

Peer Exchanges

Planning for a Better Tomorrow

FHWA/FTA
Transportation Planning Capacity Building

Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program

– Peer Roundtable Report –

“Using Regional Transportation to Plan and Build Sustainable and Livable Communities”

Event Location: Seattle, WA

Event Date: February 4, 2010

Roundtable Hosts: Federal Transit Administration
Reconnecting America

Roundtable Participants: Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture
American Public Transportation Association (APTA)
City of San Francisco, Department of Planning
City of Baltimore, Department of Planning
City of Seattle, Department of Planning
Houseal Lavigne Associates
Sam Schwartz Engineering
U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Volpe National Transportation
Systems Center (Volpe Center)
VIA Architecture

I. Background and Goals

The “Using Regional Transportation to Plan and Build Sustainable and Livable Communities” report documents the presentations and discussions of two conference sessions held in conjunction with the [New Partners for Smart Growth](#) Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, on how to promote sustainable and livable communities through the metropolitan transportation planning process. The sessions were coordinated by the [Federal Transit Administration](#) (FTA) as part of the [Transportation Planning Capacity Building \(TPCB\) Program](#), which aims to advance the state of the practice in multimodal transportation planning nationwide.

The FTA organized a roundtable to discuss how the *Sustainable Communities Partnership* can inform integrated transportation planning at the regional and local scale. A three-hour panel took place on case studies in successful Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) planning and implementation across a range of geographic scales (e.g., station area, corridor, metropolitan region) and socio-economic contexts.

This report includes the following sections:

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II. Federal Policy Context and Stakeholder Perspectives on Regional Transportation Planning for Sustainable and Livable Communities

In June 2009, the Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) formed a high-level inter-agency *Sustainable Communities Partnership* to better coordinate Federal transportation, housing, and environmental quality and help to make American communities into more “livable” and “sustainable” places.

The roundtable provided an opportunity to highlight the agency’s current efforts to support the *Partnership* through Federal policy and funding programs, as well as its work with national stakeholder groups such as the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and Reconnecting America to promote livable communities planning efforts at the local and regional level.

“Transit Oriented Development is a key opportunity to promote livable, sustainable communities.”

- FTA Deputy Administrator,
Therese W. McMillan

A. Federal Policy Context: Federal Transit Administration

Therese W. McMillan, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Livability and sustainability are multi-faceted terms, with myriad forms and definitions to reflect the diversity of American communities and geographies. For this reason, national policies must be sensitive to the differences in resources and needs among urban, rural, suburban, and tribal communities. In her remarks Ms. McMillan stated that the most appropriate role for Federal agencies is to provide support to local and regional organizations as they implement locally-crafted visions that respond to local contexts and local needs. She cautioned participants not to be over-reliant on Federal funds and stressed the importance of matching Federal dollars with local commitments to supportive investments that “take Federal resources to the next level.” One goal of the *Sustainable Communities Partnership* is to help communities leverage non-transportation funds (e.g., HUD, EPA funding).

The FTA views livability and sustainability as core principles of its mission. Ms. McMillan highlighted several of FTA’s current initiatives to support the goals of the Sustainable Communities Partnership:

- **State of Good Repair Initiative** – The FTA has launched a [State of Good Repair Initiative](#) to ensure that the billions of dollars already invested in American transit systems continue to provide safe and reliable services to community residents. The FTA believes that the only way to sustain new transit growth and ridership is by ensuring the foundation for growth is strong, especially given the economic downturn and challenging funding climate that metropolitan regions now face.
- **New Policy Direction for the New Starts Program** – The U.S. DOT Secretary Ray LaHood announced a [major policy shift for the New Starts Program](#), which is the primary Federal source of funding for transit expansion nationwide, in January 2010. The U.S. DOT is broadening the evaluation criteria used to assess applications for funding to include economic development, environmental issues, and other community-based concerns that promote livability. The U.S. DOT is also rescinding a rule from the prior administration that made cost-effectiveness the primary criteria by which applications were evaluated. The FTA will issue a rulemaking on the broadened criteria to help define the role that cost-effectiveness will play, and Ms. McMillan encouraged workshop participants to provide comments during the rulemaking process.
- **Two New “Livability” Grant Programs** – The FTA recently created two new grant programs that will provide up to \$280 million in “livability” focused transit projects, the [Urban Circulator Systems](#) Program and [Bus Livability Grants Initiative Program](#).
- **New Proposed Policy to Expand Bike/Pedestrian Catchment Areas around Transit Stops** – In November 2009, the FTA issued a [new policy proposal that expands the transit stop catchment area](#) within which bicycle and pedestrian improvements are eligible expenses. Pedestrian improvements within a one half-mile radius of a transit stop or station, and bicycle improvements within a three mile radius of a transit stop or station will be regarded as having a de facto physical and functional relationship to the transit service. The new policy will help to encourage projects that promote walking and biking to access public transportation, rather than driving.

