



Allison L. C. de Cerreño, Ph.D.
Director

MAKING THE CONNECTION: TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT- A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING November 14, 2008

On November 14th, the NYU Wagner Rudin Center hosted “*Making the Connection: Transit Oriented Development – A Blueprint for Success.*” This event, attended by roughly 400 participants, was co-sponsored by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), as well as by The Louis Berger Group, Langan Engineering & Environmental Services: Peckar & Abramson, P.C., Sam Schwartz Engineering, and Turner Construction. The event was organized in association with the American Institute of Architects – New York Chapter, The Furman Center for Real Estate & Urban Policy at NYU, the Institute for Civil Infrastructure Systems at NYU Wagner, the New York Metro Chapter of the American Planning Association, Pace University’s Land Use Law Center: the Regional Plan Association, the University Transportation Research Center, Region 2, and the Wagner Transportation Association.

After welcoming remarks by Dr. Allison L. C. de Cerreño, Joel Ettinger, Executive Director of NYMTC, delivered an address to introduce the issue of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the New York metropolitan region. Astrid Glynn, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Transportation, introduced the keynote speaker, Mr. Douglas Foy, President of Serrafix. His keynote address framed the specific past and present context for the emergence and advancement of TOD. In addition, the conference featured two panels of experts who provided further detail about TOD; the first identified the potential value of TOD in theory and defined the problems facing transit-oriented developers, while the second examined several success stories of TOD in practice and evaluated the keys to their success.

WELCOMING REMARKS & FRAMING THE ISSUES

Allison L. C. de Cerreño, Director, NYU Wagner Rudin Center for Transportation Policy & Management

In her opening remarks, Dr. C. de Cerreño acknowledged the high turnout for the day’s event, the largest in seven years, an indication that TOD is garnering significant attention. She noted the large share of ballot measures relating to public transportation that had been approved during the recent national elections as further evidence of a national shift toward focusing on transit and the links between transit and land use practices

Dr. C. de Cerreño outlined the day’s symposium, and the questions to be addressed:

- What makes a successful TOD project?
- How can such a project establish itself?
- What kinds of challenges exist to implementing successful TOD?
- What models of successful TOD exist?

Joel Ettinger, Executive Director, New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC)

Mr. Ettinger began by pointing out the unprecedented growth facing the region, but warned that this growth does not indicate the region is fully prepared to address the long-range challenges such growth will present over the next twenty-five years, particularly those resulting from congestion (*all* congestion —

highway, freight, transit, etc.). One million people will be added to the population of New York City in that time; with two million in the broader NYMTC region, and four million in the tri-state New York metropolitan area, over the same twenty-five year period.

Mr. Ettinger cited the Post Carbon Institute's recommended approaches to regional planning, focusing on the very first priority of dealing concurrently with transportation and land use – or you may as well stop now. He said that this is something we are *re*learning to do, reminding the audience that the phrase “land use planning” was not allowed to appear in any NYMTC reports for the organization's first ten years. He then cited John Nolon, one of the day's panelists, as being one of many to define the current paradigm as one of sprawl, with locally-oriented land use planning, prescribing lower density throughout a *de facto* land use plan for the region. Transportation planning, he said, is largely performed at an entirely different level, with planners looking at demand on a region- or corridor-based scale. Any local concerns are centered almost exclusively on implementing individual transportation projects. Land use considerations in transportation planning have been, according to Mr. Ettinger, quite limited, consisting of corridor or sub-area planning, or planning for individual projects' operational connections to a larger transportation system. He noted the importance of shifting the current paradigm to one that includes both land use and transportation planning.

Within the current paradigm, Mr. Ettinger noted that land use planning is almost an exclusive province of the local municipalities, which are responsible for master planning and zoning within their borders, creating a region of great jurisdictional fragmentation. However, since land use and transportation plans cannot be developed independently of each other, approaches that integrate both of these will be essential to ameliorating the negative effects – including congestion – of New York's projected growth. Mr. Ettinger listed several such approaches that have already emerged: in addition to Transit Oriented Development (TOD), there is the more general “Smart Growth” approach, as well as Transit Efficient Development, New Urbanism, and Neo-Traditional Development, all of which are based on a more rational and integrated approach to land use and transportation, and organizing development at various scales.

Mr. Ettinger stated that NYMTC has already begun looking at ways to plan land use and transportation as part of their “vision” for the region, placing emphasis on the fact that it is a “shared” vision for sustainable growth, not simply a “transportation” vision. In March 2008, NYMTC's Principal members identified ten desired growth areas for sustainable development, five in New York City and one each in the five adjacent counties. The desired growth areas rose out of a set of shared goals identified earlier by NYMTC's Principals and will be the basis for a set of strategic transportation investments that will be announced at NYMTC's March 19, 2009 Annual Meeting. Taken together, these desired growth areas and strategic transportation investments will help create sustainable growth that takes into consideration future development, congestion, the carbon footprint, and energy consumption.

