

SOUTH HILLS JUNCTION

STATION AREA PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOD FEASIBILITY



STATION ACCESS



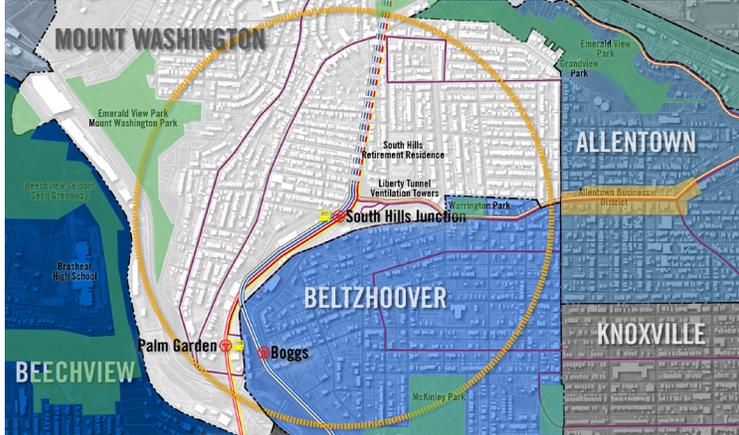
STATION DESIGN



PORT AUTHORITY OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PURPOSE

Port Authority's Planning Department has initiated a Station Improvement Program (SIP) that is focused on promoting Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), improving operations, and enhancing customer amenities at select fixed-guideway stations, with the ultimate goal of growing ridership and revenue for the agency. Ideally, new capital investment at transit stations will in turn leverage new development adjacent to Port Authority transit. Stations were prioritized for the SIP based on detailed evaluations of factors contributing to TOD, with South Hills Junction rated as one of the high-priority locations. Relevant external and internal stakeholders were engaged to ensure that proposed initiatives reflect common goals and objectives.



CONCEPT GOALS



CONTEXT

South Hills Junction is located at the southern edge of Mt. Washington at the border of Beltzhoover, and just west of Allentown, three distinct neighborhoods within the South Hills area of Pittsburgh. Placed between where the South Hills rapid transit lines—Blue and Silver lines via Overbrook, Red Line via Beechview, and the South Busway—converge approaching the Mt. Washington Transit Tunnel, as it is the last station inbound, or first station outbound before reaching the downtown Pittsburgh area (including Station Square, Central Business District, and North Shore). With three direct neighborhoods being served within the station's half-mile walkshed, walkability and access are important factors to consider. Currently, the accessibility of the station area is challenged by steep slopes and aging infrastructure. Multiple stairs, ramps, and sidewalk access points are compromised by deteriorating concrete, overgrown vegetation, and general lack of crosswalk striping and ADA-truncated domes and ramps. The neighborhoods are primarily residential in nature, with only small pockets of commercial use and active greenspaces near the station itself. It is evident that even regular passengers find the user experience to be challenging. Potential new users may not be confident in trying to use the station at all. Solutions for station area improvements and user friendly wayfinding will help support existing passengers, as well as encourage new passengers to utilize South Hills Junction and take advantage of neighborhood amenities within its walkshed.

TOD: Encourage development at South Hills Junction

- Transform South Hills Junction from an operational and facilities-focused station to a mixed-use transit hub.
- Develop a preliminary site plan for the TOD site to help inform future development.
- Catalyze development that integrates and expands transit used at the station.

Station Access: Make it easy for people to get there.

- Open old access points and improve or add new connections to the station.
- Provide new connections to the station with the added benefit of connecting the neighborhoods.
- Augment connections to the transit center from nearby commercial, residential, institutional, and recreational destinations.
- Improve multimodal connection and amenities.
- Provide safe connections to the TOD site, with a focus on improved access via the surrounding road network.

Station Design: Create a welcoming and visible station.

