



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**CITY COUNCIL PASSES THE CONNECTED COMMUNITIES ORDINANCE
TO GROW ECONOMY, MAKE STREETS SAFER, AND PROMOTE AFFORDABILITY**

Bold plan will create jobs, support local businesses, and foster healthy, vibrant neighborhoods by creating predictable standards for equitable development near transit

CHICAGO – City Council today passed the Connected Communities Ordinance, the most comprehensive and equity-focused update to the City's transit-oriented development policy yet.

Designed to stimulate equitable development near public transit, the ordinance creates jobs by catalyzing investment near transit, makes streets safer for all Chicagoans who walk, bike, drive or roll their wheelchair, and promotes affordable housing options near transit. The Connected Communities Ordinance, drafted in closer partnership with Elevated Chicago and over 80 civic and community stakeholders, will create more connected and thriving communities around Chicago's vast public transit options.

"In order to realize my administration's vision for an equitable city, we must redress and improve the ways we invest in our neighborhoods," said Mayor Lightfoot. "By introducing the Connected Communities Ordinance, we will facilitate developments that are accessible to all residents and catalytic for their communities. I look forward to working with City Council to pass this measure and bolster our equitable economy."

Every Chicagoan deserves to live in a safe, walkable, and vibrant community connected to transit, yet the wealthier parts of the city have benefited the most from Chicago's earlier transit-oriented development (TOD) policy. A 2020 analysis of developments that accessed TOD incentives between 2016 and 2019 reveals that 90% of TOD projects were constructed on the North Side, Northwest Side, in Downtown and around the West Loop. Key goals of the Connected Communities Ordinance including facilitating more investment near transit on the South and West sides of the City and preventing displacement and promoting affordable housing



options in transit-rich communities on the North and Northwest sides – all while making sidewalks and streets safer everywhere.

"We know that the future of development near transit maximizes housing affordability and accessibility while improving pedestrian safety, and connects people to the jobs and resources they need to thrive," said DOH Commissioner Marisa Novara. "The passage of the Connected Communities Ordinance strengthens our commitment to development near transit that prioritizes people, safety and affordability, and is a big step toward more equitable outcomes by race and income across the city."

"Equitable Transit Oriented Development is good for the health of people and neighborhoods," said Dr. Allison Arwady, CDPH Commissioner. "With this Ordinance, the city will take an important step to address Chicago's persistent life expectancy gap by intentionally designing policy to promote community health and racial equity."

"By increasing opportunities for developers to build more affordable and transit-served housing throughout the City, residents will have more affordable options that support their personal and family needs," said DPD Commissioner Maurice Cox.

The Connected Communities Ordinance is the result of over three years of collaboration between city departments, community-based organizations, civic groups, artists, and other experts who co-created the City's first Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Policy Plan, which was unanimously adopted by Chicago Plan Commission in June 2021. The Ordinance implements many recommendations from the plan, leveraging development near transit to connect Chicagoans to the resources and amenities they need - from jobs and schools to services and more. Out of over a dozen provisions, key ones include:

- Extending transit-oriented development incentives more broadly and equitably across the city, including to a standard 4-block radius from rail stations and 2-blocks from additional high frequency and strategic bus corridors
- Implementing pedestrian-safety standards on new construction near rail stations
- Strengthening incentives for the provision of on-site affordable units in TOD projects
- Protecting against the loss of 2-flats and 3-flats near transit in communities facing displacement pressures



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“Connecting communities is a core value in our City’s Strategic Plan for Transportation,” said CDOT Commissioner Gia Biagi. “This Ordinance will help us advance this work by increasing density and opportunity near transit stations so that more Chicagoans have easier and better access to transit in walkable neighborhoods.”

“We applaud City Council for passing the Connected Communities ordinance, which addresses an opportunity to extend the TOD benefits to a broader segment of bus service,” said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. “One the most valuable benefits of public transit -- beyond the actual services -- is the economic impact it can have on the communities it serves. Chicago’s public transit system works as a network of both bus and rail services, with a little more than half of our annual ridership on the bus side. Because the bus network reaches throughout the city, making more bus corridors eligible means a more equitable distribution of the benefits of transit-oriented development is possible. We look forward to seeing the positive impacts this ordinance will bring to the communities served by our comprehensive bus network.”

“The Connected Communities ordinance reflects the collaboration of dozens of organizations and government agencies since 2020,” said Roberto Requejo, executive director of Elevated Chicago. “Community leaders are advancing ETOD projects across the city, from Garfield Park and Washington Heights, to Logan Square and Edgewater. These developments are holistic responses to the converging crises affecting our communities, specifically racial injustices, an enduring pandemic, worsening climate challenges, and a volatile economy.”

“The Elevated Chicago coalition called for ETOD to be the norm in how to develop Chicago, not the exception,” said Requejo. “And I’m happy that today with the passage of the Connected Communities Ordinance, and meaningful resources from the City behind it, we will begin to see a more equitable Chicago for every resident.”

The Connected Communities Ordinance is part of Mayor Lightfoot’s commitment to the creation and preservation of affordable housing, especially on the South and West Sides of the City, and around transit. Earlier this summer, the Mayor attended the grand opening of the Lucy Gonzalez Parsons Apartments in the Logan Square neighborhood. Formerly the Emmett Street Apartments, the development was built on an underutilized City-owned parking lot, steps from the Blue Line and will provide 100 one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments to households at or below 60% of the area median income (AMI).

In October 2021, the City partnered with Elevated Chicago to select 11 community-driven projects to participate in the inaugural ETOD Pilot Program and receive micro-grant funding and access to technical assistance. In December 2021, the City



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announced the largest investment in affordable housing - \$1 billion in 24 developments in 20 different communities, thanks in part to the Chicago Recovery Plan. Of the selected awardees, 18 are transit-oriented developments, 12 of which will be on the South and West sides, where development around transit has lagged development on the North Side.

For more information on the Connected Communities Ordinance and the City's ETOD Policy Plan, please visit www.chi.gov/etod.

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