Transport and infrastructure
stations as anchors

Chapter Four

Transport and infrastructure – stations as anchors

Why

Without infrastructure we cannot grow yet we have lost the connection between place making and mobility.

The failing

We are talking about investing in new infrastructure when there are clear failings in the way we utilise and maximise the effectiveness of existing infrastructure and integrate it with the urban fabric.

Policy recommendations

I. PDR+ for brownfield and transport hubs: Permitted development rights for selected brownfield sites, and a presumption in favour of high-density development for new homes and commercial space adjacent to centrally-located urban and urban-fringe rail stations, where pre-agreed criteria are met around density, use and design standards. Local authorities to get central government funding for public services such as schools, hospitals, GPs to support increases in population

II. Update 300-year-old planning in three years: Radically overhaul archaic use class designation for sites, making planning and uses of land more flexible when consent is granted with a range of uses permitted so that they are responsive to local needs and market changes

Author

Peter Baird
Associate, Perkins and Will

Chapter Four

Peter Baird, Associate Perkins and Will

Urban design around stations

Rail stations have evolved from being glorious city gateways in the Victorian era to grubby industrial parts of town, overlooked and closed down, to the neighbourly entities of connection they are today. However, their integration into the urban realm remains patchy.

Closures in the 1960s shut stations based on usage, rather than their relationship to land use, creating a disconnect between station locations and the urban centres they could serve. Recent new stations have often been 'Parkways', providing park and ride facilities with no relation to development patterns.

Creating a station without an urban centre around it is a missed opportunity. Are we making the most of these critical assets – especially when we are considering investing billions into new rail lines?

Where do stations fit in?

Travelling between London and Luton Airport, there are few buildings above two storeys near any station, yet this is a major potential growth corridor. The same is true for Stansted, and even Southampton.
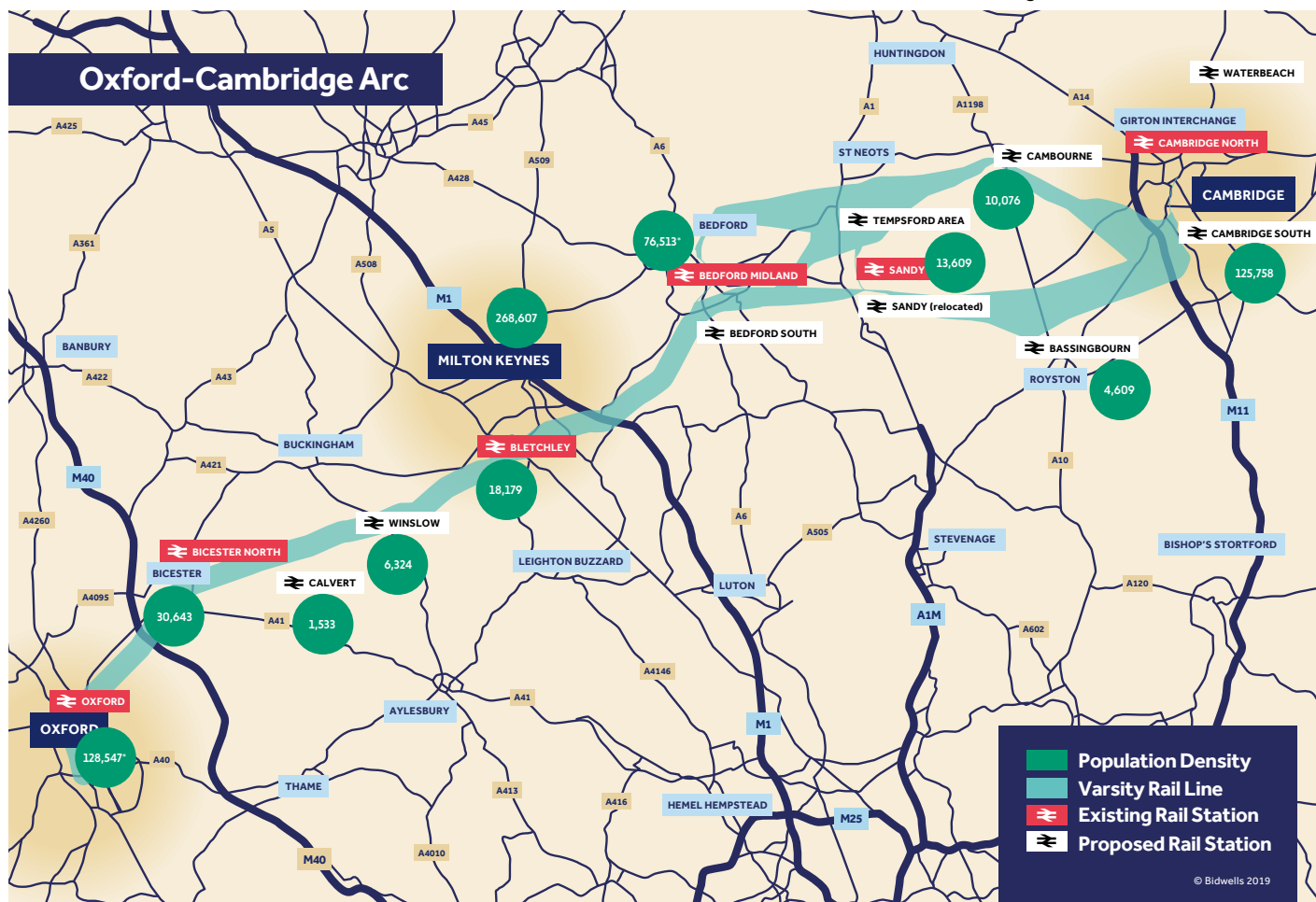
We need a mechanism that changes how we think about land around stations and the role that stations play in our urban areas. We need to provide for a future that supports self-contained towns and global mobility with much more complex relations between work, life, and travel – not just city centres and dormitory commuter towns.