Biker boarding a bus.



Source: FTA image

- **Sustainable Communities Partnership Brownfields Pilot Projects** – The FTA worked with EPA to provide input on the selection of five [Sustainable Communities Partnership Brownfields Pilot Projects](#), three of which have a major transit component. The FTA will continue to work with EPA to provide technical assistance to selected grantees.

TOD represents a key opportunity to support livable, sustainable communities. The FTA will continue to invest in research, technical assistance, and policy development to promote TOD, particularly with regard to supporting mixed-income housing near transit stops and better understanding the link between employment location and transit corridor development. Ms. McMillan noted that the [Center for Transit-Oriented Development](#) (CTOD) is conducting research on both these issues and encouraged attendees to visit CTOD’s website for resources and information.

Transit operating funds will be an important issue for debate during reauthorization of the Federal surface transportation bill. Currently, transit operating costs in large metropolitan areas are not eligible for Federal funding. Ms. McMillan explained how important this issue is given the dire funding constraints that many transit agencies now face. She touted a provision that allowed transit capital funds to be flexed for operations as one of the successes of the first Federal stimulus bill. She anticipates that there will be discussion of expanding the eligibility of Federal funds for transit operations during re-authorization, but noted that FTA will also explore opportunities to incentivize or enable states and localities to raise funds for transit operations.

It is FTA’s desire to be a more effective partner with community-based organizations and to make resources and regulations more accessible and understandable for the public. The FTA recognizes that Federal rules and regulations may be intimidating for the general reader as currently written and is committed to finding new, more effective ways of communicating information so that people can understand and take advantage of the many resources that already exist to support local planning efforts. The FTA is also exploring opportunities to extend the reach of its capacity building programs help support the work of community-based organizations who work with planning agencies to implement projects and conduct planning on the ground.

B. Transit Industry Perspective: American Public Transportation Association (APTA)

Rich Weaver, Senior Program Manager, Planning and Programs

The [American Public Transportation Association](#) (APTA) is a member-based association comprised of transit agencies and private companies in the transit industry, as well as Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and State Departments of Transportation (State DOTs).

“We live in exciting and challenging times for the transit industry.”

- Rich Weaver, APTA

Mr. Weaver noted that these are both exciting and challenging times for the transit industry. Transit ridership is at its highest levels in over 50 years and many regions are seeking to expand their transit networks to accommodate rising demand. At the same time, the economic downturn means that funding is shrinking, forcing transit agencies to maintain existing service with less funding or face difficult choices about service cuts.

Transit plays a key role in promoting livable, sustainable communities and APTA welcomes opportunities to work with FTA and the *Sustainable Communities Partnership* to promote smart growth and TOD in regional transportation planning and decision-making. One of APTA’s recent efforts to support the *Partnership* was to work with Reconnecting America to conduct a survey of transit agencies’ current capabilities and needs regarding livability promotion.

Key findings of the APTA survey included:

- **Public agency coordination** – Transit agencies currently work most closely with MPOs and local governments. They coordinate with state DOTs and human service agencies to some degree, but have minimal interaction with state environmental agencies and local housing authorities.
- **Federal programs to promote livability** – Transit agencies responded positively to new Federal funding programs like the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery ([TIGER](#)) Program and the Transit Investments for Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction ([TIGGER](#)) Program.
- **Requests for technical assistance and training** – Transit agencies expressed the need for technical assistance, policy guidance, and training to help further livability goals at the local level. They also reported a need for greater coordination among transportation and other agencies – such as housing, environmental, energy, and social service agencies – in order to advance livability goals.
- **Research needs** – Respondents identified the need for research to demonstrate the benefits and costs of compact development, and technical tools to evaluate the health and development benefits of TOD.

APTA member agencies are very interested in demonstrating the connection between transit investments and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions. APTA is currently working with FTA's standards program to identify practices and methodologies for measuring GHGs from a system wide perspective.

