Redesigning Adelaide 2050

Transit Oriented Development – A plan for building communities
This paper on Transit Orientated Development forms a key plank of the Property Council of Australia (SA Division) longer-term strategy of “Redesigning Adelaide for 2050”. Redesigning Adelaide represents the Property Council’s vision for the type of urban environment necessary for South Australia to flourish in the rapidly changing economic, environmental and social climate and to meet the targets set out in South Australia’s Strategic Plan.

Recommendations

To ensure the effective delivery of urban renewal, the Government must:

1. Immediately establish an Urban Renewal Commission, involving stakeholders from Government, Councils and the private sector – with the responsibility of delivering urban renewal through Transit Oriented Developments.

2. Task the Urban Renewal Commission with the responsibility for:
   a. Establishing shared principles;
   b. Identification of land consolidation opportunities;
   c. Commence a Ministerial DPA or alternate planning process;
   d. Coordinate infrastructure upgrades;

3. Commit to a staged upgrade of rail infrastructure to either electrified heavy rail or light rail as appropriate to Transit Oriented Development principles.

About the Property Council of Australia (SA Division)

The Property Council of Australia is the nation’s chief advocate for the property investment, development and property services sector. It champions its members' interests by engaging governments on key public policy issues, as well as creating a more informed and connected marketplace.

Our members help shape, build and finance our cities. These organisations have a long-term interest in the future of Australia’s urban areas. They include the bulk of the State's investors in office towers, shopping centres, industrial parks, tourism accommodation and residential developments.

The South Australian Division represents members with interests in more than $33 billion of property investment, of which, nearly $5 billion is invested by superannuation funds in South Australian property. More than 500,000 South Australians now have a stake in these investments through their superannuation, life insurance, managed fund property trusts, syndicates and direct ownership investments.

The Voice of Leadership
Background

For many years, the State Government has supported urban infill through the State Planning Strategy. However, factors such as local government reluctance and poorly-informed public debate have meant that genuine attempts at effective, sensitive and sustainable urban infill have been sporadic at best.

As South Australia moves into a period of strong economic growth, the State needs a robust and modern planning framework that promotes infill such that the state can house the rapidly growing workforce demanded by our economic development. In tandem with this is the imperative of ensuring that new housing paradigms are environmentally sustainable.

The State is already falling behind the level of demand for the number and type of dwellings needed. We need a diversity of housing options to suit the new workforce, ranging from traditional three bedrooms, two bathroom homes on the suburban fringes, to near-city apartment living, all sited close to or on transit nodes.

If South Australia is to capture the maximum economic benefit from the resources and defence booms, we must immediately undertake the renewal of the metropolitan area to meet the needs of our community. Most other Australian jurisdictions are already delivering TODs and South Australia has an opportunity to get onboard now.

Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) provide a mechanism to achieve this. They encourage quality medium/high density residential and mixed use developments within walking distance of convenient and attractive transit nodes to promote increased utilization of public transport, significantly reducing transport-related greenhouse gas emissions. Simultaneously, TODs generate more affordable housing, improved urban design outcomes and reduced pressure on government expenditure on services infrastructure, education and health through more concentrated urban environments.

The recommendations and suggestions put forward by the Property Council in this paper are designed to be a discussion starter. We are keenly aware that the Government has already identified TODs in previous strategies as a key method of delivering urban renewal and we believe the time is right for this to occur.

Discussion

This proposal seeks to encourage the Government to commit to the formation of an Urban Renewal Commission that would be tasked with the delivery of significant urban infill through TODs to lead urban renewal and deliver increased housing supply.

The most effective means of implementing TODs is to integrate them into broader urban renewal strategies. Given the spiking demand for residential dwellings and the need to identify new residential opportunities
to house the State’s growing population, the need for South Australia to implement an urban renewal program is now urgent.

1. Urban Renewal Commission

To deliver an integrated approach to urban renewal, one which supports the targets of South Australia’s Strategic Plan, the Property Council recommends the immediate establishment of an Urban Renewal Commission, tasked with establishing the structure for the delivery of TOD projects across the metropolitan area.

Urban Renewal Commissions are authorities established to resolve bureaucratic and structural impediments to the revitalisation or transformation of specific precincts. They are generally responsible for activities such as:

- creating masterplans;
- accommodating growth;
- coordinating infrastructure;
- coordinating whole-of-government activity
- utilising government sites;
- encouraging investment;
- facilitating public finance opportunities to revitalise communities; and
- educating local communities and communicating the benefits of and need for urban regeneration.

The Urban Renewal Commission must also drive solutions to the constraints that potential slow the implementation of TODs. These include ageing rail facilities, contaminated land and the need for remediation, planning issues such as zoning constraints, building height and density restrictions, land acquisition and site consolidation and water, gas, and electrical infrastructure demands.

