

Transit-oriented development (tod) with mixed income housing and essay

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Residents from Diverse Socio-Economic Levels

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Residents from Diverse Socio-Economic Levels

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a type of housing development located near major transit stops so that residents have only a short distance to walk to reach a mass transportation station. TOD is attractive to many cities and urban areas because it is designed as sustainable development. The households constructed are targeted for mixed-use by residents of all ages and with varying incomes who can easily access rail or bus transportation. A mix of socio-economic levels is a characteristic of TOD. The availability of mass transit decreases the negative impacts of automobiles on the environment. Less fossil fuel is used for gasoline and oil because the amount of automobile traffic is reduced. Dangerous emissions entering the atmosphere are also decreased for the same reason. Therefore “ the negative impacts of automobile travel on the environment and the economy” are decreased because the number of automobiles on the road is decreased (HUD 2013).

Mixed-income housing developments provide more stable communities because they are neighborhoods including grocery stores, retail shops, and galleries and meeting places for clubs. Four important characteristics of stable mixed income communities are social seams, barriers & edges, social awareness and permanent affordable housing. The whole community can shop, play, worship, find entertainment or go to school in areas called “ social seams” (Lund, Cervero, & Willson 2004, p. 25). A mix of different races and socio-economic backgrounds meet within social seams due to the

activities there. Barriers & edges are fences, hedges or other types of structures that divide parts of the neighborhood so the land-use will remain the same without impacts from the rest of the neighborhood. "Social awareness" refers to the homeowners' awareness that a mix of socio-economic housing is a stabilizing characteristic "so the neighborhood is more likely to take the steps necessary to ensure that it stays mixed" (Lund, Cervero, & Willson 2004, p. 25). Permanent affordable housing is guaranteed to low-income families even if a big change in the neighborhood occurs.

Andrew J. Helms from the Department of Economics, University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia researched some of the aspects of gentrification on urban housing. Helms (2003, p. 474) found that the old rule that "location matters" was not reliable in terms of housing renovation in Chicago between 1995 to 2000. Instead the researcher determined that "the characteristics of a building and its neighborhood" are deciding factors on whether renovation will likely be carried out. This is a factor in TOD because the location of some of the real estate may not be expected to be attractive to buyers but other aspects such as the variety of neighbors and the closeness to mass transit become more important. Careful planning to maintain low-income housing next to mass transit stations is necessary in order to "alleviate gentrification pressures near transit stations" (Belzer et al., 2007, p. 1).

Belzer (et al., 2007) presented an argument in favor of mixed income TOD in parts of Denver. The light rail FasTracks was approved in Denver's 2004 election. Belzer (et al., 2007) pointed out that housing demand for homes near mass transit could grow by 344 percent by 2030. "At least 40 percent of that growth is expected to come from low-income households, defined as

households earning below 80 percent of area media income, or \$51, 600 for a family of three in 2006” (Belzer et al., 2007, p. 1). The largest budget after housing for Americans is transportation. Household income savings are a benefit from lower transportation costs. Four times as many low income household members in Denver use mass transit so locating their homes within easy access to train stations is a strategy linking affordable housing and low transportation costs. (Belzer et al., 2007, p. 1)

Doina Olaru, Brett Smith and John H. E. Taplin (2011) from the UWA Business School in Crawley, Australia researched the attitudes of households to rail stations in Perth, Western Australia. The authors noted that previous research has found that decreased travel and sustainable mobility are typical in high-density urban developed areas; “ personal attitudes seem to have a greater effect on mobility than does the urban form” (Olaru, Smith, & Taplin 2011, p. 219). Their research showed a lot of variety in the attitudes to most of the factors except for one common attitude that “ the choice of residence reflects neighborhood and housing attributes” (Olaru, Smith, & Taplin 2011, p. 219).

Reena Tiwari from the School of Built Environment, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Australia working with Robert Cervero and Lee Schipper from the University of California, Berkeley (2011, p. 394) reported that TOD strategies can successfully decrease carbon dioxide emissions from automobiles. The authors pointed out that in Australia transportation ranks number three for the source of greenhouse emissions. (Tiwari, Cervero & Schipper, 2011, p. 394) TOD has a positive impact on sustainability because the planning addresses transport, land use, density, diversity, and design

(DDD). The DDD of sustainable urbanization was combined with emission amounts and the factors of “ avoid, shift, improve and finance (ASIF2) to address changes in these components that reduce emissions, provide a coherent framework for the development of a sustainable green town” (Tiwari, Cervero & Schipper, 2011, p. 394). The location of the green town was the Bentley Technology Precinct in Perth which is a “ car-oriented city” (Tiwari, Cervero & Schipper, 2011, p. 394).

The impact on single-family home values by sub-urban transit-oriented developments was studied by Shishir Mathur from the Urban and Regional Planning Department at San Jose State University and Christopher Ferrell of CFA Consultants in Berkeley. Their research concluded that TOD did significantly impact home sale prices “ with an average home sale price increase of \$21, 000 (or 3. 2%) for every 50 percent reduction in the distance between the home and the TOD” (Mathur and Ferrell, 2013, p. 42). Housing prices were found to be higher if the homes were closer to the TOD. Transit oriented development is a strategy to keep households close to mass transit stations while at the same time offering mixed-income neighborhoods. Urban areas with TOD are considered sustainable. Benefits include reducing transportation costs such as commuting. Affordable housing is created because the less money spent on transportation then a larger portion of the budget can be spent on housing. Mass transit can also benefit due to gaining more riders. Lower-income households mixed with other socio-economic levels are thought to have access to better opportunities. TOD decreases reliance on fossil fuels and also decreases greenhouse

emissions. Urban planning for mixed-income housing near mass transit stations discourages gentrification.

References

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