

Cultivating Successful Transit-Rich Communities in Los Angeles: Strategies for Equitable TOD

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Executive Summary

With the support of pro-transit Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, backing from neighboring municipalities and a public hungry for more transportation options, LA has begun an ambitious expansion of its public mobility infrastructure. Encouraging inclusive, community-oriented development in the City's transit-rich neighborhoods will stimulate economic opportunity, increase mobility in underserved neighborhoods, improve public health and mitigate climate change through a reduction in automobile emissions.

Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), would create vibrant, walkable, mixed-use and mixed-income communities while ensuring that existing residents benefit from subsequent community investment, access to jobs in construction and operation and access to high-quality public transportation options. However, displacement is a factor that needs to be considered when planning for development in transit-rich neighborhoods. Displacement occurs when vulnerable communities experience an influx of investment and rapid increases in both property values and real estate turnover. The construction or announcement of a new transit mode is often the impetus that sets these changes in motion and can result in low and moderate-income families (who are often the most dependent on transit) being priced out of their own neighborhoods.

If investment in transit and transit-adjacent development causes significant displacement in the surrounding community, it will have fundamentally undercut its effectiveness and espoused societal value. Market-rate development can attract higher income residents who own cars and/or rarely use transit. This is counterproductive to the goal of reducing VMT (vehicle miles traveled) and pushes low-income and minority residents farther from transit, increasing Housing & Transportation costs and further concentrating poverty.

This report details the strategies that were used to implement Equitable TOD in Oakland, Denver and Hollywood, in order to inform the policy and land-use decisions that will guide future TOD in Los Angeles.

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I. Public Transit and Urbanization

2008 was a milestone year; for the first time in history the majority of all people on the planet were residing in urban areasⁱ. *Urbanization* describes a shift in global population from rural and exurban areas to concentrated nodes, and has heralded the return of the most fundamental geopolitical organizing tool: the city. The urban fabric that makes up cities is as diverse as the people who call these places home. For some, the word 'city' might conjure images of the storied skyline of Manhattan island, the romantic tree-lined boulevards of Paris, or the glittering lights of a futuristic Tokyo. Still others might associate the word with the rusty decay of Detroit, a smog-blanketed megacity like Guangzhou, or even Dharavi; a neighborhood which used to be Mumbai's biggest slum with around one million residents (bigger than Boston, San Francisco or Denver), but which has since been surpassed by three larger slum districtsⁱⁱ.

Though endlessly varied in their forms and functions, all cities represent the reality of human progress. Cities are the engines that drive economic expansion, incubators for scientific and technological innovation, and the stages on which global culture is created and progressive social movements are born. They're also the places where the tragic inequalities of the 21st century are most visible: a critical lack of adequate housing, education and basic services, widespread poverty, segregation, overcrowding and pollution. Cities encompass both the greatest potential and the most daunting challenges facing humankind. Because of this, cities are where we need to start thinking about and experimenting with solutions for the future.

As an urban policy student who has called Los Angeles home for the past four years, I've spent countless hours considering the many spatial, environmental, political, economic and cultural issues that are currently shaping the Southern California metropolis. Building compact, mixed-use, mixed-race and mixed-income communities stood out as a development strategy that could begin to remedy many of the obstacles to livability that I saw affecting my adopted home.

My enthusiasm for the great potential of transit-oriented development (TOD) was tempered by the way in which I could foresee it disrupting many low-income neighborhoods, which I found to be some of the most vibrant and interesting areas that the City had to offer. My courses in the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute of Occidental College impressed upon me that policy and land-use decisions have profound, measurable effects on city-dwellers and the places where they live. With this in mind, I created a report that draws from the examples of

three urban areas where equitable TOD was implementing using a variety of community organizing, financing and policy strategies. This report can inform future development in transit-rich neighborhoods, in the hope that TOD will improve the quality of life in these neighborhoods while preserving their unique character and preventing the displacement of their existing residents.

Transit-Oriented Development: More than a Mobility Solution

By 2030, 5 billion people are expected to live in cities worldwideⁱⁱⁱ. This means that a huge increase in the housing and transportation capacities of urban areas, many of which are already suffering from overstressed infrastructures, will be a top priority. Development is often welcomed as an opportunity for stimulating the local economy, but the long-term societal costs of poorly planned growth can outweigh immediate benefits. Sprawling fringe developments are unsustainable and lead to a costly dependence on the automobile and fossil fuels. Freeways, off-ramps, parking lots and other barriers to mobility segregate communities, concentrate poverty and make for a desolate, uninviting landscape. Blighted urban cores are often underserved and overlooked by elected officials, while revitalization in 'trendy' urban neighborhoods can displace existing residents, adding to the desperation of America's working-class.

The problems facing city-dwellers are spatial and require spatial solutions. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a strategy for 'smart growth' at the local and regional level whose focus is building at higher densities and for a variety of uses within walking distance - +(usually a half-mile) of a public transit station. TOD aims to create 'location efficient' communities with a wide availability of housing, transit and commercial options. These communities would be places where people of all backgrounds, ages and income levels could afford to live, work and play. To achieve this goal, a reinvestment in effective land-use planning, public transportation, and affordable housing will be necessary. When implemented effectively TOD has the power to address a number of pressing urban issues:

- **Auto Dependence:** By providing practical, safe and affordable transportation alternatives, TOD reduces the time we spend driving, our addiction to foreign oil, and the need for expensive and inefficient roadway infrastructure. Transit-oriented communities typically experience a 30-50% reduction in per capita annual congestion delay, in comparison with similar sized automobile-oriented cities^{iv}. Public transit indirectly saves enough gasoline to fuel 5.8 million

cars per year, averting \$9 billion spent on gasoline (in 2006 dollars). TODs that take a progressive approach to parking can help reduce and in some cases eliminate the need for expensive parking structures, which cost developers an estimated \$500 billion per year^v. The automobile is deeply ingrained in American culture, and transit-oriented development cannot instantly change this time-honored tradition. However, TOD and the increased availability of alternative transportation options will usher in a shift in how people think about mobility and evaluate the cost of driving. This gradual change in perceptions can help to reduce the externalities of a car-centric lifestyle, which (in the form of accidents and traffic delays) costs Americans an estimated \$365 billion dollars a year, or \$1 billion dollars per day^{vi}.

-Public Health & Safety: Embracing public transportation reduces harmful greenhouse gas emissions, improves air quality and promotes a healthier, more active lifestyle. In California, vehicular emissions account for the vast majority of total smog-forming emissions^{vii}. Senate Bill 375, adopted in 2008, requires regions to reduce emissions from vehicle through a reduction in total vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Investing in transit infrastructure is an effective strategy for cutting back on car use and adhering to the mandate established by SB375. In addition to mitigating the major respiratory health risks associated with vehicular emissions, walkable transit-oriented communities reduce the risk of traffic-related accidents. Residents of transit-oriented communities have about a quarter of the per-capita traffic fatality rate as residents of auto-dependant sprawl^{viii}, and transit users are four times as likely to achieve the target goal of 20 minutes or more of walking each day as people who do not use transit^{ix}.

-Economic Stimulus: TOD has huge job-creation potential in construction, operation and maintenance. For example: A planned expansion of LA's Orange Line bus rapid transit system is expected to create 210,000 new jobs and \$32 billion in economic output over the next 30 years^x. As the Urban Land Institute's Marilee Utter explains: fixed-guideway transit also acts as a development magnet, attracting new investment and improving access to existing job centers. Furthermore, car-related expenses provide less employment and business activity than expenditures on other consumer goods and transit service^{xi}. Investments in transit produce 19 percent more jobs than an equivalent investment in road and bridge projects^{xii}. TOD also has the potential to encourage economic activity by increasing households' disposable income through a reduction in housing and transportation costs.

-Livability: The most intangible concept may be the most important. Livability can mean something different to everyone, but has universal societal value. TOD encourages vibrant, walkable neighborhoods, civic engagement, improved public amenities and helps to create a true sense of place. In short: TOD aims to create places where people will actually enjoy living.

Transit-oriented development is not a panacea that can cure all the ills of our Nation's urban areas. What it does offer is a pattern of development distinctly opposed to the privatized, auto-centric build-out that defined the growth of many American cities in the 20th century. The different approaches that communities will take in implementing TOD will yield different results. A commitment to providing affordable housing options in the vicinity of transit stations will most likely be the determining factor of successful TOD. The degree to which transit-oriented development will deliver on the many benefits promised by its advocates is not certain. What is clear, however, is that American cities like Los Angeles are responding to an increased demand for transit and transit-adjacent housing options by investing billions of public and private dollars in infrastructure and related development. The creation of new transit lines and stations across the country will affect hundreds of communities. The time to consider the affect on those communities (and design forward-thinking policy strategies to ensure that this affect is positive) is now.

Growing Demand for Transit-Oriented Housing

The demographic makeup of the United States is changing, and this change is causing fundamental shifts in the housing market. After a decades-long period of out-migration to suburbs and exurbs, many people are turning their sights back towards the city. Part of this is related to the fact that traffic has gotten so bad that the commute is no longer a desirable or affordable option. But a big part of this change also has to do with the changing face of the American family. While the majority of US households used to be comprised of a Mom, Dad and more than one child living together, this group now comprises less than 25% of households and this number is shrinking. Singles will soon be the new majority in the country, almost half the U.S. will be non-white by 2050 and the children of the Baby Boomers (Echo Boomers) will total more than 34% of the population. The demographic groups that are growing the quickest – older, non-family, non-white households – have historically used transit in greater numbers^{xiii}. Renters and property owners alike are displaying different priorities than they have in the past. Contemporary households want more housing options: lofts, live-work spaces, townhomes, row

houses, courtyard apartments and other spaces that facilitate a convenient lifestyle with access to jobs, shopping, entertainment, culture, public services and parks- all within walking (or biking) distance. And this isn't limited to young people: AARP estimates that 71% of older households want to be within walking distance of transit^{xiv}. All of these preferences indicate a growing proclivity for dense, transit-rich urban neighborhoods.

Figure 1: Demand for Transit-Adjacent Housing in Major Metropolitan Areas^{xv}

TABLE 2: Top Ten Regions by Potential Demand for TOD Housing

	Existing Stations	Planned Stations	2000 TOD Households	2030 Demand	Percentage Change
New York	955	6	2,876,160	5,371,866	87%
Los Angeles	113	38	261,316	1,708,447	554%
Chicago	401	8	787,204	1,503,638	91%
San Francisco	286	49	409,497	832,418	103%
Philadelphia	370	34	506,058	809,058	60%
Boston	288	7	396,261	750,726	89%
Washington, D.C.	127	11	234,202	688,582	194%
Portland	108	29	72,410	279,891	287%
Miami	60	6	62,595	271,326	333%
Dallas	48	17	46,429	270,676	483%

Source: Reconnecting America

A national TOD market study done by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development found that by 2030, almost a quarter of all American households looking to rent or buy a new home are likely to demand higher-density housing near transit. Meeting this demand will require building 2,000 units of housing at each of the 4,000 existing and planned transit stations in the United States, with most of this demand centered in the five metro regions with the biggest transit systems. Los Angeles is second only to the New York region in the projected demand for transit-adjacent housing.

This increased demand hasn't gone overlooked by developers and real estate investors. "Emerging Trends in Real Estate" is a highly regarded report that compiles the opinions of 500 real estate, development and investment leaders. Their annual real estate report has ranked TOD as one of the best bets for investors year after year^{xvi}. Before 1987, "24-hour cities" were regarded as the worst opportunities for investors and "edge cities" were ranked as the best. Since then, investments in urban centers have consistently outpaced investments in "9 to 5 cities" and suburban areas. Their 2007 report contained this glowing praise for the property value development potential of transit-rich neighborhoods:

"Energy costs add fuel to the fire—people want greater convenience in their time-constrained lives. Far-flung greenfield homes may cost less, but filling the gas tank burns holes in wallets. Both empty nesters and their young

adult offspring gravitate to live in more exciting and sophisticated 24-hour places—whether urban or suburban—with pedestrian-accessible retail, restaurants, parks, supermarkets, and offices. Transit-oriented development at subway or light-rail stations almost cannot miss.^{xvii}

Changing preferences in favor of transit-adjacent housing, coupled with increased attention from developers, means that demand for housing near transit in the coming years will be considerably greater than what the existing housing stock can provide. These conditions make the early implementation of affordable housing strategies all the more crucial, before market forces completely overwhelm transit-rich neighborhoods.

Transit Investment and Gentrification

As U.S. cities begin to reinvest in public transportation infrastructure, transit ridership is growing and Americans are becoming increasingly interested in living in transit-rich neighborhoods. The United States are already home to more than 3,300 fixed-guideway transit systems, and plans to expand these systems could result in the creation of hundreds of new transit-rich neighborhoods in the next decade. Over 80 cities and regions in the country are currently planning to allocate more than \$250 billion for transit projects, a massive public investment that has catalyzed billions of dollars of private sector investment in housing and commercial development. This massive influx of capital into transit-rich neighborhoods (which are historically home to people of color, low-income households and renters^{xviii}) is often seen as a welcome opportunity for economic revitalization. However, progressive planners and community equity advocates realize that major public improvements like transit attract wealthier populations, resulting in an increase in property values and housing costs which can push original residents out of their neighborhoods.

