

The Role of a Transit Agency in Station Area Development:

*A Case Study of
Tren Urbano, Puerto Rico*

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Research Objective

- To examine the role of a transit authority in station area development using Tren Urbano as a case study.
- To examine how a transit authority can implement station area development strategies within a dynamic political and institutional environment.

Motivation

- Transit agencies are becoming increasingly involved in station area planning and development. **WHY???**
 - To strengthen the mutually beneficial relationship between transit systems and land uses surrounding stations:
 - l Impacts of land use on transit ridership
 - l Impacts of system on urban form and land values
 - To capture additional revenue sources.

Framing the Research...

- PRHTA bill (November 1998)
 - to endow PRHTA with greater land acquisition and development control.
- *La Ley de Municipios Autónomos*, The Law of Autonomous Municipalities (1991)
 - allows municipalities to seek autonomy from the central Planning Board.

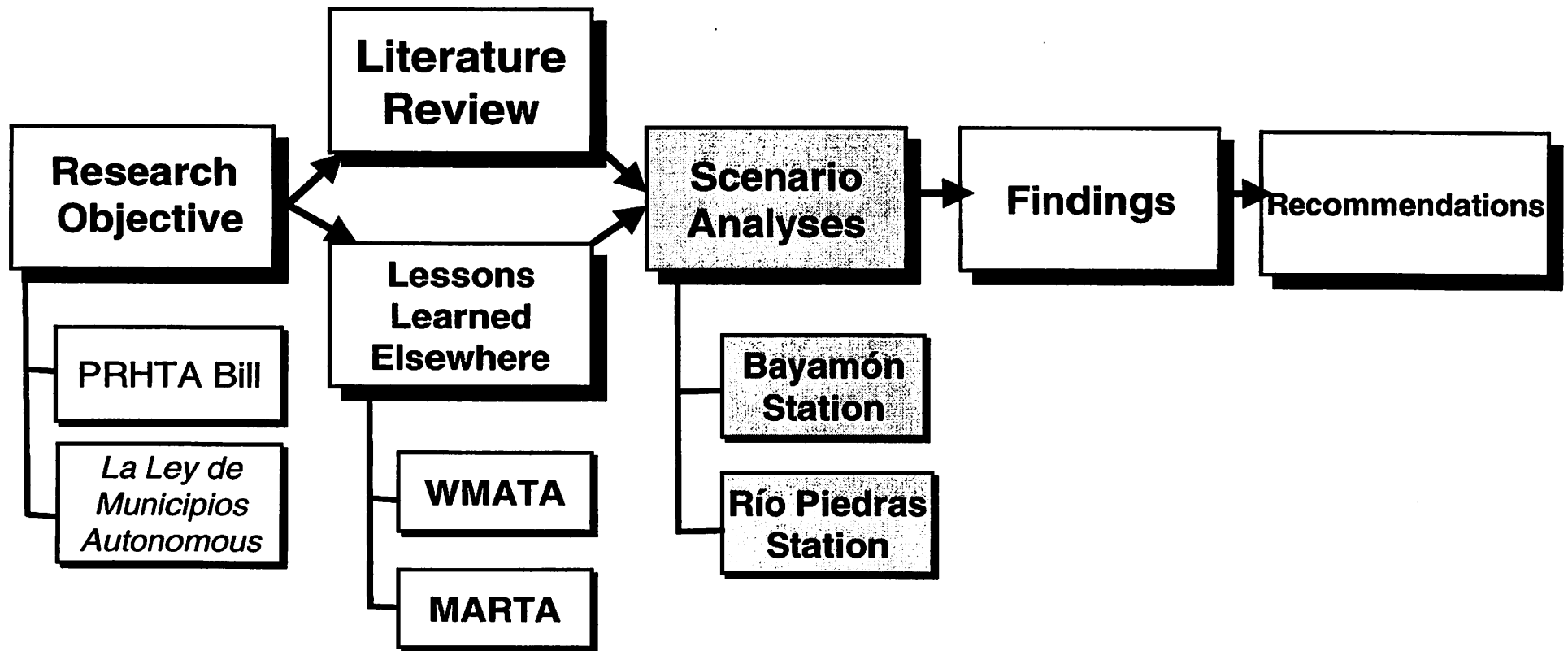
Research Questions ? ? ? ?

