

Section II: Creating TOD Along SunRail

Commuter Rail TOD

Locating the right land uses adjacent to transit is only part of making a successful TOD. The ease of riding transit is also an important component, including providing frequent service to the station area.

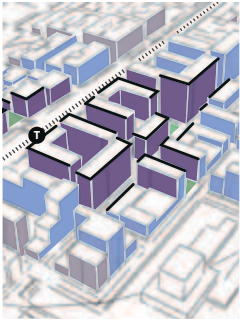
Commuter rail is unique in that it is intended to move people throughout the region. As a result, two key station area design elements for commuter rail must be considered when fitting station areas into the communities:

1. Need for park-and-ride lots. Parking near the station areas, or local transit access at the station, can be more significant than stations serving other types of transit.
2. Longer train lengths. Commuter rail trains can be longer than other forms of transit, approximately 240 to 400 feet, requiring stations and station platforms to often be larger.

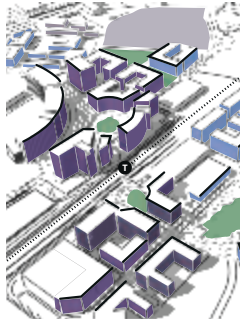
For TOD in the SunRail corridor, the specific needs of commuter rail station design can be addressed through the specific location of parking and integrating the station with other land uses to create a prominent destination.



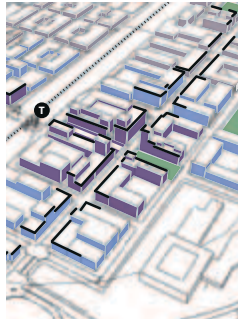
TOD as a tool for transformation.



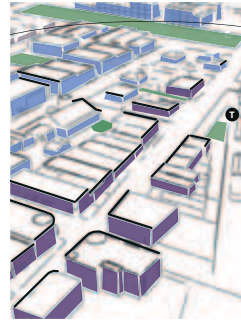
Downtown



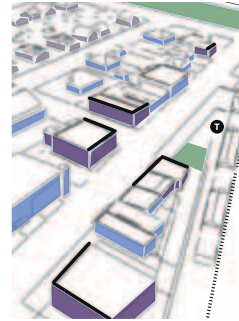
Urban Center



Town Center



Village Center



Neighborhood Center

TOD Typologies

Not every TOD is the same, nor should it be. The most successful are planned and developed within the context of the entire high capacity transit corridor to ensure that each TOD complements, rather than competes, with another. Application of TOD principles must be tailored to balance the function and form of specific land use and transportation network conditions in a given area with the community vision for growth.

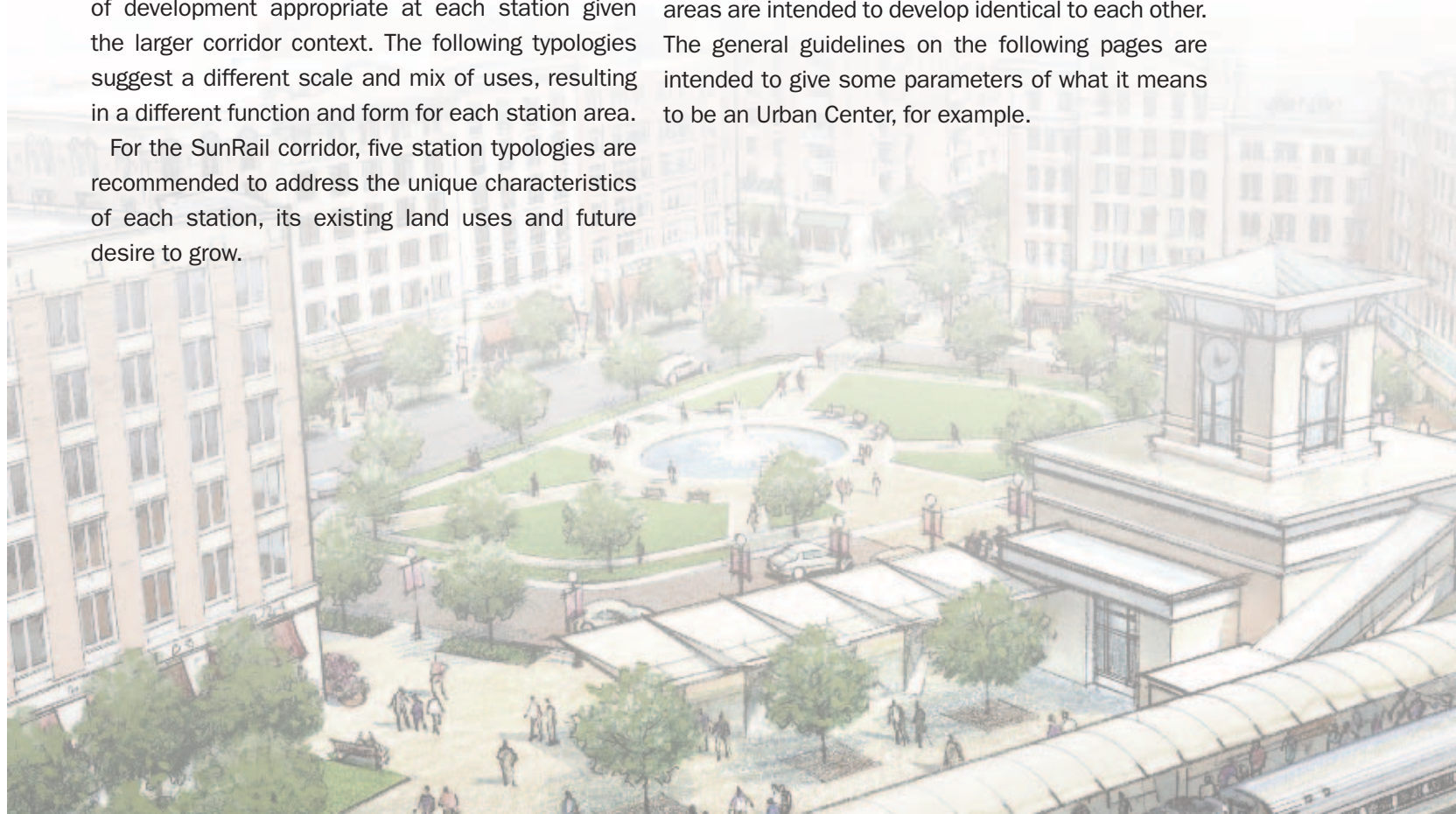
TOD typologies are one way to think about the type of development appropriate at each station given the larger corridor context. The following typologies suggest a different scale and mix of uses, resulting in a different function and form for each station area.

