



Transportation Equity Network 2025 Impact Report





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When we look at the deep inequities in transit access and safe, multi-modal infrastructure across our cities, we have to be honest about how we got here. The people living with the consequences were rarely in the rooms where the decisions were made.

Historically, the transportation planning process has not centered community experience and voice. This has resulted in decades of communities facing inaccessibility, disconnection, and lost trust towards local governments among our most vulnerable communities, and Chicago is no exception to this.

The Transportation Equity Network is the answer to the bold ask: “How can historically marginalized communities be part of the radical change needed in transportation decision-making processes to center racial equity in all our transportation decisions?”

Over the years I have led CNT, I have witnessed the coalition grow to become a major hub of community-based convening on transportation equity topics.

It is truly innovative how the coalition has given community-based organizations not only the resources to engage directly with key city-wide issues that directly impact their community's transportation systems, but also the space to build relationships with one another and with transportation decision-makers at the government level. We are proud to be part of this coalition's leadership and look forward to how we can continue to empower community voices and repair past harms from the ground-up through TEN's work.

Nina Idemudia

Acknowledgements

CNT thanks the TEN Steering Committee representatives Olatunji Oboi Reed, Jacky Grimshaw, Carolina Macias, W. Robert Schultz III, Hugo Coronado, and Gary Jimenez for their diligent leadership in TEN; to Julia Hage, the TEN coordinator at CNT; to the representatives from the TEN Member organizations and local transportation department staff at CTA and CDOT who agreed to participate in either surveys or interviews that contributed to this report's findings and insights; to all TEN member organizations for keeping the coalition work going; and to our past funders for TEN-related work: Chicago Community Trust and MacArthur Foundation.

CNT also thanks Daylight consulting for providing the framework for this impact report, and the CNT staff who contributed to the facilitation of interviews, qualitative analysis, and authoring of this report.

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Our Impact

TEN increased awareness, understanding and involvement in transportation issues, and elevated community voices to local governments.



AWARENESS & UNDERSTANDING

- **TEN provided a welcoming space for CBOs and NPOs to learn about transportation topics** alongside transportation professionals deepening their expertise.
- **Being a part of TEN gave members greater visibility to the decision-making processes** and dynamics of transit/transportation agencies and revealed where members might have influence.
- **TEN provides a consistent platform for sharing information** on transportation topics relevant to members and their communities.
- **Transportation agency staff turned to TEN for informative and quality public engagement with diverse, on-the-ground community perspectives.** Transportation agency staff formed collaborative relationships with individual TEN members that have shaped agency staff perspectives over time.



COLLABORATION & INFLUENCE

- **TEN members recognized their collective voice is stronger and more influential together.**
- **TEN created a metaphorical big tent for members to successfully mobilize on critical campaigns** advancing state policies and infrastructure investments.



TRUST & CAPACITY

- **TEN laid out the groundwork for relationship-building** both within the network and with government and communities in Chicago.
- **TEN created opportunities for collaboration**, shared learning, and partnership among community-based organizations and non-profit advocacy organizations on shared advocacy efforts



**AWARENESS
UNDERSTANDING
INVOLVEMENT**



**ELEVATED
COMMUNITY
VOICES**

2025 Snapshot

TEN hosted 11 advocacy committee meetings in 2025. Topics addressed:

- Information x advocacy opportunities to support the legislation for the Northern Illinois Transportation Authority (NITA) until passed in October 2025;
- New research on pretextual traffic stops from the Free2Move Coalition;
- Advocacy support led by Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community on the transportation equity concerns surrounding the 78 development near Chinatown and;
- Opportunities for CBOs to highlight the work they have been doing locally across the city.

TEN circulated sign-on letters to its members including:

- Advocating to the Mayor of Chicago and CTA board to undergo a national search for the next CTA president;
- Urging CTA and Metra to Reject FEMA's Counterterrorism Grant Tied to Immigration Enforcement and;
- A national sign on letter directed to the US Senate Banking Committee regarding transit priorities in Transit Reauthorization from the National Campaign for Transit Justice.



The TEN listserv, the main point of communication across the network, reached 77 partners in 2025, including 10 new to the network.

Key Accomplishments



TEN coalition members helped pass historic legislation creating the Northern Illinois Transit Authority (NITA), with TEN and its connections adding advocacy support where needed.



