2023: END OF YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

2023 was a fast-paced and exciting year for equitable transit-oriented development (ETOD) in Chicago and nationwide. We invite you to join us in revisiting the amazing strides Elevated Chicago has made over the past year.

PEOPLE
About our people

Leslé Honoré Joins Panel on Affordable Housing, TOD
Leslé Honoré was a panelist at the 2023 National Shared Mobility Summit in Chicago this past May. Its theme was All Together Now: Action + Accountability For People-Focused Mobility. Honoré discussed what the conference organizers called "Chicago's unprecedented Equitable Transportation Oriented Development program" along with other interesting cases across the US.

Attending the Active Trans’ Movers and Shakers Ball

Roberto Requejo and Marisa Novara Receive Advancing Equity Award from Active Trans
Roberto Requejo and Housing Commissioner Novara accepted the Advancing Equity Award at the Active Transportation Alliance Movers and Shakers Ball. The award honored Elevated Chicago’s efforts in advocating for the passing of the Connected Communities Ordinance in 2022.

Marly Schott and Chandra Christmas-Rouse

Marly Schott and Chandra Christmas-Rouse Selected as Chicago United for Equity Fellows
Marly Schott and Chandra Christmas-Rouse were selected as 2023 Chicago United for Equity Fellows. The CUE Fellowship includes change-makers working in partnership with civic institutions and in community with neighbors to create an ecosystem of honest conversation, meaningful collaboration and collective action.

Jannice Newson Gives Keynote Speech at Chicago200
Jannice Newson served as the keynote speaker for the Chicago200 young adult leadership program. Her speech addressed the central question to the program. “How do we make Chicago a city for all?” and explored how ETOD and public transportation fit into that vision.

Catalyze Conference speakers in St. Louis

Roberto Requejo on Sustainable Equitable Communities at RWJF Catalyze Conference
ED Roberto Requejo was invited by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to speak about Elevated Chicago’s community power building model at the national Catalyze conference, held in St. Louis, MO. The event brought together 300+ leaders and practitioners in the community development and public health fields.

Jannice Newson at the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Convening
Coordinator Jannice Newson presented on Elevated Chicago’s Nature Near Transit upcoming projects. The Doris Duke Foundation has funded a pipeline of BIPOC professionals in STEM. The learning convention of scholars took place in Hague, New York.

Roberto Requejo on Transit-Induced Displacement at Singapore Conference
ED Roberto Requejo presented virtually at the Marcus Evans Mixed-Use Transit Oriented Development Conference in Singapore on TOD best practices to bridge the racial wealth gap and preserve existing communities.

Elevated Chicago Supports W/MBE and BIPOC-Led Orgs
As part of the commitment to equity in procurement, 100% of Elevated Chicago’s contracts in 2023 went to WBE/MBE and BIPOC-lead organizations, amounting to $400,000+.

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Kevin Sutton, Foundation for Homan Square

New Steering Committee Co-Chair
In July, Kevin Sutton joined re-elected co-chairs Chandra Christmas-Rouse and Leslé Honoré as co-chair of the Elevated Chicago Steering Committee!

Welcoming New People to Elevated Chicago
We were excited to welcome several new people to the Elevated Chicago Steering Committee:
- BJ Stewart, Sunshine Enterprises
- Kate McMahon, Chicago Department of Public Health
- Marisa Novara, Chicago Community Trust

We are grateful to their predecessors, who parted ways with Elevated Chicago in 2023, leaving an extraordinary legacy:
- Megan Cunningham, Chicago Department of Public Health, Steering Committee founder
- Mike Davidson, Chicago Community Trust, Steering Committee founder
- Jair Pinedo, Sunshine Enterprises

PLACES
About places we’re impacting

ETOD grantees at the City of Chicago’s May 2023 announcement

Chicago Recovery Plan ETOD Grantees
The Chicago Department of Planning and Development awarded 26 organizations more than $4 million in grants for ETOD development and pre-development activities, including projects sponsored by a number of Elevated Chicago members and partners: Sunshine Enterprises (for a community center in Washington Park/Woodlawn); Duo Development (for its Starling community space in North Lawndale); Food Matters (for its food-based organization in Bronzeville); and Far South CDC (for its West Pullman Lofts). Funding for the grants comes from the American Rescue Plan Act. All grantees are eligible for technical assistance provided by Elevated Works.