He also explained that the planning processes are adapting. TODs are becoming focal points in planning: New York State has established a Smart Growth planning office, and agencies like New Jersey Transit and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, along with regional entities like the NJTPA and NYMTC have begun to alter the way they consider land use. The change can even be seen in individual communities; community visioning workshops have been held throughout the metropolitan area, and walkable communities have become a goal at the local level. Civic organizations have facilitated such community visioning workshops, helping not only to redevelop brownfield properties but to train local officials (at institutions like Pace University and the Regional Plan Association) to further these efforts. Finally, counties, municipalities, and agencies have begun networking with each other to share their master plans.

Despite these encouraging signs, Mr. Ettinger pointed out that there exist multiple challenges for implementing these approaches in the region. First of all, there are local planning barriers, including the difficulty some localities have with being part of a larger regional plan, and resistance to higher densities. There are also regional barriers, such as the planning fragmentation already mentioned, as well as limitations on transit infrastructure and services in low-density outlying areas, and the resource barriers of funding and financing plans, facilities, and services.

Mr. Ettinger ended his remarks by asking what was left to be done, and suggested a few possible answers to that question. He stressed the importance of exploring policy challenges, integrating efforts within the region to coordinate, and considering an infusion of resources to expand and enhance those efforts. Finally he suggested exploring opportunities at the *mega*-regional level to integrate land use and transportation planning. It is ambitious, he admitted, but it is a responsibility the region must take on in the face of a very uncertain future.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE – THE CONNECTION

Astrid Glynn, Commissioner, New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)

While introducing the keynote speaker, Commissioner Glynn took the opportunity to elaborate on the subject of the day, which she says “seems very simple” but is of course much more complex when you try to do it right — though it is worthwhile enough to continue trying. As an example, Commissioner Glynn returned to the case of the Tappan Zee Bridge corridor, mentioned briefly by Mr. Ettinger. This bridge will be part of the I-287 corridor project, which NYSDOT and NYMTC will spend a lot of time on, and their mutual hope is to bring more transit into a strong growth corridor that is currently not very robust on the transit side. It is a tremendous opportunity, she said, for Transit Oriented Development. An important part of the challenge facing this developing corridor (and others) is the ability of everyone involved—host communities, agencies, transportation providers, organizations like NYMTC and individuals like those gathered at this very event—to be able to frame the growth and the project together to create an opportunity for sustainable TOD.

Part of the brilliance in the room, she said, belonged to her old friend, Doug Foy, who “has a resume that could make most of us feel like underachievers.” Doug Foy attended Princeton University and Cambridge University, as well as Harvard Law School. It was Foy, she said, who forced the cleanup of Boston Harbor after years of neglect, and negotiated a settlement to secure billions of dollars for transit projects for the central artery project (Big Dig). He had oversight of, and integrated, the Massachusetts Housing, Environment, and Transportation agencies. Furthermore, he advanced regional greenhouse gas initiatives for Massachusetts, inspired the state’s first TOD and Smart Growth grant programs, and received several awards for his service, including the President’s Environmental Challenge Award and a Woodrow Wilson Public Service Award. As a side note, she mentioned that he had served on the Olympic rowing team in 1968.

Douglas Foy, President, Serrafix Corporation

In his keynote presentation, Mr. Foy addressed the events that have brought us to the current stage in the implementation of TOD. He discussed what we might focus on next, and provided his view of how we might “operationalize” and deal with the challenges that lie ahead. Mr. Foy mentioned his experiences at *Commonwealth Development*, a mega-agency focused on development strategies for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Foremost among recent events, Mr. Foy said, is the remarkable election of a president-elect who prioritizes climate change and will create an executive element focused on cities and an energy strategy. In the current state, urban sprawl-type housing has cratered all over the country, oil and energy prices are relatively lower now but won’t stay down, and oil dependency continues to cause serious national security concerns. Additionally, for all the optimism of many environmentalists, even if we stopped our carbon dioxide emissions today, there would be a continuing buildup due to latent effects.

Furthermore, there is the current financial crisis. With every department of transportation or transit agency effectively bankrupt, Mr. Foy articulated the need to be strategic about addressing priorities, and moving past the policy conversation by “operationalizing”— that is, putting better ideas into action. This can be done, he said, by keeping land use decisions in the hands of communities as part of a federalized system

in which money is doled out at a federal level, spent at the state level, and land-use determined locally. Leadership in such a system should be consolidated at the state level wherever possible, whether in a mega-agency like Commonwealth Development, or in a special cabinet such as can be found in New York, Arizona, or Indiana.

He mentioned that once leadership is consolidated and the policy conversation begins between agencies to have a more coordinated strategy, nothing will get done without capturing capital spending. The answer, he said, was to seize control of all capital spending for those agencies, which often spend from a “silo” mentality without attending to goals of other agencies.

