ACHIEVING OUTCOMES FOR TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF READINESS

TOD Readiness Tool User Guide and Documentation

Contents

Introduction

Achieving transit oriented development (TOD) is an evolutionary process with many factors driving readiness for TOD to take place. TOD requires a specific combination of geographic, demographic, economic, and institutional factors to function effectively in complementary fashion. Cultivating an environment from which TOD will emerge therefore requires diligent planning. TOD emerges from opportunities – opportunities that planners and local governments create, opportunities that elected officials enable, and opportunities that developers and financial institutions recognize and act upon. Identifying those opportunities is the key to understanding whether an area is "ready" for TOD and what strategies are critical to unlocking the full potential for TOD at a given location.

The Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) District Four has developed a tool to assess how "ready" an area is for TOD, based on an analysis of 20 different measures that capture those various facets of potential. Through the evaluation of those measures, planners and other stakeholders can use the tool to develop strategies to increase an area's readiness for TOD by building upon the area's existing strengths and strategically improving its weaker areas.

The current version of the TOD readiness tool represents the compilation of research, case studies, interviews, and feedback from the Southeast Florida TOD Working Group and FDOT District Four Staff, as well as various developer, lender, and business interests both within and outside of the Southeast Florida region.

The TOD readiness tool includes three components:

1. This User Guide, which provides instructions on how to use the tool, the purpose of each measure, and technical notes

2. An interactive Excel spreadsheet tool that performs the readiness assessment

3. A two-page summary template for clearly presenting the assessment results

This User Guide documents the tool's measures and methodologies and describes the inner workings of the tool. It also outlines ways in which various planning partners can use the tool.

Purpose of the Tool

Southeast Florida is experiencing unique growth pressure that is constrained by limited available land for development. The region must grapple with making transportation investments that ensure its residents and visitors can access opportunities for employment, recreation, and other daily needs. **TOD is a cross-cutting solution to many of the region's growth pressures** because it addresses many of the region's challenges by supporting investments in transit, affordable housing, and economic opportunity.

Numerous rail initiatives, including the Wave streetcar, All Aboard Florida intercity rail, and Tri-Rail Coastal Link passenger rail service, hold the promise of bringing prodigious opportunity for TOD in Southeast Florida, especially for cities in Broward and Palm Beach counties. The region's planning partners are also exploring opportunities for premium bus service, including bus rapid transit (BRT), express bus service, and limited stop bus service, some of which is already in operation today. As the Southeast Florida Transportation Council (SEFTC) brings together the long range plans for Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach in a truly regional transit vision, the notion of transit as a viable mode of transportation starts to become realized.

Southeast Florida's planning partners have been working hard to plan for TOD that will support this regional vision. FDOT and the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA) have conducted several detailed station area assessments along the Florida East Coast (FEC) rail line in preparation for the Tri-Rail Coastal Link. Other partners have undertaken numerous transit feasibility studies on other corridors throughout the region. These studies contain a wealth of information on TOD, including market potential, land use, economic impacts, feasibility, and other station area characteristics.

The TOD readiness tool complements these previous analyses. It synthesizes readily available information to focus on achieving outcomes. The TOD readiness tool helps planners and stakeholders assess an existing or potential future station area's strengths. It unveils opportunities to identify immediate next steps to make an area more ready for TOD. The tool provides a platform for synthesizing readily available information. It includes a quantitative analysis of measures that matter to the full spectrum of TOD interests. The analysis reveals the area's strengths and opportunities from a holistic perspective, which planners can then translate to concrete strategies to build upon strengths and capitalize on opportunities to achieve measurable outcomes. The tool's two-page summary can also serve as a preliminary marketing piece for garnering developer and lender interest in each station area.

The TOD readiness tool differs from similar tools and studies in other regions in that it is not a comparison of one station area against another. Instead, the tool is intended to be applied to individual station areas where the analysis will help planners develop strategies that are specifically targeted to the station area's strengths and weaknesses, recognizing each station area's vision and function is different and unique. The scoring thresholds are not based on how one station area compares to another, but employ universal and Florida-specific characteristics of what makes an area ready for TOD.

> The TOD Readiness tool is <u>not</u> intended to compare one station area to another.
>
> It assesses a station area's unique strengths and weaknesses, and helps planners develop targeted strategies to increase readiness for TOD for the individual station area.

In short, the TOD readiness tool:

- Provides information that appeals to a variety of TOD stakeholders

- Captures key factors from a variety of perspectives,

- Aids in developing strategies to increase an area's readiness for TOD

- Provides a method that is <u>simple to replicate</u> for other station areas, regardless of the level of prior study

A wide variety of audiences may find the tool to be useful. The TOD readiness tool is primarily intended for planners to complete using their intimate knowledge of the existing or potential future station area. The assessment will enable planners to view the station area through the lens of TOD readiness and assist them in developing strategies for making the station area more ready for TOD. The resulting two page summary may be of interest to developers, lenders, elected officials, and the general public to aid in decision making and investment strategies.

Definitions and Important Caveats

Definitions

Many of the terms within this document are defined consistently with A Framework for TOD in Florida (FDOT and DCA, 2011):

A *transit station, as distinct from a bus stop, is a station serving a premium type or types of transit (e.g. commuter rail, light rail, or bus rapid transit) or a station that functions as a local bus hub.*

A *local bus hub or transfer station is considered to be a premium transit station if it serves a minimum of three fixed routes operating with headways of 21 to 30 minutes of less (consistent with the Level of Service D standards in the Transportation Research Board, Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual, 2nd Edition).*

A *station area is the one-half mile or approximately 500 acres around a transit station.*

The tool analyzes the measures within the half-mile radius station area to compute the readiness scores. However, it is important to note that the benefits of TOD (financial and otherwise) extend beyond the one-half mile radius (Nelson et. al). Strategies and plans for station areas also do not have to be confined to the one-half mile radius.

Scale of Analysis

The tool is designed to measure the readiness of an entire station area, not of an individual project. However, planners can use the tool to determine whether a specific project or plan would improve the station area's readiness. For example, if the readiness assessment indicates that the diversity of existing uses within the station area is low, a project that incorporates a retail component may be determined to improve readiness.

Corridor-Wide Application

Corridor-level readiness shares many of the same attributes and characteristics as station area readiness, but there are key differences between the two. When planning for TOD, it is important to recognize that transit stations connect with transit corridors, which together form a transit system.

It is important to recognize that each station area has a unique function within the larger corridor context. One station at the end of a commuter rail line may be residentially rich, moderately dense, and have an ample supply of parking. Another station downtown may be rich in jobs, have much higher intensities of development, and contain little parking within the station area. Each station area on its own may not need to achieve the highest possible score for every measure of readiness. This is an important consideration when using the TOD readiness tool to assess a station area. Users should think critically about how each station functions within the broader corridor context, and focus on the measures that best reflect its individual function. For more information about planning for TOD at the system, corridor, and station levels, please refer to Chapter 2 in A Framework for TOD in Florida.

Station Area Place Types

While all station areas are have unique characteristics, there are some basic similarities amongst several types of station areas. A Framework for TOD in Florida and the Florida TOD Guidebook provide a transit station area typology for Florida based on transit type, existing or

desired density/intensity, and community context. The typology identifies three distinct place types each with three types of transit, resulting in nine combinations. The Framework and Guidebook station area and site level targets for each combination. The TOD readiness tool uses these targets in the thresholds for several measures of the readiness assessment. Measures whose thresholds do not vary depending on transit type or place type are based on case study research, best practices, and regional statistics.
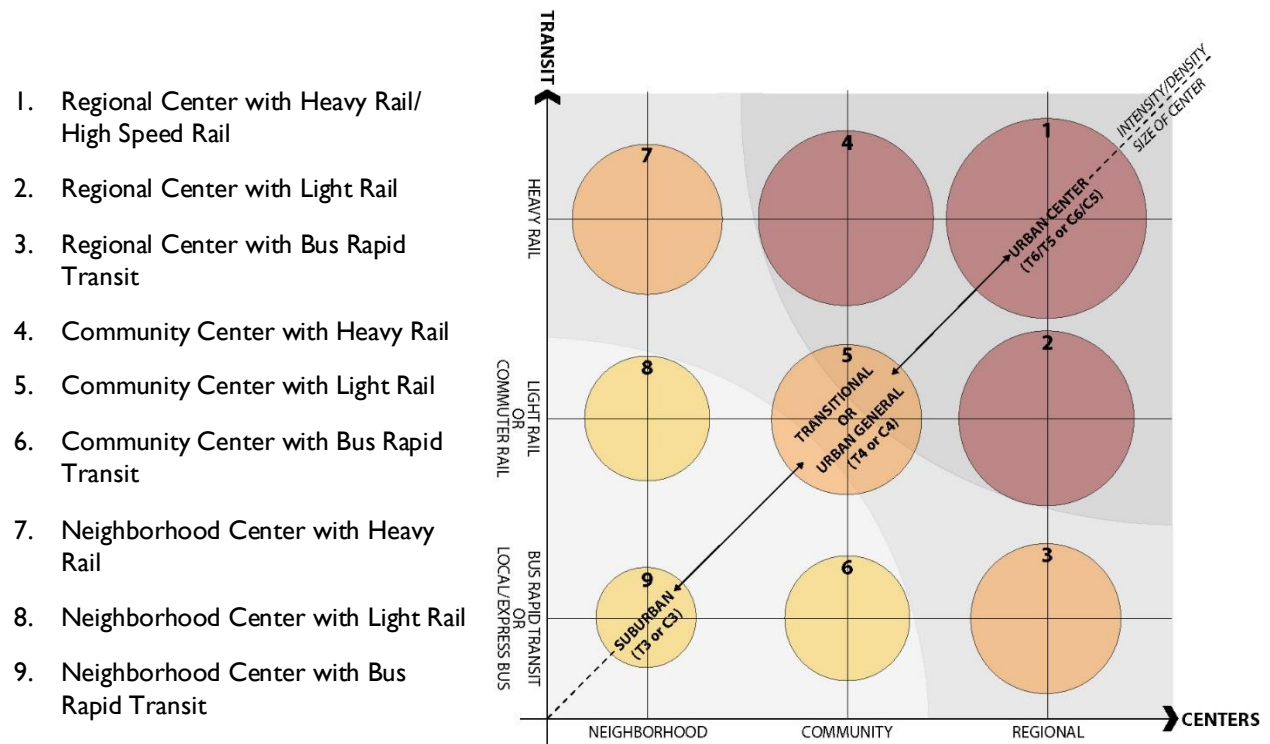
1. Regional Center with Heavy Rail/ High Speed Rail

2. Regional Center with Light Rail

3. Regional Center with Bus Rapid Transit

4. Community Center with Heavy Rail

5. Community Center with Light Rail

6. Community Center with Bus Rapid Transit

7. Neighborhood Center with Heavy Rail

8. Neighborhood Center with Light Rail

9. Neighborhood Center with Bus Rapid Transit

Figure 1: Place Types and Transit Types from A Framework for TOD in Florida

Using the Tool

The TOD readiness tool includes three components:

1. This User Guide, which provides instructions on how to use the tool, the purpose of each measure, and technical notes

2. An interactive Excel spreadsheet tool that performs the readiness assessment

3. A two-page summary template for clearly presenting the assessment results

The tool is intended to be completed by someone who is familiar with the area's planning and political context. Community planners are the most likely users of the tool, and anyone interested in learning more about TOD readiness may use the tool. The two-page graphic summary may be useful in communicating the results of the assessment to a variety of interested stakeholders, and may serve as a marketing or education piece.

