



Metropolitan Council Annual TOD Report

2018



Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is walkable, moderate to high density development served by frequent transit with a mix of housing, retail and employment choices designed to allow people to live and work without need of a personal automobile.

As the regional planning agency and transit provider, the Metropolitan Council has engaged in TOD-supportive activities for decades. With the adoption of a TOD Policy in 2014, the Council formally recognized this role. To coordinate Council efforts to implement the TOD Policy, the Council established a TOD Office as a part of its Metro Transit division in 2014.

The TOD Policy calls on the Council to advance four TOD goals, highlighted below. To forward these goals, the Council pursues five implementation strategies: prioritize resources, focus on implementation, effective communication, collaborate with partners, and coordinate internally. These implementation strategies recognize that the Council has a role as a convener, an advocate, and an implementer of TOD.

This report highlights the key TOD efforts undertaken by the Council in 2018. These efforts included pursuing Joint Development on Council-owned land, encouraging TOD through strategic funding sources, conducting studies of topics related to TOD, hosting and attending events, and collaborating with partners.

How TOD advances the Council's Mission

TOD forwards each of the five outcomes contained in Thrive MSP 2040.

- **Stewardship:** TOD maximizes the effectiveness of transit investments with higher expectations of land use. It also can generate long-term revenue for transit operations and tax base for local communities.
- **Prosperity:** TOD encourages efficient and economic growth through redevelopment and infill development.
- **Equity:** TOD locates jobs and housing at various levels of affordability in transit station areas, thereby facilitating access to regional opportunity for all.
- **Livability:** TOD supports the development of walkable places.
- **Sustainability:** TOD promotes compact, pedestrian-friendly development patterns that provide alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel.

Metropolitan Council TOD Goals

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 opportunity for all.

4

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

Joint Development Projects

The TOD Policy calls on the Council to prioritize TOD in the development of Council-owned land and facilities. To achieve this goal, the Council investigates and pursues Joint Development, “public transportation projects that integrally relate to, and often co-locate with commercial, residential, mixed-use, or other non-transit development.”¹ Joint Development facilitates TOD on Council-owned land creating ridership, maximizing the development impact of transit, and generating a source of long-term revenue for transit.

