

# Transit-Oriented Development Collaboration Study

Colin Moore, Director  
Joy Agner, Graduate Assistant  
Kenna Stormogipson, Project Specialist

Public Policy Center  
College of Social Sciences  
University of Hawai'i at Manoa

## Executive Summary

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a complex process that requires collaboration among a wide variety of stakeholders, both public and private. The need for ongoing coordination prompted the establishment of the Hawai'i Inter-Agency Council for Transit Oriented Development (TOD Council) in 2016 under the leadership of Governor David Ige. While the TOD Council has made significant gains in developing a collective vision for smart growth in Hawai'i, challenges remain in establishing effective multisector collaboration. The goal of this project was to gather and analyze key state and county agency perspectives on TOD collaboration, and to offer ideas for process improvement.

## Summary of Findings

- 1) **TOD Council members agree on the importance of TOD and are willing to collaborate.** Stakeholders believe in the value of TOD and are willing to work together when an appropriate structure is in place. They recognize TOD's role in developing affordable housing, spurring economic development and healthier communities, and contributing to the success of Honolulu Rail Transit.
- 2) **The TOD Council has made planning for TOD areas more efficient and cost-effective.** As a result of the TOD Council, agencies have been able to share information and complete tasks that would have been difficult for any individual agency to accomplish. For example, the TOD Council secured funding for a study of infrastructure needed across all state lands.
- 3) **The role of the TOD Council in implementation is unclear.** Some members were unclear how participation in the council furthered the goals of TOD or helped each agency meet its own goals.
- 4) **The TOD Council incentive structure requires modification to overcome agency interests and promote collaboration.** The structure of the council is good for sharing information and bringing stakeholders to the table. However, it does not offer strong incentives to facilitate negotiation or for agencies to prioritize TOD goals ahead of agency goals.
- 5) **The state and the county both play important and interconnected roles in the TOD development process.** Although they are separate jurisdictions,

support is needed from both the county and state to develop TOD projects. A slowdown in one jurisdiction will impede development efforts in the other.

- 6) **The current Capital Improvement Project (CIP) funding structure does not support TOD Council priorities or agency collaboration.** The TOD Council went through an extensive process in 2017 to develop a strategic plan and TOD priorities to guide urban development, primarily in Honolulu. Yet the success of CIP funding requests does not appear to be related to the priorities of the TOD Council. If the TOD Council's priorities do not affect funding decisions, state and county agencies will struggle to develop successful TOD projects.

### **Ideas for Action**

- 1) **Use CIP funds to incentivize collaboration. Reward good teamwork, not just individual requests.** Awarding funding to individual agencies with TOD related projects is less effective than providing funds for inter-agency TOD projects. To promote collaboration, funding should reward group efforts.
- 2) **Work to secure funds that the council can use as seed money to help agencies with TOD projects.** Even a relatively small budget of \$1 - \$2 million could effectively reward collaborative planning and incentivize agency efforts in TOD areas. The ability to fund small requests of \$25,000 - \$100,000 would have an outsized impact on agency participation and increase the role of the council in implementation of TOD.
- 3) **Improve the process for communicating how CIP requests advance state TOD goals.** The TOD Council should explore ways to better inform decision-makers about how specific CIP requests support larger state policy goals. Showing how TOD requests can improve stakeholder collaboration and leverage private investments could increase the funding for TOD projects.
- 4) **Continue to realize efficiencies of conducting important TOD planning work as a council instead of relegating this work to individual agencies.** In a similar manner to the infrastructure plan, the council can undertake critical market and environmental studies. Other agency needs related to TOD could be aggregated by using centralized procurement for common services such as design and engineering consulting for specific projects. This would save agencies both time and money.
- 5) **Create a TOD subcabinet in the Office of the Governor.** The subcabinet should be comprised of agency representatives who have the authority to make decisions about agency priorities and funding requests. This would ensure that TOD priorities are highlighted in each agency's CIP requests and have the full support of each agency's director.
- 6) **Explore ways that the state and county can leverage their resources and interdependence to benefit both jurisdictions, especially on state lands.**

**Example #1: Provide performance incentives to the county.** The state should provide performance incentives to the county for streamlining permitting processes which impact development in both jurisdictions.

**Example #2: Collaborate on publicly-funded studies.** When the state or county commission a study related to TOD development, the study should include information useful to both jurisdictions to avoid duplicative efforts.

7) **Increase public support by communicating the goals and positive impact of TOD to the public.** Increasing awareness of TOD and connecting it with issues of importance throughout Hawai'i such as affordable housing, traffic reduction, and economic development, will encourage more support from decision-makers.

8) **Develop a cohesive vision for the TOD Council through a concept mapping process.** Several agencies and attendees of council meetings were unsure of the benefit of the council or how success of the council is being measured and evaluated. A structured concept mapping process would outline goals and objectives, strategies to achieve shared aims, and councilmembers' roles.

CIP Funding Process and Timeline Illustrated with Three TOD Council Priorities

