



# **CONNECT Public Transportation Needs Report**

**19 March 2015**

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## Introduction

The success of a region is due to many factors: a strong economy, attractive and affordable housing, engaged and active residents, and accessible and reliable transportation. A region that lacks any of these essentials will fail to thrive. With nearly 700,000 Allegheny County residents calling the municipalities of CONNECT (the City of Pittsburgh and 36 surrounding municipalities) home, and with 75% of Port Authority's ridership residing in these communities, the success of the Port Authority is vital to the success of the urban core, and our region. A well planned and directed public transportation system can increase housing values, stimulate the economy, lower traffic congestion, protect the environment and create healthier communities.

Recognizing that the fragmented nature of local government in Western Pennsylvania can make it difficult to coordinate and manage a public transit system that successfully addresses the needs of the communities it serves, CONNECT conducted an analysis of community need in order to identify both areas of need and potential opportunities. This report and its resulting recommendations are based on municipal interviews conducted by CONNECT staff and a review of local and national public transportation best practices. The report outlines recommendations to enhance public transportation in our region's urban core through increased collaboration, infrastructure improvement, improved parking integration, and eventually service expansion. What follows are tangible and executable recommendations to the Port Authority from CONNECT, presented with an understanding of the fiscal restraints under which the Port Authority is currently operating.

## CONNECT Charges, Findings and Recommendations

### CONNECT Public Transportation Charges

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Over the course of the last six years CONNECT's membership passed a number of resolutions related to Public Transportation, including the following:

- Resolution 09-09: CONNECT embraces public transit as a means to maximize economic development and commits to a broad policy of using transit as a tool to achieve those ends.
- Resolution 09-14: CONNECT commits to active engagement in policy-level transit planning and will initiate conversation with business leaders, economic development organizations and grassroots community groups to identify and develop "next generation" transit plans for the urban core.
- Resolution 09-12: CONNECT will serve as a conduit for communication between its 37 members and the Port Authority of Allegheny County.
- Resolution 13-12: CONNECT shall produce a comprehensive report on the specific public transportation needs of the urban core for submission to the County Executive.

The charges above and the information obtained through the interview process were used to guide this report and the resulting recommendations.

### Core Findings from Interviews

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The feedback we received from the interviews fell into one of the following categorical findings:

- Increased communication, collaboration and coordination with the Port Authority, especially in the areas of planning and service provision.
- Way-finding and infrastructure improvements designed to increase resident and commuter access to local stops/stations and encourage local economic development.
- Park and Ride lot expansions and/or improvements that better integrate parking into community Business Districts.
- Establishment of new or expanded routes based on need and ridership potential and the creation of feeder routes to fixed guideways or well established routes.

The above findings combined with best practices research led to the following recommendations:

### **Recommendations to the Port Authority**

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- Designate a Port Authority representative to work with municipalities on their specific needs.
- Provide quarterly ridership updates to municipalities and CONNECT to review changing ridership environment.
- Establish quarterly or twice yearly meetings with CONNECT Executive Committee members or specified leaders to work on planning and development opportunities and address concerns.
- Engage CONNECT municipalities and proactively seek input:
  - On the rollout and expansion of the new wayfinding package
  - When making parking procedural or infrastructure changes
  - When planning route changes, additions and/or cuts

### **Data Collection Process**

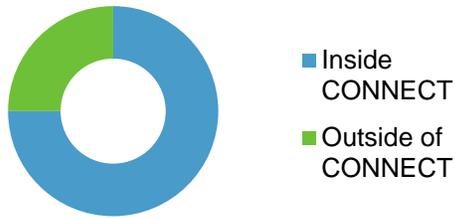
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In the spring of 2014 the staff of CONNECT conducted 35 in-person and phone interviews with the leaders (elected officials and management) of our member municipalities to assess their public transportation needs and to identify areas where they saw potential opportunities for impact in their respective communities. The interviews were compiled and the main ideas were grouped by theme. Those themes were used to outline the core findings and guide the recommendations.