Appropriate policy settings by State and Local governments should be sufficient to overcome these challenges and facilitate private sector management of any additional issues. It would be incumbent on the Urban Renewal Commission to guide the uptake of these policy settings.

The first Urban Renewal Commission project would be to coordinate the relevant State and Local Government agencies to undertake a feasibility study for the development of an integrated land use and transit network for the Adelaide metropolitan area. The study would spark the aggressive implementation of a regional light rail, tram and bus system. It would also identify the appropriate pattern of TODs to manage growth and support increased investment in the transport system.
This study should identify:
• where TOD centres need to occur, and the appropriate densities and mix of development;
• prioritising and establishing a timeframe for the upgrading of rail lines;
• the appropriate mode of rail for each line depending on utilisation rates, station spacing and overall travel distance;
• an improved bus network as a feeder services to the rail network; and
• the necessary statutory planning requirements to establish TODs.

2. The State’s strategic need for TODs

The integration of land use and transport planning is paramount to the State being able to meet many targets in South Australia’s Strategic Plan. For example, Target 3.6 (increase the use of public transport to 10% of metropolitan weekday passenger vehicle kilometres travelled by 2018) will be difficult to accomplish without far greater alignment between land use and transport planning. In addition, this alignment will become all the more critical if the South Australian Government is to meet its interim population target of 1.64 million by 2014. Pursuing an economic growth rate that exceeds the nation’s will also put pressure on both transit and housing demands, meaning coupling them together will be necessary. The linking of Adelaide’s housing growth and transit systems is also imperative to achieve in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

Without the development of such a linkage, the State will also be hard pressed to meet the objectives of South Australia’s Strategic Plan including growing prosperity, improving well-being, attaining sustainability, and fostering creativity and innovation. As noted in the plan, “the capacity to do things differently will determine whether we can achieve all our goals for the state’s future.”

The Property Council believes that the delivery of Transit Oriented Development will assist the State in achieving the following targets: T1.1, T1.2, T1.5, T1.7, T1.8, T1.9, T1.10, T1.11, T1.12, T1.13, T1.15, T1.16, T1.20, T1.21, T1.22, T1.23, T1.24, T1.25, T2.2, T2.3, T2.4, T2.8, T2.9, T2.10, T2.12, T3.5, T3.6, T3.7, T3.8, T3.9, T3.10, T3.11, T3.12, T3.13, T3.14, T4.8, T6.7, T6.8, T6.9, T6.10.

3. TODs and sustainability

The State Government and the Property Council agree that urgent action is required if we are to house South Australia’s growing population in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner. The Government has already introduced policy measures to partially address land supply – including the recent expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary – for which it should be congratulated. However, given existing pressures on housing affordability, it will be essential to target urban renewal in our aging suburbs. A sensible blend of urban expansion and urban renewal constitutes smart growth; growth which accommodates the needs of households, society as a whole and the environment.
Benefits offered by TODs

**TODs deliver simplicity**
The proximity of transit infrastructure to homes, jobs, shops, schools and universities, the foreshore, special events and other daily activities makes everyday travel easier and faster.

**TODs will make living in Adelaide more affordable**
Increased investment in rail, buses and stations will also improve the competitive transit travel times compared with cars thus reducing the existing reliance on personal cars, significantly reducing living costs. The cost of owning and operating a car consumes a large portion of the typical family’s income. By reducing car dependence we can free up income for other household needs.

**TODs benefit those who cannot or choose not to drive**
By creating a network of connected centres, more travel options will be available to a broader population. In the United States, recent research has shown that TOD residents are twice as likely not to own a car as the general population.

**TODs will dampen demand for cars**
This provides a long term potentially of freeing up for other uses large amounts of land currently dedicated to moving and parking cars. It also reduces fuel consumption and air pollution, generates fewer car trips and induces a smaller carbon footprint. In addition to reduced car usage, TODs facilitate a broader mix of land uses within a convenient walking distance, making it quicker to reach our destinations by non-mechanised transit, yielding health benefits as well as the environmental dividend. In fact, it would be necessary for TODs projects to have strictly limited car parking spaces to ensure this benefit is not diffused.

**TODs tend to create more vibrant neighbourhoods and neighbourhoods that accommodate a broader range of lifestyles.**
More and more people, such as “empty-nesters” or “urban adventurers” are seeking lifestyles that different from the traditional paradigm of the single family home on a quarter acre block. TOD centres are more adaptable to this growing demand than existing urban designs.