C. Stakeholder Perspective: Reconnecting America

Catherine Cox Blair, Program Director, Reconnecting America

Sam Zimbabwe, Director, Center for Transit-Oriented Development

[Reconnecting America](#) is a national non-profit that promotes sustainable and equitable TOD through research, publications/reports, leadership development, and technical assistance.

One of Reconnecting America's main projects is the [Center for Transit Oriented Development \(CTOD\)](#). CTOD provides research, technical assistance, tools, and strategic plans for local governments and non-profits to use to promote TOD in their regions.

Ms. Cox Blair noted the importance of identifying dynamic leaders around the country to show examples of successful TOD promotion in the regional transportation planning process. Reconnecting America is currently working on a paper that will highlight best practices in promoting TOD at the MPO planning level that will be released in Spring 2010. She highlighted the Twin Cities region of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota as a great example of innovation in promoting equitable TOD. The region's MPO, the [Metro Council](#), serves as a convener and consensus builder region-wide. Metro Council works in partnership with the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the State Housing Finance Agency, and Hennepin and Ramsey Counties to conduct planning that integrates land use and transportation from the scale of a station area all the way up to the region as a whole. The Metro Council provides technical assistance to local municipalities on issues of smart growth and TOD and has run a [Livable Communities Grant Program](#) since 1996. The [Metropolitan Transportation Commission \(MTC\)](#) in San Francisco and [Atlanta Regional Commission \(ARC\)](#) also have livable communities programs

“Diverse partnerships and coalitions are fundamental to realizing the vision of successful TOD.”

- Catherine Cox-Blair, Reconnecting America

in place to fund technical assistance to local municipalities, integrated station-area planning, and capital investments.

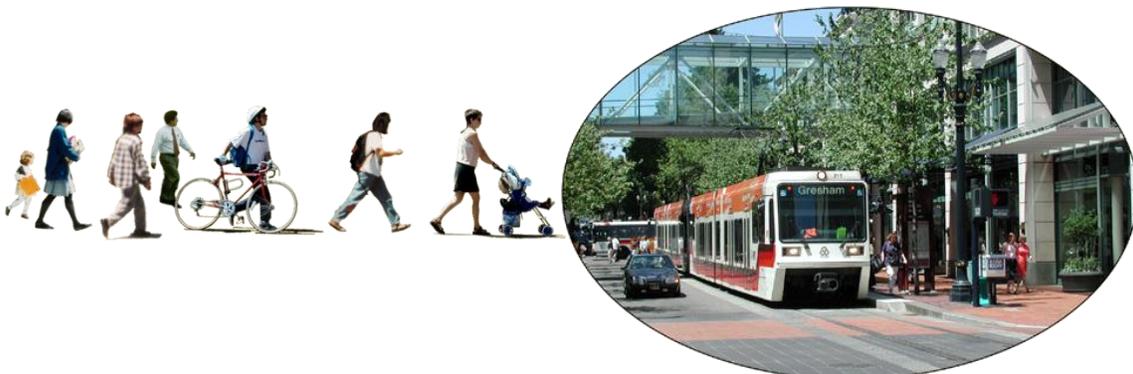
Reconnecting America believes that innovations in smart growth, TOD, and livability are led at the local level. Mr. Zimbabwe noted that the Federal government can play an important role in supporting the *Sustainable Communities Partnership* by supporting local innovation and leadership on these issues and sharing successful stories to promote best practices.

Reconnecting America believes that successful partnerships are fundamental to realizing the vision of successful TOD (e.g., [Envision Utah](#), [Sacramento Region Blueprint](#), [Portland Metro's TOD Program](#)). In order to be successful, Ms. Cox Blair explained that partnerships must be diverse and ongoing and they must be driven at the local level. Real “diversity” means including not only elected officials and decision-makers, but advocacy groups; not only urban community coalitions, but tribal, rural, and suburban communities; not only transit supporters but public health advocates and professionals. Ms. Cox Blair emphasized that new actors such as community-based organizations and foundations need to be brought in to make partnerships successful. She noted that foundations are a new stakeholder group that has played a leadership role in supporting smart growth coalitions in many communities. She highlighted the [Great Communities Collaborative](#) in San Francisco, which convenes local and national foundations and advocacy groups to support local planning and visioning efforts, as a great example of this trend.

