

Tracking Transit-Oriented Development

Key Performance Indicators to Assess Progress in Creating Vibrant, Livable, and Affordable Communities Near Transit

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December 2025

Transit-oriented development, or TOD, is a built environment that is dense, diverse, walkable, and served by effective public transportation options. It holds promise for creating vibrant, accessible, and equitable communities. As investment in TOD grows across the United States, measuring how communities compare in implementation can help establish trends and identify potential areas of concern. Yet few jurisdictions have established frameworks to evaluate whether these investments are achieving their intended goals—and fewer have systematically measured outcomes. Existing efforts to track TOD performance remain underdeveloped: most focus on individual station areas or specific projects rather than providing comprehensive, corridor-level, jurisdiction-wide, metropolitan-wide, or statewide assessments. Planning tools abound to help estimate potential impacts of proposed developments, but ongoing evaluation frameworks that monitor actual outcomes are rare.

In this brief, we conduct a national review of existing efforts by cities, metropolitan areas, and transportation agencies to assess progress in creating vibrant, livable, and affordable communities near transit. Then, based on the results of a dialogue with stakeholders engaged in this topic around the country, we develop a set of indicators to aid policymakers in achieving related goals. These goals reflect the connected need to create vibrant neighborhoods near transit, while also ensuring that people in those neighborhoods have access to other areas via the transit system. Stakeholders can use data to answer key questions about TOD, including the following:

- **Adhering to planning standards:** Are transit-rich localities meeting state or regional requirements for accommodating growth, where those rules exist?
- **Expanding housing availability and economic value:** Is new development concentrating in transit areas?
- **Producing and preserving affordable housing:** Are homes near transit affordable for a diversity of people?
- **Preventing unwanted demographic change:** Are transit areas experiencing neighborhood change in the form of impoverishment, gentrification, and/or displacement?
- **Guaranteeing high transportation quality:** Is the noncar transportation network accessible, convenient, safe, and healthy?
- **Encouraging noncar transportation use:** Do people in transit areas get around without driving?
- **Building access to employment:** Are employment opportunities available within a reasonable distance?
- **Offering access to public resources:** Can residents of transit areas get to public services, including parks, libraries, and more, with little difficulty?
- **Promoting mixed uses:** Do transit areas include commercial spaces, child care facilities, and cultural spaces?

For each goal, we identify indicators for which data can be collected to assess performance. **Using these indicators, stakeholders can develop new policies and target resources to create neighborhoods near transit that are good places to live, work, and visit for a broad set of people, while cumulatively building a city- and metropolitan-wide network of linked transit-served nodes of activity.**

Existing Efforts to Track TOD

Existing efforts to track TOD in the US focus on measuring different aspects of project progress, along with tools that help communities assess the impact of potential TOD projects. These efforts vary significantly in their scope, scale, and purpose. Some are ex-ante planning tools to evaluate potential projects or prioritize investments, while others track development outcomes at the station-area level. Notably, most existing frameworks focus on conditions and development within individual station areas, rather than providing jurisdiction- or metropolitan-wide evaluation systems. Overall, however, these tools have mostly been developed as one-time efforts; they have not yet been used systematically to track progress nor to alter investment priorities, both of which are opportunities for public sector entities considering investment in TOD. They also have not been implemented at the state level, where there are plentiful opportunities to support TOD.

Our review of current practice reveals four main types of TOD measurement approaches, including:

- **Planning tools**, such as the Equitable TOD (ETOD) Social Impact Calculator for Cook County, Illinois,¹ and the TOD Ridership Impact Tool in Washington, DC,² help stakeholders estimate the potential impacts of proposed developments before they are built.
- **Prioritization frameworks**, like the ETOD Priority Tool in Austin³ and the TOD Classification Tool in the Minneapolis–St. Paul region,⁴ assist communities in identifying which station areas should receive investment attention based on current conditions and market potential.
- **Progress-tracking systems**, exemplified by Denver Regional Transportation District's annual status report (RTD 2024) and Washington, DC's Development Tracker,⁵ monitor the delivery of outcomes such as housing units, commercial space, and economic impacts.
- **Evaluation frameworks** provide assessments of TOD performance across multiple dimensions.

