



TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) LOAN PROGRAM

Cuyahoga County Department of Development



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PROGRAM GUIDE

The Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Loan Program is designed to catalyze mixed-use, high-density development projects located near high-frequency public transit. These projects support walkable communities, reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), promote increased mobility, and deliver long-term environmental, economic, and social returns. The County offers subordinated long-term, fixed-rate gap financing at below-market rates to developers and businesses that may have difficulty securing all capital necessary for such urban redevelopment due to higher development costs, lower stabilized Net Operating Income (NOI), coverage ratios, New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) leverage-lender needs, etc.

This program offers subordinated, fixed-rate financing to address capital shortfalls in projects that align with the County's integrated development and climate goals. Emphasis is placed on projects that integrate best practices in sustainability, walkable designs, broad-based economic development, multimodal access, and meaningful community benefits.

1. PROGRAM GOAL

To enable real estate projects that strengthen transit-accessible communities, promote economic growth, and advance climate resilience while enhancing Cuyahoga County's long-term economic vitality.

2. ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

Funds may be used for comprehensive real estate development projects that involve new construction, major renovations, or substantial building improvements within the identified TOD Program Zone (see Appendix A).

- a. Within the scope of such a project, funds may also support integrated transit-oriented components such as site acquisition, structured parking, other Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies, green building upgrades, and pedestrian-scale infrastructure enhancements like sidewalks, bike lanes, or micromobility facilities. These elements must be secondary and supportive to a larger eligible real estate development.
- b. Within the scope of such a project, funds may also support the purchase of Machinery, Fixtures, Furniture, and Equipment.
- c. Stand-alone funding requests for infrastructure improvements or amenities not anchored by a qualifying building project are not eligible under this program.

3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- a. Minimum Project Eligibility
 - i. Projects must be located in the TOD Program Zone (see Appendix A).
 - ii. Projects must have a job creation element (see Appendix B for more detail).
 - iii. Projects must include a mix of uses OR at least one non-housing, TOD-supportive use (i.e., commercial, office, or public use) that promotes activity, walkability, and transit use. Stand-alone housing, retail, restaurant, hotel, daycare, nonprofit-only, or similar services are not eligible unless part of a larger mixed-use project.
 - iv. Projects fronting transit corridors or stations must contain an active first floor use (see Appendix B for more detail).
 - v. Projects must be in alignment with local or regional TOD, climate action, or sustainable land use plans.
- b. Applicant Eligibility Requirements
 - i. Applicants must have 3 years of prior financial history and experience in real estate development.
 - ii. Applicants must have adequate collateral to secure the County's loan.
 - iii. Applicants must have acceptable credit and financial capacity to repay the loan.
 - iv. Applicants must provide a minimum ten percent (10%) equity contribution.

4. APPLICATION COMPONENTS AND PROCESS

Applicants to the TOD Loan Program must complete two steps:

Step 1: Preliminary Submittal. Applicants must first fill out a TOD Loan Program Eligibility Form, and eligible projects will automatically be directed to a Preliminary Project Information Form. Projects meeting eligibility requirements will be scored against the criteria in Appendix B, and the highest-ranking projects may be invited by County staff to proceed to the second step.

Step 2. Full Application. Projects that are invited to proceed to step two will be provided a complete TOD Loan Program Application by County staff. All applications must include:

- a. Project narrative outlining conformance with the TOD Scoring Matrix (see Appendix B)
- b. Developer experience and financial background
- c. Development pro forma and projected debt service coverage
- d. Sources and uses of funds, including confirmation of primary lender participation
- e. Appraisal, equity verification, and personal/corporate financial statements

The TOD Loan Program is competitive, and all projects are reviewed by the Department of Development to determine eligibility and priority. Loan recommendations are submitted to the Cuyahoga County Community

Improvement Corporation (CCCIC) Loan Review Committee and forwarded to the appropriate County approval body for final authorization. There is no guarantee that an application will be awarded funding.

The Preliminary Project Information Form and TOD Loan Program Supplemental Form are both available on the Department of Development website: www.cuyahogacounty.gov/development/TODProgram

5. REVIEW CRITERIA

Projects will be reviewed and scored using the program's Scoring Matrix (see Appendix B). Additional points and more favorable terms may be assigned to TOD projects that meet criteria in the following topics, as further described in Appendix B:

- a. Location & Density
- b. Design & Use
- c. Economic Opportunity & Community Benefits
- d. Transportation Demand Management
- e. Environment & Sustainability

6. LOAN TERMS

The County works with multiple public and private sector partners to leverage investment and address funding gaps for projects with significant economic development benefit. Projects are funded primarily through owner equity and private bank financing, with Economic Development Loans available for "gap financing". County Economic Development Loans never exceed 40% of any project.

