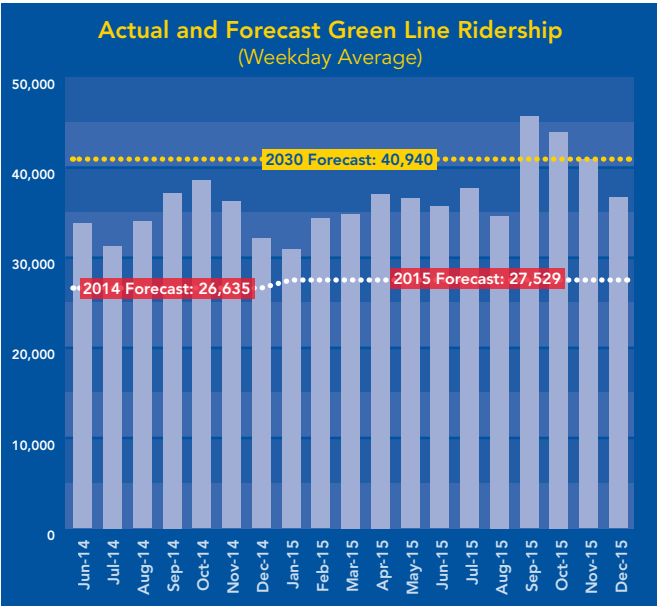




TOD Office Annual Report 2015



2015 was a productive year for Metro Transit's TOD (Transit Oriented Development) Office. The Office expanded its TOD resources, initiated development discussions on two Met Council-owned sites and convened multiple forums on development issues pertinent to our region, in addition to many other efforts. The past year also saw strong ridership on METRO Green Line. Average weekday ridership from January to November was 37,500. Even more impressively, ridership in September, October and November met or exceeded the 41,000 average weekday rides forecast for 2030. The early success of the METRO Green Line speaks to the value of urban development for growing transit ridership. In 2014 there were more than 300,000 jobs and more than 200,000 residents located within a half-mile of Green Line stations. Additionally, there has been over \$3 billion in development since construction on the LRT line began.