CHALLENGES WITH EXISTING APPROACHES TO TRACK TOD

While many transit agencies, localities, and states prioritize TOD, there has been little effective tracking of TOD initiatives' performance, for several reasons, including:

- **Lack of follow-through:** There is limited public-sector funding or resolve to track outcomes over time.
- **Limited geographical context:** There is disagreement about what scale of information is appropriate to evaluate TOD performance.
- **Tenuous link between indicators and decisionmaking:** Policymakers often do not use indicators to make choices.

Among these approaches, Chicago's ETOD Policy Plan⁶ stands out as one example that could function as a comprehensive evaluation framework at the jurisdiction-wide level. Adopted in 2021, Chicago's plan is designed to track a broad set of indicators, including housing and transit costs, affordable housing production and preservation, accessibility, economic development, public health impacts, environmental justice concerns, and the transportation and demographic characteristics of TOD residents. The plan calls for annual reporting on these metrics across the city's transit areas. However, even with this ambitious framework, actual implementation and regular updates have been difficult to come by; as of this writing, recent annual reports are not readily available.⁷

In contrast to Chicago's citywide approach, other initiatives focus on station-adjacent areas or specific transit corridors. Denver's Regional Transportation District tracks new residential units, affordable units, commercial square footage, and hotel rooms opened near transit stations. Washington, DC, monitors similar metrics for joint development projects, specifically on Metro-owned property. Austin's Project Connect ETOD study⁸ examines conditions along corridors through dimensions related to people (population, displacement risk, jobs, and businesses) and places (urban fabric, real estate market, and mobility). These station- and corridor-focused

approaches provide granular information but do not offer the jurisdiction-wide perspective that could enable a comprehensive assessment of how transit areas are performing relative to broader community goals.

The landscape of TOD measurement also includes several tools designed primarily for planning rather than ongoing evaluation. The Atlanta Regional Commission’s project evaluation framework uses a key decision-point framework to assess proposed transit expansion projects based on mobility and access, equity, safety, and resilience (ARC 2024). The Minneapolis–St. Paul metropolitan area’s TOD Classification Tool helps communities prioritize investments by assessing TOD readiness (intersection density, car-free population, amenities, transit frequency, and intensity) and market potential (increased job access, land value, development potential, and sales activity) within different station areas.

This review of existing practice reveals both the diversity of approaches to TOD measurement and also the relative scarcity of comprehensive, ongoing evaluation systems (table 1). Although planning tools and project-specific progress reports are common, few jurisdictions have implemented systematic frameworks for regularly tracking and reporting on a broad set of community-defined TOD performance indicators across all their transit areas. There are good reasons for this outcome: tracking is hard and requires a consistent focus on transit areas, which are not always a priority for cities facing frequently changing planning needs. But this gap highlights the need for the comprehensive indicator framework we propose—one that can be applied consistently across different geographies to understand how TOD contributes to achieving community goals.

TABLE 1
Types of Measurement Frameworks to Track and Prioritize Transit-Oriented Development

Type	Description	Examples	Measurement area	Tracking frequency
Planning tools	Ex-ante assessment tools that help estimate potential impacts of proposed developments or current conditions before implementation	Cook County ETOD Social Impact Calculator (estimates financial, social, and environmental benefits); Washington, DC TOD Scenario Builder (estimates ridership and development impacts); Austin Project Connect ETOD Study (assesses existing conditions)	Station areas or corridors	One-time or as-needed assessments
Prioritization frameworks	Tools designed to help communities identify which areas should receive investment based on potential	Austin ETOD Priority Tool (identifies policy priorities by station); Minneapolis-St. Paul TOD Classification Tool (assesses TOD readiness and market potential)	Station areas or proposed transit projects	One-time or periodic reassessment
Progress tracking	Systems that monitor actual development outcomes and economic impacts in transit areas, focusing on what has been built or delivered	Denver Regional Transportation District Status Report (tracks residential units, commercial space, hotel rooms); Washington, DC Development Tracker (tracks annual taxes, residential units, office square feet, retail square feet)	Station-adjacent areas or transit agency property	Periodic updates
Evaluation frameworks	Comprehensive assessment systems designed to track TOD performance across multiple dimensions, typically with regular reporting	Chicago ETOD Policy Plan (tracks housing and transit affordability, affordable housing production/preservation, accessibility, economic development, public health, environmental justice, and demographic characteristics)	Jurisdiction-wide (citywide)	Intended to be annual (though implementation uncertain)

Source: Authors’ analysis, based on a review of recent TOD tracking approaches.

