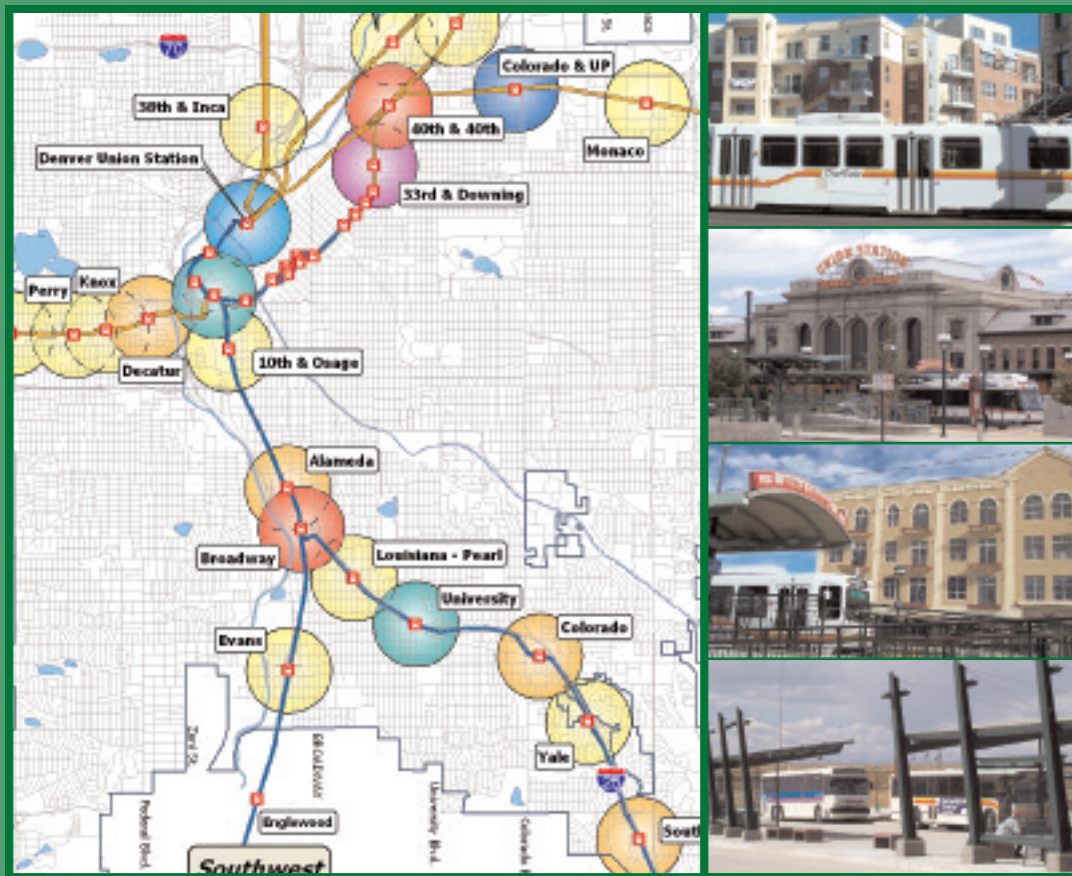


# TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

August 2, 2006





# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements . . . . .	iii
1. Executive Summary. . . . .	1
2. Introduction. . . . .	5
3. Defining Transit-Oriented Development . . . . .	9
4. The Context for TOD in Denver . . . . .	13
5. Denver's Readiness for TOD . . . . .	23
6. City-Wide Policy and Action Recommendations. . . . .	27
A. Fine-Tune Roles and Responsibilities with RTD and DRCOG . . . . .	28
B. Adopt TOD Typology and Encourage Region to Embrace a Common Definition of TOD . . . . .	28
C. Engage in Proactive Planning and Zoning . . . . .	29
D. Adopt a Package of TOD Parking and Parking Management Strategies . . . . .	30
E. Focus Funding Tools on TOD and Create New Tools . . . . .	30
F. Prepare an Affordable and Mixed-Income Housing Strategy for TOD. . . . .	31
G. Develop a Public Housing Renewal Strategy. . . . .	35
H. Other Potential City-Wide Policies . . . . .	37
7. Recommendations for Corridors and Specific Station Areas . . . . .	39
Appendices. . . . .	69
A: List of Interviewees . . . . .	69
B: Summary of Stakeholder Interviews . . . . .	71
C: Implementation Tools . . . . .	74

## Figures, Maps and Charts

Regional Transit Systems and TOD Demand. . . . .	16
Denver Regional Council of Governments Forecast . . . . .	16
Existing and Proposed FasTracks Transit System. . . . .	17
Current Denver Transit System and Linkages to Employment Centers . . . . .	18
Future Denver Transit System and Linkages to Employment Centers . . . . .	18
TOD Typology . . . . .	20
Denver Region Monthly Household Transportation Costs . . . . .	33
Denver TOD Typology and Activity Priorities. . . . .	41 & 42

Station Area Typology Map . . . . .	44 & 45
Denver Union Station . . . . .	43
Central Corridor (“C” and “D” Lines) . . . . .	46
Evans Station . . . . .	50
Southeast Corridor . . . . .	51
West Corridor . . . . .	56
East Corridor . . . . .	59
Gold Line and US-36 Corridor . . . . .	65



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

John H. Hickenlooper, Mayor

### City Council

Elbra Wedgeworth, Council President

Rick Garcia, District 1

Jeanne Faatz, District 2

Rosemary E. Rodriguez, District 3

Peggy Lehmann, District 4

Marcia Johnson, District 5

Charlie Brown, District 6

Kathleen MacKenzie, District 7

Judy Montero, District 9

Jeanne Robb, District 10

Michael B. Hancock, District 11

Carol Boigon, At-Large

Doug Linkhart, At-Large

### Planning Board

Barbara Kelley, Chair

Laura E. Aldrete

Brad Buchanan

Frederick Corn, P.E

Mr. Richard Delanoy

William H. Hornby

Mason Lewis

Ms. Judith Martinez

Bruce O'Donnell

Thomas W. Potter

Jeffrey Walker

### Community Planning and Development

Peter Park, Manager

Catherine Cox-Blair, Senior City Planner and Project Manager

Tyler Gibbs, Manager Planning Services

Steve Gordon, Development Program Manager

Eric McClelland, GIS Specialist

Phil Plenis, Senior City Planner

Karen Good, Senior City Planner

Carolyn Janssen, Graphic Design

### Consultants

Shelley Poticha, Reconnecting America, Center for Transit Oriented Development

Dena Belzer, Strategic Economics, Center for Transit Oriented Development

### Other Agencies

Bill Sirois, Regional Transportation District

# Chapter 1

# Executive Summary







*TOD is more than simply development near transit, successful TOD creates beautiful, vital, and walkable neighborhoods; provides housing, shopping and transportation choices; and generates lasting value for citizens and public and private stakeholders.*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Strategic Plan is a guide for prioritizing the planning and implementation activities of the City and County of Denver related to transit planning and transit-oriented development. City Council, Planning Board, departmental management, staff, and others will use it to:

- Set priorities for where City resources should be directed in the short, mid and long-term;
- Identify effective implementation tools, policies and strategies to facilitate transit oriented development where appropriate; and
- Ensure close coordination among City departments, staff and others as they undertake planning and implementation activities related to transit and transit-oriented development.

Community Planning and Development (CPD) worked with the Center for Transit Oriented Development (CTOD), a non-profit organization, on the strategic planning effort. To prepare this plan, CTOD staff met with key members of each City department that has a role in planning for and implementing transit and transit-oriented development, including Community Planning and Development, Public Works, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, the City Attorney's office, Council members, the Mayor's Office and the Denver Urban Renewal Agency. CTOD also met with key stakeholders from other agencies and entities, including RTD, the Denver Housing Authority, the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, Urban Land Institute and Housing Denver. In addition to these stakeholder interviews, CTOD reviewed available data and policies pertaining to TOD and visited each existing and future station area.



*Transit provides access to the region's jobs, government centers, healthcare facilities and cultural and recreational destinations.*

### The TOD Strategic Plan contains:

- **Definition of Transit-Oriented Development:** TOD is more than simply development near transit, successful TOD creates beautiful, vital, and walkable neighborhoods; provides housing, shopping and transportation choices; generates lasting value for citizens and public and private stakeholders; and provides access to the region's jobs, government centers, healthcare facilities and cultural and recreational destinations.
- **Context For TOD:** A snapshot of the trends creating a demand for development within walking distance of transit stations across the nation and in Denver.
- **TOD Typology:** A framework to help distinguish the types of places that will be linked by the transit system and frame expectations about the mix and intensity of development at specific stations.
- **Current Policies and Programs:** An inventory of policies and activities within the City and County that currently focus on TOD and an assessment of Denver's readiness to support TOD.



- **City-Wide Recommendations:** A set of recommended activities of city-wide significance that would help prepare for TOD:
  - Defining roles and responsibilities with RTD
  - Adopting TOD typology and encouraging regional TOD vocabulary
  - Conducting proactive regulatory and implementation activities
  - Adopting a package of TOD and parking management strategies
  - Creating new funding tools
  - Preparing an affordable and mixed-income housing strategy
  - Developing a public housing renewal strategy
- **Specific Station Recommendations:** A set of recommended activities for the specific station areas. The criteria used to address phasing priority and level of effort are:
  - Frequency of transit service
  - Existing land use, parcelization, and ownership patterns
  - Real estate market trends in Denver, the transit corridor, and current market activity around each specific station
  - Physical barriers that limit connectivity to the station
  - Current or future significant public investment in the station area other than the transit investment
  - Community support

Staff will be working on all of the transit corridors and station areas. However, using the above criteria, the report identifies the following stations as those that warrant immediate City action:

- Colorado (Southeast, T-REX)
- Southmoor (Southeast, T-REX)
- Decatur (West Line)
- Sheridan (West Line)
- Inca & 38th (Gold Line)
- 40th & 40th (East Corridor)
- 10th & Osage (Central Corridor)
- Alameda (Central Corridor)

## Who should use the Plan?

The TOD Strategic Plan is intended to be a guidance document for Denver staff of all departments to identify issues where additional work is needed to ensure that TOD in Denver is implemented in a way that fits with the community's long-term vision. It also identifies locations where focused efforts are either needed to set the table for high quality results or where sufficient policies and programs are in place now to let the market function.

The TOD Strategic Plan can also provide guidance for elected and appointed officials, developers and community leaders seeking answers to what kinds of change can be expected in their communities and the likely timeframe for these changes.



*10th and Osage Station*

### **How should the Plan be used?**

The TOD Strategic Plan will be consulted in annual budget reviews, as development proposals are brought forward for specific transit districts, and as Denver staff work with neighboring communities, regional agencies and other stakeholders to plan for the FasTracks program and implement Denver's TOD vision.



# Chapter 2

## Introduction



# INTRODUCTION

In November 2004, voters in the Denver Metropolitan Region passed the “FasTracks” ballot measure. The Regional Transportation District (RTD) will use sales tax revenues to fund the expansion plan of six new transit lines in the next decade. This represents a \$4.7 billion regional infrastructure investment. This ballot measure was sold to the voters, in part, on two arguments: that the region needs transportation alternatives to remain economically competitive and that clustering growth around transit stations could stimulate development of the type of neighborhoods Denver Metro residents desire. Indeed, the 119 miles of new tracks and the 70 new transit stations will provide an unparalleled level of transit access for a region of this size and, as such, could fundamentally reshape growth patterns in the region.



*Denver already has 19 transit stations, including stops downtown, behind Denver Union Station and along the “C” and “D” lines.*



*T-REX opens in November 2006 adding another seven stations.*

The City and County of Denver (Denver) is poised to take a significant leadership role in both implementing the new transit lines and focusing growth into neighborhoods and areas near some 40 transit stations. Denver already has 19 transit stations, including stops downtown, Denver Union Station and along the “C” and “D” lines. The Transportation Expansion Project (T-REX) opens in November 2006 adding another seven stations. FasTracks will add approximately 14 stations; express and local buses, and possibly streetcars to further connect residents and employees with this regional transit network. FasConnects, a complimentary timed-transfer system of buses will facilitate better connections at transit nodes. Denver will have more transit infrastructure and stations than any other city in the region. In addition, City leaders have shown a tremendous interest and willingness to “set the table” for transit-oriented development (TOD). A wide variety of activities are already underway that demonstrate the priority of TOD – from soliciting proposals for the development of Union Station to planning for specific station areas along the T-Rex line to working with the RTD to fine-tune the design of stations along the West Corridor.

Fortunately, the market for TOD is healthy and the development community is ready. A study by The Center for Transit-Oriented Development (CTOD) shows that the demand for housing near transit in the Denver region is strong and as the transit system grows that demand will also grow.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the types of households who tend to seek out transit-oriented development (TOD) – singles, couples without children, the elderly and low income minority households – are also the types of households that are projected to grow the most in this region over the next 25 years. FasTracks represents an unprecedented opportunity to capitalize on the convergence of demographic trends, consumer preferences and a willingness of residents in the region to invest in transit.

While the development community in the Denver region is increasingly aware of the opportunity presented by FasTracks, there are challenges to deliver neighborhoods that provide TOD’s signature qualities: pedestrian orientation, services within walking distance, access to jobs and housing options for a wide range of households. Many of the sites for new transit stations in Denver are located in older industrial areas with significant infrastructure needs and brownfield issues. Other stations, both new and existing, are located just a

<sup>1</sup> Hidden in Plain Sight: Capturing the Demand for Housing Near Transit.” CTOD, April 2005



block or two from established single-family neighborhoods and raise concerns from neighbors about the types of changes that may occur. Still other station areas may appear to be prime development opportunities, but upon closer examination are broken into small parcels and need to be assembled.

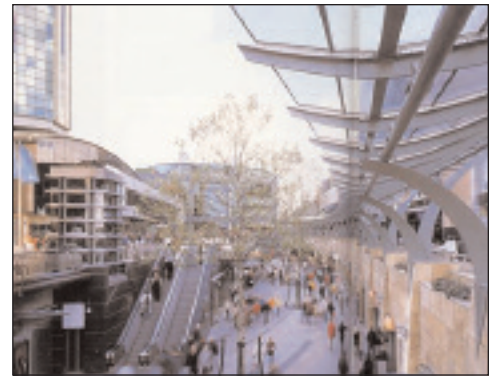
So, while TOD may be a policy priority for Denver, much more work is necessary to ready the marketplace and to ensure that what is ultimately built reflects the City's vision of community building around transit stations. Thus this TOD Strategic Plan is a guide for Denver policy-makers, management, and staff to prepare for TOD and take steps to harness the market in support of the City's long-term goals.

## Purpose of the TOD Strategic Plan

This TOD Strategic Plan (Plan) is a guide for prioritizing the planning and implementation activities of the City and County of Denver related to transit planning and transit-oriented development. The aims of the Plan are to clarify the City's role in promoting TOD and suggest a set of activities that will help remove barriers to implementing TOD. It will be used by City Council, Planning Board, the Mayor's Administration, management, staff, and others to:

- Define priorities for where City resources should be directed in the short and long-term;
- Identify effective implementation tools and strategies for TOD; and
- Ensure close coordination among City departments, staff and others as they undertake planning and implementation activities related to transit and transit-oriented development.

To prepare this Plan, Community Planning and Development worked with the Center for Transit Oriented Development (CTOD), a TOD advocacy group and staff of experts. CTOD staff met with key members of each City department that has a role in planning for and implementing transit and transit-oriented development, including Community Planning and Development, Public Works, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, the City Attorney's Office, City Council members and the Mayor's Office. Meetings were also held with key stakeholders from other agencies and entities, including RTD, the Denver Urban Renewal Authority, the Denver Housing Authority, the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, Urban Land Institute and Housing Denver. In addition to these stakeholder interviews, CTOD reviewed available data and policies pertaining to TOD and visited each existing and future station area. A list of interviewees is provided in the Appendix.



*This TOD Strategic Plan is a guide for Denver policy-makers, management, and staff to prepare for TOD and take steps to harness the market in support of the City's long-term goals.*

## Contents of the Plan

Section 1 provides an introduction to the plan.

Section 2 defines Transit-Oriented Development and identifies the benefits of this approach to development.

Section 3 provides a snapshot of the trends creating a demand for development within walking distance of transit stations across the nation and in Denver.





*Section 3 provides a snapshot of the trends creating a demand for development within walking distance of transit stations across the nation and in Denver.*

Section 4 provides a TOD typology to help frame expectations about the mix and intensity of development at specific stations.

Section 5 inventories TOD policies and activities within Denver and reports on Denver's readiness to support TOD.

Section 6 describes a set of recommended activities of city-wide significance that would help facilitate TOD.

Section 7 suggests a set of recommended activities for transit corridors and specific station areas.

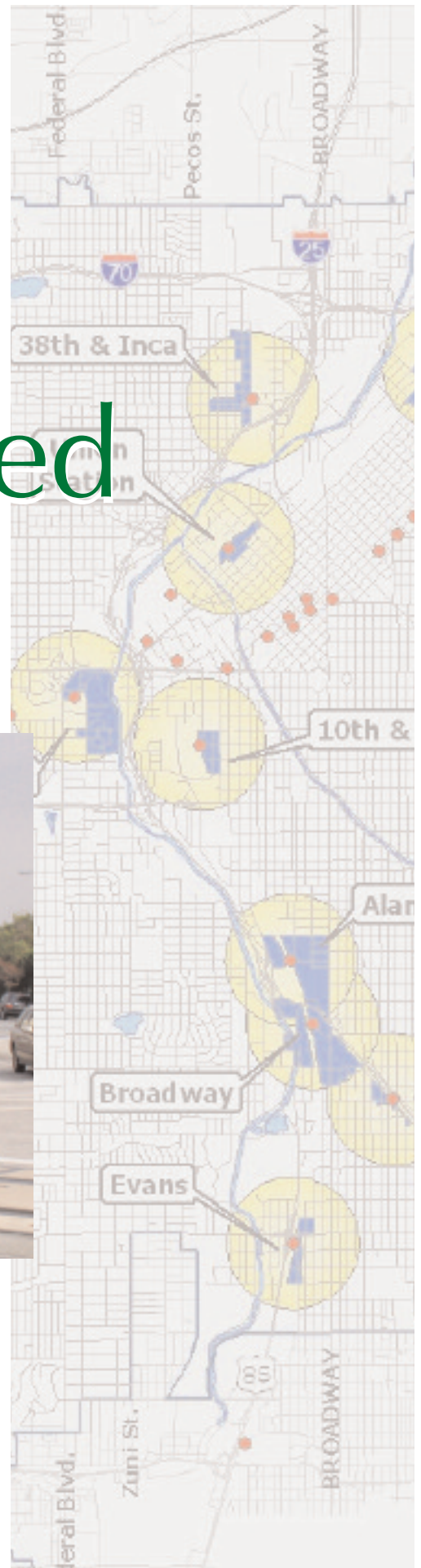
The Appendices provide background materials and additional information on specific tools.

# Chapter 3

# Defining

# Transit-Oriented

# Development







*Transit-oriented development is typically described as a mix of uses at various densities within a half-mile radius, or walking distance, of a transit stop.*



*Development experiences near transit in the Denver region demonstrate that TOD cannot be defined by a prescribed set of densities or mix of uses. Those who live in LoDo, for example, use transit more often and drive less than their counterparts in suburban communities, even though they both may live just as close to a transit station.*

## DEFINING TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Transit-oriented development is typically described as a mix of uses at various densities within a half-mile radius, or walking distance, of a transit stop. Transit-oriented development (TOD) is more than simply a project next to a transit station – it is the area surrounding the station. There are a variety of types of places that can be considered TOD.

Locating a particular mix of uses within walking distance of a station also doesn't necessarily make using transit convenient for residents or employers. Can parents drop a child off at daycare on the way to work? Can errands be done on foot? Is it possible to take a business client to lunch without having to use a car? The types of uses in a mixed-use TOD must be carefully matched with the function of the station and the needs and desires of those who live and work nearby. Indeed, "place-making" may be almost as important to TOD as transit.

Development experiences near transit in the Denver region demonstrate that TOD cannot be defined by a prescribed set of densities or mix of uses. Those who live in LoDo, for example, use transit more often and drive less than their counterparts in suburban communities, even though they both may live just as close to a transit station. The reason is that many urban neighborhoods combine density with walkable street patterns, access to transit, neighborhood amenities and an adequate mix of nearby retail and jobs, and a diverse demographic composition. Suburban neighborhoods are more likely to sit behind walls with only one entrance, lack convenient pedestrian connections, and be separated by wide thoroughfares filled with fast-moving traffic. Even though densities can sometimes be comparable to the city, residents are far more likely to drive for all trips.

TOD ought to create specific areas that integrate transit into neighborhoods and help support lively and vital communities. The types of questions that ought to be answered are: How much retail and what type are needed to serve residents and employees? How can a project provide some parking but not so much that it puts a financial burden on the development and detracts from the overall pedestrian and transit orientation? What scale and character of development is most appropriate for different contexts – a downtown versus neighborhood station?

In order to succeed, TOD should achieve five main goals (see descriptions below):

- Location efficiency
- Rich mix of choices
- Value capture
- Place-making
- Portal to the region

**Location Efficiency:** Location efficiency is the conscious placement of homes, jobs, civic uses, shopping, entertainment, parks and other amenities close to



transit stations to promote walking, biking and transit use. Location efficiency makes a region more equitable because it makes it possible for those who can't afford a car – as well as the young, elderly and those who choose not to use one – to get around. Communities with affordable housing within an easy walk of transit enable those without cars and limited resources to participate more fully in our economy.

**Rich Mix of Choices:** Choice is a defining feature of some of the best and most convenient neighborhoods, and TOD is about expanding housing, transportation and shopping choices. A neighborhood built on the principle of choice provides a range of housing options at a range of prices – single-family homes, townhomes, live-work spaces, apartments and condominiums. This allows younger and older people – who likely want smaller multi-family housing – to live alongside families, while providing for a mix of incomes. Integrating jobs and workspaces also helps address transportation problems.

