



“As the Metro System continues to expand throughout Los Angeles County, transit-oriented developments like Archstone’s will play an increasingly important role for Angelenos looking for a better way to live, work and commute,” says Metro CEO Roger Snoble, who notes that developments are currently under construction at virtually every Metro Gold Line Station from Pasadena to Los Angeles.

Enterprising development for the Empire State

One of the more interesting facets of TODs is the symbiosis they share with urban redevelopment. The rejuvenation of a transportation hub such as the full restoration of Pasadena’s historic 1935 Santa Fe Depot at Archstone Del Mar Station and the renaissance of San Francisco’s Mission Bay railyards breathes new life into an old neighborhood by introducing exciting elements while simultaneously valuing and preserving its past.

New York’s Atlantic Yards Arena and Redevelopment Project plans to take advantage of Brooklyn’s largest transportation hub to address significant housing demands and secure economic opportunities for Brooklyn and the City of New York by utilizing the planning framework of transit-oriented development.

Proposed by the New York State Urban Development Corporation dba Empire State Development Corporation in conjunction with the City of New York, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, or MTA, and affiliates of the Forest City Ratner Companies including Brooklyn Arena LLC and Atlantic Yards Development Company LLC, the development would occupy

In addition to an onsite Metro Gold Line station, Archstone Del Mar Station will include retail, a rooftop pool with outdoor fireplace, a fitness center, underground parking and a billiards lounge.

roughly 22 acres, including 16 residential buildings, office and retail space, parking, community facilities, possible hotel uses, an approximately 18,000-seat arena and a minimum of seven acres devoted to publicly accessible open space.

Project approval and public support

A certain degree of controversy has arisen as a result of the proposed redevelopment plan, as locals fear the gentrification and destruction of their neighborhood. To address these concerns, the project proposal includes the development and implementation in consultation with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation of a Construction Protection Plan to ensure the preservation of historic resources within 90 feet of the project site during construction.

The proposed arena would enable Brooklyn to once again call a major professional sports team its own for the first time since the Dodgers left in 1957 — abruptly ending a 73-year major league baseball tradition. To provide an underutilized area with such a phenomenal cultural landmark would almost certainly breed an enhanced sense of community cohesion.

According to the General Project Plan, “The principal goal of the Atlantic Yards Land Use Improvement and Civic Project is to transform an area that is blighted and underutilized into a vibrant, mixed-use, mixed-income community that capitalizes on the tremendous mass transit service available at this unique location.”

Part of that task includes relocating the Atlantic Avenue Terminal to the eastern end of the currently below-grade railyard and building a platform over Vanderbilt Yard to heal the streetscape’s existing incision.

The General Project Plan calls for “a significant public amenity comprised of a large, glass-enclosed public space, providing access to the subway station, the Arena and Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues,” which it calls the Urban Room. Designed to allow passersby to see into the “bowl” of the Arena and view the scoreboard from both the Urban Room and Flatbush Avenue, the Urban Room’s unique concept illustrates the very nature of transit-oriented development: open spaces, community connections and increased livability.

All aboard

“I think TOD speaks a lot to what people are moving toward, and that’s accessibility,” notes Kudla. “They’re moving toward areas of more engagement; they want easy services right at their fingertips. Whether in Boston or Denver or Los Angeles, the central theme is that people are moving to activity centers as opposed to private centers in suburbs. They are moving into more public, engaging spaces.”

When done correctly, the combination of mixed-use development and easily accessible public transportation creates vibrant, healthy communities. As more and more buyers make their preference for TODs abundantly clear, it won’t be long before any remaining naysayers are singing a different tune.

After all, if “you must take the ‘A’ train,” you might as well live next to the station.



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Mind the Gap

The underground goes mainstream as homebuyers embrace the age of TODs.

By Lisa Brown

▲ The Series II Townhomes at Vallagio Inverness from Metropolitan Homes, located in Englewood, Colo.

