



ACTIVE
TRANSPORTATION
ALLIANCE

STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT 2017-2021



INTRODUCTION

The Active Transportation Alliance's Strategic Blueprint outlines the organization's focus and direction for improving walking, biking and public transit for the Chicago region during the next five years.

This plan will serve as a broad framework that Active Trans will use as a foundation for defining the organization's direction, methods and activities. We think of this plan as a compass — a tool to keep us on course — versus a map that defines a specific route.

The blueprint's three strategic focus areas — Building a Movement, Advancing Public Policy and Building Local Capacity — will shape Active Trans' work going forward, from fighting for a world-class pedestrian, bicycle and public transit network, to educating road users and advocating for a fair share of transportation funding.

The blueprint will also serve as a guidepost for keeping Active Trans' work on track when crafting an annual program of work, comprised of specific, short- and mid-term objectives designed to advance the long-term goal.

In developing the Strategic Blueprint, we conducted standard assessment, planning, research and consultation activities, and we crafted the organization's first-ever Theory of Change to clarify its role in the broader realm of equity and social change.



BACKGROUND

Active Transportation Alliance was founded in 1985 as the non-profit Chicagoland Bicycle Federation (CBF). The organization took root when a small group of advocates began brainstorming ways to make cycling safer and easier in the Chicago metro region. Over the next 23 years, the organization grew from a modest, all-volunteer effort to one of the country's largest and most prominent bicycle advocacy organizations.

In 2008, CBF took an important step forward by expanding its mission to include championing pedestrian and transit issues. The organization's expanded mission was reflected in an accompanying name change, and the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation became the Active Transportation Alliance. By embracing a multi-modal approach, the organization positioned itself to capitalize on an unprecedented level of enthusiasm for walkable, bikeable, transit-friendly communities.

Now, together with 20,000 members and supporters, partner organizations, staff, board, and volunteers, Active Trans stands poised to harness the momentum of the 21st century, building on the energy of today's historic demand for a society that offers healthier, cleaner and more active transportation options.



WHO WE ARE

Active Trans: the first 30 years

Check out some of the highlights of three decades working for better biking, walking and transit.



1985: Chicagoland Bicycle Federation (CBF) founded May 15, 1985.

1988: Lost fight for bicycle access to Sheridan Road in north suburban Winnetka, but won alternative route. The fight attracted many new members and launched CBF as a viable advocacy organization.

1991: The city of Chicago printed the first edition of the Chicago Bike Map, which was developed by CBF staff and volunteers.



1993: CBF organized the first Chicago Bike to Work Week.



1998: The Chicago Department of Transportation hired CBF as a consultant for installing bike parking and bike lanes.

2000: CBF began advocating for the Navy Pier Flyover project, now under construction.



2001: Chicago Bike Ambassador program launched.

2005: CBF begins one of the nation's first Safe Routes to School programs in the South Suburbs.

2006: Chicago Bike 2015 Plan was published, focusing on policy, enforcement, and education among other topics.

2008: CBF expands mission to include walking and transit, and becomes the Active Transportation Alliance.



2011: Chicago's first protected bike lane is installed on Kinzie.

2011: Chicago's first pedestrian plan adopted.

2011: Active Trans was involved in Mayor Emanuel's transportation transition team, influencing the agenda that set goals for 100 miles of protected bike lanes, bike share, Bus Rapid Transit, and Red Line South extension.

2013: The Divvy bike-sharing program launches.

2013: First suburban protected bike lane installed in Evanston.

2013: Active Trans plays a key role getting IDOT to allow protected bike lanes on its streets.



2015: First curb-separated bike lanes installed in Chicago.

2015: The 606 and Cal Sag trails open.

2015: For the first time, Active Trans surveys Chicago candidates for mayor and alderman and shares responses with supporters.

1985

'88

1990

'91

'93

1995

'94

'98

2000

'01

'02

2005

'06

'08

2010

'11

'13

2015

'14

1987: CBF volunteers designed first bike safety pamphlet for Chicago.

1989: 200 people rode in CBF's first major fundraising ride, the Boulevard Lakefront Tour.

1992: The city of Chicago Bike Task Force approved the Bike 2000 Plan, drafted by CBF.

1992: First Chicago bike racks were installed. CBF researched options and recommended the inverted U and wave designs that the city continues to use.

1994: CBF staff created Safe Bicycling in Chicago, a 36-page bicycle education resource that became a national model.