In a very detailed example, Mr. Foy discussed the billions of dollars spent on affordable housing without paying attention to location. For many people, transportation costs exceed those of housing. Transportation and housing represent more than 50% of average total income, and transportation alone can often be more than 30%. The cost of the average car is equivalent to a \$100,000 mortgage. The cost of a vehicle is \$6,000 per year and housing agencies never think about that issue. People can't afford living in housing that requires 4 vehicles (\$400,000), and housing agencies need to think about this issue.

In another example, he described how, in one case he dealt with in Massachusetts, sewer and water authorities, preferring not to add new capacity to already overloaded lines in the downtown area, enabled policy-mandated sewer sprawl. He reversed these regulations to encourage expansion of town center utilities in conjunction with affordable housing efforts. Furthermore, discouraging suburban and urban sprawl type housing and favoring higher densities in town centers encourages a higher number of students to walk to the local school, with wide-ranging beneficial effects on health, such as decreasing obesity. In this way, several agencies responsible for sewers, health and human services, education and transportation can collaborate on a mutually beneficial development strategy. The ultimate test of this agenda, Mr. Foy said, is to ask: “Can you walk for a quart of milk?” or, “Can every child walk to a library?”

Mr. Foy concluded with seven points which should be pursued immediately to promote the implementation of improved TOD:

- *Restructure* — create new organizational structures or cabinets to ensure that state agencies are paying attention to each other in an integrated way.
- *Seize capital of the different agencies*— unchecked state investments by these agencies in a silo manner are a source of sprawl.
- *Rethink zoning* — zoning was designed to separate different uses of land (e.g., industrial, commercial, residential), but what is needed now is to bring these mixed uses back together.
- *Prioritize pedestrians* — walking is the most important form of transit available, and should not be thought of as an “alternative” mode of transport.
- *Democratize the issues* — take issues of transit funding to the ballot, because people seem ready to pay for transit services.
- *Consider children* — any new system will have to support them in the future in addition to the present.
- *Embrace technology* — with world-class information systems, buses, which are already important for much of the country, can be made accessible to anyone. As an example, he said that new IT technology, some as simple as cellular phones, could improve customer satisfaction by providing on-time information about the arrival of the next bus or train.

The final transportation problem, Mr. Foy said, was what to do for rural America, which will not benefit from trains, subways, or buses. The answer, he proposed, would be to give them broadband access through mesh-networked communication devices in every car.

PANEL 1 – TOD: THE POTENTIAL AND THE PROMISE

Moderator: Vicki Been, Elihu Root Professor of Law, New York University School of Law and Director, Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy

*Panelists: Paul Beyer, Director of Smart Growth Planning, New York State Department of State
Jeffrey Boothe, Vice Chair, Reconnecting America, and Partner, Holland & Knight, LLP
Robert Cervero, Professor & Chair, Department of City & Regional Planning, University of California at Berkeley
Steven E. Goldin, Chairman & CEO, InterCap Holdings
John Nolon, Counsel, Pace University Land Use Center*

MODERATED DISCUSSION – REMARKS AND QUESTIONS

This panel was structured as a moderated discussion where the moderator posed a series of questions (below in bold typeface), which the panel members addressed in dialogue form.

What is Transit Oriented Development?

Mr. Boothe pointed out that we mostly know what TOD *isn't*, or at least what *doesn't* work well. TOD means considering development from the standpoint of a pedestrian — whether someone leaving a facility, before entering any other mode of transportation, is facing an eight-lane road or a safe and attractive location.

Dr. Cervero continued by comparing pedestrian-centric planning to a missing piece of urban fabric. Walking, he said, should not be considered an afterthought. He suggested that U.S. suburban communities often lack a clear central hub analogous to rail stations in most European towns. Not only do these stations grant access to the region, but they also serve as gathering points for the immediate community, and as such are the most cogent part of smart growth. Today, he said, it is clear that development should therefore be concentrated around rail or bus rapid transit, and that *good* TOD doesn't look like islands in a sea of auto-centric development, but rather a necklace of pearls; TOD is not an individual entity, but must be part of a network.

How much can BRT and other mass transit be used as a TOD hub?

Mr. Boothe answered with a question of his own: What is a corridor-based bus project? A corridor, he argued, is defined by its permanency, derived in BRT's case from stations, off-board fare collection, and branding. In the absence of permanency, such projects find support with difficulty. In Northern Virginia, BRT projects did not have sufficient stations to attract development, but Cleveland's new BRT corridor (discussed in detail during the second panel) was defined by a dedicated right-of-way and station structures, making it clear to developers that it was *permanent*.

Dr. Cervero asserted that BRT can indeed shape growth, but he acknowledged that in the suburbs, buses face a perception problem. They are stigmatized, he said, as a "second class" mode of transit, engendering a sense that they simply cannot affect development as rail does. In a typical configuration, buses are indeed slow, lumbering vehicles, but when timed competitively to cars and functioning like trains, they can deliver a service of sufficient quality to unleash growth amid finite real estate. These improvements will require a little more leveraging on the part of governments; buses, Dr. Cervero said, are the "Rodney Dangerfield" of mass transit—"They don't get any respect." However, unlike rail, buses on dedicated lanes can leave those lanes and become a feeder for regular traffic, eliminating the need for transfers, as in Ottawa's system.

