

SOUTH METRO AREA REVITALIZATION THROUGH TRANSIT TRANSIT REVITALIZATION INVESTMENT DISTRICT

# SMARTRID

corridor study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY MAY 2011



**pittsburgh**  
city planning

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT IN PITTSBURGH

Pittsburgh is, undoubtedly, a unique place. As much as anything, the dramatic topography defines the city, creating distinctive neighborhoods and pockets of activity separated by steep forested slopes, valleys, and rivers. Traversing this landscape and supporting a city known for its livability is a complex transportation network of highways, major roads, and public transit designed to knit Pittsburgh together.

Public transit is a critical aspect of Pittsburgh's transportation infrastructure. Accommodating and encouraging continued transit growth is necessary not just for the City of Pittsburgh but for the region as a whole given the steady increase in both the number of hours that drivers sit in traffic and the cost of that congestion in terms of time lost. But more importantly, the financial cost of transportation hits close to home for many families in Pittsburgh. Low- and moderate-income Pittsburghers are extremely vulnerable to rising costs such as the recent increases in gasoline prices. After housing, transportation is the second largest cost to families. Promoting transportation choice is important not only for reducing congestion but also for providing affordable transit options for local families.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is a national movement focused on encouraging growth and development in a way that leverages the value of local transit. It builds on the fact that those living around transit stations are five times more likely to use transit. The intent is to promote transit use by building a mix of uses (retail, housing, office, and open space) immediately adjacent to transit stations, planning for a mix of incomes, and encouraging walking and bicycling. Across the country, TOD has resulted in improved public safety near stations, increased transit use, reduced traffic, new parks, and local jobs.

This plan is specific to the State of Pennsylvania's Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) program. The objective of the TRID program is to help finance transit oriented developments and other community revitalization initiatives by capturing tax revenue and reinvesting those dollars around designated stations. To trigger the use of this tool, a community-driven TRID plan must be completed to identify needed improvements.

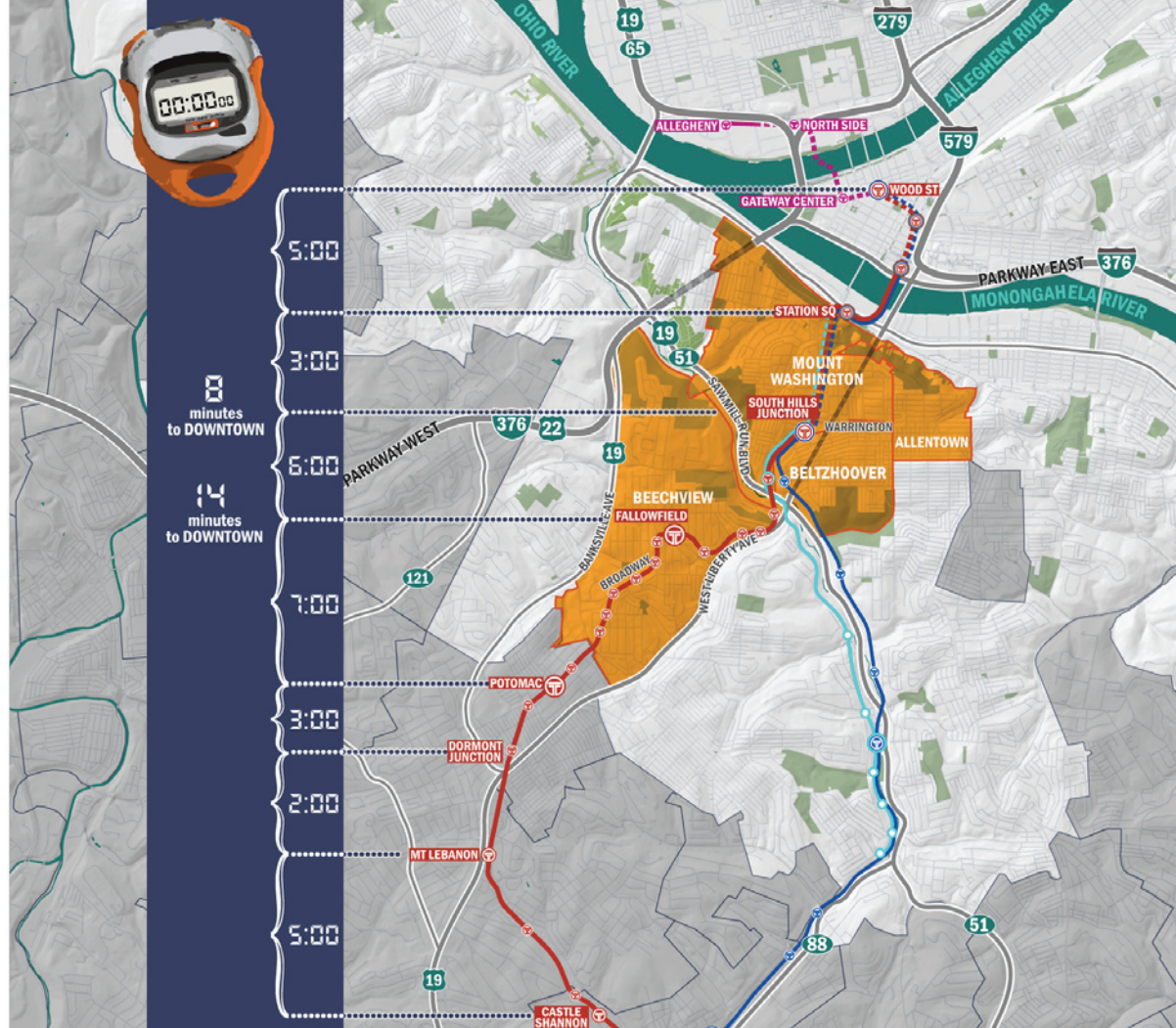


## SMART TRID CORRIDOR

This initiative focuses on opportunities to improve transit and the communities surrounding transit stations in Beechview along Broadway Avenue and at the South Hills Junction situated in the valley between Mount Washington and Beltzhoover. The *South Metro Area Revitalization through Transit / Transit Revitalization Investment District (SMART TRID) Corridor Planning Study* pulls together extensive data along with resident voices to examine the issues that have prevented these stations from becoming true community assets.

The South Metro Area neighborhoods enjoy proximity to Downtown Pittsburgh and present unique opportunities to encourage investment in underutilized land and buildings in the blocks adjacent and in close proximity to transit stations.

