IV. CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES: A SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Achieving the environmental and economic goals described in previous chapters will require an understanding of the place-specific challenges associated with supporting Transit-Oriented Districts in Los Angeles, and of the strategies that have proven successful in the past. To better understand how TOD can be brought to scale – so that there are more households and jobs located near stations, and so that more people can benefit – CTOD convened five focus groups from five case study areas, comprised of "clusters" of several stations along five corridors: the Gold Line from Little Tokyo to Indiana, the Red Line from Vermont/Wilshire to Vermont/Sunset, the Orange Line from Sepulveda to Warner Center, the Expo Line from USC to Crenshaw, and a key portion of the proposed streetcar corridor in downtown Los Angeles.

The focus groups were attended by a total of about 75 people, and included staff from the City Planning Department, City Department of Transportation, Community Redevelopment Agency, L.A. Metro, as well as members of neighborhood councils, developers, consultants, representatives from institutions located near stations, and other community members. Focus group participants were asked to identify the strategies that have worked to encourage good TOD in Los Angeles – giving specific examples where possible – and to describe conditions at the neighborhood, city, and regional levels that are making it difficult to develop good TOD. These focus group findings provide a framework for the recommendations in Chapter V and are grouped into three categories:

- **Partnership and Collaboration:** Successful TOD has the potential to significantly reduce transportation costs for households, reduce auto-dependence and greenhouse gas emissions, improve access to transit, and spur economic development at both the local and regional levels. These goals are intertwined and typically promoted by public agencies as well as community groups and private interests. The size and diversity of Los Angeles however, can make large-scale collaboration unwieldy and politically challenging. This section provides examples of successful partnerships and examines the areas in which improved collaboration would most effectively impact the creation of TOD.
- **Policy and Regulation:** Although there is no one-size-fits-all definition of TOD, there are planning elements that can be standardized to promote transit-supportive uses near stations citywide. Focus group participants reported several barriers that are common to all transit lines and stations in the case study areas, which suggests that a baseline citywide TOD policy and strategy, as well as more targeted efforts around high-priority transit stations, could facilitate development in a number of ways. The most common policy and regulatory changes recommended by focus group participants are reported in this section.
- **Funding and Prioritization of Investments:** Although the need for comprehensive and collaborative planning around transit stations is widely recognized, the ability to implement these changes is limited by the availability of funding and other resources from local, state and federal governments, as well as from the non-profit and private sectors. This section suggests ways to better leverage existing funding, and addresses the need for prioritization of existing resources.

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Focus group participants cited a lack of partnerships and collaboration as a barrier to TOD success in Los Angeles.

Successful TOD requires the coordination of land use, transportation, housing, and urban design, and therefore requires the involvement of multiple public agencies and city departments. In Los Angeles, the public agencies and decision-makers that have been involved in past TOD efforts – and which are likely to be involved in future efforts – include the Mayor's Office, Planning Department and Planning Commission, L.A. Metro, Neighborhood Councils, the LA DOT, CRA/LA, HACLA, the LA Housing Department, and even the L.A. Unified School District. Each of these agencies has an incentive to invest in station areas, with investments including new public facilities and programs, sidewalks, bike racks, and other hardscape improvements, the subsidy of market-rate or affordable housing development, and/or the preservation of existing affordable housing, and these agencies can also help with parcel assembly, and facilitate regulatory changes and other planning efforts. There is not, however, a single agency or institution charged with integrating the goals, mission and activities of all of the public and private partners in TOD, or with co-leveraging resources. Successful TOD also relies on the support of the local community.

It is critical to acknowledge the complexity and interdisciplinary nature of successful sustainable communities (of which TOD is a subset). Inter-agency partnerships are becoming increasingly common throughout the United States, and even the Federal government is coordinating the planning and investment activities of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Environmental Protection Agency, the US Department of Transportation, and potentially other agencies. This initiative, called the Sustainable Communities Partnership, has been created to eliminate the many barriers to sustainability caused by a basic lack of communication across housing, land use, and transportation agencies and staff.