**Value Capture:** Capturing value should be a key objective of TOD. For local governments, value capture can mean higher tax revenues from increased sales and property values. For the transit agency, value capture means lease revenues from joint development, increased farebox revenues, and lower costs for providing access; TOD is a more cost effective and efficient way to increase ridership than simply providing parking or bus service. For new and existing residents, TOD provides reduced household transportation expenditures – savings that can be invested in home ownership, which creates wealth – and increased convenience. For existing residents, TOD may also provide an increase in property values. Employers and retailers benefit from enhanced foot traffic, exposure and access.

**Place-making:** One of the greatest limitations to the first generation of TOD projects in cities with older transit systems such as Washington, DC, San Francisco and Chicago is that not enough attention has been paid to making them attractive, pedestrian-friendly places. To succeed:

- Places must be safe, comfortable, varied and attractive, and offer opportunities for meeting people, gathering in public places and watching the world go by.
- New development should enrich the qualities of existing places by complementing the setting.
- Places need to be easy to get to and integrated physically and visually with their surroundings.
- Stimulating, enjoyable and convenient places provide amenities to the widest array of users.
- Projects must be economically viable, well-managed and well-maintained. This means understanding the market and ensuring the long-term commitment of the community.
- New development needs to be flexible enough to respond to future changes in use.
- Places should utilize each site's intrinsic resources – the climate, landform, landscape ecology and historic qualities and resources.

**Portal to the Region:** A transit station generates activity and is a desirable “place” in which to live, open a shop or locate a workplace. At the same time it



*Places must be safe, comfortable, varied and attractive, and offer opportunities for meeting people, gathering in public places and watching the world go by.*

is a “portal” or entry point to the regional transit network, and part of a metropolitan economy composed of employment, residential, cultural, recreational and shopping amenities. Design issues abound because of this tension between a station’s role as an access point and its role as a safe, pleasant and private place to live. Understanding the station’s role in the transit system is key to planning TOD. One goal is to balance the peak hour nature of transit use by incorporating a mix of non-work uses that help generate off-peak transit riders.

## Chapter 4

# The Context for TOD in Denver







*Consumers are choosing smaller, more compact housing in neighborhoods where shops and services are within walking distance, and where high quality transit service is an option.*

# THE CONTEXT FOR TOD IN DENVER

## National Trends and Lessons Learned

Nationally, there are tremendous shifts occurring in demographics, consumer preferences, employer location strategies and transportation infrastructure investments. Consumers are choosing smaller, more compact housing in neighborhoods where shops and services are within walking distance, and where high quality transit service is an option. Regions are building more transit. Employers are looking for regions that provide the culture, amenities, “urbanity” and working transportation system that employees want.

TOD has emerged as a response to these trends. TOD, when done well, creates a mix of uses within walking distance of stations in a design that encourages walking, promotes transit ridership and provides housing choices. It places pedestrians at the heart of every design decision and thus encourages a type of development that is fine-grained, human-scaled, diverse and complex.

Unfortunately, many of the successful examples of TOD are the result of “clever exceptionalism,” and have required persistent advocacy and extraordinary public attention. In general, there are not enough good examples of TOD to showcase; there are too few developers and planners with expertise in TOD, and too few elected officials and advocates to champion exemplary projects. Thus, it is likely that without further action, the full depth of market demand will not be met. The barriers to delivering high quality projects that meet the objectives of the marketplace, succeed as places in their own right as well as nodes in regional transit systems, and improve regional transportation system performance are great.

There are six major challenges to creating high-performing TOD:

- Finding a common definition or agreement on the goals and outcomes for TOD;
- Balancing the tension between the requirements of making a project a successful place and making it a successful transportation node;
- Reducing complexity, time, uncertainty and costs in the planning and implementation phases;
- Creating a supportive regulatory and policy environment;
- Acknowledging that transit alone cannot drive real estate investments; and
- Convincing investors, developers and community leaders that the complexity and time associated with TOD generates strong returns.





## The Marketplace for TOD

The housing market in America (and the Denver region) is changing dramatically as American households get older, smaller and more ethnically diverse, and these shifting demographics are fundamentally re-scripting the American dream. While the single-family home with a two-car garage in the suburbs was the ideal for the family with a breadwinner dad, stay-at-home mom and several kids, it doesn't work nearly so well for families with two working parents and one child, single parents or for "empty-nesters" or other households with no children.

Single adults will soon be the new majority household in this country. Married couples with kids – a demographic group that made up the vast majority of households a century ago – now total just 25 percent, a number expected to drop to 20 percent by 2010. At the same time the nation's population is becoming increasingly diverse, with almost half the population expected to be non-white by 2050, and almost a third of that growth due to immigration.

Older and smaller households are going to flood the housing market with buyers and renters who are interested in smaller homes and a lifestyle that's more convenient – with entertainment, culture, sidewalk cafes, parks, and shopping all within walking distance. The evidence is mounting that people want transportation options and more housing choices – including lofts, live-work spaces, townhomes, row houses, courtyard housing and other housing types suitable for walkable, higher-density urban neighborhoods.

In Denver, the overall demand for housing near transit is expected to be very strong. In 2000, 18,600 households in the region lived within 1/2-mile of an existing light rail stop. By 2030, that demand is expected to grow to over 138,000 households or nine percent of the region's households.<sup>2</sup> This is due in part to the fact that the region is growing its transit system and development opportunities along more extensive and interconnected transit systems. In addition, homebuyers and renters are exhibiting a higher interest in locating near the transit system.



*While the single-family home with a two-car garage in the suburbs was the ideal for the family with a breadwinner dad, stay-at-home mom and several kids, it doesn't work nearly so well for families with two working parents and one child, single parents or for "empty-nesters" or other households with no children.*



*Older and smaller households are going to flood the housing market with buyers and renters who are interested in smaller homes and a lifestyle that's more convenient – with entertainment, culture, sidewalk cafes, parks, and shopping all within walking distance.*

<sup>2</sup> CTOD demand estimates, March 2006

## Regional Transit Systems and TOD Demand How Does Denver Compare?

<b>Metro Area</b>	<b>Existing Stations 2000</b>	<b>Future Stations Planned</b>	<b>TOD Households 2000</b>	<b>TOD Households 2030 Demand</b>	<b>Increase in Demand</b>
Denver Metro	27	70	18,600	138,000	742%
New York	962	30	2,951,779	5,371,866	182%
Chicago	418	9	816,351	1,503,638	184%
SF Bay Area	305	19	429,145	832,418	194%
Philadelphia	337	28	496,141	809,058	163%
Washington D.C.	169	9	252,227	688,582	273%
Portland, OR	110	22	87,465	279,891	320%
Dallas	54	23	57,017	270,676	475%
Salt Lake City	24	12	24,732	53,650	216%
Seattle	23	38	86,408	124,575	144%
San Diego	69	21	96,159	174,000	180%
Phoenix	0	30	29,116	149,360	512%

Source: CTOD

### Denver Regional Council of Governments Forecast Households and Population within 1/2 mile of Transit Stations

	<b>DRCOG Region</b>		<b>Denver</b>	
	<b>Households</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>Population</b>
2005	16,746	41,087	14,165	35,238
2015	93,651	230,281	40,781	96,219
2030	120,072	290,212	52,466	121,875

- According to DRCOG forecasts, Denver will capture 44% of the households within 1/2 mile of transit stations in 2030
- The substantial increase from 2005 to 2015 is partially attributable to the large increase in the number of stations due to the opening of the FasTracks lines
- CTOD's 2030 number of 138,000 is based on its estimate for the demand for dwelling units while DRCOG's number of 120,072 is a forecast of the supply of dwelling units based on DRCOG models.

Source: DRCOG

Minorities and immigrants are also likely to make up a significant portion of the future demand for transit-oriented housing. Historically, most immigrants and minorities have settled in cities. While this trend is changing, with more immigrants settling in suburban or even rural locations, demographers predict that most will continue to live in relatively dense urban locations (including older suburbs).<sup>3</sup> Because immigrant and minority households also tend to have lower incomes, these households tend to own fewer cars and to drive less. African-Americans, Asians and Hispanics are all more likely to use public transit or to walk,

<sup>3</sup> William Frey, *Diversity Spreads Out: Metropolitan Shifts in Hispanic, Asian, and Black Populations Since 2000*. The Brookings Institution, March 2006.



than are Non-Hispanic White Americans. For immigrants, this is also due to cultural preferences, as many came here from countries where the use of public transit is much more common.

Indeed, Denver has experienced a very strong in-migration from Latinos and Asians seeking jobs and a high quality of life. State census data show that Latinos now compose 18 percent of Colorado's population, a 75 percent change from 1990, and the Asian-American population grew 77 percent since 1990.

But perhaps the most startling figures come when income is factored into the demand for housing near transit. In 2000, 55 percent of households in the Denver region who lived near transit made less than \$35,000, compared with 33 percent of the region. By 2030 at least 52 percent of the household demand for TOD is likely to be coming from low-income households (defined as earning less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income). These trends have serious implications for the marketplace, since at least in 2003 only 35 percent of the region's households could afford the average home price of \$212,000 and had the required income of at least \$66,000.<sup>4</sup>

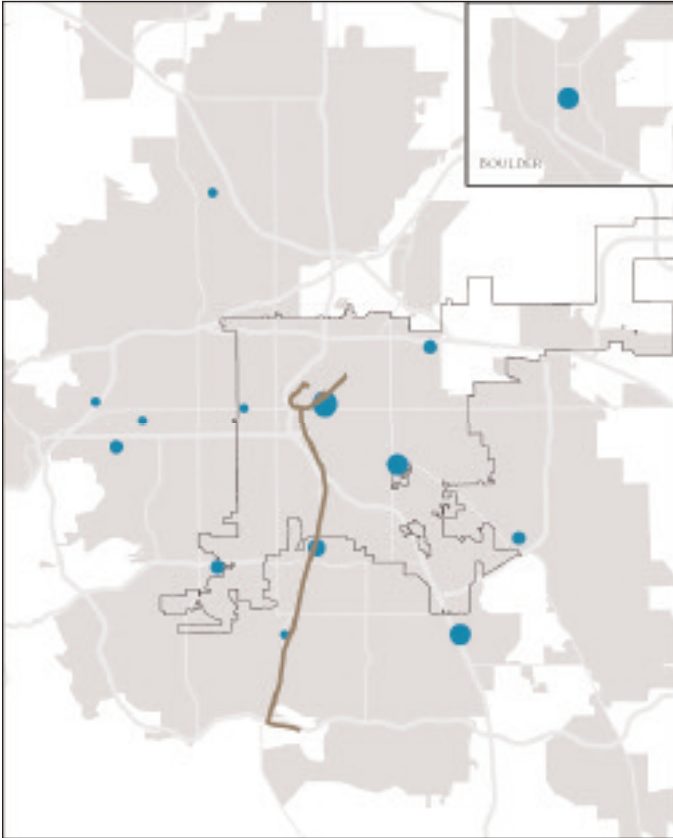


*Existing and Proposed FasTracks Transit System*

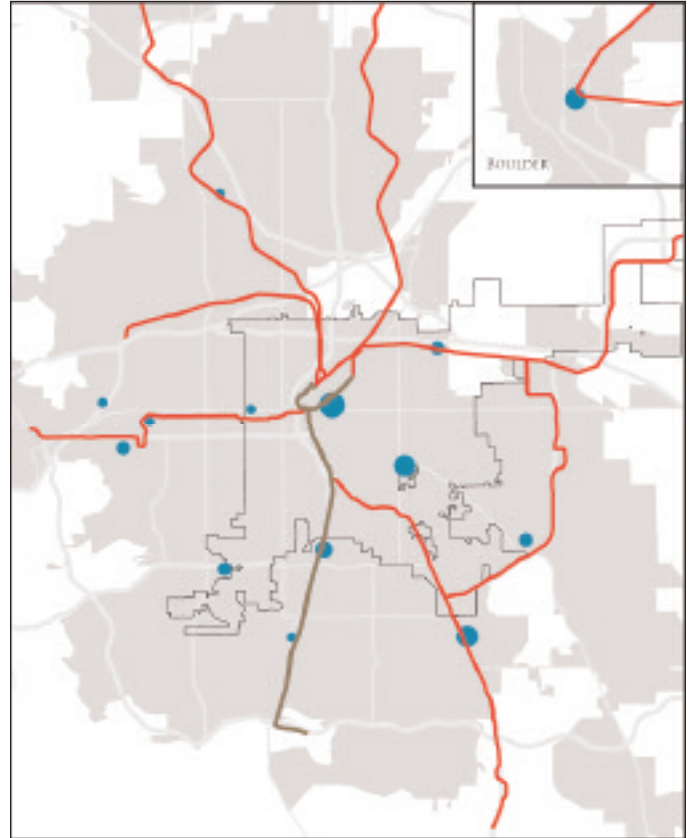
## FasTracks and Development Opportunities

Once FasTracks is built, Denver will have one of the largest transit systems for a region of its size. Not only will FasTracks reach out to suburban

<sup>4</sup> CTOD, March 2006, HUMDA Data



*Current Denver Transit System and Linkages to Employment Centers*



*Future Denver Transit System and Linkages to Employment Centers*

communities, providing transportation options for those visiting Denver's strong downtown, but it will also link neighborhoods with virtually all of the region's major employment centers. This connectivity will make it possible for a couple living in one transit station area to travel different directions to their respective jobs. It will allow low-income wage earners to save money on transportation costs, by using transit instead of owning, maintaining and operating a car.

The number of development opportunities within walking distance of existing and proposed transit stations in Denver is significant. The amount of land in transit station areas that is likely to change in use and experience new development and reinvestment in Denver is approximately 1,500 acres.

## **TOD Typology**

The standard definition of TOD – a mix of uses at various densities within walking distance of transit stations – tends to force a one-size-fits-all solution onto the different types of sites served by transit and different types of transit that serve communities. But cities and regions are sophisticated and diverse places with a multitude of conditions to serve. The types of projects that might be appropriate in older neighborhoods close to downtown are different from those that might work in new and growing areas, even with similar density goals. The TOD “typology” discussed in this section is an attempt to recognize the important differences among places and destinations within regions and then to identify appropriate performance and descriptive benchmarks for these





places. The intent is not to define TOD narrowly, but to help establish a responsive range of development in the area surrounding transit stations.

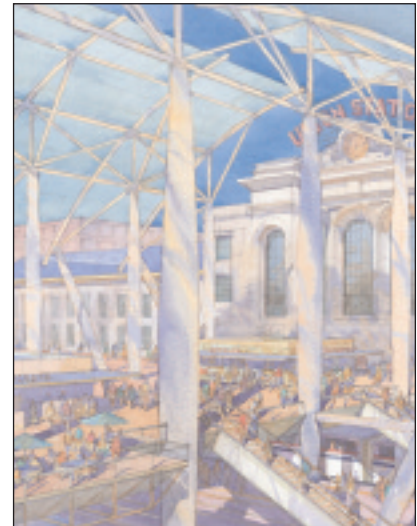
The proposed Denver TOD typology was developed after looking at each station area and its surroundings as well as considering proposed development plans and approved projects in the vicinity. The basic station area “place types” as defined by the typology are intended to provide a very general idea of the overall character of and vision for each station area without spelling out too many specific details. This typology serves two important functions. First, the place types provide enough detail so that if development proposals are submitted to the City prior to completion of a detailed station area plan, there is some basis for evaluating the proposal to determine its appropriateness given the general vision. Second, the place types provide the starting point for the station area planning process so that all of the participants in the planning process have a shared global vision from which they can work on developing the specifics of the plan itself, including an appropriate implementation strategy. By adopting this typology, the City is giving itself a flexible tool for future planning that allows for incremental decision making and effective policy guidance even without a detailed area plan.

Along with adopting the TOD Typology itself, there are six major “principals” or topic areas that should be addressed in each station area plan to ensure that each plan addresses the full range of issues associated with creating excellent transit oriented neighborhoods and districts, even if they evolve incrementally over time. These six principals are:

- 1. Design Guidelines** – These would include “rules” for establishing expectations about the quality and character of the built environment.
- 2. Land Use Mix and Placement** – A land use pattern should be established for the station area that will make each use successful while contributing to the overall synergism that defines good TOD. For example, special attention will be given to putting retail uses in locations where they have appropriate visibility and access, which may not be directly adjacent to the transit station.
- 3. Circulation and Connectivity** – Although cars must be taken into account, station area plans must plan for balanced mode choices so that people can walk or bike around the area just as easily as they can drive or ride on a bus.
- 4. Station Access and Station Planning** – Planning for the transit station itself must be considered in light of the various methods people will use to access the station including, walking, biking, driving and parking, kiss and ride, and bus. Station design and access must also respond to local neighborhood conditions so that all of these activities work together seamlessly.
- 5. Public Realm** – All station areas need good public spaces so that people feel comfortable and welcome. While these public spaces may include parks and plazas, streets and sidewalks are also critical components of the public realm and must be given careful treatment as part of any station area planning process.



*Although cars must be taken into account, station area plans must plan for balanced mode choices so that people can walk or bike around the area just as easily as they can drive or ride on a bus.*



*All station areas need good public spaces so that people feel comfortable and welcome. While these public spaces may include parks and plazas, streets and sidewalks are also critical components of the public realm and must be given careful treatment as part of any station area planning process.*



TOD Typology	Desired Land Use Mix	Desired Housing Types	Commercial/Employment Types	Proposed Scale	Transit System Function
Downtown	Office, retail, residential, entertainment, and civic uses	Multi-family and loft	Prime office and shopping location	5 stories and above	Intermodal facility/transit hub. Major regional destination with high quality feeder bus/streetcar connections.
Major Urban Center	Office, retail, residential, entertainment	Multi-family and townhome	Employment emphasis, with more than 250,000 office & 50,000 sf retail	5 stories and above	Sub-Regional destination. Some Park-n-ride. Linked with district circulator transit and express feeder bus.
Urban Center	Office, retail, residential	Multi-family and townhome	Limited office. Less than 25,000 sf office. More than 50,000 sf retail	3 stories and above	Sub-Regional destination. Some Park-n-ride. Linked with district circulator transit and express feeder bus.
Urban Neighborhood	Residential, neighborhood retail	Multi-family townhome, small lot single-family	Local-serving retail. No more than 50,000 sf	2-7 stories	Neighborhood walk-up station. Very small Park-n-ride, if any. Local bus connections.
Commuter Town Center	Office, retail, residential	Multi-family townhome, small lot single-family	Local and commuter-serving. No more than 25,000 sf	2-7 stories	Capture station for in-bound commuters. Large Park-n-ride with local and express bus connections.
Main Street	Residential, neighborhood retail	Multi-family	Main street retail infill	2-7 stories	Bus or streetcar corridors. District circulator or feeder transit service. Walk-up stops. No transit parking.
Campus/Special Events Station	University Campus, Sports Facilities	Limited multi-family	Limited office/retail	Varies	Large Commuter destination. Large parking reservoirs but not necessarily for transit.

See pages 41-42 for a list of all the stations and their typology and the map on pages 44-45.

**6. Parking** – Parking ratios for all of the land uses within the station area must be considered to ensure that they are as low as is appropriate given the level of transit service and walkability. This will help to lower development costs and decrease local traffic. but parking for the transit station should also be evaluated in a holistic manner to ensure that its placement and total number of spaces make a positive contribution to the station area, rather than creating a large barrier or obstacle between the station and the local neighborhood/district.



*Downtown*



*Major Urban Center*



*Urban Center*



*Urban Neighborhood*



*Commuter Town Center*



*Main Street*



*Campus/Special Events Station*



## Chapter 5

# Denver's Readiness for TOD





# DENVER'S READINESS FOR TOD

As mentioned above, the market for TOD in Denver is strong and likely to continue to be strong as the FasTracks system is built out. But the market cannot accomplish TOD by itself. It needs strong public-sector partners, including the City, Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), the Regional Transit District (RTD) and the other cities in the region.

CTOD prepared a policy inventory to evaluate the Denver's readiness for TOD. The following summarizes key findings from this analysis.



*Many City departments have plans in place, or are developing plans, that recognize TOD and/or support TOD principles.*

## Current Plans and Policies

Many City departments have plans in place, or are developing plans, that recognize TOD and support TOD principles. Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000, Blueprint Denver, the Strategic Transportation Plan, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans, the Parks and Recreation Department's "Game Plan," the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy, "Greenprint" Denver and the Sanitary and Stormwater master plans all mention Transit and TOD to one degree or another. In addition, Public Works has responsibility for coordinating with RTD during construction of the FasTracks transit lines and to look beyond the rapid transit system to create a complementary network of bus routes and possibly streetcar lines. Community Planning and Development (CPD) and Public Works are tasked with working with RTD and their consultants to monitor the efforts to locate new transit maintenance facilities and re-locate the City's existing Decatur maintenance and operations facility.

There are other plans and policies that can help further implement TOD, including the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy, DURA's Urban Renewal Areas, the Industrial Lands Study, Special Districts and the Charter Districts that help finance public infrastructure. Furthermore, there are a number of station area plans and general development plans adopted or underway for specific locations, including Denver Union Station, the Cherokee and Lionstone properties at the former Gates Rubber Company (Broadway Station), Belleview Station, Colorado Center and the Louisiana-Pearl Station Plan. In addition there is a corridor plan adopted and new zoning language for East Colfax and a similar effort is underway for West Colfax Avenue. These plans demonstrate progress in key areas.

## Additional Activities Needed to Help Support TOD

Despite this set of substantive foundational activities, the following gaps were identified:

- **Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities with RTD:** The transit agency is tasked with planning, designing and building new transit infrastructure on time and on budget. They are under tremendous pressure to be cost effective. Yet they also have a vested interest in supporting TOD, since dense development near transit provides a stable base of riders, improves farebox revenues and can increase the value of



their own property and the system investment. Though RTD has worked in partnership with the City and has signaled a desire to form a closer working relationship, the definition of roles and responsibilities, particularly related to corridor and station area planning is not well defined. This can lead to confusion on the part of citizens and the development community.

