City of L.A. Transit Orientation Strategy

Establishing the City of L.A. Transit Corridors Cabinet

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Image Source: Jeff Wood
Context

**Background:** L.A. has been choking—environmentally and economically—on auto traffic. Since the ‘60s, L.A. has addressed the issue with transit-oriented plans & investment.

**Situation:** “LA’s Transit Mayor” wants to take advantage of the opportunity that $10B in Measure R transit investment presents. Consultants told the Mayor that the City needs a “TOD Strategy” to capitalize on the opportunity.

**Complication:** Neither Metro (transit provider) nor the City know exactly how to strategically approach the opportunity.

**Intervention:** The Mayor convenes a TOD Cabinet to develop a strategy and Metro provides funding for TOD experts to help.
LA Metro

- 9.6 million population
- 1,433 square miles
- 80+ local jurisdictions
- Transportation planner, coordinator, designer, builder, and operator for county’s highways, rails, transit, etc.
- 9,200 employees
- 2,000 peak hour buses
- 3rd largest system in U.S.

City of Los Angeles

- 3.8 million population
- 469 square miles
- 8,100 people per sq. mile
- Heart of $800 billion regional economy (3rd largest in world)
- Formerly served by 100’s of miles of urban railway
By pursuing a transit orientation strategy, Los Angeles is cutting edge

Transit Orientation Cabinets
• Federal Government
• State of New York
• State of Virginia
• State of Massachusetts
• State of Arizona

Comprehensive TOD Strategies
• State of Maryland
City of Los Angeles policy vision has been transit-oriented since the ‘60s.
City of L.A. institutions could be better coordinated and more transit oriented
We helped City of L.A. create database of transit orientation tactics

- Best Practices Identified in Case Studies: 28
- Best Practices Identified in Literature Review: 50
- Tactics Modified from 1993 Land Use / Trans Policy: 24
- Tactics Suggested by staff in 2012: 70
There are ~20 “low hanging fruit” that could be implemented within one year.

![Bar chart showing the distribution of tactics by type.

- Low Hanging Fruit: 61
- Small Victory: 27
- Expensive Win: 68
- Nonstarter: 16

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Planning departments are not the only owners of transit orientation tactics

Percent of Tactics by Type

- Implemented wholly by other dept's
- Shared ownership by DCP & others
- Owned by DCP only

Tactics with designated owners
Becoming transit oriented is much more than new land use plans.
Bottom-up process used tactics to inform transit orientation strategy

Values

Vision

Goals

Objective A

Objective B

Approach 1

Tactic 1

Tactic 2

Tactic 3
We helped City of L.A. identify their “Transit Orientation Values”

- **Environment**: Foster a safe, healthy, and environmentally sustainable region.

- **Equity**: Foster equal access to opportunity and equitable treatment for all.

- **Engagement**: Foster social interaction and community vitality.

- **Economy**: Foster an economically prosperous and resilient region.
We helped City of L.A. identify their “Transit Orientation Goals”

- **Jobs**: Foster attractive and diverse employment opportunities in highly accessible locations.
- **Housing**: In highly accessible locations, foster housing options that meet diverse housing needs.
- **Quality of Life**: In highly accessible locations, foster the provision of basic services and additional community benefits.
- **Connectivity**: Foster diverse transportation options that reduce overall travel time and out of pocket transportation costs.
We helped City of L.A. identify their “Transit Orientation Approaches”

- Promote Vibrant Commercial Station Areas
- **Build Complete Streets**
- Support Non-auto Transport Options
- Strengthen Existing Residential Communities
- **Focus Affordable Housing Resources**
- Reform Automobile Parking Policies and Practices
- Level the Playing Field Between Transit and Autos
- Lessen the Negative Impacts of Environmental Reviews
- Capture the Value that Transit Can Generate
- Break Down Silos of Transit Orientation Players
- **Orient City Government toward Transit**
- Transit-Oriented Implementation
City’s vision + City’s actions must be coordinated with other “TO” players

Regional gov’t
- Planning & Zoning
- Permitting
- Community outreach
- Land owner
- Affordable housing

Transit agency
- Development
- Land owner
- Planning
- Construction
- Joint development

Private developer
- Proposals
- Land assembly
- Entitlements
- Construction

Sustainability Advocates

Local & Minority Biz

FTA
- Formula funds
- New Starts
- Small Starts

State
- DOT
- Transport funds

Schools

Neighborhood Groups

Social Justice Groups

Housing

US Treasury
- LIHTC
- NMTC

Chamber of Commerce

HUD

Mayor’s Offices

Public Works

Coordinating Body

LADOT

City Planning

Council Offices

Private developer

Housing

Regional gov’t

Transit agency
Established L.A. Transit Corridors Cabinet focused on transit orientation

Transit Corridors Cabinet coordinates City departments so that the City can, with one voice, collaborate with external players who also influence the transit orientation of the City of Los Angeles.
L.A. Transit Corridors Cabinet Forums

• Twice-annual forum with outside stakeholders
  – Consider progress, review new ideas and initiatives, develop six-month tactical work plan
• City Council progress report and work plan update
• First four forums, through 2014, are being planned
City of L.A.’s Working Definition of Transit Orientation

Transit orientation arises from policies that promote and coordinate planning and implementation activities to create, preserve, and enhance employment, economic development, affordable and workforce housing, and community services along transit, so that all stakeholders share in the benefits of growth and revitalization created by transit investment.

Transit orientation is built on a foundation of values related to equity, economy, environment, and engagement.

The ultimate goal is to provide communities, including people of all incomes and ethnic backgrounds, access to quality transportation, housing and economic opportunities while ensuring their participation in the community development process.