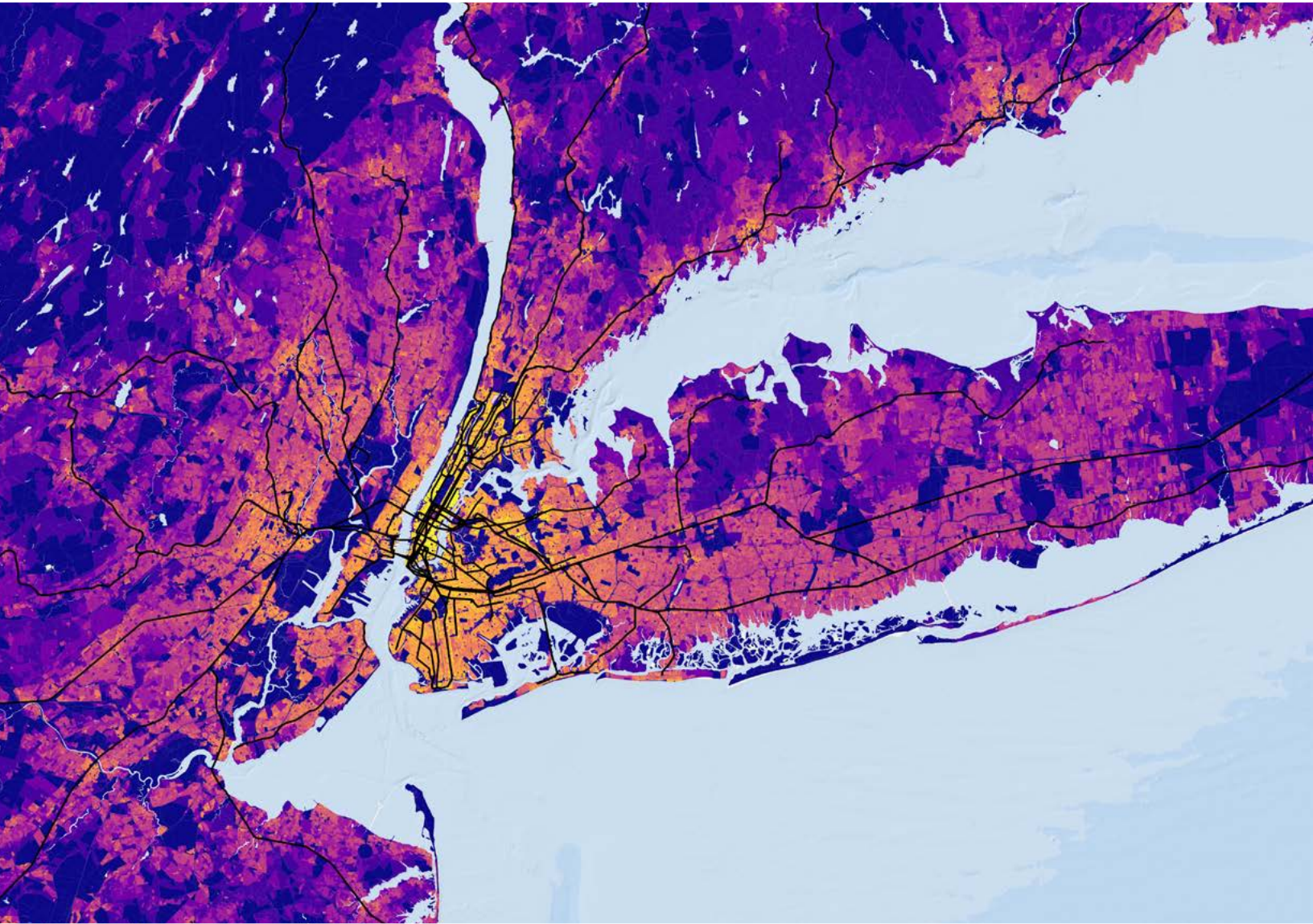# NEXT STOP:
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

TARGETING TRANSPORTATION HUBS TO SOLVE NEW YORK'S HOUSING CRISIS

New York City and its surrounding suburbs are suffering from dual crises of lack of housing and affordability. The city's population has increased by more than 625,000 in the previous decade while adding only 206,000 units (at a rate of 0.5 units per job created)[1]. Without a comprehensive combination of improved zoning flexibility and financial incentives, these crises will only worsen.

Skyrocketing rents and home prices already reflect this reality, as supply is far outpaced by demand. We need to increase housing supply at all income levels, but with particular attention given to affordable units. The construction industry, spearheaded by members of the New York Building Congress, is ready to build these homes and pull us out of these crises, one brick at a time.

This report lays out a vision of where and how we can build housing across the region. Outdated city and state policies have held us back from realizing our full economic potential for decades. However, the Building Congress is thrilled to see NY Governor Kathy Hochul and NYC Mayor Eric Adams in lockstep with our 2023 Policy Agenda.[2] Many of our proposals have been incorporated in both Gov. Hochul's Housing Compact and Mayor Adams' Get Stuff Built agenda.[3][4]

Using a robust methodology and thorough data analysis, we have identified key opportunities for housing growth around transit hubs, both within the five boroughs and in our immediate surrounding counties — even across the Hudson River in New Jersey.

The areas we identify present some of the ripest and most critical opportunities for more housing, if properly aided by our partners in government. Development at these sites highlight policies that will allow such growth to be realized across the state. All sites are in close proximity to transit and/or commuter rail stations in order to directly address the gap between job growth and housing unit production — a model known as Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), touted by the U.S. Department of Transportation as creating "dense, walkable, and mixed-use spaces near transit that support vibrant, sustainable, and equitable communities."

The Building Congress offers the following TOD toolkit, focusing on some of the region's most under-developed yet transit-rich neighborhoods to highlight policies that could help spur maximal housing development around them. In order to unlock TOD housing growth, we must first start with state policies that promote more development, and later drill down to policies that are more city- and region-specific. Our case study sites exemplify prime areas where specific policy changes can be applied to leverage the best opportunities for TODs in the metro region. They should not be viewed as the be-all and end-alls for such development, but instead the baselines from which to expand.

Ralph J. Esposito
New York Building Congress Chair
President, Northeast & Mid-Atlantic Region
Suffolk

Carlo A. Scissura, Esq.
President & CEO
New York Building Congress

1   https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/planning-level/housing-economy/geography-of-jobs2-flyer.pdf
2   2023 Policy Agenda | New York Building Congress
3   https://www.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/press-releases/2022/GetStuffBuilt.pdf
4   https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-statewide-strategy-address-new-yorks-housing-crisis-and-build-800000

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES: STATEWIDE & NYC

Statewide Keys for Unlocking TODs:

- **Lift Floor-to-Area Ratio (FAR) caps:** Old and ill-considered state laws artificially capped residential buildings at 12.0 FAR. For comparison, the 1931 Empire State Building is 30 FAR. While opponents point to the supertalls as a reason for maintaining the cap, studies[5] show that a lifted cap would allow for more homes and prevent the buildings from needing to be so skinny and tall. We are calling for eliminating the FAR cap at the state level and for lifting the FAR limit on R10 and equivalent zoning districts at the city level.

- **Incentivize office to residential conversions:** We segregate residential, retail, and office uses through zoning even though mixed-use neighborhoods are more efficient and dynamic. Due to the effects of the pandemic, we have an abundance of vacant office space in Midtown while suffering from a shortage of residential space. If we convert just 10% of our city's existing office space to residential, we could create over 46,000 homes in Midtown and nearly 100,000 homes citywide.[6] There are plenty of physical challenges to converting office space into residential, there's no reason to add legal barriers.

- **Expedite/exempt environmental reviews for public transit & infill projects & TODs:** Environmental review laws help stop many harmful projects, but also inadvertently stall many clearly beneficial projects. We know that the best thing we can do for the environment is drive less and live in dense, walkable communities with accessible public transit, but our environmental review laws often prevent neighborhoods from achieving that goal. We call for a reassessment of federal, state and city environmental review requirements on all public transportation, infill, and TOD projects.

- **Extend the Completion Deadline for Vested 421-a Projects:** The primary reason new rental units have been built over the past few decades is the 421-a subsidy, which brought the property tax rate on those projects to a manageable level in exchange for including income-restricted affordable housing in a project. 421-a has expired, and it has not yet been replaced. We are calling for immediate extension, followed by a permanent replacement.

Citywide Keys for Unlocking TODs Around Subway Stations:

- **Deepen Transit Zone Exemptions:** The city already has zoning exemption overlays within a half-mile of a subway line in areas that New York City defines as Manhattan Core and Transit Zones,[7] but the only exemption that applies to projects in Transit Zones is a small reduction (not elimination) in required parking in income-restricted affordable housing units. We are calling for the elimination of all parking requirements in transit zones.