Agencies in Los Angeles have collaborated in the past with great success. One oft-cited example is the reformulation and implementation of the Downtown Street Standards and Design Guidelines. When the South Group proposed the EVO South condominium project in South Park, they wanted to activate the pedestrian realm around the Staples Center with wide sidewalks, minimal driveway cuts, mid-block paseos and ground-floor retail development. The existing street standards would have required the adjacent street to be widened during construction to accommodate the projected increase in traffic, despite the development's proximity to all of the bus and rail lines located in transit-rich downtown. The South Group went to their City Council representative, who called together a team of public agencies, including the CRA, Planning Department, the Urban Design Studio, LA Bureau of Engineering and the Mayor's Office, to solve the problem. Representatives of these public agencies met weekly for nearly two years to create a revised set of street design standards, which were applied to all downtown streets.

Similarly, there is enormous potential in Los Angeles to leverage a "movement of movements" to build support for transit and TOD that would include affordable housing advocates, community development corporations, environmentalists, public health, green jobs and economic development. These advocates typically only focus on their area of expertise, or work in partnership on one or two issues. But because TOD increases affordability, creates active and healthy neighborhoods, counterbalances sprawl, reduces auto dependence and greenhouse gas emissions, and spurs economic development and job creation, the momentum behind each of these movements could leverage significant impact.

Local politics too often trump planning.

Due to its size and diversity, Los Angeles is a notoriously difficult city to govern. As a result, a strong City Council has emerged, comprised of 15 distinct and powerful districts. Each Council member is accountable to the community from which they were elected, and operates as an advocate for residents. Council Districts often have competing interests, however, which do not always coincide with the broader interests of the city or region as a whole. For example, if community members are unhappy with a project, they will usually appeal to their City Council representative, who wields the political influence to alter or stop a project. Decisions about which projects will go forward are often made on a case-by-case basis rather than by adhering to broader planning principles. These decisions may benefit the short-term interests of a small number of citizens, rather than serve the best interests of the broader population. Efforts by City Council members can trump decisions and planning efforts by other city departments.

The Planning Commission has sought to de-politicize planning decisions by issuing a manifesto called "Do Real Planning" that lays out broad principles to guide decisions, including requiring density around transit, making the city more walkable, providing mixed-income housing, and identifying "smart parking requirements" such as parking maximums, pooled parking and automated stacked parking. The Commission has urged the City Council to use these principles as a basis for new city ordinances, and they are being used by the Planning Department to guide community plans. The intent is to provide more certainty about development goals for developers and for communities.

High parking and low-density requirements in areas prioritized for growth continue to be a challenge, however. Wary of increased traffic and decreased street parking, local residents frequently protest new development, particularly high-density residential projects. By petitioning their local Council member, anti-growth activists are able thwart new development. However, the data analysis in Chapter III has shown that households in many station areas do, in fact, own fewer cars than other households, and there is growing evidence that households living near transit and in walkable communities tend to drive less as well. Ensuring that local sustainable community advocates and planners have access to this data can help the public better understand the benefits of development near transit.

Focus group participants cited local efforts around community outreach and education on planning concepts as key to successful planning.

The concepts behind good planning for transit-oriented districts can be difficult to understand for well-seasoned planners, much less for community members who have not been professionally trained. In order to engage the full participation of community members in the planning process, and thus gain broad support for future development or other changes that make neighborhoods more transit supportive, there needs to be more education about TOD planning concepts, and the potential benefits of density as well as other changes that make station areas more transit supportive. The East Los Angeles Community Corporation (ELACC) was able to mount this kind of outreach and training initiative, for example, with funding from the California Endowment. The training included bilingual workshops on planning "lingo" such as "TOD" and "FAR," thereby helping to ensure that local residents could play a meaningful role in the Community Plan Update process. Although it would require significant additional resources and capacity, expanding this level of outreach citywide would greatly improve the public participation process and facilitate better incorporation of community vision in transit-oriented districts.

