**TOD, Aging Populations, & Health**

*Melissa Zornitta, AICP, Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission*

By 2030, nearly one in five Americans—71.5 million people—will be over age 65. One in five Americans age 65 and above does not drive. The aging population is becoming an increasingly pressing issue for communities. One approach planners are taking is to create more livable communities where people can easily age in place through Transit Oriented Development or TOD. Communities are looking to innovatively use this approach to transform development patterns and make a significant dent in addressing the needs of an aging population.

TOD is an opportunity to focus growth around planned transit investments. Station areas become community focal points with higher density mixes of integrated uses within walking distance of a transit station, providing opportunities for people to live, work and play in one location. Other communities such as Portland, Dallas and Denver have seen considerable economic development and redevelopment around their transit stations. In Dallas, within ¼ mile of light rail stations, they have seen a 32% increase in residential property values. Over 32,000 jobs have been created. Denver has built over 15,000 housing units, 5.9 million square feet of office, and 5.2 million square feet of retail within ½ mile of their transit stations.

In addition, TOD has seen significant results in addressing affordability and increasing walkability – two important components to addressing the needs of an aging population. Transportation costs are the #2 household expense after housing, making it a major factor, especially for older residents on fixed incomes. A Metro Portland study found that vehicle miles travelled per capita was reduced by 12 miles per day when citizens lived in areas with good transit and mixed use living versus suburban areas. Households in areas with good transit can pay less than 10% of their income for transportation, while suburban households might pay upwards of 25%. This points in the direction of TOD as a successful model for addressing these issues.

In Tampa, an innovative approach has been utilized to ensure the community is ready for the TOD opportunities associated with future light rail and high speed rail through amendments to the Comprehensive Plan proposed by the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission in conjunction with the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County. The amendments provide an incentive for creating mixed use, walkable development around transit stations by allowing increased density and intensity within a ½ mile around transit stations without future amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. Taking a systemwide approach, the policies outline station typologies for the different scales of stations that may develop across the transit system. The plan provides a framework for development around transit stations with specific standards for complete streets, connectivity, mix of uses and housing types, and inclusion of public spaces. Implementation of these policies will include creation of TOD zoning districts and station area plans to further specify the design and development around transit stations. Putting plans for TOD in the Comprehensive Plan now advances the community’s position when competing for Federal Transit Administration dollars, given the increased emphasis on land use and economic development in that process.

The result of TOD policies, such as those in Tampa, will be a true integration of transportation and land use planning following in the footsteps of successful TOD’s across the country. By doing so, planners can create healthy, livable, walkable communities with a mix of uses, housing options and mobility choices and help meet the needs of our aging population.

**Resources:**

- Aging in Place Initiative from Partners for Livable Communities - [http://www.aginginplaceinitiative.org/](http://www.aginginplaceinitiative.org/)
- Center for Transit Oriented Development from Reconnecting America - [http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/](http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/)
- Dallas Area Regional Transit - [http://www.dart.org/about/tod.asp](http://www.dart.org/about/tod.asp)