Business Item

Transportation Committee

Committee meeting date: November 23, 2026 **For the Metropolitan Council:** December 16, 2026

Business Item: 2026-206 JT

2026 Policy Update: Transit-Oriented Communities Policy

District(s), member(s):	All districts
Policy/legal reference:	RF 1-6 Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Policy
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Division/department:	Metro Transit/TOD

Proposed action

That the Council adopt the attached version of the Transit-Oriented Communities Policy to guide activities across the organization that advance TOC:

- RF 1-6 Transit-Oriented Communities Policy

Background

The Council adopted its Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Policy in 2013. Since then, the transit network, the number of station areas, and Council-owned development sites have grown substantially, and implementation experience has shown the need for clearer direction on the Council's role, tools, and internal coordination.

The proposed TOC Policy replaces the 2013 policy and broadens its focus from individual projects to the station areas and corridors they shape. It sets five Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) objectives that advance the Imagine 2050 Regional Goals, and five strategies spanning transit planning and delivery, joint development on Council-owned land, local station area planning, alignment of Council plans and programs, and performance measurement. For joint development, it prioritizes land and air rights leases, directs reinvestment of revenue to the TOD Fund, and clarifies use of the Council's existing authorities, including its housing and redevelopment (HRA) authorities. Land use, zoning, and development approvals remain local decisions. The policy directs the Council to pursue joint development in partnership with local governments, calibrating its role to local capacity, site conditions, and project complexity.

The policy was informed by a national review of regional planning and transit agencies; interviews and working sessions with Council members, local governments, developers, peer agencies, staff and other stakeholders; and a cross-divisional steering committee including Community Development, Transportation Planning, Metro Transit, Real Estate, and the Office of General Counsel.

The TOD Office will coordinate implementation of this policy, including implementing procedures to follow adoption.

Rationale

Engagement for this update consistently identified three barriers to TOC: unclear Council roles and tools, wide differences in local government capacity, and fragmented coordination across Council business units. The proposed policy responds to each. It clarifies the Council's role in advancing TOC through its transit investments, property, funding, and partnerships; calibrates Council support to local capacity, site conditions, and project complexity; and establishes consistent expectations for Council business units and external partners, with clear responsibility for coordinating implementation.

Thrive lens analysis

On Feb. 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Under the Thrive lens, the TOC Policy advances several outcomes:

- **Stewardship:** The region is making a substantial and sustained investment in transit, and the return on that investment depends on what surrounds it. Transit generates very different accessibility and ridership value depending on the density, mix of uses, and walkability of the places it serves. Advancing TOC is a primary means by which the Council protects and maximizes the long-term value of that investment.
- **Prosperity:** Bringing housing, jobs, and services together around transit improves accessibility and supports regional economic competitiveness. Joint development on Council land draws in private investment. A robust TOC Policy also makes the Council more competitive for federal transit capital and planning funds.
- **Equity:** The policy sets objectives to expand and preserve affordable housing options near transit and to enable residents and local businesses and developers to benefit from transit investment.
- **Livability:** The policy supports walkable, mixed-use station areas with safe multimodal connections, where people can reach daily needs without relying on a car. It does this through advancing joint development on Council-owned property, support for local station area planning, and through transit facility design.
- **Sustainability:** Directing growth to transit-served places reduces vehicle travel per person and the emissions that come with it. It also makes efficient use of land and existing infrastructure, which can reduce redevelopment pressure on natural systems.

Funding

There is no funding attached to this action.

Small business inclusion

There is no contracting, and therefore no small business inclusion, associated with this action.