



Transit Oriented Development

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Transit Oriented Development or "Smart Growth" is often cited as one of the potential solutions to dealing with peak oil by reducing suburban sprawl and creating more usage of mass transit and walkable communities. The idea generally is to promote development near existing transit hubs or along transit corridors.

According to [TransitOrientedDevelopment.org](#), the components of TOD are:

- Walkable design with pedestrian as the highest priority
- Train station as prominent feature of town center
- A regional node containing a mixture of uses in close proximity including office, residential, retail, and civic uses
- High density, high-quality development within 10-minute walk circle surrounding train station
- Collector support transit systems including trolleys, streetcars, light rail, and buses, etc
- Designed to include the easy use of bicycles, scooters, and rollerblades as daily support transportation systems
- Reduced and managed parking inside 10-minute walk circle around town center / train station

There's a lot of talk about promoting transit oriented development (the other TOD) in theory, but how much is actually happening around the US?

In searching around local US newspapers, I came across a few TOD projects in the works around existing or new transit hubs and corridors. Here are a few highlights:

[Baltimore, MD](#)

The state Board of Public Works yesterday approved a pair of contracts that advance transit-oriented development projects. The board approved an interim \$1.2 billion redevelopment plan for the State Center government complex on the edge of downtown Baltimore. The redevelopment of the 25-acre site, which brings together MARC service, light rail and several bus lines, has been described as the largest single-site project in Baltimore since the revitalization of the Inner Harbor.

Also approved was a \$200 million development plan - including office, retail and residential construction - around the MARC station on the Camden Line at Savage in eastern Howard County. The state's development partner on the project is Petrie Ross Ventures of Annapolis.

[Beacon, NY](#)

Representatives of 56 companies descended on Beacon yesterday for a briefing on the first transit-oriented development project in Metro-North Railroad's 25-year history.

The response — three times what Metro-North predicted — thrilled the railroad and the community after five years of planning a Hudson Valley "gateway" that would connect the train station and the waterfront to the downtown.

"People here are prepared to see development — high-density, mixed-use development — happen at the waterfront, around the train station and along our Main Street, which is over a mile long," said Sara Pasti, director of the Beacon Arts Community Association, as she showed off the long string of renovated storefronts from the bus.

[Bellevue, MA](#)

A Seattle developer on Wednesday unveiled plans for a 36-acre "urban village" in Bellevue's Bel-Red Corridor that could eventually have 800 apartments, ground-floor retail, several acres of open space and more than 3 million square feet of office space.

Named the Spring District, the \$1.5 billion project would be a centerpiece of the city's revamping of the 900-acre corridor from an aging warehouse center to a tall, dense, mixed-use neighborhood, said Greg Johnson, president of Wright Runstad. The "spring" in the title is meant to indicate a season of transformation, he said.

"We certainly hope this can be the catalyst for the development that happens in the next 50 years in the Bel-Red Corridor," Johnson told 200 people at a Bellevue Chamber of Commerce luncheon at the Bellevue Hilton.

[Phoenix, AZ](#)

A Phoenix developer has big plans to build one of the largest mixed-use projects along the new light rail line.

Mike Lafferty, president of Lafferty Development Inc., will build the 11-story Union Square at 12th Street. He already has received Phoenix City Council approval to rezone

the area, and now is lining up investors and looking at ways to rejuvenate the surrounding neighborhood.

Union Square, at the southeast corner of 12th and Washington streets, will include 280 condos, about 10 percent of which will be priced for middle-income buyers; public and business meeting rooms; a 175-room hotel; and street-level retail.

[Norfolk, VA](#)

The first shovel of dirt has not been turned, yet light rail already has helped generate more than \$220 million in planned office, retail, apartment and hotel development downtown.

Developers of three projects – Wachovia Center, Belmont at Freemason apartments and a Residence Inn – said the city’s starter light rail influenced their business decisions. Having modern transit within a short walking distance delivers a steady stream of potential customers and provides an alternative to driving for residents and workers, they said.

Wachovia Center is a 22-story tower and apartment building that will include office, retail and residential space on Monticello Avenue.

“The fact that there will be a light rail stop right out the front door of our project was a key part of why we selected that site,” said Thomas G. Johnson III, vice president of sales and development for Nusbaum Realty, the project developer.

[Hillsboro, NJ](#)

The West Trenton Line reactivation plan is the key to plans by Hillsborough officials to create a Transit Village along the railroad line and Amwell Road.

According to the township's Master Plan, adopted by the Planning Board in 2005, the Transit Village district concept will feature commercial offices, retail spaces, residential development, access for pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, buses and cabs; and parks and open space. The Master Plan also allows neighborhood convenience centers, churches, nursery and private schools, libraries, parks and farm/agricultural activities in the Transit Village area.

What's happening in your area?

I'd be particularly interested in any re-zonings of suburban areas from single use residential areas to mixed use.



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