

# TRANSITIONING TO

# TOD

January 2021

## WHAT IS TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT?

Have you ever been to a city where you can easily travel around without an automobile? Where transitioning from walking, or perhaps biking, to transit is seamless, efficient, and enjoyable? Where a connected transportation network allows you to get from your hotel to restaurants, retail, and recreational amenities easily? Thoughtful city design helps to create this environment, and at the heart of this design is often the incorporation of **Transit-Oriented Development**.

**Transit-Oriented Development, or TOD**, is defined by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development as a type of development that typically includes a mix of land use types, such as residential, commercial, and office uses, with pedestrian amenities and within a half-mile of public transportation. Around the world, TOD has developed into a planning, community development, design, and funding method that allows for the creation of development patterns that support livable, walkable environments.

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# BENEFITS OF TOD



**EXPANDS MOBILITY OPTIONS, INCREASES WALKABILITY AND CAN REDUCE RELIANCE ON AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL**



**PROMOTES A HEALTHIER, BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE BY CREATING MORE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES**



**PROMOTES RIDERSHIP, REVENUE, AND POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED PROPERTY VALUES NEAR TRANSIT SERVICE**



**CAN REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**



**IMPROVES ACCESSIBILITY TO JOBS AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR LOWER INCOME POPULATIONS**



**PROMOTES AN INCREASE IN SAFETY AND REDUCTION IN OVERALL TRAFFIC CONGESTION**



**CREATES A REDUCTION IN SPRAWL THROUGH THE PROMOTION OF MORE COMPACT DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

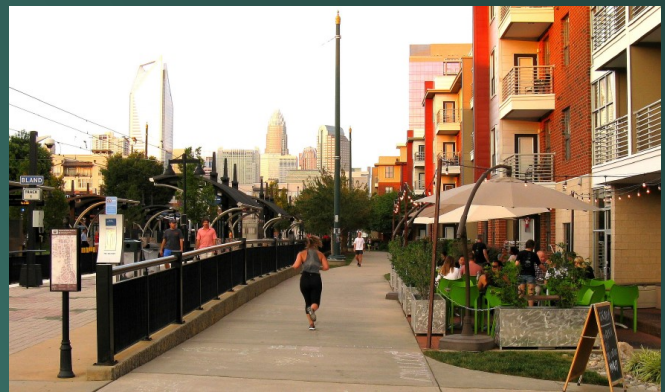


# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The concept of Transit-Oriented Development first originated in 1982 by an architect named Peter Calthorpe. It was used to link transportation and land use efforts, and the trend started to grow in popularity in the mid-2000s. At its center, TOD serves as a method for increasing connectivity between communities and within communities. It is driven by thoughtful and purposeful design that involves locating development and planning communities around accessible and reliable transit options. However, incorporation of TOD within a community does not come without challenges; but many challenges have associated opportunities that planners can consider when contemplating the incorporation of TOD within their communities.

## LOCATING TOD

When identifying areas for the incorporation of TOD projects, connectivity is a key component for successful TOD. It is often difficult to create the environment needed for TOD in areas where it is needed most, such as in suburban areas outside of major cities. There are often barriers that are difficult to circumnavigate, such as cul-de-sac developments, sprawling, master-planned communities, and private, gated developments with limited pedestrian access and auto-oriented patterns allowed by existing land development codes. To overcome these challenges, it is important for communities to implement TOD supportive land use policies that allow for the required increased densities and intensities needed to support those projects. Land use strategies that support TOD are effective in reducing the overall cost of travel and can address transportation needs in areas that are growing and where demand for service is increasing.



**TOD at the LYNX Blue Line Bland Street Station in Charlotte, NC**

*Source: The City of Charlotte Transit Oriented Development Districts Report*



**RTA Healthline East Sixth Street Station in Cleveland, OH**

*Source: Google Street View*



## CREATING A MARKET FOR TOD

One of the challenges of implementing TOD is the market conditions in an area. Market conditions have an impact on when development projects can occur and can be a challenge when they are not supportive of mixed-use development at the scale and intensity desired for TOD projects. Additionally, financing TOD projects often requires creative financial structuring to fund the mix of uses. To combat those challenges, creative strategies implemented by local, state, and often federal governments to make TOD possible are necessary. It often involves public-private partnerships as well. Some creative funding strategies include the incorporation of parking districts, site assembly to be sold at a reduced rate to developers, and the incorporation of catalyst projects that could address issues such as affordable housing, cost of infrastructure, and other associated costs of development.