1994: CBF won its first contract to develop resources showing towns how to start planning for bikes.

1999: In *Boulevard vs. Wayne*, Illinois Supreme Court decided that people on bikes are not intended users of roads unless the road is marked as such. CBF tried for six years unsuccessfully to pass a state law to fix this problem. The experience taught us how to be a player in Springfield and many successful Springfield bills followed.

2002: The first Bike the Drive took over Lake Shore Drive.

2005: The city of Chicago completes its first real on-street bike plan, called "Streets for Cycling."



2005: CBF's long battle to get bikes on Metra succeeds, although restrictions remain.

2007: Our lobbying and campaigning led to the adoption of the Illinois Complete Streets law and the Chicago Complete Streets policy.

2010: The "Must Stop for Pedestrians" bill passed in Illinois, making pedestrians' right of way in a crosswalk crystal clear.



2010: The Crash Support Hotline was launched, connecting people with vital resources after a biking or walking crash.

2012: Thousands of emails from Active Trans supporters contribute to the Dearborn protected bike lane opening in Chicago's Loop.

2012: Active Trans successfully lobbied Illinois Department of Transportation to include dooring crashes in state crash statistics, ensuring that these crashes are more accurately factored into traffic safety programs and funding.

2014: Active Trans finds the average number of daily bike trips in Chicago at 125,000 and demonstrates the rapid growth in cycling.

2014: Active Trans launches a mobile bike education fleet that visits public schools.



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE



OUR MISSION

The mission of the Active Transportation Alliance is to advocate for walking, bicycling and public transit to create healthy, sustainable and equitable communities.



OUR VISION

We envision a future where all people in Chicagoland have access to a safe, seamless, convenient and connected transportation environment that is abundant with walking, bicycling and transit options.



OUR ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES:

-  **We believe that mobility equity is fundamental to human and civil rights.** Car-centric transportation systems are fundamentally unfair and unjust, exclude the needs of those who cannot or do not drive, and discriminate against many of society's most vulnerable members. We are committed to reversing these disparities by making equity a foundational principle of our work.
-  **We prioritize "upstream approaches" to advocacy.** We believe that broad-based policies and system-wide strategies hold the greatest promise for widespread and sustainable impacts, especially in a region as large and diverse as Chicagoland.
-  **We believe in the power of partnerships.** We value the input and expertise of a diversity of communities, stakeholders and organizations who share our vision. We know we can achieve more by leveraging our collective influence.
-  **We believe in using both internal relationships and external pressure to advance our goals.** We are most effective when we work from both inside and outside institutions and agencies that control transportation decision-making.

