

Dear Members of the Committee

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill HB24-1313, titled "Housing in Transit-Oriented Communities." As a resident of a transit-oriented community in Boulder, Colorado, I have experienced firsthand the transformative impact of living in such a community.

Before residing in my current community, my daily life revolved around car transportation for even the most basic needs. I would routinely make multiple car trips daily, contributing to local traffic and pollution. Since moving to my current home, I have transitioned to a car-light lifestyle with walking, biking, and transit replacing my car as primary modes of transportation. This change was only made possible by the infrastructure prioritizing human-scale living and making alternatives easier and faster than driving.

Transit-oriented communities prioritize pedestrians and cyclists over cars and foster vibrant local businesses. These communities become destinations rather than thoroughfares for vehicles. HB24-1313 represents a pivotal opportunity to expand transit-oriented living statewide, promoting sustainability, community, and economic vitality.

Increasing housing supply through transit-oriented development can also alleviate the pressure on housing costs that strain Coloradans. By offering diverse housing options, we can create more accessible and affordable living arrangements for all residents.

I urge the members of the Committee to support HB24-1313. This bill is crucial in enabling more livable, vibrant, and sustainable communities for all Coloradans.

Sincerely,

Sidarth Dasari

**House Transportation, Housing & Local Government**

**03/06/2024 01:30 PM**

**HB24-1313 Housing in Transit-Oriented Communities**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
David Kider For themselves	I support this bill. Thank you.
Eric Jensen For themselves	Hi, I am writing to express my support for HB24-1313 Housing in Transit-Oriented Communities. In recent years the state of Colorado has experienced substantial influx of new residents to the state. While that increase in the population has posed challenges in some regards, such as placing strain on limited housing stock, it also brings opportunities to support the development of transit systems and transit-oriented communities. Investments in inter and intracity transit can reduce dependence on expensive and impactful car infrastructure. But without high-density housing near transit stations it limits the benefit the transportation systems can provide, because people may still have to drive to park & rides or would be less likely to use it. In my view, this bill to incentivize higher density housing near transit services is an essential step toward ensuring those projects are successful and that residents can benefit from them. Thank you for your time and consideration.
Hayden Dachel For themselves	I am in favor of HB24-1313. Incentivizing building housing near public transit is a crucial step if we want to prevent Colorado from becoming increasingly unaffordable. Not only does incentivizing dense housing near public transit reduce the cost of housing, it's a significant gain for the environment and for personal wellbeing. Reducing urban sprawl and car dependency will help keep Colorado wild and keep out beautiful outdoor spaces from being consumed by low density urban sprawl. Incentivizing dense housing near public transit is a big win and a great step in the right direction towards improving housing affordability in Colorado.
Ronald Hanser	I oppose any State legislation that would override local City and County control. Legislation regarding land use — currently proposed

