

TOD DEVELOPMENT IN THEORY AND PRACTICE: THE CASE OF ALBION MILL

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ABSTRACT

In the face of population, energy and competitive pressures, cities face considerable challenges. Transport Orientated Development (TOD), in a variety of formats, is seen as one solution. TODs are compact, walkable precinct, centred on train or other public transit systems, which cut traffic congestion but also enhance 'place identity'. However, a conjunction of factors can scuttle timely TOD implementation in practice. First, TODs often struggle to resolve the tension between human-scale form and increased logistical function. Second, TODs are expensive to construct because engineering for connectivity and aesthetic interfaces is not cheap. Finally, institutional constraints often prevent TOD 'self-actualisation'. Fragmented planning and state bureaucracies suffer from, if not malfeasance, then competing objectives and local resistance. Searching for pathways through the conceptual, financial and institutional bottlenecks, we conduct a brief review of some TOD literature and the Australian backdrop before an extended case study of FKP's troubled Albion Mill TOD project on Brisbane's north side. Challenging financial conditions, more appealing competitive projects compounded inherent project TOD concerns. Specifically, its isolated implementation would leave significant TOD logistical and place making neighbourhood deficiencies. We sketch two alternate TOD realisation pathways to spread risk: retention and re-configuration with uplift advocacy or, alternatively, a more formal outsourcing of risk via a special purpose vehicle or a 'TOD corporation'. These twin strategic solutions are generally applicable to all TOD projects.

KEYWORDS

Transport Orientated Development, Place-making, Urban regeneration, Special Purpose Vehicle, Tax Increment Financing, TOD Corporation

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to reflect broadly on TOD's spatial and contested 'place-making' aspects. We also propose alternate pathways to accelerate TOD implementation in practice. We dissect the various issues by unpacking a specific concrete project - The Albion Mill, in Brisbane, Australia. The property and retirement entity, FKP, shelved the project (temporarily), following the GFC. The crisis made the marginal project commercially unviable. The Mill's other limitations were a complex site, second tier location and an unattractive precinct. Balancing commercial with broader collective considerations, we use the case study to suggest pathways to spread development risk and improve TOD outcomes.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE TOD MODEL

1.1. Towards a definition:

The term "TOD" was coined by Peter Calthorpe in his book *The Next American Metropolis; Ecology, Community, and the American Dream* (1993). According to Curtis et al. (2009), the book was inspired by land use and transportation concepts of Howard's Garden City concept of the late 19th century. Calthorpe views TOD as an aspect of betterment process (Dittmar and Ohland, 2004). Most TOD definitions descriptively list components: a mix of uses, at various densities, within a half-mile radius around each transit stop. However, TOD extends beyond physical form as a *node* and a *place*. In the U.S, TOD is associated with Smart Growth policy, espoused by one quarter of states (Johnson et al 2002). For example, in Portland, TOD features within its growth management strategy (Arrington, 2009).

In both America and Australia, the level of government engagement with TOD implementation varies. Typically, in Australia, TOD interventions manifest as changes in land-use plans (Renne, 2008). For example, in Queensland (2010), TOD is a planning approach that 'promotes the creation of a network of well-designed communities focused around transit stations'. TOD precincts generally comprise a mixed-use community within a comfortable 10-minute walk of the transit station.

Conventionally, TOD definitions tend to focus on built form (Belzer and Aulter 2002). Here, we can refer to the three 'Ds' of Bernick and Cervero (1996): density, diversity and design; considered pivotal for TODs built form (Belzer and Aulter, 2002). However, an alternative approach is to focus TOD regeneration on desired outcomes in the broader sense. In the outcome approach, TODs objectives are tentatively defined which allows a more refined benchmark for success. Objectives can shift significantly during the implementation phase as awareness of substantive but overlooked issues increases.