Eight member CBOs successfully planned and hosted Future of Transit Town Halls, targeted outreach, and focus groups regarding the Better Streets for Buses Plan. The goal of these activities was to uplift popular grassroots education to help increase community understanding and community-led support for infrastructure improvements. This led to the creation of TEN's [Bus Priority Vision document](#), co-created with CBO members, with themes and recommendations that came out of transit town halls.



Image credit: Active Transportation Alliance

TEN hosted a day trip to Madison, Wisconsin with key CBOs and government stakeholders to tour Madison Metro's new bus rapid transit line. This led to an in-person roundtable of CBO and government stakeholders and a regular working group on bus priority infrastructure implementation.

Members' desired outcomes

After over five years of operating, TEN has established itself in the Chicago transportation advocacy space as a coalition for CBOs that work with their respective communities to convene on transportation equity topics. CNT, the current steward of the coalition, saw the need to engage its members in a mixed methods process that digs deeper into the impact the coalition had in 2025 to document the coalition's impact for future decision-making.

- ✓ Awareness
- ✓ Understanding
- ✓ Capacity
- ✓ Trust
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Influence



During various TEN Executive Committee meetings and at the 2025 TEN Annual meeting in September, we asked members what outcomes they would like to see measured through the impact report. Based on member feedback, **this report is organized on awareness, understanding, capacity, trust, collaboration and influence** of its active member organizations in transportation planning in Chicago, both among themselves and with transportation agencies like CTA and CDOT. We also explored how TEN has helped shift how government agencies center and engage communities on mobility justice issues. The report leaves space for reflection on CNT's stewardship of the coalition.

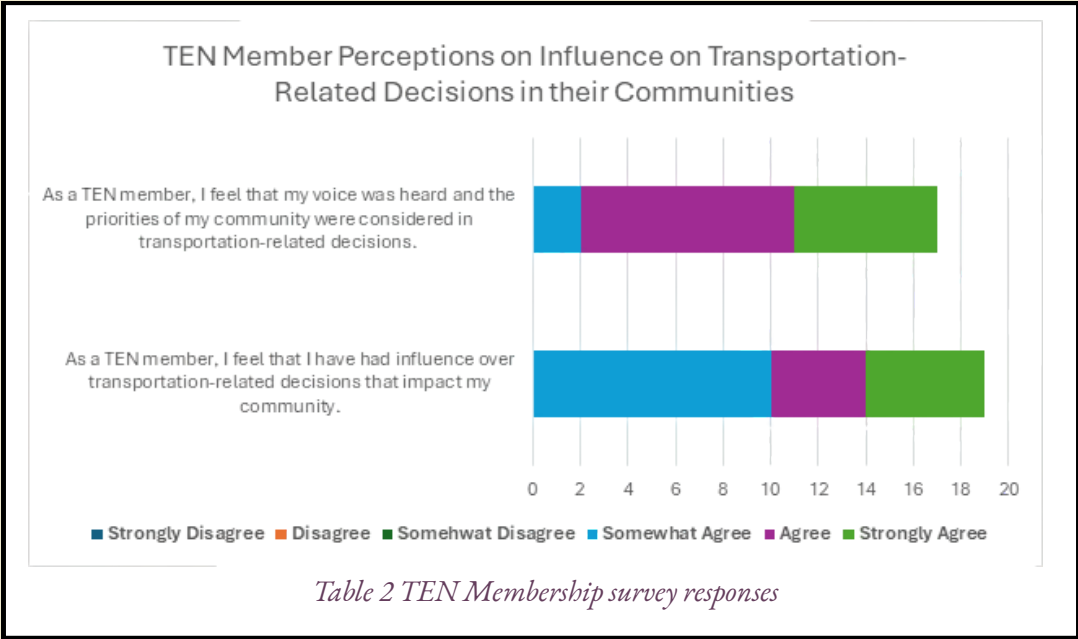
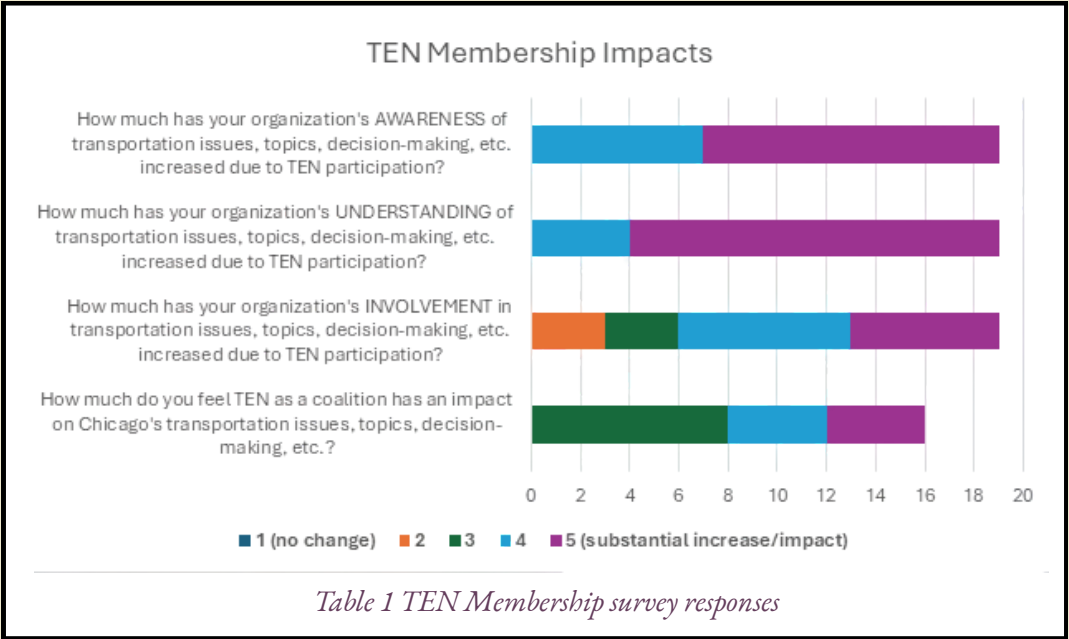
"I think it's been very valuable of the membership of TEN and how I've personally partnered with them, and they have informed the work that I've done throughout the years around transportation equity and mobility, justice."

