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perform foundation exploration, complete an environmental analysis, decide what method of under river tunneling will be used here in Pittsburgh and begin designing the project accordingly."

Significant discoveries are already attributable to the FEIS phase. For example, Port Authority is considering design improvements to an at-grade section of the track and roadway between PNC Park and the Steelers' new stadium. The revised alignment will ascend from underneath the Allegheny River onto an elevated structure, eliminating the Steeler Way Station.

"With stadium construction near completion and development plans for the property between the two new sport venues underway, we now have a better understanding of how the configuration of our light rail transit extension will work best within this area," said Mr. Skoutelas.

The revision will allow for greater pedestrian-friendly access to the new stadium and permit faster traveling times for Port Authority customers between the PNC Park Station and the proposed Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC), which will be located directly adjacent to the new football stadium.

At the end of this year long study, Port Authority will seek a Record of Decision from the FTA – the final step in the environmental review process – in order to proceed with final design and construction. The FTA's decision is expected by the spring of 2002.

North Shore Connector And How It Will Benefit You

- Sustains Port Authority's continuous mission to improve and expand public transit services for the citizens of Allegheny County, thus making transit user-friendly, accessible and convenient.
- Enables possible future expansion of the "T" to the Strip District and other areas within Allegheny County, including the county's northern and eastern neighborhoods.
- Improves access for North Side residents to the "T" as well as enhancing pedestrian underpasses between the North Shore and North Side communities.
- Offers a direct "T" connection to the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, enabling convention-goers convenient access to hotels, entertainment and restaurants in Downtown, along the North Shore and at Station Square.
- Provides a one-seat ride between the North Shore, Downtown, Station Square and South Hills employment, business and retail centers, consequently improving transit access to jobs, education and entertainment.
- Supports business development and planning efforts along North Shore, helping to connect and grow downtown Pittsburgh's Central Business District.
- Provides convenient transfers to other public transit service and facilities, including the Martin Luther King, Jr. East Busway, the West Busway, the I-279 HOV lanes and Amtrak and Greyhound service.

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: <http://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



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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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CONNEXIONS north shore

FTA Gives Approval To Progress PE and FEIS Studies Underway

Port Authority's Light Rail Transit System, the "T," is one step closer to providing fast, efficient public transit service to the Convention Center and the North Shore. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is complete and much anticipated approvals were granted from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in mid January, enabling Port Authority to proceed with a light rail transit extension connecting the North Shore with downtown Pittsburgh, Station Square and the South Hills.

Port Authority will make this transportation connection to the North Shore via an extension of the "T" from the existing Gateway Center Subway Station, located beneath Stanwix Street in downtown Pittsburgh, through a tunnel underneath the Allegheny River. A subway extension from the Steel Plaza Subway Station to the David L. Lawrence Convention Center will also be built as part of the project, thereby providing the convenience of the "T" to another segment of downtown Pittsburgh.

The Gateway alignment received significant public endorsement over the North Shore Connector's two other proposed alignments and was approved unanimously by the Port Authority Board of Directors

in August 2000. It will provide the greatest flexibility for possible future extensions of the system to Allegheny County's northern, eastern and airport corridors.

As a result of FTA approval, the alignment has now advanced from the planning level to the project's pre-construction phase; Preliminary Engineering and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). During this phase, in-depth studies will be conducted

on the Gateway alignment to examine its geologic and environmental properties and determine the preliminary design of the extension – information that is essential in preparing the federally required FEIS. The FEIS is a continuation of the environmental study begun in the DEIS. It incorporates

refinements to the design and includes additional studies of cultural and archeological resources, and further responds to public comments.

"We want to explore every aspect of the alignment to ensure that Port Authority customers have the best possible project that continues Allegheny County's light rail transit infrastructure," said Port Authority CEO Paul P. Skoutelas. "During this busy year, we will finalize the track and roadway design,

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This project is 80 percent funded by the Federal Transit Administration



What's Going On

Environmental Work Progressing

In early February, environmental specialists began obtaining test samples of soil and stone - also known as core borings - from the bed of the Allegheny River and at various locations in downtown Pittsburgh along Stanwix Street and near the Convention Center. This activity marks the initial work on an in-depth analysis of the corridor's geology.



These samples will be tested to determine rock and soil types, sustainability and permeability, which will ultimately determine the type of methods and materials required for construction and identify potential environmental impacts. Archeology and other environmental studies are also underway to determine cultural and historic information within the vicinity of the alignment.

