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West Corridor Light Rail and Station Area Planning
Lakewood, Colorado

October 29, 2008
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• About Lakewood:

  Incorporated in 1969 with a population of over 90,000.

  2008 population estimated at 148,000.

  41.6 square miles, but only 811 acres of developable vacant land.

  Home of Belmar – New Urban Infill Project.
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- **West Corridor Light Rail**
  - First line to be completed under the $7.9 billion FasTracks program approved by Denver area voters in 2004.
  - $707 million, 12.1 mile line from downtown Denver to Golden, via Lakewood.
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- West Corridor in Lakewood
  - Four stations with parking
  - Three walk-up stations
  - Four light rail bridges
  - Numerous street closures
  - Primarily through established residential areas
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• History
  - Interurban Trolley between Denver and Golden through future Lakewood. Line ceased operation in 1950.
  - 1978 Commuter Rail Study by the Regional Transportation District (RTD)
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• History
  – 1980 13th Avenue considered as a light rail corridor
  – 1982 Regional transportation plan includes the corridor
  – 1987 RTD includes the corridor in a report to the Colorado General Assembly
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• History
  - 1988 to 1994 RTD purchases most of the corridor right-of-way
  - 1995 RTD begins Major Investment Study for the West Corridor
  - 1997 MIS completed with recommendation of light rail
  - 1997 First regional transit program – “Guide the Ride” – defeated by Denver area voters
  - 2001 to 2003 Environmental Impact Statement for the corridor
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• History
  - 2004 Record of Decision issued by the Federal Transit Administration
  - 2004 FasTracks program approved by Denver area voters
  - 2005 Final design for the West Corridor begins
  - 2008 Early construction on the corridor begins
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Existing Conditions
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Existing Conditions
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Existing Conditions
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LRT Cross-Section
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Early Community Reaction

Lakewood light-rail line a tough sell

Residents rail against transit plan

Opponents question 13th Avenue rail line

Safety number one priority 2-13-97
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First Attempt at Station Area Zoning Fails Along with “Guide The Ride” in 1997.

“The proposed density is not compatible with the semi-rural character of the area.” – Former City Council member
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• In 2005, the City’s initial planning efforts focus on the four stations with parking.
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Station Area Planning Intent

“The overall intent of the station area planning effort is to create an environment for high quality transit- and pedestrian-oriented development around the West Corridor light rail stations.”
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• During 2005 and 2006, the City conducted 15 public workshops and open houses to discuss planning around the four stations.
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Public Input

- Over 450 people attended one or more of the meetings, many of them skeptical about increased development densities.
- Citizens provided input on all aspects of future development.
- Citizen comments were incorporated into the Station Area Plans.
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• The workshops consisted of small group discussions.
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Workshop attendees determined that it was appropriate for the City to proactively manage growth associated with light rail.

Higher density development was determined to be appropriate within clearly defined boundaries.
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Examples of high density, TOD projects were provided to the workshop attendees.
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As well as medium and lower density options.
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Examples of mixed use blocks were also provided.
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- Station area boundaries were determined by participants.
- Appropriate uses, building heights, setbacks, and street character were discussed.
- At least three development scenarios were presented for each station area.
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Wadsworth Station Example
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Wadsworth Station Example
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Wadsworth Station Example

Scenario #1

Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too Dense</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seems Right</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could be More</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scenario #1

PROPOSED GARAGE

PROPOSED STATION

SCENARIO 1
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Wadsworth Station Example

Scenario # 2

Too Dense  Seeks Right  Could be More Dense

Percentage

60
50
40
30
20
10
0
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Wadsworth Station Example

Scenario # 3

Too Dense | Seems Right | Could be More Dense
---|---|---

Percentage:

- Scenario # 3

[Map and graph showing proposed garage and station locations]
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Wadsworth Station Example
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Plans Adopted in November 2006

With overwhelming community support
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Transit Mixed Use Zone District

Following adoption of the Station Area Plans, the City initiated the creation of a new zone district to be implemented within the identified plan boundaries.
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Transit Mixed Use Zone District

The Transit Mixed Use district includes sub-districts that reflect those identified in the plans:

- Station Core (TMU-SC)
- Commercial (TMU-C)
- Office and Office 2 (TMU-O and TMU-O2)
- Research and Development (TMU-RD)
- Higher Density Residential (TMU-HDR)
- Medium Density Residential (TMU-MDR)
- Lower Density Residential (TMU-LDR)
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Transit Mixed Use Zone District

• Multiple meetings with property owners and area residents were held over a six month period.
  - Meetings with property owners, and commercial and residential tenants were held.
  - Over 100 people attended the meetings.
  - Notice were sent to +/-2,000 addresses.
  - Information provided on the City’s website.

• Extensive Planning Commission input as well
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Transit Mixed Use Zone District

• Significant changes following public meetings:
  – Existing single-family detached residential units would remain as permitted uses.
  – New single-family detached residential units would be permitted in the Medium and Lower Density Residential sub-areas.
  – Prohibited Uses
  – Non-conforming uses and buildings can be expanded by up to 20 percent after implementation of the zone district.
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Transit Mixed Use Zone District

• What the TMU district allows:
  – Unlimited residential density in the Station Core and High Density Residential areas.
  – Building height up to 8 stories in key station areas.
  – Reduced parking requirements.
  – Reduced landscape requirements (although specific streetscape designs are identified).
  – Reduced building setbacks.
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Transit Mixed Use Zone District

• Adopted by the City Council in February 2007.
• Supported by 80% of the citizens that spoke at the hearing.
• Unanimously recommended by the Planning Commission.
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Transit Mixed Use Rezoning

• Rezoning within the four station area planning boundaries to TMU.
• The sub-areas identified in the TMU zone district ordinance apply.
• The sub-areas reflect the land use pattern identified in the adopted Station Area Plans.
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Transit Mixed Use Rezoning

- Seven additional meetings were held to discuss the rezoning with property owners and residents.
- Minor modifications to the zoning boundaries were made to address concerns.
- Property owners were generally supportive.
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Transit Mixed Use Rezoning
Sub-Area Designations
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Transit Mixed Use Rezoning

• Unanimous Planning Commission recommendation for approval.
• 100% support of residents that spoke at the hearing.
• Unanimous City Council approval.
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TMU Development Manual

Transit Mixed Use Zone District
DEVELOPMENT MANUAL

City of Lakewood
Adopted October, 2007
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Pre-Construction Upgrades
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Pre-Construction Upgrades

Station Area Plan
- Surface Parking (200 Spaces - Initial Phase)
- Quail-Oak Two Way Street
- Transition Plaza
- Bus Lane
- Landscaping
- Station Platform

Station Area Plan
- City of Lakewood 90% Betterments
- Station Platform

Rail-Volution
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Pre-Construction Upgrades
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Pre-Construction Upgrades
An uncomfortable fit?

Sound Walls
An UnComfortable Fit?

Sound Walls
An UnComfortable Fit?

Sound Walls
An uncomfortable fit?

Sound Walls
Demonstration project
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Proposed TOD Projects
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Proposed TOD Projects
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Utility Relocation
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Utility Relocation
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Early Construction
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Lessons Learned

- Community participation leads to buy-in.
- Work through each step with the public separately.
- Explain uses by building type and height, not density and floor area ratio.
- Station area planning is not enough. New zone districts and rezoning provide incentives for development and certainty for residents.
- Collaboration between the City, transit agency and the public is important throughout planning and construction.
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City Website:
www.lakewood.org > City Services > Planning > West Corridor Light Rail Station Area and Transit Oriented Development Planning