



# Transit-Oriented Development

## 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 affordable single-family homes, the use of transit decreased significantly. Housing was built increasingly further outside of a city's transit services from the 1940s to the 1970s. In the 1970s, government-funded transit agencies began developing new transit systems to address 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), the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the 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 reported that 330 projects nationwide competed for \$6.6 billion in funding in 2009.<sup>1</sup>

Transit-Oriented Development (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".<sup>2</sup> TOD functions as a district, with the bulk of the defined development occurring within a quarter to half mile of the transit station, or a five to ten minute walking distance. Due to the proximity of the transit station, automobile use is discouraged. 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 transportation mode of choice, 1970s and 1980s transit stops became a sea of parking lots surrounding stops, rather than compact developments. As transit is examined more frequently due to increasing gas prices and air pollution concerns, planning for urban development around key transit locations is becoming more 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 transit stations. This will lead to an increase in traffic congestion, air pollution, health problems, and transportation costs.

<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration, Introduction to New Starts, [http://www.fta.dot.gov/planning/newstarts/planning\\_environment\\_2608.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/planning/newstarts/planning_environment_2608.html).

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

## GOALS FOR TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

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

- 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)

# Sustainable Community Development Code Framework

## 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<sup>3</sup>
- In 2000, there were about fourteen million people, or six million U.S. households, living within walking distance (one half mile) of rail transit stops<sup>4</sup>
- A 2007 study shows that households living in neighborhoods near transit spend sixteen percent less on transportation than families who live in auto-oriented communities<sup>5</sup>
- 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 VMT<sup>6</sup>



		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>	<b>Remove Obstacles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allow for a Planned Development zone to accommodate TOD</li> <li>▪ Eliminate minimum parking standards (see Parking Framework Section)</li> <li>▪ Develop a TOD classification system (e.g., City Center, Urban Center, Village Center, Neighborhood Center)</li> <li>▪ Increase transit ridership by coordinating bus service with transit schedules (see Public Transit Framework Section)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create an overlay zoning district for TOD</li> <li>▪ Allocate roadway space for cyclists and timed traffic signals for pedestrians and cyclists</li> <li>▪ Specify maximum parking standards</li> <li>▪ Create urban parks or land dedication requirements for TOD and urban area uses</li> <li>▪ Connect stations to neighborhoods with shorter, protected bicycle and pedestrian routes to encourage those who would not normally bike or walk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a TOD zone</li> <li>▪ Specify maximum parking standards</li> <li>▪ Develop an overall parking plan that addresses both private and commuter parking</li> <li>▪ Unbundle parking costs</li> <li>▪ Reduce the percentage or acreage requirements for parks dedication in order to maximize land use on the TOD site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reconnecting America is a comprehensive resource for all things TOD. <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> <li>▪ The Urban Land Institute publications on TOD <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> <li>▪ Tumlin, Jeffery and Millard-Ball, Alan. <i>How to Make Transit Oriented Development Work</i>. <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> <li>▪ Puget Sound Regional Council, <i>Creating Transit Station Communities in the Central Puget Sound Region: A Transit-Oriented Development Workbook</i>. <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City of Aurora, CO, <i>Urban Street standards</i> <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> <li>▪ City of Aurora, CO, Transit Oriented Development Code (not available online, please contact City)</li> <li>▪ City of Denver, CO, <i>Municipal Code for TMU-30. Division 15, Section 59-301</i>. <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> <li>▪ Montgomery County, MD, Transit-Oriented Mixed-Use Zone. Division 59 C-11 and C-13: <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> <li>▪ Hillsboro, OR, Orenco Station Zoning, Section 137. <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> </ul>

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

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

<sup>5</sup> Reconnecting America. Jumpstarting the Transit Space Race, October 2008, p. 3.

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

# Sustainable Community Development Code Framework

## TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

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 <p>Bicycle parking garage, Amsterdam Central station</p>	<b>Create Incentives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expedite the development review process</li> <li>Subject TOD plans to an administrative decision rather than a formal hearing</li> <li>Allow for a mix of housing with an affordable component and/or required percentage</li> <li>Provide safe and adequate bicycle parking (see Bicycle Mobility Framework Section)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the processing fees/waivers for TOD projects within a city</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Austin, TX, <i>TOD Financing Strategy</i>, <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> <li>City of Oakland, CA, <i>Fruitvale Transit Village Project</i>, creative partnerships with local government, transit, and a non-profit, <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> </ul>
 <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>	<b>Enact Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow densities higher than surrounding areas</li> <li>Permit a mix of residential, commercial, and employment uses (see Complete Streets Framework Section)</li> <li>Permit walkable streets with build-to lines and buildings facing the street</li> <li>Require plazas adjacent to the station or walkable main streets connecting to the station</li> <li>Require an urban street grid (see Pedestrian Mobility Systems Framework Section)</li> <li>Require pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding neighborhoods and businesses</li> <li>Require quality architecture and public art (see Pedestrian Mobility Systems Framework Section)</li> <li>Require that parking areas locate behind at-street buildings or within parking structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement on-street parking controls for all TOD areas</li> <li>Charge for parking with all TOD commuter users</li> <li>Create an access management plan to limit the number of driveway cuts and intersections on arterials and highways near TOD</li> <li>Enforce traffic calming with speed limits of 30 mph on major streets and 20 mph on lesser streets (see Public Transit Framework Section)</li> <li>Include bike stations and fully enclosed bicycle parking at major stops</li> <li>Require minimum urban levels of density</li> <li>Require a mix of residential, commercial and employment uses and restrict automobile-related uses</li> <li>Require walkable, urban streets with required build-to lines and buildings required to have entrances on the street</li> <li>Require on-street parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>Require a street grid by requiring that block dimensions do not exceed a specific size typical of urban blocks, e.g., 300-660 feet in length</li> <li>Require connections to surrounding streets and to bicycle and pedestrian trails</li> <li>Require a street cross section that accommodates multiple modes of travel</li> <li>Require defined, protected, short-distance routes for amateur bikers and walkers</li> <li>Enforce maximum parking limitations and require shared parking</li> <li>Require an architectural design plan defining a consistent approach</li> <li>Require quality, durable materials and varied architectural detail</li> <li>Enforce a formula for required public art</li> <li>Ensure the mix of uses creates 24-hour activity within the TOD</li> <li>Require that a TOD application include various features such a defined street grid, building envelopes, squares, and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Denver, CO, <i>TOD Strategic Plan</i>, <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> <li>Joe Holmes and James van Hemert, <i>Transit Oriented Development (Research Monologue Series)</i>. Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute, <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Lakewood, CO <i>Transit Mixed Use Zone District Development Manual</i>: <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> <li>BART TOD Guidelines: <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> <li>City of Portland, OR, <i>TOD Property Tax Exemption Ordinance</i>, <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> <li>City of Atlanta, GA, Atlantic Station rezoning to Central Area Commercial Residential Conditional, <a href="#">Available online</a>. Retrieved January 11, 2011.</li> </ul>

**Sustainable Community Development Code Framework**

**TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT**

				plazas to frame the TOD ▪ Pull parking structures to the street require ground/1 <sup>st</sup> floor uses		
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**Strategic Success Factors**

**Bronze**

- Ensure a minimum acreage is attainable for the proposed station area
- Locate the TOD within a five to ten minute walk of the major transit stop or one quarter 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 fifteen 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:**

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