

# people places process



What if Chicago could plan and develop neighborhoods with residents — not for us, not around us, but with us? Chicago can. Chicago must.

We **can and must** be a place where our transit assets — that's stations and stops, buses and trains — are tools for neighborhood vitality. We can and must commit to developing buildings, homes and public spaces in every neighborhood in ways that address residents' needs and wants. We can and must be a city and region that embraces and models **equitable transit-oriented development, or ETOD**.

With ETOD, businesses, homes and public spaces near transit:

- Are owned locally, generating wealth for Black, Brown and indigenous people;
- Remain affordable and accessible, ensuring that they can be appreciated by all residents, without displacing people, particularly people of color who have lived in communities for decades;
- Have access to high-quality transportation to jobs, amenities and other opportunities;
- Attract respectful investors and visitors, who help to sustain and vitalize communities;
- Are walkable, encouraging community engagement, health and safety;
- Incorporate sustainable practices to address climate change;
- Include spaces to display and perform art reflective of communities.

ETOD means that people of all incomes can benefit from dense, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development near transit hubs. It's a solution to the equitable recovery our city needs after COVID-19. It's a strategy that centers racial equity in the policies that shape our neighborhoods and lives. ETOD ensures that we all live in healthy, equitable, and climate-resilient communities.

## Collaboration

We at Elevated Chicago are residents, community orgs, artists, developers, regional nonprofits, community development financial institutions, city officials, policymakers and philanthropists. Collaboration is who we are and a measure of our work.

Crossing communities and sectors, we seek to erase boundaries, shift power, and de-center elements of white supremacy culture (such as perfectionism, conflict avoidance and competitive individualism) that harm community development.

Join us in advancing ETOD. Meet us at [ElevatedChicago.org](https://ElevatedChicago.org) and learn how you can help neighborhoods be equitable for all.

# purpose.



Connecting People. Building Equity

What is, What Was

We have lived in an apartheid city. The time for change is here. We can use collaboration, policy and investments around transit to change our deeply divided and car-oriented city, to restore vibrancy to areas harmed by disinvestment and displacement, to end racial segregation, to build wealth rather than extract it, and to use infrastructure to connect, not to separate, communities. Our reckoning is now.

Chicago's Black, Brown and indigenous residents face two forms of displacement. *Gentrification*, which means that in accelerated real estate markets, longtime residents are displaced by development that causes rent and property values to rise. For instance, between 2000 and 2019, Logan Square lost more than 25,000 Latinx residents, a 47% decline. *Depopulation*, with a nearly 27% decline in our city's Black population between 2000 and 2019, as 280,700 Black residents left, many in search of greater safety and access to opportunities and services not available in neighborhoods affected by longstanding patterns of racialized disinvestment.

Our communities have numerous strengths and assets (including transit access), and have always exhibited power and resilience. Collaborating across neighborhoods, issues and sectors, we will transform communities and the region.

Since 2017, Elevated Chicago has been a way to advance this work. Our values are adaptability, impact, inclusion, innovation and transparency. Our lenses—the approach to everything we do—are racial equity, health, climate change, and arts and culture.

Now is the time for change!

Here's What We're Doing: Our 2022-24 Workplan

Elevated Chicago is a multi-sector collaborative that promotes more equitable development of public spaces, buildings and vacant land around Chicago's public transit infrastructure.

We focus our work on **people**—especially Black, Brown and indigenous residents—, on **places** affected by displacement and other forms of inequity in the built environment, and on **processes** that can repair harms, create opportunities, spark development and strengthen communities.

**Our Steering Committee Members**

Center for Neighborhood Technology, The Chicago Community Trust, Chicago Department of Public Health, Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative, Endealeo Institute, Enterprise Community Partners, Foundation For Homan Square, Garfield Park Community Council, IFF, Latin United Community Housing Association (LUCHA), Leslé Honoré; Poet/Author to the Community, Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Metropolitan Planning Council, Sunshine Enterprises, UChicago Arts, Arts + Public Life.

**Our Funders**

Chicago Community Trust, Convergence Partnership, Enterprise Community Partners, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Polk Bros. Foundation, Strong Prosperous and Resilient Communities Challenge (SPARCC), and Walder Foundation.

Thank you!

To learn more about our leadership, staff and funders, [click here](#) or scan the code to the right.

Work & plan with us at [ElevatedChicago.org](#)

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**Case Study:** Overton Center for Excellence is one of the 11 pilots sites for the City of Chicago ETOD Policy Plan. This shuttered public school has already become a place for organizing, engaging, and activating community through events, arts, and green infrastructure. Once complete, it will serve as a center for community and economic development as a business incubator and community hub.

people

We will continue supporting neighborhood residents, business owners, and people who work within the 1/2-mile radius of transit hubs

**Our Priorities**

**Community Collaboration**

Neighborhood-based community tables bring together diverse residents and orgs such as housing co-ops, non-profit developers, churches, schools and health providers. Tables inform strategies and priorities for their equitable Hubs or eHubs (the 1/2 mile radius around transit hubs) using Elevated Chicago's capital, programs, policies, narratives, data and technical assistance. For example, the Logan Square table is successfully advocating for affordable housing units, public art and gathering space.

**Resident Power**

Knowledge is power. Besides supporting community tables, we will continue working with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and the Regional Transit Authority to include residents in planning efforts in our Logan Square and Washington Park eHubs. And, we're continuing the Equitable Development Ambassadors program, a nine-week initiative to demystify how places are built in Chicago by giving residents the know-how to influence neighborhood development.