<p>Against themselves</p>	<p>in the House Transportation, Housing and Local Government Committee is another example.</p> <p>When the State creates land use mandates, it takes away City and County Home Rule and essentially ends citizen input in what my own community (Fort Collins) will look like. Bills of this sort will stimulate even more and faster growth, force Denver-like density on all Colorado cities and do nothing to end "urban sprawl" between our cities.</p> <p>In 2022 and 2023, Fort Collins residents successfully resisted similar initiatives in Fort Collins City Council's proposed Land Use Code changes by successful citizen petition drives. The point is that Colorado citizens do not want this sort of legislation.</p> <p>Specifically regarding HB24-1313 Housing in Transit-Orientated Communities, I oppose this bill because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• According to Colorado Public Radio, "starting in 2024, the State would analyze CO cities — figuring out where they have current or future transit lines as well as how much developable [or re-developable] property is within a half-mile of rail lines and a quarter-mile of most high-frequency bus lines. Then, the State would set "housing opportunity goals," or "HOGs," for the cities. Each city would have to allow an average of 40 units per acre across all its transit-adjacent areas, with exemptions for certain properties.</li><li>• If a community fails to rezone, change local laws, and fund affordability and anti-displacement strategies to the State's satisfaction, the state will withhold and redistribute their Highway Users Tax Fund (HUTF) allocation and even seek an injunction against non-compliant jurisdictions.</li></ul> <p>I oppose the bill because it, again. State overreach and is punitive, instead of partnering with Cities. While a goal of more density around transit is reasonable, this bill is not. Without providing meaningful support for improving transit or affordable housing, the bill unconstitutionally preempts local authority and uses unfunded mandates instead of partnering with local governments to achieve mutual goals.</p>
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	<p>Punitive measures are unnecessary, do not lead to more affordable housing, and discredit the hard work of so many municipalities that are investing in transit-oriented development already.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my input.</p> <p>Ronald Hanser 4998 Clarendon Hills Drive Fort Collins, Colorado 80526</p>
<p>Quinardo Soto For themselves</p>	<p>The importance of public transport access to communities of lower economic status is near to my heart and personal experience. As a child I was fortunate to have public busses I could ride to my Junior High school, at the time my single mother didn't have the opportunity to drive me to school; this allowed me access to higher quality education at a pivotal time in my development, and allowed me to interact with people of different backgrounds that I would have never met otherwise. Later on we lived in a trailer park in Glenwood Springs, far away from the High School I attended, and also far away from any sports or social activities safe and positive for a young man; if it wasn't for the robust and affordable RFTA bus system that allowed me access to snowboarding, and to spending time with my friends, I would have fallen victim to the type of social alienation and isolated conditions that lead to drug use and depression among lower income youth. This Bill is a saviour to a new generation of youth in similar economic conditions, it will allow so many to experience opportunities they otherwise would never have access to, and will pull at-risk individuals out of their alienation. Thank you for your time.</p>
<p>Charles Kopp Against themselves</p>	<p>To representatives on the committee:</p> <p>I strongly oppose SB24-1313 because it's such a bold overreach of the state's authority on the housing development issue. The state should be a guide and not Big Brother when it comes to solutions to the housing problems affecting just about everywhere in the nation now.</p> <p>Although the policy of increasing housing density in transit corridors has its merits, it should never be mandated as in the current plan and with such punitive measures for non-compliant communities. And I suspect that if it passes, there will be some serious legal challenges.</p>

	<p>I'm hoping that after last year's draconian scheme failed, there will be great public opposition that will pressure state leaders in support of the current scheme to finally accept fine tuning the local approach to dealing with housing issues.</p> <p>I, like many residents of Colorado, also don't believe that the overall state-mandated scheme will even result in providing the amount of more affordable housing that is the main goal. At best, it's a big gamble that could really disappoint those in the "Yimby" movement who are no doubt big supporters of the scheme and think that "build, baby, build!" is the simple solution to more affordable housing. But developers and investors, also no doubt big supporters and influencers, would surely be the big and perhaps only real winners in a scheme that seems to encourage excessive development.</p> <p>Again, let's stay local in finding new solutions to complex housing problems, with the state staying in its legitimate role of offering guidance but not being Big Brother. The multitude of us voters who care about preserving the character and quality of life in our communities, and also our great Colorado environment, will be watching the way all of you vote on HB24-1313 and related bills</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Charles Kopp Fort Collins</p>
<p>Trudy Haines Amend Fort Collins HOA (Home Owners Association) Coalition</p>	<p>Dear HOUSE Transportation, Housing and Local Government Committee,</p> <p>This bill is State overreach and is punitive, instead of partnering with or inciting communities to ensure transit orientated development or redevelopment, it's punitive. While a goal of more density around transit is reasonable, this bill is not. We need to partner with the Cities. Fort Collins and other cities are well on our way to providing more density along transit corridors and our FC HOA Coalition has supported this.</p>