For the SunRail corridor, five station typologies are recommended to address the unique characteristics of each station, its existing land uses and future desire to grow.

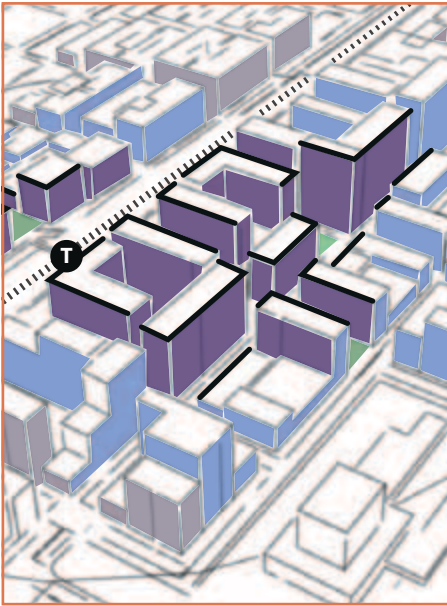
The typologies, from largest to smallest, are:

- **Downtown**
- **Urban Center**
- **Town Center**
- **Village Center**
- **Neighborhood Center**

The typologies are prototypical representations of the size and scale of each place. No two station areas are intended to develop identical to each other. The general guidelines on the following pages are intended to give some parameters of what it means to be an Urban Center, for example.



Downtown



- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| T Transit Station | — Priority Active Edge |
| ■ Highest | ■ Lower |
| ■ Medium | ■ Urban Parks/Open Space |

Downtown has the highest density and greatest mix of uses, including multi-family housing with ground floor retail or office uses. Regionally-oriented destinations are located in downtown, along with local-serving and community serving retail.

Key Characteristics

- **High density:** Distinctively designed high density buildings near stations serve as identifying features, and contribute to the quality of the city skyline.
- **A mix of uses:** A horizontal and vertical mix of uses that include office or residential above retail spaces with continuous facades that align to the build-to-line.
- **Compact, high quality, pedestrian-oriented environment:** Highly active and clear pedestrian paths are defined by street amenities and transparency of building frontages.

- **Active defined center:** Taller buildings extend above the streetwall (i.e. buildings that frame the pedestrian zone), but do not impede the comfortable pedestrian scale it defines.

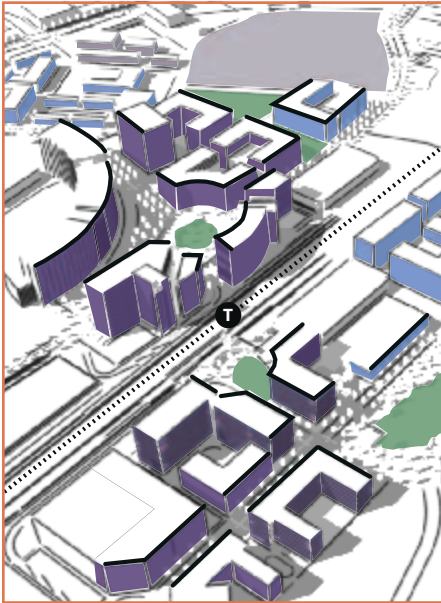
- **Limited, managed parking:** Structured parking should be integrated into development. Parking ratio maximums should be based on proximity to station.