- a. Loan Amount: \$150,000 to \$2,500,000 (not to exceed 40% of total project cost)
- b. Interest Rate: Fixed below market rate for the term as low as 3.9%
- c. Term: Up to 15 years for real estate; up to 10 years for machinery and equipment
- d. Amortization: Typically, up to 20 years for real estate
- e. Loan-to-Value (LTV): Up to 90% maximum
- f. Security: Priority lien on financed asset(s) being financed
- g. Guarantors: Personal and/or corporate guarantees required
- h. Forgiveness Terms: None

Interest and loan term are subject to underwriting and may be adjusted based on project score.

7. REQUIRED PROGRAM OUTCOME

All projects funded through this program must create or retain at least one (1) permanent, non-construction, full-time, family-sustaining wage job for every \$150,000 borrowed.

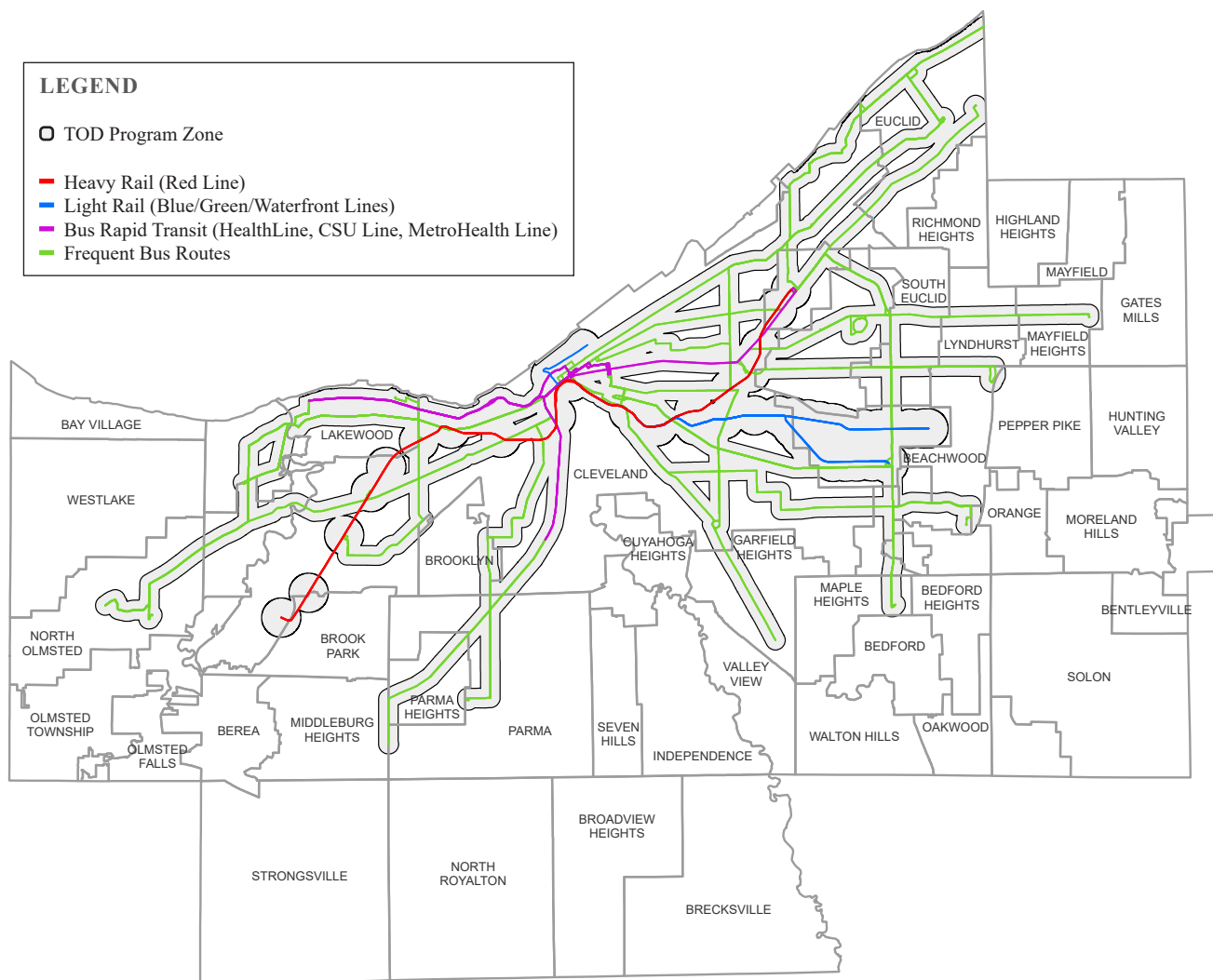
8. DESIRED PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The program also envisions desired outcomes including the following:

