

NORTH SHORE CONNECTOR

Project Description

The North Shore Connector project will extend Port Authority's Light Rail Transit system, the T, 1.2 miles from the Gateway Subway Station underneath Stanwix Street and the Allegheny River – in twin bored tunnels below the river - to the North Shore. While remaining underground along the North Shore, the alignment would travel adjacent to Bill Mazeroski Way accessing a station near PNC Park. Continuing below grade adjacent to Reedsdale Street, the alignment will transition to an elevated alignment near Art Rooney Avenue to a station along Allegheny Avenue near Heinz Field before terminating near the West End Bridge.

The North Shore Connector is a significant regional investment that will support the revitalized Downtown Pittsburgh and North Shore's residential areas, business districts, educational institutions, entertainment developments and cultural venues in addition to enhancing development opportunities. The North Shore Connector will also enable the Authority to construct future extensions of the T to other destinations within Allegheny County, thus making it a catalyst for future development opportunities throughout the region.

Frequently Asked Questions

How Many Stations Will The North Shore Connector Have?

There will be three new stations constructed. The Gateway Subway Station will be reconstructed. Two stations on the North Shore will be constructed: a subway station underneath Tony Dorsett Drive and an aerial station along Allegheny Avenue near the Carnegie Science Center.

Who Will The North Shore Connector Serve?

It will serve development between the two stadiums (Del Monte and Equitable headquarters, new Marriott Hotel, riverfront park, and proposed amphitheater); Carnegie Science Center (690,000 annual visitors); Andy Warhol Museum; Community College of Allegheny County (7,200 students); National Aviary; Allegheny Center; and other North Shore and North Side attractions.

Ridership associated with Steelers' and Pirates' games is expected to account for about 12% of the 4.2 million annual riders projected to use the North Shore Connector.

What Are The Project Benefits?

Among the project's many benefits, the project positions Port Authority to accommodate thousands of people who will live, attend school, work, shop and spend leisure time on the North Shore in coming years while providing a new option for thousands of others who already travel there – all without adding traffic congestion. Also, the North Shore Connector directly links the North Shore, Downtown, Station Square and South Hills employment, business, residential, entertainment and retail centers and enables future expansion of the T.

How Much Will The North Shore Connector Cost?

The North Shore Connector will cost \$435 million to construct.

How Will The North Shore Connector Be Funded?

Funding to construct the North Shore Connector is made available by a federal Full Funding Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration. Through this grant, 80 percent of the project's funding will come from federal dollars, 16 2/3 will come from state funds and 3 1/3 of the funding will come from local resources.

During A Budget Crisis, Why Is Port Authority Constructing This Project?

The North Shore Connector is being advanced with capital funding designated specifically for the project by federal, state and local governments. Public transportation funding regulations prohibit capital dollars from being allocated for operating expenditures. Port Authority is facing a deficit in its operating budget due to continued state shortfalls, but because capital projects typically take more than a decade to plan and complete, we are continuing to pursue infrastructure improvements while we also work to secure dedicated, growing and predictable sources of transit funding for operations.

Why Isn't Port Authority Extending The T To Oakland?

A study is currently underway, the Eastern Corridor Transit Study Transitional Analysis, to investigate a possible T extension or another rapid transit connection to Oakland.

Why Is Port Authority Building Tunnels Under The Allegheny River?

Use of existing bridges, construction of new bridges and various tunnel alignments were analyzed in the project's planning stages. The tunnels underneath the Allegheny River provide the most effective connection between the Golden Triangle and the North Shore while minimizing impacts to existing and proposed development and traffic flow. The costs of constructing a new or reconstructing an existing bridge are comparable to tunnel construction costs.

What Happened To The Convention Center Line?

A .3-mile light rail line from the Steel Plaza Subway Station to a subway station at the David L/ Lawrence Convention Center, along with the purchase of four light rail vehicles, was deferred from the project due to rising construction costs.

Why Do We Need To Extend The T?

