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Specific Strategies for Achieving Transit-Oriented Economic Development Applying National Lessons to the Twin Cities - Phase 2

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SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Applying National Lessons to the Twin Cities

Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transit-oriented development—or TOD—is a widely desired public good faced with a serious dilemma: In current policy and fiscal environments, the governments and public agencies that most strongly desire TOD have little ability to implement it by their own actions. Conversely, the private and non-profit sector entities whose actions are needed to implement TOD may not share a city's or regional planning body's goals for transit-oriented growth patterns and built forms. The fundamental mismatch of intentions between those charged with advancing TOD and those with the power to accomplish it demands creativity from planners and regional policymakers.

This report examines TOD promotion programs through direct engagement with senior- and executive-level staff at the agencies and organizations responsible for them. Through a series of in-depth interviews, our research team assessed program goals, structures and outcomes, focusing on participants' shared understandings of TOD in their regions, their agencies'/programs' roles in and goals for promoting TOD, other stakeholders' responses to their efforts and the results they see as attributable to their programs.

TOD offers the potential to direct regional growth into a more compact, sustainable pattern without the negative quality-of-life impacts that flow from dense development combined with automotive transportation. Places such as Copenhagen, Denmark and Arlington, Virginia demonstrate that the careful pursuing of TOD over many years can have profound built form, transportation and social impacts. Existing literature, however, focuses primarily on the impacts and/or benefits of TOD, as opposed to how to accomplish it in the real world. This problem is particularly difficult in the current United States context due in part to the general retreat of the state from housing provision and urban development in general over the last several decades: TOD is a public goal largely dependent on private sector decisions.

To explore how public sector actors can encourage TOD at a regional scale, we interviewed 14 senior- and executive-level staff members at TOD promotion programs around the nation. We created typologies of TOD promotion programs based on programs' primary activities, goals, scale and organizational structure, then conducted word frequency, concept coding and close reading-based content analysis of interview transcripts.

TOD promotion programs vary significantly in the forms they take, the actions they undertake and even in their underlying reasons for supporting TOD. The specific goals a program seeks to advance through TOD, the scale at which a program promotes TOD and the structures of organizations engaged in TOD promotion have important implications for what TOD promotion programs actually do. These findings suggest it is important for organizations promoting TOD to carefully consider their own goals and capacities, as well as the specific circumstances they hope to promote TOD in.

Several common themes appear in interview transcripts. First, in discussing all four primary activities, participants repeatedly identify changing preferences for development types and lifestyles as both a key driver of TOD and an opportunity to make real progress in promoting it. There is a common understanding among participants that the rising prominence of the millennial generation in real estate markets represents a fundamental shift in possibilities. Participants from fast-growth regions commonly discuss changing preferences as creating a need to expand neighborhood-scale public infrastructure such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, while participants from slow-growth regions understand TOD as a means to attract population and economic growth in the first place.

Station area- and centers-based planning and development are common themes throughout. At the highest level, participants broadly understand TOD implementation as a community building task centered on transit stations, rather than a series of individual projects. Transit service type and quality is commonly understood as critical to TOD prospects and success. Participants commonly understand fixed guideway transit in general—and rail transit in particular—as providing the strongest opportunity for TOD.

A set of brief case studies add further context from regions with more experience of TOD promotion at a regional scale. Regions studied include the San Francisco Bay Area (with one of the longest, best researched records of TOD in the nation), the Washington, D.C. metro area (focusing specifically on a uniquely robust transit joint development program), Portland, Oregon (offering a parallel to the Twin Cities' regional governance structure) and Denver, Colorado (offering a comparison to a similar size and density region to the Twin Cities). The case studies point to the importance of well-established mechanisms for regional coordination; this finding is particularly prominent in the instance of Portland. The Metropolitan Council offers the Twin Cities such a mechanism. The case studies also demonstrate the building of a strong constituency of support for TOD—something it is less clear the Twin Cities region currently has based on previous research.

This research continues the work begun in “Developers’ Perspectives on Transit Oriented Development” as part of the Corridors of Opportunity Initiative. The current work confirms several recommendations of the earlier study and modifies others. One key conclusion of the original study was that current zoning and land-use regulation regimes in the Twin Cities favor automobile-oriented development and make TOD needlessly complex and expensive by restricting density and mixing of uses, requiring excessive off-street parking, etc.

The current research strongly supports this recommendation based on experiences from other regions. Participants share a strong perception that conventional zoning and development regulations hinder TOD. In addition, participants from regions that have seen major zoning reforms in at least some of their jurisdictions see real successes in promoting TOD as a result.

The previous study recommended continuing and accelerating the buildout of the regional transit system—as well as regularizing its funding source so as to provide more surety of continued improvements. The participants in this recent research share a similar understanding of transit buildout timing as it relates to development: In both cases, only transit under construction or at least fully funded is seen as capable of attracting development.

Both participants in the current and previous studies recognize the importance of affordable housing as part of a regional TOD strategy. The previous study, however, frames affordable housing as being to some extent naturally at odds with TOD—except to the extent that TOD improves housing-plus-transportation affordability. While participants in the current research understand the potential for transit-induced housing price inflation, even transit-induced gentrification, it is important to note that they also see affordable housing as a natural ally of TOD under the right circumstances. One example of such circumstances would be a station area not yet home to rapid growth: There, quality affordable housing can represent a publicly funded catalytic development that serves as the initial grain of sand that grows into a pearl given time.

The greatest overarching conclusion of this research is that there are no silver bullets to be found; no single strategy or simple set of strategies exists that will make system-level TOD easy or quick to achieve. If there is a single conclusion to be drawn from this research, it is probably nothing more than the importance of persistence in promoting TOD; regions with high degrees of success in system-wide TOD implementation have been at it for decades. They have also consistently funded TOD promotion efforts, whether in terms of planning grants, supportive public infrastructure provision and direct loan and grant financing. Beyond this, we propose three key recommendations: focus on public investments that lift private dollars, maximize the effectiveness of constrained public resources by timing investments around new transit expansions, and build durable structures for interagency and interjurisdictional coordination.

Many of the direct public investments discussed by participants—whether investments in station area infrastructure or in specific projects themselves—have the effect of (at least eventually) attracting significantly great sums of private investment. Catalytic developments, such as strategically placed, community supporting affordable housing can also attract private investment much greater than their own cost.

Such catalytic investments, however, can be made much more effectively than otherwise if timed in coordination with the phasing of the regional transit buildout. As future Twin Cities transit corridors extend farther into the suburbs, opportunities to guide development in areas not accustomed to TOD will increase, but the time to take full advantage of those opportunities is by no means infinite.

Our final conclusion should come as no surprise to a successful, interagency group like TIRP: Implementing TOD at a regional scale is a complex process, almost invariably involving coordination between multiple agencies and levels of government, as well as between the public, non-profit and private sectors. This situation makes it critical to have reliable points of contact between stakeholders in the TOD promotion process, and to establish a group of interested parties who continue dialogue and mutual coordination as the process of implementing TOD in the region goes forward.

1 INTRODUCTION

Transit-oriented development—or TOD—is a widely desired public good faced with a serious dilemma: In current policy and fiscal environments, the governments and public agencies that most strongly desire TOD have little ability to implement it by their own actions. Conversely, the private and non-profit sector entities whose actions are needed to implement TOD may not share a city’s or regional planning body’s goals for transit-oriented growth patterns and built forms. This dilemma is particularly vexing with regard to *equitable* TOD, which seeks to guarantee low-income residents a place in new, transit-oriented communities but in so doing may weaken the primary incentive for the private sector to act—profit. The fundamental mismatch of intentions between those charged with advancing TOD and those with the power to accomplish it demands creativity from planners and regional policymakers.

The Twin Cities region must deploy such creativity in short order if regional planning goals are to be met. Thrive MSP, the Metropolitan Council’s 2040 Regional Growth Framework, predicts population growth to the tune of an additional million people. To accomplish that growth in as sustainable a manner as possible, the council intends to accommodate a majority of it as infill in the already built-up area of the region. Transit-oriented development may represent a crucial tool for accomplishing this consequential change in regional growth patterns while maintaining regional quality of life and the integrity of existing neighborhoods by channeling infill growth into compact areas and mitigating its traffic, parking and air-quality impacts.

That answers the question “Why would we want TOD?”. But the question “How do we make TOD happen?” is a more pressing one at present, and one for which the answer is less clear. In previous research entitled *Achieving System-Level, Transit-Oriented Jobs-Housing Balance: Perspectives of Twin Cities Developers and Business Leaders*, the authors found significant interest in both transit-oriented development and transit-oriented economic development among Twin Cities developers and employers. However, that interest was generally at best a secondary or tertiary consideration in determining the locations and forms of developments and places of business.

A potential core group of TOD developers exists in the region, but that group must be shown that pursuing TOD is in its interests. This mixed finding shows a need for units of government that desire TOD to proactively promote TOD. While the active promotion of TOD is not unknown in the Twin Cities, doing so on the regional scale required to achieve planning goals will be a new departure. Fortunately, examples already exist of just such TOD promotion programs in regions around the country. While their size, type, organizational structure and outcomes vary widely, these established programs can offer important lessons for promoting TOD in the Twin Cities.

To that end, this report examines TOD promotion programs through direct engagement with senior- and executive-level staff at the agencies and organizations responsible for them. Through a series of in-depth interviews and brief case studies, our research team assessed program goals, structures and outcomes, focusing on participants' shared understandings of TOD in their regions, their agencies'/programs' roles in and goals for promoting TOD, other stakeholders' responses to their efforts and the results they see as attributable to their programs.

Chapter 2 of this report reviews relevant literature concerning TOD promotion programs. We begin by briefly reviewing literature showing the reasons planners pursue TOD, including both potential planning goals served and potential societal benefits advanced. Next, focusing on literature focused on changing urban economics and social structures, we first consider TOD's potential place in 21st Century urban life, as well as the opportunities and pitfalls current trends in the economy and the role of the state create for planners pursuing TOD, with advancing social equity as a goal. We then review literature on TOD implementation, focusing specifically on TOD implementation in the context of public programs proactively promoting it. We consider the goals, structures and outcomes of TOD promotion programs as revealed by existing research. We conclude by identifying gaps in knowledge about TOD promotion.

Chapter 3 describes our research approach in detail. Beginning with our recruiting procedure, we describe participants and their organizations, as well as our interview procedure and topics covered. We then introduce our specific research techniques, including explanatory typologies, and content analysis techniques including word frequency and topic coding. We also provide a brief methodological introduction to the interpretive approach focused on the shared understandings of participants.

Chapter 4 places the TOD promotion programs considered into explanatory typologies based on their goals, structures and organization. TOD promotion programs can take many forms and may have widely differing sets of goals; they may also be implemented by a variety of different organizations. Typologies allow for a systematic understanding of the different types of TOD promotion programs in multiple dimensions, as well as a clearer understanding of how different program structures may play out on the ground.

Chapter 5 presents results of word frequency, topic coding and close reading-based content analysis of interview transcripts. In this chapter, we identify common themes and understandings of TOD and the process of actively promoting it shared by participants.

Chapter 6 presents four brief case studies of regions with a better-established track record of proactive, intentional TOD promotion than the Twin Cities. Specifically, this chapter focuses on the San Francisco Bay Area (with one of the longest, best researched records of TOD in the nation), Washington, D.C. (focusing specifically on a uniquely robust transit joint

development program), Portland, Oregon (offering a parallel to the Twin Cities' regional governance structure) and Denver, Colorado (offering a comparison to a similar size and density region to the Twin Cities). Cases are considered individually, as well as in terms of their relationships to each other and the Twin Cities.

Chapter 7 places the results of this research in dialogue with previous research on achieving TOD in the Twin Cities conducted as part of the Corridors of Opportunity Initiative and related in the TIRP-affiliated report entitled "Achieving System-Level, Transit-Oriented Jobs-Housing Balance: Perspectives of Twin Cities Developers and Business Leaders." Based on the findings of TOD promotion program goals, structures and outcomes from this report, as well as the findings of developers' perspectives on, interests in and perceptions of obstacles to TOD from the previous report, we propose how a TOD promotion program might be designed to fit the Twin Cities.

