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Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and Its Influence on Land-Use around Metro Corridors

Diwakar Singh

Master of Urban and Regional Planning Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam Technical University Lucknow, India

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Abstract - *Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) has emerged as a critical planning framework to align land-use patterns with high-capacity public transport systems. While Indian cities have adopted TOD policies alongside metro rail expansion, land-use transformation around station areas remains uneven. This paper focuses specifically on identifying and analyzing the key TOD parameters and their corresponding implementation tools that influence land-use change within metro influence zones. Based on policy review and comparative analysis of selected Indian TOD case studies, the research demonstrates that effective land-use transformation depends not only on density enhancement but on the coordinated application of regulatory, urban design, and land management tools. The findings highlight that TOD functions as an implementation-driven planning framework, where parameters define planning intent and tools determine spatial outcomes.*

Key Words: **Transit-Oriented Development, TOD Parameters, Implementation Tools, Land-Use Change, Metro Corridors, Urban Planning, India**

1. INTRODUCTION

Rapid urbanization in Indian cities has resulted in increasing travel demand, urban sprawl, congestion, and environmental stress. Conventional land-use patterns characterized by low density and single-use zoning have intensified dependence on private vehicles, leading to inefficient urban mobility systems. To address these challenges, metro rail systems have been developed across major Indian cities as high-capacity public transport corridors.

While metro infrastructure significantly improves accessibility, the areas surrounding metro stations often fail to exhibit corresponding land-use transformation. Many station areas remain low-density, mono-functional, poorly connected, and pedestrian-unfriendly. This disconnects between transit investment and land-use planning reduces the potential benefits of metro systems.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) provides a framework to align land use with transit accessibility by promoting compact, high-density, mixed-use, and walk able development within defined metro influence zones. Although India has adopted national and city-level TOD policies, the effectiveness of these policies depends on how TOD parameters are translated into implementation tools. This paper focuses on analyzing these parameters and tools to understand their influence on land-use change around metro corridors.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Urban planning literature consistently recognizes Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) as an effective approach for integrating land use with high-capacity public transport systems. Early studies conceptualized TOD as compact, high-density, and mixed-use development focused around transit stations, aimed at reducing automobile dependence and urban sprawl. Subsequent empirical research established that land-use characteristics such as density, functional diversity, and pedestrian-oriented design significantly influence travel behavior and transit usage

Later frameworks expanded TOD analysis beyond proximity to transit, emphasizing accessibility quality, street connectivity, and urban design as critical determinants of station-area performance. Research also highlighted that metro-induced accessibility often leads to land value appreciation and redevelopment pressure; however, land-use transformation is uneven without supportive planning controls.

In the Indian context, studies indicate that although TOD policies promote higher FAR and mixed land use near metro corridors, implementation outcomes remain inconsistent due to fragmented land ownership, rigid zoning, and weak walkability infrastructure. Recent policy and practice-oriented literature converge on the view that TOD effectiveness depends on coordinated application of regulatory, design, and land management tools rather than density incentives alone.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative and analytical research approach to examine the parameters and implementation tools of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) influencing land-use transformation around metro corridors in Indian cities. The research is based on secondary data, including academic literature, national and city-level TOD policies, development control regulations, and urban design guidelines. A focused literature and policy review is undertaken to identify key TOD parameters such as

density, mixed land use, accessibility, walkability, built form, and land management mechanisms, along with the tools used to operationalize them.

A case study–based comparative methodology is employed to analyses selected TOD projects representing different urban and institutional contexts. Each case study is examined to understand how TOD parameters are implemented through regulatory, design, financial, and institutional tools, and how these influence land-use outcomes within metro influence zones. Comparative synthesis of findings is used to identify common patterns, implementation gaps, and planning inferences relevant to TOD practice in Indian cities.

4. TOD PARAMETERS AND IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) operates through a set of interrelated planning parameters that guide land-use transformation within metro influence zones. These parameters define the desired spatial, functional, and mobility outcomes of TOD. However, the effectiveness of each parameter depends on the implementation tools through which it is operationalized. The following section explains how specific regulatory, design, financial, and institutional tools are used to cater to individual TOD parameters and translate TOD intent into on-ground land-use change.

