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The Contradictions of Smart Growth: Transit-Oriented Development, Affordable Housing and Community Vision –The case of the Lamar/Justin Lane TOD, Austin, Texas

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To Aunty Kalei “Snuffy” Pamela Shaw (January 6, 1957 to April 25, 2014). *Aloha hui hou*

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The Contradictions of Smart Growth: Transit-Oriented Development, Affordable Housing and Community Vision –The Case of the Lamar/Justin Lane TOD, Austin, Texas

by

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

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Smart Growth is a comprehensive approach to planning that aims to shape more compact and well-connected communities across the United States. Among its principles are leveraging existing infrastructure, developing around transit, providing a mix of housing types and price ranges, and increasing community participation in the planning process. However, research suggests the comprehensive approach at times obscures potential tensions between these principles, in particular when Smart Growth principles are applied to a specific property. This is the case in Austin, Texas' Lamar/Justin Lane TOD, where the City of Austin is currently evaluating development scenarios for a publicly-owned 5.6 acre parcel located within the TOD area. How equity and access is addressed in Smart Growth comes to fore in conversations between the City and affluent, neighborhood residents. This report examines the history of Smart Growth, reviews its implementation in cities across the U.S., and considers how the City of Austin may learn from other cities.

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Introduction

Smart Growth is a comprehensive approach to planning and urban form endorsed by the American Planning Association (APA) that is significantly shaping planning practice across the US. It seeks to influence the urban growth process in order to create cities that are more livable, sustainable, and resilient. As a framework for planning it presents a preferred alternative to the "sprawling, single-use, car-oriented projects" (Porter, Douglas and Cuddy, 2006) that have historically dominated the growth patterns in the United States. Such a comprehensive approach has been missing from planning, which has led to the auto-dependent communities that dominate the urban and suburban landscape today.

There are seven Smart Growth principles that provide planning practitioners with a guide to transform cities and influence how and where they grow:

- Compact, mixed-use forms of development that create distinctive places and encourage neighborliness; enable convenient travel by foot, bike, and transit as well as automobiles; allow efficient provisions of infrastructure; and provide for conservation of open lands
- Expand choices of living and working environments that meet the needs of America's increasingly diverse households, including housing for all income levels with convenient access to employment and basic services

- Re-use, adaptation, and redevelopment of unused and underused properties that afford opportunities for revitalizing existing neighborhoods, commercial centers, and employment nodes
- Conversion of open lands that support productive natural resources (such as farming and forests), provide recreational opportunities, and maintain natural landscapes, wildlife, and hydrologic systems
- Increased access to a variety of travel choices that provide for convenient and efficient movement of people and goods
- Efficient use and expansion of infrastructure systems that support urban development and provide civic amenities for pleasant living
- Application of these principles through participatory decision-making processes that recognize regional concerns. (Porter, Douglas and Cuddy, 2006)

Cities are encouraged to utilize the smart growth principles to achieve more sustainable, livable, and responsible communities. This means that the malleable nature of these principles enables cities to build localized plans and solutions to achieve their own development goals. However, this comprehensive approach in some cases can obscure potential conflicts between different smart growth principles. Miller and Hoel argue that the tensions and possible contradictions between smart growth principles are exposed when a specific development or planning initiative is proposed to a community, and the community is brought into the planning conversation (2002). In some cases, the parties

involved in such specific planning initiatives prioritize and rank the smart growth principles differently, thus revealing the inherent contradictions of smart growth.

In particular, such tensions often come to the fore in cases of transit-oriented development (TOD) in affluent areas where mixed-income housing is proposed, since such development may be in conflict with current residents' interests or preferences. In order to understand the friction underlying these debates, one must examine the vision that residents have for their community's future versus the vision that smart growth presents for the city and region as a whole. Comprehending the differences in perspectives for future land-uses is critical in order to develop a shared vision that accommodates potential differences between smart growth principles, in particular in rapidly growing cities such as Austin, Texas.

In 2012, Austin adopted a new master plan, *Imagine Austin*, which embraces the Smart Growth principle of compact and connected growth as a means to reduce sprawl, increase transportation choices, protect natural resources, increase prosperity for all residents and maintain its existing mix of amenities (2012). However, although thousands of Austinites helped shape the vision for Austin's future, tensions between different smart growth principles are inherent in the plan and have resulted in conflicts surrounding plan implementation. The purpose of this professional report is to examine how the tensions between affordable housing and parkland in transit-oriented developments are exposed through a public involvement process.

The focus of the report is the City's proposed redevelopment of a parcel on Ryan Drive as part of the Lamar/Justin Lane TOD. The City suggests that this would be an ideal spot to locate affordable or mixed-income housing due to its location in a designated activity center and its close proximity to transit (both rail and bus; in 2014 bus rapid transit will also be available) (City of Austin, 2013b). However, community members in the surrounding area express explicit interest that the whole parcel be transformed to parkland. Austin Energy, a department of the City of Austin and a publicly owned utility company, owns the parcel. Due to the fact that it is a city owned property, the City's Neighborhood Housing & Community Development has the option to purchase the property before private developers in order to increase affordable or mixed-income housing in the TOD zone (City of Austin, 2013a). Currently the City of Austin is in dialogue with the community regarding how the parcel should be developed, and City Council has still not made a final decision about the parcel's future development

The current dialogue regarding the Ryan Drive parcel offers an opportunity to examine the tensions that exist between perhaps incommensurable aspects of Smart Growth. In order to contribute to our understanding of the potential contradictions inherent to Smart Growth, I pose the following research questions: First, what is the history of Smart Growth and how have these tensions come to fore in other TOD projects? Secondly, what are the issues of equity and access that arise from the conversation surrounding the future development of the Austin Energy parcel? And third, how are city planners responding to

residents' perspectives and weighing the principles of Smart Growth, as expressed in city plans and ordinances, against the desires of the neighborhood as expressed by members of the neighborhood association?

In order to address my research questions, I attended two public meetings in October and December of 2013 about the development of the parcel in order to observe the public involvement process and understand the concerns of residents. To provide a fuller understanding of the community's wants, I also carefully reviewed and analyzed statements on the online public forum the City dedicated to the event at its SpeakUp Austin website. On the City staff side, I interviewed a representative from the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development department about how the parcel could be leveraged to provide the neighborhood with parkland and the city-at-large with needed affordable housing units, and his perspective about why the community was resistant to the idea of affordable housing. Additionally, I spoke with a planner from TOD division of Austin's Planning and Development Review Department about the public involvement process, the department's ideal development scenario, and her assessment of residents' positions regarding the parcel's development. To understand more about the socio-economic status of the residents compared to Austin as a whole, I consulted U.S. Census data and American Community Survey data. In addition, I reviewed and analyzed the *Imagine Austin* plan document and its guiding policies, specifically the TOD Ordinance that regulates TODs in Austin and the Station Area Plan and Regulating Plan for the Lamar/Justin Lane TOD. The research illuminated how the City of Austin is incorporating

and operationalizing Smart Growth in the master plan and Station Area Plan, and provided insights into the neighborhood organization's goals and vision for the parcel.

I begin in the next chapter by reviewing the history of Smart Growth and presenting examples of successful transit-oriented developments that have been able to comply with seemingly contradictory principles. In chapter 2, on the other hand, I focus on how Smart Growth principles may obscure tensions between affordable housing and parkland/public space in transit-oriented developments. The third chapter will provide an overview of the City of Austin, including its history and growth trends, recent growth, and the *Imagine Austin* plan. Chapter four will present the transit-oriented development zone and current conditions, and review the different development scenarios for the Ryan Drive parcel and each stakeholder groups' vision for the future of the parcel. Finally, in the Conclusion I will review the principal findings of the case study and discuss implications for future planning research and practice.

Chapter 1: Smart Growth Approach

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the Smart Growth approach to planning. It will present the history of Smart Growth as a concept, specifically focusing on definitions put forth by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the APA. A brief summary of how the term gained traction and the reasoning behind it all will also be presented. The U.S. EPA's definition was selected for discussion because of the organization's deep involvement with the movement beginning in the 1990's (Knaap, 2006; Ye, 2005). However, it is the APA's definition of Smart Growth and its principles that are the primary subject of interest for this report. Finally, a brief summary of successful operationalization of these principles from the State of Maryland will be presented.

History and Definition of Smart Growth

Smart Growth is an approach to planning that has existed as a concept since the 1990's and currently it is officially endorsed by over 40 organizations – public, private, and non-governmental – in the United States (Smart Growth Network, 2014). Some of the most prominent groups that support the Smart Growth planning framework are the APA, the EPA, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Smart Growth America, and Smart Growth Network (Ye, 2005). The origin of the term "Smart Growth" is difficult to pinpoint, although its roots can be found in the growth control and growth management movements of the 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's (Knaap, 2006; Ye, 2005). Smart Growth's antecedents were reactions to post World War II

sprawl, characterized by segregated land uses and the predominance of single-family, large lot housing and auto-based transportation related to the massive post-WWII highway and road building programs (Ye, 2005). These segregated land-uses and large lots began to change the landscape of America's cities, posing serious environmental threats and leading to decreases in open space and agricultural land.

During the 1990's multiple organizations began defining Smart Growth using their own terms. Around 1996 the EPA released at least one of its two definitions of Smart Growth (Knaap, 2006; Ye, 2005). While the two definitions differ only slightly, the definition offered by the State and Local Climate and Energy Programs was selected for the purposes of this Professional Report. It defines Smart Growth as:

> A range of development, land use planning and conservation strategies that help protect our natural environment and make our communities more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially divers. Smart Growth development is town-centered, transit and pedestrian oriented, and has a greater mix of housing, commercial and retail uses. It also preserves open space and many other environmental amenities. (EPA, n.d.)

During the same time period, the APA published two sets of working papers to codify Smart Growth. These initial papers, *Modernizing State Planning Statutes: The Growing Smart Working Papers, Vol. 1* Planning Advisory Services Report No. 462/463 and *Vol.2* Report No.

480/481 were published in 1996 and 1998, respectively. Each of these reports informed the final book *The Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook: Model Statutes for Planning and the Management of Change*, which was published in 2002. In the same year the APA adopted its own definition of Smart Growth as growth, as follows:

> [Smart Growth] supports choice and opportunity by promoting efficient and sustainable land development, incorporates redevelopment patterns that optimize prior infrastructure investments, and consumes less land that is otherwise available for agriculture, open space, natural systems and rural lifestyles. Supporting the rights of Americans to choose where and how they live, work, and play enables economic freedom for all Americans. (American Planning Asssociation, 2002)

Other institutions that are affiliated with the Smart Growth Network, such as HUD, USDA, the Urban Land Institute, and the Trust for Public Land, have all offered their own definitions (Ye, 2005). It is important to note that many definitions, especially the preliminary definitions, offer a weak stance on equity and access despite purporting that it is an approach to planning for "all Americans" (American Planning Association, 2012, p. 5).

It has been argued that the Standard City Planning and Zoning Enabling Acts of the 1920s enabled sprawl to begin with, since it created the zoning tool to segregate uses and was eventually utilized to segregate racially as well (American Planning Asssociation, 2002; Tretter, 2013). However, many other factors also contributed to the suburban sprawl that

dominates today's landscape. First, the Standard City Planning and Zoning Enabling Acts of 1920 created the zoning tool, which enabled cities to be segregated (American Planning Asssociation, 2002). Housing construction during the New Deal also served to eventually concentrate poverty and race in the inner cities, which in turn led to white flight (Jackson, 1985). This was exacerbated first by the Federal Highway Act of 1916, and then the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 and private automobile ownership made accessing previously remote areas easier (Jackson, 1985). Additionally incentives, such as tax deductions, the GI Bill and the protection the Home Owners Loan Corporation provided to small homeowners, also contributed to the rise and continuation of sprawl (Jackson, 1985).