South Hills Junction hosts the confluence of 10 bus lines and two light rail lines (the Red and Blue Lines). Over 9,000 people a day pass through the Junction on the way to Downtown. However, despite the intensity of public transit resources located here, only a few hundred people access transit service at the Junction on any given day. To increase local use of the Junction requires overcoming some significant barriers. The Junction sits at the bottom of a bowl nestled between the Mt. Washington and Beltzhoover neighborhoods. It is, in effect, the backdoor of both communities and shielded from view due to a combination of topography and a mix of industrial uses and Port Authority facilities. There are limited access points, few parking opportunities, and residents express real concerns about navigating the stairs down to the station at night. Vacant and blighted land



SMART TRID study area

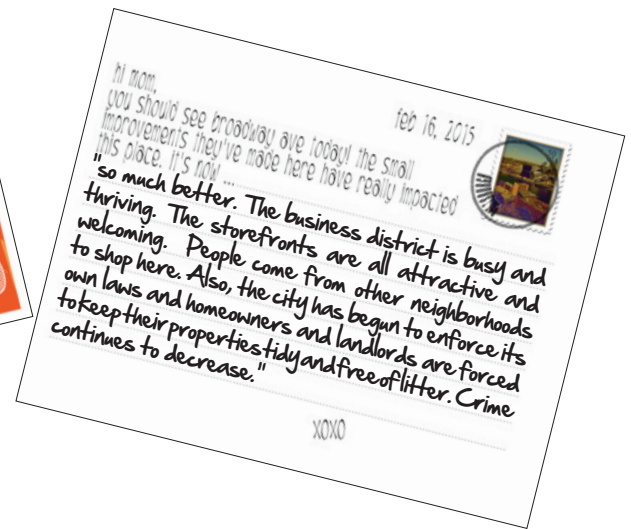
nearly as well as the lack of transit amenities, like a newspaper stand or coffee vendor, only further inhibit local use of the station.

By contrast, Beechview's station stops along the Red Line are at the historic center of the community. Situated along Broadway Avenue, the T occupies the high point of the community and traverses Beechview's traditional shopping street. Unfortunately, commercial opportunities on Broadway Avenue are a shadow of what they

once were, undermining the value of the local transit service. Many retail storefronts have been vacant for some time, and Broadway Avenue itself is in need of a makeover to provide more space for people and not just cars. But the opportunity is clearly evident. The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) is looking to redevelop a number of properties on the corridor, and a new grocery, the IGA, is set to open soon. These investments serve as a foundation to build upon in Beechview.



Postcards from the Future



Quotes from Beechview's Collaborative Map

## PLANNING PROCESS

The TRID plans for Beechview and South Hills Junction were conceived as true, community-driven plans to serve as a unified voice for local residents, business owners, institutions, community leaders, and political representatives, among others.

To create plans reflective of both Beechview and the communities surrounding South Hills Junction required an open and ongoing public dialog. The process informed and brainstormed with residents and stakeholders using a number of different outreach tools including:

- > Public meetings, interviews, and focus groups throughout the process to capture the views of the each community's residents
- > Collaborative mapping that asked people for their insights and ideas regarding the future of each community and station area (the maps were placed in prominent public spaces in each community as well as on-line)
- > Postcards from the future which asked residents to send the City a postcard about what they see in their community 20 years from now

The public outreach was complemented by a comprehensive, data-driven analysis of each community to frame both the issues and opportunities facing each station area in the context of the facts on the ground. The result is a plan rich in detail and forward thinking yet keenly aware of the challenges associated with funding and implementing TOD, and specifically TRID-related improvements.

## PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The TRID plan represents an opportunity to test the potential of transit oriented development and capital improvements to the public realm as drivers not only of economic development and increased transit ridership, but also of neighborhood revitalization and improved quality of life. With these goals in mind, the recommendations propose strategies for reinventing South Hills Junction and Beechview as safe, beautiful destinations and hubs of activity that provide a range of services beyond transit to local residents as well as commuters, consumers, and passersby. The recommendations are organized by station area in three categories:

- > **SHORT TERM** improvements involving surface treatments like public safety investments, wayfinding signage, public art, and greening that can be accomplished relatively quickly. The goals are to change public perceptions, strengthen connections, and draw attention to South Hills Junction and Broadway Avenue in Beechview, while also building upon the momentum fostered by the planning process with relatively quick, visible, and tangible improvements.
- > **PUBLIC REALM & INFRASTRUCTURE** improvements that balance the needs of pedestrians, transit riders, and cars
- > **DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS** that test the long-term residential and commercial development potential adjacent to South Hills Junction and around targeted station stops in Beechview



# SOUTH HILLS JUNCTION

## SHORT TERM IMPROVEMENTS

The following recommendations are immediate steps that should be taken in the next one to two years to make South Hills Junction safer, easier to find, and more visually interesting and attractive for residents, commuters, and those passing through.

### Create a Block Watch and Junction Patrol and install emergency call boxes

Public safety is a major concern among residents who live near South Hills Junction and a deterrent to transit riders – both those from adjacent neighborhoods and those transferring lines at the transit hub. Several initiatives are already underway that this recommendation seeks to build on, including work by the Public Safety Action Team in the Hilltop area and a public safety assessment of Warrington Avenue by Mount Washington CDC in coordination with the Allentown CDC.

To improve public safety, community leaders and residents from Beltzhoover, Mt. Washington, and Allentown should collaborate with the Pittsburgh Police and Port Authority Police to organize a comprehensive community policing strategy at the Junction as well as throughout the adjacent residential blocks. Emergency call boxes should also be installed in the Junction, as visibility is limited in the below-grade Junction and along the pedestrian routes that lead to the station.

### Invest in legible signage to brand the station and improve wayfinding; consider other surfaces for public art that helps people navigate to the station

To expand the Junction's presence in surrounding communities and help new transit riders and visitors access the station, the City should engage a graphic designer and invest in legible, attention-grabbing signage that not only improves wayfinding at existing entrances, but also helps brand the station. The signage should be installed not only at station or staircase entrances but also at the nearest intersections to direct people to the hard to find pedestrian paths to the station.

The City, Port Authority, and community groups should also partner with local and non-local artists to reinvent dull surfaces with public art that helps people navigate to the Junction while brightening and beautifying the local pedestrian environment. Surfaces worthy of consideration and an artful makeover include retaining walls framing the Junction, the venting towers for the Liberty Tunnels, and the electrical substation.

*Underutilized surfaces on the Blue Line infrastructure, the tunnel venting towers, and retaining walls surrounding the Junction should be considered for public art projects that improve station wayfinding and brighten daily commutes.*



Sample Junction Patrol T-Shirts



**Develop a simple, distinctive planting strategy for station area green spaces; replace the existing green wall along Warrington with a new “green” wall and planted bed along the sidewalk**

Beyond paint and lighting, plants can offer a simple, cost-effective means of adding color, texture, movement, and visual interest to the grounds at South Hills Junction. The City and Port Authority should work with a landscape architect and/or local greening organization to devise a low-maintenance planting strategy to enliven the grassy berm at the north side of the Port Authority’s rail tie site as well as the gently-sloping entrance ramp at Warrington and Boggston that is currently flanked by grassy ground cover.

The existing green wall along Warrington Avenue is infamous for its presence and condition. The dilapidated and ugly green wooden fence should be replaced with a new “green” wall that is artfully designed and planted with vines but also relocated approximately six feet back from its current alignment adjacent to the narrow sidewalk. This small adjustment would make room for a planted bed along the sidewalk, providing the Junction, and Warrington Avenue, with a green and welcoming front door.



*Existing green wall along Warrington Avenue leading to the Junction and rendering of new “green” wall with planted bed proposed to create a new front door to the station*



## PUBLIC REALM & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The public realm improvements focus on the station area, the adjacent parcels used for Port Authority operations, and the main paths and routes that people use to access South Hills Junction. They focus on improving the basics such as lighting, landscaping, and land management near the station, fostering stronger and more diverse pedestrian connections to the Junction, and incorporating transit amenities to make taking the T an easier and more appealing option than driving Downtown or out to the nearby suburbs.

