New Places, New Choices

TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT
IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA
New Places, New Choices

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“Now available for sale or rent in the San Francisco Bay Area: Attractive, affordable homes with modern amenities in vibrant neighborhoods. All units offer excellent public transit access for gridlock-free commutes to employment centers. Convenience is key, with shops, restaurants and retail services just steps away, and walking and biking opportunities galore. Autos are optional, and any savings in gasoline, parking, maintenance and insurance costs are yours to keep. Experience the benefits of a transit-oriented lifestyle at one of the exciting new developments taking shape in Redwood City, San Jose, Pleasant Hill, Jack London Square in Oakland, Richmond, San Francisco, Santa Rosa, Vallejo, Hayward, the San Pablo Avenue Corridor in the East Bay... and in many other locations throughout the region. Come see if this new style of living is the right choice for you.”
Introduction

If broad housing and lifestyle trends could be advertised in the way that individual real estate developments often are, the story on the preceding page is routine travel needs. Developers, transit agencies, community organizations, and cities and counties are collaborating on scores of projects throughout the region in recognition of this market demand. At the same time, regional agencies are taking concrete steps to support this more efficient use of the Bay Area’s land and public-transit infrastructure – both for housing and commercial purposes. It is a movement both well-established and growing, and it is poised to pick up even more momentum as our population expands.

If the preference for transit-oriented development patterns is not yet the dominant trend in the Bay Area – freeway-oriented, suburban-style development is still a very strong force that Transit-oriented development is not yet a mass phenomenon, it is not even abandoned “brownfield” sites – into neighborhoods poised to thrive near current or future transit stations. TOD architecture styles and densities can do it very by location, and the type of transit that serves the area. TOD can take different forms in each. What does TOD offer the Bay Area? The planning principles behind TOD are not new – they represent a return to the development patterns common to older cities throughout the world. Siting homes, jobs, shops and services within walking distance of mass transit hubs was the typical pattern of development in American cities prior to the rise of the automobile and the construction of the Interstate Highway System came a more suburban style of development, with land uses increasingly segregated over great distances according to their function (industrial, commercial or residential). This pattern typically involves compact development and a mixing of different land uses, along with amenities such as street trees and public spaces – much like the many neighborhoods of central cities such as San Francisco or Oakland that developed as streetcar suburbs and walking communities before the automobile.

To be successful, TODs must serve a significant portion of the Bay Area’s land and public-transit infrastructure – both for housing and commercial purposes. It is a movement both well-established and growing, and it is poised to pick up even more momentum as our population expands. In this publication, we feature 10 representative transit-oriented developments that were recently built or are in the process of taking shape. We selected these to convey a sense of the diversity and appeal of this style of community-building, innovation, and give an idea of why someone might choose to live or work in one of these locations. And, make no mistake – it’s the choosing that is most important. Notwithstanding all the improvements that TOD-style development offers many people an appealing lifestyle – both for housing and commercial purposes. This work in one of these locations. Another, make no mistake – it’s the choosing that is most important. Notwithstanding all the improvements that TOD-style development offers many people an appealing lifestyle – both for housing and commercial purposes. This feature to rail stations, ferry terminals or bus stops offering convenient access to frequent, high-quality transit services. This pattern typically involves compact development and a mixing of different land uses, along with amenities such as street trees and public spaces – much like the many neighborhoods of central cities such as San Francisco or Oakland that developed as streetcar suburbs and walking communities before the automobile.

What is Transit-Oriented Development? Transit-oriented development refers to land-usage planning of homes, jobs, shops and services in close proximity to public transit, ferry terminals or bus stops, offering convenient access to frequent, high-quality transit services. This pattern typically involves compact development and a mixing of different land uses, along with amenities such as street trees and public spaces – much like the many neighborhoods of central cities such as San Francisco or Oakland that developed as streetcar suburbs and walking communities before the automobile.
For Many, TOD Is Right Size, Right Price

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Demand for the TOD Lifestyle

Several surveys suggest that demand for smaller homes increases as commute times increase. A recent survey by the American Housing Survey (AHS) in 2004 found that a majority of Bay Area residents would rather live in a small home with a short commute than in a large home with a long commute.

Demand for TOD Benefits: Housing

For Many, TOD Is Right Size, Right Price

Enhancing Transit Access, Maximizing Transit Assets

Studies have shown that people living or working close to transit are more likely to use public transit — such as more frequent trains and buses — than those who live far from transit. A recent study by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) found that about 60% of people living or working near transit use transit for 42% of their work trips, while those who live more than a half-mile away from transit use transit for less than 1% of their work trips. The same study also found that people living or working close to transit use more transit for off-peak periods than people farther from transit. In short, TOD is one of the most important determinants of whether Bay Area transit expansions will be cost-effective and financially sustainable over time.

Demand for Housing and Jobs Near Transit

A recent study (the “if-then” study) found that about 60% of Bay Area commuters would travel 10 or more miles to get to work in a TOD setting. This estimate of potential demand for TOD living is deliberately conservative, recognizing that a major increase in consumer preference for this kind of housing the future demand could significantly higher — particularly if there is a long-term increase in the price of gasoline.

The same study found that the demand for jobs near transit corridors in the Bay Area is also expected to increase significantly. Based on the types of jobs that tend to locate close to transit and the growth in these employment sectors in the Bay Area, demand for employment near transit is expected to increase from the current 380,000 jobs to more than 600,000 jobs by the year 2025, constituting more than 40 percent of all new jobs expected to be created in the region over the next 25 years.
Living and Traveling Lighter on the Land

Improved transit and walking/biking opportunities available through TOD provide individuals with an opportunity to cut back on driving — the largest source of air pollution in the Bay Area — and act on their concerns for air and water quality, climate protection, use of fossil fuels, and the preservation of open space and agricultural land.

