

# Practical TOD options



Washington State  
Department of  
**Commerce**

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# Overview

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- Walk through of state law requirements
- Support tools in development
- Best practices from case studies
- Practical application – Beckye Frey, City of Redmond
- Questions

# Transit-oriented development (TOD)

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Is centering development around transit with the intent to bring:

- new development supporting
- a “vibrant, walkable, accessible” community
- focused on health, and
- expanded multimodal transportation
- containing a range of community facilities, including parks and green spaces.



# TOD station areas *RCW 36.70A.030 and .840*

**Rail station areas:** (light rail, commuter rail or trolley) cities must designate a ½ mile around each station

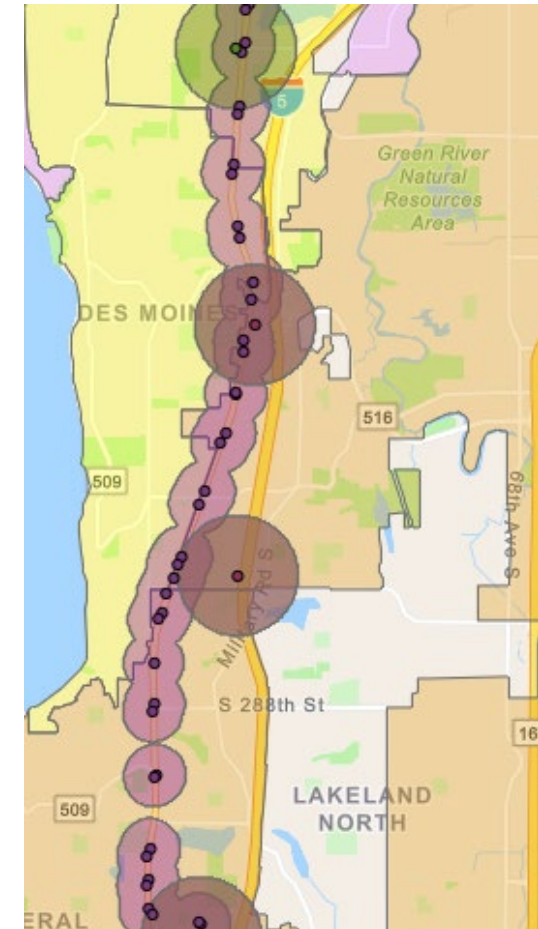
- allow development with a minimum average floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.5

