



TOD Office Annual Report 2016



2016 was another productive year in the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Office of Metro Transit. Highlights of progress include the expansion of TOD resources and web presence through a revamped website, completion of two research studies, convening of multiple TOD Forum events on development issues for the Twin Cities region and coordination with an array of external partners, including partnerships with Washington County and Hennepin County on two Federal Transit Administration (FTA) TOD Pilot Planning Grants for the METRO Gold Line and METRO Blue Line Extension. The TOD Office also made significant strides on development projects, including Council approval and FTA concurrence on the Joint Development proposal at the MLS Soccer Stadium site on Snelling Avenue, as well as Council approval to begin negotiations on the proposed 38th Street Transit Station development.

2016 also saw continued strength in ridership on the METRO Green Line, with weekday average ridership of nearly 40,000. Similar to 2015, ridership continued to grow over by more than 5.5 percent and development along the corridor has now surpassed \$4.3 billion. This continued growth in ridership and investment success along the corridor, which is over half way to the forecasted \$7 billion of investment over a 30-year period, illustrates how strong of an investment quality transit service is for our communities.

The region is now seeing a similar dynamic along the planned METRO Green Line Extension. The Metropolitan Council has tracked \$430 million in development, either finished or underway on the corridor, and the Blue Line Extension project has also seen almost \$360 million of development in various stages.

1

Maximize the development impact of transit investments
by integrating transportation, jobs and housing.

2

Support regional economic competitiveness
by leveraging private investment.

3

Advance equity
by improving multimodal access to opportunity for all.

4

Support a 21st century transportation system
through increased ridership and revenues.

What is Transit Oriented Development (TOD)?

TOD is walkable urban development served by frequent transit with a mix of housing, retail and employment designed to allow people to live and work with transportation choices.

TOD Policy

The TOD Policy provides a framework for the Metropolitan Council to play a leadership role across sectors in TOD implementation while building upon the TOD-supportive activities that the Council has completed for years. The Metropolitan Council has an important stake in maximizing TOD potential to help foster efficient and economic growth for all residents.

In addition to ridership and development activity along the region's Light Rail Transit (LRT) corridors, Metro Transit also debuted its Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT) service on Snelling Avenue in June 2016. The A Line rapid bus operates fast, frequent service designed to have a similar experience to LRT, and creates critical connections from the 46th Street Transit Station in Minneapolis, through St. Paul on Ford Parkway and Snelling Avenue, and terminating at Rosedale Transit Center in Roseville. This new service partially replaced Route 84 in the corridor and has resulted in a 35 percent increase in ridership on the corridor in the first month of operation.

Development interest around rapid bus corridors is increasing and the TOD Office plans to continue exploring the market for TOD around BRT service in 2017. Metro Transit's BRT Project Office is moving quickly ahead with planning and construction on the next rapid bus corridors – the C Line and D Line, which will operate in Minneapolis on Penn Avenue and Chicago Avenue/Fremont Avenue – and construction is planned in 2018 and 2019-2020, respectively.

This report highlights key TOD efforts from across the Metropolitan Council in 2016. The content is organized within the five TOD strategies identified in the Met Council's TOD Policy: Prioritize Resources, Focus on Implementation, Effective Communication, Collaborate with Partners and Coordinate Internally. These strategies are designed to advance the TOD Goals illustrated below. The report concludes with the 2017 work plan for the TOD Office.

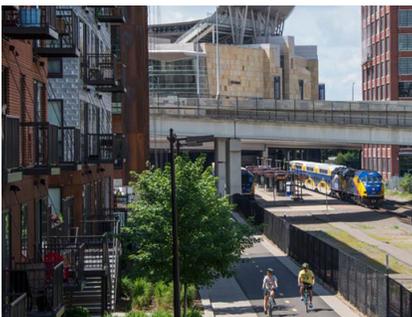
Prioritize Resources

Publicly-owned Parcel Database

Throughout 2015 and early 2016, the TOD Office developed a Publicly-owned Parcels Database based on work completed as part of a graduate capstone project at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs. This online database displays all parcels owned by public agencies within existing and future transit station areas in the Twin Cities and provides a window into the development opportunities around transit for private developers. Users can access the database via ArcGIS Online, a download of the GIS layer, or through the Metropolitan Council's web-based Make-a-Map tool.

