

ONORATO TRANSPORTATION ACTION TEAM

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are outlined as short-, mid- and long-term actions. These target dates are preliminary and may be modified based on input from agencies, stakeholders and funding sources. After due consideration and deliberation, we believe the recommended priorities for strategic action in Allegheny County should be as follows:

IMPLEMENT RAPID TRANSIT FROM DOWNTOWN TO OAKLAND AND IN AND AROUND OAKLAND

○ **CONSTRUCT DOWNTOWN TO OAKLAND LRT**

A frequent, rapid and efficient connection is critical as we grow the educational, medical and technology sectors at the core of our regional prosperity. This corridor is densely populated and congested. Facilitating growth here with excellent infrastructure is a key component needed to assure our future prosperity. Transit from Downtown to Oakland will connect the two largest economic generators in the region.

Numerous studies have investigated many alternatives for providing improved transit service from Downtown to Oakland. The team recommends a direct Light Rail Transit alignment from Downtown to Oakland be chosen within the short term by the Transportation Action Partnership. The best alternative will:

- Provide the most direct and fastest route to central Oakland from Downtown Pittsburgh;
- Service University Station hub in Oakland;
- Have high ridership potential;
- Have best potential for development opportunities;
- If possible, operate at-grade on its own right-of-way to reduce construction costs;
- Directly serve potential TOD locations along the route; and
- Consider connection with current and future development projects (i.e., new Penguin arena, Lower Hill District, etc.)

It will be the role of the Transportation Action Partnership (TAP) to lead this effort, with the ultimate goal being to select the best alignment and funding strategy.

Short-Term Actions:

- Select the Downtown to Oakland LRT alignment and “Central Downtown” multi-modal hub through public process, with public and stakeholder input and participation.
 - Include taxi stands at major hub locations

- Provide Oakland area circulator system connectivity
 - Provide for buses and shuttle buses
 - Provide for bike and pedestrian connections
 - Provide for future connectivity with other systems
- Determine procurement and funding strategy (ex: design/build, public-private partnerships, use or do not use federal funds, etc.)

Mid-Term Actions:

- Complete LRT environmental clearance and design, and groundbreaking/begin construction.

Long-Term Actions:

- Complete construction and begin operations.

○ **CONSTRUCT OAKLAND AREA CIRCULATOR SYSTEM**

Oakland is the economic wellspring for future growth of our region because of its concentration of research, universities, hospitals and the potential and current realization of spin-off companies. Transit can play a key role in connecting this development to the institutions that are driving this growth.

There are internal mobility problems within Oakland which can be addressed by construction of an area circulator system that connects Oakland to the South Side, Second Avenue, Bloomfield, Lawrenceville, Shadyside and CMU, bringing together greater Oakland's many assets and allowing the parts to function as a whole. Attraction of new technology development and retention of students to enter the workforce here after graduation are highly dependent on public transportation that needs to be readily available and easy to navigate.

This efforts need to be closely coordinated with the plans of the major institutions in and near Oakland.

Short-Term Actions:

- Improve direct access to Oakland from throughout Allegheny County:
 - Identify remote intercept garages and park-n-rides
 - Enhanced suburban service and direct service to Oakland
 - "Share the Road" bike/pedestrian markings to and around Oakland
- Advance Oakland area circulator system Phase I (Oakland to Second Ave.)
 - Determine mode, alignment, hub location, phasing and financing
 - Complete environmental clearance for Phase I
- Groundbreaking/begin construction for "University Station" hub

Mid-Term Actions:

- Open “University Station” hub and Phase I circulator
- Complete environmental clearance and design for Phase II circulation extensions and begin phased construction:
 - South Side
 - Bloomfield/Lawrenceville
 - Hazelwood LTV and Carrie Furnace

Long-Term Actions:

- Complete construction of Phase II circulator extensions to:
 - South Side
 - Bloomfield/Lawrenceville
 - Hazelwood LTV and Carrie Furnace

IMPLEMENT RAPID TRANSIT FROM DOWNTOWN TO AIRPORT

Several studies have investigated various alternatives for providing improved transit service from Downtown to Pittsburgh International Airport. The technical team believes Light Rail Transit from Downtown to the Airport utilizing a “Parkway” alignment, or a more direct new right-of-way, and establishing a major intermodal hub at a midway point for the West area will provide the best alternative for these reasons:

- Provides opportunities for travelers to our area to rapidly connect to Oakland and other essential corridors.
- Directly serves Pittsburgh International Airport hub and a midpoint “western” intermodal hub that will distribute commuters to employment centers, educational facilities and other points of interest in Western Allegheny County.
- Supports economic development, land use priorities and redevelopment opportunities along the corridor.
- Provides potential connections from the intermodal hub to Robert Morris University, CCAC West, and other higher education facilities.
- Provides most direct and fastest route to Pittsburgh International Airport.
- Provides a link connecting to the Downtown subway, North Shore and South Hills LRT.

The team has identified two stages: Stage I would complete the LRT from Downtown to the “Western Station” intermodal hub; and Stage II would continue the LRT on to the Airport Station hub. It will be the role of the Transportation Action Partnership (TAP) to lead this effort, with the ultimate goal being to select the best alignment and funding strategy.

