

Policy Checklist: How to Craft a High Quality Station Area Plan

The following is a checklist of recommended policies to implement the various aspects of great community design covered in the preceding handouts and is directed at community group leaders as a tool for reviewing draft station area plans, preliminary reports or plan alternatives.

Affordable Housing

- Is there an inclusionary housing policy requiring provision of a minimum percentage all new units to be affordable to all income levels? If the plan area is within a redevelopment zone does the city set aside more than 20% of the tax increment for affordable housing?
- Is your city pursuing funding mechanisms such as housing trust funds and commercial linkage fees to support affordable housing production? Are parking requirements reduced for affordable units?

Compact Development

- Are recommended residential densities (# of units/acre) within a 1/2 mile of the transit station greater than the surrounding areas?
- Are recommended designs sensitive to the surrounding community? Are there a variety of amenities included, such as: logical walkways connecting entries to surrounding destinations; a mix of shops or services in addition to housing; ample and well planned landscaping; reduced emphasis on parking lots or structures?

Traffic-Lite: Great Communities Have Less Traffic

- Are there clear requirements or incentives for transportation demand management (TDM) measures including: free transit passes to new residents and employees; funding for staff to coordinate a parking district or transportation improvement district; in-lieu fees instead of building parking; traffic impact fees to fund citywide traffic reduction programs; unbundling parking costs?
- Is there a policy that requires measurement of modal shift from vehicles towards walking, biking and transit trips within the stations area to measure the success of traffic reduction from TDM implementation?
- Is there a complete streets policy that accounts for the need to accommodate all modes of transportation from cars, bicycles, pedestrians and the disabled? Does the plan include specific standards for sidewalk widths, bicycle parking requirements or references to an adopted pedestrian or bicycle plan?
- Are there policies that prioritize completion of pedestrian, bicycle and transit network with the Station Plan Area?

Rational Parking

- Are parking requirements lower within a half mile of the transit area than in the rest of the city?
- Are there parking maximums instead of minimums (parking maximum of 1.0 spaces per unit or less)?
- Are the parking requirements for retail and commercial areas at most 2 spaces per 1,000 s.f.?

- Are there plans to charge for street parking (metered parking) and priced to result in 85% capacity? If so have talks with the business community been held to explore funding of a Streetscape Improvement District that pays for street furniture, maintenance, clean ups, landscaping and general beautification?
- Does the city have a parking management strategy with possible public structured parking lots that would allow parking for multiple uses to be shared?
- Are there policies in place to allow or require unbundling the cost of constructing parking from constructing housing?

Preventing Displacement

- Are there policies to ensure that some or all of the following are being considered? No net loss for affordable homes; a replacement policy that keeps affordable housing within the station area if they are relocated due to new construction; a “speculation tax” to discourage outside investors from buying up property just to fix it up and turn it around for a quick profit; charging a linkage fee of new employers that would put funding towards workforce housing?

Incorporate Community Benefits

- What percentage of the homes will be affordable to people earning the median income and less? How will the city make sure affordable housing is included?
- Will construction workers and employees in new commercial spaces be paid a prevailing or living wage? Are there ways to make sure local residents are hired for some of the jobs (such as First Source Hiring Agreements)? If so are there reporting mechanisms in place to monitor the results, years after the project is built?
- Are the buildings required to meet green building or LEED standards?
- Are public parks included as part of the development? Have maintenance or program funds been identified?
- Are there new community services and/or facilities created as part of the development?

Designing for Biking and Walking

- Are barriers to pedestrian and bicycle access to the transit station mapped? Are there specific recommendations, preliminary cost estimates and funding identified for improvements?
- Is there a continuous network of sidewalks, walkways and bikeways throughout the 1/2 mile surrounding station area? Does this network connect the primary destinations (station, shops, offices, jobs, and community services)?
- Are there policies in place to require pedestrian amenities such as benches, lighting, landscaping, water fountains, public art, directional signage, and trash cans, within the public right of way?

Creating Quality Public Spaces

- Are there a variety of public spaces from active playgrounds and passive gardens or walkways? Are these spaces easily accessed with obvious paths and located near street activity to enhance safety?
- Do the public spaces include appropriate landscaping that compliments local weather and enhances use throughout the year? Are public space features in scale with the surroundings and size of the space?
- Are there plans for longterm maintenance of public spaces if owned by the city?