This process is commonly described as *Gentrification*. The discourse concerning gentrification often includes references to the term *Displacement*; which is sometimes seen as a regrettable yet inevitable consequence of gentrification, or simply used interchangeably. However, these terms refer to two separate patterns of neighborhood change, and their distinction is significant. Although experts have differing opinions on the definition of these terms^{xix}, for the purposes of this report Gentrification will describe a shift in which a low-income or blighted area experiences a new period of investment and revitalization that is often coupled with an increase in property values and wealthy residents. Displacement will refer to the process by which ‘original’ or existing residents are involuntarily forced out of their neighborhood by illegal evictions, condo conversions or simply because they can no longer afford to stay in the

area. While the two processes are intrinsically linked, (gentrification can and often does result in displacement), it is important to remember that they are not inseparable.

The relationship between gentrification, displacement and neighborhood change is a complex one that has been the subject of heated debate and academic research. Urban areas have historically been in a state of flux, with city-dwellers migrating in and out of different neighborhoods^{xx}. Many factors influence these population shifts, including urban planning, housing policy, real estate market changes and perceptions of neighborhoods that may or may not be based in fact. Drawing concrete conclusions about gentrification is challenging because it is very difficult to isolate the single cause of a fluid cycle of neighborhood change that is influenced by a myriad of social, economic, and policy-driven factors. Furthermore, efforts to quantify displacement have been hindered by the logistical hurdles of tracking transient populations, and because people relocate for a variety of different reasons^{xxi}. Despite all the difficulties associated with studying neighborhood change, and the conflicting conclusions drawn by researchers, gentrification and displacement are very real issues that are deeply important to city-dwellers. People develop strong attachments to the places where they live, and react strongly when their neighborhoods are changed (for good or ill) by outside forces.

Because neighborhood change is a controversial issue that affects residents on a very personal level, it can be difficult to divorce emotions from a discussion of gentrification and displacement. But what do we know about the forces that affect neighborhood change, in terms of factual evidence? And how does transit investment influence the course of gentrifying, transit-rich neighborhoods? The effect of public transit investment on neighborhood change was the subject of a recent study by the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University^{xxii}. The study analyzed the broad range of socioeconomic changes¹ that occurred in 42 neighborhoods of 12 metropolitan areas that had recently been served by rail transit (between 1990 and 2000). The study concluded that patterns of neighborhood change varied between the different transit-rich neighborhoods that were investigated, underscoring the fact that effective land-use and transportation planning needs to consider the unique, place-specific characteristics of each project area to be successful. However, the study's findings also provided insight into the larger relationship between transit investment, gentrification and displacement:

¹ The study identified a limited scope of neighborhood characteristics as a shortcoming of previous research on gentrification. Because of this, they analyzed changes in population, housing and transportation preferences, racial and ethnic composition, number of housing units, tenure, housing value, rent and household income.

- **With the addition of transit, housing stock became more expensive, neighborhood residents became wealthier and vehicle ownership became more common.** The patterns of neighborhood change that occurred in transit-rich neighborhoods roughly mirrored those that were occurring in their greater metropolitan areas. However, the socioeconomic changes in transit-rich neighborhoods were much more pronounced than those in the surrounding region.
- **Neighborhoods with a greater proportion of renters are more susceptible to gentrification and displacement.** In neighborhoods that were primarily low-income, renter households before the addition of light rail stations, the aspects of neighborhood change were greatly magnified; owner-occupied units became more prevalent and rents rose faster.
- **Gentrification associated with a new transit station is not necessarily correlated with a change in racial composition.** The transit-rich communities studied had become more wealthy post-transit, but exhibited a racial composition similar to that of the pre-transit neighborhood.
- **Gentrification can be a positive force for neighborhood change, but can also have negative, unintended consequences.** The most obvious negative effect of gentrification is displacement. However, even when no displacement could be proven to have occurred, transit-rich neighborhoods experienced rapid increases in rents, adding to the housing cost burden of renter households who chose to remain and take advantage of transit and other amenities. Also, neighborhood revitalization (in the form of transit or other improvements) can attract residents who are not only wealthier, but more likely to own an automobile.

The Importance of Diversity in Transit-Rich Neighborhoods

Concerns about gentrification and displacement caused by transit investment generally stem from the desire to protect vulnerable populations (transit-rich neighborhoods and are home to a disproportionate share of lower-income households and people of color)^{xxiii} from disruptive neighborhood change. However, there are other reasons for maintaining diversity in transit-adjacent areas. People of color, low-income households and renters are more likely to use

transit than the average American. Conversely, although more than 95% of American households own a car, these three groups are likely to live in a household without a vehicle. These characteristics mean that the diverse residents of transit-rich neighborhoods represent a demographic that is crucial to the success of a public transportation network: core transit riders.

A steady, core ridership is absolutely essential to the success of a transit network. Planners often make the distinction between regular transit customers (sometimes disparagingly referred to as *captive riders*) who use public transportation out of necessity, and *choice* or *potential riders* who have access to other transportation options but choose to use transit. Regular transit customers are often taken for granted, shifting the focus towards attracting new choice riders. However, in order to increase total ridership, transit systems need to maintain their base of core riders while making it an easier and more attractive option for potential riders. Regular transit users constitute the vast majority of transit trips: those who ride three or more days per week make up more than 80% of total transit trips^{xxiv}. Furthermore, studies indicate that the likelihood of a worker using public transit to commute is highest when the worker lives in a zero-car household. The probability of transit use is drastically lower in households with just one car. Transit networks looking to increase regular ridership should focus on zero-car households, which are comprised mainly of people of color and people with lower incomes.

There is a symbiotic relationship between diverse neighborhoods and successful transit. Transit systems depend on the regular ridership that racially and economically diverse neighborhoods provide, while the residents of these neighborhoods depend on transit and benefit from other amenities that often accompany transit investment. Therefore, preventing the displacement of core transit riders is of utmost importance when planning a successful transit line. The most direct way to mitigate the negative effects of gentrification and prevent involuntary displacement is to provide a wide range of affordable housing options in transit-rich neighborhoods.

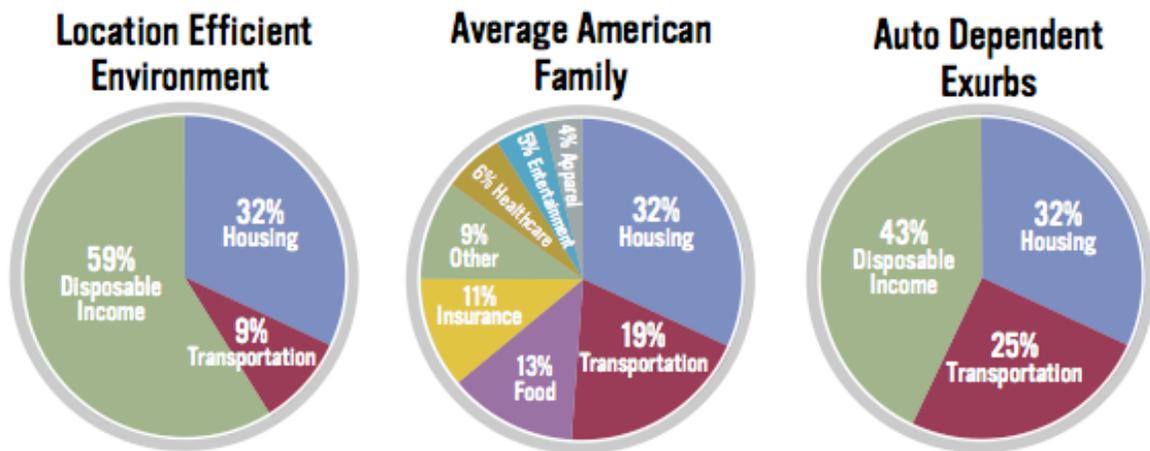
Rethinking Affordability: The Combined Burden of Housing and Transportation Costs

The success of transit-oriented development is dependant upon the availability of housing that is affordable to those who actually use transit regularly. Furthermore: diverse, vibrant communities are found in areas with an interesting mix of demographics characteristics and a wide variety of quality, affordable housing options. In the United States, housing costs are usually the measuring stick for determining an area's affordability. In general, housing costs are

expected to take up no more than 30% of a family’s income in order to be considered affordable. Therefore, what’s affordable for a household varies according to family size and income, and what is considered affordable for an area varies according to Area Median Income (AMI). Low and Moderate Income families earn between 50% and 120% of the AMI, which is often not enough to afford rent^{xxv}. These definitions are important because they determine who can benefit from federal programs like section 8, the limits for rent-stabilization ordinances, and how governments assess the housing situation in their municipalities.

Each year, the federal government measures the median income for communities across the country to determine criteria for housing programs. What’s often left out of the affordability debate, however, is the additional burden of transportation costs. In a study by the Center for Transit Oriented Development, the transportation costs in 17 of the nation’s 28 biggest metropolitan areas were found to be as high or higher than housing costs for working class families^{xxvi}. The split between housing and transportation (H&T) costs varied between the areas, but the proportion of total H&T expenditures to income remained roughly the same. This hints at the trade-off that working families deal with when choosing where to live and how to get around: Families that go further away from their jobs to find affordable housing generally end up spending their savings on transportation costs^{xxvii}.

Figure 2: Location Efficiency and Household Expenses^{xxviii}



Source: Center for TOD Housing + Transportation Affordability Index, 2004 Bureau of Labor Statistics

The H&T cost trade-off has implications for how cities think about affordability. Simply building affordable units isn’t enough. An effective housing policy needs to consider *Location Efficiency*. In-lieu fees often allow developers to fulfill affordable housing requirements off-site

and this can lead to concentrations of affordable housing in areas that lack transit connections. Households in location efficient areas adjacent to transit spend 16% less than those in auto-dependent exurbs. According to a study by the American Public Transportation Association, households could have saved an average of \$9,499 in 2008 if they used transit instead of driving, money they could have used to provide the family with food for a year or pay off a 30-year, \$150,000 mortgage 20 years early^{xxix}.

Transit-rich neighborhoods that fail to provide adequate, location-efficient workforce housing threaten their working class households with imminent displacement. Because of the relationship between housing and transportation costs, these families then face an even greater financial burden as they try and relocate. Households that are priced out of areas with good transit connections are often unable to relocate to a proximate neighborhood. As entire regions become unaffordable, they are forced to find housing farther from job centers, which can limit employment options and lead to dramatic increases in transportation costs.

II. Los Angeles: An Unlikely TOD Pioneer

Popular culture often depicts a Los Angeles that is car-obsessed; marked by out-of-control sprawl and economically/racially segregated neighborhoods. Admittedly, LA faces many challenges: a crippling dependence on the automobile and a critical lack of affordable housing being among the most urgent. But as Los Angeles begins to fully realize its potential as a global city, it has begun to rethink the ways in which its residents live, get around the city and region, and interact with the natural environment. Mayor and Metro Chairman Antonio Villaraigosa has described his vision for the city as: “a future in which Los Angeles is the cleanest, greenest big city in America”^{xxx}. Los Angeles is changing, and so are opinions on how it should grow intelligently. Angelenos are placing an increased emphasis on sustainability, effective land use, and working together for a more livable city.

LA's Transit-Oriented Past

The infamous freeway network that currently dominates the landscape of Southern California, with its asphalt arteries extending ever outwards like the arms of a giant octopus, was not always the primary mode of transportation for residents of the Golden State. In fact, in the early 20th century, a far-reaching rail transit system connected the region's major urban centers. At its peak, the Pacific Electric Railway Company had established rail lines running

6,000 streetcars a day on 115 routes that spanned over 1,000 miles of track^{xxx}. By 1910, the Pacific Electric Railway was the largest interurban rail system in the country, making Southern California one of the original great transit metropolises^{xxxii}.

Starting in 1896, Pacific Electric's competitors built the first interurban railways connecting downtown LA to Pasadena and Santa Monica. In 1901, Henry Huntington, a wealthy railroad magnate, purchased Pacific Electric. He had a vision for the growth of the city that centered on transit; this might have had something to do with the fact that Huntington had purchased huge tracts of inexpensive land on the periphery of LA's central core. To boost the value of this newly obtained land, Huntington began a massive expansion of Pacific Electric's interurban rail; soon the system's "Big Red Cars" were rolling through nearly 50 different communities in the Los Angeles region^{xxxiii}. Huntington's development strategy was successful: his streetcars not only raised the value of his land on the urban fringe, but helped to create thriving satellite communities that were deeply reliant on transit for mobility and access to the urban core^{xxxiv}. As Michael Bernick and Robert Cervero describe in *Transit Villages in the 21st Century*, Huntington's investment in transit-oriented development enabled suburban communities to grow outward while remaining connected to the city center, profoundly affecting the way that the region would continue to develop in the future. The comprehensive rail system that once defined Los Angeles had a lasting impact on the region's urban form: the early-20th century cityscape was a constellation of communities comprised mostly single-family homes, tied together by rail lines.