**TOD at the Downtown  
Plano Station in Plano,  
TX**  
*Source: Google Street View*



**TOD at the East Liberty  
Station in Pittsburgh,  
PA**  
*Source: Google Street View*

## FUNDING TRANSIT SERVICE AND INCREASING RIDERSHIP

Incorporation of TOD efforts must also be coordinated with transit service and may require existing service expansion, which can be difficult, as transit agencies are often challenged financially with existing service operations. However, the creation of TOD projects allows for increased demand for service, which can increase ridership and revenue for transit agencies and service expansion. Additionally, there has been increasing study into the relationship between TOD and value capture, which has demonstrated that there is an opportunity to capture increased property values which will increase when premium transit service is incorporated along a corridor. A portion of that increased value can then be used for funding transit infrastructure or similar improvements in TOD station areas and corridors. Different value capture methods include impact fees, special assessments and tax increment financing. These can provide needed funding that is less onerous on the developer or owner/renter of the property. For more information, see [Transit Oriented Development and Value Capture: A Study of Best Practices for the Tampa Bay Region](#).

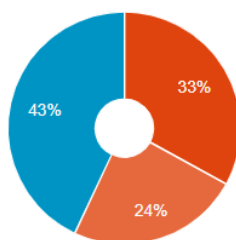
## CONSIDERING EQUITY

A major challenge that TOD must address is the effect on equity. When TOD is incorporated into a neighborhood, it can often have a direct impact on property values surrounding the transit investment. Because the neighborhood now has enhanced transit access, it can cause property values to increase, and this can cause those currently living in the neighborhood to be priced out of the area. These are often lower income families that rely most on transit service and are now forced to relocate to areas that are perhaps not as well served by transit, requiring them to dedicate a larger portion of their income to transportation costs. To address this issue, it is important that communities consider the incorporation of mixed-income housing strategies and policies within these neighborhoods. This technique can allow the market rate housing rents to offset the lower rents of workforce housing units. That, combined with incentives for developers to provide workforce housing in areas with increased transit access, can help to reduce the higher cost of living for disadvantaged populations.

### Average Housing + Transportation Costs % Income

Factoring in both housing *and* transportation costs provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and true affordability.

- Housing
- Transportation
- Remaining Income



**The Center for Neighborhood Technology has developed a Housing + Transportation (H+T) Affordability Index that provides information on housing and transportation costs in any given area, and can be used in an equity analysis to determine affordability. The data seen here is of Pinellas County.**

*Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology*

# TOD ACROSS AMERICA

All over the world, TOD is becoming a growing trend. In the United States, innovative TOD projects have taken root and serve as examples of smart planning and innovative design. From Austin to Charlotte to Cleveland, there are countless projects that can provide inspiration to create TOD projects within the Tampa Bay region. There are also examples of innovative TOD projects within Florida, which can be explored further for context.



*TOD at the Crestview Commuter Rail Station in Austin, TX. Source: Capital Metro*

In Austin, Texas, the City adopted a TOD ordinance in 2004, and the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Capital Metro), the transit agency serving the greater Austin area, has since launched a commuter rail system, Capital MetroRail, in 2010, and its Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, MetroRapid, in 2014. The system operates from south Austin through downtown and north to the suburbs. The TOD Ordinance was drafted with extensive public input and includes a two-phase process for establishing a TOD District. The TOD Ordinance created districts around station area stops along the commuter rail system and the Park & Ride locations for the BRT system. The first phase involves identifying the TOD district locations, creating a TOD profile for each district, and establishing category zones, which help to create transitions between the development around the TOD station and the surrounding neighborhoods. It also involves creating interim regulations that apply to land use, parking, and setbacks as an overlay to the properties within the boundary of the TOD district. The second phase includes the development of **Station Area Plans** and **Regulating Plans**. The Station Area Plans include tools and incentives to encourage TOD. The Regulating Plans further refine and codify the implementation tools that are adopted in the Station Area Plans.



