

Downtown-Uptown-Oakland-East End Bus Rapid Transit

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Small Starts Project Development (Rating Assigned November 2017)

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	Bus Rapid Transit 14.6 Miles, 44 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$195.50 Million
Section 5309 Small Starts Share (\$YOE):	\$97.75 Million (50.0%)
Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2020):	\$58.25 Million
Existing Corridor Ridership (Warranted):	37,010 Daily Linked Trips
Overall Project Rating:	High
Project Justification Rating:	Medium-High
Local Financial Commitment Rating:	High

Project Description: The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) 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 also includes queue jump lanes, the purchase of 25 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 two to three minutes during weekday peak periods, and every four to seven minutes during weekday off-peak periods and evenings. On weekends, the service plan includes buses operating every five to seven minutes throughout the day.

Project Purpose: URA 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 like 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 Port Authority of Allegheny County (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 project was included in the region's fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan in September 2017. URA anticipates completing the environmental review process with receipt of a Categorical Exclusion from FTA in 2018, receipt of a construction grant agreement in 2019, and the start of revenue service in late 2020.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Federal:		
Section 5309 Small Starts	\$97.75	50.0%
Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Funds	\$13.10	4.1%
Section 503 Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment (ATCMTD) Program	\$10.85	5.6%
Section 5339 Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program	\$2.90	4.1%
FHWA Flexible Funds (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program)	\$1.57	0.8%
State:		
State Capital Budget Transportation Assistance Program Authorization (Sales Tax)	\$22.51	11.5%
State Bonds	\$3.40	1.7%
State General Funds	\$2.79	1.4%
Department of Transportation Multimodal Transportation Fund (Bonds)	\$2.25	1.2%
State Sales Tax	\$1.55	0.8%
Local:		
Allegheny County General Funds	\$18.42	9.4%
City of Pittsburgh, In-Kind Station Contribution	\$12.76	6.5%
Uptown Eco-Innovation District Transit Revitalization Investment District Bonds	\$5.00	2.6%
Allegheny County Bonds	\$0.60	0.3%
Allegheny County Sales Tax	\$0.05	0.0%
Total:	\$195.50	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.

- An estimated 259,000 jobs would be served by the project, which corresponds to a High rating according to FTA benchmarks. Average population density across all station areas is 9,000 persons per square mile, corresponding to a Medium rating. In the central business district (CBD), daily parking fees average \$20, which rates as High. The proportion of LBAR housing in the project corridor compared to the proportion throughout all of Allegheny County is 1.64, which rates Medium.
- Station areas in the CBD and Oakland are typically high-density commercial and commercial/institutional 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 throughout just about every street, 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.
- *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 medium-low to high density development is permitted. There are code provisions allowing pedestrian friendly, shallow setbacks. Parking requirements are generally transit supportive.
- *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 in order 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 development that is transit supportive, has been undertaken as part of neighborhood planning efforts in various parts of the corridor.

Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* Approximately 7,000 market rate rental units and more than 2,500 low-income units are slated for construction in upcoming years, most of which will be constructed within a half mile of the proposed BRT stations. While most development is occurring downtown and in Oakland, examples were provided of high-density, transit-supportive projects in Oakland and Squirrel Hill as well.
- *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 western fringes of Oakland. These parcels typically have TOD-supportive zoning, but most are small, and land assembly is noted as 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-Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pittsburgh's planning and tools for affordable housing appear limited but are receiving increasing attention. The Pittsburgh Affordable Housing Task Force was established in 2015 and has recommended establishing a trust fund with the goal of providing a substantial pool of resources to target housing needs in the city, including funding for families earning at or below 30 percent of the area median income. Other strategies are proposed in local planning and policy documents.

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