Chapter 8 proposes how the research findings may be generalized for application to other regions and presents general policy recommendations based on the results. We conclude by suggesting directions for future research to further advance understanding of proactive TOD promotion programs.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Of all questions concerned with TOD, determining why and under what circumstances a planner might want to encourage it is one of the most easily answered based on existing literature. Starting from the earliest scholarly explorations of the concept, TOD impacts and how to design TODs for specific, desired impacts have been consistent foci of TOD literature (P. Calthorpe & Mack, 1989; R. Cervero, 1984). Research on TOD frequently finds lower per-capita VMT than traditional development (Haas, Miknaitis, Cooper, Young, & Benedict, 2010; Nasri & Zhang, 2014; Renne, 2013), higher transit use (R. Cervero, 2006; R. Cervero, 2007; Crowley, Shalaby, & Zarei, 2009; Leach, 2004) and even higher levels of physical activity (Crowley et al., 2009).

In addition to increasing transit use, TOD can also improve a transit system's usefulness by enhancing accessibility—common measured as the count of destinations reachable within a given travel time (Owen & Levinson, 2015). As accessibility is a function of both travel speed and proximity to destinations (Levine, Grengs, Shen, & Shen, 2012), concentrating destinations in transit station areas will increase accessibility even with no improvement in travel speed. Further, concentrating housing in station areas will increase the number of people who benefit from that gain in accessibility (Tilahun & Fan, 2014). Though their research focused on automotive accessibility, Levine, et al (2012) found that among the 50 largest metropolitan areas in the United States, increased density of destinations provided greater accessibility even at the cost of *slower* travel speeds. Given that transit travel speeds vary with the built environment in much the same way automotive travel speeds do, it is quite possible this finding may transfer to transit: TOD may improve accessibility even if it slows transit service by increasing demand.

TOD can also have far-reaching consequences for surrounding built forms, especially given sufficient time. Arlington, Virginia is a prime example: starting from a low-density, automobile-oriented, post-war suburb in the late 1960s, the introduction of the Metro, along with decades of careful planning has transformed Arlington into a dense, pedestrian- and transit-focused urban area which functions almost as a trans-Potomac extension of Washington, D. C. (Leach, 2004). While the degree of change achieved in Arlington is an extreme case, other researchers have found TODs serving as the nuclei of more compact, sustainable development, even beyond the bounds of self-conscious transit-oriented development as well (Nasri & Zhang, 2014; Renne & Wells, 2004).

A large body of literature that does find strong relationships between TOD and desirable outcomes offers strong reasons for planners and policymakers to want to pursue effective TOD. Unfortunately, this most widely known body of literature does not consider how they might go about that. In addition, the task of implementing TOD is complicated by long-term

urban economic and governance trends which create a mismatch between TOD planning and TOD implementation.

2.1 TOD and the Role of Government

Over the past four decades, and increasingly in recent years, the role of government in managing urban economies has receded, while the private real estate market has gained considerably in importance (D. Harvey, 2007). As early as the 1980s, large cities began to shift from a “managerial” approach to urban governance focused on direct public service provision to an “entrepreneurial” one focused on attracting and catalyzing real estate and economic development (D. Harvey, 1989). As a consequence of this timeline, the period during which TOD has emerged and grown in popularity (P. Calthorpe & Mack, 1989; R. Cervero, 1984) falls more or less entirely into the current entrepreneurial era of urban governance. The entrepreneurial model arose out as a response to the deep decline many major cities fell into in the 1970s, with entrepreneurial cities seeking to compete with each other for capital, economic development and skilled labor (D. Harvey, 1989). This trend carries forward to the current theory of the “creative class” of highly skilled, highly mobile professionals who choose a city based on amenities and are seen as driving the “new economy” in revitalizing urban centers (Florida, 2002). This entrepreneurial spirit is often seen both as part of the need for TOD (Dittmar et al., 2004) and as crucial for implementing it (R. Cervero & Murakami, 2008; Feigon, Hoyt, & Ohland, 2004).

The entrepreneurial model of urban governance operates in large part through public-private partnerships of one kind or another—whether or not they are explicitly identified as such. This is a common pattern in TOD, as well, whether in the form of transit joint development, in which transit agencies partner directly with private sector developers to develop agency-owned station area land (Renne, Bartholomew, & Wontor, 2011), or in less direct symbiotic relationships, such as the use of density bonuses or parking variances to encourage private, for-profit develops to design projects consistent with public planning goals (R. Cervero & Dai, 2014; Guthrie & Fan, 2015). In all these cases, the public sector does not directly build housing or commercial space in station areas, it employs some form of incentive to convince private developers it is in their interest to build publicly desired development types.

This arrangement can lead to a high degree of success where public sector goals align reasonably well with private developers’ goal of maximizing profits. It is more difficult for these goals to align in the instance of affordable housing, however (Haughey & Sherriff, 2011). High quality transit tends to raise station area property values (R. Cervero, 2004; Hess & Almeida, 2007; Immergluck, 2009). This simple fact can make it difficult to accomplish equitable TOD—which includes affordable housing commensurate with community needs—through the entrepreneurial model of urban governance (Guthrie & Fan, 2015). In addition, the entrepreneurial model can make TOD slow or difficult to develop in station areas outside

of regional favored sectors for development, even where TOD may be desirable from a perspective of meeting public sector planning goals (Hurst & West, 2014).

2.2 TOD and Social Equity

While housing and employment opportunities near transit can be a boon for low-income households due to high rates of both transit use and transit dependency, TOD does not necessarily advance the cause of social equity. Beyond the issue of affordable housing in TOD projects, TODs can have profound real estate market impacts on the neighborhoods surrounding them, impacts which extend far beyond TOD parcels themselves. Specifically, both the value of the accessibility provided by transit and of the neighborhood amenities commonly built may be capitalized into surrounding property values and rents (Dawkins & Moeckel, 2016). Unchecked, this capitalization can lead to gentrification, as high-income households displace low-income households. Displacement of long-time, poorer residents is seldom a goal of TOD planners focused on encouraging more sustainable travel behavior and development patterns. Still, the common impacts on disadvantaged communities of large redevelopment and revitalization projects—like TODs (Immergluck, 2009)—can raise questions about what the real function of those projects is (Smith, 2002): Who are the intended benefits for (Newman & Wyly, 2006)? In what other ways will the neighborhood change besides physical upgrades (Curran, 2004; Fan & Guthrie, 2012; Fan & Guthrie, 2013)?

Planners have several potential strategies available to both counteract tendencies toward gentrification and actively promote inclusive communities in TOD areas. One is to pursue joint development around stations with a non-profit developer. This arrangement removes the need to wring the greatest possible profit out of the project, and can allow for larger quantities of affordable housing and development that complements existing communities. (Soursourian, 2010).

In station areas without significant quantities of transit agency owned land, community land trusts can serve as a bulwark against gentrification while enhancing inclusivity as well. Community land trusts maintain and promote affordability by holding land out of the for-profit real estate market, directly providing affordable rental housing, leasing land to non-profit developers with affordability requirements and/or selling owner-occupied housing to low-income buyers with deed restrictions on resale value growth over time (Meehan, 2014). Community land trusts can play a valuable role in preserving and promoting affordability specifically in transit station areas by focusing on communities at an appropriate scale for TOD, being responsive to community goals and concerns and being flexible in focusing on types of housing and/or community-focused non-residential development as appropriate in differing circumstances. Proposed rail transit projects serving low-income areas in Atlanta, Denver and the Twin Cities have coordinated affordability preservation strategies with community land trusts with significant degrees of success (Hickey, 2013).

In addition to affordability strategies that bypass for-profit developers, TOD planners may offer incentives to make building and/or preserving affordable units worth for-profit developers' while. Such incentives may take the form of direct financial support for affordable units, or of allowing developers to build more profitable development types in exchange for including affordable units. The latter option often takes the form of density bonuses, which allow developers to build more market-rate units on a given site to offset the cost of building affordable units. Density bonuses have been the primary affordable housing promotion strategy of the highly-regarded Rosslyn-Ballston corridor in northern Virginia (Leach, 2004).

2.3 Examples of Successful Public-Sector Promotion of TOD

Implementing TOD on the scale often desired by planners within the context of entrepreneurial urban governance and the general contraction of the State in recent decades frequently demands creative action on the part of public sector actors who desire it. The following section presents examples of successful TOD implementation in such a context from the existing planning literature.

One of the first examples of deliberate, publicly planned TOD implementation at a regional scale is Copenhagen, Denmark. Since 1947, Copenhagen has directed the bulk of its regional growth into compactly developed corridors along five suburban rail lines. Known as the "Finger Plan" for its recognizable map showing the central city as the palm of a hand, with suburban towns grouped into five fingers radiating out from it, this plan has channeled Copenhagen's regional growth into compact, walkable suburban centers and new towns with a high degree of success (Knowles, 2012). Copenhagen has accomplished this impressive feat of regional planning through a commitment to high-quality transit infrastructure, the easy, public legibility of the Finger Plan and strong, regionalized land use planning authority (R. Cervero, 1998). The first two offer important lessons for U.S. based planners, the third less directly, though it shows the importance of a regional approach to TOD implementation.

In the United States, Arlington County, Virginia is frequently put forward as a TOD success story involving decades of deliberate TOD promotion on the part of local government. Beginning in the 1960s, during the early stages of planning for the Washington, D. C. Metro rail system, planners and elected officials in Arlington County, across the Potomac River from the District of Columbia, envisioned the Metro line passing through their county from Rosslyn, near the river, to Falls Church, several miles to the west, as a focal point for a new form of development (Leach, 2004). A thriving, early automobile-focused suburban area in the years leading up to planning for the Metro, the area of Arlington County between Rosslyn and Ballston had been overshadowed by rapidly expanding outer suburbs by the late 1960s. Particular in the case of the Ballston station area, Arlington planners saw a gradual program of redevelopment focused on Metro stations as a hedge against decline in the face of continuing metropolitan expansion (Jacobson & Forsyth, 2008). Despite initial proposals to

align the Metro's Orange Line in a highway median, distant from existing development, Arlington County pressed for and eventually funded an underground alignment underneath the primary commercial corridor in the area (P. Calthorpe, 2011; Leach, 2004). While the corridor is unified in its pursuit of increasing density and shifting towards a more urban built form, different stations have decidedly different forms and identities due to different pre-existing characters, station area planning and development strategies. For example, the Rosslyn (P. Calthorpe, 2011) and Ballston (Sagalyn, 2007) stations are home to large public-private development projects which have served as focal points for intense, urban density development including significant quantities of office space (at Rosslyn) and retail space (at Ballston), contrasting with lower-rise storefront-style development at Clarendon, quickly giving way to mostly single-family residential development (Jacobson & Forsyth, 2008). Leach (2004) identifies this differentiation as a major strength of the corridor, creating a unique identity for each station area, much like the unique identities of older urban neighborhoods.

Transit-oriented development is a consistent public policy in Arlington County, and has been for decades. It is not, however, managed by any single specific program. As one of the earliest U. S. examples of deliberate TOD in the modern era, Arlington County negotiated the process through a number of ad hoc arrangements. There are specific structures in place to encourage TOD, however—for example: the county has a General Land Use Plan calling for much higher station area densities than permitted by underlying zoning. Arlington's site plan review process, however, allows for significant density bonuses to be granted in exchange for development characteristics considered to be in the public interest, such as pedestrian-oriented urban design features or the inclusion of long-term affordable units in market-rate developments (Leach, 2004).