Notes: ETOD = equitable transit-oriented development.

A Recommended Set of TOD Indicators

Indicator tracking can assist governmental entities, private citizens, private investors, and others to understand how different places compare with one another and how changes are occurring. It can also enable policymakers and other key stakeholders to target resources to the places that need them most. Ultimately, indicators can be used both to understand needs around individual stations and ensure that jurisdictions encompass a growing number of vibrant and convenient transit-oriented neighborhoods.

In table 2, we list our recommended set of TOD indicators, specifying what each is designed to assess and which data sources can be leveraged to calculate the outcomes of interest (the data sources mentioned are recommendations, but not the only options). These indicators are designed to be relevant to multiple geographical scales and their corresponding governmental units: neighborhoods around a transit station, localities like cities and counties with transit systems, metropolitan planning organizations, or state governments. Stakeholders in each could take on the role of tracking certain indicators if their leaders desire—though it may be logistically easiest for metropolitan and state governments to do the tracking, given economies of scale; they can track both local and regional indicators. No single approach will tell stakeholders everything they want to know; we emphasize that combining indicators is an option, but, no matter what, the indicators used should represent local priorities.

The indicators in table 2 are agnostic about defining “transit” or “transit areas” for tracking. Much of the research on TOD has used half-mile circles around stations to define “transit areas,” while focusing primarily on rail transit (Dittmar and Ohland 2012; Guerra, Cervero, and Tischler 2012). But some communities focus their TOD investments in areas even closer to transit stations, while others emphasize the potential for development in areas adjacent to bus rapid transit networks (Cervero and Dai 2014). These indicators can also be leveraged for both static and changing outcomes. It may be reasonable to use these metrics to assess both current conditions and the degree to which they represent change to achieve the broadest picture of how TOD is working in a particular community.

TABLE 2

Key Performance Indicators to Track Transit-Oriented Development

Indicators can be calculated both solely within transit areas and also by comparing transit and nontransit areas

Indicator	Summary	Why this indicator?	Data sources and notes
Adhering to planning standards (where applicable)			
Meeting associated state requirements	The jurisdiction's comprehensive plan and zoning have been updated to meet state or regional regulations for growth, particularly near transit	Reflects whether the jurisdiction is making progress in accommodating housing growth, such as through appropriate zoning	State review of locally produced planning documents In Washington state, this is conducted by the Department of Commerce and defined as meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act
Ensuring transit-accessible land is not used for auto-centric uses	Development near transit was designed for transit users	Shows whether transit neighborhoods are maximizing limited land	State review of locally produced planning documents, e.g., identifying whether zoning allows drive-throughs and surface parking near transit
Expanding housing availability and economic value			
Overall availability	Share of jurisdiction's housing located in transit areas	Provides a baseline estimate of whether a jurisdiction's housing is located near transit	ACS; updated annually; provides data on the number of housing units*
Housing development	Share of jurisdiction's recent housing units located in transit areas	Reflects whether new housing is being focused in transit areas	Metropolitan, municipal, and county permits data, updated throughout the year; typically provided by address ^a