	<p>We worry that the State is avid about adding density to our cities, but is taking no action to discourage or stop sprawl among our cities. Thank you, Trudy Haines</p>
<p>Annabel Bland For themselves</p>	<p>I support this bill and sincerely hope the council passes it. I live in North Capitol Hill without a car and I love it. Because of the density and transit options I'm able to get most places I need to go in an average month by walking or public transportation. I live close to a light rail stop and multiple bus stops. I save hundreds of dollars per month in car related expenses and am able to get exercise without even trying. I also get to know the city more and feel like I know it so much better than the car dependent suburb I lived in before, even though I lived there a lot longer.</p> <p>But I pay more in rent to live in this neighborhood than I would somewhere more car dependent because the market knows that walkability and transit access is so desired. If this bill passes then there would be more of these walkable and transit accessible communities built, helping to bring down rents in neighborhoods like mine. Living somewhere you can walk to a grocery store and a library shouldn't be illegal, and it shouldn't only be available to people with higher incomes, it should be available for everyone who wants and needs it.</p>
<p>Sidarth Dasari For themselves</p>	<p>Dear Members of the Committee</p> <p>I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill HB24-1313, titled "Housing in Transit-Oriented Communities." As a resident of a transit-oriented community in Boulder, Colorado, I have experienced firsthand the transformative impact of living in such a community.</p> <p>Before residing in my current community, my daily life revolved around car transportation for even the most basic needs. I would routinely make multiple car trips daily, contributing to local traffic and pollution. Since moving to my current home, I have transitioned to a car-light lifestyle with walking, biking, and transit replacing my car as primary modes of transportation. This change was only made possible by the infrastructure prioritizing human-scale living and making alternatives easier and faster than driving.</p>

	<p>Transit-oriented communities prioritize pedestrians and cyclists over cars and foster vibrant local businesses. These communities become destinations rather than thoroughfares for vehicles. HB24-1313 represents a pivotal opportunity to expand transit-oriented living statewide, promoting sustainability, community, and economic vitality.</p> <p>Increasing housing supply through transit-oriented development can also alleviate the pressure on housing costs that strain Coloradans. By offering diverse housing options, we can create more accessible and affordable living arrangements for all residents.</p> <p>I urge the members of the Committee to support HB24-1313. This bill is crucial in enabling more livable, vibrant, and sustainable communities for all Coloradans.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Sidarth Dasari</p>
<p>Ted Harberg For themselves</p>	<p>I am a resident of Olde Town Arvada and am an urban planner. I am writing today to encourage your support for HB24-1313. As an AICP certified planner, I was attracted to the profession by my love for dense, walkable communities, and for the New Urbanist and Smart Growth movements. Unfortunately I have learned that these progressive movements, which are championed by our profession and encourage more sustainable development patterns, have not been widely accepted by the political leaders in many municipalities. Instead of working toward more functional and attractive development patterns; planners often get bogged down in meaningless debates about density that are rooted in fear.</p> <p>In Arvada, I watched in frustration as City Council delayed a proposed apartment project for years while they split hairs over a small handful of units. Despite being located immediately adjacent to Olde Town's G-line station, council only approved the project after reducing the density - a bad decision not made in anybody's best interest. Municipalities should not be able to accept regional investments in transit, then renege in allowing enough housing to make transit a</p>

