

What To Expect Next & How To Get Involved

Preliminary Engineering and Final Environmental Studies

Now that a locally preferred alternative has been selected, Port Authority will begin an in-depth environmental analysis of the Gateway alignment before the end of the year, pending authorization from the Federal Transit Administration. The study will further investigate potential environmental impacts and conduct an analysis of potential mitigation measures related to construction. This phase is expected to take a year to complete.

Community Workshops

During the winter of 2001, Port Authority will begin a series of community workshops to seek design recommendations to potentially integrate into the project. Station design and aesthetics, and community improvements will be some of the topics of discussion. Special mailings and newspaper advertisements will inform the public of these meetings.

Community Meetings

Information meetings will be held at various locations in Downtown and on the North Side. These meetings will be held in conjunction with other regularly scheduled meetings, such as town hall gatherings, to inform the public of the latest project developments. To request a speaker at your next meeting, please call David Wohlwill, North Shore Connector Project Manager, at (412) 566-5110.

Newsletters

Currently, newsletters are mailed out to approximately 2,500 residents and businesses in the corridor area who have been active in the DEIS process and/or who have requested to be placed on the mailing list. To either receive a copy of the newsletter at home, update your mailing address, or suggest topics to be covered in future editions, please call (412) 566-5137.

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You can find more information about this project as well as on other Port Authority projects and services at the Authority's web site.



The Gateway alignment is deemed the most compatible with the City of Pittsburgh's plans for future development along the North Shore. This alignment also offers the least construction and property impacts of all of the alignments under consideration. The North Shore Connector will include five new "T" stations: the Convention Center Subway Station; a new inbound Gateway Center Subway Station with an entrance on Stanwix Street directly adjacent to Fifth Avenue Place; a subway station just west of PNC Park; an at-grade station at Steeler Way; and a station at the proposed Intermodal Transportation Center.

www.ridegold.com STAY INFORMED

Port Authority information is available online. The Port Authority web site features general information, bus and "T" scheduling, news and capital project information - including the latest developments on the North Shore Connector. Here's how you can access Port Authority's web site to obtain general and project information:

- On the world wide web, type in: www.ridegold.com
- Click on the Port Authority logo to access the home page
- Click on "Growing with Authority"
- Click on "Capital Projects"
- Scroll down the page and click on "North Shore Connector"

OR

- From the home page, click search
- Type in North Shore Connector to begin your search



An illustration by Carlos F. Peterson of the Gateway Center Subway Station.

Printed on recycled paper.

The North Shore Connector newsletter is distributed by mail and at libraries and other community facilities. To receive additional information about the North Shore Connector or on 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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PE and Final Environmental Studies Imminent for the Gateway Alignment

Port Authority has concluded the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) phase of the Authority's North Shore Connector project with an extensive public outreach program which has led to the selection of the Gateway alignment as the locally preferred alternative (LPA).



With a 45-day long public comment period completing the phase, hundreds of people took time to attend the public hearings and offer their comments to the Port Authority, either orally or in writing, in reference to three light rail transit (LRT) alignments and other transit enhancements analyzed in the project's DEIS.

From the public feedback catalogued, significant support favored the Gateway LRT alignment that will extend the Light Rail Transit System, "T," 1.3 miles to the North Shore via a tunnel underneath the Allegheny River and include a .3-mile long line from the Steel Plaza Subway Station to serve the Convention Center with a new underground station.

The Port Authority Board of Director's unanimous decision on August 11, 2000 to adopt the Gateway alignment as the locally preferred alternative reaffirmed the public's support for the alignment.

This action selected the alignment as the best option for extending the "T" to the North Shore and points east, west and north of the City of Pittsburgh including a future extension to the Strip District. Furthermore, this alignment will provide the most efficient service to multiple destination centers on the developing North Shore and will maintain the efficient and excellent service levels for thousands of Port Authority customers. Study statistics also show that the Gateway alignment is projected to achieve the highest annual increase in ridership over the other alternatives under consideration.

Port Authority recently submitted a request to the Federal Transit Administration to begin the next phase of work to advance the North Shore Connector project - preliminary engineering and design, and final environmental studies. Under this phase, Port Authority will initiate an anticipated year-long in-depth analysis of the environmental and construction impacts as well as conduct general engineering and design work associated with the Gateway alignment.

This project is 80 percent funded by the Federal Transit Administration



We Still Need Your Support

Although nearly three years of public participation have already been invested in the project by residents and a variety of different organizations, public feedback is still a vital component in the development and success of this essential transit link which would connect the City of Pittsburgh's three growing destination centers: Station Square, Downtown and the North Shore.

On behalf of the Port Authority board and staff, I want to commend those who have already participated in the public process by offering their ideas and comments for the North Shore Connector. Not only is the public's contribution a valuable tool in helping Port Authority integrate the best possible transit enhancement into the community, but participants also validate the importance of the "T" to the residents and stakeholders in the city and region.

Port Authority supports the Gateway alignment for several primary reasons including its numerous transportation and regional economic development benefits, and its high level of extendibility, thus positioning us to plan ahead for future light rail endeavors in other areas of the county.



