

Introduction

Transit-oriented development is a deliberate planning strategy for reducing sprawl and automobile dependency by focusing growth around planned and existing transit stations, such as Metrorail, or similar systems that would achieve a similar rate of transit usage. Well-planned development around these stations, using good design principles 1) leverages major investments in public transit infrastructure, 2) provides an environmentally sound means to accommodate new growth in the County, 3) improves transportation choice in the area, and 4) creates opportunities for compact, vibrant neighborhood centers within walking distance of transit.

The following guidelines and design principles are intended to effect well-planned transit-oriented development and should be considered in planning and reviewing proposals for development around transit stations.

1. Transit Proximity. The highest density/land use intensity should be focused and concentrated close to the transit station, and where feasible, above the transit station. Subject to site-specific considerations, this transit-oriented development area may be generally defined as a $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile radius from the station, or within a 5- to 10- minute walk from the station. To protect existing neighborhoods in the general vicinity of transit but not planned for transit-oriented development, station-specific areas planned for transit-oriented development should be clearly delineated in Area Plans. Station-specific delineations should allow for the consideration of barriers such as roads, topography, or existing development that would reduce the frequency of pedestrian usage of transit and therefore reduce the expected walking distance to a station within which higher intensity development may be appropriate. Higher intensities within the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile radius may be appropriate if demonstrable opportunities exist to provide pedestrians a safe, comfortable and interesting walk to transit. Density and land use intensity should generally decrease as distance from the station increases. Please refer to the relevant Area Plan for specific boundaries delineated for Transit Station Areas (TSA) as well as for Transit Development Areas within TSAs, which may reflect a smaller or larger radius or area for high intensity development around a station based on site-specific conditions. Generally, Transit Development Areas, or the core areas planned for the highest intensity in the TDA, are located within a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the station.

2. Pedestrian and Bicycle Access and Connectivity (Walkability and Bicycle Access).

Techniques to encourage safe pedestrian and bicycle travel to and from the station area should be encouraged. This may include an integrated pedestrian and/or bicycle system plan, on-road bicycle lanes, walkways, trails and sidewalks, amenities such as street trees, benches, bus shelters, adequate lighting, covered walkways, pedestrian aids such as moving sidewalks and escalators, covered and secure bicycle storage facilities close to the station, shower and changing facilities, a pedestrian-friendly street network, and appropriate sidewalk width. Consideration should be given to the increased distance that bicyclists will travel to transit when compared to pedestrians.

3. Station-specific flexibility. Each of Fairfax County's planned and existing Metrorail stations has a unique character in terms of surrounding land uses and roadways, environmental and topographical characteristics, and location within the Metrorail system. These guidelines should provide for the flexibility to examine the unique characteristics of a particular station area in relation to transit-oriented development principles, such as the appropriate mix of land uses and the appropriate development intensity.

4. Mix of land uses. Transit-oriented development should include a mix of uses to ensure the efficient use of transit, to promote increased ridership during peak and off-peak travel periods in both directions, and to encourage different types of activity throughout the day. A balanced mix of residential, office, retail, service, governmental, institutional and recreational uses should be provided to encourage a critical mass of pedestrian activity as people live, work and play in these areas. The appropriate mix of uses should be determined by examining the unique characteristics of each station area.

5. Housing affordability. Residential uses included as part of transit-oriented developments should provide a range of housing opportunities for residents at different income levels, including housing for residents of low and moderate incomes. Affordable housing, workforce housing, and housing for seniors should be encouraged. Residential uses should also incorporate a mix of housing types and sizes where possible.

6. Design. Excellence in urban design, including site planning and building design, is encouraged in transit-oriented development areas to create a pedestrian-focused sense of place. Elements may include well-landscaped public spaces such as squares and plazas, urban parks, courtyards, an integrated pedestrian system, street-oriented building forms with a pedestrian focus, compact development, appropriate street width and block size, mitigating the visual impact and presence of structured parking, and high-quality architecture.