In addition to the innovative TOD supportive policies the City has adopted, Capital Metro has also developed a **Transit Design Guide**, a **TOD Guide**, and a **TOD Priority Tool** to encourage the incorporation of TOD along the City's high-capacity transit corridors. The Priority Tool analyzes the Capital Metro system to identify the current status of TOD projects by examining each station area and identifies action items for improvement. It also creates a closer relationship between the decisions that affect land use, and elements that improve the efficiency of the transit system. An important feature of the TOD Tool is an analytic framework that helps identify how stations are similar, different, and what is needed to attract TOD. It includes two different classification systems: a TOD Place Typology that identifies different kinds of station areas, and a TOD Readiness Score that identifies how a station area is progressing.

Capital Metro is also in the process of developing the **Project Connect Plan**, which is an innovative new transit plan that proposes three new light rail lines to connect northern and southern parts of the City, as well as South Congress, a trendy neighborhood within Austin, the Airport, and downtown Austin. It also features a new transit tunnel to connect the light rail stations underground, and expanded commuter rail service. The project's goal is to improve Austin's transportation system and connect the entire city. In November 2020, a property tax rate was approved that dedicates funding for the \$7.1 billion transit plan. Local revenues are extremely important in getting the T in TOD as all state and federal funding received is contingent on a local capital match of 25% and assume all operating costs over time.

## TOD PLACE TYPOLOGY

Capital Metro's **TOD Place Typology** includes five categories of TOD that reflect current and planned urban form in Capital Metro's service area.



Place Typologies in the TOD Priority Tool Developed by Capital Metro in Austin TX.

Source: TOD Priority Tool: A Resource for Identifying TOD Opportunities to Support High-Capacity Transit. Capital Metro



*TOD along the LYNX Blue Line in Charlotte, NC. Source: Google Street View*

The City of Charlotte, North Carolina, has also established TOD Districts for use along the City's LYNX light rail and BRT systems. Charlotte's light rail system launched in 2007 with the LYNX Blue Line, and has since expanded, and its BRT system, MetroRAPID, launched in 2020. The TOD Districts were established to enable and promote the creation of medium to high-intensity mixed-use urban neighborhoods that are close to transit stations where people can live, work, and play in areas that offer multimodal transportation options. The TOD Districts were adopted by the Charlotte City Council in April of 2019. Four districts were established: Transit Urban Center, Transit Neighborhood Center, Transit Community Center, and Transit Transition, and range from higher development intensity to lower development intensity. Additionally, the City established dimensional, design, public realm, parking, landscape and screening standards for the TOD Districts. These standards provide guidance for development within the TOD Districts, ensuring cohesiveness in design. The City has also launched an alignment rezoning effort to ensure that the parcels identified as recommended for transit-oriented development by a station area plan are zoned appropriately to encourage the moderate to high-density, mixed-use urban development best suited for transit-oriented development.

The City of Charlotte has rezoned over 1,500 parcels on the Blue Line light rail corridor. The parcels that were identified for rezoning were those designated with a future land use of transit-oriented development in the adopted station area plans. The parcels were rezoned to one of the four TOD District categories. The Charlotte Planning, Design, and Development Department created a set of criteria to identify the recommended TOD zoning district for each parcel. They have developed a **TOD Alignment Rezoning Guide** to help provide clarity as to the methodology used. Criteria for determining the TOD Zoning District for each parcel include: market conditions, identification of parcels that are

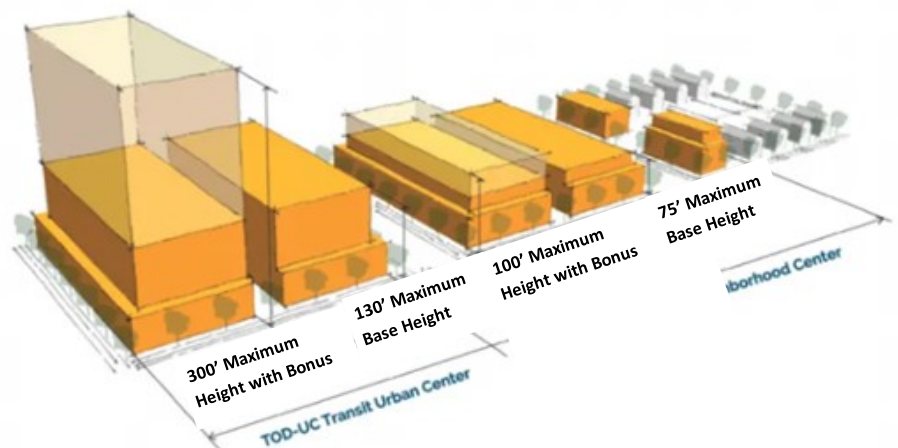


expected to develop at more moderate intensities, and area plan policies. The incorporation of TOD and resulting rezoning is part of the City's larger **Unified Development Ordinance** which is meant to guide development to create the types of community and places defined in the *Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan*. The first draft of Charlotte's Unified Development Ordinance will be available for review in the early part of 2021.

