10 STRATEGIES FOR ATTRACTING INVESTMENT NEAR TRANSIT

Lessons Learned from the San Francisco Bay Area

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Urban Land Institute San Francisco
Serving the Greater Bay Area

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About ULI

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At the Urban Land Institute, our mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. Established in 1935, ULI is a nonprofit education and research institute with 30,000 members worldwide—2,000 here in the San Francisco Bay Area District Council.

ULI San Francisco serves the Bay Area's public and private sectors with pragmatic land use expertise and education. Our members form a spectrum of land use disciplines, including developers, builders, investors, architects, public officials, planners, brokers, attorneys, engineers, equity providers, academics and students.

ULI San Francisco offers education events and tours, Young Leaders Group activities, UrbanPlan curriculum in public high schools and universities, policy reports and tools, and Technical Assistance Panels.

Background

Over the next 25 years, the San Francisco Bay Area is projected to grow by an estimated 22 percent—adding around 1.6 million new residents. Land use and development professionals are engaged in a dialogue around how the region can accommodate this growth in a way that maintains the extraordinary quality-of-life that attracts people to live and work in the region. With an eye toward demographic shifts like an aging population and an increasing number of smaller and non-family households, planners and developers recognize the growing demand for homes and jobs in walkable, urban environments.

High land and housing costs in the core areas of the region, however, create continued development pressure in the outskirts of the region, leading to commute-times and household transportation costs that are among the highest in the nation. The high cost of housing and transportation is particularly felt by the region's moderate- and lower-income families, who in some cities spend as much as much as 70 percent of their income on housing and transportation expenses.[1]

By creating neighborhoods where people don't have to rely on a car for all their trips, transit-oriented development (TOD) can play an important role in accommodating the Bay Area's projected growth. Despite its many benefits, TOD is difficult to implement due to factors like higher land costs near transit, the complexity and cost of building compact infill projects, and community resistance to change.

Because of these challenges, building successful TOD requires effective partnerships between public and private sector players. It is particularly important that land use and development practitioners work together to ensure that community plans for TOD are both aggressive and realistic - pushing the market to maximize the potential benefits that TOD can bring but also staying grounded in the realities of market demand and economic feasibility.

It is for this reason that ULI San Francisco launched the TOD MarketPlace program in 2005. Leveraging the success of ULI's national advisory panel model, the TOD MarketPlace seeks to unite land use decision makers and private sector development professionals towards investing in transit-oriented development opportunities in the Bay Area. The TOD MarketPlace program brings together teams of for-profit and non-profit developers, economists and urban designers to form Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs), which work with city representatives to evaluate transit-oriented development plans in the Bay Area. The panels develop targeted recommendations for maximizing community benefits related to public investments, and present their findings at an annual TOD MarketPlace conference. This conference, attended by 350 people in 2009, has become a seminal gathering for TOD-practitioners in the Bay Area. Over the five years of the program, technical assistance panels have worked on TOD plans in 28 cities. In 2010, the program was expanded statewide in order to examine the land use and development implications of California's future high-speed rail system. Due to its success, the Bay Area's TOD MarketPlace model is now being replicated by ULI District Councils in Denver, Los Angeles, and Orange County.