**TODs and associated urban infill relieve pressure on the Urban Growth Boundary**
The use of infill, mixed housing types and increased densities can significantly relieve pressures at the urban fringes edges. The TODs corridors proposed below are wholly contained within the existing urban growth boundary, mainly within the inner suburban area.

**TODs can be, at least in part, self funding**
In many cases seen interstate and overseas, land zoned for higher density mixed use with convenient access to transit has a higher land value than conventional developments. By assembling, rezoning and selling land pre-approved for TODs, project sponsors could collect revenue to help offset costs of rail or other transit infrastructure. Other potential financial benefits could include lower development costs due to a greater concentration of infrastructure system, higher land rateability and centralisation of public services.
Implementing TODs

International experience has demonstrated that electrified light and heavy rail are ideally suited to TODs as they enable the closest proximity to residential developments, provide high frequency services and are environmentally efficient. Furthermore, as they centre on hard infrastructure they provide certainty to the property industry and investors in that surrounding projects have a guaranteed transit supply. This itself acts as an investment attractor, and evidence of this has been seen in the investment flowing to the south of the CBD post the tram line extension.

This paper proposes several transit corridors that could serve as initial TODs projects, potentially providing case studies for further such developments. These are:

- the Port Adelaide heavy rail line (with potential to create a light rail corridor);
- the Glenelg light rail line;
- and the Marion heavy rail line.

These corridors are ideally placed for major infill and hard transit infrastructure. In addition to being amenable to residential development, they present opportunities for commercial nodes and collocation of social facilities.

We contend that along these lines, residential densities could be lifted from an average of about 20 dwellings per hectare to between 50-200 dwellings per hectare – potentially housing an extra 150,000 to 200,000 people.

Over time the network of TODs development corridors could be expanded, for example, to include the Belair heavy rail line and new light rail along Prospect Road and Norwood Parade. Again, the Urban Renewal Commission would be ideally placed to assess the need and appropriateness of such strategies and coordinate stakeholder input.

The upgrading of rail lines will also open up TOD opportunities in the Noarlunga/Seaford and Gawler rail corridors as well as the extension of spur lines. One such spur could run between Woodville and Grange Roads off the Outer Harbour line. Semaphore Road, West Lakes Boulevard and other areas of medium density residential and retail land could be similarly exploited.

Rail and tram improvements could provide connections between existing central business districts such as Adelaide and Port Adelaide, bringing economic renewal to the latter. The network could also drive new real estate and infrastructure investment through the remediation of lands previously considered prohibitively problematic. Land at Bowden Station is one such example.
This proposal centres on the need to establish an Urban Renewal Commission to oversee the deliver of TOD projects; similar to projects implemented in East Perth and the Docklands in Melbourne. Across Western and Southern Adelaide, 11 regions have been selected for their suitability as urban renewal sites:

- Morphettville
- Plympton
- Keswick/Goodwood
- Keswick Railway Terminal
- Thebarton
- Welland
- Kilkenny
- Woodville
- Cheltenham
- Westlakes/Football Park
- Port Adelaide

These precincts have been selected for the quantity of derelict building stock in each area, the level of non-complying land use and existing proximity to established public transport facilities, including light and heavy rail, bus and well maintained road infrastructure.

It is the Property Council’s position that these opportunities could be best exploited through TODs projects along the major heavy and light rail corridors.

**Outer Harbour Rail Corridor**

The existing rail line between Adelaide and the Outer Harbor is a key corridor for enhanced transit service and TODs. A possible option is an extension of the existing tram line from North Terrace, linking into the proposed new Adelaide Hospital, then extending to Port Adelaide and potentially towards Outer Harbor. The length of the line from Adelaide is 11km to Port Adelaide, then a further 10km to Outer Harbor.

Importantly, the tram line could be extended into the centre of Port Adelaide. This has potential to develop a new TOD centre, as the current heavy rail line effectively bypasses the town centre. Despite a recent resurgence in interest in the Port Centre, there remains significant potential for major redevelopment.

Planning SA has extensively examined redevelopment at several existing stations along the line. These include renewal around Bowden station, where land was previously contaminated. Other potential TODs in the Outer Harbour/Port Adelaide region include sites around the Ethelton and Glanville stations – and of course the Cheltenham development. These could be integrated into the Newport Quays development.
Woodville Grange Loop

The Outer Harbour spur line to Grange starting at Woodville could be upgraded to light rail and extended. An interesting option is to create a loop line via the West Lakes regional centre and Football Park back to Woodville.

Semaphore Road Corridor

There is potential to extend a tram line from the Glanville station along Semaphore Road and to the foreshore. Heavy rail previously operated over this route, but was removed more than a quarter of a century ago. The extension would provide access to the continuous strip development along Semaphore Road and facilitate an enlarged TOD at the end of the route.