Mr. Goldin restated the importance in investing of a binding long-term agreement between all parties involved regarding the location of the bus station.

How much unrealized capacity for TOD do we really have?

Mr. Beyer answered that the MTA could potentially give a better answer for their ten TOD opportunities underway, including Wassaic, Beacon, Brookhaven, and Ronkonkoma. His role at the state level is to give TOD the due “respect” that Dr. Cervero had mentioned. To that effect, NY State is reaching out early and often to some of these communities to educate them on difficult or complex issues like density and mixed use. This involvement extends to the highest levels of state government, evidenced by Governor Paterson’s recent appearance in Grand Central Terminal announcing the importance of the state’s new TOD initiatives.

Asked if he agreed with Mr. Beyer’s comments, Mr. Goldin, spoke about his comparable experiences in New Jersey. Of the state’s 162 rail stations, one hundred or so have potential for development. With potentially 200 new units at each station, that could mean 20,000 new units (one year’s worth of building permits in New Jersey). Clearly, Mr. Goldin said, this is part of the answer to the growth question, but not *the* answer. InterCap is currently in the midst of a community engagement process in two communities with very mixed success. For example, only about 35% of those surveyed know what “Smart Growth” is, but more importantly, they don’t care about it. They care, he said, about how it’s going to affect the traffic in their town, and their property taxes.

Mr. Beyer responded that the MTA’s projects demonstrate the effectiveness of government involvement.

Communities don’t always embrace TOD, in part because of concerns about higher density. Is there a minimum level of density required to make TOD successful?

Mr. Beyer responded that multiple studies show that TOD requires a certain critical mass. It’s not a matter of BRT vs. rail, or even of opinion—there is a minimum density requirement for TOD, and anything beyond that is simply “frosting on the cake.” New York, he admitted, is not too far along in smart growth. But, if TOD is noticeably denser than the community around it and still functions, it can stand as an example of the purest form of smart growth, hopefully one that can prompt the community to say “this isn’t so bad.”

How does TOD fare in the marketplace?

Mr. Goldin answered that, compared to other community development strategies, TOD holds value better in a down market, and increases in value faster in a rising one. For the Senior housing segment, TOD provides a more popular alternative than developments resembling the fictional “Del Boca Vista” from *Seinfeld*, he said, predicting that the 20,000 units he alluded to previously would sell out in approximately two years.

If demand exists and TOD retains value as strongly as you claim, why aren’t we seeing more TOD?

Dr. Nolon responded that TOD requires a bottom-up process. At the local level, he said, zoning is everything, and from his perspective there needs to be a local government plan and a regulatory approach to incorporating developers into a streamlined process. Over the last ten years, he said, the process went from a post-renewal downtown redevelopment strategy, to “transit adjacent development” which essentially ignored transit, then finally to actual TOD ordinances and now to so-called “enhanced” TOD. This doesn’t begin with transit or pleasing transportation planners, but rather with tax base and schoolchildren, and they want walkable, livable, sustainable communities. As legal anthropologists, Dr. Nolon and his colleagues have found that local governments can become a bottom-up force that draws down the policymaking process, aligning it perfectly with a smart growth cabinet at the state level.

What are the greatest concerns held by TOD opponents?

Mr. Goldin answered that simply put, people in New Jersey are “afraid of schoolchildren.” He’s come to the conclusion that towns in New Jersey will never accept non-active adult residential development. Affordable housing laws in that state provide a very valuable tool for developers, especially in resistant towns, but he insists that the hammer is simply not the right way to develop. Massachusetts offers incentives to developers, such as insuring all revenue shortfall in designated smart growth areas, but New Jersey cannot afford such measures, and private insurers like AIG no longer present the same third-party possibilities amidst the market turmoil.

What about a tax-dollar insurance package, linked to children moving into a TOD community?

Mr. Goldin responded that all that is in his power is to show citizens the data he has collected. Even if they begin to believe in it, no developer will take the additional risk of being a “sugar daddy” if tax bills increase anyway. There has to be a state guarantee, and he is confident that New Jersey will never make such guarantee.

Mr. Beyer identified the important middle ground of re-aligning existing resources with new priorities. Several other states have already prioritized state resources towards smart growth areas, a trend he expects will continue. But resources must be used more carefully, and there’s no better state investment than one in smart growth, specifically in TOD, which can benefit a community on health, social, and economic levels. In the way of these benefits are sixty years of “sprawl subsidies,” and there are certain areas where money is spent without verifying that development outcomes contribute to smart growth. Beyer pointed out that New York has an inter-agency smart growth incentive package, promising special treatment to communities that abide by certain rules of smart growth.