Home to the first modern light rail system in the United States, San Diego, California has long been a focal point for interest in TOD, both in terms of practice and research. Boarnet and Compin (1999) identify the use of existing railroad right-of-way through automobile-oriented areas, availability of undeveloped land in station areas, market forces at the time favoring further suburbanization and a lack of regional coordination in terms of TOD goals between local governments as detriments to the cohesive growth of a transit oriented built form in San Diego County. (Cervero (1984) warns against the use of freight railroad rights-of-way for light rail alignments in the name of simplicity or cost savings precisely on account of reduced development potential.) They do not identify San Diego County as a failure in TOD, however. Rather, due to the constraints related above, they describe TOD as an incremental process, progressing by fits and starts (Boarnet & Compin, 1999). A decade later, TOD housing commanded a significant price premium, especially when combined with a pedestrian-oriented local built environment, significantly showing strong demand for expanded available of residential TOD (Duncan, 2010).

The San Francisco Bay area has become an import center of TOD, with the areas around Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stations becoming desirable locations for both residential and office development due in large part to common long commutes and serious regional freeway congestion. Initially starting slowly in the 1970s, transit-focused growth in the Bay Area eventually accelerated due to a patchwork of local redevelopment authorities, station area upzonings and community activism (R. Cervero & Landis, 1997).

2.4 Promoting TOD: Specific Public Sector Approaches

Broadly speaking, literature on public policies and programs intended to promote TOD focuses on two basic approaches: providing incentives or financial support to developers to pursue TOD (Pollack & Prater, 2013; Tan, Janssen-Jansen, & Bertolini, 2014), and alleviating regulatory and market barriers to TOD (Guthrie & Fan, 2015; Schmidt, 2011). The former operates on the assumption that TOD brings with it difficulties and expenses for developers not shared with conventional development forms; the latter seeks to remove the structural reasons for those expenses and difficulties.

Curtis (2012a, 2012b) explores in detail the policies and regulatory structures employed to promote TOD in Perth, Western Australia over a span of more than two decades. Despite a mix of incentives and supportive planning policies, TOD-focused redevelopment agencies and state-led redevelopment in suburban railway station areas, Perth's land use has changed relatively little at the regional scale (Curtis, 2012b). The main exceptions to this pattern have been station areas in which the public sector directly develops some TOD projects through the use of local redevelopment agencies or state-led development (Curtis, 2012a). Curtis's findings suggest some limitations on the potential for incentives alone to accomplish TOD at a regional scale. In addition, pro-TOD regulatory structures paying insufficiently robust attention to desirable TOD design characteristics allow for generally automobile-oriented land uses to continue despite development policies ostensibly requiring TOD (Curtis, 2012b).

Financial instruments that reduce the risk or complexity of TOD can both remove significant barriers to TOD and act as strong incentives for it. In addition to general coordination between state/local governments, MPOs, transit agencies, philanthropic institutions, the business community, community organizations, developers and financial institutions, research commissioned by Enterprise Community Partners and the Low Income Investment Fund stresses the importance of funds for land acquisition, as well as predevelopment and remediation work, flexible, long-term credit during and after construction and grants from the public and philanthropic sectors for gap financing (Pollack & Prater, 2013). Long-term, or "patient" equity partnerships can ease the financing of high-quality TOD as well, and allow the public sector to leverage private funds for promoting TOD while still expecting a direct return eventually, after a conventional lender and the developer have been paid off (Venner & Ecola, 2007).

Transit-oriented development promotion may also take the form of direct grants to encourage desirable forms of development in station areas. The Transportation for Livable Communities program in the San Francisco Bay area offers one example of this model. Administered by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the program makes grants to community development programs with a transit-oriented focus, or to community transportation projects (Pollack & Prater, 2013).

Tan, et al (2014) see incentives for TOD as crucial for shifting from a vicious cycle of automobile-oriented regulatory regimes, fragmented governance and institutional indifference mutually reinforcing each other to make TOD implementation needlessly difficult to a virtuous cycle in which financial incentives and regulatory reforms enhance the popularity of TOD with developers, transit agencies and the public, leading to increased support for further incentives, etc. They find that regional structures of incentives can have effects greater than the sum of the individual programs or policies constituting them, as individual incentives and behavioral responses to them mutually reinforce each other. They identify four broad types of incentive structures that contribute to virtuous cycles: Legal-Financial (based on regulations financially rewarding TOD or discouraging conventional development), Legal-Socio-Cultural (based on governmental action codifying or encouraging TOD-supportive behavioral change), Financial-Socio-Cultural (based on financial instruments—not based in regulation—designed to change developers’ understanding of the risks and rewards of TOD) and Legal-Financial-Socio-Cultural (based on regulations altering the financial costs and benefits of transit- and/or automobile-oriented living). (Tan et al., 2014).

Transit-oriented development promotion may also take the form of planning assistance and/or coordination offered to municipal governments by a regional or state government or, in some cases, a transit agency. The Transit Villages program in New Jersey is one example: coordinated by NJDOT, the program encourages transit-oriented redevelopment and revitalization in small, mostly commuter rail-served communities largely by adopting a European-style model of integrated planning with strong state involvement. This model coordinates transportation, local infrastructure, land use and development planning through an interagency Transit Village Task Force that mutually solve regulatory problems, seek funding and work with New Jersey Transit and state government. The program goes beyond promoting individual developments to include neighborhood improvements such as traffic calming, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as well as public spaces (Renne & Wells, 2004).

Existing research on TOD promotion tends to focus on barriers to TOD implementation (Curtis, 2012b; Guthrie & Fan, 2015; Venner & Ecola, 2007). Specific programs may appear as best practices, but are seldom evaluated in comparison with each other. In the coming chapters, we will undertake just such an evaluation by creating a typology of TOD promotion

programs and exploring the shared understandings of senior staff in those programs, in addition to tying the results back to the Twin Cities context by comparison with previous research on how Twin Cities developers and employers perceive transit-oriented development.

3 METHODOLOGY

The following chapter describes the research approach employed in detail. This research adopts an interpretivist methodology to draw general conclusions from a small number of in-depth interviews. Such an approach places our focus directly on how and why various transit-oriented development promotion programs operate, succeed and/or interact with other stakeholders as opposed to attempting to infer such meaning from a simple enumeration of what programs exist and what development has taken place. At its heart, an interpretivist logic of explanation seeks shared understandings of concepts and processes among participants (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). It allows us to consider questions such as “What does TOD *mean* to the various organizations seeking to promote it?”, “What *reasons* do different stakeholders in the transit and regional planning process have for promoting TOD?” and “How do public-sector TOD promoters *understand* developers’ interests in TOD?”.

3.1 Data Collection

This research is based on a series of in-depth interviews with 14 senior- and executive-level staff at TOD promotion programs in # regions around the United States.

3.1.1 Recruiting

Recruiting interview participants began with the basic inventory of TOD promotion programs produced by Reconnecting America in 2010. Though it provides relatively little detail about each individual program, this inventory offered a national listing of the TOD promotion programs in existence at the time it was written, crucially for this research, often with contact information (Andreson, 2011). Due to the passage of six years after Reconnecting America’s data collection, we updated the inventory to confirm the continued existence of programs listed, as well as to capture changes and new programs introduced since.

We then sent an introductory email to a representative of every program for which a contact could be identified. This email included a research information sheet giving a general introduction to our research goals and approach. (See Appendix A.) Contacts were asked to participate in a confidential 40 minute telephone interview.

After this initial round of contacts, we also employed a snow balling approach to recruiting further participants by asking participants to suggest other individuals in their organizations and/or regions whose insights our research might benefit from. This approach allowed for valuable additional perspectives from # of the regions studied as well.

3.1.2 Interviews

Interviews were semi-structured, with general “conversation starter” questions prepared in advance for each individual participant. While specific questions were tailored to the circumstances of individual programs and regions, in general questions covered organizational goals for TOD promotion, the roles participants saw their organizations playing in the broader TOD picture in their regions, relationships with other governmental and non-profit actors, as well as with developers, where appropriate, and perceived outcomes of TOD promotion efforts. (See Appendix B for examples.) Participants, however, were generally allowed to guide the conversation as they saw fit.

Interviews lasted roughly from 30 minutes to one hour, with most falling near the 40 minute mark. Interviews were audio recorded, with participants’ consent, and our assurance of confidentiality. All interviews were transcribed in their entirety.

3.2 Analysis

Our analysis began by typologizing the TOD promotion programs represented in our interviews. Programs for promoting TOD vary greatly in activities, organizational structures and even goals; indeed, one would not go too far to say each program considered herein is essentially unique. While this diversity of cases adds a great deal of richness to the interview data, drawing generalizable conclusions can be eased by assigning each program to one of a smaller number of types.

A typology systematizes this classification by assigning cases to types based on discrete qualities articulated ahead of time (906 Elman, 2005). It can show similarities between superficially different cases, as well as partial similarities between substantively different cases. As such, our typology provides a valuable framework for guiding further analysis.

3.2.1 Word Frequency Analysis

Producing a list of the most frequently used words by interview participants is a simple technique, but can offer valuable clues as to the issues and concepts most on participants’ minds. By excluding “small words” (a, an, the, etc.) and “flavoring words” (um, so, well, etc.) and aggregating words with their synonyms, word frequency counts can suggest useful initial directions for more in-depth analysis. Precise frequency is not the crucial result here, rather an indication of what ideas are at the front of participants’ minds as a group.

3.2.2 Topic Coding

The next phase of analysis involves close readings of interview transcripts, and the coding of specific passages of text as pertaining to topics, concepts or understandings. This allows participants’ words to be organized and reorganized conceptually, as opposed to merely in the chronological order they were spoken in. In addition, coding allows for the easy identification of places where important concepts intersect—for example, the intersections

between “community infrastructure” and “gentrification” could mark particularly important passages to parse.

The coding process is iterative: the first reading produces a set of codes leading to intersections which suggest further reading, codes and intersections, etc. While coding does not produce concrete results in the way large-n statistical analysis does, it is an invaluable way of organizing the large quantities of nuanced, interrelated information contained in a qualitative data set.

4 TYPES OF TOD PROMOTION PROGRAMS CONSIDERED

Table 4-1 presents three typologies of the 15 specific TOD promotion programs discussed in interviews. (Some participants discussed multiple programs, while two participants from the same region discussed the same program.) Each of the three typologies classifies TOD programs based on what they actually *do* to promote TOD (listed in columns as “Activities”) and one other dimension, including overarching goals for TOD, scale of interventions and organizational structure.

Overall, the prevalence of programs focused on regional TOD planning or local planning assistance is striking: of the fifteen programs in total, ten focus at least partly on planning. In many cases, this focus takes the form of planning assistance to municipal governments, either in terms of direct technical assistance or grant funds to pay consultants.

Beyond planning, two programs focus on providing TOD-supportive infrastructure such as sidewalk improvements, bicycle facilities and public spaces, while four focus on direct financing of TOD-related activities. One, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s Transit-Oriented Development Office, focuses on transit joint development of agency-owned land at Metro stations.

4.1 Program Goals

Table 4-1a arranges programs into types based on their activities and the fundamental, overarching goals they seek to advance through TOD. One interesting finding is quickly apparent: most programs' goals center on encouraging sustainable, efficient land use patterns at the regional and/or community level. Promoting transit use is actually a considerably less common goal. Broadly, the majority of programs considered in this research see TOD and transit use as advancing other regional planning and development goals, not as ends in and of themselves. This can largely be said of programs with goals focused on affordable housing and economic development, as well: TOD is pursued to the extent that it advances more basic program goals, not for its own sake.

It is also interesting to note the separation of program activities by goals: there is nearly a diagonal separation of filled cells between upper left and lower right. This pattern drives home the point that specific TOD promotion activities vary significantly based on the specific reasons one has for promoting TOD, with land use- and transit performance-focused programs favoring planning assistance and provision of supportive infrastructure, and affordability- and economic development-focused programs more favoring direct financing of specific projects and businesses.

