

# FAMILIES AND TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

**Creating  
Complete  
Communities  
For All**



One in a series of best practices guidebooks from  
The Center for Transit-Oriented Development  
In partnership with the Center for Cities & Schools

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**The Center for Cities & Schools at the University of California, Berkeley**, is an action-oriented think tank, whose mission is to promote high-quality education as an essential component of urban and metropolitan vitality to create equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities for all. [www.citiesandschools.berkeley.edu](http://www.citiesandschools.berkeley.edu)

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This best practices guidebook is one in an ongoing series explaining the theory and best practices of transit-oriented development. All the books in the series are available as downloadable PDFs at <http://reconnectingamerica.org/what-we-do/what-is-tod/>. Other guidebooks in the series include:

TOD 101 Why TOD And Why Now?

TOD 201 Mixed-Income Housing Near Transit: Increasing Affordability With Location Efficiency

TOD 202 Station Area Planning: How To Make Great Transit-Oriented Places

TOD 202 Transit & Employment: Increasing Transit's Share Of The Commute Trip

TOD 203 Transit Corridors and TOD: Connecting The Dots

TOD 204 Planning for TOD at the Regional Scale: The Big Picture

**On the Cover:** Children play in a fountain in Washington, DC's, Columbia Heights neighborhood, just steps from a Metro station. The station area serves as a destination for outsiders and locals alike, with small ground floor retail, multi-story big box and grocery stores, and a variety of residential uses. *Photo by guy\_incognito*

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# Why This Book?

**TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT** can be used as a tool to support family-friendly communities and high-quality education. Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a mix of housing, retail and/or commercial development, and amenities in a walkable neighborhood with high-quality public transportation. Interest in TOD has grown across the country to achieve multiple goals, including:

- Reduced automobile trips and greenhouse gas emissions;
- Increased transit ridership and transit agency revenues;
- The potential for increased and/or sustained property values near transit;
- Improved access to jobs for households of all incomes;
- Reduced infrastructure costs, compared to what is required to support sprawling growth;
- Reduced transportation costs for residents;
- Improved public health due to increased walking and biking;
- Creation of a sense of community and place.

Recent TOD projects have often catered more to young professionals, empty nesters or other households without children, as these have been seen as the strongest market segments for transit-oriented housing. However, building TOD that better accommodates the needs and preferences of families with children is an increasing concern for communities around the country. This growing field is based on the idea that TOD focused on accommodating families can both attract new populations to live near transit and help retain existing residents in these locations, making neighborhoods and regions both more competitive globally and attractive locally. In order to meet these goals, TOD must be planned as part of a “complete community,” a place where all households have convenient access to quality housing, education, employment opportunities, open space and recreation, retail, places of worship, health care and transportation.

Building complete communities around transit requires some new investment approaches and implementation partnerships. Special attention must be paid to ensure these communities remain affordable to families of various compositions and incomes and contain all the amenities that will help them realize the full benefits of transit-rich locations.



Riding the Carousel at Yerba Buena, a major public park and plaza in San Francisco, CA, that includes a children’s museum, numerous gardens, and other family-friendly activities. This park is a short walk away from a regional transit hub.

This booklet offers a guide on how to create complete communities that support families and high-quality education based on a series of reports published by the Center for Cities & Schools at the University of California, Berkeley: *Growth and Opportunity: Aligning High-Quality Public Education & Sustainable Communities Planning in the Bay Area (2011)*, *Opportunity-Rich Schools and Sustainable Communities: Seven Steps to Align High-Quality Education with Innovations in City and Metropolitan Planning and Development (2011)*, and *Putting Schools on the Map: Linking Transit-Oriented Development, Families, and Schools in the San Francisco Bay Area (2010)* - all available for download at <http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu>

# Demand for Housing Near Transit Comes from Many Sources

**IN 2000**, roughly six million American households lived within a half-mile of an existing fixed-guideway transit stop. CTOD estimates that by 2030, nearly a quarter of those seeking housing, or over 15 million households, will want to live near fixed-guideway transit. This estimate does not account for changing consumer preferences due to increasing transportation costs or desires for a more convenient lifestyle, and the changing perceptions of urban living that have led more empty nester households and households with children to remain in cities. Even this conservative estimate predicts a demographic engine that will provide a built-in market for TOD that can be captured through new development close to transit.

The types of households who have tended to seek out TOD – singles, couples without children, the elderly and low income minority households – are also the types of households projected to grow the most over the next 25 years.

However, the market for TOD is not exclusive to just these demographic groups. There will be demand from both families with and without children. In fact, although CTOD demand estimates only show about one in five households with children seeking to live near transit, this still represents over three million households nationally, and there is a large potential for growth in the demand from this market if we are successful in building complete communities in regions across the United States.

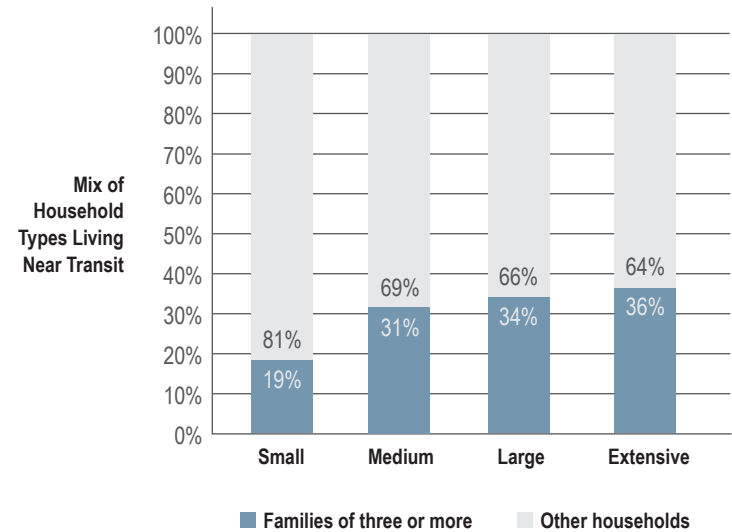
The split in demand means that development in transit-served areas will need to meet a range of housing needs, not cater to a single type of resident. Families with children are also changing, with more single-parent and multigenerational households. The changing nature of American families will also influence the types and sizes of housing units needed in complete communities.



PHOTO BY THOMAS HAWK

Walking home from school.

Mix of Household Types Living Near Transit by System Size



Families with children are more likely to live near transit when the transit system is large enough to offer a viable alternative to driving.

Source: Hidden in Plain Sight, CTOD, 2004.