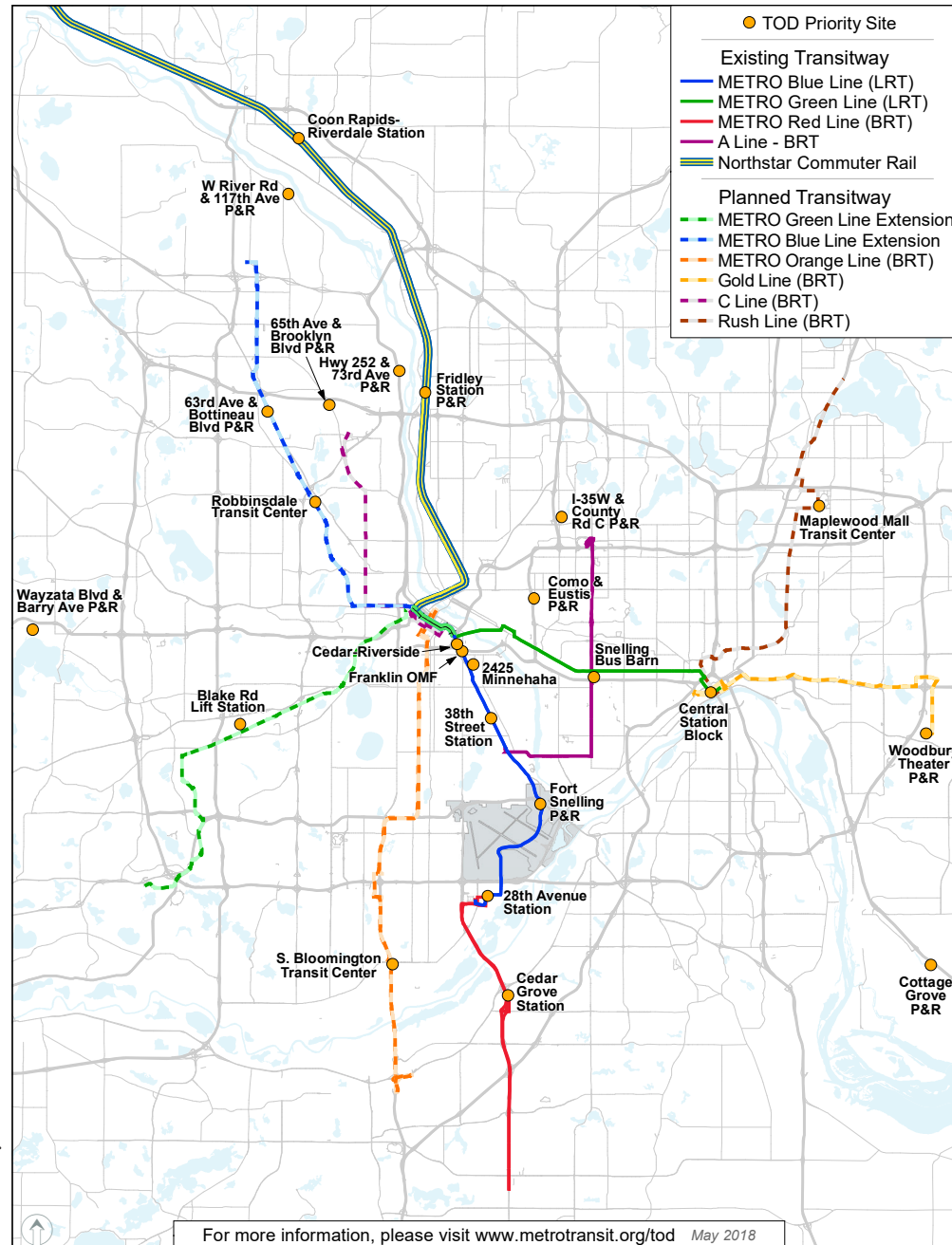


Raymond Avenue Station on the METRO Green Line

Metro Transit’s TOD Office leads the Council’s efforts to implement Joint Development projects. The TOD Office focuses on a list of Council-approved “TOD priority sites” located near existing or planned transit service. Map 1 shows the current TOD priority sites.

The first step to implement a Joint Development project is performing due diligence in collaboration with local communities and stakeholders. If a Joint Development project is likely to be in the Council’s best interest and is supported by the local community, a competitive solicitation may be released. A competitive solicitation for Joint Development seeks to identify a development partner who shares the Council’s vision for the site and who has the capacity to implement the Joint Development.

The following pages contain an update on several Joint Development projects at various stages in the process.



Map 1: The Council’s TOD Priority Sites

¹ Federal Transit Administration Circular 7050.1A

Allianz Field – Minnesota United Stadium

Construction continued throughout 2018 on the Council’s first Joint Development project. Allianz Field, the future home of the Minnesota United Major League Soccer team, is currently being built near the intersection of Snelling and University in Saint Paul on land owned by Metro Transit and formerly used as a bus barn.



Allianz Field

The nearly 20,000-seat stadium is expected to open in Spring 2019 and will host all Minnesota United home games as well as concerts and other events. The stadium is served by the adjacent METRO Green Line and A Line BRT and is expected to generate a large number of transit riders. Long-term plans for the area envision the remaking of a former auto-oriented superblock into a mixed-use, transit oriented village surrounding the stadium.

Central Station Block

The 1.66-acre Central Station Block site in downtown Saint Paul is intersected by one of the busiest stations on the METRO Green Line. The currently vacant site is owned by both the Council and the City of Saint Paul HRA and is within a short walking distance of many of the unique features of downtown Saint Paul including Lowertown, Rice Park, Mears Park and the Mississippi Riverfront, making the location prime for infill development. Following a thorough due diligence effort and coordination with the City of Saint Paul, a Request for Proposals to redevelop the Central Station Block is expected to be released in early 2019.