Table 4-1: Types of TOD Promotion Programs

		Activities			
(a)		Planning	Supportive Infrastructure	Financing	Joint Development
Goals	Land Use	1,4,5,8,10,15	4,10		
	Transit	2,6,9			14
	Affordability	11		3,13	
	Economic Development			7,12	

		Activities			
(b)		Planning	Supportive Infrastructure	Financing	Joint Development
Scale	Community	5,8,10,11,15	10	7	
	Corridor	1,4	4		
	Project			3,12,13	14
	Station Area	2,6,9			

		Activities			
(c)		Planning	Supportive Infrastructure	Financing	Joint Development
Organization	City/State Agency	4	4	12,13	
	MPO	1,2,5,6,8,9,10,11,15	10		
	Non-Profit			3,7	
	Transit Agency				14

No.	Region	Program
1	Albany, NY	Linkage Planning Program
2	Denver, CO	Station Area Planning Grants
3	Denver, CO	Devner TOD Fund
4	Honolulu, HI	TOD Strategy
5	Cleveland, OH	Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative
6	Cleveland, OH	TOD Scorecard
7	Seattle, WA	Rainier Valley Community Development Fund
8	Philadelphia, PA	Transportation and Community Development Initiative
9	San Francisco, CA	Station Area Planning Program
10	San Francisco, CA	One Bay Area Grant Program
11	San Francisco, CA	Regional Housing Need Allocation
12	Baltimore, MD/Washington, DC	Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Development
13	Seattle, WA	Seattle Housing Levy
14	Greater Washington, DC	WMATA TOD Office
15	Greater Washington, DC	Activity Centers Designation

4.2 Program Scales

Table 4-1b arranges TOD promotion programs into types based on their activities and what scale those activities are primarily conducted at. TOD promotion programs operate at a variety of micro, meso and macro scales, and once again, those scales have impacts on what programs actually *do*. Planning-focused programs primarily operate at the city or neighborhood scale—in part due to the common structure of planning assistance provided to municipal governments. Three programs focus specifically on station area planning—suggesting a growing understanding of the importance of ensuring transit-supportive built forms filling the walk sheds of high quality transit stations.

Though only two in number, the corridor-scale programs are interesting. Both of these programs focus on planning TOD for multiple station areas simultaneously, going beyond individual station area-level planning to consider desirable social and economic roles for each station area within the context of the entire corridor—a process reminiscent of Arlington County, Virginia. The Honolulu TOD Strategy also takes advantage of unified city-county government to pursue TOD- supportive infrastructure at a corridor scale as well.

Not surprisingly, most direct financing-based programs focus on individual projects, providing either loans or grants to individual developments—or future developments: two focus primarily on financing land acquisition. While the Rainier Valley Community Development Fund makes loans to individual businesses, it's focus is deliberately place-based, with practices designed to make it as easy as possible for a large number of independent businesses to receive funding as possible within a closely defined area.

4.3 Program Organization

We spoke with representatives of programs from city and state government agencies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), non-profits and one transit agency.

Table 4-1c arranges programs into types based on their activities and organizational structures. Similar to the previous typologies above, different TOD promotion activities are most common in different types of organizations.

As one might expect, MPOs focus heavily on planning grants and assistance, though one—the One Bay Area grant program in the San Francisco Bay region—also focuses on providing TOD supportive public infrastructure in stations. This usual focus reflects a common pattern of regional planning bodies either providing assistance to local governments which lack the capacity for TOD planning as part of their normal work and/or essentially pooling resources across time to allow local governments needed TOD planning capacity when transit improvements are being planned for their jurisdiction. MPOs also account for the majority of programs overall.

Both non-profits and two out of three city/state agencies focus on providing direct grant or loan financing to TOD. The Honolulu TOD Strategy, however, focuses on planning and supportive infrastructure provision; though implemented by a unified city/county government’s planning department, the fact that nearly the entire 22-mile rail corridor in consideration lies within Honolulu city/county jurisdiction allows a local government agency to function more or less like an MPO.

4.4 Summary

TOD promotion programs vary significantly in the forms they take, the actions they undertake and even in their underlying reasons for supporting TOD. This chapter demonstrates that the specific goals a program seeks to advance through TOD, the scale at which a program promoted TOD and the structures of organizations engaged in TOD promotion have important implications for what TOD promotion programs actually do. These findings suggest importance for organizations seeking to promote TOD carefully considering their own goals and capacities, as well as the specific circumstances they hope to promote TOD in. The following chapter builds on these findings with an in-depth analysis of interview transcripts.

5 INTERVIEW RESULTS

This chapter presents an in-depth analysis of our interview transcripts. We begin with simple word frequency analysis as a gauge of commonly-discussed concepts and follow with an interpretive analysis of participants shared understandings of the process of promoting TOD, organized by topic coding. Quotes from interviews are presented for emphasis and as examples; in some cases, such quotes may be edited for clarity and to protect participants' privacy.

5.1 Word Frequency Analysis

Figure 5-1 presents the 100 words spoken most commonly by interview participants. The larger the typeface, the more common the word. The primacy of “developments”, “TOD” and “transit” is not surprising, given the subject matter of the interviews. The next tier of words just slightly smaller provides interesting insights into issues considered important by interview participants.

In particular, the prominence of words like “area”, “community”, “city” and “station”, as well as the somewhat less prominent “around”, “neighborhood”, “places” and “centers” underscores a strong place-based focus of the TOD promotion programs discussed in interviews. “People” and “growth” reflect frequent discussion of regional population and job growth by participants. Interview participants have a widely shared belief that TOD is easier (or most possible) in a region with robust regional growth. That process of regional growth is underscored by the prominence of “years” as well—the most successful TOD promotion programs discussed in our interviews all have one thing in common: they have all been in existence for many years.

“Funds”, “money” and “financing” show a similarly pragmatic shared understanding: money talks. Our interview participants consistently discuss funding tied to TOD in some way—whether in terms of planning, providing supportive infrastructure or directly financing TOD projects themselves—as one of the most powerful inducements to implement TOD.

“Know” may reflect a common understanding of the limitations underlying market conditions impose of TOD promotion—it’s often said in a sense of having no illusions of a silver bullet, so to speak. The prominence of “works” and “market” as well seem to support this contention.



Figure 5-1: Most Commonly Spoken Words in Interviews

“Housing” and “affordable” are both prominent—“income” and “rents” both appear in the cloud as well—underscoring the commonly understood importance of promoting both affordability and TOD. Two of our participants are actually from organizations formed to promote and provide affordable housing that approach TOD as a means to that end; others see TOD as both a cause and a potential adaptation to significant housing affordability issues in a number of major metropolitan areas.

We consider word frequency here primarily as a measure of common concepts in our discussions of TOD promotion with interview participants. To more directly address complex concepts in detail, we also examine larger passages of text, employing them as a guide to organize our reading and interpretation in the following section.

5.2 Interview Coding Analysis

This section presents the results of topic- and concept-based coding of interview transcripts. Given this project’s focus on concrete, specific strategies for promoting TOD, this section is organized around the primary activities of TOD promotion programs as explored in Chapter 4. Table 5-1 shows the concepts that intersect with each primary category of TOD promotion activities. We do not report frequencies for these coding intersections as how many times a participant discusses a certain concept does not necessarily equate to the importance of that

concept—or even its prominence in the discussion: there seems little reason to weight many brief mentions of a concept more heavily than one lengthy discussion of it. In addition, our primary interest in coding of transcripts is as a guide to direct reading and interpretation of interview texts in search of participants’ shared understandings.

Table 5-1: Coding

Activity Type	Coding Intersections
Planning	Station Areas, Affordability, Coordination, Transit Service, Changing Preferences, Growth Management, Joint Development, Centers, Developers, Jurisdictions, Opposition, Outreach, Slow Growth, Supportive Infrastructure, Financing, Land Acquisition, Phasing, Anchor Tenants, Design, Economic Development, Fiscal Constraints, Regulation
Supportive Infrastructure	Joint Development, Planning, Changing Preferences, Growth Management, Regulation, Transit Service, Affordability, Coordination, Developers, Fiscal Constraints, Job Access, Non-financial Incentives, Phasing, Station Areas
Financing	Affordability, Transit Service, Design, Jurisdictions, Opposition, Phasing, Planning, Centers, Changing Preferences, Coordination, Developers, Economic Development, Joint Development, Regulation
Joint Development	Changing Preferences, Planning, Supportive Infrastructure, Centers, Coordination, Developers, Transit Service, Design, Financing, Fiscal Constraints, Jurisdictions, Outreach, Slow Growth, Station Areas

Several common themes appear. First, in discussing all four primary activities, participants repeatedly identify changing preferences for development types and lifestyles as both a key driver of TOD and an opportunity to make real progress in promoting it. There is a common understanding among participants that the rising prominence of the Millennial generation in real estate markets represents a fundamental shift in possibilities, as in this quote referring to the Greater Washington, D. C. region:

That's [...] just the reality of what millennials want and what people are experiencing here, it's like New York, right? I don't know how much of New York doesn't own a car and uses transit: it's just part of the affordability issue that's beyond any marketing job that a jurisdiction or the transit system did.

In addition to opening up new possibilities, however, Millennials’ lifestyle and neighborhood type preferences—as well as shifting societal preferences in general—are seen as changing the work planners and urban policy makers need to do to perpetuate healthy regions. Participants from fast growth regions commonly discuss changing preferences as creating a

need to expand neighborhood-scale public infrastructure such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, while participants from slow growth regions understand TOD not as a means for accommodating growth in a sustainable regional form, but as a means to attract population and economic growth in the first place, as described in this quote from a planner in Cleveland, Ohio:

It's something different that where everyone else is planning for TOD, until recently we were losing population so TOD is not going to be used as a tool to help with growth per se, but to make us be more attractive to growth—cause we're not growing right now; we're flat. Other people are using it to kind of, you know hold back your growth or direct people into certain pockets.

Station area- and centers-based planning and development are common themes throughout—implicitly in the case of Joint Development. At the highest level, participants broadly understand TOD implementation as a community building task centered on transit stations, rather than a series of individual projects. Interestingly, this understanding largely persists among representatives of programs whose primary activity is funding individual projects. Transit stations and sub-regional activity centers are seen as anchors for sustainable community development.

Transit service type and quality is commonly understood as critical to TOD prospects and success. Participants commonly understand fixed guideway transit in general—and rail transit in particular—as providing the strongest opportunity for TOD. This perceived strength of rail stations dovetails with the centers-based planning approach put forward as a central part of both TOD and sustainable regional planning; it also arises out of perceived popular and industry understanding of rail as a permanent, premium service.

It is also striking how primary activities intersect with each other. While different programs focus their own work on different activities, there is a common understanding among participants that they are inherently linked. (An MPO-level, San Francisco Bay area planning assistance program aimed at helping local governments plan for TOD supportive community infrastructure is one example.) This interrelated nature of TOD promotion programs in underscored by the prominence of interagency coordination and discussion of other jurisdictions in interviews. Not only is coordination understood to be crucial to accomplishing a TOD promotion program's work—coordinating the activities of different agencies, levels of government and sectors is often understood as the primary task of TOD promotion. The following quote from Honolulu offers an example:

[The mayor's office] set up a new TOD sub cabinet it's a little bit like -- like with the smart growth, the first smart growth cabinet at state level, it's roughly about half of the full cabinet: everybody from infrastructure and planning and housing to budget and it and legal and the whole and we literally meet for a brown bag lunch every

week, just to figure out the way forward to eliminate barriers between our departments things like that, and we have a small team in the planning department. [A] new TOD division that was just finalized last year, but that team has been working under contract in planning since 2009 probably on the planning end, but we really bring that group together to look at and prioritize all the city activities

5.2.1 Planning

Discussion of planning activities in the interviews takes two broad forms: planning conducted by the participant's agency to directly promote TOD and planning assistance offered to other agencies—most commonly local governments—to facilitate and/or encourage their efforts to promote TOD. The former perspective is apparent in planning activities intersections with growth management—the two are commonly understood as mutually supportive in that growth management reduces the capacity for and profitability of sprawling, automobile-oriented growth and can help create a critical mass of transit-supportive density in station areas, while TOD makes aggressive growth management possible without the negative impacts of dense development when combined with automotive transportation. As an example, Honolulu's decades-long program of growth management is seen as highly beneficial to plans for TOD in planned rail station areas:

I think it's over 40% of existing job are within—I should remember exactly—it's either half a mile or a mile from the rail stations within the corridor. Second only to New York City. If you asked the same question of everybody else when they're building a new system, it's like 15 or 18%, it's just a huge difference in between everybody else and us and New York, and part of the reason for that is decades long good growth management, of the reality of we're an island: there's mountains, you've got a small strip along the edge where major development is--both good growth policy and people want to be where they can get around and business locating where the industrial zoning and things like that.