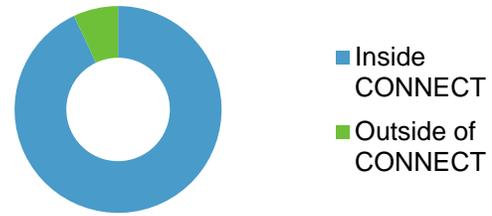
## **CONNECT and the Port Authority**

CONNECT's 37 member municipalities represent the vast majority of the Port Authority's ridership and serve as multimodal hubs for many more of the region's commuters. The Port Authority is the sole provider of public mass transit for the CONNECT communities, providing transportation via bus, light rail, inclines and ACCESS para-transit. The Port Authority estimates that over 75% of its directional service miles and 93% of all customer boardings take place within the borders of CONNECT member municipalities. While CONNECT encompasses 57% of Allegheny County's households, a much larger percentage (79.5%) of Allegheny County's vehicle-less households can be found within the borders of our member municipalities. 13.5% of workers in CONNECT commute by public transit compared to only 4.9% in the rest of Allegheny County. In fact 72% of the approximately 54,000 commuters who use public transportation in Allegheny County but live outside of CONNECT, board a public transportation in a member municipality. **This means that 38,700 commuters a day, drive, walk or ride into a CONNECT municipality to use the Port Authority's system.**

## PAT Riders Live



## PAT Riders Board



Allegheny County's financially challenged public transportation system has long been a focal point for CONNECT. Over the past decade, the Port Authority has dealt with dwindling funding, sizable legacy costs and sustained political pressure to cut costs while improving the efficiency of its service. Due to this very difficult fiscal climate, the Port Authority has had little choice but to drastically cut service to bring costs in line with their anemic funding streams. In working with its members, CONNECT has passed numerous resolutions advocating for increased state and federal funding for the Port Authority, recognizing that its success is vital to for maximize economic development and improve the quality of life in Allegheny County's urban core.

### New Transportation Funding

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In November of 2013 the Port Authority witnessed a sizable increase in funding when the Commonwealth's General Assembly passed an omnibus \$2.4 billion transportation-funding bill. The bill abated the Port Authority's looming funding crises by providing over \$100 million per year in sorely needed funding and breathed new life into a financially struggling authority.

CONNECT recognizes that while the new funding is providing necessary stabilization and some addition revenue, it is no panacea for the fiscal problems that have plagued the Port Authority. Legacy costs will continue to be a problem for the Authority in the long term and the routes that were cut will not likely be replaced. The Port Authority has suggested that it will look at returning limited service to some areas, but it will be done on a case-by-case basis and must also be approved by the Commonwealth. The discussion that follows focuses first on the municipalities' desire for increased collaboration and why it matters and moves to opportunities for capital improvements to the Port Authority's public transportation system.

### Municipal Needs and Opportunities

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Over the past decade, the municipalities of Allegheny County's urban core have seen significant cuts in the public transportation options available to their residents. They challenged and cajoled local, state and federal leaders to do something as they watched the Port Authority's funding dry up and the transit system shrink from 235 bus routes to less than 110. Finally in November of 2013, Pennsylvania's General Assembly passed a funding bill that changed the conversation. For the first time in ten years, the municipalities could talk about what they wanted instead of what they did not want to lose.

The municipal desires have been tempered in this assessment with the knowledge that the Port Authority's new funding does come with limits. The Commonwealth's transportation bill was designed to provide capital funding and not to expand operations, thus the call for the reinstating, expanding, or creating new routes have been muted in this report.

### **Collaboration**

- Throughout the interviews municipal leader expressed the desire for increased and consistent collaboration with the Port Authority, and not just when there is a large local project in the works.

### **Infrastructure Improvements – Wayfinding, Shelters and TOD**

- The need for better signage, timed connections, and effective marketing was repeatedly pointed to as reason poor or low ridership.

### **Parking**

- The need to better integrate and increase park and ride availability for residents was a concern for most municipalities, and especially for those with fixed guideways.

### **Routes**

- Although they are not the focus of the overall recommendations; lost, overcrowded, and underserved routes are a serious concern for some municipalities.

## **Collaboration**

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The need for increased and consistent collaboration and communication was a primary interest of the municipal leaders we interviewed for this Needs Assessment. While some municipalities reported having had successful planning coordination with the Port Authority on large capital projects, such as Dormont and their Transit Oriented Development (TOD) project, most reported rare communication and coordination. Proactive planning, collaboration and coordination with community leaders are considered by experts to be essential parts of a successful public transportation strategy (Transportation Research Board, 1999) and are strongly supported by the CONNECT communities.

*“The Port Authority can be a great development partner with progressive and open planning. It is important that they keep an open relationship with municipalities and work with us on local investments. If they plan well with the municipalities they can not only keep ridership up, they can increase it.” –Eric Milliron, Economic Development- Commercial District Manager, Mount Lebanon*

Successfully coordinated collaboration is good for the Port Authority as well as the CONNECT municipalities. An Urban Land Institute (ULI) panel study and report that was completed in 2014 repeatedly stresses the importance of working with local leadership and encouraging community involvement in the decision making process (ULI Panel, 2014). According to transportation planners, one of the keys to a successful urban core transit strategy is to utilize mixed land use types, through specialized zoning and development, that will produce all day trip generators for transit, such as retail, mixed use, dense residential and employment centers. Because municipalities have land use control it is imperative that a transit agency works together with the agency to maximize their service potential. The transit agency's ability to partner with municipalities, businesses, universities, redevelopment authorities and social service agencies can dramatically affect their success in attracting and sustaining a larger ridership (Transportation Research Board, 1999). By changing the focus of their work beyond their traditional authority, both the transit agency and the municipalities are able to increase their ability to affect other positive outcomes.

