# Financing the Public Realm – Building the Public Benefit

Rail-Volution

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# Basics

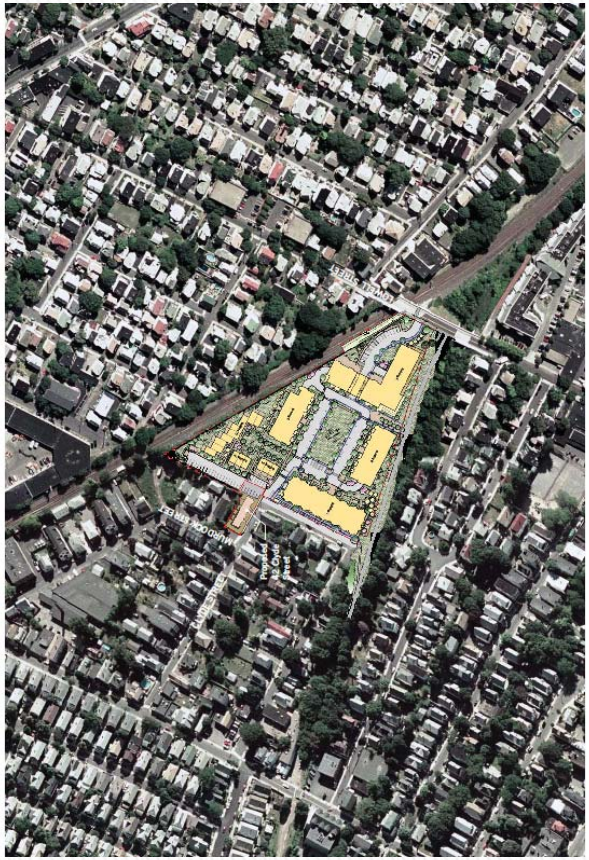
- Cities and transportation grow together
  - Trade routes, streetcars, airports
- Megaregions
  - Centers of population and economic growth
  - Defined by economic and social interchange, not jurisdictional boundaries
  - Transportation access to and within megaregion
- Highways and airports in Megaregions over capacity
  - Choking on success
  - Need to shift demand to other modes

# Sustaining megaregion growth: Why transit and rail?

- Underutilized
  - Opportunity to maximize existing rights of way
- Energy efficiency
  - Smaller carbon footprint than alternatives
- Facilitates cost-effective growth patterns
  - Sprawl costs money; density saves public dollars
- Part of multimodal system
  - Feeder systems
  - Regional connectors

# Funding Public Benefits:

- Neighborhood growth
  - abandoned industrial site
  - 199 housing units
  - 5+ buildings
  - open space
- GreenLine Transit riders
  - Minimal parking
  - Zipcar
  - Community Bikepath



MaxPac – Somerville MA

# Public Sources – justifications for investment

- Transit investment as highway mitigation
  - Green line extension/modal linkage
- Curb cuts and zoning
  - Traffic calming (developer contribution)
- State Grants and Federal Enhancement funds
  - Bikepath and public ways

# Public Sources – Public priority?

Impediments:

- Too local for MPO's regional priority ?
- Too many condition needs to address first?

New paradigms:

- Gubernatorial Smart Growth programs
  - Council
  - Commonwealth Development
- Federal authorization focused on broader goals
  - Livable Communities - community building; small matters
  - Office of Intermodalism - fix it and change it

# Funding Public Benefits: Tappan Zee Bridge

- Longest Hudson River Crossing – 3 miles long
- Growth area with limited interest in new highway capacity –
  - <30 miles north of NYC
  - Westchester and Rockland County
  - I 287 Corridor from New Jersey to Connecticut
- Building in and over a key waterway
  - Scenic and historic
  - Environmentally important
- Need to make crossing more than a highway bridge
  - Transit defined into project need and scope

# Public Sources – Leveraging Time

- Bridge first –
  - Toll revenue
  - BRT crossing
  - Commuter Rail foundation
- Sequenced EIS (Sec 6002)
  - Not segmentation
  - Design bridge while sorting out transit
- A new New Starts?
  - Too many projects?
  - Catch up later?

# Public Sources – Overcoming Obstacles

- Corridor-wide community planning –
  - Creating stakeholders first
  - "Transit-Oriented Development – Building Quality Communities around Transit"
    - Project for Public Spaces (PPS), Reconnecting America and the Regional Plan Association (RPA)
  - Assessing and monitoring impacts to river
  - Establishing basis for detailed transit planning –
    - Stations, Routes, Market/customers
- New Starts
  - How will Community metrics count?
  - Multimodal funding?

# Conclusion – Prioritizing the Public Realm

- Redefining the goal-
  - Community building through mobility, not mobility per se.
- More than condition -
  - Avoiding failure is not enough
- Federal Authorization
  - Opportunity to reshape programs with new metrics, not set-asides
  - Match funding levels to needs