



WAN STATIK
ELEVATED
Chicago
MacArthur
Foundation

Elevated Chicago

Elevating Culture near Transit RFP

Information Session – August 27, 2025



Welcome





Agenda

1. Elevated Chicago Background
2. RFP Overview
3. Data & Reporting
4. Application Details
5. Grant Central Demo
6. Questions



Who We Are

Elevated Chicago is a citywide multi-sector collaborative advancing **equitable transit-oriented development (ETOD)** by transforming the half-mile radius around public transit hubs into vibrant, walkable cultural and economic centers.



Leslé Honoré



Kevin Sutton



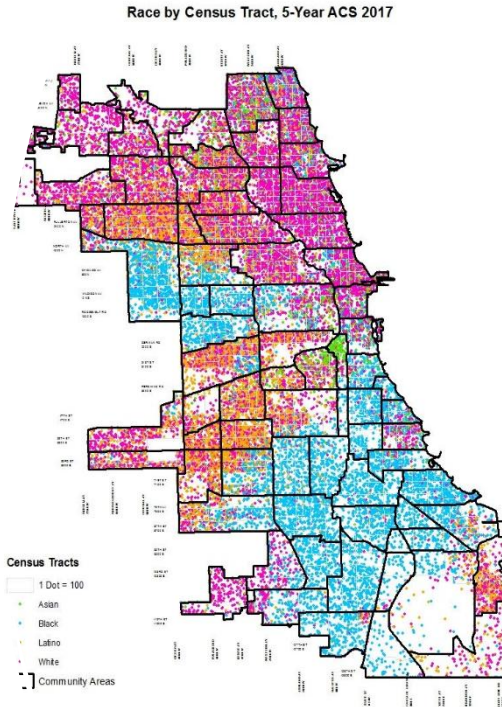
What is ETOD?



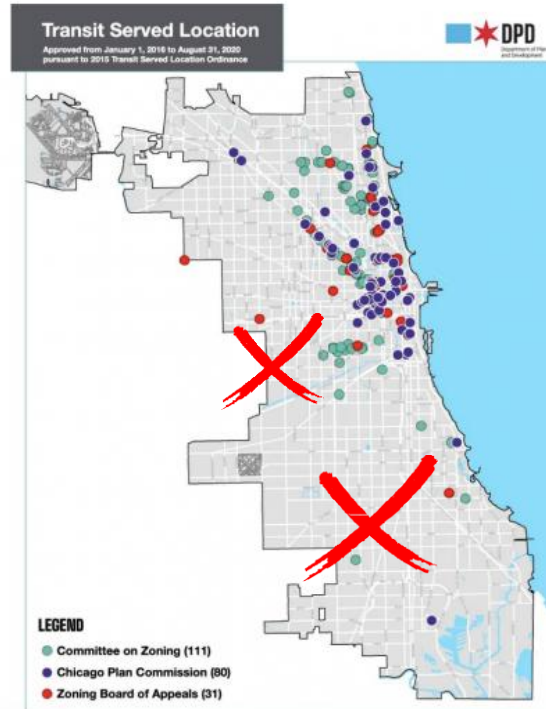
Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) is community-driven development that enables more people from all neighborhoods and backgrounds to experience the benefits of dense, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development near transit.



Why the E in ETOD?



Race by Census Tract
(5-yr ACS 2017)



TOD Projects
(2013-2020)

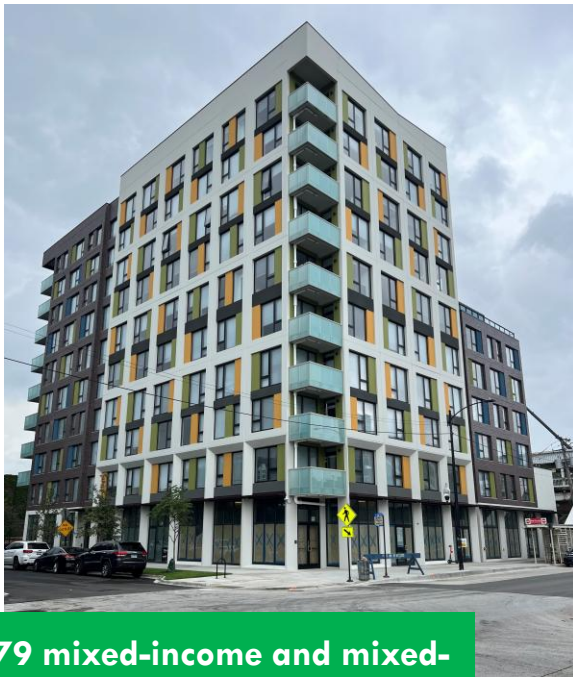


two sides of displacement



From 2013-2020, 90% of new TOD went to the North Side, Northwest Side and downtown

