



# TOD Office Annual Report 2017



2017 was an exciting year for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the Twin Cities region as favorable economic conditions and a regional shift towards infill development allowed developers to move forward with a variety of transit oriented projects. The Metro Transit TOD Office worked to assist these efforts and further TOD in the region by serving as a resource for developers and local governments as well as actively pursuing TOD on Metropolitan Council-owned land.

One of the largest transit oriented developments that broke ground in 2017 was Allianz Field, the future home of Major League Soccer's Minnesota United. The stadium is being built on land owned by Metro Transit and formerly used as a bus garage. When complete in 2019, the stadium will be served by both the METRO Green Line and the A Line.

Another high-profile development the TOD Office moved forward with is at 38th Street Station in

Minneapolis. In 2017, the TOD Office negotiated and received Metropolitan Council approval to ground lease an existing bus-turnaround to a private developer who will build a multi-building, mixed-use development on the site. The development will include numerous improvements to the public realm and will dramatically revitalize the METRO Blue Line 38th Street Station.

In addition to making significant strides on other development projects in 2017, the TOD Office also hosted two TOD Forum events on development issues, completed a study of how much development has occurred along the region's transitways, reviewed all potential TOD sites owned by the Metropolitan Council and actively collaborated with both internal as well as external partners.

This report highlights key TOD efforts of 2017, both from within the Metropolitan Council as well as from external partners.

## Metropolitan Council TOD Goals

1

**Maximize the development impact of transit investments**  
by integrating transportation, jobs and housing.

2

**Support regional economic competitiveness**  
by leveraging private investment.

3

**Advance equity**  
by improving multimodal access to opportunity for all.

4

**Support a 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation system**  
through increased ridership and revenues.

# Development Projects

## Allianz Field – Minnesota United Stadium

One of the largest transit oriented projects to break ground in 2017 was Allianz Field, a 20,000-seat professional soccer stadium near the intersection of Snelling Avenue and University Avenue in St. Paul. As the new home for the Minnesota United Football Club, Allianz Field is the first step in a long-term proposal to remake an auto-oriented superblock into a mixed-use, transit oriented village with the stadium as its hub.

This stadium is a result of a partnership between Metro Transit, the City of St. Paul and Minnesota United. Metro Transit is leasing the property to the City who will sublease it to Minnesota United. With easy access to both the METRO Green Line and the A Line, Metro Transit and the City of St. Paul estimate 5,400 – 10,500 fans will use transit to get to and from the stadium when it opens in 2019.



## 38th Street Station

In 2016, the Lander Group proposed a mixed-use, mixed-income development on a Metro Transit-owned bus turnaround at the METRO Blue Line's 38th Street Station. Throughout 2017, TOD staff worked with the Lander Group to negotiate a long-term ground lease and to ensure that transit functions at the site will be maintained and improved. The plan calls for construction



of a new street that will allow buses to turn around while freeing up space

for construction of 164 residential units and 28,000 square feet of commercial space. The iconic Cardinal Bar will be incorporated in whole into the new development. The project will increase access to jobs and housing along transit and dramatically improve the public realm around the station through enhanced pedestrian connections, streetscape improvements and the addition of public plazas. Construction is expected to start in 2018.

### What is Transit Oriented Development (TOD)?

TOD is walkable urban development served by frequent transit with a mix of housing, retail and employment designed to allow people to live and work with transportation choices.

### TOD Policy

The TOD Policy provides a framework for the Metropolitan Council to play a leadership role across sectors in TOD implementation while building upon the TOD-supportive activities that the Council has completed for years. The Metropolitan Council has an important stake in maximizing TOD potential to help foster efficient and economic growth for all residents.

## Central Station Block

Metro Transit owns most of the block surrounding the METRO Green Line Central Station in downtown St. Paul. In 2017, TOD staff worked with the City of St. Paul HRA and other stakeholders to prepare the site for development. The transit service at the site includes the METRO Green Line's Central Station as well as over 14 bus routes. Development oriented towards this transit hub will likely be a large-scale, multi-story, and mixed-use development. A solicitation is expected to be released in mid-2018.

## Additional Projects

### Wayzata Park & Ride

Metro Transit owns a Park & Ride facility near downtown Wayzata. This Park & Ride is in a location with high development potential due to its proximity to regional amenities such as Lake Minnetonka and popular regional bike trails. TOD staff are currently exploring opportunities to integrate a TOD with the Park & Ride while maintaining transit service to the downtown Wayzata area.

