

POLICY EVALUATION REPORT

OCTOBER 2019

OVERVIEW

This report is one of two documents assessing the existing frameworks for which development in Indianapolis is guided to support transit-oriented development. The Policy Evaluation Report focuses on adopted policies related to Transit-oriented Development (TOD), while the Regulatory Conformance Report assesses current development regulations in relation to TOD.

As Bus Rapid Transit ("BRT") is implemented in Indianapolis, it is important to understand how local planning policies and procedures are influencing changes in land use and development patterns along the Blue Line BRT corridor. A number of plans have been developed by communities across the City/County, each representing important local priorities that inform how land use activities and property development and redevelopment support the community's infrastructure investment. This report is a summary of an in-depth review of all relevant plans and policies. It is intended to deepen the community's understanding of issues and opportunities regarding future development and redevelopment along the corridor. These existing plans will be compared with major themes illustrated throughout several of the TOD planning documents adopted by Indianapolis/Marion County to examine the level at which various other planning areas support or conflict with them.

WHAT IS TOD?

Transit-Oriented Development ("TOD") is a relatively new term used to describe walkable development patterns shaped by, and integral to, an adjacent transit route. Many historic streetcar suburbs in Indianapolis can be described as transit-oriented development in that they often include a distinct activity center where people once boarded the train, surrounded by walkable blocks that connect seamlessly into neighborhoods. Fountain Square and Irvington are two local examples of places that reflect Indianapolis' transit-oriented development past.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Planning and zoning for transit-oriented development will better accommodate the development of walkable urban places and lessen the degree to which adjacent land use activities and development patterns negatively impact the community's transit investment. Consider the following outcomes and benefits of transit-oriented development patterns:

- **Reduces Cost of Living** – Much of Indianapolis is built in a way which requires people to own a car in order to access many job or educational opportunities. In most places, it is even difficult to access basic goods and services without a car. Implementing TOD creates an opportunity

to expand access along the BRT routes. Additionally, Marion County largely being built out, particularly where the transit system is planned, makes appropriate redevelopment and reinvestment in aging parts of the community a priority.

- **Improves Access to Opportunity** – Targeting investment along the transit corridor will expand opportunities to live and work within walking distance to a transit stop, enhancing opportunities for people who do not own a personal vehicle, are unable to drive, or prefer to not drive.
- **Stabilizes & Strengthens Property Values** – Targeted investments will create a critical mass with a shared interest in maintaining and enhancing the value of places. It also enables an increase the supply of housing of many types in order to stabilize the market and ensure the needs of all residents are met.
- **Improves Public health** – Building places that are integrated with a greater mobility system (transit, biking, and walking) will encourage people to be more active in their daily lives. Enabling walkability and improving access to transit and biking can also lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in areas along the BRT routes.

- **Builds Marketable Places** – TOD will accommodate various uses in a centralized location, including residences, commercial spaces, and cultural destinations. The creation of activity hubs will support the needs of various Indy residents, young and aging.
- **Supports Workforce Development** – Targeted investments along the transit corridor provides improved access to educational and employment opportunities.
- **Supports Efficiency** – TOD will enable compact development patterns that use existing public infrastructure more efficiently and promotes increased transit ridership.
- **Enables a Corridor-wide Impact** – The impact of TOD will be cumulative, providing positive benefits along the entire transit corridor.
- **Expands the Market** – The development of transit-supportive station areas will expand the development market in Indianapolis, making it more competitive with other mid-sized cities nationally.

TOD POLICIES

Indianapolis has developed four primary plans that are related to achieving transit-oriented development along the Blue Line BRT route – Indy Moves (2018), the TOD Design Guidelines (2018, working internal draft document), the Regional TOD Strategic Plan (2015), and the adopted Blue Line Transit Oriented Development Strategic Plan (2017/2018). The objective of these plans is to guide future growth, development and public investment in a way that is supportive of the transit system.

The following pages describe the long-term vision of the community, as stated by these plans.

TRANSIT INVESTMENT

The Blue Line represents a significant transit and infrastructure investment that will provide numerous benefits to the people of the Indianapolis. At an estimated \$200 million dollars of construction investment the Blue Line provide transit improvements of 24 additional miles of enhanced transit service and 38 new transit stations. The Blue Line project will also provide the following infrastructure improvements:

- 10 miles of new/rehabilitated sidewalks with 500 accessible curb ramps;
- 60,000 linear feet of storm sewer replacement and 1,000 drainage structures;
- 124,000 tons of street resurfacing materials; and
- Traffic signal improvements to the Washington Street Corridor.

In addition to providing improved transit service, this project will have a dramatic impact on the general infrastructure in the area. These improvements, like the transit service will support the neighborhoods and people along the Blue Line.



