



Executive Summary: “Real Opportunity”

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Access the full report: <http://www.circulatesd.org/realopportunity>

Executive Summary

Our report titled “Real Opportunity” demonstrates how the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) can transform its underutilized parking lots into affordable homes.

MTS has at least 57 acres of property that can be made available for development. With accommodating land use policies, Circulate San Diego calculates that the MTS properties can support the development of 8,000 new homes, with more than 3,000 reserved as permanently affordable for low income families.

“Real Opportunity” also includes a new data set for parking utilization at each of the various parking lots associated with MTS trolley and bus stops. Circulate San Diego dispatched volunteers throughout the region to count the number of spaces available, and how many were used. The data shows that many parking lots have very low utilization rates.

Circulate San Diego’s report recommends that MTS reform its policies to:

- Create a joint development program that issues requests for proposals for priority sites and actively solicits near-term development partners."
- Require that any residential development include a percentage of homes to be made permanently affordable for low income families.
- Eliminate the costly requirement for new developments to replace or maintain parking where it is already underutilized.

Peer transit agencies to MTS, including Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority, Bay Area Rapid Transit, and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority all have similar policies to encourage productive joint development adjacent to transit investments.

Circulate San Diego’s report recommends that MTS adopt the best practices from other transit agencies in California, to encourage more transit oriented development on its land.

With the new leadership on the MTS Board, we believe that the transit agency has a real opportunity to transform its empty parking lots into affordable homes.