The application of the TOD readiness tool consists of four basic steps:

1. Evaluate the measures to establish an existing readiness assessment for the half-mile radius circle surrounding the existing or potential transit station.

2. Compare the existing readiness measures to the policy goals and directions.

3. Identify the area's key strengths and opportunities.

4. Develop strategies to build upon strengths and take advantage of opportunities.

The user should first read this User Guide in its entirety before using the spreadsheet tool.

The user will complete a series of questions and fill in the corresponding information in the spreadsheet tool to calculate the readiness score. The spreadsheet tool makes use of only readily available data, and some GIS analysis is required. Once the user has completed the assessment in the spreadsheet tool, he/she should copy and paste the results into the two-page summary template. The user can then identify the area's general strengths and weaknesses, and develop strategies to build upon the area's strengths and seize opportunities for addressing measures that did not score well.

The four categories of measures represent the variety of perspectives of TOD stakeholders. The TOD readiness tool assesses the 20 measures within a half-mile radius of the station area.

Each measure is evaluated and simplified into a 1 to 5 score, where 5 indicates most ready and 1 indicates least ready, based on criteria that reflect the individual measure's level of readiness for TOD. The individual measures, their calculation methodology, and the scoring thresholds are explained in greater detail in the following Measures of TOD Readiness section.

The TOD readiness tool relies on the Framework for TOD in Florida and Florida TOD Guidebook for the assessment of several measures. These two documents provide a wealth of information on TOD in Florida and are recommended for planners to review. The Guidebook also includes model ordinances and design standards for station areas.

For measures that require self-rating, it does not matter as much whether you receive a score of one or two; or a four vs. five. Rather, the intent is to develop a better understanding of the attributes that indicate readiness for TOD and to determine how well the area under assessment has achieved those attributes. Evaluating each measure on a score of 1 to 5 provides a simple way to gauge the level of readiness and helps the user to identify strategies to reach a higher level of readiness.

The following section provides more details on the measures themselves. Subsequent sections show an example of applying the tool to a potential future transit station area, named "TODville," and discuss future applications of the tool.

Measures of TOD Readiness

A variety of different public and private sector stakeholders fulfill roles in planning for and implementing TOD. The 20 measures explained below, and shown altogether in Figure 2, span the full spectrum of factors that reflect TOD stakeholder interests. The measures of readiness included in this assessment tool are intended to be easy to compute with readily accessible

data. The measures are intended to guide the user of the tool in understanding the important factors of TOD readiness.
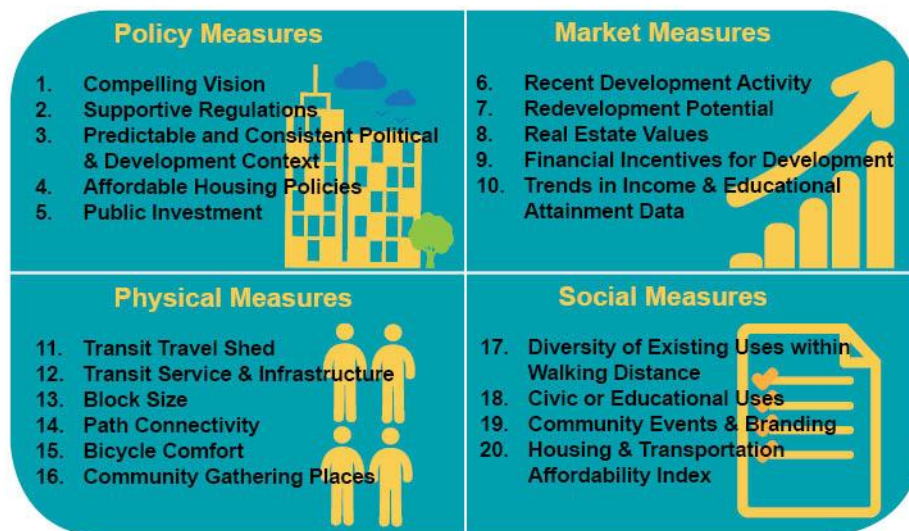
Figure 2: TOD Readiness Measures

Some of these measures are interrelated and cut across the four categories. The measures should not be viewed in isolation; rather they should be viewed together as an interconnected assemblage of readiness for TOD, as demonstrated in the "TODville" example.

Policy measures indicate the level of support the local government has demonstrated through visioning processes and documents, supportive regulations, public investments, policy adoptions, and other commitments. They also indicate the level of consistency and predictability in the process. These measures are primarily driven by local governments, and are also of interest to developers, as they can provide procedural or fiscal incentives for developers.

A cooperative local government with a clear vision generally takes precedence over market conditions and transit access, although all three are important factors. What makes an area "ready" is more akin to how steady an area is in terms of politics.

Market measures assess the market potential of the area and evaluate recent real estate activity and trends. These measures are of primary interest to potential investors, i.e. developers and lenders, because they significantly affect factors like calculated risk and return on investment.

Physical measures evaluate the area's underlying infrastructure, mix of uses, and the quality and connectivity of transportation networks. In general, these measures appeal primarily to businesses, as they indicate the propensity for potential customers to access the business without having to drive. These measures are also relevant to other audiences, including potential residents, investors, and planners because they describe the variety of destinations available and the ease with which one can access destinations by non-auto modes. Physical measures also assess the scale and orientation of the built environment (for humans or autos).

Pedestrian oriented places generally have easier access to transit, and can support local businesses with greater numbers of pedestrians passing by.

Social measures reveal several facets of the vibrancy and civic resources of the community, as well as the balance of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the existing residents. These measures are primarily relevant to potential residents and visitors because they indicate the community assets available. Local government planners, transit service providers, and businesses are also interested in these measures.

Policy Measures

a. Compelling Vision (Measure 1 of 20)

Why is a compelling vision indicative of TOD readiness?

Having a clear, consistent, and agreed-upon vision for TOD is arguably the single most important element of readiness.

Community Visions – What are they?

Community visions in general (regardless of whether they include elements of TOD) are important for building trust and creating a shared image of what the community hopes to be. Community visions articulate a community's values and priorities. They describe a desirable end state that all community members agree upon. This desired end state can influence all decisions to make sure the community is moving in the right direction. This agreement is critical to readiness.

A community vision can be as simple as a few sentences of text, or it can be as elaborate as a plan with illustrations that depict the desired character, placement, scale, and overall pattern of development. The key in identifying whether a community has a vision is if it is succinct and easily found. A vision must be explicitly specified, and not just inferred from a variety of other planning documents.

The City of Fort Lauderdale, for example, has developed Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale, its vision plan for 2035, which clearly articulates the city's values and what it wants to become. Other jurisdictions, in contrast, may not appear to have a consistent, cohesive adopted vision. Broward County is an example of a jurisdiction whose comprehensive plan includes many goals, policies, and objectives, but is generally lacking a succinct vision statement that stands alone.

> A meaningful vision empowers and inspires decision-makers and reflects community values. If the city council, board of supervisors, or other governing body adopts a vision, it carries much greater weight.

In general, if you can point to a document and specifically to a paragraph or two that describes the lofty end state for your community, then you may have a vision. However, just having a vision may not be sufficient. A meaningful vision empowers and inspires decision-makers and reflects community values. If the city council, board of supervisors, or other governing body adopts a vision, it carries much greater weight.

Community Visions – What should they include?

A vision statement on its own may not include all of the elements to guide individual development decisions. Clear visions contain an overall concept of where development and redevelopment should be focused (especially around future transit stations) and are accompanied by illustrations and guidelines for density, mix of uses, and site plan design.

Illustrations are valuable because they clarify what different densities and land use patterns look like. Incorporating pictures, photographs, and diagrams into a community vision can clarify desirable characteristics and untangle controversial concepts (such as fears of high density that assume a particular style of architecture or design).

Community buy-in is critical. The vision should be an accurate reflection of the community's values and priorities. The development of the vision document should involve meaningful public outreach, so that the vision is an honest reflection of the community's values and translates their hopes and dreams into expectations for moving forward.

> Clear visions contain:
> - An overall concept of where development and redevelopment should be focused (especially around future transit stations)
> - Illustrations and guidelines for density, mix of uses, and site plan design.

Community Visions – Are they important to developers?

Community visions are important to developers. An adopted vision shows developers that community members agree upon what the community will look like in the future. If a community already agrees upon the type of development they want, they are less likely to use the development review process to figure this out. Communities that have undergone a visioning effort have thought about how they want to grow, and the concepts within a vision plan have been vetted within the community. Developers often see an adopted vision as a sign of predictability.

Community Visions – What if it doesn't mention TOD?

Planners using the TOD readiness tool will be interested in a vision that includes TOD. In some cases, a community may have a vision that lacks language specifically referring to TOD. It is important to understand why the vision lacks reference to TOD. The vision may include references to sustainable transportation; compact, walkable development; maximizing transit ridership potential; reducing reliance on the automobile; reducing the costs of delivering public services; and reducing combined housing and transportation costs, among others that are compatible to TOD. In these cases, the community is supportive of concepts of TOD, but may be fearful of the density of TOD.

In other cases, a community vision may clearly indicate that the specific area under examination is not intended to be TOD. An area that is clearly outside of any transit corridor or growth area or is envisioned as a low density single family neighborhoods in the long term is not intended for TOD. If this is the case, planners will likely need to reengage in additional public education and dialogue to further assess the feasibility of TOD from the community perspective.

Policies to Support Community Visions

A community vision is particularly strong if the community has adopted policies to support its implementation. These policies can include spelling out transit-supportive densities and land uses within the comprehensive plan, and having adopted transit-supportive districts where providing a range of travel options guides land use and development decisions (e.g. Multimodal Transportation Districts (MMTDs), Planned Mobility Districts, Transportation Concurrency Exception Areas (TCEAs), Transit Oriented Concurrency Areas (TOCAs), or other concurrency exception or management areas). Other complimentary policies include Complete Streets policies, and bicycle and pedestrian plans.

How do you evaluate a compelling vision?

The following questions can provide some guidance on the strength of an area's vision for TOD. The measure for a compelling vision is evaluated through the following <u>criteria</u>, represented as a series of questions. Each question has a point value associated with it. (Please read the remaining explanation following the questions, as it contains some important guidance and caveats.)

1. Does the area have a vision for the future in an adopted plan (please refer to the explanation above that describes a compelling vision)?