The Publicly-owned Parcels database was launched to the public during a dedicated TOD Forum in May 2016. Following this launch, additional work was completed in the TOD Office to establish procedures for regularly updating and publishing public parcel data, including a white paper documenting the process and the development of an automated tool to comb through and update the database as new county-wide parcel datasets are compiled and released through the MN Geospatial Commons.

Both internal and external users have found value in the database in its first year. Metropolitan Council Environmental Services staff have used the tool to estimate stormwater runoff from Metropolitan Council-owned properties. Metropolitan Council GIS staff and others have



also benefitted from the tool, especially to assist in efforts to begin studying development around transit in the Twin Cities.

Low-Income Fare Program

In 2016, Metro Transit launched a low-income fare pilot program. This program provided discounted transit tickets to families using House Choice Vouchers provided by Metro HRA. A total of 300 households took advantage of the program. Although participation was lower than initially expected, user feedback indicated that over 80 percent of participants strongly agreed that the program improved their ability to move around the Twin Cities.

Lessons learned from this initial pilot program were incorporated into a new low-income fare program. Launched in October 2016, the program attracted over 2,000 enrollees as of November 2016. Continued dedication of funds to this program will continue to help meet accessibility and mobility needs of disadvantaged populations in the region.

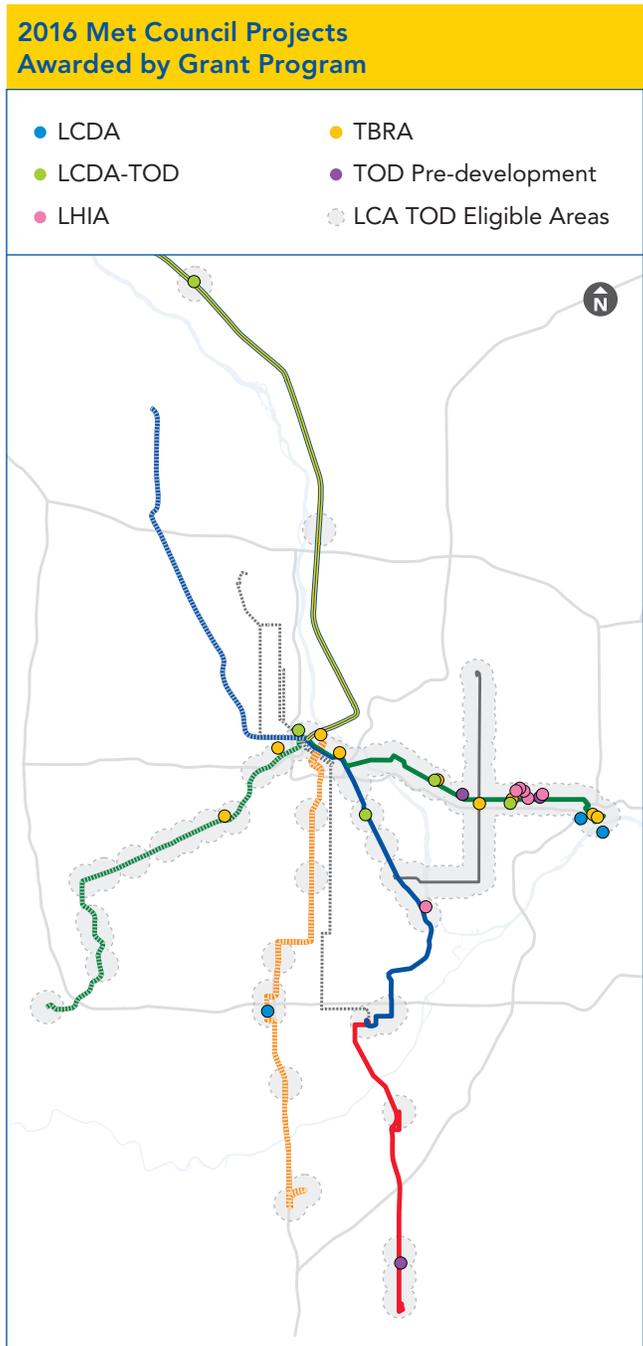
TOD Funding Guide Update

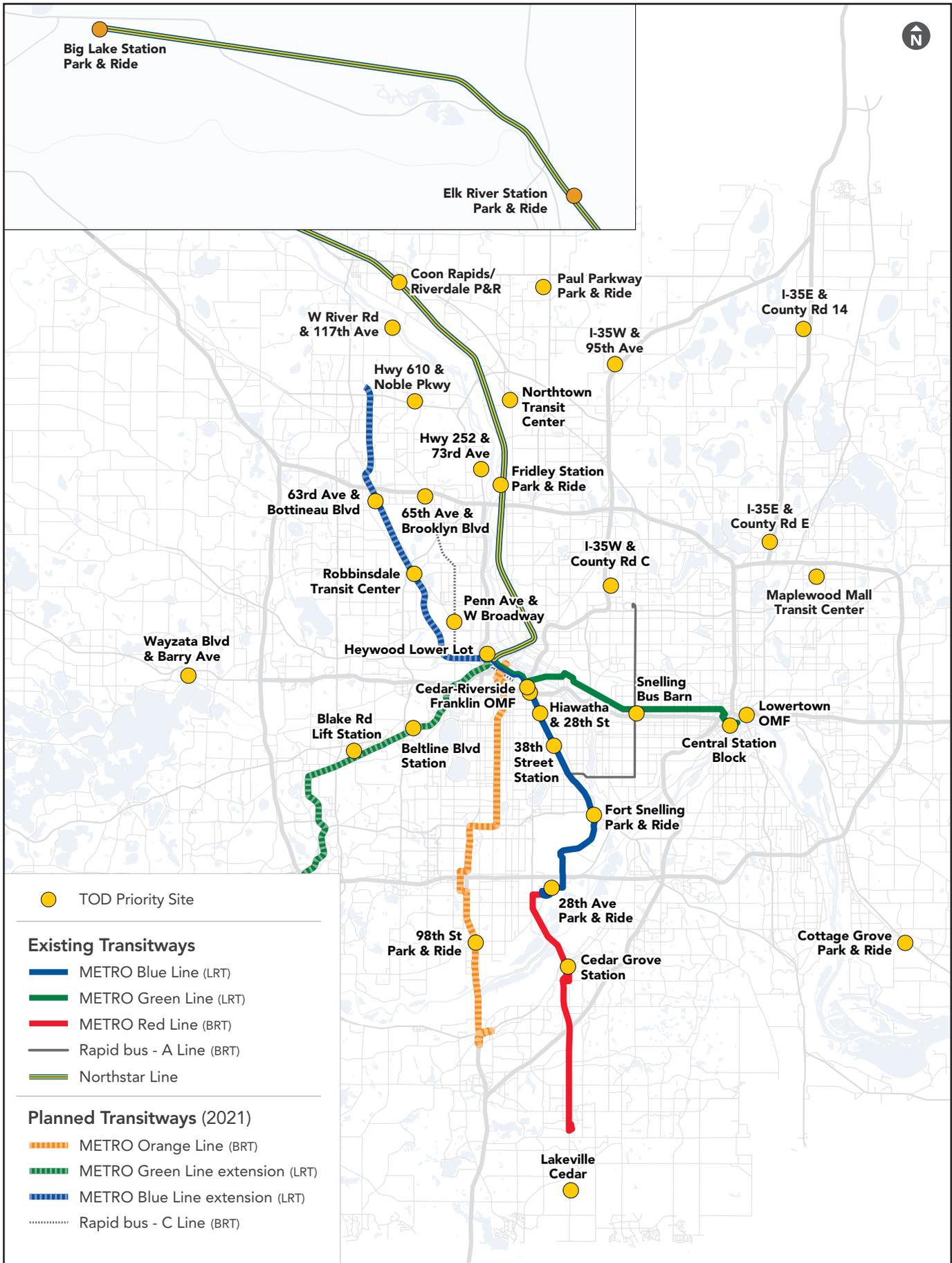
The TOD Funding Guide was updated in November to maintain its status as an up-to-date resource for developers interested in TOD, brownfield redevelopment or affordable housing. The Funding Guide is a comprehensive list of all federal, state and local financing options, including many grants and low-interest loans. New programs included in the TOD Funding Guide update include the FTA's TOD Grant program, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's Job Creation Fund and the City of Minneapolis' Grow North program.

