

Transit Oriented Development and Affordable Housing Policies

Florida's Work toward Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines

In Florida, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Community Affairs have worked together to create a framework for TOD, and are working on guidelines for local governments that want to create transit-oriented communities. There are no specific state standards for an area to be considered as TOD; it is defined at the local level. At this point, DCA and DOT have developed a guide of best practices for TOD, based on the type of setting (urban, suburban, and rural). Their findings include the following national best practices for TOD:

- ¼ to ½ mile radius around a transit station, the distance most pedestrians are willing to walk;
- Optimize transit, walking and biking; reducing “vehicle miles traveled”;
- High density, 24-hour live, work and recreate centers (connecting housing and jobs); and
- Reduced parking requirements.

Most state level planning recognizes the importance of affordable housing in TOD. The Florida draft guidelines acknowledge that TOD is conducive to affordable or workforce housing options, but that “land values increase around station areas, therefore if left to market conditions alone, maintaining the affordability of housing near TODs can be problematic over time¹.” At the federal level, HUD and the Federal Transit Administration are collaborating to address this issue. The Government Accountability Office report on TOD and affordable housing notes that state housing finance agencies have an important role in encouraging the development of affordable housing near transit, including TODs.

The final section of this paper includes information on specific TODs in Florida. The earliest TODs are centered on commuter rails; however TODs centered on bus rapid transit are also being planned around the state. TOD with bus rapid transit is a relatively new concept, but it is included in the state guidelines for TOD, and some local governments are planning for it.

Common Elements of State Transit Oriented Development Policies

- Proximity to bus or rail stations
- Proximity to bus stops
- Frequency of transportation (e.g. length of time between service at a bus stop)
- Proximity to employment centers
- Proximity to resources, such as shopping, post-secondary institutions, and local government offices
- Bicycle and pedestrian friendly design

¹ A Guidebook for Implementing Transit Oriented Development in Florida, Florida Department of Community Affairs and Florida Department of Transportation— DRAFT, February 26, 2010.

- Involvement in some type of district already designated by a body such as the state Department of Transportation (New Jersey and California have this)

The following states include transit related incentives in their Qualified Allocation Plans.

Arizona Department of Housing

In **Arizona's 2010 QAP**, the TOD standard has been revised to reflect nationally recognized best practices. Applicants can receive **up to 20 points**, out of a total of **280 points** for the following TOD features:

1. Quality bus transit – **5 points**. There must be a bus stop within ¼ mile of the proposed site and it must meet the following specifications for frequency:
 - a. At least every 15 minutes on weekdays from 6am to 6pm;
 - b. At least every 30 minutes on weekends from 6am to 6pm; and
 - c. Minimum 18 hours of service on weekdays, minimum 15 hours of service on weekend days.
2. Mixed Use – **5 points**. The proposed site is located within 1/2 mile of a mixed use center represented by at least three of the following elements:
 - a. At least 25,000 SF of convenience retail or grocery;
 - b. At least 25,000 SF of other retail;
 - c. At least 25,000 SF of commercial office or other employment other than retail;
 - d. At least 25,000 SF of institutional and civic uses; and
 - e. At least 25,000 SF of restaurant, café, or coffee shop uses.
3. High capacity transit – **10 points**. The proposed site is within 1/2 mile of light rail transit, commuter rail, intercity rail, or streetcar.

In the **2009 QAP**, projects received points if they met qualifications for proximity to employment centers, community amenities, post-secondary institutions, or mass transit. Employment centers were defined as downtown areas with commercial offices. There were three subsections, the first of which only applies to development within the Phoenix or Tucson MSAs, and the second for areas outside those MSAs. The third applied to any development. No more than **15 points** were available under this section.

1. **10 points** for projects within Phoenix or Tucson MSAs that demonstrate at least three of the following indicators of sustainable development:
 - a. Project located within a three-mile radius of a major employment center, concentration of employment centers, or community amenities, such as medical facilities, educational institutions, and shopping;
 - b. Project located within one mile of a mass transit route or light rail line;
 - c. Project located within a three-mile radius of city center or some other readily identifiable concentration of local government offices;
 - d. Project served by existing roads, utilities, and communications interfaces.