   ☐ 0 points if No

   ☐ 1 point if Yes - through descriptive language only (no illustrative representations)

   ☐ 2 points if Yes - through descriptive language with and illustrative representations (e.g. pictures and/or renderings)

2. Does the vision include language that is supportive of TOD?

   ☐ 1 point if Yes

3. Does the vision include a map that orients development around a future transit station?

   ☐ 1 point if Yes

4. Does the area have a station area plan that shows the desired layout of streets and buildings?

   ☐ 1 point if Yes

5. Was the adopted vision and/or station area plan developed through a charrette process or other intensive public outreach effort?

   ☐ 1 point if Yes

6. Does the Comprehensive Plan include (for the area under assessment):

   ☐ Transit-supportive densities (as specified in the Framework for TOD in Florida)? 1 point if Yes

☐ A mix of uses (as specified in the Framework for TOD in Florida)? 1 point if Yes

☐ Designations that exempt or modify concurrency requirements (e.g. MMTDs, Planned Mobility Districts, TCEAs, or TOCAs)? 1 point if Yes

7. Has the community adopted a Complete Streets policy and/or bicycle and pedestrian plan(s)?

☐ 1 point if Yes

Planners should use critical thinking to evaluate the relative strength of their community's vision and supportive policies. This measure is a *compelling* vision, because its merit lies in the degree to which it compels decision makers to follow through.

Analysts should not just 'check the box' to indicate whether your community meets each criterion in name only. Rather, think critically about the strength of each criterion, and ask these questions, and develop your own questions to assess the viability of each criterion:

- How involved were the public in the development of these items?
- Is the vision widely held as a true reflection of community values, or is it something that just 'sits on a shelf'?
- Do planners, elected officials, and active members of the public reference the vision?
- Does the vision influence decisions?
- How many 'spin-off' efforts has it generated?

These answers will vary for each community. Planners should assess the strength of their vision by thinking about the previously described criteria, and by simply reflecting upon how many day to day conversations and decisions hearken back to the vision. If the answer is "not a lot," then planners should think about how they can start to make the vision a part of everyday conversations. The answer will differ for each community. One community may decide to conduct a community visioning charrette process. Another may decide to have one-on-one meetings with city councilors and department staff. Another may embark on a series of structured dialogues at various community centers (e.g. churches, schools, and YMCAs) to bring issues to light.

What are the ideal values for a compelling vision?
Ideally, a community would be able to acquire a total of 10 points from the criteria. Those communities who acquire fewer than 10 points are less ready for TOD, and should begin to think about ways to strengthen their vision for TOD. Table 1 provides the thresholds for the 1 to 5 scores for a compelling vision.

Table 1: Compelling Vision Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready -- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
0 to 2 points	3 to 4 points	5 to 6 points	7 to 8 points	9 to 10 points

What are alternative ways of measuring a compelling vision?

Communities may undertake additional initiatives in support of TOD. The overall purpose of this measure is for planners and other analysts to think critically about whether they have a vision for TOD, and whether that vision is compelling and reflective of the community's values.

What are some strategies to improve a compelling vision?

Planner should refer back to the list of seven questions previously identified as criteria for this measure, and think critically about ways in which to improve upon them. The Florida TOD Guidebook contains model Comprehensive Plan goals, objectives, and policies, as well as a wealth of information on other items. Planners should consult both the Florida TOD Guidebook and the Framework for TOD in Florida as useful resources.

b. Supportive Regulations (Measure 2 of 20)

Why are supportive regulations indicative of TOD readiness?

TOD supportive regulations and ordinances are the mechanisms through which the vision, plans, and policies are implemented. Regulations ensure that development projects will achieve the desired mix of uses and densities appropriate for the TOD station area typology. Regulations are different from policies because they carry the weight of law.

How do you evaluate supportive regulations?

The following questions can provide some guidance on the degree to which land use and development regulations are supportive of TOD. The measure for supportive regulations is evaluated through the following criteria, represented as a series of questions. Each question has a point value associated with it. Many of these questions are not specific to the area under assessment. They instead assess the regulatory context of the local government as a whole. Where appropriate, the analyst should ask these questions for the area under assessment.

1. Does the zoning code require the appropriate mix of uses for the TOD place type, as specified in the Framework for TOD in Florida?

    ☐ 1 point if Yes

2. Does the zoning code require the transit supportive densities for the TOD place type, specified in the Framework for TOD in Florida?

    ☐ 1 point if Yes

3. Are the zoning regulations based on a form-based code (including but not limited to the SmartCode)?

    ☐ 1 point if Yes

4. Are the development regulations consistent with the model land development regulations from the Florida TOD Guidebook? For each element below, assess the compatibility with the Florida TOD Guidebook. Rate the regulations for consistency on a scale of 1 to 5 for each element. Acquire 0.1 points for each score. Complete consistency with all elements would result in a score of 4.5 for this question.

☐ Building Height (Acquire 0.0 to 0.5 points, depending on the level of consistency)

☐ Building Placement (Acquire 0.0 to 0.5 points, depending on the level of consistency)

☐ Building Frontage (Acquire 0.0 to 0.5 points, depending on the level of consistency)

☐ Density (Acquire 0.0 to 0.5 points, depending on the level of consistency)

☐ Frontage Standards (Acquire 0.0 to 0.5 points, depending on the level of consistency)

☐ Civic Open Space (Acquire 0.0 to 0.5 points, depending on the level of consistency)

☐ Building Façade Standards (Acquire 0.0 to 0.5 points, depending on the level of consistency)

☐ Parking Standards (Acquire 0.0 to 0.5 points, depending on the level of consistency)

☐ Street and Block Standards (Acquire 0.0 to 0.5 points, depending on the level of consistency)

5. Has the local government developed pedestrian-oriented, transit supportive, or other urban design guidelines that apply to this area? (See the City of Fort Lauderdale's TOD Guidelines for its Downtown Master Plan as an example.)

     ☐ 1 point if Yes

6. Are there parking reductions, maximums, shared parking, or other policies and initiatives lowering or removing parking requirements?

     ☐ 0.5 points if the community has a parking management plan or has demonstrated other initiatives that are alternatives to parking minimums

7. Is there a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Ordinance that applies to the area under assessment?

     ☐ 1 point if Yes

What are the ideal values for supportive regulations?
The maximum points possible is 10 points from the criteria above. Table 2 provides the thresholds for the 1 to 5 scores for supportive regulations.

Table 2: Supportive Regulations Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
0 to 1.9 points	2.0 to 3.9 points	4.0 to 5.9 points	6.0 to 7.9 points	8.0 to 10.0 points

What are alternative ways of measuring supportive regulations?
Communities may find other creative ways to incorporate TOD into land development and site design regulations. While the criteria listed above provide a starting point, planners are encouraged to think creatively and revise their ordinances accordingly to best encourage TOD.

c. Predictable & Consistent Political & Development Context (Measure 3 of 20)
   Why is a predictable and consistent political and development context indicative of TOD readiness?
   Developers consistently noted that predictability, stability, and agreement between decision-makers strongly influence their decisions on whether to undertake a TOD project in one area or another.

   Developers prefer to work with cities that have a "steady" political climate, and will avoid investing in cities where the political climate is notoriously turbulent. Development processes are more complicated and less predictable in cities where the City Commission and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) are often at odds. Conflicts in these cities tend to arise because the City Commission members do not agree on a common vision. The "durability" of the regulatory environment before and after elections is also a key consideration.

   How do you evaluate a predictable and consistent political and development context?
   The following questions can provide some guidance to think about the predictability and consistency of the political and development context. This measure is evaluated through the following criteria, represented as a series of questions. Each question has a range of point values associated with it, and several questions beneath to help planners think critically about each criterion. Many of these questions require a subjective assessment. One may argue about whether to give a score of 2 or 3, or 4 or 5. Please note that the score itself is not the point of the exercise. The point is to think critically about the political environment, and assess where one's weaknesses and strengths lie, and to develop strategies that build upon the strengths and address weaknesses.

   1. Is there a predictable permitting process? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is best and 1 is worst)

      o   Do you have a general sense of how long it takes to get a permit approved?

      o   Do you have a stated goal of timely permitting approvals?

   2. Is there consistency in the approval process? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5)

      o   Is there general agreement between elected officials (and the community) on the vision?

      o   Do developments that meet the requirements in the regulations and codes generally get approved, or do elected officials generally oppose developments due to fears of traffic, crime, etc, even if they meet the requirements?

   3. Is there a general willingness to work with developers? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5)

- o Do developers perceive that staff and elected officials are willing to frequently communicate and find solutions in instances where codes are difficult to meet? *Development projects in urban areas often require coordination between City staff and the developer to find creative solutions in instance when the code regulations cannot be 'neatly' applied. Examples include location of dumpsters and trash pickup, and the coordination of shipping and delivery times and locations.*

- o Do elected officials demonstrate a willingness to generally work with developers to balance their needs with the city's vision/needs/goals?

4. Do the City Commission and CRA share a common vision? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5)

- o If there is a CRA, do the projects that are approved by the CRA also get approved by City Commission?

5. Is there a local champion, either elected official or community leader with general business/resident support, actively advocating for TOD? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5)

- o A local champion for TOD could be a City commissioner or a leader of a community organization who shows support (for example by consistently voicing the importance of TOD at meetings and other events, and through other community discussions).

What are the ideal values for a predictable and consistent political and development context?

The maximum points possible is 25 points from the criteria above. Table 3 provides the thresholds for the 1 to 5 scores for a predictable and consistent political and development context.

Table 3: Predictable and Consistent Political and Development Context Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
0 to 5 points	6 to 10 points	11 to 15 points	16 to 20 points	21 to 25 points

What are alternative ways of measuring a predictable and consistent political and development context?

Planners should use their discretion and professional judgment to determine the degree of predictability and consistency in the political environment and development approval process. The key is to view the process through the lens of a developer, identify areas of weakness, and develop strategies to address the weaknesses.

What are some strategies to improve a predictable and consistent political and development context?

There are often no 'one size fits all' approaches to improving political predictability. A few examples are provided below. Planners should think critically and identify strategies that are customized to their own unique political nuances.

If a planner saw weaknesses in the willingness to work with developers, a strategy for improvement could be to communicate more frequently, and possibly less formally, with developers on their site development. Another strategy may be to engage in negotiations that focus on achieving the vision while being willing to compromise and make concessions on site design elements that are not critical to the achievement of the vision.

If a planner determined that the CRA and city commission are often at odds, a strategy may be to develop a shared vision through a community vision process. If a vision already exists, a facilitated dialogue might be an appropriate strategy to uncover the reason for the disconnect.

d. Affordable Housing Policies (Measure 4 of 20)

Why are affordable housing policies indicative of TOD readiness?

Affordable housing assists in maintaining a diverse housing stock with units attainable to the workforce and lower-income segments of the population who may depend on transit. Successful TOD typically results in increased property values and higher rents, which can create obstacles for maintaining affordable units.   Adopting policies and implementing programs to secure affordable units, especially early in the planning process, is a critical part of being ready for TOD because doing so ensures development will maintain and enhance the area's social equity.

