

Transit and Transit Stations Area Planning (Chapter 3 p. 69-74)

The development of a fixed-guideway mass transit system for the Tampa Bay region has been under consideration for several years. In 2002, the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) Authority completed a multi-year effort to examine the feasibility of a light rail system in Hillsborough County using CSXT rail lines and new track in other areas. A previous major investment study, "The Mobility Study," identified a rail system that one day could connect Pinellas, Pasco, Hillsborough and Polk counties via CSXT lines. The HART Rail Study (Environmental Impact Study, Tampa Rail Project, 2002) refined the plans for the first phase of this system, examining lines in the most densely populated parts of Hillsborough. The first lines would link Downtown Tampa to the USF area and to the Westshore Business Area. The technical and planning information in the HART Rail Study has been integrated into current planning efforts.

In 2006, the Hillsborough County MPO commenced an MPO Transit Study to examine the county's transit needs and choices to the year 2050. The MPO Transit Study responded to community values centered on sustainable growth, neighborhood preservation and economic vitality. A preferred transit concept for 2050 emerged from the study's recommendations demonstrating how transit investments can influence countywide growth patterns, creating a more efficient use of land that in turn makes walking and transit more viable and desirable as real transportation options. The Study was approved by the MPO in December 2007. The preferred alignment for the MPO Transit Study is depicted on the Comprehensive Plan Vision Map.

These past efforts have been incorporated into the Hillsborough MPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which serves as the primary transit and transportation plan for all of Hillsborough County. The adopted MPO Long Range Transportation 2035 Transit Needs Assessment map depicts the long range fixed guideway transit needs for Hillsborough County. As the development of a fixed-guideway transit system proceeds, it will be important to address land use policies within potential corridors to ensure that the appropriate land use framework is in place to encourage successful station area development. When investment plans are established and station sites are known, appropriate Future Land Use and zoning changes will need to take place to allow transit supportive infill development and redevelopment to occur. The Comprehensive Plan mechanism that creates this opportunity is the Transit Oriented Development Future Land Use Floating Designation (TOD FLU Floating Designation).

The Goals, Objectives, and Policies within this section accomplish the following:

1. Create the Transit Oriented Development Future Land Use Floating Designation, and describe the process for its application
2. Permit, by Transit Station Area Typologies (Table 2), the necessary densities/intensities and land use characteristics needed for successful Transit Oriented Development.

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3. Require the development of Station Area Plans for each station, which will at a minimum, include specific Components of Station Area (Table 3) and adhere to Transit Station Area Design Principles (Table 4).

The Goals, Objectives, and Policies within this section serve as the planning framework to guide the processes that will occur once station locations have been determined. The general steps of this process are listed below, in chronological order (an illustrative flow chart of the overall process is included below as Figure 1):

1. Designation of the Transit Oriented Development Future Land Use Floating Designation (TOD Floating Designation) within a general specific Area of Influence (e.g. 0.5 mile radius from approved fixed-guideway station locations).
2. Determination and approval of specific Station Area Plan Boundaries for each station. This will be a modified version of the initially designated Area of Influence.
3. Adoption of Station Area Plans for each station. Implementation of these plans will include city-initiated area-wide rezonings.

The first step, Designation of the Transit Oriented Development Future Land Use Floating Designation, occurs within three months after a fixed-guideway station location has been determined. The initial designation includes all areas within a 0.5 mile radius of the station platform, which is called the Area of Influence. Within this Area of Influence, the Comprehensive Plan allows for the consideration of higher density/intensity and a broader range of uses, as designated by station typology.

There are seven basic station types, High Intensity Urban Node, Mixed Use Regional Node, Community Center, Neighborhood, Park and Ride, Employment Center, and Special, characteristics of each documented below in Table 2 (City of Tampa/Hillsborough County Fixed Guideway Transit Station Typologies). Three of these station types (Mixed Use Regional, Community Center, and Neighborhood) include urban and suburban characteristics which will be utilized depending on where the station is located within the City. In order to be granted the additional development potential, the TOD FLU Floating Designation requires that a property be rezoned to a TOD zoning designation. This rezoning can occur either as a individual property, or as part of the implementation of an approved Station Area Plan.

The second step, Determination and approval of specific Station Area Plan Boundaries for each station, occurs prior to end of the Preliminary Engineering Phase (see Figure 1). This process will be led by by agencies and organizations as documented in an executed interlocal agreement, and take into account specific station contexts to determine appropriate Station Area Planning boundaries.

The third step, Adoption of Station Area Plans, will occur no later than the end of Final Design of the fixed-guideway transit system (see Figure 1). Once Station Area Plans are adopted, area-wide rezonings will occur to implement the plan recommendations.

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The following Goals, Objectives, and Policies allow for the flexibility and creativity needed to lead to successful Transit Oriented Development in and around future fixed-guideway transit stations. They represent the initial framework for realizing the transformative potential of the development of transit system.

Transit Stations Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 17: A transit system that supports our continued economic success, enhances livability, and promotes reductions in greenhouse gases through the use of alternative transportation modes.

Objective 17.1: To plan for a fixed-guideway transit system that creates connections throughout the City of Tampa and to locations throughout the Tampa Bay Region.

Policy 17.1.1: Prior to the commencement of Station Area Planning and no later than the beginning of Preliminary Engineering, an interlocal agreement will be executed defining specific roles and responsibilities for each of the responsible agencies and jurisdictions involved in the planning, design, and construction of the fixed-guideway transit system and its station areas.

