


EASTERN CORRIDOR TRANSIT STUDY



Purpose & Needs Report *Final Draft* **October 23, 2002**

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Study Background and Description.....	1
1.2	Purpose of Report.....	2
1.3	Description of the Study Area.....	2
1.4	Next Steps.....	4
2	Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics	4
2.1	Data Background.....	4
2.2	Population.....	4
2.2.1	Population Densities.....	7
2.2.2	Percentage Population Change - 1990 to 2000.....	9
2.2.3	Percentage Population Change - 1997 to 2025.....	9
2.2.4	Minority Residents.....	12
2.2.5	Population over 64 Years of Age.....	12
2.3	Employment.....	15
2.3.1	Employment Density.....	15
2.3.2	Employment Change – 1997 to 2025.....	15
2.4	Income.....	17
2.5	Housing Unit Vacancy Rate.....	19
3	Land Use	21
3.1	Land Uses and Activity Centers.....	21
3.2	Planned Development.....	24
3.3	Housing Density.....	24
3.4	Study Area Features.....	24
4	Transportation Network	27
4.1	Description of Transportation Facilities.....	27
4.2	Highway Network.....	27
4.2.1	System Linkage Deficiencies.....	27
4.2.2	Congestion.....	30
4.2.3	Accident Analysis.....	34
4.3	Transit Network.....	39
4.3.1	Transit Ridership.....	42
4.3.2	Transit Frequency.....	43
4.4	Railroad Network.....	46
4.5	Travel Patterns.....	49
4.5.1	Transportation and Land Use Characteristics.....	50
4.5.2	Home-Based Work Productions & Attractions.....	51
4.6	Commuting Patterns in the Eastern Corridor.....	54
4.7	Corridor Travel Demand.....	63
4.8	Travel Times.....	66
4.8.1	Highway Travel Times.....	66
4.8.2	Transit Travel Times.....	67
5	Previous Studies and Planned Improvements	75
5.1	2025 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania.....	75
5.2	Transportation Improvement Program.....	75
5.3	Previous Studies/Ongoing Initiatives.....	76
5.3.1	Airport Multi-Modal Corridor Project.....	76
5.3.2	Strategic Regional Transit Visioning Study (20/20 Vision).....	77
5.3.3	Pennsylvania High-speed Maglev Project.....	77
5.3.4	Mon/Fayette Expressway.....	77
5.3.5	Spine Line Corridor Study.....	77

5.3.6	Initial Phase Alternatives Analysis.....	78
5.3.7	East Busway Extension.....	78
5.3.8	OTAK Study.....	78
5.4	Previously Suggested Corridors.....	78
6	Public Outreach and Agency Coordination	81
6.1	Corridor Working Groups.....	81
6.2	Public Open Houses.....	84
6.3	Targeted Outreach.....	86
6.4	Study Coordination.....	87
7	Statement of Needs	88
8	Goals and Objectives	90
8.1	Consideration of Regional and Local Vision.....	90
8.2	Consideration of TEA-21 Factors.....	90
8.3	Consideration of Identified Transportation and Community Needs	91
8.4	Goals and Objectives of the Eastern Corridor Transit Study	91

List of Exhibits

Exhibit 1.1	– Municipalities in the Study Area.....	2
Exhibit 1.2	– Study Area Map.....	3
Exhibit 2.1	– Socioeconomic Data.....	5-6
Exhibit 2.2	– 2000 Population Densities Map.....	8
Exhibit 2.3	– 1990 to 2000 Population Change Map.....	10
Exhibit 2.4	– 1997 to 2025 Population Change Map.....	11
Exhibit 2.5	– 2000 Minority Residents Map.....	13
Exhibit 2.6	– 2000 Population over 64 Map.....	14
Exhibit 2.7	– 1997 Employment Density Map.....	16
Exhibit 2.8	– 1990 Income Map	18
Exhibit 2.9	– Vacancy Rate Map.....	20
Exhibit 3.1	– Land Cover Map.....	22
Exhibit 3.2	– Land Cover.....	23
Exhibit 3.3	– 2000 Housing Density Map.....	25
Exhibit 3.4	– Study Area Features Map.....	26
Exhibit 4.1	– Deficiency Report.....	28-30
Exhibit 4.2	– 2003 Volume/Capacity Map.....	32
Exhibit 4.3	– 2025 Volume/Capacity Map.....	33
Exhibit 4.4	– Accident Analysis Routes.....	34
Exhibit 4.5	– Accident Rates Map.....	35
Exhibit 4.6	– Accident Rates of Segments.....	36-38
Exhibit 4.7	– Statewide Average Accident Rates.....	38
Exhibit 4.8	– Public Transportation Map.....	41
Exhibit 4.9	– Transit Ridership by Corridor.....	44
Exhibit 4.10	– Transit Frequency Map.....	45
Exhibit 4.11	– Railroad Network Map.....	48
Exhibit 4.12	– Traffic Analysis Zones Map.....	50
Exhibit 4.13	– Home-Based Work Attractions & Productions Map.....	52
Exhibit 4.14	– Home-Based Work Trips and Transit Trips (Summary).....	53
Exhibit 4.15	– Home-Based Work Trips Attracted to the Pittsburgh CBD Map.....	55
Exhibit 4.16	– Transit Use for Work Trips Attracted to the Pittsburgh CBD Map.....	55

