Is Los Angeles Becoming Transit Oriented?

*Presented by Genevieve Giuliano and Eun Jin Shin*

Over the past 20 years, local and regional governments in the Los Angeles metropolitan area have invested significant resources in building rail transit infrastructure that connects major employment centers. One goal of transit infrastructure is to catalyze the development of high density, mixed-use housing and commercial activity within walking distance of rail stations, referred to as Transit Oriented Development (TOD). This project examines the quantity, type, and mix of economic activity that has occurred around newly built rail stations in Los Angeles over the past 20 years. Specifically, have the number of jobs or housing market characteristics changed near stations? We use establishment-level data on employment and property-level data on housing transactions to analyze changes in several employment and housing outcomes. Results suggest that new rail stations were located in areas that, prior to station opening, had unusually high employment density and mostly multifamily rental housing. There is no evidence of changes in employment density, housing sales volume, or new housing development within five years after station opening. Regressions suggest that a subset of stations saw increased employment density within five to ten years after opening.

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