*“We would like to move away from the singular focus of just riders who are in need. While, the needs of those riders are very important, they alone will not expand the use of transit very much in the Pittsburgh region. It is important to work with Port Authority, the city and the region to expand the use of transit to those who have the choice of using or not using transit” –  
Patrick Roberts, Pittsburgh*

Although many are used to thinking about public transportation solely as a service provider, it is slowly being redefined in terms of the areas of a community's life that it affects. Public transportation should no longer be viewed as simply a utility getting someone with no other means of transportation from point A to point B. Public transportation is increasingly seen as the backbone of a modern urban infrastructure. It is an economic development tool; it can improve community health outcomes, address environmental concerns, and expands access to labor pools.

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### **Economic Development**

An efficient and effective public transportation system can encourage TOD, lower traffic congestion, and help create resilient communities. In our interviews, most CONNECT municipal leaders stressed the importance of good public transportation options to their central business districts (CBDs) and near their business parks. Public transportation is also important to residential areas. Residential areas with reliable and consistent access to public transportation typically have higher property values and those values are more stable during economic downturns.

A unique feature of Allegheny County's urban core and its industrial history is the ubiquity of small dense CBDs. These largely walkable business districts provide communities with a solid backbone for creating and/or expanding TOD. TOD efforts typically create a more densely populated community with mixed use zoning and a larger tax base which in turn increases foot traffic and exposure for local businesses. Foot traffic and accessibility to their CBDs was cited by numerous municipalities including: Castle Shannon, Wilkinsburg, Swissvale and Carnegie. These municipalities, among others, recognize the importance of access and want to work with the Port Authority to improve it

## Access to Labor

According to a Brookings Institute report from 2012, 72% of all jobs in the Pittsburgh Metropolitan region are within ¾ of a mile of a transit stop. But, there is still work to be done, Pittsburgh's metropolitan residents have access to only 20.5% of the region's jobs within a 90 minute transit ride of their home, considerably lower than the national average of 27% (Tomer, 2012).

The benefits of good public transportation and TOD type investment are not limited to areas with fixed guideway access like Swissvale, Carnegie and Dormont. Managers in West View and Bellevue agree that the bus services in their communities bring people to their boroughs and increase access to the labor pool. Their municipalities also benefit from the sales and income taxes that transit generates. Connections to the labor market and businesses are very important for the Port Authority to consider.

Public and private sector partners can work together in collaboration with the Port Authority to help achieve a more business friendly environment where the labor market has better access to employment centers. Both Ross and O'Hara Township stated that transit disconnection is a serious concern for local businesses trying to maintain access to potential employees. O'Hara asserts that some employees are forced to walk almost two miles to their jobs in the RIDC commercial park, a problem that is especially serious when businesses are considering expansion or relocation, as some are. Creating access to the labor market is very important to CONNECT's economic development and local resident's desire for public transportation access is reflecting that this need is increasing.

### Housing Values

There is considerable research available today that illustrates the value to homeowners of having a public transit stop nearby. Most municipal leaders interviewed stated that convenience or easy access to a stop was the main reason people used public transit to commute. This desire to live near a transit stop adds measurable value to homes within walking distance of a stop. An American Public Transportation Association (APTA) study discovered that

from 2006 to 2011 properties that were located in transit sheds (areas with walkable access to public transportation) outperformed their respective regions by 41.6% in terms of sales value. It went further to find that the better the connection and the higher the frequency of service, the more resilient the property values (APTA. 2013).

### Traffic Congestion

Traffic can be a serious problem in CONNECT municipalities because of several chokepoints that have prevented the construction of larger transportation avenues into or out of Allegheny County's urban core. Numerous municipal managers stated that "avoiding rush hour traffic" was a primary reason that their residents take public transportation. Tunnels on both sides of Pittsburgh (Squirrel Hill and Fort Pitt) along Interstate 376 are limited to two lanes in each direction because expansion would be cost prohibitive. Bridges, while more easily widened than a tunnel, are also expensive and difficult to rebuild and expand. Because of these limitations, time consuming traffic backups and congestion pose a significant cost to our region.