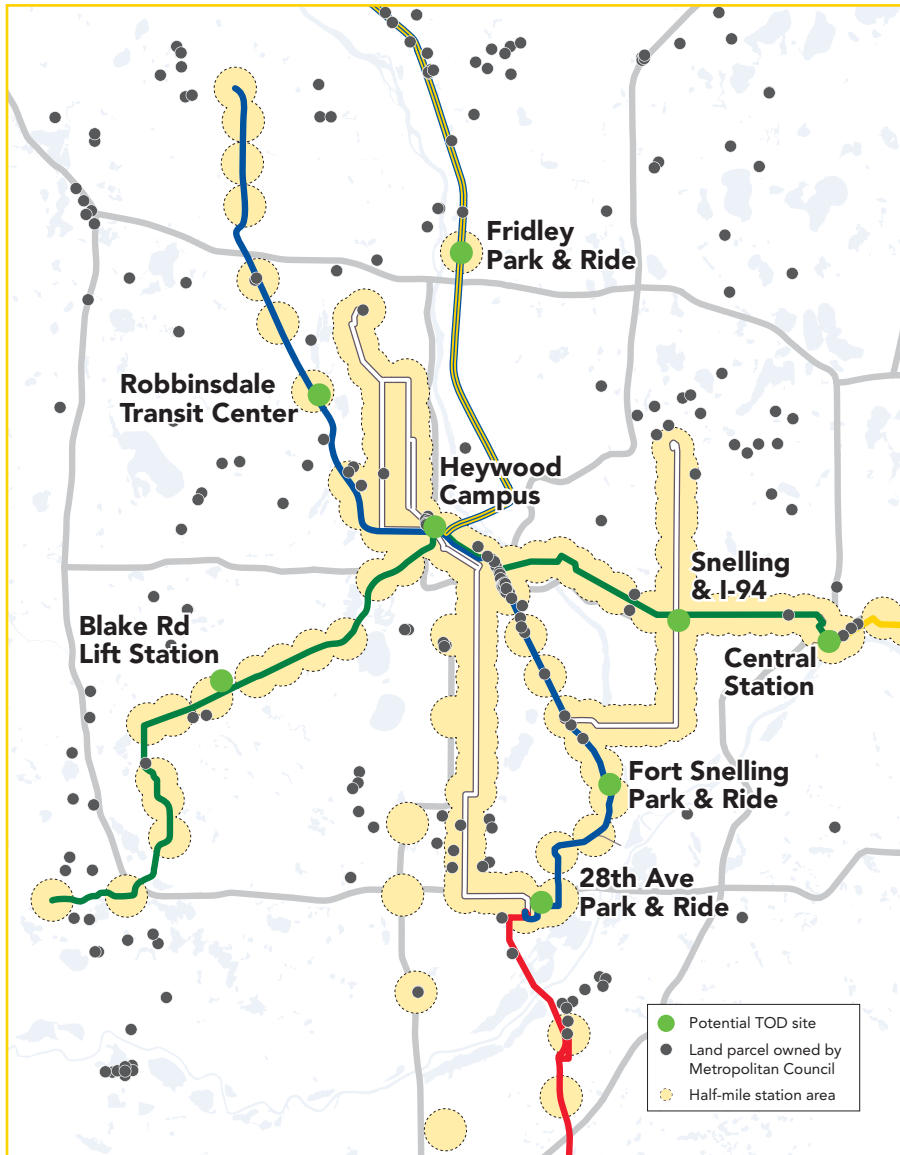


This report highlights key efforts from across the Metropolitan Council, including the TOD Office, in 2015. The report concludes with our 2016 work plan. The content is organized in terms of the five strategies identified in the Met Council's TOD Policy: Prioritize Resources, Focus on Implementation, Effective Communication, Collaborate with Partners and Coordinate Internally. These strategies are designed to advance the TOD Goals illustrated below.

- 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.

Prioritize Resources

In late 2014, the TOD Office initiated a project to identify all parcels of land owned by the Met Council. It identified a total of 411 parcels with 110 of these parcels along transitways to be built by 2020. The Office next evaluated these parcels in terms of their development suitability using a TOD Classification Tool and additional criteria and selected eight potential TOD sites for initial development efforts.



The Office partnered with the Humphrey School at the University of Minnesota to identify and evaluate all public parcels along transit corridors across the seven-county area. (The Office published the report of this Capstone project on its website.) In 2016, the Office will move the work done by the Humphrey students into a complete online database for partner jurisdictions and other stakeholders to use. As part of that project, the TOD Office is working with Met Council GIS staff to establish procedures for regularly updating and publishing public parcel data. MetroGIS staff are evaluating whether to expand the public property database beyond the station areas to eventually cover the entire region.

What is Transit Oriented Development (TOD)?

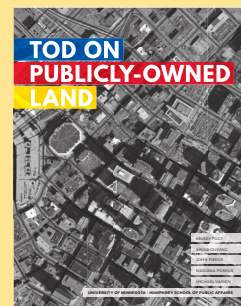
TOD is walkable urban development served by frequent transit with a mix of housing, retail and employment designed to allow people to live and work with transportation choices.

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.

2015 Met Council Grants

Grant	Number of Projects	Amount Awarded
LCA-TOD Development Grants	4	\$4.3M
LCA-TOD Pre-Development Grants	2	\$100,000
TBRA Grants	28	\$6.9M
LHIA Grants	8	\$2.2M



2015 report by a Capstone group at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs on the potential for TOD on publicly-owned land.

Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) TOD & Land Use and Met Council Community Development staff were part of the SWLRT Housing Working group that completed a Housing Strategy for the transitway. This effort, led by Hennepin County Community Works and Urban Land Institute, Minnesota Chapter (ULI-MN), will help cities along the alignment address their housing goals and demonstrate to the Federal Transit Administration their commitment to affordable housing.

