

Date: May 3, 2007
To: James Corless, MTC, Ted Droettboom, JPC
From: Shelley Poticha, CTOD
RE: TOD Training and Technical Assistance Activities – Task 7a1 and 7a2

Introduction and Purpose

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is taking off in the Bay Area due to changing demographic and market conditions, rising gas prices paired with intractable road congestion, and the commitment made by regional agencies to focus a substantial portion of future growth into neighborhoods with high quality transit. MTC's TOD Policy and Station Area Planning Grants, and the new Focusing Our Vision program for Priority Development Areas provide substantial and much-needed funding for planning around transit stations. However, the complexities of building in urban areas, breaking into new markets, and aligning the goals of a host of stakeholders makes TOD more challenging than many other forms of development. For these reasons, MTC and ABAG have asked the Center for Transit-Oriented Development (CTOD) to identify a strategic set of technical assistance and training efforts to help elected officials, practitioners and developers learn about best practices in TOD and provide access to knowledge, research and tools to inform local decision-making.

Over the course of a year, CTOD has met with local planners, practitioners, developers, advocates and agency staff to identify currently available training and technical assistance resources, determine the specific needs of communities receiving Station Area Planning grants, and assess the capacity of ABAG and MTC staff to help support implementation of the TOD Policy and the Focusing Our Vision effort. During this period, research and technical assistance related to TOD has increased dramatically, most notably with the formation of the Great Communities Collaborative (GCC), a coalition of non-profit organizations and philanthropic foundations working to advocate for more TOD in the Bay Area, with the increased activity by the San Francisco Urban Land Institute (ULI) District Council to engage and educate their developer members, and with the research capacity of the Center for Community Innovation (CCI) at U.C Berkeley. These efforts expand the resources available to support TOD and at the same time, increase the need for the regional agencies to act strategically to support communities attempting this new and challenging form of development.

This memo summarizes the findings of interviews and draws on CTOD's experience working with communities across the country to support TOD. The four sections include:

- 1. Training and Technical Assistance Needs**
- 2. Available Expertise and Resources**
- 3. Recommended Activities**
- 4. Next Steps**

Training and Technical Assistance Needs

The Bay Area has made tremendous advances in policy-making to support TOD and is now a national leader in tying infrastructure investment decisions to well-planned development. MTC's TOD Policy is considered a model that other regions hope to implement and the Focusing Our Vision initiative is rapidly gaining support by local jurisdictions that see the value of building a more sustainable future. The region lags, though, in the number and quality of new mixed-use, transit-oriented developments, as documented by a recent SF Chronicle article that cited eight new suburban town centers in other states as models for the Bay Area.¹ The article went on to find *"There's a disconnect between the way that an increasing number of Bay Area suburbanites would like to live, and the buildings that we see as a result."*

Our region is in the midst of a paradigm shift. While local elected officials are beginning to understand the value of focusing growth near transit stations and corridors, they continue to face harsh resistance from citizens anxious about change or concerned about repeating past mistakes that have led to inappropriate development. Though the development community is beginning to see the market opportunity for TOD, they continue to encounter resistance from local planners and transit officials worried about increasing density or reducing parking standards. While planners generally support the concept of TOD, they are often isolated, with limited exposure to the experiences of other communities and little knowledge of the tools and techniques being used to deliver high performing TOD. And, while MTC's Station Area Plan Pilot Program invested over \$2.8 million in eight communities, the funds are often not sufficient to address all the issues that arise with planning for TOD and bring together the myriad of stakeholders to get consensus for a strong vision. In essence, we have some of the building materials in place, but lack a strong foundation for success.

In a meeting with Station Area Plan grantees, the following issues were identified as subjects where technical assistance and training is needed.