ETOD in Action



43 Green: 179 mixed-income and mixed-use development next to 43rd Green Line



Starling: community space & coffee shop with profit-sharing model in North Lawndale



The Arts Lawn: community-centered open space next to Garfield Green Line



Lucy Gonzalez Parson Apartments: 100 affordable units in Logan Square



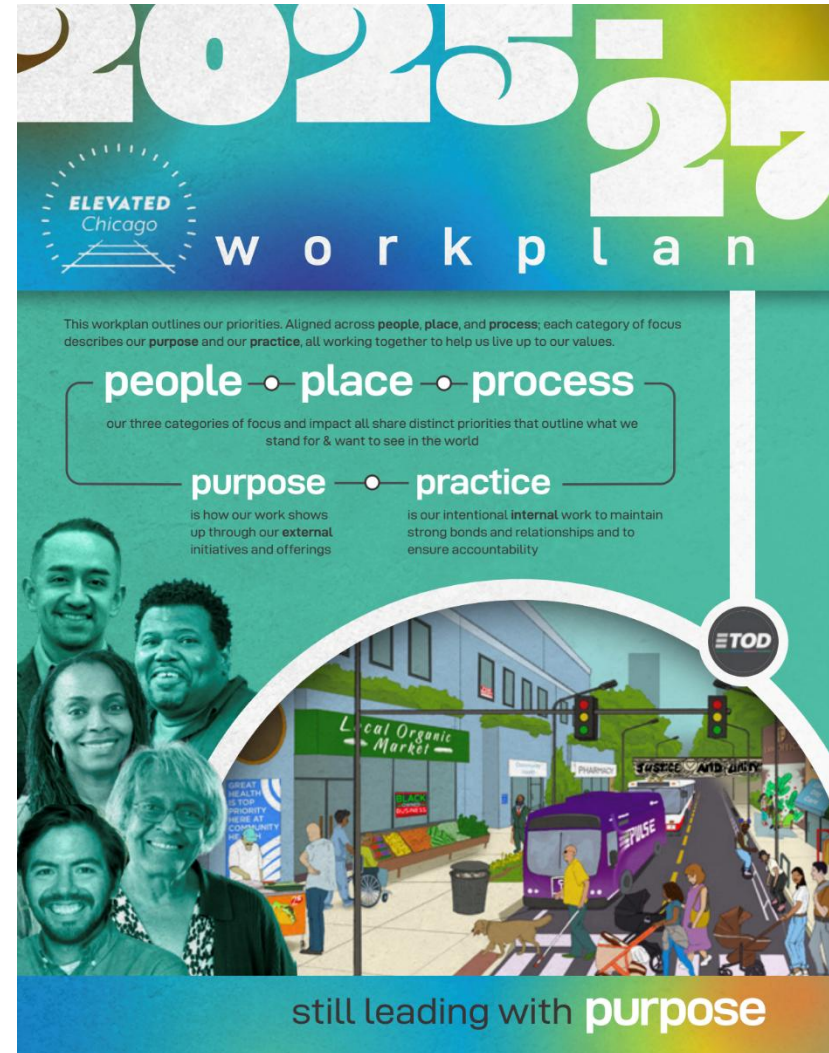
What We Do

In our work, we center:

People: We support neighborhood residents, business owners, aspiring developers, and artists, who live and work within the ½-mile radius of CTA, Pace and Metra public transit assets.

Place: We transform the built environment in the ½-mile radius around CTA, Pace and Metra public transit assets.

Process: We push public, private, and civic organizations to create processes that are more accountable, transparent, and inclusive.



learn more at elevatedchicago.org

Problem Statement

Problem Statement & Solution:

Chicago is experiencing a troubling loss of long-time residents, which is eroding the vibrancy of the city's diverse neighborhoods. Since 2000, Chicago has seen significant population decline in many historic neighborhoods, with tens of thousands of families moving away from areas once known for their strong cultural identity.

