

**Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee
Minutes
September 17, 2020**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am in Port Authority's Neal H. Holmes Board Room at 345 Sixth Avenue, Fifth Floor, Pittsburgh, with the following in attendance:

Via WebEx Board Committee Members

John Tague, Jr., Chairman

Jessica Walls-Lavelle

Ann Ogoreuc

Stephanie Turman

Board Members and Solicitor

Sandy Garfinkel, Esq.

Austin Davis

Jennifer Liptak

Representative Lori Mizgorski

Michelle Zmijanac

Opening Remarks

Mr. Tague, Committee Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

Approval of Minutes from the July 16, 2020 Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee Meeting

Mr. Tague asked Committee members if there were any corrections to the minutes. There were none and members approved the minutes.

BRT Project Update (David Huffaker)

Mr. Huffaker, Chief Development Officer, provided a brief project overview of the Downtown-Uptown-Oakland-East End Bus Rapid Transit Project Update.

Map of Entire Corridor of BRT System

- In the BRT route begins on Forbes Avenue in Uptown and will travel inbound on Fifth Avenue. The contraflow bus Lane that is in Oakland today will become a two-way bicycle track. As the system branches out into Highland Park, Squirrel Hill and The East Bus Way you will see BRT branded Buses coming through the corridor, stations, ticket vending machines at select locations.
- PAAC is the FTA Small starts grant applicant we are the design lead and we will be the project manager and construction manager when we get to that stage. Most importantly, we will be operating the system in the bus lanes and then maintaining the buses at night as well as the infrastructure

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on the electric bus charging. The City owns most of the infrastructure; the roadways, the stations and they're also the lead on our smart signals project.

The Smart Signals Project

- The City of Pittsburgh is responsible for the Smart Signal project. This will provide the traffic light priority in the corridor and will be one of the key elements to providing and improving true travel times and reliability. PennDOT is also a partner on the project and they will be granting a highway occupancy permit on Forbes Avenue in Oakland. The Smart Signals Project is a bigger city project that encompasses more than just the BRT corridor.

Project Challenges

- Right now, we are at an exciting milestone because the FTA has just assigned a project management oversight consultant (PMOC) to review our readiness for the project. This will help us to move the project forward and to be ready to receive the grant that the President tweeted about earlier this year. We are working to get the PMOC on board, familiar with the project, and understanding the project plan.

This project is one of the most highly rated projects across the country, so we feel very confident that the plan is going to meet the needs of the stakeholders and deliver value to the region.

The PMOC will come in and make sure we have all of our project management plans in place, resources to deliver the project, a funding commitment secured locally as well as all the necessary third party agreements with the city, county and other key players. So that review is a big milestone because it is a really a key step in evaluating whether we are meeting all the FTA requirements. That will be on-going for about six months. They will become very familiar with our project and we are excited to have their partnership.

Utility Work

- Pittsburgh has a lot of utilities underground. Anytime you are digging up roadways, digging up sidewalks, and other parts of the city you don't always know what you're going to find. This project encompasses a large swath of the city, there is a lot of historic infrastructure that we will be interacting with. We have several partnerships with PWSA, Duquesne Light, the gas companies any number of private utilities as well.

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Right of Way Acquisitions

- While we are not acquiring a lot of property in terms of space, we do have a large number of temporary construction easements and impacted parties. There will be temporary work that will need to access private property along the corridor, and we need to secure temporary structure easement that gives us access.

Project Funding

- This is a complex \$230 million dollar project. There is still funding that needs to be confirmed through legislative act or through confirmation.
- Allegheny County is also going to be budgeting some additional dollars this year
- we requested that the City to put some dollars in their budget
- And, there is one very small slice that is a State Grant for the Department of Community Economic Development that would help fund some of the project elements.
- The FTA Small Starts Grant funds have been identified as being earmarked for this project and assuming we meet all the PMOC requirements and FTA requirements then those funds will be made available.

Stations

- The stations are still being designed. The design will be relatively sleek and modern. We are working on how the branding of the project fit into the design of stations.
- All stations will have ticket vending machines, real time signage, benches and other amenities that will allow for offboard fare payment. The stations will stand out as a special feature in the community.

