

Call for Papers for a special issue on

Transit-Oriented Development in Built-up Areas

in the journal:

Raumforschung und Raumordnung | Spatial Research and Planning (RuR)

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Scope

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is regarded internationally as a key concept in sustainable regional, urban and neighbourhood development. Transit-Oriented Development aims to link settlement development with efficient public transport, both spatially and functionally. The focus is on compact, mixed-use neighbourhoods with good accessibility and a high quality of life, and on sustainable, climate-adapted and socially responsible spatial development. This special issue concentrates in particular on Transit-Oriented Development in built-up areas and examines the potential, challenges and governance approaches involved in integrated settlement and transport development across different types of areas.

Transit-Oriented Development was established in the 1980s and 1990s as an international guiding principle for sustainable settlement and transport development. However, it builds on older European concepts of integrated settlement and transport development, such as Copenhagen's Finger Plan or the axis-based approaches of German regional planning. Modern TOD approaches go beyond these traditional concepts by placing greater emphasis on integrated governance, the quality of public spaces, mixed-use development, active forms of mobility, and the involvement of private and civil society actors. Furthermore, discussion increasingly focuses on issues of social participation, housing development and land policy, as well-connected locations can promote sustainable infill development but also trigger gentrification and displacement processes.

Transit-Oriented Development has gained legitimacy from evidenced outcomes. Numerous studies show that the residents of TOD neighbourhoods use public transport for a higher proportion of their journeys, and that their dependence on cars is lower. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that Transit-Oriented Development has only been able to curb global trends towards suburbanisation to a limited extent. In most OECD countries – including Germany – monofunctional and low-density forms of settlement development continue to dominate, which has been shown to increase the settlement system's dependence on cars. This indicates significant institutional barriers to embedding TOD principles in regional and municipal settlement and transport planning.

Similarly in Germany, Transit-Oriented Development has not been thoroughly accepted as a guiding principle for regional and urban development. Although German regional planning has pursued approaches geared towards integrated settlement and transport development for decades, a systematic alignment of settlement development with TOD principles has only been evident in a few regions. This applies both to the development of new settlement areas on greenfield land and to the further development of built-up areas. Different challenges arise depending on the spatial scale. At the regional level, the focus is on managing settlement growth, accessibility and infrastructure coordination, while at the municipal and neighbourhood levels the emphasis is particularly on mixed-use development, the quality of open spaces, the design of public spaces, and social and land policy frameworks. Consequently, many local authorities face considerable challenges in coordinating and linking settlement development, mobility, open space development and infrastructure planning against a backdrop of limited resources, complex governance structures and, in some cases, demographic decline.

The comparative lack of attention paid to TOD concepts in German regional and urban development policy corresponds with the very limited state of research in this area. Research to date has focused primarily on the potential for settlement development around local rail transport stations, issues relating to operationalisation and individual case studies.

Little attention has been paid to how TOD principles can be systematically applied to the development of established built environments. Furthermore, international TOD research has focused predominantly on growing metropolitan areas. In contrast, issues relating to the development of built-up areas in small and medium-sized towns, railway station districts, and suburban and rural areas are becoming increasingly important. It is precisely these areas that raise specific questions: How can TOD approaches be designed under conditions of limited growth prospects and restricted local authority scope for action? What role do regional cooperation and social and land policy frameworks play? While there is extensive international research on Transit-Oriented Development, there is a lack of systematic investigations of the transferability and implementation of TOD principles in different types of areas in Germany. This is where the special issue comes into play.

Aims and Research Questions

The above observation – that Transit-Oriented Development has not yet established itself in Germany as a guiding principle for settlement and transport development – forms the starting point for this special issue. In light of the priority given to infill development in the Building Code, the focus here is on developments within built-up areas, although consideration of Transit-Oriented Development as a form of urban expansion is not explicitly ruled out.

It is intended that the papers in this special issue should combine empirical findings, theoretical perspectives and planning experience, and should in particular address the following three points:

1. Transit-Oriented Development as a spatial development concept

- To what extent has Transit-Oriented Development – in terms of settlement development and densification around local rail transport stops – been seen in Germany to date?

