# A Users Guide for the Transit-Oriented Districts University Curriculum (TOD-U)

*Enterprise Community Partners’ TOD University was made possible with support from the Southern California HUD Field Office and in partnership with Move LA, Reconnecting America and Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE)*

*December 2013*

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**Introduction: What Is Transit-Oriented Districts University (TOD-U)?**

The Transit-Oriented Districts University curriculum is designed to assist nonprofit housing development agencies and community groups in understanding and integrating transit-oriented development into their planning, advocacy and programmatic efforts. TOD University serves as a tool to empower residents and community members and increase their knowledge of affordable housing and equitable transit-oriented districts.

TOD University is composed of eight easy-to-follow stand-alone modules:

- Transit Oriented Districts 101
- Housing 101: Overview
- Housing 201: Preservation
- Housing 202: Building New Affordable Homes
- Consolidated Plan 101: Strategy & Budget for Community Development
- Jobs and Economic Development 101
- Planning 101
- Complete Streets 101

The curriculum includes useful tools for the workshop organizer including PowerPoints, PowerPoint narratives, discussion points, handouts and hands-on group exercise instructions. Each module can be completed in one and a half to two hours and is available in English and Spanish.

**How this guide is organized**

The TOD University Users Guide is provided as a resource in preparing to teach the TOD University curriculum modules. The guide includes tips for the presenter and a concise overview of each of the eight individual TOD modules in preparation for the training.

For each TOD-U module, the Users Guide contains:

- **Learning Objectives**: Overview of key concepts participants will learn
- **Exercise Objectives**: Overview of the purpose of the exercises
- **Materials Needed**: List of materials needed for that module
- **Suggested Format**: An agenda of the module PowerPoint and exercises to help you plan your workshop.
Tips for Presenters
Some of us are big fans of Andy Goodman’s “Why Bad Presentations Happen to Good Causes and How to Ensure They Won’t Happen to Yours.”1 In designing the TOD-U we’ve taken Goodman’s ideas on excellent presentations to heart. We’ve made each module interactive, well organized and tried not to overload it with too much information.

But this is only half the game. Bringing life and enthusiasm to the presentation is something only you can do. With preparation you can avoid three of the five fatal flaws Goodman identified:

- Reading the slides
- Lifeless presenters
- Technical problems

Goodman surveyed conference goers on the quality of the presentations they sat through. It’s worth quoting Goodman, as his humor drives home a painful point:

“Reading the slides: More respondents complained about this behavior than anything else – and by a wide margin. Many indignantly asked why a presenter would read slides aloud when audience members were entirely capable of reading them for themselves. Several others pointed out that not only did they have slides read to them, the text of those slides was on handouts they had already received. (In presenting lingo, this is referred to as the dreaded “triple play,” i.e., the same text is on the screen, read aloud, and in a handout.) ‘Watching someone read PowerPoint slides is a form of torture that should be banned under the Geneva Convention,’ wrote one respondent.”2

Here are six useful tips for presenting the TOD-U to maximize time, stimulate quality reflection and discussion and empower communities to continue their work around TOD.

1. **Practice, practice, practice:** Practicing will make you more comfortable and able to adjust to unexpected changes. Practice the whole presentation at least twice without reading from the narrative. No one expects you to be perfect or to know everything, but they do expect you to be prepared and to know your material.

2. **Know the community:** Every community has a unique set of issues. Work with the workshop organizers to integrate the communities’ key critical issues. Be sure you have a sense of the level of expertise and engagement of the participants and the main issues of concern.

3. **Know the learning objectives:** What are the main points and messages you are trying to hit home? Can you describe them in your own words in three sentences or less?

4. **Work on your introduction:** You want to introduce the topic so that those who are new to these issues are ready to learn and those who are experienced are eager to continue to expand and share their knowledge.

5. **Encourage questions:** Look at the faces and body language of your audience. If you don’t see nodding heads, ask if people understand or if they have questions. Try to bring the conversation back to the main learning objectives of the module. It’s ok to admit you don’t know the answer and ask if anyone else in the room does. Be familiar with the other TOD-U “courses” as the question may be covered in other modules.

6. **Be an engaging presenter:** The module narrative serves as an outline for your presentation, not a script. Be flexible in your presentation style, put the ideas in your own words, give examples the audience can relate to. Add humor if you can. Above all, don’t read the narrative. Relax and have fun!