1.2. Main challenges in practice

Belzer and Aulter (2002) identified 6 performance criteria to assess project function and outcomes: location efficiency, value recapture, liveability, financial return, choice, efficient regional land-use patterns. According to the Dunphy et al. (2009), TODs have ten principles. "Make it better with a vision" is one of them. Shaping a vision means: "imagining a development future that recognises both the community's potential and the operative economic, political, and environmental constraints, ideally the vision should be: oriented toward the future but based in reality, stakeholder centred, collaborative and educational, focused on implementation and flexible. For example, Arlington County Virginia developed a long-term vision – a consensus-driven decision-making process (the county board was advised through numerous citizen committees for advice. The planning effort lasted 25 years, the objective was to encourage growth and generate transit ridership, and major policy goals were as follows: tax base consisting of 50/50 mix of residential and commercial development, mixed-use development (including residential units), an emphasis on redevelopment within 0.4 kilometres of Metro Station entrances (Dunphy et al., 2009). The Orange line running through Arlington is considered as one of the best success stories of development around transit, Metrorail stations are hubs of activity, with pedestrian-oriented, high-density residential, commercial and office development nearby. Another key principle presented by the Urban Land Institute is private/public partnerships, they provide opportunities to share costs and rewards and provide a framework for conflict

resolution (Dunphy et al., 2009, p. 45). According to the Urban Land Institute, TODs should also create transit-centred community, therefore attention to scale and design appears as being an essential component of successful TODs.

As emphasised by Hale and Charles (2006), an important component for success in TOD development depends of the supportive actions of various stakeholders. (See table 1.)

Table 1: Supporting actions of various TOD stakeholders

<i>Institution/stakeholder</i>	<i>Role in TOD project</i>
State government	Urban planning policy
State transport department	Transport strategy and policy, infrastructure funding
Transit agencies	Transit infrastructure, transport planning
Local government	Local planning, zoning
Private developers	Constructing individual buildings
Consultants	Skills for project delivery

Source: Hale and Charles (2006)

Based on our literature review, there are challenges to be overcome associated to the TOD concept:

- Defining measures to assess the success of TOD;
- Provide a supportive institutional framework for TOD development
- Involve the community to build an identity and sense of place\
- Make TOD available for low income households (enhance transit availability for low income)

2. THE CONTEXT OF AUSTRALIA AND BRISBANE FOR TOD DEVELOPMENT

While Urbis (2011) considers the ‘Spread City’ Australian development model finished, it will be difficult to wean the system from, what have often been to date, easy short-term gains. After all ‘land rackets, speculation and corruption’ or what Ulrich Beck called ‘organised irresponsibility’ drove much urbanisation of Australia and its visual legacy is, on the whole pretty dismal (Boyd 1960; Gleeson 2010: 1). Since the war, Australian cities have been struggling to manage their growth. Many opportunities were missed. For example, in 1944 Brisbane passed-up a ‘green belt’ and satellite towns plan and in 1969 it closed its tramlines. In the face of congestion, peak oil and climate change an urge for urban rationalisation has re-surfaced with ‘better design and management of urban systems to reduce the economic and environmental costs of current urban models (Anthony Albanese, Department of Infrastructure and Transport 2010: 1). Despite ministerial rhetoric, fossil fuel dependence and the associated congestion on major arterials in Australia is set to deteriorate further (Dodson and Sipe 2007).

Despite healthy scepticism, change has occurred. Exemplars include:

- Melbourne Docklands
- Bondi Junction, Pyrmont and St Leonards in Sydney
- East Perth
- Southbank, Brisbane

Khan and Bajracharya found Perth's approach to transit oriented developments more progressive compared to South East Queensland and metropolitan. Both jurisdictions have urban management strategies to promote TOD, but Western Australia is more proactively implementing TOD. In Western Australia LandCorp facilitates land assembly and public-private partnerships for redevelopment. In Queensland the focus is more on policy frameworks such as Regional Plans and local growth management strategies, with a greater reliance on market forces for the realisation of TOD projects.