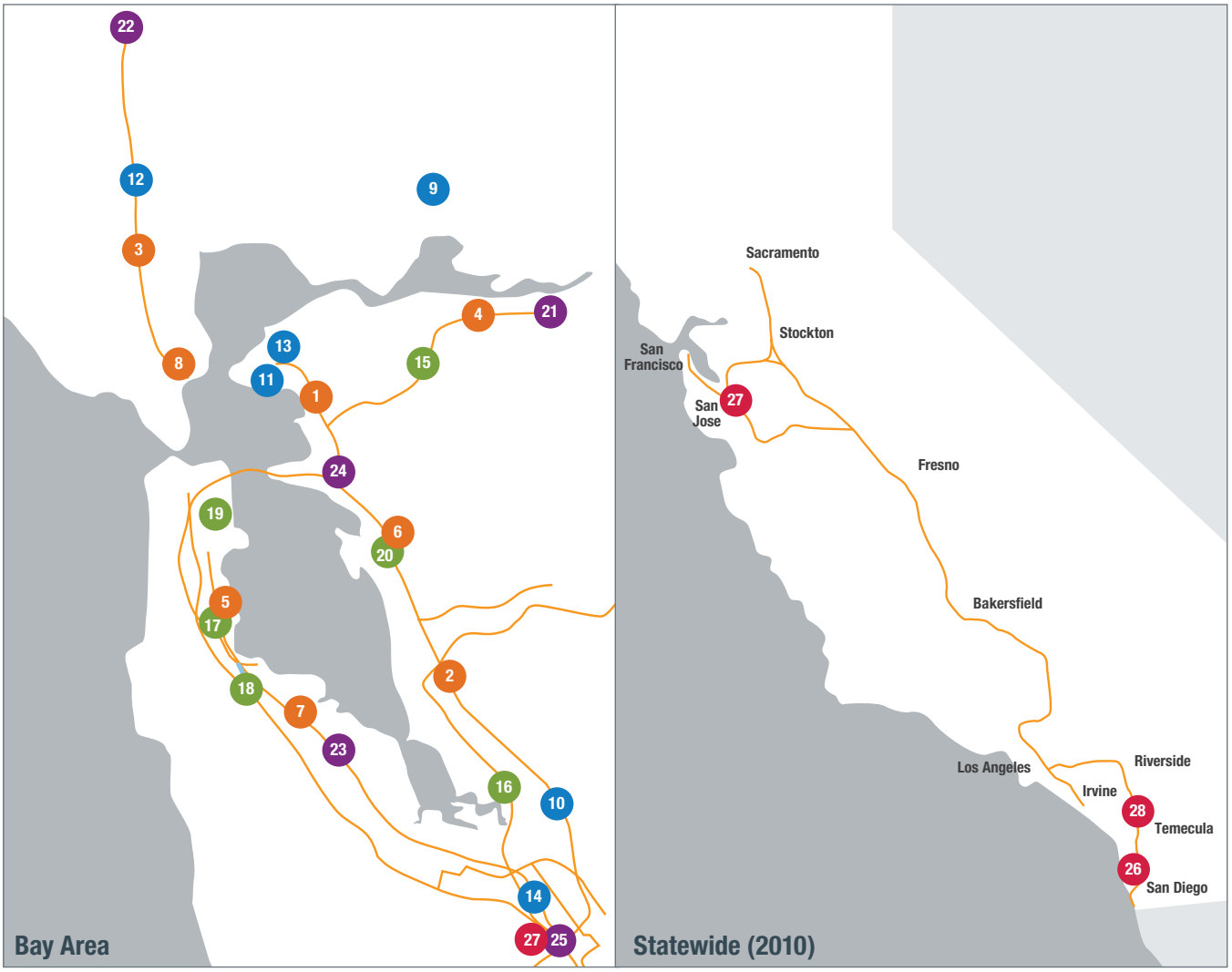
This report elevates the ten most common or compelling recommendations made by the ULI TOD TAPs over the program's five years. While these recommendations were developed for specific communities in the Bay Area, there are many common lessons that can be applied in other U.S. regions aiming to implement transit-oriented development.

WHAT IS TOD?

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is typically defined as a walkable, compact mixed-use community with a range of services and amenities located near quality public transportation. TOD can lead to reduced driving, lower household transportation costs, reduced demand for parking, increased transit use, more walking and biking, lower greenhouse gas emissions, improved air quality and other benefits.

ULI San Francisco's Technical Assistance Panels

2006–2010



2006

1	El Cerrito	Del Norte Station Area Plan
2	Hayward	Mission Boulevard Plan
3	Petaluma	Petaluma Specific Plan
4	Pittsburg	Railroad Avenue Specific Plan
5	San Bruno	Downtown TOD Plan
6	San Leandro	Downtown TOD Plan
7	San Mateo	Rail Corridor TOD Plan
8	San Rafael	Downtown TOD Plan

2007

9	Fairfield	Main Street Transit Center Plan
10	Fremont	BART Station Area Plan
11	Richmond	Richmond Transit Village Plan
12	Santa Rosa	Downtown Railroad Sq Plan
13	San Pablo	23rd Street TOD Plan
14	Santa Clara/ San Jose	Station/BART Terminus Plan

2008

15	Concord	Concord Navel Weapons Station
16	Newark	Dumbarton TOD Plan
17	San Bruno	Transit Corridor Plan
18	San Carlos	Transit Corridor Plan
19	San Francisco	Balboa Park Plan
20	San Leandro	Downtown San Leandro Plan

2009

21	Antioch	Hillcrest eBART Station Area Plan
22	Cloverdale	Downtown SMART Plan
23	Menlo Park	El Camino/Downtown Area Plan
24	Oakland	Valdez/Broadway District Plan
25	San Jose	Diridon Station Area Plan