**Bus rapid transit routes (BRT):** cities must designate a ¼ mile around BRT stations

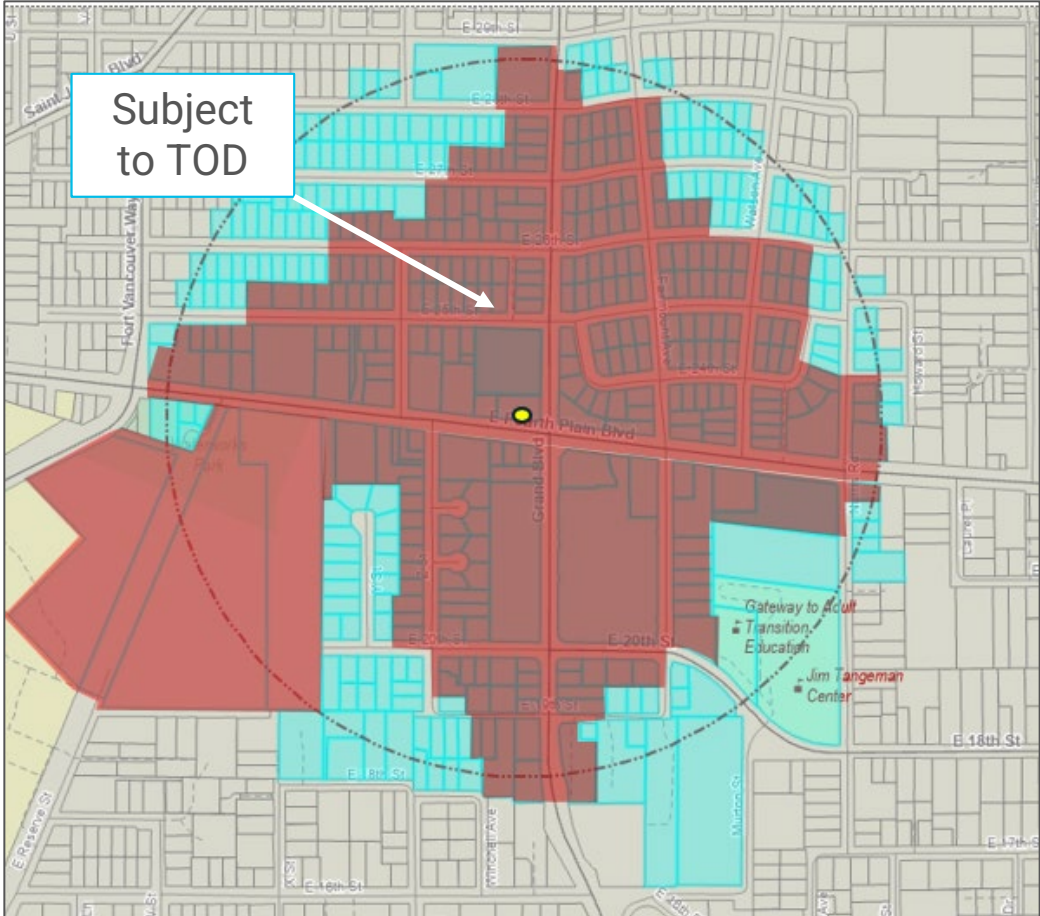
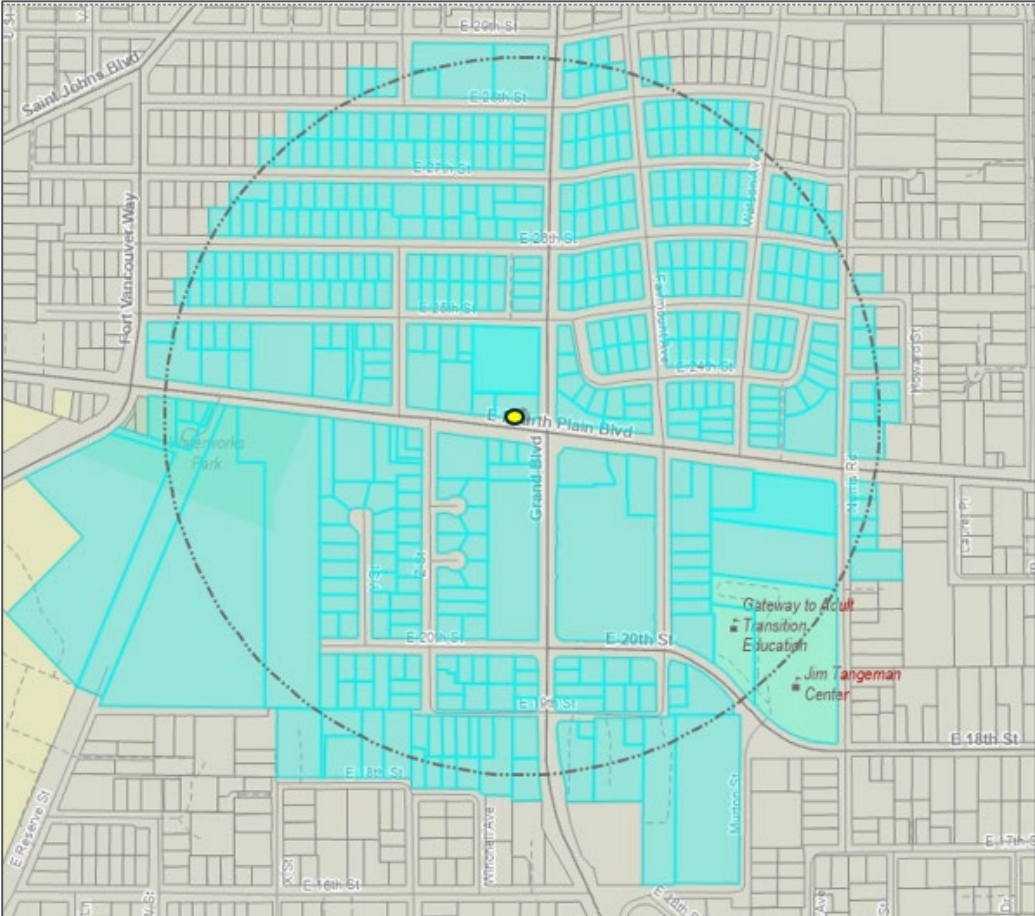
- allow development with a minimum average FAR of 2.5
- Allows 25% reduction with an average FAR of 3.0

## **May exclude:**

- Critical areas, designated shorelines, tsunami inundation area
- Industrial, manufacturing, agricultural lots
- Designated landmark, non-conforming lots, urban separators