¹ "Instant Urbanism: Citified suburbs becoming new modal for the Bay Area," John King, SF Chronicle, Sunday, April 8, 2007. <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2007/04/08/MNG70P4C0B1.DTL>

PRIORITY ISSUES FOR TOD Practitioners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial Tools• Public Infrastructure Improvements• Parking• Financial/Market Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Space/Community Amenities• Environmental Issues• Neighborhood Character• Public/Private Partnership Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Station Access• Winning Neighborhood Support• Political Challenges• Effective Community Involvement Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amendments to existing land use policies• Suburban TODs• Gentrification• Form-Based Codes• Affordable Housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pedestrian Design• Existing Incompatible Land Uses• Transit connections to rail station	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building Design Guidelines• Linear TOD along bus corridors• Landbanking

Results from March 30, 2006 meeting with Station Area Planning grantees.

Items in **Bold** received highest number of mentions

When interviewed, practitioners expressed an interest in having support made available to them that would address gaps in currently funded efforts and most frequently identified the following training and technical assistance needs:

- Educating elected officials about TOD (demand, design, density)
- Linking local governments with capable TOD developers
- Information on models and best practices (RFPs, model codes, local and national case studies, financing tools)
- Strategies for tackling tough implementation problems, such as parking and affordable housing
- Tours of successful TOD (locally and nationally)
- Short term, focused technical assistance (e.g. photo-simulation, community involvement, parking)
- Synthesized research that helps to set standards and calibrate codes
- Information on consumer preferences and market demand
- Networking among professionals/TOD stakeholders

One challenge somewhat unique to the Bay Area is the size of the region. Station Area Planning grantees clearly voiced a preference for local and/or web-based resources, rather than centralized annual meetings.

In addition, it is CTOD's impression that while many Bay Area consultants work on a national scale, there is not sufficient working knowledge of the trends, tools and techniques being used in other communities to creatively implement the latest TOD concepts. Greater exposure to cutting-edge strategies would help improve the quality of Bay Area TOD projects and could help avoid some of the common implementation pitfalls.

Available Expertise and Resources

As mentioned above, there is an emerging group of players actively engaged in supporting TOD in the Bay Area, including:

Key TOD Actors	Major TOD-Related Initiatives ²
MTC	TOD Policy, Station Area Planning Grants, Research, Technical Assistance
ABAG	Technical Assistance, Research
JPC	Focusing Our Vision/Priority Development Program
ULI	TOD Marketplace, TOD Tours, Development Advisory Service
CTOD	TOD Best Practices, Research, Training
Great Communities Collaborative	Technical Assistance to advocates and community-based organizations in priority communities, web-based tools and resources
Community Foundations	Funding for GCC and staff resources for facilitation of TOD plans
CCI/UCB	Research, local workshops
Transit Agencies & CMAs	Participation in Station Area Planning efforts

Many of the TOD-Related Initiatives are relatively new – launched within the past two years – and thus it is not possible to fully assess their impact. However, it is clear that there are several organizational and capacity issues that should be addressed as the TOD program moves forward:

- **Build Working Partnerships** – Each of the organizations listed above as TOD Actors plays a unique role in supporting the culture of TOD in the Bay Area. Given the complexity of the challenge of focusing a larger percentage of growth to PDAs and TODs, strategic partnerships will be critically important. MTC and ABAG should formalize these partnerships to the extent feasible over the coming year.
- **Establish Clear Roles and Responsibilities** – Defining clear roles and responsibilities of the many TOD actors will be important as more communities engage in planning for TOD and the general public identifies TOD as a recognizable real estate product. During the past year, as many TOD programs were launched, lack of strong coordination led to some duplication of efforts. And, given the present lack of sufficient funding to address all training and technical assistance needs, various groups are working to fill roles in untraditional ways, sometimes resulting in inefficient use of resources. For example, MTC, GCC and ULI host tours of TOD projects in the region. While these sessions are often designed for somewhat different audiences, duplication should be avoided to both reduce costs and prioritize the time of locals.
- **Focus Technical Assistance on Funded Stations and Priority Development Areas** – Given the commitment by the regional agencies to create incentives and funding for key station areas, technical assistance efforts should be focused on these sites for the time being, rather than be distributed throughout the region. This will help to ensure that these key areas become models that other communities can follow and help them be as

² This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of activities, but a synopsis of major activities related to TOD.

