

SOUTH METRO AREA REVITALIZATION THROUGH TRANSIT TRANSIT REVITALIZATION INVESTMENT DISTRICT

SMARTRID

corridor study

BEECHVIEW MAY 2011



pittsburgh
city planning

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L-R: Red Line car at Fallowfield Station in Beechview; Tracks at South Hills Junction

I INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

Purpose of the Study

Pittsburgh is widely recognized as a “livable city”¹ due to its mix of educational and cultural institutions, affordable lifestyle, employment opportunities, and public transit system. All of the pieces are in place for Pittsburgh to reach its own goals of becoming a greener, more sustainable and economically diverse city. To further Pittsburgh’s ongoing transformation, careful planning is required to ensure that the very assets that make it livable are strengthened.

1 America’s Most Livable Cities, *Forbes Magazine*, 29 April 2010: <http://www.forbes.com/2010/04/29/cities-livable-pittsburgh-lifestyle-real-estate-top-ten-jobs-crime-income.html>

Indeed, the purpose of the City’s ongoing comprehensive planning process, *PLANPGH*, is to “enhance Pittsburgh’s quality of life by determining the effective and efficient use of its natural systems, infrastructure, cultural assets, recreational amenities, and economic resources.” This study, the *South Metro Area Revitalization through Transit / Transit Revitalization Investment District (SMART TRID) Corridor Planning Study*, shares the stated goals of the Comprehensive Plan, aiming to attract investment and development along the Red Line in an effort to:

1. Strengthen Pittsburgh’s position as a regional hub and enhance its global significance
2. Provide equal access and opportunities to live, work, play, learn, and thrive
3. Grow and diversify Pittsburgh’s economy and its tax base
4. Foster a sense of Citywide community while strengthening neighborhood identities
5. Capitalize on Pittsburgh’s diverse natural and cultural resources
6. Respect and enhance the relationship between nature and the built environment²

2 www.planpgh.com/mission.htm

The Port Authority of Allegheny County operates a complex network of buses, light rail, and other services that help to knit the City and its neighborhoods together. There are 295 transit shelters and stations in this system. This is a story about a few of those stations – those located in Beechview along Broadway Avenue and at the South Hills Junction situated in the valley between Mount Washington and Beltzhoover. The *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.



Red Line car approaching Fallowfield Station in Beechview

In deciding to examine the potential of designating Transit Revitalization Investment Districts (TRIDs) in Beechview and at South Hills Junction to support transit-oriented development by employing a State mechanism that allows local tax dollars to be captured locally for community improvements near transit, the City and its partners recognized the importance of the “T” in fostering overall neighborhood revitalization. The purpose of this plan is to examine the existing conditions and future opportunities located roughly within a ½-mile of South Hills Junction and the Red Line stops in Beechview with the goals of increasing transit ridership, spurring economic development, strengthening existing neighborhood assets, improving the public realm, enhancing safety, and encouraging community building around transit.

Study Area

The *SMART TRID Corridor Planning Study* focuses on the four neighborhoods that make up the South Metro Area: Allentown, Beechview, Beltzhoover, and Mount Washington. The Study is divided into two distinct areas, both served by the Port Authority of Allegheny County transit system: Beechview, which is served by the Red Line along Broadway, and South Hills Junction, a transit hub for the Red and Blue T lines and multiple bus routes.

For the purposes of data collection, the study area for Beechview is bounded by Banksville Road, Crane Avenue, Saw Mill Run Boulevard, West Liberty Avenue, and Wenzell Avenue, with a focus on Broadway Avenue.

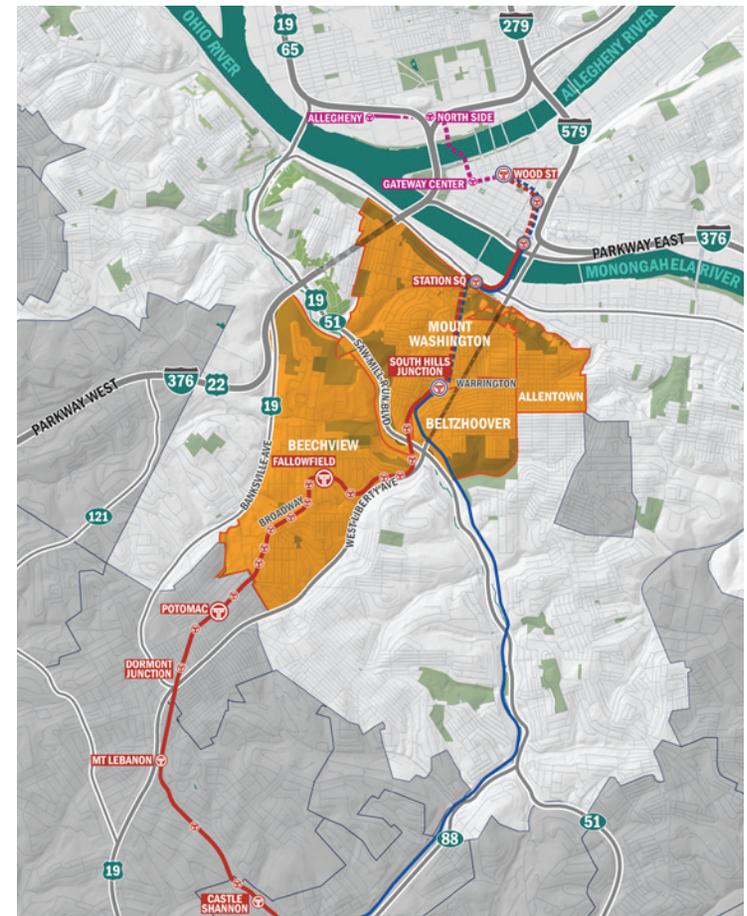


Figure 1. South Metro Area

The South Hills Junction study area encompasses Beltzhoover and portions of Mount Washington. Major park systems frame the study area on three sides – Grandview Park to the north and Mt. Washington Park to the west, both destinations within the Emerald View Park system, which overlooks Downtown Pittsburgh, and McKinley Park to the south. Beltzhoover Avenue forms the main eastern edge of the study area. Warrington Avenue and the Junction itself mark the dividing line between the Mt. Washington and Beltzhoover neighborhoods. Allentown is the neighborhood immediately to the east of both the Mt. Washington and Beltzhoover neighborhoods.

3

The South Metro Area neighborhoods enjoy proximity to Downtown Pittsburgh and represent an opportunity to build on previous TRID studies undertaken in Mount Lebanon and Dormont. Upon completion of the North Shore Connector, Pittsburgh's Light Rail Transit (LRT) system will extend beyond the Golden Triangle downtown, linking the study area neighborhoods with the North Shore. While each of the South Metro Area neighborhoods has a distinct relationship to its respective transit station(s) and significant variations in overall neighborhood conditions, they all present unique opportunities to encourage investment in underutilized land and buildings in the blocks adjacent and in close proximity to each station.

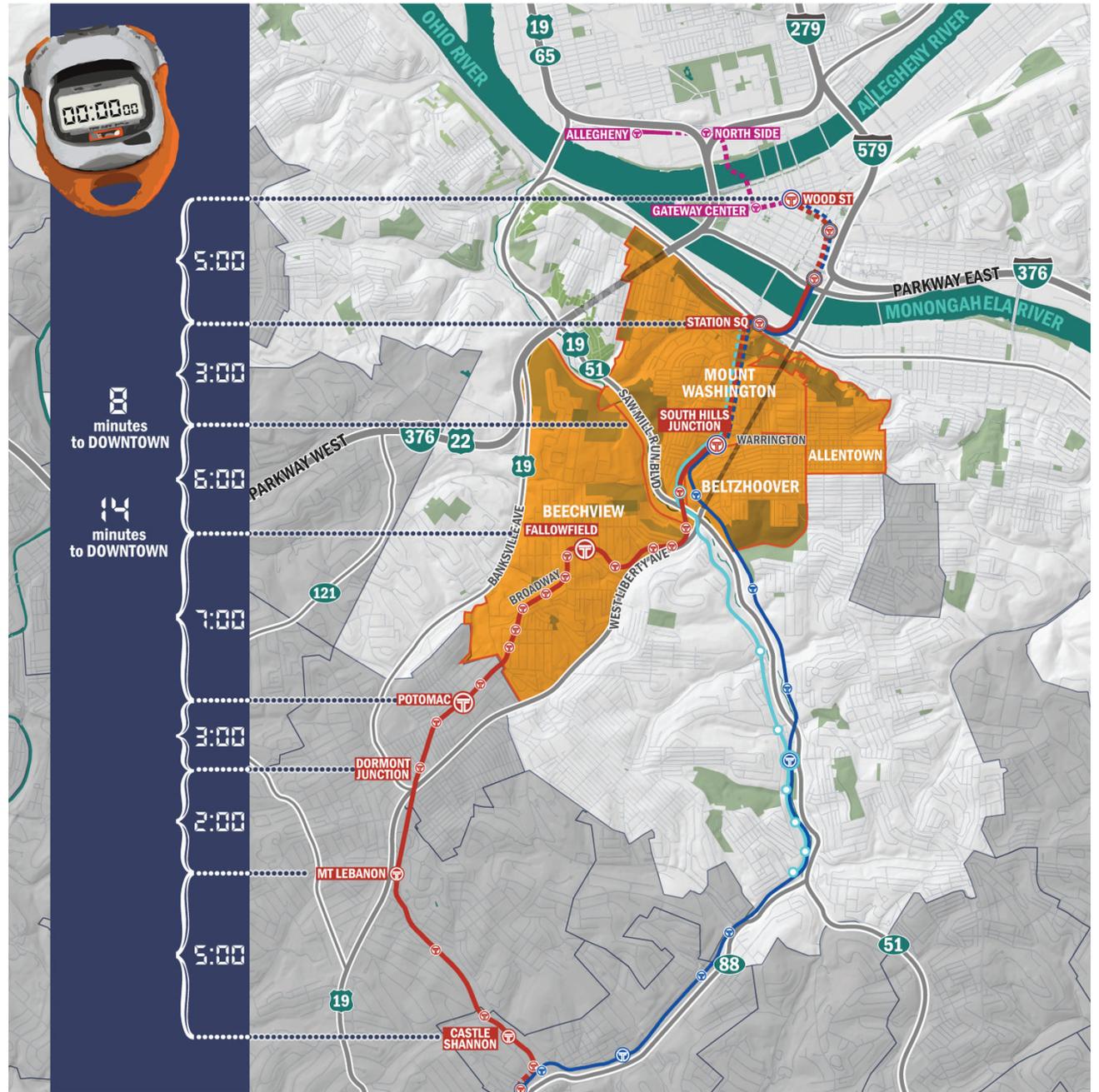


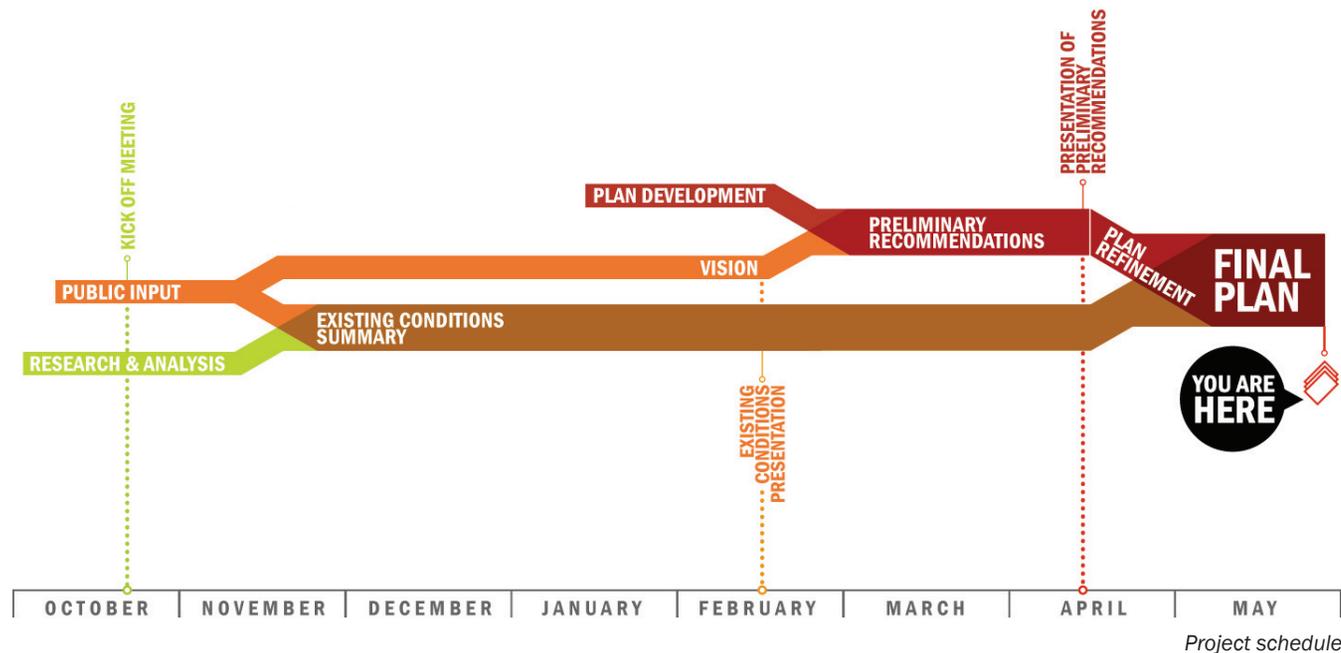
Figure 2. Proximity to Downtown Pittsburgh

PLANNING PROCESS

The SMART TRID Corridor Planning Study began in September 2010 and was completed in May 2011. The planning process consisted of three phases:

[1] The **Existing Conditions** phase, which encompassed observation, research, and outreach to assess neighborhoods and stations, consisted of:

- > A parcel-by-parcel survey of the study areas to determine land use, vacancy, and building conditions
- > An analysis of the physical environment around the station areas to assess adjacent uses, accessibility, local traffic and circulation patterns, the transit system, and pedestrian and bicycle environments
- > A review of Census and related data to evaluate demographic and socioeconomic conditions in the study areas
- > A residential and commercial market study for both station areas to determine market performance and potential
- > A review of historical material and previous plans
- > A public outreach initiative to engage local stakeholders in the planning process and elicit their input



[2] The **Preliminary Recommendations** phase included:

- > Developing objectives to guide the plan's recommendations
- > Developing preliminary recommendations that include SHORT TERM improvements that can be accomplished relatively quickly to build momentum, PUBLIC REALM AND INFRASTRUCTURE improvements that balance the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and cars, and DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS to test the long-term potential around the targeted stations
- > Conducting a value capture analysis based upon the amount and type of potential development to determine the amount of money that could be available for reinvestment around the stations if a TRID was enacted by the State of Pennsylvania
- > Public presentations of the preliminary recommendations to garner feedback and prioritize

[3] The **Final Plan** phase of work involved packaging all materials into a draft plan for review to further refine priorities and determine phasing of investment.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Over the course of the three planning phases, a series of interviews, focus group discussions, and six larger public meetings were held to introduce the Study and its goals, solicit ideas and opinions, and outline specific recommendations to achieve the stated objective of TRID and transit-oriented development. A TRID Advisory Committee comprising public, private, and nonprofit-sector stakeholders was formed to guide the process, refine the results, and build a broad constituency for the implementation of the plan.

Project kick-off meetings were held in the South Hills Junction and Beechview neighborhoods on October 26 and 27, 2010 to introduce the project and goals. At the close of the kick off meetings, residents used stickers and maps to identify their favorite and least favorite places in their respective neighborhoods to help alert the consultant team in to important local places. Local stakeholders were also asked to respond to three quick questions; their answers were recorded on tape and an audio file was later linked to the project webpage.



Residents gather for Beechview public meeting

You Said

> I take transit because...

- “It’s convenient to get downtown – for special events.”
- “It’s quicker than driving to work.”
- “It’s cheaper than parking downtown.”
- “I don’t want to own a car.”
- “It’s environmentally responsible.”
- “It’s more economical ... and worry free.”
- “I live within walking distance.”

> I don’t take transit because...

- “It would be dark and dangerous when returning late.”
- “The trolleys [are] almost always full and pass my stop by. Since Beechview is one of the last stops before town, the trains are often filled by more suburban riders.”
- “It’s gotten expensive. It’s cheaper to drive to work.”
- “The cost difference between the trolley and parking was not large enough to justify giving up my schedule flexibility allowed by having my own vehicle.”

> Transit would be better if...

- “Some of the stops were protected and aesthetically improved and had better lighting.”
- “There were more shelters, more police.”
- “It was an experience in itself, with things to do at the station [like] farmers’ markets.”
- “I could get a seat in the morning.”
- “It was more affordable.”
- “The schedules were followed more consistently.”
- “There were weekly or daily passes.”
- “There was an image that it was more convenient.”
- “It was more accessible to seniors.”

To create a channel for ongoing public input throughout the process, a large-scale collaborative map was installed in the Warrington Recreation Center and the Carnegie Library in Beechview for people to share ideas and insights about their neighborhood and tag them to specific locations. The maps were up from mid-December 2010 to mid-February 2011 and were also accessible online on the project webpage via an interactive mapping application.

The website received close to 700 hits over the course of the project, serving to build awareness about the plan while also tapping into local ideas and insights. The comments collected from the collaborative mapping exercise provided valuable input that informed the analysis and development of the plan. Direct quotes from local residents and stakeholders are sprinkled throughout this report.

The team presented analysis findings to the communities on February 15 and 16, 2011, and invited community members to imagine their neighborhoods in 20 years by filling out “postcards from the future,” which launched the recommendations phase of the planning process.

On April 19 and 20, 2011, preliminary recommendations were presented to the public and feedback was solicited through a prioritization exercise where participants were given a limited budget and asked to spend it on the recommendations they thought were most important.

SMART TRID

SMART = South Metro Area Revitalization through Transit TRID = Transit Revitalization Investment District

collaborative MAP

In all, more than 140 local residents, community leaders, elected officials, representatives of government agencies and non-profit organizations, private investors, and other local stakeholders participated in the planning process.