2010*

26	San Diego	Destination Lindbergh Plan
27	San Jose	Diradon Redevelopment Plan
28	Temecula	Jefferson Corridor Study

* With San Diego, Orange County/Inland Empire District Councils

10 STRATEGIES for Attracting Investment Near Transit

1. Invest in Walkability
2. Increase Transit to Create Value
3. Concentrate New Development in Nodes
4. Start with Downtown-Oriented Development
5. Pursue Catalytic Public Projects
6. Tackle Parking
7. Invest According to Your Ambitions
8. Create Cohesion With Existing Neighborhoods
9. Get the Density Right
10. Educate the Public on TOD

Photo © ULI SF

Attendees at TOD MarketPlace 2008, San Francisco.

1 Invest in Walkability

Since walkability is one of the most fundamental building blocks of attracting residents to transit and building a livable community, it is no surprise that this was the most common recommendation made by ULI panels over the five years of the program. Investments in walkability can range from basic sidewalk and crosswalk improvements to public realm improvements like street trees, public art, pedestrian-scale lighting and benches. While walkability should be prioritized within a half-mile of the transit station, as more development is built, particularly ground floor retail, the distance most people are willing to walk increases and the opportunity area for further TOD expands.

Sidewalk and crosswalk improvements should be prioritized in places that create clear and inviting lines of pedestrian movement between the transit station and important destinations, like job centers, neighborhood services, civic centers (City Hall, libraries, etc.), commercial districts and residential neighborhoods. In several cases, ULI TAPs recommended design guidelines that ensure that new buildings are built to the front of the lot, facing the sidewalk at ground level, in order to create a more urban environment. Limiting new curb cuts along streets can help minimize auto/pedestrian conflicts and vehicle turning radius should be minimized at intersections to both slow down traffic and lessen the crossing distance for pedestrians. In the case of large redevelopment projects, efforts should be made to create or reinforce a connected street network comprised of small blocks.

The City of San Carlos stands out as example of a city where targeted pedestrian improvements have the potential to help create a vibrant transit-oriented district. San Carlos is located on the San Francisco Peninsula and is home to just under 30,000 residents. The City's historic train station is served by a Caltrain commuter rail line that connects San Francisco, San Jose and the cities in between. The train station is separated from the City's historic core and commercial district by only a few short blocks, but a wide and busy street with an over overabundance of surface parking creates an uninviting barrier between the train station and downtown. To improve connectivity and increase the viability of new mixed-use development in the station area, the panel recommended that San Carlos narrow the busy street and add bulb-outs and other traffic calming measures near the station. To encourage walking, the panel suggested that the City provide for sidewalks designed to accommodate trees and other landscaping, benches, lighting and universal accessibility on both sides of all streets in the station area. The panel agreed that San Carlos has "good bones" for vibrant transit-oriented development and stressed the importance of prioritizing pedestrian connectivity between the existing civic core, the train station and any future TOD.

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Downtown San Carlos has "good bones" for TOD, but the panel noted the need for improved pedestrian connections to the train station.

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2 Increase Transit to Create Value

Transit is the most basic ingredient of TOD. High-quality transit service creates value for the surrounding private investment by enabling higher densities, greater walkability, more diverse uses and lower parking ratios. In some cases, TAPs helped cities identify the transit improvements that would be needed to support TOD.

One example occurred in Fairfield, a city of 100,000 people located halfway between San Francisco and Sacramento. Here, the TAP observed that the infrequent 30-minute headways on the local bus service would limit the usability of a proposed bus transfer facility, thus reducing its ability to catalyze private investment in the surrounding area. The panel recommended phasing in higher densities and improving the public realm while at the same time pursuing more frequent and far-reaching transit connections.

In the City of Antioch, the issue of how to leverage transit was different. Here, future high-frequency transit is more certain since the BART line is scheduled to be extended to Antioch. The Antioch TAP encouraged the City to bolster the potential market for TOD by creating an intermodal hub at the future BART station, linking regional transit with improved local service such as bus rapid transit or high-frequency shuttles.

The panel recommended planning the site as a "transit-ready" community—so that it works on its own and would be greatly enhanced in the future when and if transit arrives.