- **Proactive Regulatory and Implementation Activities:** Several departments have done a considerable amount of city-wide planning and staff has established strong inter-departmental processes for responding once a specific project is proposed. However, few examples exist for working pro-actively in neighborhoods to implement the goals of city-wide plans. Establishing strong, interdepartmental, working relationships is particularly important for TOD, as the size of the endeavor is tremendous and it is unlikely that the terms of each and every TOD project can be negotiated efficiently.
- **Housing Preservation and Diversity:** Gentrification is a concern for particular transit corridors and the need for housing that is affordable to the lowest income households is strong throughout the region. While the inclusionary housing ordinance helps build affordable ownership housing in Denver and funding and tools are available for building affordable housing (ownership and rental) city-wide, these resources are not necessarily targeted to neighborhoods that have or will have high frequency transit service. Since low income households are often dependent on transit for transportation and the cost of owning a car can consume a disproportionately large part of a low income household's budget, there is a strong public policy basis for targeting housing production and preservation programs within transit station areas.
- **Jobs:** Determining where, how, and what types of jobs should locate near transit stations and how the City can help guide the proper mix of uses at specific sites is essential to TOD planning. The City must work to increase the likelihood that local residents will benefit from planning, design, construction and maintenance of transit and TOD in regards to employment and economic development.
- **Parking:** Parking is another area where there are gaps in information and a lack of tools to help establish appropriate standards. As the transit network matures, a more robust set of tools for locating commuter and shared parking facilities may be needed, as well as guidance for calibrating on-site parking standards, managing parking impacts in existing neighborhoods, and anticipating park-n-ride redevelopment.
- **Parks and Open Space:** As Denver becomes denser, open space and access to trails and recreation are likely to be in high demand. Though the "Game Plan" calls for both urban parks and trails, few resources are available to pay for new public parks, facilities and required on-going maintenance.
- **Funding Tools:** In some cases, available financing tools are insufficient for TOD. For example, Denver staff recognizes that streetscape improvements that go beyond the immediate station area will be important to promote connectivity and pedestrian access from surrounding neighborhoods. However, they feel that they do not have the financial tools to assess developers or property owners for the cost of



*As the transit network matures, a more robust set of tools for locating commuter and shared parking facilities may be needed, as well as guidance for calibrating on-site parking standards and managing parking impacts in existing neighborhoods.*



*As Denver becomes denser, open space and access to trails and recreation are likely to be in high demand.*

these improvements. Similarly, there may be a desire in some locations to strategically purchase properties for later development as TOD, affordable housing, or both. Denver does not yet have a land banking program or strategic land acquisition fund

- **A level regional playing field:** The City and County of Denver is only one of eight counties that will touch the transit network while the marketplace is generally blind to the specific boundaries of one city over another. There is a danger that if the region doesn't collectively agree on a definition for TOD and the location of major job and commercial centers, the various communities that could benefit from TOD will be competing against each other for a larger piece of the pie. A proposed system-wide TOD Market Analysis should help reduce unnecessary competition by identifying opportunities and constraints and offering a development phasing strategy.

## Chapter 6

# City-Wide Policy and Action Recommendations





# CITY-WIDE POLICY AND ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementing TOD will involve both short and long-term actions, as well as city-wide and site specific activities. This section identifies a suggested set of activities and tools to address the policy gaps identified in the previous section.



*Application of the workshop format to corridors will be very helpful in conducting the corridor and regional conversations concerning TOD.*

## A. Fine-Tune Roles and Responsibilities with RTD and DRCOG

Construction of the FasTracks system requires close coordination between RTD and the cities and counties that touch the new transit lines. This impressive build-out of a system must meet stringent time constraints and budget parameters in order to satisfy both federal and local funding requirements. Since TOD is now seen as a fundamental element of the region's transit system and recognized by FTA, development and redevelopment sites should be identified early in the transit planning process and roles and responsibilities for supporting TOD should be clearly defined among agencies.

RTD and the City should work closely together to engage in corridor planning that maximizes the opportunities for TOD. Together RTD and the City should undertake station area planning so that station facilities and access improvements fit closely with Denver's long-term community development desires and new improvements are designed to maximize walking access and the goals of TOD whenever possible. The West Corridor workshop initiated by RTD in February 2006 is a great initial step in this effort. Application of the workshop format to other corridors will be very helpful in conducting regional conversations concerning TOD. RTD has also created a TOD Strategic Plan for the agency which assists in defining the role of each entity in TOD and provides a procedure for working with the transit agency on joint development opportunities.

**Leads:** Public Works/Community Planning and Development

### **Current Efforts:**

- DRCOG TIP Funding Process
- RTD TOD Strategic Plan
- West Corridor Working Group and other Corridor Workshops
- Regional TOD Market Study with DRCOG

## B. Adopt TOD Typology and Encourage Region to Embrace a Common Definition of TOD

One of the most frequent failures of TOD is a lack of a common vision for the type, scale and mix of development in a TOD District. The TOD Typology (see section 4) helps clarify expectations for new development, alleviate concerns about inappropriately scaled development at transit stations and guide incremental decisions on infrastructure and project approvals. The TOD Typology is not a binding regulatory tool, but is a vocabulary for defining a



common vision for development of a transit station area. At the regional scale, where individual transit lines cross multiple jurisdictions, the TOD typology can help build a common understanding of the types of places each city is planning to promote along the transit line and help illuminate opportunities for and challenges to appropriately-planned TOD.

**Leads:** Community Planning and Development/All departments and agencies

**Current Efforts:**

- RTD Strategic Plan
- DRCOG TOD Coordination
- West Corridor Coalition
- Zoning Code Task Force

## C. Engage in Proactive Planning and Zoning

There are several key tools that the City can use to identify priorities for station area development and direct future land use decisions. Each of these tools is a vehicle for translating city-wide goals to neighborhoods and districts. They also help set the context for negotiations on specific projects.

**Development Framework Plans** – There are a number of existing and planned transit stations in Denver that will require considerable redevelopment in order to achieve transit-oriented development. In particular, TOD works best where pedestrians have safe and easy access to the transit station. A Development Framework Plan stops short of a “full station area plan”, and focuses on identifying the location of new pedestrian, bike and auto routes, open spaces, as well as a financing strategy for public improvements in the transit zone.

**Station Area Plans** – A Station Area Plan defines the overall vision, specific land use mix, circulation patterns, urban form, open space and other public amenities for the area within walking distance of a transit stop. Typically, a station area plan should cover no less than 1/2 mile from a fixed rail stop. A station area plan should include recommendations and an implementation program that identifies the steps necessary to realize the plan’s recommendations, inter-departmental and inter-agency roles and responsibilities, financing tools for constructing and operating public facilities, and leveraging private investment.

**Proactive Zoning** – Denver currently amends the zoning code for specific properties in response to developer-initiated requests. This reactive approach often pits the developer against specific neighborhood interests and does not consider the ways in which a single project may impact the overall land use pattern within a given neighborhood or district. Denver is engaged in an on-going effort to improve the development review process and revamp the zoning code.

A rezoning process that precedes specific development requests will help establish the long-term development vision for the area. Proactive zoning can also give the City greater flexibility to explore an unusual mix of uses, allow for rezoning multiple properties at one time to create more cohesive



*TOD works best where pedestrians have safe and easy access to the transit station.*



*A Station Area Plan defines the overall vision, specific land use mix, circulation patterns, urban form, open space and other public amenities for the area within walking distance of a transit stop. Typically, a station area plan should cover no less than 1/2 mile from a fixed rail stop.*



*A code that regulates the built form, as much as the types of uses that occur in buildings, such as form-based codes, can be an effective tool to clarify expectations from developers and alleviate citizen concerns about intensification in existing neighborhoods.*



*Experience relating to the redevelopment of the Gates Rubber Company property (Cherokee and Lionstone projects at the Broadway Station) was cited as a situation where required parking was reduced with little evidentiary basis.*

development projects, and provide for greater dialog with neighbors without having to respond to a particular project. This approach to rezoning can also be used as an incentive to encourage development in high priority areas.

**Form-Based Zoning Codes for Transit Districts** – A code that regulates the built form, as much as the types of uses that occur in buildings, such as form-based codes, can be an effective tool to clarify expectations from developers and alleviate citizen concerns about intensification in existing neighborhoods. Denver has recently adopted a form-based code for East Colfax Avenue with an immediate positive response from both the development community and neighbors. A similar approach should be used in conjunction with station area plans and proactive zoning efforts.

**Leads:** Community Planning and Development/Public Works (infrastructure, parking) Housing and Neighborhood Development, Parks and Recreation

**Current Efforts:**

- Zoning Code Task Force
- CPD Work Program
- Parking Commission/Policy Group

## **D. Adopt a Package of TOD Parking and Parking Management Strategies**

Experience relating to the redevelopment of the Gates Rubber Company property (Cherokee and Lionstone projects at the Broadway Station) was cited as a situation where required parking was reduced with little evidentiary basis. As the transit network matures, a more robust set of tools for locating commuter and shared parking facilities may be needed, as well as guidance for calibrating on-site parking standards. The City should create a TOD Parking Toolkit that establishes a wide variety of strategies. Strategies may include: calculating the number of parking spaces needed in a TOD project; establishing and operating car-share programs and valet bike parking facilities; siting, designing and funding shared parking structures; creating the ability to establish parking districts under Colorado law; and establishing permit parking programs in residential neighborhoods.

**Leads:** Public Works/Community Planning and Development/Budget Management Office/RTD/Denver International Airport

**Current Efforts:**

- Parking Commission/Policy Group
- Station Area Planning
- T-REX Implementation

## **E. Focus Funding Tools on TOD and Create New Tools**

The City has significant experience with and mechanisms for financing public improvements in association with specific development proposals. Indeed, financing on-site streets and public plazas has been successfully executed through various mechanisms. Far fewer tools are currently available to build off-site and regional improvements that help connect existing neighborhoods





to station areas or improve the physical environment in the neighborhood. Indeed, transit works best if pedestrians can easily walk or bike to the station from their neighborhoods, rather than driving to a parking lot a short distance from home. Since many of the planned station sites are located in underutilized areas or near existing established neighborhoods, the need for funding tools to create new infrastructure in underutilized areas and to improve connectivity in existing neighborhoods is particularly important. Many other communities with transit are using Assessment Districts or Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to capture some of the value created by TOD to help pay for these kinds of facilities. Others are creatively tapping parking meter revenues or other fees. Specific recommendations for TOD in Denver include:

- Work with DURA and city staff to determine the most appropriate application of TIF to fill a gap to finance needed infrastructure, parks, plazas, shared parking and additional affordable housing.
- Plan and launch a campaign for a General Obligation Bond that would be dedicated to construction of public infrastructure in TOD districts.
- Tie creation of special districts, authorization of tax increment financing (TIF) and other public funding mechanisms to additional affordable housing, parks, plazas, street improvements and shared parking.

**Leads:** Budget Management Office/Community Planning and Development/  
DURA/Revenue/Attorney's Office/Public Works  
Development Council  
Possibly convene new group

#### **Current Efforts:**

- Capital Improvement Program
- General Obligation Bond Discussions

## **F. Prepare an Affordable and Mixed-Income Housing Strategy for TOD**

Even if all the challenges of building TOD were solved and developers were able to deliver TOD projects with few regulatory and permitting hurdles, the strength of the Denver housing market and the limited number of development sites in the region means that it is likely that mixed-income housing will be difficult to achieve in TOD. Though the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance applies to large, ownership housing projects, there is significant potential for a majority of the new development near transit in the region to be unaffordable to low income households, for displacement to occur in some existing low income neighborhoods, and to upset the balance of what are presently diverse mixed-income neighborhoods.

A focused effort will be required to make it possible for development to occur near transit that is affordable to a wider range of incomes than the market would otherwise provide. Growing the supply of TOD overall will help alleviate the pressures of price escalation, as will increasing residential densities near transit; if more mixed-income neighborhoods are built, gentrification



*Transit works best if pedestrians can easily walk or bike to the station from their neighborhoods, rather than driving to a parking lot a short distance from home.*



*A focused effort will be required to make it possible for development to occur near transit that is affordable to a wider range of incomes than the market would otherwise provide.*



pressures in stable neighborhoods will lessen and new housing opportunities may emerge in weaker market areas.

But growing the supply of housing won't necessarily solve all affordability problems. A variety of strategies are needed to ensure that housing is affordable to low and very low-income households so that these households – the households that are most transit dependent – can also have good access to the affordable transportation options offered by FasTracks. Locating more mixed-income and affordable housing near transit stations lessens the household expenditures for transportation costs. (See figure on facing page)

The types of strategies that can help promote income diversity in TOD include:

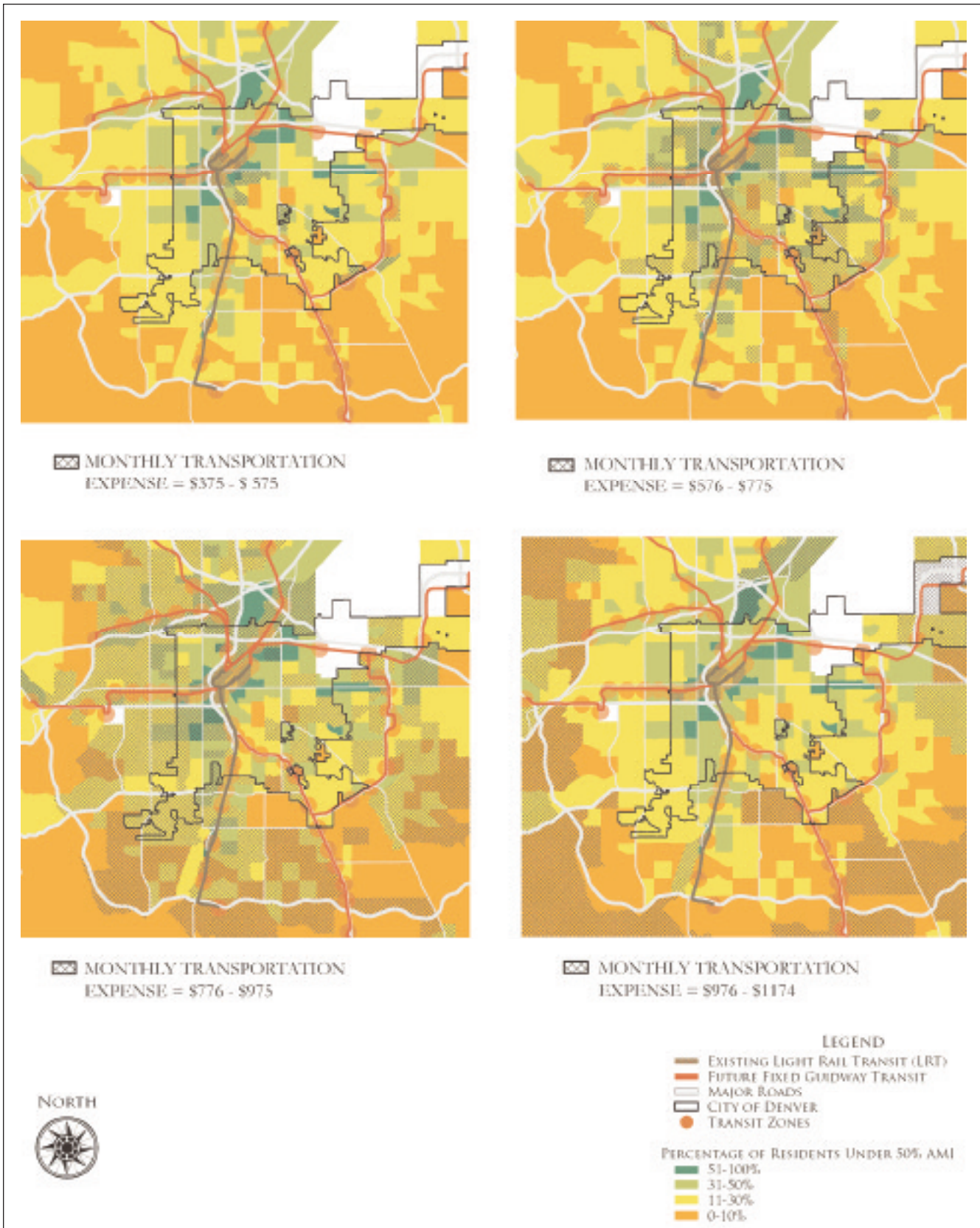
- Work with other cities in the region to adopt and implement Comprehensive Plan policies that support mixed-income TOD and jobs connected to transit, inclusionary housing programs and other tools to support mixed-income housing.
- Consider the provision of affordable housing when determining the allocation of public assistance to development projects.
- Increase the opportunity for second units in neighborhoods served by transit (e.g. accessory).
- Explore a mechanism for requiring affordable rental housing in conjunction with rezoning land.
- Increase inclusionary housing zoning requirements at transit station locations.
- Direct renter-to-owner and first time homebuyer grants for transit-area housing.
- Establish a city revolving loan fund for multi-family residential building renovation in exchange for maintaining affordable rental housing for 20 years.
- Establish a property acquisition/land banking fund for transit-oriented mixed-income housing. Identify entities that can purchase and hold land. Identify sources of funding to acquire land for future affordable units.
- Pursue Transit Village Act legislation at the State level that provides broader financing tools for TOD (commercial and residential); a revolving infrastructure fund for street connectivity improvements; a city land acquisition, banking and assembly fund; and prioritize TOD for 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits.
- Request the Colorado Housing Finance Authority to prioritize low-income housing tax credits (both 9% and 4%) for TOD like Denver currently prioritizes for homelessness.
- Reduce zoning parking requirements for affordable housing in TOD areas.
- Encourage housing developers to include transit passes in the rent to attract households who are transit dependent.
- Create a pilot project to develop family, mixed-income housing near transit stations.



*Consider the provision of affordable housing when determining the allocation of public assistance to development projects.*



*Reduce zoning parking requirements for affordable housing in TOD areas.*



Denver Region: Monthly Household Transportation Costs

There are two types of TOD opportunities along the Denver transit system:

- Transit stations in existing neighborhoods
- Transit stations with significant development/redevelopment opportunities

Given the physical, economic and social conditions in these places, different strategies are suggested in these places to promote mixed-income housing. Some of these strategies are duplicative but expand on the previous section:



*A majority of the proposed stations along the West Corridor (Knox and Perry stations) and the Gold Line (38th and Inca station) are presently surrounded by neighborhoods of predominately single-family homes.*



*In some cases, particularly along the Welton Street Corridor and the West Corridor, these single-family homes are often occupied by renters, who have the potential to be pushed out by rising rents and/or property sales.*

**Transit Stations in Existing Neighborhoods** – A majority of the proposed stations along the West Corridor (Knox and Perry stations) and the Gold Line (38th and Inca station) are presently surrounded by neighborhoods of predominately single-family homes. There are few large sites that will evolve with high density development. The types of changes that are likely to occur are more incremental, as absentee owners sell to new families, single family homes are replaced with duplexes and developers aggregate two or three small parcels to build slightly larger projects. Zoning is often a mix of R-1 and R-2. The quality of housing in these areas is often poor and a gradual transition to a mix of single-family homes, duplexes and small groupings of townhomes is desirable from the point of view of building transit ridership and improving the quality of housing. In some cases, particularly along the Welton Street Corridor and the West Corridor, these single-family homes are often occupied by renters, who have the potential to be pushed out by rising rents or property sales. Strategies that would help improve the quality of housing and help maintain opportunities for existing low-income households to live in these neighborhoods include:

- Develop a Pattern Book that provides a template of desired and preferred building types for housing in a defined area. Denver should consider preparation of a Pattern Book for infill housing in urban R-2 zones around transit stations that illustrates preferred building massing, orientation, design and materials so that new projects fit with the neighborhood character. A similar pattern book could also be prepared for TMU zones. This Pattern Book should be an educational tool to demonstrate how small, low-cost housing and multi-generational housing could fit with the scale and character of older neighborhoods. The Pattern Book concept should be examined as a part of the project to re-write the Denver Zoning Code.
- Create a renter-to-owner program focused in several of the neighborhoods vulnerable to displacement and gentrification. Monitor these neighborhoods over the next five years for displacement activity.
- Target DHA's Section 8 Homeownership Program and scattered site rental housing to these neighborhoods. New units should meet the Pattern Book guidelines.

### **Transit Stations with Significant Development/Redevelopment Opportunities**

– TOD sites designated as Urban Centers and Major Urban Centers have sufficient land to develop large mixed-use projects. These sites have greater flexibility (per the TOD Typology) to provide a mix of market-rate and affordable housing. Indeed, savvy developers will provide a wide range of housing types that are targeted to diverse incomes in order to build stability into their project economics and the flexibility to respond to changing market





conditions. But it is likely that market-rate developers will not build more affordable ownership units than required by the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance or a sufficient number of rental units that are affordable to very low income households. Thus, a series of activities should be undertaken by the City to ensure significant income diversity at these sites:

- Consider refining the inclusionary requirements for these TODs to increase the percentage of affordable ownership units and perhaps reduce the minimum requirements when it applies to below 30 units. In exchange, the City should provide assistance to developers in obtaining housing tax credits and access to other housing subsidies.
- Monitor efforts to establish a statewide affordable housing trust fund. In the past, these efforts have been unsuccessful because of the difficult task of identifying an ongoing source of funding. If formed, the City should then direct these funds to fill financing gaps in mixed-income TOD projects or commission construction of affordable ownership and rental units.
- Create a City property acquisition/land banking fund to purchase lands in these TODs and write down the cost of land for affordable housing.
- Target the low income housing tax credits administered by the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) and other housing subsidies to TOD sites.
- Maintain the existing regional allocation of private activity bonds set aside for TOD.

