

Factors that Drive Implementation of Equitable Land Use and Transportation Policies



Collaborative Coordination

Spaces for collaboration and coordination among government staff, community partners and residents facilitate shared learning, strategizing, and accountability

Our study showed that a collaborative approach to coordinating implementation work through **close cooperation and shared decision-making power among key partners** is critical for advancing equity-focused policies. Steering committees or working groups can become spaces of trust and influence when government agency staff and community partners are working together; government staff are better grounded in community priorities and needs, and community partners can be informed of government priorities, processes, and important technical/fiscal matters. Often, these collaborative spaces are used to plan next steps after policy adoption and to coordinate citywide actions and resources. Following policy adoption, various departments may support the overall policy intent by creating cross-sector collaboration across efforts. They are also spaces to collectively monitor progress and how continuous improvement can be made during implementation. Collaboration can also address any neighborhood-level concerns raised about project impacts.

Chicago's Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Policy

A key aspect of Chicago's Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) policy is the role played by the **ETOD Working Group**, which was co-created by the Mayor's office and the local collaborative Elevated Chicago. The Working Group meets quarterly to monitor and advise the city toward achieving its ETOD goals and is designed to be balanced, with about half of its 50 participants from the government sector and the other half from civic and community-based organizations. Membership of the group extends beyond Elevated Chicago's coalition and encompasses a range of important issue perspectives, such as disability rights, affordable housing, mobility/transit, health, local business, and community development.

Elevated Chicago's early work to build awareness and momentum for a revised ETOD approach provided a model for the Working Group's leadership structure and collaborative nature. Through a steering committee formed amongst civic and community groups near transit hubs, the collaborative worked for two years to develop a policy agenda. When the City initiated work

on an ETOD Policy Plan, a similar approach was used to form the ETOD Working Group. In contrast with more traditional spaces where transportation, development and infrastructure policy decisions occur, most members of the Working Group are non-city staff, people of color, LGBTQ people, and/or women from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. It also functions differently than traditional spaces, with **shared agenda-setting power** and meeting content developed by residents, including local artists. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Working Group met in-person at City Hall to promote open communication and transparency between government staff and community members. As the ETOD Policy Plan was developed, the Working Group proceeded with shared values and rules of engagement that facilitated **collaborative decision-making and trust-building**.

Community advisory committees like the ETOD Working Group take significant resources and bandwidth to operate well. Elevated Chicago is a strong, networked intermediary that functions as the backbone of the Working Group to ensure varied community perspectives are represented. Its high-capacity facilitation and group management strategies are key to the Working Group's success. Elevated Chicago is also guided by a **leadership council**, which is made up of senior city and regional executives. These meetings are a smaller, focused space for community partners to interact with department heads on key technical questions, as it is often counterproductive to parse these details within a broad-based group that does not share a similar grounding in the content. It also provides a venue to address community concerns with ETOD implementation in a civil and constructive way, helping city officials to trust that public support for the policy is holding firm while transferring insights to discussions within the ETOD Working Group.

Complete Streets Policy in Tucson

The process of drafting a Complete Streets policy in Tucson shows what can be achieved through **collaborative governance structures**. Working in partnership with the Tucson transportation department, the local organization Living Streets Alliance formed and convened a **Complete Streets Task Force** to develop elements of the policy proposal. The Task Force

was intentionally composed of staff from multiple city agencies as well as partners representing diverse issue areas (affordable housing, public health, economic development, local business, food justice, greenspace/ climate adaptation) and constituencies (youth, older adults, people with disabilities, people with low-incomes, transit users). Living Streets Alliance also worked with two neutral facilitators with strong collaborative process design skills to help optimize discussions.

Since adopting the Complete Streets policy in 2019, its implementation process has been overseen by a **Complete Streets Coordinating Council (CSCC)**, which provides a venue for action planning and accountability, including the review of transportation projects and input on funding allocations. It also facilitates engagement to ensure that community priorities and lived experience are reflected in project designs. The CSCC takes on a similar structure as the previous Task Force, with 20 members that are intentionally balanced to include city staff and representatives from local groups working with people with low-incomes, communities of color, youth, and people with disabilities.

To support the implementation process, Tucson hired a Complete Streets Program Manager, which further demonstrated strong intent for advancing the policy after adoption. The program manager works with CSCC members to set meeting agendas and assess needs, while a **consensus-based decision-making model** (an alternative to common rules of order) is used during meetings. Space has been made for capacity building and knowledge sharing opportunities for all participants, with community members gaining clarity on city policies and procedures, while city staff are exposed to more contextualized and experiential insights and a **more inclusive engagement process**. The strength of this approach was shown through the important early task of developing a project prioritization tool based on a point system. The influence of community members on the CSCC in shaping the tool was notable, with point scales revised to be twice as valuable within equity zones as was initially proposed.