TOD DESIGN GUIDELINES & BLUE LINE TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

The Indianapolis policy documents, specifically the Blue Line Strategic Plan, have identify the following place types for Indianapolis TOD station areas. The place types define the general characteristics of development necessary to support the bus rapid transit system being implemented. The Place Types include:

- **Central Business District**, defined by:
 - Employment & Residential Density
 - Large-Scale Development
 - Heightened Public Realm Design
- **District Center**, defined by:
 - Cultural Districts
 - Well-Connected to Neighborhoods
 - Mixed-Use, Medium-Scale Development
 - Active & Safe Streets
- **Community Commercial**, defined by:
 - Civic & Residential Mix
 - Residential Density at Core
 - Walkable Neighborhoods
 - Comfortable Pedestrian Experience
- **Walkable Neighborhood**, defined by:
 - Moderate Housing Density
 - Small-Scale Development
 - Walkable Blocks
 - Lower Intensity Commercial Uses

The characteristics that distinguish the different place types include the following:

- **Public Space** – the design of public space, particularly the roadway and rights-of-way, that support human-scaled development, transportation, and the needs of people, including wider sidewalks, safe crosswalks, and narrow vehicle lanes. Additional themes outlined within the TOD policy documents include:
 - Quality Public Space & Pedestrian Infrastructure
 - Safe & Frequent Intersections

- Integrated Mobility Systems & Expansion of Options
- **Urban Form** – defines how an overall district – comprised of streets, blocks, and lots – should be arranged based on the context. Policies promote smaller, shorter walkable blocks and alleyways in TOD contexts, to increase connectivity and frame the development patterns. Additional urban form themes outlined within the TOD policy documents include:
 - Mitigated Physical Barriers, Walkable Blocks, Accessibility
 - Pedestrian-Oriented Development
- **Mix of Uses** – the variation and intensity of uses in a district-wide context. The variation and intensity are greater in the Central Business District place type, and more moderate in a Walkable Neighborhood context. Additional land use themes outlined in the TOD policy documents include:
 - Nodal Development Patterns with Diverse Use Mix
 - Employment Density
 - Strategic Economic Development
 - Leveraged Proximity to Existing Hubs (Major Trip Generators)
- **Housing Diversity** – represents the variety of housing that would be appropriate in different place types to support a transit node. Housing types defined as best for the Central Business District tend to be mixed-use buildings or apartments, and more moderate types, such as small lot single-family detached houses, accessory dwelling units, and small-scale multiunit residential buildings, are best for Walkable Neighborhood contexts, with a variety of types supporting the other place types. Additional housing themes outlined within the TOD policy documents include:
 - Population Density
 - Housing Diversity & Adaptability

Some of these themes can be directly addressed by development regulations and others cannot. An analysis of the development regulations was



conducted to identify alignment of the TOD policies and the characteristics of the Place Types. The commentary provided is based on that analysis.

ADOPTED PLANS

While Indianapolis has adopted a number of clear policies for how and where TOD should be implemented, the BRT Blue Line study area overlaps with a number of other planning geographies – neighborhood-scale, corridor-scale, regional-scale, etc. – with a range of specific interests or focuses – including comprehensive planning, parks, historic preservation, etc. The extent to which other plans compete or support Indianapolis's adopted TOD policies vary, and the following sections provides an in-depth analysis of adopted policies throughout the study area related to TOD themes.

The policy plans reviewed in the following sections include:

- **Thrive Indianapolis (2019)** – Indianapolis's plan for resilience and sustainability.
- **Indy Moves (2018)** – The transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan for Indianapolis and Marion County.
- **2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (2017)** – The MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) guides the area's metropolitan transportation systems over the next 20 years.
- **The Land Use Plan Pattern Book (2017) – Accompanied by the** Marion County Land Use maps, represents the land use element of the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Neighborhood Investment Strategy (2017)** – This document provides a toolbox of priority tools that are geared towards guiding investment for various types of neighborhood contexts.
- **Pedestrian Plan (2016)** – The first pedestrian plan, envisioning a more walkable and healthier Indianapolis.
- **Central Indiana Transit Plan (2016)** – a comprehensive transportation plan focused on connectivity and infrastructure priorities.
- **Englewood Village Plan (2018)** – a community plan for Englewood Village focusing on placemaking and quality of life.
- **Bicentennial Agenda (2016)** – the communitywide vision for the next century.
- **Indy Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan (2016)** – This 5-10-year plan provides a broad framework for Indy Parks management and the needs of residents.
- **Thoroughfare Plan (2016)** – The Marion County Thoroughfare Plan is an element of the Marion County Comprehensive Plan that establishes policies regarding the development of a multi-modal transportation network for all major streets and corridors in Marion County.
- **IndyEast Promise Zone (2015)** – community plan focusing on quality of life and neighborhood revitalization.
- **Cumberland 2031 Plan (2014)** – The vision, goals, and objectives for how the Town of Cumberland should develop over the next 20 years.
- **Near West Neighborhood Land Use Plan (2014)** – This plan is an element of the Marion County Comprehensive Plan that is intended to help reverse residential decline and support investment in viable commercial corridors.
- **Indy Greenways 2014-2024 Master Plan (2014)** – This plan provides a regional assessment of existing greenway routes and provides guidance for public and private investment in and around the greenway system.
- **Accelerate Indy (2014)** – The Indy Chamber's plan, providing a framework by which Indy can leverage existing assets to realize opportunities.
- **West Washington Street Corridor Plan (2012)** – A specific area plan guiding development along Washington Street on the west side of the city.
- **Irvington Neighborhood Plan (2008)** – A neighborhood-level planning document outlining the goals and priorities of the Irvington area.
- **Near East Quality of Life Plan (2005)** – A community plan focusing on enhancing quality of life.