Met Council Grants

Community Development staff at the Metropolitan Council continue to support and award a multitude of grants for TOD and other development, cleanup and affordable housing projects throughout the region. In 2016, more than \$20.5 million was awarded to development projects within TOD eligible areas through the Livable Communities Act-TOD (LCA-TOD), LCA-TOD Pre-Development, Tax Base Revitalization (TBRA), Livable Communities Demonstration Act (LCDA) and Local Housing Incentives Account (LHIA) grant programs.

2016 Met Council Grants		
Grant	Number of Projects	Amount Awarded
LCA-TOD Development Grants	5	\$4.8M
LCA-TOD Pre-Development Grants	4	\$138,500
LCDA Grants	9	\$7.7M
TBRA Grants	22	\$5.8M
LHIA Grants	10	\$2.1M





Focus on Implementation

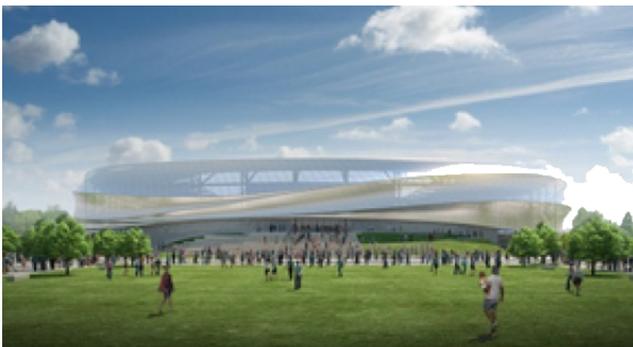
Throughout 2016, the TOD Office made forward strides on two major development projects and continued to advance multiple others through various stages of due diligence and coordination. These development sites are part of a larger prioritization effort of the top 35 Met Council-owned TOD Priority sites, all of which are owned by the Metropolitan Council that the TOD Office is exploring for potential development opportunities. Development projects to date include:

38th Street Transit Station

Metro Transit owns and operates a bus turnaround facility adjacent to the METRO Blue Line's 38th Street Station. The site was considered for potential TOD in 2015, but originally postponed because the Metropolitan Council-owned site is too small to accommodate the transit functions and feasible development.

In early 2016, a development team came to the Council with a proposal to acquire the privately-owned property adjacent to the Metro Transit facility and to incorporate the transit functions into the larger development. Council approved the TOD Office to enter into negotiations with the developer; staff have been both negotiating and working on the transit purpose issues since that time. The main transit concern is being sure that the design and construction of the development does not interfere with safe and efficient bus service. A traffic study is underway; the results will inform the final decision on the development project.

MN United MLS Stadium



(photo credit: Populous)

The Metropolitan Council (Metro Transit) acquired the property located at 400 Snelling Avenue North

in St. Paul as part of the acquisition of the privately-owned Twin City Rapid Transit Company. The site was originally part of a streetcar barn and terminal, and was later used as a bus facility. The site has been continuously used for transit operations in the intervening decades, primarily for bus storage and project staging.



(photo credit: Populous)

When the owners of the local Minnesota United Football Club decided to join Major League Soccer, the City of St. Paul and Metro Transit came together to explore locating the new stadium on this site. Metro Transit is leasing the property to the City, and the City will have authority over the construction, use of the stadium and any additional development. Metro Transit will maintain continuing control for transit purposes, and is working with the stadium designers to ensure that transit needs are included in all aspects of this development. The ground lease was approved by Metropolitan Council on February 24, 2016, and the St. Paul City Council on March 2, 2016.

The stadium is expected to break ground in early 2017; the City of St. Paul and Metro Transit continue to work in partnership on this project.

METRO Green Line - Central Station

Metro Transit owns most of the block adjacent to and surrounding the METRO Green Line Central Station in Downtown St. Paul. During 2016, TOD staff met with City of St. Paul staff and various stake holders. Staff also reviewed agreements concerning the parcel acquisitions, the skyway, and technical aspects of constructing a large building over an

active trackway. A developer solicitation is planned for the second half of 2017.