Street Design. A grid of safe, attractive streets should provide connectivity throughout the site and to and from adjacent areas. The street grids around transit station areas should be designed at scale that facilitates safe pedestrian and bicycle movement and provides vehicular circulation and capacity. Street design should incorporate elements such as lighting, appropriate street width, sidewalk width and intersection dimensions to allow for pedestrian, bicycle and multi-modal vehicular use. The design of streets should also encourage lower traffic speeds and superior pedestrian circulation through provision of on-street parking and street trees.

7. Parking. Encourage the use of maximum parking requirements, shared use parking facilities, incentive programs to reduce automobile usage, carpooling, metered parking, car-sharing programs, neighborhood parking programs, and other techniques to encourage the use of transit while also maximizing the use of parking spaces at different times of day. Efforts to provide urban design elements such as street parking, measures

to minimize the visual impact of parking structures, and minimizing surface parking lots should be encouraged.

8. Transportation and Traffic. Impacts on transit service and capacity as well as on traffic should be evaluated in a transit-oriented development, and improvements evaluated where needed. Choice in transportation modes should be offered (such as feeder bus routes, shuttles, bicycle usage, carpooling) to provide convenient and reliable alternatives to driving to a station area. Anticipated mode-split should be part of the evaluation of transit-oriented development. Transportation Demand Management programs should be implemented as part of a transit-oriented development to promote reduced automobile usage. Traffic-calming measures and design techniques to discourage cut-through traffic and to allow for appropriate drop-off points should be incorporated into development designs.

9. Vision for the community. The planning for transit-oriented development areas should be community focused, and should provide a vision for the future that addresses desired uses, activities, design, and the character of the community. Benefits and impacts to the surrounding community as well as the immediate area should be evaluated as part of this process.

10. Regional framework. Transit-oriented development can provide more efficient regional land use patterns by concentrating growth around existing and planned transit station areas. Maximizing development around transit can be a benefit regionally by accommodating some of the region's projected employment and residential growth, as well as making jobs accessible by transit.

11. Environmental benefits. The environmental benefits of compact, mixed use development focused around transit stations can include improved air quality, water quality, and the preservation of green space and environmental areas through the reduction of land consumption for development. The utilization of land near transit and existing infrastructure allows the County to accommodate increasing growth pressures in a smaller area served by infrastructure. Improvements in air quality due to reduced vehicle miles traveled and reduced automobile emissions can also be viewed as a benefit of TOD. Environmental impacts (such as impacts on mature trees, stormwater management) of proposed development should be examined and mitigated to minimize potential negative impacts.

12. Economic benefits. In addition to the benefits of providing a mix of uses, including retail, employment and residential uses in one place, development around transit stations can help to address housing and transportation costs in the County by providing opportunities to balance these costs in TODs. Residential uses near transit can provide opportunities for lowered transportation costs for residents and can also provide housing opportunities for households at varying income levels. Opportunities to assist in the retention of local and small businesses should be evaluated as part of TODs.

13. Open space. Transit-oriented development should include efforts to create enhanced opportunities for publicly-accessible, quality, usable open space, such as active and passive recreation, improved connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians, trails, public gathering spaces, civic focal points, and urban parks and plazas. Open space within new developments should be accessible to the larger community as well as the immediate transit-oriented development area. Efforts should also incorporate open space preservation where appropriate.

14. Infrastructure-Public Facilities. New development in transit-oriented development areas should look for opportunities to include public facility improvements and services within the transit-oriented development area. Opportunities to offset impacts of development in a TOD on public facilities should also be identified and implemented (see Appendix 9 – Residential Development Criteria), such as impacts on schools, parks, libraries, police, fire and rescue, stormwater management and other publicly owned community facilities.

15. Phasing of Development. Fairfax County recognizes that concurrent development of all uses may not be feasible due to market conditions. In instances where a certain mix of uses is critical to the success of the TOD, the development should include a commitment to phase the project in such a way as to include an appropriate mix of uses in each phase to help ensure the long-term success of the mixed-use development. Phasing the development can minimize the potential impacts on the surrounding community and increase amenities for residents, employees, and visitors within the transit-oriented development area.