## TOD District Summaries – Community Center (CC) and Transit Transition (TR)



## TOD District Summaries – Urban Center (UC) and Neighborhood Center (NC)



*TOD District Summaries, Charlotte, NC. Source: TOD Alignment Rezoning Guide, City of Charlotte*



*TOD along the HealthLine in Cleveland, OH. Source: Google Street View*

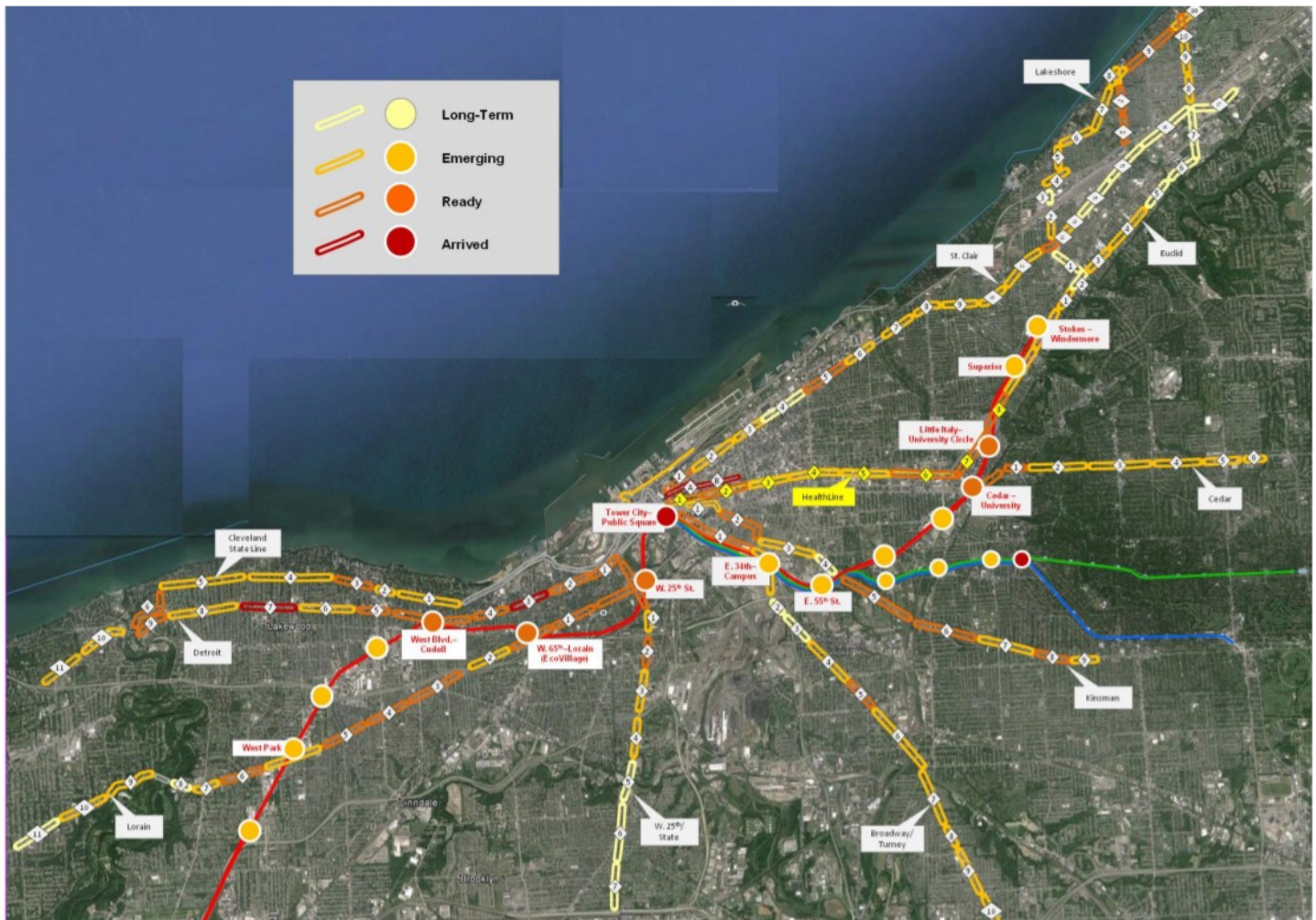
The City of Cleveland, Ohio, has established TOD around its Bus Rapid Transit System. The City launched its first BRT system in 2008. Known as the HealthLine, this system connects two of the largest regional employment centers and runs along the Euclid Corridor. This system, listed as a “Gamechanger” for BRT by the American Society of Civil Engineers, has generated more than \$9.5 billion in economic development and reinvestment along the Euclid corridor. It has resulted in \$5.8 billion in total TOD investment, while the regional real estate market strength has remained relatively poor. This effort was a result of the City partnering with strong community development corporations, agencies, and foundations, to promote development along the Euclid Corridor. Through this concerted effort, the City was able to leverage \$114.54 in new transit investments for every dollar spent on the BRT system.