Additional Projects

- **Fridley Station:** Metro Transit owns the Park & Ride facility located at Fridley Station on the Northstar Commuter Rail corridor. TOD staff is exploring opportunities to develop a portion of the west station, located adjacent to the southbound tracks. The Park & Ride currently operates at below 10 percent of its capacity and the station is located within the City's TOD Master Plan for potential future mixed-use development.
- **Heywood Lower Lot:** Metro Transit owns and operates a 1.2 acre site at the corner 8th Street and 5th Avenue on its Heywood campus in the North Loop neighborhood of Minneapolis. The parcel is and has been used for employee parking for several decades and has been identified as a TOD opportunity site in the Heywood Campus Master Plan.
- **Hubbard Marketplace:** Metro Transit owns the Hubbard Marketplace Building near the future Robbinsdale Station on the METRO Blue Line Extension. The building currently functions as a bus transfer facility but will be no longer needed when the LRT station opens in 2021. The METRO Blue Line Extension project office has been working with Hennepin County, the City of Robbinsdale and Metro Transit to plan for the redevelopment of the Hubbard Marketplace site as part of a larger TOD opportunity.
- **Beltline Station:** The METRO Green Line Extension project office and the TOD Office have been working with the City of St. Louis Park to convert a surface parking lot into a TOD that will include parking capacity previously built as a surface lot. The METRO Green Line Extension Beltline Station is expected to open in 2021 and the real estate market will determine when it will be financially feasible to convert the surface parking into structured parking.

METRO Green Line and Blue Line Extension Project Office Updates

FTA New Starts Applications

The Land Use and Economic Development sections of the METRO Blue and Green Line New Starts applications were completed in the summer of 2016. These applications and subsequent updates are required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to score all the New Starts projects across the country.

The METRO Green Line extension, commonly referred to as the "jobs" corridor, updated the 2015 application to include the 64,000 jobs located on the corridor outside of downtown Minneapolis. This change to the New Starts application gives the corridor even more strength as part of the full Green Line corridor, which will include connections to 310,000 jobs. The cities along the alignment are anticipating expansion of the already dense job base and have identified more than 500 acres of developable land along the corridor.

The METRO Blue Line extension submitted an application for the first time, stressing that this extension will complete the region's vision for extending single-seat service from the Mall of America to communities in the northwest metropolitan area. This is one of the most diverse and economically challenged areas in the region. In this corridor, more than 15 percent of households are transit dependent and more than 30 percent are living below the poverty level (\$44,955 annually for a family of four).

Featured Developments

The successful TOD along the METRO Green and Blue Lines has created excitement in the development community, as evidenced by completion of projects along the new rail corridors even before construction has commenced. The following is a sampling of these projects:

METRO Green Line Extension



The Shoreham – West Lake Street and Beltline Boulevard Stations (photo credit: Bader Development)

The Shoreham is a mixed-use development on 2.23 acres near Beltline Boulevard and West Lake Street stations. The development includes 148 residential units (including 30 affordable units) and 20,000 square feet of general and medical office uses, and is expected to be complete in 2017.



The Moline – Hopkins Station (photo used with permission from the City of Hopkins)

The Moline, located adjacent to the planned METRO Green Line Extension's Hopkins Station, includes public amenities such as a bicycle lounge and a Park & Ride facility. Through a public-private partnership with the City of Hopkins, Doran Companies was able to mitigate risk while adding to the City's existing district parking framework and preserve surrounding land for non-parking uses.

METRO Blue Line Extension



Washburn Center for Children – Van White Station (photo credit: Brandon Stengel)

The Washburn Center for Children opened in 2014 near the METRO Blue Line Extension's Van White Station. The site includes a 76,000 square foot facility for youth with mental health needs.



610 West Apartments Rendering – Oak Grove Parkway Station (photo credit: Doran Architecture)

610 West Apartments opened near the future METRO Blue Line Oak Grove Parkway Station in 2016. This \$45 million high-density, market-rate complex in Brooklyn Park includes 480 units.

