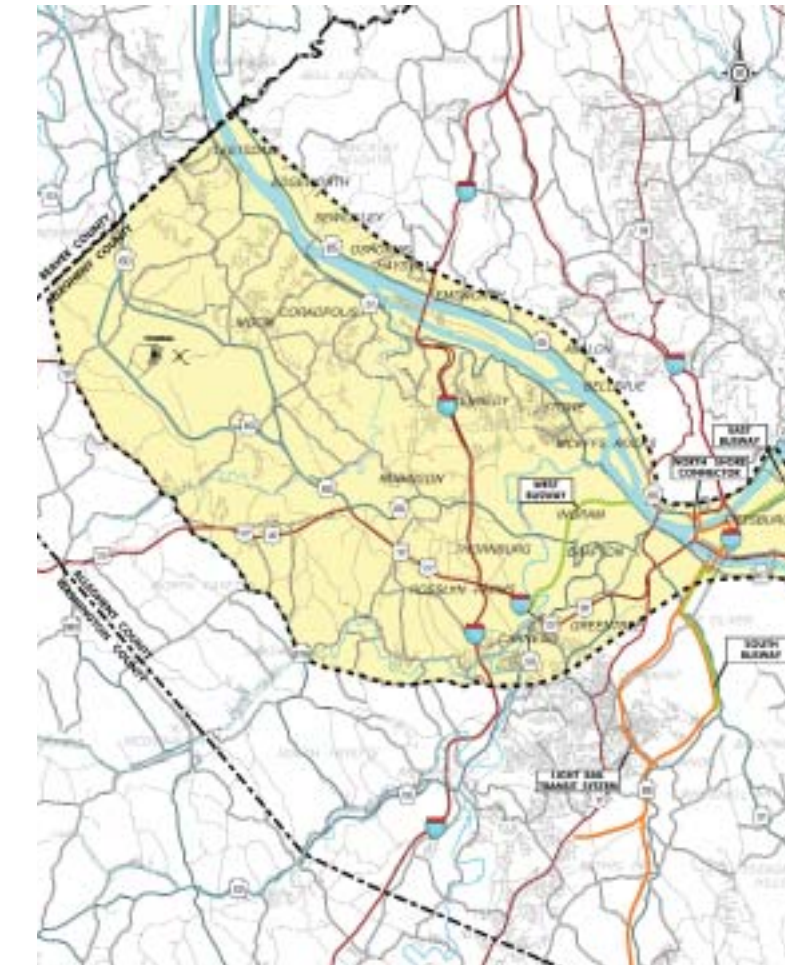




## Major Investment Study for Airport Corridor Underway



The area under study, known as the Airport/Parkway West Corridor, includes: downtown Pittsburgh; communities west of Downtown to the Beaver County line; the Pittsburgh International Airport; Parkway West (Interstate 279); Ohio River Boulevard (Route 65); Route 60; and Route 51.

A team of representatives from the Port Authority of Allegheny County, Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Allegheny County, City of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny County Airport Authority is investigating the transportation needs and concerns of thousands of area residents who live, work and commute in the corridor between downtown Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh International Airport.

A detailed analysis of public input regarding these needs and concerns is a key element in a \$1.5 million effort called the Airport Multimodal Corridor Major Investment Study (MIS).

Building on the foundation of previous studies of the Airport/Parkway West Corridor, this year-long multi-agency initiative is designed to evaluate a variety of transportation options within the corridor that will ultimately lead to investments to improve travel times, ease congestion and enhance multimodal connections.

"The study includes a comprehensive public involvement and comment process, which will enable the project team to thoroughly study, identify, analyze and recommend appropriate transportation improvements," said Port Authority Chief Executive Officer Paul P. Skoutelas. "The Airport Multimodal Corridor study will also evaluate the effectiveness of the various public transportation modes and highway improvements, provide an estimate of costs for the alternatives and investigate methods to spur sustainable transit-oriented development opportunities within the corridor."

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# Taking It To The Streets

In an effort to continue fostering information exchange, members of the study team are meeting directly with community groups and organizations that have expressed an interest in the study.

The project staff participating in this community involvement initiative, called the Airport Multimodal Speakers Bureau, have attended various community meetings throughout the corridor, including meetings hosted by the Airport Corridor Transportation Association, Char-West Council of Governments, Airport Area Development Corporation, Montour Trail Council and Moon Township's Cable Access Show.



At the request of the group or organization, a presenter attends the organization's meeting with display boards, presentation materials and various informational handouts pertaining to the study. A presentation can last from five minutes to one hour, depending upon the time allocated by the organization.

At these meetings, organizations are given an opportunity to ask questions and offer comments that will ultimately be used to help develop alternatives and identify specific community transportation concerns.

Organizations can request a Speakers Bureau presentation by calling the project's toll-free information number - **1.866.864.5774**.

