

City of Chicago's first-ever **Equitable Transit-Oriented Development** policy plan.

CT.org found Elevate Chicago at random but was impressed with their efforts to organize residents and businesses to create equitable TOD, i.e., ETOD. A great case study.



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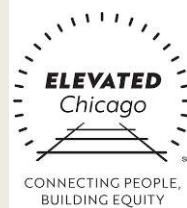
Collaboratively developed by Elevated Chicago, city departments and leaders from community and citywide organizations, the proposed policy aims to leverage tools of urban planning to address historic disinvestments in Black and Brown communities, and avoid displacement triggered by gentrification.

A working group of 80 community, non-profit and City leaders, along with developers, artists and organizers, is behind a brand-new policy that will convey the City of Chicago's approach to equitable transit-oriented development – or ETOD.

The ETOD policy plan, which went public on September 14, 2020, on the **City of Chicago's website**, aims to incentivize the development of affordable housing, small businesses, and mixed-

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Elevated Chicago



Elevated Chicago is a partnership of organizations committed to transforming the half-mile radius around transit stations into hubs of opportunity and connection across our region's vast transit system. **Elevated Chicago** views station areas as optimal locations where arts and culture, urban design, social programming and development can converge in order to address the region's deeply rooted disparities in racial equity, with a focus on public health and climate resiliency outcomes. With support from SPARCC, **Elevated Chicago** will transform decision-making structures so that low-income residents and people of color strengthen their power and influence, and so equity values are embedded in the urban development process and in its outcomes. Our initial work in four pivotal communities will guide and inform a longer-term commitment to scale this model regionally.

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use properties around all transit stations, among other goals.

If the policy recommendations are adopted by the City, organizers say the long-term outcomes will be: more neighborhoods that are affordable, walkable and transit-oriented (versus car-oriented); healthier and safer streets and corridors; and, neighborhoods that are designed *with* community members to meet their specific needs.

“Nearly all transit-oriented development in Chicago has occurred in communities that are predominantly white, and it has often contributed to displacement in communities of color, or skipped them altogether” says Roberto Requejo, program director of Elevated Chicago and one of the members of the ETOD working group. “You need only look at the differences between the activity around the Morgan station in the West Loop or the Blue Line stations along Milwaukee Avenue, on one hand, and at the vacant land around Green Line South or the 95th Street Red Line stations, on the other. It’s time for equity to be the centerpiece of the way Chicago develops communities around transit infrastructure. We need a policy that has teeth and makes *equitable* TOD the norm, rather than the exception.”

The general public was invited to review and make comments on the new ETOD policy through Thursday, October 29, 2020. The policy, hosted at <https://chi.gov/etod>, was developed with support from the Office of Mayor Lori Lightfoot and a cross-section of City departments including Housing, Planning and Development, Transportation, and Public Health, with input by the Chicago Transit Authority. A preliminary summary of the public response and comments to the policy can be found [here](#); a final report will be produced in January.

“It’s clear that both real estate developers and building tenants appreciate the benefits of transit-served economic development and housing projects,” said Dept. of Planning and Development Commissioner Maurice Cox. “This effort will help ETOD become more prevalent in portions of the City where the transit resources exist, but development doesn’t.”

Chicago Dept. of Transportation Commissioner Gia Biagi added, “Every neighborhood in Chicago should offer its residents a walkable and transit-friendly environment that provides good access to jobs, education and recreational opportunities. This new ETOD policy creates a framework for us to move forward in partnership with community leaders – those who have the most knowledge about what their communities need – as we work to overcome the historic inequities that we are committed to correcting.”

Other members of the working group, which began developing the policy last winter, include Access Living, Metropolitan Planning Council, Garfield Park Community Council, and Logan

Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA). LSNA recently celebrated the City approval of financing for 100 affordable homes near the CTA Logan Square Blue Line station, after years of advocacy for affordable housing in the already-gentrifying community.

“Transit-oriented development is inherently intersectional,” says Requejo. “It requires good planning, thorough community engagement, commitments to affordability, accessibility and mobility, and incentives to spark economic development. We are calling for a new policy in Chicago that centers equity so that ETOD is a tool to help correct our city’s deep racial segregation, and to build wealth in Black and Brown communities.”

LINK: <https://www.elevatedchicago.org/etodpolicy/>