This outmigration strips neighborhoods of their unique cultural expressions, local traditions, and sense of belonging—making communities feel less welcoming and connected.

The root causes of this loss of people and culture are historically inequitable policies and practices —such as disinvestment, redlining, exclusionary zoning, and rapid gentrification—that continue to shape who has access to housing, economic opportunity, and culturally vibrant communities.

Without intentional, community-driven interventions, Chicago risks further diminishing its cultural vitality and losing the very essence that makes its neighborhoods thrive.

Creative Strategy for Cultural Preservation



Arts & Culture strategy: where vision meets actionable solution.



Solution:

Our creative strategy integrates arts, culture, and community leadership into equitable development efforts.

By embedding cultural assets into urban planning, we aim to:

- preserve heritage,
- amplify residents voices,
- and ensure that the cultural legacy of our neighborhoods remain thriving and inclusive.

Creative Strategy for Cultural Preservation



Elevating Culture Near Transit RFP

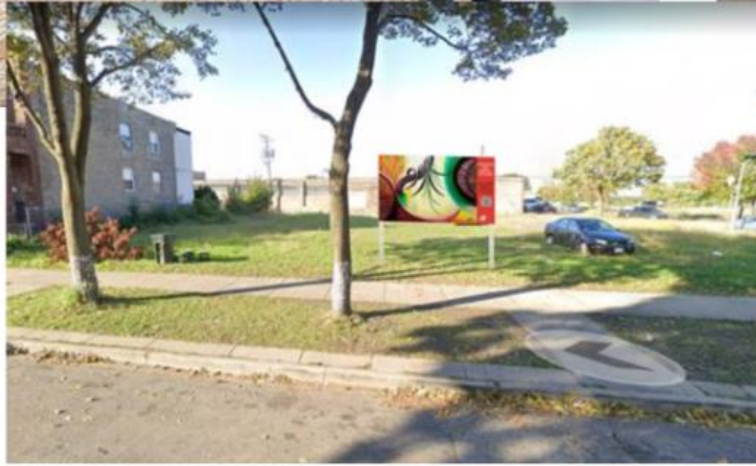


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The Elevating Culture Near Transit RFP advances creative placekeeping and placemaking projects that **utilize arts and culture as transformative tools to shape place, spark investment, reflect community identity, and engage residents from vision to implementation.**

Selected projects will advance community vitality and equity through creative, collaborative, and culturally rooted approaches that reflect local ownership and encourage broader connectivity.







Goals

The Elevating Culture Near Transit RFP aims to support projects that:

- **Preserve and amplify community culture** through activation of spaces for community/public use and benefit
- **Engage a range of residents and other community stakeholders** to shape their built environment and the decisions that affect their community
- **Support the conditions that increase economic vitality and opportunity** for small businesses, artists, entrepreneurs and commercial corridors





RFP Overview

To meet our goals looking for collaborative projects that:

- **Center and authentically engage community** and are **rooted in community culture**
- **Create inclusive spaces for all** community stakeholders to gather **through creative placekeeping**
- **Enhance community corridors and public spaces** in ways that strengthen community
- **Create economic benefit for and within the community** through local partnerships





RFP Overview

Priority strategies and activities:

- Intended for **small- to medium-scale projects** (budgeted approximately between \$10,000 - \$150,000) that are in various stages of planning but **have lead artist(s) and other collaborative partners in place.**
 - Total grant pool for 2025 is \$350,000. Depending on applications received, this may look like:
 - 4 - 6 grants of up to \$10,000
 - 5 – 8 grants of \$25,000 - \$50,000
- Activate publicly accessible spaces **within ½-mile of any CTA or Metra train stations**, and within **¼-mile of any CTA or Pace bus corridors.**





RFP Overview

Project Criteria:

- **Collaborative effort and partnership of community stakeholders** that **engages local artists and/or entrepreneurs and small businesses** based in the community
- **Provides economic benefit and opportunity** to artists and/or small businesses within the community
 - Increased revenue
 - Increased professional network and community connections
 - Enhanced connectivity and walkability of commercial corridor
- **Activates publicly accessible spaces** through art, creative documentation and storytelling, community branding, or other cultural demonstrations
- **Authentically engages community stakeholders**—especially longtime residents throughout process
- **Increases community connectivity** and demonstrates, amplifies, celebrates, shares, and documents community culture