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1 www.agoodmanonline.com/publications/index
Transit-Oriented Districts 101

Module Objectives
1. Introduce concepts behind transit-oriented districts
2. Learn how transit can be leveraged to benefit neighborhoods
3. Discuss how to transform car-oriented areas into people and transit-oriented places

Module Exercises

Exercise 1: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly
This exercise will serve as an ice breaker for the group and an introduction to the TOD module. Participants will identify what they love, would like to change and their big dream for their communities. Trainers will overview each category and highlight common themes and interesting ideas.

Exercise 2: What Do You Like/What Don’t You Like?
As a part of this exercise participants will examine a redesigned TOD community to decide what they do and do not like in the before and after pictures. This exercise will promote critical thinking regarding the components that go into making a place livable and planning a vision for local neighborhoods.

Materials
- PowerPoint presentation (don’t make handouts, see “dreaded triple play” on page 3)
- PowerPoint narrative (for presenter only)
- LCD projector and screen
- Medium-Large sticky notes (3 different colors)
- Flip chart and markers
- Pens
- Exercise 1 Instructions (for small group leaders)
- Exercise 2 Instructions (for small group leaders)
- “What do/don’t you like” handout printed in color (for all participants)
- Feedback Forms

Suggested Format
1. Participants engage in Exercise 1 as they enter the room and while waiting for others
2. Welcome participants: Narrate PowerPoint: Slides 1-2
3. Introduce participants to Exercise 1
4. Narrate PowerPoint: Slides 3-20
5. Introduce Exercise 2: Slide 21, break into small groups and distribute “What do/don’t your like” handout
6. Narrate PowerPoint: Slides 22-31
7. Thank participants for attending: Slide 32
8. Request participants complete feedback forms
Housing 101: Overview

Module Objectives
1. Learn about the current housing situation in Los Angeles
2. Understand the intersection between housing, transit and wages
3. Set goals for addressing the shortage of apartments
4. Learn about density and patterns of development
5. Explore possible places to build in the immediate community

Module Exercises
Exercise 1: Set Goals for New Housing in Your Community Plan
Participants will split into small groups and set goals for housing in their community by addressing unmet housing needs: reducing overcrowding and overpaying, housing for the homeless populations.

Exercise 2: Where Do You Want To Build New Homes?
Using their calculations from Exercise 1, group members will decide where they would build new housing in their neighborhoods. Learn how increasing density can help meet unmet housing needs without losing community and neighborhood assets.

Materials
- PowerPoint presentation (don’t make handouts, see “dreaded triple play” on page 3)
- PowerPoint narrative (for presenter only)
- LCD projector and screen
- Flip chart & markers
- Exercise 1 instructions (for small group leaders)
- Handout: “Set Goals for Your Community” (pages 2 & 3 from Exercise 2 instructions: updated with projected growth for your community plan area) – for all participants
- Exercise 2 instructions (page 1 for small group leaders; page 2 for all participants)
- Large format maps of Community Plan Area (one for each small group)
- Straight pins with different colored heads (one set for each small group)
- Feedback Forms

Suggested Format
1. Introduce Housing 101 Overview: Slide 1
2. Narrate PowerPoint presentation: Slides 2-9
3. Slide 10: Exercise 1, break into small groups and distribute instructions and “Set Goals for Your Community” handout
4. Large discussion of exercise 1
5. PowerPoint Presentation: Slides 11-24
6. Slide 25: Exercise 2, break into small groups to look at large maps, distribute instructions
7. Large group discussion of exercise 2
8. Slide 25: Thank participants for attending
9. Request participants complete feedback forms
Housing 201: Preservation

Module Objectives
1. Understand how affordable housing is lost in low-income neighborhoods
2. Discuss strategies for preventing displacement
3. Learn how new transit impacts surrounding neighborhoods

Module Exercises

Exercise 1: Select the Best Tool for the Job
In this exercise participants will brainstorm the causes of affordable housing loss in communities. Learn about the tools necessary and available to preserve existing housing with affordable rents.

