

WHERE IS "HIGH FREQUENCY TRANSIT SERVICE"?

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT A PRIMER

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is **compact** development located **near frequent transit service** that is designed to make neighborhoods more **accessible by transit, walking and bicycling**.

Compact

Compact development makes efficient use of scarce land. This often means buildings with multiple stories, smaller front, side and rear yards, smaller unit sizes, and less space dedicated to surface parking lots and driveways. Compact development also permits a mix of uses - such as live-work units in which a retail business occupies a ground floor, with residential units above. It can either be new construction or renovation or reuse of existing buildings.

Near Frequent Transit Service

Frequent service makes transit a competitive option for commuters who either do not own a car or prefer not to rely on one for everyday commutes. Ideally, TOD is located immediately adjacent to high frequency transit stops, but can occur anywhere within easy walking distance (less than one quarter mile, or five minutes).

Accessible by Transit, Walking and Bicycling

TOD makes it easier to get around without a personal motor vehicle. In addition to being close to quality transit, buildings are designed to prioritize pedestrians. Main entrances are oriented toward the sidewalk, while driveways and parking lots are located at the side or rear. The first floor features transparent windows instead of blank walls. Bike parking is available, and ADA-compliant sidewalks are wide, shaded during the day, and well-lit at night.

Above right: A multifamily apartment building in MidCity, located next to the Canal Streetcar - City Park/Museum, illustrates compact TOD.

Right: The renovation of the Pythian Building, a commercial and residential building on the Loyola-UPT Streetcar.



High frequency transit service reliably and regularly arrives during peak travel hours, so that riders can depend on it for important trips, such as commutes to work. The map above highlights New Orleans Regional Transit Authority bus and streetcar routes that arrive every twenty minutes or less, upriver from the Industrial Canal. From these areas, New Orleans' major job centers may be reached within a 30-minute door-to-door commute via transit.

Above: Several RTA bus and streetcar routes provide frequent service to New Orleans neighborhoods during peak hours, with vehicles arriving every twenty minutes or less.



WHY TOD?

TOD can **increase the supply of housing units** in smart ways to relieve pressure on the housing market; **encourage use of alternative transportation** and take cars off the road; and **make jobs and services more accessible** to more workers and shoppers.

Increase Housing Supply and Affordability

HousingNOLA indicates that New Orleans needs 33,600 units of housing over the next 10 years, which could be new construction, units brought back into service through rehabilitation, or cost reductions for residents in their existing homes and apartments. Increasing unit production to meet this demand is therefore critical to prevent prices from continuing to spiral upward. TOD allows more units to be built in neighborhoods by permitting greater density through compact development, with less traffic impact per household than car-oriented development.

Below: *The Muses, a new construction apartment community, locates 263 mixed-income apartments within easy commuting distance of New Orleans' major job centers. (Credit: Gulf Coast Housing Partnership)*

Encourage Use of Alternative Transportation

By locating next to high-frequency transit, orienting buildings toward the sidewalk, rather than parking areas, and furnishing amenities such as pedestrian lighting, street trees, wide sidewalks, bike racks and transit shelters, TOD makes it easier for residents and visitors to walk, bike or ride transit instead of driving a car. This allows residential growth with less impact on parking, air quality and traffic congestion, and promotes physical activity and healthier living.

Make Jobs and Services More Accessible

National research shows that adding TOD in areas near jobs and amenities can significantly assist families in decreasing transportation costs.¹ Increasing the supply of housing near high-frequency transit and within easy access to job centers will also assist low- and moderate-income households by decreasing their combined housing and transportation costs.

WHAT DOES TOD LOOK LIKE?

Transit-oriented development comes in many shapes and sizes. At a minimum, it is compact: with multiple stories and smaller yards and parking areas. TOD's architectural styles and building scales can vary greatly.

TOD tends to be denser than automobile-oriented development. However, by many standards, New Orleans' historic neighborhoods are consistent with the principles of TOD. Even our predominantly one- and two-family historic neighborhoods are significantly dense, measured by dwelling units per acre. Because automobiles were not prevalent at the time of these neighborhoods' development, they have little off-street parking. Buildings front directly onto the sidewalk, encouraging pedestrian activity in the neighborhood.

Even high levels of density can be built in a way that preserves the historic feel of our neighborhoods and enhances quality of life. Residential structures with up to four units can blend well into neighborhoods that are predominantly one and two-family buildings on local streets.

Below: *The Aloysius Apartments is a mixed-use TOD located at the intersection of several transit routes at the edge of the French Quarter. Its 49 residential units feature architectural details sensitive to the neighborhood's historic character. (Credit: HRI Properties)*



Above: *TOD does not need to be large scale, or new construction. This historic four-unit building is located on a neighborhood street in MidCity, one block from the Canal Streetcar.*



¹The Leadership Conference Education Fund. "Getting Home: Transportation Equity and Access to Affordable Housing." July 2011.