Focus group participants also said that even public agency staff needs more education about the importance of TOD and the design standards and guidelines required to achieve it. Cross-agency technical education and training programs, and cross-departmental working groups on TOD could encourage a shared understanding of how each agency's activities and investments could be more transit-supportive.

Focus group participants said that it is especially important to keep the LA Housing Department in the loop about TOD plans.

The City of Los Angeles Housing Department has significant resources in the city's affordable housing trust fund to subsidize affordable and mixed-income housing near stations, and did build more than 500 units of affordable and senior rental and for-sale housing, as well as market rate units, at the Avenue 26/Lincoln Heights station. This development – in several buildings on 12 acres of what had been industrial land - includes some neighborhood-serving retail, a childcare center, subterranean parking and open space, and is immediately adjacent to the station. The developer has said that lower parking ratios achieved substantial cost savings, without which the project would not have been financially feasible. But because the surrounding neighborhood is not walkable and not perceived as very safe, people have complained about the lack of parking and there have been problems in selling units for this reason.

Focus groups say transit and TOD should be linked to economic development and jobs.

The focus groups, especially the group of stakeholders along the Expo Line, said it would be far easier to enlist the support of communities and local businesses if transit and TOD were pitched as a way to stimulate economic development, to bring public and private investment into communities, to increase tax and other local revenues from increased property values and business activity around stations. Transit and TOD also generate employment in several ways: through short-term construction and engineering jobs; through improved long-term access to permanent employment; and by improving the economic competitiveness of the region. Focus group participants cited the success of the Alameda Corridor's local hiring plan, which provided 3,500 jobs and training and apprenticeship programs for low-income neighborhoods along the 20-mile corridor. The CRA's Local Hire and Construction Careers policy also requires that projects receiving a certain level of subsidy dedicate 30 percent of construction hours to local hires and 10 percent to disadvantaged workers, and that local residents be engaged as apprentices in the construction trades. The policy was enacted in February of 2009 and is expected to cover 15,000 jobs over five years in LA., a third of them in neighborhoods with high unemployment, and 1,500 for at-risk or hard-to-employ workers. In addition to generating jobs and training opportunities, local hire programs build goodwill and community support for development around transit.

There is major opportunity to partner with major employers including hospitals and educational institutions to encourage transit ridership and strengthen community connections to stations. These institutions could boost transit ridership significantly by offering the right mix of incentives and disincentives for patients, students and employees. At Pierce College, for example, only 500 of 5,000 available transit passes are purchased each semester. One disincentive is that it only costs $27 per semester to park at Pierce College, whereas it costs $175 per semester at USC. But any increase in parking fees would need to be accompanied by investments in making the station and the college seem more connected and slowing down fast-moving traffic on adjacent wide streets.

The focus groups were attended by representatives of Pierce College, USC, and the White Memorial Hospital, and all expressed interest and eagerness in partnering with the city and LA Metro to find ways to encourage more students to use transit, since it's so expensive to provide parking. In addition to hardscape and softscape improvements including wider sidewalks, traffic calming and street trees, other strategies include the promotion of discounted transit passes, transportation demand management and parking cash-out programs, good transit signage and real-time information and signage. The design and orientation of buildings, too, is key: buildings should be oriented toward the street and toward stations, and there should be shade structures, bike racks, street furniture and other amenities that create a friendly environment for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users.

POLICY AND REGULATION

Focus group participants cited a lack of planning and funding mechanisms to help bring TOD to scale in the city. Resources for station area plans are limited, and the community plan update process is too long-term and large-scale.

There are 35 community plan areas covering the 465-square-mile city of Los Angeles. The very large scale of these community plan areas makes this an inappropriate mechanism for station area planning – community plans are intended to provide a long-range vision and are not updated very often. Station area plans, in contrast, are short-term – in order to respond to the market – and focused on implementation. Moreover, the community plan update process is already strained by a lack of staff and resources, making it difficult for planners to engage residents in a meaningful dialogue about complicated topics such as floor-to-area-ratios (FAR) and to explain all the community benefits that can be achieved with development around stations. This is especially true in low-income neighborhoods where there are language and other barriers to participation.