- a. Environmental Impact: CO2 emissions reduction, energy efficiency improvements, VMT reductions
- b. Mobility & Accessibility: Improved walk/transit/bike scores and infrastructure
- c. Community Benefit: Increased transit and multimodal access to jobs, services, and affordable housing units
- d. Economic Impact:
 - i. Increases in assessed value and property taxes
 - ii. Income tax from job creation
 - iii. Construction and permanent job creation
 - iv. Spillover commercial activity and investment leverage (3:1 or higher)

APPENDIX A - TOD PROGRAM ZONE

The TOD Program Zone uses 1/4 and 1/2 mile buffers around certain high-frequency transit lines and stops. These buffers do not account for natural or human-made barriers that may restrict access to a transit stop. In instances where transit is not accessible from the proposed project, that application may not be eligible for the TOD Loan Program.



An online version of this map is available. Applicants are encouraged to enter the parcels of their proposed development to ensure they are located within the TOD Program Zone. If your project is partially within the TOD Program Zone or you have questions about the eligibility of your project, contact the Department of Development at TODProgram@cuyahogacounty.gov.

Enter your address and locate your project on our online viewer: www.tinyurl.com/TODProgramMap

APPENDIX B - TOD SCORING MATRIX

The following Scoring Matrix includes both required elements and competitive elements. Please contact the Department of Development with specific questions. TOD Scoring Criteria is subject to change.