<http://interface-studio.com/currently/pittsburgh-smart-trid/>

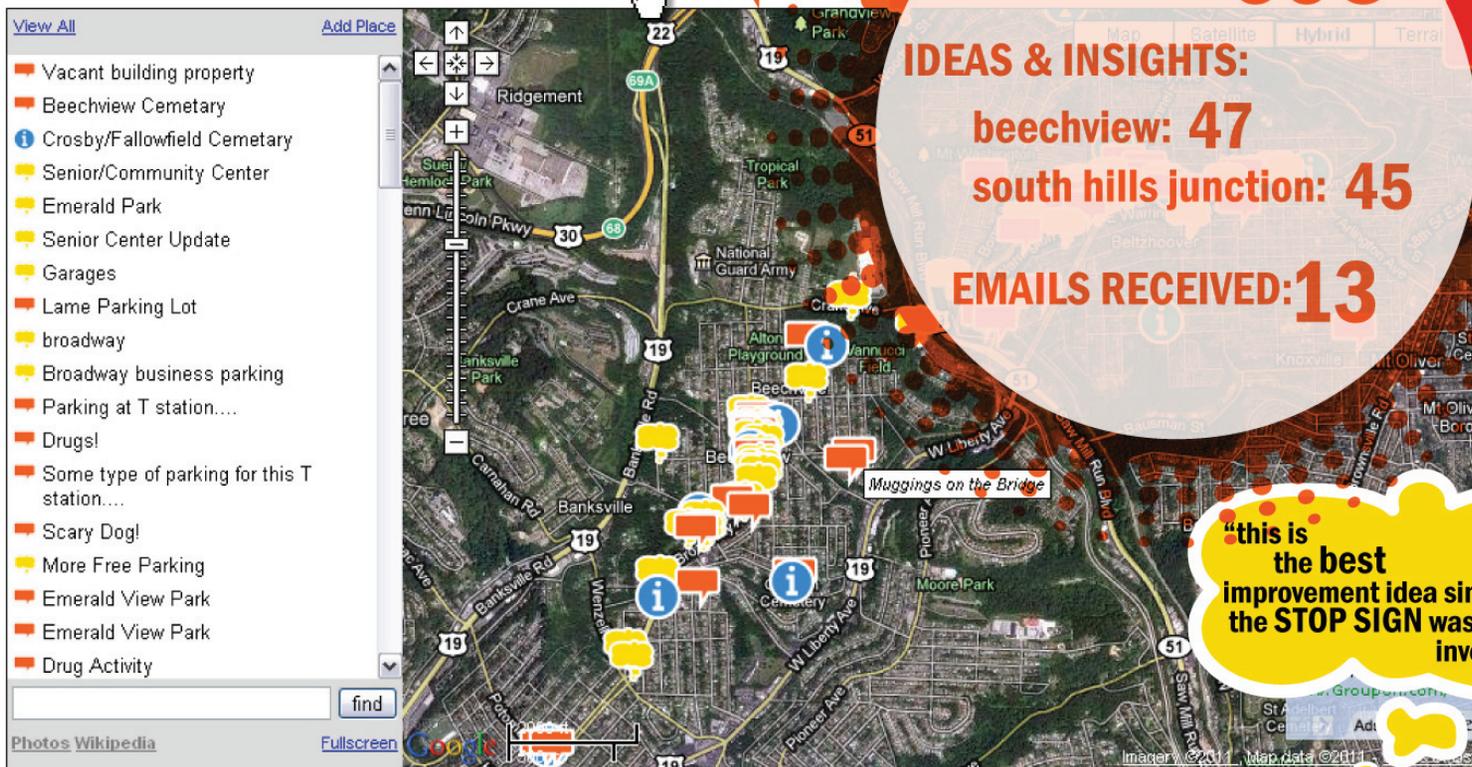


Figure 3. Online Collaborative Map Website Summary

II TOD AND TRID

WHY FOCUS ON TRANSIT

Since the expansion of the nation's highway system and subsequent growth of a car-dominated culture, transit has often been relegated to the margins of policy and funding. Trains, buses, and trolleys, to name a few, were often viewed as an urban phenomenon with limited relevance for small towns or suburbs.

However, as noted by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, "Americans are increasingly prioritizing the advantages provided by neighborhoods near transit, including economic savings to households, reduced carbon emissions, healthier lifestyles, fewer traffic accidents, and reduced suburban sprawl. At the same time, demographic and cultural changes are resulting in a growing interest in cities and urban lifestyles, which means that there is increased demand for the kind of neighborhoods that are most likely to be served by transit. These trends are only reinforced by recent spikes in oil and gas prices."³

Accommodating and encouraging continued transit growth is necessary not just for the City of Pittsburgh but the region as a whole given the steady increase in both the number of hours that drivers sit in traffic and the subsequent cost of that congestion in terms of lost time. In 2002, the Texas Transportation Institute estimated that Pittsburgh drivers experience an annual delay of **12,510,000** hours in congested traffic or an average of **15** hours of delay per week per peak road driver. The estimated cost of this congestion totals **\$235,000,000**.⁴

While traffic congestion is a regional economic issue, the cost of transportation hits very 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 2nd largest cost to families and in Pittsburgh, this can amount to between 12% and 25% of a household's income. Promoting transportation choice is important to reduce congestion as well as to affordably meet the transit needs of local families.

What happens when...



Gas prices are climbing

4 Schrank, David and Tim Lomax. "The 2002 Urban Mobility Report," Texas Transportation Institute, The Texas A&M University System, June 2002.

3 Capturing the Value of Transit, November 2008. Center for Transit-Oriented Development



One bus can take 60 cars off the road.

One light rail vehicle can take 125 cars off the road.

An alternative to sitting in traffic

The Port Authority of Allegheny County serves over 225,000 riders per weekday, and transit use in the City of around 20 percent is comparatively higher than other cities. Much of what fuels transit use in Pittsburgh is a combination of topography, traffic, and employment centers. Approximately 50 percent of people who work or shop in Downtown Pittsburgh use Port Authority's transit services. Another 12 percent of public transportation users are en route to schools and colleges. But while transit is serving a valuable local need, 54 percent of Pittsburghers continue to drive alone to work, fueling congestion along our highways and through our neighborhoods.

In both Beechview and South Hills Junction, thousands of riders pass through each day, but only hundreds get on and off at those stations and platforms. Despite the excellent infrastructure, Pittsburgh is still missing opportunities to promote transit ridership and connect communities with cost-effective, alternative transportation options.

A 2004 market study by Reconnecting America's Center for Transit Oriented Development found that a quarter of all households over the next 25 years will be looking for housing in areas within a ½-mile of transit stations. The study indicated that the majority of this demand will

target cities like Pittsburgh that already have a strong transit presence. The national growth potential was estimated to be 65 percent or 821,000 households living within a ½-mile of stations by 2025.

Meeting this potential means taking a close look at our infrastructure, stations, and surrounding communities. It is not enough to build around transit stations; we must do so in a way that encourages the use of transit or what is commonly referred to as Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

WHAT IS TOD

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. Specifically, the goals are to promote transit use by:

- > Building a mix of uses (retail, housing, office, open space) immediately adjacent to the station
- > Developing housing that serves a range of incomes and family types including affordable homes for families and seniors as well as market-rate units
- > Encouraging walking and biking, which further promotes transit use
- > Creating distinctive designs that add value to the station and surrounding communities

As demonstrated in other cities across the country including Washington DC, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Portland, the result has been fewer cars on the road, a greater use of transit, and a number of essential community benefits and improvements. These include:

- > Improved public safety through the redevelopment of vacant land that previously attracted criminal activity and related investment in amenities such as new lighting
- > Economic equity by incorporating affordable housing as a part of the new development
- > Greater transportation choice by making biking, walking, and transit safer and easier to use
- > Improved economic development through the provision of new retail as well as new jobs for local residents
- > New community-oriented civic spaces like small parks that provide additional play space for youth
- > Healthier citizens by promoting less reliance on the car and more emphasis on walking



Mixed use transit-oriented HOPE VI development in Seattle
Source: www.gglo.com



Transit-oriented development in Portland
Source: www.mithun.com



Station Entrance at transit-oriented development in Los Angeles
Source: www.article.wn.com

TOD in Pittsburgh

Many of Pittsburgh's most recognizable neighborhoods were early examples of TODs, fueled by the creation and expansion of the City's trolley and rail system. Historic examples aside, a few recent projects have actively sought to bring TOD back into the local debate, including the East Liberty development and the more than \$300 million in office, retail, and residential development around the Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway. A number of recent plans including the *20/20 Regional Vision*, the *Eastern Corridor Transit Study*, and *Project Region* have all sought to shine a spotlight on improved local transit and identify TOD as an important initiative to promote the City's continued livability and economic health. The City of Pittsburgh will now pull together envisioned concepts for TOD and tools such as TRID within the framework of the *MOVEPGH Multimodal Transportation Plan*. As the transportation component of the City's Comprehensive Plan, *MOVEPGH* will integrate land use by combining the best efforts and examples found locally and nationally into an executable plan for capitalizing upon the strategic value of TOD.

These prior studies and the work on the *SMART TRID Corridor Planning Study* have identified a number of barriers to making TOD a reality in neighborhoods across Pittsburgh including limited land availability (especially flat land), a depressed market for housing and retail around many stations, poor access to stations, and financing gaps that make such complicated projects difficult to accomplish. The need to upgrade infrastructure, improve the quality and character of local streets, clean existing environmental contamination, and finance multiple uses on one site often necessitates some form of public assistance. It is in this capacity that the State of Pennsylvania's Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) legislation offers a key opportunity to move TOD projects forward.

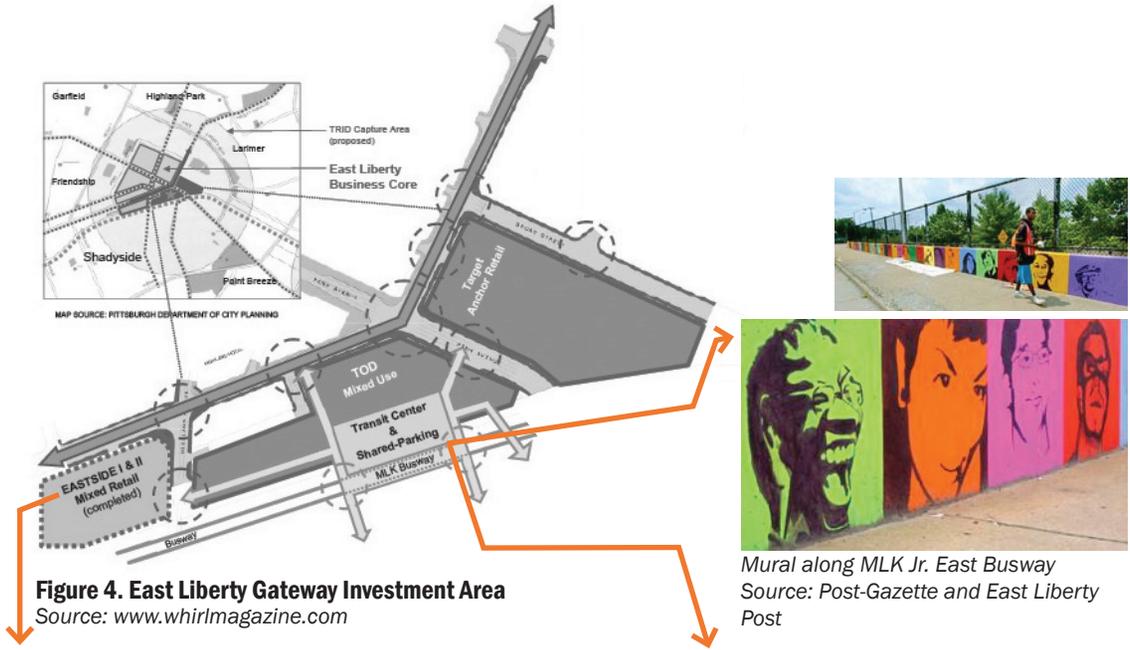


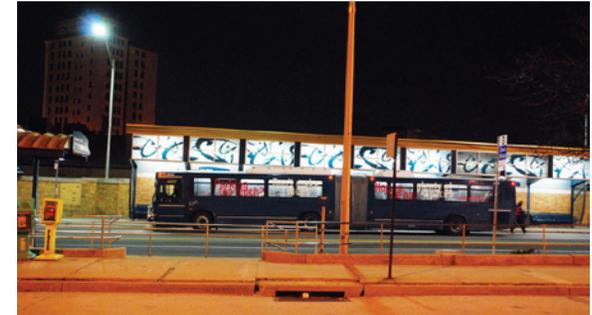
Figure 4. East Liberty Gateway Investment Area
Source: www.whirlmagazine.com



Mural along MLK Jr. East Busway
Source: Post-Gazette and East Liberty Post



The recently built EastSide Complex in East Liberty
Source: www.whirlmagazine.com



East Liberty Busway Transit Center
Source: BeyondDC on www.flickr.com

WHAT IS TRID



TRID Program

Fortunately, the Commonwealth has provided a mechanism to facilitate the cooperation and funding that is needed to help make TOD projects work at the local level. Thanks to active participation from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) in its creation, the *Transit Revitalization Investment District Act (TRID)* of 2004 was enacted by a 90-0 vote in the House of Representatives and a 187-1 vote in the Senate. TRIDs enable municipal governments and transit authorities to more closely coordinate transportation infrastructure, land use, and private development in the following ways:

- > Providing incentives for transit-oriented development
- > Establishing mechanisms to capture the value added by development around transit stops
- > Encouraging community involvement in the location, design, and implementation of development activities
- > Receiving priority for grants and technical assistance through the State's Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

What is Value Capture?

Value capture is simply the local public attainment of *new* tax revenue gained by the increase in private land values that results from new public investments. When a TRID is formed, the *new* tax revenue is solely available for public improvement and development projects within that TRID area, thus enticing investment in that community. Further, the abatement of taxes on current property assessments potentially stimulates growth and private property improvement. Future development projects and property assessments translate into future tax revenue which can be leveraged earlier for development and improvement funding. Value Capture is a powerful tool for community revitalization, and combined with the lucrative market of TODs, station improvements, and increased ridership, TRIDs have the potential to drastically improve neighborhood health.

TRID vs. TIF

Transit Revitalization Investment Districts are nearly identical to Tax Increment Financing Districts save for one key element: the notion of transit oriented development. In fact, the only difference between the two is the boundary rules for the creation of a district. While TIF districts center upon blighted neighborhoods and vacancy, TRID districts target underutilized spaces adjacent to transit stations and nodes of public transportation.

Figure 5. How TRID Works



How TRIDs Work

Transit Revitalization Investment Districts offer the opportunity to create designations where new tax revenue can be contained and solely used to support capital projects (TODs) within the designated area. Through building partnerships and conducting a planning study, the creation of the TRID itself is a rewarding process that integrates community education and outreach and can bring outside interest and financial resources to improve local transit and the surrounding community.

The first step in creating a TRID District is to conduct a planning study to determine the location, geometry, and feasibility of the TRID. Next, the municipality and transit agency must agree to the findings of the planning study and, if compelled, chose to move forward with the TRID, thus forming a TRID management entity to administer the TRID implementation. The roles and responsibilities of this entity are carefully devised and decided upon, and from this point onward, the managing entity will manage the implementation program set forth by the formation of the TRID.

TRID Process

Per the TRID legislation, a local government can designate a TRID in any geographic area within 1/8 to 1/2 of a mile from a transit stop. Once a location is identified, the process of planning, program management, implementation, and execution begins.

- Step 1** – Municipality and Transit Agency agree to work cooperatively to create a TRID
- Step 2** – Municipality undertakes TRID Planning Study to determine location, boundaries, and rationale
- Step 3** – Municipality and Transit Agency conduct community public meeting(s) on Planning Study
- Step 4** – Planning Study is revised and completed **◀ WE ARE HERE**

Step 5 – Municipality and Transit Agency accept Planning Study's findings and recommendations

Step 6 – Municipality forms Management Entity (e.g., an Authority) to administer TRID implementation

Step 7 – Municipality and Transit Agency prepare project lists of Public Sector Infrastructure Improvements, including costs, phasing, and maintenance

Step 8 – Municipality and Transit Agency coordinate with School District and County on Value Capture shares, schedule, and TRID Financial Plan

Step 9 – Municipality and Transit Agency hold public meeting on TRID Implementation Program improvements

Step 10 – Municipality and Transit Agency execute Agreement on roles, responsibilities, financial commitments, management entity, and defined improvements

Step 11 – TRID Management Entity solicits Developer interest

Step 12 – Development proposal accepted by TRID Management Entity and municipality

Step 13 – TRID Management Entity executes Development Agreement with successful Developer, including Public Sector Improvements and Private Sector Financial or Project Commitments

Step 14 – Project construction and completion

Step 15 – TRID Management Entity administers Value Capture revenues and expenditures in accordance with approved Implementation Program

Step 16 – Amendments to Agreement or TRID Plan, as required

III ANALYSIS

PROFILE

Study Area

“Beechview is Pittsburgh’s best kept secret.”