Mr. Zimbabwe explained that the importance of effective partnerships will only grow, given the current financial climate, because there is much greater demand for TOD and livable communities projects currently than there is available funding to support them. For example, the Federal TIGER program received nearly \$50 billion in applications for the \$1.5 billion available to distribute. Limited funding also means that performance goals will also become an increasingly important factor in determining where and how to guide transportation investments. Mr. Zimbabwe noted that transit projects should score well when performance criteria are expanded beyond conventional criteria to address livability concerns because transit supports a wide range of benefits including community job creation and environmental sustainability.

III. Case Studies in Successful TOD Planning and Implementation

TOD comes in different forms and exists on different scales. Station areas are surrounded by mixed-use districts where visitors and residents can walk and bike to access a variety of goods, services, and amenities. Districts are connected to one another along corridors of transit service. At the regional scale, good TOD seeks to connect corridors to one another through networks of transit service and transit-supportive investments (e.g., good sidewalks and bike facilities, compact development, improved jobs-housing balance). FTA's afternoon TOD Roundtable reflected this diversity by highlighting case studies of successful TOD projects across a range of geographic scales and socio-economic contexts.



A. Transit Station Areas Shaping Vancouver, British Columbia

Matt Roewe, AIA, LEED AP, Director of Mixed-Use and Major Projects, VIA Architecture

Vancouver, British Columbia region is home to about 2 million residents located about 2 hours north of Seattle, Washington. Vancouver is consistently ranked as one of the worlds most “livable cities” by business and travel magazines. It is interesting to study transit in Vancouver because it is one of the few places that chose not to bring freeways into the city in the 1950s and 1960s. As such, it did not experience suburban “sprawl” in the second half of the 20th century, as most North American cities did during that time. Instead, the city chose to invest in transit and focus on developing a complete network of advanced light-rail. Currently there are three major lines, one of which opened in 2009.

Investment in building Vancouver’s transit network has been accompanied by redevelopment efforts to support TOD in recent years. Today, Vancouver is the third most densely populated city in North America. The result of transit network expansion and thoughtful redevelopment efforts has been a highly successful transit system. Some trains operate on 2-minute headways, ridership has grown 20 percent in the last decade, and the [TransLink](#) system currently carries about the same number of passengers per day as the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system, which serves a region more than 3 times its size.

Mr. Rowe shared background information on a number of TOD stations in Vancouver at various stages of development and implementation, and highlighted several important lessons learned:

- **TOD has to respond to local stakeholders’ needs and local conditions to be successful because the economic and social context at each station are so different.** Some station areas will lend themselves to major retail and commercial projects, while others will require lower densities and a greater emphasis on residential and community redevelopment.
- **The “fear of heights” (i.e. density) may be lessened by a developer’s willingness to engage the community and design a project with community benefits that meet residents’ unique needs.** For example, the Collingswood Village TOD near Joyce Station is located in a declining industrial area where community residents wanted affordable housing development and a focus on neighborhood services to help revitalize the area. In order to gain community support for increased densities in the project, the developer worked with the community to address their development requests (e.g., elementary school, community center, child care facilities, community policing center, new parks, 20% affordable and 25% “family-oriented” housing units).
- **Bus integration and feeder service is key for ridership success and neighborhood integration of TOD over time.** For example, the Bridgeport Station TOD project is fed by 20 bus routes and skytrain ridership has boomed to 10,000 boardings each day.

B. San Francisco’s Transit Center District Plan

David Alumbaugh, City of San Francisco Planning Department

San Francisco’s recently released [Transit Center District Plan](#) builds on the city’s 1985 Downtown Plan, which envisioned the area around the Transbay Terminal as the core for downtown redevelopment in San Francisco. Downtown San Francisco is very dense, but new opportunities for redevelopment arose when the Embarcadero Freeway was irreparably damaged in the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989 and subsequently removed. The land was transferred to the city with the agreement that housing and transit be developed to serve the area.

The Transit Center District Plan was developed with livability principles in mind, and devotes significant attention to public benefits and streetscape elements (e.g., access to sunlight,

pedestrian accessibility, high quality open space, protecting historic resources). Sustainability principles were also an important focus of the plan. The City Planning Department ran models on energy consumption and built provisions into the plan that would allow proposed new developments to operate off the grid. The plan also looks at funding mechanisms to support new development and devotes 50 percent of revenue generation to affordable housing development.