How do you evaluate affordable housing policies?

A simple qualitative review of the affordable housing policies and programs found in the housing element of the local government's comprehensive plan is recommended. Any additional information from the local housing authority should also be considered. The following criteria (shown as a list of questions with point values) for determining affordable housing policies in TOD readiness reflect the level of effort the local government or housing authority has demonstrated in planning and assessing the need for affordable housing within the station area.

1. Does the zoning ordinance require inclusionary housing?

    ☐   0.5 points if Yes (voluntary)

    ☐   2.0 points if Yes (mandatory)

2. Are there additional incentives for providing more than the minimum required affordable units (e.g. density bonuses, parking reductions, expedited permits, reduced fees, or cash subsidies)?

    ☐   1.0 points if Yes

3. Has the local government undertaken efforts to leverage private investment in mixed income housing (e.g. through acquiring and assembling land, rezoning, funding environmental remediation through EPA grants, or by providing in-kind matches, in-lieu fees, or other government funding)?

    ☐   1.0 points if Yes

4. Is there a policy to direct affordable housing into the station area?

   ☐ 1.0 points if Yes

5. Has the local government or other entity conducted an assessment of affordable housing need?

   ☐ 1.0 points if Yes, but no recommendations have been implemented

   ☐ 2.0 points if Yes, and some recommendations have been implemented

What are the ideal values for affordable housing policies?
The maximum points possible is 7 points from the criteria above. Table 4 provides the thresholds for the 1 to 5 scores for affordable housing policies.

Table 4: Affordable Housing Policies Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
0 to 1.0 points	1.5 to 2.5 points	3.0 to 4.0 points	4.5 to 5.5 points	6.0 to 7.0 points

What are alternative ways of measuring the affordable housing policies?
Local governments may conduct more detailed analyses of affordable housing or other variations of housing studies, and a more quantitative measure may be developed in future iterations of this tool.

What are some strategies to improve affordable housing policies?
Strategies to improve affordable housing policies can be found in the Center for TOD's best practice guidebook, *Mixed-Income Housing near Transit*.

e. Public Investment (Measure 5 of 20)
Why is public investment indicative of TOD readiness?
Public investment within a future station area that is supportive of future TOD demonstrates a real, tangible commitment from the local, state, or regional government. Infrastructure investments can lessen the burden for developers, thereby providing incentives for development within the area where the investments were made. Subsidy programs such as TOD promotion grants or station-area tax abatement may be able to offset a major obstacle to TOD for developers (Fan and Guthrie, 2013).

How do you evaluate public investment?
The measure for public investment is evaluated through the following series of questions. Each question has a point value associated with it.

1. Has the community invested in bicycle facilities within the station area, or committed funds to the installation of bicycle facilities in the locality's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) or MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)?

   ☐ 1.0 points if Yes.

2. Has the community invested in pedestrian facilities within the station area, or committed funds to the construction of pedestrian facilities in the locality's CIP or MPO's TIP?

   ☐ 0.5 points if Yes.

3. Has the community invested in streetscaping enhancements and landscaping, or committed funds to streetscaping projects in the locality's CIP or MPO's TIP?

   ☐ 0.5 points if Yes.

4. Has the community made an investment in utility infrastructure and maintenance to support desired densities and intensities, or committed funds to doing so in the locality's CIP or MPO's TIP?

   ☐ 1.5 points if Yes

5. Has the community made an investment via grants or other incentives to encourage private sector development of new buildings, or committed funds to doing so in the locality's CIP or MPO's TIP?

   ☐ 1.5 points if Yes.

6. Does the local government offer incentives to renovate existing buildings, build façade improvements, or support local businesses within the area (e.g. through Florida's Main Street program)?

   ☐ 0.5 points if Yes.

What are the ideal values for public investment?

Ideally, a community would be able to acquire a total of 5.5 points from the previous questions. Those communities that acquire fewer than five points are less ready for TOD. Table 5 provides the thresholds for the 1 to 5 scores for public investment.

Table 5: Public Investment Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
0 to 1 points	1.5 to 2 points	2.5 to 3.5 points	4 to 4.5 points	5 to 5.5 points

What are alternative ways of measuring public investment?

Not all public investments are the same. Some require far more resources than others. The simple yes/no questions proposed in the measure for public investment do not distinguish between a small scale investment (such as installing one bicycle rack) and a large one (such as undertaking a comprehensive effort to install bicycle racks at all publicly owned buildings and transit stops). Future versions of the tool may incorporate a more nuanced approach to demonstrating public investment that includes the cost of these investment efforts. However, the cost of the investment may not be readily available. The questions above provide a quick and simple yes/no evaluation without an extensive data gathering effort.

Market Measures

a. Recent Development Activity (Measure 6 of 20)

Why is recent development activity indicative of TOD readiness?

Recent residential, mixed use, commercial, or office development activity (including adaptive reuse) indicates recent or current developer interest and confidence in the area. It demonstrates that the current market conditions are supportive of new development.

How do you evaluate recent development activity?

Recent development activity may include development projects that are proposed, approved, under construction, or recently completed. For the purposes of balancing accurate results with using easily accessible data and simple computations, the measure for recent development activity is based on the number of proposed, approved, and under construction multifamily, commercial, and mixed-use projects within the station area, measured through a review of the Community Development, Building, Zoning, or other department records on proposed developments and permits issued for construction and conversations with department staff.

What are the ideal values for recent development activity?

The measure for recent development activity is simply based on the number of recent development projects as described above. Because each station area is unique in its vision and desired density and intensity, the projects are measured independent of their size. Table 6 provides the scoring for this measure.

Table 6: Scoring Thresholds for Proposed, Approved, and Under Construction Multifamily, Commercial, and Mixed Use Projects

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
0	1	2	3 - 4	5 or more

b. Redevelopment Potential (Measure 7 of 20)

Why is redevelopment potential indicative of TOD readiness?

The ease with which developers can assemble property for redevelopment or infill development is an important factor of TOD readiness. Vacant or underutilized parcels have potential for more economically productive uses, but if they are owned by a variety of different landowners it may be difficult for a developer to cost-effectively assemble them into a contiguous site. Economies of scale favor larger parcels, and small parcel sizes and diverse ownership pose challenges for redevelopment and infill. Existing single-family land uses are often the most challenging to redevelop because a significant number of parcels are usually needed to assemble a large enough site, and adjacent single-family landowners may object to a change in use and/or higher densities or intensities of development nearby. Local governments are often concerned with protecting existing single-family neighborhoods. Single family neighborhoods tend to remain as single family and may also hamper higher density development on their fringes.

How do you evaluate redevelopment potential?

The measure for redevelopment potential is a composite of three different scores:

1. **Vacant and underutilized properties**: acres of land where the improvement-to-land value ratio is less than 1.0 (measured from the county tax assessor parcel data). This measure is a rough approximation of identifying properties that are more likely to redevelop and is commonly used for planning purposes (CTOD, 2011).

2. **Parcel size and ownership**: an average of:

     a. Number of unique property owners per acre: the sum of parcel acreage excluding right-of-way divided by the sum of unique owners

     b. Average parcel size: approximated by the number of parcels per block

3. **Land use**: the percentage of existing parcels that are single-family residential and are not vacant

Combining these three scores requires some analysis, but results in a more comprehensive measure than looking at each score individually.

What are the ideal values for redevelopment potential?
To evaluate the redevelopment potential measure, first evaluate the three scores individually on the 1 to 5 scales in Tables 7 through 9. Then take the average of the three 1 to 5 scores. To obtain the score for parcel size and ownership, take the average of (a) parcel ownership and (b) parcel size.

Table 7: Scoring Thresholds for Vacant and Underutilized Properties

Least Ready -- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 10% of land has an improvement-to-land value ratio less than 1.0	10% to19% of land has an improvement-to-land value ratio less than 1.0	20% to 29% of land has an improvement-to-land value ratio less than 1.0	30% to 39% of land has an improvement-to-land value ratio less than 1.0	40% or more of land has an improvement-to-land value ratio less than 1.0

Table 8: Scoring Thresholds for Parcel Size and Ownership

Least Ready --- Most Ready

	1	2	3	4	5
Parcel Ownership	More than 2.4 unique owners per acre	2.1 to 2.4 unique owners per acre	1.8 to 2.1 unique owners per acre	1.6 to 1.8 unique owners per acre	Less than 1.6 unique owners per acre
Parcel Size	More than 15 parcels per block	12 to 15 parcels per block	8 to 12 parcels per block	5 to 8 parcels per block	Less than 5 parcels per block

The Parcel Size and Ownership score is the average of the two values from Table 8.

Table 9: Scoring Thresholds for Land Use

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
More than 90% of existing parcels are single family and not vacant	75% to 90% of existing parcels are single family and not vacant	40% to 75% of existing parcels are single family and not vacant	25% to 40% of existing parcels are single family and not vacant	Less than 25% of existing parcels are single family and not vacant

The redevelopment potential score is the average of the above three scores as shown in the equation below:

$$\frac{[\text{Vacant and Underutilized Properties Score}] + [\text{Parcel Size and Ownership Score}] + [\text{Land Use Score}]}{3}$$

c. Real Estate Values (Measure 8 of 20)

Why are real estate values indicative of TOD readiness?

Higher real estate values indicate demand for the area and the market's ability to support the higher costs of higher density, mixed-use development. Real estate values can also be a surrogate for other, more qualitative attributes such as the desirability of a location and amenities. Research has shown that strong market demand correlates with projects and sites that are ripe for development (Carlton and Fleissig, 2014).

How do you evaluate real estate values?

The American Community Survey (ACS) 3-year estimates provide data on median home value and median gross rent by census block group. Using GIS, the median home value and median gross rent for a station area can be computed. These values are then compared to those in Table 10 to determine the score for each. The Real Estate Values score is then computed as the average of the score from the median home value and the score from the median gross rent. This provides the most readily available assessment of real estate values.

What are the ideal values for real estate values?

The scoring thresholds are based on percentages of median home and rent values for the respective county. The percentages are shown in Table 10. The median home and rent values for Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach Counties are taken from the 2011-2013 3-year ACS results.

Table 10: Real Estate Values Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready -- Most Ready

	1	2	3	4	5
Median Home Value	Less than 75% of County Median	75% to 90% of County Median	Between 90% and 110% of County Median	110% to 125% of County Median	Greater than 125% of County Median
Median Gross Rent	Less than 75% of County Median	75% to 90% of County Median	Between 90% and 110% of County Median	110% to 125% of County Median	Greater than 125% of County Median

d. Financial Incentives for Development (Measure 9 of 20)

Why are financial incentives for development indicative of TOD readiness?

Mixed-use TOD projects are typically more expensive to construct than single use projects. Local market conditions often cannot support mixed-use development at the densities appropriate for TOD. Financial incentives may be necessary to bridge the gap in a project's pro forma between what market rates will support and the costs of higher density, mixed use development. In station areas where the market is strong enough to support higher density mixed-use development, financial incentives may not be necessary.