	<p>success. Without density, we then cannot run frequent trains or grow enough ridership to expand the system.</p> <p>“Home Rule” grants municipalities power of governance on matters unless specifically denied by state-level action. Home Rule does not prevent the state from claiming authority on new matters, and this includes land use.</p> <p>As a planner, I encourage critical thinking when municipalities claim they cannot accommodate the growth this bill might allow. It may be true that some cities don’t yet have financing mechanisms to upgrade existing infrastructure, but it is not true that financing these upgrades is impossible. Please don’t accept such claims at face value. Other cities, like Denver and Boulder, levy "impact fees" on development that funds upgrades to infrastructure like water and sewer. As lawmakers, you should probe deeper into why other cities could not use this same method of financing infrastructure upgrades.</p> <p>Many of the cities making these claims are also planning for developers to pay to extend water, sewer, and roadway networks into previously undeveloped lands where the city will later provide service. It is insincere to claim to lack capacity for density while planning for sprawl. Horizontal expansion of this infrastructure ALWAYS requires greater resources than upgrading existing infrastructure.</p>
<p>Jeany Rush Against themselves</p>	<p>TO: HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION LOCAL GOVERNMENT STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE</p> <p>RE: HB24-1313 HOUSING IN TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES</p> <p>FROM: JEANY RUSH, COLORADO SPRINGS CONCERNED CONSTITUENT</p> <p>VOTE: NO NO NO NO ON THIS BILL</p> <p>This body of legislators in Denver in 2024, like the previous years, has already submitted over 580 bills to totally rip away our individual and God-given rights as citizens of our free nation. You have in this bill 56 pages for you all to totally confuse people, and create another government funded and OVERREACH bill to take away more and more local control of their communities. And this is funded by the very people living there. When will you all stop trying to pass all of these bills to take away all freedoms and liberties of the American People? This is nothing more than a total marxist takeover of this nation. Dictating housing, transportation, and much more, and using</p>

	<p>government grants, and more governmental rule making, is not what should be happening in our communities. This is just more of the original socialist/marxist Urban Growth model. And it relies on taxpayers to pay for it. This is not only totally wrong, it is not sustainable as a nation. So a total NO on this travesty.</p>
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## TRANSIT-ORIENTED UPZONING IN COLORADO CAN DELIVER JOBS, GROWTH, AND AFFORDABILITY

**SALIM FURTH**

*Senior Research Fellow, Urbanity Project, Mercatus Center at George Mason University*

Colorado House of Representatives, Transportation, Housing and Local Government Committee  
HB 24-1313 Housing in Transit-Oriented Communities

March 6, 2024

Chair Froelich, Vice Chair Lindsay, and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to comment on transit-oriented communities. I am an economist at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, and I study housing markets. The Mercatus Center is a non-profit, non-partisan research center dedicated to bridging the gap between academic ideas and real-world problems.

### THE HOUSING THEORY OF EVERYTHING

Housing costs in Colorado spiked in the early 2020s, as they did across the US. Median apartment rent in metropolitan Denver is 21 percent higher now than it was on the eve of the pandemic, four years ago.<sup>1</sup> And median single-family home prices are 35 percent higher.<sup>2</sup> Those cost increases are eating up a big chunk of average wage growth over those years.

Economists and others who watch housing markets have begun to buy into the “housing theory of everything.”<sup>3</sup> The theory goes that most major problems in modern society are downstream of housing—providing abundant housing in high-demand locations would make it easier to increase economic growth, redress racial injustices, balance budgets, slow climate change, produce great art, strengthen families, find a good job, and so on and on.

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<sup>1</sup> Zillow Data (database), “Zillow Observed Rent Index (multifamily, smoothed and seasonally adjusted) Jan 2020–Jan 2024,” accessed March 3, 2024, <https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>.

<sup>2</sup> Zillow Data (database), “Zillow Housing Value Index (single family, smoothed and seasonally adjusted) Jan 2020–Jan 2024,” accessed March 3, 2024, <https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>.

<sup>3</sup> John Myers, Sam Bowman, and Ben Southwood, “The Housing Theory of Everything,” *Works in Progress*, September 14, 2021; Salim Furth, “Why We Need to Achieve Housing Abundance,” *Discourse*, February 9, 2023, <https://www.discoursemagazine.com/p/why-we-need-to-achieve-housing-abundance>.

Let me zoom in on two of those downstream phenomena: jobs and economic growth. Cities are fundamentally labor markets.<sup>4</sup> But regulatory limits on housing construction in job-rich areas put jobs out of reach. Some people respond to the artificial housing shortage by moving to cheaper land at the edge of the metro area. There, they can reach most jobs, but not ones on the far side of the metro area. Other people respond to the lack of available, attainable housing by moving away altogether. Both groups end up missing out on job opportunities.