*- Romina Castillo, Director of Outreach and Engagement, Chicago
Department of Transportation*

Member Survey Findings

At the 2025 Annual Meeting in September, TEN members noted that their membership allowed them to increase awareness of, involvement with, and understanding of transportation issues (Table 1).

Members agreed TEN as a coalition had an impact on Chicago’s transportation landscape. They also said membership helped elevate their voice on transportation-related decisions in their community and that they had influence on the outcomes of decisions about transportation (Table 2). All 19 members who participated in the survey at the annual meeting plan to continue membership in 2026.



Member Interview Findings

Awareness and Understanding: CBOs

- TEN provided a welcoming space for CBOs and NPOs to learn about transportation topics, alongside transportation professionals deepening their expertise.
- Being a part of TEN gave members greater visibility to the decision-making processes and dynamics of transit/transportation agencies and revealed where members might have influence.
- TEN provides a consistent platform for sharing information on transportation topics relevant to members and their communities.

Awareness: Local governments

- Transportation agency staff turned to TEN for informative and quality public engagement with diverse, on-the-ground community perspectives. Transportation agency staff formed collaborative relationships with individual TEN members that have shaped agency staff perspectives over time.

Trust

- TEN lays out the groundwork for relationship-building both within the network and with government and communities in Chicago.
- TEN creates opportunities for collaboration, shared learning, and partnership among community-based organizations and non-profit advocacy organizations on shared advocacy efforts

Reflections on CNT's Stewardship

- TEN members see CNT as a viable steward of TEN due to CNT's proximity to decision makers and legacy advocating on behalf of marginalized communities around transportation planning — yet only as CBOs continue to have the final say on project work.

Reflections from local governments

- Community engagement is a challenge for transportation agency staff, especially with limited time and budgets.
- Transportation agency staff generally want more meaningful connections to community members (riders) and believe that their peers do, too.
- Transportation agency staff are interested in leveraging TEN as 'sounding boards' and accountability partners, and they find value in TEN as a coalition.