# Vancouver example – walking distance

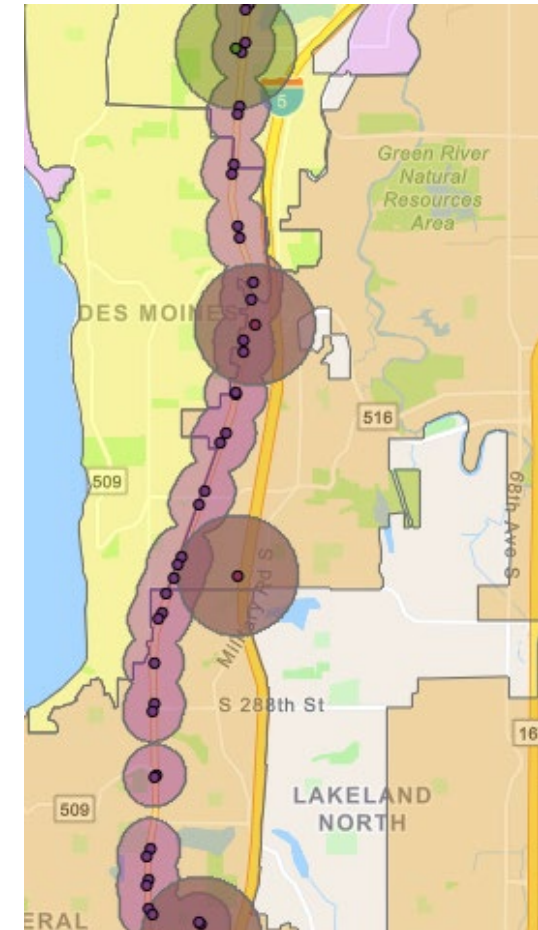


# TOD station areas *RCW 36.70A.840-842*

**Parking:** No parking requirements for residential and mixed-use development, except ADA and delivery parking.

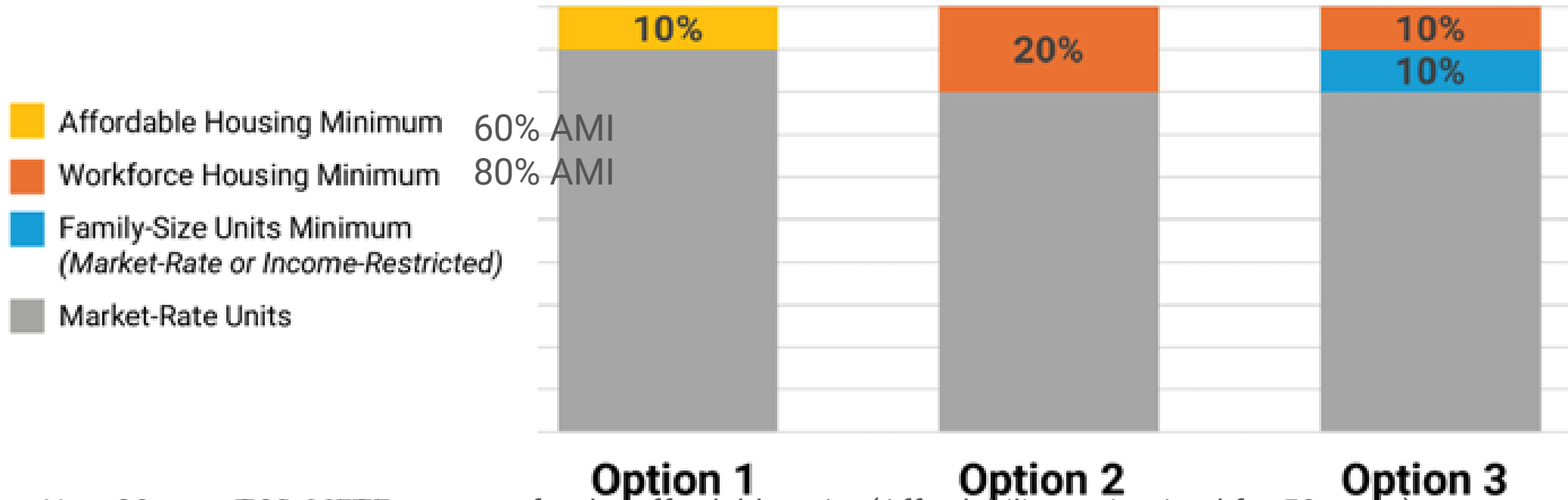
**Building requirements:** cities may apply objective development regulations required for other multifamily residential uses in the same zone, including tree retention.

**Mass timber construction:** cities must allow for greater heights and densities for mass timber construction.



# Affordable housing in TOD areas

**Required affordable housing provisions**, excluding areas with higher density, as of January 1, 2025, and buildings constructed on lots with lower income threshold or more affordable units, as of December 31, 2025



New 20-year TOD MFTE program for the affordable units (Affordability maintained for 50 years)

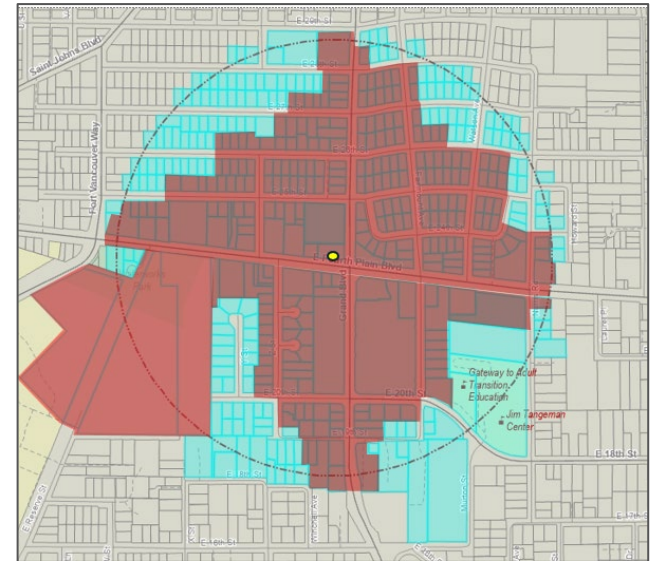
*\*Options to tailor requirements, including AMI level through RCW 36.70A.540 through inclusionary zoning*