- Improve station area circulation and visibility while updating structure, signage, and amenities to current station design standards.
- Increase station visibility from Warrington Avenue and Mt. Washington with added signage and proposed architectural elements, such as a pedestrian bridge and relocated control tower.
- Enhance the overall aesthetic and function of the station.
- Include public art and sustainable elements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TOD Feasibility

The proposed mixed-use includes a diverse use of development within the station area. Transit-oriented development has been identified to work in three separate parcels, Parcels A, B, and C, within the site that currently operate at different Port Authority facilities and operational areas:

- Parcel A depicts a low density option showing a collection of 13 townhomes with a mix of on-street parking and attached garage parking. This development would take place near the intersection of Warrington and Haberman Avenue at the existing salt shed facility.
- Parcel B offers 66,000 square feet per floor and would be a 3-5 stories of mid-rise multi-family residential option with first floor retail and commercial space. The development would include subsurface parking on the location of the existing rail tie laydown area along Warrington Avenue.
- Parcel C offers 33,000 square feet per floor and would also be a 3-5 stories of mid-rise multi-family residential option with first floor retail and commercial. Shown at the existing bus layover loop near the control tower, this development could contain lower level parking and site activation at the lower level nearest the station platforms.

Station Access

The station area has six active points and one inactive point of entry for transit users, however because of elevation changes and gaps in adjacent street network, the station is still difficult to access. To improve station access the following recommendations have been proposed:

- Repairing or replacing the stair access to the station, including reopening the stairs from Pair Street, as well as providing ADA-compliant ramps to Beltzhoover and Mt. Washington.
- The existing ramp opposite Boggston Avenue is proposed to be lengthened and widened to ADA-compliant 5% grade.
- A new walking trail from Albert Street to the bottom of the Harwood Way stairs is proposed.
- A new ADA ramp from the end of Secane Avenue to Haberman Avenue is proposed and will provide residents an additional route to the station and provide a new neighborhood connection.
- A new pedestrian bridge between Mt. Washington and Beltzhoover from the end of Lelia Street connecting to Warrington Avenue opposite the Montooth Street Stair will have access to a relocated control tower housing an elevator and stair for ease of access to the station.

CONCEPT DESIGN

5% Walking trail connection from Albert Street to Harwood Way Steps

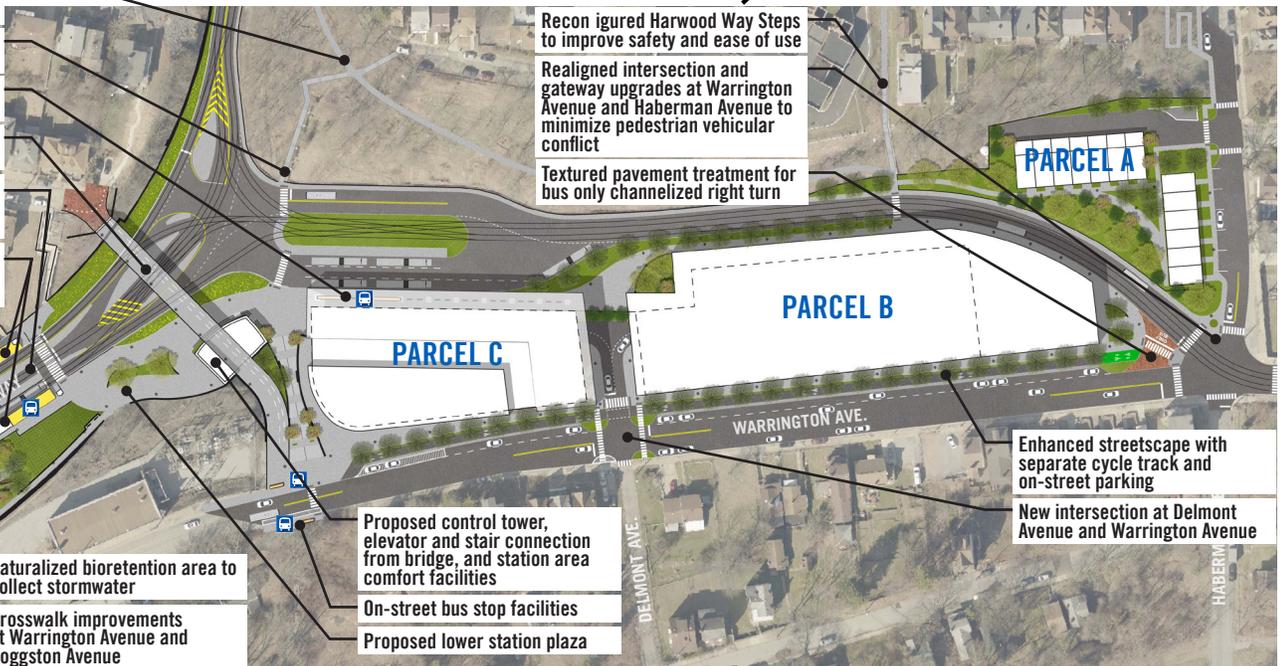
Reestablish Pair Street Steps and connection to walking trail