Collaboration and Influence

- TEN members recognize their collective voice is stronger and more influential together.
- TEN created a metaphorical big tent for members to successfully mobilize on critical campaigns advancing state policies and infrastructure investments.

Interview quotes

"When I was aware of issues, I could identify the impacts. Before TEN, we could see the impacts, but didn't know how we got to this point or what could be done about it."

- TEN CBO Member

"Direct interface with transit agencies and decision makers was helpful to meet with them and see the decisions they make—this opened [my] eyes and [my organization's] perception of what is happening with transit and what needs to be done to change it. That is transformational."

*-Aaron Mitchell, Garfield Park Community Council, TEN
CBO Member*

"In contrast to past eras of meeting with advocate groups that specialized on transportation, with TEN you do get more participants who are not already transportation policy experts, and therefore you get more of an on-the-ground perspective."

*-Jennifer Henry, Director, Strategic Planning
and Policy, Chicago Transit Authority*

Interview quotes, cont'd

"Participating in conversations around CTA improvements . . . felt like voices were heard and the TEN network helped give us voice."

- TEN CBO Member

"We have moved from just being informed, to a point where now we're collaborating. That's the strongest piece along the continuum to being empowered."

- Hubert Morgan, Endeleo Institute, TEN CBO Member

"I wouldn't have been the person who presented [transit ambassadors] to the CTA board, especially given how new I was, if not for TEN."

- TEN Non-Governmental Organization Member

About TEN

TEN is a Chicagoland-based coalition that began its work in 2019 with the goal of raising and centering the voices of marginalized and low-to-moderate income communities, specifically those on the South and West sides of Chicago, which have faced historic segregation and disinvestment in its transportation systems. Center for Neighborhood Technology facilitates TEN, whose members are community-based organizations, civic organizations, and advocacy groups working to operationalize racial equity and mobility justice in the Chicago region's transportation system. While not generally transportation or planning experts, TEN's CBO members bring on-the-ground expertise in interdisciplinary fields, from housing to community and economic development, all of which intersect with transportation needs.

TEN's steering committee is made up of Executive and Advocacy Committees. The Executive Co-Chair organizations are CNT, Equiticity, and Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO). The Advocacy Committee is chaired by organizations including Active Transportation Alliance and Palenque LSNA, with capacity-building support from Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC). The Advocacy Committee convenes monthly virtual meetings where all TEN members are invited to attend to build their capacity on ongoing transportation equity/advocacy issues, both locally and statewide in Illinois.

TEN members convene annually for a general meeting, held in a hybrid format to allow for in-person convening and online participation given the scope of TEN membership.



Throughout the year, the TEN coordinator, currently hosted at CNT, sends regular email updates to the TEN membership via a listserv that outlines opportunities for engagement and learning around transportation.

Each year, pending available funding, TEN members have the opportunity to participate in compensated project work that centers on coalition action priorities. Past projects in TEN have included working with the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) in building out equity priorities in their 2021 Strategic Plan; contributing to Cook County's 2022 Bike and Transit Plan; hosting listening sessions in 2023 with CBO partners and community members to gather information on transit needs and real experiences in disinvested communities to use as public testimony for transportation improvements; and, in 2024, working with Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and CDOT to select five priority corridors for a bus priority feasibility study.

Our story & members

The Transportation Equity Network (TEN) is a broad network of community-based organizations (CBOs), non-profit advocacy organizations, and civic organizations committed to operationalizing racial equity in transportation decision-making. Membership is informal, with the goals of remaining inclusive to those who wish to gain and share knowledge of transportation equity practices and opportunities at any given organizational capacity. The following list of members showcases organizations that have been active in the network as of December 2025.

