



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**CITY OF CHICAGO RELEASES FIRST-EVER EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

*Plan outlines a set of actions for City to advance racial equity, wealth building, public health and climate resilience goals through pedestrian-oriented development near transit hubs.*

**CHICAGO** – As a key pillar of its anti-poverty and equitable economic growth agenda, the City of Chicago today released its first-ever Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (eTOD) policy plan to address the market failures. These failures have led to (1) the lack of dense and walkable housing and retail development around CTA and Metra stations in Black communities on the South and West sides, and (2) displacement pressure being felt by long-time residents living near CTA stations in other parts of the city that have been experiencing exponential growth. The 2020 eTOD Policy Plan fulfills a requirement from the City's 2019 amendment to the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) ordinance, originally approved by City Council in 2013, which required the City to examine disparities in the TOD ordinance performance and propose revisions for more equitable development. The City's 2020 eTOD policy plan under Mayor Lightfoot updates earlier TOD efforts and offers a roadmap for mixed-use neighborhood development around CTA and Metra stations and high-capacity bus routes that are walkable and pedestrian-oriented to mitigate the effects of residential housing segregation, build community wealth, improve climate resiliency and the overall health of residents.

"Every Chicagoan, no matter what side of the City they reside on, should have access to both our world-class transportation system and the recreational, housing, and environmental benefits that come with it," said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "The new eTOD Policy Plan will expand this access and give our most disinvested neighborhoods the long-overdue opportunity to enjoy these benefits while not being forced out of the community they call home. I look forward to working closely with our Departments of Transportation, Planning and Development, and other key stakeholders as we take this next step to bring the values of equity and inclusion into our urban development agenda."



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A type of development that promotes and maximizes residential, business and open space within walking distance of public transportation, TODs not only improve the quality of life for residents with increased access to employment opportunities and cultural amenities through greater connection between communities but by also reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions due to a decreased need for vehicles. If utilized to address racial inequities as the City is here, TOD can also improve health and well-being and help close the racial life expectancy gap that currently means a Black Chicagoans live on average nine fewer years than a white Chicagoan.

“We support the City’s effort to establish this plan, which complements the inherent nature of public transit as an equalizer -- allowing anyone at any time to travel anywhere in the City for a low, flat fare,” said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. “Incentivizing development near rail lines with unused capacity will make our City less car-dependent and more resilient, as well as contributing to ridership and revenue growth for the City’s transit system.”

Over 200 developments in Chicago have been approved to access TOD benefits since late 2016. However, nearly 90% of all new TOD projects approved between 2016 and 2019 are concentrated on the North and Near Northwest sides, in Downtown and around the West Loop, with little activity occurring near train stations on the South and West. Those neighborhoods surrounding TODs are experiencing population increases and additional private investment and development, while in Black communities where TODs are not common, the population is decreasing as residents move to areas where access to transit and other amenities are better. In some Latinx neighborhoods, such as Pilsen, TOD activity is occurring, however, the growth is so accelerated that many residents are being displaced. The 2020 eTOD Policy Plan will address the lack of TOD in neighborhoods, will also protecting existing residents from displacement, expand housing opportunities and ensure inclusive economic growth. As an early step, the City will identify pilot and demonstration opportunities for advancing components of the plan.

"Every neighborhood in Chicago has a crown jewel of public investment and a network that connects us together—rail stations and high-capacity bus routes. Chicago must offer its residents a walkable and transit-friendly environment that provides good access to jobs, education and recreational opportunities," said CDOT Commissioner Gia Biagi. "This new eTOD policy creates a framework for us to move forward in partnership with community leaders as we work to overcome the historic inequities that this mayor is so committed to correcting."

Recommendations in the eTOD Policy Plan will work to elevate and prioritize investments and policies that address racially inequitable development patterns



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around transit systems and mitigate displacement in neighborhoods experiencing accelerated development over the next three years by:

- Building the City’s internal capacity infrastructure, including the formalization of an eTOD workgroup for cross-sector and inter-agency coordination as well as standardizing community engagement practices to elevate community voice in decision making.
- Making eTOD a requirement and easier to accomplish, including through creating and preserving affordable housing near transit, promoting transit, walking and biking options, and supporting small businesses growth.
- Embedding eTOD into Chicago’s “We Will” Citywide Planning initiative through incorporating health, equity and safety criteria into land-use planning and zoning decisions.

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

“As we work toward filling the City’s affordable housing gap, the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development policy plan will increase and encourage the opportunities, investment and wealth-building communities need to grow, while at the same time prevent long-time residents from being displaced,” said DOH Commissioner Marisa Novara.

A diverse eTOD working group with more than 80 members was created in 2019 that includes representatives from the departments of Planning and Development (DPD), Housing (DOH), Transportation (CDOT), Public Health (CDPH) and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), along with stakeholders from community-based organizations, the private sector, philanthropy, and regional non-profit and governmental partners. The working group, in partnership with Elevated Chicago, drafted the eTOD plan through a cross-sector engagement process and analysis of current City policies and programs using an evaluation framework focused on equity, outcomes, and implementation criteria with the ultimate goal of closing the socioeconomic gaps between neighborhoods and improving overall quality-of-life.

“We at Public Health know that there’s a correlation between the built environment and the health of our communities, so we are completely supportive of this plan,” said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “In fact, equitable transit-oriented development is one of the priority areas of our Healthy Chicago 2025 plan, because it can help advance health and racial equity.”



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The 2020 eTOD report is available by visiting [chi.gov/etod](https://chi.gov/etod). Chicagoans can submit their comments to [etod@cityofchicago.org](mailto:etod@cityofchicago.org) through Thursday, October 29.

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