With passage of California's high-speed rail bond, redevelopment of the Transbay Terminal to serve high-speed rail, CalTrain, and bus traffic became a viable component of the plan. A design competition for a new downtown building tower was issued via joint powers authority and the winning design makes a new transit center the visual focal point for San Francisco's skyline, surrounded by high-density residential development to attract new people to live downtown.

C. Planning for Transit-Oriented Communities in Seattle, Washington

Lyle Bicknell, Neighborhood Planning Manager, City of Seattle

“Our work represents an unprecedented level of engagement with those who have traditionally been left out of the planning process”

-Lyle Bicknell, Seattle Neighborhood Planning Manager

Seattle has been trying to build a rapid transit system since 1911. In 1996 voters approved a ballot measure to fund a network of regional express buses, commuter rail and light-rail and the state legislature created [Sound Transit](#) as the regional transit operator to oversee planning, construction, maintenance, and operations.

As efforts to build a regional transit network began, the city launched a neighborhood planning effort to engage communities at a grassroots level and gather input about how residents wanted the city and their neighborhoods to grow. It was an unprecedented level of effort, with nearly 30,000 volunteers and citizen

planners engaged in the process. The result was 38 separate neighborhood plans that the city has been implementing since the late 1990s. The plans include sections on land use and housing, public safety, transportation, economic development, community image and appearance. Mr. Bicknell believes that these plans provide the city with good guidance on how to build walkable, livable, transit-supportive communities. The city recognizes that the neighborhood plans could be better integrated with regional transit expansion and regional transportation planning efforts, however, and launched an effort to update them in 2008.

Updating the plans was a major resource and time commitment by the city. Staff found that residents often felt a lot of pride and ownership in the original neighborhood plans and were resistant to updating the plans for a more regional focus.

Several lessons learned have emerged from the update process to inform future neighborhood planning work:

- **Use “planning outreach liaisons” to help bring new voices to the table.** The city employed “planning outreach liaisons” to help engage a number of communities who had been traditionally under-represented in the planning process. The liaisons were members of the communities who could speak to people in their native languages (e.g., Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese, Vietnamese) and attended local festivals and community meetings to encourage participation in the neighborhood planning process.

A “planning outreach liaison” solicits public input from community residents.



Source: City of Seattle image

- **Invest the time to go to local events to build engagement and trust.** Mr. Bicknell explained that you cannot expect people to show up for your public meetings if you haven't taken the time to support their local events. This is especially true for traditionally underserved communities, who need engagement upfront to build trust and buy-in to the process. He argued that building relationships and trust leads to tangible improvements in the planning process. For example, the Vietnamese community told city planners that they wanted space to play badminton in community parks, not basketball courts, because badminton is a more popular sport in Vietnam than basketball.
- **Take time to develop a language that people respond to.** Staff found that few people respond positively to the word "density," so they stopped using it. Instead they started talking about "households" and planning projects with a "range of services and activities" for residents to enjoy in "vital town centers." Staff found that most people respond to positively to this type of language.
- **Be sensitive to the challenges of robust community engagement.** In order to engage people, Mr. Bicknell observed that you have to have a lot of meetings. He also explained that it is critical to engage people in a way that brings them along gingerly in the process, so they understand their voice is important but also one of the many at the table.
- **Use compelling graphics and visuals to communicate information.** Eye-catching graphics can help to tell stories about data in a way that is meaningful to people. For example, the city wanted to show what a 5-minute walking radius would look like from different transit stations and maps were able to show how the shape of the walking radius was different from place to place, depending on the quality of the waking environment. Staff also found that visualization techniques can help communicate the range of choices for alternative streetscape designs to the public.
- **Take advantage of new technologies like web surveys, online feedback form.** The web can be an extremely convenient and helpful place to solicit input. For example, the city had one web survey that received 13,000 responses.

Visualization tools at a workshop.



Source: City of Seattle image

D. TOD Corridors in Chicago: A Framework for Sustainable Urbanism

***Peter Kindel, Director of Urban Design, Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture
Todd Fagen, Vice President & Chicago Director, Sam Schwartz Engineering
John Houseal, Principal & Founder, Houseal Lavigne Associates***

The [Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning](#) (CMAP) is the major force for regional transportation and land use planning in greater Chicago. Mr. Kindel noted that the Chicago region has come a long way towards transit supportive land use and transportation planning in recent decades. For example, transit and rail are not even mentioned in regional plans he looked at from the 1960s and 1970s. Yet today, promoting TOD is a major component of CMAP's long-range transportation plan, [Go To 2040](#).