Glenelg Tram Corridor

Infrastructure along the corridor between Glenelg and the City has recently been upgraded, but unfortunately there has been no clear consideration given to possible TODs. Regardless, potential exists for a TODs development at the junction of the tram corridor with the Noarlunga/Belair rail corridors. In addition, an expanded TOD could be developed at the end of Glenelg line. A second TOD near to Marion Road also offers potential.

Noarlunga Rail Corridor

A small scale TOD is currently in planning for the new Oaklands Transport interchange. The City of Onkaparinga and the State Government have begun extensive planning for a major TOD at the Noarlunga station area. This TOD would have a major activity node through the adjacent Colonnades Regional Centre.

There have been proposals for a southerly extension of the Noarlunga Line to Seaford. The City of Onkaparinga is promoting this potential.

Gawler Rail Corridor

A Government working party has identified the potential for several possible TODs along this line, with the first at Salisbury interchange, and with others further to the north in Munno Para, including a new facility integrated into a reconstructed Munno Para railway station.

The network could be comprised of a combination of heavy and light rail. Heavy rail can move large numbers of people in short periods of time on heavy demand routes. Rail generally attracts better patronage than buses. The advantage of light rail is its ability to run with traffic, in its own corridor or in various combinations of both.
Conclusion

Ultimately, Adelaide deserves a world-class transport service that is extensive, frequent, all day, fast, reliable, and easy to use. Our stations should reflect our civic identity and boast ample, well maintained user amenities. The planning of such a network should be accomplished in the Urban Renewal Commission’s feasibility study. This study should also examine the costs and benefits of alternative network and station configurations.

Whatever transit network results, centring urban design around transit stations will be paramount to achieving the potential benefits described in this paper above. The relationship between land use, density, parking, road space and transit are well known. Unless these patterns are followed, we risk establishing transit dormitories as opposed to quality communities.

TOD planning should give special emphasis to promoting walking. Pedestrian Oriented Development is key to achieving a sustainable and efficient community. In a successful TOD, approximately one third of trips are made on foot. Thus, land use patterns and urban design features that encourage walking should be outlined in the Urban Renewal Commission initial study.

Although there is potential to create a TOD at each station on the network, not every TOD should be identical. The Urban Renewal Commission study would identify the appropriate scale and mix of uses to ensure compatibility with surrounding neighbourhoods while meeting current and future regional needs. Developer guidelines for the major TOD at the Noarlunga station area provide an example of the partnership structure that can achieve this balance.

The Urban Renewal Commission feasibility study should also consider the potential for creating a “feeder bus” system to connect more people to the transit network and TODs centres. More often than not bus trips are the most significant public transport element in TODs; even those with heavy and light rail elements. Bus services are flexible and affordable, they have minimal impact on land use and connectivity and they have a relatively minimal infrastructure requirement. While rail can provide an excellent backbone for TODs centres and networks, buses form a vital part of the transit mix. The design of the bus element in any TOD is a vital task.

While strategic planning is needed to make this concept a reality, planning alone will be sufficient. For example, in Adelaide, emergent TODs already exist on current rail and tram lines. However, no there is no development control mechanism to ensure the effective and appropriate development of TODs. A commitment by State and Local Government, through their cooperation behind the Urban Renewal Commission, is required to translate the TODs concept into a statutory planning mechanism that sets out the desired density and mix for different types of station areas. This necessitates the creation of clear examples, zoning and urban design
guidelines to support TOD. We should conduct extensive outreach during the study to help foster the necessary commitments by local government. Similarly, a broad spatial plan will be an essential tool in visually representing the impact TODs will have in a local area. This will aid in dispelling misconceptions about TODs and support their integration into local planning mechanisms.

On this matter, the importance of a partnership approach engaging between the State and local governments cannot be understated. There is potential for some resistance from communities regarding concerns about density, additional traffic, more schoolchildren, diversion of funds from roads and maintenance. The broader benefits of TODs to the Adelaide region and the State could be overlooked in the face of such pressure. As such, all stakeholder jurisdictions must partner in educating the community on the concept.

Better transit alone will not drive real estate investment in TODs. The reality is that there is more planning time, complexity, uncertainty and costs associated with TOD. However, by providing clarity of desired outcomes and a commitment to partnering, we believe the benefits of linking transit and our future growth can be attained.
Property Council of Australia – SA Division
Urban Design Committee

This paper has been prepared by the Property Council of Australia (SA Division) Urban Design Committee.

The Property Council (SA) would especially like to commend the contributions of Andrew Russell, Principle, QED (Chair) and Darren Bilsborough, Director of Sustainability, Parsons Brinckerhoff.

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