Local bus stop within layover loop for the Haberman Ramp

Bridge connection from Lelia Street to Warrington Avenue

Bus and rail bypass lane with buffers that can be used as temporary platforms

Reconfigured station with low and high level platforms to accommodate buses and LRVs



Station Design

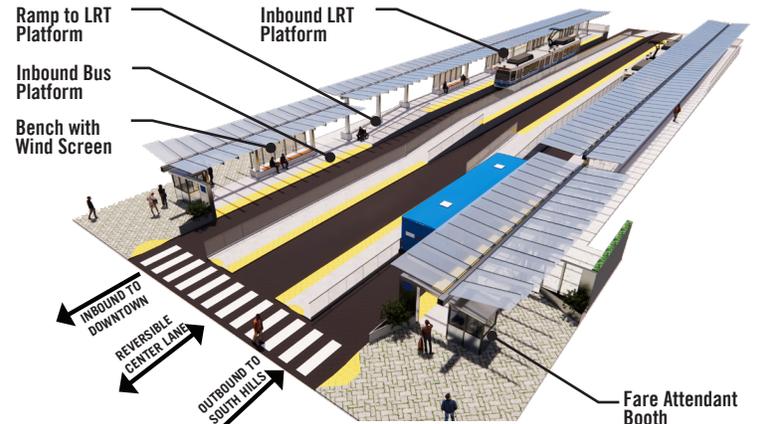
The existing station presents a number of challenges that the conceptual design addresses. Unifying bus and light rail into a single station experience will make for a better user experience and will reduce bus and light rail conflict points through the station area. Improved design elements include:

- Bright and airy boarding platform. The open design and translucent roof panels make the station platforms feel inviting and safe.
- Wide concrete benches with inset wood or composite slats. They are rust-resistant and do not collect refuse underneath. Wood or composite is also a preferred seating surface for rider comfort.
- The design language is uncluttered and simple, allowing Port Authority branding to stand out.
- Off-board fare payment would apply to both light rail and bus passengers, making for more efficient boarding and alighting for bus routes at this station.

Operations

A primary focus of station area planning is to improve station operations to make pedestrian movements more efficient and transit service more reliable and sustainable. Some operational considerations include:

- Intersection improvements at Warrington Avenue and Haberman Avenue could facilitate operations during construction.
- Turnback (staging track) can remain in place until future master plan elements are built.
- Second maintenance staging area, expanded pedestrian plaza, and ADA-compliant ramp to Boggston Avenue.
- Some turnback track and bypass track elements may be limited when operating together.



IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

The agency has prepared for TOD by establishing TOD Design Guidelines, organizing and leading the necessary agencies and groups in order to educate and build relationships, inform the public, and develop plans that are market-ready and well-integrated with necessary infrastructure improvements. Implementation strategies address issues such as funding, inter-agency cooperation, and policy recommendations.