LAND USE MIX | POLICY OVERVIEW

The current demand for attached housing in mixed-use districts is under-served in Central Indiana, and that demand is projected to increase with demographic changes over the next 20 years. Baby Boomers and Millennials represent the two largest age cohorts in U.S. history. Baby Boomers have been and Millennials will continue to be the primary drivers of the economy, including housing. These two segments also have in common a strong preference for higher density homes in mixed-use, walkable communities, which are often associated with TOD.

BLUE LINE TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN (2013)

Market demands for mixed-use, walkable development in urban areas is outpacing supply in many regions in the country, including Indianapolis. TOD has the potential to meet these needs.

TOD DESIGN GUIDELINES (2019)

Why It Matters

“Mixed-use” refers to zoning techniques that better integrate a variety of compatible and supporting uses. This may be in a single building, single site, or general area. Successful mixed-use centers can have a number of benefits:

- Allow residences and offices to support more concentrated commercial development with nearby market bases.
- Introduce new development contexts that will yield economic opportunities.
- Create valuable places where people enjoy spending time.
- Enhance the identity and marketability of a district.
- Create a focal point for increased housing density and transit-oriented development.

What Our Adopted Plans Say

Relevant plans guiding development throughout the study area support or contradict adopted TOD policies in the following ways:

- Thrive Indianapolis (2019) recognizes the important connection between land use and transportation, directly calling for both public and private investment that would promote walking and other mobility options to directly connect residences to transit. Although this plan does not provide any specific recommendations for promoting mixed-use, it does focus on developing employment hubs through strategic economic strategies that

would support access to a variety of commercial activities in key locations.

- Indy Moves (2018) policies directly promote the creation of employment/education destinations with improved access and connectivity to transit. This plan also recognizes the value in more strategic development practices, calling for smart growth strategies.
- The 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (2017) does not directly support or conflict with TOD policies regarding mixed-use centers. However, the plan identifies potential unintended consequences associated with more efficient vehicle technology and transportation funding, which is heavily reliant on gas taxes. The plan recognizes that economic development and planning will need to be strategic in order to support maintenance for existing transportation infrastructure.
- The Land Use Plan Pattern Book (2017) strongly supports adopted TOD policies, using mixed-use neighborhood typologies, a transit-oriented development overlay, and preferences for connections between higher density or community-serving land uses and transit.
- The Neighborhood Investment Strategy (2017) outlines a number of potential interventions for various contexts throughout the county, many of which strongly support TOD policies and enhanced connections between land use and transportation that facilitate transportation options and strategic concentration of development.

- The Pedestrian Plan (2016) directly supports a number of TOD best practices by prioritizing the development of activity centers with mixed-use contexts adjacent to transit stops.
 - The Central Indiana Transit Plan (2016) recommends land use patterns that generate the tax revenue needed to sustain infrastructure investments. The plan recognizes a market shift towards mixed-use neighborhoods.
 - The Englewood Village Plan (20##) recommends the development of mixed-use commercial properties and increased density of employment and educational opportunities in the neighborhood.
 - The Bicentennial Agenda (2016) calls for more transit-supportive development in suburban areas, and strategic revitalization efforts in urban neighborhoods. Many of the recommendations illustrate a return to nodal, "village-like" development patterns that support mixed-use, walkable settings in many different desired contexts.
 - The Indy Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan (2016) does not provide guidance regarding mixed-use contexts.
 - Thoroughfare Plan (2016) explicitly recognizes the intrinsic relationship between land use and transportation, calling for activity hubs to be built with the transportation system in mind to support greater accessibility throughout the region.
 - IndyEast Promise Zone (2015) identifies Indy Rezone as an important milestone for enabling dense, mixed-use development patterns. The plan also promotes increased business activity arranged in activity centers.
 - The Cumberland 2031 Plan (2014) envisions the town as a unique destination in the region that should support a variety of uses that would attract visitors, particularly along Washington Street. The plan's major objectives focus on Washington Street as an important hub for economic development and providing regional access to jobs through the transit system, also recognizing the need to reduce sprawl and unproductive development patterns.
 - The Indy Greenways 2014-2024 Master Plan (2014) recognizes the relationship between public transportation amenities and private development, promoting targeted connections to neighborhood centers. Though these locations don't specifically mention transit stops, transit-oriented development and trail-oriented development can be integrated in key locations to support strategic economic development.
 - Accelerate Indy (2014) recognizes the need for a strong transit system that connects to vibrant mixed-use centers.
 - The West Washington Street Corridor Plan (2012) has recommended most of the land along Washington Street for "Community Commercial Uses", defined for low-intensity retail and office uses that can be stand alone or coordinated with other properties into an activity center. This proposal is not supportive of TOD best practices and would promote car-oriented retail corridors.
 - The Irvington Neighborhood Plan (2008) is an older plan that recommends discouragement of uses that typically require a vehicle, such as large grocery stores and laundry services, adjacent to transit stops.
 - The Near East Quality of Life Plan (2005) promotes nodal patterns of activity infrastructure improvements to support more intense uses. The plan also promotes a range of tenancy to include smaller businesses.
- It is important to note that most of the policy plans for Indianapolis / Marion County the guide development and public investment are current, drafted since 2014, and each call for the creation of compact, walkable development patterns in support of transit investments.