"Can You Walk There?" Video Series Featured on CBS News and WTTW
Coordinator Jannice Newson recreated the "Can You Walk There?" TikTok series at the Kedzie-Homan Blue Line eHub with CBS News and in Woodlawn with WTTW. This video series highlights the successes and challenges of walkability near transit throughout the city of Chicago.

77 Flavors Podcast in Washington Park
Jannice Newson joined 77 Flavors of Chicago, a podcast on the community areas in Chicago. They discussed ETOD at the Garfield Green Line station and enjoyed a meal at the Retreat at the Currency Exchange Café, a culinary business incubator with music, art and rotating culinary artists.

Groundbreaking at Fifth City Commons
Mayor Brandon Johnson opened the groundbreaking at Fifth City Commons, a new-construction affordable housing development by POAH located in the East Garfield Park neighborhood near the Kedzie/Lake Green Line. It includes 43 apartments built to Passive House standards. The development sits at the gateway to a part of Garfield Park called “Fifth City” and was named through a community-driven process co-led by Elevated Chicago Steering Committee org Garfield Park Community Council. The name also honors a community organization active in the neighborhood starting in the 1960s whose message and legacy still resonate today. Elevated supported this ETOD with a 2022 pre-development grant.

Vacant Lots in East Garfield Park and Roseland/Washington Heights
Elevated Chicago and IHS supported two case studies on vacant lots near transit in the Roseland/Washington Heights and East Garfield Park neighborhoods. Research showed that there are more than 11,000 vacant lots located near transit in predominantly Black communities (about 3,400 are City-owned). The work entailed engagement with residents on their current perceptions of and future aspirations for vacant land. Walking tours were held in both communities to highlight vacant lot history, current conditions and potential development.

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Aerial view of the new Arts Lawn

Little Village community. Elevated Chicago was one of the first supporters of this project, providing a $125,000 grant and technical assistance since 2018.

Grand Opening of the Arts Lawn

Steering Committee org Arts + Public Life unveiled the Arts Lawn in Washington Park, the newest addition to the Arts Block by the Garfield Green Line station. It will provide equitable access to outdoor community-centered arts programs, including film screenings, live theater and performance, outdoor music, youth education, and arts marketplaces. Elevated Chicago supported the adjacent Green Line Performing Arts Center and redeveloped historic CTA station with grants.

Public Kickoff of 95th Street Corridor Plan

Several community-based orgs, Chicago DPD, CTA and infrastructure consulting firm AECOM have launched the 95th Street Corridor Plan: Community-informed ETOD. The virtual public kick-off took place Nov. 1, 2023. Residents and visitors of the 2-mile corridor surrounding the 95th/Dan Ryan Red Line station will be able to share lived experiences and recommendations for future corridor development throughout 2024. Engagement efforts include public meetings, Community Table meetings and the creation of a Community Advisory Group.

PROCESS

About our systems-change work

Launch of the Connected Communities Impact Table

As part of the National Equitable Recovery Alliance, Elevated Chicago joined ACT-LA (Los Angeles) and the TransFormation Alliance (Atlanta) to launch the Connected Communities Impact Table. Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, this collaborative builds on the work the three organizations undertook from 2017 to 2022 with funding from SPARCC (the Strong, Prosperous And Resilient Communities Challenge), a national equity initiative. This new Impact Table focuses on ETOD and

Launched Works technical assistance launch transit justice at the national level with a goal of advancing policy, exploring capital sources and exchanging lessons.

Launch of the Elevated Works Technical Assistance Program

Elevated Works, an initiative of Elevated Chicago managed by the Center for Neighborhood Technology, IFP, Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) and Rudd Resources, launched in the spring. It engages 18 organizations as technical assistance providers for ETOD projects that received funding from the Chicago Dept. of Planning and Development. The Chicago Community Trust, MacArthur Foundation and JPMorgan Foundation are co-funding this effort.