What are the main regulatory barriers to TOD?

Mr. Boothe characterized the current mindset as a “silo” program, and stressed the importance of tapping multiple pots for a coordinated and integrated development project. Given that we have an authorization bill coming up in 2009, Mr. Boothe believes we have an opportunity to repair a broken system and shape the debate in a new direction. Even with clean fuel, he said, if no attempt is made to address Vehicle Miles Traveled, climate change still won’t have been addressed. Furthermore, he cited the “half-mile radius” demarcation of TOD zones, pointing out that only 50% of all citizens live that close to transit. That proportion should be mandated at 80%, Mr. Boothe said, and methods adapted accordingly to suit particular corridors. But all of these barriers combine to threaten nearly everyone at the table, especially transit agencies fearful of losing access to their traditional sources of money. The appropriate response is to set up performance-based standards on a broader range of impacts, shaping land use and appropriate development.

What should the new administration do to better enable TOD?

Dr. Cervero answered that we need to redirect our urban policy, something president-elect Obama has already pledged to manage in a new cabinet office. But Dr. Cervero also said that he had not heard enough yet on green mobility as part of a stimulus package—bikeways and ped-ways that grant residents beyond big cities access to transit. With this in mind, the new administration should execute major demonstration programs to encourage municipalities to radically change how they zone and park new development, as well as taking a lead role in working out these issues with local governments. Finally, Dr. Cervero demanded that the new administration stop the historical overcharging of smart growth while undercharging dumb growth.

What is the major challenge facing the Obama administration?

Dr. Nolon replied that federal policy must be shifted in order to connect to state policy, and local policy. His recommendation was that the federal government should conduct an environmental impact statement concerning how TOD affects issues like impervious coverage, carbon dioxide emissions, and their corresponding levels of water and energy conservation. Then, he said, give that EIS to the states to “tweak” to their liking. After aggregating the funding for urban

areas and giving it to the states (provided those states have smart growth cabinets), smaller-town mayors would jump at the chance to take state information and money to create exactly the kind of growth they need. Nolon endorsed this “federalist” approach, combined with a package of incentives.

Mr. Goldin then suggested, only somewhat facetiously, that the new administration should practice “Chicago-style politics” and buy the votes of the local residents, in the following fashion: if municipalities agree to a higher density of development within one half-mile of train stations, the federal government should make money available for commuter parking for residents of *that town*, as well as road improvements to connect those new developments.

Mr. Beyer stressed the necessity of highlighting the all-important connection between land use and transportation — “we see it,” he said to the audience, “but we’re in the extreme minority.” Density is often believed to be the root of traffic problems, but in truth many communities who subscribe to this view are *not dense enough*, walkable enough, or transit friendly enough. Furthermore, any new administration should acknowledge trails, parks, bikeways, and transit TOD as part of our “traditional” infrastructure as opposed to supplemental “green” infrastructure. Finally, Mr. Beyer asked that more money be channeled into the Transportation Enhancements program, citing the belief that “alternative” infrastructure can make a visible difference and serve as a powerful example.

QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE

What issues are specific to New York City, and what transit investments can serve under-connected areas of the city?

Professor Been addressed this question, answering that the city has been down-zoning as well as up-zoning, but not always in the logical fashion of up-zoning around transit and down-zoning in more isolated areas. Furthermore, she said, the city’s parking requirements are ripe for review, though they suffer from a lack of advocacy. She alluded to progress the city has made, however, in connecting the dots between transportation planning, land use, and energy through a sustainability office.

What can be done to ensure that new TOD units, being more attractive and expensive, will not push poorer residents further still from transit?

Mr. Goldin fielded this question, saying first that in New Jersey, twenty percent of all new units must be set aside for affordable housing. The person who asked the question then said that this was not sufficient and Mr. Goldin responded that it was too much. He said that affordable housing requirements, whose associated costs are covered by the developer, have been added to aging infrastructure and parking requirements in a list of factors that affect the costs and returns of any development. Those numbers “don’t pencil out” with a twenty percent affordable housing requirement without passing on these costs to the “market rate” buyers, he said. He went on to say that his own firm, Intercap Holdings, has proposed twenty-five percent in one project.

Dr. Nolon spoke out in favor of a state affordable housing policy, which he said was not a new idea. Affordable housing, he argued, was an integral part of TOD and compact urban development, especially with an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the effects of daily long-distance automobile commutes. Affordable housing, he said, has to be seen as something other than a service to the poor but something important to the survival of communities.

Mr. Boothe added that people who live adjacent to transit have at least one *fewer* car per household than those who don’t, and can therefore dedicate more money to housing. This is a strong argument, he said, for the overvaluing of parking—around good transit, a 2- or 1.5-space-per-unit minimum is excessive. He agreed with Dr. Nolon’s focus on EIS, and the impact it can have towards lowering out-of-pocket expenses. In the impending affordable housing

crisis, real benefits can be afforded those who need them most by locating them around transit, giving them an important choice and chance to lower expenses.