Short-Term Actions:

- North Shore connector groundbreaking and construction

- Identify “Airport Station” and “Western Station” intermodal hubs

Mid-Term Actions:

- Begin corridor scoping, environmental clearance, and design for two-phase LRT
- Phase I: “Western Station” intermodal hub
- Phase II: “Airport Station” intermodal hub

Long-Term Actions:

- Complete final design and construction of LRT Phase I
- Complete final design and begin construction of LRT Phase II

○ **CONSTRUCT AIRPORT AREA CIRCULATOR SYSTEM**

The airport corridor has seen strong growth over the past decade, and Pittsburgh International Airport has fueled much of this development. Substantial investment for the development of thousands of acres of vacant land surrounding Pittsburgh International Airport has already been made. Those funds have been used to build needed sewer lines, roads and additional infrastructure to connect potential development sites near the airport to the rest of the region.

The corridor will continue to be attractive for new corporate headquarters, research and development facilities, manufacturing plants, and distribution centers in a wide range of industries as pad-ready space continues to be made available. To serve this growing population of workers and residents, as well as the swelling ranks of business people who come through the Pittsburgh Airport Corridor, mobility will need to be addressed.

Future construction of an area circulator system, fed by the LRT system and intermodal hubs, will serve to connect the new industry, universities, retail, and the airport, bringing together many assets and allowing the parts to function as a whole. These future developments will need to be concentrated in dense hubs to be effectively serviced by transit.

These development efforts need to be coordinated with the plans of the Allegheny County Airport Authority and Allegheny County Department of Economic Development, as well as airport-area local governments and other area stakeholders

A vision of what the County’s future transit system could be, with a light-rail transit system expanded to connect Oakland to Pittsburgh and the Airport corridor, with the Oakland circulator and the Airport Corridor circulator integrated into the system has been developed. Under this vision, buses ultimately feed the core system throughout Allegheny County and surrounding communities.

ADVANCE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT AT KEY LOCATIONS

In the pre-automotive age, development occurred where it could be served by the available transportation of the day. This naturally resulted in compact, mixed-use and walkable places that have qualities many seek to emulate once again today in the form of Transit Oriented development (TOD). TOD can increase transit ridership by creating destinations, enhancing the effectiveness of transit projects, and providing a financial return that can be captured and reinvested.

Numerous locations along existing LRT and busway alignments have great TOD potential. Future TOD locations along the Airport/ Downtown/ Oakland transit corridor could be very lucrative through lease concessions, and they have excellent private-public partnership potential. All of these TODs could assist in funding portions of this transit capital improvement program. Ideally, this could lead to the evolution of the development of Primary and Secondary intermodal hubs throughout the County.

Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) planning grants have laid the foundation for TOD along Port Authority's light rail line in Castle Shannon, Dormont, and Mount Lebanon and should continue to be utilized.

Short-Term Actions:

- Construct Phase I TOD sites at Castle Shannon and East Liberty
- Design Phase II TOD sites such as:
 - Mt Lebanon Station, and
 - In Dormont at both Potomac Station and Dormont Junction.
- Trend analysis and market evaluation of TOD potential on all existing busways and LRT stations to market sites for private development

Mid-Term Actions:

- Construct Phase II TOD sites
 - Mt. Lebanon
 - South Hills Village
 - Dormont (2 sites)
 - Wilkinsburg
 - Others as determined
- Design and begin construction for Phase III TOD sites
 - Locations TBD

Long-Term Actions:

- Construct Phase III TOD sites

LEVERAGE OUR ASSETS

Consistent with abandoning the “business as usual” approach and an almost total reliance upon federal funds, we need a new strategy. We need to inventory our assets that have potential to provide direct and indirect basis for innovation in the future funding of transportation investment.

○ **INVENTORY OUR ASSETS**

Conduct review related to long term leases and assess potential yields to determine revenue generating opportunities.

- Create “Sources and Uses of Funds Sheet” as projects surface.

○ **FORM PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (P3s)**

Pass Commonwealth legislation permitting P3s. Put into practice the use of innovative agreements with the private sector to fund systems and facilities - P3's can save between 5 and 40% of the cost of construction and can dramatically limit the potential for cost overruns.

○ **OPTIMIZE USE OF BUSWAYS**

The broader use of busways translates into broader economic development impact through revenue generation and developments and has huge untapped potential. A current successful national trend is the conversion of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes into High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes. The revenue generated from such a conversion, in particular the West Busway, could both alleviate congestion on the Parkway West and generate revenue for the priority capital projects identified in this report. They can also provide both greater mobility as well as leverage adjacent real estate development potential in the form of Transit-Oriented Development.

The team also recommends a multi-modal intercept terminal/garage in Carnegie utilizing existing ramps leading directly to and from the Parkway West via the West Busway. The Carnegie Terminal/Intercept Garage is another example of utilizing our existing assets. By allowing commuters access to the West Busway ramps, the intercept garage can become a major park-n-ride facility with express transit to Downtown Pittsburgh. Not only can this relieve Parkway congestion, but it can also encourage development of a TOD adjacent to the multimodal terminal/garage facility and increased transit usage.

Short-Term Actions:

- Complete business plan for lease/concession rights of busways, including potential extensions
- Design automated toll and fare collection systems with EZ Pass technology
- Develop operating/financial plans to convert West Busway to high-occupancy toll (HOT) facility

- Begin environmental clearance and design for West Busway Extension to I-79
- Design and begin construction of Carnegie Multimodal Intercept Garage and Terminal facility

Mid-Term Actions:

- Complete construction of West Busway Extension to I-79
- Conversion of West Busway to high-occupancy toll (HOT) facility
- Implement automated fare and toll collection system (EZ Pass)
- Complete construction of Carnegie Multi-modal Intercept Garage and Terminal

Long-Term Actions:

- Study Conversion of East Busway to LRT (LRT Phase II)

○ **USE EXISTING RAIL LINES**

The use of existing rail lines for commuter rail service should be explored, especially in the Route 28 corridor.

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