

Planning and Design for Transit-Oriented Districts (TOD)

The promise of transit oriented districts is great. At their best, TODs are where goals for placemaking are realized in concert with expanded mobility, heightened economic activity, and livable neighborhoods. These local benefits are magnified when productive transit services make TODs the departure points for travel throughout the region.

Unfortunately, achieving the benefits of TOD has been an elusive goal in many communities. In part, this is because the opportunities arising from current development patterns are so different than the forces that naturally joined public transit to land use patterns in earlier eras. In fact, central cities in traditional metropolitan areas dominated by a single regional center continue to command the highest transit commute shares. However, polycentric regions like Los Angeles and Atlanta and suburban job concentrations such as the Bay Area's Tri-Valley and North Carolina's Research Triangle are investing in and working to capitalize on transit. From first-ring suburbs where rail and bus services have long been community assets, to exurbs looking forward to the very-first arrival of the train, local leaders nationwide are engaged in planning and design for TOD.

In FTS's TOD practice, we work with communities to realize the promise of TOD by:

- Leading educational dialogue through which community members develop a realistic understanding of transit's impact and potential
- Master planning that creates stations, stops and transfer points that contribute to district identity and vitality
- Establishing design guidelines for buildings, uses, and the spaces between buildings, so that uses in the transit zone will be good neighbors.
- Carefully designing the sequence of movement from the boarding area to important district destinations so that wayfinding is easy, safe, and attractive
- Respecting the operational demands of transit agencies and the functional needs of transit riders while elevating the importance of transit in placemaking
- Creating original designs for streetscapes, urban open spaces, and landmarks that make the transit place a memorable part of civic and community identity.

The four FTS principals each contribute uniquely to these activities.

Michael Freedman works with the dynamics of urban change, using the findings of economic analysis to capture the value of transit and instigate the restructuring of city

districts. Mr. Freedman's understanding of how cities are transformed is combined with his specialty in the design of urban open spaces for results that are both inspiring and achievable. In designing transit zones, he focuses on system users as they experience a sequence of environments that connect the transit station to the surrounding place.

Gregory Tung brings to TOD design his deep understanding of architectural and landscape character, which comes into play in his designs for streetscapes, open spaces and landmark features. Mr. Tung is an expert in street and station lighting, a key element in making the transit zone welcoming and comfortable. His work for transit operating agencies includes designs for station areas and multimodal transfer points while also addressing the character and quality of the surrounding urban fabric.

Hiroyuki Sasaki excels at master planning for transit-oriented districts. Centralizing the transit station and providing the necessary mixture and variety of uses are among the strategies he draws on to create urban vitality. Mr. Sasaki's work is distinguished by thoughtful arrangement of buildings with connections between buildings for streets, pedestrian paths, open spaces, and the parking spaces that are required to make integrated and successful districts. Mr. Sasaki is leading FTS's work on incorporating form-based zoning into plans for transit oriented districts.

Look in the Project section of the Website to read more about FTS's TOD project experience:

- Heart of the Region – TOD, Tukwila, Washington
- Maclay, San Fernando, and Truman Corridors Specific Plan, San Fernando, CA
- Hacienda Business Park Transit Oriented Specific Plan, Pleasanton, CA
- Downtown Transit Gateway, Redwood City, CA
- Evelyn Avenue Corridor TOD Plan, Mountain View, CA
- Downtown Multimodal Transit Center, Mountain View, CA
- Castro Street Reconfiguration and Design, Mountain View, CA
- Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Urban Design Recommendations, Santa Clara County, CA
- Tasman East / Capitol Avenue Light Rail Transit Corridor Urban Design Recommendations, Santa Clara County, CA
- Downtown BART Area Public Improvements, Berkeley, CA
- Civic Center / BART Site Master Plan, Hayward, CA
- Lodi Transit Center Master Plan, Lodi, CA