First, what national agency can produce an umbrella EIS? Second, people do need stuff, so how does freight factor into this project?

Mr. Boothe answered first, citing California's new legislation which establishes a regional framework where freight and affordable housing are all part of a single plan to accommodate the next incremental population increase. Freight, Mr. Boothe said, is a big issue, but even bigger is the answer to the question, "What are we building towards at the federal level?" If fuel prices rise and domestic manufacturing returns, a port-oriented freight strategy becomes an internal distribution network.

Dr. Nolon then clarified his answer to the previous question, regarding an umbrella EIS, saying he was talking about aggregating the resources of the federal government to better explain what compact urban development will do for our economy and our environment.

Dr. Cervero agreed that TOD is consistent with efficient freight movements, especially within an internal distribution network.

How can we look to the waterways to serve underserved communities? Could ferries be a nucleus for TOD?

Dr. Cervero responded that, along those lines, Hoboken is one of the best examples of TOD produced in the last twenty years. Ferry service is obviously very important, he said, since most waterfronts are former industrial sites or brownfields. Additionally, many low-income houses don't have jobs in centrally-served business districts, necessitating a wider definition of public transit to include medium-scale forms of mobility like airport-style vans.

Finally, on an unrelated but practical note, Mr. Goldin stressed the importance of having a developer present on a planning team's "front end" along with public agencies and government, as they bring knowledge to that table which increases the likelihood of a successful RFP process.

PANEL 2 – TOD IN PRACTICE

Moderator: David Fields, Principal, Nelson \ Nygaard Consulting Associates

Panelists: Richard T. Roberts, Chief Planner, New Jersey Transit

Randall Fleischer, Senior Director, Business Development, Facilities & Marketing, MTA Metro-North Railroad

Michael Schipper, Deputy General Manager, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority

Phil Charles, Professor & Director of Transport Strategy, University of Queensland, Australia

MODERATOR REMARKS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Fields began with a question to the audience: How many of you have participated in the planning of a project? After many hands went up, he continued: Who has a project they can point out to people as a success story? Noting that many hands had gone back down, Fields introduced his panelists, who each

had at least one such an example to share. All of their presentations, he said, would demonstrate the importance of greater involvement of more than “just the typical players,” all working for the greater good.

PRESENTATIONS

Richard T. Roberts, Chief Planner, New Jersey Transit

Mr. Roberts quickly outlined the key ideas at play in his organization’s TOD projects: leadership, process, and partnership, then proceeded through an overview of NJ Transit’s system into an examination of several TOD success stories, either completed or in progress.

He started by speaking of the practical need to recognize that just focusing on rail stations and not paying attention to bus transit opportunities is wrong. While NJ had 164 rail stations and 60 light rail stations on its various rail lines, NJT has over 20,000 bus stops, some of these bus stops are also opportunities to encourage TOD. There are bus stations, terminals and stops that have just as much investment and permanency as some rail stations. Future planned investments in bus rapid transit in some corridors can strengthen this argument.

Proposals for TOD have a tendency to get caught up in other related urban development issues Mr. Roberts noted. The level of acceptance or resistance to a TOD proposal sometimes is rooted in other issues. For example, some local officials confuse increased traffic congestion in their community with an increase in population when what is occurring is an increase in the number of autos per household. Since TOD is often associated with more dense development it becomes entangled with fears of “too much development causing too much traffic.”

Successful local leadership for TOD projects has also proven to be a challenge, he said. Mr. Roberts cited this example; the mayor of a community may be an advocate for a TOD project but loses in the next election, possibly because of their support for the TOD project. The larger TOD projects are particularly challenging. Perhaps, at times it would be wiser to progress projects incrementally, at the neighborhood level, with tens of units being proposed, so project scale does not always become an issue.

Increasingly for the transit industry, said Mr. Roberts, a lot of investment is going to certain “hubs,” NJ Transit’s examples of which include the Trenton Transit Center, Walter Rand Transportation Center in Camden, and Newark’s Penn and Broad Street stations. The state of New Jersey established the Urban Hub Tax Credit Program, which makes tax credits available for capital investment projects, provided those projects invest a certain amount of money and create a certain number of jobs within a certain radius of designated train stations. But, Mr. Roberts said, if a circle is drawn with a half-mile radius around train stations, the point has been missed. The primary concern should be pedestrian communities, and how connected they are with their surroundings. Why can’t a TOD be a little further away from the station, he asked, with a higher degree of connectivity?

Everybody has to win for a TOD to be successful, Mr. Roberts said, and the only way to ensure a win-win situation is to talk to the community about what they want—not telling the community what they *have to* want. “If it’s win-lose,” Mr. Roberts said, “You’re dead.” As these projects continue to succeed, measurable benefits will extend from controlling greenhouse gas levels, to saved parking space, to higher property values, to even reducing the number of vehicular trips. Mr. Roberts concluded by reiterating the need for leadership, education, and partnership, reminding the audience that there was no one single way of partnering effectively.