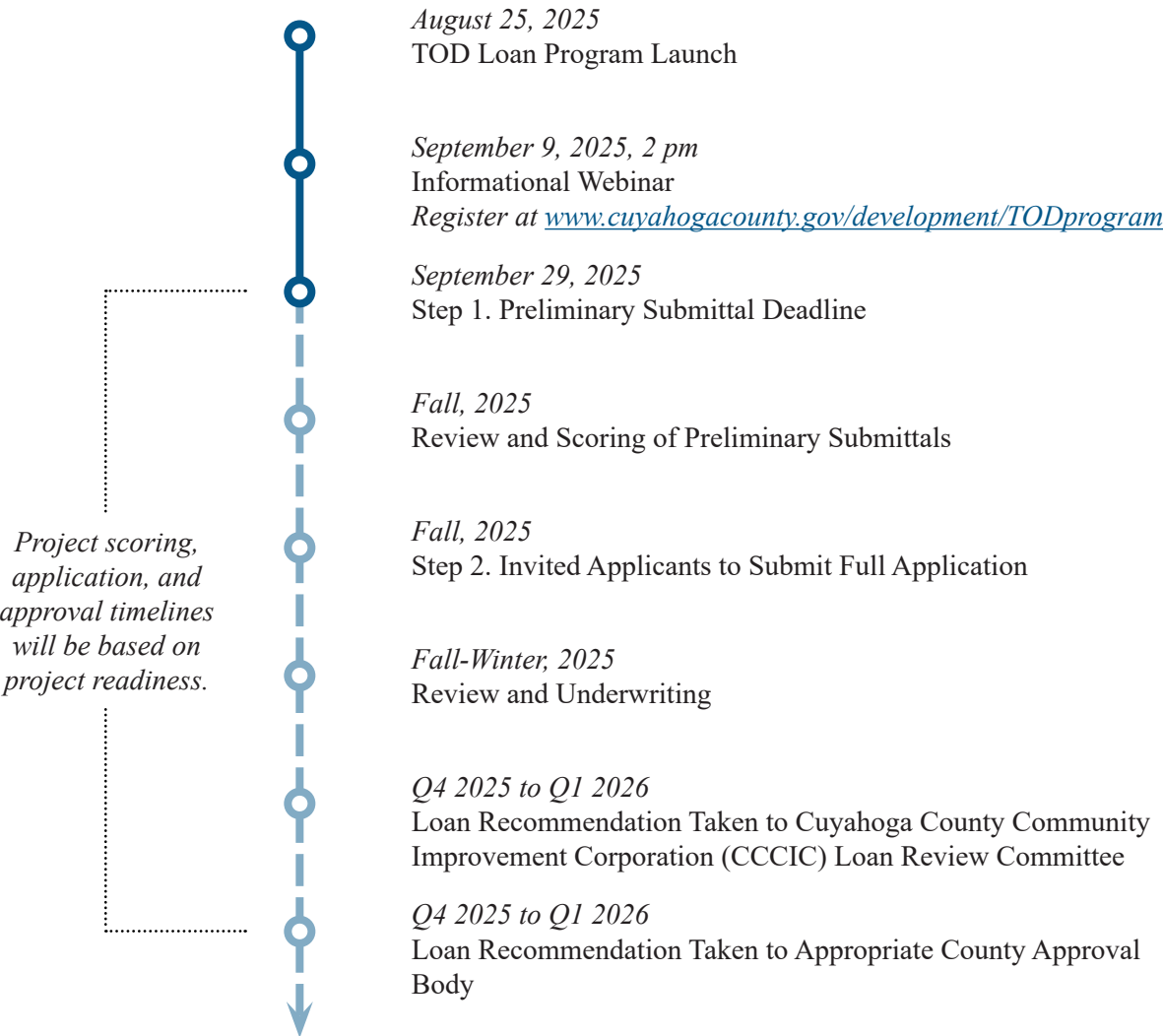
CATEGORY	CRITERIA	POINTS
Location & Density	Project is located within the TOD Program Zone (see Appendix A)	Required
	- Project is accessible to an existing or forthcoming transit stop - Project contributes to existing business districts or concentrations of buildings to create dense, transit-oriented nodes of activity OR project preserves or rehabilitates an existing building(s) - Project aligns with local or regional TOD or sustainable land use plans	25
Design & Use	Where a new or renovated building fronts a transit corridor or station, at least 50% of the first floor contains an active use	Required
	- Project includes a mix of uses OR at least one non-housing, TOD-supportive use (i.e., commercial, office, or public use) that promotes activity, walkability, and transit use - Project uses diversify the activities and amenities in the area, better meet residents' needs, and/or provide greater access to services and amenities - Project aligns with design goals in the County Planning TOD Best Practices Guide	25
Economic Opportunity & Community Benefits	The project must create or retain at least one (1) permanent, non-construction, full-time, family-sustaining wage job for every \$150,000 borrowed. <i>(For example, this means the maximum loan of \$2,500,000 requires approximately 17 jobs created or retained.)</i>	Required
	- Project aligns with the Cuyahoga County Economic Development Plan - Project creates or retains significant number of permanent, non-construction, full-time jobs - Project contributes to the revitalization of existing business districts through amenities, anchor institutions, or transformative changes - Project creates economic opportunity in traded sector industries - Project creates workforce development and/or training opportunities - Project diversifies housing opportunities - Project creates or preserves workforce housing ¹	20
Transportation Demand Management	Project incorporates Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies (such as subsidized transit passes) based on Cleveland's TDM Program Standards	15
Environment & Sustainability	- Project minimizes greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency or renewable energy elements - Project aims for climate resilience through green building standards such as Energy Star, LEED, etc. - Project aligns with goals of the Cuyahoga County Sustainability Strategy	15
TOTAL		100

¹ Workforce housing is defined as housing that is, A) restricted to residents whose income does not exceed 125% of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published Area Median Income (AMI) for family size, and B) where rent does not exceed 30% of 125% of AMI

APPENDIX C - 2025 TOD LOAN PROGRAM TIMELINE

The following diagram displays the anticipated timeline for the 2025 TOD Loan Program. The Preliminary Submittal Deadline of September 29, 2025 places projects at the top of the review and scoring process; however, preliminary forms can be submitted at any time and will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

Loan program dates are subject to change. Additional information is available on the TOD Loan Program webpage at www.cuyahogacounty.gov/development/TODProgram.



All timeframes are subject to change and a completed application does not guarantee a funding award.