*The Airport Multimodal newsletter is distributed by mail and at libraries and other community facilities. To receive additional information about the Airport Multimodal Study or any one of Port Authority's major capital projects, please contact Carmen Bray at (412) 566-5137. Also call if you would like to be placed on the mailing list.*

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### Port Authority and SPC, among others, are undertaking the Strategic Regional Transit Visioning Study. How will the outcomes of the Airport Multi-Modal study affect this effort?

The Strategic Regional Transit Visioning Study, or 20/20 Vision Study, is focused on determining, with significant public input, the next round of potential public transportation investments for the nine counties of southwestern Pennsylvania. Results of previous transportation studies indicated a great deal of public support for transportation improvements within the Airport Corridor.

Although the Airport Corridor has already been identified as an area in vital need of transportation improvements, additional public feedback and analysis gained will be shared with and incorporated into both study efforts.

### What happens to the transportation recommendations from the Airport Multi-Modal Corridor Project if High-Speed Maglev becomes a reality for the Pittsburgh region?

A project team consisting of Port Authority, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and Maglev, Inc., in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), is currently undertaking the Environmental Impact Statement for the Pennsylvania High-Speed Maglev Project. This project is a 47-mile high-speed magnetic levitation facility connecting Pittsburgh International Airport, downtown Pittsburgh, Monroeville and Greensburg. FRA will select either the Pennsylvania Project or a competing project connecting Baltimore and Washington D.C. to be the first high-speed maglev system in the United States. The FRA selection is expected in the spring of 2003.

The Airport Multimodal Corridor MIS will evaluate alternatives prior to the FRA's Maglev selection. Accordingly, the project team will develop and assess alternatives under two scenarios. The first scenario will develop alternatives anticipating that the Pennsylvania High-Speed Maglev Project will be constructed. Under the second scenario, alternatives will be developed without Maglev.

### What is the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC)?

SPC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for southwestern Pennsylvania. SPC's role is to undertake comprehensive regional transportation planning and is responsible for how federal transportation funds are spent in the region. SPC provides a forum for regional collaboration, planning and public decision-making.

Need more information, have questions or want to offer comments and suggestions?

Call the toll free hotline:  
**1.866.864.5774**

Link directly to project information from the home page of Port Authority's Web site: **www.RideGold.com**

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As part of continuous outreach efforts, the public was recently invited to participate in three public information sessions that provided a venue to ask questions of and offer comments to the project staff. Elected officials, senior managers from transportation planning and environmental resource agencies, representatives from public transportation groups and other organized interests were also convened in separate information sessions. Comments obtained from this first round of public meetings are summarized within this newsletter.

In addition to a variety of other methods to obtain information and offer comments, several more public meetings will be scheduled as the study progresses.

The Airport Corridor Multimodal Study is scheduled to be completed in October 2002.

## What's On Your Mind?

A thorough public involvement process is essential in order to identify, analyze and recommend transportation improvements for the Airport/Parkway West Corridor. The following is a summary of public feedback, ideas and suggestions resulting from the first round of public meetings and from information obtained via the project comment forms, Web site and information hotline.

- Expand and/or extend vital roadways and transit facilities within the corridor, such as the West Busway and Parkway West (I-279)
- Develop a rapid transit system from downtown Pittsburgh to the Pittsburgh International Airport, possibly light rail or bus rapid transit
- Provide additional routes and more frequent transit service throughout the corridor, including more park and ride lots
- Improve highway interchanges along the Parkway West
- Refine secondary roadways to provide quicker and more convenient access to the primary roadways
- Improve connections and provide easier access from the Airport Corridor to the South Hills, North Hills and Monroeville areas
- Explore transportation options that promote interconnectivity between highways and transit

- Improve inter-county highway connections to Beaver, Greene and Washington Counties
- Provide additional travel options to and from downtown Pittsburgh
- Implement measures to ease congestion on the major roadways
- Utilize technology measures, such as overhead message boards, to alert commuters of traffic congestion and delays
- Provide a highway connection to the Mon-Fayette Expressway from a location within the corridor
- Construct a bridge connecting downtown Pittsburgh to the Wabash Tunnel
- Build a bikeway along the Ohio River, connecting the Montour Trail and Coraopolis area to the North Shore and downtown Pittsburgh



## Study Goals

- Improve public transportation by enhancing multi-modal accessibility, options and connections within the study corridor
- Reduce travel times, improve travel reliability and decrease congestion between downtown Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh International Airport and various key destinations within the western corridor of the region
- Improve the safety and reduce the potential for traffic accidents along the Parkway West and the other major transportation arteries in the Airport Corridor
- Enhance transportation connections and options to employment and development opportunities within the Airport Corridor and throughout the region
- Improve the accessibility of the Airport Corridor from destinations throughout the region

## Previous Studies Being Utilized

Previous studies of the corridor have identified several transportation needs within the corridor. As part of the Airport Multimodal Corridor Study, travel times, efficient land use and public transit enhancements are just some of the interests to be further investigated.