### Introduce lighting in the neighborhood, along steps, throughout the station area, and along Warrington Avenue

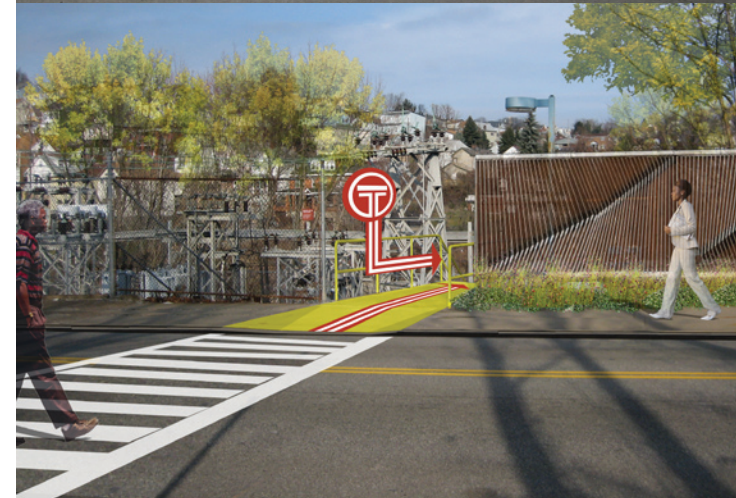
Lack of lighting is a major concern for residents who access transit at the Junction, particularly for those traveling past dark. Where there is adequate sun, solar-powered Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting should be considered as a less expensive and more flexible option for adding additional pedestrian scale lighting.

### Clean and green in targeted land stabilization areas in Beltzhoover

Many residents referenced the vacant lots and untended hillsides in Beltzhoover as a quality of life problem that must be addressed as part of a station area improvement plan. A targeted vacant land stabilization strategy should include vacant lots and steep slopes along Warrington Avenue, as well as clusters of vacant land along Industry and Climax Streets between Montooth Street and Curtin Avenue, where many blocks in close proximity to the Junction have experienced heavy disinvestment.

### Add crosswalks, slow traffic, and improve sidewalks on Warrington Avenue

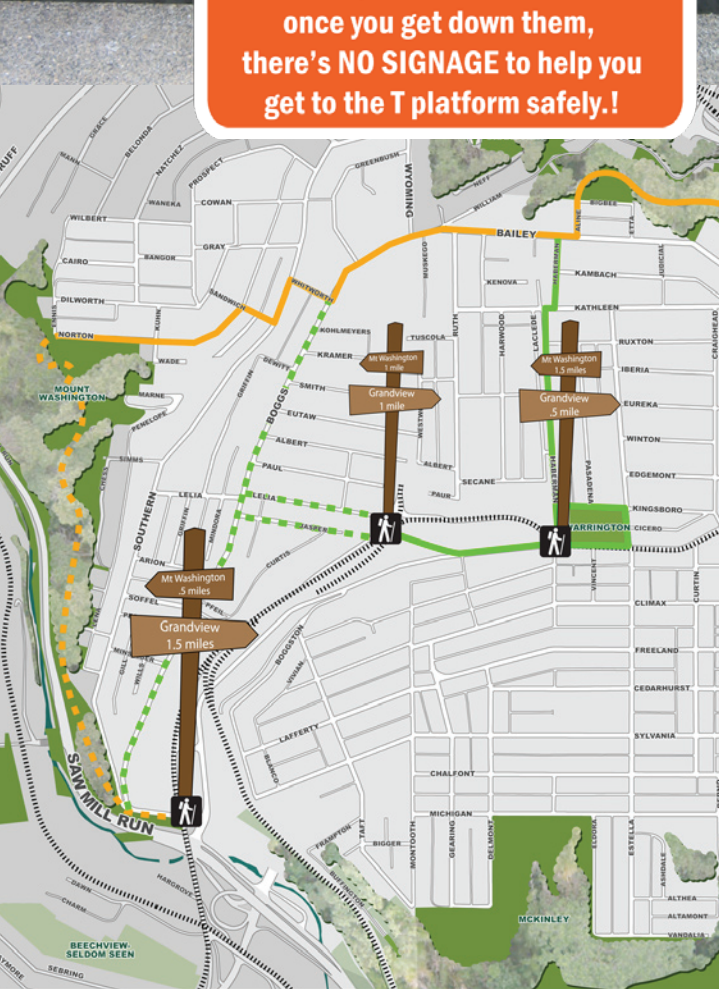
The traffic volumes on Warrington Avenue are not tremendously high, but a walk along the street can nonetheless feel somewhat treacherous. Vehicles travel at high speeds, and because the curbs are highly eroded and the sidewalks are so narrow, there is little to no protection from vehicles for pedestrians walking along Warrington. Calming traffic, integrating zebra crosswalks at station entrances on Warrington and near Warrington Recreation Center, and improving sidewalks along Warrington Avenue between Allentown and Saw Mill Run Boulevard will improve pedestrian safety, which will encourage more people to walk in the area.



*Rendering of proposed lighting and station wayfinding along stairways;  
photo of existing greening efforts in Beltzhoover;  
rendering of proposed improvements near station entrance on Warrington*



**These STEPS ARE VERY SCARY at night!  
NO LIGHTS, HAZARDOUS TREADS - once you get down them, there's NO SIGNAGE to help you get to the T platform safely!**



### Rebuild the entrance steps to the Junction

At South Hills Junction, four of the six currently open entrances involve staircases, and a fifth staircase at Paur Street where Ruth Street ends has been closed due to disrepair. The staircases leading to the Junction should be rebuilt, with new treads to replace those that are crumbling. In addition to practical design improvements, the staircases at the Junction should also be rebuilt with creativity, dressing up the risers with public art to transform the chore of climbing stairs into an enjoyable and compelling experience with the added benefit of exercise.

### Design new elevators at key entrances to the Junction

With the recent construction of 106 senior residences at South Hills High, the need for public elevators to provide easier access to the Junction has become more pressing. As a long-term strategy, new elevators and, in the case of Beltzhoover, a small pedestrian bridge from Warrington, would provide the necessary access to local communities. While this recommendation presents a costly solution to helping residents descend into the Junction, it also presents an opportunity to design new markers or beacons for the Junction. If elevators are introduced to the station area, the City and Port Authority should work with the architect to develop unique elevator towers and shafts that add interest to the station. Revenue generated by the TRID or proposed parking garage should be used to diffuse or cover elevator maintenance costs.

### Creating new ramps from Mt. Washington to the Junction

As an alternative to elevators and to complement the stairs, the City should explore the possibility of creating new ramps to facilitate the descent from Secane Street in Mt. Washington to the Junction.

### Integrate trailheads for Emerald View Park Trail at the Junction

South Hills Junction is the strategic southern-most point of the 19 new miles of existing and proposed trails within Pittsburgh's Emerald View Park. Clear signage and trailheads must be incorporated at the Junction directing people to the various trails and adding an additional programmatic use for the Junction – that of a base camp or visitor center for urban explorers.

### Create a public access road through the Junction for a Kiss 'n Ride and investigate opportunities for a Park 'n Ride lot

One of the challenges that accompanies the Junction's location is that the station is difficult to access for people who want to be dropped off or to park and hop on transit. Options should be explored to create a new public access road to enable both a Kiss n' Ride and to offer access to a proposed Park n' Ride facility occupying the existing 47-space surface parking lot to the northwest of the station that currently serves Port Authority employees and contractors.