A plan that defines the parameters of change in station areas – the size of buildings, density, mix of uses, parking, and components like open space – can provide certainty for residents, developers and investors. It can also shorten the entitlement and development process, which makes projects less costly, increasing the likelihood that a developer can invest in better architecture and building materials, public space and parks, or other community benefits. Individual station area plans, however, can cost around $500,000 and are therefore not a scalable solution for planning the large number of station areas that exist in Los Angeles.

A TOD strategic plan could help prioritize stations for the limited funding that is available, and help ensure that funding is available for the stations where they will have the most significant impact. These stations include: station areas with low transportation costs and the potential for increased development, areas with significant development opportunity and community support for development, neighborhoods where there may be displacement of existing residents due to market-rate development, station areas that serve employment centers or offer economic development potential, and stations that have barriers to access.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has already identified ten stations areas with the potential to be transformed into “sustainable transit communities” that can house low- and middle-income families, and the Mayor’s Office is working with funding from SCAG to identify an additional 10 stations for priority investment. The city will fund sidewalks, trees, lighting and parks in each location, provide incentives for housing, and provide for upfront environmental planning to expedite development and engage communities in the planning process from the beginning.

Focus group members cited the CRA-sponsored Crenshaw Vision and Implementation plan as a particularly successful community partnership that planned for infrastructure investments and development along the Expo Line. The planning initiative built consensus around a comprehensive vision, inventoried a wide range of public and private resources that could be deployed, and educated local residents about the benefits of development and how it could leverage community benefits. The West Angeles Church of God and its West Angeles Community Development Corporation are playing a leadership and investor role.

The Planning Department has had success mounting planning efforts with the aid of local colleges and universities. The Tarzana Crossing transit village was planned with the aid of students from Cal State Northridge and UCLA, was championed by the Neighborhood Council, and subsequently won $100,000 in funding for a station area plan from the Southern California Association of Governments. Another

group of students, from Sci-Arc, is analyzing transit corridors to look at the mix of uses around stations and identify basic amenities including grocery stores, drug stores, dry cleaners and child care. Students are also collecting information of the size of sites available for development, so that residents of station areas can solicit the interest of retailers.

Excessively high parking requirements near stations are one of the most commonly cited barriers to creating transit-oriented districts in Los Angeles.

Communities around stations often demand high parking requirements because they fear the traffic that will be generated by the construction of stations and development. CTOD's typology research (see Chapter 2) shows that even small increases in station area "intensity" – the number of people who live and/or work in station areas – are associated with significant decreases in vehicle miles traveled (VMT). But there are no well-publicized local (or national) case studies of development projects that have not caused increases in traffic. In fact, many people still remember an LA Times story several years ago in which a reporter surveyed commuters coming out of the Mission Meridian TOD in South Pasadena one morning and found they were all headed to work by car.

This is changing, however: the city's adaptive reuse ordinance, for example, is credited with adding 10,000 new housing units downtown in the past couple of years through the conversion of historic commercial buildings that were not required to provide any new parking. A 2008 survey of downtown residents showed that increased intensity reduced driving and increased transit use, walking and biking: The survey showed that in 2008 only one-third of residents reported commuting alone by car, down from two-thirds in 2006; another one-third used public transit, up from 11 percent in 2006; and 37 percent walked or biked, up from 17 percent in 2006. The study also notes that 60 percent of downtown residents now live and work in downtown while surveys done a decade ago found 80 percent commuted out of downtown to work. If the adaptive re-use ordinance had required the provision of parking and made driving convenient it is likely that these new residents – who according to the survey have an overall median income of $96,200 and are unlikely to be transit-dependent – would have driven their cars instead of walking, biking and using transit in such high numbers.

USC provides an interesting example of what could be a transit-oriented campus with considerable new academic, commercial and dormitory space including 7,500 new beds. However, in our focus group we were told that one new academic building, which added only a marginal number of new employees, was nonetheless required to provide 200 additional parking spaces. Zoning changes may not be able to correct this problem unless parking is capped, since parking is sometimes built because investors or major tenants require it. It is important to remember that the provision of parking, especially structured parking, drives up the cost of projects dramatically and crowds out other uses, including public open space, which could win community support by providing more community benefits. Making driving convenient acts as an incentive to traffic.