3. CASE STUDY: THE ALBION MILL

3.1. FKP Development proposal

In 2008 an application for a mixed use development, based on Transit Oriented Development principles was lodged with Brisbane City Council. The proposal incorporates original and heritage listed buildings within the site, providing contextual links to the site's history as a flour mill, and its position of prominence as a landmark site on an elevated central site at Albion. 'The Mill' is located immediately adjacent to the Albion railway station, 4.8 kms north of Brisbane's CBD. There is immediate access to public transport, with options of rail or a short (800m) walk west to the planned Northern Busway project, which will follow Lutwyche Road. The mixed use project includes residential apartments, commercial and office and retail building incorporating a full line supermarket, specialty foods, and leisure activities (cafés, restaurants).

'The commercial/office component was targeting a 5 Star AGBC 'GreenStar' rating, with integration of public space and public transport access. Residential apartments constructed over retail space will provide easy walkable access. 'The Mill' a 1.3 ha site is located immediately adjacent to the Albion railway station, 4.8 kms north of Brisbane's CBD. There is immediate access to public transport, with options of rail or a short (800m) walk west to the planned Northern Busway project, which will follow Lutwyche Road. The project is mixed use including residential apartments, commercial and office and retail building incorporating a full line supermarket, specialty foods, and leisure activities - cafés, restaurants (FKP 2008).

While the proposal was generally well received and would improve Albion station's 'desolate feel'; the public had reservations. Bloggers such Barry (2008) recorded a range of negative views including:

- Disappointment that the residential component was aimed at the luxury market
- Perceived trading difficulties for the small shops to compete with the planned supermarket

Bahnisch (2011) was particularly scathing and described the project as 'the victim of a tussle between the Council and developers, eventually to be resolved mostly in the latter's favour - with the token addition of a modicum of public housing.' Bahnisch disputes the architect's blurb that the development is 'soulful'. Bahnisch wrote: 'we can only imagine what the mill might have looked like if someone with the same vision which transformed the Powerhouse had cast an eye over it'. For Bahnisch, sundering the link between developers' donations to political parties and the planning process can't come quick enough, but it will have already been too late for Albion's heritage' (Barry 2008).

3.2. Heritage considerations

The Mill is located next to Albion's rail station. It is a large derelict six storey building with two massive nearby silos. The original five story building was constructed in 1930 by the Stuart Brothers as the depression began. Some additional buildings were added after World War II, including a laboratory and

boiler house. In 1957 the mill began to package flour under the retail name “white wings” which was the first Australian brand to introduce cake mix to the local market. The two iconic silos were added in the 1960s.

In 1983 the mill was bought out by Defiance Milling who ran it until 2002 when they were taken over by Allied Mills a conglomerate controlled by the multinational food group Cargill. As the market was ripe for consolidation, Allied bought out most of Australia’s old milling companies and, predictably, within a couple of years, the Albion Mill closed. It has been derelict since 2004. Once Albion was identified as a TOD, negotiations began in earnest for the site.

Albion village is a mixed use neighbourhood, with an industrial history and a unique village character. Both the Brisbane City Council Master Plan and South East Queensland Regional Plan identify Albion as a priority neighbourhood and flag TOD- inspired densification. Redevelopment in the local Albion plan is earmarked in several precincts, including the Village itself, the North, Commercial, Industrial, Hunt Street and Crosby Park precincts (Brisbane City Council, 2000). Albion village, at the centre of the suburb, has a cluster of amenities and some, albeit rather dilapidated, character buildings. While the village is close to the railway station, access is impeded by major road corridors. Overall, the location is disposed to renewal and the Albion historic mill could act as a catalyst site in any regeneration process.

A viable Albion TODs must extend to the regeneration of the Albion village precinct to enable consolidation of the major infill development opportunities and connect rail transit line with the parallel arterial roadway (BCC 2000). To date, Urban Renewal has focused its regeneration effort almost entirely on underutilised land abutting the Brisbane River which is no longer politically acceptable (Malberry and Lawson 2011). Searching for more peripheral intensification opportunities, the abandoned Albion Mill lot with its historic buildings has become the focus of infill. The Albion village and mill sites both have access to a major Queensland Rail transit line, regular bus services, and two major arterials, Sandgate and Albion road. A rejuvenated Mill could catalyse general renewal within the Albion suburb (Malberry and Lawson 2011).