Indicator	Summary	Why this indicator?	Data sources and notes
Value of new development	Share of jurisdiction's investment value located in transit areas	Demonstrates the value of transit-oriented development as a mechanism to increase economic development	Private-market data sources such as CoStar
Generating and preserving affordable housing			
Housing cost burdens	Share of transit area households paying more than 30 or 50 percent of income to rent	Offers insight into whether transit area renters are struggling to afford housing	ACS; provides data on household spending on rent* Housing + Transportation Cost Index, updated frequently
Availability of low-cost homes	Share of homes in transit areas that are affordable to rent or purchase for households with incomes at 30, 60, and 80 percent of area median income	Quantifies the stock of homes that offer affordable rents or can be purchased by households with low or moderate incomes	ACS; provides data on rent levels and home values for homes* Private sources such as Zillow or Zonda, updated daily; provides data on rent levels and home costs for housing on the market by address
Subsidized, project-based housing	Share of homes in transit areas that are subsidized with project-based sources and affordable to households with low and moderate incomes	Reflects the degree to which transit areas are accommodating households using public subsidies	National Housing Preservation Database, updated annually; provides information on housing units subsidized by Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Section 8; Public Housing, and other federal programs. Some localities maintain their own databases of subsidized housing created through inclusionary zoning and other programs
Subsidized, voucher-based housing	Share of households in transit areas that receive federal housing affordability vouchers	Reflects the degree to which transit areas are accommodating households using public subsidies	US Department of Housing and Urban Development Picture of Subsidized Households, updated annually; provides data on households supported by Housing Choice Vouchers per census tract*
Preventing unwanted demographic change			
Neighborhood impoverishment	Change in share of households near transit living under the federal poverty line	Provides insight into whether neighborhoods are concentrating households in poverty	ACS; provides data on the share of households living under the federal poverty line* Can be measured in terms of change over previous decade
Gentrification	Near transit, change in per capita income; share population non-Hispanic white; share adults with a bachelor's degree	Offers information about whether neighborhood is experiencing changes that signify growing wealth and concentration of privilege	ACS; provides data on per capita income, share of population by race and ethnicity, and share adults with higher education degrees (all are indicators of gentrification)* Can be measured in terms of change over previous decade
Displacement	The rate at which people with low and moderate incomes move out of transit areas, compared with the rate for people with high incomes	Enables examination of whether vulnerable people are experiencing challenges remaining in their homes	Private-market credit data sources (e.g., Data Axle), updated frequently; provide data on individual household residential addresses and incomes, and enables researchers to track changes in address over time
Guaranteeing high transportation quality			
Transit frequency	Number of buses and trains stopping at neighborhoods stations per week	Reflects whether transit options are of sufficient quality to be useful for residents and visitors	Center for Neighborhood Technology's AllTransit tool, updated annually; uses General Transit Feed Specification data to calculate transit service availability

Indicator	Summary	Why this indicator?	Data sources and notes
Pedestrian-friendly streets	Connectivity of sidewalk network, short block crossings, and landscaping in areas near transit	Informs whether the neighborhood is comfortable for pedestrians to walk around in	Requires manually calculating whether the local sidewalk network is complete, measuring arterial crossing distances, and identifying the extent of tree canopy coverage along streets
Cycling-friendly streets	Share of street mileage near transit with quality cycling infrastructure.	Explains whether neighborhood provides protective, reliable travel options for cyclists	PeopleForBikes' Bicycle Network Analysis tool, updated annually, provides data on quality cycling infrastructure and high- or low-stress neighborhood ways (including bikeways); can be compared with local street data
Safe streets	Number of fatalities and major injuries for people involved in transportation-related crashes in transit areas	Provides information on whether neighborhood streets are safe for use	Data are typically assembled by state agencies (e.g., Washington Traffic Safety Commission) and are point-based; can be disaggregated for car occupants, pedestrians, and cyclists
Low-pollution streets	Average exposure to air and noise pollution in transit areas	Reflects whether the neighborhood is healthy for residents and visitors	Requires manually identifying granular data on air and noise pollution; local and state governments provide some data
Encouraging noncar transportation use			
Transit ridership	Number of people boarding trains and buses at stations in transit areas on a typical day	Shows whether transit services are well-used by residents, workers, and visitors	Transit agencies may provide stop- and station-based data about average daily ridership ACS; provides data on the share of commuters traveling to work by transit*
Car ownership	Share of households that do not own a car in transit areas	Represents the degree to which living in a neighborhood is feasible for people without car access	ACS; provides data on resident households, by number of cars to which they have access*
Cycling rates ^b	Number of cyclists in transit areas	Reflects whether the neighborhood is accessible for cyclists	Some localities have counters that automatically register the number of cyclists on some streets on a daily basis ACS; provides data on the share of residents commuting to work by bike* The National Household Travel Survey may also be useful
Building access to employment			
Jobs within commuting distance	Number of jobs accessible in 30 minutes by transit or walking for the average resident of transit areas	Provides information about whether residents of transit areas have access to jobs via the public transportation system	Center for Neighborhood Technology's AllTransit tool, updated annually; uses General Transit Feed Specification data to calculate transit service availability. Data can be disaggregated based on job types
Jobs in transit areas	Number of jobs located in transit areas	Shows the degree to which the neighborhood offers places for work	US Census' Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics data (available using On The Map tool), updated annually; can be disaggregated based on job types
Offering access to public resources			
Public service availability	Number of public services, including schools, libraries, gyms, and public restrooms, in transit areas	Reflects the ability of residents, workers, and visitors to take advantage of public resources within an easy distance	Localities often provide data identifying the location of schools, libraries, gyms/pools, and restrooms, among other resources
Parks and open space access	Availability of parks and plazas within a five-minute walk of homes	Suggests whether the community provides recreational space	Trust for Public Land's ParkServe tool, and locally provided data on parks and plazas

