



Transit-Oriented Development

Revised 1-28-09

INTRODUCTION

In the early part of the 20th Century, most urban areas provided adequate and frequent public transportation around the core of their city. With the invention of the automobile, the highway system, and the advent of affordable single-family homes, the use of transit decreased significantly. Housing increasingly was built further and further outside of a city's transit services throughout the 1940s-1970s. In the 1970s, government-funded transit agencies began developing new transit systems to address problems such as traffic congestion and transporting people from the suburbs to the city. These agencies did not get involved in planning for development around their new transit lines.

In the 1990s, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) began integrating the transportation and land use planning link through public policy. The FTA website currently projects that 330 projects nationwide will compete for \$6.6 billion in funding for 2009.¹

Transit-Oriented Development (aka TOD), refers to development located within walking distance of a nearby transit mode that "mixes residential, retail, office and public uses in a walkable environment, making it convenient for residents and employees to travel by transit, bicycle, or foot".² Transit-oriented development functions as a district, with the bulk of the defined development occurring within ¼ to ½ mile of the transit station, or a 5-10 minute walking distance. Due to the proximity of the transit station, automobile uses are not heavily encouraged. Short-term parking is generally allocated for the retailers within the TOD and for transit riders.

IMPLICATIONS OF NOT ADDRESSING THE ISSUE

At the turn of the 20th Century, metropolitan areas captured the essence of transit-oriented development by constructing multi-story housing, retail, and office uses around transit stops. With the advent of the car as the vehicle of choice, 1970s and 1980s transit stops became a sea of parking surrounding stops rather than compact developments. As transit becomes more critical with the increase in gasoline prices and air pollution, planning for urban development around key transit locations is essential.

By not using transit-oriented development in the future, communities that fail to capture their TOD opportunities are less likely to support transit, thereby rendering transit scheduling and frequent stops less likely. A continued pattern of

suburban sprawl is likely without compact development around a transit station. This will lead to an increase in traffic congestion, air pollution, health problems, and transportation costs.

GOALS FOR TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Increasing the amount of TOD-g geared stations in communities is critical to addressing several key concerns listed in the Sustainable Land Use Code. Several of the following goals must be combined in order to achieve an effective TOD. Goals specific to transit-oriented development include:

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- Creating new great places that are centers for social interaction for residents, shops, and employees.
- Supplying new entryways and places with distinct identities that can enhance the image of the community.
- Providing a focal point for concentrating economic growth. Removing economic and zoning obstacles for greater development opportunities.
- Increasing property values around the TOD and increasing the municipality's tax base.
- Providing workforce and affordable housing options.
- Offering more housing choices for an increasingly diverse population.
- Decreasing the number of automobile trips.
- Creating more travel options, frequent and optimal transit schedules and better living environments for those dependent on transit.
- Increasing pedestrian and bicycle connections into and within the development.
- Creating "eyes on the street" through safe urban design and a mixture of daytime and evening uses.



Image, above: Fitzsimons Redevelopment Site, City of Aurora, future TOD. (Source: RTD)



Image, left: Rockies fans take the train home, Denver Union Station (Source: RTD)

Map, left: FasTracks is the Denver Regional Transportation District's 12-year comprehensive plan to build 122 miles of new light rail and commuter rail and 57 new transit stations (Source: RTD)

¹ United States Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration, Introduction to New Starts, http://www.fta.dot.gov/planning/newstarts/planning_environment_2608.html.

² Michael Davidson and Fay Dolnick, A Glossary of Zoning, Development, and Planning Terms, (American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service Report Number 491/492).





