



King County

Department of Transportation
Metro Transit Division

King County Department of Transportation

Transit Oriented Development

What is the program?

The King County Council funded the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) program in 1998 to support its Urban Center vision. The program was directed to work with Urban Center jurisdictions to develop transit supportive land uses and activities. TOD staff operates within the DOT Director's office to facilitate transit supportive housing and retail joint-development at selected Transit Division properties.

One major goal of the program is to increase transit ridership through co-locating housing, jobs, and shopping with close proximity for walking or transit. A related goal is to identify opportunities to introduce an element of affordability into the development of housing near the transit centers.

How does the program help reduce VMT?

Increasing density of housing, jobs, and shopping uses in close proximity to transit and pedestrian opportunities reduces the need to use single occupancy vehicles. Also, fewer parking stalls are necessary for multi-family housing constructed close to transit. At the Overlake TOD, car ownership is .6 per unit; much lower than comparable projects. At the Renton TOD, 38% of the residents are using the bus an average of 7 times per week.

What's happening now?

Demand for multi family, affordable housing remains strong, especially rental, in the current economic climate. Population growth remains strong in the region despite the current credit restricted downturn. Developers continue to search for properties to construct lower to middle income rental units with convenient pedestrian or transit availability.

The TOD program has consistently emphasized higher density housing with minimum parking availability and maximum transit and pedestrian access. This emphasis makes the Transit properties being evaluated for TOD development even more valuable since the recent upswing in fuel prices.

What can we be doing with existing resources?

The TOD program currently receives grants and annual council appropriations to conduct feasibility studies and other pre-development work on selected Transit Division properties suitable for joint-development.

Since there is no additional funding for developable Transit properties whose land values cannot support the cost of structuring the existing parking, TOD is limited to properties with higher land values or where more affordable housing can be incorporated. For example, low income housing tax credits can reduce the cost of borrowing for a developer able to build at the lower end of the affordable housing spectrum.



King County

Department of Transportation
Metro Transit Division

What could we be doing with additional resources?

Capital improvements could be made at existing park and ride lots on highly travelled corridors to increase and reorient surface capacity into structured parking while also providing a podium upon which to build multi-family housing. The resulting increased housing and park and ride density would increase the utility of existing Transit properties and advance Urban Center goals to reduce VMT and green house gas emissions.