Richard T. Roberts, Chief Planner, New Jersey Transit

Mr. Roberts quickly outlined the key ideas at play in his organization’s TOD projects: leadership, process, and partnership, then proceeded through an overview of NJ Transit’s system into an examination of several TOD success stories, either completed or in progress.

Mr. Roberts said that as New Jersey Transit's chief planner, he is part of "the world of the battlegrounds." Of the 20,000 bus stops in the system, a few thousand had some TOD potential, he said, but if the local leadership is focused exclusively on the system's 164 rail and 60 light rail stations, "That's a battleground." On the other hand, local leaders within a stable political environment can go a long way to moving a project forward, as can educating the communities involved—complaints about density that is "too high," for example, are actually rooted in a perception of auto ownership, not simply a high number of people. Occasionally, he related, a small-town mayor would announce his or her intention to spearhead a project, only to have it be revealed that he or she doesn't represent the entire community. Mr. Roberts said that development must be stimulated at the neighborhood level, in the tens of units. "Otherwise," he said, "We're going to have a food fight."

Increasingly for the transit industry, said Mr. Roberts, a lot of investment is going to certain "hubs," NJ Transit's examples of which include the Trenton Transit Center, Walter Rand Transportation Center in Camden, and Newark's Penn and Broad Street stations. The state of New Jersey established the Urban Hub Tax Credit Program, which makes tax credits available for capital investment projects, provided those projects invest a certain amount of money and create a certain number of jobs within a certain radius of designated train stations. But, Mr. Roberts said, if a circle is drawn with a half-mile radius around train stations, the point has been missed. The primary concern should be pedestrian communities, and how connected they are with their surroundings. Why can't a TOD be a little further away from the station, he asked, with a higher degree of connectivity?

Everybody has to win for a TOD to be successful, Mr. Roberts said, and the only way to ensure a win-win situation is to talk to the community about what they want—not telling the community what they *have to* want. "If it's win-lose," Mr. Roberts said, "You're dead." As these projects continue to succeed, measurable benefits will extend from controlling greenhouse gas levels, to saved parking space, to higher property values, to even reducing the number of vehicular trips. Mr. Roberts concluded by reiterating the need for leadership, education, and partnership, reminding the audience that there was no one single way of partnering effectively.

Randall Fleischer, Senior Director, Business Development, Facilities & Marketing, MTA Metro-North Railroad

Mr. Fleischer's remarks offered background on Metro-North's TOD program: prioritizing and catalyzing opportunities for TOD within the Metro-North service area, the critical issues encountered and strategies for implementation, and the lessons learned from the program thus far. Households in areas with good transit access have 16% more disposable income due to savings on transportation, according to a study conducted by the non-profit Reconnecting America. Additional benefits in the Metro-North region include:

- Station-centered mixed-use development of housing, retail, commercial, open space
- Enhanced mobility with direct access to public transportation
- Sustainable smart growth for communities and the region
- Alternative to suburban sprawl and consequent congestion and environmental impacts

Mr. Fleischer described Metro-North's active leadership role in approaching TOD, which represents a shift from where the organization was a decade ago. Metro-North can now act as a fulcrum in TOD projects, coordinating different parties and building consensus, promoting TOD on a regional scale, providing a vision, planning a project, and facilitating the entire process. Metro-North's mission, which has so far attracted support from public and private sources in America as well as abroad, is to "preserve and enhance the quality of life and economic health of the communities we serve."

In determining where to direct TOD-dedicated resources, Mr. Fleischer said, no one aspect takes precedence. Several different factors are considered in assessing a project's potential, including location of economic need and preexisting community support, as well as ways of optimizing regional mobility. Metro-North's prioritization methodology, formulated with participation from across the MTA and

applicable to both urban and suburban sites, includes a two-tiered site assessment and no fewer than 14 weighted criteria for objective evaluation.

Mr. Fleischer provided seven specific examples in either the “Completed,” “Underway” or “In Planning” stages. In the TOD projects at Yonkers and New Rochelle, ridership has already risen 40% and 24% respectively since the projects’ completion, and it has already risen 14% at the yet-unfinished TOD at Tarrytown. Beacon Station’s TOD, currently underway, was attractive for a number of reasons. Strategically located in a riverfront town in the midst of cultural and economic renewal, the large property benefited from strong community support and favorable zoning, besides being an important transportation center for both sides of the Hudson River. The project underscores the importance of creating an effective process using outreach to the public, the government, and the developers. Also underway are projects at Harrison Station, a Metro-North-owned property in an underdeveloped downtown setting, and Poughkeepsie Station, an important transit center in an existing urban context. The Harrison TOD highlights innovative design and partnership solutions with the municipality and the community; the Poughkeepsie TOD benefits from strong city support, and development which leverages prior Metro-North capital infrastructure investments—as Mr. Fleischer put it, Poughkeepsie Station is becoming a Mini-Grand Central Terminal. Finally, still in the planning stages, are seven sites in the Bronx identified as part of an inter-agency effort for Urban TOD. The process to identify which have the best potential for Tier 2 analysis is ongoing.

