



Arts & Culture Strategy

2025

Intro

PROTECT, PRESERVE AND PERPETUATE COMMUNITY CULTURES

The Elevated Chicago Arts & Culture Strategy is designed to protect, preserve, and perpetuate community cultures as a critical component of **equitable transit-oriented development (ETOD)**.

By embedding arts and culture into the development process, we aim to amplify community power, prevent displacement, and shift perspectives on the role of culture & community within ETOD to continue fostering an inclusive Chicago.



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.



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.

People

Strategy:

We support residents, especially Black, Brown and Indigenous residents, business owners, aspiring developers, and artists, who live and work within 1/2-mile radius of transit hubs.

- Amplify local voice and presence through cultural preservation efforts
- Strengthen organizing and advocacy initiatives that protect and uplift community-rooted cultural practices
- Support artist-led community engagement, especially projects grounded in racial equity and healing



People

Implementation Examples

- Creatives Table for learning & networking
- Technical assistance & curriculum
- Authentic community engagement
- Story-telling & narratives change
- Collaborative artistic visioning

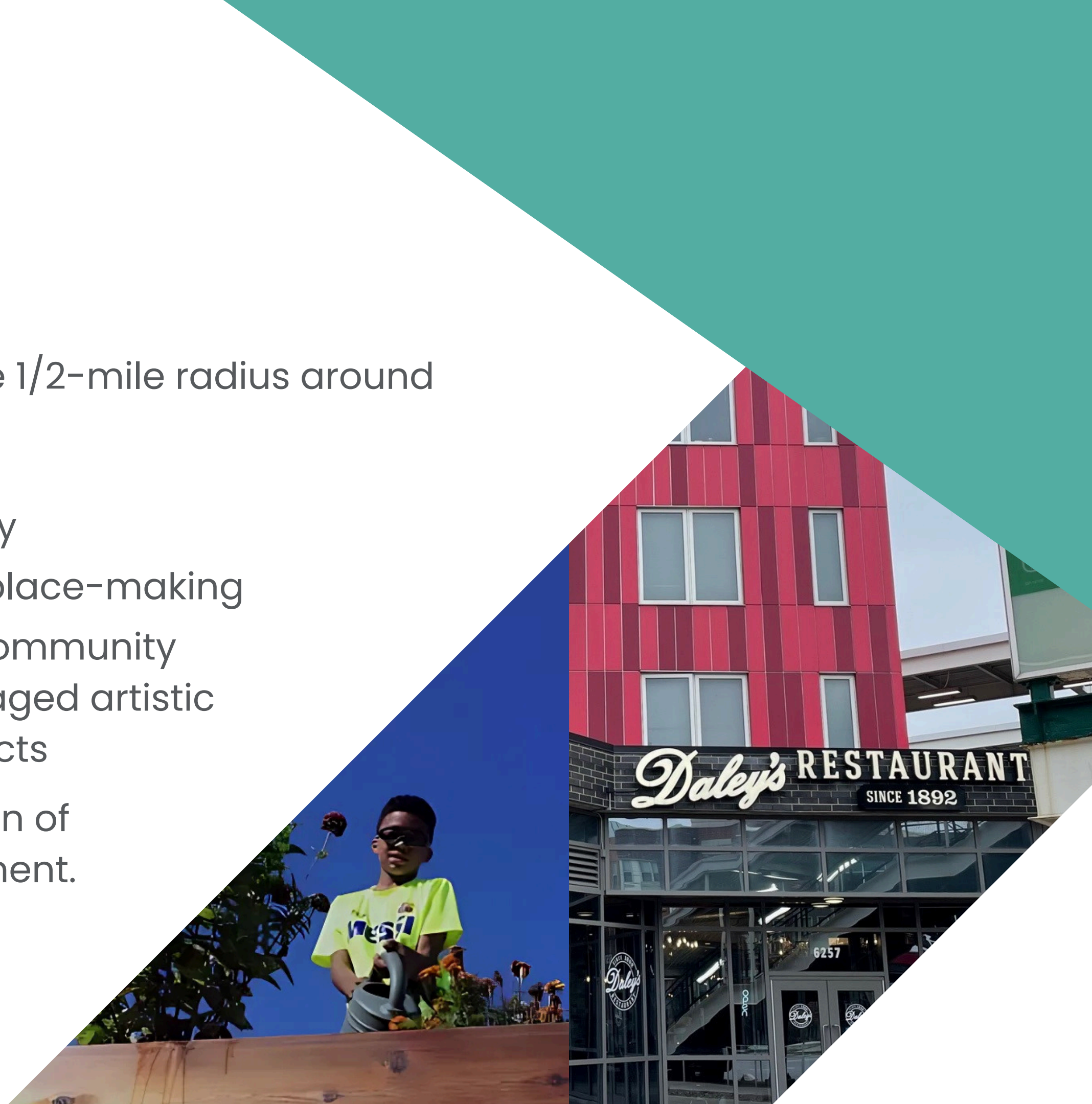


Place

Strategy:

We transform the built environment in the 1/2-mile radius around public transit.

- Protect community history and identity
- Support creative place-keeping and place-making
- Amplify local artists, history, culture, community through hyper-local, community engaged artistic interventions and beautification projects
- Support exploration and demonstration of cultural impacts on the built-environment.



Place

Implementation Examples:

- Transit-oriented Cultural Corridors
- Murals & Public Art
- Community spaces, green spaces, play spaces, and gardens
- Culturally-informed community development
- Cultural activations
- Artistic collaboration with transit agencies



Process

Strategy:

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

- Integrate arts and culture as tools for problem-solving, learning, and community engagement across policy, resource allocation, and planning in the development process.
- ReFrame how culture is perceived and defined by elevating its role in development as a means of cultural preservation and protection.



Process

- Strengthen the capacity of community development practitioners, nonprofit and for-profit developers, government agencies, and built environment stakeholders to apply arts and culture in development and engagement strategies.
- Embed artists at the earliest stages of the development process to influence visioning, planning, and implementation



Process

Implementation Examples:

- Include cultural protection as criteria in city development, funding, and process decisions
- Deeper engagement of public and private arts and culture leaders in City ETOD efforts
- Engage Artists across Elevated Chicago governance structure
- Co-design of strategy implementation with artists & creatives



Equitable Imaginative, and Rooted in Community Culture



When done right, ETOD isn't just about where we live—it's about how we thrive.
Let's build a future where every community has the opportunity to flourish!

Creative Strategy for Cultural Preservation

Thank You