# TOD Should Attract Diverse Households

**GOOD TRANSIT SERVICE** is fundamental to any successful TOD and is of particular importance to certain market segments. Understanding the different types of households that will want to live near transit and then ensuring new development and investment in existing communities meets that demand is critical to successfully building complete communities.

While the singles and other households that form the bulk of demand for housing near transit have traditionally favored high density housing, families with children have often sought lower density housing types, such as row houses or single-family detached housing, although even these preferences are starting to change in some regions.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) conducted a study to understand the conditions needed to attract different family types, or “segments” to transit-rich locations. Building from MTC’s assessment of the market segments, there are several segments that are important in making the connection between TOD and families. The bubbles to the right describe these segments.

While some segments are harder to attract, families with children are increasingly open to living in transit-rich areas if they provide amenities and services, such as good schools and safe settings for children.<sup>1</sup> Recent increases in the cost of driving may shrink the “Kids, Cars, and Schools” market segment in favor of increased transit preference, but there will still be demand from all segments of the market in the future. Anticipating where the demand comes from is important in meeting the needs of all segments.

**EASIEST  
TO ATTRACT**

## TRANSIT-DEPENDENT

households highly value transit access for its convenience and ability to reduce household transportation costs.

- *Many have children* • *Tend to have lower incomes*
- *Mostly renters* • *Relatively low auto ownership*

Improving school and community amenities is valuable for this segment, but they do not tend to seek out these amenities in making location decisions. They value high-quality, timely, clean, and accessible transit that provides a viable way to get to work, home, and play.

## YOUNG URBANITES

like the city and want to live in urban neighborhoods where they have multiple transportation choices such as walking, biking, driving, and riding transit to get to regional destinations.

- *Can be single or married*
- *Small but significant proportion have children*
- *Low levels of auto ownership*

This segment values school quality and other community amenities even if they don’t have kids, and tends to have high education levels and a lot of mobility and choice in where they live.

**POSSIBLE  
TO ATTRACT**

## MOBILE URBANITES

like the city and value urban amenities, but have a lot of choice in where they live.

- *Majority have children*
- *Relatively young and well-educated*
- *Tend to own more cars, yet are drawn to transit-rich environments*

This is a fairly large market segment in many regions, but can be more difficult to attract to TOD. Community amenities including schools, parks, and libraries are important in attracting this segment.

**HARDEST  
TO ATTRACT**

## “KIDS, CARS, AND SCHOOLS”

households have traditionally favored less dense neighborhoods with single-family housing and easy auto access. School quality is especially important, and transit does not figure highly into this segment’s location decisions.

- *Majority are married couples with children*
- *Tend to have higher incomes*
- *Tend to own more autos*

These households may choose to live near transit if the school and amenity quality is high, but may not ride transit frequently. They are among the hardest segments to attract to transit-rich locations, as they have a great deal of choice in location, or, if they are more price-conscious, value lower housing costs, even if it results in higher transportation costs

<sup>1</sup> *Choosing Where We Live: Attracting Residents to Transit-Oriented Neighborhoods in the San Francisco Bay Area*, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, May 2010.

# TOD Can Be Attractive to Families When It Is Part of a “Complete Community”

A “COMPLETE COMMUNITY” is opportunity-rich; all people have access to quality housing, education, employment opportunities, open space and recreation, retail, places of worship, health care and transportation. While complete communities are often a goal of TOD planning, in reality, many communities around transit have focused more on amenities for households without children.



A young boy eagerly awaits the arrival of the train in New York's subway.

## Complete communities are attractive to families with children when they offer:

- A sense of community and “place” through investment in parks, libraries and community events;
- A neighborhood where kids can run and bike on streets through investment in streetscape and bicycle and pedestrian improvements;
- Transit-accessible schools which are integrated into the community, rather than separate from it;
- Access to regional amenities such as zoos and large parks;
- Convenient access to daily shopping such as groceries, clothing, or school supplies; and
- Access to regional employment opportunities via high-quality transit.

## The benefits of complete communities for families are broad, and include:

- Reduced spending on transportation by owning fewer cars and driving them less;
- Reduced childhood obesity through increased physical activity;
- Reduced household stress through shorter commute times and more time for family activities; and
- Improved educational outcomes through access to stable housing and a range of supportive and enriching activities.



**Inset top:** Children playing in a large park in Concord, CA. Photo By Great Communities Collaborative  
**Inset bottom:** Families walk along historic Beale Street in downtown Memphis, TN, just steps from the streetcar circulator. Photo By La Citta Vita



# Ten Core Connections Between TOD and Families

## 1 School quality plays a major role in families' housing choices.

When parents choose where to live, they are also choosing their child's school. In a 2000 national survey, quality schools ranked first among the items suburban and smaller city residents said would draw them to live in a more urban setting. Given the importance of schools in influencing the housing choices many families make, a TOD strategy that aims to attract families should incorporate access to high-quality educational opportunities from pre-K through 12.

## 2 A wide mix of housing unit types is needed to attract diverse families.

The complexity of financing TOD and the strong market among empty nesters, singles, and couples without children often leads developers to primarily build studio, one- and two-bedroom housing units. Families with children prefer multiple bedrooms. Developments with more three- and four-bedroom apartments and townhomes offer more family-friendly options. Including mixed-income family housing is also important to ensuring low- and moderate-income households have access to the benefits of living in TOD.

## 3 School funding is intricately related to housing unit mix.

New housing is likely to impact enrollment at nearby schools, which in turn impacts school district funding and school operations because schools are typically funded per student. Unexpected changes in enrollment – increases or decreases – are generally difficult for school districts to manage. New housing that includes larger family units often increases enrollment, and this can be a problem for schools at or above capacity. In some circumstances, infill development requires removing existing housing to redevelop the land. Local schools could see an abrupt (albeit often temporary) decline in enrollment – and funding. Because of these connections, planning for TOD and families should take early account of potential impacts of school enrollment and determine an appropriate course of action in collaboration with the local school district.

## 4 Student participation in afterschool activities may depend on transit access.

For many students, especially in cities and denser suburbs, transit access means the difference between participating and not participating in academically enriching opportunities. High school students in particular seem to be increasingly attending schools that are not necessarily their



Picking out a tomato at a farmer's market in Oklahoma City. Farmer's markets can provide not only fresh produce to families, but also can be a fun activity for children.

PHOTO BY LYNNIE ROSTORNIK



Seattle WA's, Summer Streets opens up streets in neighborhoods across the city for biking, walking and playing. Here, a family has transformed one of their neighborhood streets into a giant chess game.

PHOTO BY SEATTLE DOT





Children are entertained by urban wildlife in a public plaza in Oakland CA's, Chinatown.