4.1 Density (FAR / FSI)

Transport infrastructure such as highways, metro corridors, Density is the primary quantitative parameter of TOD and is typically regulated through Floor Area Ratio (FAR) or Floor Space Index (FSI). To operationalize density objectives, planning authorities employ tools such as base FAR enhancement within TOD zones, distance-based FAR zoning with the highest permissible FAR near metro stations, and incentive FAR linked to redevelopment, plot amalgamation, or provision of public amenities. In several Indian cities, premium FAR mechanisms are also used, allowing developers to purchase additional development rights. These tools collectively enable vertical densification around transit stations, support compact urban form, and create a critical mass of population and employment necessary to sustain metro ridership.

4.2 Mixed Land Use

Mixed land use is a core TOD parameter that promotes functional diversity and reduces travel distances. This parameter is implemented through mixed-use zoning regulations that permit residential, commercial, institutional, and recreational uses within the same development parcel. Mandatory vertical mixed-use provisions are commonly used in core TOD zones, requiring non-residential uses at lower floors with residential or office uses above. The removal of single-use zoning restrictions and the imposition of minimum non-residential use thresholds further strengthen functional integration. These zoning-based tools ensure that TOD areas support continuous activity throughout the day and enhance the economic vitality of station precincts.

4.4 TOD Influence Zone

The TOD influence zone defines the spatial extent within which TOD regulations apply and establishes gradients of development intensity. This parameter is operationalized through TOD overlay zoning, which introduces TOD-specific controls without altering base zoning classifications. Ring-based zoning tools are used to demarcate core, intermediate, and transition zones around metro stations, each with differentiated FAR, land-use, and design regulations. In some cases, walk shed-based delineation is employed to account for actual pedestrian accessibility rather than fixed radial distances. These tools ensure regulatory clarity and spatial consistency in TOD implementation.

4.5 Accessibility and Connectivity

Accessibility is a fundamental TOD parameter that determines the ease of reaching metro stations and surrounding land uses. While proximity provides potential accessibility, actual accessibility is achieved through connectivity-focused tools. These include street network restructuring, block size regulations, minimum intersection density norms, and integration of local streets with arterial road hierarchies. By enhancing permeability and route choice, these tools expand the functional catchment of metro stations and strengthen the responsiveness of land use to transit accessibility.

4.6 Walkability

Walkability is a defining qualitative parameter of TOD and is essential for first- and last-mile connectivity. Walkability objectives are implemented through urban design tools such as universal footpath design standards, pedestrian-priority streets, safe crossing regulations, and requirements for shaded walkways and street furniture. These tools ensure continuous, safe, and comfortable pedestrian environments, converting transit proximity into effective access. Improved walkability also supports ground-floor commercial activity and reinforces mixed-use development within TOD zones.

4.7 Non-Motorized Transport (NMT)

Non-motorized transport forms an integral component of TOD by supporting sustainable mobility and transit access. NMT parameters are operationalized through tools such as dedicated cycle track provision within TOD zones,

mandatory cycle parking at metro stations and major developments, pedestrian-only or low-traffic zones, and direct NMT connections to station entrances. These tools reduce dependence on private vehicles, strengthen last-mile connectivity, and enhance the overall sustainability of TOD environments.

4.8 Build Form and Building Height

Built form and building height parameters regulate the spatial configuration and visual character of TOD development. These parameters are implemented through road-width-based height controls, ground coverage limits that encourage vertical growth, step-down height regulations beyond core TOD zones, and street-height ratio controls to maintain pedestrian comfort. Such tools translate density allowances into context-sensitive urban form and ensure that high-rise development remains integrated with the public realm rather than creating isolated enclaves.

4.9 Active Frontages

Active frontages are a critical TOD parameter that enhances street vitality, safety, and economic activity. This parameter is catered to through regulatory tools such as mandatory ground-floor commercial or semi-public uses along TOD streets, facade transparency requirements, zero or minimal setback regulations, and minimum frontage activation percentages. These tools ensure that buildings engage directly with the street, support pedestrian movement, and create lively public spaces essential for successful TOD outcomes.

4.10 Land Value Capture

Land value capture is a financial parameter that enables public authorities to recover a portion of the land value increase generated by metro investment. This parameter is implemented through tools such as premium FAR charges, betterment levies, impact fees, and monetization of development rights through transferable development rights or sale of additional FAR. These instruments align public investment with private development benefits and provide financial resources for infrastructure provision, public realm improvements, and affordable housing within TOD zones.