Contract Awarded for Management Services

On February 23, 2001, the Port Authority Board of Directors authorized the awarding of a contract to Tri-Gold for the North Shore Connector project management and construction management services. Tri-Gold, a joint venture of HDR Engineering, Inc., Sverdrup Civil, Inc., and the Kwame Building Group, Inc., will oversee and support the completion of the FEIS and Preliminary Engineering, and provide a variety of services, including agreement writing, review of alternative tunneling methods, cost and schedule control and value engineering, among others.

"Tri-Gold's technical resources are diverse and the team demonstrated the depth of experience needed to evaluate the range of alternative technical and contracting approaches that may be used in constructing this project," said Port Authority Assistant General Manager for Engineering and Construction Henry Nutbrown.

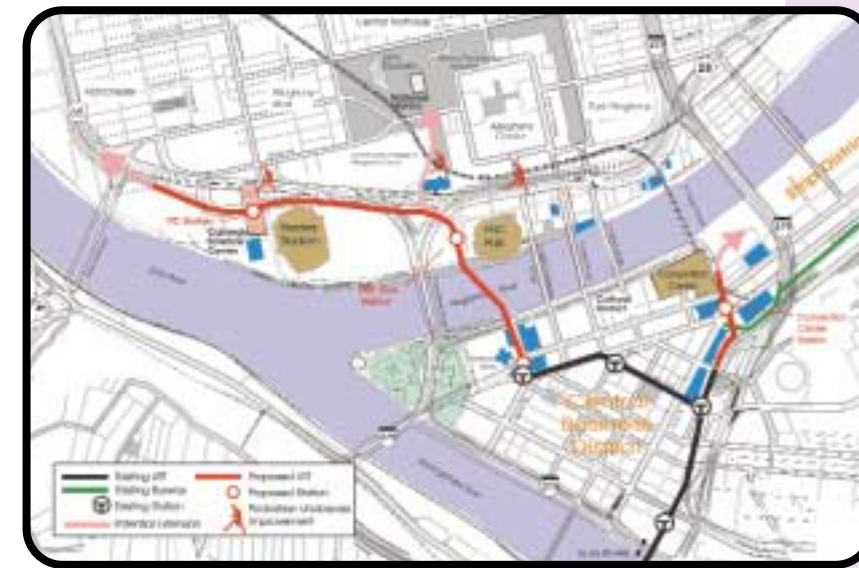
Wanted: Station Refinement

Public workshops will begin soon to get community input on developing the design and aesthetic qualities of each new station along the corridor. Notices will be placed in newspapers and on Port Authority's Web site at <http://www.RideGold.com>.

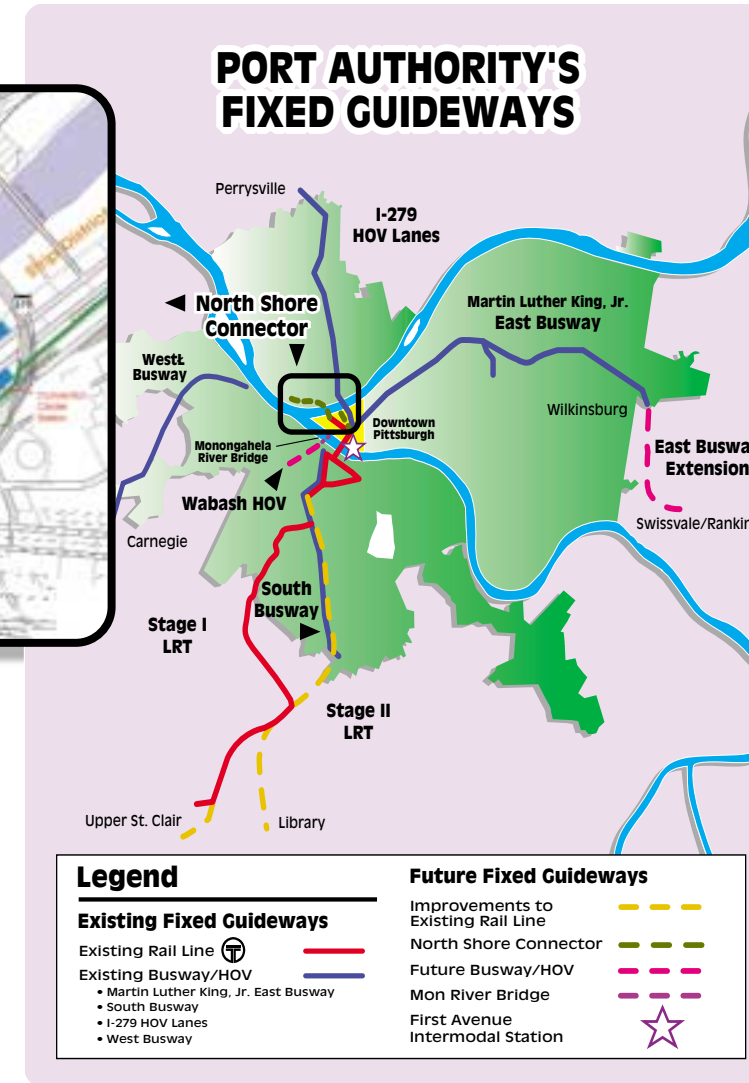
"We want the stations to reflect the unique character of Downtown and the North Side communities," said Port Authority CEO Paul P. Skoutelas. "This can only be maximized by engaging the assistance of area residents, businesses and our customers. I encourage all interested parties to attend." Please call David Wohlwill at (412)566-5110 for additional information.