- **Rezone away from auto-centric uses near transit:** C8 districts – which permit auto-centric uses such as gas stations, repair shops, and warehouses while restricting housing – are pockmarked throughout walkable, high-opportunity neighborhoods like Woodside, Queens. As these uses decline in relevance, these locations are a great opportunity for rezoning for additional housing density. If we permit housing on privately-owned lots in C8 districts at similar densities to the surrounding neighborhood, we could increase zoning capacity by 110,000 homes.[8]

- **Expand Mixed-Use Districts:** The main reasoning behind having light industrial (M1) zones without a residential component is its use buffering residential from medium and heavy industrial uses, yet a significant portion of M1 zones, including around the St. George Ferry Terminal (see our Case Studies section), aren't buffer zones and needlessly prohibit housing near transit. We are calling for all M1 parcels near transit (that are not abutting M2 or M3 districts) to legalize residential development by right.

- **Reduce the hurdles of building in Historic Districts:** Almost every single parcel between Lexington Ave. and Central Park from 61st to 79th streets is in a "historic district,"[9] permanently locked in amber despite a vast majority of buildings not being designated landmarks. By limiting redevelopment in some of the world's highest opportunity neighborhoods, we are suffocating housing supply and crowding out low- and middle-income neighbors. Adding housing density in high-demand neighborhoods in fact relieves the pressure of tearing down and replacing designated landmarks in those areas.[10]

---

5   https://rpa.org/latest/lab/nyc-12-far-reform-myths

6   PLUTO 22v3.1.

7   https://www.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans/manhattan-core-public-parking/mncore_es.pdf

8   PLUTO 22v3.1. C8-1 at R5D, C8-2 at R6A, C8-3 at R7A, and C8-4 at R9A.

9   https://www.nyc.gov/site/lpc/designations/maps.page

10   https://www.city-journal.org/html/preservation-follies-13279.html

CASE STUDIES:
NYC SUBWAY STATIONS

Within the five boroughs, these areas present some of the highest opportunities for more housing development once existing policy hurdles that stymie growth are reformed. These are not necessarily the highest-scoring sites, but we believe they serve as preeminent models that could be used to expand TOD on a far wider scale.

As a reference point, the average New York City subway station exhibits the following criteria: Density on Buildable Land: 88.3 du/ac (dwelling units per acre); FAR Utilization: 61% (meaning 39% more can be built per existing zoning); Job Accessibility Index: 6.8 (roughly 3.4 million jobs within 60 minutes); and Residential Share: 67% (meaning 33% of the floor area is dedicated to non-residential uses).

THE AVERAGE TOD OPPORTUNITY SCORE ACROSS THE CITY IS 6.7.

METHODOLOGIES

To identify the areas with the greatest potential for unlocking and building TODs, we created two custom metrics, one for NYC subway stations and another for commuter rail stations, called a **TOD Opportunity Score.**
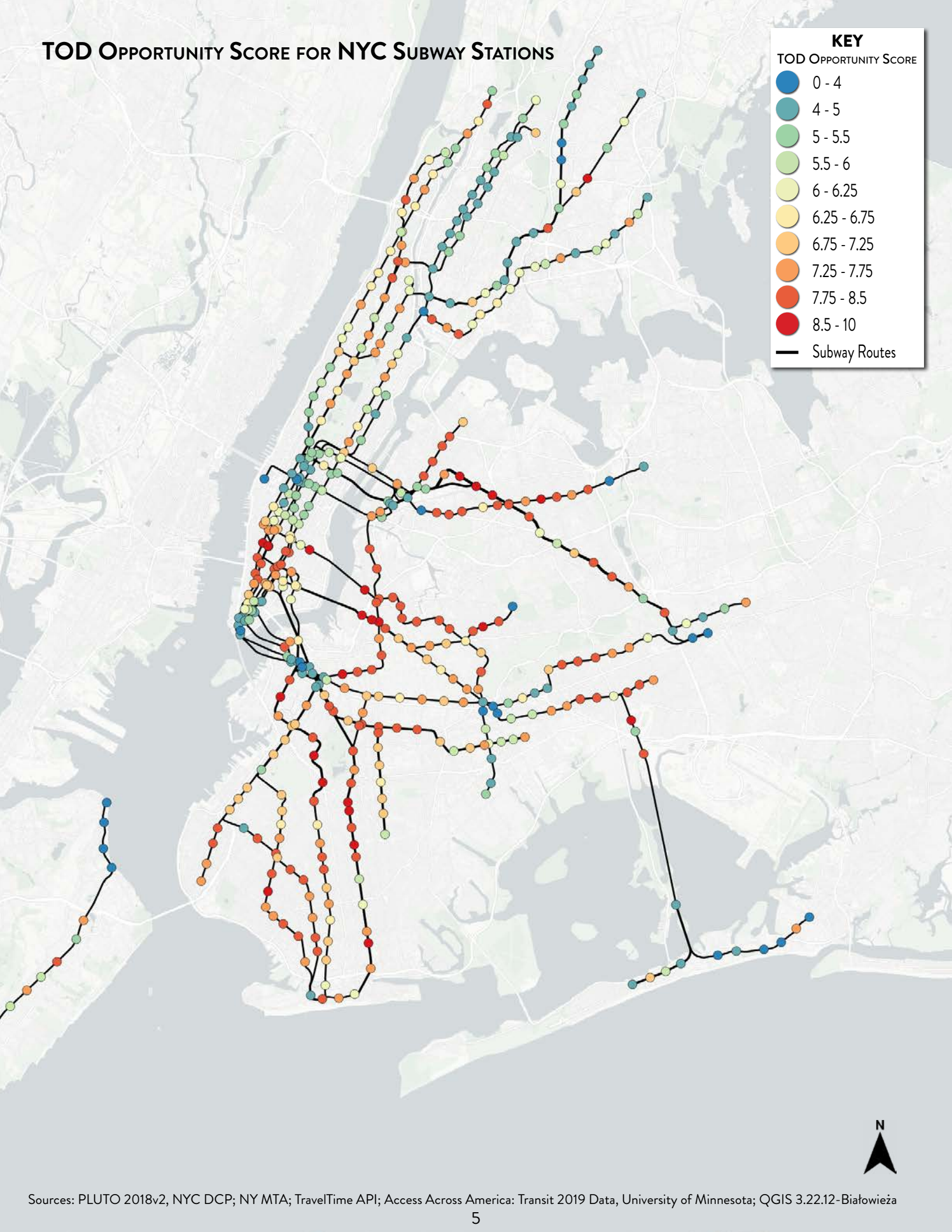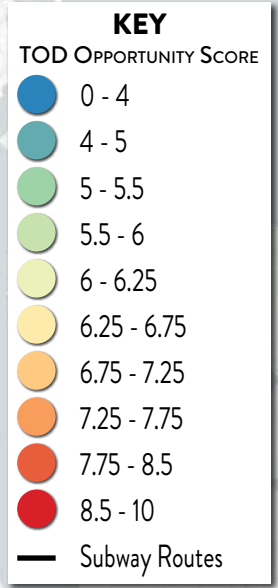
We examined the following data to guide our analysis:

1. **Job Accessibility Index:** A new metric analyzing how many jobs can be accessed using only public transit from each station, weighted by travel time.[1]

2. **Residential Density:** Number of dwelling units per acre (du/ac). Density on buildable land for the subway version of the score and true density on the commuter rail version.[2,3]

3. **FAR Utilization:** For the subway score, the percentage of housing units in an area relative to how many housing units can be built under existing zoning laws.[4]

4. **Residential Share:** For the subway score, the percentage of the floor space in the area that is dedicated to residential use.[5]

Taken together, these allow us to rank locations within a five-minute walk (~ ¼ mile) of subway stations and half-mile of commuter rail stations, and identify those which have characteristics to warrant additional TOD: Quick access to jobs, low density, low ceilings for growth per current zoning and a high share of existing residential use. We assigned stations **a TOD Opportunity Score,** on a scale of 0-10, 10 being the highest opportunity for TOD.

For a more detailed description of our methodologies, please see the report appendix.