- **Urban parks and open space:** Programmed environments with pedestrian amenities encourage community interaction and gathering places for large groups.

SunRail Station Areas

- LYNX Central
- Church Street

Urban Center



Urban Centers are activity centers with regional destinations, such as a hospital campus. They have a mix of uses that support the regional destinations, at a slightly lower density than the Downtown typology.

Key Characteristics

- **High density:** Predominantly residential district should have diversity in housing types, with good access to other regional and subregional centers.
- **A mix of uses:** Horizontal and vertical mixed-use helps create an 18-hour activity zone. Retail spaces should articulate corners to help define a comfortable pedestrian zone.
- **Compact, high quality, pedestrian-oriented environment:** Pedestrian connections mid-block offer a safer pedestrian/bike circulation and create smaller walkable blocks.

- **Active defined center:** Public amenities create a dynamic area for a variety of users. Art installations, farmer's market and programmed events activate these spaces all year around.

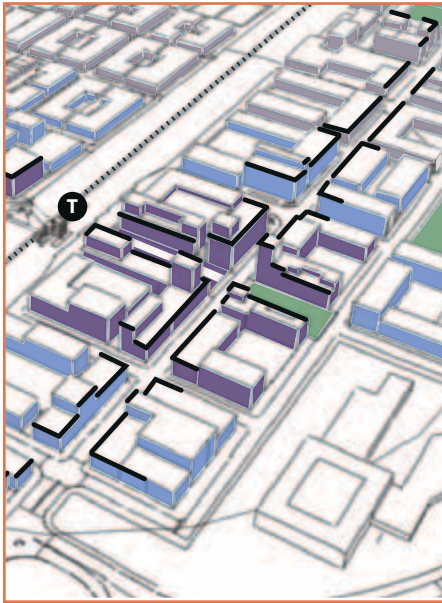
- **Limited, managed parking:** On-street parking, minimum surface parking, and some structured parking should be integrated into development.

- **Urban parks and open space:** Landscaped areas offer visual relief in higher density neighborhoods. Public space can be used as green infrastructure solutions.

SunRail Station Areas

- Florida Hospital
- Orlando Amtrak

Town Center



- T** Transit Station
- Highest
- Medium
- Priority Active Edge
- Lower
- Urban Parks/Open Space



Sometimes located in historic small towns, Town Centers have a mix of mostly residential land uses, with local-supporting commercial and employment uses. The level of density is scaled to fit in with the existing community.

Key Characteristics

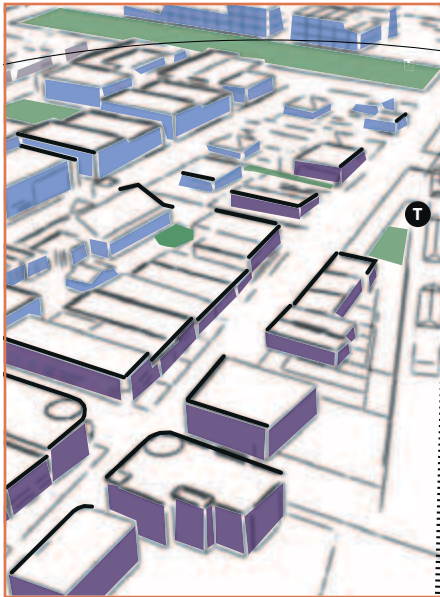
- **Moderate-high density:** Transition scale of density should fit into existing community and include destination retail with housing.
- **A mix of uses:** Mostly residential with local-supporting commercial and employment uses, building facades are articulated to create interest. Architecture should reflect existing environment.
- **Compact, high quality, pedestrian-oriented environment:** Amenities such as lighting, signage, and street trees frame the pedestrian zone and separate vehicular traffic.

- **Active defined center:** Calm streets by using a variety of paving and make the streets smaller to create a place for people that is not dominated by vehicles.
- **Limited, managed parking:** Some structured parking should be integrated into development, on-street parking, and surface parking, and occur behind development.
- **Urban parks and open space:** Programmed spaces for active and passive uses, such as town plazas, or neighborhood parks, should be a priority.

SunRail Station Areas

- Lake Mary
- Kissimmee

Village Center



T Transit Station
 Highest
 Medium
 Priority Active Edge
 Lower
 Urban Parks/Open Space



Primarily residential, with some neighborhood serving retail and local office uses. Higher densities within the ¼ mile are scaled down to medium density suburban development to begin the transition to the adjacent, non-TOD land uses.