- Can a transit authority with minimal planning and development experience “successfully” effect station area development?
- What kinds of strategies should a transit authority implement if the institutional environments continue to change?
- Will strategies be affected by the “dynamic” institutional environment?
 - Proposed increase in PRHTA’s land acquisition and development powers
 - Autonomous status of municipalities of SJMA -- planning autonomy

Thesis Approach

- Literature Review
- Review of transit authorities in the United States
 - Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA)
 - Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transportation Authority (MARTA)
- Station Area Development Scenarios
 - Bayamón Station in Bayamón
 - Río Piedras station in San Juan

Research Approach



Scenario Analyses

Bayamón Station

	No Municipal Autonomy	Municipal Autonomy
Minimal PRHTA Authority	N/A	SCENARIO I [current situation]
Increased PRHTA Authority	N/A	SCENARIO II

•two scenarios

Río Piedras Station

	No Municipal Autonomy	Municipal Autonomy
Minimal PRHTA Authority	SCENARIO I [current situation]	SCENARIO III
Increased PRHTA Authority	SCENARIO II	SCENARIO IV

•four scenarios

Comparison of Stations

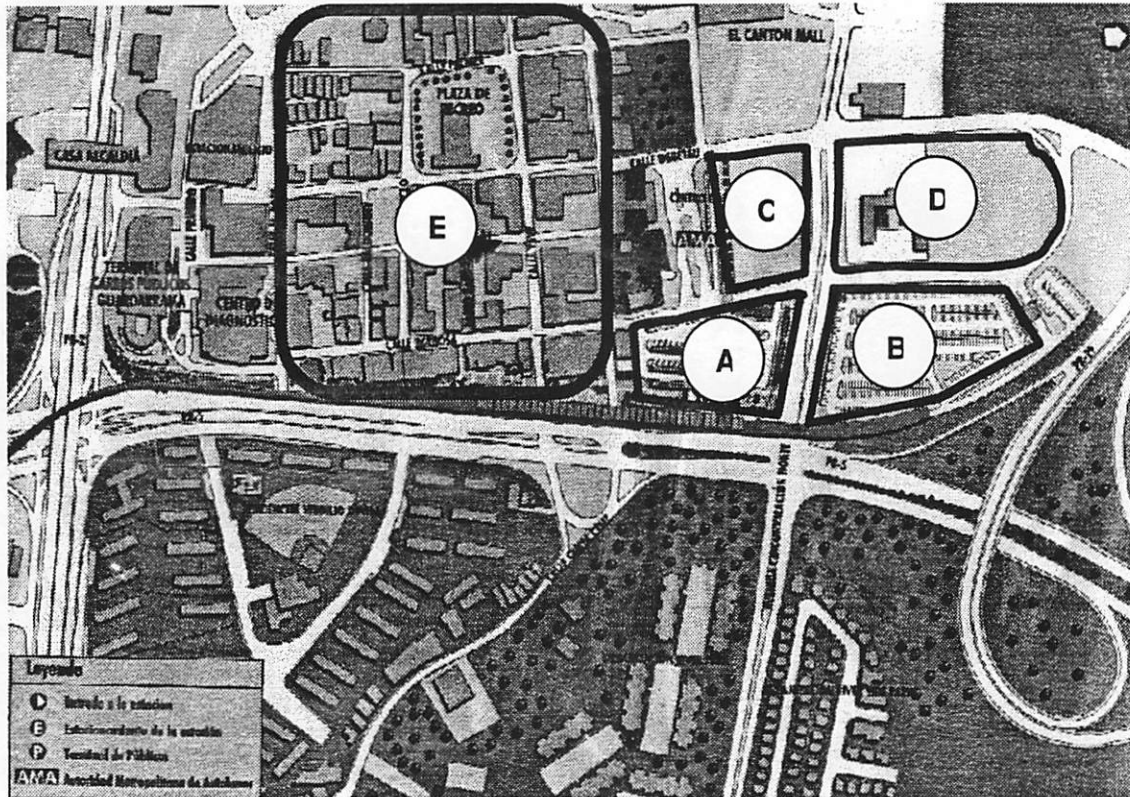
Similarities

- Declining traditional town centers
- More compact, traditional urban form
 - rectilinear street pattern
 - mixed uses
- Potential for economic development, revitalization and ridership levels.

Differences

- Autonomous status
 - Bayamón is autonomous
 - Río Piedras is seeking autonomy
- Strong mayoral leadership in Bayamón
- Strong community activism in Río Piedras
- Large parcels in Bayamón
- Few large parcels in Río Piedras