Beechview was originally settled in the late 1700s and attracted workers from the local coal mines. Over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the neighborhood attracted successive waves of European immigrants – including Scotch-Irish, English, Welsh, German, Italian, and Jewish families.⁵ As late as 1906, much of the Beechview neighborhood remained undeveloped. USGS topographic maps from the period indicate the area bounded by what is now Banksville Road, Saw Mill Run Boulevard, and West Liberty Boulevard had very few streets, fewer homes, and little industrial development. Between 1906 and 1949, the neighborhood experienced significant residential growth.⁶

The construction of the trolley line along the ridge in 1902 spurred the neighborhood’s growth and development, and gave rise to the commercial heart of the community along Broadway Avenue. The neighborhood was marketed as a healthy respite from the crowded city but still connected with fast and easy access to Downtown Pittsburgh. Beechview was incorporated as a borough in 1905 and then annexed by the City of Pittsburgh in 1909. The Liberty Tunnels, which opened in 1924, were a further impetus for growth.⁷

5 <http://www.carnegielibrary.org/locations/beeview/about.html>

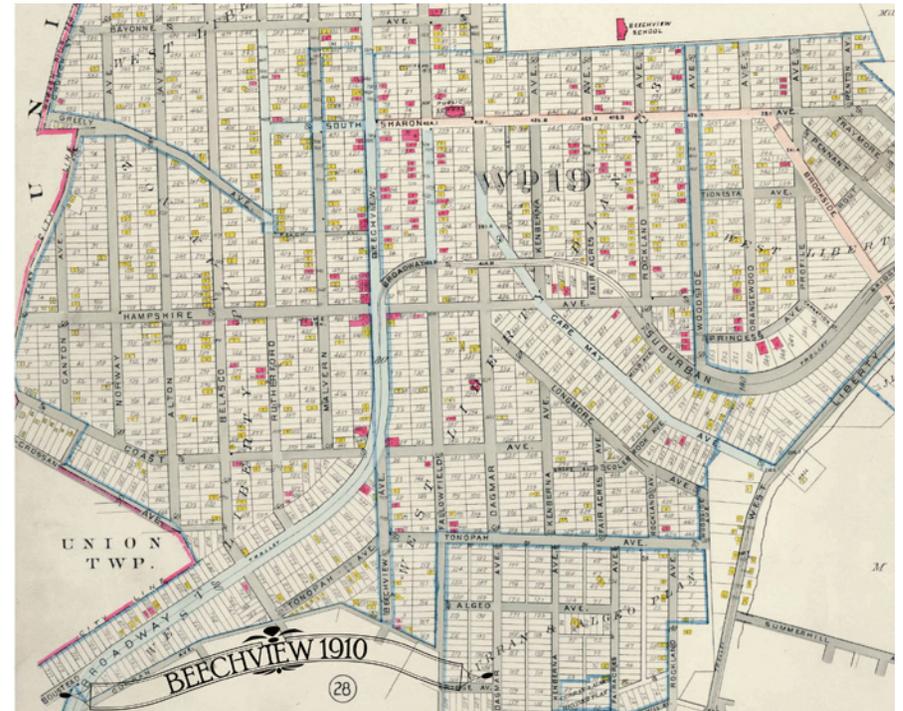
6 SMART TRID Appendix, Sci-Tek Consultants, Inc.

7 Carnegie Library.org, About Beechview



L-R: Beechview Avenue in 1945; mine sealing on Crane Avenue in 1937

Source: Pittsburgh City Photographer, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh



Beechview in 1910

Source: Historic Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh

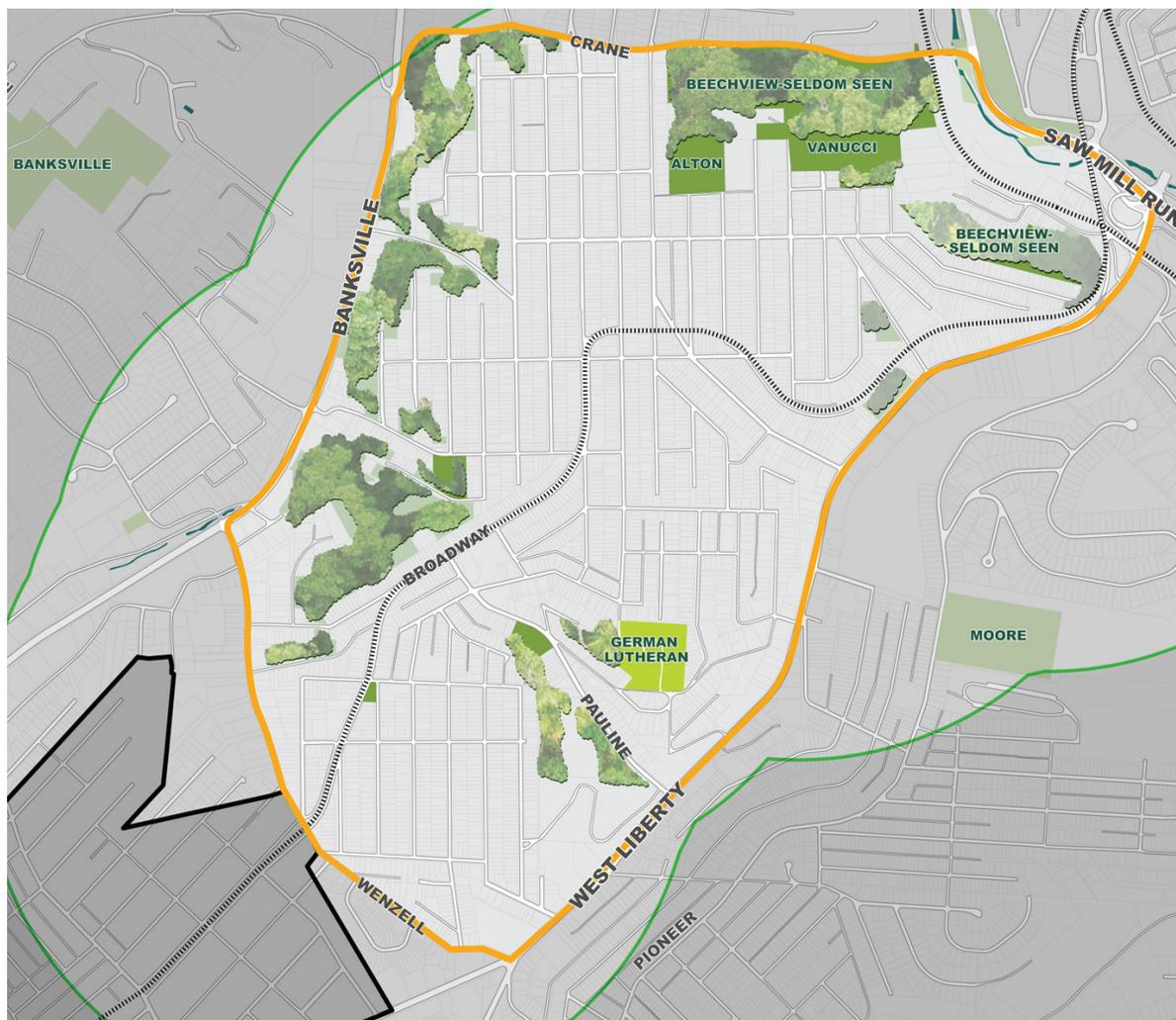


Figure 6. Study Area

Beechview's growth hit its peak in 1970 when, along with the entire Pittsburgh metropolitan area, the population began to decline as manufacturing employment fell off. This loss of population has had a visible effect on Beechview.

“When I was young, Beechview was vibrant and full of life but safe.”

Today, Beechview's residential areas are stable, but the commercial district has yet to rebound. Broadway Avenue's decline was exacerbated by a series of setbacks that included track reconstruction and street closures in the 1980s and more recently property speculation that has left prominent buildings in the center of the business district vacant. **“Beechview was once a very dynamic community. Now it feels like blowing on embers.”**

Nevertheless, Beechview is a diverse, unique community that has much to offer. Beechview's dramatic topography offers residents stunning views. The neighborhood claims the steepest occupied street in the City, and quite possibly the world – Canton Avenue with a grade of 37 percent, which is also part of Pittsburgh's Dirty Dozen extreme bicycle race. The Seldom Seen Greenway, site of a former German settlement, provides natural park space and trails and is one of the last remaining undeveloped parcels of land in the City. A diverse and affordable housing stock and a school system that serves Kindergarten through 12th grade offer a range of options to families. Today, as in its beginnings, Beechview's proximity to Downtown Pittsburgh and neighboring South Hills, its light rail line, walkable scale, and the Main Street character of Broadway Avenue are still defining elements of the community. This Study aims to enhance these assets, bring out the full potential Beechview, and let others in on “the secret.”

The Beechview study area is defined by Banksville Road, Crane Avenue, Saw Mill Run Boulevard, West Liberty Avenue, and Wenzell Avenue, with a focus on Broadway Avenue.

Coordination With Previous Plans

“This community has had more studies than you can shake a stick at.”

The *SMART TRID Study* recognizes that the citizens of Beechview are veterans of the planning process and have been actively involved in developing a vision for their community. This plan is an outgrowth of the 2008 *Beechview Community Plan* which called for a market study and TRID plan. While aligned with the more comprehensive goals of the *Community Plan*, this Study is much like the 2004 *Baum-Centre Corridor Development Strategy* for the East Busway in its focus on Transit-Oriented Development. It also builds upon other previous planning work done for the Beechview community, including:

Broadway Avenue Improvement Study (2002)

This study presented two alternatives for the redesign of Broadway Avenue. A minimal “four-lane” approach sought to make the street more pedestrian friendly while keeping the existing two travel lanes and one parking lane in each direction. The more radical “two-lane” approach proposed narrowing Broadway to one shared travel lane in each direction to increase space for pedestrians and create a planting strip. The plan also proposed a Town Square for the bend at Broadway and Beechview.

Beechview Business District Strategic Master Plan (2007)

This study focused on strengthening the commercial district through vacant property disposition, business recruitment and retention, marketing, and streetscape improvements. The plan identified sites for redevelopment, particularly the vacant properties concentrated around Broadway and Hampshire owned by a single landowner, as well as shared parking.

Beechview Community Plan (2008) – This community-driven plan developed a series of strategies that address commercial development, residential neighborhoods, public works, parks, and public safety to be coordinated by the Community Leaders United for Beechview (CLUB). Some key actions included conducting a retail and market analysis, targeting key properties on Broadway for redevelopment, creating a TRID plan, marketing for the business district and neighborhood, better quality upper floor residential space above storefronts, coordinated beautification and public art, better sidewalks and access to T stops, and a traffic study for Broadway to reduce speeds.

South Hills Transit Revitalization District Planning Study (2008)

This study, prepared for Allegheny County Economic Development (ACED), examined potential development opportunities around three light rail stations in Dormont and Mt. Lebanon. The study recommended creating a single, consolidated TRID for the three stations as they function as a continuous transit neighborhood and mixed-use commercial corridor.

Beechview Feasibility Study (2009) – This study targeted three prominent Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) properties at the intersection of Broadway and Hampshire for redevelopment as a way to spur the larger revitalization of the Beechview business district. The study included options for redevelopment from most to least intensive, with a recommendation to focus on renovating exteriors to ensure appropriate design standards are met, and then marketing the properties for sale.



Beechview residents' visions for the community displayed in the window of a URA-owned building on Broadway Avenue.

Active Allegheny (2010) – This plan identified Broadway Avenue as a Complete Street prototype, which could be reconfigured to accommodate bicycle infrastructure and pedestrian improvements.

TRANSIT CORRIDOR CONTEXT

Transit Routes

The Red Line runs along Broadway Avenue, the ridge that forms the “spine” of Beechview. Broadway is a true multi-modal roadway, with two travel lanes in each direction, the middle ones shared by the T in both directions, on-street parking, and a significant amount of pedestrian activity. However, the automobile is still the dominant user on the roadway. High-speed traffic on Broadway Avenue, which is often used by drivers to cut through the neighborhood, as well as the lack of adequate crosswalk striping at many of the stops, create dangerous conditions for pedestrians and T riders.

The Red Line runs through the Beechview neighborhood and stops at the following locations: Neeld, Shiras, Boustead, Belasco, Coast, Hampshire, and Fallowfield. The Red Line provides approximately 10 minute headways during peak hours on weekdays, and 15 to 30 minute headways at other times. The first train in the study area to Downtown arrives at Potomac at 4:59 am, and the final train in the study area from Downtown arrives at Potomac at 12:37 am. On Saturdays, the headways are approximately 20 minutes both ways, and on Sunday the headway is 30 minutes.

BROADWAY AVE
AT HAMPSHIRE

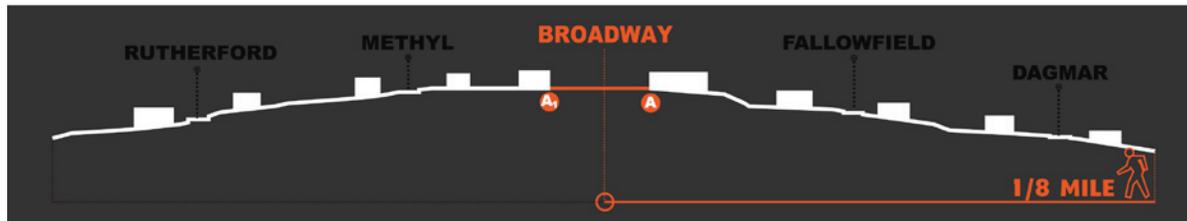
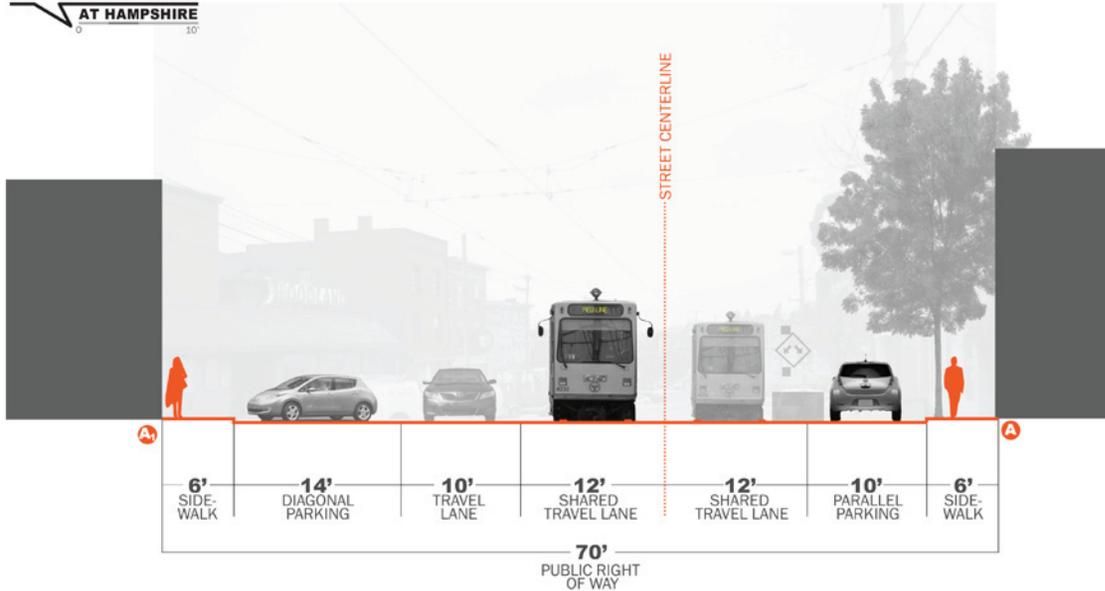
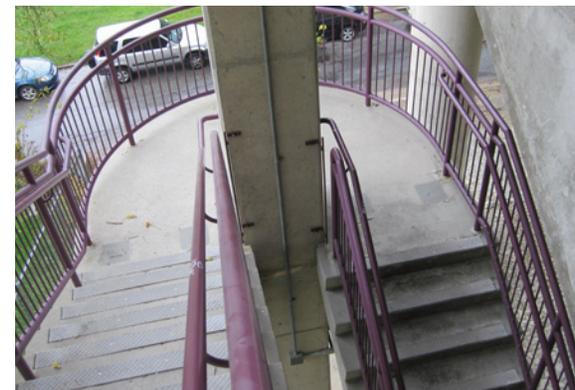


Figure 7. Section showing Broadway Avenue at Hampshire Avenue



L-R: Conditions that hamper station access include vacancy, poor road conditions on Broadway Avenue, and stairs.

Ridership

Rush hour activity is highest at the Fallowfield Station, but the stops at Neeld, Hampshire, and Shiras also exhibit a high level of activity. A common concern voiced by Beechview residents is that the T is often at capacity when it arrives in Beechview and, at times, will not stop for Beechview riders, leaving the impression that it caters to shuttle riders from the suburbs to Downtown Pittsburgh. An analysis of in-bound boardings over the course of the day based on 2008 data collected for the Port Authority's *Transit Development Plan* suggests that the high passenger boardings at the Castle Shannon, Mt. Lebanon, Dormont Junction, and Potomac stations result in rail cars that are close to capacity, if not full, by the time they enter the Beechview neighborhood.

Station Access

Approaching the T stops from the neighborhood and navigating Broadway Avenue is an obstacle course for many would-be riders and shoppers. To simply access the T from neighborhood, pedestrians must navigate steep hills to get up to the stations at Broadway. Many of the staircases that lead up the hills are poorly maintained and poorly lit at night. In the winter, when part of the field survey took place, the stairs and sidewalks leading to the transit stops were slippery with snow and ice.

Riders board the T from platform islands that are located between the shared travel lane and the parking/bypass lane. This is a serious safety concern for pedestrians that are trying to cross from the sidewalk to the platform, particularly when cars are using the bypass lane to pass

stopped trolleys. Crash barriers have been erected at the ends of the platforms to prevent cars from driving into the platforms as they swerve around trolleys, a clear indication of the potential dangers riders face. At present, the character of the platforms is more akin to that of a traffic island rather than an attractive and inviting space for transit riders.

The lack of protection between the sidewalks and the travel lanes on Broadway is an existing concern in the pedestrian environment. The volume and speed of traffic on Broadway can make it uncomfortable for pedestrians at times. On-street parking provides a protective buffer in some locations, but there are noticeable areas where the sidewalk and travel lane are directly adjacent to one another.