Timeline

- A few highlights from 2020 itself:
 - In May, the President tweeted an allocation announcement
 - In November, we should have 100 percent design and be able to give the Stakeholder Outreach
 - In 2021, the big milestone will be the PMOC concurrence with our readiness to receive federal funding. Once this is received, we can start bidding the construction work to management work
 - As early as Fall 2021, we can start to mobilize construction which will last about two years. after the FTA funds have been secured. **The FTA funding will start the timeline**

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- Electric Buses being used for portion of the BRT fleet. We would be ordering those buses as early as 2021. Typically, it is about a two-year period before the construction and fitting out of the buses and they would be delivered, and we would get them tested on the BRT system.
- You will see improvements on the corridor over the next couple of years; Roadway improvements, sidewalk improvements Way improvements and bikeway improvements, the entire system would be rolling out for revenue service as early as late 2023 and some of the other elements may come in later into 2024.
- Outreach - Brand and project identity, that is something that we are working on internally, we will develop something that will stand out and announce the BRT project, we are really excited about that.

November 2020 Service Changes due to COVID-19 Impacts (Phillip St. Pierre)

Mr. St. Pierre, Director of Service Development wants to discuss the November 2020 service changes that has a lot of modifications due to the COVID 19 impacts, today I will give you a brief summary of what some of those changes are and what our plan of action is.

Currently we are experiencing 65-70% reduction ridership. Our commuter service and our Park-N-Ride utilization has been heavily impacted more than any other route type. Each route is experiencing different levels of ridership decline, some more than others.

Currently our absenteeism for our manpower remains increased over our pre-COVID 19 levels, particularly within Operations. We are seeing an increase absenteeism and that is impacting our service reliability.

As of August 23, 2020, we are at 100% normal service levels. On a daily basis, we are experiencing three percent of out of service. We still have passenger capacity limits at all our vehicles, we have returned to front door entry and fare collection on bus. Masks are still required and will continue to be required.

We also launched our Safe to Go campaign to explain to our communities and our passengers. What we are doing to make sure that they have a safe commute once they decide to return to Port Authority and see all the extra cleaning were doing, all the things were required and wearing a mask for passengers and Operators. So, everybody can feel safe when they return to Port Authority.

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With any service plan we want to make sure we follow the three E's:

- Equitable service plan
- Effective service plan
- Efficient service plan

Our objective is to increase our service reliability and decrease the strain on manpower. We also want to increase our operational flexibility to meet demand and recourses. We want to make sure we have some flexibility in our service plan to meet any changing dynamics between now and all the way until March 2021. We also want to make sure we adhere to the collectible bargaining agreement

This plan is temporary in nature, a lot of the details of this plan would classify as a major service plan or major service change for our Title VI policy. For the FTA any plan that designated temporary in nature up to twelve months could be evaluated for Title VI. We have twelve months to make these changes permanent or revert to our existing service plan. So, we are very hopeful that this will be a short-term temporary service plan going into 2021.

We evaluated our service levels; ridership demands and routes to determine where we are experiencing overcrowding. We had to adjust service levels to meet ridership demand and by adjusting these schedules elsewhere and increasing schedules where they are needed.

In your Committee packets there is a document called a ***Summary of the Service Changes***. That document outlines 55 weekday schedules have been adjusted in one way or another for the peak frequency. Two Saturday schedules and two Sunday schedules also been adjusted in this plan. By adjusting the frequencies on a lot of these routes over half of our system we were able to get some service extensions and additions that are needed in the system.

Extensions:

- Redline trips will go to South Hills Village
- Route P68 will be extended to hospital in Monroeville
- Route 2 for Saturday and Sunday service will be extended all the way out to Mt. Royal

Additions:

- Route 59 the frequency has been increased to 30 minutes previously hourly.
- Additional daily service for all seven days of the week added to the Route 1 and Route 12

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- Additional service trips added to Route 44 and Route 51

In addition to all these changes we were able to add all the weekend service. All these changes have been incorporated into the November service plan except the Route 4 because there is a major construction project that is impacting the delivery.

Authorization to amend Port Authority of Allegheny County Transit Service Standards (D. Huffaker)

Mr. Huffaker, Chief Development Officer, provided a brief discussion on this is a resolution that would offer an extension and amendment to our current contract for General Planning Services.

We currently have two contractors on board GAI Consultants and WSP USA. This was a four-year contract that was viable through October 2020 with an option to extend there is no change to not to exceed contract value and for a little bit of discussion about the scope of services, I will turn it over to Ms. Breen Masciotra.

Ms. Masciotra, Manager of Transit Oriented Communities, discussed we have completed over ten projects under this contract. The purpose of this contract in the first place was to conduct planning to facilitate Transit Oriented Development. We have done that in the following ways:

- Negley Station – Fully designed ready to go to bid when funding allows
- Station Square Station – first rounds of design next month
- Dormont Junction Station – next month first rounds of design

Another project that we completed under this contract is the Transit Oriented Development best practices guide. One of two documents produced through a project that Port Authority undertook a partnership with CONNECT, which is Congress of neighboring communities for non-profit organization under University of Pittsburgh that works with Municipalities in the county to help them work together under shared policy issues.