**Leads:** Housing and Neighborhood Development/Community Planning and Development/Denver Urban Renewal Authority/CHFA

**Current Efforts:**

- Housing Task Force
- Zoning Code Task Force
- Parking Commission/Policy Group

## G. Develop a Public Housing Renewal Strategy

The Denver Housing Authority (DHA) is a separate government entity in charge of public housing projects, the Section 8 program and other programs. DHA is an integral partner in the effort to cultivate more mixed-income communities at transit stations. There are three public housing projects located adjacent to existing or planned transit stations where redevelopment is a possibility:

- South Lincoln Park Homes (270 units) – 10th and Osage station
- Sun Valley (333 units) – Decatur Station
- Westridge (210 units) – Knox Ct. Station

Though each site has a different set of physical and functional considerations, the proximity to transit and the relationship of these projects to prospective market rate development is important to consider. This plan suggests addressing South Lincoln Park/10th and Osage separately from Sun Valley and Westridge. However the strategies and financing for redevelopment may be similar for all three sites. Exploring a local Hope VI type approach (e.g. mixed-income) should be considered.



*Affordable Housing project under construction near Welton Street.*



*South Lincoln Park Homes*





*There are two vacant sites immediately adjacent to the 10th & Osage transit station totaling three acres. These properties are presently owned by RTD and Denver has expressed an interest in purchasing them for the purposes of supporting transit-oriented development.*

**South Lincoln Park/10th and Osage** – There are two vacant sites immediately adjacent to the transit station totaling three acres. These properties are presently owned by RTD and Denver has expressed an interest in purchasing them for the purposes of supporting transit-oriented development. In addition, RTD is considering the location of a light rail maintenance facility in the vicinity west of the station area at the Burnham Yard. Excess land may become available as a part of that process. Denver must work closely with RTD to make sure that excess land can be incorporated into a larger redevelopment strategy.

There are infrastructure issues associated with the current housing that need immediate attention. Some of the units along 10th Avenue are not configured to provide good connectivity to the station or any new development. Though the remaining public housing units are in fairly good condition and are not presently a safety concern for the surrounding neighbors, there is a long-term interest in seeing this area move toward greater income diversity and provide stronger linkages to transit. Recommended strategies include:

- The City should identify a project manager and a multi-disciplinary team to be responsible for all development planning and implementation in this area; a DHA representative is also critical since the technical and funding issues associated with changing any aspect of the public housing requires specific skills and knowledge. A (re)development strategy should be prepared for the RTD properties and a portion of South Lincoln Park Homes that provides for dense, mixed-income housing on the RTD lands, rebuilds the public housing along 10th Avenue to face new development on RTD lands and strengthens pedestrian linkages from the station to the surrounding neighborhood. A long-term phasing strategy should consider the feasibility of redeveloping the full site into mixed-income housing.



*Sun Valley Homes*

**Sun Valley and Westridge Homes/Decatur Station** – The area surrounding the Decatur transit station is one of the largest TOD opportunities in Denver and the one with the greatest potential for creating a new, thriving transit-oriented district close to Downtown and overlooking the South Platte River. With over 125 acres, this district could accommodate at least 5,000 new residents living in a mix of towers with views and low-rise, mixed-income housing; new streets and intimate public parks could make this area one where it is easy to live with one less car and attractive to spend time outdoors. The connection to the river makes this area a prime opportunity for active living.

The sheer size of the area and the fact that many of the parcels are publicly-owned, make this site a strong TOD opportunity. Sun Valley in particular, and to a lesser extent Westridge Homes, are two of DHA's most distressed properties. In order to leverage private investment in this area, these projects will need to be addressed. Recommended activities include:

- The City should lead a Station Area Planning effort for the area surrounding the Decatur station including both Sun Valley and Westridge Homes. The aim of this effort should be to define a compelling vision for the future of this transit district, bring together the various public and private stakeholders, including Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Economic Development, DURA, DHA, and RTD.
- As part of the Station Area Plan, DHA should be tasked with developing a public housing transition strategy that allows redevelopment of Sun Valley



in the near term and a longer term effort to place public housing residents in mixed-income housing. Every effort should be made to maintain the overall supply of public housing units. DHA should explore the value/feasibility of purchasing additional property in the surrounding area as temporary housing.

- Once a Station Area plan is prepared, a single public entity should be charged with managing land assembly and infrastructure construction efforts. This same entity should also be tasked with issuing RIPs for developers of selected sites.
- Create a City property acquisition fund that could move opportunistically to purchase key privately-owned sites that come onto the market. Determine if DURA, DHA or other non-city entity can acquire and hold available land and play this role if the City is unable to take on this activity.

**Leads:** Denver Housing Authority/Housing and Neighborhood Development/Mayor's Office/Community Planning and Development/Denver Urban Renewal Authority/Public Works

**Current Efforts:**

- 10th and Osage Planning
- Decatur Planning
- RTD Environmental Assessment for a maintenance facility

## H. Other Potential City-Wide Policies

### Adopt LEED Certification and Sustainability Goals for TOD

- Given the importance of TOD as part of the city's sustainability effort, mechanisms for encouraging developers to certify their buildings for energy efficiency should be developed.

**Leads:** Sustainability Initiative Staff

**Current Efforts:**

- Sustainability Initiative

### Develop Economic Development Strategies for Station Areas

- Recruit large employers and major new businesses to locate at stations areas designated as "Downtown" "Major Urban Center," and "Urban Center" in the TOD typology to direct jobs to appropriate TOD destination locations within the City that will serve the entire region.
- As necessary, conduct retail market studies for the corridors and individual station areas to determine the appropriate scale, mix, and location of retail activity. Where retail districts already exist within station areas, create a business retention strategy to assist small, locally owned retail businesses, in particular. These efforts should include strategies for dealing with competition from national chain stores that might also be interested in locating in the same station area.
- Assist in business relocation associated with right-of-way acquisitions and other construction impacts
- Incorporate workforce development programs at station areas that include serving low-income residents who need opportunities to better connect

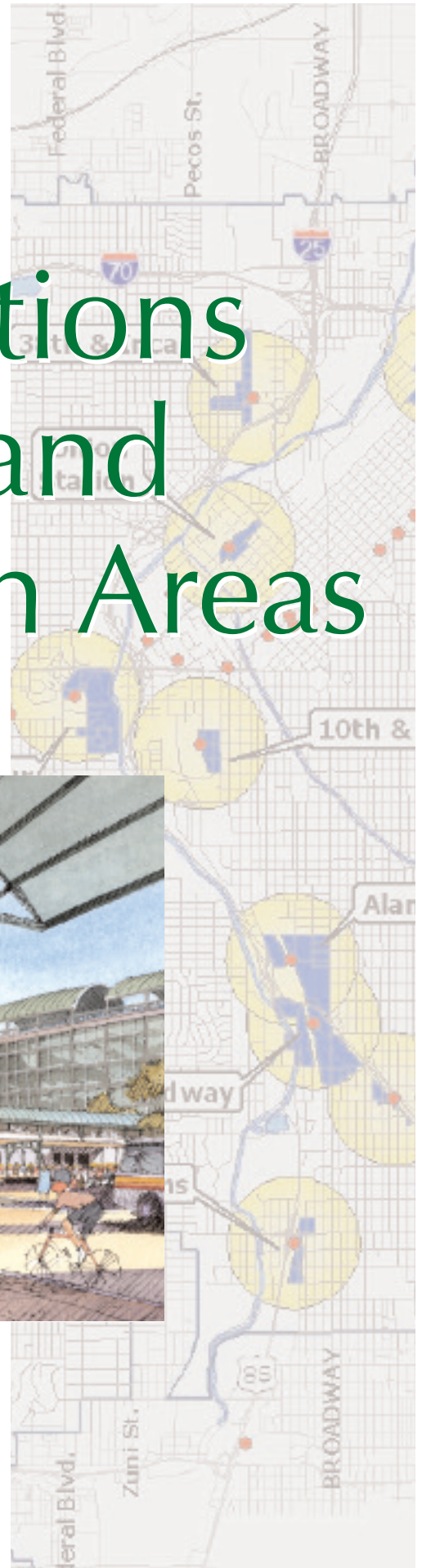
with the regional employment opportunities made possible with the expanded transit system.

- Conduct corridor economic studies to determine what businesses are at risk of being displaced by TOD or are no longer appropriate once the transit line is built but would still be an asset to Denver and could be relocated to a more appropriate site.
- Explore revenue sharing options amongst jurisdictions along transit corridors to facilitate a complementary mix of commercial uses along the corridor, rather than having station areas competing with each other.
- Prepare an analysis of projected employment growth in Denver through 2030 by sector to understand how much overall demand there will be for new commercial development that could be located near transit and to define what sectors could be vulnerable to displacement due to the build out of the transit system. The primary focus of this analysis will be office and industrial based uses. Retail activity will be driven more by population growth within individual station areas and should be studied separately.
- Create financial and programmatic resources to assist existing businesses along streets that may be impacted by transit construction (e.g. help small locally owned establishments stay open and remain profitable during transit construction).

**Leads:** Office of Economic Development /Community Planning and Development

## Chapter 7

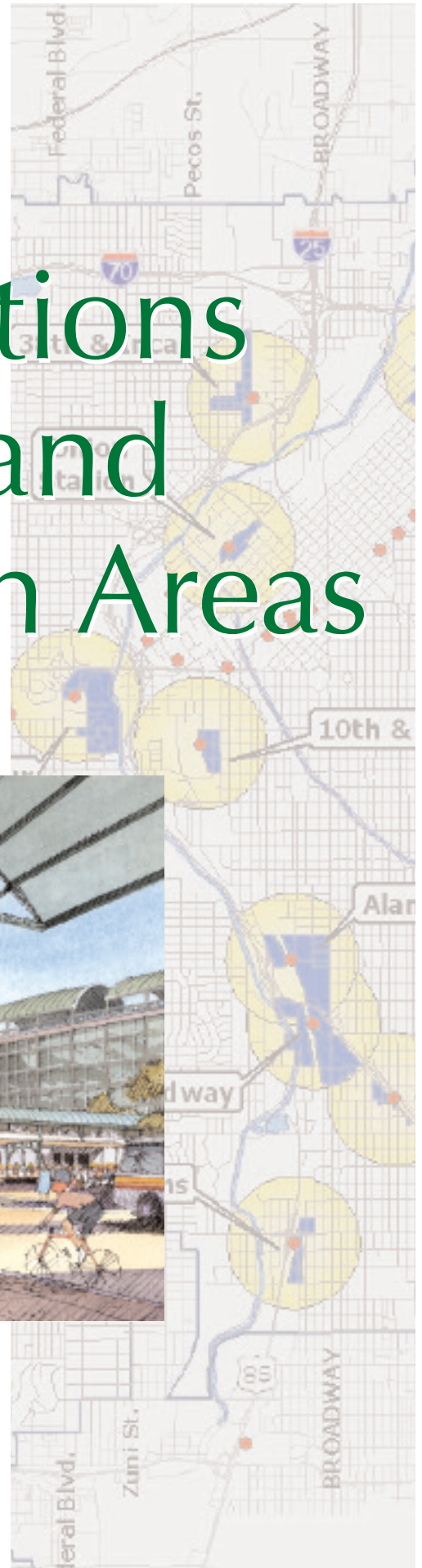
# Recommendations for Corridors and Specific Station Areas





## Chapter 7

# Recommendations for Corridors and Specific Station Areas



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRIDORS AND SPECIFIC STATION AREAS



*Between the T-Rex line (Southeast Corridor) and FasTracks, RTD will be adding approximately 23 new transit stations serving Denver along five new or expanding transit corridors.*

Between the T-Rex line (Southeast Corridor) and FasTracks, RTD will be adding approximately 23 new transit stations serving Denver along five new or expanding transit corridors. The following criteria were used to both identify and prioritize TOD opportunities in Denver at existing and planned stations:

**Frequency of transit service:** The more frequent the transit service at any given station the more likely it is that transit will help to leverage additional development. Therefore, stations with frequent transit service have different kinds of TOD opportunities than stations with lower transit service levels, all other market factors being equal.

**Existing land use, parcelization, and ownership patterns:** Existing land uses in a station area combined with existing parcel sizes can provide an opportunity if these existing uses are compatible with future TOD and there are large enough parcels available for development without major land assembly. Existing patterns can also create a barrier to TOD if the current uses are incompatible with the future vision for the station area and individual parcels are too small to support any significant redevelopment activity without major assembly. Ownership patterns are similar. If land is owned by an entity that is interested in capitalizing on coming market activity and increasing land values, then they likely are willing to either sell or develop their land. However, small individual property owners may not have the interest or capacity to sell their land for development, especially if they own residential property.

**Real estate market trends in Denver, the transit corridor, and current market activity around each specific station:** All existing and potential future land uses within a station area must be considered within the broader real estate market context and dynamics to help determine local development options and opportunities. For example, station locations within Denver that are in existing industrial areas may have the potential for significant redevelopment because the general market dynamics are changing. An examination of the City's industrial sectors suggest that some uses are leaving Denver itself in search of cheaper land and lower operating costs which exist at the eastern edge of the region, a phenomenon unrelated to FasTracks. Much of the land once occupied by these industrial uses is along the FasTracks corridors and would be ideal for redevelopment as TOD. On the other hand, existing residential neighborhoods are likely to hold their value over time and are not likely to experience extensive redevelopment pressures. Also, individual transit corridors will have differing mixes of transit oriented destinations, such as employment centers, hospitals, academic institutions, cultural activities, and/or entertainment venues. Transit lines with more of these major destinations are likely to have different market dynamics than lines that lack many strong destinations. All of these larger factors must also be examined within the local market context to understand what specific use mix would or could work within any given station area. Local conditions, for



## Denver TOD Typology and Activity Priorities

Stations	TOD Typology	Market Opportunity	Phasing Priority of City Action
<b>Denver Union Station</b>	Downtown	Strong	Underway
<b>"D" Line, existing</b>			
33rd & Downing (new station)	Main Street	Emerging	Monitor & Respond
Welton Street Stops	Main Street	Emerging	Monitor & Respond
16th Street Stops	Downtown	Strong	Monitor & Respond
10th & Osage	Urban Neighborhood	Emerging	Immediate
Alameda	Urban Center	Emerging	Immediate
Broadway	Major Urban Center	Strong	Underway
Evans	Urban Neighborhood	Long Term	Monitor & Respond
<b>"C" Line, existing</b>			
Auraria	Campus/Special Events	Emerging	Monitor & Respond
Auraria West Campus	Campus/Special Events	Emerging	Monitor & Respond
Invesco Field at Mile High	Campus/Special Events	Emerging	Monitor & Respond
Pepsi Center	Campus/Special Events	Emerging	Monitor & Respond
<b>Southeast (T-REX), opens 2006</b>			
Louisiana-Pearl	Urban Neighborhood	Strong	Underway
University	Campus	Strong	Monitor & Respond
Colorado	Urban Center	Strong	Immediate
Yale	Urban Neighborhood	Emerging	Monitor & Respond
Southmoor	Urban Center	Emerging	Immediate
Bellevue	Major Urban Center	Strong	Underway

Stations	TOD Typology	Market Opportunity	Phasing Priority of City Action
<b>West Corridor, opens 2013</b>			
Decatur	Urban Center	Emerging	Immediate
Knox	Urban Neighborhood	Emerging	Monitor & Respond
Perry	Urban Neighborhood	Emerging	Monitor & Respond
Sheridan	Urban Neighborhood	Emerging	Immediate
<b>East Corridor, opens 2014</b>			
33rd & Blake**	Urban Neighborhood	Strong	Monitor & Respond
40th & 40th	Major Urban Center	Emerging	Immediate
Colorado & UP	Commuter Town Center	Long Term	Monitor & Respond
Monaco**	Urban Neighborhood	Long Term	Monitor & Respond
Central Park/Stapleton	Urban Center	Strong	Monitor & Respond
Peoria	No redevelopment		Monitor & Respond
40th & Airport	Commuter Town Center	Emerging	Underway
64th & Telluride** or 72nd & Tower	Commuter Town Center	Emerging	Monitor & Respond
<b>Gold Line Corridor, opens 2015</b>			
Inca & 38th	Urban Neighborhood	Long Term	Immediate
<b>North Metro, opens 2015</b>			
Coliseum or 50th & UP	Campus or Urban Neighborhood	Long Term	Monitor & Respond
<b>I-225 Corridor, opens 2015</b>			
Dayton Street	Urban Neighborhood	No TOD Opportunity	Monitor & Respond
Nine Mile/Parker Road	Commuter Town Center	Long Term	Monitor & Respond

*\*\* These stations may drop out during corridor planning for commuter rail.*





example, could strongly impact how much retail development could be supported in a station area, or what the appropriate mix of housing units should be in that specific area. Local market conditions can also be affected by the presence or absence of local “community assets” near the station such as parks, schools, cultural destinations, and/or employment centers.

**Physical barriers that limit connectivity to the station:** Station locations that are cut off from the full 1/2 mile walking radius by barriers, such as highways and rail yards, have different TOD potential than station areas with better accessibility.

**Current or future significant public investment in the station area other than the transit investment:** In addition to the transit investment, some station areas are in locations where other public investments will be occurring. The best example of this is at the Decatur Station where the City will be moving an existing public works facility to accommodate a flood control project. This relocation process will create an excellent development opportunity for TOD that would not have otherwise existed.

**Community support:** Often one of the biggest barriers to new development is community resistance and/or a lack of the political will necessary to move complex implementation strategies forward. The presence of strong community support and political leadership for TOD can have a powerful impact on the future development potential in any given station area.