The third example of the importance of transit service was in southern Alameda County, where the City of Newark is conducting revitalization planning for a 150-acre former industrial site that includes a future commuter rail station on the Dumbarton Rail corridor. The proposed commuter train would connect existing Caltrain lines in Redwood City and Menlo Park with BART across the Bay to Amtrak in Union City. The panel noted that, while the City of Newark is highly committed to the Dumbarton Rail project, the implementation of the commuter system is not a certainty and the planned frequency of twelve trains per day may not warrant a development pattern that focuses on the potential train station. Instead, the panel recommended planning the site as a "transit-ready" community—so that it works on its own and would be greatly enhanced in the future when and if transit arrives. The panel's suggestion was "first, create a great place." As part of that principle, the panel also suggested that, in the near term, the City offer a bus shuttle service to connect residents to the nearest BART station. The panel cited the success of the Emery-Go-Round shuttle, which connects jobs and shopping centers in Emeryville to the MacArthur BART station. This shuttle, which is partially funded by local employers, has allowed the City to develop at higher densities without adding exponentially to local traffic.

Photo © Greenbelt Alliance

TAPs noted the Emery-Go-Round as a model of how quality transit service supports and enhances development.

3 Concentrate New Development in Nodes

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The Santa Rosa TAP suggested Redwood City Courthouse Square as a model "festival zone" that attracts activity and investment downtown.

Especially in lower-density or auto-oriented places, where TOD represents a new form of community development, the market may not support a large quantity of mixed-use development or higher-density housing in the near term. It can be effective instead to target initial investments and development activity in key nodes—possibly at primary intersections, near existing amenities within the plan area, or in locations that already have some compact, mixed-use buildings. Concentrating early development initiatives in targeted nodes within a station-area or along a transit corridor can help ensure that public and private investments add up to create distinct places, even if the scale is relatively small at first. Early public investments in nodes might include streetscaping or other infrastructure improvements, or could even be programmatic in nature. For example, in Santa Rosa the ULI TAP suggested creating a "festival zone" at one development node, where farmers markets and concerts would draw customers to existing businesses and attract new retail and restaurants to the area.

In the case of Fairfield, the City is working to convert segments of North Texas Street, a typical suburban commercial strip that runs through the center of town, into a walkable, mixed-use town center. Recognizing that transforming an entire auto-oriented strip will take significant time and investment from both the public and private sector, the TAP suggested that the city concentrate mixed-use development in nodes along the corridor starting with one intersection, where a nearby park can serve as an attractive amenity for future development. The panel recommended that the city allow only residential development in between the nodes, in order to focus retail development in the designated areas.

SITE UPDATE

The City of Fairfield reported that ULI TAP recommendations helped the city eliminate a density cap on residential development and invest in pedestrian-scale streetscape improvements.

4 Start with Downtown-Oriented Development

Existing downtowns can be a city's greatest asset. Ensuring that transit connects directly to existing downtowns and concentrating new investments there can leverage a city's existing strengths rather than compete with them. For example in Cloverdale, CA, the ULI panel was asked to help the City identify creative land use strategies that would foster business growth in the city and support future transit ridership. Cloverdale, which is located 85 miles north of San Francisco in California's wine country, is the planned terminus of a proposed SMART passenger rail system that will connect to the San Francisco-bound ferry terminal in Larkspur. Since it is not clear when regional transit service will reach Cloverdale, the panel recommended that the City focus in the near term on strengthening the existing downtown. They specifically suggested that the City realign their main street in order to expand the core district and attract new commercial and residential development to the downtown instead of to sprawling locations at the city's edges. The realignment would also extend the walkable, mixed-use downtown district one block closer to the train station.

When creating plans for downtown development, many cities often focus on attracting retail development. Similarly, one of the most common priorities voiced by citizens during planning processes is the desire to attract a grocery store to the downtown or planned station area. While the demand and market for different uses varies from place to place, several panels urged cities not to forget about the need to locate housing downtown and in transit station areas. Residents stimulate town centers by creating pedestrian energy on the streets and supporting businesses in the evening hours. One panel noted that oftentimes successful retail facilities that are located near transit, like Market Hall at the Rockridge BART station, are not supported solely by BART riders but also largely by patrons from nearby walkable neighborhoods. As a panelist on the Newark TAP said, "if you want the retail, you need the rooftops." In other words, some retail usage, especially local-serving retail like grocery stores, are "follower" land uses that only come after the households to support it are in place.

Photo © ULI SF

The TAP suggested extending the "Main Street charm" of Cloverdale's downtown in the direction of the train station.

TOD TIP: MIXED-USE

A TOD dominated by just office space entirely retail limits the urban excitement and cross-fertilization of activities. With a mix of office, higher education, retail and housing the TOD can feel like a different environment morning, noon and night and weekend versus weekday. Different uses help create a 24/7 place.