1   Access Across America: Transit 2019 Data, University of Minnesota

2   PLUTO 2018v2, NYC Department of City Planning; PLUTO Plus

3   IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, www.nhgis.org; US Census Bureau, 2020

4   PLUTO 2018v2, NYC Department of City Planning; PLUTO Plus

5   PLUTO 2018v2, NYC Department of City Planning; PLUTO Plus

TOD OPPORTUNITY SCORE FOR NYC SUBWAY STATIONS

KEY

TOD OPPORTUNITY SCORE

- 0 - 4
- 4 - 5
- 5 - 5.5
- 5.5 - 6
- 6 - 6.25
- 6.25 - 6.75
- 6.75 - 7.25
- 7.25 - 7.75
- 7.75 - 8.5
- 8.5 - 10
- ── Subway Routes
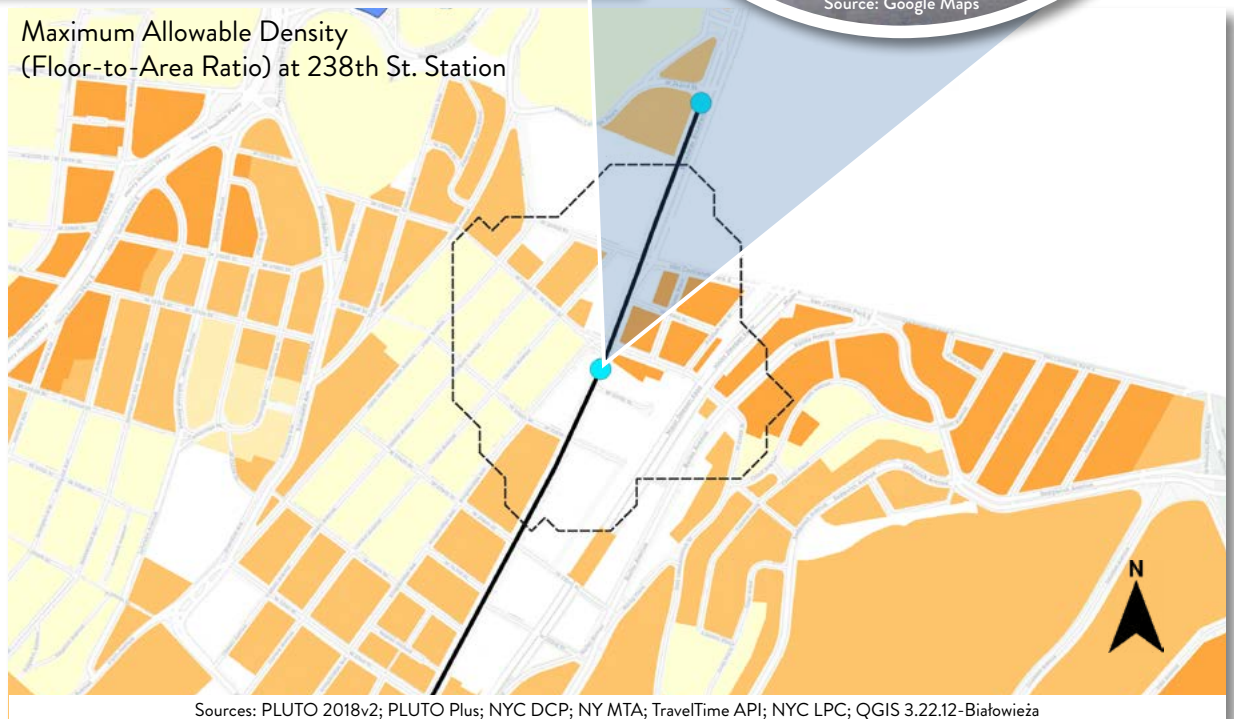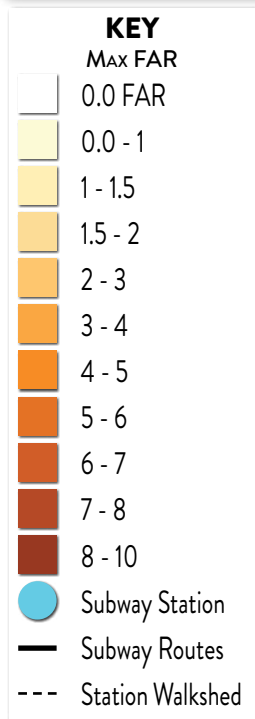
N

238th St ①

TOD Opportunity Score: 7.9

The Bronx outpaces other boroughs when it comes to housing density near transit, and we are excited for the four new Metro-North stations coming to Hunts Point, Parkchester/Van Nest, Morris Park, and Co-Op City via the MTA's Penn Station Access Project,[11] which will further improve public transportation in the borough. While high density housing should be a key focus of these future rail improvement projects, we've identified an ideal location that, today, can quickly become a hub for TOD. The walkshed (the reachable, walkable area around a station) of the 238th St. station sits right at the edge of Riverdale, which is characterized by low-density, wealthier neighborhoods. It is also less than a ¼-mile from the southwest corner of Van Cortlandt Park, which is one-third larger than Central Park. In 45 minutes, commuters have access to almost a million jobs, as such this is a prime opportunity to build a thriving, high density community in a neighborhood with quick access to major economic hubs as well as ample public space. Deepening transit zone exemptions in this location is a great first step for progressing TOD.

Source: Google Earth

Source: Google Maps

KEY

Max FAR

	0.0 FAR
	0.0 - 1
	1 - 1.5
	1.5 - 2
	2 - 3
	3 - 4
	4 - 5
	5 - 6
	6 - 7
	7 - 8
	8 - 10
🔵	Subway Station
—	Subway Routes
---	Station Walkshed

Maximum Allowable Density
(Floor-to-Area Ratio) at 238th St. Station

Sources: PLUTO 2018v2; PLUTO Plus; NYC DCP; NY MTA; TravelTime API; NYC LPC; QGIS 3.22.12-Białowieża

62ND St and New Utrecht Ave D N

TOD Opportunity Score: 7.8

The intersection of the D train and N train at 62nd St. and New Utrecht Ave. is one of just a handful of subway connections in the outer part of the city that run trains in four directions. And should the Interborough Express (IBX) be completed (as we have called for), it would add a third line and a fifth direction. You can reach one million more jobs within 60 minutes of 62nd St. (3,125,449 jobs) than the most accessible census block in the next biggest city in the country (2,105,250 jobs within 60 minutes of downtown Los Angeles). All the station entrances sit within an underutilized light manufacturing zone and the surrounding residential districts limit the FAR to a paltry 1.25, meaning building sizes/volumes are constrained based on the size of the lots they sit on. Expanding this area for mixed-use zoning and permitting exemptions for infill development and transit projects from environmental reviews are critical measures for developing TOD near this subway station.

Source: Google Maps

Source: Google Earth

Maximum Allowable Density (Floor-to-Area Ratio) at 62nd St. and New Utrecht Ave.

Lexington Ave/63rd St Ⓕ Ⓠ
TOD Opportunity Score: 6.9

68th St Hunter College ⑥
TOD Opportunity Score: 7.5
Manhattan

These Lexington Ave. subway stations at the southern end of the Upper East Side are both in the top quarter of target stations in Manhattan, and they offer a unique view into the ways we've tied our hands behind our backs while trying to build a 21st century city. From the 63rd St. and 68th St. stations, you can reach over 2.5 million jobs in under 30 minutes on public transit. In no other city in America can you reach even a million jobs in under 30 minutes. In fact, in no other city in America can you reach 2.5 million jobs in under 60 minutes.[12] This location has the added TOD benefit of being in close proximity to three different subway lines as well as Central Park. Removing the 12 FAR cap, reassessing this location's historic zoning districts, and eliminating building height requirements are key policies for improving TOD here.
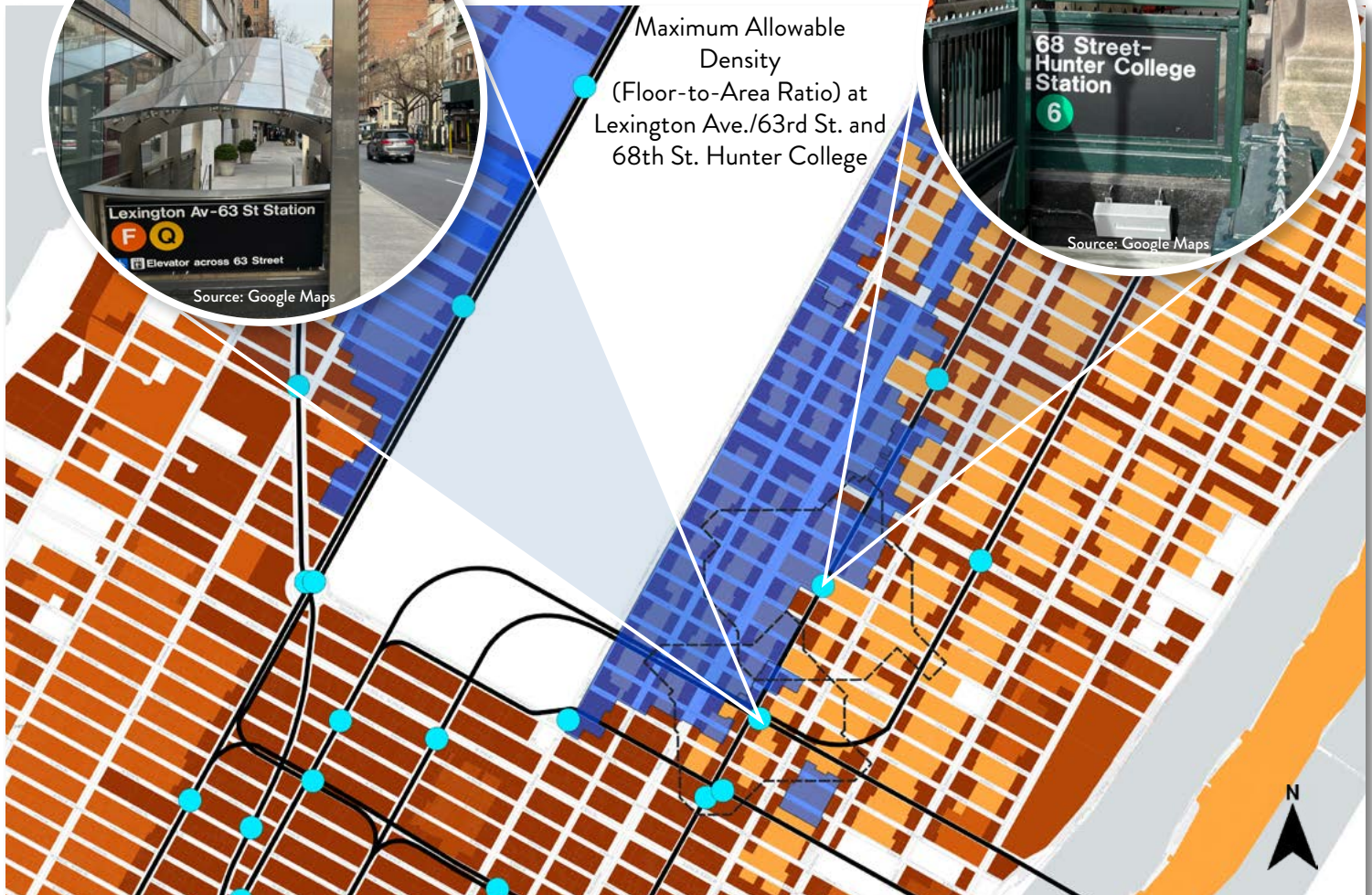