There are more than 400 different suburbs in the Chicago region, each with differing social, economic, and political contexts and needs. As such, a regional TOD vision plan needs to be supported by sub-area plans to examine the specific opportunities and challenges that exist around each particular station, as well as the design and service features that would be needed in order to make TOD work in those locations. Chicago already has an extensive baseline system of bus and rail to build from, which Mr. Kindel noted as a major asset for the region.

Mr. Houseal noted that successful TOD development requires at least three basic levels of capacity analysis:

- **Market Capacity** – Does a current market exist for residential development, commercial, a hospital complex, etc.? If not, is there market potential for these types of developments to emerge?
- **Site Capacity** – What are the physical characteristics of the station site or surrounding area? How built out is the site currently? Is there room to design a new station without disrupting existing structures? What physical infrastructure and amenities already exist (e.g., station, sidewalks)
- **Community Capacity** – What is the current comfort level or desire for TOD in the community?

“All potential TOD projects need a combination of market, site, and community capacity to be successful.”

- John Houseal, Houseal Lavigne Associates

In order to be successful, Mr. Houseal argued that individual TOD developments must incorporate elements of all three types of TOD capacity. He noted that market capacity should be the starting point for TOD analysis and corridor planning. He also argued that projects cannot be successfully completed without community support and emphasized the importance of reaching out to help build community understanding and engagement for TOD when a project begins.

Panel speakers shared brief case studies on four different corridors/sites that are currently engaged in TOD planning in the Chicago region:

- **Emerging corridor on the urban fringe** – Barrington is a middle-class suburb with large lot zoning, a 2-3 story build-out, and an existing commuter rail station. CMAP conducted a district and corridor study to look at existing land uses and mobility patterns, then developed three potential scenarios to frame re-development options: Preserve, Reinvest, and Innovate. The scenarios provided residents with varying degrees of infill redevelopment, housing, commercial space, and public amenities from which to chose.
- **Inner-ring corridor** – Melrose Park and Bellwood are two adjacent, working class suburbs, each with an existing commuter rail station. Both existing stations were “underperforming” but lacked redevelopment potential due to site capacity limitations. The market potential and community desire for TOD existed in both communities, however. CMAP worked creatively with stakeholders (commuter rail provider, community representatives, freight railroads, the Illinois DOT, and developers) to identify a site between the two *existing stations* to design a new station that will serve both communities, and create a new mixed-use development. The proposed project will be a 60- acre redevelopment, including nearly 1,000 new residential units, a pedestrian overpass, parking deck, and commercial movie theater.

Location for a new TOD between two existing stations.



Source: Houseal Lavigne Associates image

- **Urban corridor** – The Damon Avenue corridor runs 11.5 miles, encompasses 6 rail stations and crosses a wide variety of land uses and neighborhood types. In order to make the corridor more transit-friendly, a neighborhood planning initiative is underway to improve transit supportive streetscaping elements (e.g., bicycle parking, pedestrian intersection improvements, bike lanes and boulevards, bike boxes) around existing stations. Transit officials are also investing in technology to develop easily accessible bus tracking systems (e.g., real time screens in convenience stores and taverns to

Real-time bus information in a local tavern.



Source: Sam Schwartz Engineering image

- provide bus arrival/departure information) and an interchangeable fare card. Municipalities are also investing in better traffic enforcement to improve bike and pedestrian safety.
- **Chicago’s Inner-Loop as a TOD** – As Chicago aims to reduce carbon emissions, planners are looking for opportunities to encourage residential redevelopment downtown and increase TOD in the “inner-loop.” Though it may surprise some, the inner-loop does not currently have a wide mix of uses. There is relatively little residential development, and few to no neighborhood services (e.g., schools, grocery stores). In addition to promoting more mixed-use and residential development, the city is preparing a “de-carbonization plan” for the inner-loop, which explores energy reduction strategies, such as reducing cars downtown (e.g., reducing lanes, converting some streets to pedestrian malls).