New housing development in transit-served downtowns and station-areas should target household types that are more likely to live in these locations, such as the young workforce, empty nesters, and residents age 55 years and older. Panels also consistently stressed that the Bay Area needs affordable housing in all of its neighborhoods and especially those located near transit, where new affordable units help lower income households save on transportation costs through increased transit use. Panels suggested a range of strategies for securing affordable housing as part of transit-oriented development plans, including adopting inclusionary housing ordinances or designating publically owned sites for 100 percent affordable projects.

5 Pursue Catalytic Public Projects

One strong project can kick-start other development activity and set the stage for the character and scale of development that will be part of the TOD effort. An upward spiral of value creation can occur since a new project next to an existing one takes away a vacant lot or surface parking lot while putting more people on the street, increasing demand for the existing development.

Well-designed affordable housing can stimulate market-rate housing by improving the look and feel of the community. Several panels suggested that catalytic affordable housing projects are especially good to pursue during a weaker real estate market, since affordable housing developers do not rely upon all the same market-based financing tools used by for-profit developers. Similarly, rental housing, where the occupants tend to be more willing to pioneer an untested location, can stimulate the future development of for-sale housing. Government and civic buildings can also be used to catalyze development and support activity near transit. At Balboa Park BART station, which is located in southern San Francisco, the panel suggested that the transit station itself could help anchor and catalyze station area investment if it were redeveloped into bright, well-designed community gathering space.

The City of Hayward, CA provides a model of how a public investment can serve as an anchor and catalyst for private development efforts. As part of an effort in the mid-90s to revitalize and attract private investment downtown, Hayward built a new City Hall near the BART station and began supporting the development of new housing projects near the city center. Since that time, the City has welcomed a number of new restaurants and retail projects including Cinema Place, an entertainment and shopping center that includes a 12-screen movie theater.

In San Bruno, the TAP suggested that the City kick-start development in the historic core by moving City Hall to a central downtown location or by encouraging other local, state or federal government buildings to relocate downtown. The panel noted that siting government buildings downtown will generate the foot-traffic needed to support local retail and emphasize the downtown as the civic heart of the City.

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The Hayward City Hall represents a catalytic public investment near BART.

TOD TIP: REGIONAL VS. LOCAL DESTINATIONS

TOD can be categorized as either regionally significant or local-serving. Regionally significant TODs include uses that play a role in the regional economy, such as employment concentrations, civic uses, cultural, sports or entertainment clusters, higher education, medical, etc. These nodes are larger in land area and building square footage. Local serving places are smaller and provide support for the residential neighborhood around it. Both are viable TODs and paying attention to underlying market demand will assist in planning for the right uses and density.

6 Tackle Parking

Parking is often one of the trickiest parts of planning for and implementing transit-oriented development. In places with good transit service, it is possible to provide less parking compared to auto-dependent locations. That said, TOD projects located in places other than dense walkable urban centers are likely to require parking. Experience shows that early in the redevelopment of a previously auto-oriented place, higher parking ratios are needed (say, three to four parking spaces per thousand square feet, depending on the use), but that ratio will drop to as low as one space per thousand over time. It can be challenging to strike the right balance between planning for development that supports walking, biking and transit use while also making new development feasible and attractive to future tenants.

Lowering parking requirements or removing parking minimums can create flexibility for developers and help lower project costs. In some locations, panels recommended parking maximums, which set a cap for the amount of parking that can be built and thereby reduce the traffic generated by new developments. In San Leandro, a centrally-located city with a BART station and a walkable historic core, the panel suggested that the City create a parking benefit district. Within the parking benefit district, parking meter revenues would be used for improvements downtown and developers could choose to pay fees instead of providing parking site-by-site. The City could use the fee revenue to manage parking in lots and garages located throughout the downtown.

A proven strategy to manage parking is to provide garages at strategic locations and design them such that the street-level retail frontage can continue uninterrupted. Santa Rosa has an excellent parking program, but the garages occupy valuable street frontage area and have no retail on the ground floor. In contrast, the City of San Rafael has strategically located garages behind the buildings to maintain the walkable character of the 4th Street retail corridor.

Antioch is another example of a city planning for TOD and facing a sizable parking challenge. The East Contra Costa BART extension will reach Antioch by 2015 and

Photo © Greenbelt Alliance

Downtown San Rafael, which the panel used as an example of locating parking just off the main street.