Source: Google Earth

Source: Google Maps

Source: Google Maps

Maximum Allowable Density (Floor-to-Area Ratio) at Lexington Ave./63rd St. and 68th St. Hunter College

Sources: PLUTO 2018v2; PLUTO Plus; NYC DCP; NY MTA; TravelTime API; NYC LPC; QGIS 3.22.12-Białowieża

These stations are ranked 5th and 13th citywide in our TOD Opportunity Score — and for good reason. Residents can reach more than twice as many jobs within 45 minutes than the highest accessibility census blocks in every other city in America (and that's in an "outer borough"). Yet the majority of the walkshed between the two stops is locked in with low-density zoning of 1.25 FAR or lower. The highest allowable FAR in the neighborhood is a meager 2.0, while a significant chunk is blocked off to housing entirely in favor of light industrial uses. As with the Manhattan example, there is also inherent value in prioritizing an area with access to two highly ranked stations. Rezoning this location — currently dotted with many large, surface-level parking lots abutting big-box stores — to move toward higher-density housing and away from auto-centric zoning restrictions is imperative to TOD in this area.

Source: Google Earth

Source: Google Maps

Source: Google Maps

Maximum Allowable Density (Floor-to-Area Ratio) at 46th St. and Northern Blvd.
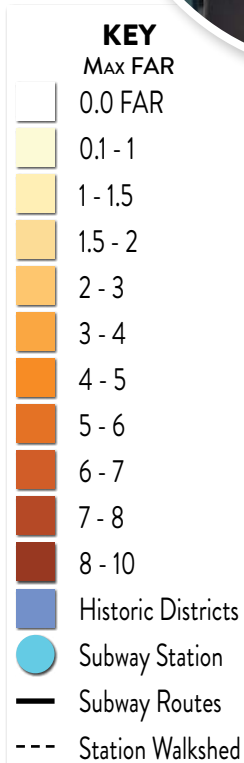
KEY

Max FAR

- 0.0 FAR
- 0.1 - 1
- 1 - 1.5
- 1.5 - 2
- 2 - 3
- 3 - 4
- 4 - 5
- 5 - 6
- 6 - 7
- 7 - 8
- 8 - 10
- Historic Districts
- Subway Station
- — Subway Routes
- --- Station Walkshed

Sources: PLUTO 2018v2; PLUTO Plus; NYC DCP; NY MTA; TravelTime API; NYC LPC; QGIS 3.22.12-Białowieża

You will no doubt notice the sudden drop in Opportunity Score. The waterfront, which includes the ferry terminal, bus terminal, and train station, is blocked off to homes with M1 (light manufacturing) zoning, and across the street are mixed commercial/residential districts that don't have a single home within a five-minute walk of the terminal entrance. Even though the zoning West of Richmond Terrace allows for housing, we haven't taken advantage of it. In 2019, the eight acres adjacent to the station completed development on a 340,000-squarefoot retail complex with no homes. This could have been a great opportunity to build a walkable, mixed-use neighborhood with incredible transit access and a world-class view of the Manhattan skyline. That dream should still be considered a reality worth pursuing. Our scoring formula originally pegged it as a CBD due to the absence of housing and residential zoning, when, in fact, it is a gateway to multiple job centers with the best transit accessibility in the borough. Fortunately, local elected officials are recognizing what it should be: a mixed-use residential community.[13] Reassessing this district's light industrial zoning component is a key aspect of TOD in this zoning district.
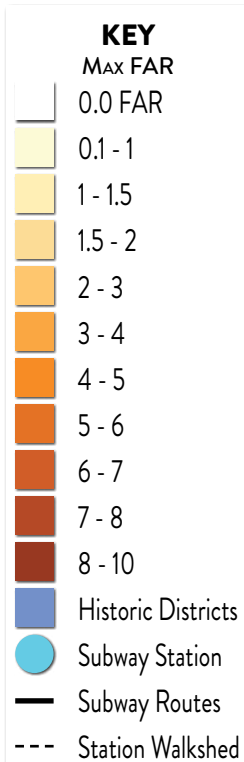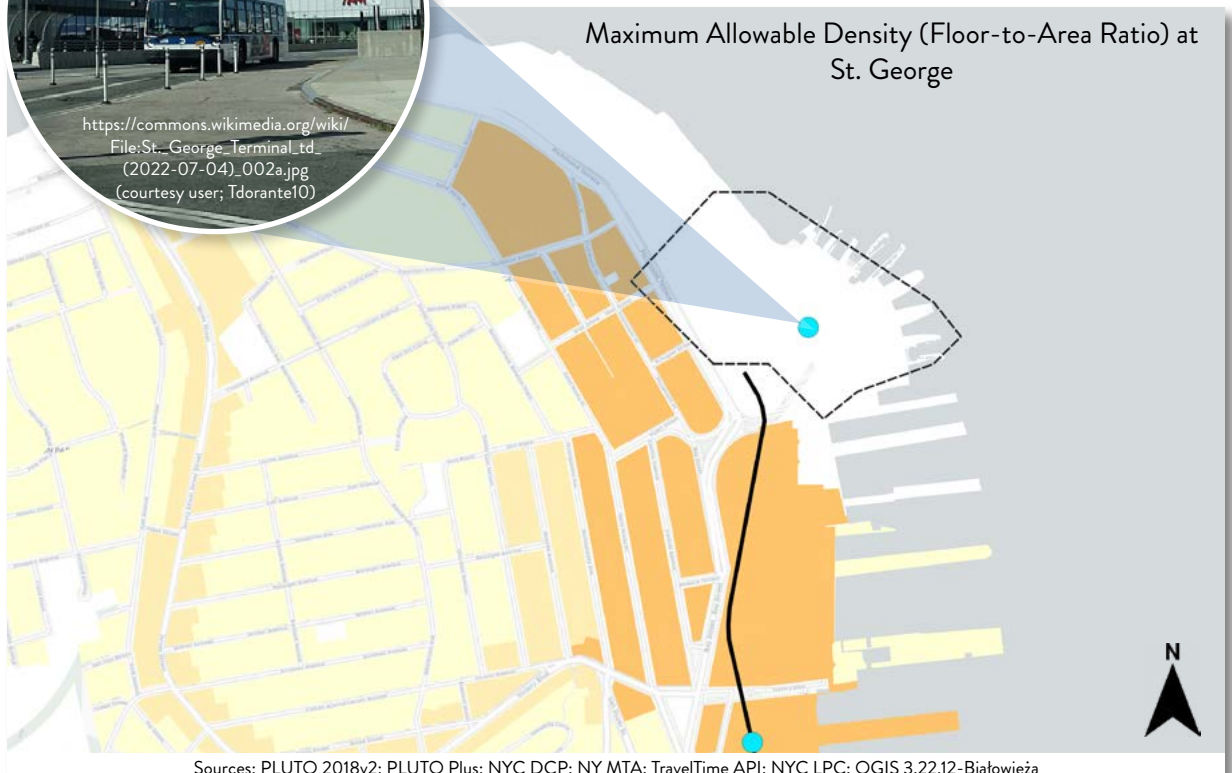

Source: Google Earth

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St._George_Terminal_td_(2022-07-04)_021_-_Staten_Island_Railway.jpg (courtesy user; Tdorante10)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St._George_Terminal_td_(2022-07-04)_002a.jpg (courtesy user; Tdorante10)

KEY

MAX FAR

	0.0 FAR
	0.1 - 1
	1 - 1.5
	1.5 - 2
	2 - 3
	3 - 4
	4 - 5
	5 - 6
	6 - 7
	7 - 8
	8 - 10
	Historic Districts
	Subway Station
	Subway Routes
	Station Walkshed

Maximum Allowable Density (Floor-to-Area Ratio) at St. George

Sources: PLUTO 2018v2; PLUTO Plus; NYC DCP; NY MTA; TravelTime API; NYC LPC; QGIS 3.22.12-Białowieża