2. **10 points** for projects located in areas other than the Phoenix or Tucson MSAs that are within 1/2 mile of a U.S., state, or county highway or other arterial and no more than 5 miles from a major employment center, concentration of employment centers, city center, or other readily identifiable concentration of local government offices.
3. An additional **5 points** for projects (inside OR outside Phoenix or Tucson MSAs) demonstrating four of the following TOD characteristics. A claim for points under this subparagraph must be supported by an appropriate map.
 - a. Project located within a 1/2 mile radius of a major employment center;
 - b. Project located within a 1/2 mile radius of a post-secondary educational institutions;
 - c. Project located within a 1/2 mile radius of an identifiable concentration of retail commercial enterprises
 - d. Project located within a 1/2 mile radius or a readily identifiable concentration of local government offices;
 - e. Project located within 1/2 mile of a mass transit route or light rail line

California Tax Credit Allocation Committee

California awards points based on a graduated scale, depending on the distance to, or type of, transit, as well as the frequency and hours of service. The following are the requirements and points awarded:

- The project is part of a TOD strategy where there is a transit station, rail station, commuter rail station, bus station, or public bus stop within 1/4 mile from the site with service at least every 30 minutes during the hours of 7-9am and 4-6pm, and the project's density will exceed 25 units per acre – **7 points**
- The site is within 1/4 mile of a transit station, rail station, commuter rail station, bus station, or public bus stop with service at least every 30 minutes during the hours of 7-9am and 4-6pm – **6 points**
- The site is within 1/3 mile of a public bus stop with service at least every 30 minutes during the hours of 7-9am and 4-6pm – **5 points**
- The site is located within 500 feet of a regular public bus stop, or rapid transit system stop. (For Rural set-aside projects, full points may be awarded where van or dial-a-ride service is provided to tenants, if costs of obtaining and maintaining the van and its service are included in the budget and the operating schedule is either on demand by tenants or a regular schedule is provided) – **4 points**
- The site is located within 1,500 feet of a regular public bus stop or rapid transit system stop – **3 points**

A private bus or transit system providing service to residents may be substituted for a public system if: (a) it meets the relevant headway and distance criteria, and (b) service is provided free to the residents. Such private systems must receive approval from the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC) Executive Director prior to the application deadline. Multiple bus lines may be aggregated for the above points, only if multiple lines from the designated stop travel to an employment center. Such

aggregation must be demonstrated to, and receive prior approval from, the CTCAC Executive Director in order to receive competitive points.

New Jersey Mortgage and Housing Finance Agency

New Jersey awards **8 or 10 points** for projects located within a transit village (8 points if in a QCT, 10 points if not in a QCT). Transit villages must be designated by the Transit Village Task Force (coordinated by NJ DOT) by the tax credit application deadline. Municipalities must take the following steps in order to receive Transit Village designation:

- Attend a pre-application meeting with the Transit Village Coordinator
- Identify existing transit (rail, light rail, bus, or ferry)
- Demonstrate municipal willingness to grow
- Adopt a TOD redevelopment plan or TOD zoning ordinance
 - Include transit-supportive site design guidelines
 - Include transit-supportive architecture design guidelines
 - Include transit-supportive parking regulation
- Identify specific TOD sites and projects
 - Document ready-to-go projects
 - Include **affordable housing** in the transit village district (any project being financed in whole or in part with State funds must reserve at least 20% of the residential units for low or moderate income households)
- Identify bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Identify “place making” efforts near transit station, establish a management organization
 - Identify annual community events and celebrations
 - Identify arts, entertainment and cultural events

The area that makes up the Transit Village district is a 1/2 mile radius around the transit station. In order to be designated a Transit Village, the municipality must document that there are multiple TOD projects planned for the area within the district.

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

Maryland awards **5 points** to developments that meet the criteria for one of the following: TOD; green certification²; brownfields; OR high development quality.³ TOD is defined as a development having a density that exceeds 25 units per acre, involves mixed use or is part of a larger mixed use undertaking, involves good non-motorized transport design (walkability), and:

- Is located within 1/2 mile of a mass or public transit rail station; OR

² To get the 5 points for green certification, developers can choose LEED, NAHB, or Earthcraft.

³ Points are given for high development quality if the development achieves at least 23 out of 28 points in the Development Quality Subcategory II, which includes consideration of project design, material selection, energy efficiency, healthy indoor environment, and site considerations. This is a section that all applicants complete; a high score gives “bonus points.”

- Is located within 1/4 miles of a bus depot or bus stop with service scheduled at least every 30 minutes (or more frequently) between the hours of 6:30am and 7:00pm.

