transit-oriented development

architecture

urban design

planning

landscape architecture

civil engineering
Transit-oriented development (TOD) has become widely recognized as an important community, livability, and economic development model. However, it faces unique challenges. Success requires good markets, advantageous station areas, and excellent coordination between numerous parties. Transit can organize and configure development, but it does not create the market. We need to conceive transit planning, urban design, and real estate development as a coordinated process with common goals.

Transit agencies across the nation are improving and expanding systems with new technology, operations, and facilities in an effort to increase appeal and ridership to the general public. These agencies are seeking new ways to improve their interest through the design of facilities that are distinctive to their systems identity. In many cases, system identity has been achieved through our unique transit architecture for station and transit centers. We recognize that these facilities are part of the urban design of the city, and then develop designs to work with climate conditions, site context, passenger needs, constructability, and long-term maintenance.

Density of residential and employment uses have been accepted ideals for TOD. In the 21st century, TOD will also be seen as successful when it contributes to the social and economic equity of the community and is carefully aligned with regional and local livability goals. Otak has a strong portfolio of affordable housing and mixed-income development projects, as well as long-range planning for Complete Communities. We provide site feasibility studies, predevelopment services, land use approvals, and site and architecture design that adheres as closely as possible to LEED and Sustainable Sites Initiative criteria.
MAKING THE PLACE

One essential aspiration of TOD is to create a place, not a project. Public policymakers and the development community increasingly see TOD as a “place-making” strategy for the neighborhoods served by transit. Attention paid to design quality, amenities, and the public realm have proven to be strong attractors for the demographics that are typical of a transit-supportive population. Otak has a highly-capable group of urban designers, architects, landscape architects, and planners who address the qualities of “place” at the scales of the individual projects and the station area.

IMPLEMENTATION

There is a conspicuous gap between the full potential of TOD and what has actually occurred in many cities. Implementation is about bridging the gap. Otak facilitates discussions based on an understanding of the unique challenges facing TOD and the perspectives of key stakeholders. We provide best practices research and assess the opportunities and constraints for successful TOD within specific station areas. We can also provide advice about strategic objectives and the tools and actions to realize those objectives.

CONNECTING PLACES

TOD connects people to transit, to regional destinations by way of transit, and to places within a neighborhood by way of walking and biking. Vehicle miles traveled decrease and access to opportunity increases. Connectivity goes hand-in-hand with affordability as household transportation costs are reduced. We provide planning and design of pedestrian-friendly streets, bikeways, multiuse pathways, and neighborhood greenways. Otak also provides services critical to the development of the high-capacity transit systems that will configure station areas and attract TOD.