Bayamón Station

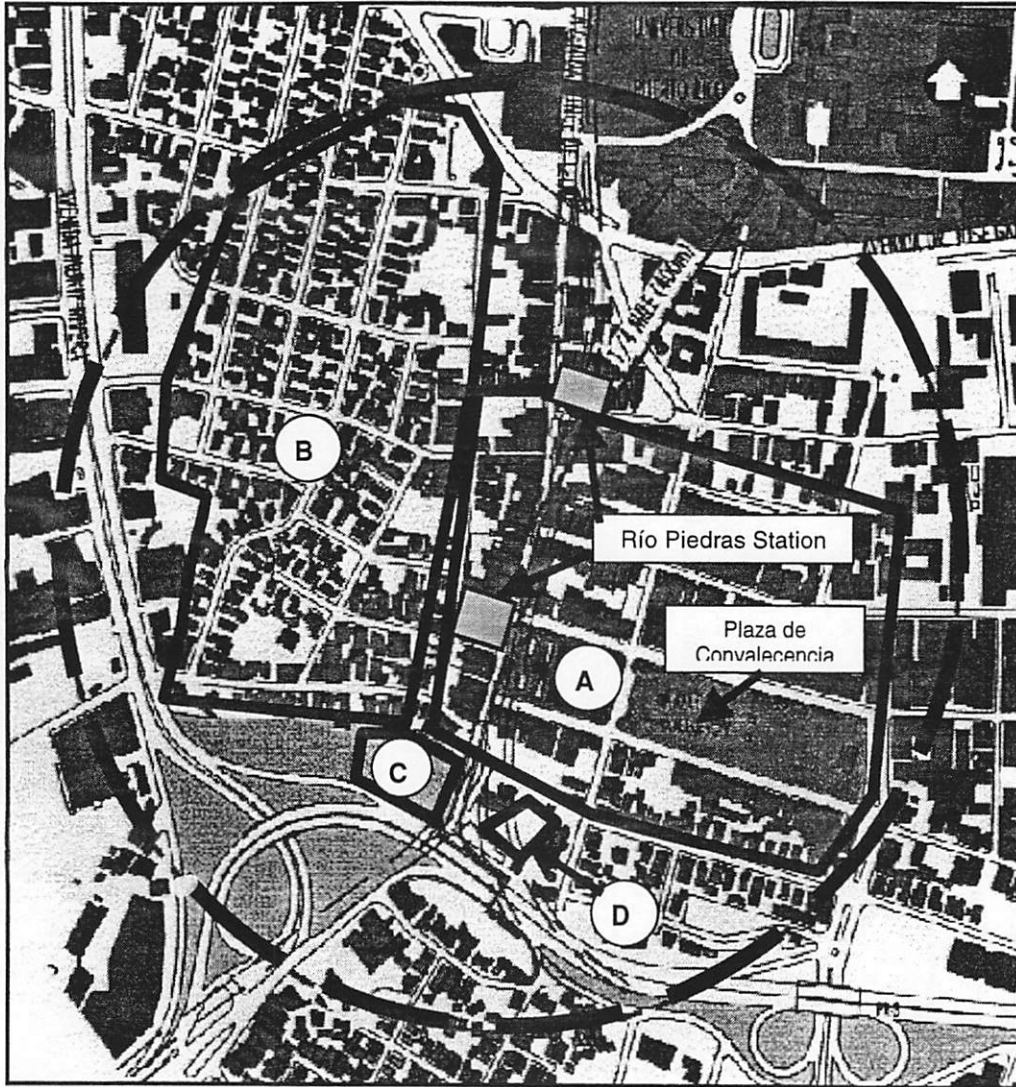


Parcel	Current Property Owner	Existing Use	PRHTA's Long-Term Plan	Municipality's Proposed Plan
A	PRHTA	Vacant excess land [casting yard for station and alignment construction]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-story público terminal • Other development [if the público functions are moved to the proposed garage on Parcel B] 	None
B	PRHTA	Vacant excess land [casting yard for station and alignment construction]	Multi-story garage for park-and-ride and potentially público functions, with ground-floor commercial	None
C	Municipality	Municipal público lot	Mixed Uses	Possible hotel development
D	Municipality	National Guard site; partially vacant	Mixed Uses	Possible performance arts center
E	Mixed – private, municipality, central government of Puerto Rico	Historic Center of mixed land uses including public, institutional, commercial and residential uses	Selective rehabilitation	Selective development and rehabilitation