HOUSING TYPES | POLICY OVERVIEW

With most households living in auto-dependent neighborhoods, over half of the region's households are paying more than 45 percent of median income on housing and transportation. Transit-rich neighborhoods, in contrast, are able to shift transportation savings to discretionary household expenses, which can have greater impact on local spending.

BLUE LINE TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN (2013)

The Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors (MIBOR) conducted a survey in 2013 which found that while 72% of respondents desire single-family detached homes in the city, 90% of all new construction within the city has been single-family detached, leaving a market imbalance of 18%. This poses an opportunity for TOD in Indiana. New developments along transit corridors could tap into this market demand and fulfill a gap for housing in the Central Indiana market.

TOD DESIGN GUIDELINES (2019)

Why It Matters

A broader mix of housing types accommodates a diverse range of lifestyles and needs. Walkable neighborhoods with diverse housing stock benefit Indianapolis in a number of ways:

- Supports a variety of lifestyles with different housing needs.
- Creates a more adaptable housing supply, and helps communities adapt to changing demographics and societal needs.
- Allows residents to “age in place” as lifestyle needs change.
- Enables more efficient use of space that supports neighborhood retail if homes are near walkable destinations.
- Builds neighborhoods that adapt over time along with its residents – building culture, reflecting sustained investment, and allowing for reinvestment that evolves them.

What Our Adopted Plans Say

Relevant plans guiding development throughout the study area support or contradict adopted TOD policies in the following ways:

- Thrive Indianapolis (2019) recognizes that 35% of Marion County residents are burdened (spending more than 30% of the income) by the cost of housing, and directly calls for investment that would promote residential growth that is integrated with the transit system, promoting density at transit stops and lowering cost of living.

- Indy Moves (2018) does not make direct recommendations related to housing policy. However, the plan illustrates the places with lower concentrations of residential units that cost more to the public (through the subsidization of infrastructure) to support and are more car-dependent.
- The 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (2017) does not make direct recommendations related to housing policy, though does recognize changing market preferences calling for diverse housing options and density, as well as recognizes that [H+T \(Housing + Transportation affordability index\)](#), tying car-dependent development patterns with affordability.
- The Land Use Plan Pattern Book (2017) calls for housing variety and increased housing units around transit stops that would be appropriate in different contexts, including Traditional Neighborhood, City Neighborhood and Mixed-Use typologies. This plan recognizes that housing adaptability and density will make many places more adaptable to market change and can help support, attract, and retain vibrant businesses.
- The Neighborhood Investment Strategy (2017) outlines best practices for housing and neighborhood revitalization seen throughout the country. It supports many components that would strengthen social equity in a community, including connections between residential uses and transit service. The plan calls for increased residential density around transit stops.