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TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

KEY STATISTICS:

- People living near a transit station are five to six times more likely to commute to work by transit than other people living in the same region.³
- In 2000, there were about 14 million people, or 6 million U.S. households living within walking distance (1/2 mile) of rail transit stops.⁴
- A 2007 study shows that households living in neighborhoods near transit spend 16% less on transportation than families who live in auto-oriented communities.⁵
- A California statewide study by Caltrans reported that the 27 neighborhoods in Northern and Southern California doubling residential density resulted in 20 to 30 percent fewer annual VMT⁶



		ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS (NOTE: higher levels generally incorporate actions of lower levels)			References/Commentary	Code Examples/Citations
		Bronze (Good)	Silver (Better)	Gold (Best)		
 <p>New transit oriented residential construction reflected on the Colorado Convention Center.</p>  <p>L'Defense, Paris's modern office center served by two metro stations.</p>	Remove Obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow for a Planned Development zone to accommodate TOD ▪ Eliminate minimum parking standards ▪ Develop a TOD classification system, i.e. City Center, Urban Center, Village Center, Neighborhood Center ▪ Increase transit ridership by coordinating bus service with transit schedules  <p>New transit oriented residential construction, University of Denver light rail station.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create an overlay zoning district for TOD ▪ Allocate roadway space for cyclists and timed traffic signals for pedestrians and cyclists ▪ Specify maximum parking standards ▪ Create urban parks or land dedication requirements for TOD and urban area uses ▪ Connect stations to neighborhoods with shorter, protected bicycle and pedestrian routes to encourage those who would not normally bike or walk  <p>No pedestrian connection, Douglas County, CO, a problem rectified after several years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a TOD zone ▪ Maximum parking standards are specified ▪ Develop an overall parking plan that addresses both private and commuter parking ▪ Unbundle parking costs ▪ Reduce the percentage or acreage requirements for parks dedication in order to maximize land use on the TOD site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reconnecting America's website: reconnectingamerica.org is a comprehensive resource for all things TOD. ▪ The Urban Land Institute has many helpful publications on TOD: ://www.uli.org/. ▪ Tumlin, Jeffery and Millard-Ball, Alan. "How to Make Transit Oriented Development Work." online. Retrieved November 11, 2008. ▪ Puget Sound Regional Council. "Creating Transit Station Communities in the Central Puget Sound Region: A Transit-Oriented Development Workbook". online. October 7, 2008. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Aurora Urban Street standards: online. Retrieved 1-26-09. ▪ City of Aurora Transit Oriented Development Code (not available online as of Jan. 16, 2009, contact City). ▪ City of Denver, CO, Municipal Code for TMU-30. Division 15, Section 59-301. online. January 16, 2009. ▪ Montgomery County, MD. Transit-Oriented Mixed-Use Zone. Division 59 C-11 and C-13: online. January 16, 2009. ▪ Orenco Station Zoning in Hillsboro, OR. Section 137. online. January 16, 2009.

³ Creating Transit Station Communities in the Central Puget Sound Region: A Transit-Oriented Development Workbook, June 1999, p. 3.





⁴ Reconnecting America's Center for Transit-Oriented Development, Hidden in Plain Sight, p.18.

⁵ Reconnecting America. Jumpstarting the Transit Space Race, October 2008, p. 3.

⁶ John Holtzclaw, "Using Residential Patterns and Transit to Decrease Auto Dependence and Costs," <http://www.smartgrowth.org/library/cheers.html>

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TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

