

# Transit-Oriented Development

HCMP offers creative solutions for the unique challenges of transit-oriented development, bringing deals to completion.

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HCMP understands the important role that transit-oriented development has in making the Puget Sound region more livable and sustainable. Our transit-oriented development (“TOD”) team is devoted to partnering with clients for the lifecycle of TOD projects from due diligence and acquisition, through land use entitlements, ownership and development agreements, leasing, and finally to asset disposition.

As part of our dedication to transit development projects, we assist clients in changing zoning laws to align density in these areas with regional investments, and we creatively approach entitlements to achieve maximum flexibility for development. We have a thorough understanding of the development opportunities TOD presents and how to successfully navigate these sites' complex challenges, such as governmental takings and exactions, tax issues, and private property rights. Our deep relationships with local governments help our clients troubleshoot issues and close deals quickly, allowing them to begin development projects that will impact communities for years to come.

Our attorneys assist clients with a wide range of development projects, including:

- Major employer corporate office campuses
- Mixed-use office and retail development
- Life sciences, lab, biotech, and medical facilities
- Residential development in all construction types
- Condominium development
- Affordable housing
- Hotels and resorts
- Institutional urban development
- Public-private partnerships

Our team has experience handling the full range of legal needs for transit-oriented development projects. As the needs of our clients continue to change, we also work with attorneys across our public finance, lender services, environmental, business, and litigation groups to navigate these changes.

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## Client Successes and Representative Transit-Oriented Development Projects

- **Spring District.** Our attorneys served as lead counsel for the University of Washington on the Global Innovation Exchange (“GIX”) project in Bellevue’s Spring District. GIX is a collaborative program between UW and China’s Tsinghua University that offers degree programs in the technology arena. In many ways, this deal hinged on Microsoft agreeing to both ground lease the development site for the GIX building and subsidize the cost of constructing the facility. We succeeded in convincing them, which resulted in UW being able to enter into a sublease with Microsoft for the entire building. The GIX project opened on-schedule in 2017 to welcome new students.

Our land use attorneys also provide assistance to the master developer of the Spring District to help them navigate the ongoing entitlement process to achieve full build-out of the District under its catalyst project designation.

- **Downtown Bellevue and Bel-Red.** Our firm represents property owners across downtown Bellevue and the Bel-Red neighborhoods who are working on major office, life sciences, and residential projects that will be connected to Downtown Seattle and beyond by fast and reliable transit service starting in 2023. We have worked on more than 2.5 million square feet of office development and 1,200 housing units just steps from light rail that is under construction as of 2021, with additional significant projects in the pipeline.
- **University District Station.** Our firm represented the University of Washington in negotiations with Sound Transit for construction of the new University District Station on UW-owned property. This involved the creative use of an air space condominium, whereby Sound Transit obtained ownership of the subterranean portions of the site. As a result, UW was able to retain ownership of the above-ground air space and so it could negotiate a long-term ground lease with a qualified developer to construct a high-rise tower. We also represented UW in analyzing and lobbying for changes to the revised University District zoning (established in 2017) that were tailored to the station site to preserve development capacity and allow for future high-rise development. These efforts enhanced the value of UW’s real estate portfolio by facilitating the new light rail station while retaining the significant economic advantage of developing the site with favorable development standards.
- **Downtown Redmond Station.** Our firm represents property owners across from the future Downtown Redmond Light Rail Station in receiving entitlements for a two-building 600-unit project with ground-level retail. This project will deliver market-rate and affordable housing, robust pedestrian amenities, and active retail opportunities at the same time the Sound Transit light rail extension reaches Redmond. The development will function as a new front door to the City.
- **Union Station.** When a client was contemplating the redevelopment of Seattle’s historic Union Station, HCMP proposed using an air space condominium to create separate ownerships for the historic train station, the adjoining parking garage and a number of building pads on top of the garage. Today, the success of the project can be seen by fans streaming into CenturyLink stadium to enjoy a Seahawks game. Union Station has been revitalized - impressive, modern office buildings cluster around a central plaza atop the garage. In addition, the entire development is served by Sound Transit’s International District Station.