

Making the Connection: Cities + Transit Agencies in New Starts Land Use and Economic Development

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RailVolution

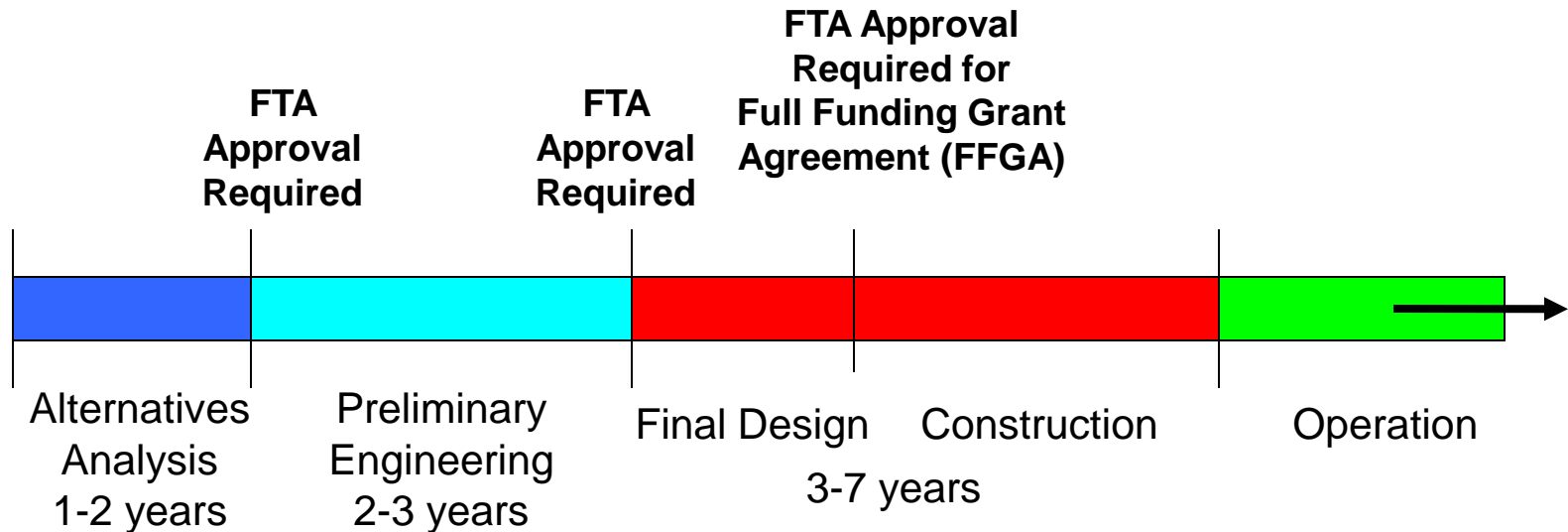
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New Starts Program Overview

- **What is a New or Small Start?**
 - New “fixed guideways” and extensions to existing systems
 - Includes light rail, heavy rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit
- **A Discretionary & Competitive Federal Grant Program**
 - \$1.99 billion appropriated in Fiscal Year 2010
 - Demand for funds exceeds supply
 - Historical average federal New Starts share = 50%
- **Evaluation** – As directed in law, FTA evaluates and rates projects against multiple criteria, including land use and economic development:
 - Annually in a Report to Congress (due First Monday in February)
 - For entry into Preliminary Engineering
 - For entry into Final Design
 - Prior to Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA)
- **Record of Success** – Over 100 major projects over 35 years

New Starts Project Development Process

- Project Development: Typically 6-12 Years



Some local keys to accelerate a project: consensus (route, mode, stations), funding, and environmental work

FTA's Land Use and Economic Development Criteria

- Land Use
 - Existing population and employment within ½ mile of station areas
- Economic Development
 - Transit Supportive Plans and Policies
 - Growth Management
 - Transit Supportive Corridor Policies
 - Supportive Zoning Near Transit Stations
 - Tools to Implement Land Use Policies
 - Performance and Impact of Plans and Policies
 - Demonstrated cases of TOD
 - Station area development proposals and status
 - Adaptability of station area land for development
 - Corridor economic development

Growth Management

- Concentration of development around regional activity centers and transit
 - Regional plans
 - Regulatory or fiscal incentives
 - “Smart Growth” policies, comprehensive plans, and zoning
- Land conservation and management
 - Growth management boundaries
 - Preservation of open space, sensitive habitat, farmland, or areas of rural character
 - Incentive or mandates for land conservation
 - Actual land conservation purchases or designations

Transit Supportive Corridor Policies

- Plans and policies to increase corridor and station area development
 - Benchmarks for floor area ratios or residential dwelling units
 - Planned high trip generators in the corridor
- Plans and policies to enhance transit-friendly character
 - Mix of land uses
 - Building design characteristics (facades, windows, setbacks, height limits)
- Plans to improve pedestrian facilities, including facilities for persons with disabilities
 - Capital improvement programs for sidewalks, connected pedestrian paths, street crossings, and facilities for persons with disabilities
 - Adopted or proposed design guidelines
- Parking policies
 - Parking limits
 - Provisions for shared parking
 - Parking fees

Supportive Zoning Near Transit Stations

- Existing and proposed zoning that supports increased development density in transit station areas
 - Density bonuses
 - Housing fund subsidies
 - Expedited zoning reviews
- Zoning ordinances that enhance transit-oriented character of station areas
 - Mixed use zoning
 - Ordinances addressing placement of building footprints, pedestrian facilities, façade treatments
 - Architectural guidance
- Zoning allowances for reduced parking and traffic mitigation
 - Minimum and/or maximum parking requirements for residential and commercial development

Tools to Implement Land Use Policies

- Outreach to and endorsement by public agencies, community organizations, and the general public in the planning process
 - Outreach program
 - Resolutions, letters of endorsement etc.
- Regulatory and financial incentives to promote TOD
 - Density bonuses
 - Streamlined processing of development applications
 - Reduced or waived zoning requirements for traffic mitigation fees
 - Tax increment financing zones, tax abatement or TOD loan support
 - Revitalization strategies
- Efforts to involve the development community
 - TOD market studies
 - Joint development strategy

Economic Development Rating Based on Project Phase

- FTA applies a higher standard as projects progress from preliminary engineering to final design
- At entry into PE, conceptual plans should be underway and work with local jurisdictions should have begun:
 - Transit oriented development proposals drafted
 - Discussions held with local jurisdictions about revising comprehensive plans, master area plans and station area plans
 - Identification of capital improvements for station areas
 - Initiation of public outreach efforts
- At entry into FD, must show some demonstrated progress on implementation of plans and policies such as:
 - Plans and policies adopted;
 - Development proposals underway;
 - Regulatory of financial incentives adopted; and/or
 - Zoning changes implemented.

Challenge

- New Starts project sponsors are typically transit agencies that have no defined role in local land use planning
- Land use and economic development plans and policies are critical to a successful project rating and receipt of Federal funding