

The Impacts of Gentrification in Transit-Oriented Development on Mode Choice and Equity

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Abstract : Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a popular intervention for local governments endeavoring to reduce auto-dependency and the adverse effects of sprawl. At the same time, American households such as the millennial generation, are shifting their residential preferences from the suburbs to the central city. These changes have intensified demand for TOD housing which generates high rents. This leads to displacement of low-income, transit-dependent households by more affluent middle class families. Critics argue that, the effectiveness of TOD might be compromised as newer affluent residents drive more and use transit less. However, there has not been a comprehensive study to test this hypothesis. Using census data (1990 - 2012) from six metropolitan areas, this research investigated if block groups within one-mile radius of TOD are gentrifying. Our findings reveal that the price of housing and number of college graduates, increased more in TODs compared to the metropolitan area. Similarly, the percentage of immigrants increased in TOD, while those of blacks and whites declined. Most importantly, TOD residents generally commuted less by car, while transit use increased in some metropolitan areas. TOD in the south of the United States registered higher cost of housing and less transit use. These findings have significant implications for the future of equitable and sustainable transportation policy.

Keywords : commuting, equity, gentrification, mode choice, transit oriented development

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