

# **Making the Connection: Cities + Transit Agencies in New Starts Land Use and Economic Development**

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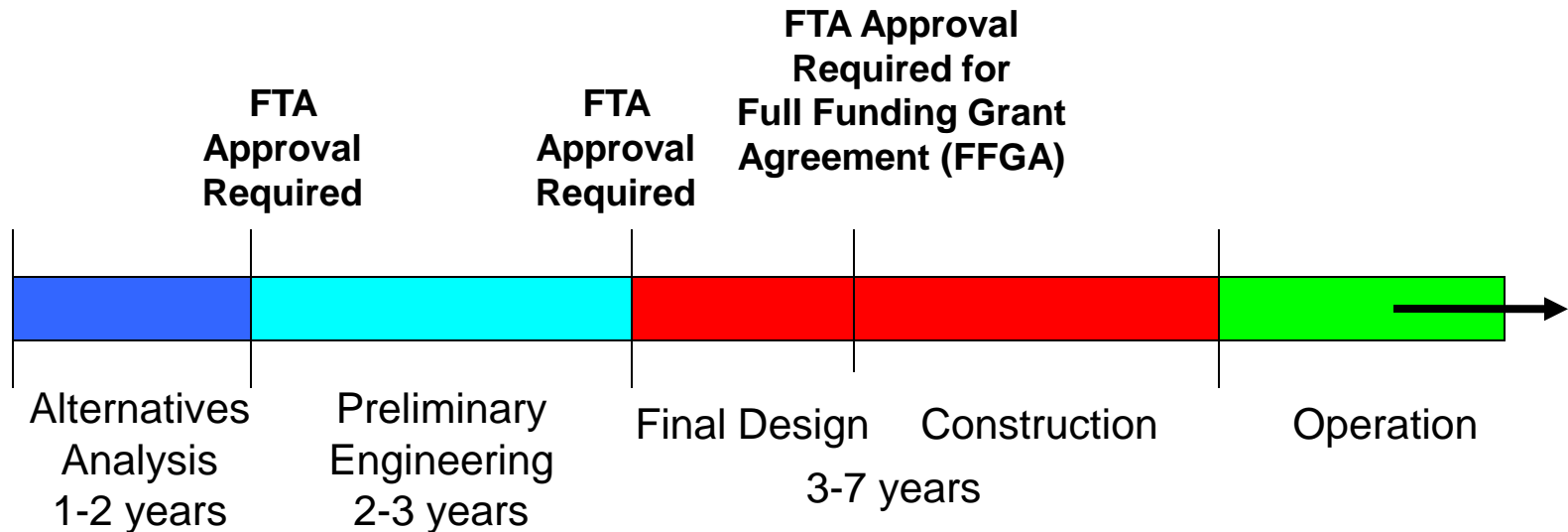
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# New Starts Program Overview

- **What is a New or Small Start?**
  - New “fixed guideways” and extensions to existing systems
  - Includes light rail, heavy rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit
- **A Discretionary & Competitive Federal Grant Program**
  - \$1.99 billion appropriated in Fiscal Year 2010
  - Demand for funds exceeds supply
  - Historical average federal New Starts share = 50%
- **Evaluation** – As directed in law, FTA evaluates and rates projects against multiple criteria, including land use and economic development:
  - Annually in a Report to Congress (due First Monday in February)
  - For entry into Preliminary Engineering
  - For entry into Final Design
  - Prior to Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA)
- **Record of Success** – Over 100 major projects over 35 years

# New Starts Project Development Process

- Project Development: Typically 6-12 Years



**Some local keys to accelerate a project:** consensus (route, mode, stations), funding, and environmental work

# FTA's Land Use and Economic Development Criteria

- Land Use
  - Existing population and employment within ½ mile of station areas
- Economic Development
  - Transit Supportive Plans and Policies
    - Growth Management
    - Transit Supportive Corridor Policies
    - Supportive Zoning Near Transit Stations
    - Tools to Implement Land Use Policies
  - Performance and Impact of Plans and Policies
    - Demonstrated cases of TOD
    - Station area development proposals and status
    - Adaptability of station area land for development
    - Corridor economic development

# Growth Management

- Concentration of development around regional activity centers and transit
  - Regional plans
  - Regulatory or fiscal incentives
  - “Smart Growth” policies, comprehensive plans, and zoning
- Land conservation and management
  - Growth management boundaries
  - Preservation of open space, sensitive habitat, farmland, or areas of rural character
  - Incentive or mandates for land conservation
  - Actual land conservation purchases or designations

# Transit Supportive Corridor Policies

- Plans and policies to increase corridor and station area development
  - Benchmarks for floor area ratios or residential dwelling units
  - Planned high trip generators in the corridor
- Plans and policies to enhance transit-friendly character
  - Mix of land uses
  - Building design characteristics (facades, windows, setbacks, height limits)
- Plans to improve pedestrian facilities, including facilities for persons with disabilities
  - Capital improvement programs for sidewalks, connected pedestrian paths, street crossings, and facilities for persons with disabilities
  - Adopted or proposed design guidelines
- Parking policies
  - Parking limits
  - Provisions for shared parking
  - Parking fees

# Supportive Zoning Near Transit Stations

- Existing and proposed zoning that supports increased development density in transit station areas
  - Density bonuses
  - Housing fund subsidies
  - Expedited zoning reviews
- Zoning ordinances that enhance transit-oriented character of station areas
  - Mixed use zoning
  - Ordinances addressing placement of building footprints, pedestrian facilities, façade treatments
  - Architectural guidance
- Zoning allowances for reduced parking and traffic mitigation
  - Minimum and/or maximum parking requirements for residential and commercial development

# Tools to Implement Land Use Policies

- Outreach to and endorsement by public agencies, community organizations, and the general public in the planning process
  - Outreach program
  - Resolutions, letters of endorsement etc.
- Regulatory and financial incentives to promote TOD
  - Density bonuses
  - Streamlined processing of development applications
  - Reduced or waived zoning requirements for traffic mitigation fees
  - Tax increment financing zones, tax abatement or TOD loan support
  - Revitalization strategies
- Efforts to involve the development community
  - TOD market studies
  - Joint development strategy



# Economic Development Rating Based on Project Phase

- FTA applies a higher standard as projects progress from preliminary engineering to final design
- At entry into PE, conceptual plans should be underway and work with local jurisdictions should have begun:
  - Transit oriented development proposals drafted
  - Discussions held with local jurisdictions about revising comprehensive plans, master area plans and station area plans
  - Identification of capital improvements for station areas
  - Initiation of public outreach efforts
- At entry into FD, must show some demonstrated progress on implementation of plans and policies such as:
  - Plans and policies adopted;
  - Development proposals underway;
  - Regulatory of financial incentives adopted; and/or
  - Zoning changes implemented.

# Challenge

- New Starts project sponsors are typically transit agencies that have no defined role in local land use planning
- Land use and economic development plans and policies are critical to a successful project rating and receipt of Federal funding