

Downtown-Uptown-Oakland-East End Bus Rapid Transit

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Small Starts Project Development

(Rating Assigned November 2019)

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	Bus Rapid Transit 15 Miles, 46 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$249.90 Million
Section 5309 CIG Share (\$YOE):	\$99.95 Million (40.0%)
Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2024):	\$62.16 Million
Existing Corridor Ridership (Warranted):	37,000 Daily Linked Trips
Overall Project Rating:	High
Project Justification Rating:	Medium-High
Local Financial Commitment Rating:	High

Project Description: The Port Authority of Allegheny County (PAAC) proposes to implement Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service between Downtown Pittsburgh and neighborhoods to the east. The proposed service is planned to operate on exclusive lanes between downtown and Oakland. In Oakland, the service branches off in three directions – toward Oakland-East, Highland Park, and Squirrel Hill. The Highland Park and Squirrel Hill branches are anticipated to operate in mixed traffic as corridor-based BRT services, while the Oakland-East branch is anticipated to operate in dedicated lanes along the Martin Luther King, Jr. East Busway. The project includes queue jump lanes, the purchase of 15 battery-powered articulated electric buses, branded BRT stations, transit signal priority, and charging stations. The service is planned to operate from 4:00 am to 2:00 am on weekdays, and from 5:00 am to 2:00 am on weekends. The service plan includes buses operating every three to four minutes during weekday peak periods, and every four to eight minutes during weekday off-peak periods and evenings. On weekends, the service plan includes buses operating every five to eight minutes throughout the day.

Project Purpose: PAAC believes the proposed project will improve travel speed and the reliability of transit service in a heavily congested corridor. In addition, the service is intended to provide connections to Pittsburgh’s two largest commercial employment centers (downtown and Oakland), universities including the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University, and several hospitals, arenas, and cultural venues.

Project Development History, Status and Next Steps: In April 2017, the PAAC completed an alternatives analysis and selected BRT as the locally preferred alternative (LPA). The project entered Small Starts Project Development in June 2017. The LPA was included in the region’s fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan in September 2017. The Project completed the environmental review process with receipt of a Categorical Exclusion from FTA in October 2018. PAAC anticipates receipt of a construction grant agreement in Spring 2021, and the start of revenue service in September 2024.

Significant Changes Since Last Evaluation (November 2018): The PAAC took over as project sponsor from the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh. The project cost

increased to \$249.90 million from \$195.50 million because a higher level of engineering and design was completed. The CIG share increased to \$99.95 million from \$97.75 million. Although the dollar amount of CIG share increased, the percentage of CIG share decreased to 40 percent from 50 percent.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan		
<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Federal:		
Section 5309 Small Starts	\$99.95	40.0%
FHWA Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program (ATCMTD) (Smart Spine Infrastructure Program)	\$6.00	2.4%
FHWA Flexible Funds (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program)	\$4.76	1.9%
State:		
State DOT Multimodal Transportation Fund (Bonds)	\$2.00	0.8%
State Technical Assistance and Consolidated Capital Grants	\$1.21	0.5%
PAAC Capital Funds	\$22.80	9.1%
PAAC General Funds	\$0.39	0.2%
Local:		
Allegheny County General Funds	\$31.56	12.6%
City of Pittsburgh Capital Funds	\$14.30	5.7%
City of Pittsburgh General Funds	\$6.00	2.4%
Uptown Eco-Innovation District Transit Revitalization Investment District Bonds	\$5.00	2.0%
Private Sector/Other:		
Revenue from selling naming rights for the BRT project and/or individual stations	\$4.73	1.9%
Unspecified Funds	\$51.20	20.5%
Total:	\$249.90	100.0%

NOTE: The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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LAND USE RATING: *Medium-High*

The land use rating reflects population density within one-half mile of proposed stations, employment served by the line, and the share of legally binding affordability restricted (LBAR) housing in the station areas compared to the share in the surrounding county.

- Average population density across all station areas is 9,100 persons per square mile, which corresponds to a Medium rating according to FTA benchmarks. An estimated 232,000 jobs would be served by the project, which corresponds to a High rating. In the central business district (CBD), daily parking fees average \$20, which rates as High. The ratio of station area to county LBAR housing is 2.24, corresponding to a Medium rating.
- Station areas in the CBD and Oakland are typically high-density commercial and institutional (mainly university buildings) in character, and together, these two neighborhoods contain the majority of Pittsburgh’s jobs. Station areas outside of these two neighborhoods contain single-family, multi-family and mixed-use developments.
- Existing development along the entire line is predominantly urban in character, with dense, walkable street grids sectioned out based on the city’s sloping elevation. Sidewalks are present on most streets, including smaller, residential side streets.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: *Medium*

Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: *Medium*

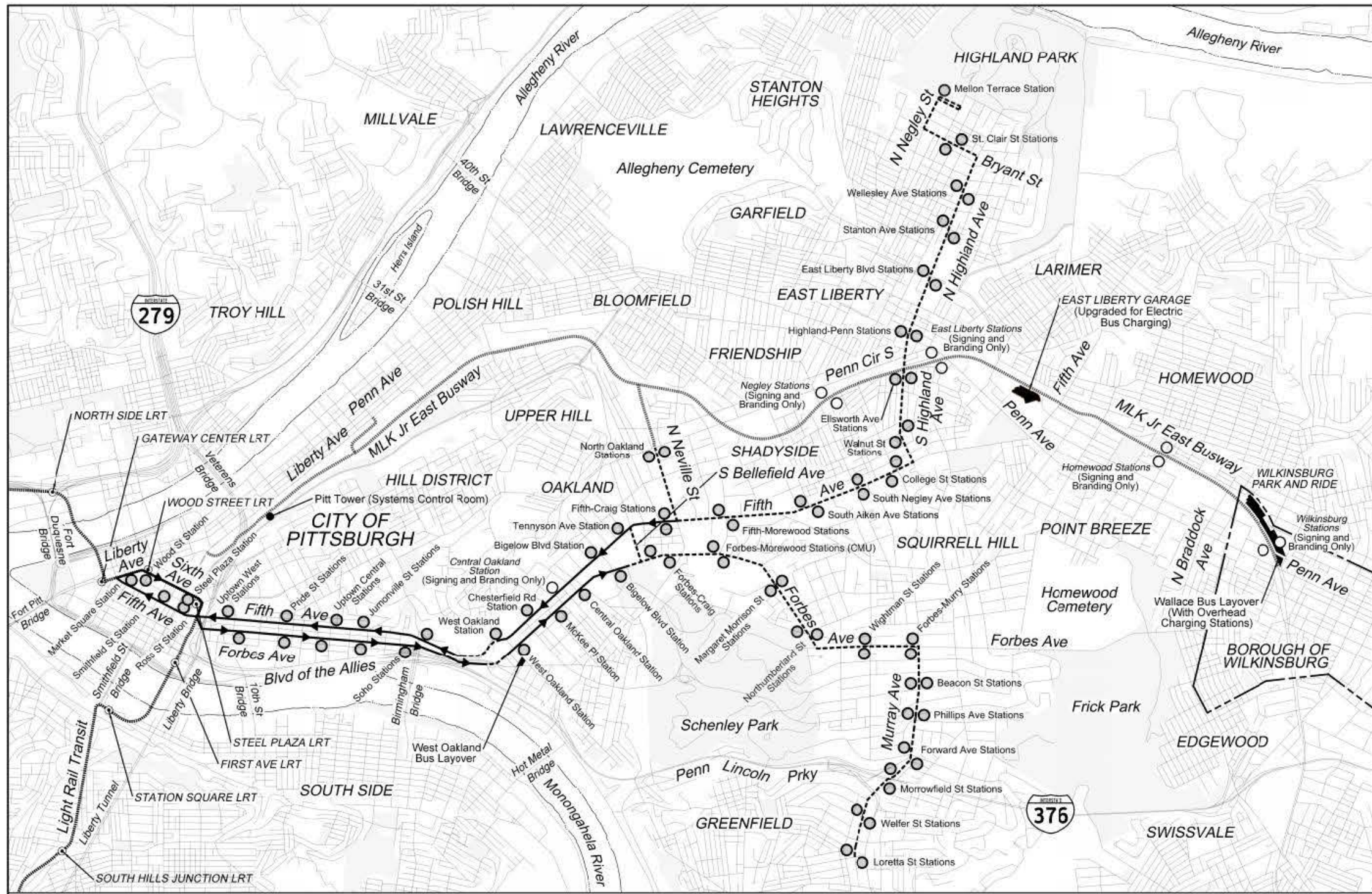
- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* The City of Pittsburgh does not have an adopted comprehensive plan. However, transit-supportive neighborhood or small area plans have been developed for some portions of the corridor, especially those most likely to see new development, such as the Oakland and Uptown neighborhoods. Institutional master plans guide development at four universities in the corridor.
- *Supportive Zoning Regulations Near Transit Stations:* Pittsburgh zoning provides densities that are supportive of transit oriented development. Within the CBD and mixed-use and commercial areas high density development is permitted, while within residential districts the permitted development densities vary widely. Pedestrian-supportive design requirements are present in some neighborhoods but not others. Parking requirements are generally moderately transit supportive, although minimum requirements have been eliminated in a newly rezoned redevelopment area.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* Pittsburgh’s primary financial tool to leverage development is the Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) Program. The TRID Program captures increases in real property taxes resulting from new development to pay for necessary public infrastructure, including transportation improvement, as well as certain eligible developments. There is one active and one proposed TRID in the corridor. Community outreach, including discussion of transit-supportive development, was undertaken as part of neighborhood planning efforts in various parts of the corridor.

Performance and Impacts of Policies: *Medium-High*

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* Over two dozen examples of recently completed or proposed transit-supportive development in station areas were provided. While most of this development is occurring in downtown and Oakland, some development has occurred or is expected to occur in other portions of the BRT corridor including Squirrel Hill and East Liberty. Recently completed projects have added over 2,700 residential units.
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* A significant amount of vacant and underutilized land exists in the corridor, mainly within Uptown and the west end of Oakland. These parcels typically have TOD-supportive zoning, but most are small, and land assembly is a potential challenge. Many of the industries in the CBD and Oakland hubs, which together contain over 200,000 jobs, have seen increases in employment in recent years.

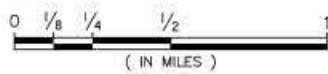
Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing: Medium

- Pittsburgh's planning and tools for affordable housing appear limited but are receiving increasing attention. The City has an affordable housing fund with \$10 million annually, half of which is targeted to families earning at or below 30 percent of the area median income (AMI). Density bonuses are also available for developments with 5 to 20 percent of units affordable at 60 percent AMI. A number of examples of recent or planned affordable projects in the corridor were identified.



LEGEND

- ➔ Dedicated Transit Lanes
- ⋯ Mixed Flow Lane
- Proposed Station
- Existing Station
- ▨ Allegheny County Parks
- ▨ Light Rail Transit
- ▨ MLK Jr. East Busway
- ▨ Municipal Boundaries



Port Authority Of Allegheny County

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