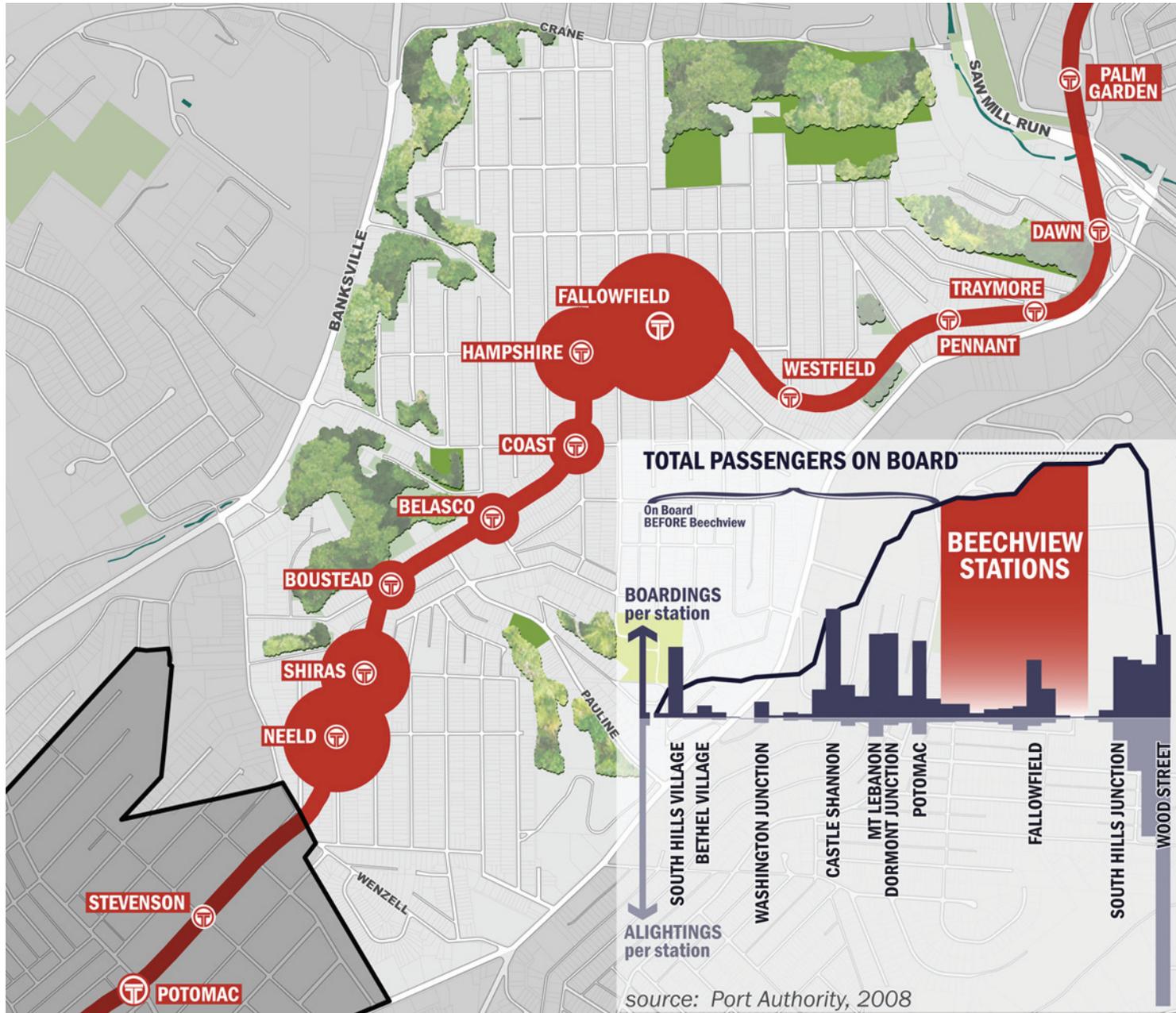


Figure 8. Red Line T Ridership: Boardings and Alightings by Station
Source: Port Authority of Allegheny County Transit Development Plan, 2008

STEEP HILLS

STAIRS



VACANCY

POOR ROAD CONDITIONS

Figure 9. Challenges to Red Line Access through Beechview

Crossing Broadway is a challenge at many times during the day. Traffic signals can provide protected crossings and gaps in traffic, but there are no traffic signals on Broadway, south of Beechview Avenue. Crosswalks are provided at a number of intersections along the corridor, but there is no additional infrastructure, such as signage, striping, or other traffic calming measures, to alert drivers to pedestrian activity or inform them to yield to pedestrians. There is also no space available in the middle of Broadway for pedestrians to wait due to the trolley tracks.

The pedestrian experience of approaching the T stops is described in a series of photographs in Figure 10 that capture the walk from A) Broadway Avenue to the Fallowfield Station, B-C) the neighborhood to the Fallowfield Station, and D) the neighborhood to the Belasco Stop.

Broadway Avenue to Fallowfield Station

This approach to Fallowfield Station avoids grade changes but still poses a challenge. The Fallowfield Station is the largest station in the neighborhood and has the most rush hour traffic. It offers covered structures, benches, ticket booths, and digital arrival boards. When approaching the station from Broadway, there is no crosswalk or signage to alert drivers to pedestrians crossing to the station. After crossing to the station side of Fallowfield Avenue, riders making their way to either the inbound or outbound platforms have no buffer between them and the cars travelling on Fallowfield Avenue or turning from Broadway Avenue.

Fallowfield Station Stairs

In addition to the entrance on Broadway Avenue, T riders can access the Fallowfield Station from a staircase on Dagmar Avenue. There is no signage indicating the station name from Dagmar Avenue, and the staircase starts under the rail bridge due to dramatic topography changes between Fallowfield and Dagmar Avenues. The staircase is one of the best in the neighborhood in terms of its condition, yet there is no lighting, and the land next to the staircase is vacant, which diminishes the natural surveillance at this entrance, particularly at night.

Stairs to Belasco Stop

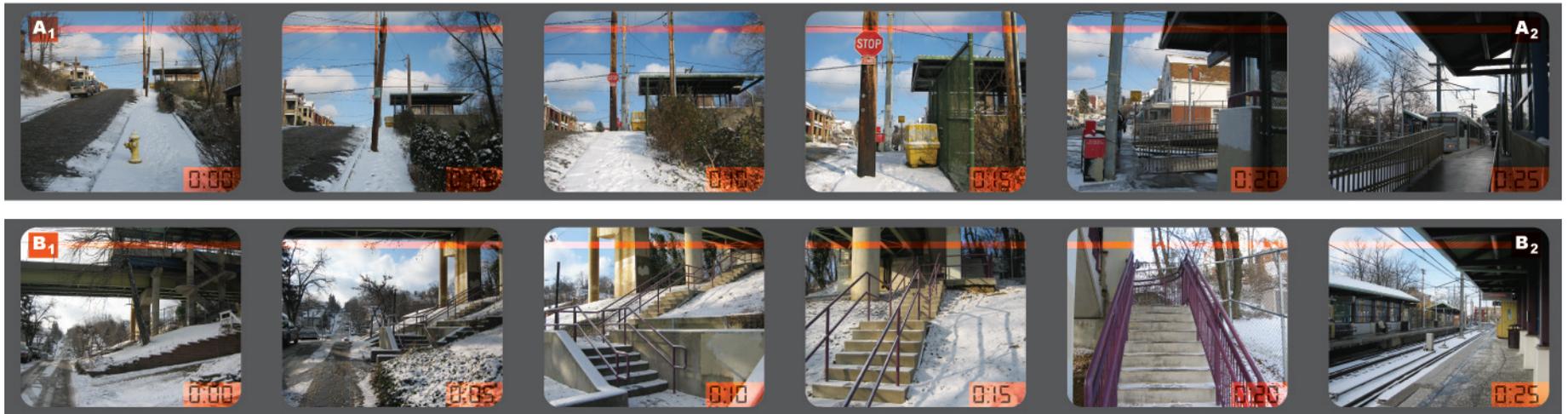
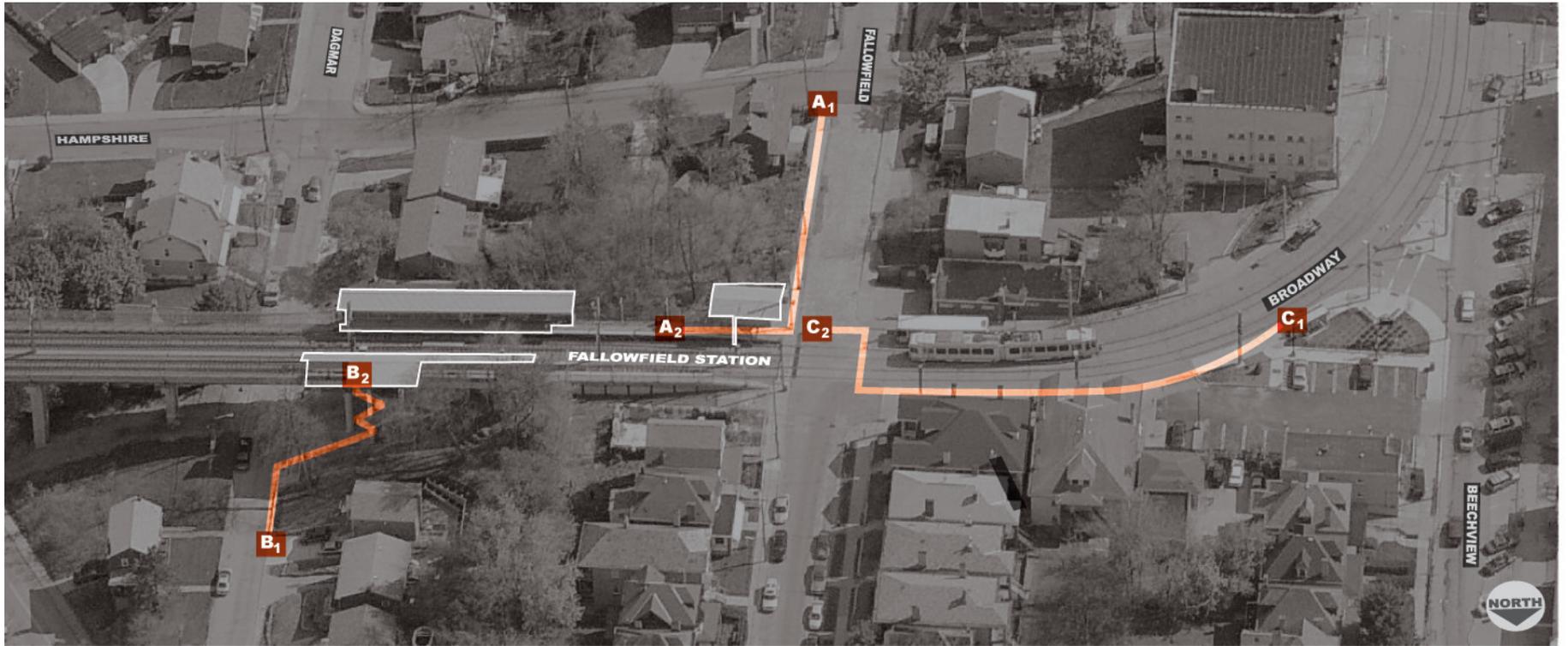
The connection from Cagwin and Belasco Avenues to the Belasco stop on Broadway Avenue is a long and hidden set of stairs through wooded hillside that is poorly maintained and has no lighting. The stairs lead not only to the T stop but also to the Carnegie Library and St. Catherine's Roman Catholic Church, which are among the community's most valued assets. However, there is no indication in the form of signage, lighting, or public art that this staircase leads to these assets from the neighborhood.

Parking

On-street parking is provided along both sides of Broadway Avenue. In the business district bounded by Hampshire and Coast, the west side of the roadway provides head-in angled parking, and the east side provides parallel parking. Both sides of Broadway provide parallel parking on the segment of the roadway from Coast to Neeld. On-street parking in the area is free, and there are no restrictions for the amount of time that drivers can park on-street.

The only off-street parking area for visitors is located at the intersection of Broadway and Beechview and provides 17 parking spaces. All other off-street lots serve private or institutional uses.

Parking demand is highest in the business district, but even at that location, observations showed supply to be greater than the existing demand. As the land uses along Broadway transition from commercial to residential, the demand for on-street parking becomes minimal. Most of these land uses have driveways on the rear of their property so they do not generate additional on-street parking demand. The lack of on-street parking demand creates additional "empty space" on the street, which is one of the contributing factors to the high vehicle speeds on the roadway.



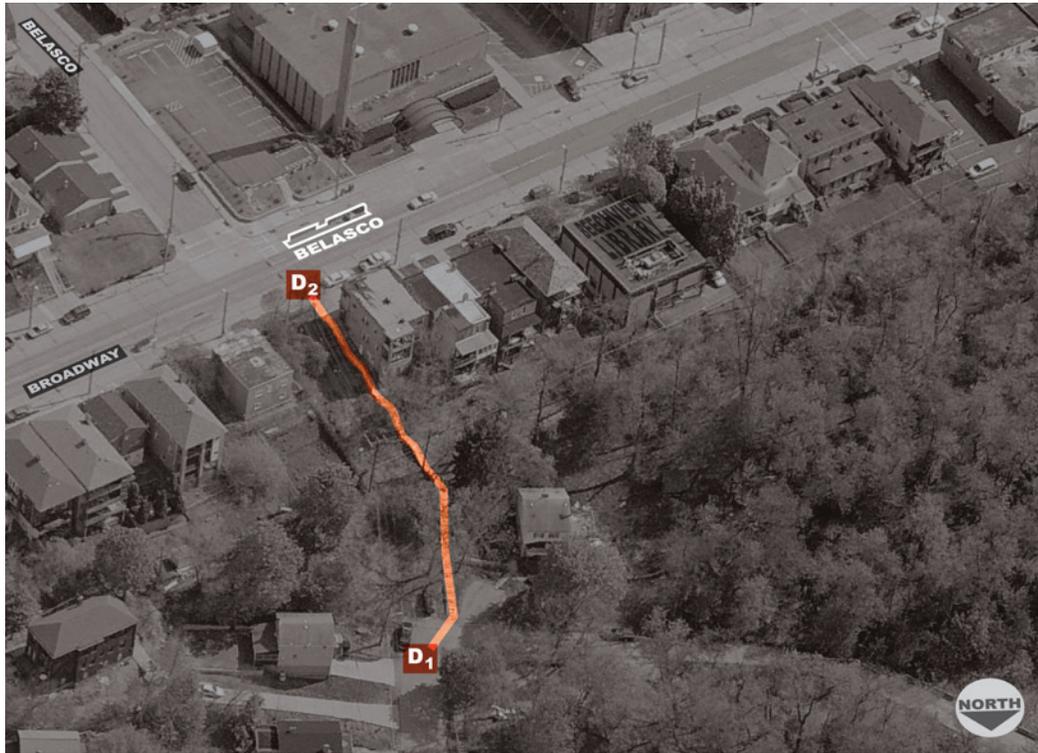


Figure 10. Photographs describing Pedestrian Experience to Fallowfield Station (A-C) and Belasco (D)



DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Population

Beechview's population has been in decline from a peak of 14,360 in 1970 to its present-day population of 7,974, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The steepest decline occurred between 1970 and 1990, when the population fell by 35%. This mirrors the population decline throughout the Pittsburgh metropolitan region where manufacturing employment over the same period from 1970 to 1990 declined by 50%. Since then, Beechview's population decline has slowed, but the loss was greater between 2000 and 2010 (9%) than between 1990 and 2000 (6%).

Although the overall population has been decreasing, the ethnic and racial diversity of the community is increasing. Historically, Pittsburgh has been a city with few Asian and Hispanic or Latino residents. However, in recent years, increasing numbers of Asian and Latino immigrants have settled in Beechview. As a reflection of this diversity, Beechwood Elementary School, which serves the neighborhood, has the only ESL program in South Hills. According to the 2000 Census, the racial make up of the community was 91% white, 6% black, 1% Asian, and 2% other, which includes people who identified themselves as being of two or more races. Additionally, 2% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic. By contrast, the 2010 Census showed that the Hispanic population had grown to 6%, and the racial make up of the community was 81% white, 12% black, 2% Asian, and 5% other.

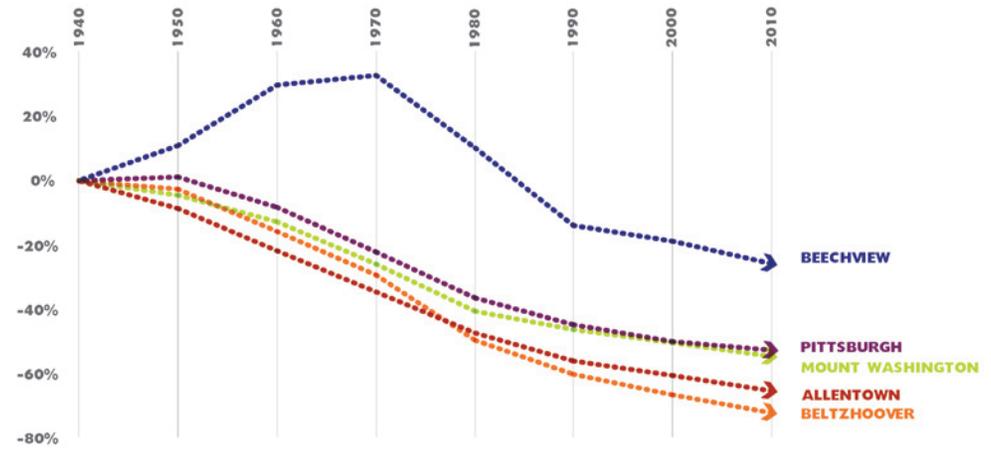


Figure 11. Population Change in SMART Area, 1940-2010

Source: U.S. Census

Income and Poverty

Beechview households have higher median incomes and lower rates of poverty than the citywide average. The 2010 median household income in Beechview was \$47,666 according to ESRI estimates, compared with \$38,437 for the City. In Beechview, 9.6% of households earn less than \$15,000 which is approximately half the citywide rate of 20.2%.

Commuting Patterns

Most workers in Beechview commute to work by driving alone (63%), which is more than the citywide percentage of 55%, according to 2008 data from the City. The next most common mode of transportation to work is by public transportation (21%), which is comparable to the 20% citywide. Additionally, 9% of workers commute by carpool, 5% by walking, and less than 1% by bicycle.