It can be easily seen why this area has been designated for redevelopment as a TOD with key features in place; however, much improvement is needed to fully implement the TOD principals. Albion’s close proximity to the city meets the ‘Location’ TOD principal quite easily (Queensland Government. 2010), 2010). In addition, train and bus transport offers a solid basis to partially fulfil the ‘Transport’ TOD principal (Queensland Government 2010), but much more needs to be done to facilitate the use of intermodal transport share, and efficient intermodal connections within the neighbourhood. Every major rail line runs through Albion with on peak trains running every 4 minutes and off-peak every 9 minutes which is a huge opportunity (Miller 2011). Nevertheless, this paper takes the position that the Albion neighbourhood does not yet fulfil the ‘Transport’ principal due to a lack provision for intermodal share and connection due to the hostile pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and the lack of connectivity within existing and limited public space. As intermodal transit and pedestrian prioritization is the basis for TOD’s, it is fair to demand high quality provision of this principal in order to rationalize and implement the additional supporting TOD principals. In addition, the ‘Process’ TOD principal has certainly been set through government coordination and community engagement, and prioritization of this area through local and regional plans (BCC, 2000; Queensland Government 2009; 2010). However, the ‘Land-use’, ‘Design’ and ‘Social’ TOD principal targets have not yet been demonstrated within the area (Queensland Government 2010). Meeting these currently unfulfilled principals is no doubt something that can only be addressed through the renewal and intensification process of Albion neighbourhood.

The historic mill site was set for redevelopment when FKP property group bought the site and designed a plan for redevelopment. The proposal that FKP developed was created when the financial property market was still strong, both developer, investor and buyer confidence was still high. FKP’s development proposal was ambitious, featuring major increases to both building height and density in comparison to the existing mid-rise building packages currently within Albion Village precinct. The development accomplished 120 dwellings per hectare, and had sold \$90 million of apartment stock within 5 months of presales (Miller 2011). The proposal featured residential units within the historic building, commercial offices units in proposed neighbouring buildings, anchored with ground floor retail including a large scale grocery store. This design provided public space in between the buildings, and could be seen from an urban design

perspective to have aimed for a new town centre contained within the mill site, as opposed to integrating within the existing Albion village precinct as well (Keen 2011). However, there are many weaknesses within the site, as well as within the surrounding context of the neighbourhood which act as barriers towards the integrated redesign of the mill site itself, which will be discussed later in this paper.

The development of the historic Albion mill site has currently halted. It faces many challenges and would certainly benefit from a re-configured local planning framework for the entire Albion neighbourhood (Miller 2011). Parking provision requirements for all uses, particularly the grocery store are demanding for the developers, so FKP proposed underground parking to accommodate for this, but faced incredibly high development bottom line costs as a result. During the approvals, negotiation and organization process of beginning the construction at the mill site, the world financial markets crashed, and the project was found to be no longer feasible. Leasing and selling the amount of commercial space the mill site offered was no longer possible (Miller 2011). There is a low probability of a project of this scale to be delivered in the short to medium term, and the market environment can drastically change in these cases, as it did with the case of the Mill (Miller 2011). Development of the mill site has been on hold, and as a catalyst site for the area, the progress of the entire Albion suburb has come to a standstill.

3.3. History of the site: context for redevelopment

In former times, Albion supported substantial industry because of its good rail links and proximity to the CBD but this is now in decline and the suburb's overriding character is residential although with commercial pockets (Malberry and Lawson 2011). Nevertheless, the local plan retains Albion's existing legacy industry which constrains creative regeneration (Malberry and Lawson 2011). Officially, all of levels of government espouse litanies of renewal, but vacant lots and underused commercial space blight its village character.