In 2007, the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) created **Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines**, which includes TOD goals and initiatives that the agency hopes to achieve. It includes strategies specifically for the Euclid Corridor. Guidelines are related to density, mixed-uses, pedestrian orientation, access and connections. By establishing this framework, the City was able to successfully plan for the incorporation of TOD throughout the City. For the Euclid Corridor specifically, the report identifies strategies such as exclusive bus lanes and one lane in each direction for vehicular traffic, pedestrian enhancements such as new sidewalks, shelters, lighting and trees that encourage transit use, roadway redesign and reconstruction to widen travel lanes and other improvements, signal upgrades to allow for transit signal priority to transit vehicles, and signage.



The City's very successful HealthLine has gained a lot of attention around the region and nationwide. As a result, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) has created a **TOD Scorecard and Implementation Plan** to help the agency prioritize investments to help facilitate TOD around the region. The NOACA serves as an advocate for TOD by providing technical assistance support and identifying public investment opportunities to help advance TOD efforts. The TOD Scorecard and Implementation Plan consists of two phases: the first phase includes the development of TOD typologies and a scorecard, creation of a TOD program to be implemented at the regional level, and the development of an Age in Place strategy. The second phase involves the creation of an implementation plan after the identification of three pilot locations in phase one. With these efforts, the City can expand TOD and continue to capitalize on innovative projects created.

## TOD Readiness Map: Bus Network



NOACA TOD Readiness Map for the Bus Network, Cleveland OH.  
 Source: NOACA Regional TOD Scorecard and Implementation Plan, NOACA

# TOD IN FLORIDA

So, the question remains, how can we learn from the innovative TOD policies and programs implemented in Austin, Charlotte, and Cleveland? The answer lies in examining the similar characteristics that these cities possess in relation to Florida communities. In Austin, for example, the need for affordable housing and the gentrification issues that the City is facing all affect the transportation costs residents are paying. Charlotte is also seeing gentrification issues, not just for residents, but for small businesses as well. In 2019, both Austin and Charlotte were named two of America's 10 fastest-gentrifying neighborhoods by Realtor.com. This is a common issue in Florida, particularly in Pinellas County. Providing equitable TOD is a major solution to this issue. The key is to make the incorporation of TOD a priority, with local government support, as was done in Cleveland. Through innovative public private partnerships with strong leadership and governmental support, Cleveland's Euclid corridor has generated an unmatched return on investment. This not only increases equitable access to transit options by considering the use of incentives such as low-income housing tax credits to preserve the amount of affordable housing along a corridor, it also generates revenue and spurs economic development. Austin's and Charlotte's rail and BRT and Cleveland's BRT systems are also relatively new, and prove that with proper planning, TOD can be incorporated in existing environments that may not be traditionally built around public transit.