Local Assets

Beechview is fortunate to have strong and active community organizations and institutions that have led community revitalization and community building activities from community clean ups and greening to the development of a community-driven

neighborhood plan. Pretty Up Beechview organizes projects intended to create a more livable neighborhood, including neighborhood clean ups, a community garden, a farmers' market, and tree plantings.

Community Leaders United for Beechview (CLUB) is an umbrella organization that is open to all organizations in the community. It was formed to encourage communication and collaboration among organizations and to inspire community involvement. CLUB also publishes the *Beechview Summit*. CLUB and its member organizations represent a cross-section of the community and has been engaged in this and earlier planning efforts in Beechview.

CLUB members include: the Beechview Area Concerned Citizens, Beechview Athletic Association, Beechview Block Watch, Beechview Community Council, Beechview Community Senior Center, Beechview Lions Club, Beechview Merchants Association, Beechview United Presbyterian Church, Carnegie Library

of Pittsburgh – Beechview Branch, Friends of the Beechview Library, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Catherine’s of Siena Church, and St. Pamphilus Church.

The schools, churches, and library are among the valuable local assets that make Beechview such a livable neighborhood and give it a sense of community cohesion. Beechwood Elementary School, South Hills Middle School, and Brashear High School provide a full educational experience for the children and youth of the community. **“Beechview is one of a few neighborhoods where kids can go to school pre-K through graduation all in the community.”** Beechwood Elementary School is one of the best performing schools in the City and is growing fast due to the number of new families, many of them immigrants, with children in Beechview. The school building, built in 1922, is also listed on the National Register as a historic site.

The neighborhood churches play an important role in the life in the community. In addition to tending to their congregations, the churches reach out to the community at large with community events and provide much needed community space for community members and for meetings. **“If it weren’t for church basements, nothing would get done in Beechview.”**

In the absence of a community center, the Carnegie Library – Beechview Branch helps to fill that gap. Located on Broadway Avenue right next to the Belasco T stop, the library serves Beechview as well as neighboring areas in the City and suburbs, and provides a range of programs for all ages.

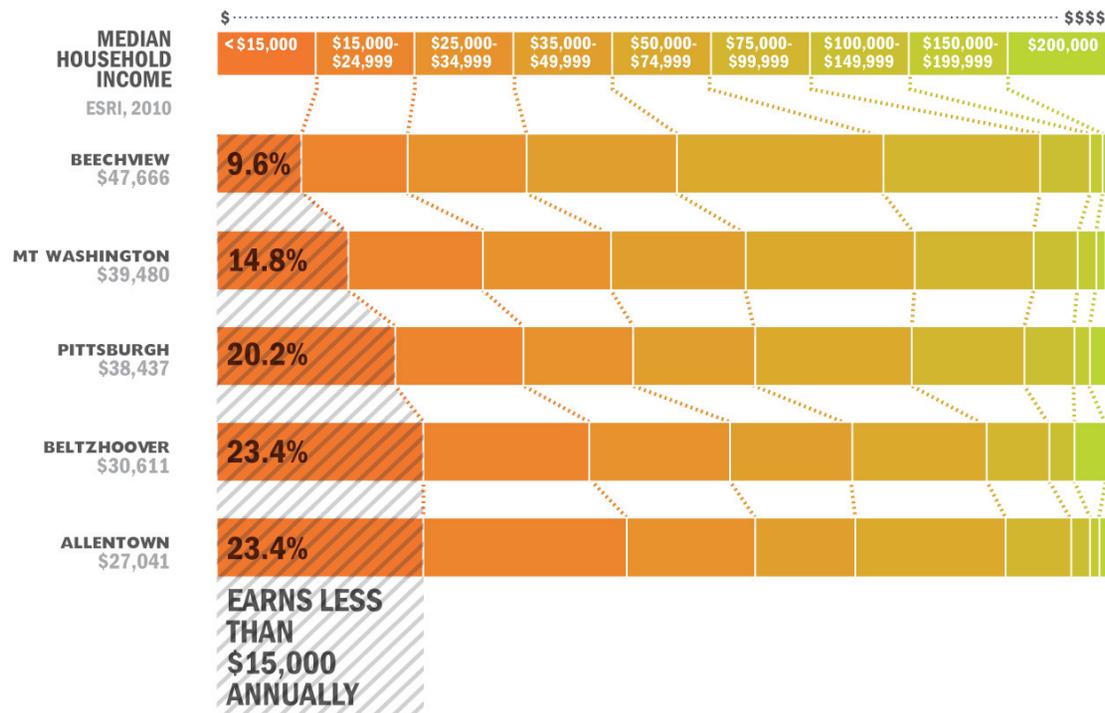


Figure 12. Comparison of Median Household Income in SMART TRID Study Area in 2010
Source: ESRI

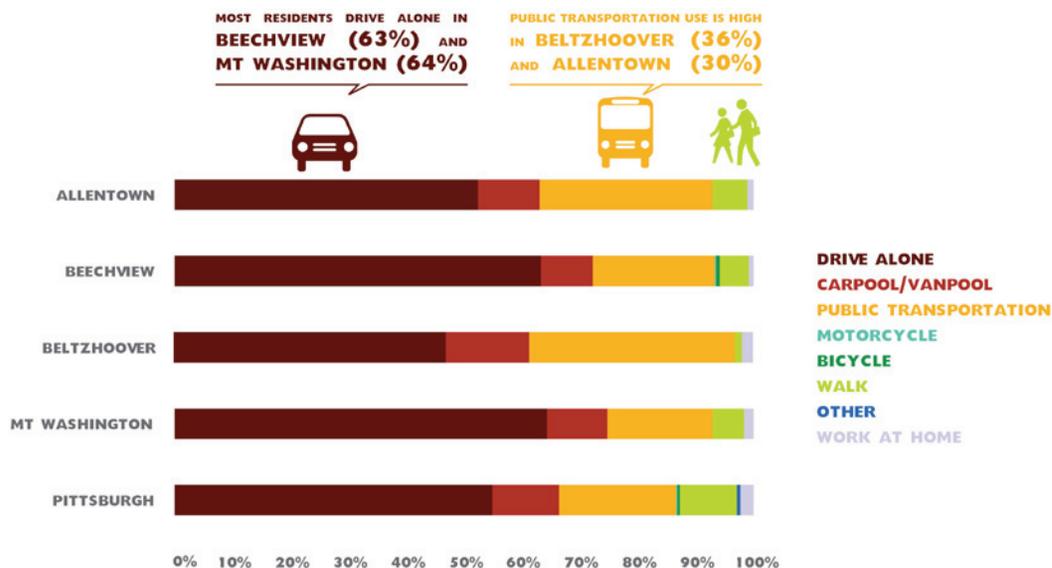


Figure 13. Comparison of Commute Mode in SMART TRID Study Area in 2008
Source: PGHSNAP



Beechwood Elementary



Houses on Canton Avenue



Castriota Metals and Recycling near Saw Mill Run

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Land Use

A parcel-by-parcel field survey of the neighborhood was conducted in October 2010 to determine the uses, vacancy and building conditions for every parcel and building in the neighborhood. As the land use map (Figure 14) shows, Beechview is a stable, primarily residential neighborhood with commercial and some light industrial development located along major thoroughfares. Distinct boundaries are formed by West Liberty Avenue and Banksville Road, which separate Beechview from Brookline and Banksville and form the rough eastern and western borders of the Beechview neighborhood, respectively.

Over half of the study area (54% of the parcel area) consists of residential uses, the bulk of which are single-family detached houses. Multi-family housing accounts for 17% of all residential parcels. The largest multi-family parcel is the Fair Oaks retirement community at West Liberty Avenue and Pauline Avenue. Most of the other multi-family housing follows the T line along Broadway Avenue and Suburban Avenue, and is also concentrated along Beechview Avenue.

Steep hillsides that cannot be developed account for 11% of the parcel area which lends the neighborhood its distinctive wooded character. The hillsides are found mainly in the western side of the neighborhood that slopes down to Banksville Road. Open space and actively programmed recreational space account for 7% and 3% of the study area's

land use, respectively. The neighborhood's largest open space is the wooded Seldom Seen Greenway in the northeastern section of the study area, and the adjacent Vanucci Field and Alton Playground. Smaller recreational spaces are located in the southern part of the study area, including the Pauline Parklet and Able Long Playground.

West Liberty Avenue and Banksville Road are major roads lined with commercial uses but with an auto-oriented character. West Liberty Avenue is home almost exclusively to auto-related businesses, which account for 8% of the parcel area. Non-auto commercial uses account for only 3% of the land area and are mainly concentrated in the block of Broadway Avenue between Hampshire and Coast Avenues, with another cluster on Broadway between Boustead Street and Shiras Avenue. Broadway and Beechview Avenues are also home to many of the neighborhood's institutions, such as the Library, Senior Center, and churches. Beechwood Elementary School, South Hills Middle School, and Brashear High School are located at northern edge of the study area near the Seldom Seen Greenway. Near the tip of West Liberty and Saw Mill Run, the neighborhood is more industrial and is physically cut off from rest of Beechview by the rail and the steep slopes of the Seldom Seen. Industrial uses, which have historically located in the Saw Mill Run corridor, account for 2% of the parcel area.

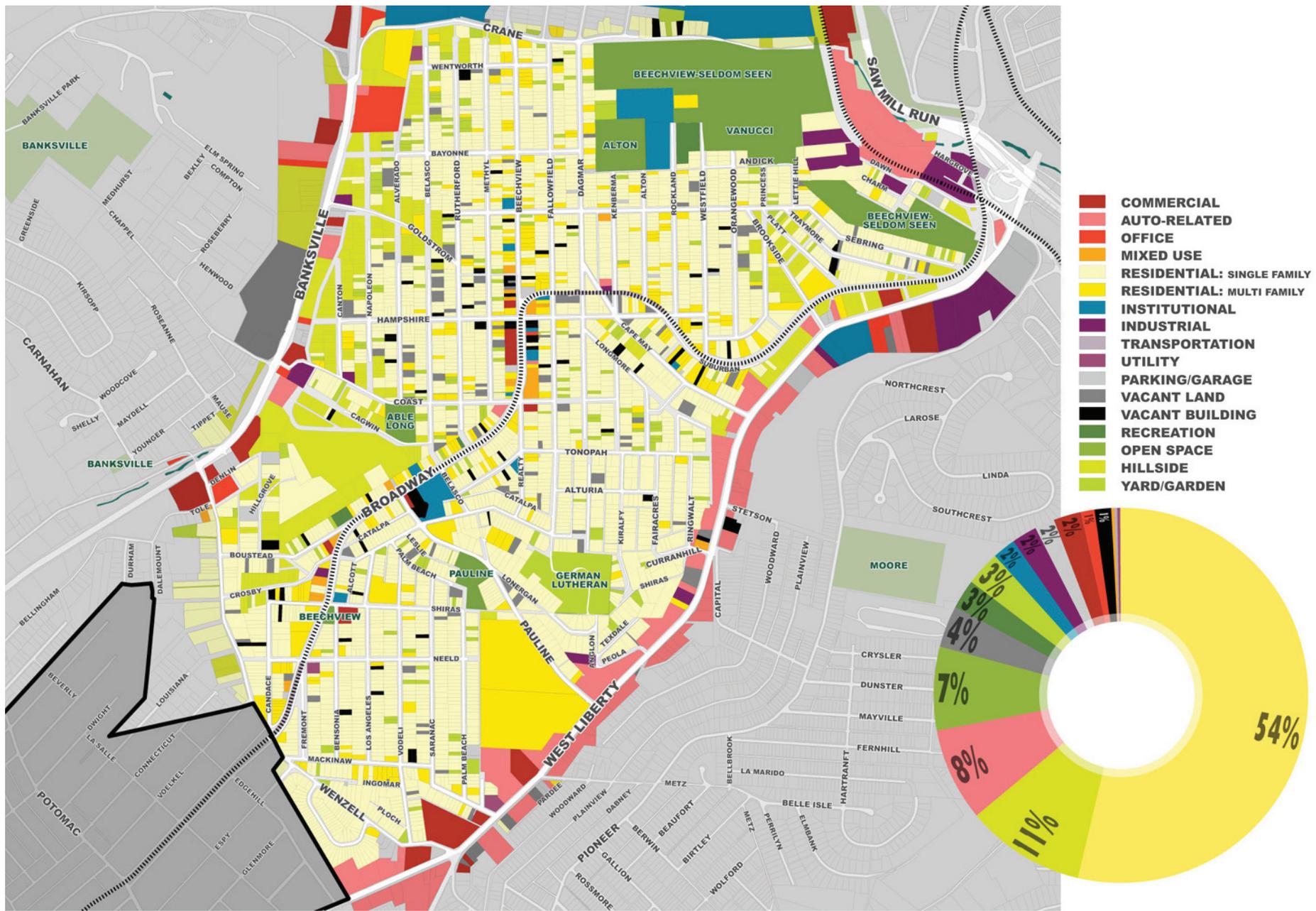


Figure 14. Land Use Map
 Source: Field Survey, 2010



Vacant land



Vacant buildings



Partially vacant buildings

Vacancy

There are relatively low rates of vacancy in Beechview; 1% of the parcel area hosts vacant buildings, 1% contains partially vacant buildings, and 4% of the parcel area (equivalent to 21 acres) consists of vacant land. The largest parcel of vacant land (8 acres) is located on Banksville Road but is only partly developable due to steep slopes. The rest of the vacancy is scattered throughout the neighborhood, mostly in the form of vacant land. Although the vacancy rate is not high and Beechview overall is stable and intact, the distribution of vacancy throughout the neighborhood has an impact on most of the study area blocks.

The highest concentration of vacant buildings is located along Beechview Avenue and Broadway Avenue around Hampshire, a very visible location within the neighborhood's commercial corridor and an entry point for riders on the T. Many of the partially vacant buildings, which are mostly mixed use buildings with ground floor commercial space and residential upper floors, are also located on Broadway and Beechview Avenues. This concentrated vacancy in such a prominent location, coupled with the accompanying maintenance and nuisance issues, inhibits the revitalization of the community's commercial district and potentially limits transit use.



Figure 15. Vacancy Map
Source: Field Survey, 2010

Building Condition

In addition to land use and vacancy, the consultant team recorded building condition for every structure in the study area during the field survey. The exterior condition of each structure received a grade ranging from A (Excellent) to D (Distressed) based on the following criteria:

- > **A: Excellent Condition** – new construction or recent renovation, well maintained, good architectural bones
- > **B: Good Condition** – well maintained, some wear evident, but only minor cosmetic improvements needed
- > **C: Fair Condition** – more serious cosmetic improvements and minor structural repairs needed
- > **D: Distressed Condition** – major improvements needed

Overall, buildings in Beechview were found to be in good condition: the majority, 62%, was ranked in good condition, 33% in fair condition, 3% were ranked excellent, and 2% were given a ranking of distressed. Most of the neighborhood blocks have a mix of buildings in good and fair condition; however the T line from Beechview Avenue travelling east forms a split in the neighborhood. Blocks with concentrations of buildings in poorer conditions (those ranked fair and distressed) were found mostly north of the T line and to the east of the bend at Broadway and Beechview Avenues. The best building conditions were located west of Beechview Avenue and south of the T line, where buildings in good condition are prevalent. The most distressed building conditions were found in the northeast section of the neighborhood that is cut off by Seldom Seen and closest to Saw Mill Run.