13   https://www.silive.com/news/2023/01/exclusive-nyc-to-develop-new-revitalization-plan-for-staten-islands-north-shore.html
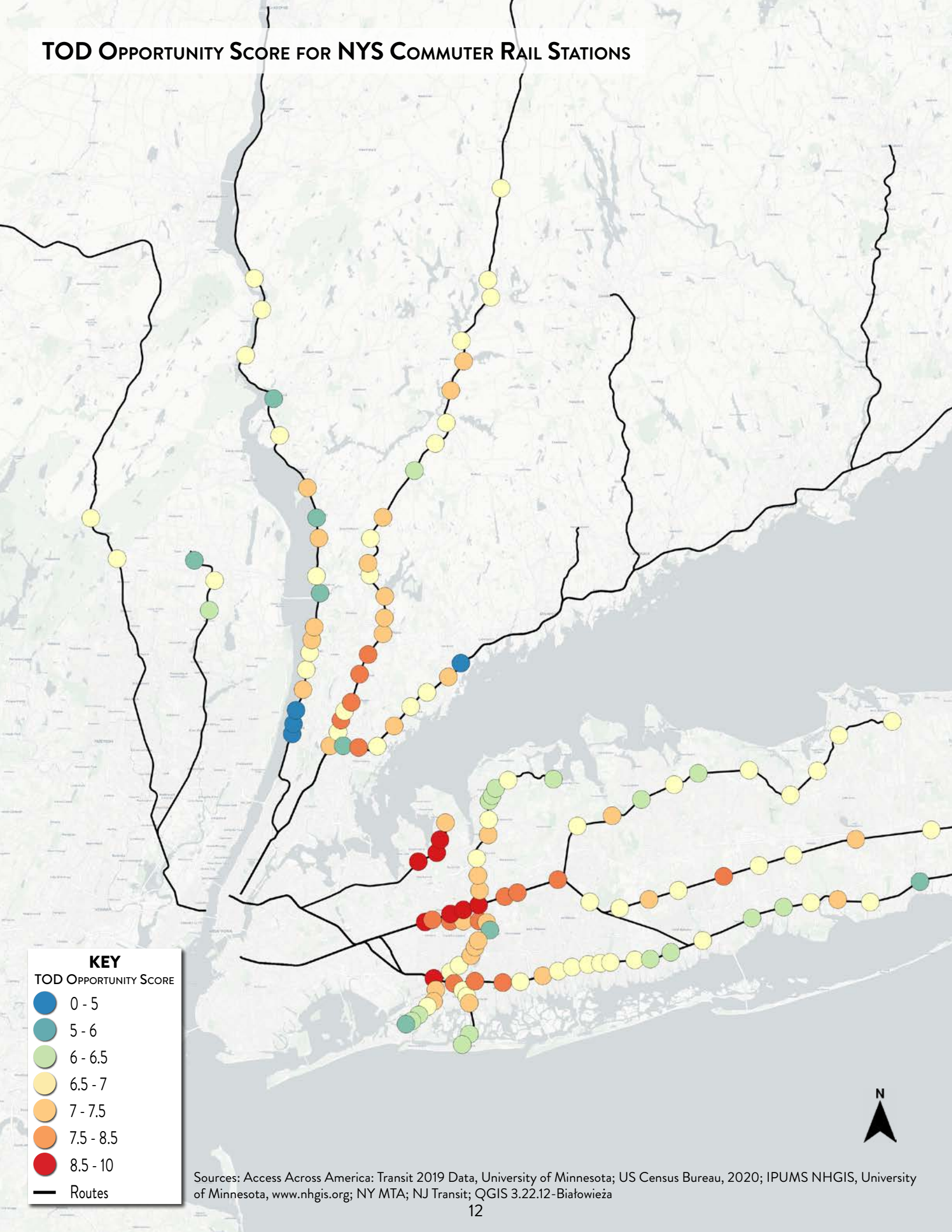
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION

The Mets-Willets Point **7** LIRR | TOD Opportunity Score: 9.2

The Mets-Willets Point subway station, like St. George, has zero homes within a five-minute walkshed. However, when we reran the commuter rail TOD Opportunity Score to include New York City commuter stations, the Mets-Willets Point Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) stop was ranked second for TOD opportunity out of all New York State stations, with exceptionally high job accessibility (3,379,895 within 60 minutes) and exceptionally low residential density (3.3 du/ac). We fully support the Willets Point mixed-use development project[1] aiming to bring 2,500 affordable homes to this area, creating a real community within a half-mile of a subway and commuter rail station.

1   https://www.nyc.gov/site/hpd/news/055-22/mayor-adams-vision-willets-point-transformation-generational-100-percent-affordable#/0

Source: Google Earth

KEY

DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE

- 0 - 0.1 du/ac
- 0.1 - 0.5
- 0.5 - 1
- 1 - 2
- 2 - 5
- 5 - 10
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 50
- 50 - 100
- 100 or more
- Station
- Routes
- Half-Mile Radius

Residential Density at The Mets-Willets Point Station

Sources: Access Across America: Transit 2019 Data, University of Minnesota; US Census Bureau, 2020; IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, www.nhgis.org; NY MTA; NJ Transit; QGIS 3.22.12-Białowieża

TOD Opportunity Score for NYS Commuter Rail Stations

KEY
TOD Opportunity Score

- 🔵 0 - 5
- 🟢 5 - 6
- 🟩 6 - 6.5
- 🟡 6.5 - 7
- 🟠 7 - 7.5
- 🟧 7.5 - 8.5
- 🔴 8.5 - 10
- — Routes

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES: COMMUTER RAIL

We've looked at policies that are specific to New York City Transit locations and zoning changes that must be made within city limits. Now we seek to expand our horizons to identify the locations along major commuter rail lines in the broader metro region to increase housing in suburban areas that lack such density today, giving municipalities a best practice guide for meeting the governor's annual housing production targets.

KEYS FOR UNLOCKING TODs AROUND COMMUTER RAIL STATIONS:

- **MTA Land Development:** Abutting the Deer Park LIRR station in Suffolk County is a 16-acre surface parking lot owned by the MTA. Since it's state-owned property, the state can supersede local exclusionary zoning laws. The parking lot is adjacent to a park, offices, and abundant retail options, so instead of waiting for the town to permit dense housing, the MTA could facilitate the construction itself. The MTA must be allowed to reevaluate all of its publicly owned lands and structures for TOD purposes.

- **Lift Accessory Dwelling Unit and Apartment Bans and Relax Restrictive Regulations Statewide:** In the midst of a housing crisis, large detached, single-dwelling zoning must be reimagined, especially around transit. Fourplexes and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs, also known as in-law apartments) should be legal and easy to build. These homes can add gradual density and affordability to a community without changing neighborhood character. By legalizing them, we let multiple generations of a family live separately but on the same lot, and create room for immigrants to find homes and realize the promise of New York. Even if just 10% of homes near commuter rail stations were to add ADUs, New York State would increase its housing stock by nearly 40,000 homes[14] — that is 5% of Governor Hochul's ten-year housing target of 800,000 homes with minimal effort.

CASE STUDIES: COMMUTER RAIL STATIONS

Outside the five boroughs, these areas present some of the highest opportunities for more housing development, once existing policy hurdles that stymie growth are reformed.

For commuter rail to be cost effective, there needs to be a minimum of 20 du/ac[15][16] within a 1/2-mile of the station, with a target of 50 du/ac. The reason: A lack of density causes a lack of ridership, which causes less frequent service, which causes even less ridership, creating a doom loop of disinvestment. Greater density has the opposite effect, increasing ridership and service frequency and fueling a positive feedback loop of investment. The tipping point is right around 20 du/ac. Despite this, only one station in New York achieves that minimum — Yonkers at 21.8 du/ac — and only seven stations achieve even 10 du/ac. As a comparison, the rowhouses of Brownstone Brooklyn average 40-60 du/ac, and the five-floor walk-ups of Northern Manhattan and the Bronx range from 110-140 du/ac. Low-rise apartments like these should be legal to build near transit. New York State should prohibit municipalities from restricting these types of medium-density developments within ½-mile of any subway or commuter rail station. That means no height caps below five stories, no lot size minimums above 1,400 square feet, and no building lot coverage maximums below 60%.

As a reference point, the **average** commuter rail station in New York state outside of New York City has a density of 3.43 du/ac and a Job Accessibility Index of 0.69.

THE AVERAGE TOD OPPORTUNITY SCORE FOR COMMUTER RAIL IS 6.9.

