

# Bus Priority Vision

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



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# Transportation Equity Network Bus Priority Vision

## 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	 Indeleo	 CNT	 EQUITICITY POWER • EQUITY •
 N4EJ Neighbors for Environmental Justice CHICAGO	 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
- Furthering East-West connectivity
- Advancing connectivity to the suburbs
- Guaranteeing the speed of buses during rush hours

### ADA Compliance

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

### Safety

- Improving crosswalks around bus shelters
- Upgrading lighting in and around bus shelters
- Boosting safe interaction with bike infrastructure

### Reliability

- Increasing frequency of buses
- Bettering consistency of scheduling
- Advancing real-time tracking at bus shelters

### Comfort/Dignity

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



## Values/Principles

Based on the themes generated from CBO engagements, values and principles were developed to guide the priorities outlined below:

### Building Better Bus Corridors

- Prioritize the best available bus improvements—including dedicated lanes where dimensions allow, transit signal priority, and queue jumps in all corridors—and focus electrification efforts along these bus priority corridors to maximize environmental benefits for environmental justice (EJ) communities first

### Anti-displacement

- Coordinate with local businesses, local chambers of commerce, small business associations, special service area commissions (SSAs), and longtime residents through public engagement process
- Coordinate 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

- Recognize that improved services should not come with higher prices especially for youth, students, or seniors

### Accessibility for people with disabilities

- Ensure people with disabilities are part of conversations around improvements
- Make certain that bus stops and shelters have ADA-compliant accommodations

### Safe Community 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

Based on themes from community engagements in 2024 and 2025, and the values and principles that TEN considers important for the future implementation of bus priority corridors, the Transit Equity Network (TEN) recommends the following steps to support a bold and equitable vision for these corridors:

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.
8. We recommend that CTA prioritizes its introduction of electric buses in environmental justice communities first, where the need for zero-emission transportation is needed most to counteract the cumulative economic and health impacts of prolonged exposure to toxic vehicle emissions, industrial corridors, and fossil fuel productions.



To learn more about this work, please contact:

**Julia Hage**  
Center for Neighborhood Technology  
[jhage@cnt.org](mailto:jhage@cnt.org)

**Hugo Coronado**  
Metropolitan Planning Council  
[hcoronado@metroplanning.org](mailto:hcoronado@metroplanning.org)

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