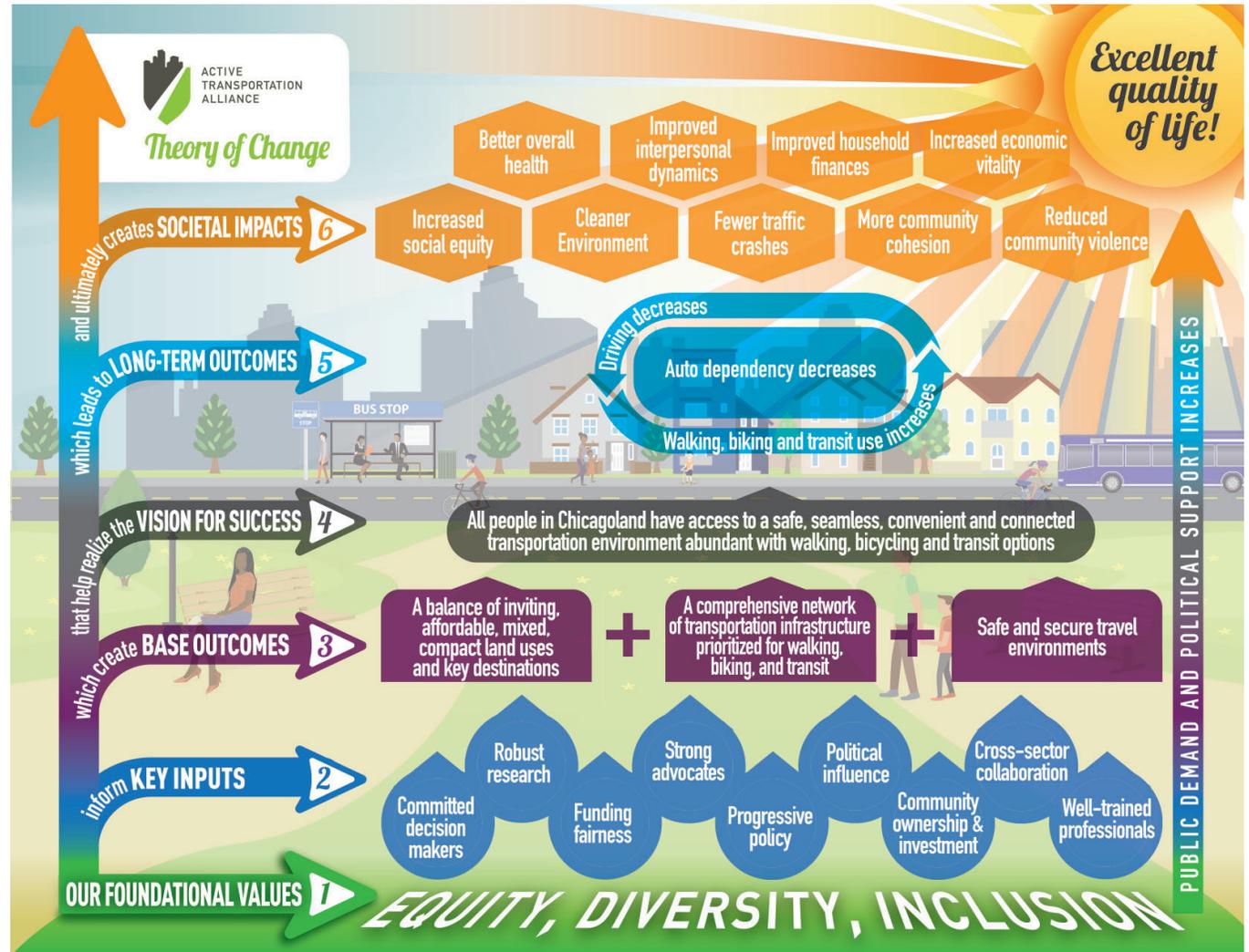
WHAT WE BELIEVE

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change is an organization's story of how and why the change it wants to see in the world happens. It explains the group's beliefs about how change will dynamically unfold, providing the "missing middle" between organizational activities and goal achievement. A Theory of Change accomplishes this by portraying a logical series of preconditions and causal pathways that need to exist in order for change to occur. It also depicts the long-term outcomes and societal benefits that the organization seeks.

The graphic model illustrates, from Active Trans' perspective, the necessary ingredients that form the framework for advancing change. Moving from the bottom of the model to the top, it shows the essential building blocks, outcomes and impacts involved in the change process. Although the depiction is expressed somewhat in terms of linear movement, we recognize that the art of change-making is often messy, occurring in fits and starts and often not in a particular order.

Active Trans' Theory of Change was developed as an attempt to understand the external environment that we aim to influence separate and apart from our own activities. This helped us to more objectively assess our role in advancing change; where our strengths and talents will have the most impact; and where we need to build relationships with partners who focus on the areas we do not. The process of developing the Theory of Change strongly affirmed that we cannot and should not seek to create change on our own, but rather prioritize collaboration with renewed vigor.



OUR LONG-TERM GOAL: 50/50/ZERO

Active Trans' "50/50/Zero" goal is, by design, ambitious and aspirational. But we believe it captures the key indicators — travel mode rates and traffic crashes — that can best measure progress toward the outcomes and impacts we seek. When roads are safe for all users, and transportation options are robust and balanced, the future we envision is within grasp.



Active Trans believes there are three interational components — reflected in our Theory of Change — that serve as the primary building blocks in attaining a truly walkable, bikeable and transit-friendly region. We view these core outcomes as prerequisites to reaching our long-term goal.

1

A balance of inviting, affordable, mixed, compact land uses and key destinations. Even if transportation options improve, they serve only as a half measure if distances and access to jobs, schools, shopping, health care and recreation remain as barriers. Smart and sustainable urban development is required to achieve a multi-modal future.



2

A comprehensive network of transportation infrastructure prioritized for walking, biking and transit. Completing our streets and improving transit service is seminal to a balanced transportation system. We must realize a future where building sidewalks, bike lanes and rapid transit lines is the norm, not the exception.



3

Safe and secure travel environments. If conditions on our streets and aboard transit are too dangerous for walking or biking, no amount of new facilities or community development will convince people to change their travel behavior, while those without access to cars are put at an increased risk for death or injury. Reducing and calming traffic, addressing public safety and ending street harassment are essential to reaching our goal.