Building Condition Scale

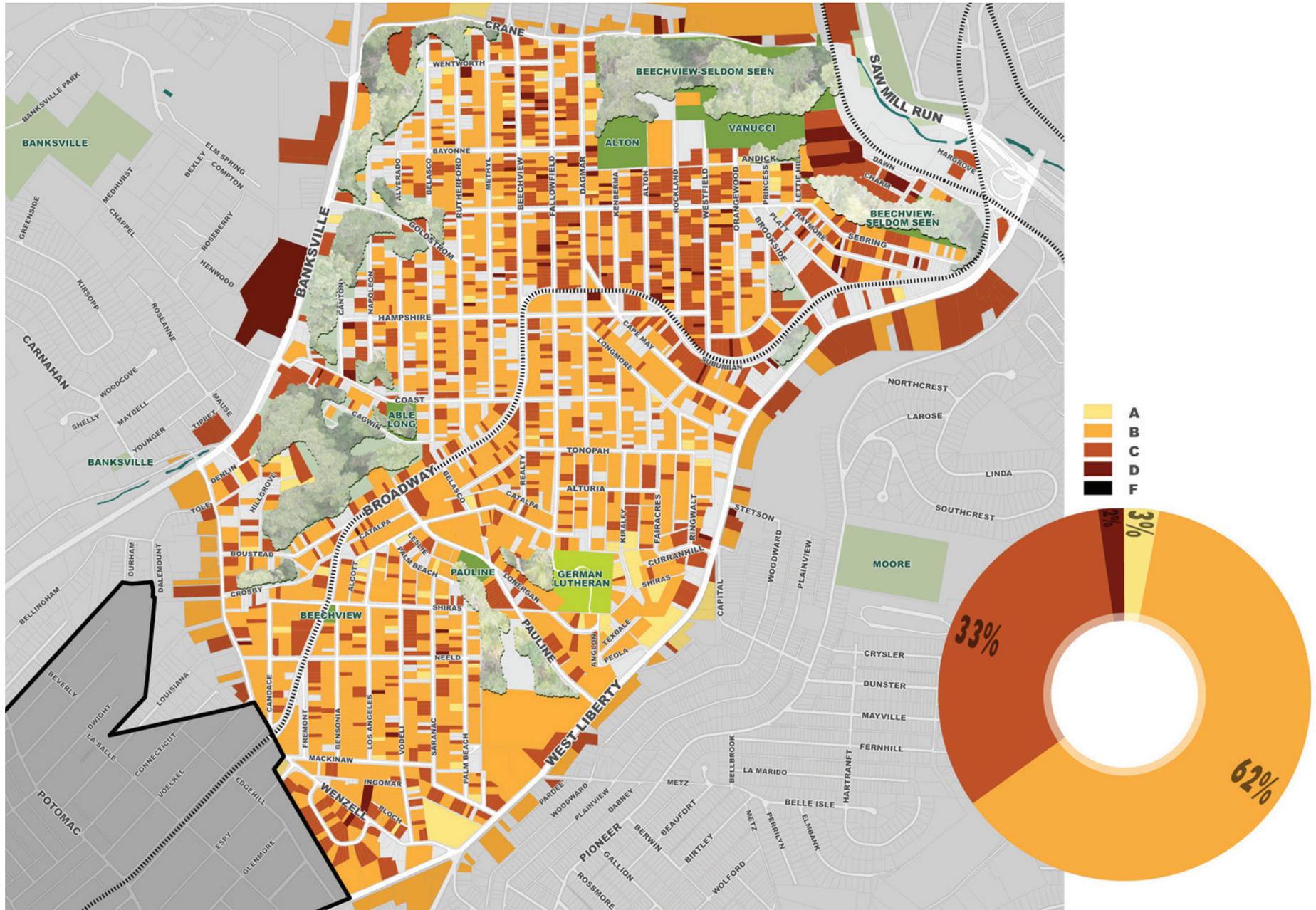


Figure 16. Building Condition
Source: Field Survey, 2010



Vacant building on Beechview Avenue near Broadway

Crime

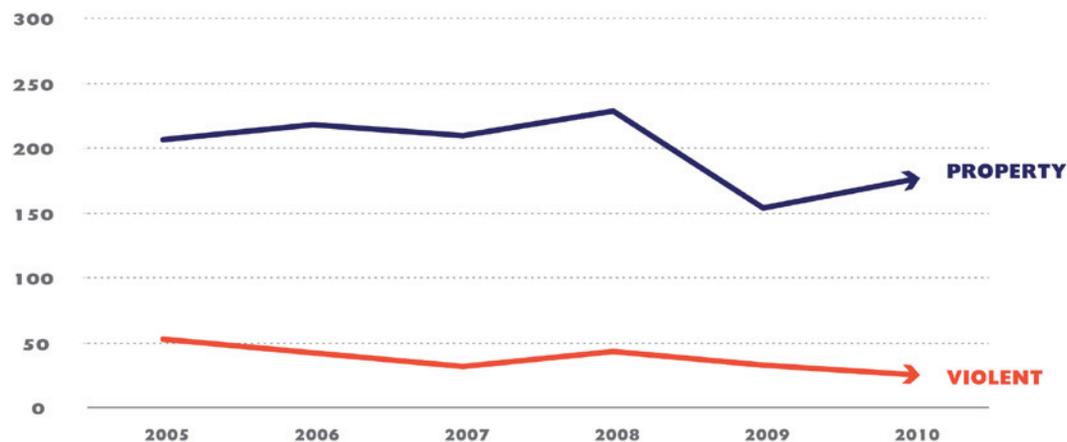
Beechview residents expressed concern that crime in the neighborhood has increased and identified Broadway and Beechview Avenues and the staircase at Cape May Avenue as the worst areas. Crime and safety issues, both real and perceived, affect local residents' quality of life and their use of the commercial area and transit. Residents expressed concern about using transit at night because they did not feel it was safe, and the stairs that connect the neighborhood to the T stops on Broadway are dark and poorly maintained.

An analysis of crime data from 2005 through 2010 was used to determine the types of crimes affecting Beechview and where they

occur most frequently. The data is organized in two categories: crimes against property, which include theft, motor vehicle theft, arson and burglary; and crimes against people, which include assault, robbery and rape. Property crimes are more common in Beechview than crimes against people; there were 126 incidents of reported property crimes, mainly theft and burglary, versus 30 incidents of reported crimes against people, mainly robbery and assault, in 2009. To place these figures in perspective a comparison of crime rates for serious crimes shows that Beechview, with a rate of 2.8 per 100 people in 2008, was below both the national rate of 3.7 incidents per 100 people and the citywide rate in Pittsburgh of

4.9 per 100 people. Serious crimes include: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Mapping crime data from 2009 confirms that there are hotspots for criminal activity on Beechview and Fallowfield Avenues around Broadway where there is concentrated vacancy, on Cape May Avenue around the stairs that lead up to Suburban Avenue, and along Suburban Avenue, which dead ends and faces the rail tracks. The concentration of criminal activity in what is the heart of the community warrants special attention, as reducing crime and its perceived magnitude will be a key piece in the revitalization of the neighborhood and helping it achieve its commercial potential.



*Part 1 Crimes include the most serious offenses: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.

Figure 17. Crime Trends, 2005-2010

Source: City of Pittsburgh



Figure 18. Crime Hot Spots, 2009
 Source: City of Pittsburgh



Steep slopes give Beechview its distinctive and scenic views.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Environmental Issues

A review of available information and a “windshield” survey were conducted by local geotechnical engineers, Sci-Tek Consultants, Inc. to assess if sites with environmental issues exist or have existed in the past which may be a potential threat to project goals. Sources reviewed included public and private databases, historic and current topographic and aerial mapping, and Sanborn insurance maps.

In general, the neighborhood has fewer environmental concerns than typically found within the City of Pittsburgh. With the exception of the area along Saw Mill Run, there was little industrial activity within the study area. The neighborhood has historically been a residential area with some commercial areas supporting the surrounding residential areas. As a result, the study area was subject to limited environmental impacts related to the industrial development of the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Adverse Geologic Conditions

Based on local knowledge of geological conditions and on site observations, subsurface conditions within the study area are typical for the Pittsburgh area. Conditions may include, but are not limited to weak (with respect to shear strength) compressible soils; steep slopes; landslide prone soil and rock;

existing landslides; abandoned deep mines; potentially active deep mines (unlikely); acid mine drainage; mine gas; radon gas; expansive soil and rock; and high groundwater. There is recorded mine subsidence within a few areas of the study area, and most of the area is undermined. Landslide prone areas are found in the steepest parts of the neighborhood along Banksville Road north of Coast Avenue, Saw Mill Run, and West Liberty Avenue under the T where it is elevated. Parts of Cape May Avenue and Brookside Avenue also fall within the landslide prone area.

In any case, it is unlikely that adverse geologic conditions will preclude development at any particular site within the project study area. However, if built upon, sites with less favorable geologic conditions will add measurable risk and cost to the project. The risk and cost can be reduced by conducting appropriate site-specific geotechnical investigations to discover and assess the implications of adverse geologic conditions as early as possible during the design cycle of any proposed facility.

West Liberty Avenue has a number of Captive Hazardous Waste Generators related to the car dealerships and repair shops located along its length. Each has a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) permit and handles its waste properly as required by law. This would have no impacts on the study area.



Figure 19. Adverse Geologic Conditions
Source: City of Pittsburgh



Broadway Avenue



Banksville Road



West Liberty Avenue

MARKET CONDITIONS & POTENTIAL

Commercial Market and Potential

Commercial activity in Beechview is concentrated along three main corridors, each of which has a very different character. Broadway Avenue north of Coast Avenue offers Main Street-style shopping similar to Brookline Avenue with restaurants, retail, and services soon to include a new charcuterie and the IGA supermarket. Another cluster of businesses, including Davio's and Lunardi's restaurants, is found farther south on Broadway, just past Boustead Street.

In contrast to Broadway Avenue's pedestrian-scaled character, the two other commercial corridors, Banksville Road and West Liberty Avenue, are wide, high capacity roads with an auto-oriented character, ample surface parking, and little in the way of pedestrian amenities. Banksville Road has a range of commercial uses, including restaurants and retail, while West Liberty Avenue is dominated by auto-related businesses, mainly car dealerships. Vehicles travel at relatively high speeds on Banksville Road and parts of West Liberty Avenue.

Of the 115 businesses counted in the field survey, over a third of them, totaling 42 businesses, are auto-related. Services account for 21% of the businesses, and include professional and medical offices, contractors, realtors, and funerary services. Other businesses in the study area include restaurants (16%) and retail stores (10%). Almost all of the vacant commercial spaces, which account for 7% of the commercial uses, are located along Beechview and Broadway Avenues.

Aside from the forthcoming IGA supermarket, residents have several other options for groceries in Banksville, Dormont, and Mt. Washington. Competition for consumer dollars includes shopping districts in Downtown Pittsburgh, the Strip District, Carson Street, and South Side Works off of Carson Street, as well as the large shopping centers, such as South Hills Village and the Parkway Center Mall, outside of the City limits (see Figure 23).



Figure 20. Commercial Uses
Source: Field Survey, 2010

Trade Area

To identify potential unmet demand from the neighborhood, Real Estate Strategies (RES) measured spending potential in Beechview based on a transit-oriented trade area, which includes Beechview and also a portion of the adjacent Borough of Dormont. Dormont has retail and commercial establishments at the intersection of Broadway and Potomac Avenue and extending to and along West Liberty Avenue around the intersection with Potomac. Residents of Beechview reported that they shop in Dormont, as well as at retail stores along Banksville Road; hence, these establishments are capturing some of the expenditures of Beechview residents. As delineated and illustrated in Figure 22, the trade area’s southern boundary is McFarland Road, the point where the T enters a tunnel. The T emerges near Mount Lebanon, which has its own shopping district and is considered to be a different trade area. RES used the trade area and data describing the characteristics of households living Beechview and the types of expenditures they make to estimate consumer spending patterns in the area.

Retail Leakage Analysis

RES analyzed retail expenditure patterns within the trade area, including demand (retail potential) based on expenditures made by residents in the trade area and supply (retail sales) by establishments located in the trade area. Areas along West Liberty Avenue in the delineated trade area contain large concentrations of motor vehicle and parts dealers, and there are additional such establishments at other locations. These businesses were not considered in estimates of total demand and demand for particular goods and services.

The estimated trade area spending potential (demand) for retail trade and food and drink, excluding motor vehicles, totals \$102.9 million.

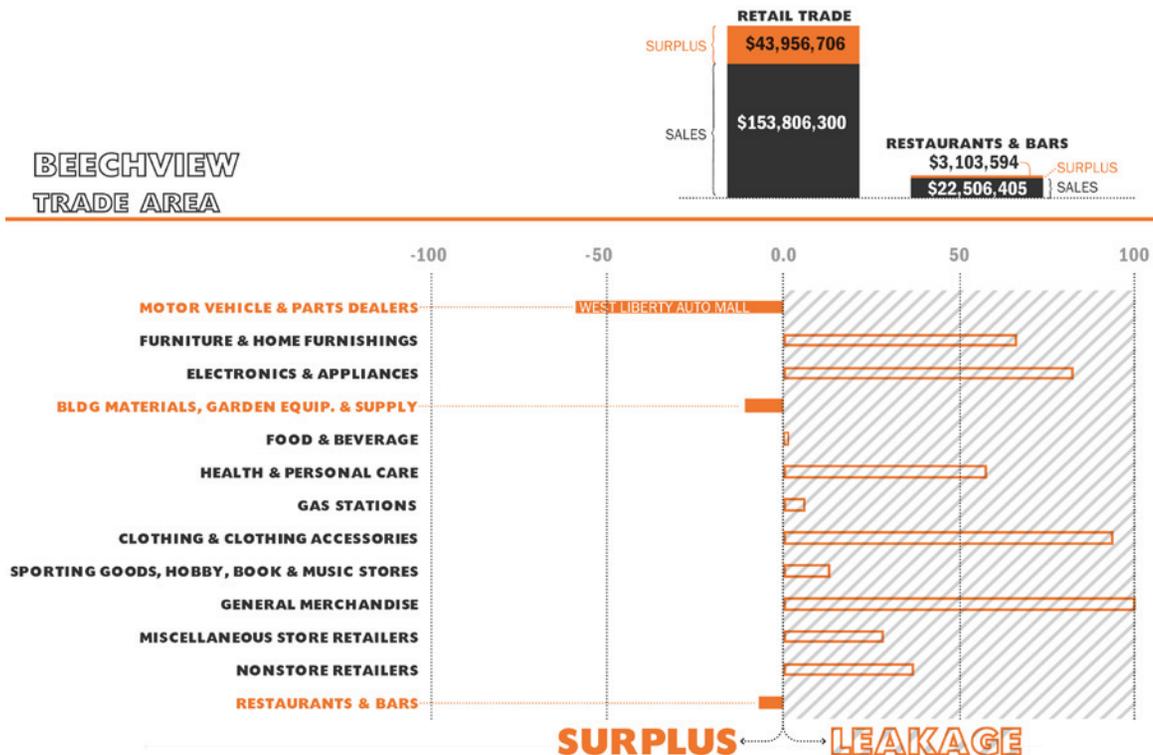


Figure 21. Leakage/Surplus Factor by Industry Subsector

Source: RES, ESRI, Infogroup

Retail sales in the trade area total about \$73.3 million. Therefore, there is a gap of \$29.7 million of retail expenditures that residents are making outside of the delineated trade area. This “leakage” could support other retail establishments in the trade area, most notably at establishments that might be attracted to locations along Broadway in Beechview. Subsectors with leakage include, in descending order, general merchandise, clothing and clothing accessories, electronics and appliances, furniture and home furnishings, health and personal care, internet retail, miscellaneous store retailers, hobby and leisure items, gas stations, and food and beverage.

It should be noted that these estimates were prepared while the Foodland store was still operating in Beechview and would include expenditures made at that store. Therefore, it is likely that grocery store expenditures are overstated because sales previously at the Foodland are being made elsewhere, and many undoubtedly are made by trade area residents outside of the delineated area.

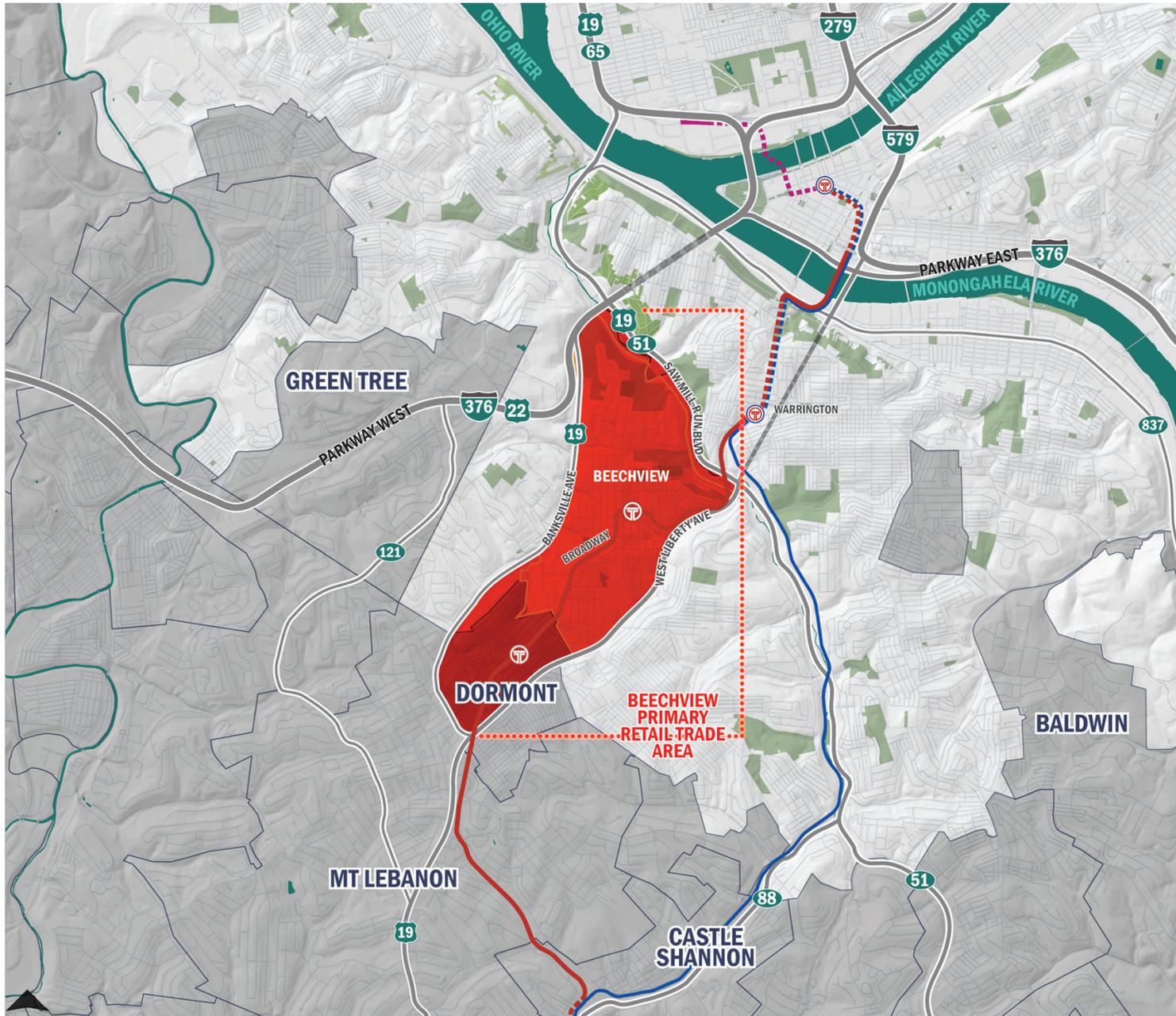


Figure 22. Retail Trade Area
Source: Real Estate Strategies



Broadway Avenue commercial uses

Based on this analysis, there is likely support for 18,000 to 20,000 square feet of commercial space in Beechview that would be marketed to retailers and service establishments in addition to the IGA store. To obtain synergies among establishments, RES recommends that commercial/retail establishments be located in close proximity to the existing retail concentration between Beechview Avenue and Coast Avenue and near the IGA store scheduled to open during August 2011. Another retail store, a combination of charcuterie and delicatessen, is scheduled to open about the same time.

