How Cities Set the Table For Transit

Steven Higashide, TransitCenter
All Transportation is Local workshop | 3.23.18
@shigashide | @TransitCenter
Frequent, fast transit is most important to riders:

- Higher frequency
- Faster travel time on bus
- Lower fare
- Real-time info at stop, app
- Shelter at bus stop
- Eliminate transfer
- More fare payment options
- More available seating
- Better on-time performance
- Bus stop closer to home
- Trees + sidewalks en route to stop
- Power outlets + Wi-Fi on bus

Relative importance of different transit service improvements, Who’s On Board 2016
Most transit riders reach transit on foot—especially frequent transit riders.
A recipe for transit ridership:
Fast, frequent, walkable, reliable!
Silver Line Ridership In Tysons Well Below Metro Estimates
Lack of sidewalks blamed in internal WMATA analysis

“Parking is abundant, and good pedestrian facilities are lacking in many places,” Metro planners said in the analysis.

For instance, an estimated 4,000 jobs are cut off from the Greensboro station because of a lack of

Transit to unwalkable places often underperforms
Cincinnati Streetcar Ridership Falls Below Expectations

With Cincinnati's streetcar close to its one-year anniversary, ridership projections have fallen short of expectations.
Austin Capital Metro ridership, 1/2018 vs. 1/2017

- Local bus: -10.7%
- Commuter rail: -9.7%
- MetroRapid bus: +35.4%

Fast, frequent, walkable transit has continued to perform.
Have clear goals for transit and articulate the city’s vision

**MOVING THE MUSIC CITY: OUR VISION FOR 2020**

1. 20,000 workers in Nashville are commuting using active transportation (transit, biking and walking).

2. Double our current number of residents who are within a half-mile of frequent transit service (every 15 minutes or better).

Transit action plans should include:

- “Why transit” (i.e. growth, affordability)
- **Goals** (i.e. more residents near frequent transit)
- **Targets** (i.e. create 14 frequent bus routes)
Reflect transit priorities in city staffing

Hire transit expertise; create dedicated transit positions or teams

Examples: Seattle DOT Transit Division, Denver Moves Program.
Understand where to speed up transit

Prioritizing buses on 7 miles of Boston-area streets would speed trips for >20% of bus riders (92,000 people).

Source: CTPS
Understand how to speed up transit

City tools:

- Bus-only lanes & queue jumps
- Boarding islands
- Signal priority
Develop walkable neighborhoods around high-frequency rail and bus
Rewrite rules that make it hard to build walkable places

Denver’s Plan to Turn Its Lifeless Parking Crater Into a Walkable, Bikeable Neighborhood

There’s a sparkling long-term vision to replace parking lots with a place conducive to street life.

By David Sachs | Mar 12, 2018 | 2

“The problem is, there’s no way to build it under current zoning rules, which require large amounts of parking.

Enter Community Planning and Development’s ‘Central Platte Valley-Auraria District’ plan...”

- Streetsblog Denver
Stop asking developers to widen roads and intersections as a way to “mitigate” traffic.
Ask developers for improvements that enable transportation choice.
“Field guide” for city leaders: 21 strategies with examples from over three dozen cities

- How cities can hire the right transportation leaders
- Working with civic allies
- Land use, parking, and development policy
- Curb management, street design, and TDM
City leaders – working with civic leaders and agency champions – make change happen.

Thank you!

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