Oregon Housing and Community Development

Oregon specifies projects in “Transit-Oriented Districts” as DDA (providing a 130% basis boost). Projects must be an area specified by a city or county government initiative as a TOD or an area that encourages the development and use of public transportation.

Illinois Housing Development Authority

Illinois has as one of their priorities serving “low and moderate income persons unable to afford housing near work or transportation. To address this priority, IHDA awards proximity points for developments near transit.

6 points will be awarded if the proposed Project is located in close proximity to fixed-route public transportation, excluding inter-city transportation. “Close proximity” for this category will vary by set-aside and will be defined in the following manner: Chicago (6 blocks); Chicago Metro (1 mile); Other Metro (1.5 miles); Non-Metro (2 miles). Transportation routes and distance to Project site must be identified in the market study submitted with the Application.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

To qualify for **3 Community Transportation points** in Georgia’s QAP, the proposed site must be located within 1/2 mile walking distance of a rapid rail transit station along paved roads, sidewalks, established pedestrian walkways or bike trails.

Nevada Housing Division

Nevada includes proximity to transit routes and services in its green building section. The maximum for this section is **3 points**.

- **1 point** if the site is within 1/4 mile of local transit route;
- **1 point** for every 3 services within 1/4 miles of site (for a maximum of 2 points); services include grocery store, pharmacy, bank, park, school, day care, medical service, and library.

Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

Developments Sites located within a one mile radius (two-mile radius for Developments competing for a Rural Regional Allocation) of at least three services appropriate to the target population will receive **4 points**. A site located within 1/4 mile of public transportation that is accessible to all residents including Persons With Disabilities and/or located within a community that has "on demand" transportation, special transit service, or specialized elderly transportation for Qualified Elderly Developments, will

receive full points regardless of the proximity to amenities, as long as the Applicant provides appropriate evidence of the transportation services used to satisfy this requirement. There are 14 types of eligible services for proximity, which are listed in the application:

- Full service grocery store or supermarket
- Pharmacy
- Convenience store/Mini-market
- Department or retail merchandise store
- Bank/credit union
- Restaurant (including fast food)
- Indoor public recreation facilities, such as civic centers, community centers, and libraries
- Outdoor public recreation facilities, such as parks, golf courses, and swimming pools
- Hospital/medical clinic
- Medical offices (physician, dentistry, optometry)
- Public schools (only eligible for developments that are not Qualified Elderly Developments)
- Senior Center
- Dry cleaners
- Family video rental

TODs in Florida

The **Miami-Dade** county government has joint development programs with Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) to support residential and mixed-use projects, including retail, hotels, office space, and affordable housing near transit stations. There are currently 14 joint development projects. Seven include either affordable or workforce housing:

- Allapattah Metrorail Station;
- Brownsville Metrorail Station;
- Coconut Grove Metrorail Station;
- Gran Via Housing/Park& Ride;
- Northside Metrorail Station;
- Okeechobee Metrorail Station; and
- Senator Villa Housing/Park & Ride.

Jacksonville Transportation Authority is currently planning four TOD projects. One of these projects, centered on the Kings Avenue Skyway has broken ground, and includes two hotels, a residential component, restaurants, and retail. The other three plans do not contain any information about housing at this point. They are:

- 200 Riverside;
- Bay Street Station; and

- Laura Street.

Broward County has the following TODs included in their county land use plan:

- Deerfield Beach Station TOD;
- Hollywood TOD; and
- Sunrise TOD.

Broward County is also planning for TODs around a major bus rapid transit corridor on State Road 7/US 441. There are currently five projects being planned along that corridor; however some of the development is on hold due to the economic climate.

Alachua County has four TODs in the planning stage that are centered on bus rapid transit.

Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) has worked with many cities in the southeastern Florida on TOD design charrettes. TCRPC worked with the City of West Palm Beach to plan a TOD around the downtown Tri-Rail station that addresses the need for workforce housing, and increases transit ridership and pedestrian circulation. TCRPC relies on national best practices for TOD, as well as public input. The **West Palm Beach** plan includes the following elements:

- New federal courthouse
- 100-room hotel
- Palm-Tran bus transfer station
- Florida Department of Health expansion
- New north/south street
- “Anchor” retail
- Mixed-use housing
- Expansion of the American Red Cross
- New elementary school
- Workforce housing