2425 Minnehaha Avenue

Metro Transit’s police force will be relocating from their existing facility along Minnehaha Avenue in Minneapolis to a new building adjacent to Metro Transit’s Heywood Office Building in mid-2019. As the site will no longer be needed by Metro Transit, the building will be offered for Joint Development. The site is within a half-mile of the METRO Blue Line’s Franklin Avenue station and is served by local bus route 9.

Fridley Station

Fridley Station on the Northstar Commuter Rail has Metro Transit park & rides on both sides of the tracks creating two TOD opportunities. In 2018, Metro Transit determined it could reduce the size of the park & ride on the east side of the tracks allowing the property owner to sell the land to Sherman Associates, a notable TOD developer. Metro Transit is also exploring reducing the size of the park & ride on the west side of the station to allow for a Joint Development. The TOD Office is working closely with the City of Fridley to determine the best time to release an RFP for TOD on the west side of the station.

Wayzata Park & Ride

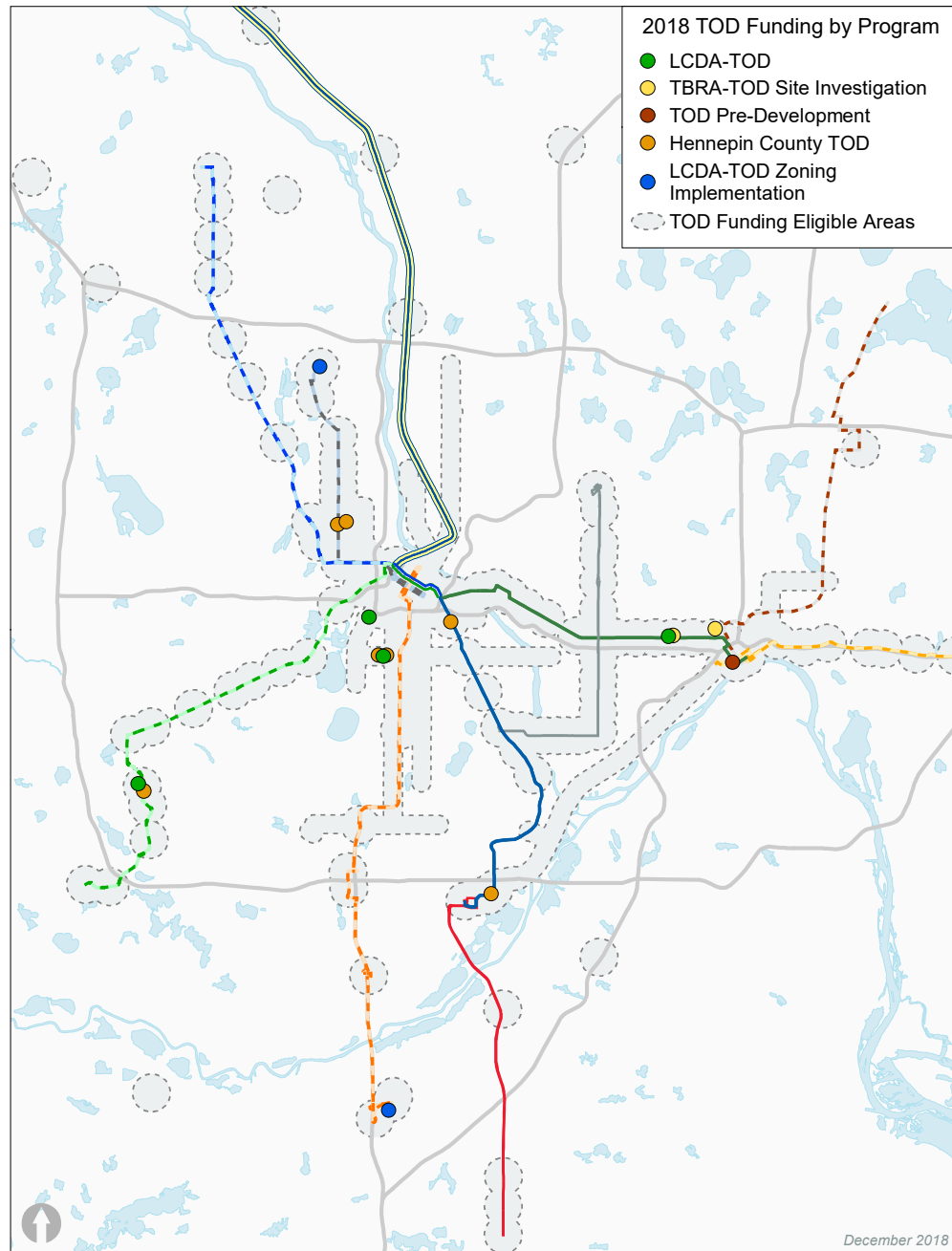
Metro Transit owns a 102-space surface park & ride in the City of Wayzata. Located near Wayzata’s downtown and the shores of Lake Minnetonka, this park & ride is in an amenity rich area that makes it appealing for residential and commercial development. Metro Transit staff are currently exploring opportunities for TOD on the park & ride site that will maintain existing bus service.