## DENVER UNION STATION

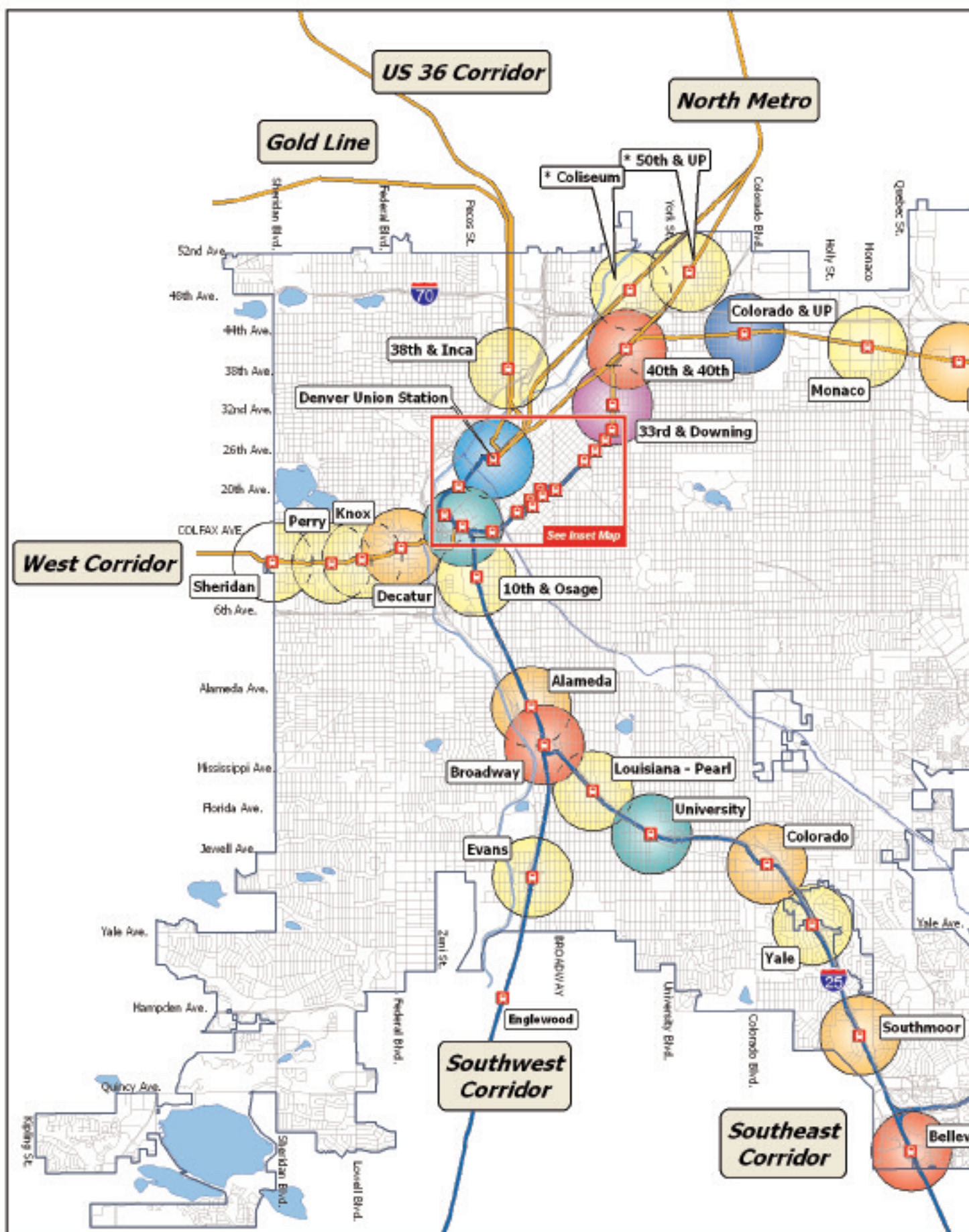
**TOD Typology: Downtown**

**Priority: Underway**

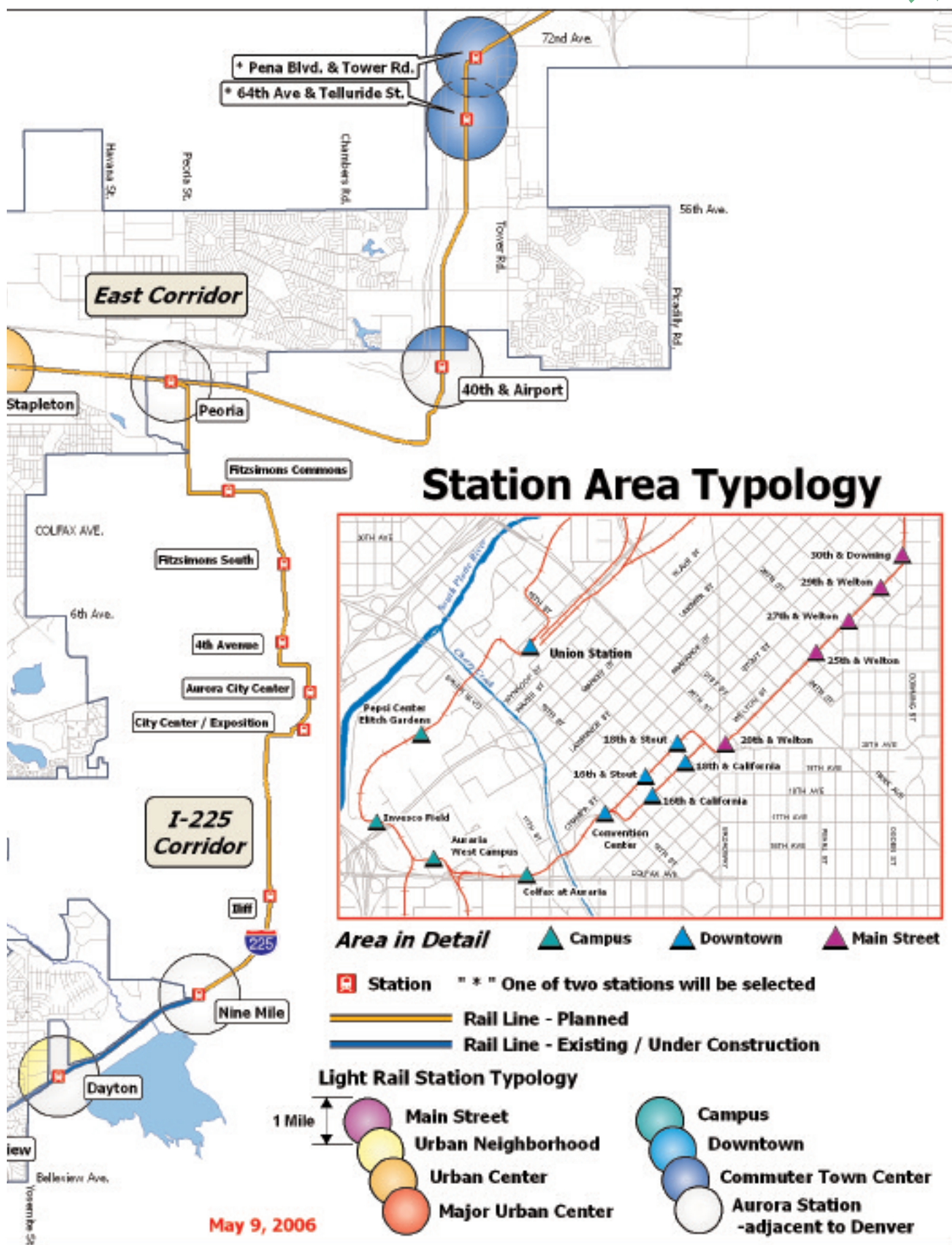
Issues and Conditions: Denver Union Station (DUS) is the hub of the RTD transit system. All of the transit corridors with the exception of the I-225 line,

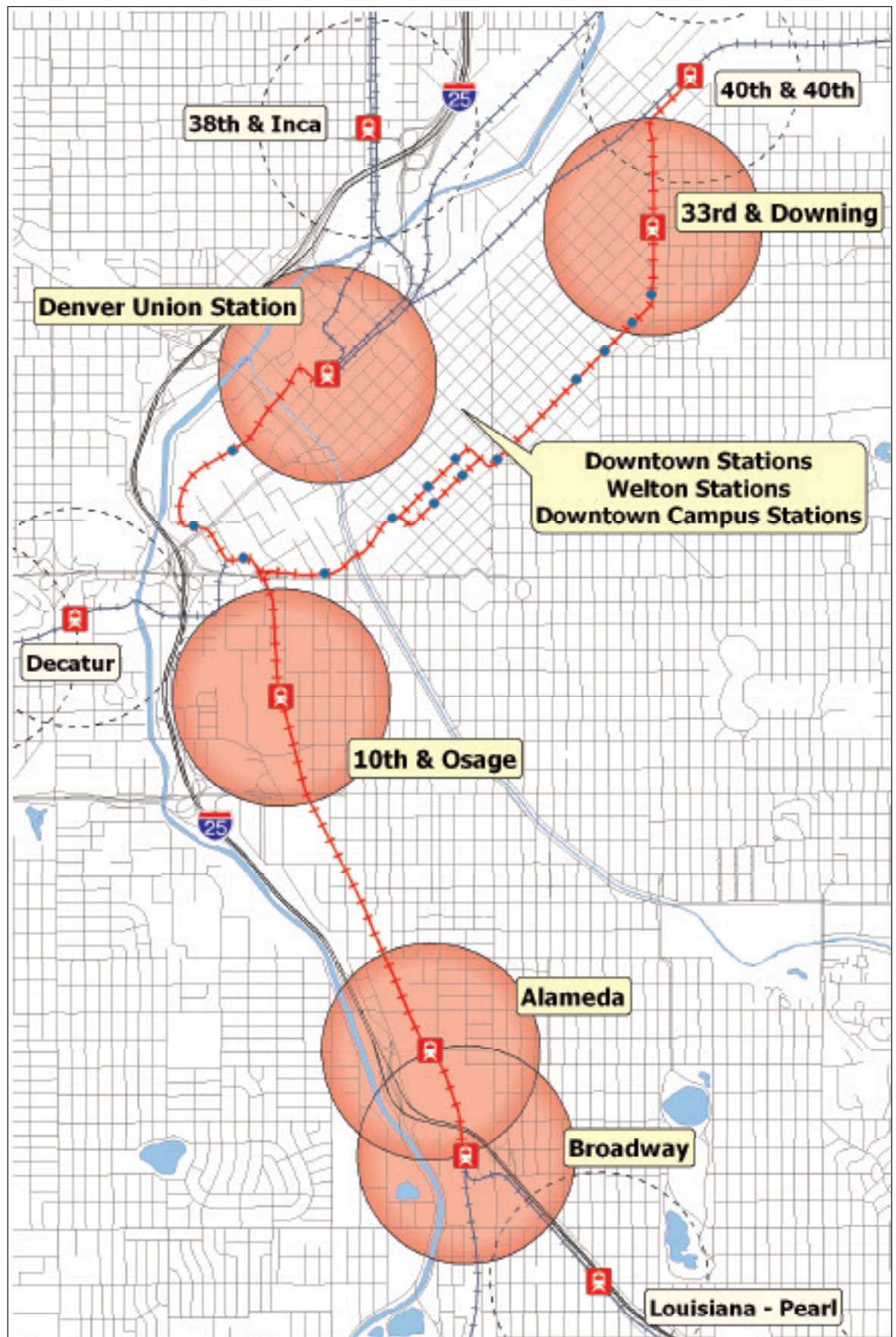


*Denver Union Station*









Central Corridor ("C" and "D" Lines)





go to DUS. This nineteen acre site has considerable potential for TOD. A vision plan and a shorter-term funded plan have been completed. Steps are already being taken to engage a master developer to assure that development opportunities are incorporated into the transit engineering decisions and to push development on the site.

Recommendation:

- Complete process to select a Master Developer and assure that development opportunities are factored into the station design.

## CENTRAL CORRIDOR (“C” AND “D” LINES)

The existing Central Corridor begins at I-25 and Broadway, continues into the heart of the CBD, and then continues to Welton Street. The Central Corridor will be extended along Downing Street from the current terminus at 30th and Downing to the 40/40 Station. The TOD opportunities vary widely within this corridor and include Main Street opportunities along Welton and Downing, downtown development in proximity to the numerous downtown stations and circulators, the possible redevelopment of a portion of a public housing development and the possible intensification of development at a shopping center. Given that these stations are largely in place and that there is considerable development activity, the development opportunities are near-term in nature.

### Downing Street Stops

#### TOD Typology: Main Street

#### Priority: Monitor and Respond

Issues and Conditions: In addition to the station at 30th & Downing, one or two additional stations are anticipated to be added between 30th and 40th. Much of this land has an opportunity over a period of time to redevelop. It will be important for the City to ensure that new projects and the transit system respect the established character of the area.

Recommendations:

- Consider carefully the street cross-section in conjunction with the extension of light rail or alternatively, the use of a street car to assure that a pedestrian and development friendly atmosphere is created.
- Determine whether Main Street zoning should be applied to this corridor.
- Monitor and respond to opportunities as necessary.



*30th and Downing Street*

### Welton Street Stops

#### TOD Typology: Main Street

#### Priority: Monitor and Respond

Issues and Conditions: Although the Welton Street stations have been in place for about ten years, it has only spurred a modest amount of redevelopment.



*Welton Street*

There is an opportunity for additional redevelopment that could occur and a developer is currently intending to develop three or four different condominium products on a block along Welton. As with the Downing Street station, these and future projects must respect the established character of the surrounding area.

#### Recommendations:

- Consider carefully the street cross-section in conjunction with the extension of light rail or alternatively, the use of a street car to assure that a pedestrian and development friendly atmosphere is created.
- Determine whether Main Street zoning should be applied to this corridor.
- Monitor and respond to opportunities as necessary.

## **Downtown Stations**

### **TOD Typology:**

#### **Downtown**

#### **Campus (Auraria, Invesco Field, Pepsi Center)**

### **Priority: Monitor and Respond**

Issues and Conditions: There are several downtown stations. In a sense, all of downtown could be characterized as transit oriented development given the extensive and wide ranging transit alternatives available. There is some evidence that new development is locating to be proximate to stations, especially at the edges of downtown. Circulation and other transportation issues were addressed in the recently completed Downtown Multi-modal Access Plan (DMAP). FasTracks provides funding for the recommended Downtown Circulator connecting DUS and Civic Center on 18th and 19th Streets. The decision on streetcar versus light rail on Downing/Welton will have implications for downtown transit. As the rapid transit system grows with TREX coming on line in 2006 and FasTracks from 2013 to 2017, downtown's access to the entire Denver Metropolitan Area will continue to grow. A Downtown Area planning process is underway. One of the major opportunities identified are the vast amounts of surface parking lots adjacent to the C-Line.

#### Recommendations:

- Work with the Downtown Denver Partnership to continue to heavily market this growing accessibility to continue to attract a wide range of development to downtown and cooperate on the Downtown Area Plan.
- Monitor and respond to opportunities as necessary



*Downtown station*



*10th & Osage Station area*

## **10th & Osage Station**

### **TOD Typology: Urban Neighborhood**

### **Priority: Immediate**

Issues and Conditions: This existing station has three acres of land owned by RTD adjacent to the station as well as a 270 unit housing development owned



by the Denver Housing Authority. The proximity to downtown is advantageous for the redevelopment potential. RTD is studying the possibility of locating a light rail maintenance facility in the Burnham Yard which may make available surplus land west of the platform. The potential redevelopment of the area immediately around the station should be explored but in a manner that preserves or expands the existing supply of affordable housing.

Recommendations:

- Explore redevelopment opportunities (See also discussion above under Public Housing Strategy.)

## Alameda Station

### TOD Typology: Urban Center

#### Priority: Immediate

Issues and Conditions: This station is between the mainline railroad tracks and a shopping center. This station is only slightly over two miles south of downtown and just north of the I-25 and Broadway station. The shopping center and the design center to the south are under single ownership. There is a significant opportunity to redevelop the small park-n-ride facility, a small amount of remaining industrial uses, and, in time, the Broadway Market Place and the Design Center.

Recommendations:

- Explore redevelopment interest on the part of the owner
- Undertake a station area plan within the next one to two years that sets a framework for redevelopment concepts in terms of urban design, circulation, and land uses.
- Monitor and respond to opportunities as necessary



*Alameda Station*

## Broadway Station

### TOD Typology: Major Urban Center

#### Priority: Underway

Issues and Conditions: Planning for this station area is already well underway due to the purchase of the Western portion of the Gates Rubber factory by Cherokee Investment Partners and the Eastern portion of the site by Lionstone. The developers' overall intention is to create a major mixed-use place, including a significant office concentration, housing, and a major retail component. This is one of the few transit stations in the city that is likely to have major new office development.



*Broadway Station development area*

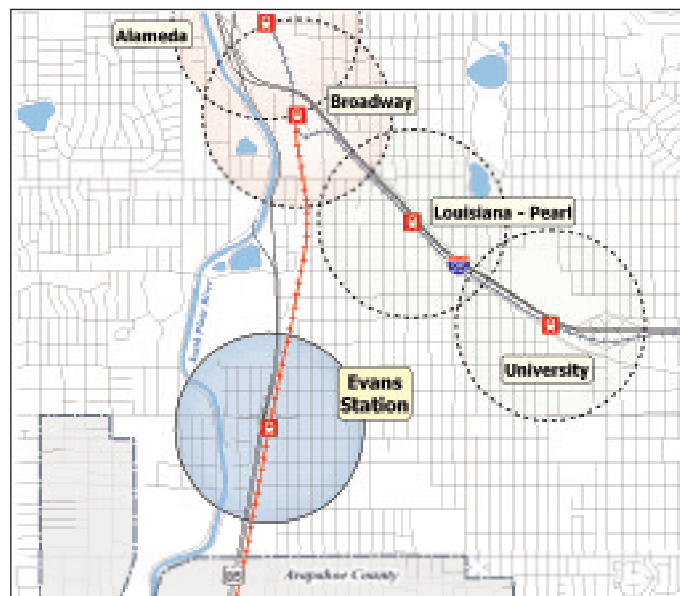
All of the proposed uses can be transit supportive; however, to make this a transit oriented, rather than transit adjacent, project the City should work with the developer to refine the appropriate parking ratios, urban design plan, and circulation plan. Housing typically generates the most transit ridership of

any land use and housing developers are becoming more sophisticated about ways to lower parking ratios and still maintain marketable projects, but these developers also often need supportive housing policies so that they are not required to provide more spaces than they think is optimal. Office users will also use transit to get to work, but only if parking is limited. Again, the City can play a key role in terms of supportive parking policies and by working with the developer to develop additional travel demand management strategies for the site. Retail uses are very parking sensitive, but creative techniques can be used to both minimize the required number of spaces and to locate these spaces to ensure a high quality pedestrian environment.

Also, many “mixed use” projects merely append housing on top of retail shops with no consideration as to whether there is any synergism between the two uses. Thus, the retail tenant mix should include a food store and other convenience-oriented stores that allow project residents (and employees) to take care of their daily needs by walking instead of having to drive to shop.

#### Recommendation:

- Develop a Parking and Parking Management Plan
- Fine-tune retail mix strategies
- Improve strategy for pedestrian connections among sites and to surrounding neighborhoods.



### **Evans Station**

## **TOD Typology: Urban Neighborhood**

### **Priority: Monitor and Respond**

Issues and Conditions: The Evans Station is a small park-in-Ride station that also serves as a neighborhood “walk and ride” station. The immediate uses are light industrial and the surrounding neighborhood is predominately single family with a mix of housing types. There have been a few, small projects occur around this station area. However, this is a tucked away station that





provides an interesting opportunity for some small, in-fill development projects. Spillover parking has been cited as a past issue. Connections and integration into the surrounding community as well as to the Broadway corridor and the South Platte River should be explored.

#### Recommendations:

- Engage in a community planning process that identifies a vision for future changes in the station area. This process should address land uses, development intensity, new zoning and appropriate implementation tools.
- Incorporate way-finding, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements that increase and improve connectivity to the station.
- Monitor and respond to opportunities as necessary.



## SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR

The Southeast Corridor connects Downtown to the Tech Center along the I-25 corridor. Along with Downtown, this corridor is where most of the city's significant office projects are located and where another large office development is anticipated at the Cherokee and Lionstone projects at the Former Gates Rubber Company site. This line also serves entertainment centers at Colorado Center, Southmoor and the University of Denver. Given this mix of uses and the quality of the residential neighborhoods adjacent to most of the station areas, and the fact that transit will operate fairly soon, this corridor has the best near-term potential to provide very strong TOD projects at every station where there are development opportunity sites. While the

market for specific uses at specific sites may take some time to mature, it is likely that early successes along the line will stimulate development not just in the immediate neighborhood, but also at other stops elsewhere along the line. Therefore, it is critical to consider all of these stations as part of a continuous system, rather than as independent disconnected neighborhoods without a relationship to each other.



*There is a 29-unit residential project currently under construction adjacent to the station and another in the planning stages.*

## **Louisiana Station**

### **TOD Typology: Urban Neighborhood**

#### **Priority: Underway**

Issues and Conditions: Louisiana will be a neighborhood “walk and ride” station with no commuter parking. It is intended to service the immediate neighborhoods of West Washington Park, Washington Park, and Platt Park located on opposite sides of I-25. These surrounding neighborhoods offer a charming, quality housing stock, neighborhood parks, schools, and small business districts. There is a 29-unit residential project currently under construction adjacent to the station and another in the planning stages. Beyond these projects, there is little opportunity for additional new development around the station but redevelopment and changes in existing business types may occur in response to the long term success of the transit station.

As noted, there is a well-established single family neighborhood framework surrounding this Louisiana Station. However, much of the surrounding neighborhood is zoned R-2 which allows attached and duplex housing. The increased transit access and the increasingly popular historic business district centered on the intersection of Pearl Street and Florida Avenue could place pressures on the neighborhood and trigger redevelopment from single family to multiple family housing. In addition, if this station has high ridership projections, it is possible that some riders may look to park on neighborhood streets in this area. While station use should be promoted, the spillover parking could create a nuisance for local residents.

#### Recommendations:

- Engage in a community planning process that identifies a vision for future changes in the station area. This process should address land uses, development intensity, new zoning and appropriate implementation tools.
- Incorporate way-finding, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements that increase/improve connectivity to the station.
- Develop residential, commuter, and business parking management strategies that can respond to increased parking demands and potential parking spillover.
- Utilize the pattern book strategy for managing infill housing in R-2 zones.



## University Station

### TOD Typology: Campus

#### Priority: Monitor and Respond

**Issues and Conditions:** The primary land use at this station is the University of Denver campus. RTD considers this to be a park-n-ride that primarily serves the campus and has provided a 540 space garage. This garage assumes little or no relationship between the University and transit ridership. Other than the 300-unit apartment complex currently under consideration, there are no further plans for additional development at this station. There are several other opportunities for future residential intensification at such time as when the housing market is strong enough to warrant building over existing parking structures or intensifying surface parking lots.

#### Recommendation:

- Continue to cooperate with RTD in an attempt to improve the connectivity between the park and ride lot, station users, and nearby destinations.
- Continue to monitor market conditions in order to identify long term development or redevelopment opportunities.



*University Station*

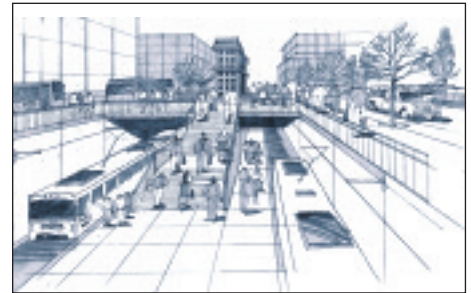
## Colorado Station

### TOD Typology: Urban Center

#### Priority: Immediate

**Issues and Conditions:** The existing uses around this station are primarily commercial and oriented to the high traffic volumes on I-25 and Colorado Boulevard. This auto-oriented character and the multiple lanes of Colorado Boulevard have created an unwelcoming environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. Though the station area has a wide variety of existing residential neighborhoods nearby, both I-25 and Colorado Boulevard will continue to make pedestrian and bicycle access challenging.

One of the impediments to TOD is the fragmented ownership and zoning and non-transit supportive attributes around this station area. Many of the parcels appear underutilized based on the existing development intensity, the large expanses of surface parking, and the business types. Recent real estate transactions involving several key parcels indicate the market has considerable interest in this location, at least on a speculative basis. These transactions, combined with the high number of underutilized sites provide an excellent opportunity to rethink this area as more of a mixed use residential neighborhood oriented towards the transit station, rather than as an auto-oriented commercial center. As projects begin to emerge, this would likely accelerate the rate at which others assemble land in the area and begin to demonstrate the market feasibility of doing housing and/or mixed-use development in this neighborhood.



*RTD is treating the Colorado Station as a park-and-ride location and is installing a 360 space surface parking lot adjacent to the station and right in the middle of one of the prime redevelopment areas.*

RTD is treating this as a park-n-ride location and is installing a 360 space surface parking lot adjacent to the station and right in the middle of one of the prime redevelopment areas. While this is an important facility in the short term, long term planning for this site and surrounding area is needed.

Recommendations:

- Prepare a Development Framework Plan to define a pedestrian oriented street network, desired land uses, and urban design elements in the area so that as parcels redevelop a unified development district is achieved.
- Consider proactively rezoning the area for uses that are transit-oriented.



*Yale Station*

## **Yale Station**

### **TOD Typology: Urban Neighborhood**

#### **Priority: Monitor and Respond**

Issues and Conditions: The surrounding area is predominantly single family residential neighborhoods. At the interchange of Yale Avenue and I-25 there are small pockets of non-residential uses that serve the neighborhoods. The Yale Station will be a “walk and ride” station intended to only serve residents of the surrounding area on opposite sides of I-25. There is new parking proposed as part of this station.

There are very few development opportunity sites in this area, especially since a new office building was recently constructed on one of the prime sites adjacent to the station. The biggest existing opportunity site is a parking lot owned by a church located on Yale Avenue. The City should test the church’s interest in selling or developing the land for residential. In addition, it will be important for the City to monitor potential impacts to nearby areas once the station has opened and ridership increases.