How do you evaluate financial incentives for development?

The first step is to determine if a market assessment has been conducted for the station area.

If a market assessment has been conducted, and if it shows that financial incentives are not necessary to achieve the desired densities and intensities, then this measure will receive a score of 5 out of 5 regardless of whether incentive programs exist.

If a market assessment has not been conducted, or if it has been conducted and shows that the market is not strong enough to support the desired development types without financial incentives, then this measure is evaluated by two additional criteria: (1) the number of financial incentive programs for development that are available for potential projects within the station area and (2) evidence on whether developers have used the incentives to build a project

1. Has a market assessment been conducted to determine if there are financial gaps to the type of development encouraged in the station area?

   □ 1 point if Yes, and incentives are likely required by the market

   □ 4 points if Yes, and the market does not require incentives (in this case, do not complete questions 2 and 3.)

2. Are local or regional financial incentive programs available for projects within the station area to encourage the desired development? Examples of financial incentives for development include: Land banks, density easements, Florida

Housing Finance Corporation programs, tax credit financing (especially for affordable housing), and impact and/or development fee credits for locating within a station area.

☐ Up to 2 points (1 point for each incentive program)

3. Have any of the financial incentives for development been applied towards the completion of a project meeting the vision of the station area?

☐ 1 point if Yes.

What are the ideal values for financial incentives for development?

If a market assessment shows that financial incentives are not necessary to achieve the desired densities and intensities, the station area receives a score of 5 for this measure.

If a market assessment has not been conducted, or if it has been conducted and shows that the market is not strong enough to support the desired development types without financial incentives, a community would be able to acquire a maximum total of 4 points from the previous questions. Communities that acquire all four points have a variety of incentives available, and the incentives are encouraging the type of development envisioned. Communities that acquire fewer than 4 points are less ready for TOD. Table 11 provides the scoring thresholds for the 1 to 5 scores for financial incentives for development.

Table 11: Financial Incentives for Development Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready -- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 or more points

e. Trends in Income and Educational Attainment Data (Measure 10 of 20)

Why are trends in income and educational attainment data indicative of TOD readiness?

This measure indicates the desirability of an area and the area's ability to attract and retain residents who choose to stay there. If this value declines, it indicates that those with opportunity and ability to leave are doing so. If this value increases, it indicates that either a) existing residents have increasing income levels and education, b) new residents chose to move to the area, or c) some combination of a and b. This measure is indicative of choice and demand based on change in value, not of absolute value levels. It is very important that existing residents receive the benefits of increased investment and have the opportunity for increased income and education, especially in station areas where there is an existing population of disadvantaged residents. Ideally, a TOD will integrate all socioeconomic levels and maintain increases in income and educational attainment that are on-par with regional averages. A decline in these numbers (or static condition of low numbers) would indicate the need to focus on equitable TOD as a strategy that includes mixed income housing, job training, education, health care, and social services. It is important to implement strategies to prevent displacement of residents if and when land values increase.

How do you evaluate trends in income and educational attainment data?

The ACS 3-year estimates provide data on income and educational attainment at the block group level. The change in income and educational attainment is an <u>average of two percentages</u>, each of which are computed using a combination of the Decennial Census and ACS data:

1. Percentage change of per capita income over 10 years (e.g. a 20% increase from $48,000 in 2000 to $57,600 in 2010)

2. Percentage change of the percent of the population age 25+ that has a bachelor's degree or higher (e.g. a 40% increase from 15% in 2000 to 21% in 2010)

These two values are computed by taking the average of the data from the block groups within the half-mile radius, weighted by the area.

What are the ideal values for trends in income and educational attainment data?

The overall change in Florida for this measure from 2000 to 2010 was an increase of 20 percent. Broward County as a whole increased similarly by 22 percent. Successful TOD stations have demonstrated increases of 80 percent or more. For example, the Carson and Bland Street stations along the Lynx blue line in Charlotte, NC have experienced increases of 86 and 194 percent, respectively.

Given that any decline in this measure represents a drop in demand, and that an 80 percent increase indicates TOD that is already successful, the scoring thresholds shown in Table 12 below range between these two extremes.

Table 12: Trends in Income and Educational Attainment Data Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready -- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
Any decline	0 to 10 percent increase	11 to 20 percent increase	21 to 40 percent increase	Increase greater than 40 percent

Physical Measures

a. Transit Travel Shed (Measure 11 of 20)

Why is the transit travel shed indicative of TOD readiness?

An area is ready for TOD if existing transit services within the area provide easy access to jobs. The more jobs that are accessible via transit service to an area, the greater the potential demand for housing, and complementary non-residential uses for daily non-work activities. The proximity of a station area to existing employment centers and downtowns is one of the most important factors influencing development along transit lines (CTOD, 2011). If relatively few jobs are currently accessible via transit, a future strategy might include increasing the amount of employment within close proximity to the station area and investing in transit improvements.

How do you evaluate the transit travel shed?

The Transit Travel Shed measure uses the Center for Neighborhood Technology's (CNT) All Transit tool. The All Transit tool includes a job accessibility measure that calculates the number of jobs accessible by public transportation within 30 minutes. The All Transit tool determines the number of jobs through a complex methodology utilizing CNT's GTFS data and U.S. Census LEHD-LODES data. First, the tool defines a Transit Access Shed (TAS) with the block group as the smallest geographic unit. The tool selects all the transit stops within the block group or within a quarter-mile of the block group boundary. The tool then identifies all stops that can be reached within 30 minutes for each transit stop, allowing for one transfer within 600 meters of a stop, including a buffer of 10 minutes of walking and/or waiting. The tool creates a quarter-mile buffer around each station and merges the buffers into a single area, which becomes the TAS. The tool calculates number of jobs within the TAS, which is the number of jobs accessible by public transportation within 30 minutes.

There are several drawbacks to this methodology. The assumptions result in relatively high numbers of jobs accessible by transit that are not precise. The tool computes the number of jobs based on census block groups, which are typically larger than the half-mile radius station area. Despite these drawbacks, the CNT All Transit tool is the most robust analytical tool that can easily be used for assessment the number of jobs accessible by transit from a station area. It requires no GIS analysis.

What are the ideal values for the transit travel shed?

Generally, more jobs accessible by transit indicates better TOD readiness. The scoring thresholds for the transit travel shed, shown in Table 13, are based on the thresholds established by CNT and used in the All Transit tool. It is important to note that the values returned by the All Transit tool are higher than the number of jobs that would be accessible from the transit station area itself. For the purpose of this tool, the scoring thresholds account for the inflated values when assessing this measure.

Table 13: Transit Travel Shed Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
Fewer than 100,000 jobs	100,000 to 199,999 jobs	200,000 to 299,999 jobs	300,000 to 399,999 jobs	400,000 jobs or more

b. Transit Service and Infrastructure (Measure 12 of 20)

Why is transit service and infrastructure indicative of TOD readiness?

The quality of transit service is a key component of TOD. Areas with high quality convenient, comfortable, and reliable transit service are more likely to attract TOD than areas with lower quality service. Infrastructure and amenities at transit stations are important for rider comfort and security.

How do you evaluate transit service and infrastructure?

The measure for transit service and infrastructure compares the type of transit currently available with the desired type of transit in the station area vision. This measure also examines the availability of infrastructure and amenities at the transit station. It is based

on the Florida TOD Guidebook's recommended service frequencies by transit type, and asks a simple series of questions. Planners may be interested in performing a more in-depth analysis of transit service and infrastructure using the TCQSM.

1. Does the desired transit service type currently serve the station area? (i.e. if the vision for the station area includes heavy rail, does heavy rail currently serve the area?)

   ☐ No. The desired transit type does not currently serve the area. The desired transit type is not included in a long term vision plan, and it is not programmed in a cost feasible plan. (0 Points)

   ☐ No. The desired transit type does not currently serve the area. The desired transit type is included in a long term vision plan, but it is not programmed in a cost feasible plan. (1 Points)

   ☐ No. The desired transit type does not currently serve the area. The desired transit type is included in a long term vision plan, and it is also programmed in a cost feasible plan. (2 Points)

   ☐ Yes. The desired transit type does currently serve the area. (3 Points)

2. Does the transit service frequency meet the standards as specified in the Florida TOD Guidebook (pages 2-6 to 2-9) and summaries in Table 14 below?

   ☐ Yes. (2 points)

   ☐ No. (0 points)

Table 14: Transit Service Frequencies

Transit Type	Service Frequency
Express and Inter-City Passenger Rail	60 minutes (peak express), up to 12 daily (inter-city)
Heavy Rail	5-10 minutes (peak)
Commuter Rail	20-30 minutes (peak)
Light Rail	5-30 minutes
Modern Streetcar	8-15 minutes
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	8-20 minutes
Local & Express Bus	21-30 minutes (maximum) with no fewer than three fixed routes

3. Does the transit station include supporting infrastructure, such as bicycle parking, pedestrian access, a shelter, or seating?

   ☐ No - there is no supporting infrastructure at the transit stop, and supporting infrastructure improvements are not programmed in a cost feasible plan. (0 points)

   ☐ No - there is no supporting infrastructure at the transit stop, but supporting infrastructure improvements are programmed in a cost feasible plan. (0.5 points)

☐   Yes – there <u>is</u> supporting infrastructure at the transit stop. (1 point)

4. Is the station area served by more than one mode of transit?

☐   Yes. (1 point)

☐   No. (0 points)

What are the ideal values for transit service and infrastructure?
Ideally, a community would be able to acquire a total of 7 points from the previous questions, reflecting the quality of the station and its infrastructure, as well as the transit level of service. Table 15 provides the thresholds for the 1 to 5 scores for financial incentives for development.

Table 15: Transit Service and Infrastructure Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
0 to 1 points	1.5 to 2.5 points	3 to 4.5 points	5 to 5.5 points	6 or more points

c. Block Size (Measure 13 of 20)

Why is block size indicative of TOD readiness?
Block size is a critical component of walkability. Street patterns with small blocks offer a variety of pedestrian paths and more direct routes than streets with larger blocks.

Although this measure is not easily changed, it is extremely important in understanding how walkable a place is. Places with large block sizes will have a harder time garnering pedestrian activity even with investments in streetscaping and façade design. Conversely, areas with small blocks will have much greater potential for generating pedestrian activity, even if the land uses and other elements are not yet in place.

How do you evaluate block size?
Average block length can be calculated through a simple GIS exercise with a shapefile of the local street network that includes <u>all</u> of the local streets, not just the state roads or major roads.   The GIS analyst explodes the street network within the station area (an automated process that splits segment lengths at intersections) and computes the average segment length between intersections.

What are the ideal values for block size?
Generally, ideal block lengths in dense urban areas are 200 to 300 feet, and should not exceed 400 feet to facilitate convenient pedestrian crossings from one side of the street to the other. In less dense areas, the preferred block length is 200 to 400 feet, and should not exceed 600 feet (ITE, 2010).

