Readiness Criteria: Metrics for Transit Oriented Districts

JACOBS CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD INNOVATION
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All TOD is desirable, but scarce resources should be targeted to places of high readiness and high potential benefit—that is, district-scale TOD that can “move the needle” in the near to mid-term if investment and other implementation efforts are directed there.
Purpose of Readiness Criteria

- Understand the factors that contribute to the success of TODs
- Prioritize resources and support for areas where they will have the greatest benefit
- Primary audience is for policy makers and private investors
- Help identify areas that are “ready but-for...”
Level of Readiness

• The geographic unit of measurement: Smart Growth Opportunity Areas, except Rural Villages and Downtown San Diego.

• Readiness depends on: transit service, local submarket strength, developable property, and local government support.

• Ready (Near-Term) – By 2020

• Emerging (Mid-Term) – By 2025

• Future (Long-Term) – After 2025
Proposed Metrics

Location in the Transit Network

- Type of Transit Service
- Access to Employment
- Catchment Area Connectivity
- Daily Ridership
Proposed Metrics

Local Market Readiness

- Station Area Density
- Residential Market Performance
- Office Market Performance
- Development Activity
Proposed Metrics

The Land Resource

- Developable Area
- Pattern of Ownership
- TOD Fabric
- Major Site Constraints
Proposed Metrics

Government and Regulatory Support

- TOD District Designation
- Zoning
- Environmental Review Status
- Infrastructure and Facilities Funding
Proposed Metrics

Level of Benefit

- Place Typology
- Multimodalism
- Planned Housing Density
- Planned Employment Density
- Developable Area
High-Readiness & High-Benefit Opportunities

![Diagram showing levels of readiness and benefit]

- **Low**: Ready: Priority 3, Emerging: Priority 3, Future: Priority 4
- **Medium**: Ready: Priority 2, Emerging: Priority 2, Future: Priority 3
- **High**: Ready: Priority 1

*Level of Readiness (By 2020)*

*Level of Benefit (By 2025)*

*Future (By 2050)*
Some Examples

➤ Covering the full range of transit modes

➤ Characterized by concerted, multi-jurisdictional government support

➤ Each requiring one or two “but-fors” to be solved
Assembly Square, Boston

**What they did:**

- Resolved 15-year land use debate at key site
- $56 million rail transit infill station—*first* $15 million, including all pre-construction costs, funded upfront by developer
- $125 million in streets, sidewalks, utilities, open space financed through local property tax TIF and “state TIF” on income and sales taxes
- 2,100 housing units, 1.1 million sf retail, 12-screen cinema, 1.75 million sf office/R&D, hotel, waterfront park
Assembly Square, Boston

What it shows:

✓ New station but high ridership—6,000 / day

✓ Local market strength: East Cambridge/ East Somerville

✓ Large developable area, concentrated ownership: 66 acres, 2 owners

✓ Government support: TOD Growth District championed by Mayor, Governor, MBTA, MPO

✓ “But-for”: Infrastructure funding: developer participation, TIF
Haverhill, MA, Train Station

What they did:

- A “Gateway City”: historic mill district and riverfront in walkshed of commuter station
- Four adaptive reuse residential projects, totaling nearly 600 units
- New park-and-ride infill garage attracts activity without competing for TOD land
- Private business incubator in nearby mill
- Now under construction: Harbor Place—market and workforce housing, office, retail, UMass Lowell satellite campus
Haverhill, MA, Train Station

*What it shows:*

✓ Good transit: train service to 128, Boston

✓ Strong TOD fabric and catchment area connectivity (historic street grid)

✓ Government support: championed by Mayor and business leadership; MA “40R” and “40S” TOD zoning

✓ “But-for”: weak submarket overcome by targeted use of housing incentives

✓ “But-for”: infrastructure funding (parking for train station, Harbor Place)
Dormont Junction, PA, LRT Station

What they did:

- LRT station on Pittsburgh’s South Hills Line
- Multi-jurisdiction TOD study concluded in 2009, engineering feasibility study in 2012
- Joint Development RFP results in “The Junction”—240 housing units, fronting on West Liberty Avenue (“main street”) and the station
- Shared parking garage mostly below grade built into hillside, supported by $10 million TIF
- Closing delayed from 2015-2016 due to market conditions
Dormont Junction, PA, LRT Station

What it shows:

✓ Good transit: LRT to downtown Pittsburgh
✓ Moderate TOD fabric and catchment area connectivity (topography)
✓ Sizable land resource in public ownership
✓ Government support: one of the first PA Transit Revitalization Investment Districts (TRID)
✓ “But-for”: infrastructure funding (structured parking for park-and-ride, development)
✓ Marginal submarket: outcome to be seen
Washington Street Silver Line, Boston

*What they did:*

- 2-mile, 11-stop urban “BRT Lite”, comparable to Mid-City Rapid Bus; connects inner-city neighborhoods to Boston, South Station

- 21,000 daily riders; nearly 8,000 at Dudley Station, the historic neighborhood terminus

- Opened 2002: extensive mixed-use TOD from 1999-2005: $250 million new construction; $93 million rehab; 2,000 housing units

- Dudley Station: $115 million Boston School HQ to open in 2015, other redevelopment in place
Washington Street Silver Line, Boston

**What it shows:**

- BRT with permanent investment, labor market connectivity, strong ridership
- Great TOD fabric, catchment area connectivity
- Government support: priority of Mayor Menino
- “But-for”: affordable housing along the corridor required targeted use of housing subsidies
- “But-for”: at Dudley, a weak submarket overcome by catalyst City investment
VIVA BRT, York Region, Ontario

What they did:

- 87-km, four-corridor BRT system built from scratch in north suburban region of Toronto

- Viva One: full network, BRT Lite, opened 2005

- Viva Next: conversion of key segments to full-feature BRT in median busway (on-going)

- Backbone of the Region’s “Centres and Corridors” smart growth / TOD strategy.

- Two major hubs interfacing with Toronto subway termini; several interfaces with GO Rail commuter network
VIVA BRT, York Region, Ontario

What it shows:

✓ Multimodal: BRT, metro, commuter rail, bus

✓ Labor market and special destination connectivity: downtown, reverse, intra-Region commutes; York University

✓ Downtown Markham (new transit town): large developable area (250 acres in one ownership); 16,000 jobs, 10,000 residents

✓ “But-for”: government support: 4 designated Regional Centres, numerous Local Centres, land use regulation TOD-based, tied to viva