

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.

LEGEND:

- Conditions in earliest stage of development
- Conditions moving towards TOD
- Conditions supportive of TOD

Station Area

Station Area Name: *Delray Station*
 Station Area Type: *Community Center*
 Future Transit Type: *Commuter Rail*



| 20 MEASURE ASSESSMENT | | |
|---|---|---|
| EXISTING CONDITIONS | READINESS | READINESS ASSESSMENT |
| <p>POLICY</p> <p>Compelling Vision: A clearly articulated adopted vision of the scale, intensity, character, amenities, and locale of development is a paramount first step towards TOD.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Predictable and Consistent Political and Development Context: <input type="checkbox"/> Cities with a consistent and receptive approach towards development and a predictable timeline for approval and permitting processes are more attractive to developers.</p> <p>Affordable Housing Policies: <input type="checkbox"/> Policies to maintain a diverse housing stock with workforce housing increases access to transit and ridership potential.</p> <p>Public Investment: Capital program planning, infrastructure investments and related financial incentives ensure adequate capacity for higher density development and demonstrate public sector commitment.</p> | <p> <i>Establish a vision for the area</i></p> <p> <i>Revise zoning districts</i></p> <p> <i>Shorten the development approval process</i></p> <p> <i>Strengthen workforce housing policies</i></p> <p> <i>Increase capital improvement funding and incentives</i></p> | <p>Public</p> <p>Supportive Regulations</p> <p>Predictable and Consistent Political and Development</p> <p>Affordable Housing Prices</p> <p>Compelling Vision</p> |
| <p>MARKET</p> <p>Recent Development Activity: Proposed, under construction, and new residential, mixed-use and commercial development indicate developer interest.</p> <p>Redevelopment Potential: The ease with which redevelopment can occur based on underutilized or vacant parcels, land uses, parcel size, and ownership.</p> <p>Real Estate Values: Property values measure market strength and the desire for compact development.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> | <p> <i>Entice developer interest</i></p> <p> <i>Reduce barriers to redevelopment</i></p> <p> <i>Increase property values</i></p> <p> <i>Provide incentives for targeted businesses</i></p> <p> <i>Continue to support education opportunities</i></p> | <p>Trends in Income and Educational Attainment Data</p> <p>Redevelopment Potential</p> <p>Real Estate Values</p> <p>Financial Incentives for Development</p> <p>Recent Development Activity</p> |
| <p>PHYSICAL</p> <p>Transit Travel Shed: The number of jobs accessible by transit influences how desirable a station area is to potential new businesses or residents.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Block Size: Smaller block sizes promote pedestrian scaled development and walkability.</p> <p>Path Connectivity: Physical barriers to connectivity inhibit pedestrian and bicyclist access to transit, shopping, jobs, and services.</p> <p>Bicycle Comfort: Accommodating bicyclists can expand transit station catchment areas far beyond the typical pedestrian shed.</p> <p>Community Gathering Places: Parks, public plazas and squares, and other areas of public open space are essential amenities and social catalysts for TOD.</p> | <p> <i>Increase accessibility to jobs</i></p> <p> <i>Enhance connecting transit service to Tri-Rail station</i></p> <p> <i>Reduce block sizes</i></p> <p> <i>Provide more connections for walking & cycling</i></p> <p> <i>Enhance on-road bicycle lanes</i></p> <p> <i>Create and enhance community places</i></p> | <p>Community Gathering Places</p> <p>Transit Service and Infrastructure</p> <p>Block Size</p> <p>Bicycle Comfort</p> <p>Path Connectivity</p> <p>Transit Travel Shed</p> |
| <p>SOCIAL</p> <p>Diversity of Existing Uses: A measure of whether daily errands can be made by walking as determined by Walk Score.</p> <p>Civic or Educational Uses: Civic, cultural and educational institutions can function as anchors for development and as destinations attracting people to the station area.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> | <p> <i>Require greater mix of uses</i></p> <p> <i>Expand civic and educational uses</i></p> <p> <i>Increase branding efforts</i></p> <p> <i>Increase housing opportunities near Tri-Rail station</i></p> | <p>Housing and Transportation Affordability</p> <p>Civic or Educational Uses</p> <p>Community Events and Branding</p> <p>Diversity of Existing Uses</p> |

ASSESSMENT

STRENGTHS:

Delray Station is already well-served by commuter rail, several BCT lines, and the downtown/beach trolley. The station area is experiencing neighborhood redevelopment and stabilization, and contains several community assets, including the Village Academy school, Catherine Strong Park, and Saltwater Brewery. The area's market potential continues to grow.

