



## A fast track to transformation

By Andrew Hoyne, Principal and Creative Director, Hoyne

*Why transit-oriented development (TOD) is catching on.*



*Many of Australia's major cities came to life a century ago and were founded as transit-oriented developments (TODs), before the term was even coined. They grew in tandem with the early tram and train lines that threaded through these fledgling urban settings. Back then, our cities were compact, mixed use and reliant on public transport. We need more of that approach now if we're to meet our predicted population growth and create vibrant neighbourhoods for all.*

While we have new problems to solve and opportunities to seize, around the world TOD has been recognised as one of the most versatile ways to transform:

- dormant retail spaces;
- traffic congestion;
- increasing urban sprawl; and
- lack of affordable housing.

The TOD approach is as powerful for new developments as it is for existing transport hubs. In Melbourne there are several successful developments above train lines. Federation Square, a vibrant 24-hour public space, sits neatly above Melbourne's suburban train network and opposite bustling Flinders Street station.

At 664 Collins Street, a new commercial building by Mirvac has been so cleverly constructed the rattle and hum of trains below has zero affect on the people working above – it's also directly opposite Melbourne's largest transport hub, Southern Cross Station. The fact that both were designed by Grimshaw Architects is no accident.

In Perth, Western Australia, two successful TOD projects were steered by alternative governance models:

Subiaco Redevelopment Authority and East Perth Redevelopment Authority – a distinction that's noted by many as remarkable.

There are as many kinds of TOD as there are benefits that flow to everyone involved. For developers, realising commercial opportunities while simultaneously activating previously dormant locations used only by commuters offers plenty of wins.

A thoughtful TOD can also reinvigorate a tired community. Around the world, new precincts have emerged from reimagining formerly sleepy sites. By applying a distinct new persona to an aged area, new destinations can emerge from the rubble.

In Stockholm, Sweden, new towns have typically been built in greenfields. In the 1990s, the city decided to invest in a brownfield development, just outside the city centre. This once-polluted industrial site is now home to 20,000 residents.

Hammarby Sjöstad is Stockholm's largest urban regeneration project. While not yet complete, reports claim that land prices and rents there have increased more quickly than most other

parts of metropolitan Stockholm in recent years.

Developed by two city authority departments who worked with multiple architecture firms and more than 40 building contractors, Hammarby Sjöstad will house 11,000 residential apartments when completed.

A tramline runs through its centre, making this the first area in Stockholm to have a tramline installed as the main form of transport in 50 years. There are also buses, a ferry service, a car-pooling scheme, bike lanes and a huge network of pathways.

Its location – next to a lake and a canal – allows for quays and waterfront access. This new medium-density, urban-designed development attracts 13,000 visitors each year.

Like so many aspects of placemaking, successful TOD relies on collaboration and an urban-planning focus that puts people first. Providing transit is not its sole purpose, yet its very nature offers us connection – whether we're tenants or owners. Until recently, Australia has had only a few sites that exemplify this style of development. ➤

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We're finally jumping on board.

The opportunities presented by TOD are mind-boggling. When well planned and supported by governments and developers in tandem, TODs can transform communities, financially and socially, creating safer, more vibrant neighbourhoods.

Higher density mixed-use projects that are part of or next door to public transport have the potential to relieve growing population concerns in Australia and revitalise dormant precincts – bringing new businesses and reasons for people to linger.

In Tokyo, Japan, commuters at Shibuya Station are funnelled from the platform into a department store – the railway itself is a minor player. Jiyugaoka Station is similarly surrounded by department stores and located in a dense community.

Tokyo's private rail lines are seen as successful largely for the diversity of their business makeup. In 2006, real estate holdings and retail outlets accounted for 30 per cent and 20 per cent of their profits respectively, rail fares brought in only a third.

While infinitely easier when stations are already located in dense communities and surrounded by schools and businesses, Australia could plan new TOD that enhances connections and neighbourhoods.

Given the success of two projects delivered through alternative authorities, our relevant lack of TOD may highlight one of our biggest challenges – the need for leadership in how we fund and deliver infrastructure projects.

If we're to reap the inherent benefits of TOD, we need:

- vision from government – in rezoning sites, funding transport infrastructure, negotiating with authorities, marketing and providing certainty to businesses;
- support for incentives to attract long-term commercial and retail tenants; and
- locations within already established areas or land corridors, close to medium-density communities who will benefit most from TOD.

More cities are beginning to embrace TOD, with two projects proposed and being put to the test in Queensland. Six kilometres from Brisbane's CBD, on a former Animal Research Institute site, Yeerongpilly Green is earmarked to become an urban village.

With pedestrian access linking the 14-hectare site with Yeerongpilly train station, this urban development promises to create a new commercial and retail precinct, providing more jobs closer to home as the precinct develops.

Yeerongpilly Green will unfold over the coming decade. When completed, this site will comprise 1200 residences, specialty retail, a food and beverage precinct, a supermarket and a boutique hotel – surrounded by landscaped gardens and parks.

Rather than waiting 10 years to see if projects like Yeerongpilly Green become a success – and judging them when they appear to fail along the way – why not invest in developing more collaborative, mixed-use precincts with in-built transport options? — ●



- 01** SHIBUYA STATION, TOKYO.
- 02** HAMMARBY SJÖSTAD, STOCKHOLM.
- 03** FEDERATION SQUARE, MELBOURNE.
- 04** YEERONGPILLY GREEN, QUEENSLAND.
- 05** SHIBUYA STATION.
- 06** 669 BOURKE STREET, MIRVAC'S SMART SISTER TO THE UPCOMING 664 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE.



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