## Fridley Station

In 2017, a developer approached the Fridley HRA with a proposal to build several phases of residential development on the Fridley Northstar Station Park & Ride. The Fridley HRA owns the east Park & Ride and leases the space to Metro Transit for transit parking, though the site operates at less than 10 percent of its capacity. In 2018, TOD staff will work with the Fridley HRA and a private developer to explore redevelopment opportunities that more efficiently use the land directly adjacent to the commuter rail station.

## Woodbury Theatre

The METRO Gold Line is a planned nine-mile BRT line that will connect downtown St. Paul to Woodbury, MN. The line's eastern terminus will be at the Woodbury Theatre, a Park & Ride and operating movie theater owned by Metro Transit. As station area planning continues for the Gold Line, TOD staff will work with internal and external partners to help shape a comprehensive vision for the Woodbury Theatre area that will prioritize TOD.

## 2425 Minnehaha Avenue

In 2019, Metro Transit's police force will be relocating from their existing facility along Minnehaha Avenue in Minneapolis to a new building adjacent to Metro Transit's Heywood Office Building. The TOD Office has begun evaluating the feasibility of pursuing joint development on the old MTPD site after the building has been vacated.

## Coon Rapids/Riverdale Station

The TOD Office has begun due diligence on property located at the Coon Rapids Riverdale Northstar station. The property is adjacent to another parcel currently being examined for development as a TOD by a private developer. TOD staff will continue to carry out due diligence and explore the feasibility of pursuing development on the site.

## External TOD developments

### Ray

Ray is a residential development consisting of 78 "micro-apartments" located adjacent to the METRO Green Line's Raymond Avenue Station. With units ranging from 372 to 505 square feet, the Ray's success has shown that there is a demand for a variety of housing types near transit. The Ray opened in Summer of 2017.

### The Moline

The Moline, located adjacent to the planned METRO Green Line Extension's Hopkins Station, includes public amenities such as a bicycle lounge and a Park & Ride facility. Through a public-private partnership with the City of Hopkins, Doran Companies was able to mitigate risk while adding to the City's existing district parking framework and preserve surrounding land for non-parking uses. The Moline opened in Fall 2017.

### The Finn

The Finn is a mixed-use development in St. Paul's Highland Park neighborhood and is located just a short distance from the A Line. The development contains 57 apartments, offices for Edina Realty, and several retail spaces on the ground floor. The Finn opened in Summer 2017.

### Veterans East

Veterans East is a five-story, 100-unit affordable housing community for homeless military veterans. The community is located near the METRO Blue Line's VA Medical Center Station. The building opened in Fall 2017.