Effective Communication

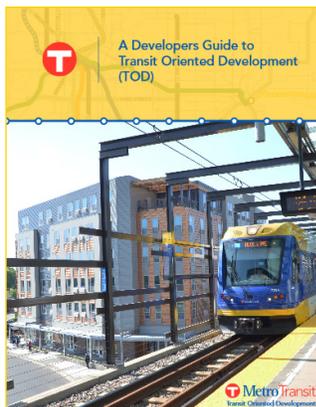
TOD Website



The TOD Office launched a new and improved website in September 2016. The rebuilt website included the addition of resources for developers, planners and other TOD professionals; a navigation pane for easier access to the expanded content; and multimedia elements used to briefly inform users of the TOD Office's role in the region and provide training opportunities on TOD subjects. The website content was also written and designed for continued search engine optimization to enable professionals and developers to find the TOD Office website with greater ease through search engines. The website launch included advertisement through internal email and newsletters; a new, external email newsletter; targeted Facebook advertisements to new audiences within the Twin Cities and through a Finance and Commerce article featuring the website and its resources.

Developer's Guide to TOD

One featured resource on the newly launched TOD Office website is the TOD Developer's Guide. The web-based and printed document features resources, statistics, and other helpful information to both educate and entice developers to explore development around transitways in the Twin Cities. The Developer's Guide is written in plain



language and includes useful local examples, best practices, and design guidance. The document was featured with the website launch in September 2016, will be distributed electronically and in hard copy throughout 2017, and will be updated on a recurring basis.

Metropolitan Council TOD Guide

Metropolitan Council Community Development staff continued the development of the online TOD Guide throughout the year and launched the web-based resource in fall 2016. The Guide's primary audience includes local planners and others who are involved in local planning. The TOD Guide is similar in design to the online Local Planning Handbook; however, while the Local Planning Handbook focuses on comprehensive plan updates, the new TOD Guide supports TOD planning. The TOD Guide was developed with the input of local planners and staff throughout the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit, including the TOD Office.

The TOD Guide has three sections: *TOD Roles and Support*, covering who does what throughout the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit, how TOD staff work together, and who to contact on the different aspects of transit and TOD planning; *Key Policy and Program Considerations for TOD and Planning Fundamentals*.

The TOD Guide is an evolving resource that will be updated periodically. Metropolitan Council staff will also solicit ongoing feedback about the site's usefulness and suggestions for improvement. The TOD Guide will include a growing and changing library of case studies on TOD Guide topics published in 2017.

Conference Participation

The TOD office participated in both regional and national conferences in 2016. These conferences allowed Metro Transit staff to share their expertise on issues from community engagement to street design. They also provided an opportunity to learn from the experience of national leaders in TOD.

- The Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association hosted the Upper Midwest 2016 Planning Conference in St. Cloud. Metro Transit employees presented on topics including

community engagement, parking, and building better bus stops. Metropolitan Council staff also presented on the TOD Guide, including highlights from case studies.

- The 2016 Rail~Volution Conference was held in San Francisco. Metro Transit employees presented on a range of topics including the value of a real estate perspective in TOD, the importance of elevating women's roles in transportation planning and the changing nature of transit in the suburbs. Presentations also highlighted Metro Transit achievements of the past year, such as progress on the 38th Street Station TOD and the opening of the A Line.
- Metro Transit TOD Staff also participated in the Minnesota Public Transit Association conference in Rochester, Minn. An update on 2016 projects and developments at Metro Transit was provided, in addition to staff presentations on transit, street design and TOD.

TOD Forums

The TOD Office convened two public Forum events in 2016 to disseminate information and resources to local stakeholders, including planning, development, finance, city administration and other TOD professionals. The events included:

- May 2016 – Publicly-owned Parcel Database Launch: This event was held at the Minneapolis Central Library and featured the public launch of the Publicly-owned Parcels database, as well as a panel of development experts discussing how this product can be useful to the development community. Attendees were invited to learn more about the database at the end of the event with demonstration laptops set up throughout the room. Approximately 60 professionals attended the Publicly-owned Parcel Forum.
- July 2016 – District Parking: The summer TOD Forum featured the recently-completed Towerside District Parking Framework, including perspectives and lessons learned from the study, as well as insights from the City of Edina, the City of Hopkins, and a tabletop activity facilitated by Twin Cities LISC to illustrate the costs and land impacts of traditional and district parking scenarios. The event was attended by over 100 professionals.