14   IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, www.nhgis.org; US Census Bureau, ACS 2016-2021

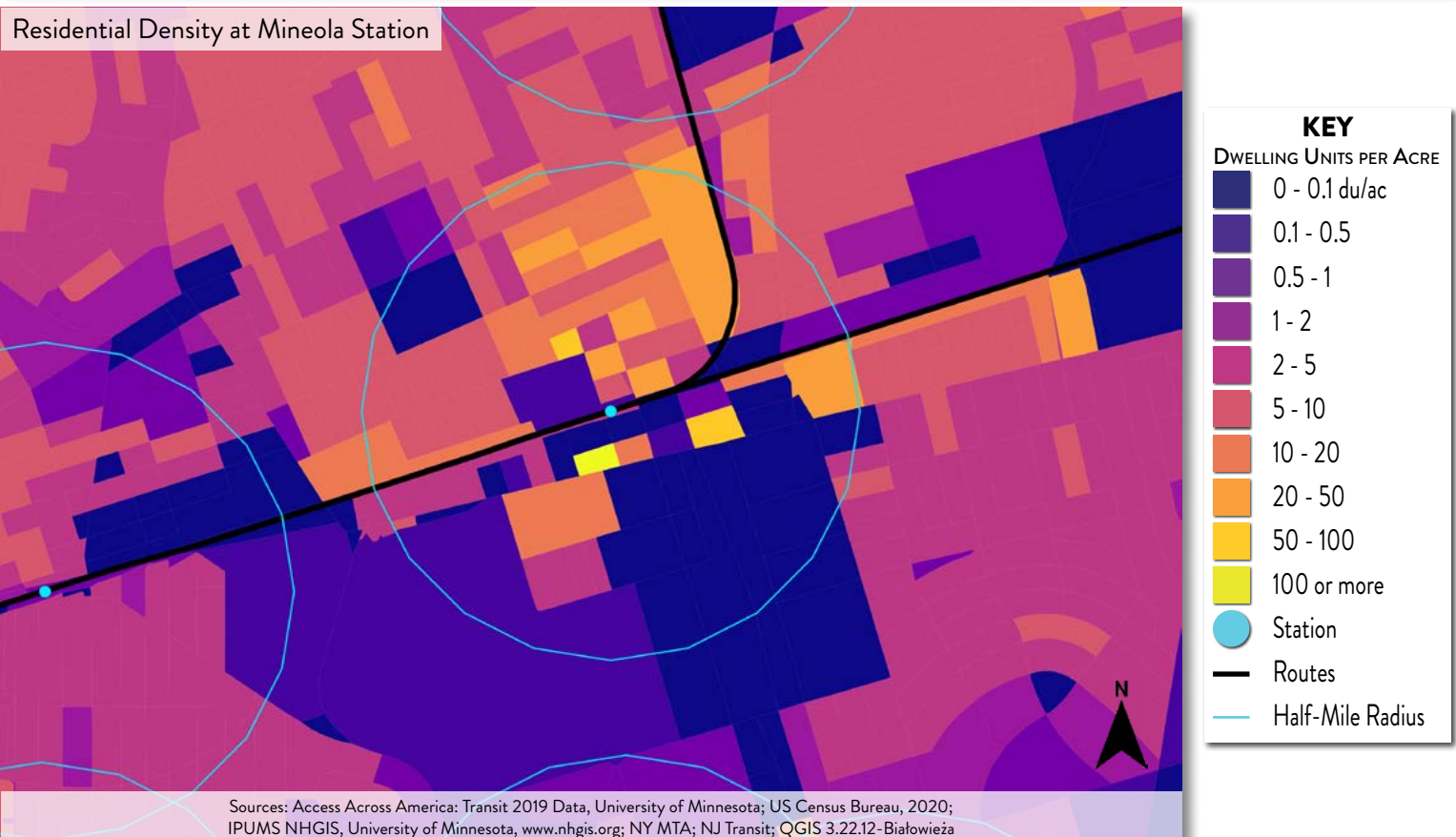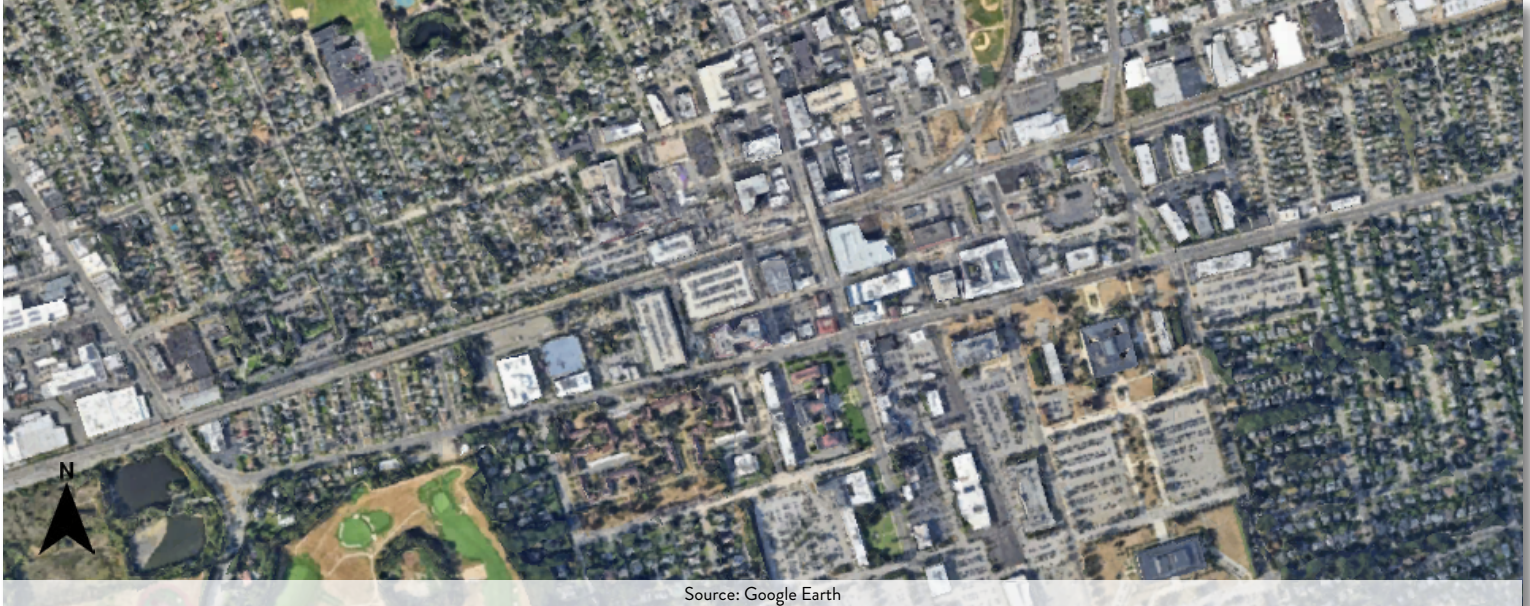15   https://metrocouncil.org/Handbook/Files/Resources/Fact-Sheet/LAND-USE/Density-and-Activity-Near-Transit.aspx

16   http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/201109DensityUCBITSVWP.pdf

Mineola, Long Island Rail Road (LIRR)

TOD Opportunity Score: 9.2

Nassau County

Out of the 147 LIRR and Metro-North Railroad (MNR) stations in the suburbs, Nassau County is home to the top 11 stations with the greatest opportunity for TOD using our Commuter Rail metric. Mineola, home to the county seat, stands at 5.7 du/ac, with some of the most restrictive TOD zoning policies in the metro region. Even in the suburbs, residents can access more jobs via transit within 60 minutes of Mineola station than any block of any other city in the country. If 10% of existing low-density residential land near commuter rail stations were built to the density of rowhouses, the state could add an estimated 460,000 new homes. Allowing ADUs is a good first step towards making TOD progress in Mineola.

Source: Google Earth

Residential Density at Mineola Station

KEY

DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE

- 0 - 0.1 du/ac
- 0.1 - 0.5
- 0.5 - 1
- 1 - 2
- 2 - 5
- 5 - 10
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 50
- 50 - 100
- 100 or more
- Station
- Routes
- Half-Mile Radius