Recommendation:

- Monitor and respond to redevelopment pressures and opportunities as necessary.
- Incorporate way-finding, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements that increase and improve connectivity to the station.



*Southmoor Station area*

## **Southmoor Station**

### **TOD Typology: Urban Center**

#### **Priority: Immediate**

Issues and Conditions: Southmoor is another station area with early market interest in TOD. A developer recently acquired a motel at the intersection of Hampden Avenue and I-25, which was then demolished and replaced with an apartment project. While this land use is ideal to support transit, this particular project runs the risk of being “transit adjacent” rather than “transit oriented” because pedestrian access across the intervening properties between the apartments and the transit station is difficult to traverse. Several other adjacent properties are currently developed with entertainment uses,





including a multiplex and national chain restaurants. These properties may also be eventual redevelopment sites, depending on how well the market responds to the TOD project at this station area, as well as at other stations along the T-Rex line, including Colorado and Louisiana.

Again, RTD could be a key player in facilitating this change. The current plan is to keep the existing 800 car surface parking lot at this station. However, a joint development project in conjunction with a Development Framework Plan to facilitate pedestrian circulation through the larger station area would certainly help to push the market forward.

Recommendation:

- Prepare a Development Framework Plan to define a pedestrian oriented street network, desired land uses, and urban design elements in the area so that as parcels redevelop a unified development district is achieved.
- Consider proactively rezoning the area for uses that are transit-oriented.

## Bellevue Station

### TOD Typology: Major Urban Center

#### Priority: Underway

Issues and Conditions: The Bellevue station is at the western edge of the Denver Tech Center. There is one significant major development site in this area and an experienced developer who is familiar with higher density residential development controls a portion of the land and is planning to do large-scale TOD. Therefore, the City does not need to make any interventions at this time.

Recommendation:

- Monitor the evolution of the planned TOD to ensure as details unfold they continue to reflect the goals of the station and best TOD practices.



*Bellevue Station*



## WEST CORRIDOR

Currently in the final design phase, the West Corridor will be the next line in the FasTracks to start operating after the Southeast corridor. Major destinations at the eastern end of the line include downtown Denver and Invesco Field at Mile High Stadium, and the western terminus is anchored by the Jefferson County Government Center. The line parallels two major regional arterials, West Colfax, and 6th Avenue; both carrying very high volumes of regional traffic. The light rail is intended to provide congestion relief, primarily along 6th Avenue. While the line ties together a number of sub-regional centers, including the Auraria Campus, the Federal Center and the Jefferson County Government Center, the 11 total stations along this line do not represent a broad range of land uses or activity intensities. Therefore, it is unclear how much impact the transit line itself will have on the real estate market in this corridor. However, the four Denver stations seem well positioned for new development because of their proximity to Downtown, the Lakewood Dry Gulch Park and the South Platte River.

There are two immediate planning opportunities along the West Corridor that could affect TOD. The first is the West Colfax planning effort including a focused study of the re-use of St. Anthony's Hospital. This effort will identify sites to concentrate new commercial activity along West Colfax and transition housing opportunities in between commercial nodes. This plan is seeking to provide stronger pedestrian linkages from neighborhoods north of the West Corridor into transit stations. The second is as part of the Final Design Contract for the West Corridor, RTD sponsored a West Corridor Value Engineering/TOD Planning Charette. The aim of this one-week effort was to fine tune the location and configuration of station facilities (platforms, bus connections, parking, etc) with an eye toward how these facilities help or hinder development in the station areas. Denver was fully engaged in this effort.



## Decatur Station

### TOD Typology: Urban Center

#### Priority: Immediate

**Issues and Conditions:** This station is located just outside of downtown Denver and adjacent to the South Platte River. It has excellent development potential that will be further strengthened by the transit connection to downtown. The best development site within the station area is the City's maintenance and operations facility, which is slated to move elsewhere to accommodate a flood control project and the transit station. Every effort should be made to ensure that the actual station is located adjacent to this site, rather than up the hill closer to the stadium parking lot. Other assets in this station area include the Denver Human Services Center, the Parks and Recreation Rude Recreation facility and the Sun Valley Public Housing Project (See also discussion under Public Housing Renewal Strategy).

Despite the excellent opportunity for development at this station area, the nearby Sun Valley project owned and operated by the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) is currently a barrier to future development. This housing development, one of the most troubled owned by DHA, is a disincentive to market rate developers who might otherwise be interested in building housing at this location. The City should initiate a coordinated effort with DHA to consider ways to rebuild this project with a greater mix of housing unit types targeted at a broader range of incomes while identifying a goal for replacing affordable housing units. Other opportunity sites within this station area include parking lots owned by the Metropolitan Football Stadium District and several privately owned lots.

#### Recommendation:

- Prepare a station area plan for this large area and a development framework plan that identifies optimal development sites within the station area and define the circulation system focusing on pedestrian and bike access.
- Promote the Public Housing Renewal Strategy with DHA



*Sun Valley Public Housing Project in Decatur Station area*

## Knox Station

### TOD Typology: Urban Neighborhood

#### Priority: Monitor and Respond

**Issues and Conditions:** The only significant opportunity site in this station area is the Westridge Homes DHA housing project that is extremely low density relative to the area's potential given its proximity to Downtown. While this project could be redeveloped as more intensive mixed-income housing, it must be considered in the context of all three station areas on FasTrack lines that also have public housing projects.

One issue that is important to the Knox, Perry and Sheridan station areas is the potential for gentrification. The majority of residential properties in these



*Knox Station*

neighborhoods are renter-occupied. As transit becomes imminent, it's possible that entrepreneurs could purchase single lots with the aim of either consolidating properties into larger development sites, transitioning to owner-occupied housing or replacing single-family homes with duplexes in areas zoned R-2. In any case, existing low income renters could be displaced.

Recommendation:

- Prepare a Mixed-Income Housing Strategy for the neighborhoods to identify the potential magnitude of change, define appropriate densities and building types for new construction, target existing or new programs to help renters with price escalations or to help create a supply of permanently affordable rental housing, and to help renters become home owners.



*Perry Station*

## **Perry Station**

### **TOD Typology: Urban Neighborhood**

#### **Priority: Monitor and Respond**

Issues and Conditions: This station area has limited opportunities for new development. However, the proximity to Colfax and the St. Anthony's redevelopment may increase the opportunity for more density at this station location. There may be increasing activity on the part of speculators who buy up single-family homes and redevelop the lots as duplexes or town homes. The area's zoning should be reviewed to determine if this would be permitted, and if so, would the allowed change be appropriate or not. This station area is identified in Blueprint Denver and in the West Colfax planning process to allow densification.

Recommendation:

- Prepare a Mixed-Income Housing Strategy for the neighborhoods to identify the potential magnitude of change, define appropriate densities and building types for new construction, target existing or new programs to help renters with price escalations or to help create a supply of permanently affordable rental housing, and to help renters become home owners.

## **Sheridan Station**

### **TOD Typology: Urban Neighborhood**

#### **Priority: Immediate**

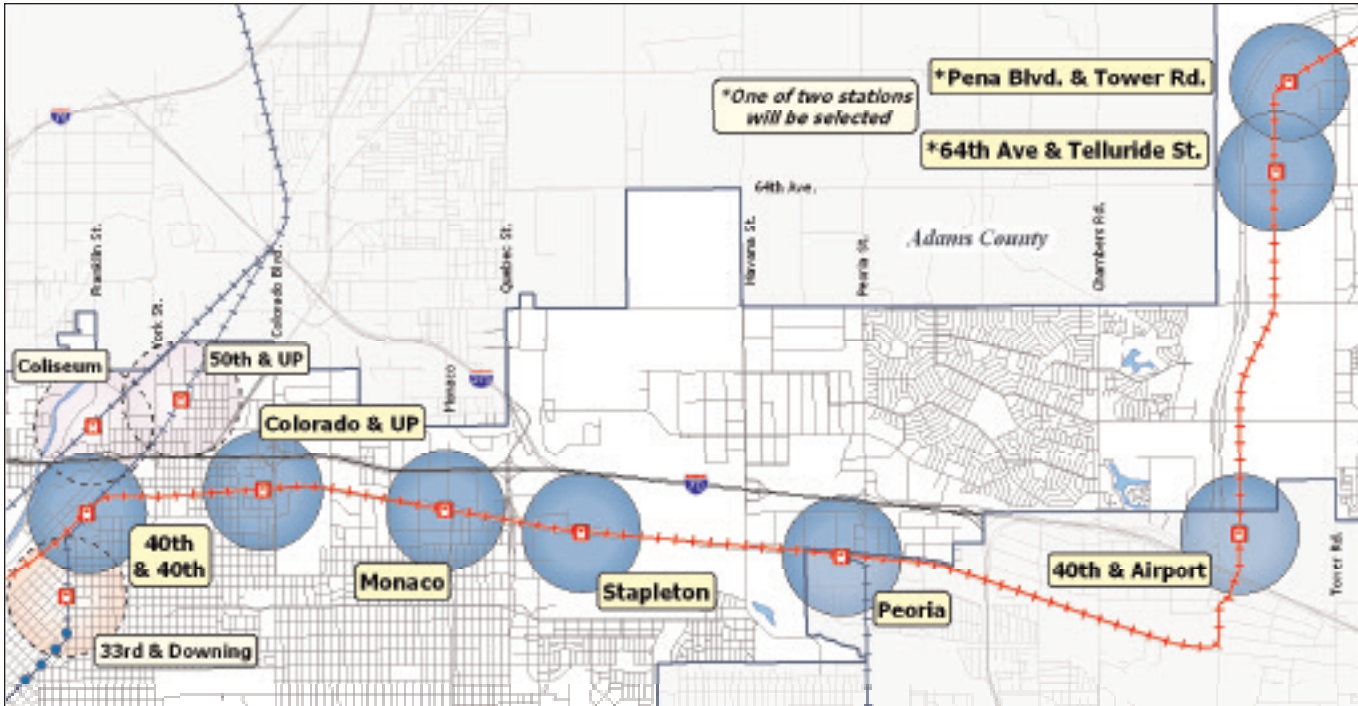
Issues and Conditions: RTD is planning to put an 800 car parking facility at this station and has indicated a willingness to incorporate development with the parking structure. Given that RTD is planning to make such a major investment at this station, it will be appropriate to do either a Development Framework Plan or a full Station Area Plan in conjunction with Lakewood in the near term to better understand how all of the existing and potential future uses could work together and how circulation should be maximized.





### Recommendation:

- Prepare a Mixed-Income Housing Strategy for the neighborhoods to identify the potential magnitude of change, define appropriate densities and building types for new construction, target existing or new programs to help renters with price escalations or to help create a supply of permanently affordable rental housing, and to help renters become home owners.
- Develop a Development Framework Plan or Station Area Plan



## EAST CORRIDOR

The East Corridor connects Denver International Airport (DIA) with Denver Union Station (DUS). Excluding the termini, there are between 6 and 10 stations depending on the technology with more stations included for the light rail option. Of the ten stations for the Light Rail alternative, six are in Denver, two are on the boundary between Denver and Aurora, and two are exclusively in Aurora. One significant issue is that, with the anticipated selection of Commuter Rail, Denver needs to consider the appropriate number and location of stations to serve both local transit needs as well as the need for express service between DIA and DUS. The TOD opportunities vary considerably and the existing land includes mostly industrial land and greenfields.

There are two or three transit lines that will connect with the East Corridor. The I-225 line connects with the East Corridor at the Peoria Station and the “D” Line connects to the station at 40th Avenue and 40th Street (40/40). The North Metro Line EIS is just about to get underway. Two alignments will be studied including the Union Pacific alignment, which would connect at the 40/40 Station, and the Burlington Northern Alignment that would not connect with the East Corridor.

With the East Corridor anticipated to open in 2014 and given the nature of the land around most of the stations, development is anticipated to occur over a mid to long-term time horizon. Given that the final engineering will occur well before 2014, planning for the stations needs to be initiated as part of the EIS and over the next few years in order to assure that TOD will be facilitated by the station design. Just like for other corridors, it is critical to consider all these stations as part of a system and also look at the relationship to the North Metro and I-225 lines. The Downing connection to downtown and possible use of streetcar technology will also be important to consider.

## **33rd and Blake Station**

### **TOD Typology: Urban Neighborhood**

#### **Priority: Monitor and Respond**

Issues and Conditions: Regardless whether 33rd and Blake has a station or not, this area is undergoing a steady transformation. Old and functionally obsolete industrial uses are being replaced by various types of housing including both live/work units and more traditional higher density condominiums/apartments. The River North Plan and the Northeast of Downtown Plan call for this area to continue to evolve as a “mixed use” neighborhood that accommodates a variety of retail, office, and industrial uses. While the River North Plan is not detailed about the role of housing along Brighton, the emphasis on pedestrian and bike connectivity indicates that additional residential development is anticipated.

#### Recommendations:

- Prepare a Development Framework Plan that identifies additional street infrastructure, the appropriate amount and location for housing, zoning and specific industrial uses/sites that should be preserved.
- Consider proactive zoning in select areas around the transit station and along Brighton Boulevard.



## **40th and 40th Station**

### **TOD Typology: Major Urban Center**

#### **Priority: Immediate**

Issues and Conditions: Over the long run, this location offers an enormous opportunity for TOD. The Union Pacific (UP) intermodal facility currently occupies about 68 acres of land in this area and a developer is already working with UP to move this facility to the Front Range Airport area. In anticipation of this move, and because the land is relatively inexpensive, there has already been some speculative real estate activity in the neighborhood. While there is probably little immediate demand for housing or even higher density employment uses in this area, this is the right time to start planning for future development by defining the street network to begin laying out a rational system of circulation once the area is improved. The City has already completed a very preliminary conceptual plan for this area that shows where



new streets could go. However, this plan includes only a very general land use diagram with what is probably too much land allocated for “mixed use” and not enough consideration given to where or how much retail should be included in the plan.

As the market matures, it will become more clear as to what the right land use mix will be for this area, including how much retail could be supported as part of a mixed use development in and around the UP facility. However, for the time being, the major challenge for the City will be to prevent interim development uses, outside of the UP land, that sub-optimize the future TOD development potential. Some uses that can be built in today’s market may prove to be difficult to redevelop once the transit line has become operational. Careful consideration should be given to an interim development strategy for this area, and for allowing for the eventual transition of these interim uses into a more permanent and long-term transit oriented land use program. In addition to planning an appropriate development strategy for this area that acknowledges interim and long term uses, the City should start working now with RTD to acquire the land from the UP.

#### Recommendations:

- Prepare a Station Area Plan for 40th and 40th
- Land acquisition/assembly

## Colorado Boulevard and Union Pacific Station

### TOD Typology: Commuter Town Center

#### Priority: Monitor and Respond

Issues and Conditions: There are several future options for this station, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. One idea is to make this a major park-ride location for those coming from the north and south along Colorado Boulevard. Another is to push for a major mixed-use development. Given that the East Line is not expected to be operational for another eight years, it is probably better for the City to hold off on doing any major planning for this area for several more years. Once T-Rex and the West Line begin operating, the real estate market will have a better understanding of what impact transit has on land values. This will begin to give some indication as to how the Colorado and UP station area could be developed to meet RTD’s parking needs and to support a real TOD type district. Also, whatever happens at 40th and 40th is likely to influence the potential of this site.

#### Recommendation:

- Engage developers to assess their willingness to pursue additional development or wait until the market comes to fruition.
- Reconsider further policy action in a few years.



*40th and 40th Station*



*Colorado Boulevard and Union Pacific Station*



## **Monaco Station**

### **TOD Typology: Urban Neighborhood**

#### **Priority: Monitor and Respond**

Issues and Conditions: There has been no firm decision to place a station at the intersection of Monaco Parkway and Smith Road. From a limited operations perspective, adding a station here might negatively impact travel time. However, and more importantly, if a station is not placed at Monaco there will be three miles separation with no station directly serving the Park Hill neighborhood. The area east of Monaco between Smith Road and 38th Avenue is predominately industrial and warehouse uses that served the former Stapleton Airport. Given the presence of the MLK Park and Recreation Center, redevelopment may be appropriate to enhance the existing NE Park Hill neighborhood and connect to development at Stapleton. For now, the most important implementation action the City can take with respect to this station is to keep the dialogue open with RTD about putting a station at this location and including the station in the Environmental Impact Statement. Other details, such as zoning and a specific capital improvements plan should be considered in more detail either as the market matures, or as it gets closer to the time to start final design for this transit line.

#### Recommendation:

- Advocate for inclusion of this station in the EIS and DRCOG RTP.
- Monitor and respond as opportunities arise

## **Central Park Boulevard/Stapleton Station**

### **TOD Typology: Urban Center**

#### **Priority: Monitor and Respond**

Issues and Conditions: Until a decision is made on the alignment for the UP main line, it is not possible to formalize a plan for this station area. The Union Pacific is contemplating moving their main line operations to the abandoned Denver and Rock Island alignment. This could have significant implications for the Stapleton station as well as for other stations to the west. The possibility of utilizing the 200 foot wide UP right-of-way should be explored if this were to occur. The area south of Smith Road has significant TOD potential and should be held for future TOD. If parking is placed south of Smith Road, it should be structured in order to provide as much developable land as possible around the station platform. The potential of development north of the UP tracks should be considered at a later time. Denver should work closely with RTD and Forest City (Stapleton's Master Developer) to formulate an approach to planning this station area especially given that RTD is acquiring land from Forest City to construct a surface park-n-ride.

#### Recommendation:

- Keep options open in the EIS
- Monitor and Respond as opportunities arise



## Peoria Street and Smith Road Station

### TOD Typology: No redevelopment (Aurora Station)

#### Priority: Monitor and Respond

Issues and Conditions: This station is on the border between Denver and Aurora. The portion in Denver is fully developed with solid industrial uses. There is no immediate development opportunities in Denver. This station is where the I-225 Line and the East Corridor come together. Denver needs to focus on assuring that there is a convenient interface for passengers for these two transit lines.

#### Recommendations:

- Monitor and respond as opportunities arise
- Continue coordination with the City of Aurora
- Assure convenient interface between I-225 line and East Corridor Line

## 40th and Airport Boulevard Station

### TOD Typology: Commuter Town Center/Aurora Station

#### Priority: Underway

Issues and Conditions: This station is on or near the border between Denver and Aurora. There is an existing park-n-ride facility for 1,200 cars which is expected to remain at the present or another nearby location once the transit line is opened. This is a greenfield site with considerable opportunity for future development. Denver is involved with a station area planning process that Aurora has initiated. The key aspects are the location of the platform, (near 40th Avenue is preferred), the future location of the park-n-ride, and the nature of the future development.

#### Recommendations:

- Monitor and respond as opportunities arise
- Continue coordination with the City of Aurora to develop a Station Framework Plan

## 64th and Telluride Street Station

### TOD Typology: Commuter Town Center

#### Priority: Monitor and Respond

Issues and Conditions: This station area was identified for light rail. It is a greenfield site under single ownership. It is some of the land closest to DIA and should be utilized to both take advantage of its proximity to DIA and to transit. The biggest immediate issue is to make this the primary station location for Commuter Rail as well as Light Rail. The noise contour for DIA is at 67th Avenue which does not permit residential development south of 67th. Thus a station at 72nd could not fully take advantage of development

opportunities that accompanies a transit station. On the other hand, a station at 64th can provide for a full range of uses.

Recommendations:

- Monitor and respond as opportunities arise
- Advocate for 64th & Telluride as the primary station for Commuter Rail.
- Work with developer on station concepts.

## **72nd and Tower Road Station**

### **TOD Typology: Commuter Town Center**

#### **Priority: Monitor and Respond**

Issues and Conditions: This station is designated for Commuter Rail. See discussion for 64th and Telluride. This area should be considered for a future station in the event that a very large park-n-ride facility is needed.

Recommendations:

- Eliminate as prime station location for commuter rail in the EIS



*Denver International Airport*

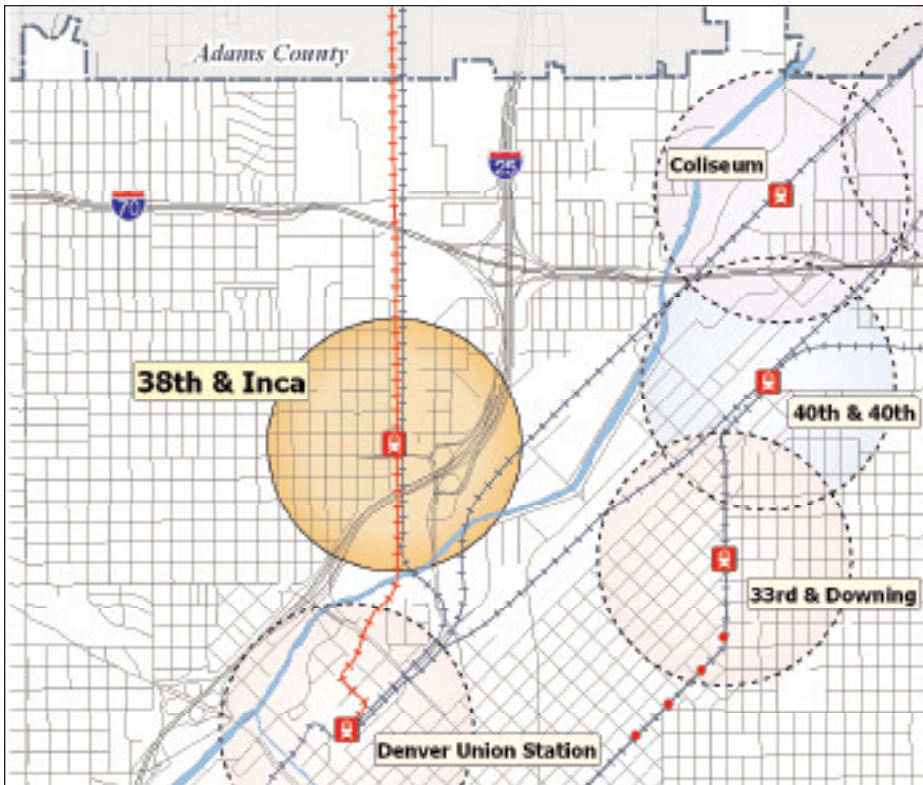
## **Denver International Airport (DIA)**

Issues and Conditions: DIA is the final stop on the East Corridor. Given that all lines except I-225 go to Denver Union Station, it is important that rapid service be provided from Denver Union Station to the East Corridor. This is an important destination for travelers as well as for employees who work at DIA. The I-225 Line connects with the East Corridor at Peoria and provides a connection from the Denver Tech Center and employment strung along I-25. A second issue is providing a convenient connection between the East Corridor train and the DIA terminal to assure that passengers on the train can readily access the terminal and the ticketing section. This will enhance the ridership. Although there is not an opportunity for TOD at DIA, providing convenient service will enhance TOD at other stations on the East Corridor and promote greater ridership on the East Corridor.