Uses for consideration include retail stores, restaurants, service providers, and medical providers including the following:

- > Pet supply store (food, toys, related goods; no pets)
- > Electronics store/phone store
- > Cards/Gifts store
- > Credit Union
- > Specialty clothing store
- > Chef-operated restaurants, potentially with outside seating areas:
 - Chinese
 - Mexican
 - Seafood
 - American bistro with liquor license
- > Liquor store
- > Service establishments/providers:
 - Physical therapy
 - Medical clinic/doctor's office
 - Chiropractor
 - Optometrist
 - Realtor
 - Insurance agent
 - Attorney

RES's full commercial market analysis is included as an Appendix to the plan. Development scenarios for the determined market potential in Beechview are explored in the Recommendations section of the report.

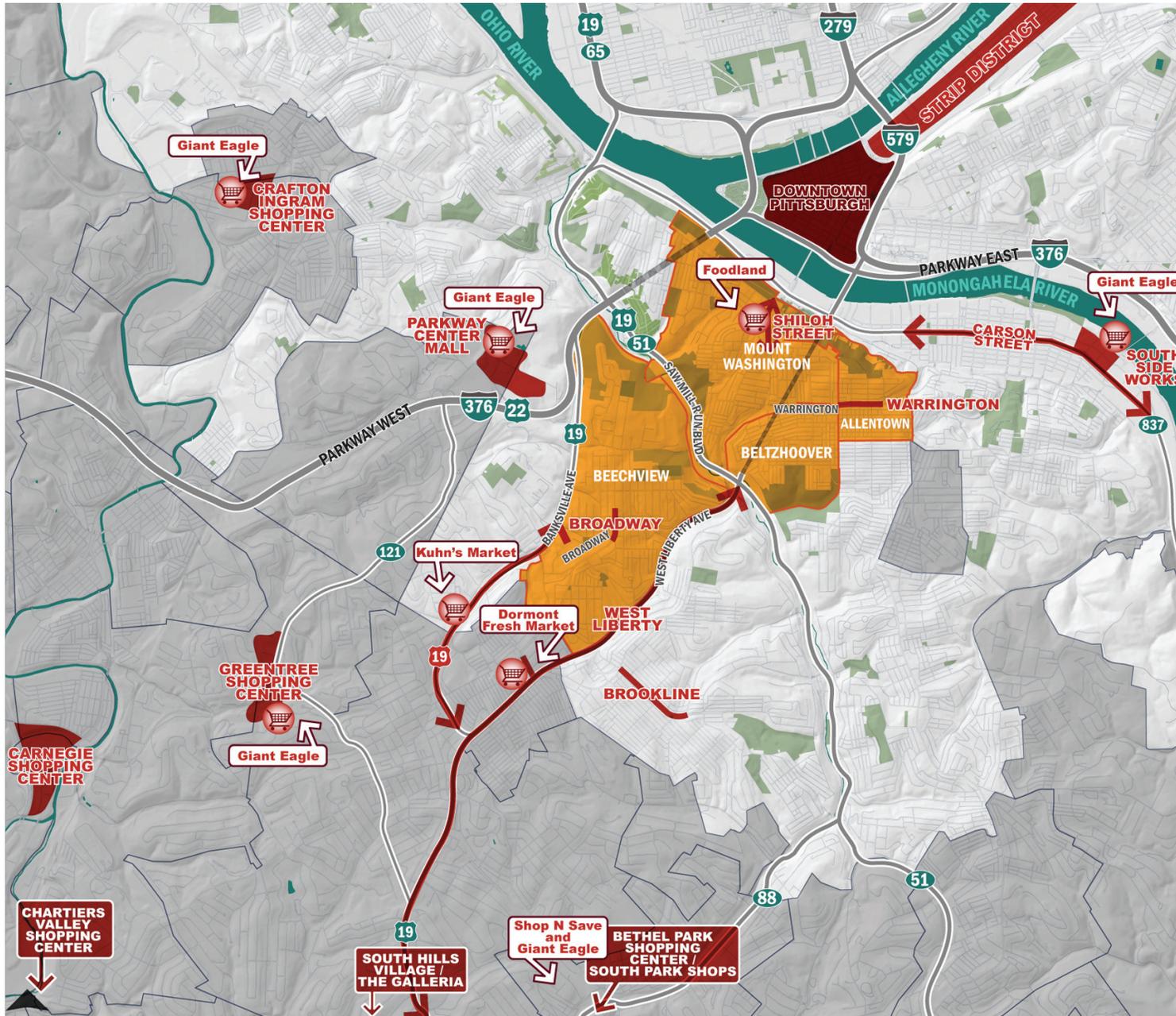


Figure 23. Commercial Competition



Housing Market and Potential

Beechview is a stable community of older homes that are predominantly one- to four-family structures. The estimated homeownership rate in Beechview in 2010 is 65%. As with other areas of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, the Beechview residential market area, defined by RES on the basis of postal zip codes⁸ from which prospective owners and renters might move, is losing households, and this trend is projected to continue. From 2010 to 2015, ESRI data projects a loss of 1,101 households, from an estimated 42,272 households during 2010 to a projected 41,171 households in 2015.

The main driver of demand for housing is household growth. In the delineated market area there is no overall growth to drive demand. However, prospective purchasers from other South Hills neighborhoods reportedly are attracted to the value perceived in purchasing a home in Beechview. Moreover, there is a very limited supply of rental housing in multifamily

buildings, including properties reserved for seniors, and very few subsidized housing developments in the suburban portion of the market area.

There are some changes in the number of households in different income bands and age cohorts, and some of these may create demand for housing units in Beechview. While there are large losses of households with incomes below \$35,000 and in all age cohorts, there also are increases in the number of households with incomes ranging from \$50,000 to \$74,999 in virtually all age cohorts. Some of this change may be the result of inflation and so-called “bracket creep,” rather than an actual increase in affluence. However, for Beechview the growth in the number of younger households in this income band might increase the number of first-time homebuyers who could be attracted to the neighborhood. Similarly, there are increases in the number of households 65 and older in higher income bands. These households might seek senior housing in

Beechview if such a property were available. Finally, some households in the income band from \$50,000 to \$74,999 in all age cohorts could be interested in renting multifamily units offered in Beechview, taking advantage of the availability of the T in the neighborhood.

The Pittsburgh rental market is very tight, and the vacancy rate is even lower in the Beechview residential market area. Vacancy rates generally range from zero to 4.1 percent. Rental rates at the end of 2010 for units at multifamily rental properties in the residential market area ranged from \$476 for a studio to \$1,500 for a 3-bedroom apartment. Rents typically include cold water, sewer, and trash collection.

ESRI estimates that almost 32% of Beechview’s housing units were renter-occupied in 2010. In addition to apartments in multifamily and mixed-use buildings, single-family homes in the neighborhood are being offered for rent. Beechview is a particularly affordable part of the market area. Units located near

⁸ The zip codes included in RES’s defined residential market area include 15210, 15211, 15216, 15220, and 15226.



The housing stock in Beechview varies greatly.

the intersection of Broadway and Hampshire Avenues are rented by the building's owner for an average of \$500 per month, including all utilities for units that have not been renovated. For renovated units, rents average \$500 per month, plus gas and electric. The property is always 100 percent leased.

RES contacted developers and managers of senior housing properties located in Beechview and the broader residential market area. Properties typically are fully leased or report having one vacancy in the process of being filled off of a waiting list. The majority of interviews conducted were with managers of subsidized senior properties. Tenants at these properties pay 30 percent of adjusted income for rent; as a result, units can be rented to seniors with extremely low incomes.

Beechview offers a broad range of housing types and styles for sale. Some homes are newer single-family properties; others are older homes that have not been upgraded recently. Based on the 2000 Census, 65.6% of the

housing units in the neighborhood were single-family detached homes, while an additional 19.5% of units were in two-to-four family structures. Because of issues with foreclosures, Beechview census tracts were eligible for the City's Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), even though the neighborhood is not eligible under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Under URA's direction, vacant foreclosed and abandoned homes in Beechview have been acquired, rehabilitated, and sold to new owners. The program has been successful in stabilizing blocks that could have been adversely affected by vacant, deteriorating homes. Units offered for sale generally have sold quickly.

Trulia.com statistics indicate that the median asking price for homes offered for sale in Beechview was \$85,164, as of April 27, 2011. The median sale price during the time frame from January through early March 2011 was \$56,250, which represents an increase of 2.3% from the same time frame during 2010, but is a 14.8% decline from the 2006 median

sale price of \$66,000. While detailed data are not available, the total number of home sales has remained fairly constant during this five year period.

Apart from new construction, the housing stock citywide is old; the 2009 American Community Survey reported that the median year housing units in the City were built was 1941, which means that half of the City's units are now at least 70 years old. In Beechview, all of the properties are aging; the property completed most recently, Greenbriar Village, was completed in 1970. Age coupled with building condition data confirm that many housing units in the study area are physically and/or functionally obsolete, requiring rehabilitation to bring them up to modern standards.

RES's full residential market analysis is included as an Appendix to the plan. Development scenarios for the determined market potential in Beechview are explored in the recommendations section.

PUBLIC INPUT

General Themes from the Collaborative Map

Residents and stakeholders were asked to provide their input throughout the process in a number of ways that included collaborative mapping to link their insights and ideas to specific places in the neighborhood and envisioning their neighborhood as they would like to see it in the near and not so near future. From these exercises, and also interviews and focus group discussions, a number of themes emerged for what the community hopes to see in Beechview:

A Vibrant Business District

“Perhaps a child day care center or even a pet day care center could be successful on the T line in Beechview.”

“Most of us wish it would be the way it was about 15 years ago when we had a grocery store, a hardware store, a laundromat, and a drug store which was also a postal substation.”

Community Amenities

“How about a Cultural Center? We do not have one in the whole of South Hills.”

“We need a community center, a place for kids, teens, adults, and seniors. A place for meetings, games, and events. A place to build community.”

“[N]eed an enclosed athletic field.”

Better Public Realm and Curb Appeal

“Plant trees along the sidewalk.”

“Provide some color to the Beechview Branch of the Carnegie Library. Add some Library Flags and a couple of outdoor benches.”

“The library is a huge asset to the Beechview community but is hardly noticeable when riding on the T...”

“Add exciting color to existing structures with paint, graphics, flags [...] Make it stand out and be different!!!!”

“[C]leaning under the trees.”

Improvements and Repairs to Broadway

“The bend along Broadway near Beechview Ave is hard for pedestrians to navigate, which is bad for business!”

“Get someone to maintain the streets in Beechview, especially Broadway Avenue. The curbs and sidewalks would be a great idea also.”

Better T Access and Service

“[T]here were numerous times the ‘T’ would not stop and pick up rush hour Beechview residents. Soooooo the ridership dropped.”

“Perhaps shelters by more of the T stops.”

Crime and Safety

“There’s drug activity near the Dollar Store.”

“There are quite a few fights that I have witnessed at Potomac Station. And nothing was done because there aren’t any security measures at the stop.”

“What is feasible in the short term? There are so many ideas, at least one of them must be attainable immediately.”

Marketing to Attract New Residents and Customers

“Beechview has something that no one else in the world has. Canton Avenue, the steepest residential street in the world. How about racing up Canton. Conquer Canton!”

“[W]e need to draw more attention to the points along Broadway that make Beechview a quality neighborhood to raise a family in.”

“It’s worth the view!”

“We live on the line.”

Recreational Opportunities

“If you look at any map of Beechview we are almost surrounded by green space. We have an [low capacity] railroad⁹ that goes through Beechview and connects with several communities along Route 51 [...] There is Federal Transportation money to restore ... railroad bed[s] into recreation trails.”

⁹ This comment refers to the Wheeling & Lake Erie line, which passes through the northeastern corner of Beechview. Although not a busy railroad, the line still conveys freight.

collaborative MAP

ideas & insights



Insights from the collaborative map

collaborative MAP

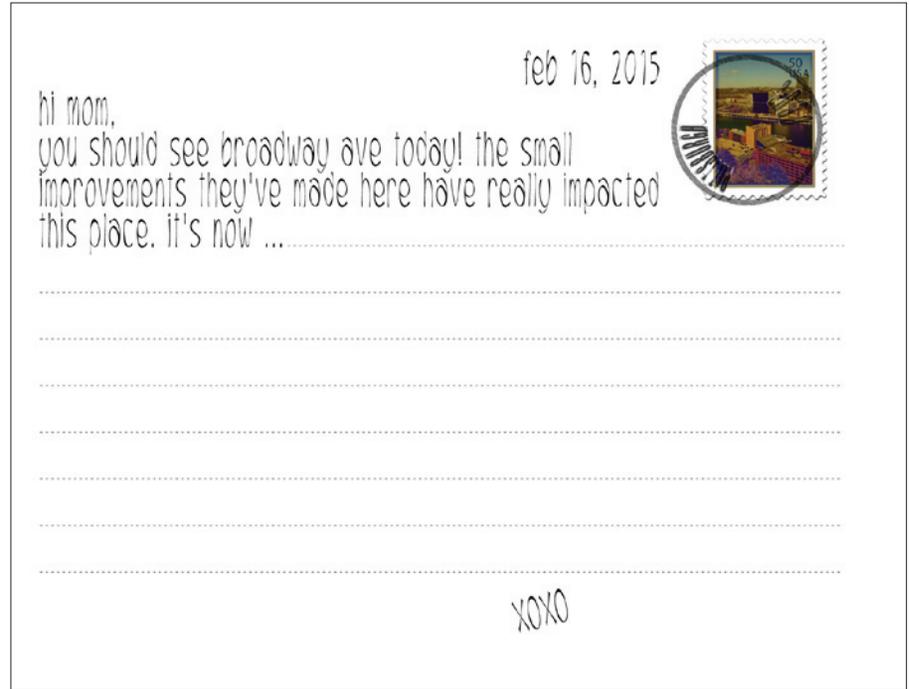
ideas & insights



Ideas from the collaborative map

Postcards from the Future Vision Statements

Beechview residents were asked to envision what they hoped Beechview would be like in 2015 after small improvements have been made and again in 2025 after bigger changes have had a chance to make an impact. Their vision formed the basis for moving forward into the recommendations phase of the planning process.



Postcards from the year 2015

“...clean! There are very few empty storefronts. There’s a grocery store, a dry cleaner, a sandwich shop and deli and a great senior/community center. I know more good things are around the corner!”

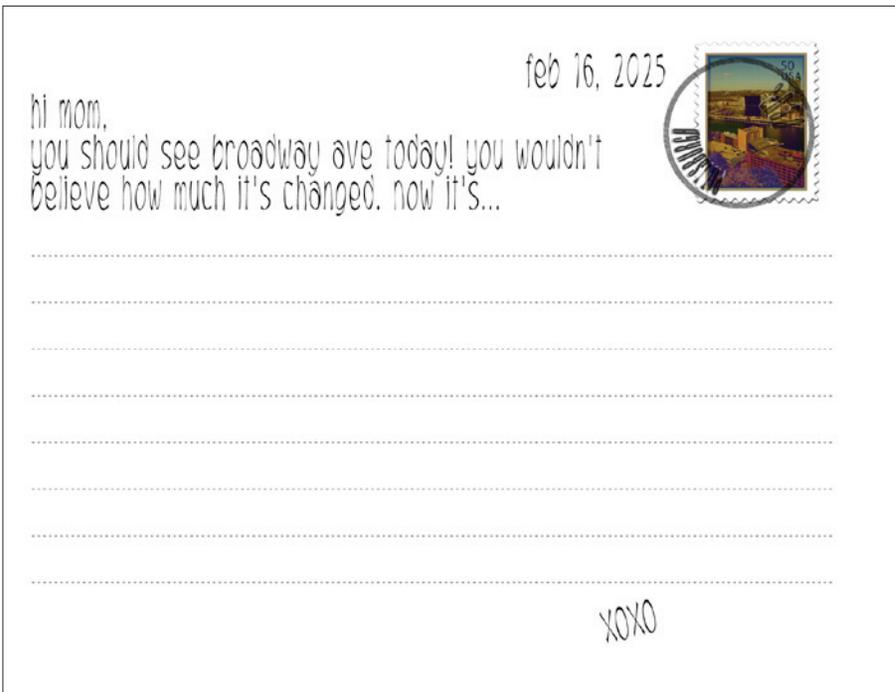
“...much easier to use the T now that you can board directly from the sidewalks on high platforms. It’s also nice that immigrants have continued to come into the community; that helps the new businesses.”

“...attracting small businesses which can be supported by our typical residents (coffee shop, diner, bakery, dry cleaner, etc). A place where commuters through Beechview stop to shop and then continue their commute to Dormont or Mt. Lebanon, etc. A place with well-maintained, clean streets, and better lighting.”

“...better lit. The stairway railings have been all repaired and repainted with cool colors. There is better signage around the Fallowfield stop. And the senior/community center at the corner of Broadway and Hampshire is done. And there are more trains coming through!”

“...pretty with flowers and plants on the wider sidewalks. Some sidewalk cafes too.”

“...so much better. The business district is busy and thriving. The storefronts are all attractive and welcoming. People come from other neighborhoods to shop here. Also, the City has begun to enforce its own laws and homeowners and landlords are forced to keep their properties tidy and free of litter. Crime continues to decrease.”



Postcards from the year 2025

“...so modern! It’s a great business area that people come from all over to visit. Great shops, restaurants, and a great place to live!”

“I just took the T from downtown to the new Broadway Station/Carnegie Library for the premiere performance of a local composer’s new string quartet. Beechview is now a center for Pittsburgh’s culture and arts.”

“Flowers, better train system, lots of people walking around here, roses and sunshine.”

“A hub area for small businesses and trade. Business district has been extended to areas between Coast Avenue and Pauline Street on Broadway. Parking areas have been added. Plenty of shopping and dining for residents and commuters. [It’s] now a low crime area.”

“...colorful! Every business owner has done something really cool, funky and colorful with their storefronts...Each transit stop has been renovated with its own shelters, and there are young people moving into the cool apartments above the local businesses.”