Creating new 'Station Zones'

The government should instigate a mechanism of 'station zones', to promote increased density, or residential and employment uses around existing stations. A programme of incentives based on land within a 10 minute walking catchment could operate similarly to Enterprise Zone tax benefits.

New stations should only be brought forward if they are accompanied by plans for significant development in a mixture of employment and housing supply - depending on location.

Catchment should be designated by existing path and street networks and not radius catchment. If a development demonstrates added accessible walking routes, placing it within the 10 minute catchment, it can be considered within the zone - adding to the release of land value.

Oxford-Cambridge Arc

Legend:
- Population Density
- Varsity Rail Line
- Existing Rail Station
- Proposed Rail Station

© Bidwells 2019

Source: ONS, Citypopulation

Current development density around the new stations proposed in the Varsity Line

Place*	Bedford	Ridgemont	Woburn Sands	Bletchley	Winslow	Bicester	Oxford Parkway	Oxford
University spin out companies	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	61
Ave. house price	305,219	335,989	331,527	325,460	375,032	342,382	418,728	473,988
Ave. office rent (£psf)	12	13	13	15	14	14	17	22
No. schools[1]	14	2	4	12	3	11	2	8
Pop. density (Km2)	3815	58	478	2389	206	1965	801	2491

[1] This includes primary, secondary and special needs schools (Source: Data collected from Spinouts UK, HM Land Registry, CoStar, OS (Ordnance Survey) and ONS (Office for National Statistics). Averages taken from a 5x5km grid square in which the station will potentially be located.

Within these new zones we should focus on three areas:

i. Alignment to land use patterns

Which is more important to put next to a station: employment or residential?

There is a relationship between existing urban centres which supply employment, but we must avoid just saying 'residential' in the majority of places. Smaller towns are in danger of creating commuter locations, and should seek to promote employment at affordable costs relative to larger cities. Schools and retail are also a natural fit, but they must support the existing centre – not compete with it.

ii. Travel Choices

We do not necessarily make the same travel choices every day. We should plan for a greater mix of mobility choices and place greater value on proximity to stations as interchange locations.

Interchanges need to increase the mobility options on offer. They are the anchor to the regeneration whether they are a grand central terminus or a rural train halt. They must be integrated with micro-mobility: the cycle network, public transport, footpaths, to allow full interaction with the urban realm they support.

iii. Quality of Design

Stations are unique pieces of infrastructure that create a special sense of place. They are the gateway into an area and generate life and activity.

New station zones offer the potential to transform places, but without consideration for design they could create a feeling of disconnect with the urban centres they should support.

As such, they must be built with a character that draws from the local context, and that creates new townscapes which support the joy of discovery.

New and old rail

Alongside existing stations that support existing employment hubs, there is huge potential for new stations along HS2 and the Varsity Line.

The table above shows the disparity between locations along the Arc. Owing to their rental prices and space for development, consideration should clearly be given to potential employment and education pipeline in these areas, not just considering them dormitories for additional housing.

Chapter Four

Contributor

**Zachary Zabel, Senior Associate
Nelson Nygaard**

Corporate Mobility

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is an evolving sector that employs a variety of strategies to reduce drive alone rates and parking demand at a site or district level.

Throughout America, major employers, including many Fortune 500 corporations, are at the frontline of implementing TDM and emerging mobility options to remain competitive and reshape the employee commute experience.

At the project level, it reduces the need for expensive on-site parking, increasing site development opportunities. At the human resource level, providing non-drive alone options for mobility such as commuter shuttles, dynamic trip planning, transit subsidies, bike share, and multimodal design improves employee health, productivity, and retention outcomes.

In addition, many of the world's most dynamic companies see mobility as a way to attract the best and brightest entrants to the workforce, many of whom are more than comfortable with the idea of mobility as a service from the tap of their phone and place a higher value on lived experiences in vibrant urban environments than aspirational car ownership.

From a marketing standpoint valuing transportation choices creates a public image that may be welcomed by the community through reduced congestion at a regional level and lower carbon emissions on a global level.

By prioritising diverse mobility options in site development, corporations can achieve significant return on investment in the areas of real estate, sustainability, and overall employee convenience and satisfaction.

Save Money
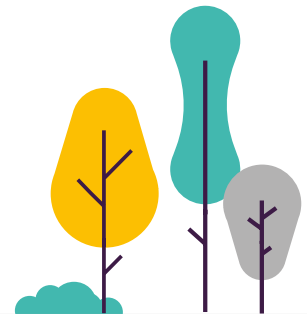Conserve resources by reducing parking

Attraction + Retention
Commute experience is a key factor in deciding a potential employment opportunity

Sustainability
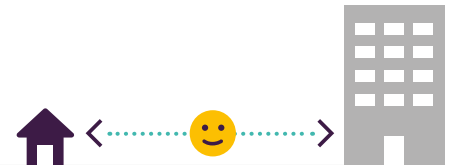Reduce firmwide emissions by producing options beyond driving alone

Walk, bike, thrive
Active commuting improves employee health and boosts workplace vitality

Happier employees
Reduce daily stress while improving employer productivity

Source: DfT National Road Traffic Survey