E. A Regional Strategy for Promoting TOD in Baltimore and Central Maryland

Brian O’Malley, Central Maryland Transportation Alliance

Dr. Seema Iyer, Baltimore City Department of Planning

The [Central Maryland Transportation Alliance](#) (CMTA) was formed in 2007 to promote better transportation in Baltimore and the five surrounding counties. One of CMTA’s initiatives has been to build a diverse coalition of state and local agencies (e.g., planning, transportation, housing, economic development), advocacy groups, and foundations to develop a regional strategy to promote TOD in Baltimore and central Maryland.

Transit service in Baltimore is provided by the [Maryland Transit Administration](#), a state-run agency. Baltimore is currently served by regional bus service, one heavy rail subway line, and one light rail line. The CMTA is actively engaged in creating a vision for building Baltimore’s current transit system out and then advocating for the policy and funding provisions that would be needed to realize that vision.

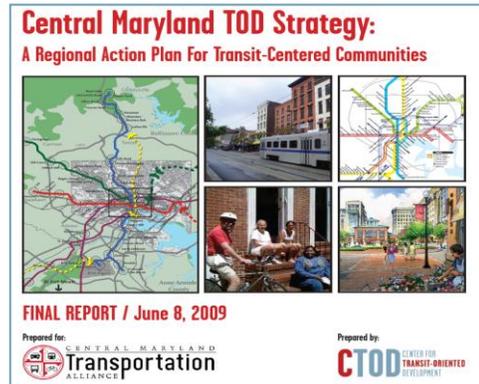
To do so, the CMTA created a TOD Steering Committee and partnered with Reconnecting America to conduct a strategic planning process and produce a report that would:

1. Identify key corridors and ideal sites for TOD in the Baltimore Region, and
2. Develop an action plan for use as an implementation strategy.

The final report, [Central Maryland TOD Strategy: A Regional Action Plan for Transit-Centered Communities](#) was released in July 2009. It identified five primary strategies to achieve TOD goals in the region:

1. Complete existing projects to demonstrate high-quality transit-centered communities in the region;
2. Make new investments in key regional locations;
3. Modify local, regional, and state policies to support TOD;
4. Construct transit and multi-modal transportation systems to build the market and expand the geographic reach of transit; and
5. Foster cross-sector partnerships and build local capacity for TOD implementation among all stakeholders.

Regional Vision and Action Plan for TOD in Baltimore.



Source: Reconnecting America image

The TOD Steering Committee has now transitioned into an implementation committee that will use the TOD Analysis and Action Plan to coordinate, monitor and advocate for TOD strategies in the region.

The members of the TOD Steering Committee advocate for policy reform, at both the state and regional level, to support TOD. For example, members of the TOD Steering Committee:

- Secured a provision in state law that recognizes TOD as an eligible “transportation purpose” expense from the Maryland Transportation Trust Fund.
- Supported TIGER program grant for a TOD project in Westport.
- Are currently working to modify state/local policy on the formation of tax increment financing (TIF) districts to be more supportive of equitable TOD.
- Are currently working to renew and adequately fund the state historic tax credit to support TOD (since most TOD happens in infill development where historic tax credits may be applied).
- Are currently working with a group called Transportation for Maryland on a transportation finance campaign to find sustainable revenue sources for transit and TOD.

The CMTA has also worked on outreach and coalition building, particularly in support of the Red Line project, a new proposed 14.6 mile light rail line that it sees as a key step towards achieving Baltimore’s regional transit vision. The CMTA sponsored a Regional Red Line Community summit and was a signatory of the [Red Line Community Compact](#), which outlined 4 community goals:

1. Put Baltimore to work;
2. Be green;
3. Design community centered stations; and
4. Aggressively plan and manage construction to limit community impact.

The City of Baltimore works closely with the CMTA and is active in promoting TOD in the city, both through Red Line project planning as well as through broader efforts. In 2009, the city adopted a new form-based zoning code (its first update since 1971), known as [TransForm](#)

[Baltimore](#), which created TOD districts and a typology of seven different station types that reflects the diverse range of opportunities to develop TOD projects city-wide. Neighborhood revitalization is a major component of the city's TOD strategy, as demonstrated by its efforts to engage citizens in the Red Line Community Compact process, and Ms. Iyer noted that the city is currently looking at land-banking as a strategy to address the city's foreclosure crisis. Despite the city's many current efforts, Ms. Iyer noted that it can be challenging to do TOD successfully in a region where there is not a strong market for private development and investment.



Leadership from elected officials and community organizations are two key components of Baltimore's Regional TOD Vision and Action Plan.



Source: Central Maryland Transportation Alliance images