Policy 17.1.2: The City of Tampa will continue to build upon the findings and recommendations of the HART Alternatives Analysis, and the TBARTA Master Plan, and the Hillsborough MPO 2035 LRTP in pursuing the development and implementation of a fixed guideway transit system.

Policy 17.1.3: The City shall coordinate with the Local Planning Agency (LPA) and the Metropolitan Planning Organization to recommend appropriate station development characteristics for designated station areas.

Objective 17.2: To establish a Transit Oriented Development Future Land Use Floating Designation to be applied to fixed-guideway station areas.

Policy 17.2.1: The TOD Future Land Use Floating Designation can only be utilized within the Urban Service Area.

Policy 17.2.2: The specific density/intensity ranges and allowable uses for the TOD Future Land Use Floating Designation will be as listed in Table 2 Tampa and Hillsborough Fixed-Guideway Transit Station Area Typologies, which is adopted as part of this section.

Policy 17.2.3: Within three months of the designation of the physical location and type of a new fixed-guideway transit station by the transit or transportation agency, the Tampa City Council, on recommendation from the Local Planning Agency, will hold a public hearing to approve a TOD Future Land Use Floating Designation initially measuring 0.5-mile radius from the center of the station platform.

Policy 17.2.4: The City of Tampa shall adopt TOD Zoning Designations, which will be utilized on lands that are designated under the TOD FLU Floating Designation. If property owners within these designated areas wish to redevelop prior to the adoption of a Station Area Plan they can choose one of the following options:

- Develop consistent with the existing zoning designation on site, or
- Rezone the site utilizing one of the TOD zoning designations.

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Objective 17.3: To efficiently plan for new development around transit stations by preparing Station Area Plans during the design phase of the fixed-guideway system.

Policy 17.3.1: Following the adoption of a TOD Future Land Use Floating Designation, a Station Area Planning boundary for each station will be defined by the responsible entities as described in an executed interlocal agreement. The Station Area Planning boundary will, at a minimum include all areas within a 0.5-mile walking distance from the transit station. In determining the specific Station Area Plan boundaries, physical, environmental, and community features, boundaries, and borders shall be considered.

Policy 17.3.2: Station Area Plan boundaries shall be approved by Tampa City Council.

Policy 17.3.3: Station typology definitions included in Table 2 and a location-specific market study shall provide guidance for the Station Area Planning process.

Policy 17.3.4: Following the designation of a Station Area Plan boundary, and prior to the end of the fixed guideway transit system design phase, the City of Tampa shall begin preparation of Station Area Plans for each station. These plans will include, at a minimum, the components as identified in Table 3, which is adopted as part of this section. These plans will recognize the unsuitable inclusion of residential development in industrial and M-AP future land use designated areas and the community character of stable and historic neighborhoods where increased densities and intensities may be deemed inappropriate.

Policy 17.3.5: Pursuant to the local interlocal agreement (Policy 17.1.1), Station Area Plans shall be completed. These plans can either be publicly or privately funded, but their completion must be overseen by a public agency. At a minimum these plans should address the components as listed in Table 3.

Policy 17.3.6: In addition to those required Components of Station Areas documented in Table 3, Station Area Plans must adhere to the Transit Station Area Design Principles in Table 4, which is adopted as part of this section.

Policy 17.3.7: Station Area Plans shall be based on a consistent methodology which is approved by the Local Planning Agency and the City of Tampa.

Policy 17.3.8: A public involvement program, that includes community stakeholders, public agencies, and private developers, shall be part of the Station Area Planning Process. This process shall include community design and public workshops.

Policy 17.3.9: Following the completion of a Station Area Plan and during construction of the fixed-guideway system, a city-initiated area-wide rezoning for parcels within station areas to transit supportive zoning categories (to be defined in the Land Development Code), will be completed.

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Objective 17.4: Utilize the Transit Station Area Design Principles in Table 4 and subsequent policies listed below to guide the development of Station Area Plans.

Policy 17.4.1: Where applicable, Station Area Plans shall recognize neighborhood planning efforts adopted by the City of Tampa including, but not limited to, neighborhood plans, economic development plans, and community redevelopment area plans. These plans shall receive priority consideration in Station Area Plans. However, the existence of a current plan does not preclude change from occurring in station areas as opportunities for development and redevelopment will need to be reevaluated within station areas in order to encourage transit supportive densities and intensities. In areas where Station Area Plans are in conflict with existing adopted plans, the Station Area Plan shall supersede.

Policy 17.4.2: Where Station Areas are located within or adjacent to Mixed-Use Corridor Villages (Objective 16 and associated policies), closely coordinate planning efforts to ensure consistency in approach and implementation strategies. Where feasible, combine Station Area Plan efforts with those for the surrounding or adjacent Mixed Use Corridor Village in order to streamline the process in order to encourage participation by stakeholders. Where form based codes are pre-exist the Station Area Planning process, amendments to the code may be required during the city-initiated rezoning phase to ensure that the specific target densities and intensities related to the station typologies will be accommodated.

Policy 17.4.3: Where the Transit Oriented Development Floating Designation covers areas that are designated with industrial or MA-P future land use categories, the existing categories' prohibition to allowing residential development will remain in place with no modification. Increased intensity of non-residential uses may occur consistent with the Station Area Plan.