Sources: Access Across America: Transit 2019 Data, University of Minnesota; US Census Bureau, 2020; IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, www.nhgis.org; NY MTA; NJ Transit; QGIS 3.22.12-Białowieża
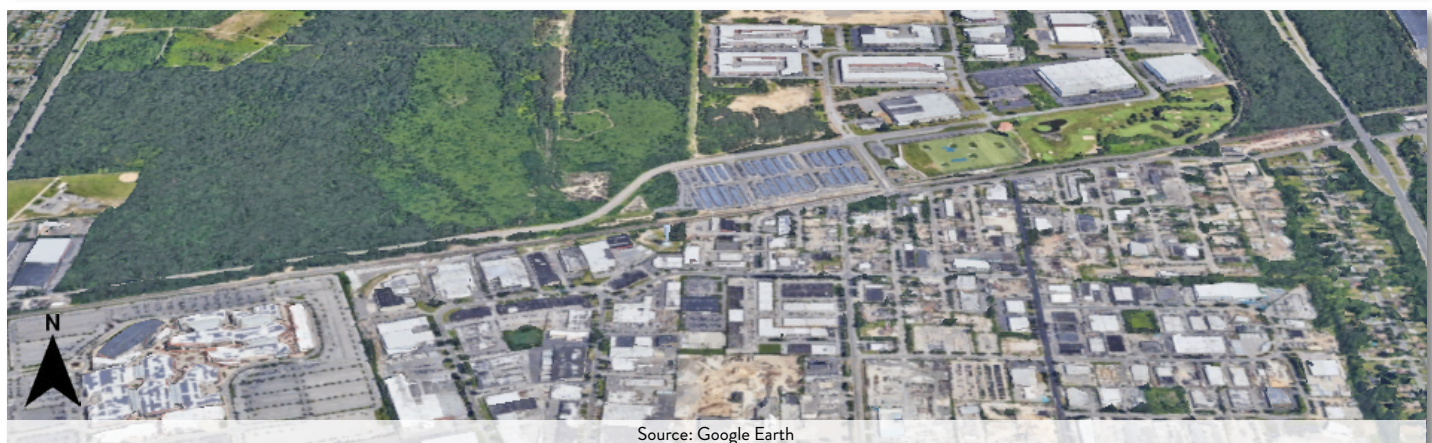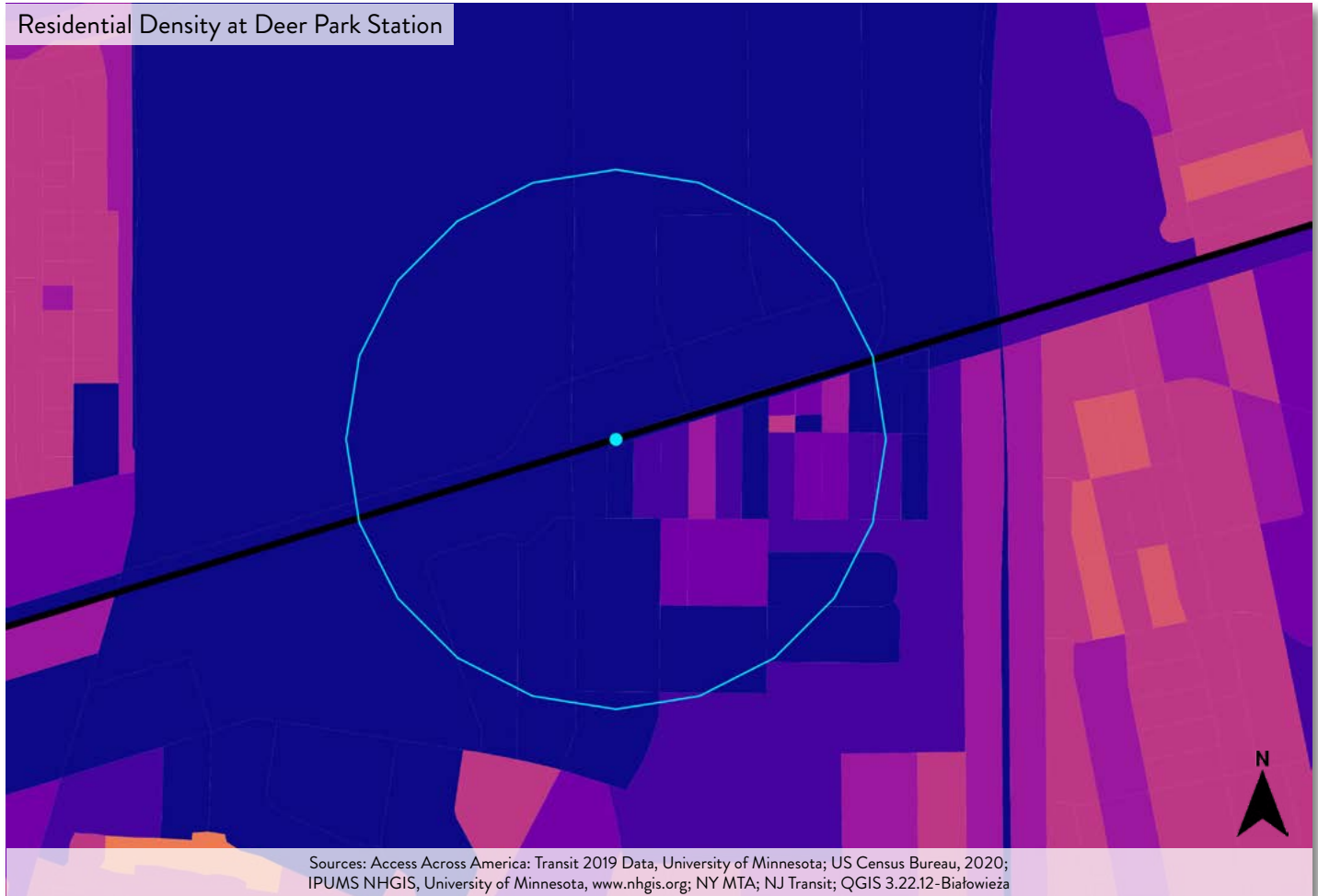
Deer Park, LIRR

TOD Opportunity Score: 7.5

<div align="right">Suffolk County</div>

There are just 111 homes within ½-mile of the Deer Park station. It's one of the starkest examples of segregated land uses in the metro area, featuring over a thousand acres of low-rise commercial, industrial, and office buildings (and a golf course). There's also an 813-acre nature reserve that people might like to live near. Between the train station, the public preserve, and the workplaces, Deer Park has all of the ingredients needed to make an iconic "15-minute neighborhood,"[17] where residents can access a job, a park, a grocery store, a school, and rapid transit within a 15-minute walk of their home. But, at 0.06 du/ac, much needs to change to see this ideal scenario come to life. Here, _TOD can be quickly implemented if the MTA is allowed and encouraged to facilitate housing development_ on its property.

Residential Density at Deer Park Station

Sources: Access Across America: Transit 2019 Data, University of Minnesota; US Census Bureau, 2020; IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, www.nhgis.org; NY MTA; NJ Transit; QGIS 3.22.12-Białowieża

Source: Google Earth

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17   https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2021/01/25/15-minute-neighborhood-gets-its-15-minutes-fame
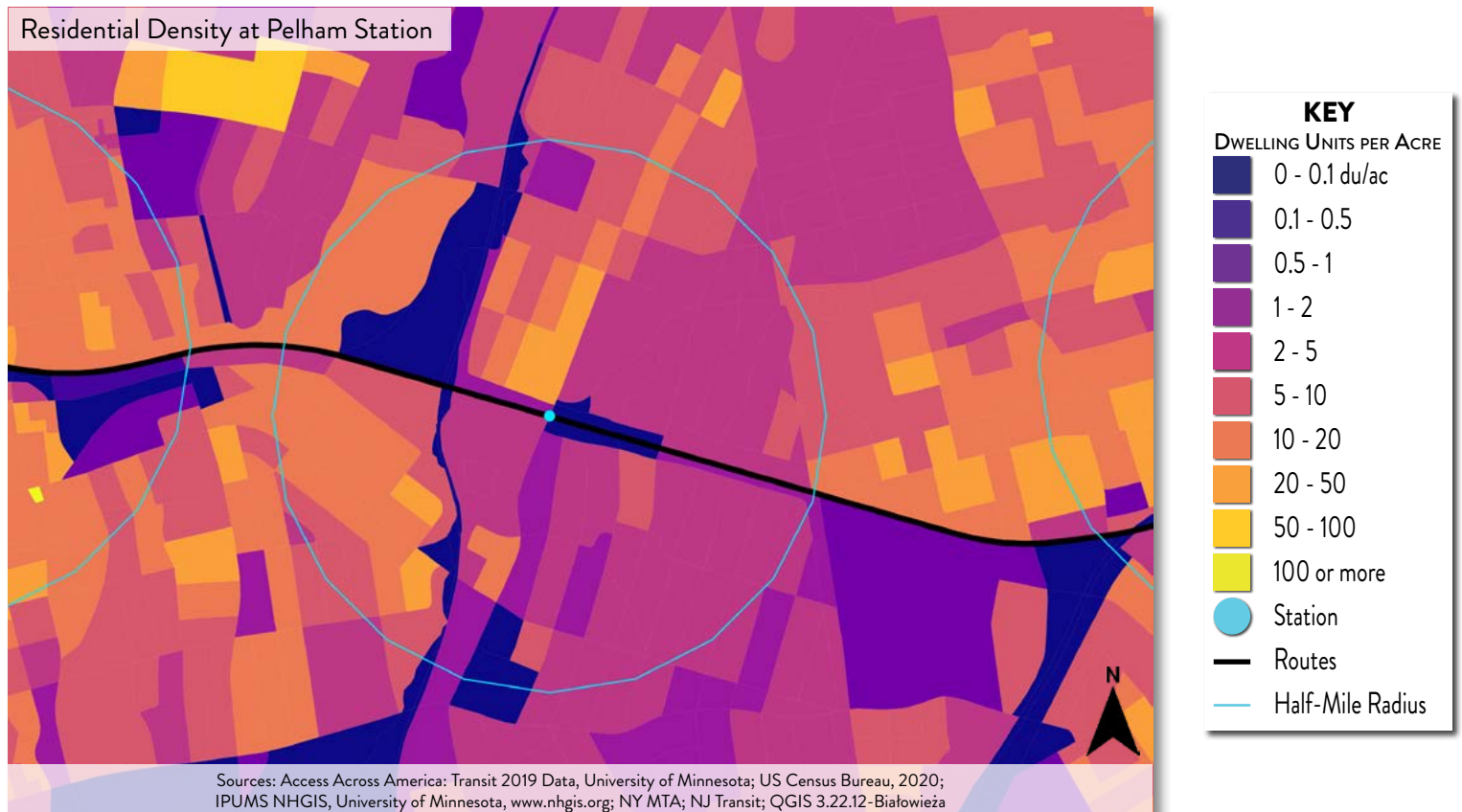
Pelham, Metro North Railroad (MNR)

TOD Opportunity Score: 7.8   Westchester County

Pelham, to its credit, has about 15 acres with low-rise, mixed-use apartment buildings that exceed the 20 du/ac minimum density required to make commuter rail cost-effective. Unfortunately, the remaining 700 acres within the half-mile radius are filled with single-family, detached dwellings that average around 2.5 du/ac. The census tract below the railroad tracks, where multifamily housing is illegal on all but a few acres, has a median income of $245,000 and is 85% white.[18] Pelham maintains its low density on the vast majority of its land, with 5,000-square-foot minimum lot sizes, and bans on structures that are three stories or taller. In addition, they maintain a prohibition on ADUs.[19] This prohibition must be eliminated to unlock its TOD potential.

