

Summary of TOD Findings and Recommendations

Kansas City was selected as a recipient of targeted transit-oriented development (TOD) technical assistance (TA) provided by Smart Growth America through Federal Transit Administration support. The focus of the TOD TA centered on stabilizing and revitalizing the Prospect Avenue corridor through reliable and enhanced transit service as well as providing existing residents with more economic opportunity. Key findings and action items from the TOD TA engagement are detailed in a larger report and briefly summarized below.

Kansas City launched its MAX Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in 2005 with the Main Street line. This improved service led to a growth in ridership along the corridor of 50 percent. The city built on this success Main Street MAX route with a second BRT line on Troost Avenue. Additionally the Kansas City streetcar opened in May of this year and has averaged more than twice its expected daily ridership. Now the city is planning a third BRT line on Prospect Avenue, one of the busiest bus corridors in the city. The corridor is characterized by a concentration of low-income residents and high vacancy rates. The city and Kansas City Area Transit Authority (KCATA) are investing in the Prospect MAX BRT to stabilize and revitalize the corridor through reliable and enhanced transit service.

Findings

1. **Transit alone will not generate TOD.** The development policies and land use near stops is every bit as important as the transit itself.
2. **Focus on a few small nodes.** In the early years the city will have to attract development and provide incentives, so a node should be constrained to the four corners around a selected transit stop.
3. **Current market conditions don't support TOD.** Development activity is the result of a high level of engagement from local community institutions, which is an asset that can be built upon.
4. **Development can come from and serve the Prospect Corridor.** Harnessing programs to help residents and business owners improve and expand their properties is a good way to both encourage development and demonstrate that the city's efforts will help new and existing residents.
5. **Improve walkability and connect to neighboring communities.** The corridor's transportation infrastructure on its borders disconnects it from neighboring communities, but because Prospect Avenue is a relatively narrow, low-speed corridor with low traffic volumes improvements to walkability and bikeability are very possible.

The National Public Transportation/Transit-Oriented Development Technical Assistance Initiative is a project of the Federal Transit Administration administered by Smart Growth America.

Recommended Action Plan

1. **Support and proactively seek to create the development the city wants.** The city will need to use public funds to catalyze the early investments and projects that can improve the economics of subsequent investments such that future developments need little or no subsidy. The city should both receive proposal ideas and proactively seek development opportunities.
2. **Use tools to fill the market gap.** The city should be familiar with all funding options and be ready with additional local sources of funding to fill any remaining gap.
3. **Make 2-3 station areas the priority for development.** The 2-3 station areas (nodes) chosen as priority development areas should be where incentives are focused, and should be constrained in size to no more than a block or two surrounding the selected Prospect MAX BRT stops.
4. **Make sure development by transit is TOD.** Make sure that the development attracted brings the full benefits of TOD. If the first node does not deliver the results that were promised then its failure could be used against future TOD efforts in the corridor and possibly beyond.
5. **Concentrate commercial development and zoning.** Address the current zoning so it allows residential development in more areas in the corridor and concentrates commercial development to specific areas to create neighborhood centers.
6. **Move forward on TOD zoning soon.** It is essential that planned development support the TOD future that everyone wants for Prospect Avenue. Considering the fact that the city will be an active participant in seeding development in the near term, that financial support should be used to ensure that any development in the corridor (especially at the priority nodes) is designed as TOD.
7. **Make sure infrastructure supports TOD.** The current efforts to give the BRT a look of great permanence is more likely to attract development than regular bus service. It is also important to ensure that Prospect Avenue is designed to support transit users to make it safer for transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Finally, Prospect Avenue will do better the more connected it is to the neighborhoods next to it.

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