



TRANSIT

MORE HOUSING NEAR TRANSIT WON'T SOLVE TORONTO'S AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

Transit-oriented development sounds like progress, but it may just create more expensive housing in convenient locations, write architect Onah Jung

BY ONAH JUNG

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Onah Jung is a Toronto-based architect, urban designer, and founder of [Studio Jonah](#).

The City of Toronto recently revealed [plans](#) for more housing around Toronto's 120 transit stations, including subways and LRTs. The goal of creating more housing around transit makes sense at first glance. Being close to stations would encourage people to use transit and reduce the need for parking. There are many benefits, in theory.

I have seen this theory fail in real life.

In the early 2000s, I lived in Manhattan, the city that never sleeps, the city where, if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere. New York is also a city with an abundance of transit connections, including to routes going out of the city.

Spanning a decade, my graduate school and subsequent work life taught me that being near public transit costs a lot. Most people I met during there did not live near their work or near transit. They drove or took other transportation modes (regional buses, trains, ferries) to get into the city, leaving their cars near commuter stations. Multiple transfers were involved.

I was one of those people, though in a more comfortable setting. But living in Brooklyn near a subway station came with a price: first, an exorbitant fee to a rental broker for finding an apartment, then paying much higher rent than my coworkers who drove in or took the train from farther locations.

Being near transit is a convenience everyone wants, including drivers. The convenience is especially important for people without cars. Yet the City's strategy to build more housing near Toronto's transit stations is disingenuous because those plans don't tell us about the type of housing envisioned or whom the housing is for. The elephant in the room is affordability.

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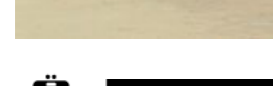
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