Updated Community Engagement Principles and New Toolkit

Duo Development (led by brothers Carlos and Rafael Robles), Rudd Resources and JNJ Creative worked together to update Elevated Chicago’s Community Engagement Principles. A streamlined booklet and a new In.Field Community Engagement Toolkit, are now available for developers, government agencies and community groups interested in ensuring that development in neighborhoods is ethical, rooted in equity, led by resident and fun! The updated principles are live at ElevatedChicago.org; the toolkit is expected to be widely available in 2024.

Elevated Chicago on the PART Steering Committee

Elevated Chicago ED Roberto Requejo and Steering Committee member Jacky Grimshaw were appointed to serve on the Plan of Action for Regional Transit (PART) Steering Committee, convened by Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). This group

Members of the mayoral transition Subcommittee on Transportation

Elevated Chicago Tapped for Mayor Johnson Transition Subcommittees

Several Elevated Chicago leaders were appointed to serve in Mayor-Elect Brandon Johnson’s transition. ED Roberto Requejo was appointed to co-chair the Transportation Subcommittee, and Co-Chair Leslé Honoré to co-chair Arts and Culture. Other members of the Steering Committee served in a variety of sub-committees, including Christian Diaz and Lissette Castañeda (Housing) and Jacky Grimshaw (Environmental Justice). Other friends of Elevated Chicago who served on various sub-committees include Erin Aleman, Andy Geer, Darlene Hightower, Lynnette McRae, Jim Merrell, Katanya Raby, Sendy Soto, and Joanna Trotter.

G. Thomas Kingsley Impact Award

DePaul Institute for Housing Studies, co-chair of Elevated Chicago’s Knowledge Sharing Working Group, received an award

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from the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership. The award recognizes their impact in using data to improve local policy—such as the Connected Communities Ordinance—and to advance equity and well-being across neighborhoods.

ETOD Visioning Breakfasts and Conversations
Elevated Chicago hosted breakfasts with aldermen to discuss the importance of ETOD, propose a plan for an office of ETOD in Chicago, and share why ETOD principles need strong government backing to be successful. Additionally, Steering Committee members and partners met with City Council and their staff to engage them in next steps needed to sustain the city’s growing ETOD pipeline. A total of 26 aldermanic offices were engaged.

Connected Communities Impact Table Convening
The Connected Communities Impact Table, part of NERA and co-led by Elevated Chicago, Transformation Alliance (Atlanta), and ACT-LA, convened in Chicago for a day-and-a-half session. The meeting served as a learning exchange and strategizing session for furthering the goals of the table: resourcing organizations to do ETOD work, providing joint oversight and community engagement for ETOD, and educating partners about public policy and impact at the federal level. Organizers from the three cities attended the event and toured The Hatchery, one of Chicago’s pioneering ETODs.

USDOT Listening Sessions
Manager Marly Schott attended a USDOT Chicago Listening Session. Federal Transit Administration Administrator Nuria Fernandez met with elected and community leaders across the Chicagoland area for a firsthand look at how infrastructure investments are improving transportation and quality of life for passengers and residents around the city, with a special focus on Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities.

Advancing Diversity and Social Change Award
Coalition partner Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and Steering Committee member Palenque LSNA received the Advancing Diversity and Social Change Award from the American Planning Association Illinois Chapter for their work on the Logan Square Blue Line ETOD Action Plan, supported by Elevated Chicago.

Chicago Convergence Partnership Convening
Elevated Chicago and The Chicago Community Trust hosted a two-day meeting of the Convergence Partnership, a collaborative of national and community foundations advancing racial and health equity. Members discussed how to organize philanthropy to amplify community power and multiyear regional investment strategies. The group received a tour of the Logan Square eHub led by Palenque LSNA.

Plenary Panel at Mpact Transit + Community Conference
Elevated Chicago, ACT-LA, and TransForma-tion Alliance—organizations on the Con- nected Communities Impact Table—held a plenary panel at the annual Mpact conference in Phoenix, AZ. They discussed the past, present and future of ETOD in their respective cities. Mariia Zimmerman of USDOT and Jacky Grimshaw of the Center for Neighbor-

Grant support from MacArthur, MetLife and Builders Initiative
Elevated Chicago received $1M in new grants from Builders Initiative, the MetLife Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation to support general operations, Elevated Works, and the In.Field Community Engagement Toolkit, among other projects. MetLife Foundation’s grant is one of 24 provided to groups across the US that are accelerating solutions to close the income and wealth gap.