TOD TIP: PARKING

A 2010 study by the San José State University department of Urban and Regional Planning and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) looked at parking utilization at 12 South Bay housing developments near VTA light rail and Caltrain stations and found that local parking requirements could be reduced by as much as 26 percent.[2]

the new station will create an opportunity for compact, mixed-use development. The city wants to create a vibrant, walkable district near BART, but current land use consists of low-density development, much of which is single-family housing. Since TOD is as-of-yet untested in Antioch, the panel suggested a shared parking strategy that would lessen the cost to the private sector of providing parking. Shared parking works when multiple uses located near one another have different demand for parking over the course of the day or between weekends and weekdays. Many walkable places that have an abundance of office parking have the opportunity to use the same parking spaces for arenas, symphony halls and restaurants, reducing the cost of building additional structured parking and increasing the property values and property taxes of the office buildings. In Antioch, the panel recommended that a single parking garage at the future BART site could be funded through a public-private partnership and used by BART patrons as well as office workers, shoppers and residents.

7 Invest According to Your Ambitions

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The ULI panel tours the 5,000 acre redevelopment site in Concord.

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Old munitions bunkers on the Concord Naval Weapons Station Reuse site.

A major redevelopment plan that aims to attract a significant amount of new private investment is likely to require a sizable commitment of funds and implementation support from the City. Especially when the uses or densities proposed represent a significant change from what currently exists, the cost of needed infrastructure upgrades may go beyond what a developer would be able to assume alone.

Public-private partnership is typically required to make large-scale redevelopment feasible.

In one example, the Broadway/Valdez District Plan in Oakland seeks to transform the city's historic "Auto Row" into a large-scale shopping destination. The plan focuses on regional retail development, which will require extraordinary parcel acquisition and assembly, street reconfigurations, an expansion of the urban parking supply, among other investments. In cases like these, a public-private partnership is typically required to make large-scale redevelopment feasible. The City of Oakland has not made clear its intentions to invest public money in this effort, and it is unlikely that a private investor alone would be able to take on the risk and cost associated with a project of this significance. This panel suggested that the City may either need to identify public funds to support this effort or develop an alternate plan that encourages incremental private investment and, at least initially, smaller-scale, neighborhood-serving projects.

The Concord Naval Weapons Station is a 5,000 acre redevelopment site adjoining the North Concord BART Station in Contra Costa County. Given the historic military use of the site, significant environmental remediation is required and the site needs sizable infrastructure and service investments including roads, sewer, water, schools and emergency services. While much of this cost is expected to be borne by private developers, public investment will also be needed in order to make this major redevelopment feasible. The ULI panel recommended aggressive pursuit of state and federal funds to support the project, as well as the creation of a Community Facilities District or similar mechanism to help finance the needed improvements.

SITE UPDATE

The City of Concord reports that the recommendations of the ULI TAP helped inform the City Council and the public about the market feasibility of various elements of the redevelopment plan. After years of planning and public engagement, the Concord Naval Weapons Station Reuse Plan was adopted in February of 2010.

8 Create Cohesion with Existing Neighborhoods

Photo © ULI SF

The panel toured the first phase of the Richmond TOD project and made suggestions on phase two.

An extreme mismatch in density or design between a new TOD project and an adjacent existing neighborhood can provoke a negative public reaction and create an unattractive public realm. Design elements like streetscaping or stepping-down densities as a new project approaches near-by neighborhoods can help address this issue. For example, near Balboa Park BART Station, a publically-owned decommissioned reservoir represents one of the largest remaining undeveloped sites in San Francisco. The site is abutted to the west by a historic, lower-density neighborhood. If the site were made available for redevelopment, the TAP stressed the importance of staggering the building heights so that the tallest buildings were concentrated closer to the transit station and phased down into lower density townhomes adjacent to the existing single-family neighborhood. The panel also recommended that the city create a street network and design guidelines that integrate the site with surrounding neighborhoods.

Another notable example is in Richmond, CA, where the panel argued that the relatively high density of the proposed transit village near an existing BART station would create a stark contrast to the adjacent existing single-family neighborhood. The panel suggested that design considerations like streetscaping could mediate this transition but thought it was possible that a slightly lower density (i.e. townhomes) would be more physically cohesive with the surrounding community—as well as more economically feasible in a challenged market.

