



Chicago

L-Evated Chicago

Catalytic Moment



Chicago is at a crossroads. Deeply divided along racial and economic lines, too many of our city's residents lack equitable access to jobs, healthcare, greenspace, and other opportunities that impact quality of life. Yet there is also an unprecedented alignment of new resources and priorities to address this inequity, and leaders across community, public, and private sectors are looking to the built transit system as a way to close these divides. Chicago's vast transportation system—and the physical connections it makes—offers opportunities to create new capital, policies, and programs that focus on equity, health, cultural assets, and climate resiliency.

A few examples of how major institutions and decision makers are prioritizing large-scale regional changes:

- J The City of Chicago's Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus will leverage investment in downtown to support redevelopment in underserved neighborhoods
- J The new Chicago Community Catalyst Fund will invest \$100 million over three years to finance real estate and business ventures in disinvested neighborhoods
- J The city's Health in All Policies resolution calls on city departments, including the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, to consider health impacts in all policy areas and collaborate to mitigate root causes of health inequities.
- J The Metropolitan Planning Council is in the midst of a groundbreaking study on the economic impact of segregation
- J The Chicago Community Trust, the region's community foundation, is deeply committed to promoting equity for all residents

Taken together, these aligned priorities, substantial resources, and willingness to partner represent a profound catalytic moment.

Regional Partnership



L-Evated 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. L-Evated Chicago views station areas as the optimal locations for planning, programming, urban design, and development to converge to address the region's deeply rooted disparities in racial equity, public health, and climate resiliency.

With support from SPARCC, L-Evated Chicago will transform decision-making structures so that low-income residents and people of color strengthen their power and influence, and so that values of equity, health, and climate resilience are embedded in development outcomes. The initial work in four pivotal communities will guide and inform a longer-term commitment to scale this model regionally.

The collaborative's goals are:

- J Remake the half mile area around transit stops into a center of commerce, culture, and social interaction
- J Unite community partners and harness collective power, align and cultivate capital, and transform systems
- J Advocate for policies to remove barriers to equity, health and climate-wise development

Context



Chicago has long been recognized as one of the nation's most segregated cities—the result of a century of racially motivated disinvestment and wealth extraction. Federal highway and rail projects divided communities, creating isolation and furthering segregation. Minority and low-income residents still endure this legacy in the form of substandard housing, poor health outcomes, joblessness, and police and community violence. Since 1970, there are twice as many families living in either low-income or high-income neighborhoods, illustrating the growing wealth gap across the region.

Additionally, these geographic divisions have left poor communities more vulnerable to climate events such as flooding and extreme heat. The life expectancy of Chicagoans in communities with high economic hardship is five years shorter than the city average, and Chicago's south and west sides have the city's highest rates of children seeking emergency care for asthma.

From its origins more than a century ago, Chicago's extensive transit system has provided a backbone for the region's growth. Across the city and many surrounding suburbs, tangible signs of rebirth in neighborhoods where there was once disinvestment are taking shape near transit lines and the capacity for similarly transformative community development resides in the proximity of available land near rail lines.

PARTNERS

Center for Neighborhood Technology
The Chicago Community Trust
City of Chicago Department of Public Health
Enterprise Community Partners Chicago
IFF

Latin United Community Housing Association (LUCHA)
Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC)
University of Chicago Arts and Public Life
Washington Park Development Group