Access for All: Why and How to Support Child Care at Transit

Railvolution, October 29, 2008
Presentation Overview

- Background on LINCC work on child care at Transit Oriented Development
- California data on parent transit ridership
- Overview of “Building Child Care Into New Developments”
- Next steps to support child care and transit linkages
LINCC Background

- Local Investment in Child Care (LINCC) Project was launched in 1997 by The Packard Foundation with National Economic Development and Law Center.
- Today projects operate independently in Alameda, Kern, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties. Ventura and Monterey have also participated.
- One key focus is to integrate child care interests into economic development and transportation planning.
Project Background: Child Care and Planning Trends—Bad News

- There is a current disconnect between parent dual roles, needs, and transit links
- Lack of convenient, quality or affordable child care near home or work/school results in
  - More miles driven and time spent in vehicle
  - Less time with family and in community
  - Obesity from vehicle use, due to inability to walk
  - More traffic congestion
  - More vehicle emissions (pollution & asthma)
  - Burden on transit dependent populations
Project Background—Good News

- New APA survey indicates planners understand families are important to growth, sustainability and diversity and think they can play a role in helping communities become family friendly.
- Quality child care is in great demand and transit linked child care can appeal to commuters, residents, and nearby employees.
- More systematic analysis and planning could facilitate quality child care program development and parent transit ridership.
Recent California Study Surveyed Parents at Centers Near Transit

- 781 parent responses from 19 child care centers statewide within 1/3 mile of transit stations
  - Urban, suburban, rural
  - Subsidized & unsubsidized (fee-based)
- 22 child care director interviews
- Transit or city officials interviews where intentional collocation
Key Findings

- Parents at California centers near transit use transit to get to and from child care at many times the national rate of parent transit use for this trip.
Key Findings

- When walking trips are added, significant numbers are not using Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOV). 23% of parents are traveling to child care by walking, transit or other.
- 34% of parents in the study then traveled by walking, transit or other than SOV to their final destination (not graphed).
Key Findings

- In San Francisco and Los Angeles, 24\% of non-subsidized parents used transit, walked or other to get to child care.
- Then 47\% used transit, walked, or other to get from child care to their final destination—usually work (not graphed).
Key Findings

- In San Francisco and Los Angeles, 43% parents at centers serving subsidized children walked, used transit or other to child care.
- Then 52% of these parents walked, used transit or other to their next destination.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>To Child</th>
<th>From CC to</th>
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<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walk, Other</td>
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Findings

Parental Perceptions of Barriers to Transit Use

- Carrying children/stuff: 31 Not a Barrier, 21 Biggest Barrier
- Length of trip on transit: 41 Not a Barrier, 17 Biggest Barrier
- Distance from home to transit: 51 Not a Barrier, 11 Biggest Barrier
- Lack of storage at CC: 62 Not a Barrier, 10 Biggest Barrier
- Dealing with strangers on transit: 53 Not a Barrier, 9 Biggest Barrier
- Distance from station to CC: 57 Not a Barrier, 8 Biggest Barrier
- Cost of bus/rail: 60 Not a Barrier, 7 Biggest Barrier

Legend: □ Not a Barrier, □ Biggest Barrier
Findings

Parental Opinions

Driving is the fastest way to drop my child at childcare.

- Agree: 86
- Disagree: 14

I need a car to get to child in emergency.

- Agree: 71
- Disagree: 29

It is cheaper to ride the bus/train than driving.

- Agree: 58
- Disagree: 42

Parking is very expensive near my workplace.

- Agree: 38
- Disagree: 62

LIINCC

Connecting Child Care + Economic Development
Findings

- Free parking at work is a deterrent to transit use
- Parents report child care quality, space availability and cost as most important factors in their selection of child care (i.e. not location near transit)
- Proximity between child care and transit not necessarily enough to encourage ridership
Review of Centers: ToD Publication

Overview

- Benefits of child care at ToD to developers and planners
- Trends
- Examples
- Case studies
- Special issues: parking, density, play space
- Next steps
Benefits

- Density bonuses
- Access to new funding sources
- Competitive advantages
- Partnership opportunities
- City, transit agency, environmental, ToD community and social justice support
Examples

- The Shady Grove Metro Station (Maryland) child care center was formed with a unique public private partnership with 11 corporate sponsors.

- A 4,000 square foot child care center is in San Jose’s 194 unit affordable housing development Ohlone-Chynoweth Commons on transit authority land.
Case Studies

- In Los Angeles, the $80 million Metro Hollywood Transit Village has more than 120 apartments, and office and retail space above the subway station.
- The 4,000 square foot center for 52 children has playground space shared with housing.
- The center was a requirement of the Redevelopment Agency.
- Fruitvale, Via Del Mar and Kansas City are also profiled—some near bus as well as rural.
Fruitvale BART
Key Project Characteristics

- Project density ranges from 27 units/acre to 61 units/acre (where that information was available)
- Center size ranges from to 4,000 square feet (Los Angeles and San Jose) to 24,000 square feet (Fruitvale)
- Costs ranged from $707,000 (Watsonville) to $3.4 million (Kansas City)
Special Issues: Parking

- Account for some parents walking and taking transit
- One center designates shared spaces for child care and retail since child care usually needs spaces briefly early in the morning and evening
- General guidelines: 1-3 spaces for 1-25 kids; 4 spaces for 25-49 kids; 6 for 50-99 kids
- Some have short term drop off zones/parking
Special Issues: Play Space

- In California there are square footage requirements per child for outdoor play space. Some community care licensing offices allow these to be reduced with staggered play times for children.
- Centers have developed play space on the second floor, but may need to add special exiting.
- Kansas City designed the location of the play space to be protected from the busiest traffic areas.
- Two centers designed the play space to be shared at times with children from the surrounding housing.
Special Issues: Financing

- Cities can contribute the lease payment for centers (Fruitvale ToD)
- Transit districts can provide lease payments
- Federal Transit Administration can provide funds for exterior shell
- Local transit authority can finance exterior shell
- Other public agency and foundation grants can be obtained
Next Steps

- For state policy makers:
  - Include child care in ToD and livable communities funding formulas and incentives (California Housing)
Next Steps

- For municipal and transportation policy makers:
  - Child care as congestion mitigation (San Mateo)
  - Work with child care programs and transit agencies to support the linkages for parents (e.g. cross-marketing)
  - Champion integration of child care, transportation and land use planning (fees, development agreements)
  - Offer incentives for child care consideration through RFPs (resources, reduced requirements, added points)
Next Steps

- For planners:
  - Contact child care intermediary about local needs, potential providers
  - Include child care in Transit Area Specific Plans (Milpitas)

- For developers (private and non-profit): consider child care in proposed new residential & non-residential developments
Next Steps--LINCC

- Broaden and learn from conversation about feasibility, model policies, programs and regulatory changes
- Continue research on information needed for future projects
- Support local program development
What Other Challenges and Opportunities Should We Take Into Account?

For More Information
Ellen Dektar
Ellen.Dektar@acgov.org
510-208-9578
www.lincc-childcare.com