- successful as possible. ABAG should assess the degree to which existing technical assistance programs can be focused to station areas and PDAs.
- **Provide Grantees with a Package of Training and Technical Assistance Resources** – In order to ensure that grantees use funds as efficiently as possible, a package of support should be made available to them before they enter into contracts with consultants. This might include an orientation session to TOD and lessons learned from previous station area planning efforts, model RFQs/RFPs, local tours for practitioners and elected officials, access to technical assistance, low or no-cost training sessions on key technical issues, and the tools resulting from commissioned research.
 - **Be Strategic with Resources** – Given the tremendous number of TOD plans and projects that are underway, it will be easy to lose sight of long-term, larger goals. Technical assistance providers should proactively identify communities to direct resources to and topics that need significant focus, rather than responding ad hoc to requests. Education and outreach should help build a deeper culture of support for TOD and transit in the region. Key findings from research efforts should be made available to practitioners through training and tools, and to the public through education and outreach efforts.
 - **Fund Technical Assistance and Training Over Several Years** – Though a substantial amount of regional funds are being used for station area plans and will be directed to PDAs, there is limited funding for training, outreach, education, tool development and quick-response technical assistance. These types of efforts leverage the funding for planning and help build more informed elected officials and practitioners. Multi-year support is essential to support the numerous communities planning for TOD and to build expertise among practitioners.

Recommended Activities

The following table recommends a prioritized set of current and suggested activities for the MTC and ABAG, as well as current and planned activities of other groups. Footnotes provide additional information, recommendations and clarifications

	MTC/ABAG Current and Funded Activities	MTC/ABAG Recommended Activities (provided funding is made available)	Support by Others Funded (seeking funding *)
Technical Assistance	Photo-Simulation Service (ABAG) ³ Community Involvement Assistance (ABAG) ⁴ Parking Toolkit (MTC) ⁵ Direct Ridership Modeling Tool (MTC) Staff as extension agents (ABAG) ⁶	On-call technical assistance for Station Area Plan and PDA grantees (MTC) ⁷ Model Ordinances/RFPs/ Toolkits ⁸	Technical Assistance to Community Based Orgs in Priority Station Areas ⁹ Mixed-Income TOD Toolkit (CTOD/CCI) ^{*10} Great Communities Toolkit (GCC) ¹¹ Health Impact Assessment Tool (GCC) ¹² TOD Traffic Generation Model (GCC) Web-Resources (CTOD) Fee-Based Advisory Panels (ULI) ^{*13}

³ ABAG staff has recently been trained to use computerized photo simulation tools. This is a valuable set of services that should be made available to Station Area Planning and PDA grantees on a competitive basis.

⁴ ABAG has offered to develop a service to provide one-on-one assistance to local governments to aid them in developing a public outreach process. This service should be focused on new Station Area Plan and PDA grantees.

⁵ MTC expects to finalize a research effort on parking in TODs by Summer 2007. A TOD Parking Toolkit will be prepared as part of this contract. Training sessions would help make this tool more effective and could be incorporated into the TOD University concept (See below).

⁶ ABAG staff is providing flexible technical assistance to communities seeking support on a wide variety of planning matters. Targeting these “extension teams” to TODs and PDAs would help leverage other available resources.

⁷ A flexible pool of funds that could be deployed to address unforeseen technical issues in station area plans.

⁸ Technical resources/case studies are needed to bring national best practices to station area planning and PDA efforts on the most pressing issues raised by local practitioners.