The North Shore Connector is a small project in a larger plan to expand public transportation to the Pittsburgh International Airport, the Parkway West/Airport Corridor, the North Hills and other areas within Allegheny County.

Also, the extension will reduce traffic in the Golden Triangle by locating the North Side Station under the new SEA parking garage, making it possible for those destined for Downtown Pittsburgh to use fringe parking on the North Shore. It also gives another transit option for persons with limited mobility and disabilities.

How Did The North Shore Connector Get Started?

In the late 1990s, the City of Pittsburgh developed a plan that envisioned a revitalized downtown, which included expansion to the North Shore. The plan called for a new rapid transit line linking the Golden Triangle and the North Shore. In 1997, the City and SPC initiated a study that warranted additional study of a rapid transit link between Downtown and the North Shore. In 1999, Port Authority assumed responsibility for the project when it began the North Shore Connector DEIS.

Was The Public Involved In The Planning Process?

During the DEIS and FEIS (1999 – 2002), Port Authority held 275 meetings with local, state and federal planning, environmental and transportation agencies; neighborhood groups; major employers; regional civic, environmental and transportation organizations; property owners; and other stakeholders (sports teams, The Carnegie, CCAC).

These groups provided significant input during the definition of the alternatives considered in the DEIS, selection of the LPA and subsequent refinements in the alignment.

How Many People Will Ride The North Shore Connector?

Average weekday ridership, accounting for Steelers, Pirates & other events, is 14,300. The projected annual ridership is 4.2 million.

When Will Construction Begin And End?

Construction is scheduled to begin by Fall 2006 and conclude in 2011.

Where Can I Get More Information About The North Shore Connector?

The Port Authority Web site, www.portauthority.org, has a variety of information regarding the North Shore Connector. This information includes a project overview, construction information, station renderings and additional frequently asked questions and answers. To receive project newsletters and updates, email dwhipkey@portauthority.org.

Basic Facts

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- ▶ A 1.2-mile extension to the current 25-mile light rail transit system

- ▶ Total project cost: \$435 million (80 percent federally funded)
- ▶ Will serve rapidly-developing North Shore, including new Del Monte and Equitable Resources headquarters, PNC Park, Heinz Field, Marriott Springhill Suites, Carnegie Science Center, Community College of Allegheny County and other cultural, business and residential destinations
- ▶ Enables future expansion of the T to Pittsburgh International Airport, the Parkway West/Airport Corridor, the North Hills and other areas within Allegheny County
- ▶ Will support approximately \$377 million in new economic development and \$750 million in existing development as well support thousands of direct and secondary jobs through engineering, design, project management, construction and operation. The American Public Transportation Association estimates that every dollar invested in public transportation returns up to \$6 in economic and other public benefits, and that every \$10 million in capital investment sparks up to \$30 million in business sales
- ▶ Positions Port Authority to accommodate thousands of people who will live, work, shop and spend leisure time on the North Shore in coming years while providing a new option for thousands of others who already travel there – all without adding traffic congestion.
- ▶ Directly links the North Shore, Downtown, Station Square and South Hills employment, business, residential, entertainment and retail centers
- ▶ Improves access to the T for North Side residents
- ▶ Reduces traffic in the Golden Triangle by making locating the North Side Station under the planned SEA parking garage, making it possible for those destined for Downtown Pittsburgh to use fringe parking on the North Shore and then light rail service to easily circulate to their destination
- ▶ Supported by FTA, PENNDOT, Allegheny County, the City of Pittsburgh and stakeholders on the North Side, including the Northside Leadership Conference, as well as the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and the Manchester Citizens Corporation, among others
- ▶ Sustains Port Authority's continuous mission to improve and expand public transit services for the residents of Allegheny County, thus making transit user-friendly, accessible and convenient
- ▶ One of five transit improvement projects included in the President's Fiscal Year 2005 Appropriations Bill
- ▶ Scheduled to open in 2011