Equitable transit-oriented development: Tools + Tactics

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Chicagoland’s growth over time

1950

Population density
- Fewer than 2,000 ppl/sq. mi.
- 2,000 to 10,000
- More than 10,000

Transportation
- Grade-separated highways
- CTA ‘L’
- Commuter rail
Chicagoland’s growth over time

1960

Population density
- Fewer than 2,000 ppl/sq. mi.
- 2,000 to 10,000
- More than 10,000

Transportation
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1970

Population density
- Fewer than 2,000 ppl/sq. mi.
- 2,000 to 10,000
- More than 10,000

Transportation
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- Commuter rail
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1980

- **Population density**
  - Fewer than 2,000 ppl/sq. mi.
  - 2,000 to 10,000
  - More than 10,000

- **Transportation**
  - Grade-separated highways
  - CTA ‘L’
  - Commuter rail
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1990

Population density
- Fewer than 2,000 ppl/sq. mi.
- 2,000 to 10,000
- More than 10,000

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2000

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2013

Population density
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- More than 10,000

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1950

2013

metroplanners.org
Major causes of change

• Changes in personal preferences.
  – Increased ability to afford personal automobiles.
• Disinvestment in urban centers and rising urban poverty, associated with segregation and racism.
• Significant federal subsidies for (suburban) home ownership and freeways.
• Urban renewal and urban freeway programs.
Impacts are apparent even in in-demand areas

Percent change, 2000 to 2010

- Lakeview
- Lincoln Sq
- Logan Sq
- North Center
- West Town

Legend:
- Orange: Median rent
- Blue: Median household income
Impacts are apparent even in in-demand areas
What is effective TOD?

- Fast, competitive transit in many directions
- Mixed-use development
- Housing for multiple income levels
- Access to community services and resources
- Walkable, landscaped streets
Benefits of development near transit

- People who live and work near transit drive 40% less than others.
- Residential property values near rapid transit outperform those of others by 40%.
- Low-income residents near rapid transit have access to 25 to 50% more jobs.

U.S. Census 2010
MPC’s TOD initiative

Encouraging TOD in the Chicago region through:

- Regulatory change
- Financial incentives
- Community engagement
POLICIES AND FINANCING
Zoning laws are limiting, but changing

- Even in areas near transit, zoning laws limit density and require high levels of parking
- MPC pushed for, and the City of Chicago passed, a zoning ordinance change for business, downtown, and commercial parcels near train stations that:
  - Reduced parking requirements
  - Increased allowed density
Zoning change will bring benefits

- 60,000 to 70,000 new housing units located near rail transit stations
- 1,300 on-site affordable units and $150 m for off-site affordable housing
- $200 m additional revenues for local taxing bodies
- $450 m in additional retail sales at neighborhood stores and restaurants
TOD projects already moving forward

3200 N. Clark

3400 N. Lincoln
Remaining challenges

• Obstacles remain: Much of the region is zoned for low densities.
• Even in areas that have traditionally featured multi-family buildings, new construction at the same density is typically not allowed.
• New housing requires lots of parking per unit.
A Lakeview example

Current conditions
- 6,000 sq. ft. lot
- 14 residential units
- 20,000 sq. ft. built
- 0 parking spaces
A Lakeview example

Zoning limitations: RT-4 district
- Only 6 residential units allowed
- Rear setback must be 40’, street setback 12’
- 3x as much built space as allowed
Financing concerns

• While TOD is going up in high-market parts of the city, it’s not adequately serving two key markets:
  – Affordable housing in high-income areas
  – Commercial uses in low-income areas

• Finding financing sources to address these challenges is a top priority
Demonstrate TOD Benefits
We need to build public support

Current public engagement approaches don’t work
We need to build public support

Proactive public engagement is vital.
Thanks!

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