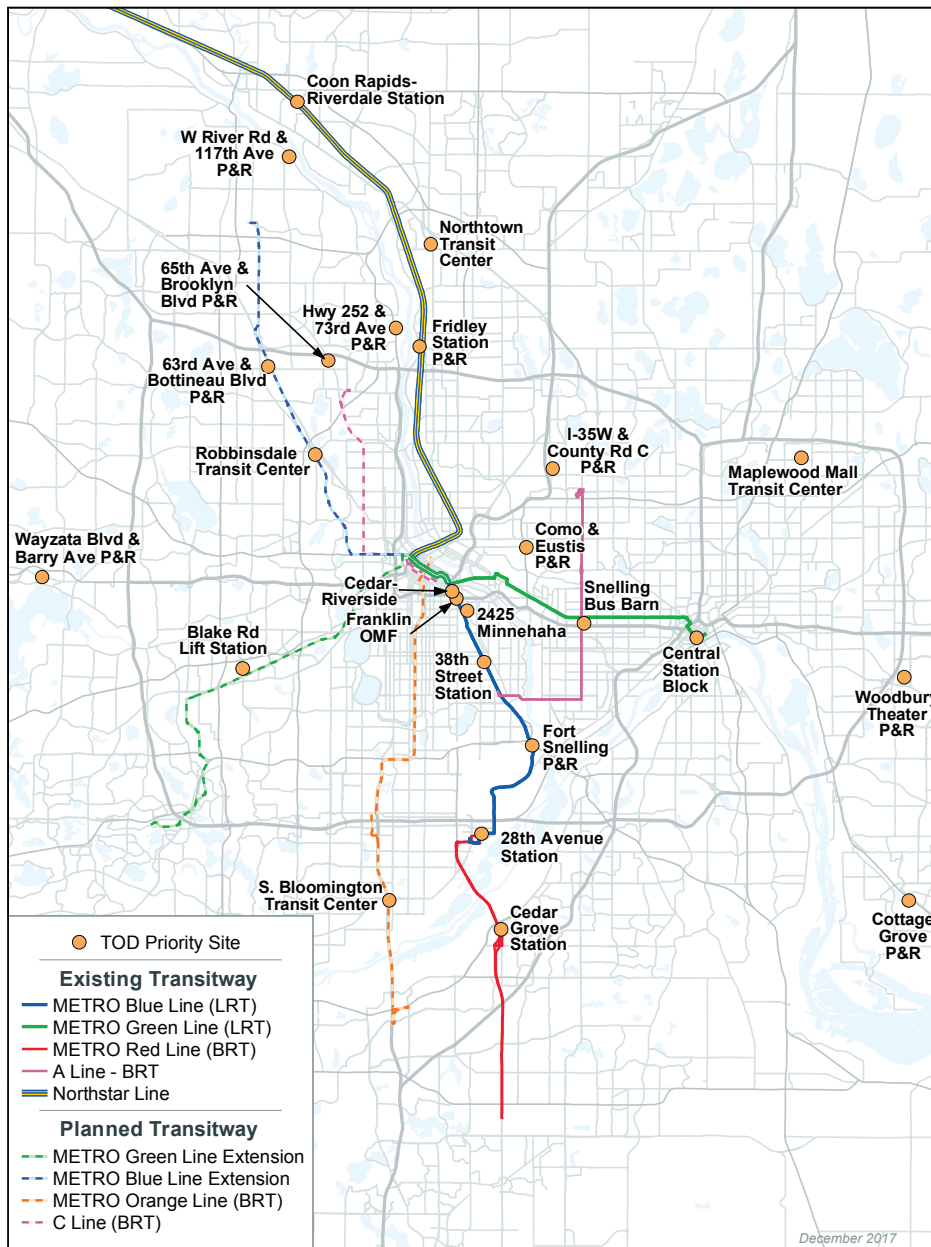
# Development Opportunities

## Development Opportunities on Metropolitan Council owned property

One of the functions of the TOD Office is to explore development opportunities on Council-owned land. In 2017, all Council-owned properties were analyzed for their TOD potential. 25 sites were selected as likely to have near-term potential for TOD. A map of these sites is available on the next page. The TOD Office will continue to explore the feasibility of TOD on these sites.

## Update to Public Parcels Database

In 2016 the TOD Office released the Publicly-owned Parcels Database. This online database displays all parcels owned by public agencies within existing and future transit station areas in the Twin Cities and provides a window into the development opportunities around transit. In 2017, this database was expanded to include public properties along the proposed C Line arterial BRT as well as many of the region's park-and-rides. Feedback has indicated that both public and private entities have found the database useful for relevant work, including studying development around transit in the Twin Cities.



# TOD Grants

## Metropolitan Council Grants

The Metropolitan Council provides annual grants to development projects that promote affordable housing, environmental cleanup, or TOD in the region. In 2017, \$22 million in funds were made available in four categories: Transit Oriented Development (LCA-TOD), Tax base Revitalization (TBRA), Livable Communities Demonstration Act (LCDA) and Local Housing Incentives Account (LHIA) grant programs. Many of the developments sponsored in 2017 fell near high-frequency transit service, as seen in the map at right.

Metro Transit TOD staff participated in the process of reviewing applications for the 2017 LCA-TOD grant awards. Participation involved reviewing initial designs, providing feedback on draft proposals and reviewing final applications. Final decisions on awards were made by the Metropolitan Council.

