

Partners for Places Project Lessons Report

Project Name: *Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD): Process, Plan and Engagement Strategy*

- **Year Complete:** 2021
- **Local Government:** Chicago, IL
- **Local Foundation:** The Chicago Community Trust; Elevated Chicago

Project Purpose

To create and implement an innovative policy process, plan and engagement strategy for Chicago's transit-oriented development ordinance, with an emphasis on equity, affordability, and connectivity between neighborhoods.

Key Lessons Learned

- It is essential to have allies across City departments to socialize policy plans and ideas that push beyond the norm of City policy. Allies are essential to advancing projects and plans that require buy-in and collaboration from multiple departments. They are also critical to sustaining work that has met with internal and external challenges, setbacks, and delays.
- True collaboration requires power sharing, openness, and transparency. It requires a shift from entrenched processes and practices to those that are inclusive, flexible, and agile to truly embrace the ideas and expertise communities contribute. This requires an equal seat at what are often closed and opaque tables of decision-making. Community stakeholders must feel they can bring their authentic selves to the process and can offer honest feedback, input, and constructive criticism without reservation. All of these elements are key to building trust, repairing strained relationships, and sharing power.
- Ample resources are required to undertake collaborative planning efforts. Community-based leaders and organizations must be compensated for participation with financial resources to truly commit to the work necessary, in ways that honor their experience and perspective. Community engagement efforts must be adequately funded in budgets, with an understanding of the real costs of engaging communities and tailoring engagement to each audience. Finally, it is essential to provide resources needed to build a strong team based on an in-depth analysis of project needs, existing partner capacity, and expertise gaps that can be filled utilizing specialized consultants and external experts.

Additional Information and Resources

Elevated Chicago, specifically the ETOD work group's activities around the ETOD policy plan, was featured in a Next City [article](#) and a Block Club Chicago [article](#). The project team also created A two-part video series on walkability around transit stations in the [Logan Square](#) and [Washington Park](#) communities. More information on continuing work on the ETOD Policy Plan can be accessed [here](#).