- The Pedestrian Plan (2016) does not make direct recommendations associated with housing policy.
- The Central Indiana Transit Plan (2016) recognizes a need to build more housing in mixed-use neighborhood settings proximate to quality transit. The plan also recommends strategic investment in affordable housing funds to stabilize portions of the market to support equitable access to transit.
- The Englewood Village Plan (2018) calls for expanded housing diversity and new financing methods to support residential access in the neighborhood, particularly focused on infill of vacant lots.
- The Bicentennial Agenda (2016) calls for more transit-supportive development in suburban areas, and strategic revitalization efforts in urban neighborhoods.
- The Indy Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan (2016) identifies “small neighborhood parks” as the #2 desire of the community for park improvements in Indianapolis.
- Thoroughfare Plan (2016) explicitly recognizes the intrinsic relationship between land use and planning, calling for activity hubs to be built with the transportation system in mind.
- IndyEast Promise Zone (2015) calls for a diverse set of housing types, including mixed-use development projects geared towards aging residents and people with limited income.
- The Cumberland 2031 Plan (2014) calls for the promotion of housing diversity, particularly to support the aging population. The objectives for housing diversity support the creation of transit-oriented development by supporting greater density. BNS/DMD are responsible for conducting development review for Cumberland, and it is noted that review processes and impact fees could slow or hinder the development process for smaller infill projects and along the transit system.
- The Indy Greenways 2014-2024 Master Plan (2014) does not make direct recommendations associated with housing policy.
- Accelerate Indy (2014) recognizes that while the cost of single-family, owner-occupied housing is relatively affordable, the cost of rental housing is increasing with national trends because demand for rental housing in urban core areas is rising rapidly. Providing rental housing options is identified as a key aspect of attracting and retaining young talent.
- The West Washington Street Corridor Plan (2012) supports residential density within walking distance to transit centers, recognizing the high levels of transit ridership in this corridor. The plan advocates for up to 12 units per acre, typically seen as a minimum neighborhood density when served by transit. Additionally, many small to moderate scale housing typologies can exceed this measure, including rowhouses, fourplexes, and small-scale multifamily buildings, appropriate for a neighborhood context.
- The Irvington Neighborhood Plan (2008) aims to protect the character of existing neighborhoods by mitigating the potential impact of new commercial development. Future regulatory change should consider how more compact transit-oriented development projects integrate with existing contexts and adjacencies.
- The Near East Quality of Life Plan (2005) recommends expanding housing opportunities and reuse of vacant lots within the community, particularly for affordable housing.



URBAN FORM | POLICY OVERVIEW

In addition to being pedestrian-friendly, the local street system should be logical and highly connected. Blocks should be short in length, 300-400 feet, if possible. Pedestrians and drivers should not be forced onto arterial streets, but allowed to take self-determined routes through neighborhoods.

BLUE LINE TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN (2013)

Transit-oriented development, or TOD, is a type of urban development that includes a mixture of housing, office, retail, and/or other amenities integrated into a walkable neighborhood and located within a half-mile of quality public transportation.

TOD DESIGN GUIDELINES (2019)

Why It Matters

Development patterns and building orientation will determine the extent to which an overall district is accessible by the multimodal network. Orientation to enable greater mobility will help create distinct, walkable places. Greater attention to urban form will have a number of benefits:

- Enable targeted approach to creating destinations along the transit corridor that serves as a more efficient use of space.
- Achieve more efficient site design practices, such as sharing of access, parking lots and open spaces.
- Realize coordination of development projects so that more vibrant and human-scale places can be built and appropriately connected with existing adjacent neighborhoods.
- Enhance neighborhood character and value by providing unique activity centers that are focal points along the transit corridor.
- Elevate how public space and blocks are established to favor the design of social and gathering spaces for people to experience, and connections that improve access for people walking, biking, and using transit.

What Our Adopted Plans Say

Relevant plans guiding development throughout the study area support or contradict adopted TOD policies in the following ways:

- Thrive Indianapolis (2019) supports a more cohesive relationship between transportation

and land use, though does not make direct recommendations relating to urban form.

- Indy Moves (2018) recognizes that Indianapolis is a considerably large geography, calling for compact, walkable, and productive development patterns in places related to transit investments, indicating how zoning can influence development patterns.
- The 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (2017) policies for congestion management directly support more transit-oriented development practices, shifting from car-oriented land use patterns towards more walkable development patterns. These strategies call for better development patterns that would support less car use and reduce overall congestion.
- The Land Use Plan Pattern Book (2017) is overwhelmingly supportive of adopted TOD policies, illustrating the positive benefits of walkable development patterns and activity hubs on mental health, economic resilience, and business retention. This plan addresses the need to create a more connected block pattern and enhanced walking connections to transit hubs.
- The Neighborhood Investment Strategy (2017) calls for the development of nodal activity centers tied to transit stops, and the redevelopment of failing strip malls into more walkable development patterns in key locations.