Recommendation:

- Continue to be involved in the East Corridor EIS and with DIA to assure that the service to DIA is convenient.





## GOLD LINE AND US-36 CORRIDOR

The Gold Line runs from Denver Union Station through Wheat Ridge to Arvada. Although there will be a stop at Old Town Arvada, this line will largely serve to bring commuters and visitors to Downtown Denver. The Gold Line in FasTracks has a station at 38th and Inca. The US36 Line will go from Denver Union Station to Boulder and then on to Longmont. Even though it serves a corridor that includes a considerable and growing employment base, FasTracks did not provide a station in Denver. Both of these lines share the same right-of-way through Denver. The major issue that needs to be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statements for these two corridors is to determine if the station at 38th and Inca best serves the Northwest Denver community with service from one of the two lines or both lines.

### 38th and Inca

#### TOD Typology: Urban Neighborhood

#### Priority: Immediate

**Issues and Conditions:** The Gold Line will provide commuter rail service into Downtown Denver from outlying suburban communities, none of which currently have, or are planning any major employment or entertainment centers. The two stations along this line that do have significant TOD opportunities will be primarily driven by residential development with some retail and civic functions. Thus, the Gold Line itself will only connect station area residents directly to one major employment destination. However, because this stop is so close to Union Station, which will be the transfer point



*38th and Inca Station area*

for all but one of the regional transit lines, 38th and Inca will have excellent regional connectivity.

Even with this regional transit connectivity, it is unlikely that the market would support a major mixed use concentration around the 38th and Inca station itself. The railroad tracks running parallel to Inca Street, the industrial area to the east of the tracks, and I-25 create major barriers that prohibit access to any future retail development from many parts of the 1/2-mile transit zone. This isolated trade area limits the amount of retail development that is supportable at this location. While the larger Sunnyside neighborhood, in which the 38th and Inca Station is located, is considered a “Focus Neighborhood” by the City’s Economic Development Department, revitalization efforts probably need to take on a broader area and address the larger issue of potential gentrification and displacement, rather than just considering TOD around the station. Right now this neighborhood represents a significant reservoir of housing for low- and moderate-income families, including the Quigg Newton Public Housing Development. But, over time, development pressures coming from neighborhoods to the south and west, as well as improved transit access could eventually cause the housing market in the Sunnyside area to heat up. At that point it will be much more difficult to deploy any kind of comprehensive anti-displacement strategy.

There are many small and very rundown industrial facilities along Inca Street that could be redeveloped as housing, not as mixed use development as this location is very marginal for anything but the most minimal retail development. Mixed use projects should be encouraged elsewhere within the 1/2-mile radius of the transit station at a location that has better visibility and vehicular access from all directions. One possible location for such development would be along West 38th Avenue at the intersection with Navajo or Mariposa. This would build on a small existing retail node and allow future residents to still have walkable access to the Gold Line. However, to make this strategy effective, the station should be located nearer to 38th Avenue, rather than at the northern end of the neighborhood.

#### Recommendations:

- Prepare a Station Area Plan for 38th and Inca

## **NORTH METRO**

The EIS for the North Metro Line will be starting up in the near future. The North Metro Line runs from Denver Union Station to Thornton. The alignment and station area locations will be addressed in the EIS. If the UP alignment is selected, the North Metro Line will connect at the 40/40 station. It is anticipated that an additional station would be added in the vicinity of 50th and the UP. If the Burlington Northern (BN) alignment is selected, the most recent scoping showed a station tucked in behind the Denver Coliseum.



## Coliseum or 50th and UP Station

**TOD Typology: Urban Neighborhood (for the UP alignment at 50th & UP) or possibly Campus (BN alignment)**

### Priority: Monitor and Respond

Issues and Conditions: Under the BN alignment, the recent scoping study showed the station tucked in behind the Denver Coliseum which would include a modest-sized park-n-ride to be shared with the Coliseum. The benefit of this station location is that it could serve the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) but the NWSS is for two weeks in January with sporadic events on the weekends or in the evenings. Otherwise, this proposed station location is completely isolated and inaccessible from any residential neighborhood. It is unclear that this station has any TOD potential. Given the lack of TOD opportunity and isolation from neighborhoods, it is not apparent that a station makes sense at this location. If the UP alignment is selected, a station is possible in the vicinity of 50th & UP and would be readily accessible to much of the Swansea neighborhood. It would be a station with the TOD typology of urban neighborhood. The UP alignment would enhance the role of the 40/40 station as described elsewhere.

#### Recommendation:

- Carefully evaluate alignment and station locations in the EIS
- Monitor and respond to opportunities as necessary



*Coliseum and UP Station*

## I-225 CORRIDOR

### Dayton Station

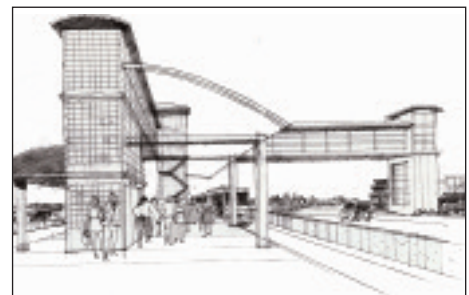
**TOD Typology: Urban Neighborhood**

### Priority: Monitor and Respond

Issues and Conditions: The land in Denver is built out with medium density housing. Denver is cooperating with Aurora to explore the opportunity for new residential development at an appropriate intensity in the immediate vicinity of the station east of Denver. A pedestrian connection needs to be created to enable Denver residents to access the station in a convenient manner while assuring that parking problems are not created.

#### Recommendations:

- Create a pedestrian connection to existing Denver residences.
- Monitor and respond to opportunities as necessary.



*Dayton Station*





*Nine Mile (Parker Road) Station*

## **Nine Mile (Parker Road) Station**

### **TOD Typology: Commuter Town Center**

### **Priority: Long Term/On-Going Monitoring**

Issues and Conditions: The land adjacent to the station in Denver is developed.

#### Recommendations:

- Explore opportunities for connections to the station
- Monitor the opportunity for redevelopment



# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: List of Interviewees

### City & County of Denver

#### Community Planning and Development

Peter Park, Manager

Tyler Gibbs, Manager of Planning Services

Catherine Cox-Blair, Senior City Planner

Steve Gordon, Development Program Manager

Katherine Cornwell, Senior City Planner

Eric McClelland, GIS

#### Public Works

Amy Mueller, Deputy Manager of Public Works

Bob Kochevar, City FasTracks representative

Stu Williams, Director of Engineering

Peter Baertlein, Engineering Manager

Jason Longsdorf, City Planner Specialist

Mark Najarian, Senior Engineer

Amy Wiedeman, Associate City Planner

Dave Weaver, Traffic Engineer

#### Parks and Recreation

Devon Buckels, Planner

Keith French, Landscape Architect Studio Leader

#### Office of Economic Development/Housing and Neighborhood Development

Ledy Garcia-Eckstein, Senior Policy Analyst

Katherine O'Connor, GIS Analyst

Jim Carpenter, Economic Analyst

Liz Alkire, Economic Analyst

Betty Sparrow, Assistant Director

## **Mayor's Office**

Peter Chapman, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor

Diane Barrett, Assistant to the Mayor

## **Environmental Health**

Janet Burgesser, Environmental Scientist

Monica Buhlig, Program Administration

## **Department of Law**

Karen Aviles, Assistant City Attorney - Specialist

Joann Weinstein, Assistant City Attorney

## **Budget Management Office**

Marilyn Miller, Director of Capital Improvement Projects

Stephanie Iwanski, Administrative Assistant Asset Management

## **Assets Management**

Richard Warren, Analyst

## **Other Agencies**

### **Denver Urban Renewal Authority**

Laura Aldrete, Assistant Director

### **Denver Housing Authority**

Chris Parr, Director of Development

### **Regional Transportation District**

Bill Sirois, Manager of Transit Oriented Development



## Appendix B: Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

### Background

The Center for Transit-Oriented Development (CTOD) has been retained by the City of Denver Community Planning and Development Department to prepare a Strategic Plan for transit oriented development (TOD). The purposes of this effort are to:

- Set priorities for where City resources should be directed in the short, mid and long-terms;
- Identify gaps in the City's implementation framework for TOD and suggest ways of addressing planning, regulatory and/or implementation shortfalls.
- Ensure close coordination among City departments and staff as they undertake planning and implementation activities related to transit and transit-oriented development,

On August 22 and 23, 2005, Shelley Poticha and Dena Belzer met with representatives of the city departments (see attached list of participants). Staff from each department was asked about how they see the opportunity for transit-oriented development with the passage of FasTracks, what plans, policies and programs are already in place to support TOD, where they believe the greatest opportunities for TOD are located, the types of barriers their department faces in implementing TOD, and what specific role they see filling as the TOD program is defined.

The results of these interviews are summarized below.

### What We Learned

Across all departments there is a tremendous level of enthusiasm for supporting the expanding opportunities for transit-oriented development. Staff sees the ballot box success of FasTracks as a signal of public support for focusing development around transit and providing greater mobility options throughout the community. They understand the concepts associated with TOD and want to be a part of the positive changes that it will generate for city life.

Coupled with the enthusiasm is concern regarding the tremendous responsibility the initiative places

on staff. Recognizing the magnitude of the new system, they worry that it will be all too easy to lose focus and drift from one site to another with little progress to show. Similarly, every department voiced a concern that in the face of constrained resources, staff needs tools and criteria to help set priorities.

Many City departments have plans in place, or are developing plans, that recognize TOD and/or support TOD principles. Blueprint Denver, the Strategic Transportation Plan, the Parks and Recreation Department's "Game Plan," the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, and the Sanitary and Stormwater master plans all mention Transit and TOD to one degree or another

Specifically, departments have begun the process of identifying priority TOD sites from their own discipline:

- Community Planning and Development (CPD) has drafted a TOD Typology that classifies all stations along the existing and future transit system according to future place type, development opportunities, zoning, parcelization patterns and receptivity of local stakeholders.
- DURA has informally identified urban revitalization areas where they are considering focusing their resources and financial tools.
- The Office of Economic Development has identified a series of "Focus Neighborhoods" where they intend to direct workforce development and affordable housing programs.
- Public Works has responsibility for coordinating with RTD during construction of the FasTracks transit lines and is also looking beyond the light rail system to creating a potential complimentary network of bus and streetcar lines.

Furthermore, there are a number of station area plans underway for specific locations, including Union Station, the Cherokee and Lionstone properties at the former Gates Rubber Company, Bellevue and a Louisiana-Pearl Station. In addition there is a corridor plan adopted and new zoning language for East Colfax and a similar effort is underway for West Colfax Avenue. While these plans clearly do not represent the full range of site-specific plans that are needed, they demonstrate



progress in key areas and show that City staff does have experience developing these policy and development documents.

Despite this set of very good foundational activities, we found the following gaps:

- **Implementation Activities:** Several departments have done quite a bit of city-wide planning, but fall short on identifying and prioritizing implementation activities for follow-through. This is particularly important for TOD, as the size of the endeavor is tremendous. CPD's TOD Typology is a good foundation for prioritizing specific locations and should be a starting point for spatially prioritizing sites
- **Process:** Staff has established strong inter-departmental processes for responding once a specific project is proposed. However, few examples exist for working pro-actively at specific sites to implement the goals of city-wide plans. The East Colfax form-based code may be a good model.
- **Implementation Tools:** In some cases, available implementation tools are insufficient for TOD. For example, public works staff recognizes that streetscape improvements that go beyond the immediate station area will be important to promote connectivity and pedestrian access from surrounding neighborhoods. However, they feel that they do not have the financial tools to assess developers or property owners for the cost of these improvements.
- **Housing Balance:** Gentrification was raised as a significant concern for particular transit corridors. While the inclusionary housing ordinance exists and tools are available city-wide for building affordable housing, there is limited guidance for how to implement mixed-income housing near transit, where to locate new affordable housing and how to preserve the stock of existing rental units.
- **Jobs:** Where, how, what types of jobs should locate near transit stations and how will the City help guide what the right mix of uses is at specific sites. How can the City guarantee local jobs result from TOD and transit?
- **Parking:** Setting parking standards is another area where there are gaps in information and tools to help establish appropriate standards. The Gates property experience was cited as a situation where required parking was reduced with little evidentiary base. As the transit network matures, a more

robust set of tools for locating commuter and shared parking facilities may be needed, as well as guidance for calibrating on-site parking standards.

- **Parks:** As the City becomes denser, greenspace and access to trails are likely to be in high demand. Though the "game plan" calls for both urban parks and trails, few resources are available to pay for new public lands.
- **Prioritization:** When discussing which stations should be given priority over others, it became clear that a number of datapoints are needed to paint a composite picture. These factors might include: status of the rail line planning and design, size and condition of available land, parcelization patterns, market demand for development in the station area, willingness of local property owners and residents to consider TOD, whether development in the station area can be a catalyst for other activity in the neighborhood, and the degree to which the station should be dominated by parking.

## Issues for Further Consideration

These initial discussions indicate that there are a series of more global issues that need to be considered before the final criteria can be developed for organizing all of Denver's FasTracks stations into a final typology addressing the near, mid- and long-term actions the city must take to optimize TOD at each location, as appropriate. While this list may evolve as further discussion between the C-TOD and city staff take place, the first cut at this issues list is as follows:

- Where can/should TOD play a catalytic role in revitalizing neighborhoods that have already been identified as Areas of Change or other kinds of "focus neighborhoods," even if the real estate market is relatively weak?
- What critical issues related to current or upcoming EISs need to be addressed quickly to incorporate into the EIS processes?
- Are there any station areas with near term market potential that are not already being examined through some more "fine-grained" planning effort?
- What role should/does the market, versus other community objectives, play in terms of defining any given station's "significance" relative to other stations, and in determining what resources should be allocated to that station?
- How should the need to accommodate a range of household types and incomes near transit be



defined for individual station areas and along each transit corridor?

- How will the City's standards for parks and public facilities vary in transit zones (1/2 mile area around each transit station) from other types of neighborhoods?
- How will the City work with RTD to define the appropriate role each station takes in both

providing ridership to the system and meeting local community development goals?

- What resources are needed to accomplish the implementation strategies?

# Appendix C: Implementation Tools

## Regulations

### Form-based zoning

- Pattern book
- Relaxed parking requirements
- Incentive-based zoning

### Finance Mechanisms

- Tax increment financing
- Land banks
- Land acquisition funds
- Prioritizing station areas in financing affordable housing
- Community land trusts

### Integrated Strategies

- Station area plans
- Transit oriented zoning
- Joint development

## Regulations

### Form-based zoning

A code that regulates the built form, as much as the types of uses that occur in buildings, such as form-based zoning, can be an effective tool to clarify expectations from developers and alleviate citizen concerns about intensification in existing neighborhoods. Denver has recently adopted a form-based code for East Colfax Avenue with an immediate positive response from both the development community and neighbors. A similar approach should be used in conjunction with station area plans and proactive zoning efforts.

### Case Study: Columbia Pike, Arlington, VA

In the 1960s, Columbia Pike, a 3.5-mile stretch of road that runs from the Pentagon to the Arlington County/Fairfax County border, was considered Arlington's main street. Single-use development lined the Pike, until recently when Columbia Pike citizens initiated a long-range vision and planning process. The Columbia Pike Revitalization Plan including form-based zoning codes was adopted in 2002.

The Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Form Based Code is an optional development approval process developed to foster a vital main street for its adjacent neighborhoods through a mix of uses—with

mixed-income residences, sidewalk cafes, and other commercial and office uses. The Columbia Pike Form Based Code provides a citizen-endorsed urban design for the improvement of all properties in designated areas including the forthcoming streetcar that will link Pentagon City in Arlington to the Skyline area in Fairfax County. For more information:

[http://www.columbiapikepartnership.com/FORM/index\\_E.html](http://www.columbiapikepartnership.com/FORM/index_E.html)

### Case Study: Leander, TX

The "Leander, TX TOD" plan was adopted in 2005 to take advantage of the forthcoming Capital Metro Commuter rail line, which is expected to be complete in 2008. The Transect-based plan and Unified Land Development Code covers 2,000 acres in Leander, the fastest-growing city in the Austin region and the first application of the SmartCode\* in Texas. The new code is mandatory, not optional; it replaces conventional zoning and subdivision codes in the 2,000 acres owned by seven separate landowners. The city government and the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority collaborated with major landowners on the planning and code initiative, with landowners paying much of the cost. For more information: <http://www.ci.leander.tx.us/index.cfm>

The SmartCode is an example of a form-based zoning code developed by Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company.

### Resources:

<http://www.formbasedcodes.org/>  
[http://www.lgc.org/freepub/land\\_use/factsheets/form\\_based\\_codes.html#top](http://www.lgc.org/freepub/land_use/factsheets/form_based_codes.html#top)  
[www.dpz.com](http://www.dpz.com)  
<http://www.placemakers.com/info/smartcode.html>

### Pattern book

A pattern book provides a template of desired and preferred building types for housing in a defined area such as a TOD district. They can illustrate preferred building massing, orientation, design and materials so that new projects fit with the neighborhood character. It is used as an educational tool to demonstrate how small, low-cost housing and multi-generational housing can fit with the scale and character of older neighborhoods.

### Resources:

<http://www.urbandesignassociates.com>



### Relaxed parking requirements

Parking management strategies include parking location, cost, supply, and demand. Parking demand also changes over the life of a transit station. As the transit network matures, a more robust set of tools for locating commuter and shared parking facilities may be needed, as well as guidance for calibrating on-site parking standards. Strategies may include: calculating the number of parking spaces needed in a TOD project; establishing and operating car-share programs and valet bike parking facilities; siting, designing and funding shared parking structures; creating the ability to establish parking districts under Colorado law; and establishing permit parking programs in residential neighborhoods.

Mixed land uses often have complementary peak demand times and can provide opportunities for shared parking. Shared parking, along with transit accessibility and parking management, can work to reduce the parking spaces required for an individual development. On site parking requirements for transit oriented development can often be reduced substantially, reducing the costs for developers and allowing denser development around transit.

#### Case study: Pacific Court, Long Beach, California

Pacific Court is a mixed-use, infill development completed in 1992. It includes 142 apartments above 96,000 square feet of retail on a 2-acre urban site. Through negotiations between the developer and the City, guest parking was eliminated through a variance process and retail parking requirements were reduced from 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet to 2 spaces per 1,000 square feet. The developer constructed 400 underground parking spaces on-site, and the local redevelopment agency operates several parking lots in the area.

#### Case study: San Diego, California

The City of San Diego has reduced Transit Area parking ratios that apply to development within a Transit Area Overlay Zone or Urban Village Overlay Zone.

The minimum required parking spaces for: multiple dwelling units is 1.0 to 2.0 rather than 1.25 to 2.25 (depending on the number of bedrooms), retail/commercial is 2.1 to 4.3 per 1,000 square feet rather than 2.5 to 5.0, eating and drinking establishments is 2.1 to 12.8 per 1,000 square feet rather than 2.5 to

15.0 per 1,000 square feet. For more information: <http://clerkdoc.sannet.gov/legtrain/mc/MuniCodeChapter14/Ch14Art02Division05>

#### Resources:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/tod.htm>

[http://www.nelsonnygaard.com/articles/article\\_parking.htm](http://www.nelsonnygaard.com/articles/article_parking.htm)

### Incentive-based zoning

Incentive-based zoning provides developers with incentives, like density or floor-area bonuses, to meet certain housing objectives. Many localities and some states offer incentives as part of their joint development or TOD program activities. Incentive-based zoning can work over a very broad area such as bus corridor. Incentives typically require less up-front planning work than a station area plan and they can be more effective in a political environment in which policymakers are apprehensive about or opposed to requiring either mixed-income or mixed-use.

#### Case Study: City of Chicago

To encourage mixed-income, the City of Chicago has chosen to use incentive-based zoning rather than a mandatory inclusionary housing program. The incentive, a density bonus, provides additional floor area ratio and height in exchange for providing either money or on-site affordable housing. For on-site units, developers receive a 4:1 bonus of additional square footage for each foot of affordable housing. If the developer opts to pay the fee, fees are deposited in a special fund, which to date has collected \$12 million, a modest amount in comparison to the effects of a true inclusionary program. The affordable units are targeted either to renters earning 60 percent of AMI, or owner-households earning 100 percent of AMI. All must remain affordable for at least thirty years. Although the City's downtown affordable housing zoning bonus is not currently focused on TOD, Mayor Daley has recently proposed to expand the program beyond the downtown areas to neighborhoods well-served by transit. For more information:

<http://egov.cityofchicago.org/city/webportal/home.do>

#### Case Study: Expedited Permitting in Austin, Texas

Although technically not zoning, expedited permitting is akin to a zoning incentive in that it is a tool that accelerates a development through the entitlement process in return for meeting certain use or design



considerations. In Austin, Texas, the city has created a special program to promote affordable TOD. The SMART (Safe, Mixed-Income, Accessible, Reasonably-Priced, Transit-Oriented) Housing program provides projects with at least 10 percent affordable homes with development fee waivers and expedited permit reviews. In this case, affordability is defined as affordable to households earning 80 percent or less of AMI. Since its inception in 2000, the program has produced over 4,000 single-family and multi-family units, including nearly 3,000 reasonably-priced units. Another 7,000 are in the pipeline.