According to the APA, however, Smart Growth is an approach that provides planners with a comprehensive tool set to address the planning issues of the 21st century, from segregated land-uses to environmental issues (2002). By building compactly and incorporating many mixed uses, we can potentially make land more valuable in the economic sense (from tax revenues) but also reap the rewards from maintaining and preserving natural systems (for green infrastructure purposes). Smart Growth provides planners with a new framework so they may be better equipped to address systematic issues of sprawl.

Principles of Smart Growth

By outlining and ratifying a definition of Smart Growth, the APA began to deliberate the principles of this planning approach and eventually developed the "Policy Guide on Smart Growth," which outlines the sixteen guiding principles. The original policy guide was

updated and subsequently adopted by the APA's Board of Directors and Chapter Delegate Assembly on April 14, 2012, 10 years after the original document was ratified (American Planning Association, 2012). The principles of Smart Growth are comprehensive in nature and address all major concerns in urban planning, including economic development, inclusive planning structures and processes, transportation and land development, fiscal efficiency, social equity and community building, farmland protection and land conservation, and healthy communities (American Planning Association, 2012). The principles central to Smart Growth Development are listed as:

A. Efficient use of land and infrastructure

B. Creation and or enhancement of economic value

C. A greater mix of uses and housing choices

D. Neighborhoods and communities focused around human-scale, mixed-use centers

E. A balanced, multi-modal transportation system providing increase transportation choices

F. Conservation and enhancement of environmental and cultural resources

G. Preservation or creation of a sense of place

H. Increased citizen participation in all aspects of the planning process at every level of government

I. Vibrant center city life

J. Vital small towns and rural areas

K. A multi-disciplinary and inclusionary process to accomplish Smart Growth

L. Planning processes and regulations at multiple levels that promote diversity and equity

M. Regional view of community, economy and ecological sustainability

N. Recognition that institutions, governments, businesses and individuals require a concept of cooperation to support Smart Growth

O. Local, state, and federal policies and programs that support urban investment, compact development and land conservation

P. Well defined community edges, such as cultural greenbelts, wildlife corridors or green ways (American Planning Association, 2012)

The principles set forth in the "Policy Guide on Smart Growth" provide professional planners with a comprehensive outline of what the planning process should strive to achieve. However, it is not a binding statute or ordinance, nor does it address how, if, or to what extent equity and access should be incorporated into planning efforts and community involvement. Instead, planners must pursue these principles in practice, and attend to the possible contradictions between these principles.

Operationalization of Smart Growth

The ways that Smart Growth can be implemented depend on the powers that state constitutions allot to cities, municipalities, and counties. Maryland is an example of a state that operationalized the principles and visions of Smart Growth at a statewide level, developing statutes that require all cities, counties, and municipalities to plan in

accordance with Smart Growth principles. In 1997, the Priority Funding Areas (PFA) Act was adopted and codified in §5-7B of Maryland's Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code, giving counties the power to direct urban growth by locally designating areas that are suitable for growth (*Priority Funding Areas*, 1997). These PFAs became eligible for infrastructure projects funding that would support the growth and creating Priority Funding Areas (Ali, 2013; *Priority Funding Areas*, 1997). The 1997 Act also set the required density for PFAs at 3.5 dwelling units per acre. Maryland subsequently introduced Smart Growth at the state level through the Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act, and in 2009 the Act was amended to include the twelve "new Smart Growth visions" (Ali, 2013, p. 120).

In addition to directing growth and increasing density in PFAs, Maryland also designed three programs to incentivize development in line with Smart Growth principles in PFAs, including efficient use of land and infrastructure, greater mix of uses and housing choices, and regional views of community, economy and ecological sustainability. The Job Creation Tax Credit program, which is offered to new businesses that create 25 or more new jobs in the PFAs, addresses the uses of land and infrastructure and the regional views of community and economy (Ali, 2013). By locating within PFAs, businesses would be able to take advantage of the existing infrastructure instead of requiring new infrastructure to be built. The Live Near Where You Work program, furthermore, supports the Job Creation Tax Credit program by offering new homebuyers in certain areas financial assistance (Ali, 2013). Together, the two programs facilitate efficient use of land and infrastructure and a

mix of uses and housing choices if the housing and jobs are located in the same PFA. Finally, the Voluntary Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment program takes into account the regional views of ecological sustainability. By offering assistance and funding for site cleanup, this program makes the redevelopment of previously toxic sites more likely and thus promotes reuse of previously developed land (Ali, 2013).

Ali holds up Montgomery County, MD as a good example of how Smart Growth principles have been operationalized (2013). In addition to the state's Smart Growth statutes, the county also adopted its own land use policies in accordance with Smart Growth principles and has one of the oldest and strongest inclusionary zoning requirements in the country. Developers are required to devote 12.5 to 15% of new developments to be affordable to families at or below 65% median family income (MFI) (Schuetz, Meltzer, & Been, 2009). Montgomery County's adopted many of its Smart Growth policies due to the public concern over the negative effects of urban sprawl, utilizing inclusionary zoning and Smart Growth principles enables low-to-moderate income families access to some of the approach's benefits (Ali, 2013). As of 1986, the county's annual growth policy must be assessed every other year (Ali, 2013). In addition to the state's PFAs, Montgomery county adopted mixed use development and transit oriented development policies to address land use and to manage urban areas (Ali, 2013), as well as other county-level regulations, including the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), as well as the Transfer of Development Rights, Purchase of Development Rights and Open Space/Historic Preservation programs to preserve land in the county. In comparison with

Montgomery County, Fairfax County, Virginia, which is "pro-growth", lost more farmland and saw more sprawl from 1969 to 2007 than Montgomery County (Ali, 2013, p. 126).

Thus the principles of Smart Growth have been successfully implemented at the municipal level in Maryland following the statewide promotion of Smart Growth. However, Smart Growth is not a one-size-fits-all measure. What is possible in one locality or state may not be possible in another. For example, in the State of Texas it would be difficult for county-wide measures to be implemented as successfully as in Maryland, in part because of Texas' "Home Rule," which severely limits counties' authority to raise funds for infrastructure projects. Another challenge confronting the implementation of Smart Growth is that stakeholders take different positions on the different, but sometimes incommensurate goals, inherent to Smart Growth. In the next chapter I will discuss the potential conflicts arising from TOD projects, planned according to Smart Growth principles.

Chapter 2: Smart Growth and TOD: Confluence and Conflict

Smart Growth has been successful in states like Maryland, which have sought to change development patterns that have been entrenched for the past 60 years. However, the application of these principles, especially those pertaining to affordable housing, parkland, and transit-oriented developments, sometimes exposes tensions between them. Tensions are particularly prominent when the public is involved in a dialogue that requires either a compromise between the three principles, or a choice between one or another. This chapter will first look at the relationship between transit-oriented developments and Smart Growth and two successful TOD implementations – one in Oakland, CA the other in Dallas, TX. Next it will examine the tensions that are inherent in Smart Growth itself and the role that consensus-building efforts through public engagement plays in bringing these tensions to light. This review is useful in order to understand how the clash of principles of Smart Growth has led to conflict in the case of TOD development in Austin, which will be the subject of subsequent chapters.

Confluence of TOD and Smart Growth

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) entered the planning dialogue in the late 1980's, and was planted in the national lexicon by Peter Calthorpe in 1991 in the *New York Times* article "Focus: Sacramento, California: A Transit-Oriented Approach to Suburbia" (Carlton, 2009). It is a "neo-traditional" approach to development characterized by an emphasis on mixed uses, increased density, high-quality pedestrian street networks, and close proximity

and access to transit (Carlton, 2009; Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2014). However, TOD is not a new concept in planning. It was influenced by Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities, New Transit Towns and Street Car Suburbs (Carlton, 2009). Prior to WWII and the proliferation of the Interstate System, streetcars and rail systems were the primary modes of transportation which opened up new land to be densely developed (Carlton, 2009). Examples of early developments that presaged the modern concept of TOD can be found in places like Garden City, NY; Baldwin Hills Village in Los Angeles, CA; and Woodbourne in Boston, MA (Carlton, 2009). However, as automobile ownership became more affordable and car travel more feasible in the 1950's, the predominance of development along transit faded and gave way to sprawling suburbs. The size of suburbs and the lack of street connectivity fueled the automobile culture that is predominant today.

In the 1980's interest emerged in focusing urban development along transit lines as a reaction to suburban sprawl. Many different but related concepts – Pedestrian Pockets, Traditional neighborhood Developments, Urban Villages – were experimented with before TOD as an overarching concept emerged (Carlton, 2009). In the 1970s, studies demonstrated that transit ridership in New York City was "related to the intensity of development near transit stations" (Carlton, 2009, p. 3). Calthorpe, then, revived the concepts of concentrated, compact development with a mix of uses and housing types along transit lines, and the development style that emerged eventually became branded as TOD (Carlton, 2009).

Cervero explains that the associated positive synergies around transit may lead to several benefits of TOD (2004). By facilitating dense development through a diversity of land-uses coupled with affordable housing, transit ridership will increase and this in turn will lead to an increase in density. Specifically, according to the Center for Transit-Oriented Development (CTOD) these benefits are as follows:

1. Reduced household driving and thus lowered regional congestion, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions
2. Walkable communities that accommodate more healthy and active lifestyles
3. Increased transit ridership and fare revenue
4. Potential for added value created through increased and/or sustained property values where transit investments have occurred
5. Improved access to jobs and economic opportunity for low-income people and working families
6. Expanded mobility choices that reduce dependence on the automobile, reduce transportation costs and free up household income for other purposes (2014) .

As both Smart Growth and TODs are a reaction to suburban sprawl and environmental issues, it stands to reason that one would support the other. As both concepts developed, stakeholder groups' definition of a TOD became intermingled with the smart-growth principles associated with mixed-use developments and walkable environments that

support transit (Cervero, 2004). In 2004, the Transportation Research Board (TRB) found that successful TOD implementation across the U.S. relied on "some kind of regional vision, policy or plan in place that embraced TOD principles" (2004, p. 446). Furthermore, the TRB study also found that these policies were linked to a smart-growth plan or agenda to address land-use and transportation planning. Since the CTOD's list of TOD benefits aligns with many of the APA's Smart Growth Principles and benefits, many came to view TODs "as a tool for promoting Smart Growth" (Cervero, 2004, p. 3). In fact, there are many examples of TODs at various scales throughout the United States that have supported the principles of Smart Growth. Some of these projects have been developed based on previously existing infrastructure, whereas others are relatively new and have emerged following the announcement of new transit lines.

Successful Integration of TOD and Smart Growth

The San Francisco Bay Area's Fruitvale Valley Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station is a good example of successful TOD built around an existing heavy rail transit system (Cervero, 2004). It is especially significant because the TOD was the vision of a community group, instead of a transit agency or a developer (BART Planning Department, 2002). In Dallas rail transit was recently implemented through the North Central Texas Council of Governments' (NTCCOG). The Plano, Texas Station on the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) system is an example of a successful TOD in the Dallas area (Cervero, 2004).

a. Community Vision and TOD

The San Francisco Bay Area overall has embraced the principles of Smart Growth to address needs for connectivity, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, and problems caused by increasing congestion and demands for affordable housing associated with the steady decrease of available, developable land (Addison, Zhang, & Coomes, 2013; Cervero, 2004). The Fruitvale BART station TOD is a nine-acre site located in southeast Oakland, developed from a community vision (Federal Highway Administration, 2000). In 1991 the local community was outraged about BART's proposed parking structure near the existing Fruitvale Station (Cervero, 2004). A community group, the Unity Council, put forth its own vision for the station area: a mixed-use TOD with retail, mixed- income housing, a library, and community center (Cervero, 2004). After officials reviewed the proposal, BART accepted it and that became the starting point for the existing development that today surrounds Fruitvale Station. In Phase I of the Transit village, 10 of the 47 one- and two- bedroom units are affordable to families with a 30-80% MFI (Scully, 2005; The Unity Council, 2013). Phase II of the plan will include 275 more residential units, with an undisclosed amount of affordable units (Puget Sound Regional Council, n.d.). The strong vision for a mixed-income, mixed-use community that guided the development of Fruitvale Transit Village is relatively uncommon within TOD, but the project continues to be successful as evidenced by the continued construction of Phase II.