Key Characteristics

- **Medium density:** Residential district organized around transit station with convenience retail (e.g. coffee shops, dry cleaners, etc.) located on ground floor.
- **A mix of uses:** Integrate moderate density housing and supporting local-serving retail with limited vertical mixed-use.
- **Compact, high quality, pedestrian-oriented environment:** Use landscaping, paving and street furniture to create a comfortable pedestrian zone.

- **Active defined center:** Active edges create a 12 hour activity zone, and include creation of a central gathering space with pedestrian amenities.

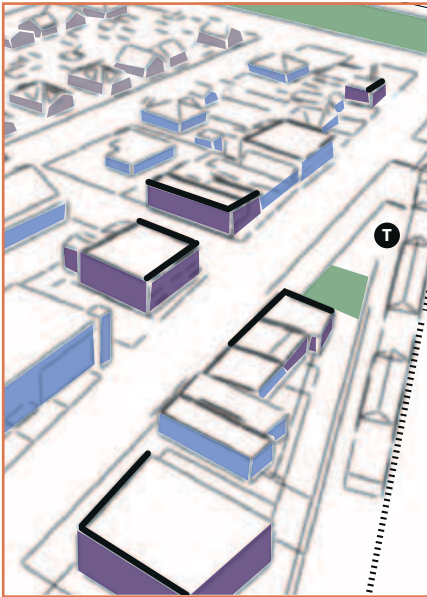
- **Limited, managed parking:** On-street parking should be parallel or angled. Surface parking should be placed behind development, accessed by driveway or secondary local road.

- **Urban parks and open space:** Programmed spaces for active and passive uses with spaces in between developments can be an opportunity for public or private open space.

SunRail Station Areas

- Winter Park
- Longwood
- Altamonte Springs
- Maitland
- Sand Lake Road
- Osceola Parkway

Neighborhood Center



Higher densities within the first 600 feet from the transit station, down to low density suburban development to begin the transition to the adjacent, non-TOD land uses. The residential and neighborhood retail land uses are likely the same as those located outside the TOD.

Key Characteristics

- **Low density:** Neighborhoods offer a variety of single family attached or detached housing stock, with some multi-family housing units.
- **A mix of uses:** Primarily residential with periodic small-scale local retail uses.
- **Compact, high quality, pedestrian-oriented environment:** Lighting, paving, and secondary access from main road offer safer places for pedestrians.

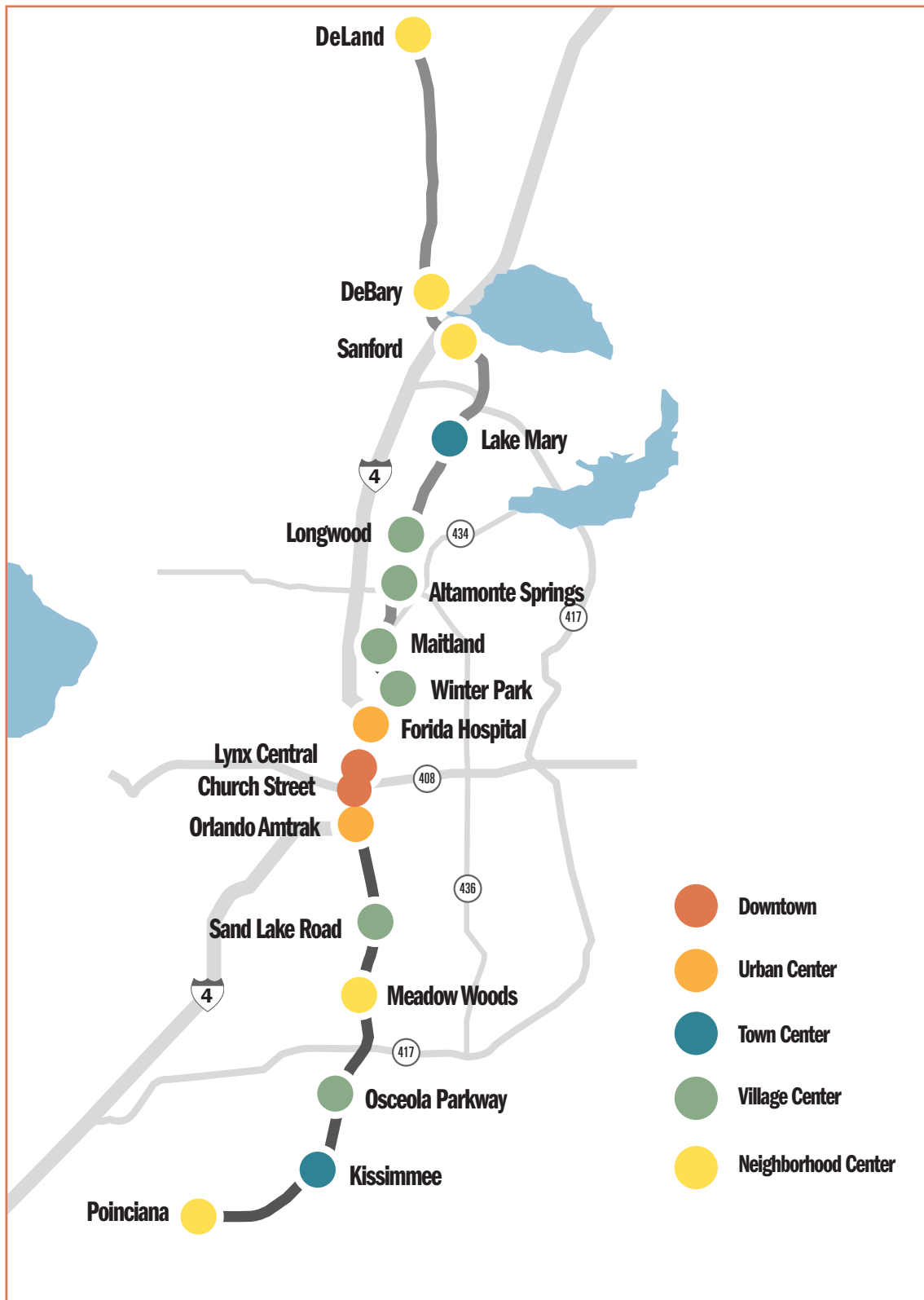
- **Active defined center:** Community centers, schools, and recreation facilities help to stimulate a pro-active neighborhood.