Exhibit 4.17 – Home-Based Work Trips Attracted to the Oakland Area Map.....	56
Exhibit 4.18 – Transit Use for Work Trips Attracted to the Oakland Area Map.....	57
Exhibit 4.19 – Home-Based Work Trips Attracted to the Monroeville Area Map.....	58
Exhibit 4.20 – Transit Use for Work Trips Attracted to the Monroeville Area Map.....	58
Exhibit 4.21 – Home-Based Work Trips Attracted to McKeesport & North Versailles Map.....	59
Exhibit 4.22 – Transit Use for Work Trips Attracted to McKeesport & North Versailles Map.....	60
Exhibit 4.23 – Home-Based Work Trips Attracted to the Penn/Jeannette Area Map.....	61
Exhibit 4.24 – Transit Use for Work Trips Attracted to the Penn/Jeannette Area Map.....	61
Exhibit 4.25 – Home-Based Work Trips Attracted to Greensburg and Vicinity Map.....	62
Exhibit 4.26 – Transit Use for Work Trips Attracted to Greensburg and Vicinity Map.....	63
Exhibit 4.27 – 2003 Estimated AM Peak Hour Highway Travel Times.....	69
Exhibit 4.28 – 2025 Estimated AM Peak Hour Highway Travel Times.....	70
Exhibit 4.29 – 2025 – 2003 Estimated AM Peak Highway Travel Times.....	71
Exhibit 4.30 – 2003 Estimated AM Peak Hour Transit In-Vehicle Travel Times.....	72
Exhibit 4.31 – 2025 Estimated AM Peak Hour Transit In-Vehicle Travel Times.....	73
Exhibit 4.32 – 2025 – 2003 Estimated AM Peak Hour Transit In-Vehicle Travel Times.....	74
Exhibit 5.1 – TIP Transit & Roadway Projects.....	76
Exhibit 5.2 – Previously Suggested Corridors Map.....	80
Exhibit 6.1 – Corridor Working Groups Map.....	83
Exhibit 6.2 – Open Houses Map.....	85
Exhibit 6.3 – Targeted Outreach.....	86-87

Appendices

Appendix A – 2003 Home-Based Work Trips

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background and Description

Port Authority of Allegheny County (PAAC) and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), along with Westmoreland County Transit Authority (WCTA), are jointly undertaking a year-long planning effort, the Eastern Corridor Transit Study, to identify transportation and community needs and potential public transit improvements within a study area extending from downtown Pittsburgh to the City of Greensburg and from the north shore of the Allegheny River northeast to New Kensington and to the south shore of the Monongahela River southeast to Clairton.

The Study will first identify the transportation and community needs within the study area and then develop appropriate transit solutions that efficiently and effectively address those needs. This study effort will build on existing public transit infrastructure and systems while improving mobility, fostering economic development, considering environmental impacts and addressing community concerns. Potential transit alternatives that will be considered include improvements in existing bus service, busway / light rail extensions and/or improvements and commuter rail service on existing railroad rights-of-way. The Study will encompass the following technical tasks:

- **Needs Assessment Analysis** – Identification of existing transportation and socioeconomic conditions and transportation/community needs.
- **Purpose and Need Statement** – Reasons for the study and the need for transit improvements.
- **Definition of Alternatives** – Development of transit alternatives to satisfy the aforementioned needs.
- **Technical Analysis** – Operating/capital cost estimates, ridership estimates and environmental review.
- **Evaluation of Alternatives** – Qualitative and quantitative evaluation process.
- **Public and Agency Coordination** – General and targeted public outreach.
- **Financial Planning** – Financial plan for recommended investment strategies.
- **Next Steps** – Implementation plan for the next phases of project development.