28th Avenue Station

28th Avenue Station on the METRO Blue Line contains a 1,585-space park & ride divided between a 5-story parking ramp and two surface lots. The site is located in the City of Bloomington’s redeveloping South Loop district near MSP International Airport and the Mall of America. The long-term vision for the area calls for a mix of uses and increased density centered around the district’s four light rail stations. Metro Transit staff are currently assessing the feasibility of TOD on both the surface parking lots as well as integrated with the parking ramp.

Como and Eustis Park & Ride

Como and Eustis is a 38-space park and ride with local bus service to the University of Minnesota, downtown Minneapolis, downtown Saint Paul and north Minneapolis. The TOD Office has been working with the City of Saint Paul and The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to explore a TOD on this 0.9-acre site located in the desirable St. Anthony Park neighborhood. MnDOT has an easement over a portion of the property and is considering vacating the easement to make a Joint Development feasible at this location.



Map 2: TOD Grants - 2018

TOD Funding

Livable Communities Grants

The 1995 Livable Communities Act (LCA) funds community investment that revitalizes economies, creates affordable housing, and supports TOD. LCA's voluntary, incentive-based approach leverages partnerships and shared resources to help communities achieve their regional and local goals. In 2018, \$27 million in LCA Grants were made available to communities in the region.

LCA-TOD grants promote projects that are transit oriented. These projects are moderate to high density development projects located within walking distance of a major transit stop. In 2018, almost \$5 million was awarded to TOD projects. These funds were distributed to TOD projects across the region, as seen in Map 2.

Hennepin County TOD Program

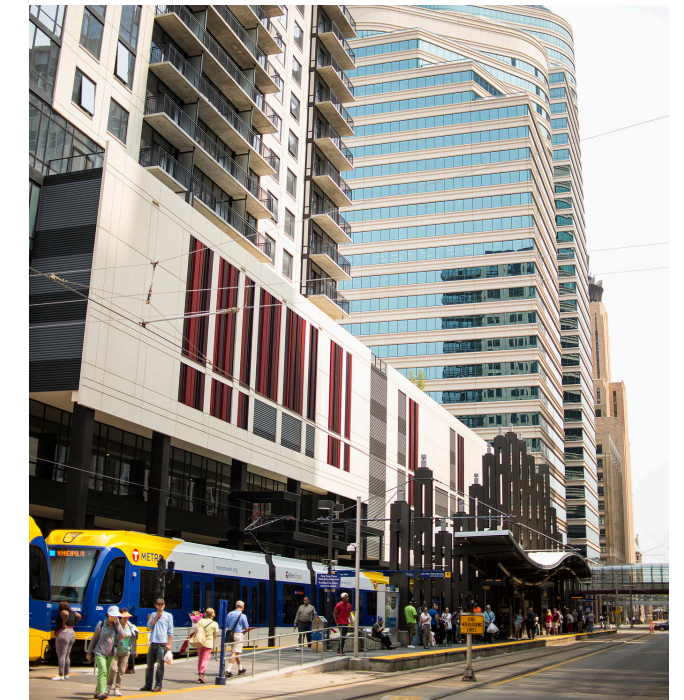
Through its TOD program, Hennepin County supports projects that enhance transit usage, increase density along key transit corridors and reinforce the community. Council staff supported the review of applications for Hennepin County's TOD program in 2018. A total of \$2.2 million in grants and financing were distributed to seven projects in 2018. The locations of these projects are shown in Map 2.