Public transportation in Pittsburgh already saves local commuters \$124 million in congestion costs and 5.7 million hours in avoided delays annually. Compared to the other methods used to lower congestion in Pittsburgh, such as high occupancy lanes and arterial street signal coordination, public transportation saves three times as much money and time (Texas A&M TI, 2012). Increasing Port Authority ridership through effective community collaboration can save time and money.

When asked how public transit and transit related infrastructure could improve, the City of Pittsburgh's lead transportation planner, Patrick Roberts, answered "the largest need is for increased and consistent planning and coordination with the Port Authority." Collaboration is an important way to deal with many public problems, but according to organizational experts the best collaboration occurs with organizations that "share information, undertake coordinated initiatives and develop shared power arrangements in order to pool their capabilities to address the problem or challenge" (Bryson, Crosby and Stone. 2006). It is clear that the CONNECT municipalities are interested in this type of collaboration and the Port Authority has also shown a considerable willingness to work together on these shared interests. The following themes from the interviews address more specifically where the municipalities feel those shared interests lie.

## Congestion

According to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Pittsburgh drivers consumed 21.4 million extra gallons of fuel (18 gallons per commuter), spent 46.7 million extra hours in their cars (39 hours per person) and spent 25% of their time driving stuck in traffic annually because of congestion (2012).

## Shelters and Wayfinding

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The request for more bus shelters was heard repeatedly during our interviews with the CONNECT municipal leaders. Other small scale infrastructure requests were common as well, including better wayfinding and multimodal linkages to municipal CBDs. It was also repeatedly suggested by municipal leaders that the Port Authority should focus on increasing ridership by reaching out to those people who can choose whether to ride, especially with the local demographics changing towards a younger audience who are more apt to use public transit. "The customer experience must be enhanced to improve the value for the customer and the overall system"(ULI report, 2014). By improving the face of the Port Authority, with better bus shelters, small infrastructure and new wayfinding the system should find increased ridership.

### Bus Shelters

When asked what infrastructure needs a municipality had regarding public transportation, "more bus shelters" was far and away the most common answer we received. It is important to note that the majority of the bus shelters in CONNECT are not owned or maintained by the Port Authority; instead they are primarily owned and managed by private advertising companies (currently Lamar Advertising) that have separate agreements with each municipality. The bus shelters managed by Lamar are often placed to maximize advertising potential more so than to encourage or support ridership, as is obvious by the number shelters found at end of routes on the outgoing side where riders are typically departing the bus and headed to their final destination. The Port Authority could work together with the municipal leaders and share ridership information to help guide the placement of the privately owned shelters.

*“We have bus shelters that were built by the County and the Port Authority over a decade ago and it was difficult to get PAT to work on them as they were not seen as theirs to work on. The repairs have been made but who has the responsibility of their upkeep is unclear.” - Julie Bastianini, Edgewood Borough*

The bus shelters that are owned and maintained by the Port Authority are unbranded, limited in number and have not been updated in almost 25 years; however, the Port Authority does use their limited shelter capacity strategically. The Port Authority places their shelters upon request only in high ridership areas that are not already served by Lamar’s shelters, or in areas where Lamar has refused to put bus shelters due to their lack of advertising potential. Even with this strategic placement policy, which has utilized their limited and aging inventory of bus shelters effectively, there was a consistent call from municipal leaders for the Port Authority to improve and expand their bus shelter infrastructure. And there are some CONNECT municipalities, such as Stowe Township, that reported having no private shelter agreements and no Port Authority shelters and have a significant need for bus shelters.

The ULI report advised that “shelters can transform your customer’s experience” and recommended that the Port Authority did what they could to enhance the shelters and transit stops to make them more accessible and informative, and easier to locate. They stressed that the stops should provide real time schedule information and the current service status (ULI report, 2014). Since there is no clear line of authority on who should provide bus shelters, and they can clearly benefit the both the Port Authority and municipal residents, it presents an opportunity to create coordinated initiatives and/or shared power relationships. Such collaboration could harness the expertise, knowledge and capacity of the Port Authority, CONNECT, member municipalities, Allegheny County, community development corporations, and businesses alike to add value to the transportation system as whole.

There are some great examples of this type of collaboration already occurring in CONNECT, but there needs to be a more coordinated effort to expand them. One example is what Economic Development South (EDS) is working on in the South Hills to bring businesses and municipalities together to build transit stops with site specific shelters, smart infrastructure and increased access to surrounding neighborhoods. EDS has worked with interns from CMU to help design better streetscapes for multimodal linkages and access to bus stops in an area where Brentwood Borough was already considering street and curb redevelopment. EDS is partnering with a local business to plan and pay for a shelter with a site specific design at a high potential ridership stop. An inviting bus shelter designed to have increased access and better information can change the customer experience, increase ridership and beautify the community. This is one of many ways to capture those riders near the margin, riders who have the choice to ride but do not have to ride; similar efforts and policies could be greatly enhanced by collaboration and expansion with assistance from the Port Authority and Allegheny County.