# Commerce support materials

Materials	Project detail	Available
<b>Preemptive ordinance</b>	Draft preemptive ordinance	Summer 2026
<b>Quick guide</b>	Overview of state law	Spring 2026
<b>Case Studies Checklist</b>	<i>Existing examples of TOD</i> <i>Review of state requirements</i>	<i>On-line</i> <i>On-line</i>
<b>Guide</b>	Step by step station area planning and implementation of state law	December 2026
<b>Factsheets and Videos</b>	Financing, affordability, parking	December 2026

# Initial planning steps

- **Identify stops**
  - By state statute; or
  - For non-required cities, consider service levels
- **Define station area by walking distance**
  - Broken pathways? Define and plan:
    - Building sidewalks
    - Expand bike or multi-use paths
    - Redefining street grid
- **Design station areas**
  - Consider taller buildings and higher intensities closer to the stop with low-rise buildings closer to existing residential neighborhoods



# Best practices – planning

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- **Inventory station areas to create a baseline**
  - Land uses and character/culture – Cleveland Heathline
    - What is the current public attraction or service?
    - What are current challenges/opportunities – lack of connectivity, critical areas?
    - What uses and areas may be a risk of displacement?
    - Public/private parking?
    - Access and equity – what is available? What is needed?
  - Zoning standards
    - Primarily used to identify existing TOD zoning
    - Secondarily used to identify exception areas
    - Finally, used to understand current land uses or lack of land uses

# Best practices – planning over time

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- **Plan for change**
  - **Infrastructure, locations and capacities**
    - Define what is needed to support higher densities
    - Adjust capital facilities plan to expand service
    - Consider funding sources or tools – Cleveland Heartline example
      - Build partnerships with transit agencies, private developers, local businesses, hospitals, universities
      - Tax Increment Financing, grants, bonds, loans
  - **Parking**
    - Define existing public and private parking – Boulder Junction example
    - Plan for incremental reductions in parking requirements as TOD station areas develop with more amenities and higher densities

# Best practices – transit stops

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- **Transit stop(s)**
  - **Stop enhancements**
    - curbside boarding, precision docking technology, frequency of service, signal prioritization, off-board fare payment, real-time arrival information, emergency phones, and more
  - Institute for Transportation & Development Policy
    - BRT Standard recognition system: bronze, silver, or gold
    - Cleveland Heartline is a silver-standard BRT system along a 7.1 mile corridor

<https://itdp.org/library/standards-and-guides/the-bus-rapid-transit-standard/about-the-brt-standard/>

# Best practices – transit stations

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- **Developing public realm**
  - Creating or enhancing public spaces, destinations and areas of interest
  - Connecting with other forms of transportation
  - Include a mix of built and natural environment
  - Consider public art and gathering places
- Public land management structures
  - Local residents/agency/committee manage public and private leases based on local goals and objectives

# Practical application

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## Redmond Planning for Light Rail



# Planning decades ahead

*City priority, led by multiple leadership teams over several decades*

Corridor studies to determine routes initiated by city in advance of regional action

Development codes preserve light rail corridor and station areas

Coordination with adjacent jurisdictions and county on infrastructure needs, including transportation improvements

Regional stormwater facility plans to allow for urban development patterns, including 100% lot coverage

Capital and transportation projects funded and built before or at same time as light rail