TOD Pilot Planning Grants

In 2015, Washington County received a \$1.0 million TOD Pilot Planning Grant from the Federal Transit Administration for station area planning on the METRO Gold Line. This innovative program is intended to allow counties and cities along planned transitways to pursue coordinated station area planning for the corridor as a whole. In 2016, the TOD Pilot Planning Grant program made a second award to the region with a \$1.2 million grant to Hennepin County for station area plan implementation along the METRO Blue Line Extension. Each grant was matched by local contributions provided by Washington County for Gold Line grant and by Hennepin County, cities along the alignment, Metro Transit, and several other partners for the Blue Line Extension grant.

Overseen by the Council's TOD Office, work under these two planning grants continued in 2018. Washington County worked to develop station area

plans for the METRO Gold Line, while Hennepin County has been working on implementation plans for the METRO Blue Line Extension station areas. In 2019, under the METRO Blue Line's TOD Pilot Planning Grant, the Council's TOD Office will lead efforts to determine innovative financing strategies for the implementation plans for these station areas. The planning efforts under these grants are expected to be completed in 2019.



Nicollet Avenue at 5th Street

Studies

BRTOD – State of the Practice in the United States

To support the ongoing expansion of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the Minneapolis/Saint Paul region, the TOD Office studied what factors influence how well BRT performs in stimulating TOD. The report concluded that government support is the most crucial factor leading to BRT's success at leveraging TOD. Government support can come in the form of transit-supportive comprehensive plans and zoning, financing, land assembly, environmental cleanup and marketing. Other factors that play a role are the strength of the real estate market and the presence of institutional anchors along a BRT corridor. With a high level of government support and a strong real estate market, arterial BRT projects that provide improved service in a corridor can attract significant levels of TOD.

Development Trends Along Transit

The effectiveness of transit investments depends on having jobs, housing, and services located nearby. In 2018, the TOD Office analyzed building permit data collected by the Council to determine how much development is occurring along several existing and planned transit corridors. Focusing on both Light Rail and Bus Rapid Transit, the report found that over 15,500 multifamily residential units, \$3.7 billion in commercial development, and \$850 million in public and institutional development have occurred along high-frequency transitways in the Twin Cities region in recent years. While the amount of development varies by transitway, these developments show that residents, employees, businesses, and institutions value the accessibility brought by transit investments.

Humphrey Capstone Project

During the spring semester of 2018, a group of students from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota completed a Capstone project on behalf of the TOD Office looking at methods to evaluate TOD at the station area and corridor scales. The students proposed a new TOD Scoring Tool and corresponding methodology that gives station areas a score based on various attributes determined to be important for good TOD characteristics. The methodology was applied to the METRO Green Line for demonstration. The project received the 2018 Outstanding Student Project award at the American Planning Association Minnesota Chapter's (MN APA) State Conference in September.



TOD Office Intern Andrew Degerstrom (left) and Frank Alarcón accept the 2018 Outstanding Student Project Award at the MN APA conference.

Initiatives

Property Inventory Pilot (PIP)

The Property Inventory Pilot sought to understand the resources necessary to build a robust inventory of property owned by Metro Transit. Focusing on 12 of the TOD priority sites, the PIP included records research, financial analysis and the development of a database capable of storing relevant property records in an accessible format. These data are being integrated into the new Transit Asset Management database, allowing for easy access to the information.

Overall, the PIP will improve Metro Transit records management and streamline the due diligence process for TOD and other projects on Council-owned land. The TOD Office is seeking funding to expand the PIP into a comprehensive Real Property Inventory during 2019.