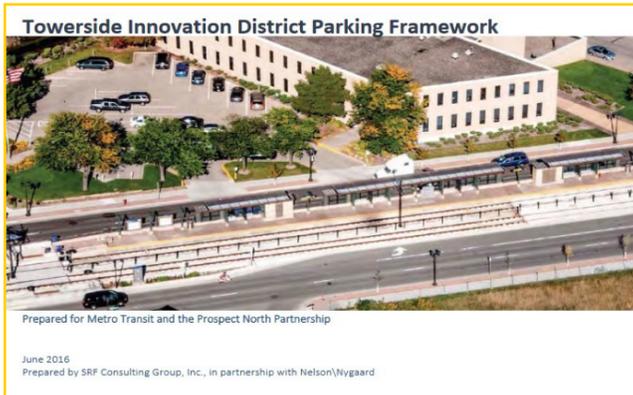


A full-length video of the Forum was developed for the TOD website and additional training and education opportunities for those who could not attend in person. Following the release of the District Parking Framework and the TOD Forum, the TOD Office continued to receive inquiries from partner cities regarding parking issues throughout 2016.

Collaborate with Partners

Several efforts throughout 2016 included close collaboration with regional partners:

Towerside District Parking Framework



The Towerside District Parking Framework study was developed as a case study for use by any regional partner. Using the Towerside Innovation District as the example, the study examined existing and predicted development, existing parking, parking requirements and developed a plan for a Parking District that would result in more efficient parking. District Parking is more complex to establish and administer than having each development build its own parking, but the savings can be significant. For example, in the Towerside District, combining parking into a shared resource would mean that the District would need to build half as much parking as would be required if done by each individual development.

The study was led by SRF Consulting Group and Nelson\Nygaard and engaged representatives of the Prospect Park Partnership, University of Minnesota, City of St. Paul, City of Minneapolis and Metro Transit.



The study was completed in summer 2016 and was featured in the July 2016 District Parking Forum, attended by almost 100 people. Metro Transit staff also developed a short video as a tool to briefly educate and pique the interest of professionals and elected officials facing parking issues. This video was distributed to District Parking stakeholders, Forum attendees and promoted through targeted ads on Facebook.

Child Care and Transit Study

The TOD Office partnered with Wilder Research to study the location of child care facilities in relation to Metro Transit's high-frequency service network. The study was funded through an internal Metropolitan Council equity grant program, which was created to investigate and promote new ways of advancing equity in the region. In addition to mapping child care facilities within walking distance of transit, the Transit-Accessible Child Care Study also included a survey of parents who use transit with their children. The study was completed in summer 2016.

FTA TOD Pilot Grants

The TOD Office worked closely with Washington and Ramsey Counties to apply for a TOD Pilot Grant for the METRO Gold Line; this grant award was announced in September 2015. In 2016, the TOD Office and Hennepin County Community Works staff applied for and received another TOD Pilot Planning Grant for the METRO Blue Line Extension project. The FTA announced the \$1 million award for the Gold Line grant in September 2015, and the TOD Office began coordination of the grant after the updated Locally Preferred Alternative decision in Fall 2016. The FTA announced the award of the \$1.2 million grant for the Blue Line Extension project in October 2016 at the Rail~Volution conference in San Francisco, and TOD Office staff began internal and external coordination shortly thereafter.

Both projects will focus on corridor-wide strategies to embed existing station area plans in policies and ordinances, developing capital improvement programs, and set the table for strong community development. Community engagement will be the backbone of each work plan.

Corridor Housing Strategies

METRO Green Line extension housing staff from the five project cities, Hennepin County, the Twin Cities Local Initiative Support Coalition (LISC), Urban Land Institute - Minnesota (ULI MN) and the Metropolitan Council collaborated through the Community Works program to continue the development of a corridor-wide housing strategy in 2016. The strategy was adopted by the Community Works Steering Committee after presentations to all five corridor cities. This effort created a model that the METRO Blue Line Extension Community Works program is evaluating for use on the corridor Blue Line Extension corridor.

Additional Partnerships

Twin Cities LISC has a program called Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) that is designed to involve the community in exploring development options for specific areas or sites. The Cities of

Eden Prairie (Town Center Station), Hopkins (Blake Road Station) and St. Louis Park (Wooddale Station) completed a CDI process in the station areas that examined development options and ways to elevate the station area to be accessible to walkers and bikers. Each CDI process included four workshops, culminating in an industry-expert panel providing market and financial feasibility feedback on the community's development vision.