RFP Overview

Project Criteria (continued):

- Promotes **inclusive, healing-centered, and culturally grounded practices**
 - Asset-based
 - Use culture and creativity as a tools
 - Create safe spaces and promote accessible wellness
 - Preserve place and memory
- **Connects to and encourages use of public transit,** other forms of active transportation, and walkability
- Located within the City of Chicago





RFP Overview

Elevated seeks organizations that can **demonstrate strong community relationships, and a history of collaboration and established partnerships** with artists, small businesses, neighborhood chambers of commerce, commercial businesses, or residential developers including:

- **Artist Collectives or Collaboratives**
- **Community Cultural Institutions and Arts Organizations**
- **Community-based Organizations**
- **Community Development Corporations and Planning Councils**
- **Community Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce**
- **Locally-owned Small Businesses and Community-based For-profit Entities**



Who Can Apply

To be eligible for a grant award, an applicant must be:

- A 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) organization; or be fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) organization; or be a governmental unit within meaning of Section 501(c)(1) of IRS code
- Located within or primarily serving residents of Chicago



Outcomes



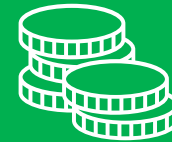
**Increased cultural activation and
resiliency**



**Improved resident advocacy and
participation in built environment
decision-making**



**Increased opportunity for and
participation in cultural programming**



**Improved economic outcomes in
underinvested communities and
neighborhoods experiencing
displacement of residents**



Data & Reporting

Outcome: Increased cultural activation and resiliency

Measures of Progress:

- Increased presence of local landmarks, symbols, cultural spaces and public art in the community
- Improved perceptions of community cultural presence and cohesion (qualitative)
 - Participant surveys, social media engagement, quotes, etc.

Outcome: Improved resident advocacy and participation in built environment decision-making

Measures of Progress:

- Community are engaged as equal partners at planning and decision-making tables
- People from across the community participate and outcomes reflect their perspectives
- Community members hold improved perceptions of community collaboration, cohesion, or ownership (qualitative)
 - Participant surveys, social media engagement, quotes, etc.



Outcome: Increased opportunity for and participation in cultural programming

Measures of Progress:

- Number of participants in placekeeping projects and events
- Increased presence of local landmarks, symbols, cultural spaces and public art in the community
- Community members hold improved perceptions of community cultural presence and cohesion (qualitative)

Outcome: Improve economic outcomes in underinvested communities and neighborhoods experiencing displacement of residents

Measures of Progress:

- Economic benefit for local artists
 - Income generation, increased professional connections and network, increased social media presence and engagement
- Economic benefit for local small businesses and entrepreneurs
 - Improved or increased community presence, investment or improvements in physical space, increased professional connections and network, increased engagement on social media, increased number of patrons
- Increased engagement with local assets and small businesses
- Improved walkability of commercial corridors



How to Apply

- Apply via GrantCentral, The Chicago Community Trust's online grant management system
- Applicants must complete and certify an Organization Profile before applying
 - If applicable, fiscal sponsors must also complete and certify an organization profile
- Applicants may receive a telephone call, or other communication from foundation staff as part of the application review process





Add Indicator

Define an Indicator for this Measure of Progress

Outcome: **Amplify Impact Following Policy Wins**

Measure of Progress: **Changes in shifting norms, narrative or content of debate**

At least one Indicator is required for each Measure of Progress:

* Indicator Description (255 characters or less)

Complete this field.

* Type

- ☐ Quantitative
☐ Qualitative

* Baseline ⓘ

* Target ⓘ

Complete this field.

* Data Source and Collection Methods

Data sources may include, but are not limited to, pre- and post-surveys, focus groups, interviews,

Comments ⓘ



Key Dates

Information Session: August 27, 2025

Application Opens: September 3,
2025

Application Deadline: October 6, 2025
at 11:59pm CT*

**Funding Decisions &
Announcements:** December 2025

*Late applications will not be accepted



Resources and Questions?

- [How to Submit an Application](#)
- [Elevating Culture Near Transit RFP Folder](#)
- For technical questions, email our Grants team at grants@cct.org
- For programmatic and application content questions, email Marly Schott at marly@elevatedchicago.org





Q & A





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