Residential Density at Pelham Station

KEY
DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE
- 0 - 0.1 du/ac
- 0.1 - 0.5
- 0.5 - 1
- 1 - 2
- 2 - 5
- 5 - 10
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 50
- 50 - 100
- 100 or more
- Station
- Routes
- Half-Mile Radius

Sources: Access Across America: Transit 2019 Data, University of Minnesota; US Census Bureau, 2020; IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, www.nhgis.org; NY MTA; NJ Transit; QGIS 3.22.12-Białowieża

Source: Google Earth

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18   http://www.justicemap.org/index.php
19   Village of Pelham Zoning Code: https://ecode360.com/8781742

Newark Penn, NJ Transit (NJT)

TOD Opportunity Score: 9.5

New Jersey

As important as it is to focus on New York city and state policies, we are still part of a multi-state metro area, and New Jersey is an essential commuter hub for our job centers. There are PATH stations in New Jersey that have a higher Job Accessibility Index than subway stations on the Upper West and East Sides. We re-ran our TOD Opportunity metric to include NJ Transit stations and landed on Newark Penn, where transit commuters can reach twice as many jobs in 45 minutes as the most accessible block in every other city center in the country. New York City has five Central Business Districts, but the metro area can easily count Jersey City and Newark as its sixth and seventh. Yet, being job centers doesn't preclude them from having residential density. Nearly all the PATH stations east of the Hackensack River have density above 35 du/ac, but Newark Penn, which has access to both the PATH and NJ Transit heavy rail, has just 13.3 du/ac. Why? The overabundance of surface parking surrounding it.

In 2015, the city of Newark overhauled its zoning code and rezoned the blocks in the immediate vicinity of the station for high-density, mixed-use development — a big step in the right direction. But since then, building heights on Newark's commercial strips have been capped at just five stories, limiting housing unit production. With housing supply unable to meet demand, the regional housing supply crunch has reached Newark, with rents skyrocketed by an estimated 35% in 2021.[20]

Source: Google Earth

Residential Density at Newark Penn Station

Sources: Access Across America: Transit 2019 Data, University of Minnesota; US Census Bureau, 2020;
IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, www.nhgis.org; NY MTA; NJ Transit; QGIS 3.22.12-Białowieża

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20   https://www.redfin.com/news/redfin-rental-report-december-2021/

BEST PRACTICES FOR FAIR HOUSING IN NEW YORK

New Jersey's Mount Laurel Doctrine

Beyond Newark, the state of New Jersey has plenty of low-density suburbs with commuter rail stations that look a lot like the suburbs on the LIRR and Metro-North — but the state has an ace up its sleeve, and New York should take heed. The Mount Laurel doctrine,[21] named after two lawsuits the South Burlington County NAACP brought against the township in the '70s and '80s, declares that, just as municipalities cannot discriminate based on race, so too can they not discriminate based on income —making exclusionary zoning illegal and giving the courts the power to directly remedy such inequities. It requires all municipalities to do their fair share to meet the regional housing need at all income levels.

APPENDIX / FULL METHODOLOGIES

Commuter Rail Station Metrics

The metric for commuter rail stations is combination of two indicators of transit accessibility and development opportunity.

True Density: Using 2020 Census data down to the census block level, provided by IPUMS NHGIS,[22] we calculated how many housing units per acre there were in census blocks within a half-mile radius of the station. The average density around metro area commuter rail stations is 6.3 du/ac. Removing New York City and Hudson County stations, the average density is 3.5 du/ac. In our official metric, we only use stations in New York State outside of New York City.

Job Accessibility: We use the same metric for commuter rail stations as we outlined above for the subway metric, courtesy of the University of Minnesota's Access Across America data. The average Job Accessibility Index for metro area commuter rail stations is 1.44, or 0.71 when removing NYC and Hudson County. In our metric, we only use stations within the Access Across America New York metro region and exclude New York City stations.

TOD Opportunity Score: TOD Opportunity Score: These two metrics are placed on a normal distribution curve and each station is assigned a positive or negative standard deviation. High positive standard deviation scores raise the station's metric, while low negative scores lower it. (The standard deviations for density are inverted to target lower density stations.) All of the standard deviations are summed and then placed on a 0-to-10 scale to get the final metric.

Mineola	Score	Standard Deviations
Density	5.7 du/ac	-0.59
Job Accessibility	2.76	+2.55
Deer Park	**Score**	**Standard Deviations**
Density	0.06 du/ac	+0.99
Job Accessibility	0.36	-0.49
Pelham	**Score**	**Standard Deviations**
Density	6.3 du/ac	-0.75
Job Accessibility	1.94	+1.52
Newark Penn	**Score**	**Standard Deviations**
Density	13.3 du/ac	-2.87
Job Accessibility	6.77	+6.41

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21   South Burlington County NAACP v. Mt. Laurel (1983) https://law.justia.com/cases/new-jersey/supreme-court/1983/92-n-j-158-0.html
22   https://www.nhgis.org/

Subway Station Metrics

Density on Buildable Land: We used TravelTime API to create isochrones of five-minute (~1/4-mile) walksheds around each station. Using PLUTO data, we calculated the number of residential units, then we divided it by the aggregated lot areas of all developable parcels.

FAR Utilization: Using PLUTO[23] data from all of the parcels within a five-minute walkshed, we analyzed the FAR utilization of each individual lot, or, how built-up the lot is relative to how many more homes the zoning would allow the landowner to build. Our formula adds nuance to the standard formula in order to account for the positive impact of commercial uses and buildings that are denser than current zoning. Walksheds with high FAR Utilization are constricted in their ability to grow.

Job Accessibility Index: We used the University of Minnesota's Access Across America data[24], which shows job accessibility via transit in America's 50 largest metro areas down to census block level. Using this data, we created a new index that gives more weight to jobs that take less time to reach (ie, jobs between 45 and 60 minutes away are unweighted, but 0 to 15 minutes are quadruple weighted, etc). The most recent data is from 2019.

Residential Share: The square footage dedicated to residential uses relative to all uses within the walkshed. Including residential share sufficiently discounts business districts relative to their need for denser development (ie, it doesn't make sense to call out Times Square as a place for more TOD, despite it having ultrahigh job accessibility and low residential density).

TOD Opportunity Score: Each of these four metrics are placed on a normal distribution curve and each station is assigned a positive or negative standard deviation. High positive standard deviation scores raise the station's metric, while low negative scores lower it. All of the standard deviations are summed and then placed on a 0-to-10 scale to get the final metric.

Lexington Ave/63rd St.	Score	Standard Deviations
Modified Density	157 du/ac	-1.16
FAR Utilization	67%	+0.33
Job Accessibility Index	11.3	+1.34
Residential Share	65%	-0.09
68th St. Hunter	**Score**	**Standard Deviations**
Modified Density	186 du/ac	-1.65
FAR Utilization	73%	+0.66
Job Accessibility Index	10.7	+1.18
Residential Share	87%	+0.77
62nd St./New Utrecht Ave	**Score**	**Standard Deviations**
Modified Density	33 du/ac	+0.93
FAR Utilization	81%	+1.10
Job Accessibility Index	4.7	-0.63
Residential Share	59%	+0.32
46th St.	**Score**	**Standard Deviations**
Modified Density	46 du/ac	+0.73
FAR Utilization	81%	+1.07
Job Accessibility Index	8.3	+0.46
Residential Share	76%	+0.33
Northern Blvd	**Score**	**Standard Deviations**
Modified Density	26 du/ac	+1.05
FAR Utilization	79%	+1.02
Job Accessibility Index	8.3	+0.44
Residential Share	59%	-0.32
238th St.	**Score**	**Standard Deviations**
Modified Density	57 du/ac	+0.53
FAR Utilization	82%	+1.18
Job Accessibility Index	4.0	-0.84
Residential Share	77%	+0.38
St. George	**Score**	**Standard Deviations**
Modified Density	0.0 du/ac	+1.49
FAR Utilization	0%	-3.53
Job Accessibility Index	2.0	-1.45
Residential Share	0%	-2.58

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23   https://www.nyc.gov/site/planning/data-maps/open-data/dwn-pluto-mappluto.page

24   https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/218072

The New York Building Congress, a broad-based membership association celebrating its 102nd year, is committed to promoting the growth and success of the construction industry in New York City and its environs.

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