Focus group participants cited a need to improve connections between transit stops and neighborhoods.

In many cases, station and neighborhood access are an afterthought to the transit planning and design process – typically addressed only after the station has been built and utilizing retroactive strategies such as way-finding signage and minor infrastructure improvements. Better coordination and attention to bike and pedestrian access early in the planning process – when the station is designed and built – would prove much more effective. For example, focus group participants referred to a number of examples where the Department of Transportation worked at cross-purposes with LA Metro, widening streets in front of stations to accommodate the additional traffic generated by station area activities, while Metro was simultaneously investing in infrastructure to make station areas more pedestrian-friendly. Focus group participants also noted that LA Metro does not consistently prioritize the convenience of pedestrians, who

are sometimes forced to walk around large parking structures or other obstacles to get to and from stations.

But the problem of stations being separated from adjacent destinations by wide, heavily trafficked streets and surrounded by unwalkable neighborhoods was cited as a problem by many focus group participants. Where resources are available, LA Metro has successfully implemented the Community Linkages Program – a corridor level planning effort to ensure that stations are integrated into surrounding neighborhoods and providing access to pedestrians, bikes and transit users. These plans have gotten increasingly ambitious in scope, culminating in the recent $30 million Eastside Extension planning effort, which worked with neighborhoods around stations to develop "community visions" for four joint development projects as well as plans for crosswalks, traffic calming, street trees, way-finding signage and other amenities. These planning efforts have been lauded by the Federal Transit Administration as a transit agency best practice.

Many significant destinations and employment centers in Los Angeles will not be served by rail in the near future. For this reason it is critical that high-quality bus and shuttle service connect stations to destinations, especially employment centers. The LA County-USC Medical Center, for example, is a major regional destination that draws patients and workers from a 50-mile radius. The medical center is served by a shuttle to Union Station but is not yet connected to the Gold Line station in Boyle Heights a mile away—just beyond walking distance.

There is a lack of local evidence showing that stations and TOD can reduce traffic, rather than increase it.

Prioritizing new development in walkable, bikeable transit-served neighborhoods is an important strategy for reducing VMT and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), as called for in AB32 and SB375. However, CEQA mandates traffic mitigations for new development to maintain "levels of service" for drivers. Thus, higher-density urban infill projects near transit are required to widen streets even though these road improvements promote driving and make station access by non-motorized modes more difficult. The problem is partly a matter of scale: many regions are likely to require significant development in the urban core to reduce VMT and avoid many tons of emissions. CEQA requires analysis of the impact of the auto trips generated, which makes it appear that reducing density will produce fewer trips and emissions. But when viewed from the regional level, VMT and GHG reductions are best achieved by maintaining that project's density and not making mitigations – such as road widening – that will promote driving. Because CEQA is focused on the project scale it isn't suited to the large-scale land use strategies required to achieve significant GHG reductions. Because of this and other considerations, cities across the state are considering abandoning auto-oriented levels of service in favor of mitigations that provide for the safety and convenience of all users, including non-drivers.

SB 375 creates special CEQA provisions for the review of "transit priority projects" found to be consistent with the local "Sustainable Communities Strategy." These projects must be residential or mixed-use residential, at a density of at least 20 units per acre, and located within a half mile of a major transit stop or a corridor with frequent transit service. These special provisions include a CEQA exemption for projects that meet environmental and land use criteria, a "sustainable communities environmental assessment" that is similar to a mitigated negative declaration, or an EIR (for those projects that can't mitigate all impacts) that does not have to take into consideration cumulative impacts that have been addressed and mitigated in a prior EIR. SB 375 also allows communities to legislate traffic mitigation in advance rather administering it on a case-by-case basis. Communities can, for example, legislate policies that exempt transit priority projects from additional mitigations. SB 375 authorizes local governments to require any kind of mitigation, from street and road improvements to transit passes and transit contributions.