Portland, Oregon has an optimal street grid for pedestrians with block sizes of 250' x 250'. Many cities have oblong street blocks, and even some cities renowned for walkability have longer block lengths that exceed the 600 feet but are complemented with shorter block lengths. Upper Manhattan's grid measures approximately 250' x 900', which averages 575 feet in average block length, but the longer blocks have significantly

less pedestrian and retail activity than the shorter block lengths. Washington, DC is another classic example of a walkable city with extremely long block lengths. Many of the historic downtown areas established around Flagler's FEC rail stations in Southeast Florida have similar block sizes. Downtown Miami and Fort Lauderdale both measure approximately 300' x 500', proving that the ideal block lengths from national sources apply here in the Southeast Florida region. The scoring thresholds for block size are shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Block Size Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
> 1,000 ft	501 - 1,000 ft	401 - 500 ft	351 - 400 ft	≤ 350 ft

d. Path Connectivity (Measure 14 of 20)

Why is path connectivity indicative of TOD readiness?

Path connectivity is a qualitative measure of the degree to which barriers disrupt the connectedness of the street network. It is a complementary measure to block size and evaluates how much pedestrians and bicyclists must travel out of their way to reach an intended destination. An area that scores well in block size may have a large barrier that bisects the street network, or it may have a lot of purposefully disconnected streets to discourage cut-through traffic, making it virtually impossible to walk to destinations on the other side without going well out of one's way. Path connectivity is also beneficial for motorized vehicles. A well connected street network provides more route options and lessens the propensity to concentrate high volumes of traffic onto only a few facilities.
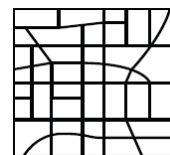
Barriers to path connectivity may include highways, large arterials, waterways, railways, excessively long blocks, and other large scale infrastructure that disconnects the street network. Whether these features are barriers to connectivity depends on their scale and length, and how they are integrated into the surrounding urban form.

How do you evaluate path connectivity?

Measuring path connectivity requires a simple visual assessment of an aerial image (e.g. Google Earth) to determine whether any large barriers disrupt the street network, how frequently connections across the barrier are provided, and whether significant portions of the street network are disconnected. The following criteria prompt users to identify the block structure within the station area and any barriers than may affect path connectivity.

1. Block Layout – Please select the description that best characterizes the street network within the study area

   Grid Pattern

   □ Grid Pattern: A small-scale street pattern where local, public streets typically cross at four-way intersections with few or no dead ends. For the purpose of this tool, a grid does not have to contain a majority of perpendicular streets. (1 point)

   Superblock Pattern

   □ Superblock Pattern: Consists of a few, widely spaced arterial streets connecting to form a large block. Side
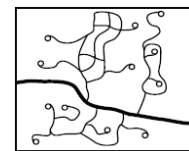
streets may penetrate into the large block, but are typically private and are dead ends. (0 points)

2. Barriers

☐ 0 points if there is at least one major barrier with only one (or zero) connections

☐ 1 point if there is at least one major barrier with several connections

☐ 2 points if there is at least one major barrier but it is well integrated and there are numerous connections

☐ 3 points if there are no major barriers

3. Street Connections

☐ 0 points if there are many disconnected streets (including dead ends)

☐ 1 point if there are few disconnected streets

☐ 2 points if there are no disconnected streets

What are the ideal values for path connectivity?

The scoring thresholds for path connectivity, shown in Table 17, are based on a composite of the possible points from the assessment questions above.

Table 17: Path Connectivity Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
0 points	2 points	3 points	4 points	5-6 points

e. Bicycle Comfort (Measure 15 of 20)

Why is bicycle comfort indicative of TOD readiness?

An area is more ready for TOD if bicyclists can safely and comfortably ride on the roads and access destinations. A robust network of bicycle paths and bicycle-friendly streets can expand the transit station catchment area far beyond the typical pedestrian shed without using precious real estate for vehicular parking. Bicyclists can comfortably travel on small, slow speed, low volume roads without needing designated bicycle facilities. The percentage of roads that are comfortable for bicyclists is a good indicator of whether bicyclists can easily travel on the road network, or whether they will go out of their way to reach destinations. High speed and high volume roadways will likely require bike lanes at a minimum, and still may not be comfortable to many bicyclists.

How do you evaluate bicycle comfort?

Bicycle comfort can be quantified by calculating the percentage of road centerline miles with either very slow posted speeds (25 mph or less) or with designated bicycle facilities.

The most readily available data source for speed limits on all roads, including state and local roads, is Navteq, which classifies roads according to categories of speeds in increments of 10 mph. All roads with speed limits of 21 to 30 mph are included in one category. For the purpose of this tool, roads with speed limits of 20 mph or less were

included as "comfortable for bicyclists" in addition to any roads with a designated bicycle lane (4-feet wide or wider). Several cities, including New York City, San Francisco, Aspen, CO, and Portland, OR, are lowering speed limits on low-traffic roads to 20 mph to enhance bicyclist and pedestrian safety.

What are the ideal values for bicycle comfort?

Ideally, all non-limited access roads within a transit station area should be safe for all users, including bicyclists. The proposed scoring thresholds for bicycle comfort, shown in Table 18, rate areas with more than 90 percent of all roads as comfortable for bicyclists as most ready for TOD. As this value drops, so does the score for TOD readiness.

Table 18: Bicycle Comfort Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready -- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
< 25%	25 - 50%	50 - 75%	75 - 90%	> 90%

f.   Community Gathering Places (Measure 16 of 20)

Why are community gathering places indicative of TOD readiness?

Parks, public plazas and squares, and other areas of public open space are essential amenities and social catalysts for TOD. These areas can serve as focal points for new development, encourage recreation and social interaction in the public realm, and enhance the environment for walking and bicycling.

How do you evaluate community gathering places?

The percentage of area within the station area that is considered to be parks or open space can be calculated from the county or city tax assessor's GIS parcel shapefile.

What are the ideal values for community gathering places?

Open spaces in station area case studies in Portland, OR, Washington, DC, and San Francisco, CA from the Florida TOD Guidebook account for 3.2 to 7.4 percent of the total area, as shown in Figure 3. Generally, anywhere between 5 and 8.5 percent may be considered ideal, as reflected in Table 19.

Both too little and too much open space may not be ideal. Too little open space may not afford people opportunities for active or passive recreation. Too much open space may indicate a lack of destinations and low ridership potential, or may serve as a barrier to walkability. However, it is less important that station areas achieve the prescribed 5 to 8.5 percent open space. Designing the available open space to integrate with the community context and function is of primary importance.

Image Source: TCRPC

Figure 3: Parks and Open Space Case Studies from the Florida TOD Guidebook

Table 19: Community Gathering Places Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 1% or More than 16%	1 – 2% or 12.5 – 16%	2 – 3.5% or 10.5 – 12.5%	3.5 – 5% or 8.5 – 10.5%	5 – 8.5%

Social Measures

a. Diversity of Existing Uses within Walking Distance (Measure 17 of 20)

Why is the diversity of existing uses within walking distance indicative of TOD readiness?

The diversity and desirability of destinations within walking distance indicates the potential for people who live or work within the station area to access a variety of uses to meet daily needs by walking. A rich variety of destinations fosters an environment and a culture where people choose not to drive for at least some of their daily trips.

How do you evaluate the diversity of existing uses within walking distance?

Walk Score (www.walkscore.com) provides a free analysis of the density and diversity of destinations that are within walking distance of a specified point. By simply entering the street address of the center point of the area, Walk Score will provide a score from 0 to 100 of the surrounding area's walkable nature.

What are the ideal values for the diversity of existing uses within walking distance?

Walk Score defines five categories of results, which are reflected in the proposed scoring thresholds for walkability, shown in Table 20.

Table 20: Walkability Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready -- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
0 – 24	25 - 49	50 - 69	70 - 89	90 - 100
Car-Dependent	Car-Dependent	Somewhat Walkable	Very Walkable	Walker's Paradise
Almost all errands require a car.	*Most errands require a car.*	*Some errands can be accomplished on foot.*	*Most errands can be accomplished on foot.*	*Daily errands do not require a car.*

b. Civic and Educational Uses (Measure 18 of 20)

Why are civic and educational uses indicative of TOD readiness?

Major civic, cultural, and educational institutions can function as anchors or catalysts for surrounding development. They can generate significant transit ridership. These types of facilities may also serve as focal points in the urban fabric.

How do you evaluate civic and educational uses?

A qualitative assessment of the number of civic, cultural, and educational facilities is a quick and easy way to determine the level at which these types of facilities contribute to readiness for TOD. This measure is evaluated through the following criteria, presented as a series of questions that reflect the presence and size of civic and educational uses.

1. Is there a local elementary, middle or high school within the station area?

    ☐ 1 point if Yes.

2. Is there at least one of the following within the station area: City Hall, Post Office, or similar government/ civic use?

    ☐ 1 point if Yes.

3. Is there at least one of the following within the station area: Museum, Library, or cultural performance hall of local significance?

    ☐ 1 point if Yes.

4. Is there at least one of the following within the station area: Museum, Library, or cultural performance hall of regional significance?

    ☐ 2 points if Yes.

4. Is there a college or university within the station area?

    ☐ 2 points if Yes.

What are the ideal values for civic and educational uses?

A community would be able to acquire a maximum total of 7 points from the previous questions, Table 21 provides the thresholds for the 1 to 5 scores for civic and educational uses.

Table 21: Civic and Educational Uses Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 or more points

c. Community Events and Branding (Measure 19 of 20)

Why are community events and branding indicative of TOD readiness?

Hosting community events can develop an identity for the station area, celebrating its unique character. Developing a brand for the area, when combined with events, can market the area as an attractive place.

How do you evaluate community events and branding?

A qualitative assessment of community events and branding efforts is a quick and easy way to determine the level at which these strategies contribute to readiness for TOD. This measure is evaluated through the following series of questions.

1. Does the station area have a well-known name or identity (i.e. Arts District)?

    ☐   1 point if Yes.

2. Are regularly occurring community events hosted within the station area (e.g. weekly farmers market or monthly food/wine walk)?

    ☐   1 point if Yes.

3. Are special community events or festivals hosted within the station area (e.g. arts and crafts festival or Fourth of July celebrations)?

    ☐   1 point if Yes.

4. Does the station area take advantage of any unique physical or cultural attributes (e.g. culinary district, warehouses, historic architecture)?

    ☐   2 points if Yes.

What are the ideal values for community events and branding?

A community would be able to acquire a total of 5 points from the previous questions, Table 22 provides the thresholds for the 1 to 5 scores for community events and branding.

Table 22: Community Events and Branding Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 or more points

d. Housing and Transportation Affordability Index (Measure 20 of 20)

Why is housing and transportation affordability indicative of TOD readiness?

The affordability of living in a particular location depends on both the cost of housing and the cost of transportation to get to work and meet daily needs. These factors are heavily influenced by the transportation options available and the mix of uses and amenities located nearby. The housing and transportation affordability index captures the location-efficiency of the station area and the cost of living there. Places that score well on the housing and transportation affordability index have desirable characteristics, which indicates potential demand for TOD.