Beginning in the 1920s, the automobile began to influence the development of Southern California's urban areas. Residents of auto-oriented suburbs were not close enough to have convenient access to transit, and had to rely on automobiles for most, if not all, of their transportation needs. This lifestyle clashed with that of transit-users: the mix of streetcars and automobiles on the same roadways caused congestion and traffic incidents. The streetcars began to be seen as more of an inconvenience rather than an asset, whether due to changing public perceptions or the sustained attacks by pro-automobile forces who criticized the system for causing delays and increasing fares^{xxxv}. In the mid-1920s, The City of Los Angeles made a decision that would affect the lives of Angelenos for generations to come. Two policy proposals were submitted for planning the city's future transportation infrastructure: a transit-oriented proposal and an automobile-oriented proposal. The City settled on the latter, a decision that would seal the fate of Los Angeles as a car-centric city for decades to come. By the 1930s, LA had laid more miles of asphalt per capita than any other American city^{xxxvi}, a trend that would continue in earnest through the 1970s.

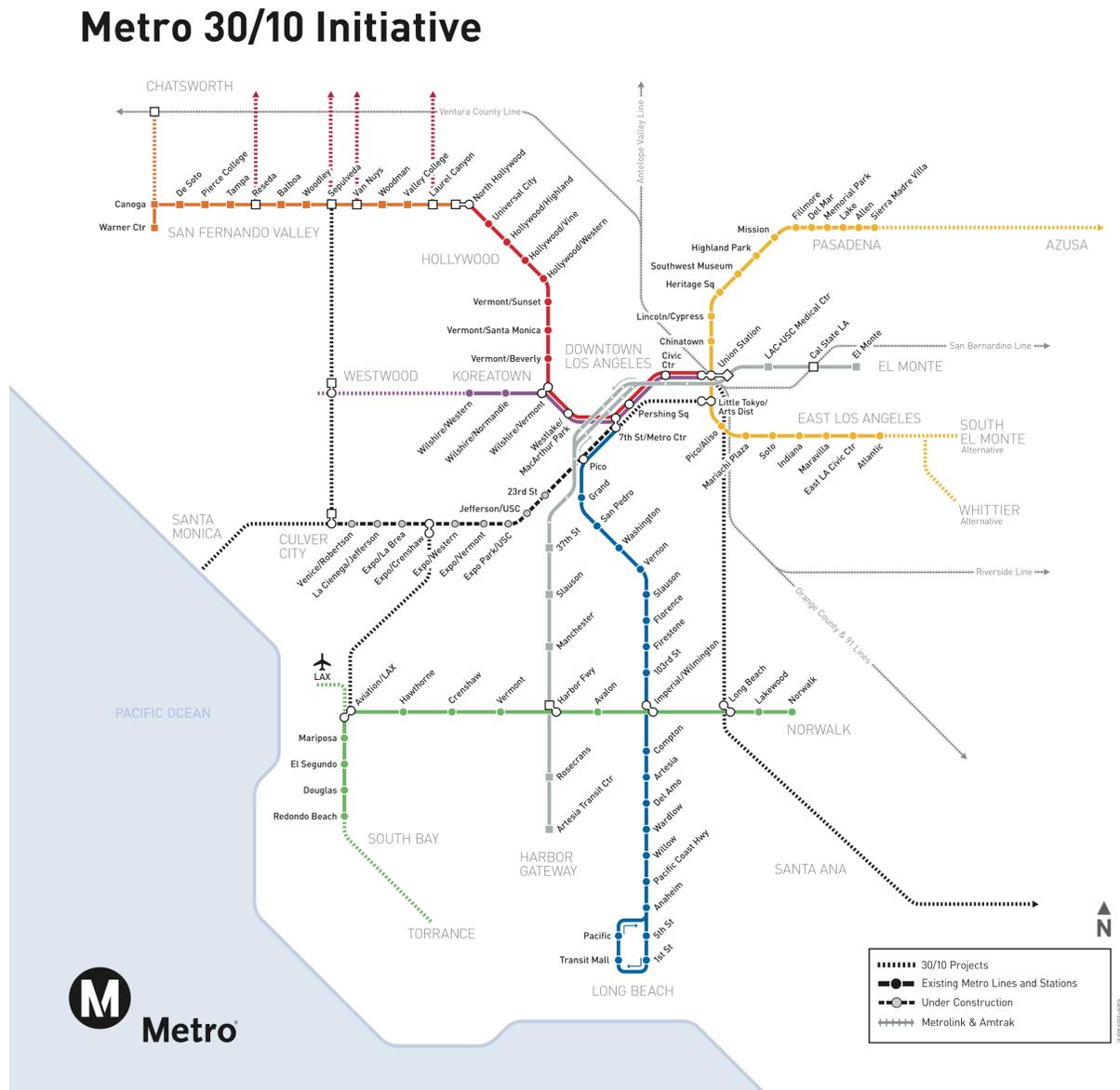
Reconnecting Los Angeles

The dream of a transit-oriented LA isn't lost forever. Beginning in the 1980s, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Association (Metro) has spearheaded an ambitious transit expansion project that will make strides towards improving the mobility and interconnectedness of the region. The project will add new light rail, streetcar, subway and bus lines, and will expand existing rail and roadway infrastructure. Like all places, Los Angeles is unique and will require a unique strategy for smart growth. The examples of denser, transit-rich cities on the East coast and in Europe may not be directly applicable to LA's polycentric metropolis. But a transit-oriented Los Angeles was once a reality, and with a commitment to affordability and a focus on connecting high-density job centers, this pattern of development can be re-tailored to enhance a thriving, 21st century LA. This unlikely project provides a unique opportunity to spur economic revitalization and recreate more sustainable and interconnected neighborhoods.

In 2007, an overwhelming majority of LA county voters helped pass Measure R, which created a half-cent sales tax that would generate \$40 Billion over the next three decades for transportation improvements. Passing Measure R was a victory, but the battle to ensure that LA's transit expansion gets completed on schedule is still underway. MoveLA is an activist group whose goal is organizing a diverse constituency around the timely implementation of a robust transit system in Los Angeles. It's been successful in uniting business, labor and environmental groups: divergent interests that often do battle. MoveLA galvanized the unanimous approval of the Long Range Transportation Plan by the Metro board, which helped focus federal grant applications to fund projects like the Westside Subway and Regional Connector.

The suite of Measure R transit projects planned by Metro were refined into a legislative package known as the "30-/10 Plan": Villaraigosa's staff research concluded that with enough federal financing, all 12 Measure R projects could be built in 10 years instead of 30. To encourage other municipalities to pursue federally funded transit expansions, Los Angeles and MoveLA later introduced a nation-wide version of 30/10 that was re-branded "America Fast Forward" (AFF). As president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Villaraigosa helped build momentum behind AFF, which quickly gained support from Senator Boxer, 120 U.S. mayors, The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the labor group AFL-CIO.

Figure 3: 30/10 Project Map with Proposed and Existing Projects^{xxxvii}



The success of America Fast Forward hinges on a major increase in funding from federal programs like the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA), which provides low-interest loans and long-term bonds to cities who can use a revenue stream like Measure R as a security. This innovative mix of federal financing and local funding makes it easier on the federal government because they act as a ‘lender rather than a spender’. Because they are providing loans instead of giving away grants, all the money that is invested on the

local level gets paid back with interest, allowing the government to stretch it's resources further and encourage development in more communities.

As of March 2012, however, the 30/10 financing model that had been widely heralded among transportation advocates and experts may face major delays due to partisan gridlock in Washington. Although congress voted to extend federal transportation spending for 90 days to avoid a shutdown of Washington-funded highway work, the bill did not include funds for Mayor Villaraigosa's LA projects^{xxxviii}. House Republicans have blocked further federal funding of local transit projects and any movement on the bill seems unlikely until after November's elections.

As federal funding streams stagnate or dry up entirely, Los Angeles needs to explore new and innovative financing strategies to keep the 30/10 plan moving forward. One potential source for fast-tracking money into LA to pay for transit is the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank. Even during the worst recession in 60 years and with one out of every eight workers out of a job, California still has an economy larger than most countries^{xxxix}: in 2010 it ranked 8th in the world, behind Italy and just ahead of Brazil. The Bank still has a AAA credit rating and can offer competitive rates, like it did to provide funding for the ongoing bay ridge renovation project². Other possibilities include putting another local sales tax measure on the ballot, (known as Measure R+) or even looking to Europe as a new funding source: The European Investment Bank has lent money to 78 countries to build highways and transit projects^{xl}. The Bank's mission is to fund infrastructure projects that support the climate change mitigation goals of the European Union, and considering globalization and the increased relevance of cities as international players, several of the proposed 30/10 projects could fall under this category. Although the bank has never financed a project in the U.S., the current economic climate necessitates bold and unprecedented tactics, and Mayor Villaraigosa could be the right man to pitch such a proposal.

Barriers to Affordability

Los Angeles' proposed transit expansion projects, coupled with a rapidly increasing demand for transit-adjacent housing, will put added pressure on the City's already overstressed housing stock. Despite the popular images of Los Angeles that depict a surplus of suburban homes, LA is currently experiencing a serious housing crisis. The cost of living has skyrocketed and wages are having trouble keeping up. Housing and transportation costs are so high that rents and home prices are out of reach for many families who live and work in LA. Low and

² <http://baybridgeinfo.org/>

moderate income households are so overburdened by rent that many have to share space to make ends meet; nearly 20% of households in Los Angeles are considered ‘severely overcrowded’^{xii}. Los Angeles is composed of predominately renters; six in ten Angelenos rent as opposed to owning a home, and 176,917 of them spend more than half their monthly income on rent^{xiii}. These people are particularly vulnerable to displacement caused by rising rents and land values, which is often the result of the construction or planning of a transit station.

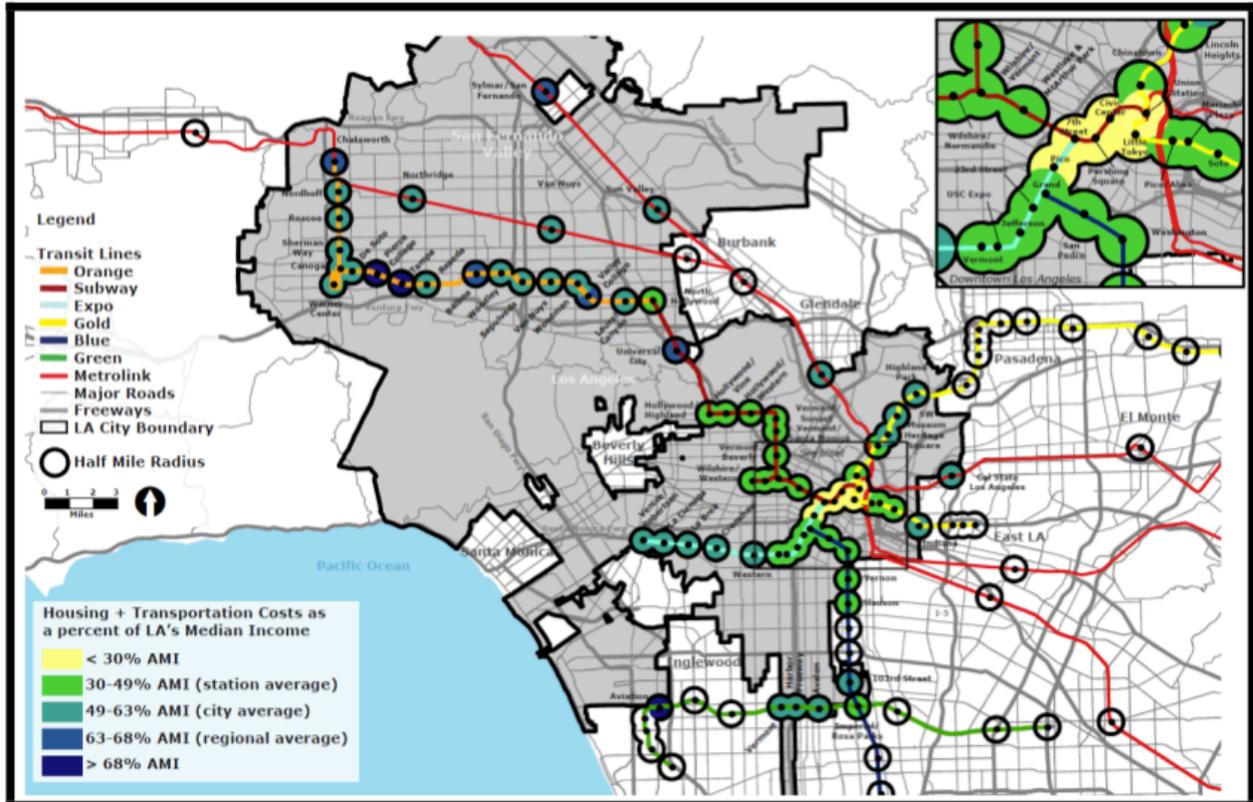
The city’s Housing Element determines the need for housing and sets goals for new home construction. In the last building boom, Los Angeles fell short of its targets for new affordable homes but far exceeded the targets for luxury homes. Over 65,000 new homes were constructed in LA since 1998, but the majority of these have been market-rate; unaffordable for many working families. Additionally, while the city fell short of Housing Element goals for affordable housing by 8,256 units, it also lost over 13,000 older rent-controlled units to condominium conversions or Ellis evictions^{xiii}.