Steering Committee



General members

- | | |
|---|--|
| Access Living* | Fetal and Infant Mortality Project (FIMR) |
| Active Transportation Alliance* | Foundation for Homan Square |
| Alliance of the Southeast (ASE) | Garfield Park Community Council (GPCC)* |
| Austin Coming Together (ACT) | Grassroots Empowerment Mission (GEM) |
| Avondale Neighborhood Association (ANA) | Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation (GAGDC) |
| Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) | Greater Roseland Chamber |
| Centro de Desarrollo Latino (CEDEL) | Greater Southwest Development Corporation (GSDC) |
| Claretian Associates | Grow Greater Englewood |
| Clean Power Lake County | Housing Opportunity Development Corporation (HODC) |
| Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (CBCAC) | Illinois Environmental Council (IEC) |
| Crossroads Collaborative | Kalipeni Foundation |
| Community Service Partners | Latinos en Evanston/North Shore (LENS) |
| Commuters Take Action | Latinos Progresando |
| DuPage Federation | Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) |
| Elevated Chicago | Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) |
| Elgin Community Bikes | Neighbors for Environmental Justice (N4EJ) |
| Elgin in Solidarity with Black Lives Matter | North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council (North Lawndale CCC) |
| Emerald South | Northwest Center |
| Endeleo Institute* | |
| Equitycity | |
| Evanston Transit Alliance (ETA) | |
| Far South Community Development Corporation (Far South CDC) | |

General members, continued

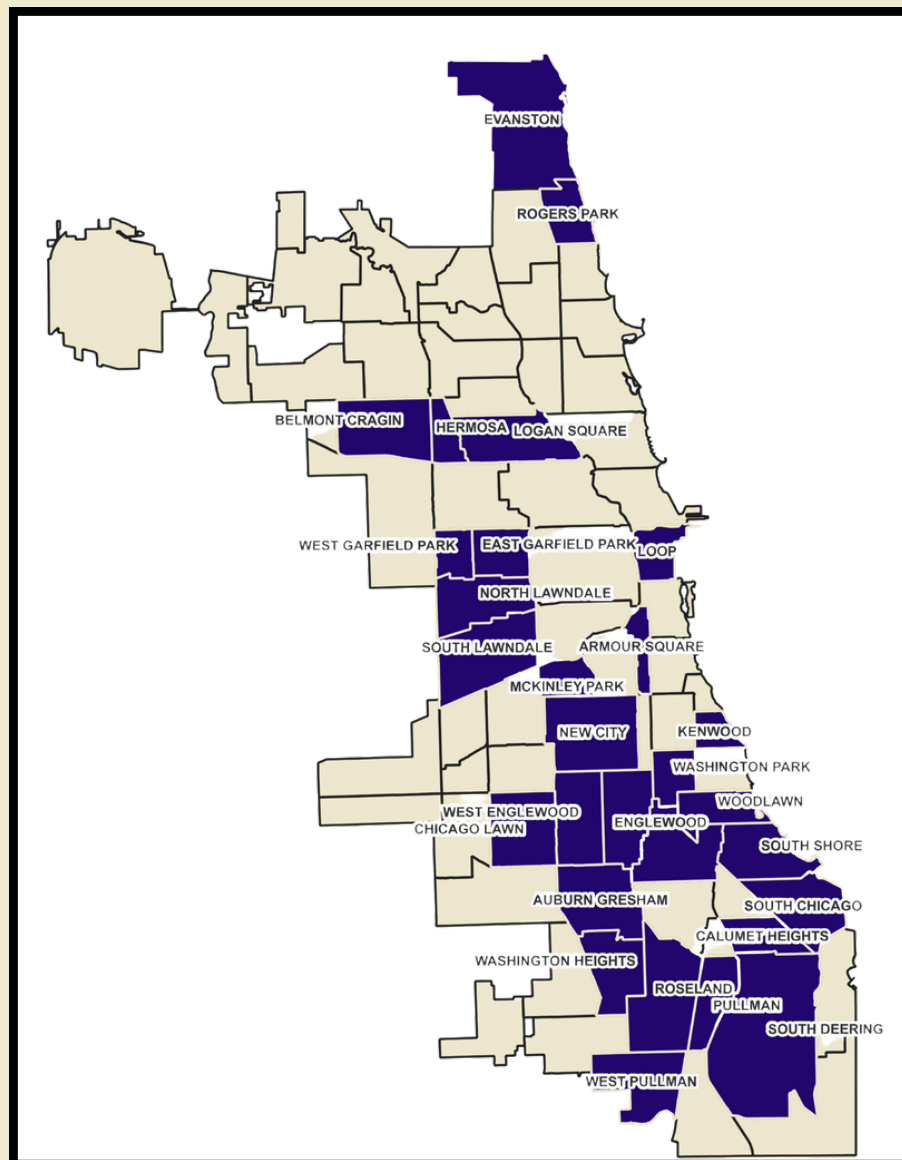
Northwest Side Community Development
Corporation (Northwest Side CDC)
OAI, Inc.
Palenque Logan Square Neighborhood Association
(Palenque LSNA)*
People's Lobby
Rogers Park Business Alliance (RPBA)