Economic growth, of course, is just the sum of individual income growth. So, when zoning prevents individuals from bettering themselves, it shows up in the national accounts.<sup>5</sup>

## MILE-HIGH PROBLEMS, MILE-HIGH SOLUTIONS

A number I reference often is minus two-thirds. That's the best estimate of the rent elasticity of housing demand.<sup>6</sup> In English, it means that to decrease rent by two percent, you need a three percent increase in the stock of housing. Most lawmakers are hoping for something more like a 20 percent decrease in rent—which means they should be thinking about making space for 30 percent more homes in job-accessible locations.

The bill before you, HB 24-1313, is at a scale big enough that you can reasonably hope it will lead to double-digit rent decreases. Back of the envelope math suggests that the bill will create regulatory space for over a million dwellings in the Denver metro area.<sup>7</sup> Building takes time. Major upzonings like this don't deliver new housing for decades: Arlington, Virginia, where my office is located, is still opening new apartment buildings in a large transit corridor that was initiated before I was born.

Slow and steady wins the race: A statewide upzoning of the scale conceived in HB 24-1313 would open a multi-generational spigot of new housing, create decades of downward pressure on prices, and put the state, its citizens, and its businesses in position to weather future crises.

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<sup>4</sup> Alain Bertaud, *Order without Design: How Markets Shape Cities* (MIT Press, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Gilles Duranton and Diego Puga, "Urban Growth and Its Aggregate Implications," *Econometrica* 91, no. 6 (December 2023): 2219–51; Fil Babalievsky et al., "The Impact of Commercial Real Estate Regulations on US Output," (National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 31895, November 2023).

<sup>6</sup> David Albouy, Gabriel Ehrlich, and Yingyi Liu, "Housing Demand, Cost-of-Living Inequality, and the Affordability Crisis," (National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 22816, November 2016).

<sup>7</sup> I cannot stress enough that this is back-of-the-envelope math aimed at estimating the order of magnitude. The Denver metro area has 78 RTD stations plus several dozen miles of frequent bus service (State of Colorado, *Housing Proposals Overview*, unpublished presentation). The half-mile circle around each station contains 500 acres; each mile of frequent bus service creates a "transit corridor area" of 320 acres. I assume that half of the covered land is non-exempt. At 40 units per acre, this would imply a zoning capacity requirement of 10,000 units per station and 6,400 per mile of frequent bus service. Allowing for some overlap, this might yield 700,000 units of zoning capacity near rail stations and as many or more on bus corridors. Existing zoning, of course allows dense housing on much of this land. The net new capacity is likely half or less of the total capacity.

March 4, 2024

To: Members of the Committee on Transportation, Housing, and Local Government  
From: Alan and Joan Lamborn, Fort Collins  
Subject: HB 24-1313, Transit Oriented Communities

We write to express our dismay that an idea as laudable as encouraging increased housing density along transportation corridors in cities and towns should have gone as badly awry as it has in this proposed legislation. We urge the Committee – and the Legislature – to reject this draft and develop an approach that is more collaborative and eliminates the bureaucratic overreach that permeates every aspect of this version.

Our conclusions and recommendations reflect our understanding of the issues involved. We have read quite a few research papers on this topic over the last several years, several iconic books on urban planning and politics, and have closely followed the debates within Fort Collins. One of us is also an emeritus professor of political science who was tasked with evaluating draft legislation when he was in an administrative position at Colorado State University. With this background, we read the entire bill with great care.

We will state our principal concerns briefly.

