The market is ripe for a transit-oriented development like 3401 N. Southport. Millennials and small households want to live near transit without cars. As consumers, they gravitate toward computers and smartphones rather than cars and televisions. As commuters, they prefer to take transit, walk, or bike. And as households, they face uncertain job prospects, a rising cost of living, and a need to cut costs and save money. A car is an obvious place to start: transportation can cost $11,813 per year.¹

3401 N. Southport Avenue meets that demand for housing near transit, and it’s in short supply along the Brown Line. Until very recently, city zoning made it difficult to build this kind of development because it required that every unit have a parking spot. The more space on a property dedicated to parking, the less space available for people. This is especially critical right now, as the neighborhood has become more desirable and two flats and three flats are being converted into single-family homes or torn down. This development adds new units and will help retain younger households that spend money and keep Southport’s shopping district vibrant.

The Southport Corridor has everything a transit-oriented development needs to succeed. Residents along Southport have several different transportation options, which helps lower demand for parking. Within a five-minute walk, residents can access the CTA Brown Line; CTA Damen, Ashland, Belmont, and Diversey buses; and a Divvy bike share station. Not only are these options available, they’re used: roughly one half of residents walk, bike, or take transit to work – an increase of 90% since 2000. This development targets the half that use these alternatives.² Ridership at the Southport station has increased from 2,531 per weekday to 3,187 per weekday since 2000.
Car ownership along Southport is dropping – and, with it, demand for parking. With so many options, and so many households increasingly choosing to use them rather than drive, vehicle ownership is declining, particularly among this development’s target groups: renters and Millennials. Between 2000 and 2011, the total number of vehicles in the neighborhood dropped by 9%. Among renters around Southport, the number of households without a car increased by 33% between 2000 and 2011. And among households under 35, 47% more live without cars now than did in 2000.

3401 N. Southport will keep the neighborhood vibrant and replace small units lost during the last housing boom. When multifamily buildings are torn down or converted into single-family homes, the Southport Corridor loses units, people, and consumer dollars. The household population shrank by 6% between 2000 and 2011. Much of that decline came at a loss of small housing units like the ones added in this development. Studios and one bedrooms have declined by a third just since 2000. This development brings young consumers back to Southport. 3401 N. Southport will add 30 units and $1.3 million in consumer spending potential, which will help support local retail.

References

Contact
Kyle Smith, ksmith@cnt.org
Economic Development Project Manager
Center for Neighborhood Technology
2125 W. North Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647
www.cnt.org