9 Get the Density Right

Creating denser development around transit nodes is a fundamental principle of TOD. The "right" density and building height for each place will depend on a number of factors including the land value, development costs, existing community characteristics and needs, recent development activity, proximity to jobs and retail and other factors. Cities should work with developers to make sure planned densities and heights are both aggressive and realistic. While the appropriate density varies place to place, a general rule of thumb is that densities must be at least a 1.0 floor area ratio (FAR) to achieve the type of walkable urbanism that is needed for TOD. This is at least four to five times higher than standard suburban densities.

In some cases, the panels called for cities to hold out for projects representing higher densities or heights near transit. For example in Santa Rosa, the panel recommended that the City increase the height allowance from 55 to 65 feet in order to allow for more design variety and for mixed-use projects with retail on the ground level. In Fremont, the panel called for increased floor-to-area ratios (FAR) on key sites to stimulate high-density development. Even with high zoned densities, increasing FAR can increase the value of the underlying real estate and improve the financial feasibility of high-density projects. In San Carlos, the panel recommended increasing the maximum heights to 75 feet, which they called a "sweet spot" for maximizing density while at the same time keeping costs low by allowing for wood frame construction and avoiding the life safety/fire protection requirements of taller buildings.

On the other hand, densities that are too aggressive for the local market might lower the feasibility of anything getting built. In a few cases, panels suggested that reducing the minimum density would allow some medium-density projects to move forward in the near term, with higher density projects phased in later. For example in Antioch, the panel felt that the minimum required floor area ratio of 0.4 was too dense in the near term because it translates into a four- or five-story building and begins to force the need for structured parking. The panel suggested that the City allow some two- and three-story offices with surface parking in order to initiate office development in a community that currently lacks precedent for this type of product. Similarly, in San Leandro the panel stated that, given the lack of precedence for successful TOD in the City, the minimum densities of 60 units per acre might be too high, especially since many of the City's priority infill sites are less than one acre in size. To help make development more feasible in the near term, the panel recommended that higher minimum densities could be phased in with minimums closer to 30 units per acre allowed for the first few years of implementation.

Photo © ULI SF

The TAP and ULI members toured the TOD site in San Carlos, where the panel recommended an increase in planned densities.

TOD TIP: DENSITY

The most successful TODs exhibit a variety of densities, heights and building types—rather than all buildings being constructed at the same scale. Retaining smaller, older single family buildings alongside infill townhomes, multi-story apartments and even some mid and high-rise buildings can help to establish a more organic neighborhood character.

10 Educate the Public on TOD

Photo © Urban Advantage/VTA/City of San Jose

Photosimulations can help engage the public in discussions about future densities and street designs.

The public can act as important allies for a TOD plan, or they can stop it in its tracks. Communities may resist TOD due to the density that is generally required to support high transit ridership or worries about how TOD will change the character of a neighborhood. Concerns about additional traffic and impact on schools and city finances are also common. Some of these fears are myths that can be dispelled through public education, while others may warrant a change or accommodation in the TOD plan. Engaging public stakeholders early and in a meaningful way will allow the city to develop a plan that represents the community's desires, and can be critical to the success of TOD implementation.

Public participation strategies might include the creation of a new TOD Plan Advisory Committee or targeted engagement with existing community groups. For example the ULI panel noted that the Richmond Transit Village Plan overlapped with five different Neighborhood Council districts and suggested that the City view these Councils as key stakeholders in the TOD planning process. Cities can educate and engage the public through design charettes and site visits, and can conduct simulations of proposed development to show how new buildings will impact sunlight or views from adjacent neighborhoods. Developers themselves can also play a key role in public outreach by meeting early and often with community members about a particular development project. Regardless of the method used, community participation and education can create a two-way street between the community and public- and private-sector practitioners.

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One key public engagement strategy is to craft a message about TOD that resonates with the local community. For example in San Carlos, the panel learned that residents were not particularly excited by the concept of TOD but were invested in a citywide planning effort to make San Carlos more environmentally friendly. The panel recommended that the TOD plan be folded into the City's "green" strategy and that the City provide data on the environmental benefits of TOD, such as reduced greenhouse gases, improved air quality and the potential to incorporate green buildings into TOD plans.

Spotlight:

TOD and High-Speed Rail

When California's high-speed rail (HSR) network is completed in 2026, the state will have more than 700 miles of high-speed track. Trips between San Francisco and Los Angeles will take less than 3 hours aboard trains that reach speeds of 220 miles per hour. Recognizing the massive potential of high-speed rail to reshape growth in California, ULI expanded the TOD MarketPlace program in 2010 to take a statewide look at the land use and economic development implications of future HSR in California. ULI's California High-Speed Rail TOD MarketPlace was coordinated in partnership with the ULI District Councils in Los Angeles, Orange County/Inland Empire, Sacramento, San Diego/Tijuana and San Francisco. The HSR TOD MarketPlace held Technical Assistance Panels at planned high-speed stations in San Diego, San Jose and Temecula.