PHOTO BY ALEXIS SMITH

closest option or within walking distance. Access to these educational options hinges on access to safe, reliable, and affordable transportation. This access to transportation options facilitates students' on-time and consistent arrival at school, reducing truancy and tardiness. In addition, students often use transit to get to afterschool activities that enhance their educational experience, including internships, clubs, and recreational activities. TOD and infill development at transit hubs can provide greater access to these activities.

**5 Children with multimodal transit alternatives can access the increasing landscape of school options.**

The educational landscape across the country is continually changing, and students and families now have an increasing number of school options, both within the public system and private alternatives. Children no longer necessarily attend their closest neighborhood school, but rather may choose to attend a traditional public school, a public charter school, a public magnet school, or a private school outside their neighborhood.

**6 Teachers benefit from mixed-income TOD that incorporates workforce housing.**

School districts often struggle to recruit and retain new teachers. The combination of modest teacher salaries and high housing costs can contribute to this challenge. TOD that focuses on mixed-income and family housing could help attract and retain public school teachers and presents an opportunity for the school district to partner in the TOD process.

**7 TOD design principles support walkability and safety for children and families.**

Across the country, there have been drastic declines in the number of children walking and bicycling to school over the past four decades. Parents cite distances between home and school, traffic concerns, and "stranger danger" as the major barriers to walking and bicycling to school. TOD design principles inherently address these concerns. First, TOD models emphasize pedestrian infrastructure like sidewalks and crosswalks. Second, mixed-use TOD aims to create active, vibrant street life, which improves safety by having more "eyes on the street." Finally, TOD aims to increase transit use by a broad range of riders, which builds community support for greater safety and reliability. These design principles go beyond the design of streets to include the design and planning of buildings to support pedestrian activity.



The Fox Theater is half a block from one of downtown Oakland CA's, major transit hubs and hosts a variety of live entertainment events. The theater's building is also the permanent home for the Oakland School for the Arts, a tuition-free charter school dedicated to artistic and academic excellence.

## **8 The mix of uses and transit connectivity inherent in TOD can bring family-serving amenities and services closer to residential areas.**

Families with children seek different amenities than those without children, including libraries, child care, and retail amenities that meet daily needs. Though TOD has historically provided amenities that serve singles and families without children, because the definition of TOD includes a mix of uses near transit, there is an opportunity for it to offer the services and amenities that attract and support children and families. Libraries and community centers provide opportunities for social interaction and can also be the venue for other activities like farmers markets or community fairs. Child care and afterschool care are also important services to have nearby. Retail amenities that meet daily needs (such as grocery stores and other shopping) are often more attractive than entertainment uses (such as bars and restaurants.) Not every community needs to provide each of these amenities, especially if they can be provided in nearby transit-linked communities, but such amenities thrive where families with children decide to live.

## **9 Integrating schools with TOD planning provides opportunities for the shared use of public space.**

When new transit investments and TOD are located near existing schools, there are opportunities for community use — often referred to as “shared use” — of the school’s open space, especially in areas that lack it. This also enables a wider range of funds to be used for site improvements to leverage shared use opportunities and improve the quality of the spaces for both public and student use. Public access to school spaces is an attractive amenity to families who are considering buying homes near transit, a way to build broader public support among childless residents for schools as community assets, and a strategic tool for developers to meet open space requirements for their new developments.

## **10 TOD offers opportunities for renovating and building new schools in developments, which draws families.**

TOD planning presents opportunities to incorporate new schools and attract families. Creating small schools, charters, magnets, or other specially focused schools may be an especially good fit. Building a new school within the TOD also presents shared use opportunities specially designed to support the new development. In fact, schools can fit right into TOD: in Portland, OR, for example, the public school district is leasing storefront space in a new mixed-use, affordable housing building and in Oakland, CA, a charter arts high school is located in a major cultural venue downtown near transit.

# 7 Steps to Creating TOD that Supports Family-Friendly Communities and High-Quality Education



These children are enjoying the Minnesota Zoo outside of Minneapolis. When family-friendly amenities like zoos and parks are located near transit, families may be more likely to see the value in living in transit rich neighborhoods.

PHOTO BY DAN ANDERSON ON

**HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATIONAL** opportunities are one of the most important factors that families consider when choosing a place to live. TOD can enhance those opportunities as well as non-educational amenities if the planning process is done in tandem with community planning.

While the steps are numbered, they need not be implemented strictly in this exact order. This section of the booklet provides snapshots of communities across the country successfully achieving synergies between high-quality education and TOD. The seven major action steps to achieving that outcome are as follows:

- 1 Know your educational landscape
- 2 Engage school stakeholders, families, and young people in transportation and TOD planning
- 3 Create a shared vision linking community, regional, and educational prosperity
- 4 Support a family-friendly complete community through comprehensive services and desirable amenities
- 5 Align bricks-and-mortar investments in community assets
- 6 Maximize access to opportunity through affordable transportation options
- 7 Institutionalize ongoing innovation

# STEP 1

## Know your educational landscape

**PLANNERS AND POLICYMAKERS** should be aware of educational options and policies, and how they affect choices families make about housing. The complex and diverse set of school programs, school choices, student needs, and school assignment policies that make up a school district's responsibilities can be hard for non-educators to grasp.

Families now have an increasing number of educational options, including charter schools, theme-based magnet schools, and private or parochial schools. School districts may have a student assignment policy that disperses students throughout the district in an effort to relieve overcrowding or to counter racial or economic segregation. As a result, students do not necessarily attend the school nearest their home. This trend varies from region to region, but regardless of the specific local context, it is likely to continue and ultimately play a significant role in choices families make about where to live.



Mission High School in San Francisco is highly utilized by local community-based organizations.

Additionally, the quality and capacity of school district buildings are important considerations for new TOD. Poor school building conditions are strongly associated with poor educational outcomes and create formidable barriers to student success. School building conditions can also send strong signals to potential residents about educational and neighborhood quality.