Coordination with major employers, local businesses, and transit providers

Redmond 2050

# TOD planning focus areas

Creating TOD Focus Areas at 4 light rail stations

SEPA Planned Action and SEPA Infill Exemptions

Upzoning near light rail stations – density and building heights

Reducing or eliminating off-street parking requirements

Updating design standards for more urban forms, inc. towers

Equity in the Built Environment

Pedestrian system updates

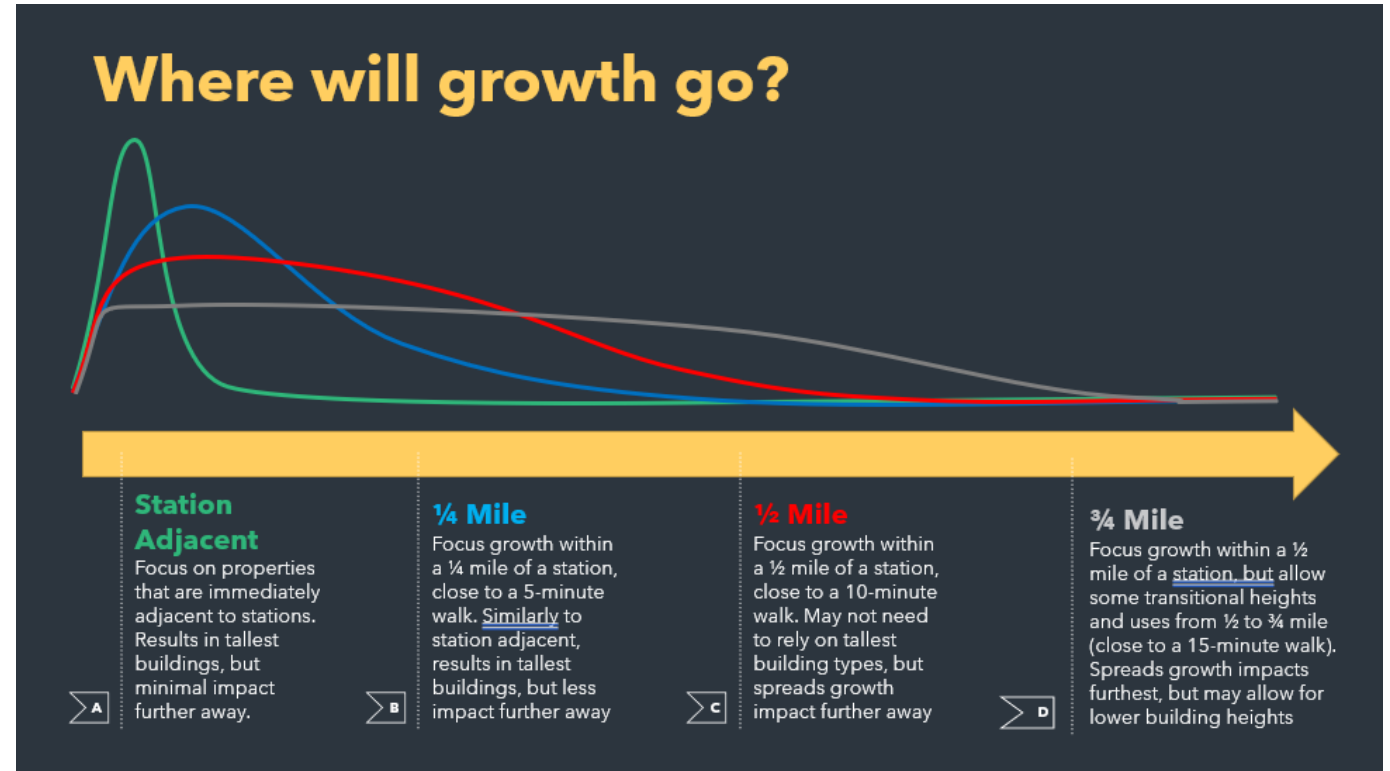
Updating incentive program



# Community conversations

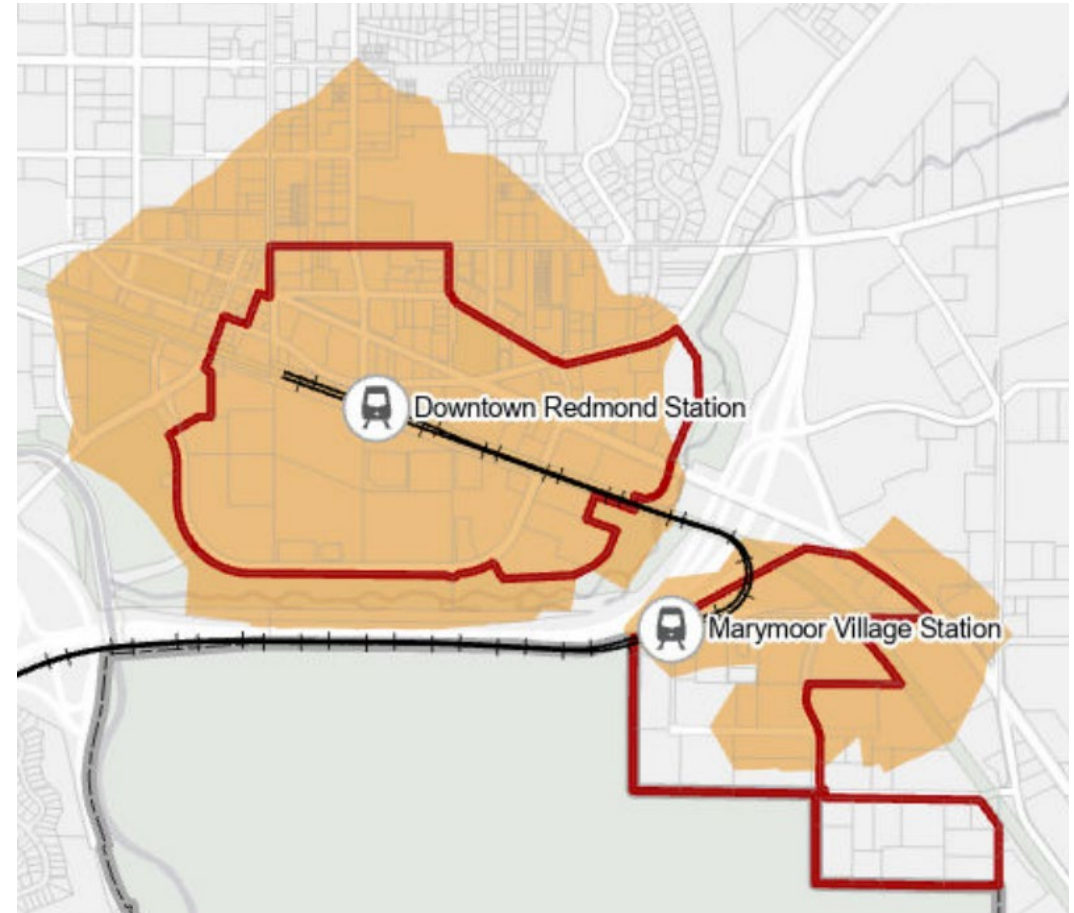
Framed around set amount of growth (not compromising on numbers), with look at how we distribute growth and impacts.