The low-income fare pilot project encourages the families using Housing Choice Vouchers through Metro HRA to use transit by offering them a discounted ticket price. This aims to reduce financial barriers for low-income populations that most need access to transit services. Metro Transit is partnering with Metro HRA on a six-month pilot program. The program will provide Go-To Cards to everyone in eligible households, allowing ridership to be tracked. Results will inform future efforts to coordinate solutions to housing and transit needs across the region.

Focus on Implementation

A key charge of the TOD Office is to pursue private and public partnerships to accelerate transit-oriented development. The first definitive steps toward this goal were taken in 2015. Negotiations began in earnest on a proposed Major League Soccer stadium and surrounding TOD on the superblock including the Met Council's Snelling and University property (see map on page 2).

Due diligence on the Central Station block, the Fort Snelling Park & Ride, the Heywood Lower Lot and the Fridley Park & Ride were initiated.

At the SWLRT project office, the TOD and Land Use team has made significant progress towards having a Joint Development at Beltline Station included in

the project. A request for development proposals for that site will be issued in 2016. At another station, the Project Office is supporting the efforts of a city to work with a developer to integrate a proposed Green Line Extension parking facility with their planned mixed-use development. In the initial planning of the METRO Blue Line Extension, two Joint Development opportunities were identified by the TOD and Land Use team in Robbinsdale and Brooklyn Park. Project Office TOD staff are also exploring how best to support TOD efforts beyond the Joint Developments included in the formal project definitions.

Metro Transit, including Service Development, Street Operations, BRT Small Starts, Rail Operations, Public Involvement & Community Engagement and Engineering & Facilities established a new Site Plan review process. The goal of this effort is to coordinate plan reviews by municipalities and Metro Transit in order to better integrate transit operations and facilities with adjacent development. The site plan review team also reviews LCDA-TOD grant applications in an effort to ensure transit operations and facilities are an integral part of the project, and conform to Metro Transit's standards. Examples of recent coordination under the new process include:

- L+H Station Transit Plaza: The team collaborated with Hennepin County and helped with coordinating smooth transit transfers, planning walkable spaces and providing scalable shelters. The final project successfully integrates transit and ridership with its own spatial programming.
- 66 West: The Site Plan Review team worked with the developer and the City of Edina to preserve an existing bus layover and improve bus facilities, and increase safety of pedestrians. The project will provide studio apartments for homeless youth (innovative for a suburban neighborhood), and help link youth to jobs, education and other services.



Rendering of a joint development opportunity at the proposed Green Line Extension's Beltline Station.

Effective Communication

The TOD Office convened three forums to discuss TOD issues with our public and private partners. These forums attracted more than 220 attendees from various agencies (public, private and nonprofit).

- At the first forum, the TOD Office engaged regional stakeholders in a series of TOD related questions. Answers were displayed in real time, providing a basis for discussion of how best to advance TOD in the region.
- The Office held its second forum at the Midtown Exchange, an excellent case study of Equitable TOD. Panelists presented lessons learned in the development of the Midtown Exchange, followed by questions and a lively discussion of equitable TOD needs and resources. The forum concluded with a tour of the project, which allowed participants to see how this exemplary project operates today.
- The Office's last forum explored transit benefits, specifically the new A Line arterial BRT corridor, on employment and job generation. Speakers from Metro Transit and University of Minnesota shared evidence of these impacts through their quantitative research.

The American Planning Association, Minnesota Chapter (MN-APA) held its annual meeting in Bemidji and featured two sessions on TOD:

- Suburban TOD: Presentations by Fridley, Hopkins, and Bloomington staff on how to create transit-friendly places through city planning and development.
- TOD Guide: Presentation by Met Council Staff on the development of the updated TOD Guide, as useful resource for planners interested in tools for TOD.

Met Council members, staff and many regional partners participated in the 2015 Rail~volution conference in Dallas, Texas. After the conference, the group met to brainstorm lessons learned and to share their perception of the Twin Cities' regional transit and TOD efforts. This exercise suggested ways to enhance Metro Transit's performance in the near future.