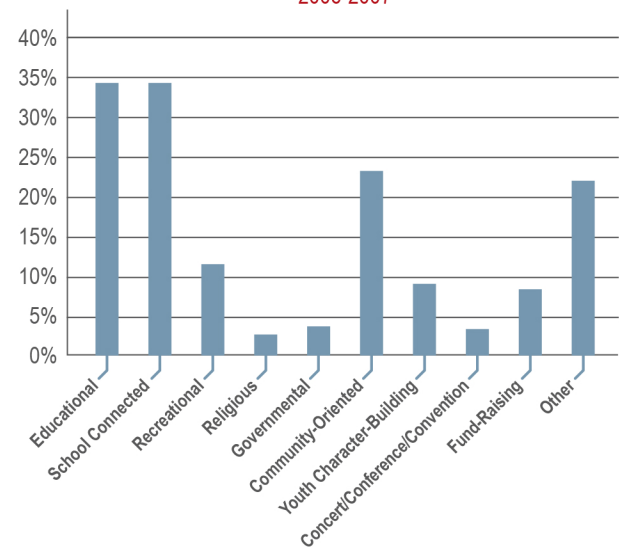
Finally, a general sense of the diversity of programmatic offerings in a school district can also indicate how families make choices about which schools to attend and likewise, present opportunities for partnership and engagement in the TOD process. For example, some schools offer technical education in planning, engineering and/or architecture where planners and developers can engage with students on design and development of new TOD.

The educational landscape is changing in different ways in regions across the country. In Washington, DC, demographic shifts in the past decade brought sharp enrollment declines that triggered school closures and led to community debate about how to reuse these public assets. In Los Angeles, however, increasing immigration and other demographic changes have required historic levels of new school construction, which has strained the capacity and budget of the school district.

### CASE STUDY

San Francisco, California — San Francisco's city government, its school district, and community-based organizations collaborated on a study to improve community access to the city's 134 schools for programs, services, and activities. Conducted by the Center for Cities & Schools at the University of California, Berkeley, the study mapped the non-school users and uses of school spaces and convened a diverse stakeholder group to discuss challenges and options for improvement. The report, *San Francisco's Public School Facilities as Public Assets*, provided a policy, management, and budget framework for the school district to expand and sustain community use throughout its schools. In 2011, the school board formally adopted a resolution to support expanding community use and the partners are working to implement the report's recommendations.

Community Use of San Francisco Schools  
2006-2007



Public school buildings in San Francisco have been used for a variety of community-oriented purposes. Source: San Francisco's Public School Facilities as Public Assets, Center for Cities & Schools, 2010.

## ACTION

# Focus on the existing educational opportunities and policies

In order to engage in TOD planning that enhances educational options and attracts families, each locality and region should use three key approaches to understand the educational landscape:

### 1 Understand local educational policies and demographics

This includes mapping school district jurisdictions, identifying key leaders and existing partnerships, understanding school district attendance boundaries and assignment policies (which may not overlap perfectly with city boundaries), and charting student demographics.

### 2 Inventory educational and workforce assets

To engage in meaningful dialogue with school districts, municipalities need to have a working understanding of school priorities and broader community assets. This should include five categories: high-quality child care and early learning, K-12 assets (such as programs that prepare students for college and careers), out-of-school time programs and support services, higher education, and regional workforce preparation and adult education.

### 3 Assess physical school infrastructure

The more than 90,000 public schools across the country are place-based neighborhood assets. The physical conditions of these assets vary considerably, which affects educational quality. Given the role that schools play in families' housing choices, the quality and capacity of existing school infrastructure and plans for new construction and/or modernization are important considerations for other neighborhood development activities.



Students enjoy lunch at Next Step Public Charter School in the Columbia Heights neighborhood of DC. Next Step contracts with Fresh Start, a local social enterprise that combines school nutrition with job creation and investment in growers.

## CASE STUDY

Washington, District of Columbia— In 2007, the Washington, DC, Office of the State Superintendent commissioned a study to understand the causes and implications of rapidly declining school enrollment and how to retain and attract families. The 21st Century School Fund, the Brookings Institution, and the Urban Institute collaborated on the research. The partners developed a sophisticated framework utilizing student, school, and neighborhood level quantitative data; focus groups with parents and high school dropouts; and meetings with city stakeholders and education and housing officials to understand the complex and dramatic changes occurring in the city. The 2010 report, *Quality Schools, Healthy Neighborhoods, and the Future of DC*, fostered a more informed dialogue about enrollment retention and attraction strategies, school closure options, and school assignment policy changes. The process and findings shed light on the often overlooked relationship between residential patterns and school assignment, building bridges between city, neighborhood, and educational stakeholders' interests.

## STEP 2 Engage school stakeholders, families, and young people

### in transportation and TOD planning

**AS OUR NATION'S** metropolitan communities continue to grow and develop, their ability to do so in healthy and sustainable ways will largely depend on the engagement and participation of diverse stakeholders. This is especially true in TOD planning, which can affect the mobility options and neighborhood services of thousands of people.

Effective civic engagement addresses the interests and constraints of all parties. This can include ongoing involvement in genuine decision-making and policy implementation and ultimately lend greater legitimacy to final plans and clear the way for smoother implementation.

While city planners likely understand the importance of participatory planning, they often do not recognize that school leaders, families, and young people can make enormous contributions to the process. By focusing on a common problem, such as the need for more open space or better school facilities, these players can overcome diverse and even competing interests through shared planning and action.

School district engagement in TOD planning is often instrumental in fostering new partnerships or enhancing existing ones around joint programs, shared facilities, and other infrastructure. When school districts find a seat at the TOD planning table, the planning process can also reach directly into schools by connecting to educational programs and curriculum.

#### CASE STUDY

Portland, Oregon – Housed in the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, the Youth Planning Program (YPP) hires young people to work alongside city planners and sustainability professionals to assist in shaping Portland's long-range planning. YPP also provides young people with small grants to create community-based projects that are initiated, designed, and run by youth age 21 and younger. One recent collaboration between the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and YPP focused on the Eastside MAX Station Communities Project. Young people examined half-mile areas surrounding six MAX light rail stations through surveys and focus groups to identify young people's concerns about the area and their priorities for change.



In Portland, OR, families in some neighborhoods have a variety of transportation options, including light rail, streetcar, bus, bike and walking.

# ACTION

## Support effective engagement of residents of all ages

Planners and policymakers can realize benefits of broad participation and opportunities for effective engagement when they:



PHOTO BY URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

### 1 Identify multiple ways for school district personnel to engage in the TOD planning process

Planning processes can be long and complex. Identifying critical junctures for school district personnel to engage ensures that their participation is constructive. For example, decisions around housing unit mix in new development around transit, new parks adjacent to schools, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure may be relevant to school stakeholders who are concerned about shifts in enrollment, opportunities for shared use of space, and access to schools. Through community and group activities, residents who do not normally engage in planning can gain knowledge about how to channel their vision into the decision-making processes of their community.

### 2 Identify opportunities for students and parents to engage in the TOD planning process – and connect it to classroom learning

Even the best community engagement processes can face apathy, resistance, and suspicion from local residents. Young people bring fresh ideas and a sense of hope and inspiration, and their participation often catalyzes action among adults. Working with teachers, youth participation in TOD planning can also be an especially effective way to link classroom learning to real-world experience.