Additionally, ULI MN has a program called Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) that brings together an unbiased, interdisciplinary panel of volunteer professionals who address a specific project, development or policy issue. The Cities of St. Louis Park (Beltline Station) and Hopkins (Blake Road Station) teamed up for a TAP in the form of a two-day workshop early in 2016. Development concepts at both stations were evaluated by the panel and specific feedback was provided to assist the cities in soliciting and evaluating potential development proposals.

Coordinate Internally

Throughout 2016, the TOD Working Group continued to convene on a monthly basis to bring together Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council staff involved with TOD projects, research, and design throughout the region. These meetings provide an opportunity for staff across different divisions to coordinate efforts, share best practices, and provide updates on TOD projects. In 2016, the Working Group discussed topics such as linking housing grant programs to transit, increasing equity in lower income neighborhoods, managing stormwater on greenfield developments and providing data for developers to identify ideal TOD sites.

Karen Jensen, an Environmental Services TOD Internal Group representative, has also partnered with the TOD Office and the Southwest Project Office to help complete a cost-benefit analysis for stormwater solutions along the METRO Green Line Extension project. Assistance was also offered in developer meetings for the METRO Blue Line Extension project. In both cases, the added knowledge of the respective Watershed District's capabilities and funding sources for innovative storm water solutions will help the cities' sustainability goals.

The TOD Office also participated in the Thrive 2040 Economic Competitiveness Implementation Team. The Team's goal for the year was to work to connect TOD to the economic development community, including engaging with groups including economic development organizations, site selectors and real estate professionals to make the case that TOD sites are great locations for many types of businesses. Actions included TOD Office meetings with the Economic Development Association of Minnesota, NAIOP, the Urban Land Institute – Minnesota Chapter, individual real estate professionals, finance professionals, affordable housing developers and other individuals and groups. This crucial work toward connecting TOD to the economic development community will continue throughout 2017 and future years.

In addition to the Internal Working Group and Thrive activities, the leadership of the TOD Office, Metropolitan Transportation Services and Community Development meet monthly to continue close coordination on economic development, TOD and land use planning topics, projects and needs in the region.

2017 Work Plan



Prioritize Resources

1. Maintain online database of publicly-owned parcels served by transit
2. Coordinate and align existing Met Council programs with TOD Policy.
3. Monitor federal grant opportunities; apply as appropriate
4. Update guide to existing TOD funding resources
5. Update resources available to assist with effective design, construction, and maintenance of green infrastructure and Low Impact Development (LID) storm-water management on TOD projects

Focus on Implementation

1. Develop protocols for managing the ground lease of the Snelling site
2. Resolve issues blocking redevelopment of the Met Council's property at the METRO Green Line Central Station
3. Complete due diligence on selected Met Council properties
4. Issue solicitation for development for one or two Met Council owned properties
5. Ensure that green infrastructure and Low Impact Development (LID) storm-water projects on Met Council properties are effectively maintained and operated, serving as example of good stewardship to our partners

Effective Communication

1. Produce and share annual TOD report
2. Publish report on development impact of Metro Transit's rapid transit system (LRT & BRT)
3. Plan and participate in Rail~Volution 2017
4. Where appropriate, participate in local water resources gatherings, such as the annual MN Water Resources Conference or the Clean Water Summit held at the MN Landscape Arboretum each fall
5. Ensure that TOD communication projects include mention of importance of implementing effective storm-water management and green infrastructure on TOD sites

Collaborate with Partners

1. Convene forums and publish reports on TOD topics
2. Provide training resources for local jurisdictions on TOD planning and zoning.
3. Convene the Regional TOD Peer Exchange quarterly.
4. Convene discussions with local water management organizations (including cities, counties and watershed districts) on potential collaboration efforts for including green infrastructure and LID storm-water management in TOD projects

Coordinate Internally

1. Monitor Council-wide TOD Policy implementation and report annually
2. Convene the TOD working group monthly
3. Participate in TOD related programs and projects across the organization
4. Seek opportunities to partner with MCES on TOD projects to protect regional water quality, enhance aquifer recharge or support water conservation

Contact us at:
tod@metrotransit.org
metrotransit.org/tod