A variety of partners were recruited to raise $100 million for the project. In addition to the Federal Transit Authority, the City of Oakland and BART, the Levi-Strauss Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and PG&E Corporation also contributed funds towards the project

(Cervero, 2004). The Fruitvale station area was the first area to be categorized as a TOD district, a zoning classification created specifically for the project to promote mixed-use by allowing "residential, commercial, and civic…activities and…the highest residential densities" (Cervero, 2004, p. 396). Additionally, the city reduced the parking requirement for the project due to the proximity to transit (Cervero, 2004). In 2008, the Fruitvale station saw an average of 7,535 riders enter on a weekday with 5,386 riders originating from home (BART Planning Department, 2002). The station continues to be a popular station. It has a Walk Score of around 89, which is a ranking of how pedestrian friendly versus auto-oriented a community or neighborhood is, the higher the walk score the more pedestrian friendly and walkable the area is. With Fruitvale's Walk Score of 89 and transit connections, it serves as an excellent example of a TOD that emerged from a community vision. Despite a complicated planning process and various institutional obstacles, this has become a viable and heavily frequented TOD.

b. City planned Public-Private Partnerships and TOD

In contrast to the BART TODs, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) in the Greater Dallas area "lacks any regulatory control" (Cervero, 2004, p. 316) intended to promote TODs along the DART system. However, Plano's formerly deserted downtown has witnessed a resurgence due to TOD planning, led by civic leaders and a forward thinking developer who were able to revitalize the area by taking some risks (Cervero, 2004). In the early 1980's, the proliferation of suburban shopping centers and strip malls rendered Plano's downtown economically unviable. Far from an economically vital area, downtown

became home to specialty stores that closed early and had a high occupancy turnover rate (Cervero, 2004). In response to this challenge, in the late 1980's and 1990's the city began the first efforts to revitalize the historic downtown through design interventions such as landscaping and streetscaping (Cervero, 2004). Significant improvements to the town center were also enabled through the 1991 city council approval of a downtown development plan. The plan put in place principles of New Urbanism to pursue redevelopment of the area through infill and reuse in order to create a "compact town center" (Cervero, 2004, p. 307). These improvements were viewed as the groundwork to take advantage of the planned DART station and included a new zoning district called "Business/Government," which enabled mixed-use in the core area. In 1995, DART elected to construct a full-service platform in Downtown Plano instead of the special-event service it had originally planned, and also worked to ensure the business/government district was within the quarter-mile radius of the new station (Cervero, 2004).

In addition, DART and the City of Plano worked together to acquire land near the station for a vertical, mixed-use development on 3.6 acres of land (Cervero, 2004). In 2001 the development, Eastside Village 1, which was designed and constructed by Amicus Partners, was completed and included loft apartments and "ground-floor commercial space…two restaurants, small offices and a community room" (Cervero, 2004, p. 309). The first phase of development was so well received that it quickly went to a 98% occupancy rate and encouraged the development of Eastside Village 2 (Cervero, 2004). Although Phase 1 of Eastside village saw a drop in occupancy (89%) during the construction and opening of

Phase 2, when DART opened Phase 1 went back up to 98% (Cervero, 2004). Robert Shaw of Amicus Partners believes that 25-50% of the new leases are "DART-driven" (Cervero, 2004, p. 309).

Overall, Eastside Village 1 and 2 draw on the Smart Growth principles of compact and connected communities with a mix of uses, housing typologies, and transportation choices. However, although the success of Eastside Village 1 and 2 are a reflection of the benefits of leveraging new public transportation infrastructure for TOD development, this project has proceeded without any intention to pursue affordable housing. TOD was able to thrive in market terms in Plano because leaders focused on creating a sense of place, in part by building on previous efforts starting in the 1980s to revitalize a historic downtown area but without any affordability goals.

Both the Fruitvale and Plano cases offer Austin valuable lessons about the planning of TODs. First, Fruitvale is an example of leveraging a publicly owned property to increase affordable housing options in one of the most expensive places to live in the United States. It is an example of a public-private partnership that valued the community's vision to create a vibrant, mixed-use center. Plano demonstrates that TODs can in fact be successful in Texas. The planning staff seized an opportunity to redevelop its central business district by leveraging DART's arrival. Instead of building a parking lot, it efficiently used the land and planned infrastructure to increase the CBD's economic value by adding dense housing to support rail ridership and entertainment options, like restaurants, shops, and plazas, for

residents to take advantage of. These examples demonstrate that community vision can create successful TODs.

Tensions in TOD and Smart Growth

However, while there are examples around the United States of communities that have successfully merged TOD development with the principles Smart Growth, they are not reflective of the majority of such integrated projects. According to Downs, in most cases, pressure to pursue Smart Growth policies comes from a small minority of the population (2005). Downs suggests there are three groups that make up this minority: environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs), urban planners and local officials, and innovative private real estate developers. In order to pursue Smart Growth, and even TOD, they must persuade the vast majority of the population to accept and support a set of growth strategies that are intrinsic to the planning arena but perhaps not widely known and shared by the public (Downs, 2005). Without a wide network of support, it is no wonder that those pursuing Smart Growth strategies must be selective about the principles that are addressed.

In the Smart Growth paradigm trade-offs are frequently a necessity. First, while cities are attracted to redevelopment that furthers density and multiple uses because this potentially increases tax revenues, cities may be less inclined to pursue affordable housing or parkland since this is not likely to boost tax revenues. Some states utilize growth boundaries as a method to implement Smart Growth, and some cities have implemented open space and

park requirements to provide neighborhoods with open and green space amenities. As the word "boundary" indicates, this limits the amount of developable land available for all uses (Addison et al., 2013; Downs, 2005; O'Connell, 2008), which in turn increases the value of the land, especially in rapidly growing metropolitan areas (Downs, 2004, 2005). When these boundaries are put in place, developers will react to their particular, regional market: simplistically, if the market demands an increase in mixed housing options then the supply side will react accordingly by developing mixed housing. However, if there is demand for single-family homes, then these will command a higher premium and housing in the area will become less and less affordable (American Planning Association, 2012; Carlson & Crawford, 2004; Downs, 2004, 2005).

Another, pronounced tension between TOD and Smart Growth is affordable housing. Few municipalities list affordable housing amongst their top Smart Growth goals or implement policies that would enforce its development (Addison et al., 2013; Carlson & Crawford, 2004; Downs, 2005). One of the primary reason for this resistance or lack of implementation is financial and stems from homeowner interests (Downs, 2005). Downs explains that homeowners make up a majority of the voters and are also vocal members of the citizenry, and this group of voters wants to protect their most valuable asset, i.e. their homes (Downs, 2005). Policies that enable or promote multiple family housing and accessory dwelling units could be used to increase affordable housing; however, these policies are perceived to lower the financial value of homes and are opposed by homeowners (Addison et al., 2013; Downs, 2005). These claims, however, are unsupported,

especially when the affordable or mixed income housing is dispersed throughout the neighborhood or community (Center for Housing Policy, n.d.).

Social factors also fuel opposition to affordable housing in many areas, although such concerns are typically not stated outright. Addison et al. explain that financial motivations enable the market to protect "existing social relations and corresponding political order" (2013, p. 220). Put simply, many believe that the market facilitates a social ranking based on income and ability to pay and typically caters to middle- to high-income needs (Addison et al., 2013). As a result, the majority of voters and well-to-do citizens are comfortable with this market based sorting. While they generally acknowledge that there is a need for affordable housing, their attitude towards it is informed by "not in my backyard" or NIMBYism (Carlson & Crawford, 2004). By implementing Smart Growth policies that increase affordable housing options throughout a city or region, officials would be able to maintain some levels of income diversity. However, mixed-income housing in affluent neighborhoods does not sit well with residents because it may alter the social make-up of the neighborhood and affect the demographics of local schools (Addison et al., 2013; Carlson & Crawford, 2004; Downs, 2004).

Although Smart Growth represents a desired change in long-standing development patterns, planning projects inspired by Smart Growth principles can meet resistance from residents. Much of residents' resistance is based on their ranking of the sometimes incommensurate values inherent in the Smart Growth principles, as demonstrated in the

following examples. At times the resistance emerges because of two different visions of future development, as is the case in Minneapolis-St. Paul. Other times it is an outright resistance to changing the socio-economic heterogeneity of suburban neighborhoods, as in Erie County, NY. The following cases provide the City of Austin with important perspectives about the different ways that public involvement exposes tensions between Smart Growth principles.

Examples of Conflicts in Smart Growth

a. *Minneapolis-St. Paul and Consensus Building*

At the state level in Minnesota, Smart Growth has been touted as a way to develop sustainably, by maintaining green spaces and farmland and offering choices in housing and transit (Brand, 2003). In the late 1990s and early 2000's, the city was working to implement the principles of Smart Growth, "including the preservation of natural resource areas and higher-density development" (Brand, 2003, p. 195). The Metropolitan Council developed a community visioning process to implement the principles and hoped to build consensus amongst community members (Brand, 2003). This visioning process consisted of a community dialogue about balancing anticipated growth and preserving open space, and included stakeholders that would be affected in the short term and long term, such as land-owning stakeholders and any residents that wished to attend the meetings (Brand, 2003).

However, two camps quickly emerged from the process: those that would benefit from the proposed Smart Growth changes, and those who would not. One camp favored the existing "growth pattern of one house every four acres" (BRAND, p 198) coupled with the clustering of high density development in order to preserve natural areas. Those in favor of the Smart Growth changes could potentially prosper economically due to the changes, while the other side saw its potential for economic gains diminished (Brand, 2003).

Due to the deep split between community members, it was not possible for the Metropolitan Council to achieve consensus amongst the two groups (Brand, 2003). However, according to Brand, the consensus-building exercise was helpful in two ways. The first is that it provided community input for municipal and county level governments (Brand, 2003). The input was taken into account by city council when it made decisions regarding the comprehensive plan (Brand, 2003). Second, it was an educational experience for community members since the process informed them about future growth in the community and the region (Brand, 2003). Minneapolis-St. Paul began to embrace Smart Growth principles early on in its development. It serves as an early example of consensus building's importance, especially since in the early 2000's Smart Growth was a drastic departure from the norm. It also demonstrates that both the future vision of growth and economic opportunities are linked in the Smart Growth conversation when the public is brought into the conversation.

b. *Erie County, New York and NIMBYism*

While Minneapolis provided an example a deep split between community members about future development, Erie County in northwestern New York illustrates residents' coalescing against mixed-income housing in suburban communities. Erie County, which in 2010 had a population of 919,040, suffered from a severe lack of affordable housing in the late 2000s (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b). Especially in the major city in Erie County, Buffalo, and its surrounding municipalities, very few suburban areas offered any affordable of mixed-income housing (Patterson & Silverman, 2011). One contributing factor to the lack of affordable and mixed-income housing in the area was exclusionary zoning principles that stipulated minimum lot sizes, which in turn led to economic barriers to developing affordable housing (Patterson & Silverman, 2011). Patterson and Silverman noted that "community resistance in the form of not-in-my-back-yard (NIMBY) efforts" (2011, p. 177) was identified by local administrators, non-profit providers, and elected officials as the primary barrier to entry for affordable housing. Residents who heard about potential affordable developments proposed in their communities would attend public meetings to express opposition to either the specific project or the rezoning propositions (Patterson & Silverman, 2011). Many elected officials stated that they were contacted by residents who were opposed to affordable housing (Patterson & Silverman, 2011).