### 3 Engage school district personnel, students, and parents with appropriate capacity building tools and activities

Robust engagement will require time and patience, as these groups need new skills and tools to engage with planning processes. Capacity building should include programs that educate participants on the value of transit and coach them on how to be transit riders and supporters.



PHOTO BY CENTER FOR CITIES AND SCHOOLS

Two well-known national initiatives teach young people about urban planning and development. At left, through Y-PLAN (Youth-Plan, Learn, Act, Now), students in the San Francisco Bay Area become active participants in ongoing local community development efforts, which foster city-school collaborations, enhance project-based classroom curricula, and offer opportunities for youth to apply classroom lessons to a real-world project. At top, through the Urban Land institute's UrbanPlan program, students in Washington, DC, learn about the fundamental forces that affect development and create development proposals based on their theoretical knowledge of urban economics and public policy.

## STEP 3 Create a shared vision linking community, regional, and educational prosperity

Learning violin at East Baltimore Community School.



**INTEGRATED POLICIES** are becoming a more common component of community development and metropolitan planning. This provides an opening for educators to come to the planning table to help shape a more inclusive vision. A public, shared, and comprehensive vision statement can articulate the interdependency of community and educational prosperity. It provides a story that all stakeholders can work from and a consistent way to communicate goals across “siloed” institutions.

This vision statement should also be accompanied by benchmarks to gauge progress, allowing agencies to align their work, so they have a common set of goals and objectives to organize around. This robust process will inspire all stakeholders – elected leaders, developers, parents, and students – to advocate for the articulated vision.

### CASE STUDY

Baltimore, Maryland — The East Baltimore Development, Inc. (EBDI) project is a \$2 billion 80-acre redevelopment site located on the east side of Baltimore city just north of Johns Hopkins Medical Center and a Metro station. East Baltimore suffers from high vacancy and disinvestment, but over the past few years, the area has begun to revitalize. Through partnerships between Baltimore City and philanthropic partners, EBDI has become a mixed-income community through rehabilitation and new construction of housing, biotech office buildings, retail, open spaces, and a new elementary school.

The East Baltimore Community School (EBCS) opened in the fall of 2009 with the belief that one key to a revitalized neighborhood is a school that serves the community. Johns Hopkins University and Morgan State University have both partnered in a university-school initiative to make EBCS a model for elementary education in the city. EBCS is a K-8 “public contract” school that gives enrollment priority to neighborhood children. Under the school’s contract with the Baltimore City Public Schools, up to 70 percent of the school’s enrollment may be students who were relocated from the area or have moved into the neighborhood. The school is one-half mile from the Johns Hopkins Medical Center station and along the proposed Metro extension, as well as accessible by multiple bus lines.

### CASE STUDY

Charleston, South Carolina — In October 2005, Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley appointed a youth master planning team to develop a countywide plan in collaboration with the mayors of sixteen municipalities in the region. The team included leaders from the cities, local school districts, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations. Trained facilitators conducted focus groups and surveyed about 900 youths to determine their opinions about existing services and identify further needs. Completed in 2007, the Youth Master Plan identified seven goals to comprehensively support young people. The employment and transportation goal, for example, emphasized the need for adequate and accessible transportation for youth to get to and from work and work-based learning experiences.



## ACTION

# Use a robust, inclusive visioning process to begin to bridge rigid policy and institutional goals

To achieve such a collaborative visioning process, the following three key components should be involved:

### 1 Cultivate leadership and champions

Collaborative initiatives require strong, effective leadership to motivate and manage diverse stakeholders and move an integrated planning process forward. Champions who carry the message of a unified vision and can speak on behalf of the planning process are critical to effective collaboration. However, developing leadership also requires time and a willingness to meet stakeholders “where they are.” Leaders are found among stakeholders and third parties, and ultimately must be cultivated across and at every level of each organization.

### 2 Adopt the vision statement formally across institutions

The formal adoption of a vision statement by governing bodies (e.g., boards of education and city councils) ensures the sustainability of and commitment to that shared mission. Formal adoption provides a clear and public signal that subsequent steps to an integrated planning process can be taken.

Children play soccer in Addam's Park in Chicago. Increasing access to parks, improving the quality of education opportunities, and improving educational outcomes are all elements of CMAP's GO TO 2040 Plan that supports more complete communities.



### 3 Develop common indicators to measure change, foster shared accountability, and increase the effective use of scarce resources

Through the visioning process, stakeholders must agree on how to hold themselves and each other accountable. When executed properly, accountability metrics honor individual activities and collaborative efforts, measure changes in collaborative processes and policy/program implementation outcomes, and provide decision makers with objective means of measuring improvements in the use of increasingly scarce resources.

## CASE STUDY

Chicago, Illinois — The Chicago GO TO 2040 regional plan was adopted by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), a new regional planning body created by the state legislature to facilitate integrated planning processes. CMAP engaged in a three-year visioning and planning process that brought together hundreds of diverse stakeholders, including educational leaders, policymakers, parents and young people to create a shared vision for the future of the region. To ensure sustained collaboration and integration of policies, Chicago officials created a regional indicators project, named MetroPulse, that tracks progress toward achieving the plan's regional vision. More than fifteen new indicators focused specifically on education, including the Quality of Educational Opportunities, Educational Outcomes, Enrollment/Attendance, and Funding/Cost.

## STEP 4 Support a family-friendly complete community through comprehensive services and desirable amenities

**FAMILY-FRIENDLY TOD** includes enrichment programs before and after school hours, out-of-school academic support, health care, healthy food options, and safe and nurturing environments. Complete communities contain these types of services and amenities and thereby support and attract an economically and racially diverse group of residents. To ensure that complete communities are opportunity-rich, families with children need services and amenities that support them in school and life, so families of all incomes need to be able to access these assets. But to attract a wide range of people, communities should strive to not only support disadvantaged students, but also provide the programs and amenities higher-income families expect.

The Fruitvale Transit Village includes a private outdoor playground for the Head Start program, as well as a public space that families and residents of all ages can enjoy.