## Hennepin County TOD Grants

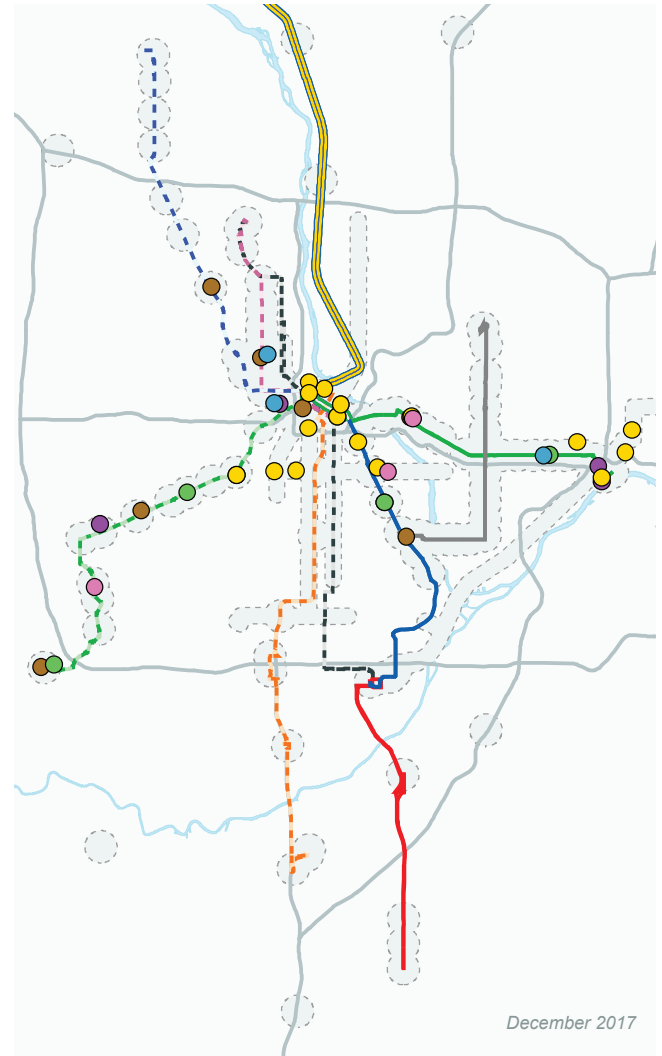
Through its TOD Grant program, Hennepin County supports projects that enhance transit usage, increase density along key transit corridors and reinforce the community. At the request of Hennepin County TOD staff, the Met Council supported the review of grant applications for Hennepin County's Transit Oriented Development Program in the Spring and Fall. The locations of 2017 Hennepin County TOD Grants are shown in the map at right.

## FTA TOD Pilot Planning Grants

The TOD Office worked with Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington Counties to secure \$2.2 million for transitway TOD planning efforts from the FTA TOD Pilot Planning Program. This innovative program helps coordinate station area planning and develop implementation strategies for transitways. Two local planned transitways received funding: the METRO Blue Line Extension and the METRO Gold Line. The METRO Gold Line TOD grant will be managed by Washington County and will focus on developing station area plans, while the METRO Blue Line Extension TOD grant will be managed by Hennepin County and will create implementation plans for the existing station area plans. These planning efforts are expected to be completed in 2019.

## 2017 Met Council Projects Awarded by Grant Program

- LCDA
- LCDA-TOD
- LHIA
- TBRA
- TOD-Predevelopment
- Hennepin Cty TOD
- TOD Grant Eligible Areas





# Studies and Resources

## Development Trends Along Transit Study

The TOD Office partnered with the Regional Policy and Research Office at the Metropolitan Council to examine development trends along existing and planned Light Rail and BRT transitways in the Twin Cities region. Going back to 2003, the study tracked how residential, commercial, and industrial development has occurred over time. Developments were spatially classified to determine where in the region development is occurring. The study found that development is far more common in areas that are served by transitways than in areas that are not. Since 2003, over 13,000 multifamily units, \$3 billion of commercial development and \$1.7 billion in public and institutional development have been built along the transitways included in the study. The next report including development data from 2017 is planned for mid-2018.