**Community Ownership**

We will support financing and business models for development that bring wealth to community residents. In Logan Square and Hermosa we support the Here to Stay Community Land Trust, which purchases properties to sell to low- and moderate-income buyers from the area. We will help our partners build grocery stores (95th/Dan Ryan eHub), community venues (Kedzie-Homan eHub) and food halls (California Green eHub), all of them owned by community residents.

places

We will continue transforming the built environment in the half-mile radius around transit assets such as Chicago Transit Authority and Metra stations, and CTA and Pace bus corridors to create vibrant, healthy, equitable and resilient communities

**Our Priorities**

**Bricks-and-mortar**

We invest capital and provide technical assistance to bricks-and-mortar projects that lead to a more equitable built environment, positively impacting public health, climate resilience, and arts and culture.

We will continue supporting business incubators in Washington Park, community centers in Little Village, affordable housing for people with disabilities in Homan Square, and many more projects, including City of Chicago ETOD pilots and housing developments across the city.

New homes, art venues, small businesses: you name it. If it is community-led, fights displacement and is near transit, we want to be there for it.

**Walkability**

Safe and welcoming streets free of violence, sidewalks and viaducts that guide all residents regardless of ability to key services and amenities nearby, spaces where pedestrians are first, is how we define walkability. At the Kedzie-Lake eHub, the Garfield Park Community Council will continue promoting streetscape and infrastructure improvements. At the Kedzie-Homan eHub residents are working for infrastructure improvements along the Homan Avenue corridor. More communities will join them.

**Cultural Activation**

Station areas should be vibrant spaces full of art and culture rooted in community. We will continue investing in campaigns activating empty lots with art and positive programming (Kedzie-Homan eHub), gathering spaces reflective of the community's culture (like La Placita at the Logan Square eHub), and roller rinks and plazas (Pulaski eHub). Our Green Line South Community Table has acquired a mechanical lift, the "Elevated Lift," to allow muralists to safely access high walls. This means more murals across the city by artists previously hampered by paying for major equipment rental.

**Healthy and climate-resilient spaces**

Black and Brown communities disproportionately have too many vacant lots, too few trees, and too few places to catch stormwater runoff, leaving them vulnerable to climate catastrophes. We will support the Green Line South Community Table's Terra Firma project to stabilize, beautify, and environmentally remediate vacant lots, using sunflowers and other plantings.

We will continue helping the Kedzie-Lake Community Table's work with the City to build the Garfield Park Eco-Orchard, which will include fruit and nut trees, a gathering space, and will divert 90,000 gallons of stormwater from local streets, sewers, and basements. And we will support new nature-based solutions in up to four eHubs to ensure our transit assets are protected against climate change.

process

We will continue advocating for more accountable, transparent and inclusive decision-making in public, private and civic organizations responsible for major investments in the built environment and infrastructure

Scan here for more info!

**Our Priorities**

**ETOD policy plan implementation**

Chicago's new ETOD policy has been collaboratively developed by Elevated Chicago; the Mayor's Office, departments of planning and development, housing, transportation and public health; the CTA; developers; and leaders from community and citywide orgs. We'll continue to co-lead the working group tasked with implementation.

**Advancing equity in local government**

We've teamed with the Metropolitan Planning Council to create a JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion) cohort of rising City of Chicago leaders exploring ways to integrate JEDI principles into city planning. We will share lessons learned and continue building the City's capacity to lead an equitable recovery through ETOD, We Will Chicago, Invest South/West and other programs.

**Meaningful community engagement and ownership**

Our Community Engagement Principles and Recommendations will be updated in 2022 for greater adoption by people and organizations making built environment decisions.

**Federal ETOD policy**

Through our national network and funders at SPARCC (the Strong, Prosperous and Resilient Communities Challenge), we'll continue advancing an ETOD policy agenda across federal agencies.

**Advancing public sector funding for place-based work**

Our advocacy helped lead the passage of the City of Chicago's 2022 budget, which includes \$10.2 million for ETOD and an allocation of \$800M in affordable housing near transit. We will advocate for more resources to ensure that ETOD flourishes across Chicago.

**Where we Work**

The City of Chicago has incentivized development near transit since 2013, but 90% of it has taken place in the North and Northwest sides or near the Loop, and most of it has been neither affordable or community-driven. The South and West sides have benefited only from 10% of new transit-oriented development. The 2020 Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Policy Plan was co-created by Elevated Chicago and the City to address these shortcomings.

Our work began in 2017 with a focus on the 1/2-mile radius of seven CTA stations located in Woodlawn, Washington Park, Bronzeville, Little Village, Homan Square, Garfield Park and Logan Square. We called these areas equitable hubs, or eHubs. Since then, our work has expanded to 20+ eHubs where residents see ETOD as a key tool for community development and recovery, from Rogers Park to Washington Heights. We call this expanded network Elevated Chicago Plus.

○ = eHubs We are supporting

1/2-mile radius of CTA stations

Rogers Park Metra station

scan for the full ETOD Policy Plan

Equitable Transit Oriented Development can be a reality for Chicago!

**Case Study:** Elevated Chicago supported Assemble Chicago (rendering below), the first ETOD project being built in the city's downtown district. Developed by The Community Builders, Assemble Chicago will bring affordable housing for emergency and essential workers to the corner of State and Van Buren streets, adjacent to the Harold Washington Library and CTA stop.

We Work Together to Achieve...

people	place	process
Increased collaboration and cohesion in/ among communities	Improved health and economic outcomes for residents of color	More meaningful community engagement/ ownership in built environment decisions
Improved resident participation and advocacy in built environment decision making	Decreased displacement of people of color	More transparent decision making and implementation processes
Increased ownership of homes, businesses, land, and other assets by people of color	Increased climate and cultural resiliency in communities of color	Greater availability of capital for low income communities/ communities of color
	More equitable development near transit hubs	Greater prioritization of affordability and retention in policies and practices

purpose

November 2021