10 Years of TOD in the Denver Front Range Region:

Are we creating and exploiting synergies on our transit investments?

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THE FRONT RANGE HAS POWERFUL TOOLS

DRCOG Metro Vision 2030
"Goal: Encourage the development of higher-density, mixed-use, transit and pedestrian-oriented urban centers throughout the Denver region."

Blueprint Denver
TOD is the organizing concept for Blueprint Denver. It explores the important relationship between land use and transportation and advocates that land-use and transportation decisions be made in conjunction with each other.
WHAT THE FRONT RANGE REGION HAS TODAY

Central & CPV Corridor
Southwest Corridor
Southeast Corridor
Central Corridor

INTENT
To prove rail can work in Colorado

FACTS
- Cost $118.4M
- 14 Stations
- 1,600 Parking Spaces
- 5.3 miles long
- Year Completed 1994
- CPV Spur 2002
Successes:
We Got it Built and it Works!
Huge Community Asset for 5-Points & CPV Development

Central Corridor
Lessons Learned:
Lack of understanding of the relationship of transit to land use

Five Points
- Community Consideration
- Physical integration of infrastructure to neighborhood
- Transit alone doesn’t drive real estate- Transit is an amenity

10th & Osage
- With out a master plan - Land Assemblage is the number one obstacle to TOD
- Advanced planning by jurisdiction imperative

Auraria Campus
Lack of political will = lack of integration
Southwest Corridor

INTENT
Efficiency & Service

FACTS
- Cost $164.1M
- 6 Stations
- 2,597 Parking Spaces
- 8.7 miles long
- Year Completed 2000
**Successes:**

Jurisdictional vision & involvement can transform a city

Southwest Corridor
**Missed Opportunities:**

**Mineral & Santa Fe/ Littleton**- Huge lost opportunity because of lack of vision & political will. Yes to Auto Oriented Retail, No to Urban Housing

Poor Siting of Transit Stations throughout corridor due to Cheapest ROW track location. 1/2 a TOD if any
Lessons Learned:

PAY ATTENTION TO THE MARKET!!

- Transit is an amenity, not a “driver” of TOD. Retail follows rooftops not transit.

- Development has certain formulaic conventions that must be followed.
Southeast Corridor/ T-REX

INTENT
- Response to Severe Congestion
- Getting to the DTC
- Test of Public Financing

FACTS
- Cost $183M
- 14 Stations
- 2,520 Parking Spaces
- 19.1 miles long
- Expected to open Fall 2006
Successes:

- Early planning by jurisdictions (forced by design build process)
• **TOD TOOLS CREATED**

  - Leadership & political will
    - Political champions
  - Flexible Comprehensive Plans
  - Flexible zoning codes
    - (flexible but predictable)
  - Public/private partnerships
    - Importance of building flexible, inclusive relationships recognized
  - Incentives
    - Higher density, special zoning, waivers and variances
  - Public Investment
  - Process is more developed & understood
Missed Opportunities:

- **BUILDING RAIL TRANSIT IN CHEAPEST ROW**
  - Creates physical barrier/ impassable edge
  - Transit should be hub not appendage
  - More difficult to use
  - Obvious disconnect between transit & land use
  - Inherently not pedestrian oriented, but auto oriented
Missed Opportunities: Southeast Corridor

STATION VISIONS: System of Park N Rides
Missed Opportunities: Southeast Corridor

STATION VISIONS: No Land Use Connection
Lessons Learned:

PLACEMAKING & BARRIERS

- Impassable edges impact how TOD operates. The 1/4 mile walkable catchment area changes based on interest and connectivity or lack thereof.
- Landuse should be a integrated, NOT an appendage
Lessons Learned:

**Design/ Build Process: Good for Transit, Bad for TOD**

- **Advance planning**
  - Transit agency must work with landowner for planning to avoid huge infrastructure mistakes that cannot be corrected

- **Disconnect in timeline of D/B vs. planning and education processes**
  - Speed of the Design Build process eliminates choice and flexibility and exponentially complicates TOD opportunities.

- **Limit D/B capacity**
  - Design- Build should be limited to tracks, platform and highway – leave station area planning out of contract- station area design is highly volatile and market dependent.

- **D/B gets things done, but at a cost**
  - Design- build forces choice, but is TOD’s worst enemy

- **Design portion requires as much attention as Build portion**
  - If used again imperative to create teams based not just on operations and engineering standpoint but based on contextual design for each station.
FasTracks

FACTS
- Cost $4.7Billion
- 60+ Stations
- 21,000 Parking Spaces
- 119 miles of new light rail and commuter rail
- Expected Completion 2016
Successes:

• Early Station Area Planning by Cities and Developers
Successes:

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Successes:
• Transit Ready Development [TRD]
Successes:

- Transit Ready Development [TRD]
**Successes:**

- Most Lines on Existing Rail ROW’s
Critical Observations: What We Have Now

1. Stations focused on **auto access** with **big parking** on big roads in **Cheap ROW**
2. **Node** took precedence over Place
3. **Time** took precedence over Community
   **TOD is the rare exception**, not the rule
4. Most of the development activity being planned is not TOD, but its impersonator **TAD [Transit Adjacent Development]**. TAD does a better balance of place and node, but fails to fully take advantage of location and synergy, limiting its full potential.
Critical Observations: **What We Need Now**

1. Smart Growth demands that **Land Use as an Equal Partner to Transit**
2. **Partnering** [we have no lead agency for TOD]
3. **Envisioning** [regional, corridor & station]
4. **Build Places**, not Projects
5. **Assemblage of Land**
A New Paradigm of TOD Principals

1. **Above All Else, Make It Pedestrian**
2. Transit as a Framework for Regional Growth / TOD as the Model
3. Create a Regional Vision, with Teeth
4. Explore Regional Revenue Sharing
5. Pay for Parking
6. Embrace a Mixture of Uses
7. Minimum Densities / Maximum Parking
8. Prohibit Auto Oriented Uses in Transit Zones
9. Create a Model Transit Overlay Zone- Form Based Code
Rethink Station Area Planning

1. Identify station area principals and market potential during corridor EIS
2. Commit to a basic development framework before Preliminary Engineering completion
3. Adopt station area plans before Station Final Engineering Design completion
4. Adopt zoning and incentives prior to station construction
Re-State the Question

The question has been “How do we want our transit network to work best?

Maybe the question should be “How do we want our cities and neighborhoods to work best.
If you plan cities for traffic, cars & transit-
You get traffic, cars & transit.
If you plan for people, places & transit-
You get people, places & transit.