The Southwest Project Office (SPO) organized and prepared information about the Beltline Joint Development opportunity for the ULI-MN Technical Assistance Panel (TAP). The TAP was comprised of a

diverse team of real estate professionals who provided recommendations for improving the Beltline Joint Development redevelopment opportunity.

Many public agencies offer funding resources that can be used to finance transit-oriented development. The TOD Office summarizes these resources and publishes them on its website annually. The intent is to offer developers and cities a quick reference to the TOD financing opportunities available in the region.

The Met Council's TOD Guide update was completed in 2015. The resource will be published online in early 2016.

Collaborate with Partners

Several efforts in 2015 involved close collaboration with regional partners:

- The TOD Office worked closely with Washington County to apply for a grant to fund coordinated station area planning for all stations in the Gold Line corridor. In September, the FTA announced that it had awarded this team \$1 million for this innovative approach to planning. The TOD Office will develop a report on this case study of coordinated planning for possible use in future transitways.
- Metro Transit is using a Met Council Equity grant for a study evaluating the accessibility of childcare facilities by transit. The Wilder Foundation is providing the expertise for the study, incorporating their previous work on childcare availability in the region.
- The SPO is working closely with the City of St. Louis Park and Hennepin County Community Works to make Joint Development at Beltline Station a reality.
- Metro Transit Commuter Programs coordinated efforts to enable the use of the Go-To Card with various car sharing companies and NiceRide docking stations. The goal is to increase the Go-To Card compatibility with all green transit systems.

The Met Council also provides resources, such as the Transit-Oriented Development Guide, to provide more specific guidance to local governments on how to best plan for and implement land use that supports transitway investments.

Coordinate Internally

The TOD Office holds monthly meetings for all Met Council staff involved with TOD. These meetings coordinate TOD efforts across the Met Council's different departments and divisions to support the Met Council's TOD Policy. Topics in 2015 included brownfield development, housing policy, TOD design issues, green infrastructure, storm-water management, metropolitan stream, river, and lake water quality, coordinating housing and transit support, updates on arterial BRT and other topics from across the Council.

Additionally, the TOD Office started the year by working with the Project Office (Transit System Department) to hold joint staff meetings and share resources and expertise. In February, the two offices merged into one office to better coordinate TOD efforts around new and existing rapid transit systems.

The Office of General Council collaborated with the TOD Office to research:

- The authority of Met Council to pursue TOD / joint development under existing legislation.
- The legislative authority for transit agencies to pursue TOD / joint development in states that have been active in TOD.

Metropolitan Transportation Services created a matrix to outline expectations for communities around station-area planning during different phases of developing a regional transitway. This product also clarifies the timing of those expectations for local governments and identifies how staff at the Met Council and Metro Transit will support local governments during each phase.

2016 Work Plan

Prioritize Resources

1. Publish online database of publicly-owned parcels served by transit
2. Develop program for investing TOD funding sources
3. Coordinate and align existing Met Council funding sources with TOD Policy.
4. Monitor federal grant opportunities.
5. Ongoing compilation of existing TOD funding resources.
6. Compile 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. Finalize development agreements regarding the Met Council's property near the intersection of Snelling Avenue and University Avenue
2. Develop a redevelopment plan for the Met Council's property at the METRO Green Line Central Station
3. Continue due diligence on selected Met Council properties
4. Issue solicitation for development for one or two Met Council owned properties

5. Work with Project Offices on future development opportunities
6. 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. Continue developing relationships with major regional TOD stakeholders
3. Publish report on the development value of Metro Transit's rapid transit system (LRT & BRT)
4. Participate in external forums as opportunities arise
5. Participate in Rail~Volution 2016
6. 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
7. Ensure that TOD communication projects always include mention of importance of implementing effective storm-water management and green infrastructure on TOD sites

Collaborate with Partners

1. Complete study of child care accessibility by transit
2. Complete district parking study for University Avenue Innovation District as a case study for the region
3. Convene forums on TOD topics
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