Erie County's NIMBYism, as most NIMBYism, primarily emerged from the perceived economic and social impacts of affordable housing, including lowered property values and concerns about schools (Patterson & Silverman, 2011). Officials suggest that this resistance stemmed from social stereotypes regarding the people who need affordable housing,

specifically minorities, families, and the disabled. However, in many of these areas affordable housing for the elderly did not face similar levels of opposition (Patterson & Silverman, 2011).

Thus applying Smart Growth principles to specific pieces of land exposes the tension between them, especially when the community is asked to make trade-offs between visions for the future. This can be especially problematic for municipalities, counties, and states that would like to pursue a Smart Growth-oriented planning agenda, including TOD development. There are examples of TODs that have done well as illustrated by the proposed DART stations in Plano, Texas, which prompted and enabled Plano to revitalize its downtown through TOD measures. In Oakland, California, community participation and developer vision enabled the city, BART, Unity Council, and various other organizations to create a transit-oriented village with its first priority being affordability. While TOD's possess the opportunity to provide affordable housing for those who utilize transit as their main transportation choice, it is most times more lucrative for cities to forego affordable housing.

However, Smart Growth itself inhibits affordable housing because of the high costs associated with infill development. Additionally, some states that adopt Smart Growth principles also adopt Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB) that limit the supply of developable land. As the availability of developable land in cities that have enacted UGBs decreases, cities are required to accommodate more people on less land. Other cities such as Austin

have designated desired development areas with higher allowable densities, allowing them to capture population and facilitate job growth. However, both the high cost of infill development and constraints on developable land increase land prices, which are then passed onto consumers unless the city steps in to provide incentives to offer affordable housing. In addition, decreasing the land available to develop also increases the competition between other uses as well, such as parkland in urban areas.

Ultimately, principles such as providing for both parkland and affordable housing may be at odds with one another when it comes to developing city or state owned property. As described in the Minneapolis case, drastically different views between stakeholders show that there are limitations to the public involvement principle of Smart Growth, especially when a consensus cannot be reached. In Erie County, community participation and resistance has kept affordable housing out of many suburbs surrounding the City of Buffalo, which suggests that when consensus cannot be reached, elected officials are likely to pursue the goal of the most vocal group over those that offer less resistance or policies that yield higher tax revenues. This puts the Smart Growth principle of providing a greater mix of housing options on the backburner and justifies the decision to maintain current levels of affordable housing based on the opinion of one, vocal stakeholder group.

Thus the community participation principle of Smart Growth ironically tends to expose the tension between the other principles of Smart Growth. This is because the principle of community participation requires stakeholders to reach consensus between goals that may

be too disparate, such as affordable housing, parkland and TODs. Striking a balance between these tensions and incorporating community involvement is difficult in growing cities, such as Austin, TX, which have embraced both TOD and Smart Growth in their master plans.

Chapter 3: Austin, Texas and Smart Growth

Austin, Texas, consistently tops media lists as among the "Bests of." In 2011 *Forbes* rated it as the No. 1 Next Big Boom Town for the US, and in 2012 *Forbes* also rated it the No. 1 Best Big City for Jobs. The *Huffington Post* ranked it as No. 2 of the Top 12 Cities for "Millennials to Work and Play" in April 2014. As of April 2014, Austin has held Forbes' title of America's Fastest Growing City for four years in a row.

Such dramatic population increases has remained a consistent theme in Austin's history, with the City's population doubling every 20 to 25 years on average. As one of the "best" places to live in the United States, Austin is growing because of the amenities it provides and the reputation that precedes it. However, the City also provides a provocative case to examine the contradictions between Smart Growth principles and how these impact planning practice.

History and current trends of growth in Austin

The City of Austin was founded in 1839 as the capital of the Republic of Texas, and it remains today the capital of the State of Texas (Humphrey, 2010). Austin began as a 640-acre site on the Colorado River flanked on the east by Waller Creek and the west by Shoal Creek, at the confluence of two different ecosystems, the Balcones Canyons (Texas Hill Country) and Blackland Prairie (Humphrey, 2010; Steiner, 2011). In 1840 the City's population was 856 but by 1870 that number had more than quadrupled to 4,000-plus

residents (Humphrey, 2010). During the 1860's and 1870's, the black residential communities of Masontown, Wheatsville, Pleasant Hill, and Clarksville were established in Austin; 36% of Austin's population was black by 1870. The University of Texas was established in Austin in 1881 and has since played a prominent role in the city's growth as a leading provider of employment opportunities.

The City was still growing in the 1920s and it was acknowledged that a new city plan was needed. In 1928 "A City Plan for Austin," developed by the engineering firm Koch and Fowler, was adopted by the city. One of the most poignant implications of this plan was that it entrenched segregation in the City. In the plan, the City agreed to provide municipal services to black communities, but only if they relocated to the newly created "negro districts" in the eastern portion of the City (City of Austin, 2012; Humphrey, 2010; Tretter, 2013). This explicit segregation plan effectively concentrated the black communities and created the east-west divide that is still prevalent in the City today, and which was later exacerbated by the construction of I-35.

By the 1970's it was evident that a new master plan was needed, and the City began a comprehensive planning process (Humphrey, 2010). The City had a fine line to walk as much of the public was opposed to future growth and voiced these opinions to the planners. What resulted was the 1979 Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, which established the current land use code. The plan and land use code from 1979 unfortunately did not seriously examine or consider the future growth of Austin. What resulted is a land

use code that is difficult to navigate due to multiple revisions and amendments (City of Austin, 2014a). In addition to navigating the complicated land use code, in the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's Austinites fought to protect "streams, lakes, watersheds, and wooded hills"(Humphrey, 2010). In 1990, the SOS Alliance was established to oppose a planned unit development over the Barton Creek watershed and this group remains committed to protecting Barton Springs and the Edwards Aquifer(Save Our Springs Alliance, 2012). Perhaps one of the most prominent protective measures put in place was the Save Our Springs Ordinance, which was driven by the SOS Alliance and passed in 1992 following extensive debates. The SOS ordinance protects the Barton Springs Watershed by limiting the maximum levels of impervious cover allowed over the aquifer and establishes a limit on the concentration pollutant levels in developed areas (City of Austin, 1992).

Rapid growth and public debate about the nature and direction of urban development continues today. In 2010 the City of Austin had a population of 790,390, and as of April 1, 2014, the City estimated that its population was 865,504 – a 9.5% increase in population over four years, with an annual growth rate of 2.38% (City of Austin, 2014b; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). The causes of this growth include Austin's unique character and prominence as an education and technological center, which has induced large amounts of in-migration. While most of the in-migration is from the State of Texas, there has also been a large influx of residents from the both the east and west coast (Burner, 2012).

This influx is creating a diverse population base. In terms of age, 20-29 year olds are the largest age cohort at 22%, followed by 30-39 year olds at 18% and 40-49 year olds at 13% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). The educational attainment rate among residents over the age of 25 is also impressive. Based on data from the American Community Survey (ACS), 28% of residents hold at least a bachelor's degree, 11% hold a master's degree, and 2% a doctorate; overall, 42% of the population holds a bachelor's degree or greater (American Community Survey, 2012). Additionally, in recent years Austin has become a no majority city with the population of Hispanics and Asians increasing dramatically compared to Anglos, while the African American population is dwindling (City of Austin, 2014b).

Table 1 Educational attainment of Austin's population age 25 and up (American Community Survey, 2012)

High School or Less	Earned GED	Some college, no degree	College Degree	Masters	Ph.D.	Other Professional Degree
28%	3%	5%	19%	11%	3%	2%

However, while Austin has an increasingly diverse and well-educated population, the City is experiencing growing pains. Families with children are leaving the urban core, urban sprawl is intensifying, and socio-economic spatial segregation into higher and lower-income areas is increasingly visible (City of Austin, 2014b). Because of these challenges stemming from rapid growth, in the late 2000's the City of Austin initiated the planning process for a new comprehensive plan.

Imagine Austin Plan

Imagine Austin (The Plan) was adopted by City Council on June 15, 2012. Prior to its adoption the City implemented its community engagement process, spearheaded by the Comprehensive Plan Citizen Advisory Task Force. The Task Force established six principles to guide the process called *Making Austin: Public Participation for a new Comprehensive Plan*: "open to all, community engagement, transparency, enthusiastic and vibrant, engaging the underrepresented, [and] fun" (City of Austin, 2012, p. A–5). The process began in 2009 with two principal goals: first, to "give as many people as possible the opportunity to participate" (City of Austin, 2012, p. A–5), and, second, to make the process iterative by building on previous phases of engagement. The Task force employed various methods to spread the word about public meetings and stakeholder events, including using social media outlets like Facebook, visiting farmers markets and football games, reaching out to neighborhood associations and businesses, and purchasing advertisements on TV, in print, and online (City of Austin, 2012). The outreach was successful since thousands participated in the citywide process.

The planning approach was premised on allowing community members to identify the "existing challenges and opportunities" (City of Austin, 2012, p. A–5) in the City and provide their opinions on how the City should address them. This engagement was facilitated through public meetings, online and paper surveys, online forums and comments, traveling teams, "Meetings-in-a-Box", and a speakers bureau, all aimed at reaching as many citizens as possible (City of Austin, 2012). From the beginning residents

were involved in the visioning through the Community Forum Series organized by the Planning and Development Review Department (PDRD) and the Communication and Public Information Office. The working groups and Community Forums used the planning framework and preferred scenarios to vet input and ideas and distill a community-based vision for the City of Austin. Through the various meetings, working groups, and events the City received over 18,500 inputs regarding the plan (City of Austin, 2012).

The community input was synthesized into a comprehensive plan that will direct growth in Austin for the next 30 years and inform the new land development code. Over 300 City of Austin staff members worked on the plan to ensure it also addresses issues that span across departments (City of Austin, 2012). Ultimately six key challenges and opportunities were identified to be addressed by the plan: preserving livability, expanding transportation choices, tackling the ethnic divide, protecting natural resource, promoting prosperity of all, and collaborating regionally (City of Austin, 2012). These challenges and opportunities address big issues due to rapid growth such as the east-west socio-economic divide, dwindling water resources, and how to grow.

In order to address the challenges and opportunities identified in the community visioning process, *Imagine Austin* establishes six core principles to guide planning action in the future. The first principle is to address sprawl by leveraging existing and planned infrastructure and establishing activity centers and corridors across Austin, in order to develop a "compact, connected city" (City of Austin, 2012, p. 10). The second principle is to

integrate nature into the City through parks and greenbelts, with an emphasis on the benefits of green infrastructure (City of Austin, 2012). Next, the plan promotes an integrated economic development strategy that implements specific policies to achieve prosperity for all by working with high-skill jobs, major, small, and local businesses, and opportunities for all skill levels to achieve prosperity for all (City of Austin, 2012). Also, since the city is growing so quickly and attracting high-wage, high-skill workers, the plan states that developing affordable and healthy communities is important to maintaining balance and diversity in the City (2012). This principle explicitly links high-quality amenities like transit, walking, and biking, to mixed-use centers. Mixed-use centers will vary in size and will be connected to one another through transit, hike-and-bike systems, and a quality street system. The last two principles are to sustainably manage resources including water and energy at a regional level to address and acknowledge environmental, economic, and infrastructure realities and solutions (City of Austin, 2012).