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 <p>Bicycle parking garage, Amsterdam Central station</p>	<p>Create Incentives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expedite the development review process Subject TOD plans to an administrative decision rather than a formal hearing Allow for a mix of housing with an affordable component and/or required percentage Provide safe and adequate bicycle parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the processing fees/waivers for TOD projects within a city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a fee-in-lieu program where developers opt out of all or a portion of minimum parking requirements through a payment of a fee to the city. Fees are placed into an Enterprise Fund for future parking needs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Austin, Texas, TOD financing strategy: online. Fruitvale TOD, creative partnerships with local government, transit, and a non-profit: online.
 <p>Mixed use, multi family building, Emeryville, CA.</p>  <p>Billboard ad for new mixed use transit oriented development, Amsterdam Central station</p>  <p>Atlantic Station, TOD, Atlanta, GA</p>	<p>Enact Standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow densities higher than surrounding areas Permit a mix of residential, commercial, and employment uses Permit walkable streets with build to lines and buildings facing the street Require plazas adjacent to the station or walkable main streets connecting to the station Require an urban street grid Require pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding neighborhoods and businesses Require quality architecture and public art Require that parking areas locate behind at-street buildings or within parking structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement on-street parking controls for all TOD areas Charge for parking with all TOD commuter users Create an access management plan to limit the number of driveway cuts and intersections on arterials and highways near TOD Enforce traffic calming with speed limits of 30 mph on major streets and 20 mph on lesser streets Include bike stations and fully enclosed bicycle parking at major stops Require minimum urban levels of density Require a mix of residential, commercial and employment uses and restrict automobile-related uses Require walkable, urban streets with required build-to lines and buildings required to have entrances on the street. Require on-street parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require plazas or main streets connected to the station. Main streets must have ground floor retail and services and plazas must also be surrounded by retail, services, or other active uses Require a street grid by requiring that block dimensions do not exceed a specific size typical of urban blocks, i.e. 300-660 feet in length Require connections to surrounding streets and to bicycle and pedestrian trails. Require a street cross section that accommodates multiple modes of travel. Require defined, protected, short-distance routes for amateur bikers and walkers Enforce maximum parking limitations and require shared parking Require an architectural design plan defining a consistent approach. Require quality, durable materials and varied architectural detail. Enforce a formula for required public art Ensure the mix of uses creates 24-hour activity within the TOD Require that a TOD application include various features such a defined street grid, building envelopes, squares, and plazas to frame the TOD Pull parking structures to the street require ground/1st floor uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Denver, CO. "TOD Strategic Plan." online. January 16, 2009. Joe Holmes and James van Hemert, <i>Transit Oriented Development (Research Monologue Series)</i>. Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute, online. Retrieved 2-2-09. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Lakewood, CO Transit Mixed Use Zone District Development Manual: online. BART TOD Guidelines: online. Portland TOD Property Tax Exemption Ordinance: online. Atlantic Station rezoning to Central Area Commercial Residential Conditional. online. Retrieved 2-2-09.

Strategic Success Factors

Bronze

- Ensure a minimum acreage is attainable for the proposed station area
- Locate the TOD within a 5-10 minute walk of the major transit stop or ¼ mile from the stop to the edge of the project
- Amend the comprehensive plan to support TOD areas
- Define the station area district and characteristics through a community based planning process
- Increase transit ridership by coordinating bus service with transit schedules
- Create a land use plan identifying TOD uses, station-specific zoning or a base zone district
- Create Capital Improvement Plans for station areas
- Establish urban renewal districts at station areas that fall within the urban renewal standard for blighted areas
- Ensure park and ride areas are properly located, designed and managed to minimize pedestrian and cyclist conflicts

Silver

- **Work with transit agencies to ensure** that the transit service is fast, frequent, reliable and comfortable with a headway of 15 minutes or less
- Use Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIF) to help finance infrastructure, pedestrian connections, station improvements, and structured parking
- Foster the establishment of business improvement districts

Gold

- Use land banking by local government to ensure proper development and property cost write-downs to help finance infrastructure, pedestrian connections, station improvements, and structured parking
- Create location improvement districts
- Encourage location efficient development and location efficient mortgages
- Provide public parking in structures at selected station areas as opposed to park and ride facilities

Potential sustainability measures:

1. Income variance in TOD neighborhoods (the greater, the better)
2. Number of housing units per acre at various distances from transit stations (increasingly higher nearer station)
3. Percentage of persons living in TOD using transit
4. Increased income levels of TOD residents over a period of time
5. Harmony of mixed uses
6. Thriving enterprise in TOD communities