Key themes from the three HSR panels included:

I. **DEVELOP HIGH-SPEED RAIL STATIONS AS GRAND AND ICONIC TERMINALS.** In all three locations, high-speed rail stations have the potential to be developed as "Grand Terminals" that act as central community gathering places and inspire travelers upon arrival to the city.

II. **USE JOINT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO COORDINATE MAJOR PROJECTS.** Because HSR has regional and statewide implications and stakeholders, the planning, financing and oversight of future development around high-speed rail stations will require a multi-disciplinary and inter-agency approach. To promote communication and partnership between key groups, a formal Joint Development Authority can serve as a central, coordinated entity for overseeing development.

III. **INVEST IN PUBLIC OUTREACH EARLY AND OFTEN, AND ESTABLISH A FORMAL ADVISORY GROUP.** A proactive and long-term public outreach strategy and a formal Advisory Group will allow planners and implementers to understand community desires at the outset of the effort and help them address potential areas of conflict early through education and engagement.

See entire HSR TOD MarketPlace report: www.hsrtodmarketplace.org

Photo © California High-Speed Rail Authority

Rendering of Diradon Station and future HSR-oriented development.

Moving Forward

The experiences and lessons learned through the TOD MarketPlace program continue to inform land use and development practices in the San Francisco Bay Area. Especially as the housing and financial markets recover, and State and Federal policy increasingly focuses on TOD, this type of multi-disciplinary effort will be increasingly important as the region redoubles efforts to implement TOD plans. ULI San Francisco is dedicated to helping cities make the most of land use and development opportunities near transit and will continue to serve as a convener around issues of TOD in the greater San Francisco Bay Area and California.

Based on the success of past ULI technical assistance panels, ULI San Francisco expanded the Technical Assistance Panel program and is accepting applications from city governments, public agencies and nonprofit organizations. For a small fee, Technical Assistance Panels provide expert, multidisciplinary advice to jurisdictions facing complex land use and real estate challenges. See www.ulisf.org/taps.

Photo © Metropolitan Transportation Commission

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This report was written by Alia Anderson, ULI Young Leader Group Member, edited by Kate White, Executive Director of ULI SF, and designed by Thia Buggia, AECOM.

MORE INFORMATION on the issues discussed in this report can be found in the 2007, 2008 and 2009 TOD MarketPlace reports (www.todmarketplace.org) and in the 2010 California High-Speed Rail TOD MarketPlace report (www.hsrtodmarketplace.org).

ULI San Francisco's TOD MarketPlace has been used as a ULI in the Community "Case Study for Action." To find out nuts and bolts of how to create a similar program, see:

http://www.uli.org/CommunityBuilding/Smart%20Growth%20Alliances/SGAIN%20Resources/Case%20Studies%20for%20Action.aspx

Other TOD Resources

- "The Option of Urbanism" (Christopher Leinberger, 2008)
- "TOD 101: Why TOD and Why Now?" (Reconnecting America and the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2007)
- "TOD 202: Station-Area Planning" (Reconnecting America and the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2008)
- Bay Area Priority Development Area Showcase (www.bayareavision.org/pda)
- Bay Area Regional FOCUS program (www.bayareavision.org/initiatives/)
- Bay Area Best Practice Conferences (www.bayareavision.org/initiatives/conferenceseries.html)
- Bay Area Sustainable Communities Strategy (http://onebayarea.org/)
- Ten Principles for Successful Development Around Transit (http://www.uli.org/ResearchAndPublications/Reports/~/media/Documents/ResearchAndPublications/Reports/TenPrinciples/TP_DevTransit.ashx)
- TransForm's GreenTRIP development certification program (http://transformca.org/GreenTRIP)
- "Windfall for All: How Connected, Convenient Neighborhoods Can Protect Our Climate and Safeguard California's Economy", (http://transformca.org/windfall-for-all)
- Great Communities Toolkit, including sample fact sheets and other resources (http://greatcommunities.org/resources/regional-tools)

Citations

[1] Urban Land Institute, Terwilliger Center for Workforce Housing. Bay Area Burden, 2009.

[2] San Jose State University, Department of Urban and Regional Planning and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. A Parking Utilization Survey of Transit-Oriented Development Residential Properties in Santa Clara County, 2010.

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