

Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee  
Minutes  
June 17, 2021

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:

Roll Call

<u>Via WebEx Board Committee Members</u>	<u>Board Members and Solicitor</u>
John Tague, Jr., Chairman	Jeffrey Letwin, Esq.
Ann Ogoreuc	Jennifer Liptak
Stephanie Turman	Representative Austin Davis
	Gerald Delon

Opening Remarks

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

Approval of Minutes from the May 20, 2021 Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

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

Downtown Mobility Plan – Project Overview and Plan Highlights (Amy Silbermann and Chris Watts, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership)

Ms. Silbermann introduced Mr. Watts, of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, who gave an overview about pursuing a Downtown Mobility Plan. This is a collaboration between PDP, Port Authority of Allegheny County, City of Pittsburgh and SPC. Thanked David Huffaker and Amy Silbermann for being a great champion with this process.

The reason why the PDP is in collaboration with the Port Authority, City and SPC decided to move forward with the Downtown Mobility Plan because we recognize Downtown is changing and this was even before the impacts of the Pandemic were happening. Over the past decade there has been

over \$8 Billion of investments in Downtown that has transformed the relationship between the people, businesses and infrastructure and we know that there is going to be some decisions made on how we utilize public realm and how we move people to accommodate these changes in the future. It has been a vibrant dynamic place but certainly the impacts of the last year have been challenging. To prepare us for that future we wanted to create a plan that provides a proactive approach to strengthen Downtown that we can continue to track people, spur the type of sustainable equitable development we want to see and focus resources to get things done.

The Process: We kicked this planning effort off in Fall 2019, ideas for this plan really started in decades before. The outcome of Envision Downtown was the need to create a plan to create some strategy and priority setting for what we want to see for Downtown that relates to transit, infrastructure, and the public realm. Ninety-plus organizations were represented on the Downtown advisory group that informed this planning process throughout the various phases as well as an equity working group that helped make sure that we are checking ourselves against bias and making sure that this plan is positioned well for the future we all want to see, as well as now well over two thousand respondents to multiple online and in-person surveys from throughout the region. We just wrapped up the final phase of this project this past May and we rolled out the plan to the public, which I will share shortly. The plan was ground in a set of guiding principles and goals that we felt was the most important component of this plan to help us really identify the North Star where we are headed towards. Each have a set of specific goals that have been embedded through the Downtown advisory group and public process feedback process that are included in the final plan that we rolled out last month. Recap the guiding principles:

- Welcoming & Vibrant
- People – First & Transit Prioritized
- Equitable & Affordable
- Intuitive and Responsive
- Sustainable & Healthy

After setting those high-level principles and goals we got technical and looked at every street withing the Golden Triangle and understood current

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infrastructure, transit network, vehicular network, freight network, AND more pedestrian and public space corridors. Also looked at current and future travel demands and understanding where people are going today and looking at potential and future development that is both proposed but also what the potential may be for the greater downtown to understand what the capacity maybe for the future travel demand. As you can see from the color-coded grid shown on the screen there are four typologies, and it goes from highest volume to lowest volume. From Gateway streets to district streets, activity streets which are almost a place amongst themselves and neighborhood streets which serve a lot of the new resident's capabilities and a lot of back of the office house facilities but also a comfortable biking and walking experience as well. As a result of this process from the various surveys we heard and the feedback from the downtown advisory group and Stakeholders a lot of research of previous plans and priorities and current planning processes, nine high impact priorities were identified, and these high impact priorities are key project themes that each incorporate various potential phases and projects that the plan is pushing to be implemented.

Two of the nine high impact priorities directly focus on public transit, one was more focused on frequency and availability which directly ties into NEXTransit planning, we are very supportive and excited about where that process is going. One better bus experience is really about the infrastructure and the routing that happens in downtown. We know and heard for decades that what's happening on the streets now is insufficient to meet the demands of public transit and this plan prioritizes and pushes for a better bus experience in downtown, that includes things like improved shelter experience both with other proof elements and seating and things that make more comfortable placeS as well as a better bus priority network and infrastructure, helping the buses better efficiently navigate downtown and get where they need to go quickly. The last component of this is ensuring that the people know when and where buses are going, improving that availability both real-time transit information but also legibility of the system and the CBD.

Where we are with the plan is that we launched on May 11, 2021 the website [DowntownMobilityPlan.org](http://DowntownMobilityPlan.org) that includes details about the full plan itself - the 125 pages of content - but also the very simple easy to

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understand snapshots of each high impact priority as well as a survey that allows public engagement of the key elements of each high impact priority. That was launched last month and has already received over 400 responses which is great, and we are continuing to push that out with some significant media which was very beneficial but also some page digital ads for some certain key areas where we are not getting strong responses. That is also a part of getting the public and stakeholder feedback that we have been going throughout the process. Trying to do our best to meet with various community groups and organizations and downtown employers and anyone that is interested to share the framing of the plan to get some feedback because the whole point of this plan is to improve downtown.

Ms. Silbermann explained where we think we are going next, Mr. Watts mentioned downtown, uptown, Oakland and east end of the BRT project, which is in eminent in our future, it will impact 46 bus routes in downtown on only three streets that it operates on. So, with the reversal of that loop in addition of course to all the things that Mr. Watts talked about already this morning of changing downtown and wanting to be more responsive to our riders we also have a lot of shifting that's happening just with that one group of routes with that project. That is the key timing reason that we want to start moving forward with the process to look at overall best routing and stops for those routes in the central business district over the next year or two.

Mr. Huffaker discussed a brief explanation on the BRT, and the FTA announcement of last Friday, it was very good news for us and for the region. Just to provide context this announcement was related to the American rescue plan that President Biden signed into law on March 11 of this year and as you recall that included more than \$30 Billion dollars for public transportation support. The bulk of that money was money that was allocated to transit agencies across the country that were a continuation of the relief funding that we already received but will allow us to absorb the additional cost related to the pandemic as well as the lost fare revenues. So, a brief preview of where we are for next month, we continue to work with the FTA and the Project Management Oversight Consultant on the review of the project and the project details and the one feedback we received is, this is a complex project and so we are working with them to help them to understand and advance the

project. We will have a more complete update next month, but I did want to provide some content on this funding announcement last week.

Questions from Board Members and Others

1. Ms. Ogoreuc stated that she has participated on the downtown advisory group for this study, and she wanted to compliment the team, it was very thoughtful and well done and appreciate them and look forward to implementing some of these projects.
2. Mr. Tague stated yesterday the city released the pedestrian safety plan, so I was interested if you could address any of that Mr. Watts or Ms. Silbermann.
  - a) Mr. Watts answered yes, we had done our best to incorporate the collection of complaints that exist into this plan. There is the: Pedestrian Action Plan; Bike Plus Plan; Mobility 20/70 Vision Plan. All were in process during this planning effort or very much on their way and close to being finished. The guiding principles and goals that are reflected in the mobility plan and are intended to be directly aligned with both the planning efforts of the pedestrian action plan specifically as well as what we knew at the time of the long-range plan of Port Authority of Allegheny County, and they intended to be complimentary and reflective each other.