



Metro

April 7, 2006

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ROGER SNOBLE 
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: CAROL INGE 
INTERIM CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

SUBJECT: LAND USE, ZONING AND REVENUE IMPACTS

ISSUE

At the Executive Management and Audit Committee Board meeting on 6/14/2005, Board Member Ed Reyes requested Metro staff to present examples of successful scenarios where zoning changes have been used to promote housing and increase revenues from transit usage. While virtually every development near Metro's stations has required discretionary acts from the local Planning Commission, and in all cases increases in densities or improved development form have provided both additional riders or improved revenues.

BACKGROUND

In order to achieve higher density and better land use/transportation integration, the current institutional zoning and land use codes, and laws effecting developments near transit facilities require adaptation to facilitate the mixed use and higher density development being proposed around transit stations.

The City of Los Angeles (City) has adopted a transit framework plan that acts as a guiding policy document for city planning efforts. The Transportation Element of the City's General Plan recognizes that the link between land use and transportation can lead to reductions of vehicle trips. The Transportation Element provides goals, objectives, standards, policies and programs to meet both the mobility and air quality challenges faced by the City of Los Angeles.

The City has generally advocated a policy for transit supporting development, and is currently working to translate this policy into a citywide implementation framework. The successes that the City has in Transit Oriented Development (TOD) are largely predicated on the City's active support and positive responses to specific development proposals. These projects are largely outside the institutional zoning designations and zoning codes associated with these development sites. As an example, the Hollywood/Highland development above one of the Hollywood Boulevard Metro Red Line Stations required numerous exceptions to the zoning and density designations for this location. The City

Planning Department supported the project through the numerous discretionary planning actions.

In some cases the City has adopted Specific Plans (MacArthur Park, Avenue 57 and Avenue 26) that anticipate the potential of mixed use and higher density developments that are likely around these stations. The City Planning Department is working with Metro to create a broader zoning category that allows higher density and mixed use transit adjacent development through a "Transit Overlay Zone". Proposed projects in this overlay zone would have some level of pre-approval if they included potential transit servicing uses and TOD type building forms.

The City, through its housing department, has also adopted affordable housing incentives to increase affordable housing. Current discussions with the City include encouraging funding "set-asides" for affordable housing development in proximity to transit stations. These discussions with the City are ongoing.

The experience of the City of Los Angeles has been similar to the experiences of other cities along the rail system. The Cities of Pasadena, South Pasadena, Azusa and Glendora have all adopted projects and land uses that respond to either planned or constructed rail stations. The increase in densities or the reductions in other traditional development requirements (such as reducing parking) were encouraged to assist higher density developments near planned or constructed rail stations. They, as did the City of Los Angeles, reacted to specific proposals and adapted their land use plans and zoning to "fit" the proposed development. The City of Los Angeles has begun the base work for more broadly applicable development and planning guidelines based largely on the successes and examples of those transit supporting developments already in place.

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