Indicator	Summary	Why this indicator?	Data sources and notes
Promoting mixed uses			
Groceries, retail, and restaurants	Number of groceries, retail stores, and restaurants located in transit areas	Demonstrates whether transit areas offer opportunities to shop and dine	US Department of Agriculture Food Access Research Atlas, updated infrequently. Private-market data sources (e.g., Walkscore), updated frequently
Child care access	Number of daycare facilities available in transit areas	Represents whether parents can drop off children in areas near home and work	State child care regulatory departments offer lists of licensed operators, their capacity, and their locations
Cultural spaces	Number of cultural spaces, such as theaters and art galleries, located in transit areas	Offers information about whether the community provides a breadth of activities	Requires manually identifying which spaces are considered culturally important to local residents and mapping them

Source: Authors' analysis.

Notes: ACS = US Census American Community Survey (provides rolling, five-year estimates, with a two-year delay, updated annually). * Data analysis for small areas (e.g., tracts) can be conducted using areal interpolation, a technique that leverages geospatial information to estimate how demographic data are distributed across an area (e.g., the population within an area).

^a Reviewers of this paper noted that permit data can vary substantially between communities and thus should be used carefully.

^b In communities with bike sharing or scooter sharing options, tracking their availability near transit could be useful.

Despite the variety of options to use the indicators in table 2, users considering leveraging them for their own TOD tracking must reach some agreement on how they define “transit” and “transit areas,” and which measurement aspects—whether static or changing over time—are most important to them. This choice of definitions must be agreed on as a first step, as without it, there is no consistent mechanism to begin measuring.

The indicators in table 2 may not encompass the full range of metrics that policymakers and community stakeholders consider important to achieving their TOD goals. These are a starting point for developing a community-relevant set of datapoints to track.

Questions of Geography and Time

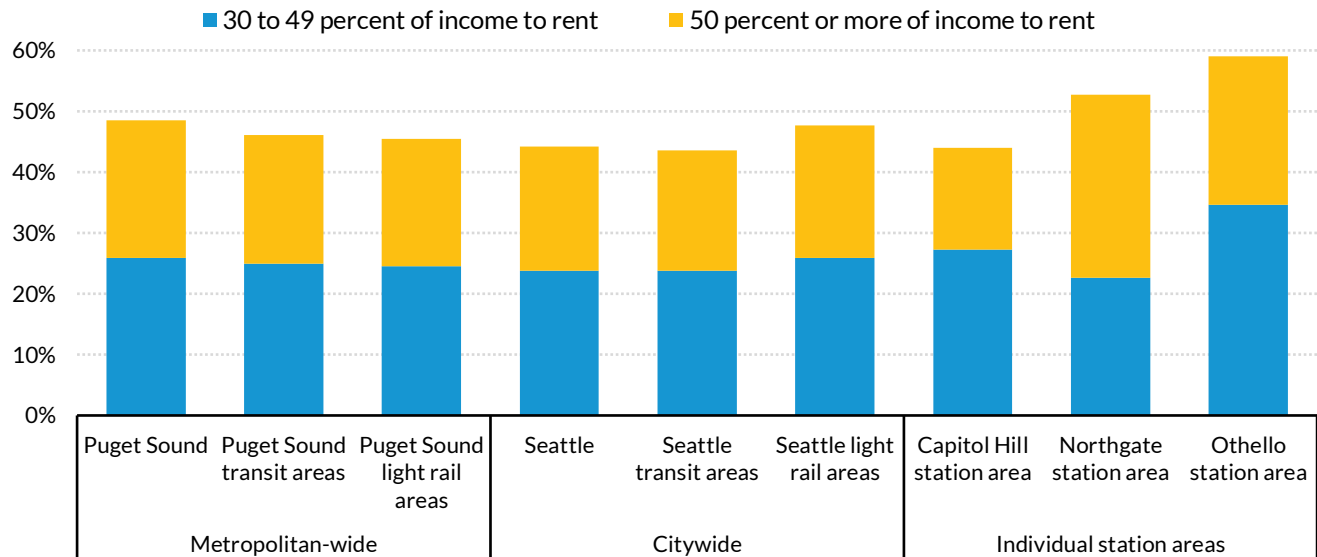
Performance indicators can provide insight into the relative performance of localities across multiple goals. Two key questions for policymakers and other stakeholders interested in effective measurement are: what geography to use for the analysis, and over what time period to conduct it.

