Right Before Your Eyes:
Finding Value at Your Existing Transit Stations:
NJ TRANSIT’s Experience

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RailVolution - Los Angeles, CA
NJ’s Land Use and Transit Policies

• NJ TRANSIT created in 1979 to reverse decline of public transportation

• State Development & Redevelopment Plan adopted (1986)...encourages growth in areas where population, jobs and infrastructure exist

• NJ TRANSIT’s Transit-Friendly Planning Assistance Program (1999)...community engagement, visioning and TOD plan adoption

• NJ’s Statewide “Transit Village Initiative” (1999)...rewarding communities who “get” TOD

• NJ’s Green House Gas Plan (2008)...reduce emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and cut emissions to 80% under the 2006 level by 2050

• Urban Transit Hub Tax Credit Act (2009)...incentivizing commercial and residential development in NJ’s 9 urban core communities (tax breaks and job creation)

• 2011...NJ Office of Plng Advocacy releases the DRAFT Strategic State Plan; focus on getting people to jobs and industry retention/expansion

• 2011, Northern NJ region awarded $5MM US HUD Sustainability Grant to create a regional plan for sustainable and equitable development through strategic TOD
NJ TRANSIT’s Multimodal Network

- Third largest commuter transit system in the country
- Commuter Rail, Light Rail, Express Bus, Intra-state Bus, Private Bus Carriers, Bus Rapid Transit “Lite” & Community Transit (by private carriers and/or counties)
- Connecting NJ to Center City Philadelphia, Atlantic City, Newark, Jersey City and Lower and Midtown Manhattan
NJ TRANSIT’s Light Rail Network

3 different lines (Newark, River LINE, Hudson-Bergen)

60 stations in 21 NJ communities
NJ’s Integrated Transit Network Enables TOD

- 75% of New Jersey’s residents live within 5 miles of a transit station
- 1 in 4 New Jersey communities hosts a rail station
- 30% of New Jersey residents live within walking distance of rail stations, and
- 10% of New Jersey residents use mass transit for work trips
How does NJ TRANSIT assist communities so that they take advantage of NJ’s multi-modal, interconnected transit network to ensure a sustainable land use/transportation connection

**TRANSIT FRIENDLY PLANNING & TOD!!**

- Engaging community leaders, advocates, residents and businesses
- Providing technical assistance and on-call consultant expertise
- Collaborating with local, county, regional and state partners
- Building consensus
- Creating market-worthy plans
- Executing good projects to create sustainable local economic opportunity around transit (Transit-Oriented Development)

**OUR APPROACH = EDUCATE, PLAN, VISION, ADOPT, PROJECT EXECUTION**
NJ’s Transit Village Initiative

• Effort led by NJ DOT and NJ TRANSIT (started in 1999)

• State agencies partner to recognize TOD in designated communities

• 24 transit communities designated, to date

• Designation criteria include municipal adoption of transit oriented development by Master Plan (vision document), AND Zoning Code and/or Redevelopment Plan, creation and implementation of TOD-friendly, sustainable design guidelines.

• Rolling designations, inclusionary affordable housing requirements

• Discretionary and competitive grant funding available only to designees
Successful Transit Oriented Development in NJ Around Established Rail Stations…
A Collaboration
- NJ TRANSIT Reconfigured and modernized rail station (mid-1990’s)
- Partnered with the community to provide commuter parking in downtown deck: 450 dedicated spaces, resulted in...
- Significant private investment in downtown TOD:
  - 1,000+ new downtown residential units,
  - New retail, office commercial and civic spaces
  - 100-room luxury hotel
- Downtown Cultural & Arts Initiatives include Union County Performing Arts Theatre; open-air concert shell, black box theatre

Station Plaza, mid-1990’s
Rahway, NJ
Former NJ TRANSIT Parking Lot Site, 2006
Morristown, New Jersey
The Highlands @ Morristown Station, 2009
Morristown, New Jersey
The Highlands @ Morristown Station
217 Residential Units
8,000 sf Retail
736 space garage
Former Surface Parking Lot w/ new deck, mid-2000’s
Montclair, New Jersey
Montclair Residences at Bay Street Station (2009)
165-unit studio, 1 and 2 BR Rental Residential Units
Key TOD Success Factors

- Transit must be welcomed by the community
- Stable local political environment
- Seek a local champion
- Open, transparent, engagement of local officials and community as a whole
- Active management of the effort; professional guidance and expertise must be offered (many communities don’t have it readily available)
- Partnerships are KEY! (engagement and funding between and amongst state agencies, MPOs, Counties, Municipalities, not-for-profits, private sector, etc.)
- Target effort to create platform for community to take further action (e.g., rezoning, redevelopment, etc.)
Lessons Learned

- TOD is an economic empowering strategy that improves access to transit

- TOD can be a win-win for a community if the correct, helpful approach is taken

- Education and partnerships are central to success

- TOD cannot be mandated or pushed on communities – push back will occur in the form of anti-growth policies and actions

- Transit providers need TOD to succeed in order to survive…we have to build our constituent base…

  - What better way than to foster infill and/or new development within closer walking and biking distances to transit stops?
  - We are providing environments where walking and biking are attractive access alternatives to cars!
  - We are encouraging communities to deploy effective shuttle bus and van systems to connect transit riders living further out; and
  - We are thoughtfully locating parking around our systems where we can reach a comfortable accommodation with host communities
Thank you!

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