

Glossary of terms

Built environment

Built environment is the human-made design and creation of our surroundings that impact our everyday life. Think about your neighborhood: the streets you walk on, the stores you visit, and even the playgrounds and parks—all of these are parts of the built environment. It's designed and built to help us live our lives, and it affects how we move around the world, how safe we feel, and how our communities look, function, and interact with one another.

Commercial Corridor

Commercial Corridor is a stretch of street on a major roadway or intersection that features a variety of mixed-use developments, businesses, services, and pedestrian-friendly features to serve those who live, work, and play in the community, fostering economic and cultural vitality. ETOD promotes development to enhance or create hubs of opportunity and connectivity on commercial corridors near transit.

ETOD (Equitable Transit-Oriented Development)

ETOD (Equitable Transit-Oriented Development) 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.

Video: [ETOD 101: An Explainer on Equitable Transit-Oriented Development in Chicago](#)

Healing-centered engagement practices

Healing-centered engagement practices create intentional spaces and engage in practices—physical or programmatic—where art, culture, and wellness intersect to address collective trauma, foster resilience, and strengthen social bonds. They:

- **Center Culture & Creativity:** Use arts and cultural practices (music, dance, visual arts, storytelling, rituals) as tools for emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being.
- **Promote Equity & Belonging:** Prioritize BIPOC, immigrant, and historically marginalized communities most impacted by displacement, disinvestment, and systemic inequities.

- **Provide Accessible Wellness:** Offer healing modalities—such as art therapy, meditation, movement, and holistic care—close to public transit so residents can easily participate.
- **Build Community Power:** Create networks of support, dialogue, and collaboration that help residents not only heal individually, but also collectively imagine and shape more equitable futures.
- **Preserve Place & Memory:** Honor neighborhood stories, traditions, and cultural anchors as vital parts of community identity and resilience.

Additional resources: [A Framework For Healing-Centered Community Development](#)

Local ownership/locally owned

Local ownership/locally owned is defined as in the hands of the residents of the neighborhood in which the development is built.

Report: [City of Chicago Community Wealth Building Initiative](#)

Placemaking

Placemaking is the creative process of transforming spaces into vibrant culturally rich places where people feel connected. Through integrating arts and cultural practices with community and economic development, placemaking in the context of ETOD activates public areas near transit — like plazas, transit stations, and community hubs—with murals, performances, and installations that celebrate neighborhood identity, strengthen community ties, and invite people to gather, create, and thrive.

Key goals in ETOD:

- Spark community pride through arts & cultural expression
- Increase activity and accessibility around transit areas
- Support small businesses and local creatives through activation projects

Placekeeping

Placekeeping goes beyond activation—it's about protecting, sustaining, and uplifting the culture, history, and people who already make a community special. In the ETOD framework, placekeeping ensures that development near transit prioritizes equity, prevents displacement,

and honors long-standing cultural traditions. Arts and culture serve as vital tools to safeguard memory, amplify community voices, and sustain rooted identities while new investments take place.

Key goals in ETOD:

- Preserve cultural heritage and neighborhood stories
- Advance equity and prevent displacement
- Embed artists and community leaders in planning and decision-making
- Ensure new development strengthens, not erases, community
- Support small businesses and local creatives through activation projects

Together, **placemaking** and **placekeeping** shape ETOD as not just about physical infrastructure, but about community power—ensuring Chicago’s growth is creative, equitable, and rooted in culture.

Additional Resources:

[What is “Creative Placemaking”? | Americans for the Arts](#)

[Field Scans | Creative Placemaking Research - ArtPlace America](#)

[Creative Placemaking Resources to Get You Started or Grow Your Practice | Local Initiatives Support Corporation](#)