- **Managed parking:** Angled or parallel on-street parking can help mitigate over-flow from parking in the neighborhood. Create clear paths to and from retail and residential development.

- **Urban parks and open space:** Larger scale public space can offer a variety of uses within a centralized location, such as recreation fields, community gardens, picnic amenities, etc.

SunRail Station Areas

- DeLand
- DeBary
- Sanford
- Meadow Woods
- Poinciana



Suggested Corridor Station Typologies Diagram

Advancing TOD and SunRail Stations

As described in the last section, the 17 SunRail stations all have a different character and function within their respective communities and the larger region. The typologies reflect these differences. In addition, the station areas are in varying states of “readiness” to become successful TODs. Several are fully developed urban areas, some are more suburban in character, and others are rural or partially developed. Some of the challenges and opportunities facing the SunRail corridor are documented in the Assessment of SunRail Station Community TODs – Opportunities & Challenges prepared by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, and they were also discussed during the station planning work sessions held in March 2011.

As SunRail moves from planning and design to construction and then to operation, the creation of transit-supportive communities surrounding each station will also progress as described by the TOD Timeline. Some of the specifics of the nature of TOD at each SunRail station and implementation steps are described in the conceptual plans in the next section. Taking the next step to move those plans from planning for TOD to implementation will be enhanced by regional stakeholders developing a cohesive strategy to support local actions. This broader planning, problem solving and implementation of TOD should occur within a coordinated regional planning context, use the TOD principles as a guide, and include an implementation strategy.

Coordinated Regional Planning

The 2009 ULI work sessions concluded with a recommendation that Central Florida should create an overall regional transportation vision. The state and local governments and agencies need to effectively work together to:

- Create and clearly communicate the vision.
- Improve transportation connectivity and regional mobility.
- Increase the number of walkable, mixed-use places and reduce suburban sprawl.
- Provide for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit transportation modes.
- Eliminate barriers and create incentives to encourage walkable, mixed-use places.
- Establish a dedicated revenue source to support transit.

SunRail represents an important piece of this overall regional strategy. This list of tasks, which are relevant to SunRail and the region, will be more effectively addressed together as a region than separately by individual jurisdiction. This is especially true for a region with limited TOD experience. Information sharing and cooperation will accelerate the learning process leading to successful TOD along the corridor. Regional cooperation will be important in two primary areas:

- **Building TOD Experience.** As with any new venture, those without first-hand experience tend to be cautious and tentative. This is true of TOD for developers, agency staff, elected officials, and citizens. Understanding the benefits of TOD, how it can help achieve community and regional goals, and improve the quality of life is essential. Keeping an eye on the “big picture” for SunRail, and recognizing the differences between station communities and identifying how each TOD should complement and not compete with each other, will be critical to the overall success of TOD at SunRail stations. The SunRail communities should work together to create and deliver this educational message to promote successful TOD.

- **Removing Regulatory Constraints.** While the development regulations for the station communities include provisions that encourage TOD, work remains to be done to transform existing regulations from being passive to actively encouraging TOD. For example, land use policies and zoning regulations typically do not recognize the presence of transit, tend to favor low-density, auto-oriented uses, and use terms such as “may” rather than “shall.” Development regulations need to be amended to actively support TOD. In addition, street improvement standards exhibit a strong tendency to favor high speed auto traffic and motorist convenience over creating quality pedestrian environments.