*Emerald View Park trailheads should be located at the Junction, pointing the way and noting the distance to nearby trails.*



*Existing path along Haberman from Beltzhoover toward the Junction and rendering of proposed greening along Haberman; Haberman's extended median in Mt. Washington is visible in the distance.*



### **Extend the median along Haberman to Warrington Avenue**

Pedestrian and streetscape improvements should be made to Haberman, as it is a main route to the Junction. It is one of the few streets that crosses Warrington Avenue between Mt. Washington and Beltzhoover, and it links Grandview Park at the top of Mt. Washington with McKinley Park at the southern edge of Beltzhoover. The median that exists along Haberman further north in Mt. Washington should be extended from Secane Street where it currently ends south to Warrington Avenue, giving Haberman a grander presence as an entrance point to Mt. Washington.

### **Implement a greening program for Haberman through Beltzhoover**

Greening and landscaping investments along Haberman's median north of Warrington in Mt. Washington should be reflected south of Warrington in Beltzhoover as well, strengthening Haberman's role as a connector of neighborhoods, park spaces, and transit resources.

### **Install real-time information for busses and trains at the Junction**

Many cities across the United States have Global Position Systems (GPS) on their vehicles and have made this information available to the public. The Port Authority is currently investigating the feasibility of installing GPS on its vehicles. If the Port Authority installs GPS on vehicles and provides the information available to the public, it is recommended that this information be displayed in public, at the Junction, within area convenience stores, as well as online and via smart phone.

## DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

The third set of recommendations focus on attracting new development and activity to South Hills Junction and transforming it into a new transit oriented development site for Pittsburgh. To test the development potential of the South Hills Junction station area, the consultant team considered eligible sites close to the station deemed either vacant or underutilized and worked with the findings from the commercial and residential market study to determine how the proposed development program might fit into the site to transform South Hills Junction from an overlooked transit hub into a hub of transit oriented activity.

The majority of the land that the development scenarios investigate is owned and occupied by the Port Authority of Allegheny County, including the one-acre site currently used for salt storage, the 1.7-acre site used for rail tie storage, and the existing parking area near the Junction. While open to discussions about facility relocation, the Port Authority emphasizes that any relocation of the salt and rail tie storage sites would need to be funded by non-Port Authority sources. Any sites identified for relocation should provide the Port Authority with the same or better response effectiveness for the entirety of the light rail and busway systems as the existing locations. These sites are integral to maintenance operations, and proximity to the Maintenance Group is required.

As development at the station would need to be complemented by investment and stabilizing efforts in Mt. Washington and Beltzhoover to succeed, the development scenarios were also informed by the presence of vacant land and buildings, publicly-owned vacancy, and tax-delinquent land.

### Integrate small vendors and seek to attract larger-scale development at South Hills Junction

Input from the community indicates a strong desire for some commercial conveniences at the Junction so that transit riders can purchase a cup of coffee or a newspaper while they wait for the T. While such services would improve local quality of life with added conveniences at the Junction, the market study by Real Estate Strategies (RES) stresses that transforming South Hills Junction into a transit oriented destination will require a large, highly visible new development. The development must be large enough and significant enough to attract people who otherwise would not come to the area. It must have sufficient “critical mass” to change the identity of the area while also giving people a reason to come to the South Hills Junction station area.

To test the development potential of the South Hills Junction station area, the team developed three conceptual scenarios.

#### SCENARIO 1

Scenario 1 focuses on residential infill to stabilize the portion of Mt. Washington just north of Warrington Recreation Center and the creation of additional recreational resources to serve both Beltzhoover and Mt. Washington. In addition to an extended median as Haberman approaches Warrington Avenue from the north, greening along Haberman in Beltzhoover to link McKinley Park with Warrington Avenue, and a ramp from Ruth Street down into the Junction, this scenario includes a new Park n’ Ride facility, a new community, health and recreation center, new green space, improvements to Warrington Recreation Center, 75 new residential units, and targeted greening in Beltzhoover.

It was agreed that this approach would not provide the necessary boost of activity to change perceptions of the area nor would it generate enough value to be captured to pay for local improvements. Understanding these realities, the team explored alternative development scenarios.

#### SCENARIO 2

Scenario 2 expands the initial program developed in Scenario 1 but adds a pedestrian and auto bridge linking Ruth Street with a proposed parking structure over the Junction and retail opportunities, which could include a grocery, along Warrington. The scenario also includes a mix of 66 new homes and apartments.

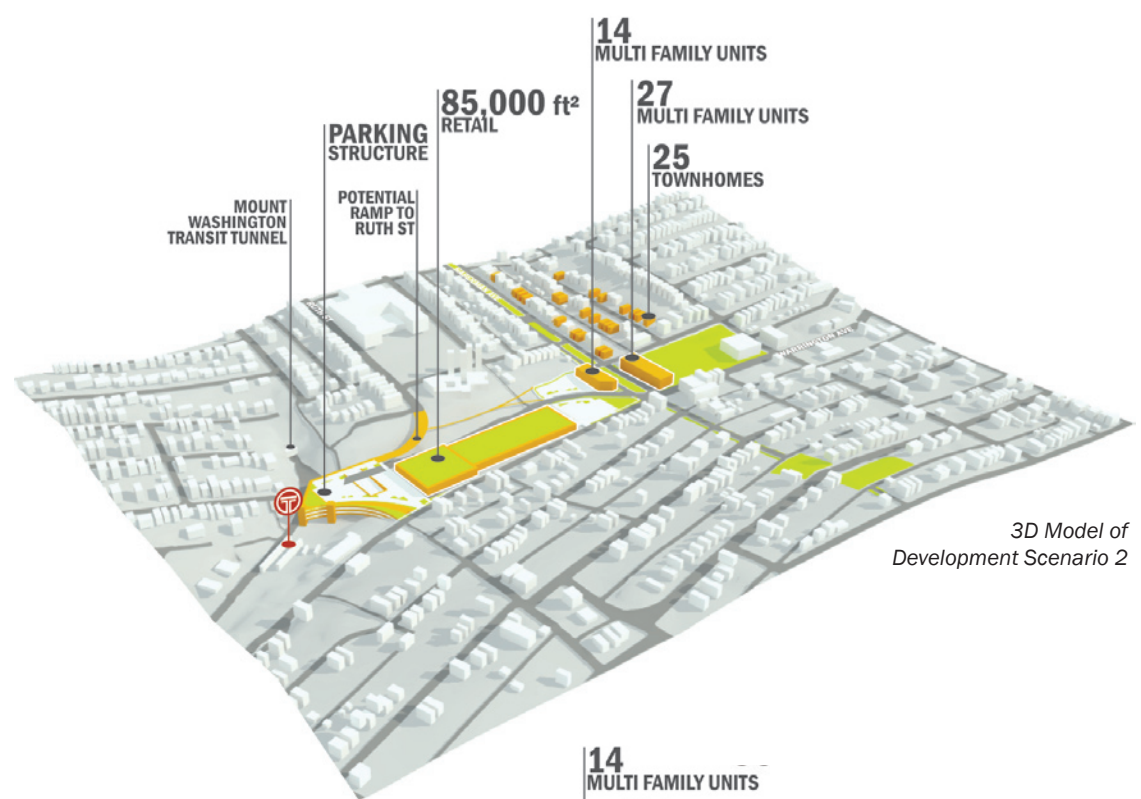
This approach generates enough development to effectively “capture value” with a TRID designation and reinvest those dollars to support local infrastructure and public improvements. But while more money would potentially be available through a TRID according to this scenario, the costs are also higher to make the development feasible including, most notably, the parking deck over the Junction.