▶ A modernized campanile serves as the focal point for this public plaza at Archstone Del Mar Station, a transit-oriented apartment community at the heart of historic Old-Town Pasadena, Calif.





▲ Situated above vibrant retail, the homes at Vallagio Inverness offer pristine views combined with a convenient location and amenities that simply can't be beat.

From Billy Strayhorn's "Take the 'A' Train" to The Who's "Magic Bus" to The Beatles' "Drive My Car," our cultural preoccupation with transportation has permeated the airwaves for generations. It was only a matter of time before that collective fixation would manifest itself in all manner of industries.

The plane crash survivors on "Lost" obsess over boats; credit card companies have joined forces with airlines to translate everyday consumer spending into frequent flier miles. And as homebuyers abandon the suburbs and extended commute times in favor of centrally located residences, it is no small wonder that builders and developers alike are responding in progressive numbers, as evidenced

by the proliferation of transit-oriented developments.

As land grows increasingly scarce and concerns over fuel — and the environment — continue to grow, the future of both the residential and commercial building industries can be summed up in a simple three-letter initialism: TOD.

Interconnected urbanity

The popularity of Vallagio Inverness, Metropolitan Homes' community of condominiums, row townhomes, loft residences and golf villas situated on the Inverness Golf Course in Englewood, Colo., speaks volumes to the market's demand for low-maintenance housing projects listing public transit and accessibility among their amenities.

"We've contracted in excess of 141 residences without any models whatsoever," says Metropolitan Homes CEO Peter Kudla.

Directly connected to the Dry Creek light rail station via a pedestrian bridge, the master planned village of Vallagio provides residents with easy access to downtown Denver and all it has to offer. Upon its overall completion scheduled for 2009, the project will include 469 residential units, 18,000 square feet of commercial space and 22,000 square feet of vibrant retail, including a wine store, fine dining establishments and a coffeehouse.

Far from merely providing a service, coffeehouses function as non-discriminatory gathering places — unlike bars, which are limited by virtue of legal age restrictions.



▲ Combining 469 residential units with an abundance of commercial space and retail, Vallagio Inverness presents a texturally and contextually diverse streetscape.

This is an integral component of a successful transit-oriented development, as it infuses the project with a sense of community and connection in keeping with New Urbanist principles.

Simply put, TOD sells

The realtor community has received Vallagio Inverness with open arms, which is far from surprising, as the nature of transit-oriented development is a veritable sales magnet.

"It's a very unique and special type of community in a dynamite location with a lot of facets that aren't really offered out there today," says Deborah Green, vice president of sales and marketing for Metropolitan Homes. "The location is tremendous, giving you access to major highways,

great retail, excellent restaurants and the Western Slope."

With features that typically fall by the wayside in suburban development such as green space and pathways, outdoor fireplaces and dynamic public art to supplement the convenience of "round-the-corner" shops and restaurants, the residential element enthusiastically drives a TOD's retail for a thriving, self-sustaining community.

Revamping the rental market

Southern California's second-largest apartment owner and one of the largest apartment companies in the nation, Archstone-Smith joined forces with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority, or Metro, June 8 to celebrate

the opening of Los Angeles County's first fully integrated transit-oriented, mixed-use apartment development.

In addition to an onsite Metro Gold Line station, the 347-unit project in Pasadena will include 11,000 square feet of retail, a rooftop pool with outdoor fireplace, a 1,300-square-foot fitness center, underground parking and a billiards lounge. A public plaza with shaded seating and water features adds to the town-like feel of the development, while traditional brownstone porches promote social interaction. A frequent destination for urban planners, architects and transit officials around the world, Archstone Del Mar Station was honored with the Congress for the New Urbanism's Charter Award.

▼ Within walking distance of trendy boutiques and dining, the cable-ready apartments at Archstone Del Mar Station feature walk-in closets and spacious floor plans.



▼ Archstone Del Mar Station's amenities include tiled kitchen flooring, granite countertops and a stainless steel appliance package.