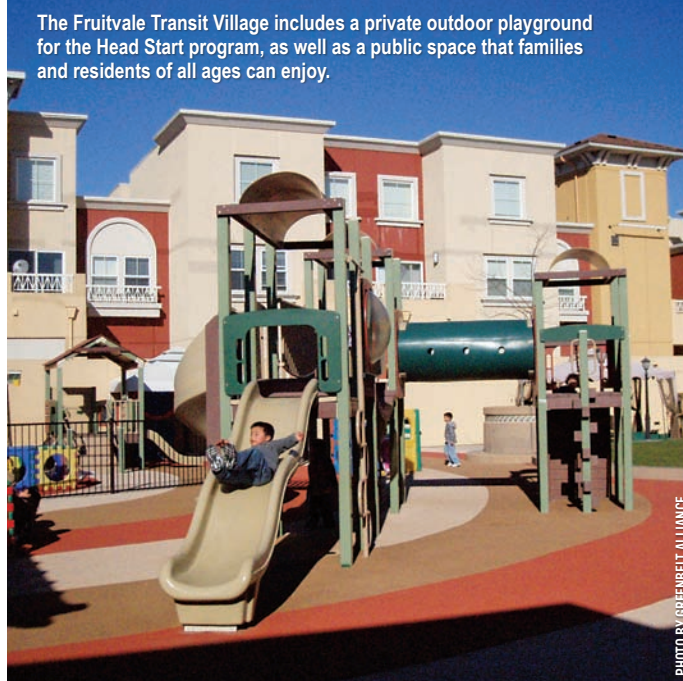


PHOTO BY GREENBELT ALLIANCE

### CASE STUDY

Oakland, California — The Fruitvale Transit Village provides an example of a TOD project and planning process that responded to community needs and preferences and now provides a mix of family services and housing sizes. When transit planners at BART announced their intention to build a multi-story parking garage at the Fruitvale station in 1991, a local community development corporation called the Unity Council sprung into action to push for a project that better served the area. Working together with the community, BART and the Oakland City Council, the Unity Council engaged in an eight-year process to build Fruitvale Transit Village. The resulting mixed-use TOD includes mixed-income apartments, an affordable housing development for seniors, and community services space such as a health clinic, library, Head Start program, and senior center. Fruitvale also incorporates 40,000 square feet of retail space and a pedestrian plaza that links the station to the surrounding neighborhood.



PHOTO BY JOVANA



PHOTOS BY DOTPOLKA



The Fruitvale Transit Village hosts many family-friendly community events like the Día de los Muertos Festival held on November 1-2.

## **ACTION** Create the right mix of services and amenities that will support and attract a diverse set of residents

**DIVERSE AVENUES** will ensure that the mix of services and amenities are included in TOD:

### **1 Provide comprehensive social services aligned with educational needs and opportunities**

Comprehensive social services are often provided outside of regular school hours, and range from small, targeted programs to robust, “wrap-around” services. Schools and service providers should tailor the services and programs offered to the social and educational needs of students. These services are often provided with a mix of public and foundation funding.

### **2 Provide quality amenities to attract families and enrich students’ lives**

Family-oriented amenities attract families to a neighborhood and offer enrichment opportunities. In particular, three highly desirable amenities can be developed during a TOD planning process:

- Early learning programs
- High-quality childcare
- Healthy living environments with space to play and access to fresh food

### **3 Harness public and private funding to align program operations for efficiency**

Providing services and amenities that will attract, support, and enrich families in conjunction with TOD planning presents an opportunity to leverage and maximize a variety of funding streams, including public investment in schools, libraries, and other community infrastructure and private investment in development, which can often also include investment in community assets.

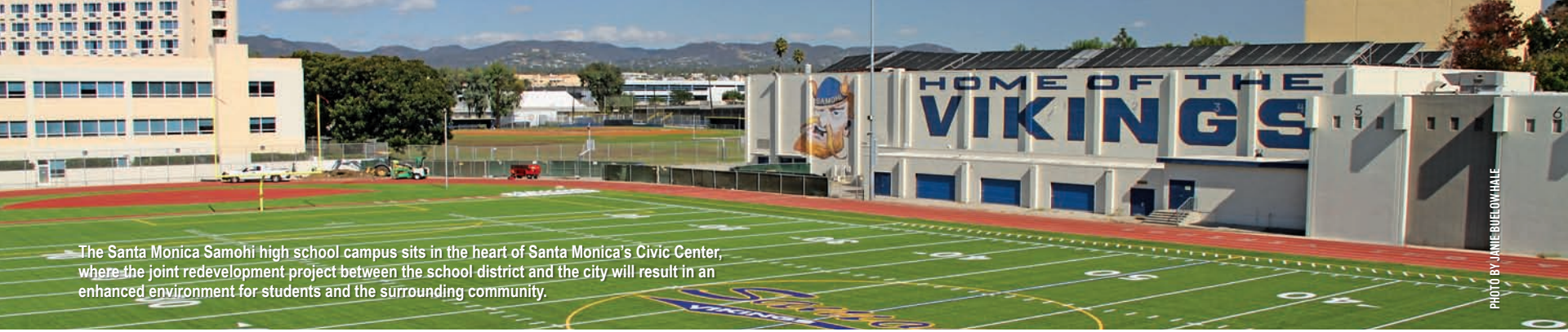


The Rondo Community Outreach Library offers classes in English for nonnative speakers, GED tutoring, college prep, and has a small business resource center.

PHOTO BY RONDO COMMUNITY OUTREACH LIBRARY

## **CASE STUDY**

St. Paul, Minnesota — The Rondo Community Outreach Library and University Dale Apartments is a mixed-use project located along the Central Corridor light rail line that will connect Minneapolis to St. Paul and three major bus routes. The project is located near the future Dale Street Station, and anchors an overall major redevelopment plan for the four corners of the intersection of Dale Street. The building consists of three floors of mixed-income apartments above a ground floor library. The library also provides services and learning opportunities to a diverse population, including many recent immigrants and low-income families. The nexus of affordable housing and a new library gives children and parents access to resources that can help at school and at home.



The Santa Monica Samohi high school campus sits in the heart of Santa Monica's Civic Center, where the joint redevelopment project between the school district and the city will result in an enhanced environment for students and the surrounding community.

## STEP 5 Align bricks-and-mortar investments in community assets

**INTERAGENCY AND MULTI-SECTORAL** partnerships catalyze investment in TOD, transportation, and other urban infrastructure that increase the livability of communities. These place-based capital investments are key components in supporting both opportunity and sustainability. Traditionally, these investments have often relied on federal funds from HUD, DOT, or other agencies for either direct implementation or planning for capital projects.

Unfortunately, such projects are usually pursued in isolation from the school infrastructure investments that local government and school districts make. As a result, communities miss out on opportunities for realizing shared benefits, improving the efficient use of public resources, and attracting families to places with high-quality schools and other family-supportive amenities. Similarly, many investments by local governments in schools or other assets have not taken transit accessibility into account.