The City needs to create more detailed land use designations and implementation strategies for station areas that are in or adjacent to its industrial preservation areas.

The City of Los Angeles has inventoried industrial land citywide and determined which areas should remain industrial – thereby helping ensure there is room for job-creating industry within city limits – and which should be allowed to convert to other uses. Many transit lines – including the Expo Line in South Los Angeles, the Gold Line in Boyle Heights, and the Vermont-Beverly station on the Red Line – traverse neighborhoods that need stable jobs and that are in or near these industrial zones. But some jobs are more transit-oriented than others – warehousing, for example, doesn't provide many transit riders – and it will be important that the city encourage the right kinds of jobs to locate in industrial preservation zones with or adjacent to transit stations. Food services, professional, scientific and technical professions are the sectors that generate the most transit ridership in Los Angeles, according to the US Census. Zoning, design and parking standards must be tailored to fit the needs of these businesses and the transportation needs of their employees.

While TOD can promote economic development and job growth, many local decision-makers do not yet see this connection.

Because unemployment rates were nearly 13 percent in Los Angeles County in late 2009 when the focus groups were convened, people who attended cited economic development as a clear priority for TOD. Chapter III includes a discussion about some of the ways that TOD and transit access can contribute to economic development.

Extensive transit networks can promote a healthy economy by helping to keep the cost of living down for employees and helping to keep the cost of doing business down for employers while at the same time providing access to the regional workforce. During the past 30 years, many large employers in Los Angeles followed workers to out to the suburbs. The downtown Los Angeles focus group complained that the reason there are no Fortune 500 companies headquartered downtown is because there is no regional transit system to keep costs down and provide access to a broad pool of workers. Although many employers are now moving back to downtowns across the U.S. this has not happened to a significant degree in Los Angeles.

To ensure that the regional workforce can, in fact, take advantage of transit, the City will need to consider the role that transit plays in influencing the jobs-housing balance. As the major job center with access to the regional workforce from all directions and by all modes, downtown Los Angeles functions as a key destination on the transit system. While there have been and continue to be some opportunities for residential development within the downtown, the long-term focus should be on strengthening downtown as an anchor for regional employment growth. Conversely, increasing the supply of housing in job centers outside of downtown can also promote economic development while minimizing traffic by improving the jobs-housing balance. Such a strategy can, in the long run, result in more job growth in these places by reducing the number of workers who have to commute from long distances.

FUNDING AND PRIORITIZATION OF INVESTMENTS

Given the fiscal constraints of the City of Los Angeles, the Planning Department and other City agencies do not have the resources they need to fund planning around stations citywide. On the contrary, focus group participants reported that planning initiatives are typically undertaken only when funding is available, rather than when they are most needed. These funding limitations pose a serious challenge to successful TOD, and the situation is likely to get worse before it gets better because of the state's budget crisis. Rather than enumerating these challenges, however, this section focuses on opportunities for improving the administration and leverage of existing funding sources.

A wide range of actors are responsible for implementing and planning TOD, including the city's planning, housing and transportation departments and other agencies such as the CRA, Metro, HACLA, and the Mayor's Office, individual city council offices, and non-profit and for-profit groups including affordable housing and community development organizations. Given that there are so many actors it is no surprise that there is a lack of coordination when it comes to funding, even though resources are scarce across all organizations. A citywide TOD strategy that lays out the roles of all of the actors could provide a comprehensive plan for investment in TOD that pools limited resources with the goal of funding common goals and strategies.

Better coordination and understanding of existing funding sources for station area improvements is needed.

Focus group members said that having greater clarity about available funding sources and a mechanism for coordinating them and leveraging them is key. Although a range of funding sources exists, there is no clearinghouse or easily accessible resource guide for anyone seeking information about resources for station area planning and improvements. Compiling a complete list of resources takes time, money, and often requires previous experience with these funding sources. In some cases, departments or agencies such as the CRA have pieced together funding sources. For example, CRA staff has been working in the Vermont/Sunset station area to improve pedestrian access to the station and enhance linkages to Barnsdall Park. Piecing together financing is a major component of any project, and this information gap presents a serious challenge to efforts to promote TOD.