1.2 Purpose of Report

The Eastern Corridor Transit Study will ultimately identify transit alternatives that address identified study area needs. The first step in this process is to identify the purpose and needs of the study. This is accomplished by analyzing existing demographic and transportation related data to identify existing system deficiencies. An important component of the needs analysis is the collection and documentation of transportation and community needs as heard from residents throughout the study area. The following sections of this report will discuss these efforts and the resulting transportation and community needs of the study area.

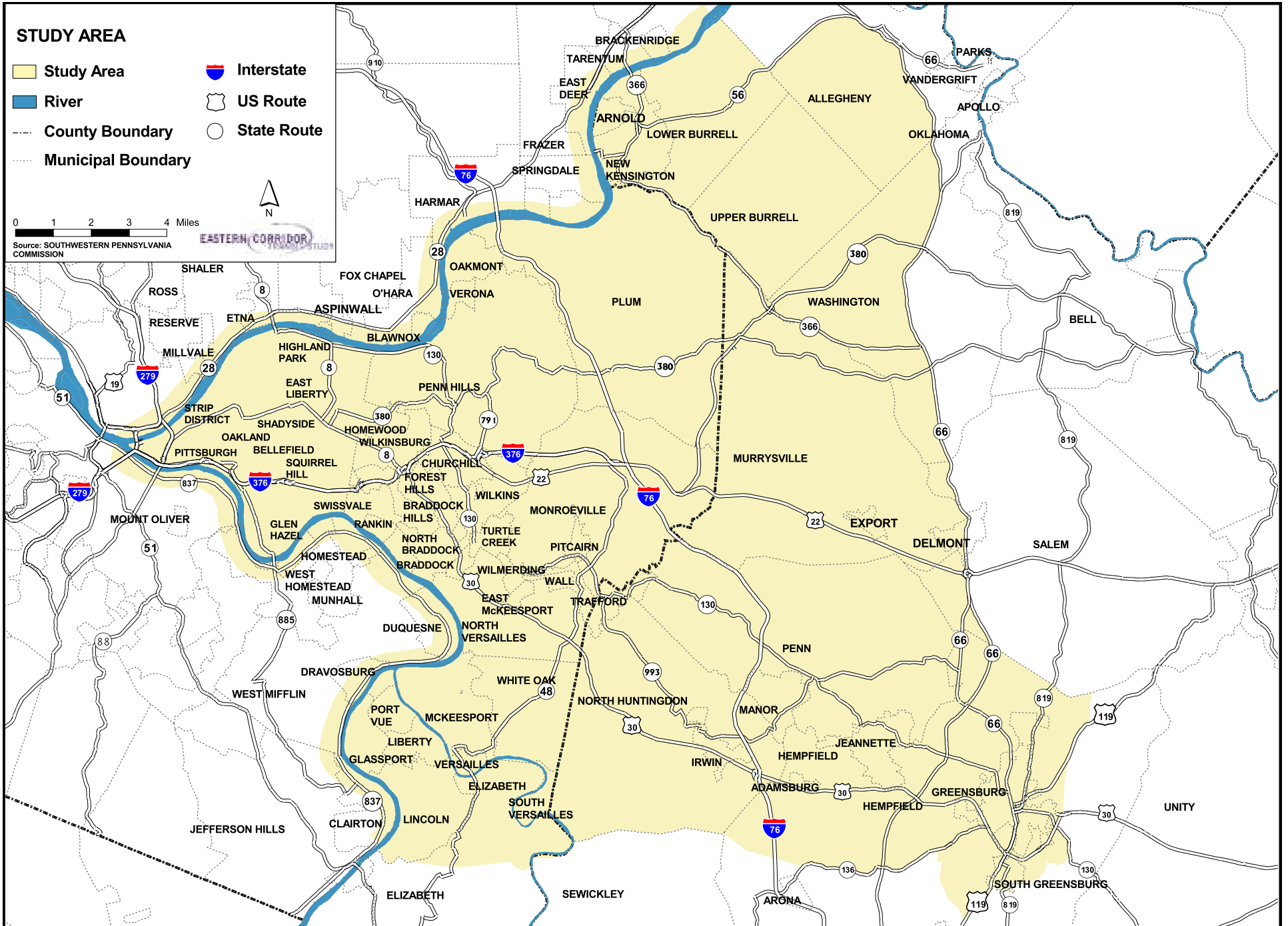
1.3 Description of the Study Area

The study area of the Eastern Corridor Transit Study, as illustrated in Exhibit 1.2, extends from downtown Pittsburgh to western Westmoreland County and is bounded by the north shore of the Allegheny River to the north, and the south shore of the Monongahela River to the south. The eastern boundary is approximated by State Route 66 and the City of Greensburg to the southeast. The study area covers 385 square miles encompassing 53 municipalities entirely and portions of 34 others. The municipalities, consisting of boroughs, townships and cities within the defined study area, are presented in Exhibit 1.1.