### CASE STUDY

New Orleans, Louisiana — The Lagniappe Project is a comprehensive community development project focused around a charter school, community health center, senior center, and other services. The planning firm Concordia, well-known for their nexus planning concept, is leading the master planning process. The nexus planning concept places educational facilities at the center (or nexus) of community development, thereby leveraging the physical transformations of schools and neighborhoods to benefit students and families and the collective community.

### CASE STUDY

Santa Monica, California — In 2008, the City of Santa Monica and the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) sought to coordinate redevelopment efforts between the SMMUSD's high school campus (known as Samohi) and the city's Civic Auditorium campus. The undertaking came about because of the unique shared use potential inherent in the concurrent development of these two campuses. In 2009, the City Council prioritized \$57 million in funds for the first phase of shared use improvements associated with the long-term master plan for the Samohi campus. Since this time, the school district has made further refinements of the overall master plan and phase 1 improvements. Phase 1 of the Samohi upgrades prioritizes shared use opportunities on the school campus and will include a new gymnasium, synthetic turf for the existing football field, and support facilities for the existing outdoor amphitheater. Other planned projects in the downtown/civic center area that will be within walking distance of the campus include a new light rail station, a new seven-acre park, and a new 325-unit mixed-income housing development. Working together, the city and the school district have found ways to maximize amenities to benefit students and the community.

# **ACTION** Use cross-sector partnerships to coordinate capital investments in schools, housing, transportation, and neighborhoods

Building cross-sector partnerships can be challenging, but three key avenues support this to leverage bricks-and-mortar:

## **1 Establish schools as centers of complete communities**

Schools can provide space not only for traditional educational endeavors, but also for physical activity, community building, social events, and other initiatives common in vibrant communities. Key strategies for positioning public schools at the center of communities and TOD include:

- Ensuring adequate modernization and expansion of existing schools.
- Siting new schools so they are connected to neighborhoods and energy efficient.
- Making design choices that enhance student safety in and around schools.

## **2 Ensure family-oriented, mixed-income housing**

Access to stable, high-quality affordable housing is associated with a wide range of positive effects for students, teachers, schools, and districts, but there are two major challenges. First, the current housing crisis is making it harder for public school families to find a safe, healthy, and affordable place to live. This can lead to displacement of low-income families and families of color, which significantly disrupts student academic experiences and contributes to low achievement and high dropout rates. Second, neighborhoods with an overwhelming concentration of poverty rarely produce healthy academic environments for students. Mixed-income housing aims to address both these issues by decreasing high concentrations of neighborhood poverty and providing affordable housing options for families of every income level, including teachers and staff at the school.

## **3 Pursue multi-agency partnerships for development**

Multi-agency partnerships can build projects that foster schools and amenities as centers of community. Through these partnerships, two or more entities partner to plan, site, design, and build facilities. Transit-rich areas provide an especially good opportunity for projects that may include a combination of educational and recreational facilities, housing, or commercial development. The innovative partnerships created through this approach can be particularly important to building family-friendly communities, where the design of buildings and public spaces may require a more collaborative approach.

In Denver, CO, a collaboration between the City and County of Denver and a nonprofit real estate developer came together to plan a multi-use project near a future light rail station. The project will feature a new public library and will also include workforce housing, retail and commercial space.



## STEP 6 Maximize access to opportunity through affordable transportation options

**PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY** school facilities, affordable housing, and vibrant civic spaces is not enough if families cannot afford to live near them or reach them by transit. TOD can greatly expand community access to these amenities if they are affordable to live in and are served by affordable transit.

The increasing number of school choice options makes affordable transportation even more important for young people who do not always attend their neighborhood school. For example, students may be attending a district wide magnet or charter school, or a public school with a specialized program. Access to transportation often determines which families have the opportunity to choose the most appropriate schools and other educational services for their children.

### CASE STUDY

San Jose, California — A transit agency and a child care provider formed a partnership to support families by creating a child care center at a transit hub. The Tamien Child Care Center opened at the Tamien Caltrain and light rail stations in 1995. The \$2.5 million, 9,600 square foot facility sits on a previously underused site owned by Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA). Bright Horizons Children's Centers, Inc., operates the center under contract with VTA. The center enrolls nearly 150 children from six weeks to twelve years old. Families receive incentives to utilize both the child care and transit, including rail and bus discounts, priority enrollment, and tuition discounts for children of transit users.



### CASE STUDY

Chicago, Illinois — A faith-based community development corporation spearheaded an effort to build a mixed-use facility with child care services around an elevated train (El) stop. In 1992, the developer, Bethel New Life, Inc., heard of plans for closing the Pulaski El station. Bethel New Life responded by forming a coalition that successfully opposed the closing of the station. Bethel then began a planning and development process that eventually yielded the Bethel Center, a 23,000 square foot TOD at the station, which includes a daycare center, an employment center, a community technology center, and retail space.



The Bethel Center, developed by faith-based community development corporation on Chicago's west side, provides child care services and other retail only steps from an "El" train station.

PHOTOS BY BALLOGG PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF FARR ASSOCIATES

# ACTION Link affordable, multi-modal transportation to educational opportunities

**TOD HAS A NATURAL ADVANTAGE** in providing improved access to educational opportunities because of its mixed-use nature and integration with transit. In order to fully realize this advantage, TOD should incorporate the following key principles.

Grover walked to school with students in Harlem as part of New York City's International Walk to School Day celebration.



## 1 Make areas surrounding schools safe for walking and bicycling

For the past thirty years, fewer and fewer children have walked or biked to school. Many factors still in place today perpetuated this trend, including a neighborhood's streets and sidewalks, which may be poorly maintained or designed to prioritize car travel. Physical upgrades to sidewalks, bicycle lanes, street lighting, and street furniture improve the safety and vibrancy of public spaces and enable young people and their families to safely and conveniently access local schools. Programs such as Safe Routes to School are essential in making these connections.

## 2 Site schools to maximize multi-modal transportation access

The location of a school affects many aspects of a community, including walkability, traffic safety, neighborhood desirability, and even housing prices. Strategically locating schools and community facilities allows schools to serve as the home base for a range of academic and extracurricular activities. For example, schools could be sited in or near a mixed-use development so that students may more easily and safely get to afterschool programs, nearby recreation centers, or an internship at a local business. Likewise, parents may walk their children to school on the way to their jobs, or pick up kids on their way home.