TOD Guide Update

The Community Development division of the Council launched an online TOD Guide in 2016 as a resource for professional planners, citizen planners, and public officials involved in supporting TOD. The TOD Guide

details the roles and responsibilities of each level of government in planning TOD, provides information and best practices, and highlights case studies of successful examples of TOD planning. In 2018, Local Planning Assistance staff from the Council's Community Development division led an effort to update the TOD Guide with new content, case studies, and a Standard Operating Procedure for future updates.

Public Parcels Database

The Public Parcels Database was launched in 2016 to provide an interactive online tool to view publicly-owned land along the region's transitways. The database serves as a resource for both public and private sector stakeholders interested in planning and developing along transit. In 2018 the database was significantly expanded to include two new transit corridors, the METRO Gold Line and the Rush Line, as well as several park & rides. The database now identifies 264 acres of Council-owned land and over 17,000 total acres of publicly-owned land near transit.

Events and Collaborations

Two of the implementation strategies contained in the TOD Policy call on the Council to communicate effectively and collaborate with partners. In accordance with these strategies, the Council regularly hosts and participates in events related to TOD and actively seeks out collaborations with local, regional, state, and national partners.

Metro Transit TOD Site Evaluation – Technical Assistance Panel

The Metro Transit TOD Office partnered with the Urban Land Institute Minnesota (ULI MN) to host a Technical Assistance Panel in June of 2018. ULI MN assembled a panel of real estate professionals who provided a private sector perspective on the potential of several of the Council's TOD priority sites. In addition to gaining perspective from the private sector, the event also served as a chance to advertise the TOD priority sites to the development community. Approximately 50 developers and other real estate professionals attended the event.



A panel of real estate professionals discuss opportunities for TOD on Metro Transit land at the June 2018 TOD Forum.

Bus Rapid Transit Tour

The Local Planning Assistance team of the Council's Community Development division organized a tour of TOD projects and a workshop for stakeholders on the Gold Line Project. The tour included meeting with Brooklyn Park and Minnetonka Planning and Economic Development staff to share what they learned during planning for TOD on the LRT extension projects. The workshop featured a presentation by a knowledgeable BRT and TOD practitioner.

RailVolution

Lucy Galbraith, Director of TOD at Metro Transit, serves on the National Steering Committee for RailVolution, a national conference on building livable communities with transit. The National Steering Committee worked to organize the 2018 RailVolution Conference, which took place in Pittsburgh. Staff from multiple divisions of the Council attended the conference to network with peers, learn industry best practices, and participate in tours. In addition, Council staff presented on topics such as value capture through joint development and the data tools Metro Transit is employing to improve transit service and reliability.

Other Conferences

Council staff participated in several other conferences in 2018, including serving on a panel on Transit Oriented Communities at the 2018 American Public Transportation Association (APTA) National Conference in Nashville and serving on a panel for a National Mobility Management Association half-day workshop on transit and the challenge of managing street-space in the era of new mobility options.

Collaborations

Council staff regularly collaborate with other thought leaders from around the region and across the nation. One of the most significant new collaborations in 2018 was Metro Transit joining the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). By joining NACTO, Metro Transit will gain access to valuable technical assistance, peer-to-peer learning opportunities and forums on best practices.

In 2018, Council staff also collaborated with the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP), the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association and hosted delegations from Atlanta and Iceland who were interested in learning from the region.

Other venues for cross-Council and regional collaboration on TOD are the TOD Internal Working Group, the Regional TOD Peer Exchange, and starting in 2018, quarterly meetings between MnDOT and the TOD Office. The TOD Internal Working Group brings together staff from across different divisions of the Council to discuss work related to TOD. The Regional TOD Peer Exchange brings together a broad group of TOD stakeholders from around the region. These groups will continue to meet throughout 2019.

Contact Us

The Metro Transit TOD Office coordinates the Metropolitan Council's TOD activities and serves as a resource for developers and urban planning professionals interested in pursuing or advancing TOD in the Twin Cities.

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