- The Pedestrian Plan (2016) directly supports a number of TOD best practices by prioritizing the development of activity centers adjacent to transit stops.
- The Central Indiana Transit Plan (2016) supports investment in walkable activity centers, though does not go into specific detail about urban design components. The plan does recognize that transit corridors are best supported by private development that is built to the sidewalk, oriented towards people walking, rather than conventional patterns with large street-facing expanses of surface parking.
- The Englewood Village Plan (2018) calls for “more compelling” walkable development in the neighborhood that can be characterized as a village, accentuating unique architectural features and small civic spaces.
- The Bicentennial Agenda (2016) calls for more transit-supportive development in suburban areas, including a return to nodal, “village-like” development patterns that support mixed-use, walkable settings in many contexts.
- The Indy Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan (2016) recognizes the important affect parks have on the overall system of connectivity.
- Thoroughfare Plan (2016) calls for a grid development pattern in compact areas to support walkability, though does not explicitly discourage conventional development patterns that have resulted in automobile-oriented patterns. However, the plan does call for heightened development standards that would emphasize pedestrian and bicycle environments and TOD practices.
- IndyEast Promise Zone (2015) supports the creation of walkable villages near transit.
- The Cumberland 2031 Plan (2014) calls for the expansion of pedestrian facilities that would enhance walkable options throughout the block pattern and supports transit-oriented development patterns. The plan also supports “form-based” development standards that would orient new development to support walkability. Though this plan generally supports TOD best practices, these policies compete with the plan’s additional support for highway-oriented development patterns.
- The Indy Greenways 2014-2024 Master Plan (2014) does not provide specific recommendations regarding urban form and development patterns/orientation.
- Accelerate Indy (2014) includes themes that describe a “village-like” development pattern illustrated in this document when describing quality of life and the region’s ability to stay competitive with comparable cities. The plan also calls specifically for transit-oriented development that coincides with the BRT routes.
- The West Washington Street Corridor Plan (2012) discourages parking lot frontages that hinder pedestrian connections between Washington Street and adjacent neighborhoods and deters access to businesses. Site development recommendations are outlined to guide the placement and design of commercial, industrial, and sometimes residential development projects. Overall, these recommendations do not undermine general principles of transit-oriented development. Elements that support transit-oriented development include pedestrian oriented building access design, side or rear parking lots, and building elements that extend onto the sidewalk area to protect pedestrians from rain. However, most of the Land Use Recommendations favor “Community Commercial”, which is recommended to be implemented by the C-4 zoning category, which currently would not achieve TOD.
- The Irvington Neighborhood Plan (2008) calls for more walkable development patterns tied with transit stops. The Near East Quality of Life Plan (2005) promotes nodal development patterns and façade grants to support improvements to buildings in commercial settings.



STREET DESIGN | POLICY OVERVIEW

If it is expected that transit riders will reduce vehicle miles traveled, sidewalks along a connected street system must be provided and they must be in good condition. In addition, there should be walks and paths that connect across significant barriers such as parks, large parking lots, and separated subdivisions.

BLUE LINE TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN (2013)

Streetscapes are all of the pedestrian amenities which exist along the sidewalks. Great urban spaces usually offer a higher amount of streetscape features, including street lamps, bike parking, outdoor seating, wayfinding, signage, awnings, planters, and waste bins just to name a few. Consider the following components around TOD station locations and how the selection of streetscape amenities could improve them.

TOD DESIGN GUIDELINES (2019)

Why It Matters

Streetscapes establish the character of the public realm, and the design of streetscapes determines how private development should relate to these spaces. Streetscape design also affects different modes of travel based on the broader street network and the development patterns and uses within a specific area. Contextual streetscape design can produce many benefits:

- Establish the character and identity of the community, and different places within the community.
- Enhance the pedestrian experience with appropriately scaled sidewalks, buffers for protection, lighting, and other public amenities.
- Balance the interests of mobility and experiences within the public realm, to preserve and create valuable places for people.
- Encourage people to walk, yielding health benefits to the community.
- Support a safer and more appealing public realm for people walking, biking, and using public transit.
- Prioritize different interests on different streets, or even on different segments of the same street.

What Our Adopted Plans Say

Relevant plans guiding development throughout the study area support or contradict adopted TOD policies in the following ways:

- Thrive Indianapolis (2019) has several policies directly supporting investment and development of a multimodal transportation system, though does not give any specific guidance about the character of reinvented streets.
- Indy Moves (2018) is likely one of the strongest plans detailing multimodal street design. The plan defines street types that are directly tied to various land use contexts, safety needs, and multimodal priorities.
- The 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (2017) calls for safer streets and investment in the multimodal system. The plan cites the Complete Streets policy, primarily applied to the urbanized areas, indicating it be used to represent the priorities for bicycle-users and pedestrians. It is important to note that the MPO does not include projects that do not change the capacity of the transportation network in the LRTP.
- The Land Use Plan Pattern Book (2017) puts a critical emphasis on the design of the public realm for supporting lasting value in neighborhood contexts. It also recognizes the important relationship between land use contexts and street design in a number of Living Typology descriptions.