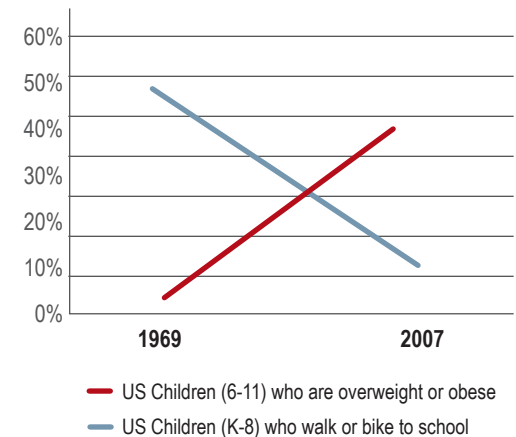
## 3 Align transit options to support school choice and extracurricular opportunities

In addition to walking and biking, students use transit – buses and trains – to get to and from school and afterschool activities. Access to safe, reliable, and affordable transit helps students to get to school on time. Depending on funding, transit agencies may be able to augment service on routes that serve students at peak school times. Given the increasing landscape of school options, transit can play a key role in ensuring all families' access to educational choices and afterschool activities.

## 4 Create incentives for multi-modal transportation choices by students and families

Sometimes, the availability of transportation options is not enough by itself. Incentives that inspire students and families to bicycle, walk, or take transit to school can play an important role and do not need to cost additional money. Examples include the Safe Routes to Schools Program and community colleges that offer transit discounts.

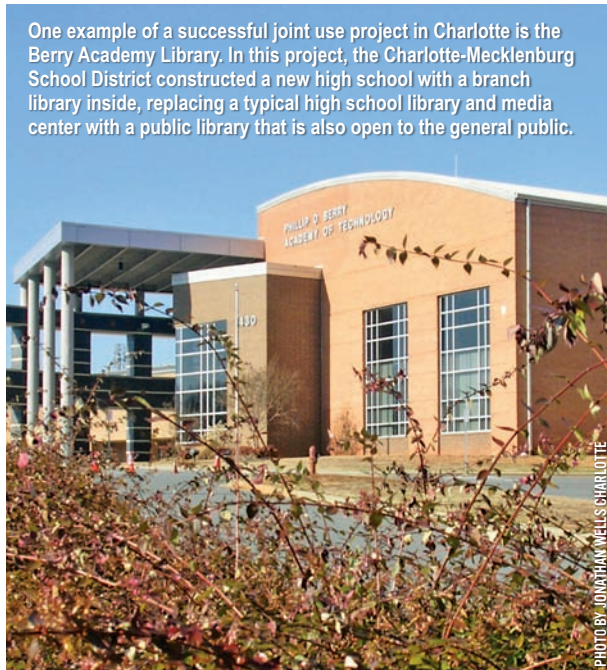
Decreased activity leads to more overweight and obese children



In 1970, about half of all students walked or biked to school; by 2000, that number had dropped to less than 13% of students. Now, more than half of the nation's school-aged students arrive at school in private automobiles. As the number of children walking and biking to school has dropped in the last 30 years, the number of children who are overweight or obese has risen. These trends are not directly correlated, but they are related. Source: NHTS and Safe Routes to School National Partnership

## STEP 7 Institutionalize ongoing innovation

**PARTNERSHIPS** and collaboration are not novel ideas, but making these relationships last will take a new approach. To do this, collaboration needs to become business as usual. By institutionalizing what works, collaborative initiatives can secure gains and establish the necessary conditions for ongoing innovation. This should include establishing a two-way system of accountability where schools and the cities and neighborhoods they serve are equally accountable to each other for delivering on the promise of opportunity-rich schools and sustainable communities.



One example of a successful joint use project in Charlotte is the Berry Academy Library. In this project, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District constructed a new high school with a branch library inside, replacing a typical high school library and media center with a public library that is also open to the general public.

PHOTO BY JOHANNA WELLS CHARLOTTE

### CASE STUDY

Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina — A diverse coalition of government agencies in Charlotte, NC, adopted a joint resolution in 1995 to promote shared use of public facilities as a way to get the most out of capital dollars and maximize gains for the community. Together, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners, the Charlotte City Council, the local community college board, and the county library board established a Joint Use Task Force that meets monthly and has representation from two dozen agencies covering transportation, storm water, parks, fire, and nonprofit organizations. The Task Force's purpose is to align capital investment in the region to achieve win-wins, including reduced facility costs and a better living environment for the community. Charlotte has made coordinating investments business as usual, and has yielded many dozens of joint use arrangements, including co-locating a new elementary school next to a new transit park-and-ride structure, with the roof of the parking structure serving as the school's playfield.

Charlotte's transit and uptown areas offer family-friendly entertainment and ways of getting around the city.

PHOTO BY WILAMOR MEDIA





# **ACTION** Make inclusive planning to support families and sustainable communities “business as usual”

**THE FOLLOWING FOUR** key areas are crucial to making inclusive and integrated planning business as usual. All of these areas focus on a critical juncture in the process of aligning high-quality education with city planning and TOD.

## **1 Support capacity building for new professional practice, formal communication systems, and streamlined collaborative decisionmaking**

Job descriptions at public agencies — from school districts to transit agencies — should clearly communicate the need for collaborative skills. Staff must be recognized and compensated for these new expectations around collaboration. As collaborations move from the work of individual leaders to “business as usual,” partnerships will need to form more permanent structures.

## **2 Measure change, assess impact, and leverage results**

Sustained positive change will also require effectively using new indicators and data to measure change, assess impact, and then make data-driven policy and program decisions. Research and data collection are also

important to provide the necessary feedback loops that validate what works and help disseminate lessons learned. These types of assessments will allow cities to move beyond intuition and anecdotal evidence to data-driven policy decisions.

## **3 Leverage diverse resources**

Now more than ever, economic conditions call for innovative partnerships and efforts to maximize resources. Initiatives involving cities, schools and TOD planning will most often combine private and public funding sources.

## **4 Balance “what works” with “what could be”**

Changing the status quo will depend on striking a delicate balance between policies with a proven track record and the flexibility to take risks and innovate.



Oakland Tech High School students tour a nearby off-site facility of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory for an introduction to computational science and supercomputer architecture.

## **CASE STUDY**

San Francisco Bay Area, California – Cities, schools, and university partners have created a regional learning network for community and educational change. Six cities and five school districts in the San Francisco Bay Area came together in 2006 in partnership with the University of California, Berkeley, Center for Cities & Schools to create a regional learning network for sharing best practices and learning from one another about how best to support young people, families, and the region at large. The network, called PLUS (Planning & Learning United for Systems-change), provides coaching, technical assistance, public institutes and forums, and graduate student assistance to each city-school team. PLUS also offers a set of research-based recommendations for how to plan and build integrated cross-sector relationships.

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