Through these six principles, the plan articulates specific policies and goals that will bring the vision of a complete community to fruition. These policy areas are land use and transportation, housing and neighborhoods, economy, conservation and environment, city facilities and services, society, and creativity (City of Austin, 2012). Each policy has a dedicated section in the plan and these policies provide the City with the necessary tools to pursue the principles of the plan. Additionally, policy types that can be linked to strengthen the idea of a compact community, for example links between land use and transportation, housing and neighborhood, are noted throughout each policy section. These policies are

used to complement the future growth map that identifies activity centers and corridors where growth will be concentrated.

Imagine Austin and Affordability

Imagine Austin acknowledges that Central Austin is becoming increasingly unaffordable both families and individuals (City of Austin, 2012). Due to this, in the City's vision expresses the desire to be "affordable and accessible to all" (City of Austin, 2012, p. 2)but the biggest obstacle is how to maintain affordability and increase the City's share of affordable units, since there is currently a shortfall (City of Austin, 2012). Chapter five of the plan establishes eight priority programs, they are ranked based on the number of votes received from community members involved in the planning process (2012). The program "Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin" ranked number six of eight, the two departments that are in charge of the program are Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) and the Planning and Development Review Department (PDRD) (City of Austin, 2012). The program acknowledges that in addition to rent or mortgages, transportation costs, utilities, and accessibility to daily and weekly needs also contribute to overall household affordability (City of Austin, 2012).

In the short term, defined as 1-3 years, the departments are to identify the gaps in affordable housing throughout the City for a variety of household types, use the S.M.A.R.T. Housing framework to implement a variety of tools, strategies, financing mechanisms, grants, and partnerships to advance affordable housing for moderate to very-low income

households (City of Austin, 2012). As well, they are working to ensure that small area plans address preserving current affordable housing stock and offer incentives to develop new affordable housing (City of Austin, 2012). In the long-term, three or more years, the goals are to address the regulatory barriers to affordable housing, raise awareness among the public about affordability and about the statutory barriers to affordable housing in Texas, develop a database of available affordable housing units, and to expand or identify new revenue sources for affordable housing. The most important long term goal is for this professional report is to "identify opportunities for…affordable housing on publicly-owned land" (City of Austin, 2012, p. 202), since the Austin Energy parcel is a publicly-owned piece of land that could take into account transportation costs, and access to essential household needs due to its location in a town center.

Imagine Austin and Smart Growth

Although the *Imagine Austin* plan is not explicitly described as a Smart Growth plan, it arguably embraces principles and concepts of Smart Growth. In keeping with the Smart Growth approach, at the beginning of the planning process, the City of Austin embraced the principle of increasing resident and citizen participation in the planning process, at the municipal level. The City expended much effort to gather as much community input as possible about the challenges and opportunities facing Austin in order to understand the way residents would like the City to grow. The City even put into practice an innovative "Meeting-in-a-Box" that enabled residents to hold their own neighborhood meetings and return the materials to the City for comments to be recorded (City of Austin, 2012).

Ultimately public engagement lasted for two years with four rounds of public input including five rounds of surveys, 21 public meetings, 112 special events, and social media outreach (City of Austin, 2012).

However, the input was not evenly distributed among social groups. Demographically, the input of white residents was drastically overrepresented: almost 70% of the *Imagine Austin* forum participants were white, while city-wide, that group represents only 50% of the population (City of Austin, 2012). In addition, input from those making less than $49,000 a year was underrepresented, while those making $50,000 or more were overrepresented (City of Austin, 2012). Appendix B in the plan shows that people of color and residents with less than a bachelor's degree were underrepresented, as is the case for most community engagement processes (2012). Still, in keeping with the Smart Growth approach, the City blended traditional and emerging approaches to community engagement in an effort to gain as much balanced input as possible and to make the methods of input accessible at multiple different levels.

Another way that the plan embraces Smart Growth principles is through its Land Use and Transportation (LUT) section, where the plan lists the concept of Complete Streets as a best practice to pursue. Complete Streets, a strategy explicitly promoted in Smart Growth literature, are "designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities" (Smart Growth America, n.d.). In order to build complete streets LUT P33 indicates that the City must:

> Apply high standards of urban design to ensure that 'complete streets' are safe and accessible for all users. Encourage people to use alternative forms of transportation that are sensitive to the demands of the Central Texas climate. (City of Austin, 2012, p. 22)

The goal of creating "complete streets" will be met by retrofitting existing streets and roadways through the Capital Improvements Program, the Healthy Austin Program and the forthcoming land development code. In addition to accommodating multimodal forms of transportation, complete streets in urban areas should also connect the activity centers that the plan and future growth map establish.

Also reflecting Smart Growth principles, *Imagine Austin* establishes three different types of activity centers that all promote connectivity, linking residents with employment, retail, recreation and entertainment. In addition, the activity centers are to be walkable and accessible by transit, i.e. ideally located near "one or more major transit stops" (City of Austin, 2012, p. 104). These activity centers will range in size: the largest type of activity center is a regional center, followed by town centers and finally neighborhood centers. The plan calls for a variety of housing types in these activity centers, from single-family homes to high-rise apartment buildings, in order to provide choices to residents (City of Austin, 2012). While town and neighborhood centers are primarily oriented towards local residents with a mix of local uses, the regional center will be the largest and provide

services for residents throughout the region (City of Austin, 2012). The mix of uses and housing choices, also include the City's goal of preserving the existing affordable housing units and increasing them throughout Austin (City of Austin, 2012).

Such mixing of uses and housing choices is a core principle of Smart Growth and the plan provides examples of best practices from various U.S. cities like Portland, Oregon, Miami, Florida and Roanoke, Virginia. These best practices, in turn, are also built on Smart Growth principles and illustrate the importance of neighborhood choice and transition of uses, design-based codes, and complete street policies. By providing examples to guide the future land development code, Austin is drawing of past practices derived from principles Smart Growth in order to achieve the various goals and policies laid out in the plan.

By promoting principles of mixed-use and human-scale development of walkable and bikeable streets and significant expansion of transportation choices, *Imagine* Austin also reflects Smart Growth principles of other, already existing urban development policies and ordinances. For example, the Housing and Neighborhood (HN) ordinance HN P10 dictates that there should be "complete neighborhoods" throughout the City that offer a housing mix that includes affordable housing as well as "transportation options, and access to healthy food, schools, retail, employment, community services, and parks and recreation options" (City of Austin, 2012, p. 138). LUT P5 compliments HN P10 by calling for a multimodal transportation system with "realistic opportunities for transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel" (City of Austin, 2012, p. 116) which is a principle of Smart Growth.

Another way Austin embraces Smart Growth principles is through City Facilities and Services (CFS) P41 and CSF P42. CSF P41 "ensure[s] and increase[s] equitable access" (City of Austin, 2012, p. 163) to recreation space throughout the City, which is one of the goals that Smart Growth details reinvestment in city amenities should do. CSF P42 will increase connectivity within and between neighborhoods through greenways, sidewalks, bicycle lanes and trails (City of Austin, 2012). In *Imagine Austin*, many of the policies are supported by one another, as is the case with HN P10 and LUT P5: HN P10 states that affordable housing is needed, while LUT P5 provides a way to increase housing's affordability by co-locating it near transit. The coordination between different policies also increases the need for departments to coordinate with one another, especially when it comes to the collocation of housing and transit options to increase affordability.

In order to ensure Austin's development is consistent with these policies, the City is now in the process of rewriting the land development code. Since the old code did not permit the development of TOD, the City of Austin in 2005 circumvented the old code and adopted the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Ordinance. The TOD zoning designation created six TOD districts that correspond to Capital Metro Transportation Authority (CapMetro) stations. The six districts are the Northwest Park and Ride TOD, the Convention Center, Plaza Saltillo, Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., North IH-35 Park & Ride, and Lamar Blvd./Justin Lane. The ordinance stipulates that these districts develop in a manner that is "compatible with and supportive of public transit and a pedestrian-oriented environment" (City of

Austin, 2005, p. 1), and to that end, the allowable density in these zones was increased to 15 to 25 dwelling units. The ordinance furthermore calls for Station Area Plans (SAP) to govern the development of the TODs. Since the APA and Smart Growth America endorse TODs as preferred development alternatives, through its TOD ordinance, therefore, Austin is continuing to further a Smart Growth agenda as a principal strategy to manage the rapid growth of the City.

Cases such as Plano, Texas that are dense, walkable, located near transit, are examples of TOD's, and Smart Growth that embrace only a few principles. Plano, specifically, excluded affordable housing from its TOD and that may have been due to the high cost of development and the risk the developer took by deviating from the normal development pattern in Texas. In the following chapter, I will describe the process currently underway to evaluate and plan for the development of one of these TODs: the Lamar Blvd./Justin Lane area. At the Lamar Blvd./Justin Lane TOD there is a true chance to incorporate affordable housing into the area, if the City follows one of its affordability goals and takes this opportunity to locate housing on the publicly owned Austin Energy parcel. This development reflects Smart Growth policies embedded in the City of Austin's comprehensive plan and reflected in other policy instruments. The planning process with Lamar Blvd./Justin Lane area stakeholders has been fraught and contentious. As in the case of Minneapolis-St. Paul, instead of a seamless implementation of Smart Growth principles, this TOD development has served to illuminate the tensions between Smart Growth principles of public involvement, affordable housing and affordable transit.

Chapter 4: Austin Energy Parcel and the Tensions in Smart Growth

One of the TOD districts created through the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Ordinance in 2005 was the Lamar/Justin Lane TOD district. In this TOD Zone, the planning process surrounding a parcel owned by Austin Energy illuminates the possible tensions in Smart Growth development brought forth by conflicting interests between affordable housing and development of green space. While the parcel is a prime location to provide many needed affordable housing units, the area is also lacking in parks and the parcel could provide parkland for the community. The City is currently evaluating the best use for the parcel, including considering how to balance the need for housing and green space, each of which are promoted by different interested parties.

This chapter provides a description of the TOD zone, including its built environment and its demographics. It will first examine the Station Area Plan (SAP) and its Vision Statement and then analyze the rhetoric of stakeholders emerging in public meetings and online public comment forums in order to understand the opinions and concerns of residents and other stakeholders. In addition, the chapter will evaluate and examine how these opinions and concerns pit the imperatives for affordable housing and green space/parkland against one another in the Lamar/Justin Lane TOD, but also in TODs more generally.

Lamar/Justin Lane TOD Station Area Plan

Planning Process

In 2007, the City began the public involvement process to create the SAP for the Lamar/Justin Lane TOD. Stakeholders and city officials recognized the immense design challenge of creating a walkable, vibrant and thriving transit oriented development given current conditions. In April 2007 the City initiated a four-step design process to tackle these issues and incorporate the public's vision of the future for the TOD SAP (Table 2).

Table 2 Lamar/Justin Lane SAP Visioning and plan adoption timeline

2005		**2007**				**2008**	**2009**
May		*April*	*June*	*Oct*	*Nov*	*Dec*	*March*
TOD Ordinance Adopted	Affordability goals adopted	Charrette #1	Charrette #2	Develop Draft SAP	Present SAP to community	Adopt SAP and Regulating Plan	SAP and regulating plan become effective

The visioning process involved two charrettes to gather public input for the SAP's vision (City of Austin, 2008a). The first charrette centered on the future "look, feel, and function" (City of Austin, 2008a) of the SAP. Staff from the City's Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department, a Technical Advisory Group (TAG), CapMetro, and other stakeholders reviewed input to refine and explore alternative development scenarios for the station areas (City of Austin, 2008a). The Technical Advisory Committee included staff members from the City's planning department, and other public agencies that include transportation, public works and water resources, and emergency services (City of Austin 2008a). In the

second charrette, the community members worked in teams to review the presented alternatives and amend the plan (City of Austin, 2008a). Between September and October 2007 the City prepared the regulating and implementation plan based on the input from the charrettes and presented the final draft to the public in November (City of Austin, 2008a).