Assessing LA’s Transit-Rich Districts

Because it services such a vast area it can be difficult to understand the opportunities and challenges facing LA’s public transit network and it’s many transit-rich districts. One of the crucial steps towards developing a comprehensive equity strategy for Los Angeles will be reaching a holistic understanding of all its transit station areas. This will make it possible to compare station performance, prioritize and coordinate investments, see where ‘good’ TOD is happening and where it isn’t and, finally, to strategize about ways in which station area performance can be improved.

With the support of a Caltrans Community-Based Transportation Planning grant, the Center for Transit-Oriented Development (CTOD) has set about the complex task of measuring performance, analyzing demographic and economic conditions, and creating station area profiles for five major transit corridors. Considering that station area plans average about \$500,000 each in California, the CTOD’s study could prove invaluable as a cost-effective way for the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), among others, to gain a bird’s eye view of how station areas in the city and county relate to one another. The study’s findings reveal the unique role that TOD could play in improving the quality of life for Angelenos in LA City and County, as well as how residents of station areas are the most susceptible to displacement^{xiv}:

Figure 4: Housing and Transportation Costs, Compared to Station, City and Regional Averages, 2000^{xlv}



- Housing and Transportation costs for the average household in the Los Angeles constitute 54% of its income, well above the National average.** This underscores the importance of considering combined housing and transportation costs when determining affordability. Furthermore, families that live in location efficient neighborhoods in Los Angeles can save up to \$10,000 a year on transportation costs, emphasizing the role that transit can play in reducing the H&T cost burden on working families.
- Demand for location efficient, transit-oriented housing options in Los Angeles is steadily increasing.** The CTOD forecasts that over 1.7 million households in the region will want to live near transit by 2030. Nearly two thirds of this demand comes from households earning less than the city's median income. This is a reminder of who needs transit the most, and should make it clear that affordable housing is a priority for LA's station areas.

- **Los Angeles transit stations tend to be located in lower income neighborhoods.** Residents of transit-rich neighborhoods are less likely to drive a car, more likely to use transit, walk, and bike to work and have significantly lower incomes than the regional median. What's more; they are significantly more likely to be renters. This means that station areas in Los Angeles are providing low-income families with increased regional mobility, but that these areas are also the most vulnerable to displacement.
- **The majority of affordable housing contracts in LA station areas will expire by 2014.** More than half of all federally assisted affordable housing contracts in the LA region are located within a ¼ mile of a transit stop. Of these, 82% have expiring contracts. With large numbers of affordable contracts expiring, affordable housing development is facing an uphill battle, meaning that preservation of existing units will be equally as important as creating new units.

III. Methodology

Recognizing that Los Angeles' plans for a more robust transit network had great potential for improving quality of life for its residents, as well as the potential to disrupt many of its vulnerable communities, I sought to create a document that could inform a regional effort to create sustainable, equitable and inclusive transit-oriented developments in LA.

Los Angeles has been shaped by several distinctive patterns of growth, so any attempt to improve land-use and transportation planning in the future must consider the city and region's unique development history. Furthermore, the most effective way to address neighborhood development is at the ground level: understanding the priorities of the affected community and the specific economic and cultural forces at work in the area is essential to planning successfully.

Maintaining the character and diversity of transit-rich neighborhoods is a place-specific challenge that requires unique, place-specific solutions. However, LA will need innovation and creativity to tackle the many challenges associated with their transit network expansion. Learning from other cities and municipalities can help identify the many promises and pitfalls of transit-oriented development, and provide examples of forward-thinking strategies for equitable community investment.

Selecting the regions that I would use as case studies proved to be quite a difficult process. Many American cities are pursuing transit network expansion, or have had experience with neighborhood change related to public transit investment. I wanted to focus on cities with economic, cultural, and spatial characteristics that reflected those of Los Angeles, but didn't want to limit my findings by being overly selective. I chose to focus on Oakland because its BART system runs through many diverse, low-income communities, paralleling the affected areas in Los Angeles. The Bay Area also struggles with challenges posed by automobile infrastructure: freeways, parking and traffic are major concerns for planners, civil engineers and any resident who has suffered through a gridlocked Bay Bridge commute. The Fruitvale Transit Village stood out an exceptional example of best practices related to TOD, and the time frame of the project allowed for the benefit of hindsight in identifying key successes and shortcomings.

Denver is currently pursuing the second biggest public transit infrastructure build-out in the nation, behind Los Angeles. The ambitious scope of their planned light rail expansion means that a large number of communities, many of which are low-income, will soon be affected by the presence of new transit. I wanted to showcase a city that was thinking ahead about how its neighborhoods will be changed by transportation investment, and that was being proactive in ensuring that this change would be positive and inclusive for all residents. Denver's Eagle P3 project also features a highly effective public-private-partnership, which I have identified as a significant trend in developing housing and transportation infrastructure in major urban areas.

Finally, my work with MoveLA during the summer of 2011 had focused largely on a report about Hollywood that was being written jointly with Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing (SCANPH). I spent a great deal of time researching what had happened in Hollywood and speaking with many of the key players involved in its revitalization, eventually piecing together a rich and layered story of transit-oriented community development in one of LA's most dynamic neighborhoods. The Hollywood case study is significant because it highlights many of the LA-specific challenges that planners and communities will face as they anticipate an array of new transit-rich neighborhoods. It also provides strong evidence of the link between the availability of affordable housing and an effective station-area TOD and/or greater transit network, which was an important concept underlying my report.

To gain a deeper understanding of the transit-oriented development projects that I chose to include, I conducted interviews with planners, transit equity advocates, community organizers, transportation engineers, and real estate development consultants. A generous Anderson Grant award made it possible for me to travel to many of the locations discussed in

my case studies, and to gain insight into the development process through discussions with a wide range of stakeholders.

An extensive literature review process guided my analysis of the three case study areas. I incorporated studies on transportation planning, housing policy, community organizing and economic development. My research helped to establish three elements of successful TODs, which I used to identify the continuities and innovations that existed between each of the locations:

- **Innovative funding strategies** drawing from opportunities on the local, state and federal levels.
- **Effective planning** in station design, land use, development and housing policy.
- **Community Engagement** in the development process to secure benefits for tenants, property owners and local businesses.

The degree to which each of these elements are implemented in a TOD project serves as the rubric by which I evaluate successful transit-oriented development. They also helped to define what I felt constituted *Equitable Transit Oriented Development*. Equitable TOD creates economic opportunity, improves mobility and public health, and provides transit-rich neighborhoods with a wide range of affordable, high-quality housing options, all while preserving the character and diversity of these neighborhoods and sharing benefits of the project with the local community. The goal of my case study discussions is to provide guidelines for Equitable TOD in Los Angeles, an endeavor that is especially timely and relevant as the region is currently experiencing an unprecedented period of renewed investment in public transit infrastructure.

IV. Case Study: Oakland's Fruitvale Transit Village

In 2004, the first phase of Oakland's Fruitvale Transit Village was completed. This project transformed a gritty, run-down parking lot in one of Oakland's most underserved neighborhoods into a vibrant, mixed-use community center. The dramatic course of events in which the Fruitvale community took command of the development in their neighborhood and changed the original plans for the village site (a hulking, multi-level parking structure) belies a larger shift in sensibilities taking place across the nation. Communities, planners, elected officials and developers alike are beginning to realize that a private, auto-centric pattern of

development is neither a viable nor desirable option. In the pursuit of more livable urban areas, the emphasis has shifted towards accessibility, interconnectedness, and diversity in terms of race, income, form and function. Fruitvale Transit Village is a prime example of how a strong, broad-based P3 partnership and a community-driven planning process can create inclusive public spaces that share benefits with and contribute to the character of a neighborhood. In a larger context, the Village could inform future development in the US and abroad; acting as a template for the neighborhood-level building blocks that would fit together to create a more sustainable and interconnected urban fabric.

A Community Vision for Equitable TOD

The roots of the Fruitvale Transit Village project can be traced back to 1991, when BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) announced very different plans for the parcel of land adjacent to the Fruitvale transit station. BART wanted to construct a multi-layered parking facility on the vacant parking lot, a move that would have devoted this premium, central location entirely to the storage of private automobiles. A parking structure would have also acted as an unsightly obstacle to pedestrian accessibility in Fruitvale, limiting the potential of the BART station as a community centerpiece and further isolating the neighborhood from the transit network. Soon after the plans were made public, Fruitvale residents and business owners banded together to send the city and transit agency a clear message: they weren't satisfied with the plans for the station, or with the top-down manner in which they were being implemented.

In contrast to the initial offering from BART, Fruitvale residents showed great foresight and creativity in their vision for the parcel, which realized the site's potential for a walkable, mixed-use TOD plaza. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a planning concept that envisions mass transit stations as catalysts for economic revitalization and environmental improvement. These two functions made TOD a welcome strategy for Fruitvale residents, whose small, racially diverse neighborhood southeast of downtown Oakland was experiencing significant economic stress and was in dire need of investment. Residents realized that their underserved community had several challenges to face: at the time, the station's crime rate was the second-highest in the entire BART system, and the area around the station was increasingly distressed and lacking vitality^{xvii}. Still, they imagined a station area that would directly address and create solutions for these challenges, as opposed to something like the parking structure, which they agreed would have worsened crime, blight, traffic congestion and pollution.

In the first of what would become a long series of remarkable developments, BART received the Fruitvale community's complaints in a surprisingly understanding and cooperative

manner. Although government agencies, developers and communities are often at odds with one another in the development process, and the two sides certainly clashed over some issues, BART came to understand that the Unity Council (a community development corporation representing Fruitvale residents and businesses) was uniquely suited to inform the discussion about what was right for the neighborhood.

This understanding, however, was not reached easily. In fact, it took a concerted effort from the Unity Council, which channeled the voices of the local community and demanded a project that would provide benefits for the neighborhood. BART continued to stress the need for a parking garage, but in the face of strong community opposition, agreed to locate the structure elsewhere if another plan for the site could be agreed upon. In 1992, the Unity Council received \$185,000 in Community Development Block Grants from the city of Oakland to develop an alternative plan for the station area^{xvii}. The Unity Council went to work organizing a broad base of stakeholders from the area in a series of community planning workshops. The workshops allowed residents and local business owners to express their priorities and to shape the development agenda for the site; in a community design symposium held jointly with UC Berkeley's National Transit Access Center, architects collaborated with community members to create designs for what would become the Transit Village. Some key themes that emerged from these discussions were the need to integrate struggling local businesses into the project plan in the hopes of sparking revitalization, and to streamline the connection between residential areas, commercial areas and transit. In 1993, impressed with the progress and increasing community involvement in the project, the Federal Transit Administration awarded the Unity Council \$470,000 to conduct economic, traffic and engineering studies for the area^{xviii}.

A Dynamic Partnership

In 1994, with the scale and scope of the Fruitvale Village continuing to expand, the three principal players involved with the project (Unity Council, BART and the City of Oakland) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize their relationship. The Memorandum established the Fruitvale Policy Committee, which would guide all further planning and construction. This agreement was important because it solidified the working relationship between the three parties and secured the Unity Council's role going forward in the development process. It also represented considerable flexibility from BART, who had cooperated with an innovative planning and design process that was very different from their usual approach to project development.

By this time, plans for the project were more or less finalized. The Village would be located on the site of an existing 9-acre parking lot directly adjacent to the BART station, would

be centered around a tree-lined pedestrian plaza complete with retail shops and restaurants, and would connect the transit line with the 12th street business district a block away^{xlix}. The considerable effort and inter-agency cooperation that went into planning was an accomplishment in itself, but the project still faced significant obstacles. One of the most challenging was that of “land assembly”. In order to move forward with construction, all the individual parcels of land in the station area needed to be collected under single ownership. Unfortunately, BART still owned much of the land in the development site and because of a policy that required the agency to hold on to the land around its transit stations for long-term planning, it would be difficult to part with ownership.

In 1996, the Unity Council established a nonprofit corporation called the Fruitvale Development Corporation (FDC) to act as the developer for the Transit Village and oversee contracts. Normally, developers for BART projects are chosen through a competitive bidding process, but, again exhibiting considerable flexibility, the agency agreed to award sole-source development rights to the FDC and set up an exclusive negotiating agreement with the Unity Council. The next step was a complicated one: in a unique “land swap” masterminded by the Fruitvale Policy Committee, the FDC was awarded a 96-year lease on the Transit Village property. In exchange, BART received several nearby properties that had been owned by the City of Oakland^l and Union Pacific Railroadⁱⁱ. This allowed the FDC to gain proprietary rights for the whole project area, while ensuring that BART could maintain the value of its land assets around the station. The dynamic partnership between city, transit agency and community made it possible for the project to deal with the daunting challenge of land assembly in such an innovative way. Furthermore, both the City of Oakland and BART showed great foresight in their willingness to try out unconventional strategies to reach a win-win solution.

