The Dilemma of TOD vs. Park-n-Ride

Regional Transportation District
Denver, CO

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System Overview

• 8 counties
• 40 municipalities
• 2.6 million people
System Overview

- 1,071 total buses
- 851 peak period buses
- 90 light rail vehicles
- 166 routes
- 35 miles of light rail
- 36 light rail stations
- Average weekday boardings:
  - Bus: 208,000
  - Light rail: 56,000
System Overview: Light Rail
System Overview: park-n-Rides

- 55 bus park-n-Rides
  - 15,000 parking spaces
  - 60 percent average utilization
- 20 light rail park-n-Rides
  - 11,500 parking spaces
  - 80 percent utilization
Future Rapid Transit System

FastTracks Program

- 122 miles of new light rail and commuter rail
- 18 miles of bus rapid transit
- 31 new park-n-Rides with over 21,000 new parking spaces
- Redevelopment of Denver Union Station
- Enhanced bus service and FastConnects throughout the region
System Characteristics

Mode of Access: Bus

- Walk: 79%
- Passenger drop-off: 5%
- park-n-Ride: 9%
- Other: 7%

Source: 2005 Bus Customer Satisfaction & Trip Characteristics Survey
System Characteristics

Mode of Access: Light rail

- Walk 27%
- park-n-Ride 39%
- Bus 25%
- Passenger drop-off 5%
- Other 4%

Sources: Spring 2006 Light Rail Customer Satisfaction & Trip Characteristics Survey and 2007 Southeast Light Rail Customer Satisfaction & Trip Characteristics Survey
Appeal of park-n-Rides

- RTD’s approach expands access and extends the reach of transit system
- Park-n-Rides are popular mode of access, especially to light rail
  - Recent Passenger Survey results indicate 78% of light rail riders are choice riders
  - Effectively serves less-dense suburban areas where bus service is less productive
Factors Driving Transit Access Design

Success of park-n-Rides helps drive future demand:

- Overwhelming demand for parking on initial LRT lines led public & policy-makers to ask for even more on future corridors (T-REX; FasTracks)
- Park-n-Rides serve a vocal constituency
- Travel demand models are calibrated to current conditions and travel behavior; future forecasts are likely to result in similarly strong demand for park-n-Ride access
- Difficult to limit or adjust forecast parking demand in EIS and based on drive to meet cost-effectiveness measures (FTA New Starts, local measures)
- FTA funds are available for capital projects, including park-n-Ride construction; not for feeder bus routes

Additionally, State law limits RTD’s ability to manage demand for parking through pricing
RTD’s adopted Policies and Goals related to TOD and parking

• Creating an access hierarchy:
  - Pedestrians
  - Bus riders
  - Bicyclists
  - Vehicles (short-term, long-term parking)

• Considering access needs beyond RTD property
  - Pedestrian connections in 5-10 minute walk
  - Bicycle connections
  - Regional bus transit
  - Vehicular access for station catchment area

• Balancing vehicular access and the opportunity for TOD to maximize ridership
Building Livable Communities with Transit

RTD’s adopted Policies and Goals related to TOD and parking

- Optimizing RTD parking at stations by considering:
  - Proximity to Downtown Denver (less parking closer in)
  - Local feeder bus service (less parking with higher levels of service)
  - Pedestrian connectivity (less parking with good pedestrian connections)
- Using surface parking as a strategic land bank
- In short, RTD’s goal (and struggle) is to achieve a balance between the demands for parking access and Transit-Oriented Development at station areas, along corridors and in the region
Unlike TOD, park-n-Rides are generally straightforward to develop and remain in the control of the transit agency through land assembly, design, construction and operation.
RTD’s Experience

Mineral Station:
- 1,227 transit parking spaces
- 0 TOD

Englewood Station:
- 910 transit parking spaces
- 438 apts
- 380k SF retail
- 150k SF office
- 100k sf gov’t
- 34k sf cultural
Where RTD is Heading

- **TOD Strategic Plan**
  - Advocate for TOD
  - Coordinate efforts with agency and external stakeholders
  - Work to achieve implementation of RTD’s TOD goals

- **RTD’s Transit Access Committee**
  - Interdisciplinary committee (service development, TOD, long-range planning, design and engineering, operations, finance, legal, safety)
  - Reviews plans and designs for stations to assure accessibility for all modes
  - Reviews joint development proposals

- **Parking Estimation Policy**
  - Flexibility to re-allocate parking along a single corridor at most appropriate stations, encouraging development opportunities at others
Conclusions

• Challenge is how to optimize access to balance (sometimes conflicting) goals
  - RTD’s goals
  - Public’s goals
  - Local governments’ goals
  - Regional goals