- The Neighborhood Investment Strategy (2017) outlines recommendations for streets within various place types, indicating that Complete Streets should be targeted in areas that remain regionally competitive – specifically calling out Type 01 Strong Suburbs, including Cumberland.
- The Pedestrian Plan (2016) is very supportive of safer and better designed streets in the community. This plan directly calls for safer intersections, a complete pedestrian network, and enhanced streetscapes that would encourage walkability.
- The Central Indiana Transit Plan (2016) identifies a need for enhanced amenities at transit stops, including sidewalks and bicycle racks.
- The Englewood Village Plan (2018) calls for streetscape enhancements on Washington Street to include street trees, basic infrastructure improvements, sidewalks, and bicycle infrastructure.
- The Bicentennial Agenda (2016) supports safer streets that support multimodal activity and reinforce the character of the community, identifying a number of amenities that are needed to support this vision.
- The Indy Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan (2016) supports various other plans relating to streetscape design, including the Complete Streets Policy, though does not make specific recommendations relating to streetscape design.
- Thoroughfare Plan (2016) outlines objectives for a safe multimodal network with streets that are designed to support adjacent land uses of various contexts. These objectives, in many ways support the best practices for TOD. The Right-of-way Preservation and Design Guidelines provide general support for the design of multimodal systems with range of different street types and potential section measurements for each. The table does not indicate specific development patterns that would be appropriate for the defined streets.
- IndyEast Promise Zone (2015) does not provide specific recommendations for streetscape design, though does support investment in infrastructure such as sidewalks.
- The Cumberland 2031 Plan (2014) contains walkable design policies and cites the complete streets policy for public improvement projects intended to support transit users and improve quality of access – including street stress and safety improvements. In addition, this plan calls for improved open space standards to integrate small-scale open space design practices that would improve the quality of the public realm, particularly as open space is incorporated into transit-oriented development projects.
- The Indy Greenways 2014-2024 Master Plan (2014) recognizes the adoption of the Complete Streets Policy and calls for implementation to include greenway improvements as a contribution to the complete mobility system.
- Accelerate Indy (2014) identifies the necessity for complete streets, connected places, and multi-mobility for competing with comparable cities, attracting and retaining talent. The plan also calls for streetscape design to enhance perceived quality of life.
- The West Washington Street Corridor Plan (2012) is highly supportive of streetscape improvements that would support TOD and encourage safe walking environments.
- The Irvington Neighborhood Plan (2008) focuses the need for pedestrian-oriented streetscapes along Washington Street, calling particularly for sidewalk infrastructure. Recommendations for improvements to the Pennsy Trail reinforce the importance of the overall integrated transportation system.
- The Near East Quality of Life Plan (2005) promotes improvements to public infrastructure to support private development, including the enhancement of corridors to promote walkable, nodal development.

SUMMARY

The following are initial observations from this preliminary analysis. These issues will continue to be discussed with staff, stakeholders and public officials throughout the first phase of the project and prior to creating the initial draft of the regulations.

Policy Strengths:

- Every plan adopted in Indianapolis since 2014 has called for more compact, walkable development patterns and smarter development around transit.
- The plans are overwhelmingly supportive of enhancing the connection between land use and the complete transportation system through more coordinated development efforts.
- The plans recognize that residents in Marion County, particularly renters, are adversely affected by the cost of housing, including transportation costs, and that transit-oriented development offers a way to reduce the cost of living for residents who live and work near the BRT system. Being attentive to the housing markets will ensure options are available for those residents who already rely on, and would greatly benefit from, the enhanced transit system.
- Adopted policies recognize the need for more compact and coordinated development patterns that make efficient use of expensive public investments like streets and sewers.
- A number of development policies call for a “nodal development pattern” – increased residential density and use intensity directly around transit stops, reducing as these places reconnect to existing neighborhoods. This condition is often described as a “village-like” development pattern.
- A number of different “Place Types” for transit-oriented development hubs have been

identified to support varied development intensity along the corridor that can be used to support a growing market for compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods.

- The adopted planning policies exemplify national best practices for transit-oriented development and neighborhood revitalization strategies.

Policy Weaknesses:

