Regional Plan Association’s new Transit-Oriented Development report provides an analytical framework to help identify the suitability of commuter rail station areas to support transit-oriented communities and determine the type of planning efforts needed to foster them.

WHY TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT?

Transit-oriented development (TOD) presents a holistic and forward-thinking solution for town planning, addressing housing needs, mitigating environmental issues, and improving residents’ and neighbors’ quality of life.

At its core, TOD integrates residential, commercial, and recreational spaces around public transportation hubs, promoting easier access to employment, alleviating traffic by reducing the need to drive, and creating inviting public spaces and activity hubs.

Regional Plan Association has identified 96 locations where investments and new regulations could unlock TOD potential in the near term. Additional catalytic investments could unlock potential for another 133 locations in the mid-term. The following diagram illustrates how a framework for TOD decision-making could inform planning decisions and create attractive and vibrant communities.

The following diagram is not a formal planning or actual development proposal but is intended to illustrate how the framework could be used to inform planning decisions.
96 regional stations are classified as having “Near Term” TOD opportunities. With 71 located in the inner suburbs, “Near Term” opportunities are largely concentrated in the counties of Nassau and Westchester in New York and in Bergen, Essex, and Union counties in New Jersey. Three “Near Term” opportunity locations are located along the western boundary of Suffolk County. An additional 18 stations classified as “Near Term” opportunities are located within the urban core, including New York City’s outer boroughs, the city of Newark, and Bergen County in New Jersey.

These measures are meant to inform and support TOD-related policy decisions in two ways:

- **Investments**: Inform the level of planning support and discretionary funding needed to make each station area fully transit-oriented.
- **Regulations**: Identify places where more flexible land use regulations and/or streamlining procedures would enable more housing near transit.

### TOD OPPORTUNITY TYPES

The classification system (RPA TOD Types) estimates opportunity levels by station. By characterizing station areas as Near-Term, Mid-Term, and Long-Term, the TOD Types can help inform the level of support needed to make each station area fully transit-oriented and where regulatory changes are needed to enable more housing near transit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Near-Term</th>
<th>Mid-Term</th>
<th>Long-Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typical Investments Needed</td>
<td>Already have physical and mobility attributes for successful TOD</td>
<td>Have most mobility attributes but lack either physical characteristics or sufficient development capacity</td>
<td>Have significant amounts of underutilized land but lack key mobility or physical features</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typical Regulatory Interventions</td>
<td>Updated zoning codes, Higher densities, Reduced parking minimums, Accelerated permitting</td>
<td>More extensive zoning changes to allow multi-family and mixed-use at appropriate densities</td>
<td>Master planning, Extensive zoning changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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