## **Wayfinding**

A number of municipal representatives suggested that better wayfinding would be an excellent way to increase ridership and make the system more user-friendly for their residents, and when the ULI convened a panel of experts, they agreed. The ULI panel described wayfinding as an area of need for the Port Authority if they are to improve their service and increase ridership (ULI, 2014). The Port Authority is currently undertaking two major efforts to strengthen the system’s ease of use; one effort is the Port

Authority's new Real-Time tracking system and the other is their new wayfinding project. Both of these efforts are welcome news to the municipal representatives and their residents.

*"We need better apps or electronic bus tracking at bus shelters and stops to make the service more user friendly and easily navigated." – Chris Blackwell, Principal Planner, Penn Hills*

Real time data can provide numerous benefits for residents waiting for or using public transportation. A study done in 2006 reported that real time information at stops produces a litany of positives effects including: reduced wait times, reduced feelings of uncertainty, increased ease of use, a greater sense of security, increased willingness to pay, makes the waiting period more efficient and productive, increased overall customer satisfaction and gives the transit agency a better image. The municipalities are happy that the Port Authority is working on the Real Time tracking system and the new wayfinding package. CONNECT looks forward to working with the Port Authority as the new signage is rolled out in the communities of Allegheny County's urban core.

### Transit Oriented Development

Transit oriented development (TOD) is a type of economic development that takes place in the area surrounding a transit stop, typically a high volume fixed guideway stop or station, in coordination with planning for and investment in adjacent or nearby properties. The goal is to integrate the function and value of the transit stop into the surrounding areas by using dense mixed use zoning (usually a combination of retail, office space and residential) and multimodal infrastructure investment. By creating a walkable and densely clustered self-contained community with excellent access to public transit, residents are able to limit their automobile use and developers are able to charge more per square foot. The increased real estate value should also raise the property taxes collected by the taxing authorities.

The Port Authority is currently involved in a number of TOD projects in CONNECT municipalities, including projects in Dormont, Castle Shannon, Mount Lebanon, and Pittsburgh that are all in various stages of development. These projects and other potential projects were included in a number of recent studies done by regional experts including Allegheny County, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group and the Center for Transit Oriented Development (CTOD), the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), and the Port Authority.

These studies shined a light on local TOD potential and our municipalities agree that the investments recommended and the work started should continue and be expanded. Carnegie, Wilkinsburg, Castle Shannon, Pittsburgh (in a number of neighborhoods) and Swissvale among others, expressed

**Public Desire for TOD**

The Center for Transit Oriented Development (CTOD) recently compiled industry reports examining the desire for TOD style residential areas and found that 37% of households now desire small lots and clustered development and 71% of older households want to be within walking distance of transit (ctod101, CTOD).

interest in seeing additional or new TOD investment in their communities and the previously mentioned studies support these requests. We strongly recommend that the Port Authority work with our members to increase TOD investment in CONNECT.

When the Urban Land Institute was invited by the Port Authority to conduct a week-long advisory panel focusing on creating tangible strategies for improving the transit agency, they reported that the Port Authority recognized their role in developing their property and the importance of their stations and assets to the region. But, they critiqued that the Port Authority was reluctant to move on TOD efforts because economic development and land use is traditionally the purview of the municipalities and the county. The ULI suggested that the Port Authority leverage its real estate and coordinate with the municipalities to assist with this type of development (ULI report, 2014). This is another opportunity for municipalities to work with the Port Authority to make this type of development more accessible to the transit agency

## Park and Rides and Overflow Parking

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Most municipalities discussed concerns with parking around transit stops or with park and rides and there lack of integration into the community. For municipalities found on fixed guideways with Port Authority operated park and ride parking lots, it was common for them to be concerned with the multimodal infrastructure of the lot and how it was integrated into their community. Many also reported that their local park and ride was filled to capacity very early (by 7:00 a.m. on most weekday

*“We would like to see an additional park and ride lot located and integrated so that it encourages people to stop by establishments in our central business district.”*  
Tom Hartswick, Manager,  
Castle Shannon

mornings) and late-coming commuters would venture into surrounding neighborhoods to find parking. This was reported at park and rides lots regardless of whether they were found on a fixed guideway or not. In addition, a few municipalities requested new or larger park and rides to compensate for these overflow problems.