Addressing these issues on a regional level will help create a consistent approach for all station areas and give area residents and the development community a consistent message regarding the elements and expectations for TOD.

TOD Principles as a Guide Medium to High Density Greater than Community Average

Generally speaking, the densities surrounding the planned SunRail stations are not particularly high or greater than the average of the communities where they are located. Given the current auto-oriented development, which characterizes much of the corridor, this is to be expected and is typical of suburban communities throughout the nation. The key for transforming the corridor station areas over time to feature higher densities includes:

- **Remove density barriers.** Land development regulations should be evaluated to determine if there are any conflicting requirements that make desired densities unattainable. For example, do the building height, set-back, landscaping and parking standards actually support the desired density or do they conspire to only allow something lower?

- **Provide density incentives.** The region and local jurisdictions should provide incentives to promote higher densities within station areas. The highest densities should be within the station area “core” – the first 600 feet from the station. Expedited development review, density bonuses for quality design or amenities, reduced and/or more flexible parking standards are just a few examples of the types of incentives to consider.
- **Push the market.** The land use regulations for the majority of the station areas have maximum density standards, but no minimums. Reasonable minimum density requirements should be established for the areas within ½-mile of the stations. The closer to the station, the higher the density should be. The minimums obviously need to be reasonable given market conditions, but they should be sufficiently high to push the market to a slightly higher density than would normally be considered. Setting minimum TOD densities at the top of today’s market is a way to cautiously push the market.
- **Allow higher density over time.** In instances where the market cannot support high density, development sites should be designed to allow higher density in the future. An example would be designing a parking lot to be converted to additional buildings as a second development phase.
- **Assure design quality.** A common public objection to higher density relates more to the quality of the development project and not the density per se. Attention should be paid to properly integrating new, higher density projects into the context of the surrounding neighborhood.

Mix of Uses

A mix of uses is essential for walkable station areas and neighborhoods. In many cases along the corridor, this mix is absent with large districts allowing exclusively residential, commercial or employment uses. This pattern increases the distances between destinations, thereby discouraging walking. As noted earlier, studies in transit station areas have shown a direct, inverse relationship between distance and walking rates.

The appropriate mix of uses will vary between stations areas depending on existing land use and future development aspirations. For example, an employment station area may be best suited for introducing service, commercial and retail businesses to complement needs of the companies and employees. Studies have shown that people are more likely to use transit to and from work when commercial services are within an easy walk. The mix of uses may also be horizontal or vertical depending upon the character of each station area.

Similar to density, the mix of uses should be greatest near the core of the station. Key components of a transit-supportive land use mix include:

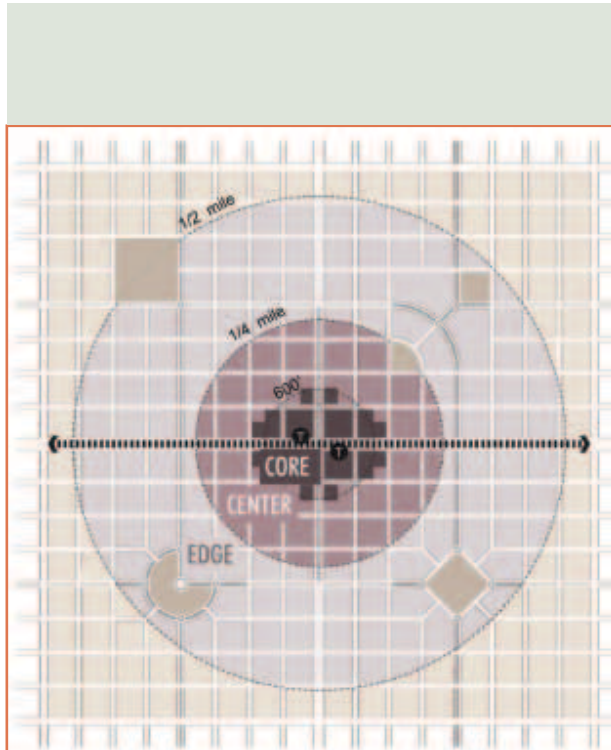
- **Allowing a range of uses outright.** Zone districts, which allow exclusively commercial or residential uses, should be avoided near transit. A vertical or horizontal mix of uses should be allowed, especially within ¼-mile of transit.
- **Requiring “active” ground floor uses.** An important element to a quality pedestrian environment is active ground floor uses, such as restaurants, services, retail, and entertainment at the street level. It provides a more interesting environment where people want to walk. People are also more inclined to walk because they can conveniently run multiple errands on foot rather than taking several car trips.