Materials
- PowerPoint presentation (don’t make handouts, see “dreaded triple play” on page 3)
- PowerPoint narrative (for presenter only)
- LCD projector and screen
- Flip Chart & markers
- Tape
- Exercise 1 Instructions (for small group leaders)
- Cards with descriptions of 6 “preservation tools” (one set for each small group)
- Feedback Forms

Suggested Format
1. Introduce Housing 201: Preservation
2. Slide 2: Use flip chart for a large group brainstorm on how people lose their homes
3. Slide 3: Break into small groups for Exercise 1
4. Large group discussion on exercise 1
5. Narrate PowerPoint presentation: Slides 4-17
6. Slide 18: Thank participants for attending
7. Request participants complete feedback forms
Housing 202: Building New Affordable Homes

Module Objectives
1. Understand the multiple components involved in building new affordable homes
2. Learn the various financing options for affordable homes
3. Discuss ways communities can support new affordable home construction

Module Exercises

Exercise 1: The Economics of Rent
Participants work in small groups to calculate the rental amount they (as property managers) would have to charge in a 100-unit apartment complex with no land or construction costs.

Exercise 2: Affordable to Whom?
In this exercise participants are introduced to the relationship between occupation or income and what affordable rent is. Working in small groups participants match specific occupations to incomes, incomes to affordable rents the workers affordability rents in their neighborhood based on their income.

Materials
- PowerPoint presentation (don’t make handouts, see “dreaded triple play” on page 3)
- PowerPoint narrative (for presenter only)
- LCD projector and screen
- Flip chart and markers
- Tape
- Butcher paper with list of selected occupations (one for each small group)
- Sticky notes with selected annual incomes (one set for each small group)
- Exercise 1 Instructions (for small group leaders)
- Exercise 1 handout (for all participants)
- Affordability handout (for all participants)
- Exercise 2 Instructions (for small group leaders)
- Feedback Forms

Suggested Format
1. Introduce Housing 202: Building Affordable Housing: Slide 1
2. Narrate PowerPoint presentation: Slides 2-10
3. Exercise 1: Slide 11, break into small groups, leaders distribute handout
4. Large group discussion
5. PowerPoint presentation Slide:12
6. Exercise 2, break into small groups, Slide 13
7. Large group discussion, distribute affordability handout
8. PowerPoint presentation: Slides 14-22
9. Thank participants: Slide 23-24
10. Request participants complete feedback forms
Consolidated Plan 101:  
A Strategy & Budget for Community Development

Module Objectives

1. Familiarize participants with the City’s strategy for reducing poverty with federal community development funds.
2. Give participants an understanding of the kinds of activities and programs that can be funded with federal community development dollars
3. Get participants to look at the city through a “transit lens” and to examine the distribution of low-income people and services across the city.

Module Exercises

**Exercise 1: Mix & Match the Programs to the Strategies**

Participants will become familiar with the federal programs in the ConPlan, the wide range of local activities they can fund, and how those match up to our citywide ConPlan strategies.

**Exercise 2: Looking at maps**

Participants will look at five different maps of the part of the city where their neighborhood is located. The maps, prepared by HCID, show the transit system, homeless services, affordable apartments, community amenities and city-supported social services.

Materials

- PowerPoint presentation (don’t make handouts, see “dreaded triple play” on page 3)
- PowerPoint narrative (for presenter only)
- LCD projector and screen
- Flip chart & markers
- Tape
- Small cards (in three colors) with federal programs and allowable uses. (one set for each small group)
- 7 pieces of butcher paper, each with one ConPlan Strategy
- 3 handouts: Section 8, Public Housing, Partnerships (for all participants)
- Exercise 1 Instructions (for small group leaders)
- Exercise 2 Instructions (for small group leaders)
- Feedback Forms

Suggested Format

1. Introduce Consolidated Plan: A Strategy & Budget for Community Development: Slide 1
2. Narrate PowerPoint presentation: Slides 1-13
3. Exercise 1: Slide 14, break into small groups
4. Large group discussion of Exercise 1
5. Narrate PowerPoint presentation: Slides:15-24
6. Exercise 2, Slide 25, break into small groups, leaders distribute handouts
7. Large group discussion of Exercise 2
8. Narrate PowerPoint: Slides: 26-31
9. Thank participants: Slide 32
10. Request participants complete feedback forms
Jobs & Economic Development 101

Module Objectives

1. Understand how housing and transportation costs impact individual opportunity.
2. Learn how transit construction and TOD development creates new job opportunities.
3. Examine the transportation connection to major job centers and educational opportunities.

Module Exercises

Exercise 1: Where Do You Live and Work, and How Do You Commute?
Participants will identify where they live, where they work and their mode(s) of transportation. This exercise will serve as a tool for participants to begin thinking about the role that transportation plays in job opportunity and how we get to and from our jobs.