Sierra Club Chicago
Southeast Environmental Task Force (SETF)
Southland Partnership
Shared Use Mobility Center (SUMC)
Union of Concerned Scientists*

**Organization members participated in interviews for this report*

Where TEN members work

Community Areas and City of Evanston (not shown: Elgin, Waukegan)



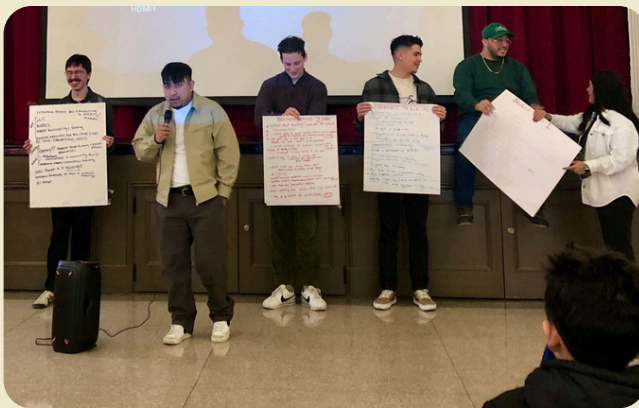
Mission, vision & values

Mission

TEN's mission is to create transformative systems change by embedding racial equity into every transportation decision in the region. This is done through capacity building with CBOs and advocating policy change within government agencies to improve accountability and codify racial equity principles and anti-displacement strategies.

Vision

TEN envisions a Chicago region where historically marginalized racial groups have safe, accessible, affordable, environmentally sustainable, and enjoyable modes of transportation. This will create a more equitable region, improve the quality of life for under-served communities, and connects this population both within and across neighborhoods and cities.



Future of TEN

TEN as a coalition will continue to focus its efforts on shifting the dial towards community-owned solutions to transportation planning and mobility justice issues. TEN members believe the network should continue to hold spaces that uplift community-led knowledge sharing, so continuing to find ways to host this space will be a priority in the coming year.

Emerging priorities in how the coalition should continue its operations based on member feedback include:

- Add more formal elements to the coalition to allow for better structure and specificity for future advocacy campaigns.
- Increasing involvement and dedicated leadership roles given to CBOs in the network to ensure racial equity can be truly operationalized.
- Placing a strategic focus in its interactions with elected officials and government agencies to better achieve equity goals and hold decision-makers accountable.

Core grant funding for TEN operations ended in December 2025. This funding covered staff support for CNT to coordinate TEN coalition activities, compensate CBO staff time, and additional program and event expenses. CBOs also highlighted the importance of being funded for the work they partake in as TEN members.

Sustainable funding is essential to sustain both the operations of the network and the project work CBOs engage in, which have allowed them to