The managers of Etna, West View and Brentwood all reported having spill over parking issues in their central business districts (CBD). Many argued that the cuts in the bus routes over the last few years have simply prompted many riders from catching the bus at a stop in a more distant municipality to driving into their municipality, parking on the street and catching the bus there. Those managers mentioned above, in addition to many others, asked for

improved, larger or new park and ride lots. They also suggested potential locations.

The managers and leaders of many of these municipalities suggested other parking opportunities. For example in Scott Township the Port Authority has worked with a local church to provide parking for commuters. Since churches tend to have the highest parking needs on the weekends, it is an ideal parking partnership for the Port Authority. Partnerships like this help prevent spillover parking, an especially pressing issue for municipalities struggling to maintain accessibility in their CBDs.

Municipalities with limited on-street parking in their CBDs complained that commuters use their streets as impromptu park and ride lots, preventing customers from easily accessing local businesses. While this is not an area that the Port Authority can directly affect, it is something they can assist with indirectly by

working with municipalities to plan for local multimodal improvements. The Port Authority can supply the municipalities with data as to where riders are boarding buses so leaders can move to create and enforce better parking regulations. Proactive planning can lessen the likelihood of using CBDs or residential areas as impromptu park and rides.

## **Bus Service/Routes**

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We prefaced the interviews with our municipal members by reminding them that the Act 89 transportation funding allocated to Port Authority was to be used for capital and not operational support. However, we still asked every interviewee if they saw a need for increased or altered service in their municipality and if so, what that might be. Most had requests for new or increased frequency of service and a complete list of those requests can be found in Appendix A.

While this report makes the suggestion that Port Authority should move from a focus solely on people who need public transportation to additionally focus on those who use transportation as an alternative, it is still very important to address those residents who are underserved. Based on the interviews, there are still significant concerns and areas of need in many CONNECT municipalities and we hope that the recommendations made here can help the Port Authority to collaborate with municipalities to serve those in need.

In addition to suggestions for increased service or reinstated routes, there were suggestions for new types of service, such as feeder routes or on demand service. Many of the municipalities that are home to fixed guideway systems suggested implementing feeder routes to increase access to their transit stops. Mt. Lebanon and Castle Shannon both saw this as an opportunity. A few municipalities, such as Baldwin Township, a municipality that no longer has any public transit service, asked that feeder routes be created to nearby municipalities to provide access to people in their municipality. The ULI panel agreed that instituting feeder routes was a way to increase access in more remote areas of the county.

## **Recommendations**

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These recommendations were created to actively address the issues and leverage the opportunities discussed in the interviews with municipal leaders. They were vetted by local experts and the Port Authority management to ensure that the guidance provided in these requests are tangible and executable.

### **Designate a Representative**

CONNECT Recommends that the Port Authority designate a representative to work with municipalities on their specific needs. Appointing a person who will be the municipal liaison at the Port Authority will provide community leaders with the ability to develop a lasting relationship with the transit authority. It will give municipal personnel the ability to better represent and react to the needs of their residents.

### **Share Data**

CONNECT recommends that the Port Authority provide the municipalities and CONNECT with quarterly ridership updates and other pertinent data. Giving the municipalities regular access to usable versions of this data will empower them to make better planning decisions internally and it could help them better understand the impact that public transportation has in their community.

### **Meet and Collaborate**

CONNECT requests that the Port Authority join CONNECT for quarterly or twice yearly meetings with our Executive Committee members or specified municipal staff to work on planning and development opportunities and discuss concerns.

### **Engage**

CONNECT Recommends that the Port Authority regularly engage CONNECT municipalities and proactively seek input on, but not limited to the following issue areas:

- The rollout and expansion of the new wayfinding package
- Parking procedural or infrastructure changes
- Route changes, additions and/or cuts