The working relationship with BART wasn’t all peaches and cream, however. Due to a policy that required BART to relocate elsewhere any parking spaces removed for a project, the transit agency required that the Unity Council raise the \$12.7 million needed to construct the replacement parking garage that had originally been planned for the site. Parking proved to be a very difficult and expensive issue, but the Unity Council eventually succeeded in securing BART a \$7.65 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration, \$4.1 million from the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA)ⁱⁱⁱ and \$975,000 from a commercial lender. Later, the Unity Council petitioned the City of Oakland for a zoning ordinance banning construction of additional parking lots in the area immediately surrounding the Transit Village, which was passed by the city in 1996. During this time BART received \$780,000 for construction from the FTA in the form of flexible funds transferred from the FHWA (Federal Highway

Administration)ⁱⁱⁱ. In addition, BART received \$2.3 million through the FTA's livable communities initiative. The Unity Council and its partners continued to facilitate the project until groundbreaking began in late 1999.

Evaluating the Project's Impact

The eight-year planning process that led to the creation of Fruitvale Transit Village is a truly remarkable accomplishment: In a rare instance of cooperation between government, developer and community, Fruitvale residents were able to design and help create a lively, unique centerpiece for their neighborhood. The mere fact that there is currently no parking structure where the Village is located stands as a testament to the project's success. But what affect did the Fruitvale TOD have on the surrounding neighborhood? Did the project live up to its espoused goals of revitalizing the local economy, increasing transit use and providing affordable housing solutions?

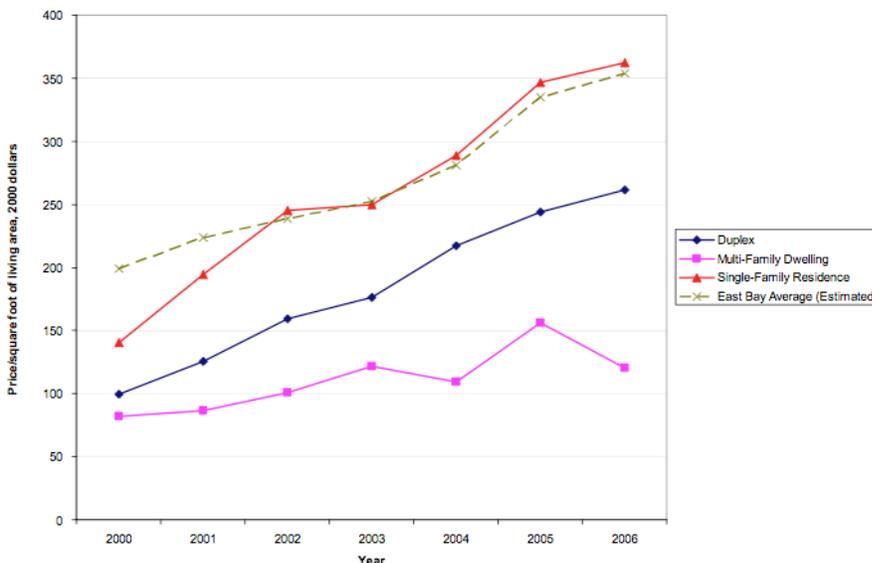
In 1989, two years before BART announced plans for the Fruitvale station area parcel, the neighborhood was in serious need of revitalization. 46% of households within a half-mile radius of the station were considered "very low income", meaning they earned less than 50 percent of the median income for Alameda County. An additional 27% qualified as "low-income", earning between 50 and 80 percent of the median.^{iv} The neighborhood's main commercial corridor, International Boulevard, was struggling with vacancy rates of roughly 50 percent. An influx of investment was badly needed.

Having now been operational for slightly longer than a decade, the project has galvanized several positive changes in the neighborhood. The station area now includes a nonprofit health clinic, a library, a 'head start' education program, a foster children's counseling clinic, senior center, 45,000 square ft. of office space and 45,000 square ft. of retail/restaurant space. Almost a thousand people utilize these community services daily, not including those patients at the clinic. In addition, the project site brought more than 400 jobs to the area when fully occupied, providing a boost to surrounding retailers, especially those on International Boulevard, which now boasts a nearly 100% occupancy rate. Thirty-two percent of Fruitvale Village residents use BART to get to work, which is slightly less than advocates had hoped, but still four times greater than that of Oakland as a whole^{iv}.

Despite this, the Village's role in preventing or mitigating the process of displacement in the neighborhood has come under scrutiny. While the overall profile of residents living in the Village is slightly more affluent than the surrounding area, it can be considered truly mixed-

income: tenants incomes range from \$20,000 to more than \$200,000^{lvi}. But concerns have been voiced about the increasing rent burden facing Fruitvale residents as a whole, and the adequacy of affordable housing options provided by the Village. In 2000, median rents were low enough that the Unity Council hadn't considered affordable housing as the highest priority in development (Median rents in 2000 (\$627) were actually lower than they were in 1990(\$640) in real dollars)^{lvii}. However, a report from affordable housing advocacy cooperative Great Communities Collaborative reveals that from 2000 to 2006, median prices for single-family homes within a mile of the Fruitvale Village more than doubled (in real dollars): from \$140.47 to \$363.51 per square foot. Similar increases occurred in the prices of duplexes and multi-family homes, reflecting rising costs in the East Bay as a whole. These trends have a deep significance for Fruitvale residents, a majority of whom (69%) rent as opposed to own their homes. Rising sales prices for homes and a faster real estate turnover are very likely to be correlated with a similar increase in rents and property taxes. What's more, median income in the area hasn't been able to keep pace with rising housing costs, increasing only slightly in real dollars from 2000 to 2006: from \$32,915 to \$33,881. This means that Fruitvale residents face a greater housing burden now than they did when construction began for Phase I of development. All these factors are warning signs that suggest housing may soon become too expensive for many of Fruitvale's current residents.

Figure 5: From 2000 to 2006, home prices rose just as fast in the Fruitvale Neighborhood as they did in the rest of the Bay Area^{lviii}.



Sources: FARES, OFHOI, CCI, Strategic Economics.

Emphasis must be placed on increasing income diversity so that Fruitvale Transit Village doesn't become a victim of its own success by causing or failing to slow the displacement projected for the area. The Unity Council has decided that a mix of new market-rate and affordable housing development would serve the needs of the community better than a 100% low-income housing project. In 2000, the Fruitvale area was much less diverse in terms of income than the rest of the Bay Area region. Adding new market-rate units would catalyze revitalization of the local economy through an infusion of residents with disposable income, while permanent affordable housing options would ensure that Fruitvale residents don't get pushed out of their own community. The findings of the Great Communities Collaborative study support this strategy; to achieve full income diversity, GCC recommends that about 1,000 new market-rate units would need to be built, along with 450 affordable units (at 120% of AMI or below, but above 50%) or in other words: one affordable unit for every two market-rate units.

Lessons Learned

- **Community involvement means community support:** Engaging the residents of the Fruitvale area in the planning and design of the Village was essential in creating an effective addition to the neighborhood, and the reason for such strong public approval of the project. Although BART hadn't pursued this strategy initially, they deserve credit for including the Unity Council and others in the planning process once it became apparent that the parking structure plan had garnered very little support. Furthermore, the local community's knowledge and experience are often some of the greatest assets available to transit planners, affordable housing advocates and conscientious developers. The Fruitvale Transit Village shows how an organized group of local residents can be the experts best suited to inform the planning process.
- **Broad-based partnerships are invaluable in dealing with complex development challenges:** The Fruitvale Transit Village faced complicated legal, financial and regulatory obstacles. The unique alliance formed between the BART, The City of Oakland, and the Unity Council made it possible to overcome these challenges. Had any of these key players been missing, the project may not have come to fruition. However, not all local governments and transit agencies can be expected to be so accommodating. The formation of the Fruitvale Policy Committee through a Memorandum of Understanding was crucial to protecting the community's stake in the

project and securing their central role in the development process. The Fruitvale Development Corporation also allowed community stakeholders to use ownership of the property as leverage to ensure that it would provide agreed-upon benefits for the community. This kind of partnership would be particularly difficult, yet all the more necessary, in an area like Los Angeles where municipalities, transit agencies, and regional agencies have complex and overlapping jurisdictions and constituencies. Although challenging, building a working relationship between a diverse group of stakeholders will be necessary for any major development initiative in LA.

- **Develop a long-term plan for affordability:** Although gentrification may have not seemed like a pressing concern for Fruitvale in the late nineties, rising housing costs and stagnating household income levels have led to a very real threat of displacement for the area. Thinking ahead about income diversity is crucial because creating and maintaining affordable housing options becomes more difficult as property values in the area rise. Another benefit of long-term affordability planning is the possibility to include value capture mechanisms, like Tax Increment Districts, at the neighborhood level before gentrification begins in earnest.

V. Case Study: Denver's Unique Transit Partnership

The Denver region is currently embarking on one of the most ambitious fixed-railway transit expansions in the country, with more than 122 miles of new commuter rail and light rail planned for the region's main corridors. The Denver metropolitan area is expecting considerable population growth (expected to swell from 2.6 million people (in 2005) to 3.9 million in 2025^{lix}), and is determined to provide new and improved transportation choices for its residents, who are currently faced with frustrating traffic congestion and long commute times. The region has chosen a dynamic Public Private Partnership (P3) to implement their bus and rail expansion, bringing together planners, developers, investors and contractors to make the projects a reality. Although the privatization of public infrastructure may seem like a process which might push transit equity and housing affordability to the bottom of the agenda, the region has in fact established a unique, proactive transit-oriented development fund to secure affordable housing as the project moves forward. The effectiveness of the P3 project is mirrored by the early

successes of its TOD housing fund, which encourages the collaboration of housing advocacy groups, government, businesses and financial institutions.

Transit on the Fast Track

Denver's Regional Transportation District (RTD), decided to enter into an agreement with a private, special purpose company called Denver Transit Partners (DTP) to complete a large portion of their *FasTracks* transit expansion. In this agreement, DTP will design, build, and finance four separate diesel commuter and electric rail lines, known collectively as the Eagle P3 Project, and operate and maintain the lines for an additional 30-40 years after completion.

Denver Transit Partners is a unique team owned and organized in large part by Fluor Enterprises, a Texas-based international engineering and construction firm that tackles major infrastructure projects across the globe. Some of Fluor's high profile projects include the new World Trade Center transit hub in New York City and the Bay Bridge east span extension in the San Francisco Bay Area, which will be the largest public infrastructure project in California's history^{lx}.

Denver Transit Partners was selected by RTD as "concessionaire" for the project through a competitive bidding process, in which DTP was chosen over three other qualified contenders. DTP presented a diverse and qualified private team, and promised to build rail lines to Denver International Airport, Arvada-Wheat Ride and Westminster (elements of the Eagle P3 project) \$300 million under RTD's budget and almost a year ahead of schedule^{lxi}. The remarkable efficiency of the proposal speaks to the effectiveness of the P3 collaboration in getting infrastructure built, especially in such a difficult economic climate. Partnering with a private team allowed RTD to shift most of the risk involved with designing and building a project of this magnitude to DTP and to spread the huge upfront costs out over 30 years, while retaining all project assets.

Community Commitment

In an effort to demonstrate their commitment to the Denver area and help develop a more robust small business sector, Denver Transit Partners has integrated RTD's Small Business Enterprise program (SBE) and the City and County of Denver/Colorado Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program (DBE) into their contracting process. The DBE/SBE outreach program aims to create opportunities for local businesses by removing barriers that would normally exclude them from participating in such a project. Denver Transit Partners will use its influence with major suppliers and large contractors to assist

DBE/SBEs with pricing so as to not exclude them from being competitive. DTP has also promised to utilize existing policies to grow small businesses, such as the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Emerging Small Business Program, which rewards contractors for using DBEs that have never been involved with a CDOT project^{lxii}. Denver Transit Partners will contract more than \$200 million to small businesses in the Denver region during the design/build phase of the Eagle P3 project, and currently has 102 small/disadvantaged companies working on the project^{lxiii}.

Another aspect of DTP's commitment to local businesses is its Capacity Building program, which includes a series of workshops targeted at growing businesses. Topics include: financial management, construction accounting, accessing capital and credit, estimating and bidding on claims and securing loan packages^{lxiv}, all of which contribute to a more competitive and efficient small business that will be better suited to participate in the Eagle P3 project. The program also includes networking seminars, which focus on fostering a more cooperative and interconnected small business sector in the Denver region.

Strategic Land Acquisition for Affordable Housing

Anticipating the completion of Denver's *FasTracks* and Eagle P3 light rail projects, affordable housing advocates in the city banded together to create the nation's first housing trust fund devoted specifically to TOD. The Mile High Transit-Oriented Development Fund is a partnership involving Enterprise Community Partners, The City and County of Denver, Urban Land Conservancy (ULC), U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo and others. Enterprise Community Partners, a national nonprofit, assembled the initial capital of 15 million from a diverse group of lenders, including government, quasi-governmental agencies, banks, nonprofits and foundations, with the City of Denver being the largest contributor with \$2.5 million. Since its creation in April, 2010, the TOD Fund has created or preserved 404 affordable units, and is working on increasing its initial loan capital from an \$15 million to \$30 million^{lxv}.