This housing and affordability measure is related to, but does not duplicate the measure on affordable housing policies. Both are critical in different ways. Affordable housing policies demonstrate the political commitment to ensure that the housing stock within the station area will remain affordable to working class and low-income households as new construction projects unfold. The housing and transportation affordability measures whether an area is actually affordable. The two are somewhat independent. Affordable housing policies are intended to retain affordable housing if the area is already affordable, and to provide additional affordable housing if the area is not currently affordable.

How do you evaluate housing and transportation affordability?

The Center for Neighborhood Technology calculates the percentage of household income that is devoted to housing and transportation costs, and provides this data for free at www.htaindex.org.

What are the ideal values for housing and transportation affordability?

The general rule of thumb is that households should spend no more than 45 percent of their income on transportation and housing, which is the upper threshold in Table 23. The other thresholds in Table 23 reflect increases in this percentage. The average housing and transportation affordability index in the three-county region falls around 60 percent.

Table 23: Housing and Transportation Affordability Index Scoring Thresholds

Least Ready --- Most Ready

1	2	3	4	5
More than 65%	60 – 65%	50 – 59%	45 – 49%	Less than 45%

TODville Example

In the development of the readiness tool, the project team selected an example place to serve as a potential future transit station area. The project team applied a prior version of the 20 measure assessment to this place, identified the key strengths and opportunities, and developed strategies. This example place is a real place in Southeast Florida, but its specific location is withheld, and it is called "TODville" in the following description. The TODville example was conducted to better understand the value of the measures and the overall readiness assessment. The project team assumed values for some of the more qualitative and policy-related measures. More in depth conversations with city planning staff, and a closer

examination of the city's zoning code and land development regulations would be necessary to complete the full assessment more accurately.

TODville as a Station Area Place Type

Today, the TODville station area consists mostly of single family residential homes with smaller scale neighborhood commercial uses to the east along a principal arterial. Local bus and limited stop bus transit serves the area, but the uses are not dense enough to generate significant ridership.

In the future, the TODville station area will be a vibrant town center with a mix of moderate density residential and employment uses within walking distance of a passenger rail station. The pedestrian-oriented urban form and mix of uses within close proximity will encourage walking and biking for daily trips.

Based on the above description of the desired future transit station, the project team categorized TODville as a *Neighborhood Center* station area type with *Heavy Rail* for the future transit type.

Assessing the Readiness Measures

The 20 measures of readiness for the TODville station area are summarized on the first page of the two-page summary in Figure 4. Measures that scored a 1 or 2 indicate that conditions are in the earliest stages of development, and are shown as an open circle. Measures that scored a 3 or 4 indicate conditions are moving towards TOD, and are shown as a half-filled circle. Measures that scored a 5 indicate conditions that are truly supportive of TOD, and are shown as a full circle.

Most of the measures from the TODville example demonstrate conditions moving towards TOD, with many half-filled circles. The policy measures scored the best, with conditions supportive of TOD in the compelling vision, supportive regulations, and public investment measures. The weakest measures include financial incentives for development, bicycle comfort, community gathering places, and community events and branding. In general, the community has demonstrated a commitment through investments to support TOD. However, the market conditions are not yet ripe for TOD and will likely require greater financial incentives in the short term to expedite the transformation of the area.

The green text and arrows to the right of the circles shows the policy goals and directions for each measure.
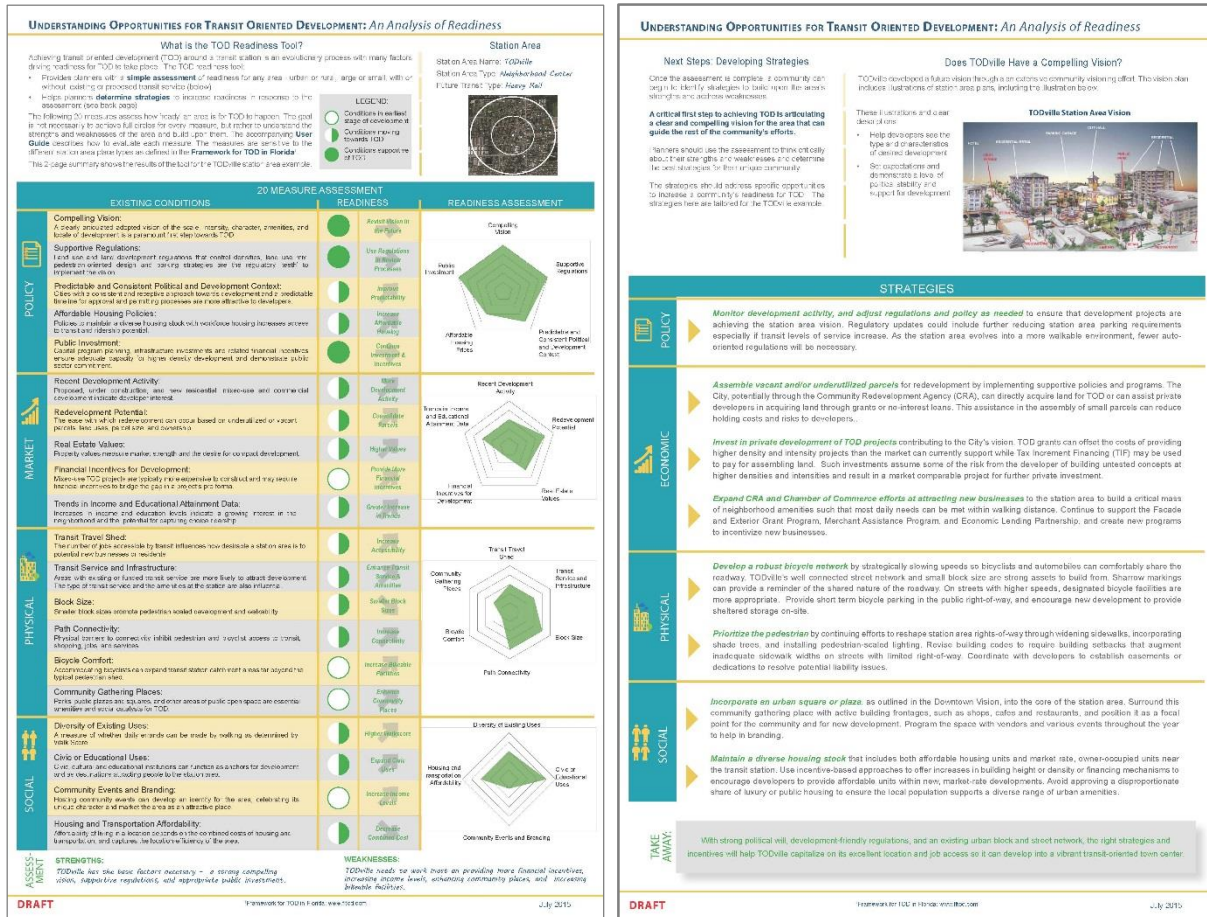
Figure 4: Two-Page Graphic Summary of TODville Example
A full-size 11" x 17" version of the TODville two-pager is provided in Appendix A.

Identifying Key Strengths and Opportunities

The assessment of the measures reveals several key strengths and opportunities. The project team identified the following strengths and opportunities based on the readiness assessment. Community planners and stakeholders may identify additional strengths and opportunities.

TODville's key assets include small block sizes with a well-connected street network and good access to transit. TODville's policies and station area vision support the higher density, mixed-use development required for TOD, and local leaders have demonstrated political will to encourage implementation.

The station area's key opportunities to increase readiness for TOD include capitalizing on vacant and underutilized parcels for redevelopment and developing a network of safe and comfortable bicycle routes.

Developing Strategies to Increase Readiness

Based on the identified strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, the project team developed targeted strategies to increase the station area's readiness for TOD. Example strategies for TODville include the following, which are condensed versions of the full strategies found on page 2 of the two-page summary in Appendix A.

Strategies to increase readiness for the TODville station area:

- Monitor development activity and adjust regulations and policy as needed

- Assemble vacant and/or underutilized parcels

- Invest in private development of TOD projects

- Expand Community Redevelopment Agency and Chamber of Commerce efforts at attracting new businesses

- Develop a robust bicycle network

- Prioritize the pedestrian

- Incorporate an urban square or plaza

- Maintain a diverse housing stock

While these strategies are generally applicable to many station areas, they represent a list of most critical items for TODville.

The strategies outlined above are example strategies for the TODville station area. The project team developed these strategies using the results from the 20-measure assessment. The tool does not provide users with targeted strategies automatically. Users will need to develop the strategies for increasing readiness based on the outcomes from the 20-measure assessment.

> The key in the application of the readiness tool is to think critically about the strengths and weaknesses that the 20-measure assessment reveals, and to identify targeted strategies to build upon the station area's unique strengths and address its weaknesses.

The TODville example illustrates the full process for using the TOD readiness tool. The project team evaluated the 20 measures of readiness, compared the existing readiness measures to the policy goals and directions, identified key strengths and opportunities, and developed strategies to increase readiness.

Users can use the accompanying Excel spreadsheet to conduct the 20-measure assessment and the two-page summary InDesign template files to display the assessment results for any existing or potential future transit station area in Southeast Florida. The key in the application of the readiness tool is to think critically about the strengths and weaknesses that the 20-measure assessment reveals, and to identify targeted strategies to build upon the station area's unique strengths and address its weaknesses.

Future Applications and Refinements

Potential Future Applications

The previously described methodology for assessing TOD readiness and identifying strategies has potential for a wide variety of applications.

Local governments may desire to focus new growth in certain areas. Local governments can use the tool to conduct a readiness assessment on multiple areas to determine which areas are most ready for more intensive TOD, understand the particular challenges of certain areas, and

develop strategic next steps to build upon each area's assets and overcome the biggest barriers. Local governments may use the tool to help assess the feasibility of an area to accommodate more growth. It may aid in determining which areas to include within a growth boundary or designated land use area.

Transit agencies and regional entities can use the tool to better understand the characteristics and dynamics of a potential future transit corridor, transfer areas or even major stop locations. The tool is specifically designed to reflect the different types of station areas. Transit corridors consist of a variety of station area types. The recommended next step in the development of this tool is to apply it to an example corridor and assess how well it reflects the functions of the different station area types.

Overall, local governments and other public sector agencies can use the tool as a backdrop for understanding how one particular initiative fits into the overall context of TOD readiness. A local government can invest in pedestrian and bicycle improvements, for example, that will help directly increase the physical and policy elements of TOD readiness. Yet those investments will likely indirectly influence other measures, for example increasing real estate values, which may in turn generate more development activity, and may eventually influence the housing and transportation affordability and activity density. Comprehensively assessing the measures together allows a holistic picture of the station area's characteristics and dynamics to emerge.

Similarly, local governments may use this tool to help prioritize capital improvement projects and policy efforts. While comprehensive plans include a vast array of policies, this tool will help identify priorities for those areas where localities have an interest in attracting TOD.