On December 11, 2008 the Lamar/Justin Lane Station Area Plan was adopted and its Regulating Plan became effective on March 1, 2009. The SAP presents "four characteristics" of successful TODs: "1) greater density than community average; 2) a mix of uses; 3) a quality pedestrian environment 4); and a definite center" (City of Austin, 2008b, p. 16). By 2020 the SAP is to be a mixed-use center with high quality pedestrian and bicycle environments and new buildings along Lamar and Airport (City of Austin, 2008b). New buildings along Lamar and Airport will range from 5-6 stories and taper down in height to provide a buffer for the existing single family housing in the Brentwood and Crestview neighborhoods and public spaces like pocket parks, linear parks and street trees will enhance the feel and sense of place in the TOD (City of Austin, 2008b).

The plan creates two zones to support the vision statement: a mixed-use zone and a residential zone. There are three designations that fall under mixed-use TOD Mixed-use[1],

[1] TOD Mixed-Use: the highest allowable density and is characterized by ground floor uses (active retail, office space) with high-density residential above it (City of Austin, 2009)

Corridor Mixed Use[2] and Live/Work Flex[3] (City of Austin, 2009). In the Residential Zone there are two designations High Density[4] and Medium Density[5] (City of Austin, 2009).

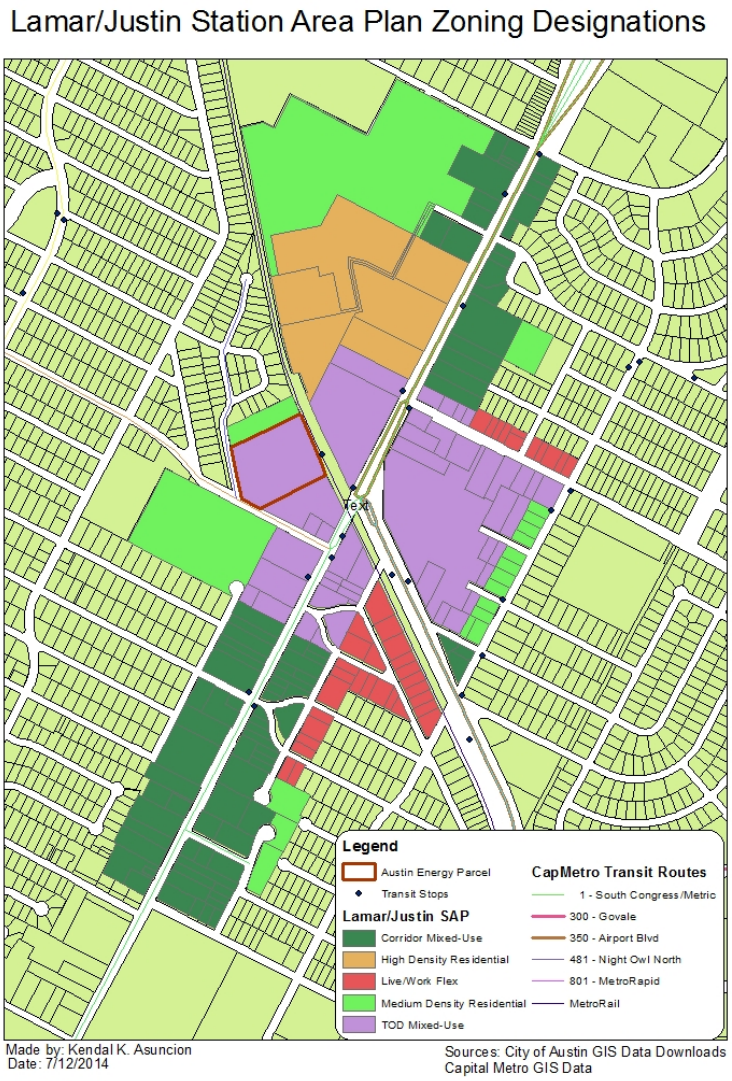

Figure 1 Lamar/Justin Lane Station Area Plan Zoning Designation and Circulation Map

[2] Corridor Mixed Use: similar to TOD MU but with a broader mix of uses and mixed uses are not required, but encouraged (City of Austin, 2009)
[3] Live/Work Flex: enables residents to live and work in the same unit and allows light or custom manufacturing in the live/work space (City of Austin, 2009)
[4] High Density: minimum of 25 dwelling units per acre and its population should support the activities and business within the TOD (City of Austin, 2009)
[5] Medium Density: provides a buffer between the single family homes and intense uses (City of Austin, 2009)

The SAP specifically acknowledges the benefits of locating affordable housing in TODs because the colocation reduces transportation expenditures and increases "access to employment and services" (City of Austin, 2009, p. 41), and it adds to the economic diversity of the area. The SAP stipulates the following goals for overall affordability:

- Affordable owner-occupied units should be occupied by households with incomes at or below 80% of Median Family Income (MFI) as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and
- Affordable rental units should be occupied by households at or below 60% of MFI.
- In addition, the Ordinance provides a specific breakdown for these targets[6] (City of Austin, 2009, p. 41).

The station area's affordability goal is 25% throughout the entire district. The goals set by the TOD ordinance for affordability are 10% homeownership by households at 70-80% MFI and 5% by households earning less than 60% MFI (City of Austin, 2009). For renters there is a goal that 10% of the units be affordable to families between 40 and 60 percent MFI, 10% to those between 40 and 40 percent MFI, and 5% to families with an MFI of 30% or less.

[6] Refers to Ordinance No. 20050519-008, "TOD Ordinance"

Since inclusionary zoning is illegal in the State of Texas, the regulating plan offers incentives for developers to provide some affordable housing units. Because the Austin Energy parcel is owned by the City, the SAP indicates that its development could act as a catalyst project to "stimulate market and development in the station area" (City of Austin, 2009). A big opportunity for the City would be to leverage the property to achieve the goal of 25% housing affordability in the TOD district. Since the parcel is a City held property, Austin could enter into a public-private partnership with a developer to offer deep subsidies as a requirement to include affordable housing in a potential development.

However, while the SAP recognizes the potential this parcel holds for the City's affordable housing, it also states the parcel can help meet the need for green space in the TOD area. Specifically, the SAP recommends a pocket park, which requires a minimum of half an acre and up to an acre, be located in the TOD, preferably adjacent to the Crestview Station (City of Austin, 2008b). Indeed, if a pocket park up to an acre were developed on the property, this would still leave room for mixed income housing to be developed, as well. However, by including both the affordable housing potential and green space potential in the SAP, planners initiated a contentious dialogue with the community about which smart growth principle should be ranked higher, or if compromise could be a possibility.

Planning Outcomes

As of today the TOD area has made some progress towards the vision stated in the SAP. Midtown Commons, a 73-acre transit village with live/work apartments, studio to 2

bedroom apartments, retail, office and dining, opened in 2010. Although the northern portion of Midtown Commons still remains to be developed into small lot, single-family homes and duplexes, this is an important step towards the described vision for the area. Although much of the TOD remains an auto-dominated area, as of June 2014 CapMetro operates seven easily accessible transit lines within the TOD. Four of these are MetroBuses: the number 1, number 5, and number 481 – a Night Owl route operating between 12AM and 3AM – maintain a north-south route. The 300 and 350 provide east-west connection through the TOD area. The fifth line is the MetroRapid Route 801, which is part of Austin's bus rapid transit (BRT) and runs a north-south route along Lamar with a dedicated lane through downtown Austin. Finally, there is the MetroRail Crestview Station. Residents in the TOD district show higher levels of transit ridership than Austin as a whole: 9% of commutes to work are primarily made by transit in the district compared to Austin's share as a whole of 2% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

In the Lamar/Justin Lane TOD area, housing and transportation costs as a percentage of household incomes are also relatively low. These measures are based on the H&T Index, which includes housing and transportation costs to determine levels of affordability, instead of following the traditional measure that a housing unit is affordable if is at or below 30% of household income (Center for Neighborhood Technology, 2012). According to the H&T Index, household contributions to housing and transportation costs should not exceed more than 45% of household income. In the Lamar/Justin Lane TOD zone, households contribute less than 30% of income to housing and only one census block

group in the TOD district contribute more than 30% of income to housing and transportation combined. According to the H&T Index, residents in the TOD area spend less than 45% of their income on housing and transportation combined indicating that most residents in the TOD district are living within their means relative to their household incomes. Though there is no historical data on the H&T Index page about the trend in the TOD district over time, transportation costs have decreased for households because of the co-location of housing and transit options. By taking advantage of the TOD district's transit opportunities, the City could leverage the Austin Energy parcel to make housing available to families with incomes below 80% MFI.

Planning for the Austin Energy Parcel (6909 Ryan Dr.)

The Austin Energy property sits adjacent to the Crestview Station on the southeast side of the tracks, in the center of the TOD district, and its development is therefore subject to the TOD Regulating Plan. It is a 5.6-acre decommissioned pole yard with eight, primarily wood frame buildings with metal siding exteriors (City of Austin, 2013b, p. 10) (Figure 2).

On both the east and west the Austin Energy parcel is bordered by industrial uses; to the northwest lies the Midtown Commons and northeast of the station is a low-rise strip mall development that is auto-oriented with many curb-cuts in the sidewalk to allow cars

accessto the businesses. Many of the stores in this area provide automobile services, such as autobody repair and tire retail. At the Justin Lane and Lamar Blvd. intersection is a small shopping center with a Walgreens and a Vietnamese Bakery, an ethnic market and a Korean-style karaoke establishment (Figure 3 and 4). A low-rise multi-family apartment complex is also located in the area south of the Crestview Station. South of Justin Lane on either side of Lamar are furniture stores and more businesses that mainly offer car services or parts, as well as two extended stay motels (Figure 5). The TOD zone ends at the Violet Crown Shopping Center, where N. Lamar and Brentwood meet.