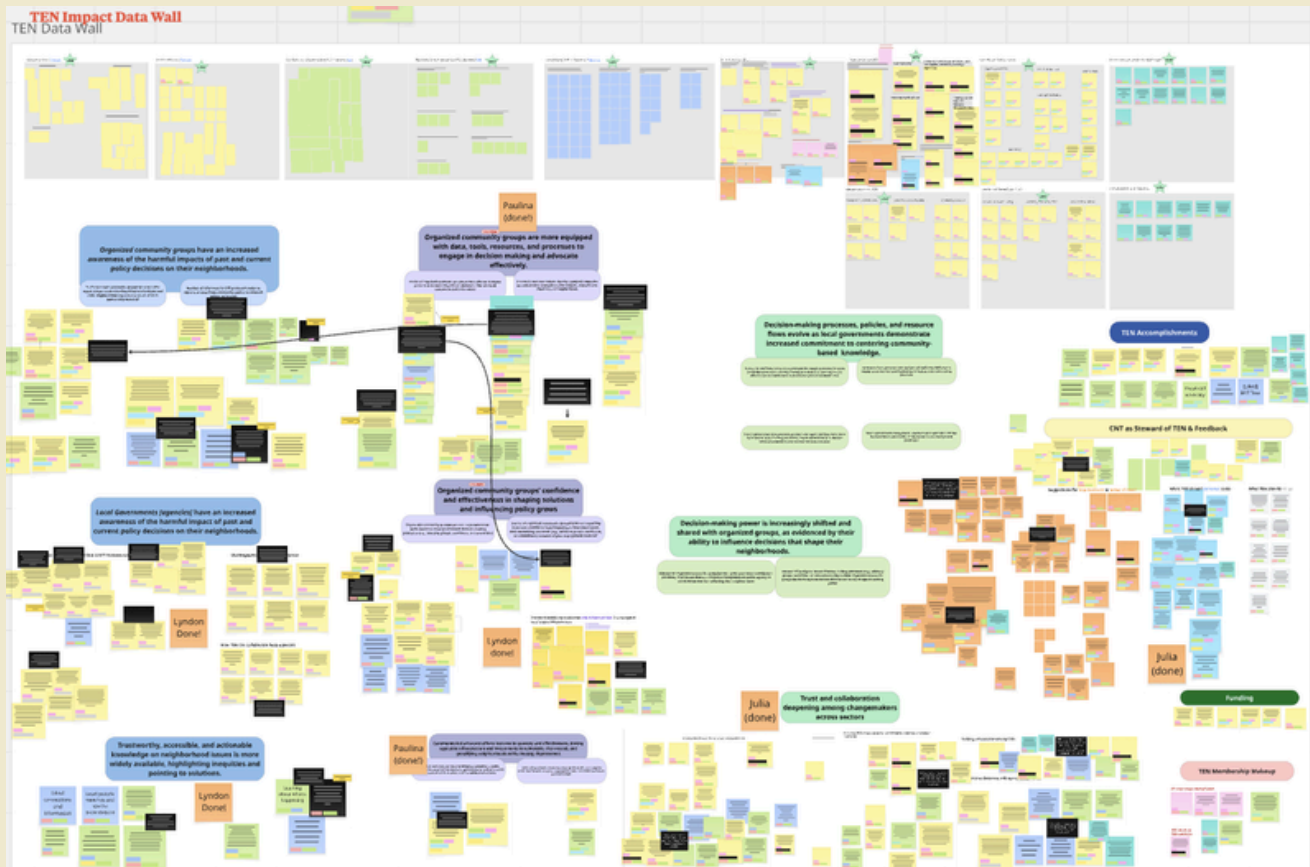


build their capacity and do transportation-specific work in their communities. In the interim of funding, continuing communication with CBOs via the listserv and maintaining a cadence of advocacy committee meetings to keep CBOs up to date with advocacy opportunities are key.

Major transportation priorities that the coalition would like to continue to engage in 2026 include:

- Advocacy on the implementation of the Northern Illinois Transit Authority (NITA).
- Advocacy to advance the progress, implementation, and meaningful engagement on Complete Streets projects across the city.
- Continued popular education and collaboration with CTA and CDOT on the Better Streets for Buses Plan, to ensure equitable implementation of bus priority infrastructure in Chicago.
- Further collaboration with CTA and CDOT on the Bus Vision Plan to improve bus service planning throughout Chicago.

Impact report methodology



CNT staff relied on a mixed-methods approach coalesced from TEN member surveys, annual meeting retrospective notes, and semi-structured interviews. Two TEN member surveys were administered in early and late 2025 and received 18 responses. During the TEN 2025 annual meeting in September, 13 organizations and 17 attendees participated in a retrospective discussion about what they liked, longed for, wanted to let go of, and what they learned as part of TEN. Meeting participants also responded to an interactive survey during the session on mentimeter. In the fall of 2025, 10 semi-structured voluntary interviews were conducted with TEN members about their experiences and suggestions for TEN's future.

Following the completion of data collection, CNT staff analyzed thematic findings. The first step involved creating a data wall to summarize responses for each data source input. Second, the staff coded and categorized data using tags. Finally, in Step 3, staff synthesized findings into conceptual insights or themes. Information gleaned from these sources form the basis of our thematic analysis in this report and will guide future TEN efforts.



Photo Credit: Matt Weiss



Photo Credit: Andrew Collings



Photo Credit: Andrew Collings