The three major categories of financing and investments that take place around a station area are:

1. Infrastructure Investments
2. Planning Investments
3. Housing and Community Development Investments

The following subsections discuss funding successes and offers suggestions for improvement, based on the comments made by the focus groups.

1. Infrastructure Investments

The expanded regional transit network that will be funded by Measure R can provide the armature for growth and development. But further investments are needed for local circulators that can provide "first mile/last mile" connections between transit riders and their destinations. These circulator services can also help move workers and residents around neighborhoods even if they don't use the regional transit network.

The downtown DASH bus system – with its frequent (5-minute headways) service and small propane-powered buses – has proved hugely successful as a local circulator that provides connections between transit stations and jobs, housing and other destinations. But the City of Los Angeles and Southern California Association of Governments are investigating other options, including a "Smart Mobility" demonstration project that will link community colleges, vocational schools, public social services and jobs with transit. Transit riders will be able to arrange to have the vehicle of their choice – ranging from electric bikes to Segues to a car-sharing vehicle, for example – waiting for them at a station by utilizing information services ranging from the Internet to GPS systems. A demonstration project is being launched at Union Station and the Civic Center Red Line station. Other options being studied include:

- Casual carpooling: Drivers meet passengers at designated locations and transport them to transit stations. These ad hoc carpools are popular in the Bay Area.
- Zone-based taxi fares: People often avoid taxis because they don't know how much a ride will cost. But if fares were based on distance instead of time traveled passengers would know the cost ahead of time, and this could facilitate travel to stations.
- Car-sharing: Privately operated car-sharing programs have not succeeded in LA, but city-supported car-sharing may be viable because in addition to serving members such a program could also help reduce the cost of maintaining the city's vehicle fleet, and costs could be offset by advertising.
- Short-term car rental: Like car-sharing but membership wouldn't be required.
- Bike-sharing: The city code could be modified to allow bike share lockers and locations on government property. Developers could be encouraged to provide for both bike and car-sharing on their property in lieu of funding road mitigations. Or the city could embark on its own program and offset costs with advertising.
- Folding bikes on transit: It is legal to bring a folding bike, but not a regular bike, onto trains and buses at all times. LA Metro is considering subsidizing the cost of folding bikes to encourage usage.

Focus group members praised LA Metro's Call for Projects, which every other year allocates discretionary federal, state and local transportation funding to public agencies through a competitive process. The total available funding varies, from a low of $160 million to a high of $800 million in recent years. A significant share of the funding goes to bike, ped, transportation demand management and other enhancement projects. In 2009, for example, out of a total pot of $265 million, $38 million was spent on pedestrian improvements, $34 million on bikes, $12 million on TDM, and $8 million on other enhancement projects. Sixteen years ago, when the program began, the pot of money for peds and bikes totaled just $1 million each.

2. Planning Investments

With 70 fixed-guideway transit stations, and several new lines in the works, many Los Angeles communities would benefit from a specific plan to guide growth and encourage TOD. In fact, SCAG's Compass Blueprint 2 Percent Strategy recommends accommodating the projected growth of 6 million residents by 2035 by developing just 2 percent of regional land at higher densities along major transportation corridors and especially in station areas. The plan recommends significant mixed-use development and walkability, and preserving existing open space and stable residential neighborhoods. But channeling so much growth into station areas requires good planning, and station area plans cost several hundred thousand dollars – an investment that is possible at only a few stations.

One way to address this obstacle is to develop a strategic plan that will prioritize stations for investment and development and make it clear where the development opportunities are significant enough to justify investing in a station area plan. In response to passage of the FasTracks ballot measure in Denver, for example, which provided for the construction of six rail lines and many stations, the city and county developed a TOD Strategic Plan (with the help of Reconnecting America and the Center for TOD) that prioritized stations for planning efforts and infrastructure investments. The strategic plan has been credited with guiding implementation efforts during the past three years, and has helped galvanize support for TOD in the region.

