

Transit Station and Transit Zone Evaluations



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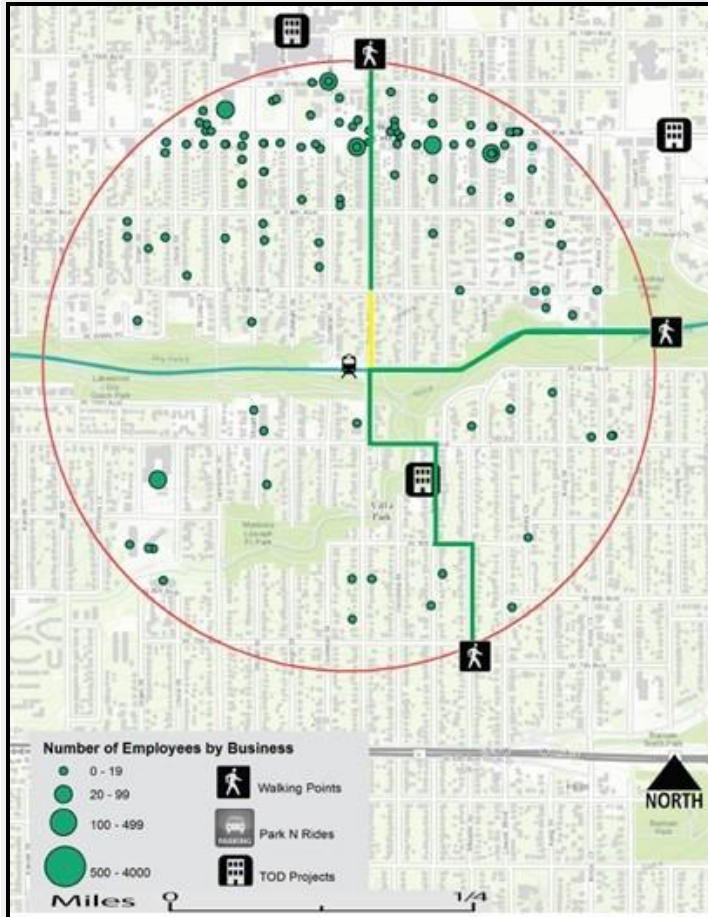
Honor Award: Student/Recent Graduate Projects

*Master Of Urban and Regional Planning Fall 2014 Studio
CU Denver College of Architecture & Planning*



The UC Denver Master of Urban and Regional Planning Fall 2014 Studio conducted assessments on transit-oriented development (TOD) accessibility, development patterns, and business development at 45 stations along the RTD Southeast, Southwest, and West lines. The findings and lessons learned from these assessments were used to inform the objective of a research team from the UC Denver's College of Architecture and Planning and School of Public Affairs (CAP/SPA Research Team) to plan for affordable housing along the Gold Line corridor scheduled to open in 2016. Working with the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) and its member jurisdictions, the CAP/SPA Research Team developed a list of recommended sites for affordable housing and mixed-income and mixed-use development around the stations along the future Gold line corridor.

In order to better understand TOD in the U.S., each student conducted case study research and assessments on exemplar TODs, including how each compares to the four DRCOG criteria: affordability, accessibility, jobs and economic development, and site development.



Incorporating the lessons learned from the case studies, the studio employed a variety of research methods to analyze the four criteria around the existing RTD stations. One of these methods was an innovative mobile survey tool to gather primary data related to quality of walk, connectivity, and walk times for three half-mile walking points at each of the stations. Collectively the studio students walked 131 miles! The walking point primary data along with secondary data such as housing density, affordable housing, business, employment, demographics, and zoning were used to score and rank the stations. The scoring method was developed to draw the attention of local and regional decision makers to the successes and challenges of planning, developing, and monitoring TOD around the stations. Additionally, students participated in a blindfold tour of downtown led by Claudia Folska, RTD District E Director, that provided invaluable knowledge and experience that was applied to the accessibility analysis of the station areas.

Finally, five-page transit zone summary reports were developed for each station and used to support recommendations made by the research team to DRCOG. These detailed yet concise station area evaluations provide grounded primary evidence of the need for regional support to fund, plan, and coordinate first and last mile connections, investment in infrastructure, affordable housing, workforce training, and innovative urban designs that promote equity and walkability.