- What differences can be observed between development in built-up areas and urban expansion, as well as between large, medium-sized and small towns, and between suburban and rural areas?
 - What spatial effects can be observed in terms of mobility, land use, climate adaptation, the development of open spaces and social development?
2. Planning, governance and implementation on different scales
- What role do TOD principles play at the various levels of spatial planning, from municipal land-use planning through regional planning to development strategies for urban regions and metropolitan areas?
 - To what extent do regional and urban development plans adhere to TOD principles, and what differences are evident in this regard between the federal states and regions?
 - What forms of multi-level governance and inter-municipal cooperation support the successful implementation of Transit-Oriented Development?
3. Conditions for success, obstacles and future prospects
- To what extent are TOD principles used in strategies for the development of built-up areas and urban regeneration, and to what extent do they correlate with the upgrading of the transport facilities of an existing railway station?
 - What institutional barriers can be identified as contributing to the relatively limited significance of Transit-Oriented Development in the German context?
 - What role is played here by land policy instruments, funding models, housing market developments and issues of social justice, such as affordable housing, gentrification and displacement?
 - What factors contribute to the success of TOD strategies and projects?

We particularly invite empirical papers that highlight real-world developments and reflect on planning experiences. These may take the form of regional or local case studies, as well as analyses based on geodata or statistics. Submissions that address the interfaces between urban, transport, regional and open-space planning, incorporating both theoretical and empirical or practice-oriented perspectives, are especially welcome.

We are seeking work on the following topics:

- Transit-Oriented Development in large, medium and small towns, as well as in suburban and rural areas
- Regional planning approaches to aligning settlement development with local rail transport
- Municipal planning tools for implementing Transit-Oriented Development
- Finance, land policy and innovative implementation models
- Affordable housing, social inclusion, and gentrification and displacement processes in the context of Transit-Oriented Development
- Railway station districts as hubs for integrated urban and regional development
- Governance, cooperation and multi-level coordination in TOD-processes
- Transit-Oriented Development in the context of decline and stagnation
- Methods for the evaluation, impact analysis and monitoring of Transit-Oriented Development
- Comparative international studies and papers on Transit-Oriented Development in different institutional and planning contexts

We particularly welcome papers featuring innovative theoretical and methodological perspectives, empirical analyses of different spatial contexts, comparative international case studies, and papers that link academic findings with planning practice.

Further Information

Papers may in German or English and submitted in the categories ‘Forschungsbeitrag / Research Article’ or ‘Kommentar / Commentary’. Interested authors are asked to consult the journal’s guidelines for authors (<https://rur.oekom.de>; ‘Submissions’ section). All submitted manuscripts undergo the standard double-blind peer review process.

Related literature (selection):

- Bertolini, L. (1999): Spatial Development Patterns and Public Transport: The Application of an Analytical Model in the Netherlands. In: *Planning Practice and Research* 14, 2, 199–210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459915724>
- Calthorpe, P. (1993): *The Next American Metropolis. Ecology, Community, and the American Dream*. New York.
- Curtis, C.; Renne, J.L.; Bertolini, L. (eds.) (2009): *Transit Oriented Development. Making it Happen*. Farnham.
- Ibraeva, A.; Homem de Almeida Correia, G.; Silva, C.; Pais Antunes, A. (2020): Transit-oriented development: A review of research achievements and challenges. In: *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice* 132, 110–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2019.10.018>

Timetable

The following timetable is planned:

- Submission of abstracts via email to the guest editors (not via the journal’s editorial platform): 30 September 2026
- Notification to authors about whether a manuscript may be submitted on the basis of the abstract: 31 October 2026
- Deadline for the submission of completed manuscripts via the journal’s editorial platform: 31 January 2027
- Initial online publication (‘online first’) approximately four weeks after acceptance of a manuscript.
- The print publication of the special issue is scheduled for autumn 2027.

For subject-related queries, please contact the guest editors: Stefan Siedentop (stefan.siedentop@tu-dortmund.de), Arvid Krüger (arvid.krueger@asl.uni-kassel.de) and Martina Hülz (martina.huelz@arl-net.de).

For organisational queries, please contact the Editor-in-Chief: Andreas Klee (andreas.klee@arl-net.de).