1. The legislation's approach places far too much power and administrative discretion in the hands of the Department of Local Affairs in collaboration with Energy and Transportation. The negative effects of this centralization are exacerbated by the extraordinary number and complexity of the factors these Departments are supposed to take into account. Indeed, the web of factors is so complex and intertwined that it reminds us of all the reasons why planned economies failed so completely in the Soviet bloc during the Cold War.
2. While the comprehensiveness of the list of factors the bureaucracy is instructed to take into account is no doubt intended to be indicative of the drafters' knowledge of the issues involved, several key factors are perplexingly omitted. If these Transit Areas are to be effective in achieving the announced goals, there must be more than housing in the Transit Areas, there must also be employment centers. Moreover, in a society in which multiple members of a household typically work (and, often, work in different locations), and in a state where most households will want cars to get out onto the plains and into the mountains when not working, the ability of Transit Areas to reduce the need for parking and car ownership is highly limited. Automobile use can be reduced, and that would be highly valuable, but ownership and parking not nearly as much.

These initial concerns suggest a disquieting pattern. On the one hand, the state's departments are tasked with a bureaucratic evaluation and determination of a lengthy and complex set of considerations when identifying the Transit Areas, Transit Corridors, and Transit Centers. On the other hand, the implicit claim that the mere complexity, length, and comprehensiveness of these considerations reflects erudition and expertise is unpersuasive. In our view, what the length and complexity of these considerations really reveals is a lack of attention to the practicalities involved in successfully implementing the legislation.

This absence of wisdom about practicalities and possible unintended consequences is accentuated by several of the following considerations.

3. The reporting requirements for cities are so overwhelming as being highly unlikely to be effectively met within existing budgets and personnel.
4. The top-down nature of the processes envisioned by the legislation and the overwhelming reporting requirements will make the inevitable bureaucratic missteps and unintended negative effects profoundly illegitimate politically, thereby undermining faith in government and feeding into the narrative of governmental overreach and arrogance.
5. When one analyzes the details of what constitutes a Transit Area (which includes analyzing the embedded definitions of a Transit Station, Transit Corridor, and Transit Center), it turns out that the emphasis on increasing density along Transit Areas is a Trojan Horse for widespread rezoning of large swatches on the city. Especially in those cities, such as Fort Collins, that have organized bus transit lines along a grid system in which the arterials are typically a mile apart, the one-quarter to one-half mile box defining the Transit Area (the legislation allows for an additional one-quarter mile for areas adjacent to bus transit under certain conditions) will cover large sections of the City. The title suggests one thing – a largely uncontroversial emphasis on several already densely used corridors. The details suggest a more comprehensive re-zoning.
6. One of the effects of the previous points will be to penalize communities that have already done the most to promote transit. The more bus lines there already are and the more frequently they run – or are planned to run – the more areas in a city that will be labeled as being in a Transit Area. It is a classic “no good deed goes unpunished” scenario: The better a city’s existing services and plans, the more that city will be turned upside down by state bureaucrats.
7. One of the most likely unintended consequences of this legislation: The greater the percentage of a city that falls within a Transit Area designation, the greater the number of current residents who will want to move out of the city into rural areas or exurbs to recreate their preferred single-family neighborhood existence.

The cumulative effect of these characteristics of the legislation is to draw a picture that combines an absence of wisdom about possible unintended consequences and the practicalities involved in implementing the legislation with a determination to plow ahead bulldozing all opposition. That approach is straight out of the critique of the potential “tyranny of the majority” in the Federalist Papers.

For all these reasons, we suggest that the Legislature adopt an approach that is built around collaboration, incentives, and incremental experimentation to see what works. The implicit assumption that the very real issues involving housing affordability, energy, transportation, and the environment can be solved in one fell swoop is as misguided as it is arrogant.



**Yonah Freemark**

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March 6, 2024

Dear Representatives,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony to the Colorado House Committee on Transportation, Housing & Local Government.