Enterprise and others recognize the need to implement a TOD-specific housing trust fund while Denver's massive public transit expansion is still in the early stages of development. The Mile High TOD fund will provide affordable housing developers with access to capital, allowing them to take advantage of the opportunity to create and preserve affordable units while real estate values in station areas are still low. With light rail lines and stations announced for many of Denver's neighborhoods, cities and counties have been busily preparing land-use plans for TOD developments. However, there is great concern that most TODs will fail to include benefits for those who need it most: low-income households and communities of color. In most

urban areas in Denver, including those that will soon be serviced by five new light rail lines, working families (earning between \$20,000 and \$55,000) spend an average of 59% of their income on housing and transportation^{lxvi}. Locating affordable housing in transit corridors reduces the combined housing and transportation burden for these households, allowing them to build wealth and increasing their access to employment, education and other essential services.

In May of 2011, thanks to a generous grant from the Ford Foundation³, the Denver region was able to create the Mile High Transit Opportunity Collaborative (MHTOC) to compliment and facilitate the expansion of the TOD Housing Trust Fund. Comprised of Enterprise Community Partners, Reconnecting America, the Urban Land Conservancy, U.S. Bank and others, the MHTOC's primary goal is to ensure that the \$6.7 billion investment in the FasTracks expansion benefits all communities in the region; especially it's low-income populations. Specifically, the Mile High Transit Opportunity Collective will focus on the creation of a Regional Equity Atlas which will map the regions' demographics, housing, employment, education and health metrics, leading to a better understand how the planned transit network will affect theses factors. Additionally, the group will raise awareness about equitable TOD through educational events targeted at local and regional stakeholders. The MHTOC also supported the Denver region's 2011 HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant application, which resulted in a \$4.5 million HUD grant for planning regional, corridor level and catalytic transit line projects^{lxvii}.

Lessons Learned

- **Public Private Partnership** can be an effective tool for implementing major transit expansion projects, and can also create unique opportunities for job creation and enriching the local small business community. Denver Transit Partners is an impressive private team that will handle design, finance, construction and operation of RTD's Eagle P3 light rail project. By compartmentalizing the investment risks associated with the project, DTP reduces the financial burden on RTD and makes completing the project under-budget and ahead-of-schedule a reality. Although the Denver region already had mechanisms in place for protecting affordability, a public private partnership in another municipality like Los Angeles should include an equity agreement that would hold

³ <http://www.fordfoundation.org/about-us>

developers accountable for affordable housing creation as well as local hiring and other community benefits priorities.

- **A TOD-Specific Housing Trust Fund** is crucial in securing mixed-income housing options near transit. Although housing trust funds exist in other regions, making TOD a focus of the fund makes it possible to strategically acquire and hold parcels of land for development of affordable housing units specifically in transit station areas. Implementing a TOD fund in a timely manner is absolutely essential: it is necessary to take advantage of low property values before the area experiences a rise in housing costs and displacement begins. An area like Los Angeles, with a high percentage of renters and a rapid real estate turnover, is the most vulnerable to displacement but is also an environment conducive to a concerted effort to acquire strategic TOD properties.

VI. Transformative TOD in Hollywood

Walking down Hollywood boulevard today, with its star-lined sidewalks, throngs of tourists, bustling shops and brightly-lit theatres, it's difficult to imagine it any other way. But as recently as a couple decades ago, Hollywood was a very different place. The major film studios that helped popularize Hollywood as the glamorous world capital of entertainment had disappeared from the area by the 1960s, and what they left behind was a shadow of its former glory. The legendary theatres had fallen into disrepair, gangs claimed the area as their territory, and crime, drugs and prostitution were daily realities. The radical transformation that occurred in Hollywood was no miracle, although it may have seemed like one. A concerted effort by a coalition of community groups, business owners and government agencies, centered around three new Red Line subway stations, made the revitalization of one of Los Angeles' most treasured, historic neighborhoods possible.

A Blighted Boulevard

In the 1980s and 1990s, Hollywood was known more for its grit than glamour; it had become infamous as an epicenter for drug culture, gang activity and prostitution in the City of Angels. Primarily latino gangs such as White Fence and 18th Street claimed much of

Hollywood's streets and dilapidated apartments as their territory^{lxviii}. The gang-related crime wave in the 80s became so alarming that the city had to close Hollywood Boulevard on weekend nights. Gangs controlled a significant number of buildings in Hollywood, from courtyard bungalows to 10-story apartment buildings. Neighbors were living in fear and investors were reluctant to touch the area. The historic El Centro Apartments, for example, had fallen into disrepair: at the time they were covered in graffiti and well-known as a gang hangout and hotspot for drug dealing. The intersection of Hollywood blvd. and Vine, which in the 1920s was considered the central downtown of a vibrant and upscale neighborhood, had now been replaced by aging slum apartments, seedy bars and clubs, and dozens of "no-tell motels"; the shady venues of a prostitution epidemic^{lix}. The once-inviting commercial corridor of Hollywood Boulevard had degraded into a dangerous stretch of road dotted with liquor stores and trashy outlets hawking lingerie and t-shirts.

A Community-Driven Cleanup

The revitalization that occurred in Hollywood was the result of many different forces working individually and in concert. But a key aspect in the transformation of the neighborhood was the clean-up effort led by a handful of dedicated community organizing groups. The central Hollywood area, known as the Yucca Corridor, was populated by many Central American immigrant families that were often headed by women. These women joined forces with tenant organizers Inquilinos Unidos (United Tenants), The Hollywood Beautification Team, and an collection of church congregations known as the Hollywood Interfaith Sponsoring Committee (now LA voice) to become outspoken advocates for a safer Hollywood. These community activists took aim at corner drug-dealers, notorious slumlords and an excess of off-site liquor stores. They painted over graffiti, organized protests at liquor stores, identified and chased away drug dealers and campaigned for a new park in the area.

A top priority for the community was dealing with the crumbling, unsafe housing stock in the area: Slum housing needed to go. Inquilinos Unidos, The Yucca Coalition and the City Council began organizing tenants in dozens of apartment buildings, and worked with the city's Slum Housing Task Force to bring the buildings up to code and prosecute slumlords^{lxx}. Community developers and property owners also got involved in the campaign. Seven property owners formed "SlumBusters"; an organization that supported the city's efforts to crack down on the slumlords that were dragging down property values in the area. A number of local developers purchased condemned properties and converted them into safe, affordable housing.

The CRA Spearheads Redevelopment

While Hollywood residents and the local business community were eager to initiate and support the revitalization of Hollywood, the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) was the entity that would channel the efforts of many stakeholders into a powerful force for neighborhood change, and connect these efforts with the funding, land use and policy capacities of the City of Los Angeles. Since its creation in 1948, the CRA has been the city's public partner in housing, commercial, neighborhood and economic development^{lxxi}. CRA/LA was, until recently⁴, the largest redevelopment agency in the US. The agency was charged with mitigating blight and creating affordable housing in the city by making strategic investments in underserved neighborhoods. CRA/LA laid the groundwork for neighborhood revitalization by facilitating private investment in neglected areas. While the CRA has been widely criticized for straying from its core goals of providing benefits for disadvantaged neighborhoods and instead using of taxpayer money to subsidize wealthy private developers⁵, its role in the transformation of Hollywood cannot be understated.

Controlled by a board of seven commissioners appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council, the CRA was able to facilitate the collaboration of numerous city departments and public agencies, a difficult task in a city where inter-agency cooperation is hampered by a complex web of overlapping regulatory jurisdictions. The broad scope of the CRA gave it the flexibility to invest public funds in a variety of ways: Land acquisition, gap financing, equipment and moving expenses for industrial businesses, infrastructure supporting new industry, and more^{lxxii}. With these wide-ranging capabilities and a close relationship to the mayor and city council, CRA/LA assumed a leadership position that greatly sped up and streamlined the development process.

In May of 1986, the city council voted overwhelmingly to have the CRA/LA begin work in Hollywood^{lxxiii}. To promote responsible development in the Hollywood plan area, the CRA

⁴ In February of 2012, the California State Supreme Court ruled in favor of assembly bill 1x 26, which was later signed by Governor Jerry Brown in June, and would abolish all state redevelopment agencies and divert their funding towards schools, public safety and other gaps in the state operating budget - (LA Weekly, *Redevelopment Agencies Across California, Including LA CRA, Abolished: Governor Jerry Brown Victorious*, by Simone Wilson, Dec. 2011, http://blogs.laweekly.com/informer/2011/01/jerry_brown_redevelopment_aler.php)

⁵ For example: In 2011 the CRA/LA set aside \$52 million for Eli Broad's proposed art museum which would hold his foundation's personal collection, while providing only \$32 million for the entirety of South LA; a region with a population of 550,000 and an unemployment rate among young minorities of more than 30 percent. (LA Weekly, *Jerry Brown Redevelopment alert: Wealthy Eli Broad Gets \$52 Million for a Garage; the Entirety of South LA gets \$32 million*, Jan 27, 2011, http://blogs.laweekly.com/informer/2011/01/jerry_brown_redevelopment_aler.php)

compiled a list of 12 redevelopment goals. These goals simplified cooperation with private developers by communicating exactly what the city and community had in mind for Hollywood. If a developer wanted to access funding for his or her project, they had to meet at least six of the twelve goals^{lxxiv}:

- **Catalytic projects** that will have significant economic impact in the Hollywood community.
- **Transit-oriented development** that promotes “walkability” and public transportation
- Supports **economic growth** in a core Hollywood industry: Film & Entertainment, Tourism, Health Care and/or Education.
- Provides **education or job training** in core Hollywood Industries
- Creates **living wage jobs** for local residents.
- Provides **affordable housing** for low and moderate income households
- **Reduces Homelessness** in Hollywood
- Is an **energy-efficient development** that meets or exceeds LEED silver standards
- Preserves a **significant historic structure**
- Contributes meaningfully to **public art and/or cultural institutions**
- Creates publicly accessible **parks** and/or open space
- Strengthens and supports a **nonprofit social service provider** in Hollywood.

These goals put the community’s priorities on the development agenda, and held private contractors accountable for providing benefits to the neighborhood. In addition, the CRA negotiated “labor peace” agreements with the developers of several major projects. These agreements stated that developers would hire locally and not interfere with or retaliate against newly hired workers who wanted to form unions.

In addition to ensuring community benefits and local hiring, the CRA got involved with producing and preserving affordable housing in the area. Along with former Councilmember Michael Woo and the Los Angeles Community Design Center (a community development organization now known as [Adobe Communities](#)), the CRA founded the Hollywood Community

Housing Corporation (HCHC). With help from the CRA, HCHC was able to purchase the decaying St. Andrews Court Bungalows, a 16-unit apartment complex. The bungalows were vacant and slated for demolition, at the time occupied by prostitutes, gang members and homeless people. The CRA helped acquire the property, which now provides affordable homes for the disabled and formerly homeless^{lxxv}. CRA/LA also pursued public-private partnerships with developers who had the expertise to take control of problem properties and renovate them into affordable homes. Along with affordable housing developer Thomas Safran & Associates and the Los Angeles Community Design Center, the CRA took control of the historic Hollywood El Centro Apartments, which had become a magnet for illegal activity, restored the building and created 88 apartments that were affordable to working families and seniors with fixed-incomes^{lxxvi}.

The CRA also played a central role in organizing the public-private partnership that succeeded in preserving many of Hollywood's historic theatres. Because much of the construction in Hollywood occurred before 1930, many of its historic buildings were falling into disrepair or abandoned. Jeffrey Rouze, a developer from the midwest who specialized in restoration, expressed interest in the El Capitan theatre, one of the area's most elegant historic venues. Working closely with the CRA and Council office, Rouze was able to gain control of the property and secure funding for restoration from Disney and Pacific Theatres^{lxxvii}. In 1991, Disney's "Lion King" premiered in a wonderfully restored movie palace. The success of the El Capitan renovation inspired projects to revive the nearby Cinerama Dome and Egyptian Theater, two of Hollywood's most notable landmarks, and critical to the revitalization of the neighborhood.

The Red Line as a Catalyst for Development

The Metro Red Line subway was a crucial factor in the revitalization of Hollywood. It reconnected the neighborhood with Downtown, the San Fernando Valley and other parts of the city, acted as an anchor for high-end development, and boosted the perception of Hollywood as a well-served, interconnected and exciting place to live, work and play. Former director of the CRA/LA's Hollywood region Helmi Hisserich underscores the dramatic shift caused by the subway: "The Red Line changed everything in Hollywood"^{lxxviii}. Despite several serious obstacles

during construction⁶, in 1999 Hollywood gained three operational Metro Red Line subway stations in the heart of the CRA redevelopment area. CRA/LA began planning a “bookend strategy”^{lxxix}, which would concentrate investment around the stations as the first step in attracting development to the rest of the project area. The most visible signs of the changes occurring in the neighborhood manifested around the transit stations on Hollywood boulevard. Brand-new, upscale and eye-catching developments popped up around the Hollywood/Western, Hollywood/Vine and Hollywood/Highland station areas.

