



## POLICY GUIDE

# Transit-oriented development

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a community development model that incorporates housing, retail and commercial growth into walkable neighborhoods within a half-mile of quality public transportation.<sup>1</sup> TOD can promote health by reducing transportation costs, creating access to services and jobs, and providing opportunities for physical activity through carefully planned neighborhood design and accessible active transportation options.

### Opportunities that Promote TOD:

- » Incentivize mixed-use development.
- » Encourage Complete Streets strategies.
- » Increase use of traffic-calming measures.
- » Promote long term planning for the use of public and private lands.
- » Provide route maps, arrival times, schedules and integrated fare systems.
- » Increase opportunities for active transportation.

A survey of Americans aged 65 or older found that non-drivers make 15percent fewer trips to the doctor, 59 percent fewer shopping trips and restaurant visits, and 65 percent fewer trips for social, family and religious activities compared with those who drive.<sup>2</sup>

### Types of TOD-Supportive Policies and Programs

*Federal Policy:* There are several federal programs that support (or can be used to support) planning for or building TOD. Examples include the New Starts Project Planning & Development, a transit capital program, and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

*Authorizing Legislation:* Many states have adopted legislation that establishes authority for localities to create TOD districts or special zones that can enact tax increment financing, be prioritized for transportation funds or receive other benefits.

*Design Guidelines:* States, regions, cities or transit agencies can adopt guidelines that outline an agency's support for TOD and provide recommended land uses and design characteristics in TOD zones.

*Local Zoning:* TOD-supportive zoning will vary depending on the local context but typically includes higher density, mixed-use development, reduced parking requirements or special affordable housing policies near transit.

*Direct Funding and Financial Incentive Programs:* These programs include grants, loans, tax credits or direct financial incentives.

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## Sustainable Community Planning in NYC<sup>3</sup>

Sustainable community planning contributes to TOD efforts in NYC. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded a \$3.5 million Sustainable Communities Planning Grant to the New York-Connecticut Sustainable Communities Consortium, which allocated a portion of the grant to several projects in New York City including the “Sustainable East New York study.”

The study entails a comprehensive planning initiative for the areas of Broadway Junction, East New York, and Cypress Hills in Brooklyn.

The New York City Department of Planning is managing the planning study.

### Key Project Goals Include:

- » Preparing recommendations for land use and zoning changes that will facilitate TOD and the production of affordable housing.
- » Identifying opportunities for improvements to transportation access and intermodal connections.
- » Promoting energy efficiency for new and existing buildings.



1. Reconnecting America. “Inventory of TOD Programs.” 2010. Available at [www.reconnectingamerica.org/resource-center/books-and-reports/2011/2010-inventory-of-tod-programs/](http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/resource-center/books-and-reports/2011/2010-inventory-of-tod-programs/).

2. Victoria Transport Policy Institute. “Evaluating Public Transportation Health Benefits.” 2012. Available at [www.vtpi.org/tranben.pdf](http://www.vtpi.org/tranben.pdf).

3. Pace Law School. “Land Use Law Center: TOD Line.” Fall 2012. Available at [http://lawweb.pace.edu/landuse/todline/TOD\\_news\\_Fall\\_2012.pdf](http://lawweb.pace.edu/landuse/todline/TOD_news_Fall_2012.pdf).

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