

Bus Priority Engagements

Themes, Values, and Recommendations on Process and Implementation
from the Transportation Equity Network



DECEMBER 2025

Transportation Equity Network Bus Priority Engagements

Themes, Values, and Recommendations on Process and Implementation

We encourage the Better Streets for Buses project teams, as well as the government agencies overseeing the process, to support a bold and equitable vision for bus priority corridors across Chicago. Bus priority corridors must center the needs of bus riders and commuters, particularly those in historically transit-disconnected communities. We envision priority corridors that make bus travel faster and more reliable through enhancements such as dedicated bus-only lanes and accessible, safe stations that elevate the experience for community members. These corridors can also serve as catalysts for investment in underserved communities, connecting people to the destinations they need.

We uphold these principles to guide the feasibility study and future implementation of bus priority corridors. We recommend these principles be incorporated into the project's framework and evaluation criteria.

Participating Transportation Equity Network (TEN) Organizations

 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE	 Bronzeville Community Development Partnership	 GROW GREATER ENGLEWOOD	 GARFIELD PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL
 Palenque LSNA Liberating Spaces through Neighborhood Action	 Endeleo	 CNT	 EQUITICITY POWER • EQUITY >
 N4EJ Neighbors for Environmental Justice CHICAGO/ILLINOIS	 LVEJO	 Metropolitan Planning Council	

The following themes emerged from the engagements that community-based organizations (CBOs) hosted in 2024-2025.

Connectivity

- Improving connectivity to destinations, to other transit, and to neighborhoods on the South and West sides
- Improving East-West connectivity
- Improving connectivity to the suburbs
- Guarantee the speed of buses during rush hours

ADA Compliance

- ADA compliance around crosswalk technology
- Improving areas around bus stops to be more ADA compliant

Safety

- Improving crosswalks around bus shelters
- Improving lighting in and around bus shelters
- Safe interaction with bike infrastructure

Reliability

- Improving frequency of buses
- Improving consistency of scheduling
- Improving real-time tracking at bus shelters

Comfort/Dignity

- Improving amenities at bus stops: shelters with heating, seats, art
- Activating green/cooling space near transit infrastructure



Values/Principles

Building Better Bus Corridors

- Prioritize the best available bus improvements, dedicated lanes where dimensions allow, transit signal priority and queue jumps in all corridors

Anti-displacement

- Coordination with local businesses, local chambers of commerce, small business associations, special service area commissions (SSAs), and longtime residents through public engagement process
- Coordination with other city departments, particularly the Department of Planning and Development and the Department of Housing, to ensure anti-displacement and preservation are prioritized with infrastructure investments
- Seek out policy change in impacted corridors that will ensure preservation practices

Affordability

- Improved services should not come with higher prices especially for youth, students, or seniors

Accessibility for people with disabilities

- Ensuring people with disabilities are part of conversations around improvements
- Bus stops and shelters need to have ADA-compliant accommodations

Safe Engagement

In light of increased immigration raids that can limit opportunities for public engagement in some of our communities, we urge that this process ensures meaningful and safe community participation, keeping communities at the center.

- Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) should assess and address safety concerns proactively, provide timely updates, and maintain flexibility with engagement dates to ensure that all community members can participate in a safe and welcoming environment.

Recommendations

1. We recommend that CTA and CDOT engage with anti-displacement policies beyond public engagement through coordination with other City agencies to ensure affordability and housing preservation.
2. We recommend that CTA and CDOT work with the City to identify and implement policies, such as that align with local community development needs and priorities as it relates to improving bus priority infrastructure in the corridors.
3. We recommend formalizing this group of stakeholders into a bus priority street advisory group that consists of TEN community-based organizations along the priority corridors and CTA, CDOT, and Mayor's office representatives.
4. We recommend CTA and CDOT identify an ADA coordinator to coordinate with CMAP on ADA-compliance in bus priority infrastructure and connect with local ADA coordinators.
5. We recommend that meaningful public engagement remains a priority, which includes more opportunities for collaboration with the public on each aspect of decision-making including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solutions.
6. We recommend that CTA and CDOT coordinate closely with each other and their consultants to ensure that planned improvements consistently prioritize bus service over single-occupancy vehicles.
7. We recommend that CTA and CDOT provide a variety of options for community members to engage both virtually and in person, including language accessibility—such as Spanish interpretation—depending on the communities involved. For in-person meetings, CTA and CDOT should assess and address safety concerns in collaboration with local communities and remain flexible with engagement schedules based on community circumstances. Additionally, CTA and CDOT should partner with local community-based organizations (CBOs) and local Rapid Response groups to track enforcement activities that directly affect residents in the areas where engagement takes place.