We worked with ten communities in the County that have our LRT and BRT stations located in them and help them understand planning and zoning best practices that they could implement and encourage TOD in their communities.

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Each Municipality received a custom tool kit document that outlines exactly bullet points of how they could update their comprehensive plan and their zoning code to be more conducive to TOD in their community.

In addition to all these projects we are actively working on a smaller scale stationary plan for Carnegie Station. Port Authority of Allegheny County received a six-million-dollar Congestion Air Quality Grant to build a parking structure. We have presented this to the community, and we are working on conceptional design. The final public meeting for that next week on September 24, 2020 and information about this can be found on our website.

In terms of major projects one of the things you may have heard is that Port Authority of Allegheny County was approved for a \$682,500.00 grant from the FTA's Pilot Program for TOD planning and we will be using this contract to conduct the work for that project which includes the stationary plan at Wilksburg Station.

We have also done a number of smaller projects under this contract including understanding the need for parking replacement if we build TOD on Park-N-Rides, locations specific Market studies and we have done sustainability work including a draft of sustainability plan for the agency and fully designed green infrastructure on our property at Homewood station, another project that is ready for construction when budgets and capacity allow.

In total we have been satisfied with the work that has come out of this contract. We want to exercise the option that would allow us most importantly The consultant team helped us prepare this application, some of them have significant prior experience working in Wilksburg that will be very helpful to us and we look forward to continuing our relationship in order to complete that important project.

With that, the resolution authorizes an amendment to the terms of the agreement for an additional year and I respectfully request that you do so. This was approved by board committee members to take to the full board on October 23, 2020.

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Questions from Board Members and Others

1. Ms. Zmijanac stated that she would like to thank Mr. Huffaker for giving us the timeline and she is very excited for this project to move forward and this is good news.
 - a. Mr. Huffaker explained that we are excited
2. Mr. Tague said it shows in November 100 percent design outreach but once you reach 100 percent design does that mean there is no changes to the project at all, or how does that work?
 - a. Mr. Huffaker answered, that is a good question, we are getting to the point where the design is starting to come baked in. We have been reaching out to stakeholders throughout the corridor to get feedback to address concerns that have come up, but we are getting to a point where the design is coming more and more final. There are always opportunities for changes, should that be required we can do that, but we are getting to point where those changes could have schedules and cost impacts. This is the project of the community so we would be open to any feedback get at that point.
3. Mr. Tague asked Mr. Huffaker if he could see the community feedback because we were at 60% design and then next does it go to 100% design, am I wrong on that.
 - a. Mr. Huffaker said 90% would be next then he asked Mr. Wargo if those dates were correct, Mr. Wargo answered 90% would be coming in November then we will obtain any comments and then we will finalize documents to 100% with the bid documents over the next couple of months. There is some opportunity to have some non-significant changes if you will, to adjust some specific things.
4. Mr. Tague would like for the committee to be able to view the Community input so far on the design after the 60 percent was put out there. Mr. Tague has not seen much on that and want to make sure at least the committee can look at what is being said and what changes are being made. Can you provide that Mr. Huffaker?
 - a. Mr. Huffaker answered yes, we can provide some feedback on what comments have been received and the meetings and the stakeholders we have been talking to at locations as well.
5. Ms. Turman asked Mr. Huffaker as you discussed the design has any of the CDC guidelines for COVID 19 been discussed or incorporated.

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- a. Mr. Huffaker answered, we certainly have been discussing that, Mr. Wargo can you address how COVID 19 has impacted the design. Mr. Wargo answered we are looking at generally spacing and contractor requirements for construction. We are incorporating some of those things into contracts whereby contractors operate in a safe fashion so that we don't introduce unnecessary risk to the public. These are open air stations so there is not a lot of need for that like the buses. But we do address the specifically COVID 19 requirements that is in our construction contracts. You will see signage along the highway today, this is a COVID Project the same type of thing for our construction, follow-up with our construction managers. Contractors are required to have COVID plans and these are incorporated into our documents moving forward.
6. Mr. Tague has a question about the 60 footers. I am assuming that we are using 60 footers on routes with increased demand, where it is feasible to use a 60-footer.
 - a. Mr. St. Pierre answered yes absolutely. We are maximizing our use of the 60-footers where we can. Some routes are inter-whined with other routes that can't use a 60-foot bus, so we must send out a 40-foot bus.