- **Acknowledging market realities.** Naturally, every location will have a market threshold for the mix of uses, amount of ground floor retail, etc. that it can support. Market reality needs to temper requirements (versus simple allowance) for mixed use and active ground floor uses. A balance needs to be reached so mixed-use requirements are not a disincentive for development. One solution to provide flexibility to accommodate active ground floor uses in the future is to require structures to have appropriate first floor dimensions (primarily entrance/window orientation, ceiling height and floor depth), which could accommodate future ground floor retail.
- **Discouraging/prohibiting auto-oriented uses.** Auto-oriented uses, such as drive-through windows and surface vehicle parking/storage, should be discouraged, and preferably prohibited near transit. They bring additional traffic into the TOD, deaden the pedestrian environment and create additional auto-pedestrian conflict points with driveways. If they cannot be prohibited, they should be located to the side or rear of buildings.

Compact, High Quality Pedestrian-Oriented Environment

One issue, which is shared by almost all SunRail station areas, is the lack of safe, comfortable and efficient pedestrian environments. Most of the station areas feature high-volume/speed thoroughfares, large block lengths, difficult street crossings, and generally uninteresting streetscapes. A number of actions should be taken to improve the walking and bicycling environment:

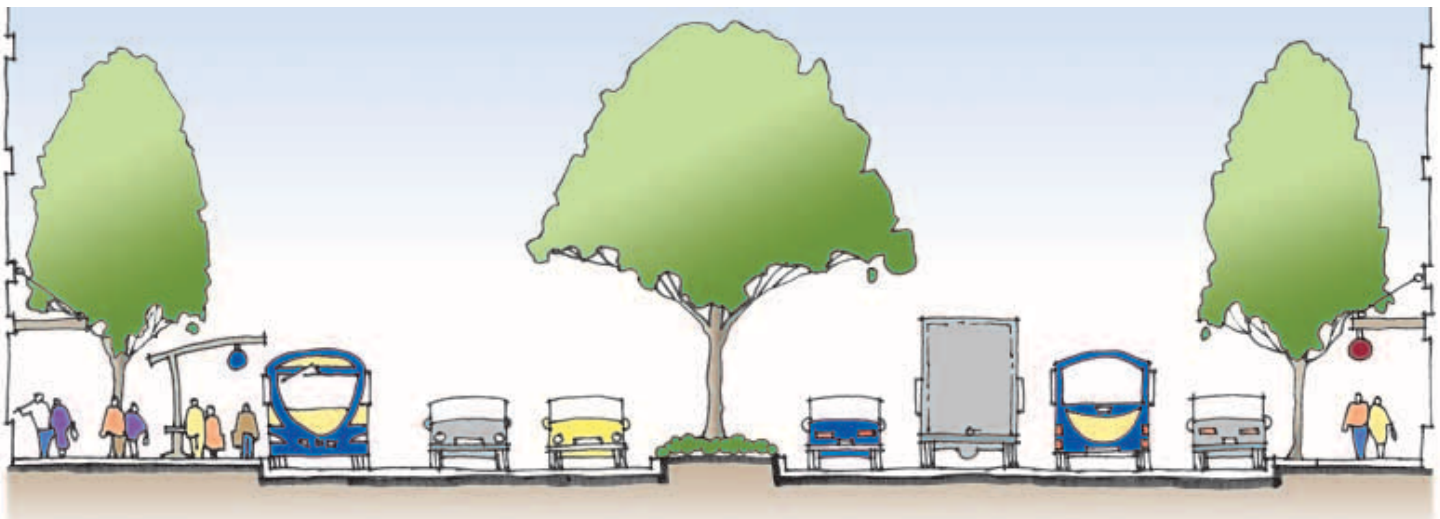
- **Adopt a complete streets policy.** Ensure that all future street improvement projects take into account the needs of all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation users, as well as children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities.



Highest Density at the Station

The immediate area around the station (core area) should generally contain the greatest intensity and mix of uses.

- **Create interconnected networks.** Walking rates decline rapidly as distance increases. Therefore, the best pedestrian environments feature compact street grids with block lengths ranging from 200 to 400 feet. Street standards in Central Florida typically call for distances exceeding 600 feet between major intersections. These standards need to be amended for the station areas to include maximum block lengths and the pedestrian connectivity necessary for successful TOD.
- **Fill in the gaps.** Beyond making new and refurbished roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists, gaps in the network for these modes must be a top priority within the station areas.
- **Calm the traffic.** The majority of the station areas include one or more major roadways, which represent a barrier to pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. High traffic speeds and long crossing distances are major safety issues and obstacles. A major effort is necessary to calm traffic speeds and create safer, more frequent and pleasant crossing opportunities. In many cases, traffic capacity can be maintained with slower speeds through improved signal timing.
- **Provide buffers from traffic.** The major roadways near the SunRail stations offer little separation between pedestrians and auto traffic. In addition to calming the traffic, creating buffered pedestrian spaces will create places people want to be - not have to be. Creating a streetscape, which is more like an urban boulevard with wider sidewalks, landscaping and other amenities, would transform the pedestrian experience. Local access/parking lanes should also be considered to accommodate both heavy through traffic and local access and on-street parking.
- **Commit a fair share for safety.** Ultimately, the region needs to invest in walking, bicycling and transit and not consider them as only “alternative modes.” For TOD, these are the preferred modes, and they should receive the recognition and funding as such.