The Hollywood and Highland station complex was completed in 2000 and ushered in a revival of the area as a vibrant entertainment capital. In addition to a shopping mall, the 637-room Renaissance Hollywood Hotel, nightclubs, restaurants, and a bowling alley, the complex also includes Grauman’s Chinese Theatre and the Hollywood and Highland Center Theatre (formerly the Kodak Theatre), which is now home to the Academy Awards. Hollywood and Vine also received a \$326 million, mixed-use TOD development that includes: the 300-room W Hotel, 500 units of housing, 67,000 square feet of retail space and more than 1,000 parking spaces. Labor and public health advocates at Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) helped to organize the community benefits agreement (CBA) for the project. Under the CBA, developers agreed to provide living wages for all employees, use a first source local hiring program, and to make more than 20% of their rental units affordable. In addition, they would contribute \$100,000 for a culinary arts career training program, \$500,000 for an arts program at Hollywood High School, and \$30,000 to sign neighbors and employees up for low cost healthcare^{lxxx}.

Side effects of Revitalization

The sweeping changes that took place in Hollywood are outwardly apparent: a walk or drive down Hollywood blvd. showcases a completely re-energized streetscape. But what effect have these major public improvements and surge of investment had on the neighborhood and its’ original residents? Have the high-profile projects along Hollywood blvd. been successful as transit-oriented developments? Finally, was the community that worked so hard to secure benefits for and improve their area able to share in these benefits?

⁶ In 1995, during construction of the subway, a sinkhole appeared on Hollywood Blvd, halting the tunneling process and damaging several buildings on the street. This incident led to the contractor in charge being replaced, and raised serious concerns among hollywood residents.

A number of studies attempted to track the changes that took place in Hollywood, and to quantify the displacement of original residents. While it is difficult to definitively track displacement without a sustained study tracking individual residents, there are many statistics that indicate a number of Hollywood's lowest income residents were priced out of their neighborhood. In the MoveLA report titled *Hollywood: A Comeback Story and Lessons Learned*, the transit advocacy group draws on census data, a CRA analysis of property tax revenue, and other community surveys done in central Hollywood.

The report shows how Hollywood's original, long-term residents were primarily low-income transit users who lived in rent-stabilized apartments. Of the 12 census tracts that comprise the Hollywood redevelopment area, an overwhelming 96% percent of residents rented as opposed to owned their homes. This high proportion of renters, combined with the rapid rise in property values caused by public investments, were two powerful indicators of imminent displacement. By 2009, Hollywood had experienced a profound demographic shift. The people living there had higher incomes than those who lived there before. They owned more cars and lived with fewer people in each apartment. Per capita income in Hollywood had risen by 34%, compared with just 2% citywide. Despite the increased availability of a wide range of high-quality transit options, there was a 32% decrease in car-free households, and households with one car increased by 15%.

Figure 6: Demographic Shifts in Hollywood^{lxxxix}

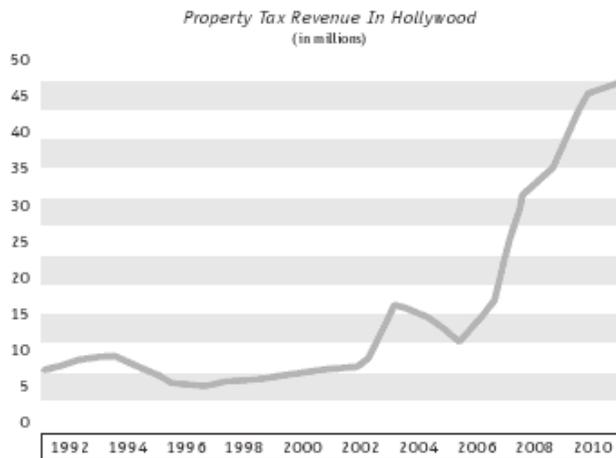
	1990	2009	% Change Hollywood	% Change City of LA
Population ▶	60,412	54,041	-10%	+9%
Households ▶	23,017	23,336	+1%	+6%
Household size ▶	2.6 people	2.3 people	-22%	+6%
Population below poverty line ▶	32%	27%	-15%	+1%
Per capita income ▶	\$14,162	\$19,015	+34%	+2%
Households without a car ▶	8,260	6,440	-32%	-22%
One-car households ▶	14,703	16,889	+15%	+10%

Despite admirable efforts to keep housing affordable, the Red Line and other key developments led to a dramatic increase in property values, starting the process of displacement that pushes away the working families who most need location-efficient affordable housing, and who are the most reliable public transit customers.

Although property taxes are speculative, they often represent the market value of land and/or the rental and housing costs associated with it^{lxxxii}. The CRA study which tracked

property tax revenues in the area shows a rapid increase in property values that occurs in the early 2000s, directly following the opening of the complete Metro Red Line and many of its catalytic station area projects. This data supports the conclusion that more transit options and station-area TOD investments can lead to an increase in property values, and are thereby intrinsically related to displacement.

Figure 7: Property Tax Revenues in Hollywood^{lxxxiii}



But the most compelling and reliable data documenting displacement in Hollywood may be the first hand stories of residents who witnessed their neighborhood change so dramatically before their eyes. The MoveLA report includes testimonies from several central hollywood residents and community activists. One longtime Hollywood renter describes the visible demographic changes that took place, and some of the underhanded methods that landlords used to take advantage of the shift in the housing market:

“I lived in a building with eight apartments and over three years I saw one Latino family after another move out until the whole building was new people. I remember one family that had been there for many years, and all of a sudden the landlord lost their rent check three months in a row. It was such a hassle for them. The people who moved in were paying much higher rent and there were fewer families.”

LA Voice member Socorro Callejas expresses the bittersweet feelings that can be associated with the successful revitalization effort that ends up displacing residents:

“We fought for what we have now. No more gangs, no more prostitution, it is better than it was. The thing is that right now my neighbors aren’t here. This makes me sad, because it’s like when you clean a house but afer its clean you don’t live there anymore”

Although Hollywood was able to take advantage of its rapidly developing commercial and residential market and create many new affordable homes, the reality is that a comparable number of units were lost due to condo conversion, demolition, and expiring affordable housing covenants. The unparalleled success of Hollywood's revitalization ushered in a wave of public investment and subsequent gentrification: without enough affordable units to keep up with these changes, many original residents were displaced. This problem isn't limited to Hollywood: many nearby areas (such as Echo Park, Silver Lake, Los Feliz and Koreatown) are experiencing their own struggles with gentrification, and displacement has become a much more serious challenge for low income families. With the whole region becoming unaffordable, many residents displaced from Hollywood were unable to afford the cost of relocating to a proximate neighborhood, and were forced to leave Los Angeles. On a regional scale, the process of displacement creates a spatial disparity between job centers and housing affordable to low-income families^{lxxxiv}. This means that families have to spend more to reach city centers with large demands for service jobs. These increased transportation costs place further economic stress on rent-burdened, working-class households.

Lessons Learned

- **Maintaining a base of core transit-users** is essential to the success of a TOD project or transit line. The transit system as a whole will be more efficient if there are a lot of consistent riders living close to its stations, and the transit agency won't have to use valuable land near stations to create parking structures. Low-income working families are less likely to own cars, and more likely to use public transportation. The increased car ownership that Hollywood experienced post-revitalization indicates that not enough was done to maintain the affordable housing necessary to retain loyal transit riders. Former CRA/LA director for Hollywood Helmi Hisserich underscores the crucial link between affordable housing and effective TOD: "If you want effective transit oriented development that reduces vehicle miles traveled you need extensive housing for workers who are actually using that transit"^{lxxxv}.
- **Engaging local communities and business owners** was a crucial step in transforming Hollywood. Tenants helped to rid residential blocks of gangs and drugs, while property

owners set up a Business Improvement District (BID) to keep the streets clean and safe and establish a now-popular Farmer's Market. Including local stakeholders in the planning process for new developments strengthens

- **The CRA played a key role in coordinating** Hollywood's revitalization. Tackling major community redevelopment projects like this one requires creative action and collaboration on multiple fronts. The CRA was able to facilitate cooperation between local businesses, city government, community and labor groups. The CRA also had the unique ability to use public funding to provide subsidies to developers in exchange for community benefits, and to acquire properties in key redevelopment and transit-adjacent areas. Now that the CRA has been abolished, transformative revitalization efforts like the one that took place in Hollywood will have to face many difficult obstacles that the redevelopment agency might have hurdled in the past. Comprehensive, broad-based partnerships will be even more crucial for redevelopment in a post-CRA Los Angeles. Some key public agencies that could help fill the vacuum left by the CRA include: LA Metro, City Council Offices, the City Attorney, LA Housing Department, LA City Planning Department, LA Department of Transportation, LA police department, and the Mayor's office^{lxxxvi}.
- **Implementing affordable housing strategies early on can minimize displacement.** Negotiating with developers for the inclusion of affordable units in new construction is an important aspect of increasing the stock of housing that is affordable to low-income, transit-riding residents. However, limiting condo conversions and the demolition of rent-stabilized apartments is the other half of the battle. Households that are vulnerable to displacement also need to be protected from rent increases and illegal evictions through more stringent enforcement of tenants rights, rent-stabilization ordinances and housing code inspections.

VII. Developing a Comprehensive Equity Strategy for Los Angeles

There are 71 transit stations existing or planned for Los Angeles, which means that dozens of communities are currently anticipating the addition of new transit modes and/or transit-oriented developments. With LA on the precipice of a transit breakthrough, now is the time to plan progressive housing and land-use policies to guide equitable development around station areas. The unprecedented momentum around transit and TOD in the region can be harnessed to generate the benefits that are important to community stakeholders: public investment in transit can be used to leverage private investment in community benefits, especially in the creation and preservation of affordable housing.

However, the fragmentation of the primary players and stakeholders involved in transit-oriented development is the fundamental source of the challenges confronting equitable TOD in Los Angeles. Transit agencies, planners and elected officials disagree over where and how to implement projects, and end up creating obstacles for one another. Developers and communities are locked in a constant struggle over who gets to benefit from land and other properties, with neighborhood and affordable housing advocates fighting an uphill battle. The City, Metro and other stakeholders need more inter-agency and inter-departmental collaboration to maximize their effectiveness in supporting TOD. In a post-CRA Los Angeles, there are many public partners with a stake in TOD that have the potential to assume a leadership role. These include, but are not limited to: the Department of City Planning, LA Metro, LA Department of Transportation, the LA Housing Department, the Mayor's Office, City Council Offices, HACLA and even LAUSD^{lxxxvii}. Ultimately, the campaign for equitable TOD will depend on the efforts of dedicated community groups. Many organizers and neighborhood councils are prepared to advocate for equitable TOD, but they are often left out of the planning and development process. The most effective TODs are achieved with a broad base of community support, and this will be a key factor in developing inclusive, sustainable and successful transit-rich neighborhoods in the future.

Learning From Denver, Oakland and Hollywood

The case examples from Denver, Oakland and Hollywood represent innovative and forward-thinking strategies for getting the most out of transit. As Los Angeles experiences a revolutionary period of new investment in its public transit infrastructure, much can be learned from these rising TOD stars. However there is no 'one size fits all' solution for transit equity.

Where they are most successful, municipalities and TOD advocates have tailored equity strategies specifically for their individual regions, cities, neighborhoods and station areas. The specific policy, organizing and development strategies implemented in these areas can provide inspiration for action in Los Angeles, but cannot be translated exactly. Several key components of TODs in these areas, however, will be useful in informing the creation of equitable transit-rich districts in LA.

All three regions were able to surmount the challenging obstacle of overlapping jurisdictions through interagency cooperation and broad-based partnerships. Los Angeles, as a city and county, represents a much greater challenge than either of the two smaller municipalities in Denver and Oakland. In the case of Hollywood, the CRA was able to coordinate the efforts of many smaller stakeholder groups and access the funding, land-use and policy capabilities of provided by Metro and the City Council offices. Any effort to create equitable TOD in greater LA will require coordinated partnerships between a host of transit agencies, local governments, business districts and community groups. This will be difficult, but not impossible: An addition to the Metro Gold Line known as the Foothill Extension will soon pass through 11 new cities, from Arcadia to Montclair, each with their own unique political, economic and regulatory climates. The logistics of this project might seem onerous enough to slow any progress to a crawl, but with the support and coordination of a countywide transportation authority (LACMTA, a.k.a. Metro), construction on Phase 2 of the Gold Line Extension is now underway^{lxxxviii}.