#### SCENARIO 3

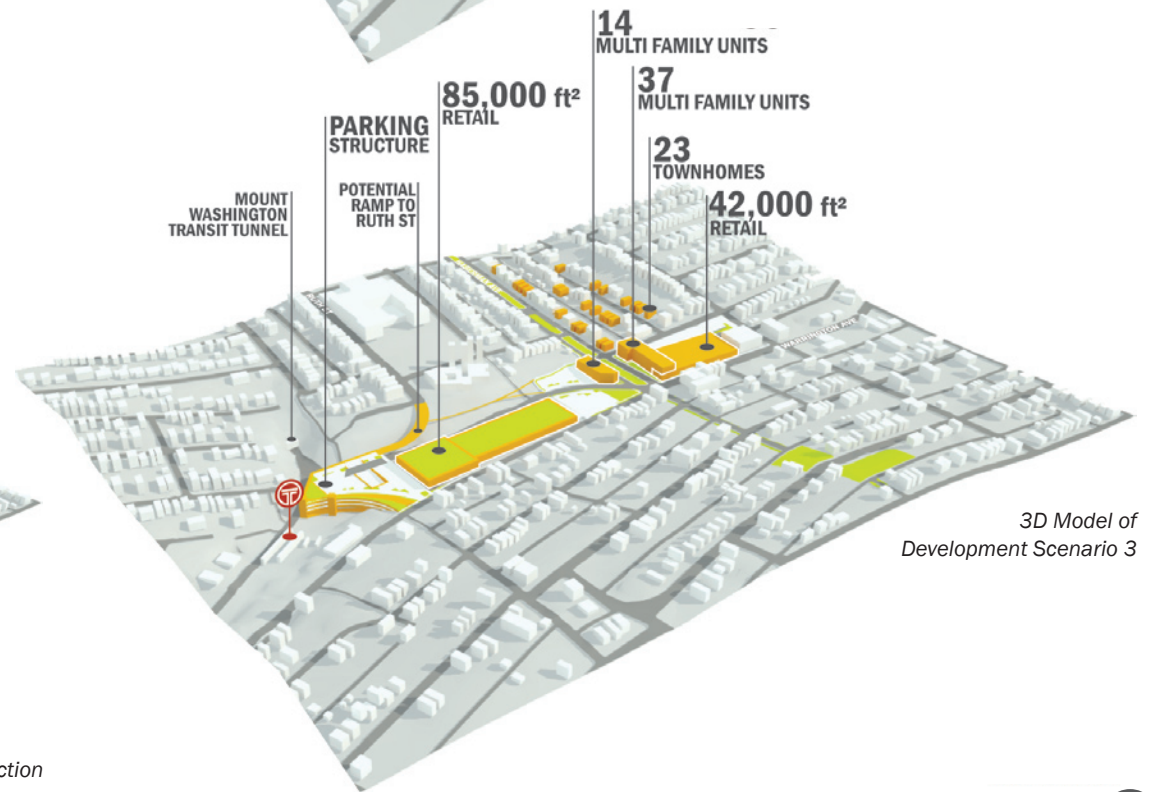
Scenario 3 presents the most commercial programming of the three conceptual site plans. It retains many of the elements illustrated in Scenario 2, but adds the existing Warrington Recreation Center site as a potential development site to fit a new grocery store with parking and housing above for a true, mixed-use transit oriented development. The idea of exploring the potential of Warrington Recreation Center for new development enables more retail to be developed to further provide that critical mass necessary to reinvent both the Junction

and Warrington Avenue. In addition, a new community, recreation, and health center (potentially run by a private or non-profit organization with capacity to undertake this type of development) would offer a home for much needed local services while providing a burst of new investment in the heart of the community it serves. Before this option could move forward, the City and elected officials would have to work with area community groups to select a new site in close proximity for the construction of a new community, health, and recreation center.

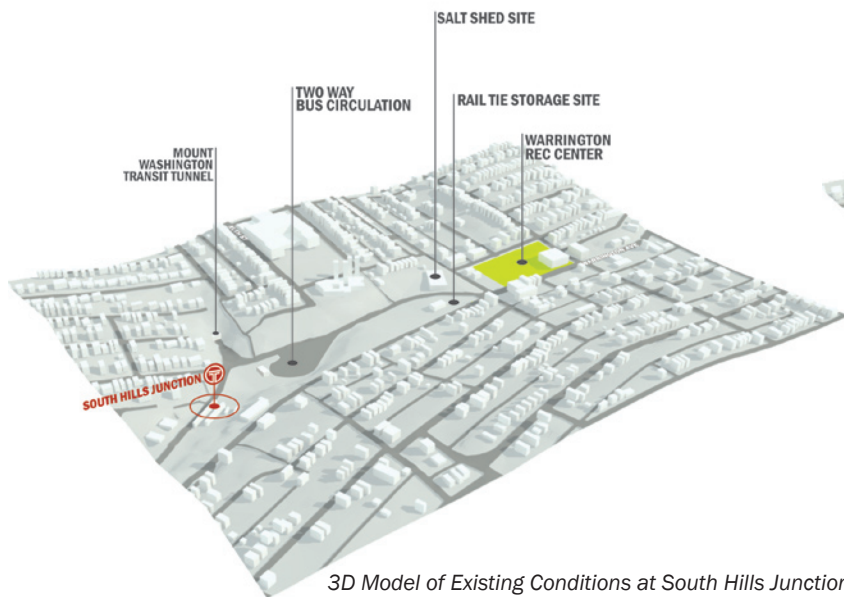
The third Scenario incorporates the greatest amount of new services for the surrounding communities and establishes a mixed-use footprint around the Junction in line with market realities. It will generate the greatest amount of value capture dollars to be reinvested locally. However, this scenario also incurs the greatest cost. It will be difficult to pay for a new community, health, and recreation center without a large sponsor or private donor.



3D Model of Development Scenario 2



3D Model of Development Scenario 3



3D Model of Existing Conditions at South Hills Junction



*A new name would signal major change at the Junction.*



*McKinley Park and pockets of stable housing nearby are assets to reinforce and build upon in Beltzhoover.*

### **Rename, rebrand, and add visual cues at the station to reflect the new development at the Junction**

The City and Port Authority should offer station naming rights as a carrot to attract commercial developers and tenants and make advertisement space available near the tracks as an income generator. Advertisements and public art visible from the windows of the T and clear navigational signage throughout the station will help passengers on the T register that they have arrived at the new Transit Oriented Development, advertise the retail opportunities located above the station, and direct customers alighting from the T to the nearby shopping venues.