First, consider **transit area geography**, which influences how we think about outcomes. TOD indicator tracking could be undertaken at the individual station level, such as for stations along a particular transit route (e.g., a light rail line) or within a particular jurisdiction (e.g., a city). For example, data about conditions around a single station may help us understand that particular community’s challenges, assets, or benefits from TOD, but may not tell us much about the overall circumstances in TOD areas across an entire city or metropolitan area. In all cases, it is important to compare indicators in transit-accessible areas with those in areas without transit access to determine whether transit neighborhoods are unique in some way. One additional—and potentially more important—consideration is comparing development within transit areas with development just beyond those areas, because some TOD incentives and regulations, such as grants or requirements for on-site affordable housing, may push development out of or into those zones. Such comparisons can provide insight as to whether policymakers are achieving the desired goal of maximizing quality of life in transit areas for all.

For example, cost burdens help show whether renters face difficulties covering their housing costs. Consider the Puget Sound region in Washington State (the Seattle metropolitan area), where Census data show that almost 50 percent of renters pay at least 30 percent of their incomes to rent (figure 1). Examining transit areas across the metropolitan area, or even just within Seattle, the region’s largest city, evidence suggests that cost burdens are a

lesser concern, since they are lower than the metropolitan or citywide average. Nevertheless, exploring data within specific transit neighborhoods opens up greater insight; for instance, while renters do not face higher cost burdens around the Capitol Hill light rail station in Seattle, a greater share of those who live near other Seattle light rail stations, like Northgate and Othello, face burdens. A granular geographic examination can help parse out these differences and contextualize them within broader contexts.

FIGURE 1
Key Indicators, Such as Renter Cost Burdens, Can Be Calculated at Multiple Geographies
Share of renter households that are cost-burdened, select geographies, 2019–23



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Source: Authors' analysis of American Community Survey 2019–23 data at the tract level, using areal interpolation.

Notes: Transit areas are defined as within a half mile of stations. Puget Sound data encompass King, Pierce, and Snohomish, Washington, counties. Includes data for transit that is existing or under construction in 2025.