Tools included GIS modeling where community could adjust placement and see impacts to goals.



# TOD focus area considerations

- GIS layers issues impacted watershed analysis
  - Missing info or lines not connecting
  - Needed to include future projects too, not just built
- Excluded historic, manufacturing and other areas that we didn't want added pressure for redevelopment
- Physical constraints included freeway, highway, and large county park
- Other considerations: environmental, infrastructure, etc.



# Redmond 2050 SEPA regulation updates

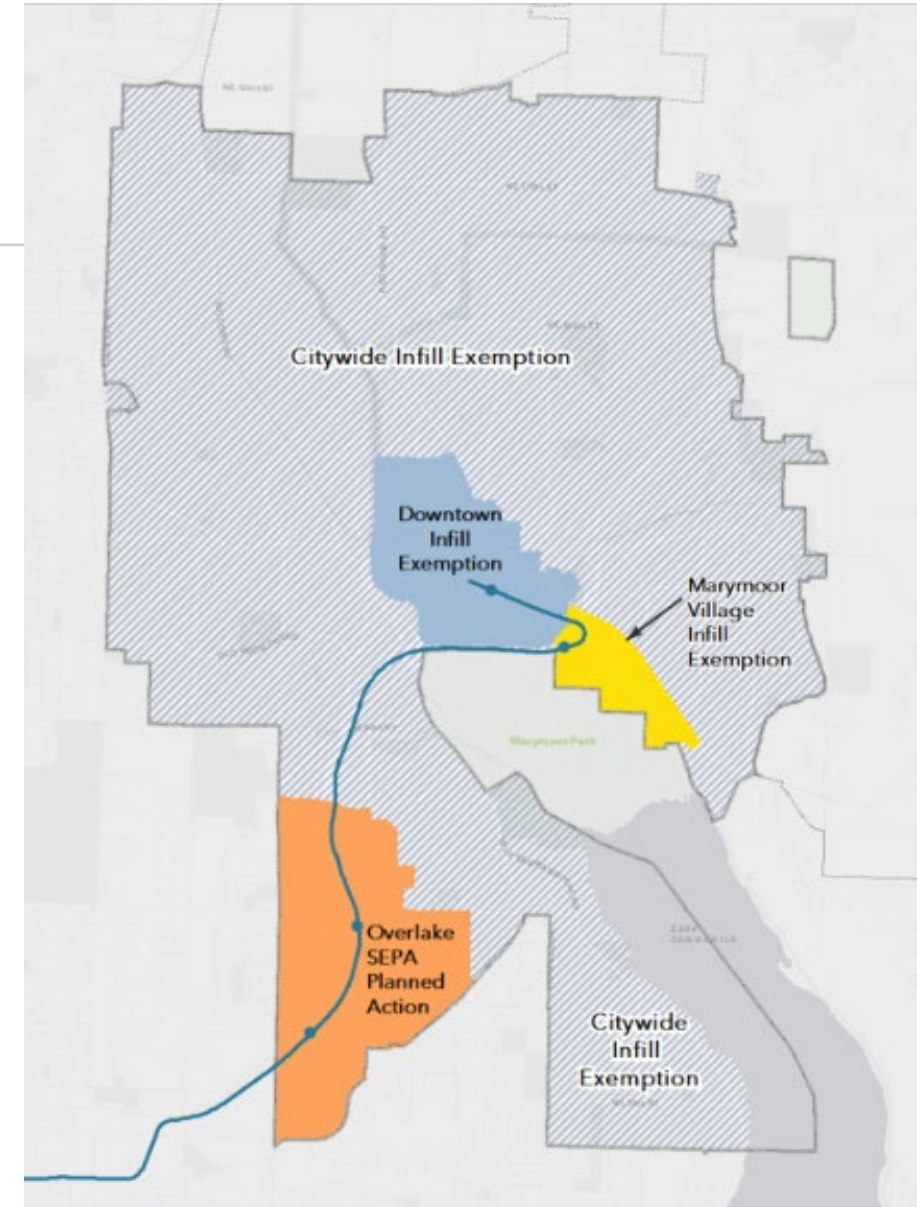
Expand  
categorical  
exemption  
thresholds