## Appendix A

### Service Requests by Municipality

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CONNECT Requests for Additional Port Authority Transit Service	
Municipality	Service Requests from Municipal Leaders
Aspinwall	No additional service requests
Baldwin Borough	-
Baldwin Township	Restore a major route on McNeilly road; Circulator service to West Liberty Avenue and Route 88/51 intersection with stops at McNeilly T station
Bellevue	More frequent service to downtown. Lincoln Ave most important to Borough.
Brentwood	Shuttles to and from the T or the busway, feeder routes. Remove stops from the 51 to expedite travel
Castle Shannon	
Carnegie	Direct/Easier route to Oakland. Another flyer to Robinson/Airport
Crafton	Better connection to Oakland - only one way on the 28X
Dormont	More frequent or consistent service on the T
Edgewood	No additional service requests
Etna Borough	Restore service to the Route 8 corridor
Green Tree	More frequent service on Green Tree Road, people are being passed up in the morning. New 270 Unit apartment complex being constructed behind Parkway Center Mall (1500 feet from stop on Parkway Center Dr)
Homestead	No service to Oakland or Downtown after 7:00 p.m. aside from 8th Ave service. Need service up the hill on West Ave. Both the 53 and 53L stop at Waterfront at night and during the weekend.
Ingram	-
Kennedy Township	-
McKees Rocks	-
Millvale	-
Mt. Lebanon	Restore feeder system to the T, this would benefit their CBD and increase ridership. Expanding the T to other areas (Airport and Oakland) would be very good for Mt. Lebanon.
Mt. Oliver	Long waits at bus stops. More frequent service on 51, people can be passed up in the morning.
Munhall	More frequent service on the 53 to West Run.
O'Hara Township	A loop through RIDC commercial park (two mile loop with no sidewalks) 74B used to access the entire park. Businesses are complaining that they will have difficulty expanding without access to labor.
Penn Hills	A route on Saltzburg Road serving Senaca Place Retirement Complex (no sidewalks to Verona Ave stops). Local Routes to Oakmont or the Waterworks would be beneficial. Weekend and evening routes to Downtown to encourage younger ridership.

Pittsburgh	Areas in need of better access or development: Warrington/Beltzhoover by South Hills Junction, Warrington Ave, Almono Site in Hazelwood, Larimar and the Lower Hill
Reserve Township	
Robinson Township	
Ross Township	Restore the 11C from West View on the Perrysville Corridor along Business 19. There are numerous apartment buildings and assisted living facilities located there. A loop on Browns lane for the residents in apartments behind Northway.
Rosslyn Farms	Bus stops on Upper Rosslyn Road/Kings Highway. (no bus stops in the borough currently)
Scott Township	Restore bus service on Lindsay Road between Green Tree and Hope Hollow. Restore service to Birdland (St. Clair Heights).
Shaler Township	Restore service to Shaler Crest
Sharpsburg	No additional service requests
Stowe	Benefit from restoring the loop up Dohrman St. and out Singer Ave. The buses now cause congestion on Broadway. The Preston Area of the "bottoms" currently has no bus route and needs one (nearly a mile walk to nearest bus route).
Swissvale	No additional service requests
West Homestead	It would be good to have a route head up Forest Ave.
West Mifflin	-
West View	Additional service on already well used routes.
Whitehall Borough	-
Wilksburg	No additional service requests

## APPENDIX B

### FUNDING for Public Transportation

#### Local Funding Possibilities

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The following is a list of general funding options that have been used locally or in other areas of the country to fund public transportation expansion and improvement. These options may or may not have local or state equivalents, but are included here to encourage local leaders to consider the options that are possible. This list is not exhaustive and options detrimental for the urban core of Allegheny County have been omitted.

**Fare Increases:** Increase fares or change fare structure to increase revenues. It has the advantage of being widely applied and it is a user fee, so it is considered equitable. Discourages transit use and is regressive.

- Port Authority already has one of the highest rates in the country and raising it would only serve to lower ridership so could be revenue neutral.
- The Transportation funding bill (Act 89) signed into law in 2013 mandated that the transit providers increase their rates, but the Port Authority was given a temporary reprieve due to their already high rates.

**Discounted Bulk Passes:** Discount passes sold to groups based on their ridership. Increases ridership and revenue but it also increases transit service costs and so may provide little net revenue.

- Already utilized by Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh but could be expanded to other universities and marketed to well-positioned businesses.
- Has benefit of lowering congestion and need for parking capacity.

**Property Taxes:** Increase local property tax. Has the advantages of being widely applied and distributes the burden widely but it supports no other objectives (like increasing ridership) and it is regressive.

- Many of the more transit dependent areas of Allegheny County already have high millage rates due to low property values.
- Would be regressive and would hurt those with the greatest need.

**Sales Taxes:** Special local sales tax. It has the advantage of being distributed widely but serves no other objectives and it can be regressive depending on how it is administered.

- Typically unpopular (the regional asset district (RAD) tax or drink tax were both controversial) but has been successful in cities like Minneapolis/St. Paul and Denver.
- Has large potential to increase revenue.

**Fuel taxes:** Additional fuel tax in region. Widely applied and it reduces vehicle traffic and fuel use, but is seen as regressive.

- Fuel tax was just increased state wide to fund transportation but it does have large potential.
- If fuel prices remain low, there it will be less a less painful to implement now.

**Vehicle Fees:** additional fee for vehicles registered in region. Applied in some jurisdictions charges motorists for costs, but it does not affect vehicle use.