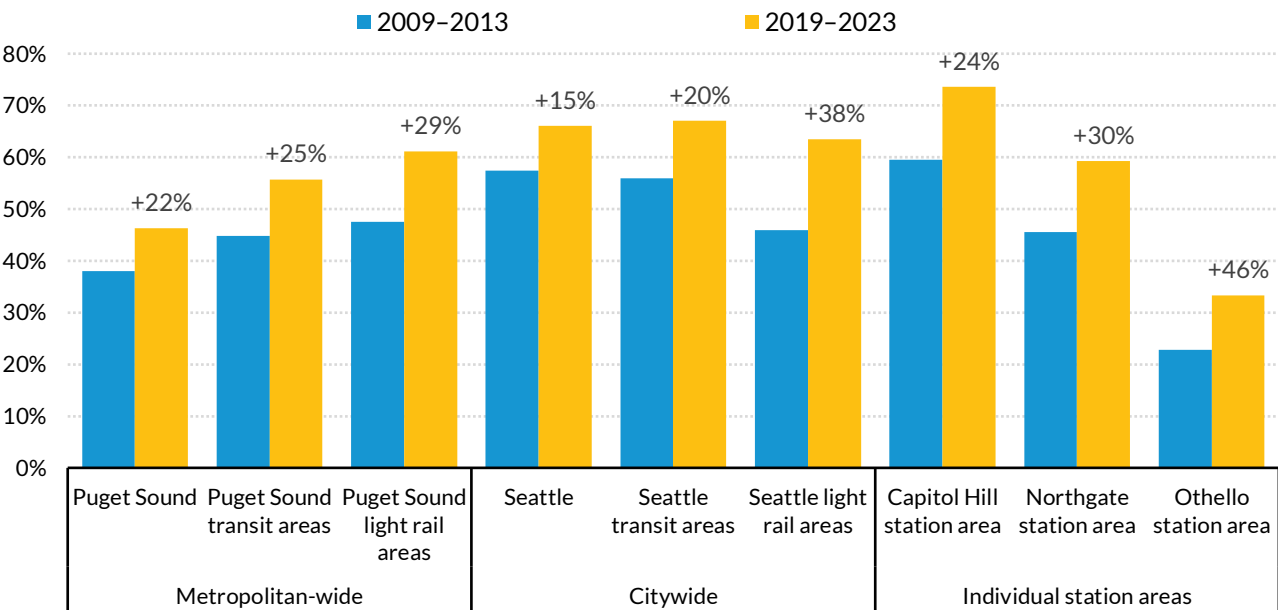
Geographical measures can represent conditions *within* a specific geography (e.g., figure 1). But they can also reflect the ability to access *other* geographies, especially by using transit. This is important because people living in transit areas ideally should be able to use trains or buses to get to other neighborhoods in a reasonable amount of time. In table 2, we include an indicator representing the number of jobs to which people living in transit areas can commute. It would be reasonable to apply this concept of access to regionally relevant destinations, such as universities, hospitals, or major shopping centers.

Second, TOD indicator tracking must incorporate **temporal change**.⁹ We compare different geographies in terms of the educational degrees of adult residents in figure 2. The Othello station area has a considerably lower share of adult residents with a bachelor's degree or higher than the other station areas or broader geographies. But the Othello station's share of such higher-educated residents increased more than twice as quickly over the previous decade as did the share across the Puget Sound as a whole. This may reflect gentrification that would not be apparent if looking at one year of data alone. Stakeholders may benefit from integrating both static and temporal data into indicator tracking.

FIGURE 2

Temporal Data Can Offer Insight into What Areas Are Experiencing Change

Share of adults 25 or older with a bachelor's degree or more, with percent change over period labeled, select geographies



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: Authors' analysis of American Community Survey 2009-13 and 2019-23 data at the tract level, using areal interpolation.

Notes: Transit areas are defined as within a half mile of stations. Puget Sound data encompass King, Pierce, and Snohomish, Washington, counties. Only includes data for existing or under-construction transit as of 2025.

Considerations for Implementation of TOD Tracking Approaches

TOD areas are, by design, often among the most rapidly evolving parts of many metropolitan areas. At the same time, states, localities, and transit agencies have rarely, if ever, systematically tracked how their neighborhoods located near transit compare or how they are helping to meet public goals. Nonetheless, they have a great opportunity to do so now. Tracking indicators can help identify the extent to which TOD areas are living up to their potential and assist policymakers in targeting resources to communities that need assistance. Policymakers devoting resources to TOD policy—such as by investing in neighborhood infrastructure near train stations and bus rapid transit stops—should be aware that those public investments may themselves result in changes over time. As a result, public stakeholders would benefit from the data provided by those indicators. Ultimately, leveraging indicators can help communities achieve two interconnected goals. They can improve the quality of life in neighborhoods around specific transit stations, creating vibrant, livable, and affordable places where people want to live. At the same time, they can build toward creating a region of interconnected TOD nodes where people can reliably use transit to get to and from their homes, offices, schools, recreation, and other key destinations.