Exhibit 1.1 Study Area Municipalities			
Adamsburg Borough	Export Borough	Munhall Borough*	South Greensburg Borough
Allegheny Twp*	Fawn Twp	Murrysville, Munic of	South Versailles Twp
Arnold City	Forest Hills Borough	New Kensington City	SW Greensburg Borough
Aspinwall Borough*	Fox Chapel Borough*	North Braddock Borough	Springdale Borough*
Baldwin Borough*	Frazer Twp	North Huntingdon Twp	Springdale Twp*
Blawnox Borough*	Glassport Borough	North Irwin Borough	Swissvale Borough
Brackenridge Borough*	Greensburg City	North Versailles Twp	Tarentum Borough*
Braddock Borough	Harmar Twp*	Oakmont Borough	Trafford Borough
Braddock Hills Borough	Harrison Twp*	O'Hara Twp*	Turtle Creek Borough
Chalfant Borough	Hempfield Twp*	Penn Borough	Upper Burrell Twp
Cheswick Borough*	Homestead Borough*	Penn Hills, Munic of	Verona Borough
Churchill Borough	Irwin Borough	Penn Twp	Versailles Borough
Clairton City*	Jeannette City	Pitcairn Borough	Wall Borough
Delmont Borough*	Jefferson Hills Borough	Pittsburgh City*	Washington Twp*
Dravosburg Borough*	Liberty Borough	Plum Borough	West Homestead Borough*
Duquesne City*	Lincoln Borough	Port Vue Borough	West Mifflin Borough*
East Deer Twp*	Lower Burrell City	Rankin Borough	Whitaker Borough*
East McKeesport Borough	Manor Borough	Reserve Twp*	White Oak Borough
East Pittsburgh Borough	McKeesport City	Salem Twp*	Wilkins Twp
Edgewood Borough	Millvale Borough*	Sewickley Twp	Wilkinsburg Borough
Elizabeth Twp*	Monroeville, Munic of	Shaler Twp*	Wilmerding Borough
Etna Borough*	Mount Oliver Borough*	Sharpsburg Borough*	

* Names marked with an asterisk indicates that only a portion of the municipality is within the study area.

Exhibit 1.2



1.4 Next Steps

Based on input from the public, agencies, and workgroups, the study team will conduct an evaluation of the initial set of defined Alternatives. This iterative evaluation process will assess the ability of each alternative to satisfy the needs documented from previous efforts and current stakeholder and public input. Alternatives that successfully complete the first screening will comprise the "short list" and each will undergo additional development, engineering, evaluation and public discussion. Based on the results of this screening process, the study team will define alternatives that best meet the needs discussed in this study and establish an appropriate course of action to be followed for future project development.

2 DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

2.1 Data Background

Demographic and socioeconomic data for the Eastern Corridor Transit Study has been analyzed for the following years:

- **1990 data** – Obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and used as a base for all projected demographic and socioeconomic figures.
- **1997 data** – Obtained from SPC, 1997 is the base year for SPC's current long range forecast of population, households, and employment.
- **2000 data** – Obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and compared to the 1990 data set to determine demographic and socioeconomic changes.
- **2025 data** – Obtained from SPC, 2025 data is the horizon year for SPC's current long range forecast of population, employment, and households.

Data was analyzed and tabulated for either one particular year, e.g. 2000 population density, or compared to a different year of data to determine if the community experienced any changes. All data was either summed by census tract level for Census data or by traffic analysis zones (TAZs) for SPC data.

2.2 Population

The total population of the study area derived from 2000 Census data was 804,891 persons as listed in Exhibit 2.1. 214,627 persons resided within the City of Pittsburgh. Allegheny County's eastern suburbs also exhibited a fairly high population base; in particular, the municipalities of Penn Hills and Monroeville contained 46,809 and 29,349 persons, respectively. Within Westmoreland County, the largest concentrations of population existed in the municipalities of Hempfield, Murrysville, and North Huntingdon with 30,224, 18,872 and 29,123 persons, respectively.