The growth management implications of TOD also show up in terms of planning assistance to smaller communities, along with urban design considerations (especially for small communities with little experience or existing capacity for transit-oriented planning) and outreach to both residents and communities. While interview participants understood regional TOD planning as broadly popular among and TOD planning assistance as broadly desired by local communities, broad-based regional TOD initiatives at the scale of considering TOD prospects at most or all stations in a region have the potential to generate local opposition in single-family and affluent communities.

The same types of communities are understood as occasionally opposing efforts to integrate affordable housing with TOD. On a more encouraging note, however, affordability is discussed most prominently in terms of often ambitious municipal and regional housing

strategies. One of the most strongly shared understandings among participants (with the exception of those from slow-growth regions such as Cleveland, Ohio and Albany-Schenectady, New York) is that housing affordability is a major and growing problem in their own regions are around the country. By offering low-cost regional mobility to all and promoting efficient forms of growth that can lend themselves to affordable construction, TOD is understood as potentially beneficial to regional affordability, but not necessarily so, due to the high desirability of premium transit access. The following quote from Seattle illustrates this dual character of the relationship between TOD and regional affordability:

I saw you had a question about do you focused on existing or future and it is both. You're looking at sort of impacts: there's been some press lately about how property values have just skyrocketed in the vicinity of our new light rail stops and getting an anchor for affordable units in those communities is a really high priority before people are just--all the land is just snatched up and there's nothing there. Affordable housing—so we made a couple very long range 5, 6 year hold type arrangements for a couple of stations where the TOD has yet to grow up around it and we're looking at a couple that are on the drawing board and making sure that we have partners that are accessing sites in those vicinities.

In a planning context, economic development is primarily understood as a need in relation to TOD. Participants understand the need for employment in station areas to allow TOD to achieve its greatest regional benefits. The scale of most planning-focused TOD promotion programs considered here does not match most station area economic development activities well, but working with major regional employers and developers to attract large, anchor tenants to station areas planned as employment centers is understood as highly beneficial to station area economic development, as discussed by one planner from the Greater Washington area:

I think you have a much more diverse economy than we have here, but to the extent that we have market leaders, and I think you do, I mean you've got a few major anchor corporations, so they are market accelerators and don't underestimate the power of their setting the pace of what's expected. So, I'd really partner with them as part of this because their voice in the business community will mean something. much more so than the even than strongest and greatest planning leader that you have. I mean, having that voice of your Target and meds—whoever your different guys are out there—this is what we're valuing; this is what our employment base is looking for: that will convince a lot of people and be very powerful.

Regulation appears in discussions of TOD-focused planning efforts in terms of planning initiatives to reform currently land use and development regulation. There is a broadly shared belief among participants that current zoning regimes, etc. frequently hinder TOD and make

transit-oriented projects less attractive to developers. While an extreme example, the City of Albany is currently rewriting its zoning code from the ground up with the aid of the region's MPO partly to further TOD around a growing rapid bus system, as described here:

One the projects we worked on in the City of Albany was a TOD guidebook that used sort of three prototype areas to sort of illustrate what the zoning could be to support TOD in the city. Now fast forward a few years the city is now doing a city wide rezoning effort which will incorporate those principles into their new zoning code so it's sort of helped jumpstart that effort [...] The City of Albany's current zoning code is outdate cobbled together over the years and there's uses that are so incompatible with each other just even in terms of the development styles it's kind of like "How did this even happen?". It's a patchwork of inconsistencies and the board's definitely struggled with giving lots of variances and things like that 'cause some things that we want to see happen are illegal under the current regulation. So, they kind of, over the years seems like they were suburbanizing the city in a way, and I think their zoning code started to go that direction: more auto oriented and now they're trying to bring it back to a less auto oriented or something that certainly promotes more mixed uses.

5.2.2 Supportive Infrastructure

Regulation arises in discussions of TOD-supportive infrastructure in a very different sense: that of mandating certain features in projects seeking TOD- or smart growth-focused loan or grant funding. Mostly, however, it arises in terms along the general line of *not* mandating developers provide bicycle parking or specific sidewalk widths, etc. as explained below by a planner from _:

I don't know that we do anything specifically to say "Gee you should include bike racks." or---those are things we like to see, but I don't think there's anything that specific in application or program documents that would tell somebody you're going to get additional points or you'll rise to the top of the stack if you include bike racks.

Interestingly, affordable housing arises in a sense of being itself TOD-supportive infrastructure. Individual affordable housing developments are understood as potential catalysts for station area-scale TOD, as well as a dependable base of ridership for transit, despite fiscal constraints on them, as illustrated by this housing specialist from Denver, Colorado:

Affordable housing development is a good kind of catalyst for station areas that don't have a lot around them because there's such need for the units that they'll fill up even if it's not in the most amenitized community.

Given limited direct public funding for TOD, supportive infrastructure is understood as an important and attractive non-financial incentive for developers to build TOD projects. While there is broad acknowledgement that successful TOD is easier to realize in the context of a generally transit-oriented built form, TOD-supportive infrastructure such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities and public spaces is seen as a way for the public sector to help create such a built form while working to attract developers. As such, it is also understood as a way to phase TOD-supportive improvements in concert with new transit expansions. TOD-supportive infrastructure is also understood as supporting effective transit-based accessibility by functionally connecting station area neighborhoods with transit.

5.2.3 Financing

Affordable housing is commonly understood as one of the most significant roles for direct financing in TOD promotion. Among our participants, it is most commonly discussed by representatives of general affordable housing programs that have adopted transit-accessible locations and transit-oriented design features to promote housing-plus-transportation affordability and more broadly increase affordable housing residents' access to opportunity as described by one housing professional from Seattle:

I think it's just better for people. I don't think we're trying to reduce their [housing-plus-transportation] costs, that's sort of a byproduct, but there's host of other things we want people to be successful who live in the buildings we fund. We want them to be able to get to work of school easily, so many, many benefits.

The usual project-scale focus of direct financing programs can open affordable TOD projects in particular to community-level opposition. Phasing affordable housing funds—especially land acquisition funds—to get out ahead of planned transit improvements is understood to be crucial for reaping the greatest benefits from limited budgets. The need for affordable housing is seen to be large and growing, and the desirability of established, transit-oriented neighborhoods makes it highly beneficial to at least establish land control before new transit stations open.

Direct financing for TOD housing, among our participants, most commonly flows to non-profit developers that focus on affordable or mixed-income development. Direct financing for economic development may also flow to (generally non-profit) developers furthering community-serving commercial space—such as service centers, community health clinics, childcare, libraries, etc. Alternatively, direct financing for transit-oriented economic development may go right to local businesses with a focus on making improvements to enhance ability to remain and thrive in revitalizing station areas.

5.2.4 Joint Development

Transit joint development represents a smaller portion of the TOD activities conducted by our participants than the other three. In fact, only one program—the Washington

Metropolitan Area Mass Transit Authority’s TOD Office—focuses primarily on joint development. Several others, however, engage in some joint development activities. Given the importance of joint development in the literature and in existing examples of TOD success stories, we present participants’ understandings of joint development in their own subsection.

One of the key issues to address in pursuing TJD is a three-way balancing act between developers’ need to turn a profit, planners’ desire to achieve a genuinely transit-oriented built form and transit agencies’ need to facilitate transit operations and first mile-last mile connections. The land immediately surrounding rail stations is commonly understood to be the ideal for the type of catalytic TOD projects that can form the nucleus of broader transit-oriented communities. However, functionally connecting those communities with transit requires convenient pedestrian access, bicycle parking and local bus connections, none of which is necessarily facilitated by residential and commercial development immediately adjacent to stations, as articulated in the following quote:

The complexity is not around, well land ownership—if you don’t have land control, or if you don’t have any relationship with the land owner, they’re just going to do whatever they want to do. If you upzone the property through zoning then they’re going to want to sell or develop to that higher density if the market supports it. So then you don’t need to have any relationship with them you can just incentivize them through the upzoning process, but in my world, because we are providing parking and bus loops at most of our stations, we have both train and bus together and so you want to make sure that bike access, pedestrian access is safe, that there’s parking facilities. If you’re really trying to bring in commuters to have them come to a stop, park there, get out of their car and then get into transit—so if we’re going to with the land that we own, we usually have parking facilities, bus facilities, bike facilities and when we try and encourage development then we still have to provide all of those facilities, and so the complication is who pays for that?

In addition, depending on the type of community and broader surrounding built environment, developers may be uncomfortable providing the low parking ratios and pedestrian-oriented built forms—particularly for commercial development—that are generally considered critical for effective TOD. In some cases, it may prove difficult to interest developers in joint development projects (at least on reasonable terms for transit agencies) in suburban and/or economically disadvantaged areas. Outreach to developers—in the form of “TOD marketplaces” where planners invite developers to learn about joint development opportunities and forums including industry partners such as the Urban Land Institute, etc.—are seen as a valuable strategy for bridging gaps between developers’ perceptions and planners’ understanding of TOD possibilities in an area.

6 CASE STUDIES

Understanding how TOD promotion programs fit into the urban contexts they serve is crucial to understanding the programs themselves and the real-life outcomes different program structures can generate. To further this understanding, the following chapter presents four brief case studies focused on regions whose TOD promotion efforts may offer valuable lessons for TOD promotion in the Twin Cities region. The San Francisco Bay Area offers one of the longest-standing, best developed (and best covered in the literature) regional TOD projects. It offers a look at a region with a mature, modern transit system with decades of promoting TOD as a regional growth strategy as well as an instructive mix of success and failures. A study of the Washington, D.C. metro area focused on the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority's joint development program offers a look at one of the largest TOD programs that creates partnerships with the private sector to develop transit agency-owned land. Portland Oregon, in addition to having a long-standing tradition of regional transit and TOD promotion, offers the closest parallel in the nation to the Twin Cities in terms of regional governance structure. Finally, Denver offers an example of a region of similar size and density to the Twin Cities region that is somewhat farther along in terms of its regional transit buildout. The remainder of this chapter describes each case and the results each region's TOD promotion efforts have led to, then draws parallels between cases and suggests lessons for the Twin Cities region.

Each of these four regions is of course unique, with its own particular set of circumstances. However, each can offer examples of processes that exist in other regions, including the Twin Cities. For example, the Metropolitan Council has adopted region-wide TOD as a tool for achieving regional growth-management and quality of life goals, as has long been the case in the Bay Area. As Twin Cities transitways grow and mature, redevelopment of agency-owned land at park-and-ride oriented suburban stations is likely to become an increasingly attractive prospect, as it already has in the case of D.C. Metro stations. Our region wrestles with reconciling the vision of a regional government with the sensibilities of the local governments and communities that, it is hoped, will implement it: a dynamic familiar in Portland. The Twin Cities stands on edge of a rapid expansion of both its regional transit system and the opportunities for TOD it creates, much as Denver did a few years ago. These similar processes allow us to draw meaningful lessons for the Twin Cities from regions that have been the way we are going in one sense or another.

6.1 San Francisco Bay Area

The San Francisco Bay Area, spurred on by geographic constraints, epic cross-regional commutes and a strong tradition of environmentalist policy is one of the oldest examples of TOD promotion as a central regional growth policy. Thanks to the work of scholars such as

Robert Cervero, Kara Kockleman and others, it is also one of the most closely-examined regional TOD programs in the nation.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) serves a coordinator for TOD planning in the Bay Area. “Coordinator” is an important role in this context, as the Bay Area spans nine counties, 100 municipalities and more than 40 transit agencies—in some cases with three or four major transit operators in a single city. The MTC oversees regional transportation planning, but has no land use planning authority. In fact, no regional body with land use planning authority exists in the Bay Area. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) serves in a coordinating role for regional land use, housing, economic development and environmental planning. It’s recommendations are still subject to local land use regulation, however. As a result, TOD promotion in the region tends to take the form of local planning assistance, incentives and entrepreneurial deal making in the form of public-private partnerships.