Other barriers discouraging development in Albion include ostensibly high infrastructure charges linked to its undulating topography which imposes high storm water management costs (Malberry and Lawson 2011). The FKP project accrued \$6 million for infrastructure charges alone (Miller 2011). To unblock this constraint, State government recently capped infrastructure costs (Malberry and Lawson 2011). To attract investors, governments have made an effort to collaborate and revised Brisbane City Master Plan and SEQ Regional Plans.

At the regional level, The SEQ Regional Plan explicitly recognised Albion's potential for intensification. The SEQRP (2009) is a key document that addresses scales beyond local areas with a wider vision, which sets out to direct 'smart growth' toward the compact development of brownfield urban sites. In the Plan, Albion is identified as an area for residential, employment and high-end industrial growth in areas such as health, education and technology. Albion is considered a 'growth corridor', addressing its accessibility potential, to support residential, commercial, retail activities while also providing high-quality access to major transit routes (SEQRP, 2009).

At the urban scale and local suburb, Brisbane City Council's Urban Renewal team, has contributed to central regeneration in Brisbane since the early 90's (Malberry and Lawson 2011). Originally, Urban Renewal concentrated on industrial and derelict sites but today it has evolved with a focus on public river access, residential housing and social planning, heavily informed through community consultations and local stakeholder engagement (Malberry and Lawson 2011). Catalyst Urban Renewal projects improve the public urban realm, such as through lighting and street scaping (Malberry and Lawson 2011).

Brisbane City Master Plan also identifies Albion as a key local area for redevelopment. The location is dotted with underdeveloped and derelict lots and the historical mill site, the quarry, the raceway facilities and the Queensland cricket facilities all present intensification potential (Malberry and Lawson 2011). The Local plan for Albion aims to improve bus routes, pedestrian and cycling links along Sandgate Road, as well as to improve streetscapes and pedestrian connections through Albion Village precinct (Brisbane City Council 2000). There is no doubt when visiting the area that traffic volume and speed is intense and hostile towards pedestrians and cyclists, compounded with the fact that public space is minimal, and pedestrian sidewalks are impassably narrow.

3.4. Strengths and weaknesses of the site

Albion main strength is its 5km proximity to the city centre of Brisbane. It straddles the main northern rail track and also bisects Sandgate Road. Albion Village has an, albeit somewhat run down, village character. The Mill presents imposing views towards the city, Mt. Coorima and the Brisbane River (Malberry and Lawson 2011) but, although the Brisbane River and Breakfast creek can be accessed on foot via Crosby Park, Albion is not a prime river front suburb like Hamilton or Ascot. The proximity of and road links to Fortitude Valley and Bowen Hills generate significant peak hour transient traffic (Keen 2011). High numbers train commuters generates a flurry of peak-hour east and west pedestrian foot traffic but little retail business (Keen 2011).

A shortage of off-road parking along Sandgate road prevents the realisation of the retail potential of its character buildings. Few commuters stop to make impulse or more routine purchases (Miller 2011). Albion's genteel decline has eroded its pedestrian connectivity. Pedestrian activity is discouraged by fragmented land use and intense vehicular traffic (Keen, 2011). Traffic density and noise creates an 'island effect' isolating the Albion Mill site from the rest of the location. Keen (2011) suggests that a key challenge for TOD regeneration is to build connectivity, linking site to surrounding urban fabric. In short, the current pedestrian environment is hostile, and major investment is required to enhance the public realm and activate street life. The pedestrian facilities that exist now are barely even safe (Keen 2011).

Currently, Albion suffers from a degraded place identity. To attract shoppers, businesses and residents, it must reinvent itself (Miller 2011). The legacy industrial blight does not help in this regard (Malberry and Lawson 2011). Much of the industry is declining and blights without bringing technological spinoffs. In addition, empty lots in the neighbourhood suggest unrealised intensification opportunities (Malberry and Lawson 2011).