The case studies are all remarkable because of the high priority assigned to community benefits in development. In the case of Oakland's Fruitvale Transit Village, the community was able to demand certain benefits through the hard work of the Unity Council, a local community-organizing group. In Denver, a city/countywide TOD Housing Trust Fund makes affordable housing land acquisition a priority for the region's working-class families. In Hollywood, a deep commitment to affordable housing in new development and renovation was coupled with strong project-specific CBAs and Labor Peace Agreements. All three strategies are applicable to greater Los Angeles. LA is composed of a patchwork of neighborhoods and ethnic enclaves; each with their own unique characters and social seams, and localized community organizing will be necessary to address the neighborhood-specific needs of each station area. However, because the new transit network will be planned and constructed with a regional perspective in mind and will involve stakeholders from all over LA County, there is a need for an overarching entity that could coordinate local efforts and fight for community benefits at the countywide level.

The implementation of a countywide TOD Fund could integrate with a broad-based community organizing/transit-rights coalition. The deficit of affordable housing is a regional issue; so thinking about securing affordability at this level is necessary. The resources for these entities currently exist, but need to be coordinated and targeted in anticipation of a fully operational transit network. Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) is already engaging with Metro to ensure equitable distribution of construction and operation jobs for new transit projects^{lxxxix}. Furthermore, in 2001, a coalition of housing, community, religious and labor groups called Housing LA scored a victory when they persuaded then-Mayor Jim Hahn to create a housing trust fund to help subsidize affordable homes and apartments for low-income and working families^{xc}. The fund could be re-envisioned to target land near Metro station areas, and re-invigorated by exploring new funding streams. The upcoming city council elections are a perfect venue for getting a housing fund on the campaign agenda, and the recent trend of holding financial institutions accountable for their social impact^{xci}, could present opportunities for garnering monetary support from LA-based lenders. Although affordable housing is a difficult issue to champion during such a stagnant economic period, creating a robust TOD housing trust fund is far from impossible.

Areas that Demand Immediate Consideration

As LA Planning Commission Vice President Regina Freer explained: the battle for community benefits in transit-rich neighborhoods will play out ‘wherever they are laying tracks’. However, the demographic characteristics and presence of transit in certain Los Angeles neighborhoods make them especially vulnerable to displacement, as well prime candidates for implementing equitable TOD strategies.

Downtown - As the central hub of LA City and County’s transportation network and a major job center, Downtown Los Angeles is one of the regions’ prime real estate locations on the verge of momentous gentrification. With several massive investments slated for the area in the near future⁷, property values in the Downtown are sure to skyrocket. Another characteristic of Downtown that will pose a challenge to the creation and preservation of affordable housing is the wealth of historic and industrial buildings in the area, many of which are in the process of being renovated into lofts or converted into condos. Getting affordable units included in these

⁷ Downtown will soon be home to the proposed regional connector, the proposed streetcar system, the Farmer’s Field sports stadium and convention center, a mixed-use apartment complex at 8th/Grand, numerous restaurants, grocery stores, apartment towers and renovated historic buildings.

developments can be a daunting task, but will likely define the character of the neighborhood in coming years. Freer notes that: 'a progressive adaptive reuse ordinance will be the single most important factor in bringing back a residential downtown'. When combined with a high concentration of the most vulnerable populations (low-income, people of color and the homeless) all the conditions for the rapid displacement of existing residents are in place.

Westlake/MacArthur Park - Although there is some debate over whether or not the Westlake/MacArthur park area has the potential for gentrification⁸ it's demographic characteristics make it ripe for displacement. Westlake has a high proportion of low-income residents who rent instead of own their homes, as well as a large Central-American population. Furthermore, the immigrant community (legal and otherwise) could be difficult to organize (despite a shared cultural background and existing community organizations) because of the financial and legal risks that are associated with housing and neighborhood advocacy.

In addition, despite relatively high levels of crime and an aging housing stock, Westlake has some fundamental assets that will make it a highly desirable area to live. Westlake's historic 1920's apartment buildings and theatres could be given a new life through renovations and conversions, and the Metro Red Line subway provides premium transit access to Downtown, Koreatown and with any luck in the next few years, to the Westside⁹. MacArthur Park is an incredible resource in a central city that lacks adequate green space. The beautiful lakefront properties and downtown views will surely attract market-rate investment in the future.

Cornfield/Arroyo Seco Area - The Los Angeles City Planning department has recently released their proposal for the Cornfield Arroyo Seco area. The specific plan area covers approximately 660 acres in the communities of Lincoln Heights, Cypress Park and Chinatown, including several unique industrial and green space areas, all located directly northeast of Downtown. Although the area is comprised of mostly older, industrial buildings, several proposed improvements to the area (such as the planned greenways along the LA river and an extensive bicycle network), its proximity to Downtown and the presence of the Metro Gold Line will spur gentrification in the area as industrial sites give way to housing and mixed-use.

⁸ <http://kagansblog.com/2012/02/why-westlake-wont-gentrify/>,
http://la.curbed.com/archives/2009/11/macarthur_park_gentrification_watch_westlake_theatre_plan_moves_forward.php (see comments section for an extensive discourse)

⁹ <http://www.metro.net/projects/westside/>

VIII. Policy Recommendations

Cultivating a region of diverse, inclusive, transit-rich neighborhoods connected by a robust transit network is a monumental task. The struggle to achieve this goal will most likely define Los Angeles in the 21st century, and the degree to which LA can succeed in this challenge will determine its standing as a globally competitive urban area. Reaching a countywide solution for transit-area development that does not result in displacement will require innovative strategies from different actors at the federal, state, local and station-area level:

- **Gain a holistic understanding of LA's station areas and affordable housing stock** to inform any further efforts for equitable development in transit-rich neighborhoods. Identifying station areas that are most vulnerable to displacement or have the greatest potential for development will allow planners and officials to more effectively direct attention and prioritize funding. The CTOD's station area typology project¹⁰ has made important strides towards assembling a complete inventory of Metro station areas. Ensuring that all Angelenos can afford a place to live necessitates a complete understanding of the realities of the housing crisis facing LA. This means knowing where affordable housing is located, and where housing covenants and rental subsidies are going to expire. A comprehensive report detailing LA County's affordable housing stock would allow advocates to implement aggressive preservation efforts.
- **Link the Equitable TOD movement with other citywide and regional equity initiatives.** Transit-oriented development offers a wide range of benefits pertaining to economic development, public health, affordable housing and social equity. For this reason, any future efforts to promote TOD could benefit immensely from the resources of and collaboration with advocates representing other initiatives to improve the City and Region.
- **Develop an education campaign that communicates the benefits of transit-oriented development and the logistics of creating equitable TOD in Los Angeles.**

¹⁰ <http://latod.reconnectingamerica.org/welcome>

In focus group studies done by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, participants described widespread misunderstanding of the central concepts of TOD and its implementation in Los Angeles. Given the complex assortment of public agencies that will be key players in transit area development, many local government and private sector actors do not fully understand the multi-departmental regulatory process that goes into the planning and implementation of TOD. A comprehensive and accessible education campaign is necessary to provide public agency staff, CDCs, advocacy groups and policymakers with the information they need to effectively campaign for equitable TOD.

- **Use zoning tools to prioritize community benefits in transit-rich neighborhoods.** Land use and zoning plans governing a particular area determine the form and function of the neighborhood and ultimately shape how development takes place. There are several overlapping types of land use plans for Los Angeles in place, including the City's general plan (comprised of plans for each community planning area in LA), specific plans, station area plans and others. These plans are critical because they allow place-specific concerns to be addressed directly, and provide a means for the implementation of affordable housing strategies. **TOD Overlay Zones** allow for a city to focus on closely shaping the growth of a TOD or station area. An overlay zone is superimposed on the existing zoning map, creating a special area where density bonuses, reduced parking requirements and affordable housing strategies can be experimented with. **Inclusionary zoning** requires developers to include a certain percentage of affordable units in their housing developments, sometimes rewarding developers by providing density bonuses. To streamline the connection between jobs and affordable housing, the possibility of including IZ provisions in commercial developments should be explored.
- **Facilitate effective Community Development Corporations (CDCs).** Community development corporations provide a way for community stakeholders to gain leverage in the development process through land ownership. Ensuring that CDCs are effective will require some flexibility on the part of local government and transit agencies like Metro. The Fruitvale Development Corporation was able to convince BART to bypass the competitive bidding process for identifying developers and award them sole-source development rights because the FDC was deemed to represent the best interest of the district. Crafting capable CDCs in Los Angeles' transit-rich districts should be a priority

for community organizing groups, and would give residents greater control over the development in their neighborhoods. Community groups of all types can also **sign up to be qualified purchasers under state notice law**^{xcii}, so they can receive notice and exercise rights to submit purchase offers for properties at risk of losing their affordability. The extra time provided by the notice period can give tenant and community-based organizations time to find financing sources for purchasing strategic properties.

- **Prioritize the Enforcement of Rent Stabilization Ordinances and Protect Tenants' Rights.** A USC study shows that there are over 200,000 rent-stabilized apartments located within a half mile of a transit stop in Los Angeles. One of the key lessons of Hollywood's revitalization is that low-income renters will be displaced if the city doesn't enforce its own rent stabilization and tenant protection ordinances.^{xciii} Creating new affordable housing units is only half the battle; preventing the illegal evictions and condo conversions that allow unscrupulous landlords to eliminate affordable housing is the other half.
- **Create a TOD-specific Affordable Housing Acquisition Fund.** An equitable TOD fund in Los Angeles would be a major step towards a coordinated affordable housing creation/preservation strategy. Acquisition funds offer grants or low-interest loans to nonprofit developers to acquire property for the preservation and development of affordable housing around transit^{xciv}. Because LA's main transit corridors service the City's lower-income neighborhoods, residents of these neighborhoods will in many cases be unable to go through the complex and expensive process of acquiring property. Furthermore, as property values rise in the wake of public transit investments, creating and preserving affordable housing properties will become more difficult. A city or countywide housing acquisition fund, which would have the capacity to act quickly before transit becomes operational, could be the most important tool in slowing or mitigating displacement in transit-rich neighborhoods. Funding for the fund could be provided by capturing the increases in property values caused by increased investment in transit and other public amenities, by attaching a development fee to proposed projects in special TOD overlay zones or specific project areas.
- **Broaden the scope of Health Impact Assessments (HIAs)** to include affordable housing, public space and other community-serving provisions. Although there are no

current regulations requiring Health Impact Assessments, they can be effective tools for getting community benefits on the agenda *before* project development begins. Linking community benefits with public health can make a stronger case for their inclusion in the project. The Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) is currently partnering with several legal and public health organizations to conduct a Health Impact Assessment of the proposed Farmers Field/Convention Center Expansion. This HIA examines the relationship between the project and displacement in nearby areas, with an emphasis on engaging local residents to meaningfully participate in the planning and development process.

- **Tailor parking requirements that reflect and encourage the reduced-auto dependency of transit-rich neighborhoods** in appropriate TOD areas and special overlay zones. Costly and cumbersome parking requirements near stations are one of the most common barriers to creating successful transit-oriented districts in LA^{xcv}, and are usually one of the most expensive elements of development. Parking is a highly contentious issue, especially in Los Angeles, so a sweeping change in parking policy across the city is unlikely. It will be possible, however, to slowly chip away at required parking minimums through specific plans and other creative policies. For example, the city's adaptive reuse ordinance has been credited with adding 10,000 new housing units downtown without any new parking through the conversion of historic commercial buildings^{xcvi}.
- **Invest in improving the "Last-Mile Connection"** LA's transit system can only be considered successful if it connects people with job centers and other destinations that are scattered across both transit-rich and transit-poor neighborhoods throughout the city. Therefore, improved connections through bus and shuttle transfers and safer and more accessible pedestrian and bicycle routes should be prioritized. This will enable a robust transit system to serve households throughout the City, not just those within walking distance of a transit station^{xcvii}.

IX. Conclusion

Los Angeles and its residents are ready for a change. The overwhelming majority of Angelenos that voted in favor of the transit funding sales tax established by Measure R, as well

as the substantial reinvestment of public and private dollars in transit infrastructure and transit-adjacent development, are indicators that LA is ready to change the auto-centric pattern of development that has defined the region for so long. The affect that this investment will have on the cycle of neighborhood change in LA's transit-rich districts needs to be evaluated and effectively addressed in order to create a high-performing transit network.

Residents of LA's transit-rich districts are disproportionately low-income, renters, and people of color. These characteristics make the populations of these neighborhoods particularly vulnerable to the processes of gentrification and displacement. If investment in LA's planned and existing transit-rich districts causes the displacement of existing residents, the societal value of transit-oriented development will be substantially undercut. Furthermore, displacement of core transit riders will result in an underperforming and financially unsustainable transit network.

Preventing displacement and implementing Equitable TOD will require the cooperation and collaboration of a wide array of public agencies, private developers, community advocates and others. A broad-based coalition of support will be integral in creating successful TODs. However, the key factor in preventing displacement and creating diverse transit-rich neighborhoods is the creation and preservation of affordable housing stock. This can be achieved through the negotiation of strong Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) with developers, the strategic acquisition of transit-adjacent property for affordable housing development through Community Development Corporations and/or a TOD-specific Housing Trust Fund, and finally through the enforcement of rent-stabilization and tenants' rights ordinances.

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