*Above Left and Above Right: TOD at the Longwood SunRail Station in Longwood, FL*



*Below: Rendering of TOD at the Gables Station in Coral Gables, FL  
Source: Nolan Reynolds International*







## Lake Mary, FL

Around the state of Florida, TOD is growing in popularity as a planning practice that focuses on pedestrian scale development to improve overall quality of life. There appears to be increasing interest in expanding transportation options within the state, as automobile travel is no longer sufficient to serve the needs of the growing population. The City of Lake Mary in Seminole County, Florida, for example, features several innovative TOD projects along the SunRail Corridor, which serves the greater Orlando area. The incorporation of TOD in Lake Mary started around 2009 as a result of the completion of the City's **TOD Vision Master Plan** and the City's Downtown Master Plan and the creation of the SunRail system. The City has already seen the completion of two TOD projects along the SunRail corridor, one is a 200-unit apartment complex, another is a commercial building with a coffee shop, and the City has another project that has been approved for development, which is a two-part Planned Unit Development, with one of the parcels consisting of largely residential development, and the other parcel containing vertical mixed-use.



*Pictured Left and Right: TOD at the Lake Mary Station in Lake Mary, FL., which currently consists of an apartment complex and commercial building, served by both SunRail and LYNX transit service.*



# TOD IN THE TAMPA BAY REGION

Within Pinellas County, the incorporation of TOD is encouraged through the most recent updates to the Countywide Plan to promote increased densities and intensities along priority transit corridors. It is also encouraged through research efforts conducted by various agencies and organizations like the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority and the University of South Florida, and through local adoption of transit supportive land development regulations by municipalities.

Emerging research regarding the implementation of TOD in the region has helped to identify key challenges and benefits. In 2018, the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority applied for a Federal Transit Administration TOD Pilot Program grant to research the implementation of TOD along the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Corridor that runs from Downtown St. Petersburg through South Pasadena to St. Pete Beach. A consultant has been selected and work has begun. Other research efforts include a study conducted by the Tampa Bay



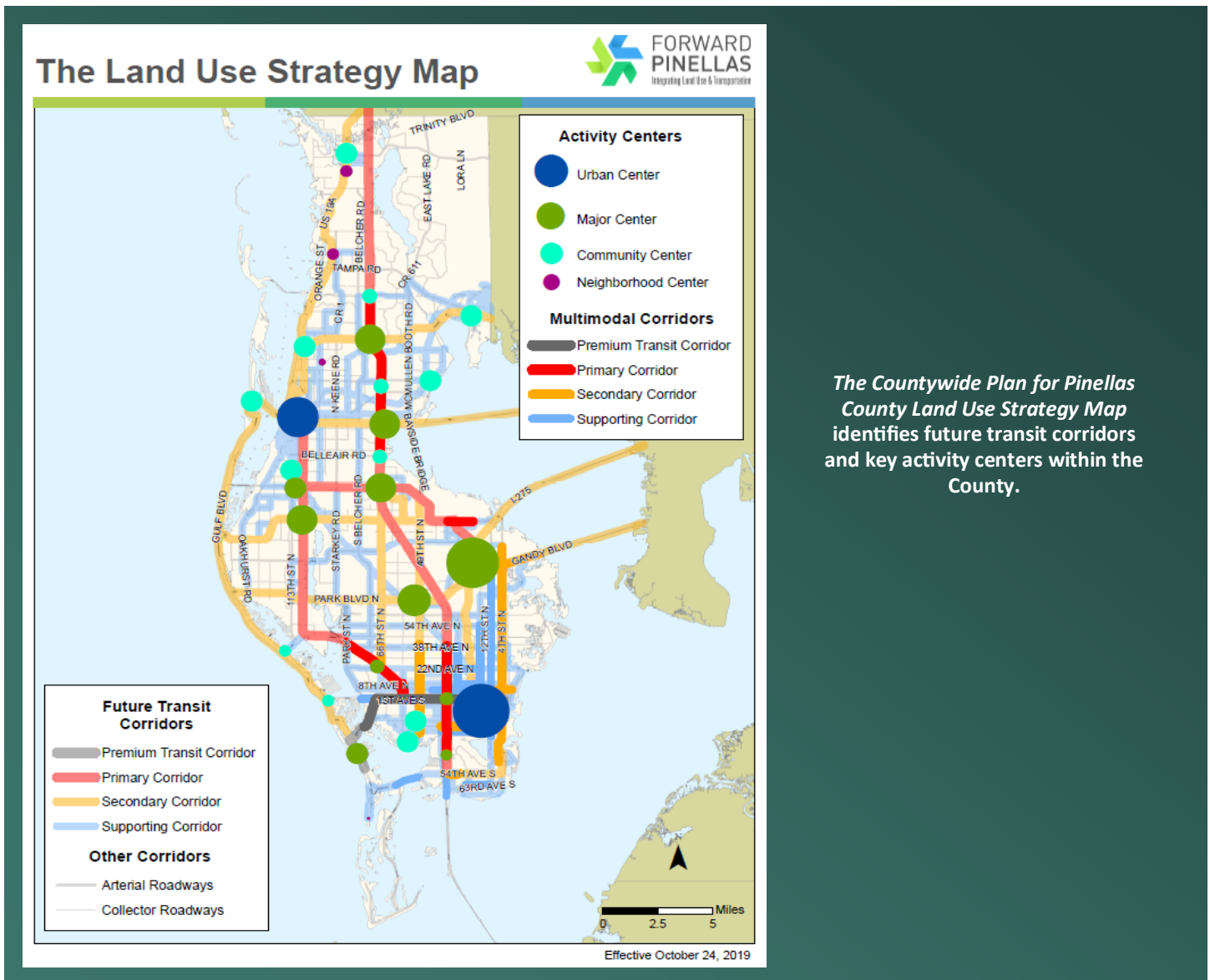
PSTA Central Avenue BRT Key Destinations Map, Pinellas County, FL  
Source: PSTA