Exercise 2: What Economic Opportunities Do You See?
This exercise will allow participants to view a redesigned TOD community from a job and economic development lens. Participants will examine a before and after picture of a TOD community to identify the economic opportunities they see.

Materials

- PowerPoint presentation (don’t make handouts, see “dreaded triple play” on page 3)
- PowerPoint narrative (for presenter only)
- LCD projector and screen
- Flip chart & markers
- Tape
- Exercise 1 Instructions (for small group leaders)
- A map of the county (Auto Club or Metro System map)
- Exercise 2 Instructions (for small group leaders)
- “What economic opportunities do you see?” handout (for all participants)
- Feedback Forms

Suggested Format

1. Welcome participants to Jobs and Economic Development: Slide 1
2. Exercise 1: Slide 2, break into small groups
3. Large group report back and discussion
4. PowerPoint presentation: Slide 3-25
5. Exercise 2: Slide 26, break into small groups, hand out “What economic opportunities do you see?”
6. Large group report back and discussion
8. Thank participants: Slide 29
9. Request participants complete feedback forms
Planning 101

Module Objectives

1. Understand planning terminology and concepts
2. Learn who the planning decision-makers are in Los Angeles
3. Understand the planning process and some past successful community campaigns

Module Exercises

Exercise 1: Small Group-Zoning Map
Participants will learn how to read a zoning map and interpret the different symbols and colors. Groups will examine zoning maps from their own community to orient themselves based on landmarks or places they know.

Exercise 2: Building Blocks
In this exercise participants will see how changes in density, floor-to-area ratio and height limits can change the size of a building.

Materials

- PowerPoint presentation (don’t make handouts, see “dreaded triple play” on page 3)
- PowerPoint narrative (for presenter only)
- LCD projector and screen
- Flip chart & markers
- Tape
- Exercise 1 Instructions (for small group leaders)
- Large format color zoning map of your community plan area from Zimas or Planning Department (one for each small group)
- Aerial map of the same area, preferably to the same scale and with the same landmarks as zoning map (one for each small group)
- Exercise 2 instructions (for small group leaders)
- 15 small rectangular blocks, identical in size and shape, labeled 10 ft high, 15 ft wide, 30 ft long (or use Duplo blocks or Lego blocks)
- A large piece of paper with a grid of 3 squares by 6 squares, each representing 10 feet.
- Feedback Forms

Suggested Format

1. Welcome Participants to Planning 10: Slide 1
2. PowerPoint presentation: Slides 2-20
3. Exercise 1: Slide 21, break into small groups
4. Large group discussion of Exercise 1
5. PowerPoint presentation: Slides 22-28
6. Exercise 2: Slide 29, break into small groups
7. Large group discussion of Exercise 2
8. PowerPoint presentation: Slides 29-49
9. Thank Participants: Slide 50-51
10. Request participants complete a feedback form
Complete Streets 101

Module Objectives

1. Discuss how streets can be made safe and accessible to everyone
2. Learn the benefits of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
3. Become familiar with all aspects of a complete street

Module Exercises

Exercise 1: A Complete Street Walkabout
In this exercise participants will split into groups, walk around their neighborhood identifying changes to create a healthier environment for walking and biking.

Exercise 2: Identify Streets for Walking, Bicycling, Driving, Traffic Calming
In this exercise participants will return to their previous groups to identify priority streets for modification focusing on safety and access for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Materials

- PowerPoint presentation (don’t make handouts, see “dreaded triple play” on page 3)
- PowerPoint narrative (for presenter only)
- LCD projector and screen
- Flip chart & markers
- Tape
- Exercise 1 Instructions
- Exercise 2 Instructions
- Map of Community Plan Area (one for each small group)
- Notepads & pens
- Map of area around the classroom facility
- Camera (optional)
- Feedback Forms

Suggested Format

1. Welcome to Complete Street 101: Slide 1
2. PowerPoint presentation: Slides 2-17
3. Exercise 1: Slides 18-19, break into small groups
4. Large group discussion of walkabout: Slide 20
5. PowerPoint presentation: Slides 21-28
6. Exercise 2: Slide 29, break into small groups
7. PowerPoint presentation: Slides 30-34
8. Thank Participants for Attending: Slide 35
9. Request participants complete evaluations.