1: COLLABORATE

This role encompasses proposed projects and strategies that the Port Authority can influence or implement through strategic partnerships with organizations such as public agencies (City of Pittsburgh DOMI and DCP, PennDOT, SPC), community organizations, and advocacy organizations. A full list of strategic partnerships can be found within the Appendix of the Station Area Plan. Collaborative projects could include:

- Improved streetscapes along Warrington Avenue and Haberman Avenue.
- Enhanced station access via a new pedestrian bridge connecting Mt. Washington and Beltzhoover.
- Realigned Haberman Avenue to reduce intersection offset and align for potential traffic signal control (if warranted).

2: DESIGN

This role reflects proposed projects and implementation strategies that are linked to property controlled by the Port Authority.

- Improve station elements, including new combined platform, elongated station canopies, and improved signage.
- Create neighborhood connections through a series of improved public access points within the station area.
- Incorporate green infrastructure projects into the station to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff into the greater Saw Mill Run watershed.

3: DEVELOP

This role addresses proposed TOD projects that Port Authority can lead.

- Engage in a joint development partnership to build equitable TOD at South Hills Junction.

Early Catalytic Projects 0-2 years	<p>Port Authority Station Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ M Loop State of Good Repair Project, to provide ADA compliant sidewalk upgrades and remove unused track near the control tower. ▪ Continue refinement of station conceptual design, including proposed improvements to the station platform, amenities, signage, and access. ▪ Coordinate with Port Authority transit-oriented communities advisory committee and internal design team. ▪ Prioritize capital funding for improvements. 	<p>Ongoing Port Authority TOD Efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) for infrastructure improvements associated with TOD since the market has changed since the 2011 SMART TRID was completed. ▪ Explore methods to incorporate mixed-income housing at the TOD site, including models for affordable home ownership. ▪ Consistent with the Port Authority's Procedures for Competitive Negotiations for Joint Development, issue an Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the site at the station.
Medium Term Projects 2-5 years	<p>Wayfinding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilize the 2022 Wayfinding Guidelines for South Hills Junction to establish a new wayfinding system for the station area that can be replicated at other transit stations. ▪ Coordinate wayfinding through development. <p>Port Authority Station Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take station area design into engineering and design development. <p>Port Authority Access Upgrades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate funding opportunities for station area access improvements focusing on ADA-compliant upgrades. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritize capital funding for improvements. ▪ Coordinate with the Port Authority to perform initial phases of access development at the Paur Street steps and Albert Street trail. <p>Mixed-Use Development Along Warrington Avenue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with the City of Pittsburgh to explore TOD-friendly zoning for the station area. <p>Port Authority Facilities Master Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore opportunities for relocation and expansion of Port Authority facilities through a Facilities Master Plan process. ▪ Review opportunities for operational facilities to be relocated from South Hills Junction.
Long Term Strategic Initiatives 5+ years	<p>Port Authority Station Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate with The Port Authority to perform station platform redesign for a combined light rail and South Busway system. ▪ Perform track realignments as part of station platform relocation and extension. ▪ Develop green infrastructure systems throughout site to reduce stormwater runoff from entering Saw Mill Run. <p>Pedestrian Bridge, Control Tower, and Lower Plaza</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with city and adjacent property owners (as applicable) to refine concept. ▪ Secure potential funding (e.g. Port Authority capital budget, TIF, CIP, etc.) ▪ Coordinate with adjacent utilities during engineering and design of new facilities. 	<p>Mixed-Use Development Along Warrington Avenue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue conversations with stakeholders to promote TOD. ▪ Explore an expedited review process for TOD projects. <p>Public Realm Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with the TOD developer (as appropriate) and the City of Pittsburgh to refine conceptual streetscape plans along Warrington Avenue, including the incorporation of cycle track and green infrastructure, where appropriate. ▪ Work with the City of Pittsburgh to refine conceptual streetscape plans along Haberman Avenue, including relocating the ROW into Port Authority property to better align Haberman Avenue. ▪ Work with the City of Pittsburgh to secure funding for improvements through capital funding, grants, TRID, etc.