We recommend that states and cities interested in supporting additional TOD adopt some or all of the indicators listed in table 2 above, adjusting and adding their own when appropriate, in the context of a particular community's conditions and future goals. Transit lines and station areas often cross between multiple jurisdictions, each with its own policymakers, priorities, and regulations. The indicators we recommend are relevant to both transportation and land use planners, so regional and cross-agency coordination is imperative. Committing to indicator tracking over the years is an essential element of this work, necessary to conduct the sorts of

multigeography and temporal analyses we point to in the previous section. Without these comparisons, it may be difficult to determine whether TOD-related goals are being achieved.

To prevent a coordination problem, states should assign and fund a specific entity—such as a regional governance body like a metropolitan planning organization or a state-level agency like the department of commerce or transportation—to regularly assess and report on indicator performance and change over time. This entity should consistently provide recommendations on how findings indicate potential areas for new public action across different jurisdictions or agencies. This entity should develop a public-facing tracking website with a frequently updated data dashboard to provide the latest information on indicators at multiple geographic levels to stakeholders interested in effectively implementing TOD in their communities. This dashboard can help hold policymakers accountable for the investments they have made both in the transit system and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Keeping track of indicators is no easy task for governmental agencies that often lack the capacity even to conduct the work they have already been assigned. Policymakers must ensure that these agencies are well-staffed and adequately funded to undertake this endeavor; they should work with philanthropies and seek out federal assistance where feasible to help support these efforts. These agencies will, in particular, need resources to maintain databases with information collected from third-party, private sources. Ideally, agencies can make the most of existing public resources to minimize additional work. Even so, several of the indicators that we recommend could require manual data collection, which could be time-intensive.

Those keeping track of TOD-related indicators are also likely to face the reality that—especially in the early years of their work—dramatic changes in outcomes, such as related to housing construction, housing affordability, or gentrification, are unlikely. Policymakers should be careful not to expect too much change over a short period. Once a system for tracking indicators has been implemented, the agency responsible for it should begin estimating how rapidly they expect change to occur, based on experience in other communities. They should then help policymakers understand this context as they judge TOD performance.

Notes

¹ “ETOD Calculator,” Center for Neighborhood Technology and Metropolitan Planning Council, updated 2022, <https://etod.cnt.org/>.

² “Metro Ridership Impact Tool,” Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, accessed October 27, 2025, <https://tod.wmata.com/Scenarios>.

³ “ETOD Priority Tool,” CapMetro, accessed October 27, 2025, <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/0388c5d05c0b45d495d2c2c74500f60a/page/Station-Typologies>.

⁴ Reconnecting America, “Overview: Transit Oriented Development Classification Tool,” accessed November 21, 2025.

⁵ “Metro’s Development Tracker,” Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, accessed October 27, 2025, <https://tod.wmata.com/Tracker>.

⁶ “Equitable Transit-Oriented Development,” City of Chicago, accessed October 27, 2025, <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/equitable-transit-oriented-development/home.html>.

⁷ Former staff of the City of Chicago with whom we spoke noted that the lack of follow-through resulted from the fact that elected officials did not require staff to update the indicators, and there was little or no public pressure to do so, either.

⁸ “Transit-Oriented Development (TOD),” CapMetro, accessed November 21, 2025, <https://www.capmetro.org/plans-development/tod>.

⁹ Calculating temporal change using data from sources such as the American Community Survey can be complicated by changing geographies, such as tract boundaries. There are mechanisms to get around this, such as through areal interpolation, but this can add error. Analysts should take care to acknowledge the limitations of their work.

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Acknowledgments

This brief was funded by the Washington State Legislature Joint Transportation Committee. We are grateful to them and to all our funders, who make it possible for Urban to advance its mission. The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders. Funders do not determine research findings or the insights and recommendations of Urban experts. Further information on the Urban Institute's funding principles is available at urban.org/fundingprinciples. We thank Chessy Brady, Annie Dixon, Courtney Jones, Sarah LaCorte, Sean Northup, Jacob Riger, Joe Schilling, and Ellen Zavisca for their review of drafts of this brief. Copyright © December 2025. Urban Institute. Permission is granted for reproduction of this file, with attribution to the Urban Institute.