⁹ The GCC annually identifies 3 to 8 communities where its partner organizations provide technical assistance, support and funding to community-based organizations effected by station area planning efforts. The aim is to engage a larger group of stakeholders in station area plans and to ensure that equity and environmental considerations are addressed in station area plans.

http://www.greatcommunities.org/index_files/chart.htm

<p>Outreach (public)</p>	<p>TOD 101 Powerpoint (MTC) New Places, New Choices (ABAG, BAAQMD, BCDC, MTC)</p>	<p>Speakers bureau (ABAG)¹⁴ Public Information Campaign (ABAG/MTC)¹⁵</p>	<p>Priority Communities Outreach efforts (GCC)¹⁶ Opinion Polling/Message Development (Community Fdns)¹⁷ Sponsored Speakers Series (CTOD)*</p>
<p>Education (practitioners + electeds)</p>	<p>TOD Marketplace (with ULI)¹⁸ Quarterly tours for regional agency board members & staff (MTC/ABAG) RailVolution Conference for Staff + Commissioners (MTC)</p>	<p>TOD University – 4-6 Workshops/year on key Technical Issues¹⁹ Annual trip to another region for regional agency board members & staff Effective Community Engagement Workshops (2/year) (ABAG) TOD Orientation Session and Tour for new Station Area Planning Grantees and PDAs Local workshops on TOD issues – thru on-call consultants (MTC)</p>	<p>Developers Tours of TOD (ULI) Making the Case for Mixed-Income TOD Symposium (CTOD/CCI) Health Impact Assessment Trainings (GCC) Communications Trainings (Community Fdns)*</p>

¹⁰ As housing affordability and gentrification emerge as critical issues for TOD, a set of tools are needed to help practitioners analyze site conditions and link to the most appropriate tools for their community. This effort could be funded by the foundations or the regional agencies.

¹¹ A resource for local advocates and community-based organizations. On-line: http://www.greatcommunities.org/index_files/toolkit.htm

¹² This toolbox is expected to be ready Summer '07. It will be made available to a limited number of GCC priority communities and up to 6 training sessions will be staged over a two-year time-frame.

¹³ A standard service offered by the ULI and typically paid for by the sponsoring local jurisdiction.

¹⁴ With pre-prepared powerpoints on the Vision and TOD, ABAG staff could make presentations at local events. ABAG might also compile a list of recommended speakers on specific topics for local events.

¹⁵ A significant effort is needed to develop, define and deploy a public information campaign on the principles of Focusing Our Vision and the TOD initiative. This is not currently funded.

¹⁶ See description under footnote 7.

¹⁷ To be completed Summer '07.

¹⁸ First session successfully completed Fall '06. Second session planned for Fall '07.

¹⁹ CTOD has envisioned establishing a training program for elected officials and practitioners on TOD-related issues in the Bay Area. The TOD University would stage 4 to 6 seminars each year on topics of relevance to implementing TOD, such as Getting Started with TOD, Model Zoning Codes for TOD, Parking and TOD, Assessing the Market for TOD, Working with Developers to Get High Quality

Research & Evaluation	TOD travel behavior surveys & research (MTC) Monitoring Report (ABAG)	Shared TOD database for regional agencies (MTC/ABAG) Annual performance evaluation for station area plans, Res 3434 corridors and PDAs	TOD Projects Tracker (GCC)
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Next Steps

It's critical that the regional agencies develop a cohesive package of outreach, technical assistance, education and outreach strategies that can support both MTC's efforts around transit-oriented development in the five transit expansion corridors under the TOD policy as well as the larger multi-agency FOCUS project. MTC and ABAG should develop a work plan and budget for 2007-08 that focuses on a limited set of activities based on the core competencies of each agency directed towards a limited number of areas – ideally those that have been identified as Priority Development Areas (PDAs) through the FOCUS program. This work plan should be closely coordinated with stakeholder groups funded by the San Francisco Foundation, the East Bay Community Foundation and others to avoid overlap, maximize synergies and leverage resources.

Development at Transit Stations, etc. The curriculum could be guided by the common issues that station area planning grantees and PDAs are facing. Faculty would be drawn from local and national sources. Funding has not been secured.