## TOD Guide

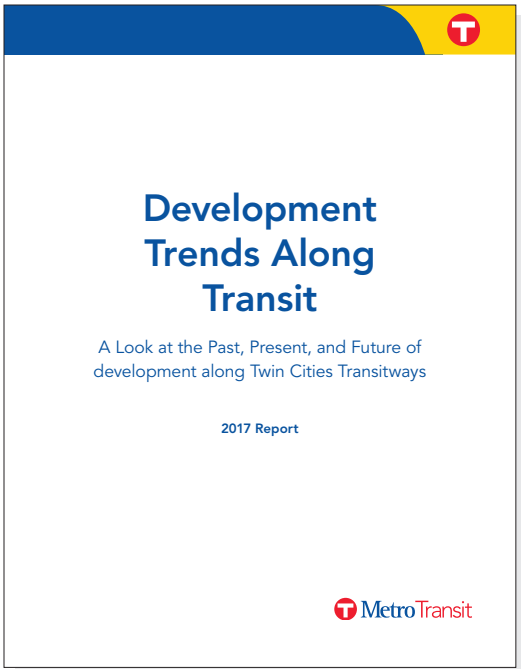
Staff at the Metropolitan Council maintain the TOD Guide to serve as an ongoing and evolving resource for local stakeholders involved with the planning and implementation of TOD. The TOD Guide includes information on the roles of local public entities, the market for TOD and the planning fundamentals necessary for the successful implementation of TOD. The TOD Guide also includes numerous case studies to provide real-world examples of successful TOD projects.

## SAC Credits with MCES

Sewer Availability Charges (SAC) are administered by cities to pay for regional wastewater infrastructure. In the past few years, these charges have sometimes been perceived as a burden on small-businesses and property developers. The TOD Office coordinated with Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) on a guide to SAC credits and deferments to help both business owners and developers better understand SAC and the resources in place to help them cover the cost. This guide is arranged in an easy to read FAQ style and is available on the TOD Office's website. This guide will be updated as SAC are revised, including an expected update in 2018.

## Transitway Impacts Research Program

The Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota released two reports in 2017 as part of their ongoing Transitway Impacts Research Program. These reports answer questions about the economic, travel and community impacts of transitway corridors in the Twin Cities region. Reports released in 2017 study the walking tolerance of transitway users and what strategies local governments and other public entities can use to encourage TOD at a regional scale.



# Communication and Collaboration

## TOD Office Forums

The TOD Office held two public Forums in 2017 to disseminate information and resources to local stakeholders and TOD professionals. The events included:

- February 2017 – Reimagining the Winter City: This event sought to educate local planners and developers on how to design and build public spaces that are inviting year-round, even during the coldest and darkest months of the year. Featuring experts from Stantec, the City of Minneapolis and the Musicant Group, attendees learned how blocking wind, capturing sunlight and using warm building materials can drastically improve the appeal of public spaces in winter and enhance the comfort of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users. Over 90 professionals attended the Reimagining the Winter City Forum.
- August 2017 – Building 21st Century Suburbs: The summer 2017 TOD Forum highlighted the local communities and developers that are successfully building pedestrian and transit-friendly development in the suburbs. Featuring both private developers and public city officials, this panel discussion touched on changing consumer preferences for walkability, how to build public support for walkable development and how to provide parking while maintaining walkability. This event was attended by over 80 professionals.

Full-length videos of each Forum as well as summary videos were developed and are available on the Metropolitan Council YouTube channel.

## Conferences

Over 50 transit and planning staff from local cities, counties and the Metropolitan Council participated in the 2017 Rail~Volution conference in Denver, a national conference on building livable communities with transit. Metropolitan Council staff served as organizers, panelists and moderators for various sessions. Over 1,200 participants attended the conference and shared experiences on all aspects of TOD.

Staff from the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit also played a role in the 2017 American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Sustainability and Multimodal conference, which was held in Minneapolis in August. TOD staff organized and participated in the conference, including leading tours of local transit oriented developments and transit facilities.



In addition to these large national conferences, Metro Transit staff also participated in numerous local panels and workshops including guest lecturing at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs and participating in a Metropolitan Council workshop entitled "TOD in the Comprehensive Plan," hosted to help communities throughout the region update their comprehensive plans to support TOD.

## Internal Working Group

Throughout 2017, the TOD Working Group convened periodically to bring together Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council staff involved with TOD projects, research and design throughout the region. These meetings provide an opportunity for staff across different divisions to coordinate efforts, share best practices, and provide updates on TOD projects.

## Technical advisory committees for projects

TOD staff worked with various transitway planning projects as requested to ensure inclusion of development-oriented ideas in future transitways.

## Contact Us

The Metro Transit TOD Office serves as a resource for developers and urban planning professionals interested in pursuing or advancing TOD in the Twin Cities.

Please contact us at [tod@metrotransit.org](mailto:tod@metrotransit.org) with any development offers, comments or questions.