4.11 Land Assembly and Redevelopment

Land assembly is a critical enabling parameter for TOD, particularly in built-up and brownfield contexts. This parameter is operationalized through plot amalgamation incentives, land pooling or land readjustment schemes, redevelopment-led TOD policies, and relaxation of development controls for assembled parcels. These tools address fragmented land ownership, facilitate coordinated redevelopment, and enable optimal utilization of TOD incentives.

4.12 Land Assembly and Redevelopment

Institutional coordination is an overarching TOD parameter that determines implementation effectiveness. It is facilitated through tools such as TOD-specific Special Purpose Vehicles, single-window clearance mechanisms, and inter-agency coordination committees involving planning authorities, metro agencies, and urban local bodies. These institutional tools ensure that TOD parameters and regulations are implemented coherently and consistently rather than in isolation.

5. TOD POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

5.1 National-Level TOD Policy Framework

Transit-Oriented Development in India is guided by the National Transit-Oriented Development Policy (2017) issued by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. The policy provides a strategic framework for integrating land use and public transport by encouraging compact, high-density, mixed-use, and walk able development within 500–800 meters of mass transit stations. Key policy directions include FAR-based densification, mixed land-use promotion, and multimodal integration, prioritization of pedestrians and non-motorized transport, and inclusion of affordable housing. The policy functions as a guiding document and requires contextual adoption by states and cities.

5.2 City-Level TOD Regulations

At the urban scale, TOD principles are implemented through amendments to master plans, development control regulations, and TOD overlay zones. Cities such as Delhi, Ahmedabad, and Pune have adopted TOD regulations that prescribe distance-based FAR zoning, mandatory mixed-use development, built-form and height controls, and redevelopment incentives within metro influence zones. These city-level regulations translate national TOD objectives into enforceable statutory provisions tailored to local planning conditions and land ownership patterns.

5.3 Urban Design and Street Design Guidelines

Design-oriented TOD guidelines prepared by organizations such as the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy complement statutory policies by focusing on the quality of the public realm. These guidelines emphasize walkability, street connectivity, fine-grain block structure, active frontages, and safe pedestrian infrastructure. Such design standards play a critical role in enhancing first- and last-mile connectivity and improving the functional performance of TOD areas.

5.4 Implementation and Institutional Framework

Effective TOD implementation depends on coordination between planning authorities, metro agencies, and urban local bodies. Institutional mechanisms such as TOD overlay zoning, Special Purpose Vehicles, and inter-agency coordination committees are commonly used to operationalize TOD policies. These frameworks ensure that regulatory controls, infrastructure provision, and urban design interventions are implemented in an integrated and consistent manner.

6. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Urban Planning and Development Authorities

Urban planning and development authorities play a central role in TOD implementation by framing statutory planning instruments such as master plans, development control regulations, and TOD overlay zoning. These authorities are responsible for delineating TOD influence zones, prescribing FAR and mixed-use norms, and enforcing built-form and urban design controls. Their regulatory capacity directly influences the extent to which TOD parameters are translated into land-use transformation around metro corridors.

6.2 Transit Agencies and Metro Rail Corporations

Metro rail corporations are key stakeholders as providers and operators of mass transit infrastructure. Their decisions regarding station location, access design, interchange planning, and integration with feeder systems significantly shape TOD potential. Effective TOD outcomes require close coordination between transit agencies and planning authorities to align station-area development with transit accessibility rather than treating metro projects as stand-alone transport investments.

6.3 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)

Urban Local Bodies are responsible for on-ground implementation of TOD through development approvals, local infrastructure provision, and public realm improvements. Their role includes street redesign, pedestrian and non-motorized transport infrastructure, parking management, and enforcement of urban design regulations such as active frontages. The institutional and financial capacity of ULBs strongly influences the quality and consistency of TOD implementation.

6.3 State Governments and Policy-Making Bodies

State governments provide the legislative and policy framework enabling TOD adoption. Their role includes notifying TOD policies, amending town planning and municipal acts, and enabling land assembly and value capture mechanisms. Alignment between state-level policy direction and city-level planning instruments is critical for scaling TOD initiatives across metropolitan regions.

6.4 Private Sector and Landowners

Private developers and landowners influence TOD outcomes through redevelopment decisions, land assembly participation, and investment in high-density and mixed-use projects. Their response to TOD incentives such as higher FAR, redevelopment bonuses, and infrastructure improvements determines the pace and extent of land-use transformation. Public–private coordination is therefore essential for successful TOD implementation.

7. CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

7.1 Case Study 1: Karkardooma TOD Pilot

The Karkardooma TOD Pilot represents a redevelopment-led TOD model implemented on predominantly public land within an existing urban fabric. The project applies TOD parameters through high FAR provisions, mandatory mixed land use, and compact block planning within the metro influence zone. Density is operationalized using distance-based FAR zoning, allowing maximum development intensity near the station core. Mixed land use is enforced through vertical zoning controls, ensuring commercial and public uses at lower floors and residential or office uses above. Walkability and accessibility are addressed through fine-grain street networks, pedestrian-priority streets, and active frontage regulations along primary TOD corridors. Strong plot amalgamation norms and redevelopment incentives function as key implementation tools, enabling coordinated land assembly. The case demonstrates that effective TOD outcomes are achieved when regulatory control, land ownership, and urban design tools are aligned.

7.2 Case Study 2: GIFT City Metro TOD (Ahmedabad–Gandhinagar)

GIFT City illustrates a Greenfield, master-planned TOD model characterized by unified land ownership and institutional control. TOD parameters are embedded at the planning stage through high-density zoning, mixed-use superblocks, and vertical development typologies aligned with metro accessibility. Density is implemented via high permissible FAR and unrestricted building heights, while mixed land use is achieved through integrated master plan zoning rather than plot-level controls. Accessibility and walkability are supported by planned pedestrian networks, direct station integration, and controlled vehicular circulation. Land assembly is not a constraint due to single-agency land control, and land value capture mechanisms are embedded through premium development rights. While the case demonstrates strong

land-use–transport integration, its applicability to existing cities is limited due to exceptional institutional and land conditions.

7.3 Case Study 3: Pune Metro TOD

The Pune Metro TOD represents a TOD overlay approach applied to an existing, privately owned urban fabric. TOD parameters are introduced through overlay zoning, FAR incentives, and mixed-use permissions within defined influence zones around metro stations. However, land-use transformation remains uneven due to fragmented land ownership, limited plot amalgamation, and weaker enforcement of urban design controls. Walkability improvements and NMT integration are primarily corridor-focused, with interior areas remaining less accessible. Although density incentives are available, their uptake is selective, highlighting the limitations of FAR-based tools in the absence of strong land assembly and institutional mechanisms. The Pune case underscores the gap between TOD policy intent and implementation capacity in brownfield contexts.

Table-1: Comparative Analysis of TOD Case Studies

Aspect/Parameters	Karkardooma TOD Pilot	GIFT City Metro TOD	Pune Metro TOD
TOD Context	Brownfield redevelopment	Greenfield, master-planned	Brownfield with TOD overlay
Land Ownership Pattern	Predominantly public land	Unified, single-agency control	Fragmented private ownership
Density Implementation	Distance-based FAR zoning, incentive FAR	High FAR through master plan zoning	FAR incentives via overlay zoning
Mixed Land Use	Mandatory vertical mixed use	Integrated mixed-use blocks	Permitted but not mandatory
Walkability & Connectivity	Fine-grain street network, pedestrian-priority streets	Planned pedestrian networks	Corridor-focused, limited internal connectivity
Land Assembly Tools	Plot amalgamation and redevelopment norms	Not required due to unified ownership	Largely absent
Key Implementation Tools	TOD overlay zoning, urban design controls	Master plan control, premium development rights	Overlay zoning, FAR incentives
Land-Use Transformation Outcome	High and coordinated	High but context-specific	Partial and uneven

8. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Transit-Oriented Development should be implemented as an integrated planning and governance framework rather than a standalone density regulation. The study indicates that higher FAR provisions alone are insufficient to achieve effective land-use transformation around metro corridors unless supported by mixed-use zoning, walkability-focused urban design controls, and land assembly mechanisms. In built-up urban areas, proactive redevelopment and land management tools are essential to overcome fragmented ownership and enable coordinated TOD outcomes. Furthermore, prioritizing pedestrian and non-motorized transport infrastructure and strengthening institutional coordination between planning authorities, transit agencies, and urban local bodies are critical for translating transit accessibility into compact, functional, and sustainable urban form.

9. CONCLUSION

Transit-Oriented Development can effectively guide compact and sustainable urban growth around metro corridors only when planning parameters are supported by appropriate implementation tools. While density and mixed-use policies are necessary, successful TOD outcomes depend on coordinated land assembly, walkability-oriented urban design, and strong institutional collaboration. The findings reinforce that TOD must be treated as an implementation-driven planning approach rather than a standalone regulatory or density-based intervention.

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