### **In the long-term, build upon improvements and new development at the Junction with new residential investment in Beltzhoover**

In the long term, once investments at South Hills Junction have taken root and transformed the area and its image, the housing market in Beltzhoover may be strong enough to develop a 40 to 50 unit homeownership development clustered at McKinley Park near Delmont and Montooth to build upon an existing strong residential pocket in the neighborhood.

# BEECHVIEW

## SHORT TERM IMPROVEMENTS

It is time for “Pittsburgh’s best kept secret” to step out into the limelight and get noticed. The following recommendations are immediate steps that can be taken to make the Red Line’s route along Broadway Avenue more attractive and enticing to residents and bring it to the attention of those passing through.

### Create a new “Welcome to Beechview” mural on the side of the Senior Center and consider other surfaces along Broadway for murals as well

For many T riders, the view of Beechview as they pass through is unremarkable. The current “Welcome to Beechview” sign at Broadway and Hampshire is easy to miss. The blank wall on the side of the Senior Center presents an excellent opportunity to create a gateway to Beechview, as it is one of the first views of business district seen from the T as it enters Beechview from the Fallowfield Station. Other important assets along Broadway Avenue such as the IGA supermarket façade, the Carnegie Library, and Fallowfield Station could also be considered for colorful surface treatments such as mural to highlight them and brand the corridor.

### Use the billboards to share information, and improve the landscaping around them

The billboards that line Broadway Avenue are a distinctive and highly visible part of the experience of travelling through Beechview. Lamar Advertising Company, the owner of the billboards, is interested in being a community partner and could be recruited to work with community groups to create new signage that helps to brand the neighborhood and the corridor. The parklets could also be replanted as part of a corridor-wide planting strategy.

### Temporarily reuse vacant storefronts with art and Beechview marketing

The vacant storefronts on Broadway Avenue can be transformed from liabilities to assets by enlisting them in the branding and marketing strategy as well. While waiting for these buildings to come back online with commercial enterprises, the spaces themselves and their storefront windows can come alive temporarily with installations, performances, or community events. Since the vacant storefronts on Broadway Avenue are in such prominent locations in the heart of the commercial district, they are an opportunity to make a statement and support the existing and new businesses by generating interest and activity on the corridor.

### Improve signage at key intersections to direct people to Broadway Avenue

There are opportunities to develop gateways at key entrances to Beechview from West Liberty Avenue, Banksville Road, and Crane Avenue. Wayfinding signage and public art at these locations can make people on these well-traveled roads aware of the amenities Broadway Avenue has to offer and help them find their way to the corridor.



Proposed “Welcome to Beechview” mural; repurposed billboard marketing the community; gateway locations for signage directing people to Broadway

## PUBLIC REALM & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The public realm improvements focus on Broadway Avenue from Fallowfield to Neeld Avenues and adhere to several key goals to promote a livable and sustainable community: slow traffic, improve safety, improve the T stops, manage stormwater, encourage walking and biking, and promote a “Main Street” character.

### Repair Broadway’s potholes, restripe crosswalks, and integrate pedestrian crossing signage

The poor road conditions on Broadway Avenue are not only unattractive but also dangerous to both drivers and pedestrians. The focus needs to be on repairing potholes on an annual basis and developing a maintenance plan for crosswalk and lane striping on the roadway so it is clear to drivers and pedestrians.

Consideration should also be given to additional signage that makes drivers aware that Broadway Avenue is a pedestrian-friendly street and that they should reduce their speed accordingly. Pedestrian crossing signage in Beechview could be in the form of stand-alone signs or incorporated with other neighborhood branding signage.

### Introduce lighting in the neighborhood, along steps, and along Broadway Avenue

Pedestrian-focused lighting along Broadway Avenue would enhance the attractiveness of the commercial district and increase visibility and safety for shoppers and T riders. For the staircases, lighting not only increases visibility and safety, but is also an opportunity to add visual interest and point the way to and from Broadway Avenue. In addition to overhead lamps, LED lighting can be embedded in the steps themselves or along the railings, or glow-in-the-dark phosphorescent paint could be used to play up the steps as a fun and beautiful feature of the neighborhood.

### Integrate new trees on residential streets and rain gardens along the corridor

The dramatic topography makes controlling stormwater runoff all the more important, which can be done through planting more street trees and creating rain gardens. Creating rain gardens along Broadway Avenue, which runs along the highest point in the neighborhood, could minimize the flow of stormwater down the slopes and be part of a planting strategy that contributes to the branding of the corridor, enhances the streetscape, and provides traffic calming benefits.



*Rendering of proposed lighting and wayfinding improvements along the stairways leading to Broadway and the Red Line*





### Connect the sidewalks to T station stops with speed tables to slow traffic

Station stops at Shiras, Boustead, Belasco, Coast, and Hampshire are essentially raised concrete islands that provide little to no protection from vehicular traffic that drives by on both sides of the island. Installing speed tables in the area between the Broadway Avenue sidewalks and these islands will create real station areas that are easy to access by all pedestrians. This design solution will help to visually anchor the platforms to the sidewalk and create a much safer space for pedestrians to access and stand within while waiting for the T; the speed tables will also deter (or at least slow) automobile traffic from passing to the right of the station stops.

### Provide more space for pedestrians

Providing more space for pedestrians can increase pedestrian safety, encourage more pedestrian activity, and improve economic development in an area. The plan calls for installing curb extensions at intersections to reduce the span of pedestrian crossings and slow traffic as well as increasing the curb length of the area where parking is prohibited near intersections.

### Plan for a bicycle network in Beechview

The challenge with creating a bike network in Beechview is the steep grade of many of the residential streets. These grades are obviously a tremendous challenge for bicyclists, and any bike network must minimize the exposure to segments that have grades steeper than 5%. The proposed bike network in Beechview must connect to designated bike routes in neighboring Banksville, Brookline, and Dormont as well.

### Introduce bicycle parking near Fallowfield Station and at the Library

In addition to improving the on-street bike infrastructure on Broadway, more bike parking should be constructed in the area. Standard bike parking should be located in places with enough sidewalk space on Broadway Avenue. More concentrated bike parking stations should be considered at Fallowfield Station and the Library. With a vacant lot located next to the Fallowfield Station, consideration should also be given to reusing this lot for a future bike sharing station.

PHASE 2  
T SHELTER

PHASE 1  
SPEED TABLE



Existing roadway and T platform on Broadway; proposed speed table to connect the sidewalk with the transit stop

## Designate priority stops for investment near retail; create new covered shelters and install real-time information for the T

Improvements to the transit stops will need to be targeted to have the greatest impact on the corridor. Priority stops for investment should be designated to reinforce retail and community assets. The stops at Hampshire and Boustead are good candidates for upgraded transit amenities to support the main centers of retail.

Priority investments at designated stops could include a return of the covered shelters on Broadway Avenue to make the T stops more comfortable and inviting, and increase the visibility of the stops. In addition, real time information about the wait times for approaching T trains should be incorporated at designated T stops should the Port Authority start collecting and sharing this data with new GPS on system vehicles.

## Reclaim automobile space for bicycle lanes

Broadway Avenue has many characteristics of a livable, multi-modal street. However, it is still a roadway that is dominated by automobile traffic, the majority of which is using the roadway to bypass West Liberty Avenue. The *Active Allegheny Plan* noted that “Broadway Avenue has more roadway capacity than needed to accommodate vehicular traffic, and has potential to upgrade bicycle accommodations, in particular.”