Strategic plans are necessary, especially now that city budgets are constrained because of the economy, to ensure that existing funding and resources are targeted to locations where they will have the greatest

impact. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has already identified ten station areas that have the potential to become sustainable transit communities, and he is working with SCAG to identify an additional 10 stations for priority investment. The typology and station area profiles completed for this report provide a quantitative framework to assist planners in prioritizing station investment. Potential factors for determining priority locations (described in more detail in Chapter III) include:

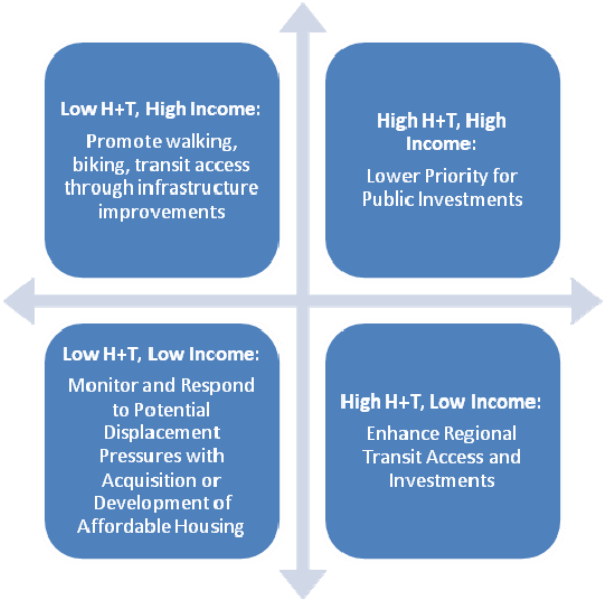
- Station areas with low transportation costs and potential for increased residential density.
- Areas with significant development opportunity and community support for development.
- Neighborhoods at risk for destabilization and vulnerable populations.
- Station areas with significant employment clusters and opportunities for economic growth.
- Stations with mobility barriers and existing high ridership.

3. Housing and Community Development Investments

Low- and moderate-income housing development should be focused in transit-rich areas because of the lower transportation costs, which makes these neighborhoods inherently more affordable. But there are many types of investments and regulations that can provide opportunities for households of all incomes to live near transit, from the preservation of existing affordable units, to the enforcement of rent control policies, to development of new affordable or mixed-income housing projects.

Understanding factors such as potential for displacement, recent demographic changes, current transportation costs, and other indicators identified in Chapter III can provide guidelines for prioritizing station areas for investment, and understanding the type of investment that is most appropriate. A TOD Strategic Plan could provide guidelines for prioritizing station areas for different types of investment. For example, transportation costs and median household incomes could be evaluated for all station areas, which could then be grouped into four categories that indicate the type of investment that would be most appropriate, and the priority for that investment, as shown in **Figure 28**.

Figure 28: Investment Priority Screen based on Income, and Housing + Transportation Costs



Conclusion

TOD is truly joint development that must involve the coordination of several city departments and public agencies and the co-leveraging of significant resources for planning and infrastructure improvements around stations (not to mention private involvement). Mounting station area planning efforts at all 70 stations is cost-prohibitive, but creating partnerships and working groups would help departments and agencies achieve common goals in station areas: TOD can provide a cost savings for households in station areas, increase transit ridership and decrease driving and greenhouse gas emissions, improve access to jobs and workers and decrease the cost of living and the cost of doing business for employers and employees, provide opportunities for economic development, and promote public health. There are many examples of successful partnerships and collaborations to attain shared goals in the city, including the collaboration that resulted in a revision of downtown street standards, LA Metro's Call for Projects funding, SCAG's Compass Blueprint plan and demonstration projects, LAHD participation in the Avenue 26/Lincoln Heights TOD project, the CRA's Crenshaw Vision and Implementation Plan, to cite just a few examples. But the heightened importance of station areas for development, especially given the GHG emission reductions required by SB 375, and the scarcity of resources will require even greater coordination on the part of all public stakeholders, and a focus on those places where resources can leverage the most benefit.