Adopt  
Infill  
Exemptions

Update  
Overlake  
Planned Action

Update procedures,  
general requirements

Recommendation: Do infill exemptions with comp plan update SEPA





## ***What we heard:***

**Maximize transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities**

**Implement equity and inclusion, sustainability, and resiliency**

**Honor multicultural history and present**

**Anti-displacement and retaining small businesses**

## ***What we did:***

- ✓ Updated policies and codes
- ✓ Deleted conflicts (including removing old view corridors, updating allowed uses, and making density changes)
- ✓ New and updated policies with emphasis on equitable TOD
- ✓ Support needs of community members with disabilities
- ✓ Adopted new mandatory green building requirements
- ✓ Adopting Overlake Intercultural District & Marymoor Arts & Culture District
- ✓ “Honoring and celebrating” – incentives, design standards, partnerships, identification of future projects
- ✓ Coordination with local Tribes, including incorporating their priorities into incentive program
- ✓ New and updated policies and programs
- ✓ New incentives

# Code revisions to support TOD

- Urban vs suburban form and patterns, including updated design standards
- Rezoning and Updating development standards (2x – 3x development capacity in some areas)
  - 30 stories in Overlake
  - 12 stories in Downtown and Marymoor
- Placemaking and public realm
- Standards for ground floor residential and retail
- Updates to how buildings connect to trails and urban pathways
- Limitations on ground floor non-residential uses to ensure pedestrian-oriented uses in key locations
- Ensured transit-oriented uses were allowed near stations, including food and services to support residents
- Preserving space for non-residential – including restricting stand-alone housing, “no net loss” of commercial space, and mandating minimum first floor ceiling heights
- Anti-displacement programs, codes, and incentives

# Equitable TOD (eTOD) focus areas

Planning with diversity in mind, including existing cultural diversity and coordination with Tribes



Planning ways to minimize or mitigate displacement

Updating mandatory affordable housing requirements and incentives

Planning with existing community members, including local ethnic businesses, community members with disabilities

Planning for an inclusive neighborhood, focusing on community members with disabilities and language barriers



Planning spaces and meeting needs for all ages and genders



Planning for a range of income levels and family sizes and types

Planning ways to fill the gaps in current services and meet needs of growth



[redmond.gov/2057/Inclusive-Design](https://redmond.gov/2057/Inclusive-Design)

# Inclusive to who?

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- All ages – children, teens, etc. (looking at lower level, safety)
- All genders (safety and activities)
- Cultural (spaces and events, physical representation in city)
- Abilities (access, safety, independence)
  - Autism, blind, deaf, etc.
- Income levels (transit access, times for businesses/transit, places to be that doesn't cost money)
- Third shift / 18-hour city (equal opportunity for access to services)

# Community based organizations (CBOs)

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- Used grants to expand and deepen community collaboration
- Hired Eastside for All to coordinate deeper outreach with several other CBOs as sub-contractors to engage with hard to reach or other typically under-represented groups
- CBOs held design events, activities, transportation to/from city events, and co-created materials
- Language support based on need, and not just on commonly used languages

# Community identified accessibility priorities

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## Accessible Housing

Incentives for housing with accessibility features (no step entry, wide hallways, etc.) and for fully ADA accessible housing units, to increase housing options for community members with disabilities.

## IDD Housing

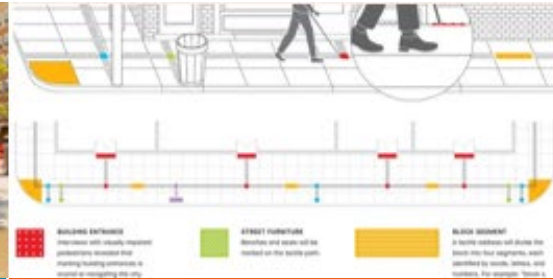
Redmond has an identified need for housing for community members with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Incentives for units added to the state's IDD housing program (design standards apply, and may be eligible for state funding opportunities).

# eTOD code revisions



Complete neighborhood priorities



Universal Design standards and incentives



Light rail accessibility Studies



Increasing ADA parking and updating parking garage standards



Updating design standards



Updating open space and wayfinding standards



Inclusive Neighborhood Pilot Project



Updating incentive program with equity and cultural bonuses

# Light rail accessibility study

- **Goal:** Comfortable and safe access to/from the stations for all ages and abilities
- **Review:** Public realm design, which includes streets and sidewalks, lighting, seating, wayfinding, etc.
- **Activities:** Interviews with residents and organizations, focus group, Walk-and-Roll audits
- **Outcomes:**
  - New intersection and ramps design
  - Wayfinding improvements and standards, and
  - Code updates and future projects identified



# Pilot project: inclusive neighborhood

We are incorporating several inclusive design elements into Overlake, Marymoor Village, and Downtown, so that our areas around our new light rail stations fit within our goals for equitable transit-oriented development.