I have attached my planned testimony on House Bill 24-1313, the Housing in Transit-Oriented Communities Bill. In that testimony, I refer to recent research I led related to housing availability. I published this research here:

- Yonah Freemark. 2022. *Homing In: What Types of Municipalities Are Adding Residential Units, and Which Are Mounting Barriers to Housing?* Washington, DC: Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/homing-in>
- Yonah Freemark, "Spurring Housing Development Near Transit through Federally Funded Land Acquisition," Urban Wire (blog), Urban Institute, February 27, 2024, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/spurring-housing-development-near-transit-through-federally-funded-land-acquisition>

All views expressed here are my own and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders. I hope that this information is useful in your deliberations on the subject. I look forward to discussion with the committee during the question-and-answer session following the planned testimony and would be happy to follow up afterward with additional discussion if useful.

Sincerely,

Dr. Yonah Freemark

## Statement of Yonah Freemark before the Colorado House Committee on Transportation, Housing & Local Government

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I hold a PhD in urban studies from MIT and lead the Urban Institute's practice area on Fair Housing, Land Use, and Transportation, but my testimony today reflects my views alone.

Though Colorado has constructed many homes in recent decades, too many of those new units are in places far from transit. Consider the Denver urban area, which accounted for about one-third of the state's housing growth between 2000 and 2020. Despite the enormous investments in new light rail and commuter lines in the greater Denver area over that period, my research found that just 27 percent of new units were located within a half-mile of rail transit stations.<sup>i</sup>

The remaining units were much farther from transit—and as a result, their residents are likely to drive more, produce more pollution, and have higher transportation expenses. Meanwhile, transit ridership suffers.

A key problem is that many localities are zoning to prevent dense new housing construction. Other research I led identified numerous cities with access to light rail and high real estate values that nonetheless are adding housing at less than half the rate of the overall Denver metropolitan area.<sup>ii</sup> Englewood, for example, has zoning that allows only single-family homes within a mere 680 feet of the Oxford–City of Sheridan station.<sup>iii</sup> In Lakewood, some lots within just two blocks of the Wadsworth station are zoned to require a minimum of 12,500 square feet per unit,<sup>iv</sup> far more than the maximum 2,000 square feet per unit needed to support effective transit service;<sup>v</sup> this legal requirement thus makes dense, transit-friendly living impossible and reduces transit ridership.

These conditions are inhibiting people from being able to live in communities near transit in Colorado, increasing transportation costs and pollution.

If Colorado is interested in expanding access to housing, a state mandate that requires localities to plan for minimum densities around transit could play an important role in making room for more homes in situations like these. The Transit-Oriented Communities Bill could appropriately reward communities for achieving minimum densities.

Thank you.

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<sup>i</sup> Yonah Freemark, "Spurring Housing Development Near Transit through Federally Funded Land Acquisition," *Urban Wire* (blog), Urban Institute, February 27, 2024, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/spurring-housing-development-near-transit-through-federally-funded-land-acquisition>

<sup>ii</sup> Yonah Freemark, *Homing In: What Types of Municipalities Are Adding Residential Units, and Which Are Mounting Barriers to Housing?* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2022), <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/homing-in>

<sup>iii</sup> City of Englewood, "Zoning Map," accessed March 4, 2024, <https://www.engagewoodco.gov/government/city-departments/community-development/zoning/zoning-map>

<sup>iv</sup> Lakewood, Colorado, "Zoning and Standards," accessed March 4, 2024, <https://www.lakewood.org/Government/Departments/Planning/Development-Assistance/Development-Assistance/Zoning-and-Standards>

<sup>v</sup> Cervero and Guerra find that cost-effective rail transit requires roughly 30 residents per gross acre near stations. Assuming about 30 percent of land is occupied by the public right of way and other uses, and an average of 2 people per dwelling unit, this equates to about 2,000 square feet of land per housing unit. Robert Cervero and Erick Guerra, "Urban Densities and Transit: A Multi-dimensional Perspective," (working paper UCB-ITS-VWP-2011-6, University of California, Berkeley, Institute of Transportation Studies, 2011).