The average completion time for SMART Housing reviews was approximately half the time of conventional reviews. The city has brought together many city departments to both fund the fee waivers as well as consider the impact of zoning and other regulatory processes on affordability. Among the fees waived include zoning, site plan, subdivision, building permit, construction inspection and capital recovery fees. During the first three fiscal years of the program, the City of Austin waived over \$3.5 million in fees for SMART Housing developments. These waivers are done on a sliding scale – from 25% fee waivers for 10% reasonably-priced units up to 100% fee waivers for 40% reasonably-priced units. For more information:  
<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/ahfc/smart.htm>

Resources:

<http://www.fanniemaefoundation.org/programs/hff/v8i1-inclusionary.shtml>

## Finance Mechanisms

### Tax increment financing

Many other communities with transit are using Assessment Districts or Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to capture some of the value created by TOD to help pay for public facilities.

### Case Study: Twelve Centennial Park

In Atlanta, the Novare Group recently began construction on Twelve Centennial Park, a large mixed-use and mixed-income complex directly adjacent to the Civic Center MARTA station near Centennial Olympic Park. The development includes two 39-story residential towers with 1,034 condo-minium units, a 16-story 102-room boutique hotel, 12,500 square feet of office, a restaurant and retail shops.

TIF served as a key to moving the whole development forward, as well as the mixed-income component in particular. The Atlanta Development Authority provided the developer with \$11 million in TIF funds (known locally as a tax allocation district, or TAD), based on the anticipated property tax increment to be created through development on the site. The total project budget is approximately \$120 million to construct Phase I (and over \$220 million for both phases combined).

The first phase of 517 condominium units, the hotel and most of the retail and office broke ground in fall 2005. It includes 104 affordable for-sale condominium units in Phase I (20%) at sales prices of \$144K for 1BRs and \$155K for 2BRs. Because of the funding from the Atlanta Development Authority, these units are targeted for households earning 80% of AMI or less, which is approximately \$39,000 for an individual up to \$54,000 for a family of four. The Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership participated as a financial partner in the development, providing \$500,000 in return for the ability to market and sell the affordable condos.

Resources:

<http://www.illinois-tif.com/>

<http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/cmgr/pages/-9194/>

## Land banks

A land bank is a governmental entity created by state and local enabling legislation to convert vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties into residential neighborhoods and green space. While land banks are generally associated with older urban communities that have significant abandonment (Flint, Michigan), they are just as useful in hot markets (Portland, Oregon) to preserve healthy communities from deterioration and to hold land for future development. By using legal tools, a land bank can ensure that property is sold or developed with the long-term interest of the community and surrounding property owners in mind.

One of the important functions of a land bank in relation to TOD is the ability to hold ownership of properties for long periods of time for future uses. Land banking is an important strategy for preserving sites for affordable housing and other community needs in areas where land is currently inexpensive but where price



inflation is likely. Securing significant parcels of land before transit is built and prices rise makes affordability possible with fewer subsidy dollars. In addition, the strategic selection of parcels to bank will help shape the character of the community.

### **Case Study: The Fulton County/City of Atlanta Land Bank Authority**

The Fulton County/City of Atlanta Land Bank Authority, Inc. (LBA) is a non-profit corporation authorized by state statute in 1990 to help put the region's abandoned and deteriorated property back into productive use. The LBA was given the power to forgive delinquent City and County property taxes that CDCs purchase on the open market and on properties the LBA acquires from the government through a variety of means. The LBA expedites the process of clearing title on acquired properties and serves as an intermediary between government and community-based redevelopment efforts.

Projects supported by the Land Bank Authority include affordable single and multifamily housing units, commercial projects, and parks, gardens, and recreation centers that help revitalize neighborhoods. To date, over 900 housing units have been built on land secured with the help of the LBA, and nearly 240 more are under construction.

For many transit agencies, surface parking lots are their biggest development asset. As demand for housing increases, transit agencies can build upon surface parking lots and achieve results similar to land banking. Parking lots tend to be large sites that are relatively cheap to build upon. Importantly, developers only have to negotiate the land purchase with the transit agency and gain sufficient return on investment. These extra incentives make parking lots ideal locations to build mixed-income developments.

### **Case Study: Ohlone-Chynoweth, San Jose, CA**

Located in San Jose, CA, the Ohlone-Chynoweth station area originally included a 1,100 space park and ride lot owned and operated by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. After redevelopment, the 7.3-acre parking lot was transformed into 33 units of affordable housing, 4,400 square feet of retail, a day care center, and 240 parking spaces. The overall density of the project is 27 dwelling units per acre.

Resources:

<http://www.lisc.org/content/publications/detail/793/>  
<http://www.lisc.org/content/publications/detail/944/>

## **Land acquisition funds**

Similar to a land bank, land acquisition funds can be established for the purchase of land near transit stations to create transit oriented development. The purpose of these land acquisitions is to spur private sector transit oriented development by aiding in land assembly, removing blight or inappropriate land uses, and assisting in mixed income housing development.

### **Case Study: City of Charlotte, NC South Corridor Land Acquisition Fund**

In Charlotte, NC, the South Corridor Land Acquisition Fund was established to purchase land near planned transit stations along the South Corridor Light Rail to create transit oriented development. The funding came from the City Council's allocation of over \$5 million from the Capital Investment Plan to the Smart Growth Fund. The goal of the fund, according to the Joint Development Principals and Policies (adopted April 2003) is for "selective acquisition of strategically located land around transit stations..." The City of Charlotte Departments of Economic Development, Planning, Neighborhood Development, Engineering, Charlotte Area Transit Systems and a consultant from Coldwell Banker Commercial work together to manage the fund.

The first site of this kind is located in the Scaleybark Station Area along the South corridor. The approximately 8-acre site is immediately adjacent to the park and ride for the Scaleybark Station. The purchase price was \$5,435,000 and the Smart Growth Fund covered \$3,435,000 with the remaining cost covered by the Housing Trust Fund. The project includes removing existing land uses that are not transit supportive and creating a mixed-use and mixed-income development that is intended to be a catalyst for the station area. In addition, the development will include a minimum of 5% to a maximum of 25% affordable residential units. The property is expected to be sold to a qualified developer in early 2007.

## **Prioritizing station areas in financing affordable housing**

There are a number of ways that tax credit allocation agencies can facilitate mixed-income and mixed-use TOD. LIHTC are distributed in each state on the basis of qualified allocation plans and an accompanying set of regulations and scoring criteria. According to Global Green USA, 28 states have rewards or

requirements for transit access. For example, Texas provides 4 additional points for developments located within 1 mile of public transportation. And in California, where transit is more abundant, there is an even more extensive set of options and incentives (see below). Some allocating agencies also give additional consideration for mixed-income. In Illinois, the tax credit allocation process gives as many as 4 additional points for projects that include 20 percent market-rate housing.

\* CHFA has funding limits that might make it more difficult to finance large affordable housing TOD projects. <http://www.colohfa.org/>

#### **Case Study: California LIHTC Transit Incentives:**

- 7 points: The project is part of a transit-oriented development strategy where there is a transit station, rail station, commuter rail station, or bus station, or bus stop within 1/4 mile from the site with service at least every 30 minutes during the hours of 7-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m., and the project's density will exceed 25 units per acre.
  - 6 points: The site is within 1/4 mile of a transit station, rail station, commuter rail station or bus station, or bus stop with service at least every 30 minutes during the hours of 7-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m.
  - 5 points: The site is within 1/3 mile of a bus stop with service at least every 30 minutes during the hours of 7-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m.
  - 4 points: The site is located within 500 feet of a regular bus stop, or rapid transit system stop.
  - 3 points: The site is located within 1,500 feet of a regular bus stop or rapid transit system stop.
- <http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/ctcac>

### **Community land trust**

Community land trusts are democratically controlled nonprofit organizations that provide housing for low- and moderate-income households. The Community Land Trust's distinctive approach to ownership involves permanent CLT ownership of land, which is leased to households through a long-term renewable lease for affordable homeownership or rental housing. When CLT homeowners decide to move, the CLT has the right to buy each home for an amount determined by the CLT's resale formula thus keeping the housing permanently affordable.

Community Land Trusts acquire land through purchase, donation or eminent domain. CLTs may build new homes, rehabilitate older homes, or acquire existing housing that needs little or no renovation. The CLT itself

may own and manage a building as rental housing, another non-profit may own it, or the residents may own it as a cooperative or as condominiums. In each case, the CLT ensures long-term affordability.

Community Land Trusts can play key roles in developing diverse transit-oriented neighborhoods. Those roles include developing high density affordable housing, revitalizing economically disadvantaged areas without displacing existing residents, and advocating for public policies that promote the creation of diverse, affordable transit-oriented neighborhoods.

In order to create and maintain a mixed-income community around a transit hub or along a corridor, it's crucial that affordable units be permanently preserved. By permanently removing land and housing from the speculative market, CLTs can help develop and preserve diverse housing choices in conjunction with transit. The substantial public investment required to build transit is a strong argument in favor of the use of the CLT ownership model. By retaining the affordability of the housing they create in perpetuity, CLTs also retain the value of scarce public subsidies and private donations.

#### **Case Study: Dudley Neighbors, Inc., Boston, MA**

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) was established in 1984 to revitalize the dramatically deteriorated Dudley Triangle area in the Roxbury section of Boston. To implement plans to redevelop vacant and abandoned lots in the neighborhood, DSNI and local residents created the Dudley Neighbors Incorporated (DNI) as an urban community land trust. Through a series of policy firsts, DNI became the first community nonprofit organization in the country to be awarded eminent domain powers over vacant land in a 1.3 square mile area of the neighborhood.

DNI acquires vacant lots and leases these to private and non-profit developers for the purpose of building affordable housing, and subsequently to individual homeowners, cooperative housing corporations and other forms of limited partnerships. Dudley Neighbors Incorporated has built a total of 155 new homes and two community spaces. Within the next decade, approximately 200 new homes will have been built on DNI land.

#### **Case Study: San Francisco Community Land Trust**

Home to one of the most expensive housing markets in the world, San Francisco has seen much of its working-class population forced to leave the city. To combat this displacement and discrimination, the San Francisco Community Land Trust (SFCLT) was formed in 2001, to





provide quality resident-controlled housing for very low to moderate-income households. In 2006, the SFCLT and tenants of the Fong Building, a 21-unit apartment building in Chinatown, formed San Francisco's first resident-owned, limited-equity housing cooperative (LEHC).

Bordering Chinatown, North Beach and the Financial District, the Fong Building is located just blocks from the planned Chinatown Central subway stop. The low-income Chinese immigrant residents are concerned about gentrification and displacement as a result of the large amount of investment and development planned in the area, including around the new transit station. As a response, the Fong Building residents built a partnership with the Asian Law Caucus, Chinatown Community Development Center and San Francisco Community Land Trust to buy the building and convert it to a LEHC. The residents will each have a "share" in the co-op, purchased with a modest "down payment". Each member pays a monthly assessment to cover the mortgage, insurance, taxes, maintenance and other costs. When (s)he moves, (s)he gets the share value back with interest. The SFCLT retains ownership of the land and makes sure that it remains permanently affordable. For more information: <http://www.sfclt.org/>

Resources:

<http://www.iceclt.org/clt/>

<http://www.pclt.org/>

## Integrated Strategies

### Station area plans

Station area plans refer to conceptual or specific plans for an area around a transit station or corridor. There is some variation in what these plans contain, but they should lay out basic elements like zoning, design standards, parking requirements and information about transit access and bike and pedestrian circulation. The most effective plans have a clear timeframe and strategy for implementation, such as an investment or infrastructure improvement plan with clearly identified funding sources. Plans can be paired with numerous other tools like TIF to provide a cohesive strategy for implementation.

Station area plans work best for encouraging TOD when significant development opportunities exist, a result of, for example, large parking lots or other underutilized land. They are less useful for single buildings or projects of a more limited scope. Station

area plans should be done early in the process to provide maximum benefit to all parties and be specific enough to create certainty for developers and community members alike. In some cases, plans are advanced enough to create "by-right" zoning possibilities that greatly expedite the time from project conception to start of construction.

Certain elements of the station area plan may be proscriptive, such as prohibitions on auto-oriented retail, or prescriptive, such as a provision that at least 50 percent of the ground floor space be devoted to retail. Other elements may be permissive, i.e., the developer has the option but is not required to provide a feature. The challenge lies in finding a balance between required and optional elements so that the development is truly transit-oriented but developers are not discouraged from building at all. Planners and policymakers should heed the admonition of not letting the perfect get in the way of the good.

### Case Study: Mission Bay, San Francisco

The Mission Bay development is a good example of how a station area plan was combined with TIF and a novel inclusionary housing strategy to create value for both the master developer and the broader community. In this case, the station area plan is, in fact, a redevelopment plan for an area with multiple transit providers, including CalTrain commuter rail service, electric buses and MUNI METRO light rail.

Mission Bay is a 303-acre redevelopment project along San Francisco's waterfront, adjacent to the San Francisco Giants Baseball Stadium. At the start of the planning process, the area was owned almost entirely by Catellus, a real estate company spun off to shareholders in 1990 to develop property owned by Santa Fe Pacific Corporation. The project area will eventually include over 6,000 residential units, 5 million square feet of corporate offices and biotech space, a new campus for the University of California-San Francisco (UCSF), a hotel and conference center, 750,000 square feet of retail, and 49 acres of parks and open space. So far, nearly 40 percent of the housing is complete or under construction, along with much of the new UCSF campus.

As part of the development agreement with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA), Catellus agreed to dedicate 14 parcels to the SFRA for the purpose of developing affordable housing. The SFRA



then competitively selected developers and provided both land and TIF funds to build mixed-use affordable housing complexes throughout the development. Catellus and the SFRA created a unique land dedication and funding strategy that enabled 28 percent of the housing— which will be created in both stand-alone affordable housing developments and as part of larger market-rate condo developments—to be affordable to very low-, low- and moderate- income households.

For example, Rich Sorro Commons is a 100-unit rental apartment development with a 40-child Head Start program and 10,000 square feet of ground floor retail. Around the corner, the SFRA provided land and TIF funds to Mercy Housing California to develop a 100-unit senior care community with a local library on the ground floor. These two developments are sandwiched among a half-dozen market-rate condominium developments that include a grocery store and thousands of square feet of local retail.

This strategy largely frees up the market-rate parcels to maximize their building envelope and profitability. In comparison, many of the affordable sites are zoned for 50 feet of height, allowing them to stay with cheaper wood-framed construction. Furthermore, in the 100 percent affordable complexes, the affordable housing can more efficiently use tax credits.

Due to the station area plan, parking minimums are relaxed greatly and a parking maximum of 1:1 is in place. Likewise, setbacks have been greatly reduced and the design guidelines encourage ground floor retail. Because a Master EIR was conducted for the project area, the approval process for individual buildings moves very quickly for those that meet the specifics of the redevelopment plan. For more information: [http://sfgov.org/site/sfra\\_page.asp?id=5597](http://sfgov.org/site/sfra_page.asp?id=5597)

Resources:

[http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/transportation/ppmp\\_sap\\_home.htm](http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/transportation/ppmp_sap_home.htm)

<http://www.bart.gov/about/planning/station.asp>

## Transit oriented zoning

In addition to plans that are custom-designed for specific stations, some government agencies have created “floating” zoning classifications for TOD. These “transit village” classifications are not limited to a specific location but instead can be applied if a project or plan meets certain criteria like mixed use or pedestrian orientation, and less frequently, affordability.

## Case Study: Massachusetts Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District

A recent example of an attempt to create both mixed-use and mixed-income transit-oriented zoning is the Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District (aka 40R) adopted by the State of Massachusetts in 2004. The act “encourages communities to create dense residential or mixed-use smart growth zoning districts, including a high percentage of affordable housing units, to be located near transit stations...” Upon state review and approval of a local overlay district, communities become eligible for payments from a Smart Growth Housing Trust Fund, as well as other financial incentives.

40R brings together a number of key tools, including inclusionary zoning, expedited permitting and financial incentives. In essence, a locality interested in receiving funding under the act applies to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to have its district certified as meeting the requirements of the act, one of which is density provisions that require minimum allowable “as-of-right density” requirements.

The local zoning and/or the accompanying Community Housing Plan ensures that at least 20 percent of homes in the Smart Growth district are affordable to people earning less than 80 percent of AMI. The requirement applies to all projects of more than 12 units and requires at least a 30-year affordability timeline. There are some peculiarities about the nature of zoning decisions in Massachusetts that make rapid adoption of 40R difficult. Nonetheless, the concept could easily be adapted to other states. For more information: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/gl-40r-toc.htm>

Resources:

[http://trb.org/news/blurb\\_detail.asp?ID=3544](http://trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?ID=3544)

## Joint development

Joint development allows property interests held by the transit agency to be shared with private entities. The key challenges to joint development are: 1) transit agency emphasis on revenue over ridership or affordable housing goals; 2) high costs associated with joint development parcels; and 3) real estate challenges associated with local transit agency practices regarding sale or lease of transit agency-owned land.

A potential constraint on joint development activities is the requirement that the sale price be based on “highest and best use” or “highest and best transit use.” It’s not clear how much this holds back the mixed-income



aspect of TOD, but evidence from Portland suggests that this concern can be overcome.

One way to encourage developers to take on development features that initially cause apprehension is to share the risk and reward. For agencies that own land or can loan funds in a flexible fashion, this can be done through either lease agreements or loan terms. This is often the most practical way to resolve debates over the “value” of transit to the developer and can help resolve debates about the marketability of either retail space or residential units that the developer is uncomfortable about.

Specifically, an agency may require only a modest base land rent payment with the provision that the developer pays more based on the success of their project, which can be measured in terms of cash flow for rental or commercial property, sales prices of units or some other metric. The key is that the developer reduces their initial risk, but the public agency doesn’t get taken for a ride.

Another key issue for joint development is the disposition of land. Many transit agencies prefer to lease land rather than sell it outright. This distinction may seem unimportant to transit operators but for developers it can have a crucial impact on the cost of their financing—i.e., lenders and equity providers perceive more risk from deals in which the land is not permanently secured to their real estate improvement. The resulting increase in costs can make the difference between having a project “pencil out” or not. In the case of mixed-income housing, it may make a big difference on the number and price of the affordable units.

While historically there has been a legal question as to whether or not the FTA allows “fee simple” sale of land for joint development purposes that issue now appears to have been resolved. As long as the transit operator contractually requires the developer to maintain the physical or programmatic connection to the transit service — this often takes the form of an easement agreement that ensures a physical link — the project is still functionally related to transit.

There is also the thorny question of replacement parking, which has killed the financial feasibility of many joint development projects. With the cost of structured parking between \$20,000 and \$40,000 in many markets, requiring that the developer to replace a large surface parking lot with structured parking can quickly erode or eliminate the price that they are

willing to pay for development rights on transit agency property.

Notwithstanding some incredibly successful TOD projects, BART in the San Francisco Bay Area has struggled with this issue for years. Two good examples of BART’s success are the Fruitvale Transit Village in Oakland, CA and the Metrowalk project, described earlier. Recently the agency adopted a more flexible set of guidelines that takes into account ridership from joint development activities as a potential way to offset lost parking. BART’s new TOD policy calls for using “performance-based station access strategies on a corridor or line segment basis rather than on a station basis.” Using both the corridor approach and evaluation of the ridership benefits of TOD will enable BART to adjust its 1:1 replacement parking standard.

### **Case Study: METRO TOD Implementation Program, Portland, Oregon**

The traditional way to think about joint development is for a transit operator to consider what to do with its existing assets, like parking lots. While this can work, it may not be enough for local agencies that really want to jump-start TOD and lack the land for it. A more entrepreneurial approach is the METRO TOD Implementation Program in Portland, Oregon.

Using federal transportation dollars, the TOD program is used to acquire, plan and then re-sell land to developers under the condition that TOD happens on site. It is also one of the best examples of a land assembly program that doesn’t rely on TIF for its funding. Land is often written down based on a re-use appraisal that takes into account the specific limitations or extra demands placed on the site. For example, Metro may require structured parking and ground-floor retail, both of which have costs that a developer may not be willing to absorb based on market conditions. The Portland Development Commission (that city’s redevelopment agency) also uses federal CMAQ funds to acquire sites within the city. In such cases, a “highest and best transit use” appraisal is used to establish the sale price.

Portland seems to be leading the way in examples of mixed-income, mixed-use joint development. Although not traditional joint development, Center Commons was developed on a surplus ODOT site near a light rail station and various bus routes. The site was purchased initially by the Portland Development Commission, which then selected Lennar Affordable Communities as the developer. As a condition of sale,

PDC required at least 40 percent of the project's residential units to be affordable, which the developer exceeded by making 75 percent of the units below market-rate. In total the project included a small amount of retail and a day care center, as well 288 affordable rental apartments and 26 for-sale town homes. Not your typical joint development project, the land costs were reduced by 75 percent after TOD easements, covenants and restrictions were placed on the parcel to secure pedestrian access to the MAX station. This reduction was made possible through the Metro TOD Implementation Program.

For more information:

<http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=140>

Resources:

[http://www.fta.dot.gov/legal/federal\\_register/1997/376\\_1769\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/legal/federal_register/1997/376_1769_ENG_HTML.htm)

<http://www.wmata.com/bus2bus/jd/jointdev.cfm>

[http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/joint\\_index.asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/joint_index.asp)