In conclusion, Mr. Fleischer offered a broad summary of five keys to the success of Metro-North’s TOD program: a clear vision, effective land use decisions, strong leadership, true collaboration, and implementation of a master plan.

Michael Schipper, Deputy General Manager, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority

Mr. Schipper offered perspective on a TOD success story from outside the New York metropolitan region, namely the Euclid Corridor Bus Rapid Transit project in Cleveland, Ohio. Mr. Schipper described how, for forty years, desire was strong for a heavy rail corridor along Euclid Avenue, but it couldn’t be funded. Ultimately, the decision was made to go with BRT instead, and now they have sparked a very successful TOD in this corridor.

Euclid’s BRT features near-level boarding, enhanced service frequency, off-board fare collection, unique vehicles (not “buses,” Mr. Schipper said, but “vehicles”), real-time passenger information and a passenger-friendly waiting environment. The Euclid corridor complements an existing three-line rail network, and runs between two major employment centers: Downtown Cleveland and the University Circle campus area.

As part of an “Urban Core Infrastructure Investment,” and at a \$200 million total cost for the project, Euclid Avenue underwent a “building face to building face” reconstruction. This included utility improvements, new roadway, curbs, and sidewalks as well as new lighting, communications, landscaping, irrigation and traffic signaling systems. Beyond the roadway itself, the investment was extended to public art and passenger amenities, and the BRT line’s thirty-six stations and platforms.

While fitting 120 feet of amenities in a 99-foot right-of-way was difficult at the start, Mr. Schipper said that the true test of the project came when considering the Midtown neighborhood. Zoning Midtown’s overlay district took two years of very hard work to focus development away from parking garages and driveways, said Mr. Schipper, but the results in the past five years have been undeniable—land values in Midtown have doubled in that time, and the Cleveland Clinic is investing \$1.2 billion in that area of Euclid Avenue, having already completely taken over a decrepit parking garage in just three years.

Mr. Schipper concluded by detailing investments made by developers in other areas of the corridor, including over \$1.6 billion in the University Circle area alone, and presented images of the corridor’s reconstruction as well as Euclid Avenue’s current state of development.

Phil Charles, Professor & Director of Transport Strategy, University of Queensland, Australia

Mr. Charles offered a true outsider's perspective on a TOD success story with his presentation of "The Mill at Albion," a TOD three miles northeast of the central business district of Brisbane in Queensland, Australia. Brisbane, like New York, is facing high population growth rates and even higher rates of increasing traffic congestion. The 2005 Southeast Queensland Regional Plan, he said, was intended to contain the city's urban footprint by better managing land use, and provide appropriate infrastructure and services to the region's population. The plan was also intended to facilitate appropriate forms of TOD in areas served by public transport. While it succeeded in establishing a state-level policy and identifying potential TOD sites, Mr. Charles said that state agencies' TOD capabilities remained limited and un-translated to a local level.

The "mill" in question is a disused flour mill on a 3.2-acre lot which includes a car dealership and park-and-ride lot adjacent to a railway station. The city of Brisbane first conducted the urban renewal proposal for the local area, which was to be a higher-density development (minimum 50 dwellings per acre) featuring a mix of uses and types of housing. Integrated land use and transportation planning around the rail station would encourage use of public transport and reduce the use of private vehicles by improving access to the station and bus stops, and promoting that inter-modal connection.

The local suburban neighborhood plan was a largely supportive parallel process to the development proposal, said Mr. Charles, but proceeded with limited guidance and a *laissez-faire* approach that lacked active facilitation. With such a large number of local, regional, and state agencies and departments supportive but uncoordinated, there was a lack of shared focus, he said; the lesson learned was the pronounced need for one agency to lead at the local level. In Albion's case, the TOD was developer-led.

Mr. Charles enumerated a series of pros and cons to the selection of the Mill at Albion as a site for TOD. On one hand, it was located on a high-frequency transit service, but on the other, there were no feeder services to the main corridor, and no alternative to the automobile for local travel, necessitating the continued existence of ample parking, upon which there are no limits.

CLOSING REMARKS: ALLISON L. C. DE CERREÑO

Dr. Allison L. C. de Cerreño concluded the event by pointing out the recurring imagery of links, connections, building blocks, or strings of pearls evoked by the speakers and panelists. She said she was struck by the need for a new vision and a new paradigm — some years ago, she said, new paradigms were already "the big discussion," but it is clear that those goals may not have been fully realized. Our paradigm must continue to shift, she said, and with a new administration and new authorization legislation on the horizon, now is the time for that shift to break the silos that prevent the links from functioning.