For example, increasing travel delays and traffic congestion between northeast and southwest segments of the region will ultimately hinder efficient accessibility to jobs in the vicinity of the Pittsburgh International Airport and in nearby Washington and Beaver Counties, as well as adversely impact freight movement and economic development opportunities. This study will closely examine this growing trend and recommend transportation enhancements to address these travel needs. Measures will then be taken to begin planning and ultimately constructing transportation improvements within the corridor.

The last major study of the Airport Corridor, the Parkway West Multimodal Corridor Study, was undertaken by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission and completed in 1989. Recommendations from the study produced many improvements, such as the Airport Expressway, West Busway, West End Improvements and the Liberty Tunnel Interchange. Previous planning studies of the corridor have also identified various other public transportation improvements and highway alternatives that may become a reality for the corridor.

### Potential Public Transportation Alternatives

- Build a Light Rail Transit or Bus Rapid Transit system from downtown Pittsburgh to Pittsburgh International Airport
- Provide direct transit connections to growing employment centers within the corridor
- Improve connections to the existing Light Rail Transit System, proposed North Shore Connector and to the Bus Rapid Transit Network
- Expand and construct additional park and ride facilities
- Provide efficient transportation connections to potential High-Speed Maglev MAGport™ Stations at the Airport and in downtown Pittsburgh

### Potential Highway Alternatives

- Widen the Parkway West
- Construct a new four to six lane limited access highway
- Build connections to Routes 60, I-79, Route 51 and Route 65
- Construct a river crossing at Brunots Island
- Construct interchanges to enhance potential development opportunities
- Incorporate tolls to offset operating and capital costs

### Other Potential Options

- Develop the High-Speed Maglev Transportation Facility – currently undergoing environmental studies
- Investigate the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad Corridor/ Banksville Connector for public transit or highway improvements

According to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's transportation models, it is likely that increases in travel delays during peak travel times will occur if transportation improvements within the corridor are not developed and implemented.

	Peak Period Travel Time (2002)	Peak Period Travel Time (2025)
Pittsburgh to Airport	40 minutes	58 minutes
Washington to Pittsburgh	47 minutes	54 minutes
Cranberry to Airport Area	53 minutes	72 minutes
Greensburg to Airport Area	1 hour & 37 minutes	2 hours & 9 minutes
Kittanning to Airport Area	1 hour & 41 minutes	2 hours & 6 minutes

# Timeline

### January - February 2002

- Define the Purpose and Need - *Define the transportation issues of the corridor and develop a needs analysis for potential improvements*

- Consensus on Purpose and Need - *Developing agreement and consent from the public, elected officials and regional stakeholders on the corridor's transportation issues and needs*

- First Round of Public Meetings
- Preliminary List of Alternatives - *Begin investigating and analyzing a variety of transportation alignments and modes resulting from public feedback*

- Develop Measures of Effectiveness - *Begin investigating and analyzing the effectiveness of each transportation option*

### March - April 2002

- Initial Qualitative Alternative Screening - *A refinement of transportation options based on public input, project need, and environmental, technical and operational feasibility*

- Further Refine Alternatives
- Second Round of Public Meetings

### May - June 2002

- Conceptual Engineering - *With input and feedback from the public, conceptual designs of the alignments and stations locations will be drafted*

- Develop Service Plan, Ridership Estimates, and Operating and Maintenance Cost

- Environmental Overview

### July - August 2002

- Development of the preferred set of transportation solutions - *Based on public input and detail analysis, the study would recommend preferred transportation options for the Airport Corridor*

- Third Round of Public Meetings

### September 2002

- Present transportation investment alternatives to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission to be placed on the regional priority list

### October 2002

- The completion of the Airport Multimodal Corridor Study
- Public meeting to report study findings
- Initiate the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the recommended transportation improvements



# Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a Major Investment Study (MIS)?

A Major Investment Study (MIS) is the first level of the planning process for considering federally funded transportation infrastructure investments within a specific corridor of a metropolitan area. Crafted with significant public input, this study produces preliminary costs, project benefits and potential environmental impacts of various alternatives and transportation modes. The MIS will also identify all reasonable alternative strategies for addressing mobility and accessibility needs and concerns in the Airport Corridor.

### What are the next steps after this MIS study?

Among other tasks, the project team will begin a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS for the selected transportation modes and alignments. A DEIS is a federally mandated document that outlines the transportation needs of the study area and analyzes and describes a range of alternatives for meeting those needs. The DEIS further identifies in detail any environmental or community impacts and mitigation measures. The DEIS also produces more accurate estimates for ridership, revenue and capital costs.