Additionally, FDOT may use this tool to help advance coordination efforts between SFRTA, local transit agencies, and municipalities. SFRTA has recognized the need to attract more intense TOD within its station areas with complementary infrastructure and design to maximize ridership potential. FDOT may offer to assist SFRTA in the evaluation of the readiness measures. FDOT and SFRTA can communicate the results of the measures to the other planning partners and together have a conversation on what the next steps should be. Other regional agencies, like SEFTC, the South Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRPC), and their technical advisory committees may similarly find this tool useful.

Future Refinements

The current version of the TOD readiness tool makes the best use of available data to rather quickly and easily assess the various factors that influence whether an area is "ready" for TOD. New data sources and new ways of analyzing data are increasingly becoming more readily available both in terms of cost and time. The TOD readiness tool may be revised in the future to incorporate different data sources and methods as they become more readily available.

Specific measures that may be considered for further exploration and possible incorporation into the tool are absorption rates, vacancy rates, and average rents. These rates are telling indicators of market potential. However, the data is not typically freely available, and many economic analysis firms spend a lot of time and resources on developing and using this information.

Summary

FDOT District Four developed the TOD readiness tool to provide a comprehensive assessment of the various factors that influence how "ready" an area is for TOD. This tool builds upon the station area assessments that have been conducted for potential transit investments, and can be applied to areas that have not undergone any prior evaluation.

The tool is intended to synthesize a variety of information into an easily understandable assessment of the area's strengths and opportunities to a variety of audiences, including local public sector planning partners, developers and lenders, members of the public, and businesses.

The readiness analysis includes the assessment of 20 different measures, the identification of strengths and opportunities, and the development of strategies that build upon each station area's unique assets.

This User Guide is one of three components of the TOD readiness tool. The accompanying Excel spreadsheet and two-page summary template InDesign files are available online at www.sfrpc.com/TOD.htm under Research and Reports.

Please direct all comments and inquiries regarding the TOD readiness tool to TOD@citiesthatwork.com.

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Appendix A: TODville Example Two-Page Graphic Summary

Understanding Opportunities for Transit Oriented Development: *An Analysis of Readiness*

What is the TOD Readiness Tool?

Achieving transit oriented development (TOD) around a transit station is an evolutionary process with many factors driving readiness for TOD to take place. The TOD readiness tool:

- Provides planners with a **simple assessment** of readiness for any area - urban or rural, large or small, with or without existing or proposed transit service (below)
- Helps planners **determine strategies** to increase readiness in response to the assessment (see back page)

The following 20 measures assess how 'ready' an area is for TOD to happen. The goal is not necessarily to achieve full circles for every measure, but rather to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the area and build upon them. The accompanying **User Guide** describes how to evaluate each measure. The measures are sensitive to the different station area place types as defined in the **Framework for TOD in Florida**[1].

This 2-page summary shows the results of the tool for the TODville station area example.

LEGEND:
- ◯ Conditions in earliest stage of development
- ◑ Conditions moving towards TOD
- ● Conditions supportive of TOD

Station Area

Station Area Name: *TODville*
Station Area Type: *Neighborhood Center*
Future Transit Type: *Heavy Rail*

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20 MEASURE ASSESSMENT

EXISTING CONDITIONS	READINESS	READINESS ASSESSMENT

POLICY

Compelling Vision:
A clearly articulated adopted vision of the scale, intensity, character, amenities, and locale of development is a paramount first step towards TOD.
● *Revisit Vision in the Future*

Supportive Regulations:
Land use and land development regulations that control densities, land use mix, pedestrian-oriented design and parking strategies are the regulatory 'teeth' to implement the vision.
● *Use Regulations in Review Processes*

Predictable and Consistent Political and Development Context:
Cities with a consistent and receptive approach towards development and a predictable timeline for approval and permitting processes are more attractive to developers.
◑ *Improve Predictability*

Affordable Housing Policies:
Policies to maintain a diverse housing stock with workforce housing increases access to transit and ridership potential.
◑ *Increase Affordable Housing*

Public Investment:
Capital program planning, infrastructure investments and related financial incentives ensure adequate capacity for higher density development and demonstrate public sector commitment.
● *Continue Investment & Incentives*

Radar chart axes: Compelling Vision, Supportive Regulations, Predictable and Consistent Political and Development Context, Affordable Housing Prices, Public Investment

MARKET

Recent Development Activity:
Proposed, under construction, and new residential, mixed-use and commercial development indicate developer interest.
◑ *More Development Activity*

Redevelopment Potential:
The ease with which redevelopment can occur based on underutilized or vacant parcels, land uses, parcel size, and ownership.
◑ *Consolidate Parcels*

Real Estate Values:
Property values measure market strength and the desire for compact development.
◑ *Higher Values*

Financial Incentives for Development:
Mixed-use TOD projects are typically more expensive to construct and may require financial incentives to bridge the gap in a project's pro forma.
◯ *Provide More Financial incentives*

Trends in Income and Educational Attainment Data:
Increases in income and education levels indicate a growing interest in the neighborhood and the potential for capturing choice ridership.
◑ *Greater Increase in Trends*

Radar chart axes: Recent Development Activity, Redevelopment Potential, Real Estate Values, Financial Incentives for Development, Trends in Income and Educational Attainment Data

PHYSICAL

Transit Travel Shed:
The number of jobs accessible by transit influences how desirable a station area is to potential new businesses or residents.
◑ *Increase Accessibility*

Transit Service and Infrastructure:
Areas with existing or funded transit service are more likely to attract development. The type of transit service and the amenities at the station are also influential.
◑ *Enhance Transit Service & Amenities*

Block Size:
Smaller block sizes promote pedestrian scaled development and walkability.
◑ *Smaller Block Sizes*

Path Connectivity:
Physical barriers to connectivity inhibit pedestrian and bicyclist access to transit, shopping, jobs, and services.
◑ *Increase Connectivity*

Bicycle Comfort:
Accommodating bicyclists can expand transit station catchment areas far beyond the typical pedestrian shed.
◯ *Increase Bikeable Facilities*

Community Gathering Places:
Parks, public plazas and squares, and other areas of public open space are essential amenities and social catalysts for TOD.
◯ *Enhance Community Places*

Radar chart axes: Transit Travel Shed, Transit Service and Infrastructure, Block Size, Path Connectivity, Bicycle Comfort, Community Gathering Places

SOCIAL

Diversity of Existing Uses:
A measure of whether daily errands can be made by walking as determined by Walk Score.
◑ *Higher Walkscore*

Civic or Educational Uses:
Civic, cultural and educational institutions can function as anchors for development and as destinations attracting people to the station area.
◑ *Expand Civic Uses*

Community Events and Branding:
Hosting community events can develop an identity for the area, celebrating its unique character and market the area as an attractive place.
◯ *Increase Income Levels*

Housing and Transportation Affordability:
Affordability of living in a location depends on the combined costs of housing and transportation, and captures the location-efficiency of the area.
◑ *Decrease Combined Cost*

Radar chart axes: Diversity of Existing Uses, Civic or Educational Uses, Community Events and Branding, Housing and Transportation Affordability

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ASSESSMENT

STRENGTHS:
TODville has the basic factors necessary - a strong compelling vision, supportive regulations, and appropriate public investment.

WEAKNESSES:
TODville needs to work most on providing more financial incentives, increasing income levels, enhancing community places, and increasing bikeable facilities.

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[1]Framework for TOD in Florida: www.fltod.com

Next Steps: Developing Strategies

Once the assessment is complete, a community can begin to identify strategies to build upon the area's strengths and address weaknesses.

A critical first step to achieving TOD is articulating a clear and compelling vision for the area that can guide the rest of the community's efforts.

Planners should use the assessment to think critically about their strengths and weaknesses and determine the best strategies for their unique community.

The strategies should address specific opportunities to increase a community's readiness for TOD. The strategies here are tailored for the TODville example.

Does TODville Have a Compelling Vision?

TODville developed a future vision through a an extensive community visioning effort. The vision plan includes illustrations of station area plans, including the illustration below.

These illustrations and clear descriptions:

- Help developers see the type and characteristics of desired development
- Set expectations and demonstrate a level of political stability and support for development

TODville Station Area Vision

STRATEGIES

POLICY

Monitor development activity, and adjust regulations and policy as needed to ensure that development projects are achieving the station area vision. Regulatory updates could include further reducing station area parking requirements especially if transit levels of service increase. As the station area evolves into a more walkable environment, fewer auto-oriented regulations will be necessary.

ECONOMIC

Assemble vacant and/or underutilized parcels for redevelopment by implementing supportive policies and programs. The City, potentially through the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), can directly acquire land for TOD or can assist private developers in acquiring land through grants or no-interest loans. This assistance in the assembly of small parcels can reduce holding costs and risks to developers..

Invest in private development of TOD projects contributing to the City's vision. TOD grants can offset the costs of providing higher density and intensity projects than the market can currently support while Tax Increment Financing (TIF) may be used to pay for assembling land. Such investments assume some of the risk from the developer of building untested concepts at higher densities and intensities and result in a market comparable project for further private investment.

Expand CRA and Chamber of Commerce efforts at attracting new businesses to the station area to build a critical mass of neighborhood amenities such that most daily needs can be met within walking distance. Continue to support the Facade and Exterior Grant Program, Merchant Assistance Program, and Economic Lending Partnership, and create new programs to incentivize new businesses.

PHYSICAL

Develop a robust bicycle network by strategically slowing speeds so bicyclists and automobiles can comfortably share the roadway. TODville's well connected street network and small block size are strong assets to build from. Sharrow markings can provide a reminder of the shared nature of the roadway. On streets with higher speeds, designated bicycle facilities are more appropriate. Provide short term bicycle parking in the public right-of-way, and encourage new development to provide sheltered storage on-site.

Prioritize the pedestrian by continuing efforts to reshape station area rights-of-way through widening sidewalks, incorporating shade trees, and installing pedestrian-scaled lighting. Revise building codes to require building setbacks that augment inadequate sidewalk widths on streets with limited right-of-way. Coordinate with developers to establish easements or dedications to resolve potential liability issues.

SOCIAL

Incorporate an urban square or plaza, as outlined in the Downtown Vision, into the core of the station area. Surround this community gathering place with active building frontages, such as shops, cafes and restaurants, and position it as a focal point for the community and for new development. Program the space with vendors and various events throughout the year to help in branding.

Maintain a diverse housing stock that includes both affordable housing units and market rate, owner-occupied units near the transit station. Use incentive-based approaches to offer increases in building height or density or financing mechanisms to encourage developers to provide affordable units within new, market-rate developments. Avoid approving a disproportionate share of luxury or public housing to ensure the local population supports a diverse range of urban amenities.

TAKE AWAY:

With strong political will, development-friendly regulations, and an existing urban block and street network, the right strategies and incentives will help TODville capitalize on its excellent location and job access so it can develop into a vibrant transit-oriented town center.