The Albion Queensland Rail (QR) station, as with many of the QR stations, also detracts rather than enhances the site. The station is poorly projected, undercapitalised, and unfriendly and reluctantly permits pedestrian access along almost prison-like catwalks (Keen 2011). Certainly, TOD value enhancement will require a significant cultural and strategic re-invigoration of public transit entities. No doubt, the transition from commodity shipment functional outlook to a creative urban one will be challenging for QR, nevertheless elegant and inspiring station design is essential to move from TOD rhetoric to authentic implementation (Keen 2011). One step Council could take to signal to developers that it was serious about its commitment to progressive TOD planning would be to re-visit currently onerous car parking requirements (Miller 2011).

The Mill, as a catalyst site, demands a large-scale strong project to take hold of the neighbourhood. Large scale developments have high amounts of risk associated with them because they cannot necessarily be delivered in a short enough time frames for design to meet the current state of the market (Miller 2011). Confounding this is that large-scale densities do not necessarily match the existing density scales of the neighbourhood, creating a clash between the new and the old (Keen 2011).

3.5 PFK PROPOSAL, FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY AND VALUE CAPTURE

3.5. FKP backdrop

FKP's main activities are property development, construction and investment, the development and management of retirement villages and the management of resorts and associated infrastructure. The established retirement and expanding residential divisions are its main income drivers. FKP was badly hit by the GFC but, since then, capital restructuring appears to have stabilised the entity with statutory profits after tax increasing 62% from \$50.8m in 2010 to \$82.3m in 2011.

FKPs noteworthy Brisbane residential portfolio includes two transit-oriented developments: Albion Mill and The Milton as well as the much larger Gasworks project in Newstead. The Gasworks comprises 1,700 apartments and should generate sales in excess of \$850m. As originally conceived The Mill exposed FKP to significant project and marketing risk. Albion Mill Mark 1 included substantial commercial and an 8-10 story residential component. While the commercial element was badly hit by deterioration in office demand,

the apartments evoked strong local buyer interest - 70% of original pre-sales according to Miller (2011). However, interest fizzled out and in July 2009 FKP aborted the project to digest its other major land acquisitions both at Newstead River Park and in Rochedale. FKP (2011) stated intention is to re-launch Stages 2 and 3 of the Mill, comprising mixed-use space with 250 apartments, once planning approval is secured.

3.5.2 Twin strategies to make Albion Mill feasible: risk retention or outsourcing

Going forward, FKP faces challenging market conditions which dictate lower achievable price points and projected returns. However, initial losses on land initial acquisition should be written-off as per IAS 36 (Impairment of Assets). Despite this, FKP will need to re-configure the mix and presentation of commercial, retail and residential product to appeal to discerning residential investors who will likely form the bulk of its customers. FKP's recent share price volatility (see Figure 3) has inflated its beta and not endeared it to investors. However, financial statements suggest that banks appear ready to lend to FKP (2011) at a weighted average borrowing cost of just 5.38%.

Two strategies to spread risk are presented to render the Albion Mill project feasible for FKP:

- Retain formal ownership of a re-configured project spread risk to Brisbane ratepayers and taxpayers more generally by influencing planning and other regimes to pay for adjacent public realm/transport uplift.
- Outsource risk to a SPV (TOD Corporation) with a formal and transparent investment by other stakeholders, possibly in conjunction with a tax increment financing (TIF) arrangement.

In terms of the first, retention, option FKP will have to re-design, re-configure the mix of uses, scale back, and delay or reschedule the project elements to take account of market conditions. Once a realistic target market is established, given competition from other regeneration sites in Brisbane (Bowen Hills and Kelvin Grove), achievable price points can be fed into feasibility models. The retention and re-configuration strategy needs to be supplemented by open or covert advocacy to induce adjacent public urban realm improvement. In concrete terms this could take the form of Brisbane City Council Urban Renewal involvement, the declaration of an ULDA by State Government or securing of a major government tenant as part of the city's attempt to disperse activity outwards from its congested core. Enhancement of Albion village, connectivity improvements or street scaping and the upgrading of the railway station are all measures which would substantially raise the attractiveness of Albion for major tenants.