There is an opportunity to create a bicycle facility on Broadway that appeals to the neighborhood’s youngest and oldest residents. A Portland Department of Transportation study concluded that 60% of its population is interested in cycling, but concerned about safety. In order to encourage this portion of the population to ride their bike on street, new infrastructure must be developed that provides protection for bicyclists from vehicles.

Increasing the transportation options that access Beechview will also increase the number of people that visit Beechview’s many assets. It is necessary to develop bike lanes, such as the one proposed for Broadway, that offer strong connections to the heart of neighborhoods. The Broadway bike lane would serve as a new sustainable connection to Beechview from Dormont, it would form the spine of a future bike network in the area, and it would encourage visitors from outside the area to take the T and then bike along Broadway to visit the neighborhood businesses, restaurants, and recreational assets.

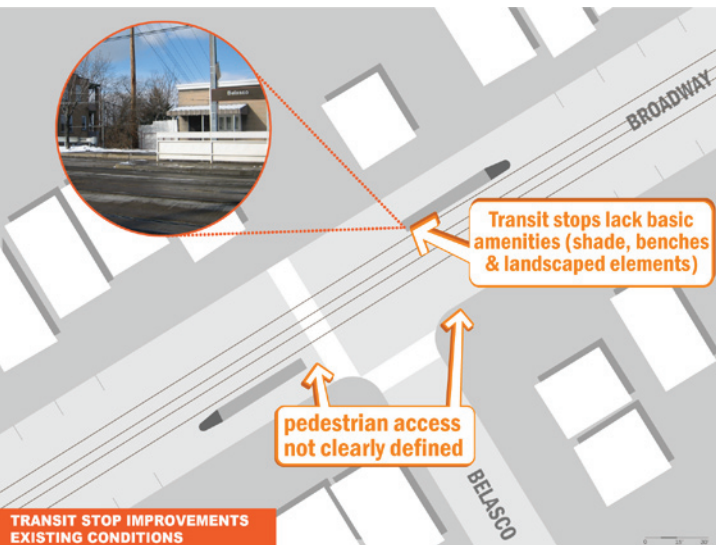


Diagram and photo of existing roadway conditions on Broadway Avenue

## SCENARIO 1

### Stripe bicycle lanes on Broadway and restrict traffic to share the lane with the T

The first alternative requires removing the outside travel lane, having vehicles share a travel lane with the T, and providing a buffered bike lane between the travel lane and the parking lane. This design would slow vehicular traffic, provide a buffer for bicyclists from the trolley tracks, moving vehicular traffic, and open doors of parked cars, and retain space for vehicles to pull into if they are disabled or need to allow emergency vehicles to pass. The cost of the project is limited to re-stripping the roadway.

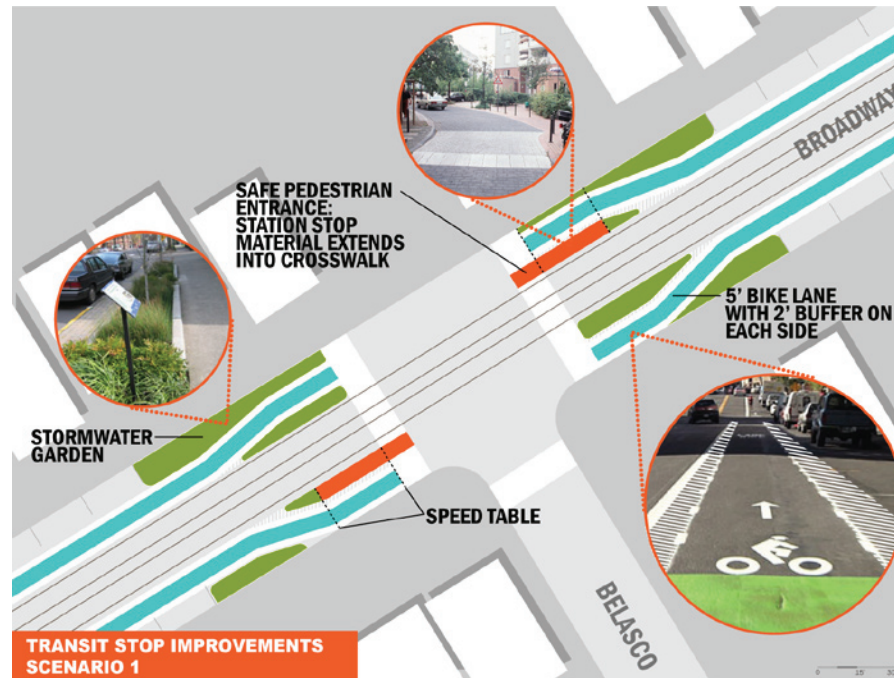


Diagram of proposed Scenario 1 improvements to Broadway Avenue



Scenario 1 bike lane

## SCENARIO 2

### Extend sidewalks on Broadway and create a new bicycle lane protected from auto traffic by a floating parking lane

There also exists the opportunity to create a much more innovative bicycle facility and increase space for pedestrians. This can be accomplished by flipping the bike lane and the parking lane, which would create a protected bike lane between the parking lane and the sidewalk. This would create the opportunity to increase the width of the sidewalks on each side of the street by two feet, slowing vehicular traffic and creating a bicycle facility that would encourage activity and be perceived as safe by the majority of people interested in bicycling. It would also improve pedestrian safety and increase the amount of space for pedestrians that could be used for landscaping or sidewalk cafes.