Partnership and the University of South Florida examining the relationship between TOD and Value Capture for the proposed Regional Bus Rapid Transit System that is planned to operate between downtown St. Petersburg and Wesley Chapel on I-275. The study, entitled *Transit Oriented Development and Value Capture: A Study of Best Practices for the Tampa Bay Region* was referenced earlier in this report, and is a great resource for more information on this creative funding mechanism for TOD projects. TOD research efforts continue in Pinellas County, with the goal of increasing equitable access to premium transit options along priority corridors, through the expansion of workforce housing and accessibility to jobs and essential services.

## NEXT STEPS

Forward Pinellas worked with our partner agencies to identify the locations best suited for premium transit service in the County. This analysis looked at population, employment, workforce development, and affordable and workforce housing. Locations were scored based on these factors, and Forward Pinellas identified the best routes to connect these



areas via transit service. These priority corridors are designated as multimodal corridors on the Land Use Strategy Map featured in *The Countywide Plan for Pinellas County*, as well as the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan, known as *Advantage Pinellas*. Through *Advantage Pinellas*, Forward Pinellas has created the Investment Corridor Strategy, where the priority investment corridors identified in the Countywide Plan Land Use Strategy Map will be prioritized for transit investment to support TOD efforts. The Countywide Plan was recently amended to allow for increased densities and intensities along the investment corridors that would encourage transit supportive development. This approach to transportation investments and future growth will serve to protect our established neighborhoods and enhance the areas best suited for additional growth and redevelopment. The Countywide Plan has established land use goals and strategies that will build upon the existing development pattern, preserving the character of established neighborhoods while channeling higher-density and intensity growth into appropriate centers and corridors where multimodal transportation infrastructure exists or is planned. Through the integrated land use strategies identified in the Countywide Plan, and the prioritization of transit investments through *Advantage Pinellas*, we can create a truly integrated land use and transportation network in Pinellas County that is supportive of TOD efforts.

By establishing maximum densities and intensities in appropriate centers and corridors where multimodal infrastructure is already planned, these maximums allow for the increase in these densities and intensities at the local level, allowing for more flexibility for the municipalities to implement TOD within the County. We recommend the local municipalities consider the establishment of TOD Guidelines to shape the development of TOD within their respective jurisdictions and consider the adoption of transit supportive land development regulations within their respective comprehensive plans. Doing so would help to establish local government support for TOD that is needed for projects to develop successfully.

For more information on TOD, please visit <https://www.transit.dot.gov/TOD>.

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS?

- Review the Countywide Plan to determine the potential locations of Activity Centers and Multimodal Corridors within each respective City as identified in the Land Use Strategy Map
- Review Comprehensive Plans to identify potential limitations to TOD and amend policies accordingly
- Consider the incorporation of TOD supportive land development regulations within local Comprehensive Plans
- Identify potential development incentives that can be used locally to create equitable TOD projects along priority investment corridors



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