**There are opportunities to go further in Marymoor Village through design standards and incentives.**

- Housing for community members with disabilities, with additional incentives for housing for community members with autism and/or developmental disabilities.
- Intentional design for both the neighborhood to be as accessible as possible – the buildings, site, and blocks, with a specific focus on housing and public spaces.
- Incentivizing jobs and services for the elderly and community members with disabilities.
- Tribal partnerships for housing and sharable community spaces



# New incentive program

Points based menu of options

Stackable bonuses based on outcomes

TOD Focus Areas have different priorities and greater incentives

Adds equity, anti-displacement, and other Redmond 2050 goals and priorities

BIPOC and small business protections, preservation



*First few years get the most benefit, highest incentive*



Triple incentives for mass timber projects for first few projects, hoping for mass timber tower in Overlake

# New incentive program

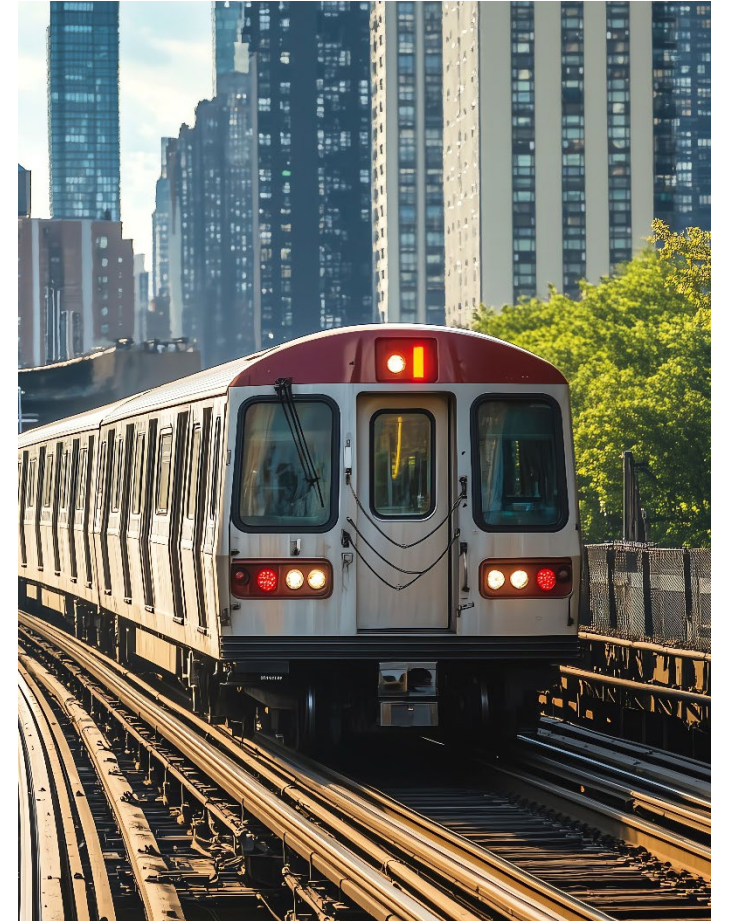
- **TOD Focus Areas have different priorities based on needs analysis and community priorities**
  - Existing and predicted gaps in services
  - Complete Neighborhoods goals
  - Environmental goals
- Significant focus on equity, families, art, and culture
- Coordination on Tribal projects/goals

Projects in centers must have at least one option from five main categories:

1. Affordable Housing
2. Green Building
3. Inclusive Design
4. Building Site, Form, and Uses (anti-displacement, social services, etc.)
5. Open Space, Art, Public Amenities

# Tasks for successful TODs

- **Establish policies to support TOD development**
- **Research local conditions**
- **Consider corridor plan, subarea plan or other planning activity**
- **Adopt antidisplacement policies & implantation strategies**
- **Modify development regulations over time**
- **Support new development with infrastructure**
- **Include best practices for eTOD based on local community needs!**



# Resources

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**Redmond:** [redmond.gov/2057/Inclusive-Design](https://redmond.gov/2057/Inclusive-Design)

**Commerce TOD webpage:** [commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/housing-planning/transit-oriented-development/](https://commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/housing-planning/transit-oriented-development/)

**WSDOT Transportation Efficient Communities webpage:** [transportationefficient.org/](https://transportationefficient.org/)

**Sound Communities:** [soundcommunitiesps.org/new-tools/](https://soundcommunitiesps.org/new-tools/)

**Puget Sound Regional Council Transportation Plan:** [psrc.org/planning-2050/regional-transportation-plan](https://psrc.org/planning-2050/regional-transportation-plan)

**MRSC TOD webpage:** [mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/zoning/transit-oriented-development](https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/zoning/transit-oriented-development)

**TOD Institute (rail) webpage:** [tod.org/](https://tod.org/)

**Institute for Transportation & Development Policy (BRT) webpage:** [itdp.org/library/standards-and-guides/the-bus-rapid-transit-standard/about-the-brt-standard/](https://itdp.org/library/standards-and-guides/the-bus-rapid-transit-standard/about-the-brt-standard/)

# Thank you!

## Questions ?



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[www.commerce.wa.gov](http://www.commerce.wa.gov)



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