

Transit-oriented development — the future of city planning

<https://www.devex.com/news/transit-oriented-development--the-future-of-city-planning-83280>

By Carlos Santamaria 10 April 2014



An aerial view of Guangzhou, China, location of one of eight successful Transit-Oriented Developments. Photo by: [ilya](#) / CC BY-NC-ND

As the world population continues to rise and more people move to cities, urban planning will increasingly become a priority in development efforts, which traditionally have focused on other areas such as health, education or food security.

That will require a new brand of partnerships between donors and implementing partners with mayors and city governments in developing nations, which can benefit from not only official development assistance funds but also technical assistance to help them carry out their future real estate development in a truly sustainable way.

One such initiative will be launched on Thursday at the [World Urban Forum](#) in Medellin, Colombia.

Transit-Oriented Developments are projects that are vertical, accessible by foot and bicycle, and plug into mass transit, so cities can continue to grow while minimizing their climate change footprint.

Eight successful TOD projects around the world — three of which are in developing countries, namely Brazil (Curitiba), China (Guangzhou) and India (Pune) — are highlighted by the [Institute for Transportation and Development Policy](#) in an [interactive map](#) that uses a [TOD standard evaluation tool](#). This guide takes into consideration eight key elements to integrating sustainable transport, land use planning and sustainable urban design.

ITDP highlighted how TODs can provide substantial cost savings for both city governments and citizens. For instance, a recent [World Bank](#) study shows how China could save \$1.4 trillion in urban infrastructure costs if its urban growth development plans focused on density rather than sprawl. This alone already costs the country \$300 billion annually in health problems caused by air pollution.

Also, the [World Health Organization's](#) 2013 Global Status Report on Road Safety noted that 1.24 million people worldwide die every year in road traffic accidents. As urban population rises, TOD projects could help reduce our dependence on automobiles, thus saving lives now lost on the road.

“There are many places where the car-centric lifestyle is becoming a thing of the past,” ITDP CEO Walter Hook said in a statement. “If a billion people in the developing world move to car-oriented cities, the social and environmental toll could be catastrophic. Fortunately, real estate developers are increasingly responding to these new priorities embraced by city governments and people of all economic means.”