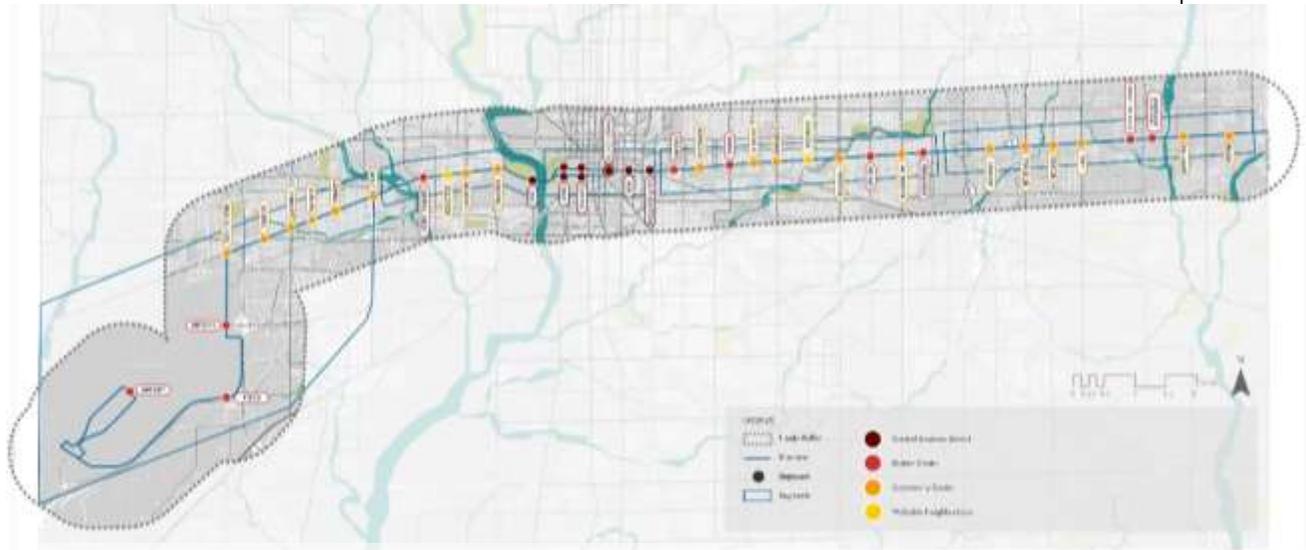
- The West Washington Street Corridor Plan appears to be the greatest outlier, recommending most of the corridor for “Community Commercial Uses” that reflect low-intensity, car-oriented retail that typically result in uncoordinated and unwalkable development patterns. This is somewhat caused by the plan’s use of the previous land use plan system, based on land use categories that define uses and densities, rather than the Pattern Book land use framework.
- The West Washington Street Corridor Plan uses density as its primary metric for illustrating what type of housing is appropriate, and where. Defining the density of a neighborhood or district may be appropriate as a target measure. Typically these density measures are translated to site specific standards which can be inappropriate, when used alone, because they lack the design details necessary to create compact, connected, diverse places.
- The Cumberland 2031 Plan and West Washington Street Corridor Plan each attempt to promote both walkable and car-oriented development patterns. These recommendations

conflict or undermine the need to develop transit-oriented development patterns.

- The Complete Streets Policy provides high-level direction and does not specify design standards and necessary improvement in specific places. Many of the adopted plans do not provide place-based recommendations for street facilities, and seemingly rely on the Complete Streets Policy comprehensively for guidance, which it lacks.

original walkable development pattern that had been disinvested in during the 20th century. These places provide strong examples for how walkable places can provide long-lasting value to residents and the city.

- Many plans recognize changing market preferences favoring a more diverse array of housing options set in walkable, vibrant places.
- The adopted Complete Streets policy supports the creation of a multi-modal transportation



Blue Line – Adopted Place Typologies

External Opportunities

- Accelerate Indy (2014) recognizes that the cost of rental housing is increasing with national trends because demand for rental housing in urban core areas is rising rapidly. Providing rental housing options is identified as a key aspect of attracting and retaining young talent. This presents an opportunity to develop regulations that support increased supply of housing units, particularly in locations with walkable access to improved transit.
- There are a number of historic transit-oriented places, such as Irvington, that have initiated public realm improvements that support their

system, expanding opportunities to utilize transit, bike, or walk.

External Threats

- Streetscape design policies are not being implemented throughout the city. And, while to policies advocate for the creation of connected, walkable networks that serve development, the design concepts and details are lacking, both in policy documents and the development regulations (as cited in the Regulatory Conformance Report.)
- The LRTP recognizes that maintenance of public infrastructure is heavily reliant on gas taxes, and

that both transit and more efficient vehicles will reduce funding. Alternatively, development efforts must be strategic and make efficient use of existing infrastructure, to reduce reliance on such funding sources.

- The market for supporting a mix of land uses will vary along the transit corridor. There are many areas along Washington Street with declining suburban shopping centers, amassing enough land for both a walkable village and new neighborhood. Broad change can be a challenge where the market is weak, ownership is diverse, and land is not adequately planned for or assembled.
- There are several factors that pose a challenge for supporting the creation of walkable development patterns, including: lack of density in some areas, lack of effective sidewalk infrastructure, lack of streetscape enhancements, land coordination/consolidation needs, development regulations that deter infill, residents who are opposed to the evolution of neighborhoods.
- Areas further from downtown contain several waning commercial development sites, many of which are quite large, that are now being used and reused in ways that do not support basic principles for walkable development or TOD, such as car sale lots, gas stations, drive-thrus, and storage facilities.
- The Indy Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan (2016) identifies Federal Housing Grants as a potential source of monetary support for parks, which may impact or compete with housing development efforts if uncoordinated.
- Because development practices have vastly changed during the past 70 years, undermining the creation of walkable environments in favor of car-oriented development patterns, the supply of real estate in older transit-oriented places is severely limited. This scarcity drives up the costs to occupy space – for business or residence – in distinct areas like Irvington or Fountain Square.
- Existing areas that reflect car-oriented development patterns are incredibly expensive

to maintain and must be subsidized by areas that provide an excess of value and use infrastructure more efficiently.