Node Versus Place at Commuter Stations: A False Choice
The Supposed Typology

**Node**

- A point of interface in the regional transportation network
- Park-and-ride
- Intermodal bus / rail hub
- Dominated by cars and buses, inhospitable to place-making

**Place**

- No park-and-ride
- Intermodal transfer activities are secondary and invisible
- An existing TOD environment, or a “new place” ripe for the taking
- Public realm, mixed uses, and density—a transit village
Real Life Isn’t Like That

Yes, there are some “either/or” settings, but they’re the exceptions that prove the rule:

• Stations in urban core typically exclude park-and-ride; intermodal transfers occur naturally.
• Some out-lying stations are sited and designed for park-and-ride and feeder service only—at least for now.

Most park-and-ride or intermodal stations can be places too, and should be—through either of two integrative strategies:

• Incremental (start with surface parking and some TOD; transition to structured parking and more intense development)
• Immediate (develop a critical mass of TOD, public realm, and park-and-ride / intermodal facilities on Day One).
Commuter Rail Stops in Massachusetts:

Downtown is Not a Parking Lot
The Challenge

• MBTA commuter rail system: one of the 5 largest in US.
• Undergoing a generation of modernization and expansion.
• Park-and-ride vs. TOD debate raging in some towns.
• Different issue: several older city center locations are also highly strategic park-and-ride catchment sites.
• Downtown can’t be a parking lot—integrated development required from Day One.
Lawrence: Prime Example on North System

- Flagship station connecting the Merrimack Valley to the 128 Corridor and Boston
- 900-space, shared-use garage
- Intermodal link to RTA buses
- Accommodation for taxis, airport shuttles
- Issue #1: get the site right
- Issue #2: get the TOD right.
The Right Site: Macro Level

Downtown Core

Existing

Selected

495

North Andover

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Node Versus Place:
A False Choice
The Right Site: Micro Level

The Duck Bridge to Downtown Core

The Wood Mill
**TOD: Good Urban Design**

**The Train Side:**
- Contemporary façade
- Retail and public uses
- Bus berths adjoin platform

**The Mill Side:**
- Masonry façade--looks like a mill!
- Mill parking right across the street
TOD: Partnering with Developers

- Selected site was the parking lot of the Wood Ayer Mill complex.
- 1.3 million sf of historic mill space awaiting redevelopment.
- We swapped 2/3 of the parking lot for two floors of mill parking.

**Mill owner:** “Right here, you are looking at a $200 million private investment that would not happen if it were not for these types of investments.” (Bob Ansin, September 9, 2004 groundbreaking)
Attleboro is a key catchment point for Boston and Providence commuters

- 600 existing surface spaces; need 400-600 more
- Intermodal link to RTA buses
- Issue #1: get the site right
- Issue #2: get the TOD right
A Choice of Downtown Sites

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Node Versus Place: A False Choice
Union Street Alternative
Riverfront District Alternative

Riverfront District Gets:
- Intermodal station and garage
- Mixed-use TOD

Union Street Block Gets:
- Adaptive reuse of mill buildings
- Mixed-Use new construction TOD

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Node Versus Place:
A False Choice
BRT Nodes in York Region, Ontario:

Moose Pastures and Hydro Lines
VIVA and TOD

- A regional BRT system planned and built for Smart Growth
- 4 corridors, 87 kilometers, 60 stations
- Park-and-ride an essential ridership ingredient
- Two diverse case studies: Markham / Cornell and Steeles / University
- One strategy more incremental, one mostly immediate
Markham / Cornell Terminus

Phase I of New Urbanist Development
Station Site
Existing Neighborhoods
Hospital
Future Phases of New Urbanist Development

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A False Choice
Markham / Cornell Issues

- End-of-line station for the Highway 7 east-west corridor.
- A significant park-and-ride locus, with interline connection to neighboring Durham Region Transit.
- Cornell Village—a multi-phase Duany new urbanist development — surrounds the terminal area.
- Markham-Stouffville Hospital a major regional destination.
- The best permanent station site: a big, green “moose pasture”.

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Alternative Park-and-Ride Concepts

- Needed: 300-500 park-and-ride
- Surface lots OK as interim measure
- Avoid: permanent sea of parking alongside transit terminal
- Long-term: park-and-ride garage
- Question: Who benefits? Who pays?
Conceptual Site Plan

Joint development at terminal
Park-and-ride in linked garage
Land freed up for more joint dev't

Potential Development adjacent to Transit Terminal

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<th>AREA</th>
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<td>6000 m²</td>
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<td>800-9 STORY</td>
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<td>THEATRE - 1170 SEATS</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>790</td>
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Road, Building, and Site Section Details

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Node Versus Place: A False Choice