WEAKNESSES:

I-95, the E-4 canal, and the golf course limit the amount of land within walking distance of the Tri-Rail station. Large block sizes, narrow sidewalks, and a lack of trees create an uncomfortable environment for pedestrians. The development approval process is long and arduous. Workforce housing policies can be improved.

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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.

Does Delray Station Have a Compelling Vision?

Much of the land within walking distance of the Tri-Rail station is within the Mixed Residential, Office and Commercial (MROC) district. The MROC district encourages development of Class A office buildings, supporting commercial uses and residential units in a master planned environment, which will provide housing (both market rate and workforce) and employment opportunities for the residents of the Greater Delray Beach Community.

In the future, Delray station is friendly, warm, and colorful. It draws you in with a metropolitan atmosphere that is safe and welcoming. Delray station has the assets of a big city, with the authenticity and intimacy of a small town.



STRATEGIES



POLICY

- Develop and adopt a clear and compelling vision that reflects the community's values.** Compose a succinct vision statement that describes a desirable end state that community members agree upon. Consider conducting a charrette or other intensive public outreach process to develop illustrations of desired street layouts, buildings, and architectural features. The Congress Avenue task force can help develop this vision. Elected officials can adopt the vision statement, and the City can feature it prominently in its Comprehensive Plan. Consider including elements of TOD within the vision language and performance measures. The vision can include a unique identity for the Congress Avenue corridor - such as "a distinguishable self-serving neighborhood with a smaller Class B and Class C flexible office space to support start-up companies and artists with nearby workforce housing."
- Revise the City's regulations to support the community vision.** Expand upon and refine the language and requirements of the MROC and other zoning districts to reflect the community vision and require transit-supportive densities and mix of uses. Consider adding or refining elements from the TOD Guidebook, such as building height, building placement, setbacks, parking, and block size standards to be consistent with the vision for TOD. Consider developing architectural and landscape design guidelines to create a distinct identity. Incorporate the performance measures from the vision into the regulations and design guidelines.



MARKET

- Provide regulatory and financial incentives to increase development interest.** Identify types of businesses to target, such as smaller employers or those that fill a market niche, and develop multiple complimentary strategies to attract them. Regulatory incentives could include expediting the review process for targeted businesses and density bonuses. Consider providing financial incentives or strategies, such as a community land trust, to increase potential for redevelopment. In general, streamlining the development process for all development types could increase developer interest.



PHYSICAL

- Create better connections for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit routes.** Community assets like the Village Academy School, Catherine Strong Park, and the surrounding neighborhood are within close proximity to the Tri-Rail station, but I-95 is a barrier for pedestrians and bicyclists. The City could work with partner agencies (e.g. the MPO and FDOT) to creating connections to these destinations. The City could also work with Palm Tran and SFRTA to consider modifications to bus routes to provide more direct transit connections to these assets.
- Undertake corridor streetscape improvements.** Excess right-of-way may be available. City staff can work with the MPO and other partner agencies to undertake a corridor reconfiguration project to add bicycle lanes, widen sidewalks, and provide shade trees. The partners should consider speed reductions and mid-block pedestrian crossings to make the corridor safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. The streetscape improvements should reflect the landscaping pallet in the design guidelines, if the guidelines already exist.
- Develop a Complete Streets policy for the Congress Avenue corridor** to provide for the safe access to destinations for everyone, regardless of age, ability, income, or ethnicity, and no matter how they travel. Policy statements can include laws, resolutions, executive orders, or departmental policies.



SOCIAL

- Strengthen housing policies to ensure a diverse mix of housing options located close to jobs.** Revise the existing workforce housing policies to ensure that new developments create more workforce housing than is currently required, which would support a live/work component of the community vision. Encourage developments to provide housing for a mix of income levels, and revise policies to promote jobs-housing balance.
- Initiate a branding campaign** to create a distinct identity for the area and generate energy. "Delray Beach is so much more than our downtown" is one potential slogan. Host events, such as food truck rallies or cook-offs, to attract visitors while showcasing improved infrastructure and public amenities. Use underutilized properties, such as the golf course or county parking lot, as a testing ground for new events and ideas. An entrance sign and consistent wayfinding signage with personalized style will reinforce the area's unique identity.

TAKE AWAY:

Delray Station is an area with high potential. Today it is characterized as "strictly functional." It has existing assets, and with some attention and "TLC," it can become a friendly, welcoming, and colorful place with its own unique identity. With short-, mid-, and long-term strategies, it can prove that Delray Beach is so much more than our downtown.