6.1.1 Plan Bay Area

ABAG and the MTC are currently in the process of merging to deepen coordination between regional land use and transportation planning. This collaborative approach is reflected in the regional draft 2040 plan, Plan Bay Area, drafted jointly by the two agencies. The plan allocates forecast population and employment growth with a heavy focus on roughly 200 Priority Development Areas (PDAs)—pre-existing neighborhoods with high transit accessibility chosen as targets of further compact, infill development. Their counterparts are Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs): open spaces facing development pressure the plan seeks to direct development away from (Metropolitan Transportation Commission & Association of Bay Area Governments, 2017).

PDAs are conceived as centers of compact, walkable communities with a range of housing types for various income levels. The plan’s implementation strategy makes heavy use of voluntary mechanisms, however, such as the use of incentives for for-profit developers to make 10% of new housing units deed-restricted permanently affordable. The plan calls for density increases in PDAs, but makes a point of emphasizing the fact that neither ABAG nor MTC has the authority to mandate zoning changes at the municipal level. Rather, density increases in station areas are established as a prerequisite for designation as a PDA, in an attempt to leverage the popularity of the PDA designation to encourage cities to make zoning changes they might not otherwise be amenable to (Metropolitan Transportation Commission & Association of Bay Area Governments, 2017).

6.1.2 Transportation for Livable Communities Program

Though now concluded (and partially supplanted by the PDA designation in Plan Bay Area), historically the MTC’s Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) program played a significant role in promoting in the Bay Area. Transportation for Livable Communities

focused on funding catalytic projects intending to strengthen connections between transportation and land use, all with a focus on local community goals (Cervero et al., 2004). The program consisted of planning grants to support smart growth planning in areas with high transportation accessibility, capital grants for supportive infrastructure including pedestrian and bicycle improvements and public spaces and a Housing Incentive Program, which provided gap financing for higher density development than would otherwise have been possible, as well as for affordable housing.

6.1.3 *Joint Development: BART and VTA*

Transit Joint Development—in which a transit agency partners directly with a developer to implement TOD on agency-owned land surrounding stations has played a relatively small, yet significant role in the Bay Area. In an illustration of the size and complexity of the region, two different transit agencies—the Bay Area Rapid Transit Authority (BART) and San Jose’s Valley Transit Authority (VTA) have independently pursued joint development projects in their respective station areas. Traditionally, the two agencies’ approaches have differed markedly in their approaches to replacement of commuter parking—often a crucial, controversial issue in joint development. Due to high demand, BART has generally required 100% replacement of redeveloped park-and-ride spaces, though they do recommend lowered commercial and residential parking standards in TODs themselves. While this practice preserves access for pre-existing transit users, it limits development opportunities and tends to require expensive, structured parking. VTA takes the opposite approach—indeed, one of the key motivations behind their first major joint development project (the affordable, mixed-use Ohlone-Chynoweth development) was finding a more beneficial use of underutilized commuter parking around a suburban light rail station (Brezna, 2004)(Cervero et al., 2004).

BART’s joint development practice, while not a systematic initiative, is exemplified by the well-known Fruitvale Station development in Oakland. Including a mixture of affordable and market-rate housing, as well as a thriving commercial district, Fruitvale Station replaced a large surface park-and-ride facility, as well as a 1950s era automobile-oriented retail district (Cervero et al., 2004).

6.2 Washington, D.C. Transit Joint Development

The Washington, D.C. region is well known for TOD on account of the widely-lauded Rosslyn-Ballston corridor in Arlington County, Virginia (Leach, 2004). There is good reason for this. Arlington is a shining example of the long-term, intentional conversion of a low-density, automobile-dominated suburb into an extension of urban life outside the District. The D.C. region is also home to another excellent example of TOD promotion: the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s (WMATA’s) joint development program. With the earliest beginnings of WMATA’s involvement in real estate stretching back to 1969 (with further one-off projects in the 1970s), and formalized with the creation of what was then known as the Station Area Development Program (SADP) in 1981, joint

development has long been a feature of the Washington, D.C. region in one form or another (Cervero et al., 2004).

As is common for new-start heavy rail rapid transit systems of a similar age, Metro's stations tend to have very large footprints, and are frequently surrounded by significant areas of transit-agency owned land, both particularly in suburban locations. As close proximity to Metro stations significantly raises land values in the region, vacant land, unused air rights, etc. at stations represent a large missed opportunity for supplemental revenue for WMATA (Leach, 2004). In addition, these common station configurations effectively reduce station area densities—to zero in the case of the prime land immediately surrounding stations. This situation reduces population and activity at the hearts of station areas, and thus ridership as well. It also functionally disconnects metro stations from their surroundings. Further, as the D.C. region grows and inner suburbs densify in general pedestrian, bicycle and bus access are becoming viable for stations which once depended wholly on park-and-ride access.

In this context, WMATA operates a standing program to facilitate Transit Joint Development (TJD) at its stations. WMATA prioritizes stations for development based on suitability, then may initiate the TJD process through either a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) or a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), under which a developer is selected based on capabilities and experience and develops a development proposal in concert with WMATA and local communities. Developers may also lead the process by submitting unsolicited proposals to WMATA. The following subsection briefly discusses the WMATA TJD program's role in the region, as well as its results.

6.2.1 *The Joint Development Program*

The Joint Development Program serves both WMATA agency goals and broader regional and local public goals. Specifically, the program intends to:

- *Promote Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) by advancing the following smart growth principles:*
- *Reduce automobile dependency*
- *Increase pedestrian/bicycle-originated transit trips*
- *Foster safe station areas*
- *Enhance surrounding area connections to transit stations, including bus access*
- *Promote mixed-use development with housing*
- *Offer the opportunity to obtain goods and services and enjoy active public spaces near transit stations*
- *Attract new riders to the transit system*
- *Create on-going sources of revenue for WMATA's long-term financial sustainability*

- *Assist local jurisdictions in achieving their goals for economic development* (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, 2017b)

WMATA's Joint Development Program may represent the most complete institutional embrace of joint development by an American transit agency. The program has its own director and dedicated staff, and—unlike most TJD programs—actively seek out developers as partners in station area development through the RFP and RFQ processes, and directly collaborate with developers in project design (Cervero et al., 2004). In addition, WMATA's staff *plan* for TJD as well: projects do not proceed at specific stations merely by fortuitous interest on the part of developers, but according to region-wide development suitability analysis in terms of the use, intensity and phasing of development (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, 2013). Planning for TJD also considers local plans and zoning; guidelines for the TJD process even consider instances where the desirable development type for a station would require significant rezoning or changes to local planning. In such cases, WMATA works with both developers and local planners to achieve an outcome that fits both agency and community goals, while turning a profit for the developers. This type of project is a common use of the RFQ process: by recruiting a developer with expertise in similar circumstances, WMATA, the local community and the developer are able to design the development and the land use control regime governing it together from the ground up (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, 2013).

Development transactions themselves can take a variety of forms: sale of land (with easements for station facilities), ground lease, sale of air rights or a mix. Most developments in recent years (since 2002) have taken the form of a sale—providing large (but one-time) infusions of funds in a time of significant WMATA capital funding needs (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, 2017b). The Joint Development Program and its predecessors has completed more than 40 projects—with 18 in its current iteration since 2002 alone.

6.2.2 *Joint Development in Arlington County*

One prime example of joint development serving as a catalyst for regional TOD more generally is the famed Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor in Arlington County, Virginia. Stretching roughly two and a half miles from Rosslyn Station near the Potomac River to Ballston-MU Station in central Arlington County, the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor follows what—at the time of Metro implementation—had been a sprawled, suburban arterial. Thanks in part to joint developments serving as anchors at either end, the corridor has become a model of TOD as a suburban retrofitting strategy. The Rosslyn Metro Center, built directly atop its namesake station serves as the center of a major, regional commercial and employment center. The Ballston station as originally built served primarily as a bus transfer station. Due to the phased construction of the metro system, it was the terminal of the Orange Line until 1986 when an extension opened farther into the Northern Virginia suburbs. When the Metrorail

terminal moved outward, the transfer point moved with it, freeing up land originally used for bus bays, turnarounds and layover space. The 28-story Ballston Metro Center that opened on the site in 1989 includes residential, office and retail commercial space and a hotel (Cervero et al., 2004). In fact, Arlington County features several other TJDs, as well, including the Olmstead Building at Clarendon Station and the ongoing (begun 2006) Liberty Center development adding to the Ballston station area and featuring 355,000 square feet of office space, 11,000 square feet of retail, a 183-room hotel and 257 residential units with a further 410,000 square feet of office and 10,000 of retail proposed (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, 2017a).

6.3 Portland: The Regional Approach

Portland stands apart from the preceding cases (and, importantly, alongside the Twin Cities) in having a strong, regional governance structure with significant power to shape land use planning. It also stands apart from the other cases (and the Twin Cities as well) in having a stick to go along with the more common carrots of TOD promotion. That stick is better known as Portland's famous Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). While the UGB does not directly require TOD, it does close off one common alternative to it: continual, low-density outward sprawl. In practice, one could argue this—along with the extensive MAX light rail system—represents a significant part of TOD promotion in the Portland region: require reasonably compact, contiguous development through the UGB and provide both a large number of transit station areas and a high level of transit accessibility. This is not so much “build it and they will come” as it is a subtle changing of the costs and benefits of TOD relative to other development types (Cervero et al., 2004).

TOD promotion in the Portland region also leans heavily on station area zoning reforms, which frequently go well beyond simply allowing transit-oriented built forms. Whereas other regions must often content themselves with relaxing minimum off-street parking requirements and increasing maximum allowable densities even in central city station areas, Portland implements parking maximums and minimum densities around MAX light rail and Portland Streetcar stations (City of Portland, 2004). Along with the way in which the UGB makes infill development in the central city somewhere between attractive and unavoidable, these policies come very near requiring a transit-oriented built form in station areas in much the same way conventional development practices essentially require an automobile-oriented built form.

Tri-Met, the primary transit provider in the region, also takes an active, educational, advocacy and funding role in promoting TOD as well. This structure dovetails well with the overall regional approach to TOD in metropolitan Portland; indeed the structure of transit agency as TOD coordinator *backed by Portland's regional land use planning structure* stands in stark contrast to the San Francisco MTC's attempts to serve the same role, but without any analogous regional governing body. It also allows Tri-Met to build TOD

planning into plans for new transit corridors from the ground up, even in communities with no prior TOD experience. Tri-Met’s lead role in TOD promotion also focuses TOD policy on supporting increased transit use, which in turn supports higher service levels and increased demand for TOD. This type of virtuous cycle could well be described as the holy grail of regional TOD promotion strategies—establishing such a strong base of demand that project-level public sector interventions are primarily required to guide and shape TOD, not merely to make it happen at all. This dynamic shows through in the rigorous expectations the Portland region has of TOD projects in terms of pedestrian orientation, compactness and functional connections to transit stations and the surrounding neighborhood. Freed from the necessity to expend energy, resources and political capital attempting simply to achieve some form of TOD, planners in Portland can focus their efforts on ensuring TOD projects are as genuinely, functionally transit-oriented as possible (Cervero et al., 2004).

All of this speaks to the effectiveness of a strong, regional (and somewhat prescriptive) approach to promoting TOD; it also speaks to the necessity of building a broad, strong constituency in support of TOD. While TOD planning is often (at least implicitly) conceptualized as a largely technocratic process, Portland shows that it depends on a political process as well. Oregon Metro did not spring fully formed from the minds of a particularly enlightened group of planners, it was created by the Oregon legislature in response to a strong coalition of citizens who valued and advocated for environmental and rural land protection. That type of coalition building is not often written into regional planning documents, but Portland shows how crucial it is to creating a policy environment which can actually achieve the lofty goals that are.