York Region Rapid Transit Corporation / York Consortium

DMJM HARRIS AECOM
Steeles Intermodal Site

Steeles Avenue
Toronto City Line

Highway 407 / 404 Interchange

York University
Steeles Intermodal Issues

- Key location on Toronto / York Region line
- Just off the 404 / 407 regional interchange
- York University across the street
- Region bought 3-acre site for BRT park-and-ride intermodal station
- City of Vaughan and York Region have identified the block as a key land use area
- Land use study creates TOD street grid
- Toronto TTC to extend subway through site
A Constrained Site

- UPS’ Canada hub planning expansion
- Subway and hydro alignments constrain site
- Location too important to be just a “node”
- Park-and-ride under hydro aerial line
- Region enters multi-jurisdictional talks
- Region seeks to expand area under control
Conceptual Site Plan Alternatives

- Surface Park-and-Ride Under Hydro Lines

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Node Versus Place:
A False Choice

York Region Rapid Transit Corporation / York Consortium
Heavy Rail Stations in San Juan, PR:

Wholesale Place Making on the Expreso
Tren Urbano Alignment

- New Starts heavy-rail “metro” line
- 11 kilometers, 16 stations, $2.25 billion
- Opened for service in 2005
Three Strategies for TOD

1. **Station Area and Corridor Planning**
   - An urban planning vision rooted in TOD
   - Under Law 207, a transit sign-off on all public and private investment
   - On the road to new Station-Area zoning

2. **Station Area Improvements**
   - $100+ million direct public investment in the urban fabric
   - The first layer of TOD place-making
   - Signature projects: Martínez Nadal and Cupey

3. **Joint Development Program**
   - Sets the standard for TOD in an unfamiliar market
   - The most direct form of value capture
   - Eight projects in the pipeline, worth $637 million in private investment.
Capitalizing on the Urban Train’s $2.25 Billion Investment

Ciudad Red will help increase train ridership by strategically placing government facilities along the train’s corridor, generate income through the sale of surplus government land near train stations, and attract more private-sector investment.

Node Versus Place: A False Choice

A Public Policy Vision: La Ciudad Red
Martínez Nadal and Cupey

• On the southern edge of the developed city—the “Smart Growth fault line”, where place-making is essential

• Critical commuter catchment points where major radial expressways intersect Tren Urbano; also critical bus intermodal feeder points

• All three TOD strategies in play: transformative-level planning; aggressive station area improvements; large-scale joint development

• Magic ingredient: use park-and-ride to assemble critical mass of transformable land

• Martínez Nadal integration strategy more incremental, Cupey more immediate
Martinez Nadal: a Hole in the City

Expreso M. Nadal

Industrial Area

Special Community

Tren Urbano
Original Station Plan: an Isolated Node
TOD Vision: a Place and a Node

Puerto Rico HTA / Tren Urbano Office / GMAEC

Node Versus Place: A False Choice
Strategy: a Temporary Sea of Parking
Martínez Nadal: Parking as Land-Banking

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Node Versus Place:
A False Choice
Martínez Nadal: Joint Development Parcels

- Five major parcels owned by HTA
- Total of 22.2 cuerdas (22.9 acres)
- A and B go first—no conflict with park-and-ride
- C, D, and E: more development, park-and-ride replacement
Martínez Nadal Station: Parcel A

$41 million investment
120 units (2BR and 3BR)
Parking: 2 per unit
Martínez Nadal Station: Parcel B

$32 million investment
176 housing units
Parking: 1.7 / unit
Cupey Station
The Middle of Everywhere...
The Middle of Nowhere

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Node Versus Place:
A False Choice
Original Station Plan: Two Isolated Nodes
Station Area Improvements: a 100% Makeover

- Shift all intermodal to north headhouse
- Realign roadways and traffic pattern
- Clear junk properties, create green space
- Create a rich pedestrian network
- Clear 12 cuerdas for 600-space parking lot
On Second Thought, Forget the Parking Lot
Immediate Integration: Conceptual Massing

Garage

Puerto Rico HTA / Tren Urbano Office / GMAEC
As of Today...

- Five developer proposals—among the most creative in PR history
- Department of Education Headquarters, at below-market rent
- Additional Office Space—ranging from 50,000 to 100,000 sf
- Destination retail and entertainment
- 100-200 units of housing
- A shared-use garage, with 400 park-and-ride spaces, embedded in the project massing
- The UPS Biomolecular Research Center
- Several million $$ in cash and in-kind return to the Authority
Integrating Node and Place

It happens a lot.
It’s not technology-bound or morphology-bound.
Whether incremental or immediate, it’s likely to take:

• Planning with a clean sheet of paper
• Ambitious and aggressive design
• An appetite for land assembly, garage construction, or both
• Some form of joint development
Best Practice examples welcome at:
alden.raine@dmjmharris.com