HOW WE'LL GET THERE

ACTIVE TRANS HAS IDENTIFIED THREE BROAD AREAS OF FOCUS AND ASSOCIATED STRATEGIES TO GUIDE OUR WORK:

- 1. **Build a Movement around active transportation**
- 2. **Advance Public Policy at all levels of government**
- 3. **Increase Local Capacity through technical assistance and organizing**

Based on real-world conditions and opportunities, Active Trans will develop a set of annual Action Plans that specify goals, objectives, activities and tactics that correlate to these three focus areas.

Each focus area reflects our organizational strengths and expertise, and is directly tied to progressing one or more of the Essential Inputs of the Theory of Change.

		THEORY OF CHANGE KEY INPUTS								
		<i>Committed decision makers</i>	<i>Robust research</i>	<i>Funding fairness</i>	<i>Strong advocates</i>	<i>Progressive policy</i>	<i>Political influence</i>	<i>Community ownership & investment</i>	<i>Cross-sector collaboration</i>	<i>Well-trained professionals</i>
STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS	Build a Movement Around Active Transportation				★		★	★	★	
	Advance Public Policy at All Levels of Government	★	★	★		★	★		★	
	Increase Local Capacity Through Technical Assistance and Organizing				★	★		★		★

FOCUS AREA 1

BUILD A MOVEMENT Around Active Transportation

Creating significant, lasting change requires staunch public demand and sustained political support. While our movement has grown significantly since our founding, our work must resonate even more broadly to win the cultural and policy changes we seek. It must also be informed at all levels by diverse leaders, stakeholders and constituents — especially those who represent historically underrepresented or disenfranchised groups. Our challenge lies in both centering our efforts around community needs while winning the hearts and minds of the general public.

THEORY OF CHANGE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS INFLUENCED:

- Community ownership and investment
- Strong advocates
- Political influence
- Cross-sector collaboration

STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING A MOVEMENT

- Build inclusive partnerships and collaborations** for increased collective impact.
- Host fun special events and activities** that attract new supporters and reward existing ones.
- Cultivate and nurture individual members and supporters** to strengthen their commitment to our mission.
- Communicate our mission broadly** through print, electronic and social media and the press.



ADVANCE PUBLIC POLICY at All Levels of Government

The vast majority of the decision-making power about public space lies with local, regional and state governments. When these units of government adopt policies that address matters like funding, zoning, land use, affordable housing, transportation design, equitable access, parking requirements and transit integration, we can ensure the construction of complete streets and related facilities. By strongly advocating for pedestrian, bicycle and transit-promoting policies, we can influence built environments for years to come.

THEORY OF CHANGE ELEMENTS INFLUENCED:

- Committed decision makers
- Funding fairness
- Progressive policy
- Political influence
- Cross-sector collaboration
- Robust research

STRATEGIES FOR CROSS-CUTTING POLICY

- Prioritize government relations** to maximize policy impacts among elected officials.
- Engage and educate public agencies** around active transportation approaches.
- Advance progressive legislation and policy adoption** aimed at improving walking, biking and transit.



INCREASE LOCAL CAPACITY Through Technical Assistance And Organizing

Active Trans has established expertise and experience in assisting local residents, municipal staff, transportation professionals, elected leaders, non-profit organizations and others to reshape their communities for better walkability, bikeability and transit-friendliness. We will leverage this knowledge and skill, particularly in low-resource communities, to expand the active transportation and advocacy knowledge among these important local influencers, and to demonstrate proof-of-concept of innovative practices and programs.

THEORY OF CHANGE ELEMENTS INFLUENCED:

- Strong advocates
- Progressive policy
- Community ownership and investment
- Well-trained professionals

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE LOCAL CAPACITY

- **Provide professional planning and consulting services** that amplify our mission
- **Organize local communities** around key issues and campaigns
- **Develop and train new champions** to increase our reach throughout the region



For more details on our Theory of Change, annual work plan, process, and performance indicators, please see the Strategic Blueprint Supplement, downloadable at activetrans.org.



ACTIVE
TRANSPORTATION
ALLIANCE

Help make biking, walking and public transit better throughout Chicagoland.

CONNECT WITH US!



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE | 9 WEST HUBBARD STREET, SUITE 402 | CHICAGO, IL 60654-6545 | 312-427-3325 | WWW.ACTIVETRANS.ORG