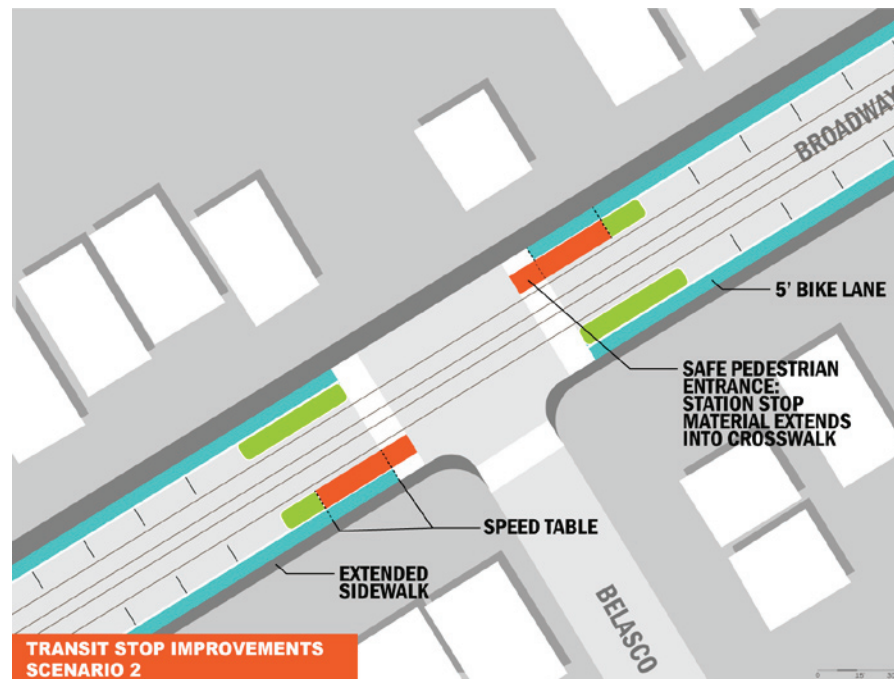


Diagram of proposed Scenario 2 improvements to Broadway Avenue



Scenario 2 bike lane buffered by floating parking

## Reuse the public parking lot and concrete triangles at Broadway & Beechview as a new central plaza

Previous plans have explored transforming the public parking lot at Broadway and Beechview Avenues into a Town Square to anchor the commercial district. In its current configuration, the site consists of a parking lot with 17 spaces and a traffic island that directs southbound cars turning left from Beechview onto Broadway Avenue. A small seating area and a clock provide some public realm amenities, but there is an opportunity for a larger scale redesign to create a public plaza capable of programming such as outdoor festivals and a farmer's market. By combining the traffic triangle with part of the parking lot and redrawing the geometry of the street at the end of Beechview Avenue to accommodate left turns on Broadway Avenue, a sizable plaza can be created. The redesigned plaza and parking lot results in a net loss of 9 parking spaces. However, these spaces are made up elsewhere in the same block with new on-street and off-street parking associated with new development.

## Design and build street furniture, green elements, planters, graphics, and flags that are unique to Beechview

The design of Broadway Avenue from the infrastructural elements, which emphasize a bikeable and walkable environment, to the look of the street furniture and decorative elements should be an integrated whole that sends the message of a vibrant corridor for people-oriented activity and a green sensibility. A theme that capitalizes on Beechview's natural beauty, topography ("it's worth the view"), and growing cluster of culinary businesses would be enhanced by tying in greening elements, such as the rain gardens, green roof bus shelters, and distinctive planters that carry a consistent plant and color palette throughout the corridor.



Examples of branding elements for the Broadway Avenue corridor

## DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

Beechview is a stable community that is mostly built up with few areas containing a critical mass of developable properties. The plan identifies the commercial core on Broadway and Beechview Avenues between Fallowfield and Coast Avenues as having the most potential for focused investment. An analysis of the available properties determined that the concentration of vacant and partially vacant properties combined with the high profile of the location made this the most feasible target area to achieve the desired impact for revitalization. Momentum is already growing near the bend along Broadway, with several projects under development: the medical offices in the former American Legion Building, the new IGA supermarket, the updated senior center and café, and the new charcuterie. The development of new businesses is recommended in close proximity to the existing retail concentration to take advantage of synergies.

### Rehabilitate 50 homes in the community near Broadway Avenue and develop a façade improvement program for homes and stores along the corridor

The market study supports the rehabilitation of 50 single- and multi-family (up to four family) homes near the Broadway Avenue commercial core to help shore up the corridor. Although most of the housing in Beechview is in good condition, scattered vacancy and poor conditions, especially near the T line, affect otherwise healthy blocks. Targeted rehabilitation of vacant buildings or those in poor condition will help to stabilize these blocks and improve the neighborhood as a whole.

In addition to a strategy for targeted rehabilitations, a façade improvement program that provides funds and guidance to property owners should be developed to upgrade the whole Broadway Avenue corridor. The buildings that line Broadway Avenue in both the commercial core and the residential zones are the most visible and are high priority candidates for façade and landscaping improvements to present the best possible face to everyone who passes through the community.

### Develop new independent senior housing above retail on Broadway

Based on the market study and the size constraints of available sites, 44 new units of senior rental housing could be absorbed in Beechview near the commercial core. A new senior housing development is proposed on a site located on Broadway Avenue across from the IGA supermarket.

### Develop new housing for younger tenants seeking good connections to Downtown

The neighborhood should be marketed to a younger population looking for affordable urban living with fast connections to Downtown Pittsburgh as well. The market study shows that it would be possible to introduce 45 units of rental housing in a mix of new construction and rehabilitated mixed use buildings in the Broadway Avenue core. Five buildings at the intersection of Beechview, Broadway, and Hampshire Avenues are good candidates for rehabilitation.



*Buildings visible from the T along Broadway*



Development potential identified by the market study for Beechview





### Improve the senior center

Beyond renovated and new housing, the community has been waiting for a new senior center for over 25 years. Though a number of relocation possibilities were considered, the senior center will be expanded in its current location. A master plan for the existing building is necessary to explore the possibility of adding a fitness center and multipurpose room for the community.

### Create a small kiosk in the proposed plaza at Broadway & Beechview Avenues

Input from the community indicates a strong desire for more activities to enliven the commercial corridor, such as street fairs and a farmers' market. A kiosk at the new plaza could host a café, farmers' market or other activities, and would expand the level of programming for the plaza.

### Bring new stores to Broadway Avenue

Approximately 18,000 square feet of ground floor retail could be developed in the commercial core through rehabilitation of vacant mixed use buildings and proposed new construction over a five-year period. The market study supports new retail uses with a focus on food-related businesses with outdoor dining to take advantage of the wide sidewalks in the commercial core. Four types of business uses were identified: retail stores, restaurants, service providers, and medical facilities. Suggested retail and food businesses include chef-run restaurants, a bakery, a wine/liquor store, a pet supply store, electronics, specialty clothing store, gift store, credit union, and offices and services including physical therapy, a chiropractor, an optometrist, a realtor, and insurance and legal services.



*Rendering of proposed new plaza at Broadway and Beechview Avenues and photo of existing traffic triangle and parking lot*



## IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the development scenarios prepared for South Hills Junction and Beechview presented in this planning study, Real Estate Strategies (RES) prepared estimates of the real estate tax and earned income tax increments associated with the proposed development program.

Preliminary estimates of the total 20-year tax increments projected for the proposed South Hills Junction TRID development program range between approximately \$5.3 million and \$7 million for the most aggressive development in illustrated in Scenario 3. If the Earned Income Tax is also included in the value capture, an additional \$2.4 million could be used to fund local improvements.

Preliminary estimates of the total 20-year tax increments projected for the proposed Beechview TRID development program range between approximately \$2.5 million and \$3.3 million depending upon the School District participation rate. If the Earned Income Tax is also included in the value capture, an additional \$330,000 could be used to fund local improvements.

What is clear from the TRID analysis is that while TRID can be an extremely useful tool to help pay for the improvements outlined in this plan, other sources of funds will be needed to make transit oriented development a reality in these communities. An implementation matrix is included in each station area plan to detail the timeframe, costs, and supporting funding sources for each recommendation. The matrix is intended to help guide the discussion regarding which strategies should be funded with TRID dollars and which should target other funding sources. The matrix should also help organize and track implementation progress and must be regularly updated once implementation commences.

Addressing the barriers to transit oriented development in Pittsburgh will require ongoing and expanded political support. A consortium of public and private stakeholders must continue to raise awareness of the benefits of TOD and encourage investment in infrastructure that will support development. But while development is a critical ingredient in bringing more activity around transit, each station exhibits opportunities for new investment and improvements that will add value to local communities with or without new development. In accordance with community feedback, this plan identified opportunities to enhance open spaces, calm traffic, and create safer streets, among other local goals. These community-based improvements will require the active involvement of non-profits, the City, and political representatives but also, most critically, active and engaged community organizations.





## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

If you are interested in reading the full *SMART TRID Corridor Study Plans* or the market analyses developed for South Hills Junction and Beechview, please contact:

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