6.4 Denver: A Look to the Future?

The Denver metropolitan region bears a significant resemblance to the Twin Cities in aspects that influence TOD and transit development more generally. Both are mid-sized, medium-density regions with few geographic constraints on outward expansion. Furthermore, both regions experienced their initial periods of explosive suburban growth in the second half of the 20th Century—leading to large areas of sprawled, automobile-dominated growth. Both regions are also still growing in population and employment and have become regional business and cultural centers. Crucially, neither has a legacy rail system, having abandoned rail transit altogether in the post-war period and had bus-only systems for decades.

Table 6-1 summarizes basic regional population and social characteristics of the two regions. Denver has a slightly smaller population and lower density than the Twin Cities, however, the two regions have nearly identical overall rates of transit commuting. The regions are similar in terms of basic economic indicators as well: median household incomes are quite similar, and the percentage of adults over 25 with college degrees—an important indicator for the 21st Century economy—differs by barely a percentage point.

Furthermore, both regions experienced their initial periods of explosive suburban growth in the second half of the 20th Century—leading to large areas of sprawled, automobile-dominated growth. Both regions are also still growing in population and employment and have become regional business and cultural centers. Crucially, neither has a legacy rail system, having abandoned rail transit altogether in the post-war period and had bus-only systems for decades.

Table 6-1: Comparison of Denver and the Twin Cities

Region	Population	People/Square Mile	% Transit	Median HH Income	% College Degree
Denver	2,703,972	322	4.32%	\$65,614	48.22%
Twin Cities	3,458,790	426	4.62%	\$68,778	49.48%

Source: ACS 2015

The regions differ in the extent of their modern transit systems, however, as well as in the speed and ambition of their respective programs of projects. Denver RTD currently operates 46 route-miles of light rail as well as 30 route-miles of commuter rail offering frequent, all-day, bidirectional service, as compared with 22 route-miles of light rail and 10 miles of bus rapid transit. In addition, Denver is in the midst of a 122 route-mile light and commuter rail buildout. Known as FasTracks, this program will give Denver one of the most extensive regional transit systems in the nation by 2042. The extent of Denver’s system, as well as its rapid expansion, has led to important innovations in TOD promotion in hopes of focusing regional growth on station areas in as equitable a manner as possible.

6.4.1 *Regional TOD Fund*

The Denver Regional TOD fund was established in 2010 as a partnership between the City of Denver, Enterprise Community Partners—a national non-profit focused on equitable community development (Enterprise Community Partners, 2017a)—and the Urban Land Conservancy—a Colorado non-profit focused on property acquisition for affordable housing and supportive commercial space (Urban Land Conservancy, 2017). The fund provides property acquisition loans for development and preservation of affordable housing and supportive commercial space in transit station areas. Created due to concerns the Denver region’s rapidly accelerating transit buildout could lead to wholesale gentrification—pricing out the groups most likely to use and depend on transit, the fund is currently capitalized to the tune of \$24 million. Originally operating only in the city of Denver, the fund expanded to a regional scope in 2014 (Enterprise Community Partners, 2017a).

Eligible projects include affordable multifamily housing, mixed-use developments including both affordable housing, community facilities like childcare centers, clinics, etc., and the acquisition of vacant or underutilized land for either type of development. Loans are

available within ½ mile of a current or planned rail transit station or ¼ mile of a high-frequency bus corridor. Each loan may be up to \$5 million for a term of up to 5 years (Enterprise Community Partners, 2017b).

The fund’s goal is the creation or preservation of 2,000 affordable housing units in existing and planned transit station areas by 2024. To date, the fund has participated in 8 projects, for a total of 554 new affordable housing units created and 16 existing units preserved (Enterprise Community Partners, 2017a).

The Regional TOD fund’s unique structure—as a public-non-profit partnership—allows it to grow its geographic scope as the transit system expands out into suburbs and outlying centers such as Denver International Airport and the city of Boulder. It also eases the task of cross-jurisdictional coordination in the absence of a regional governance structure with authority over land use planning.

6.4.2 *Sustainable Communities Initiative*

The Sustainable Communities Initiative was a three-year program of coordinated, interagency regional and local planning aimed at focusing regional growth into transit station areas in hopes of creating sustainable, livable urban centers arranged along transit lines at a much broader, regional scale that they had been present previously in the region. The initiative was coordinated by the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), the Denver Region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Spurred by the FasTracks transit buildout program and funded by a regional planning grant from the HUD/EPA/USDOT Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the initiative sought to have plans for transit-oriented communities in place before most FasTracks lines opened. Overall initiative goals included improving accessibility, reducing fossil fuel use, and reducing the need for automobile ownership (Jacob, Harrison, & Piro, 2015).

The initiative operated simultaneously at three scales of planning: regional, corridor and site. These parallel structures grew out of a recognition both of the unique nature of individual projects and corridors within the region and the implications all have for the region as a whole. Site-level planning focused on “catalytic projects”—developments, community infrastructure or other projects capable of serving as the germs of sustainable, transit-oriented communities.

Corridor working groups provided more intense local focus on planned transit corridors, as well as to directly consider the diversity of circumstances between stations on transit lines in vastly different parts of the region. Corridor working groups also allowed for the more direct and meaningful involvement of local stakeholder groups in planning regarding each corridor.

Regional planning focused on coordinating corridor- and site-level planning efforts in the interest of advancing five broad goals, including:

- Providing safe, sanitary and affordable housing for all residents of the region,
- Promoting public health through the creation of communities that encourage active living,
- Supporting a vibrant, resilient regional economy,
- Increasing transit accessibility throughout the region, and
- Creating transit-oriented communities—full-service communities tied together with high-quality transit allowing people of all walks of life to live independent of the automobile.

The initiative led to the outlining of a regional housing strategy calling for DRCOG to coordinate addressing housing needs at a regional scale by providing information across jurisdictional boundaries and convening local governments to work together in planning to address housing needs, provide technical and funding support to programs and initiatives that increase housing options, and directly implement programs to create and preserve diversity of housing options in transit-served and location-efficient areas. The housing strategy focuses primarily on creating a structure for addressing regional housing needs at the local level—not so much on directly producing housing.

The corridor working groups identified promising catalytic projects to focus local planning efforts on for three prominent corridors. They also conducted market readiness studies to determine which stations in each corridor are currently suited to TOD, which are emerging as potential TOD markets and which require more growth in demand to make transit-oriented communities viable. These readiness studies serve as a guide in focusing both regional and local planning and implementation support efforts along FasTracks corridors.

The sustainable communities initiative also focused on creating a new regional standard in stakeholder engagement around planning for TOD and livable communities. The stakeholder engagement aspect of the initiative also focused on identifying community priorities and unmet needs not captured by the market readiness studies and other conventional analysis. This process led to the identification of needs including fare relief for disadvantaged communities, better addressing of first mile-last mile issues and improved service to marginalized areas (Jacob et al., 2015).

6.5 Discussion of Case Studies

Each of the four regions considered in this chapter offer valuable lessons for the Twin Cities region. The WMATA Joint Development Program and the various approaches to TOD promotion in Denver offer a look at innovative approaches to TOD promotion at the project level, but which still maintain a regional perspective. As Twin Cities transitways extend into the suburbs, depending initially on large park-and-ride facilities to establish a base of ridership, the WMATA model of a regular process for pursuing transit oriented redevelopment may be highly beneficial once that base of ridership is established. In

addition, Denver's approach of a regional TOD loan fund initially capitalized with public funds, but able to essentially utilize those funds repeatedly as loans are repaid suggests a potentially valuable approach for stretching limited funds for TOD promotion.

Particularly prominent among these lessons is the value of regional coordination and/or governance for TOD promotion. Portland's even more rapid progress on TOD than the Bay Area's, despite a younger transit system and less explosive population and economic growth speaks strongly to the importance of a coherent, regional strategy for TOD backed by at least some degree of regional authority over land use planning. In addition, Portland's experience also shows just how much can be accomplished in terms of genuinely transit-oriented built forms through a regional approach with strong planning and design standards, as well as the necessity of building a strong constituency in support of regional TOD promotion. In fact, every case considered in this chapter has some mechanism for regional coordination of TOD promotion, even where, as in the Bay Area, it is a relatively weak one. While the Metropolitan Council arguably puts the Twin Cities in a strong position to pursue TOD as a regional policy, it is not clear that a regionally strong constituency in support of TOD and strong growth management more generally exists in the region at present. This suggests a need for the Council to play an educational and outreach role in laying the groundwork for TOD promotion at a regional scale. If that groundwork can be laid, however, the cases in this chapter—especially Portland and Washington—show the potential for genuinely transformative outcomes.

7 LINKAGE TO TWIN CITIES DEVELOPERS

This research continues the work begun in “Developers’ Perspectives on Transit Oriented Development” as part of the Corridors of Opportunity Initiative (Guthrie & Fan, 2016). This previous work centered on a similar series of interviews with 24 Twin Cities metro developers, aimed at identifying and removing barriers to TOD at the scale of the regional transit system. The current research aims to refine recommendations for regional TOD implementation based on the experiences of other regions—recommending policies for the Twin Cities region based on proven strategies elsewhere. The current work confirms several recommendations of the earlier study, and modifies others.

7.1 Regulatory Reform

One key conclusion of the original study was that current zoning and land use regulation regimes in the Twin Cities favor automobile-oriented development and make TOD needlessly complex and expensive by restricting density and mixing of uses, requiring excessive off-street parking, etc. We recommended the creation of a “TOD-by-right” zone for station areas, with high enough permissible densities, diverse enough permissible mixes of uses, low enough permissible parking ratios, etc. to allow a developer to simply purchase a parcel of land in a station area and build a genuinely transit-oriented, profitable project on it by right, without the need for rezonings, variances, lengthy site plan review processes, and so forth. The current research strongly supports this recommendation based on experiences from other regions.

Participants share a strong perception that conventional zoning and development regulations hinder TOD. In addition, participants from regions that have seen major zoning reforms in at least of their jurisdictions see real successes in promoting TOD as a result. The following quote from a planner in the Washington, D. C. region is illustrative:

So, clear plans that encourage that signal to the market where there is going to be support for density: [...] that has real impact on the development community, particularly if you can do anything by right or eliminate or somehow provide some fast track. I don't know what the political environment is in Minneapolis like in Portland and Seattle there's significant design buy committee so that slows things down, and so I don't know what kind of like community empowerment—I don't know if community input is advisory or it's a little bit more there's a little bit more authority so you kind of have to look at that, but to the extent that the planning process can lower barriers to production, meaning like can create a predictable approval process, then the private market will respond to that.

7.2 Continued Transit Improvements

The previous study recommended continuing and accelerating the buildout of the regional transit system—as well as regularizing its funding source so as to provide more surety of continued improvements. It is impossible to ignore the fact that the regions studied here with both the greatest successes in terms of TOD and the greatest variety of TOD promotion programs—such as Washington, D. C. and the San Francisco Bay Area—have large, regional rail systems developed over a period of decades. Put simply, the more destinations served by high quality transit, the more accessibility—and thence desirability—it provides to each potential TOD site. Beyond this simple observation, the participants in this recent research share a similar understanding of transit buildout timing as it relates to development: in both cases, only transit under construction or at least fully funded is seen as capable of attracting development, as shown by the following statement:

That really has ramped things up—once developers started seeing the concrete getting poured the actually build it, we got more interest from developers in projects.

7.3 Affordable Housing

Both participants in the current and previous studies recognize the importance of affordable housing as part of a regional TOD strategy. The previous study, however, frames affordable housing as being to some extent naturally at odds with TOD—except to the extent that TOD improves housing-plus-transportation affordability. While participants in the current research understand the potential for transit-induced housing price inflation, even transit-induced gentrification, it is important to note that they also see affordable housing as a natural ally of TOD under the right circumstances. One example of such circumstances would be a station area not yet home to rapid growth: there, quality affordable housing can represent a publicly-funded catalytic development that serves as the initial grain of sand that grows into a pearl given time.