Bayamón Station Area Development Strategies

Parcel	Current Property Owner	PRHTA's Long-Term Plan	Municipality's Proposed Plan	SCENARIO I: Municipal Autonomy and Minimal PRHTA Authority	SCENARIO II: Municipal Autonomy and PRHTA Authority
A	PRHTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-story público terminal Other development [if the público functions are moved to the garage on Parcel B] 	None	Limited to PRHTA development [restricted from joint development]	Joint development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different uses are possible on this parcel if all público functions are transferred to the proposed multi-purpose garage on Parcel B.
B	PRHTA	Multi-story garage for park-and-ride and potentially público functions, with ground-floor commercial	None	Limited to PRHTA development [restricted from joint development]	Joint development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lease revenues from ground floor commercial
C	Municipality	Mixed Uses	Possible hotel development	Persuading the municipality to adopt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overlay district that would encompass this and surround areas; or Zoning changes for mixed uses [unlikely] 	Persuading the municipality to adopt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overlay district that would encompass this and surround areas; or Zoning changes for mixed uses [unlikely]
D	Municipality	Mixed Uses	Performance Arts center	Persuading the municipality to adopt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overlay district that would encompass this and surround areas; or Zoning changes for mixed uses [unlikely] 	Persuading the municipality to adopt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overlay district that would encompass this and surround areas; or Zoning changes for mixed uses [unlikely]
E	Mixed – private, municipality, central government of Puerto Rico	Historic Center of mixed land uses including public, institutional, commercial and residential uses	Selective rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend a rehabilitation program that is administered by the municipality but potentially funded by the central government. PRHTA involvement and financing would be minimal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend a rehabilitation program that is administered by the municipality but potentially funded by the central government. PRHTA involvement and financing would be minimal.

Río Piedras Station



Long-Term Plans for the Río Piedras Station Area

Parcel	Current Property Owner(s)	Existing Uses	PRHTA's Long-Term Plan	Municipality's Proposed Plan
A	Mixed – private, municipality, central government of Puerto Rico	Historic Center of mixed land uses including public, institutional, commercial and residential uses	Selective rehabilitation	Selective Rehabilitation
B	Mixed – private, public	Residential neighborhood	Selective improvement	Unknown
C	PRHTA	Construction staging area for Tren Urbano	Joint development of mixed uses	Unknown
D	Municipality	Undeveloped	Joint development of mixed uses	Público terminal

Río Piedras Station Area Development Strategies for Scenarios I through IV

Parcel	Current Property Owner	PRHTA's Long-Term Plan	SCENARIO I: No Municipal Autonomy and Minimal PRHTA Authority	SCENARIO II: No Municipal Autonomy and PRHTA Authority	SCENARIO III: Municipal Autonomy and Minimal PRHTA Authority	SCENARIO IV: Municipal Autonomy and PRHTA Authority
A	Mixed – private, municipality, central government of Puerto Rico	Selective rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend a rehabilitation program that is administered by the municipality but potentially funded by the central government. PRHTA involvement and financing would be minimal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend a rehabilitation program that is administered by the municipality but potentially funded by the central government. PRHTA involvement and financing would be minimal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend a rehabilitation program that is administered by the municipality but potentially funded by the central government. PRHTA involvement and financing would be minimal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend a rehabilitation program that is administered by the municipality but potentially funded by the central government. PRHTA involvement and financing would be minimal.
B	Mixed – private, central government	Selective improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend a rehabilitation program that is administered by the municipality but potentially funded by the central government. PRHTA involvement and financing would be minimal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend a rehabilitation program that is administered by the municipality but potentially funded by the central government. PRHTA involvement and financing would be minimal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend a rehabilitation program that is administered by the municipality but potentially funded by the central government. PRHTA involvement and financing would be minimal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend a rehabilitation program that is administered by the municipality but potentially funded by the central government. PRHTA involvement and financing would be minimal.
C	PRHTA	Joint development of mixed uses	Limited to developing transit-related uses independently (i.e., no joint development) or leaving the parcel vacant.	Joint development of mixed uses.	Limited to developing transit-related uses independently (i.e., no joint development) or leaving the parcel vacant.	Joint development of mixed uses.
D	Municipality	None	None	None	None	None

General Findings

■ PRHTA's Role in Station Area Development

- PRHTA's bill would not significantly improve PRHTA's ability to effect station area development
- The full extent of the bill is not entirely necessary for transit-supportive development to occur
- Some sections of the bill would increase the potential for some kinds of development -- i.e., joint development

General Findings (cont'd)

■ Influence of Municipal Autonomy

- PRHTA's ability to effect development on a particular parcels is less influenced by the municipality's autonomous status than presumed.
- PRHTA was found to present the same type of strategy for land regardless of the autonomous status of the municipality
- However, autonomous status of the municipality may be important in early coordination between PRHTA and the municipality over station area planning/visioning.

General Findings (cont'd)

- If property with potential development value is owned by a municipality, it may be difficult for PRHTA to influence future land uses, especially if PRHTA's plans are not consistent with the Authority's.
- Strong leadership at the municipal level can either be a hindrance or a benefit to station area development.

Recommendations

- Transit agencies should reach out to neighborhood groups and residents regarding future station area plans.
- Transit agencies should coordinate visions for station areas with local and regional jurisdictions at the earliest stage possible.
- Should transit agencies decide to actively pursue joint development, they should establish a separate real estate division.