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



Gateway Alignment



What To Expect During The FEIS

The FEIS and Preliminary Engineering phase is expected to take a year to complete. Throughout the FEIS phase, Port Authority will hold informational meetings and community workshops to keep the public informed about the recent project developments. These meetings will be widely publicized and open to the general public. Call 566-5110 for more information.

Here are the types of issues that will be addressed over the next 12 months:

Geotechnical Studies

Conducting topography surveys, river and ground borings, and testing to determine the soil and rock composition

Environmental Reports

Performing fish studies, identifying potential hazardous/contaminated wastes, and determining mitigation efforts for air quality, noise and construction impacts

Cultural Resources

Conducting archaeological and historical research

Preliminary Engineering

Modifying and improving the alignment, reviewing alternate tunneling and construction methods, and identifying utility and right-of-way impacts

Preliminary Design

Beginning the design for the subway, bridges, track, signals, traction power, stations, roadways and tunnels

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

- 1996** The City of Pittsburgh began a new plan for downtown Pittsburgh which expanded the Central Business District (CBD) to include the North Shore.
- 1997** The City of Pittsburgh and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission began the North Shore/CBD Transportation Corridor MIS in support of current and future development initiatives. The study recommended further analysis of various alignments and transportation modes.
- 1999** (January) The MIS study was completed and Port Authority began studying the recommended modes and compiled the information into a DEIS for the North Shore Connector Project. Three technologies - Low-speed Maglev, People Mover and Light Rail Transit - and 15 different alternatives were considered.
- 1999** (July) Light Rail Transit was selected as the mode of choice for the North Shore Connector. Now only three light rail alternatives - Gateway and Steel Plaza (Options A and B) - were under study.
- 2000** (June/July) The DEIS was circulated for public review and comment. Public hearings were held for the North Shore Connector, one of the final steps in completing the DEIS. The Gateway alignment was publicly preferred.
- 2000** (August) Based on public opinion and prior analysis, the Port Authority Board of Directors voted unanimously to move the Gateway alignment forward as the Locally Preferred Alternative.
- 2000** (September) The DEIS was submitted to the FTA for approval to begin FEIS studies and Preliminary Engineering.
- 2001** (January) Port Authority receives FTA approval of the DEIS. Port Authority subsequently begins FEIS and Preliminary Engineering on the Gateway Alignment.
- 2001** (April - December) Port Authority to continue an open dialogue with the communities and keep the public informed about the developments of the North Shore Connector project during the FEIS phase via update meetings, design workshops, newsletters, press releases, Web site updates, etc.
- 2001** (December) Anticipated completion of the FEIS and Preliminary Engineering.
- 2002** (Winter) Anticipated FTA decision regarding the FEIS, also known as a Record of Decision. A positive finding will allow the Port Authority to move forward with final design and construction.
- 2002-2005** Final design and construction expected to be underway.
- 2005** (Fall/Winter) The completion of the North Shore Connector project. Light Rail Transit service will cross both the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers connecting the South Hills, Station Square, downtown Pittsburgh and the North Shore while allowing for several future light rail transit extensions.