Figure 2 Austin Energy Parcel

Figure 3 Current uses a Vietnamese bakery, Korean karaoke, and an ethnic market

Figure 4 Walgreens at the Lamar and Justin intersection

Figure 5 One of the extended stay motels in the TOD area

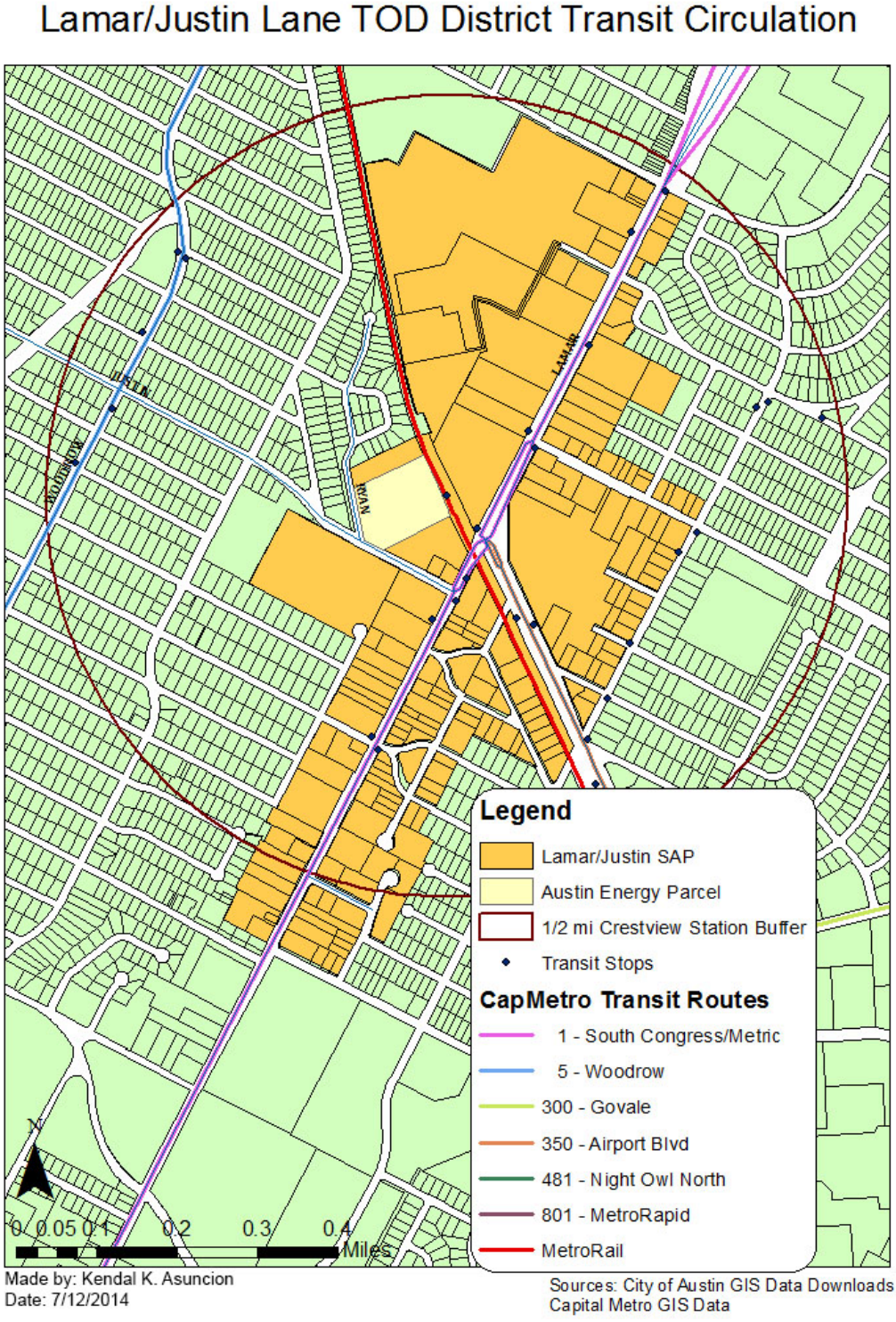

Figure 6 Lamar/Justin Transit Density and Circulation Map

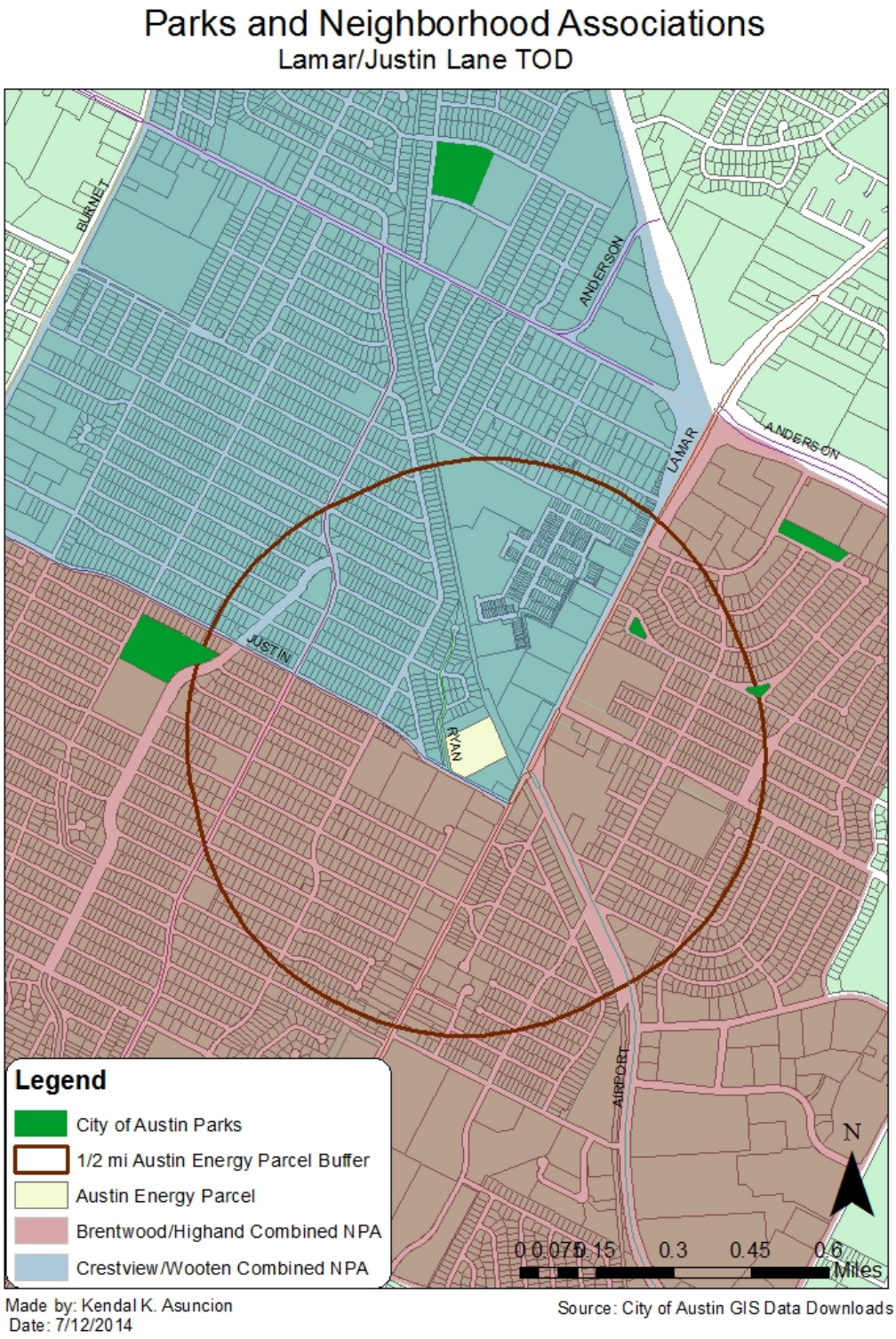

Figure 7 Combined Neighborhood Plans and City parks in the SAP area

The City of Austin understands this parcel offers a unique opportunity to achieve its goals to offer both affordable housing in TOD districts, and parkland within a quarter to half a mile from every household. At the behest of community members from the Crestwood Neighborhood Association and Brentwood Neighborhood Association, the City Council in 2013 passed Resolution No. 20130117-054 which charged eight City departments[7] to evaluate the site in its entirety as a park and as a "model energy-efficient, affordable, and family-friendly multi-family development and neighborhood pocket park" (City of Austin, 2013b, p. 1) (Table 3). The resolution details the Austin Energy parcel's current uses on the site, where those uses could be relocated to, assessments – environmental or other - of the tract and the findings, potential public-private partnerships and their structuring, and strategies to overcome obstacles (City of Austin, 2013b).

Table 3 Austin Energy Parcel community involvement timeline

2013			
January	*May*	*Oct*	*Dec*
Resolution 20130117-054 issue to analyze development scenarios for AE parcel	Response to Resolution issued with input from eight city departments	Open House # 1	Open House # 2

The development scenarios report provides an overview of three different scenario types with their challenges and opportunities. Scenario A is all 5.6 acres to be used as parkland (Table 4).

[7] Department of Neighborhood Housing and Community Development – Real Estate & Development Division, Department of Planning and Development Review – Urban Design Group, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Watershed Protection, Austin Energy, Department of Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services, Department of Transportation, Office of Real Estate Services

Table 4 Opportunities and challenges for Scenario A (City of Austin, 2013b)

Opportunities	Challenges
Meets Crestview Neighborhood /25 mi. park needs	The size of park and lack of connectivity could require large amount of site to be used as surface parking
Provides one large parcel of land to avoid buying up several individual parcels to create a park	Large cost: acquisition, development, maintenance
Less impervious cover	Loss of opportunity to create affordable housing near a fixed transit system
Regional water detention/water quality control opportunities	Limited financial/development partners
Can provide a wider variety of amenities that require larger parcels, i.e. Basketball courts, tennis courts, soccer fields, etc.	Not consistent with the vision illustrated in the adopted Lamar-Justin Station Area Plan
	Loss of tax revenue for the City of Austin

Scenario B would have a pocket park and build to the greatest allowable building height (Table 5).

Table 5 Opportunities and challenges for Scenario B (City of Austin, 2013b)

Opportunities	Challenges
More opportunity to provide goods and services to the TOD	Range of programming for the park is limited
Structured parking is financially viable at this density	Amenities requiring more acreage are omitted
Could serve as an example of compact urban Pocket Park for Austin	More impervious cover
Possible agreement with private development to maintain parkland	Less opportunity for regional water detention
Public/Private Partnership to provide recommended street connect to Crestview Station with Crestview neighborhood	
Consistent with the adopted Lamar-Justin Station Area Plan vision	
Meets Crestview Neighborhood .25 mi park needs	
Opportunity for greatest amount of affordable housing	
Development can provide tax revenue for the city	
Mixed-Use and retail are more viable at this density	

Scenario C would balance parkland and development to provide affordable housing and parkland (Table 6).

Table 6 Opportunities and challenges for Scenario C (City of Austin, 2013b)

Opportunities	Challenges
Parkland can serve as transition to neighborhood	Reduces density near a fixed transit station
Balances parkland with development to the greatest extent possible while still keeping affordability a viable option	Reduces the number of affordable units provided
Possible agreement with private development to maintain parkland	While larger than a pocket park, larger amenities would still be omitted from the programming
Meets Crestview Neighborhood .25 mi park needs	Provides less diversity in housing types
Development can provide tax revenue for the City	Reduces the visibility of uses from Lamar (Core Transit Corridor) making retail less viable.

Conflicts Surrounding the Planning of the Parcel

When these scenarios were made public, however, the tension between affordable housing goals and parkland development was thrust to the forefront, fueled by demands from different stakeholder groups. These stakeholders include city departments that drafted these scenarios, community members and their neighborhood associations, City Council members, and low-to-moderate income families that would need affordable housing and affordable housing advocates. For a clearer understanding of the different value systems and perspectives that emerged in this case, this research focused on members of the neighborhood associations, the NHCD, PDRD, and City Council members. The conflicts are revealed mostly through the public meetings that were held in October and December of 2013 and the online forum SpeakUp Austin.

The most vocal of the stakeholder groups is the members of the neighborhood associations in the area. During the October and December 2013 meetings, many of the attendees who spoke mentioned their connection to the neighborhood associations in the TOD area, in particular the Brentwood Neighborhood and its neighborhood association. The October meeting had merely 60 attendees, while the December meeting had only around 30 attendees in addition to staff members. In addition to the low turnout of residents, it is important to note that, based on making observations and overhearing conversations, the majority of attendees appeared to be represent Caucasian, potentially upper-middle class with families with children. The majority of this stakeholder group would prefer to see the entire 5.6-acre tract developed into a park. This desire became clear first by the opinions voiced at the December 2013 Open House meeting, which aimed to discuss the options for the parcel to become a multi-use development with housing and parkland. However, all but two of the attendees spoke up to say that developing anything other than parkland would be unacceptable to the neighborhood. The general consensus among these stakeholders was that there should be a children's play area, a walking path and an off-leash dog park.