7.4 Summary

This research lends field- and time-tested support to some of the recommendations made in previous TIRP-affiliated research: in particular the importance of reforming zoning codes and other land use regulations and of continuing and regularizing the buildout of the regional transit system. It also potentially lends more hope to efforts to make affordable housing an integral part of regional TOD strategy in the Twin Cities region. The concluding chapter will draw more general conclusions from the results of the interviews and offer specific recommendations for promoting TOD.

8 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The greatest overarching conclusion of this research is that there are no silver bullets to be found: no single strategy or simple set of strategies exists that will make system-level TOD easy or quick to achieve. Indeed, as shown in the interview results, every program, every primary TOD promotion activity is complex in its design, conditional in its application and has effects contingent on myriad factors beyond its designers' or managers' control. If there is a single conclusion to be drawn from this research it is probably nothing more than the importance of persistence in promoting TOD: regions with high degrees of success in system-wide TOD implementation have been at it for decades. They have also consistently funded TOD promotion efforts, whether in terms of planning grants, supportive public infrastructure provision and direct loan and grant financing. In addition, the existence of a region-wide coordinating structure—even in cases where significant amounts of TOD promotion work takes place at more local levels—is exemplified by the case studies. Still, what specific conclusions can we draw about how to promote TOD other than “Spend a lot of money on it in a coordinated fashion and expect it to take a long time.”? We propose three key recommendations: Focus on public investments that lift private dollars, maximize the effectiveness of constrained public resources by timing investments around new transit expansions, and build durable structures for interagency and interjurisdictional coordination.

Many of the direct public investments discussed by participants—whether investments in station area infrastructure or in specific projects themselves—have the effect of (at least eventually) attracting significantly great sums of private investment. For example: pedestrian and bicycle facilities, as well as neighborhood scale public spaces, are low-cost investments, certainly compared to even a single development. However, if by making such investments, a city, MPO or transit agency is able to convince developers that a given area is ready for TOD, those modest investments can have an impact far out of proportion to their size. Catalytic developments, such as strategically placed, community supporting affordable housing can also attract private investment much greater than their own cost.

Such catalytic investments, however, can be made much more effectively than otherwise if timed in coordination with the phasing of the regional transit buildout. Put simply: land around a planned station on a transit corridor that has yet to break ground is likely to be much less expensive and much easier to assemble than land around a completed, operating transit corridor. As future Twin Cities transit corridors extend farther into the suburbs, opportunities to guide development in areas unused to TOD will increase, but time to take full advantage of those opportunities is by no means infinite.

Our final conclusion should come as no surprise to a successful, interagency group like TIRP: implementing TOD at a regional scale is a complex process, almost invariably involving coordinating between multiple agencies and levels of government, as well as between the

public, non-profit and private sectors. It also involves the public itself, as the *decision* to proceed with the policies needed to seriously pursue TOD at a regional scale is fundamentally a political one. All these actors' interests may often align around TOD, but their goals in pursuing it are not necessarily the same, as seen in the typology of programs. This situation makes it critical to have reliable points of contact between stakeholders in the TOD promotion process, and to establish a group of interested parties who continue dialogue and mutual coordination as the process of implementing TOD in the region goes forward.

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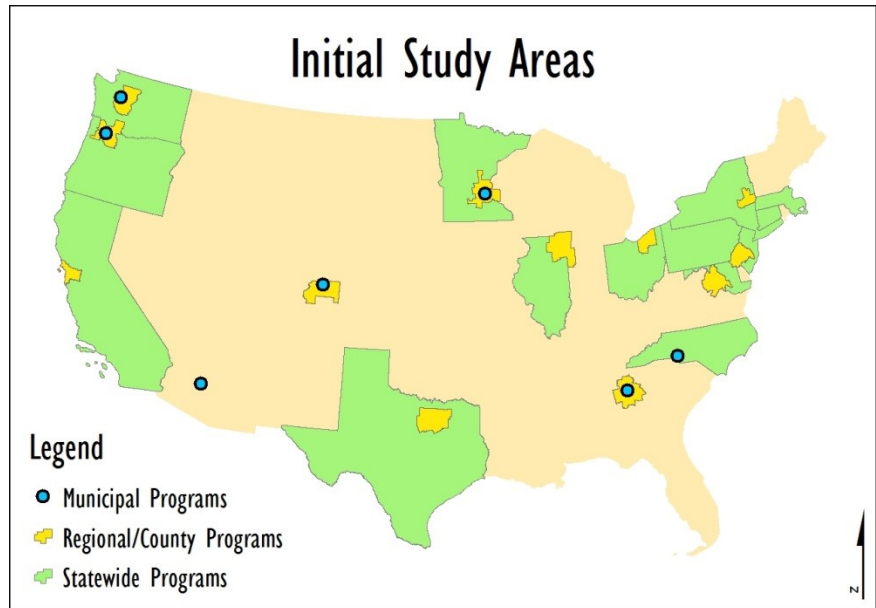
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APPENDIX A

Information Sheet for Research Specific Strategies for Promoting Transit-Oriented Development

You are invited to participate in a research study of public programs and public-non-profit partnerships aimed at promoting transit-oriented development. You have been selected as the best contact we can identify in connection with a TOD promotion program identified in an inventory of such programs conducted by Reconnecting America in 2010.

This study's purpose is to explore programs aiming to promote and support TOD on a national scale. The research will develop strategies for encouraging and accelerating station-area development that is truly transit-oriented with a particular focus on approaches which maximize the effects of limited public funding. Initially, the study will focus on __ programs in 14 states, 12 regions and 7 cities, shown at right.



Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an interview last 30-45 minutes.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private and stored securely. Only Dr. Yingling Fan, the Principal Investigator, and Co-Investigator Andrew Guthrie will have access to the records. In any report they might publish, interviewees will not be identifiable in the publication without interviewees' written permission.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Dr. Yingling Fan (principal investigator), Associate Professor and Director of Global Transit Innovations, University of Minnesota. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact Dr. Fan at yingling@umn.edu, 612-626-2930 (work), or 919-599-9333 (cell).

You will be given a copy of this information for your records.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For [planner in an MPO]

(Start with intro about research.)

So to start with, could you give a brief description of what role [your organization] plays in promoting TOD in the region, and how that relates to other agencies and governments in the region?

I'd specifically like to discuss the Transportation and Community Development Initiative—what role does TOD play in that program?

What are your agency's key goals in promoting TOD?

(If needed: How long has the [your organization] been involved in directly promoting TOD, and why did it start?)

How large a feature of the TOD-promotion work you do is coordination across multiple agencies, governments, etc.?

How does that coordination change across all the different areas you're responsible for?

Do you engage directly with developers? If so, what form does that engagement take?

How have developers responded to your efforts?

TOD has a pretty long history in [your region]—what changes have you seen over time in terms of developers' and local governments' views or the ease of actually implementing projects?

How have the [your organization]'s TOD promotion efforts changed over time?

Where do the ideas equitable TOD and affordable housing fit in? What are the key ways you pursue them?

How do you deal with new transit expansions—is there an effort to get out ahead of construction, and if so how do you approach that?

Is there anyone else in the area you would suggest speaking with?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For [the director of a municipal housing fund]

(Start with intro about research.)

So to start with, could you give a brief description of what role TOD plays in [your organization's] activities and where it fits into your goals?

Is TOD a goal in and of itself for your organization, a tool for reducing residents' housing-plus-transportation costs, or some combination of both?

How much do you work with the private, non-profit and public sectors? Do you notice any difference in projects between them?

What are some of the outcomes or results you've achieved?

What characteristics of a proposed project make it qualify as TOD for your purposes?

How does your work relate to the phasing of Seattle's transit buildout? Do you focus on planned stations, existing stations, both?

To what extent does the TOD-promotion work you do involve coordination across multiple agencies, governments and other stakeholders?

How does the amount of grant funding available compare with the demand?

Is there anyone else in the area you would suggest speaking with?

APPENDIX C

DETAILS OF TOD PROMOTION PROGRAMS DESCRIBED IN INTERVIEWS

Region	Program	Activities
Albany, NY	Linkage Planning Program	Local planning assistance program administered by MPO. Funds multimodal transportation feasibility studies, complete streets guidelines, related planning work and implementation activities. Intends to integrate transportation and land use planning and revitalize urban and town centers.
Denver, CO	Station Area Planning Grants	Local planning assistance program administered by MPO. Funds station area planning by municipalities in furtherance of a regional planning goal of 50% of new housing units and 75% of new jobs from 2005 to 2035 located in urban centers.
Denver, CO	Denver Regional TOD Fund	Non-profit managed loan fund (capitalized with public dollars) that funds property acquisition for equitable TOD, with a minimum of 70% affordable units. (In practice, most projects funded are 100% affordable.) Projects may also include community-supportive commercial uses.
Honolulu, HI	TOD Strategy	Regional and station-area planning, zoning reform and implementation effort conducted the Honolulu unified city-county government in preparation for the opening of a 20+ mile light rapid transit corridor. The Honolulu TOD Strategy is an unusually integrated program, with one local government responsible for planning, public works and transit operations at all stations, as well as zoning for all but one.
Cleveland, OH	Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative	Local planning assistance and implementation program administered by MPO and focused on integrated transportation and land use planning with an eye to livable community development. Offers planning grants and implementation grants for projects arising out of completed TLCI planning grants. Frequently funds planning and implementation of streetscape improvements, bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
Cleveland, OH	TOD Scorecard	MPO-conducted station-level TOD suitability analysis for Rapid stations. Intended to serve as a community and developer information

		measure about the capacity and demand for TOD in the Greater Cleveland region.
Seattle, WA	Rainier Valley Community Development Fund	Non-profit administered small business loan fund established in a light rail-served street corridor originally with the primary intent of helping small businesses survive construction.
Philadelphia, PA	Transportation and Community Development Initiative	MPO-led initiative supporting implementation of transportation and land use goals of regional long-range plan. Offers local planning assistance, funding for community-level transportation infrastructure improvements. Projects are located in transit corridors or existing urban centers.
San Francisco, CA	Station Area Planning Program	Local planning support grants administered by Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Focused on designated Priority Development Areas—must be infill, with transit service (regardless of mode) at least every 15 minutes weekday peak. To be eligible, the community must plan for mixed-use development with a significant housing component.
San Francisco, CA	One Bay Area Grant Program	Regional grant program administered by the Association of Bay Area Governments focused on designated Priority Development Areas, defined as above. Uses may include streetscape enhancements, bicycle and pedestrian improvements and safe routes to school programs.
San Francisco, CA	Regional Housing Need Allocation	Regional assessment of need for new affordable and market rate housing units. Mandated by state law, the RHNA directs local governments how many units of housing (and affordable housing) they must include their (also state mandated) General Plan. The RHNA allows ABAG to direct housing into transit-served areas.
Baltimore, MD/Washington, DC	Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Development	State agency involved in Maryland's unique, state-level smart growth program through supporting community infrastructure, main street revitalization projects and affordable housing. Primarily a funding agency, but also provides technical assistance, especially concerning local infrastructure financing.

Seattle, WA	Seattle Housing Levy	Special assessment on residential property in the City of Seattle used to fund production and preservation of affordable housing. Starting in 1981 as a bond, the program was reauthorized as a levy 1986, and has been further reauthorized three more times since. Has funded more than 13,000 affordable rental units, as well as assisted over 900 first-time home buyers. The levy also funds emergency rental assistance, which has served over 6,500 households to date. Most recently reauthorized in August, 2016, the current levy is expected to generate \$290 million in revenue over seven years.
Greater Washington, DC	WMATA Joint Development Program	Permanent program housed within the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to develop agency-owned land around Metro stations. Actively plans in-house for TOD on WMATA-owned land and recruits developers through a regular RFP process, also collaborates directly with developers to plan more complex developments and accepts developer-led proposals to develop at stations as well. Aims include promotion of transit ridership, compact regional growth and raising revenues for transit through ground rents.
Greater Washington, DC	Activity Centers Designation	A Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments-led program which identifies compact, walkable, predominantly transit-served areas as the primary areas into which to direct regional housing and employment growth. Activity center designations typologize centers by place type and social/economic factors as a way to guide local planning decisions to coherently serve regional goals.