- There is a law that was part of the new transportation funding bill that allows Allegheny County to increase the local vehicle registration fee by \$5 per year, which would create \$5 million in revenue for liquid fuel tax guided spending.
- Does not seem to be applicable to transit or transit based infrastructure, unless applied to paving or lighting.
- Not a large funding pot

**Vehicle Miles Travelled Tax:** A fee based on the distance registered vehicles travel in the state. It has the advantage of reducing the miles cars travel, but it is costly to implement.

**Parking Taxes:** A special tax on commercial parking transactions. This policy is already being implemented in Pittsburgh through the Pittsburgh Parking Authority.

- Pittsburgh's rate was as high as 45% in 2007 and it now is 37.5%.
- Rate could be increased back to 2007 rates and a portion could be allocated to the Port Authority.

**Parking Levy:** Special property tax on parking spaces throughout the region. Large potential and it delivers the burden widely, encourages compact development. Costly to implement and opposed by suburban property owners.

- Could be combined with green infrastructure improvements ideas.

**Expanded Parking Pricing:** Increase when and where public parking (such as on street parking spaces) are priced. Moderate to large potential; distributes burden widely, reduces driving.

- Right priced parking
- Already implemented in some communities to a small degree.
- Potential: **Varies by municipality**

**Land Value Capture:** Special taxes on property that benefit from the transit service. Has a large potential and it charges beneficiary. May be costly to implement and could discourage TOD development.

**Station Rents:** Collect revenues from public-private development at stations. It has the advantage of charging beneficiaries, but there is limited potential.

- Could work with new BRT and fixed guide way improvements based on new capital funding.
- Potential: **Unclear**

**Station Air Rights:** Sell the rights to build over transit stations. Charges beneficiaries.

- Limited development in market like Pittsburgh.
- Mt. Lebanon has worked on an easement similar to this.

**Advertising:** Additional advertising on vehicles and stations and it has the advantage of already being used. But has limited potential and in can be unattractive.

- Look at pricing model, Ads on the Port Authority are rarely full.
- Limited revenue

## **Funding options for TOD**

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These are options that are currently available in Pennsylvania.

**Tax Incremental Financing (TIF):** Provides funding by holding tax revenues that local taxing bodies would receive from a property at the level it was at when the development began and places the additional tax

revenue into a separate funding over a given period of time. Those funds can be used to pay for infrastructure and other improvements related to the project.

- Typically limited to specific projects that have investors and a distinct timeline.
- Area must be designated as blighted (has not been difficult to achieve) and all taxing bodies must approve the diversion of taxes.
- Potential: **Low/Medium** (mostly due to its limited scope)

**Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID):** A district based tax increment financing mechanism that is implemented within ½ mile of a transit station. These are not limited to blighted areas and do cover an entire area, instead of just a single property or project.

- Have only been used once in Allegheny County (East Liberty TRID) since created in 2004
- Potential: **Unclear**

**Neighborhood Improvement Districts (NIDs) and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs):** Districts that are designated by a municipality where all properties are charged a special improvement assessment. They are administrated by a special nonprofit called a Neighborhood Improvement District Management Association (NIDMA).

- They can improve a given area with small-scale investments like street lights and sidewalk improvements.
- BIDs are focused just on commercial districts.

### **State and Federal Funding Programs**

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The following funding options are currently active programs that could potentially fund projects for the Port Authority and/or CONNECT municipalities.

#### **Federal Funding Options**

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**New Starts Program:** This is a competitive funding source administered by the Federal Transit Administration for new light rail, bus rapid transit, and heavy rail projects, including capacity improvements or extensions.

- Was used for numerous light rail projects in Pittsburgh over the last three decades.

**Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA):** Is a low interest loan program administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) for use in building bridges, highways and transit projects with local or state funding.

**Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funding:** Is administered nationally by the FHA with the goal of helping state and local agencies achieve increased air quality. Locally, SPC administers the program, focusing on diesel engine retrofits, traffic flow improvements, traffic demand management, and bike/ped improvements.

**MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives:** Competitive funding for bike/ped improvements, traffic calming, access to public transportation and others and it is administered locally by SPC.

**Urbanized Area Formula:** The Urbanized Area Formula Funding program makes Federal resources available to urbanized areas for transit capital and operating assistance in urbanized areas and for transportation related planning.

#### **State Funding Options**

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**Department of Community and Economic Development:** Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP), Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA), and Infrastructure and Facilities Improvement Program (IFIP) are all funding programs that could be used in transit or TOD type projects.

**Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF):** New funding from PennDOT for projects which coordinate local land use with transportation assets to enhance existing communities. Municipalities, Counties and Transit Authorities among others can apply for the funding.

**PA Infrastructure Bank:** Provides low-interest loans to help fund transportation projects that can fund rail, bridge, or capital transit projects.

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