This perspective is not entirely unexpected, however since families with children account for 44% of households in the Brentwood neighborhood and may have been disproportionately represented at the stakeholder meetings. Only one person identified herself as a single, non-family household, while the majority of attendees who spoke mentioned their families and other, less vocal attendees indicated they were caring for children. Furthermore, household size and income data suggests that the speakers may

have come from higher income groups: in the census tract where Brentwood is located, the median family income is $87,400[8] and the average family size is three people (the HUD established MFI for a three person household is $67,850)(City of Austin, 2013a).

At these public meetings, many community members also alluded to a park that was supposed to be developed as part of a previous planning process involving a parcel known as the Huntsman tract. According to an interview with Ms. Freundl at PDRD, the community members feel wronged because the park promised for the Huntsman tract never came to fruition. These members view this tract of the land as the last chance to have a large park or open space. During the December 2013 meeting, City staff attempted to engage in a meaningful dialogue with community members about developing the parcel to include some parkland, but also affordable housing. However, the community adamantly refused the proposal, with many speakers referring to the City's reneging on its promise to develop a park in the Huntsman tract.

In these meetings, no residents explicitly said that affordable housing development made them uncomfortable or that did not want low-income families in the area. To the contrary, one woman during the meeting argued that a "large percent of [residents] voted for [the affordable housing] bonds." Since the neighborhood residents voted for the affordable housing bonds, their out-of-hand rejection of anything other than a 5.6-acre park seems contradictory. If one of the best ways to make housing affordable is to locate it near transit

[8] Adjusted for inflation to 2014 dollars

lines, then it is reasonable that a compromise would both support the community's need for a park and the City's need for affordable housing.

Postings on the online forum SpeakUp Austin also reflected the strong support for the park without a housing development, which had been expressed in the public meetings. Five of the six ideas that residents expressed on the forum pertaining to the development of the Austin Energy parcel called for the entire parcel to be developed into the park. Some participants in the online forum couched the pro-parkland argument in terms of benefits that parkland can provide for families. Indeed, one comment in the online forum asked to "just save the Justin/Ryan plot of land for the people"(City of Austin, n.d.), thus elevating the needs of current neighborhood members above people who need affordable housing. Through their wording, this and other online comments imply that families in need of housing are not the same type of "people" as those who live in the Brentwood neighborhood today.

These comments may not reflect the majority view in Brentwood, however. During the December meeting only about 30-40 stakeholders were present, which is less than one percent of the tracts' population. Only 31 people posted or responded to ideas in the SpeakUp Austin forum. Thus the perspectives of only a very small percentage of the neighborhood as a whole were represented through these participatory spaces.

In particular, there was no input at either venue from the low-to-moderate income community, even though how the parcel is developed directly affects the availability of affordable housing throughout the City. According to a public involvement specialist, low-and-moderate income stakeholders are notoriously difficult to engage in public involvement. Some do not attend because of language barriers, others due to heavy work schedules, and yet others because they are unaware of the open house meetings. In an interview with PDRD, a staff member said that the most vocal of stakeholder groups holds the ear of city officials and planners. In this particular Smart Growth conflict, the voice of low-to-moderate income families was not heard at all.

For their part, City department representatives are concerned with the City's ability to leverage the Austin Energy parcel to *both* increase affordable housing and to meet the community's immediate need for parkland. Austin's NHCD maintains that the Austin Energy parcel is an ideal place to balance the community's desire for a park with the affordable housing shortfall. At the public meeting on December 9th, a representative from the department indicated that in 2009 alone there was a 37,600-unit gap in affordable housing throughout the City. Staff from NHCD maintains that one of the best ways to make housing affordable for low-to-moderate income families is to locate it near transit, thus decreasing the household transportation costs. In addition, co-locating affordable housing and transit is both context and environmentally responsible since it reinforces the public investment through increased ridership levels and helps reduce traffic congestion. Through a personal correspondence with an analyst at NHCD, it was revealed that ideally there

would be a public-private partnership established to develop mixed-income housing and a park on the property.

Representatives of the PDRD suggest that the department would like to see the uses that best support TOD and that incorporate the public's vision. The representative I spoke with indicated that this area of Austin is a unique and active hub and that TOD is one tool the City may use to increase affordability. In addition, this parcel is the only city-owned property located adjacent to a metro station in the City. Another point to consider, which the "Development Scenario Report" demonstrates, is that developing the entire parcel into parkland would not generate any tax revenue for the City, whereas, housing – even affordable housing – would generate some revenue for the City (City of Austin, 2013b). In a phone interview, a PDRD representative echoed a similar sentiment to NHCD that one of the best ways to increase affordable housing is to locate it near transit and to decrease parking throughout the TOD district. It holds the position it would like to see at least some affordable housing put developed on the Austin Energy parcel, because of its ability to achieve deeper levels of affordability due to its proximity to transit.

City Council members are also stakeholders in the process, and both Council member Martinez and Tovo were present at the meeting. However, both were careful to not side strongly for or against either a park or affordable housing. At the beginning of the December meeting, Council Member Martinez emphasized that Austin is a growing city and as it grows there is a need to integrate affordable housing into the City, especially in a

compact-and-connected manner. In the same opening talk he also acknowledged that one of *Imagine Austin*'s goals is to increase parkland availability throughout the City with pocket and neighborhood parks. By tactfully addressing both needs, the council member avoided taking sides in this debate since affordable housing is a less popular principle of Smart Growth. In the end, the City council members must carefully decide how to prioritize affordable housing and parkland, especially since affluent voters are more likely to vote than low-income voters. Ultimately the City Council will decide how the Austin Energy parcel will develop.

Conclusion/Discussion

In this report I explained the history and background of Smart Growth as a reaction to environmental concerns and suburban sprawl. It is a comprehensive approach to planning embraced by various organizations, including the EPA, HUD, APA and Smart Growth America, that emerged in the 1990s. Smart Growth is defined slightly differently by different groups, and cities, counties, and states have implemented Smart Growth measures to varying degrees and with varying results. States like Maryland were able to implement statewide Smart Growth measures tied to infrastructure and economic development projects (Ali, 2013).

Next, I examined the rise of TOD as one of the mechanisms used to implement Smart Growth. TOD represented a reemergence and adoption of principles of dense growth patterns along transit lines that connected transit lines, housing, entertainment, retail and employment (Carlton, 2009). The goal of TOD was to coordinate an efficient use of infrastructure and land that "support urban development and provide civic amenities" while also achieving a variety of housing choices (Porter, Douglas and Cuddy, 2006). Indeed, TOD has become a tool that can be used to improve affordability in cities and that fits well within the Smart Growth paradigm. Community engagement is also highly valued in Smart Growth planning. Unfortunately, the goals of affordability and community engagement may be divergent, especially in a park-poor area surrounded by affluent

residents. In particular, the principle of affordable housing as part of Smart Growth has generated significant opposition.

While both BART – Fruitvale Station in Oakland, CA and DART – Plano, TX achieved successful TODs through vision and consensus, other cities were not as successful in their adoption of Smart Growth principles. Minneapolis-St. Paul began a consensus building process to embrace the state's Smart Growth agenda that resulted in a breakdown because one group wanted to continue with development as usual, while the other embraced the vision of compact and connected cities of the future (Brand, 2003). In Erie County, NY, Patterson and Silverman explain that community members in affluent suburbs showed up to public meetings and contacted elected officials to express opposition to the affordable or mixed-use housing projects in their communities (Patterson & Silverman, 2011). These cases demonstrated the diverse influence of community involvement on the implementation of Smart Growth, including the potential, negative drawbacks of community opposition to some Smart Growth principles.

The City of Austin, which has taken many measures to accommodate growth, contain sprawl, and leverage existing infrastructure investments, has also seen its measure of conflict associated with Smart Growth. Two of the planning measures intended to facilitate Smart Growth are Imagine Austin, the new comprehensive plan adopted in 2012, and the TOD ordinance adopted in 2005 that established six TOD districts, including the Lamar/Justin Lane TOD. The Austin Energy parcel in the Lamar/Justin Lane TOD was noted

as a parcel that could serve multiple City goals: providing affordable housing and parkland, and in 2013 a planning process, including a public involvement component, was initiated by PDRD, NHCD, Austin Energy, and the Parks and Recreation Department to determine how the parcel should be developed in the future. However, as I have shown through my analysis of commentaries provided by residents in open houses and the internet forum SpeakUp Austin, and through my interviews with analysts and planners in the NHCD and PDRD, instead of achieving consensus the public process brought to light the potential tension between the principles of affordability and green space development within the TOD. In the case of the Austin Energy parcel, members of the neighborhood association have indicated that they will not compromise on their demands: although the parcel could accommodate both open space and mixed-income housing units, neighborhood association members want the whole acre parcel to be developed into a park. However, because of the low turnout in the community meetings, it is unclear if the neighborhood association members truly represented the entire neighborhood or just a handful of homeowners.

As Miller and Hoel (2002) argue, such tensions between the principles of Smart Growth often emerge when applied to a specific parcel, in this case the Austin Energy parcel. The holistic approach to planning that Smart Growth brings to professionals is subject to many trade-offs as different values are pitted against one another in the public arena. Specifically, Miller and Hoel suggest that such tensions surrounding Smart Growth development emerge because the "right of the individual" (2002, p. 1) is in competition with the "goals of the community" (2002, p. 1). The Austin Energy parcel, however, is

publicly owned, which demonstrates how affordable housing and public space goals can come into competition with one another. This case illuminates how public involvement can effect development decisions regarding city owned parcels in TODs, which is a source of potential tensions within Smart Growth that has received little attention in previous research.

Although the Austin City Council to date has not determined the parcel's future, their decision must consider how best to serve the community's interests while also protecting the City's interest at large. If this case is evaluated based primarily on the potential to reach the affordability goals of this specific TOD and the City as a whole, it would be best to pursue a development pattern that allows for the most affordable or mixed-income housing as possible. This would also meet the Smart Growth principles of providing a mix of housing types and varieties, increasing density, capitalizing on existing transit and transportation infrastructure, and providing recreational facilities for residents. However, if city council members evaluate this case based on community input, the most logical decision would be to develop the entire site as a park, as participating residents clearly expressed during the December 2013 public meeting and on SpeakUp Austin. However, the following matrix demonstrates that the best option would be to seek a balance between the two, as it would fulfill many of the expressed goals of Imagine Austin and the community, though not without compromise (Table 7).

Table 7 Evaluation Matrix

	Full Park	**Mixed-Income/Park**	**Mixed-income housing only**
Increases affordable housing		X	X
Increases access to parkland	X	X	
Leverages existing infrastructure and investment		X	X
Decreases parking needs		X	
Generates city tax revenue		X	X
Helps achieve compact and connected goals		X	X
Who pays acquisition/maintenance/capital costs?	City	Potentially developer	Potentially developer
Achieves multiple Imagine Austin goals		X	

Ultimately, this case shows that planning is not as neat and clear as the renderings that illustrate the comprehensive plans we produce: it is a difficult process that involves working with multiple stakeholders to find a solution that does not put either group at a complete disadvantage. It involves education, communication and compromise, even within a comprehensive approach such as Smart Growth. As the experiences from California, Texas, Minnesota, and New York demonstrated, consensus building is pivotal to the success of Smart Growth initiatives. It is not enough to have sound scenarios and data if there is no stakeholder support or buy-in. The Austin Energy parcel in the Lamar/Justin Lane TOD may offer an example of compromise that would best serve the City at large in its goals to increase affordable housing, leverage existing public infrastructure, and increase community access to open space. Ultimately the Austin's City Council will decide the parcel's future; hopefully it will tactfully balance the goals that are in contention with one another.

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