



Achieving Affordable Housing at Transit-Oriented Development Railvolution

October 28, 2008

About FRESC

FRESC utilizes policy development and advocacy, academic-level actionable research, community organizing and non-partisan civic engagement to promote the creation of jobs that pay family-sustaining wages with benefits, housing and health care which are affordable to all families, and neighborhoods that are environmentally safe and sustainable.

- Community Benefits is a key strategy
- Labor-community partnership model → Broad coalition of labor, low-income housing residents, environmental groups, community organizations, micro-business, and faith

Denver Context for TOD

FasTracks

- 2004 voter approved regional transit expansion
- 6 new lines, 15 year+ build-out, \$6.1 billion+
- 60 new stations
- a primary driver of development and public investment



FRESC Strategy Overview

- Research
 - Local Context (we have a need)
 - National best practices/case studies (this is possible)
- Site-specific neighborhood organizing (esp. for anti-displacement)
 - Plan to redevelop public housing (in progress)
- Site-specific comprehensive community benefit campaigns
 - Cherokee-Gates (completed 2006)
 - Union Station (in progress)
- Policy advocacy
 - Transit agency joint development policy (Sep 08, on-going)
 - TOD Plans
 - Municipal policies
 - Regional policy (MPO)

Municipal Strategies

- Incentives (only helps those going to build affordable anyway)
 - Parking reductions
 - Density bonuses
 - Expedited review and/or reduced permitting fees
- Case-by-case leverage (reaches those who wouldn't do otherwise)
 - Rezoning
 - Subsidies, special taxing authority, or loans
 - Variances, street vacations, waivers
- Inclusionary Zoning (requires affordability or \$ buy-out from all)
 - City-wide
 - TOD specific or different standards for TOD?

National Best Practice Research

National Survey of Transit Agency Joint-Development/Affordable Housing Approaches (FRESC & Enterprise Community Partners)

Documented policy language, approaches, projects

- 8 agencies with explicit language on affordability
- 13 agencies have achieved affordable housing in projects they controlled

Affordable Housing Supports Transit:

- Increased ridership (documented by Miami, Portland, others)
- Consolidate or replace surface parking with garages
- Greater place-making → greater overall success of joint-development
- Efficiency through shared use spaces
- Decreased paratransit costs due to greater accessibility

Lesson: Distinguish Among Transit & TOD Opportunities

- 1) Public transit infrastructure (tracks, stations, parking structures...)**
 - location may impact housing, but not a direct path to affordable
- 2) Transit agency-joint development (sale of public land to private entity, combining public structure with private development, land lease....)**
 - establish expectations in early plans, RFPs, and contracts
- 3) Private TOD with public involvement (rezoning, subsidies, loans...)**
 - leverage on private parties via public decision-makers
- 4) Private TOD with no public involvement**
 - least leverage (can reach housing with Inclusionary Zoning)

Lesson: Challenges to Overcome

Elements Impacting Community Benefit Potential at Transit

- development leveraged for transit infrastructure, limiting availability of funds for other benefits
- speculation leading to inflated land costs → harder to do affordable housing, debate about using limited subsidies on most expensive land
- higher infrastructure costs
- not all TOD involves public subsidies/leverage
- long time frame from area planning → proposed development planning → actual development

Policy Victory

RTD Strategic Plan for Transit Oriented Development

Goals and Strategies (Section 2.5 – Goal 2)

- ▶ Sustainable development described as “Encouraging TOD that serves the full diversity of the community, including low and moderate income individuals.”

Affordable Housing Policy and Enforcement (section 3.1.2)

- ▶ ...RTD is committed to strongly encourage a diverse range of housing options, including affordable units, in close proximity to RTD transit service. With that goal in mind, RTD will work with local governments to understand the affordable housing needs of their communities, and will encourage transit oriented development and/or joint development that addresses affordable goals of local communities and the region, working within all applicable legal limitations and parameters.

Site Specific Victory – Cherokee Gates Redevelopment



Housing Component of the Cherokee-Gates Community Benefits



- 100 for-sale units average of 95% of AMI
- 100 rental units \leq 50% of AMI (10% of rentals) and 100 rental units \leq 30% of AMI (10% of rentals)
- Distribution throughout site

For More Information



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**Union Station Community Benefits
Campaign**

www.unionstationforall.com

<http://www.youtube.com/user/frescdenver>