Active Defined Center

The SunRail stations are all different and the centers immediately surrounding the stations should be designed and developed to maintain and build on their unique, defining characteristics. Part of this definition comes with the increase in density, use mix and pedestrian orientation that create a different environment compared to the outlying areas. The typologies discussed earlier help to frame the range of types of centers that can be expected along the line. In addition, the character or sense of place is further defined by:

- **Urban parks and open spaces.** All vibrant centers have a combination of parks, open spaces, plazas, etc. that create a unique sense of place. With the introduction of higher densities in the TOD center, public open spaces are a critical element.
- **Urban design.** The design of a center, including its street system, site layout, building form, and architecture is also essential for creating a unique and pleasing environment that attracts people to live, work or visit.
- **Active uses.** Active uses and creating an 18-hour active place are essential elements of successful and vibrant centers. The combination of transit and concentrated activity are mutually supportive.



The 5-Minute Walk

National studies on walking behavior near transit consistently show that the proportion of transit riders walking to and from transit is greatest within a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile walking distance. Walking rates typically decline by one-half between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, and become insignificant beyond $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. People are also willing to walk longer distances between transit and their home and shorter distances to and from work. Studies also indicate that a quality walking environment and its usefulness (ability to easily reach retail and services) will also encourage pedestrian trips and walking longer distances.

Limited, Managed Parking

Parking is generally abundant at all of the SunRail stations. Because high-frequency transit service is not available to most of the station areas today, they are auto-dependent. Experience has shown that abundant and inexpensive parking motivates people to drive rather than use transit. The availability of parking in the station TODs should be reduced to encourage transit use over time by:

- **Reducing required parking.** Minimum parking standards in the corridor tend to reflect suburban industry standards. Land development ordinances should be amended to reduce or eliminate on-site parking minimums. In addition, maximum parking standards should be applied in TOD station areas, particularly within the core area (first 600 feet) adjacent to the station.
- **Phasing parking standards.** The beginning of SunRail will not immediately affect travel behavior – it will take time for TOD to become established. Station communities should consider ways to reduce parking requirements over time. One example is to require new development to identify how surface parking may be redeveloped in the future as parking demand declines. District parking is another technique where developers pay for centralized off-site parking in lieu of on-site parking. As parking demand declines, the city may reduce parking requirements at the district level by allowing additional development without expanding the district parking supply.
- **Reducing visual impact.** Large parking areas located along the street have a significant negative impact on the pedestrian environment, as well as making pedestrian access more difficult. Parking should be located to the rear or side of buildings rather than between the street and buildings. Parking structures should have active ground floor uses along important pedestrian streets.

Public Leadership

“Bending” the real estate market to introduce TOD into the Orlando region will likely take a concerted effort by the public sector. If the experience from other regions are a guide, there is a major role for government in TOD education, advocacy, planning, providing properly scaled regulatory and financial incentives. This leadership includes:

- “Political will” to support SunRail and TOD principles.
- Willingness to plan and work collaboratively with regional partners.
- Commitment to remove regulatory and other development roadblocks.
- Working with the development community to promote TOD.
- Packaging and implementing catalyst TOD demonstration projects.

TOD Concepts – What they are and what they are not

The following pages include conceptual TOD plans for each of the 17 stations along the SunRail corridor. The TOD concepts apply the land use typologies based on a vision for the place, identified by stakeholders. The concepts are intended to guide future planning by identifying future areas of change, access and connectivity improvements, and the urban form of the place. The concepts are just that – conceptual. Before adoption as part of any city plan, additional vetting of the concepts and refinement will need to occur.

Creation of the TOD Concepts

A series of individual work sessions were held during the week of March 14th, 2011 for 16 of the 17 station areas. Due to scheduling constraints, the city of Winter Park was not able to participate. Agency staff and key property owners in the station areas participated in two-hour sessions to discuss the existing conditions, upcoming development projects, current plan and zoning requirements and proposed amendments, and future aspirations. The sessions then focused on how TOD could be established in a manner consistent with the TOD principles. Important circulation and land development concepts were discussed and recorded on maps for each of the stations. The discussion from the work sessions is the basis of this report.