In 2002, the Bay Area's "Smart Growth Strategy" — a landmark, long-range regional visioning effort — found that promoting transit-oriented development and focusing housing, jobs and retail along transit corridors would preserve as much as 66,000 acres of open space by 2020, compared with current development trends. Such a strategy also would reduce average weekday driving by as much as 30 percent (710,000 vehicle miles in 2020), conserving 300,000 gallons of gasoline a day and reducing daily carbon dioxide emissions (the principal greenhouse gas) by 2.9 million pounds per day.

Already, Bay Area households located close to transit stations make fewer driving trips than do others in the region. Households within a half-mile of train stations and ferry stops log only 20 vehicle miles of travel per day, just 56 percent of the regional average. The fewer trips people make, the fewer the pollution-producing "cold starts" of their cars. These factors combine to result in lower fuel use and lower tailpipe emissions by those households living closer to transit — and they also add up to powerful evidence of the environmental benefits of TOD in the Bay Area.

TOD Benefits: Environment

Walking and Cycling Your Way to Better Health

Recent research suggests a link between physical activity and the built environment. In reviewing 50 studies on the subject, the Transportation Research Board concluded in 2005 that land-use patterns, transportation systems and design features are important contributors to levels of physical activity, especially walking and biking. Factors that influence more walking and biking are:

• population, employment and retail density
• diversity and mix of land uses
• close destinations
• grid street networks and sidewalks
• neighborhoods that are well served by transit and walkable

While personal characteristics and preferences play a strong role in how we get around, an appealing built environment can encourage walking and biking. Even people without a predisposition for walking will walk to more destinations in urban areas than will similarly minded people in more suburban areas. And people will walk more if there are useful destinations nearby. MTC analyses show that people who live close to transit walk for far more of their trips — especially short trips — than do people who live farther from transit. (See pie charts this page.) For walking to catch on, planners and developers need to pay attention to the safety of the environment — through safe sidewalks, crosswalks and streets. And overall walkability needs to be given to older people and younger people, who make up a significant proportion of the walkers in most neighborhoods. The appeal of bicycling also hinges on safety in the form of on-street bike routes, off-street bike paths and secure bicycle parking.

TOD Benefits: Healthier Living

People who live close to transit walk for more of their short trips.

Within 1/2 Mile of Rail or Ferry Stop

* A "short trip" is a trip of 1 mile or less.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Within 1/2 Mile of Rail or Ferry Stop</th>
<th>More Than 1/2 Mile from Rail or Ferry Stop</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
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<td>67%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Source: MTC

People who live close to transit walk for more of their short trips.
Measuring the Benefits of TOD

Using data gathered from over 15,000 households, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission conducted an in-depth analysis of the travel behaviors of Bay Area residents who live in close proximity to rail and ferry stops in the region. The results contained in Characteristics of Rail and Ferry Station Area Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area: Evidence from the 2000 Bay Area Travel Survey, published in September 2006, clearly indicate that those living near transit stops are three times as likely to use transit, walk, and bike much more than people living farther from these facilities. The study does recognize that “self-selection,” or the tendency for individuals with a high propensity for using transit to live in TODs, may play a factor in these travel behaviors. Still, the study concludes that “whether being near rail/ferry transit simply allows people who prefer to drive less that personal choice, or whether it creates a greater interest in such travel options, this research demonstrates that policies to support transit-oriented development hold promise as one important tool, among others, in addressing congestion, transit usage, non-motorized travel, and air pollution in the Bay Area.”

More land to be used for housing, parks, amenities “zero-vehicle households.” This means that fewer people farther from transit for work and non-work trips, adding a vibrant presence on local streets and supporting a healthy lifestyle. This compares with 4 percent of people living close to transit who drive only on work and non-work trips, adding a vibrant presence on local streets and supporting a healthy lifestyle. This compares with 4 percent of people living close to transit who drive only on work and non-work trips, adding a vibrant presence on local streets and supporting a healthy lifestyle. This compares with 4 percent of people living close to transit who drive only on work and non-work trips, adding a vibrant presence on local streets and supporting a healthy lifestyle. This compares with 4 percent of people living close to transit who drive only on work and non-work trips.
The Challenges for TOD

Fulfilling TOD’s Promise Will Take Careful Planning

While TOD offers promise, traveling and living options, and opportunities, it also presents its own set of challenges. Mitigating or eliminating these stumbling blocks will require thoughtful and coordinated planning and implementation. Issues include the following:

- TODs are more complicated for developers to achieve in terms of financing and marketing, since they do not fit the real estate model that has been most commonly used in the last few decades. They also require more complex and integrated planning, zoning, and early and frequent participation by the public and regional agencies.
- TOD can ameliorate gentrification. High demand for TOD living tends to drive up prices for market-rate units, sometimes resulting in prices significantly higher than the surrounding area. While the inclusion of some below-market-rate housing can help mitigate this effect, additional efforts to enhance the availability of existing units and new units may also be needed.
- Existing urban areas may not have sufficient infrastructure — including water, electricity, sewers, traffic impacts, the travel alternatives must be safe, convenient and affordable, and amenities such as schools and parks — to serve a larger population, families with school-age children, for whom school quality is often a decisive factor in choosing where to live. (As to physical infrastructure, it is usually more expensive to upgrade existing facilities than to invest in new infrastructure to support sprawl-type development.)
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Moving Forward

Supporting TOD at the Regional Level

While the lead role in planning and building TOD belongs to cities, developers and transit agencies, regional agencies also have a crucial role to play. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) have joined together to advance the concept of transformed development. All of these agencies agree that TOD is a piece of our future as a livable region.

TOD is at the heart of a regional growth strategy pursued in 2002 under the current development and early and frequent participation by the public and regional agencies.

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