Venner and Ecola (2007) outline generic obstacles that TOD development confronts, including:

- High risk for construction lending
- Complexity, design, and construction challenges,
- Mixed-use TOD product concern

There are, basically two solutions. The first is intelligent engineering with designs that reflect local conditions and advanced construction processes which use information management systems, alternative building methods and materials. The second solution is institutional. It requires spreading various risks to joint venture partners who have the resources to finance and the technical capabilities to manage complex projects.

Such a joint venture strategy to spread project risk requires an extended project spatial scale beyond individual sites to encompass the relevant TOD precincts. This whole area is developed by a special purpose vehicle (SPV) or TOD Corporation (TODC). In the specific case of the Mill, the Albion TODC would acquire FKP site, the station and the Albion Village. If listed, the general public or superannuation funds could investor in the TODC or its ownership could be more selective and only include major stakeholders such as the State and Federal Governments and Queensland Rail.

A TODC seeks to bring greater transparency to urban regeneration so that diffused spatial benefits are captured and reflect costs and risks borne. The overall cost of development includes public infrastructure disbursements. Frequently, major public infrastructure generates adjacent property hedonic uplift which is

not adequately taxed. The construction of Haussmann's boulevards in Paris is the classical example, where incumbent landlords reaped windfall gains (Benevolo 1980 [1975]). The SPV would be, in effect, a public private partnership or PPP with the relative degree of public or private ownership determined according to the amount of equity invested. The attractiveness of the Albion TODC for investors could be enhanced if it were combined with the designation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) envelop around the SPV precinct. TIF designation mandates the use of any TOD incremental property uplift tax revenue to repay bondholders. Of course, the implicit but contested assumption is that real estate prices will continue to increase (Keen 2011). Obviously, TIF designation would give banks, pension funds and overseas investor's extra assurance and, presumably, lower the cost of capital.

One concern with SPV or TOD Corporation implementation vehicles is that they, in effect, dilute democratic flexibility and can circumvent legitimate local concerns. In effect, control is handed over to a corporation. Although best TOD practice mandates extensive community consultation, elements of the local community will continue to resist development for a variety of ideological or venal reasons. Certainly, state and local government officials should be engaged on a TODC boards to ensure broader collective consideration temper commercial ones. The TODC would acquire public land and buildings and other assets. Within its spatial jurisdiction, the SPV would have legislative power to dispose or resume land to implement its vision. In return, the TODC would provide the necessary resources in terms of financial and human capital of its talented staff to develop bundled infrastructure and services in a timely and, hopefully, intelligent manner.

TOD extends beyond transportation logistics to contested place making. Intelligent TOD implementation requires, first, moving beyond glossy planning rhetoric and perhaps the repeal of planning guidelines which no longer make sense. Second, it needs foresight, and collaboration between stakeholders, including governments, developers and communities with institutional arrangement to balance long term collective imperatives with local short-term or vested interests. TOD collaboration and calibration between stakeholders can be achieved implicitly (via informal or covert coalitions and advocacy) or, formally (in a TODC). Whatever the mode, collaboration reduces risk and cost of finance for logistical and place investment. A TODC with a TIF mechanism can also capture the value of adjacent windfall property gains and recycle them fairly to reflect the costs and risks borne by investors and the community. Within a broadly privately-focused and evolutionary urban development tradition, if properly configured and overseen, a TODC can be a cost-effective vehicle to deliver progressive regeneration without provoking legitimate collective, as opposed to venal, local opposition. To date, strategic movement in such directions has been insufficient to deliver compelling tangible TOD results in Brisbane, at least for the time being. Key lessons from the troubled FKP Albion project are both collective and commercial. Collectively, successful TODs extend to place-making governance and collaboration. Commercially, developers need formal or informal mechanisms to spread TOD risk. Whether these insights can be generalised more widely requires further research.

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