With projects envisioned more than 30 years ago nearing completion over the next five years, Port Authority, early next year, will embark on a year-long Strategic Visioning and Long Range Public Transportation Study to identify transit priorities for the region. The study will analyze and recommend the next generation of potential transit investments, possibly including future extensions associated with the North Shore Connector. Community feedback and involvement is essential in order to collectively determine the best possible transportation options that will create a regional transportation vision and development strategy for the future.

At the same time, however, your assistance is needed to see the North Shore project to fruition. In the near future, there will be several opportunities for you to participate in workshops to help maximize key elements of the project, such as station design and transit-related neighborhood improvements. In addition, an extensive public program will keep you informed and involved by way of community briefings, newsletters, special mailings and web site updates.

Your insight is valuable to the success of this project. We look forward to working with you on the North Shore Connector project and on other transportation initiatives that will keep our region moving forward.

Sincerely,

Paul P. Skoutelas

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul P. Skoutelas".

Chief Executive Officer

F R E Q U E N T L Y A S K E D North Shore connector

..... Questions and Answers

Will this light rail line only serve Steelers' and Pirates' games?

The North Shore Connector will serve much more than just sporting events. In fact, ridership associated with Steelers' and Pirates' games is expected to account for less than 15% of the 5.2 million annual riders projected to use the North Shore Connector. Riders will use the system to travel to the Convention Center, Carnegie Science Center, Community College of Allegheny County, Allegheny West, Amtrak Station, Greyhound Terminal and new development planned for the North Shore area between the two stadiums. Furthermore, the extension will connect North Shore fringe parking with Downtown employment with the addition of a 1,700 space Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC). The capital costs for this project include improvements to three pedestrian underpasses which will enhance access to and from the North Side neighborhoods.

How will this project serve the Convention Center?

A two-track line will be built from the Steel Plaza Subway Station to a proposed underground station that will conveniently serve the Convention Center. The station will be located one block from the new 10th Street and Penn Avenue entrance to the Convention Center.



An illustration by Carlos F. Peterson of the Convention Center Subway Station.

Why is a tunnel under the Allegheny River being planned?

A tunnel underneath Stanwix Street and the Allegheny River provides the most direct and effective connection between the Golden Triangle and the North Shore. It will allow Port Authority to extend its Downtown subway from the Gateway Center Subway Station to the North Shore without creating any permanent impacts to Downtown's existing street network. A bridge connecting the Gateway Center Subway Station to the North Shore would greatly impact Downtown street traffic and businesses as it would, among other impacts, require the closing of Stanwix Street, thereby blocking entrances to several adjacent buildings. Light rail vehicles would have to ascend very sharp curves and/or steep grades to reach the necessary elevation. This would significantly diminish system efficiency, safety and light rail vehicle speed. A new bridge would also introduce negative visual impacts to the historic Roberto Clemente, Seventh and Ninth Street bridges.

Isn't it difficult to build a tunnel under the Allegheny River?

While a tunnel under the river would be a new endeavor for the Pittsburgh area, there are more than 100 examples of underwater tunnels around the world. Use of underwater tunnels for transportation purposes dates back to 1843 when a tunnel was built under the Thames River in London. It is still in use today by the London Underground Railway System. The first underwater tunnel built in North America, the St. Clair Tunnel, was completed in 1891 and connects Huron, Michigan and Sarnia, Ontario. More recently, Bay Area Rapid Transit built subway tunnels under the San Francisco Bay to accommodate the agency's light rail transit system. One day after the Loma Prieta Earthquake hit the Bay area in 1989, the tunnels were operational while major portions of the regional highway network experienced long-term damage. The tunnel under the Allegheny River will be built below the riverbed and will neither obstruct river flow nor interfere with river traffic.

How much will the North Shore Connector project cost?

The cost to design and construct the North Shore Connector is estimated to be \$390 million. This cost estimate includes the light rail transit line to the Convention Center and the acquisition of additional light rail vehicles.

Will the new line be accessible to riders with disabilities?

All of the new stations and light rail vehicles will be accessible to everyone wishing to ride the North Shore Connector. Elevators, ramps and station graphics will facilitate access for persons with physical and visual challenges. Port Authority plans to continue to work closely with the Committee for Accessible Transportation to maximize these components of the project.

Will at-grade operations pose safety problems, particularly during sports events?

Many North American transit agencies operate portions of their light rail transit system at-grade without any significant safety problems. Many of these systems operate through highly developed urban areas including Baltimore, Toronto, Dallas, Denver, Portland, and Sacramento. Most of Port Authority's LRT system is in an at-grade configuration. LRT operations along the North Shore Connector would not pose additional risks.

Is Port Authority planning additional LRT extensions?

Port Authority will design a system that can be extended to other areas of the county. The North Shore Connector light rail transit line can be extended further west through the Ohio Valley and to the Pittsburgh International Airport. An extension to the north would serve the North Side neighborhoods and allow for a future extension to the North Hills. The Convention Center connection has been designed to be extended to the Strip District and could be extended even further to serve the Allegheny Valley or eastern communities. Port Authority and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission will soon be embarking on a visioning effort to identify other areas in the Pittsburgh region which would present opportunities for major transit improvements.