“Wow! We now have something in every store. Great beauty shop, the T is wonderful. I can hop on and be in town in 14 minutes. It is hard to find a home for sale because people “want” to be here. Do come and visit, Beechview is so worth viewing.”

“...more vibrant and diverse. Many new businesses have moved into the storefronts and you get almost anything you need here. There have been a lot of streetface improvements, and there are many buildings and parks where community members can gather.”

“...a very profitable community. There is a family community center, grocery store, a huge farmers market on Wednesdays. I can run to the hardware store to even get a shade or light bulb. I really like walking the neighborhood because it’s people friendly. There are a lot of flowers in the spring. I even love the Library that’s in the heart of everything.”

“Property values are much higher and people have remodeled and enhanced their properties, especially along Broadway and Beechview Avenues. The neighborhoods are much more attractive. New upscale apartments have been built, and young professionals live here and commute into town. **Beechview is no longer an eyesore along the T line. Beechview shines and is no longer a secret!!!**”

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The analysis and public outreach identified many similar themes and issues facing the TOD potential in Beechview. Prior to developing the recommendations for each station area, a series of key objectives were identified to guide the work. These include:

Expand the Presence of the Stations

Stations along Broadway Avenue are relatively unremarkable. They serve as traffic islands rather than visible and attractive places for people. Further, off Broadway Avenue there is little to guide community members to the stations and, consequently, retail nearby. Each station should be visible and serve as identifiable sources of pride within the community. Therefore, each station's presence needs to expand beyond the actual platform and imprint itself within the most active community spaces. New signage, lighting, and public art should serve to promote the T throughout the community.

(Re) Connect and Improve Access

The red line stations are not well connected to the community nor to the adjacent retail and homes along Broadway. Poor sidewalk conditions, deteriorating stairs, ruts and potholes along Broadway, and confusing traffic patterns around the platforms themselves all inhibit access to the T and diminish its value to the community. Serious attention will need to be paid to the infrastructure and design of these key connections.

Promote Walking and Bicycling

The ultimate goal of TOD is to reduce traffic congestion and get people out of their cars. While we may never convince some people

to abandon their cars for another form of transportation, a growing percentage would choose another form of transportation if it was safe, easy, affordable, and accessible to do so. In fact, continued increases in the price of gasoline are causing more people to reduce automobile usage in favor of other transportation modes. T stations should be designed as a hub for transportation alternatives, such as public transit, biking or walking, to make the switch from driving as easy as possible. Reconfiguration of Broadway Avenue's form and function would promote Beechview as a walkable, bikeable community. The long-term potential is fewer cars on the road and a better environment.

Focus Mixed-Use Development around Beechview's Assets

Due to retail competition in surrounding areas, particularly in Dormont and Mt. Lebanon, which are also located on the Red Line, there is a limited market for new retail uses. That said, there are opportunities to boost the range of services and stores Broadway Avenue offers. These uses, from restaurants to small stores to offices should be developed near the intersection of Broadway Avenue, Beechview Avenue, and Hampshire Avenue. Combined with housing above for a mix of ages and incomes, this added density and activity will support the

The Red Line train pulling into Fallowfield Station



new IGA underway and help to re-create the Main Street character along Broadway Avenue with which so many residents identify.

Reinforce Community Initiatives

Proposed investments along the Red Line through Beechview are guided by former plans and community-led initiatives. The *Beechview Community Plan* identified a wide range of strategies, developments, and programs including the need for this TRID Study. The recommendations and strategies in this plan must augment the prior work, reinforcing the priorities and goals set by local residents and stakeholders.

Be a Model

The State of Pennsylvania TRID legislation is a new and exciting concept that has the potential to bring financial resources, as well as political ones, to make TODs in Pittsburgh a tangible reality. This Study extends the work completed outside the City in Dormont and Mt. Lebanon to create an integrated transit corridor that adds value to neighborhoods facing a range of challenges. For this reason, this Study's process and findings should serve as a model to other neighborhoods that seek similar consideration as a designated TRID district and strive for both short-term fixes and long-term initiatives that will transform the stations into active centers of their respective communities.



View of the neighborhood from Fallowfield Station

IV RECOMMENDATIONS

The TRID plan is an opportunity to spur transit-oriented development and invest in capital improvements to achieve the goals of increasing transit ridership and economic development. But it is also an opportunity to strengthen existing community assets and improve the public realm and neighborhood quality of life. With this in mind, three types of recommendations were developed:

- > **SHORTTERM** improvements involving surface treatments like wayfinding signage, public art and greening that can be accomplished relatively quickly to generate interest and draw attention to Broadway Avenue and the Beechview neighborhood
- > **PUBLIC REALM AND INFRASTRUCTURE** improvements that balance the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and cars
- > **DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS** to test the long-term residential and commercial potential around the targeted stations

SHORT TERM IMPROVEMENTS

1 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 Broadway Avenue more attractive and enticing to residents and bring it to the attention of those passing through.



Figure 24. Summary Diagram of Short Term Improvements

1.1 Create a new “Welcome to Beechview” mural on the side of the Senior Center

For many T riders, the view of Beechview as they pass through is unremarkable. But there is a big opportunity to catch their eye, as the advertisers on the billboards lining Broadway know. 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 the business district seen from the T as it enters Beechview from the Fallowfield Station. A mural and distinctive planting at this site could create a sit up and notice moment that gets riders to keep their eyes open as they pull into the Beechview business district. New murals or planting strategies proposed for the public realm would require review, coordination, and approval by the Art Commission and Historic Review Commission prior to implementation.

1.2 Consider other surfaces along Broadway for murals to brand the corridor

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. A planting strategy can also be developed as part of the branding effort, particularly for the Library which currently has landscaping that obscures the building rather than draws attention to it.

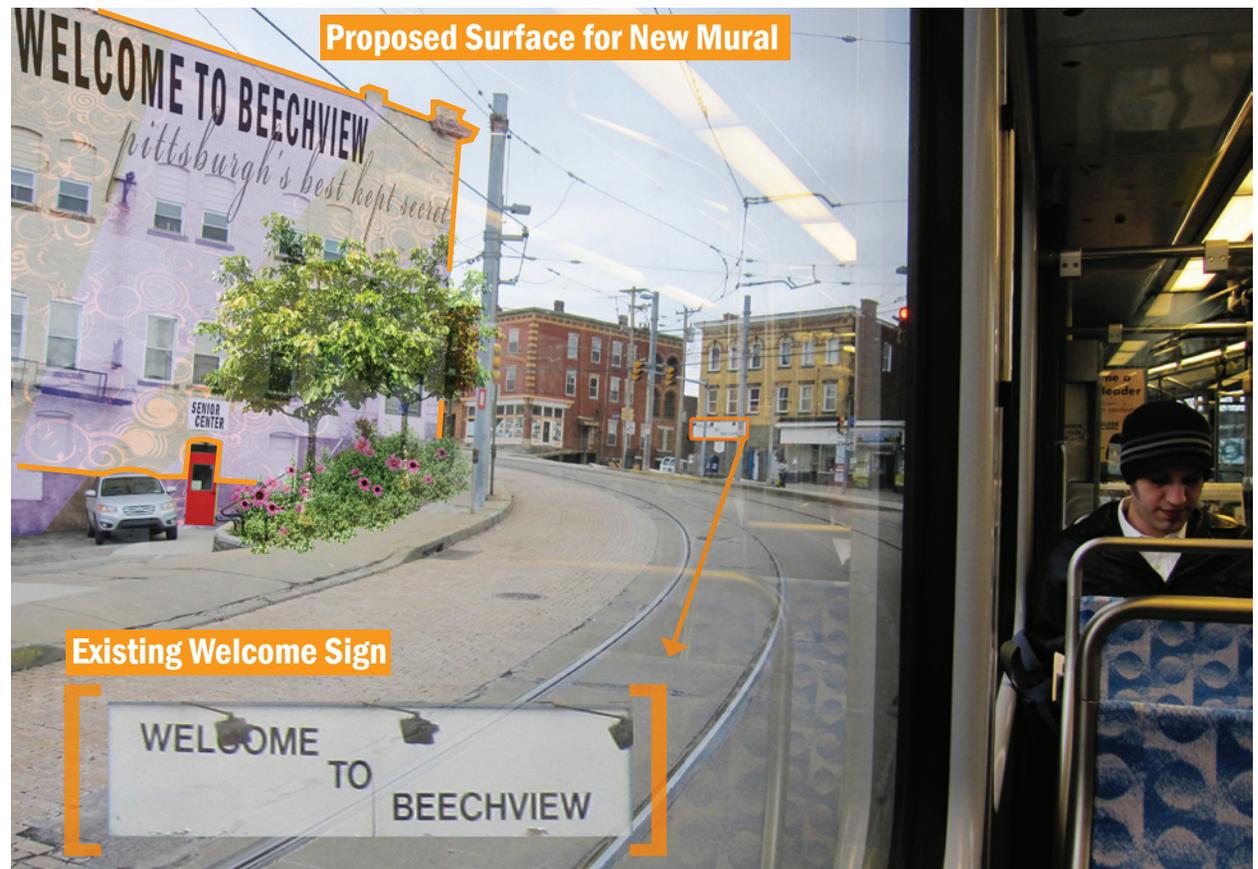


Figure 25. Proposed “Welcome to Beechview” Mural on the Senior Center’s North Façade

1.3 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. They are set into parklets with benches and landscaping. Lamar Advertising Company, the owner of the billboards, is interested in partnering with the community on an information sharing and advertising strategy that services the immediate community. Such an initiative should recruit local artists and 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 to continue the branding theme.



Figure 26. Repurposed Billboard



Storefront art in San Francisco. Source: www.sfartscommission.org

1.4 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. 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. Art in vacant storefronts is a movement

that has taken off in cities across the country as a way to enliven vacant commercial spaces left in the wake of the depressed commercial real estate market. 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.



Figure 27. Gateways Proposed for Signage Directing Drivers to Broadway

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

Moving beyond Broadway Avenue itself, there are opportunities to develop gateways at key entrances to Beechview from West Liberty Avenue, Banksview Road, and Crane Avenue. Banksview Road and West Liberty Avenue are major thoroughfares with high traffic counts. 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.

PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements Along
BROADWAY From
NEELD To
FALLOWFIELD
[about 3/4 of a mile]



Figure 28. Summary Diagram of Proposed Public Realm Improvement Area

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

2 PUBLIC REALM AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The public realm improvements are focused on Broadway Avenue from Need to Fallowfield 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.

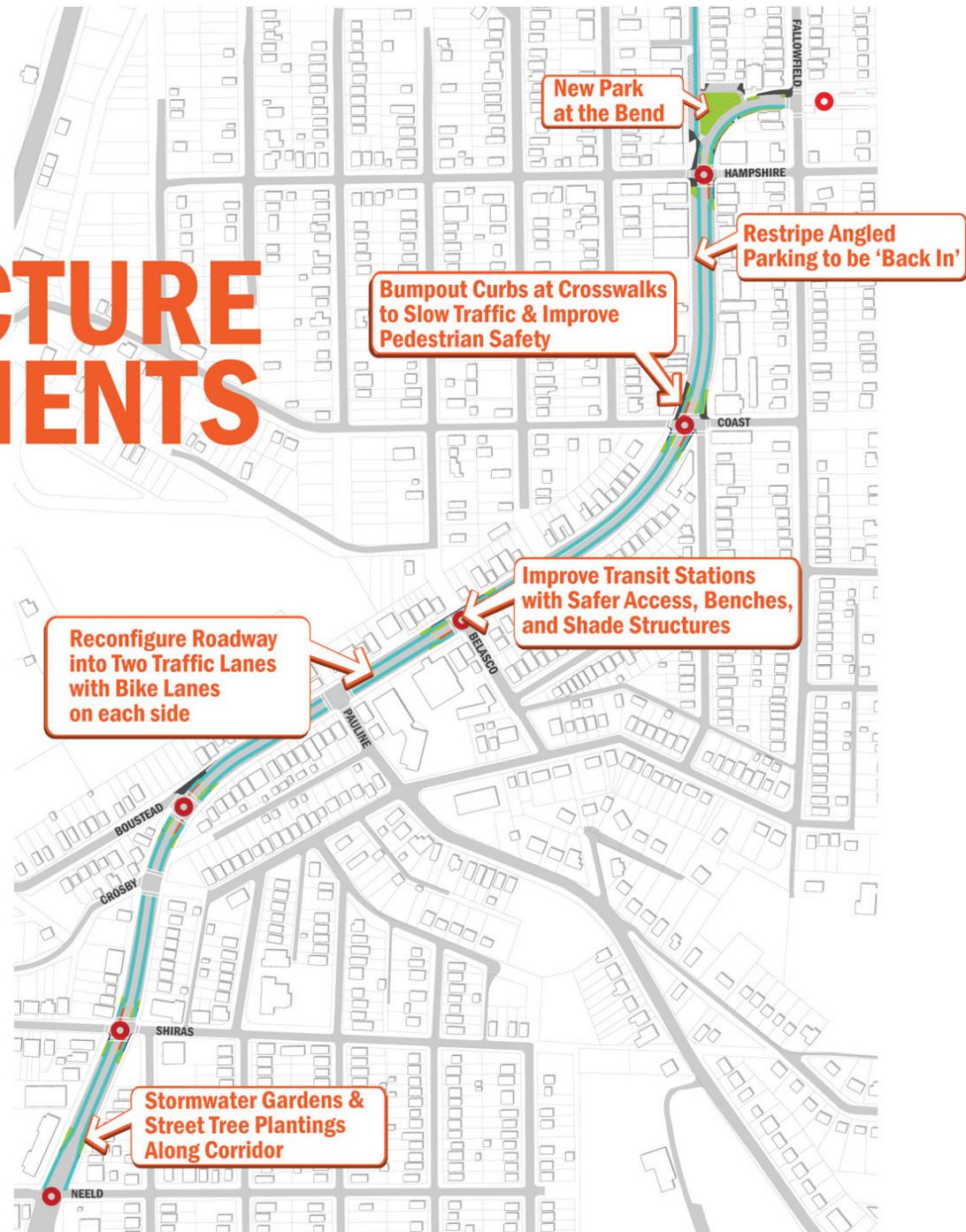


Figure 29. Summary Diagram of Proposed Infrastructure Improvements



Figure 30. Improve the Staircases Leading to the T



CORRIDOR BASICS

2.1 Repair Broadway's potholes and restripe crosswalks

Broadway Avenue is the heart of the neighborhood, and it must be maintained to prevent interruption in mobility in the area. The focus needs to be on repairing potholes on an annual basis and developing a maintenance plan for the crosswalk and lane striping on the roadway so it is clear to drivers and pedestrians. The poor road conditions on Broadway Avenue are not only unattractive but also dangerous to both drivers and pedestrians. Drivers must swerve around potholes and ruts next to the T tracks. Pedestrians trying to cross the street have to keep an eye out for drivers avoiding potholes and are further disadvantaged by faded or nonexistent crosswalks, making those on foot even less visible to drivers.

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

Poor lighting has been cited as a reason residents do not use transit at night and is of particular concern along the many staircases in the community, which feel dark and isolated. 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



Curb extension and rain garden in Portland
Source: www.portlandonline.com



Green street in Portland
Source: www.dutchdialogues.com

feature of the neighborhood. Where there is adequate sun, solar-powered LED lighting can be considered, as it is less expensive and offers more flexibility in the placement of the lights when compared with traditional lighting because it avoids the need to hook up to the existing power infrastructure.

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

Beechview owes its stunning views and lush woodlands to its topography. Trees are plentiful on the hillsides where it is too steep to build, but along the residential streets of the neighborhood they are less evident. The most street trees in the neighborhood are found along Broadway Avenue in the commercial district north of Coast Avenue and along Beechview Avenue. Street trees enhance the experience of the street by making it more aesthetically pleasing and thus encouraging foot traffic. They also add value by providing shade, stormwater absorption and air filtration, and increasing property values. In commercial corridors, this can translate into more attractive sites for retail development.

The dramatic topography makes controlling stormwater runoff all the more important, which can be done through planting more street trees and creating rain gardens. Rain gardens are planted depressions specifically designed to capture and retain stormwater, letting it soak back into the ground rather than taxing the sewer system. 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.

PHASE 2
T SHELTER

PHASE 1
SPEED TABLE



Figure 31. Proposed Speed Tables to Connect the Sidewalks and Transit Stops
Above: Proposed transit improvements, Below: Existing platform and roadway



PROMOTE WALKING AND BIKING IN BEECHVIEW

One of the goals of this project is to make Broadway Avenue more livable. This can be accomplished by increasing the amount of “people” activity by making it easier and more pleasurable for people to walk and bike in the area.

2.4 Integrate pedestrian crossing signage

One of the challenges faced in the neighborhood is simply crossing the street. Pennsylvania State law requires drivers to yield to pedestrians at crosswalk locations. However this was rarely observed on Broadway Avenue. An effective method to make drivers aware of pedestrians is through signage. This can be accomplished with standard signage from the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. 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. This can be in the form of stand-alone signs or incorporated with other neighborhood branding signage.

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

Riders accessing the T at Shiras, Boustead, Belasco, Coast, and Hampshire encounter a number of challenges. The “stations” at these locations are essentially raised concrete islands that provide little to no protection from vehicular traffic that drives by on both sides of the island. It is also difficult to access the islands as a pedestrian. There is no crosswalk between Broadway Avenue sidewalks and the islands, vehicular traffic uses the space between the



Far left: Daylighting top picture shows view obscured by parked car, bottom picture shows clear view.
Source: www.streetfilms.org

Top right: Pop up cafe in New York
Source: www.ecosalon.com

Bottom right: Curb extension and rain garden in Portland
Source: www.sf.streetsblog.org

sidewalk and the islands as a bypass lane, and there are no accommodations for pedestrians with mobility issues.

Installing speed tables in the area between the Broadway Avenue sidewalks and the islands will create real station areas that are easy to access by all pedestrians. Removing the grade change will create more space for pedestrians and make it possible for all pedestrians to get to the T. Vehicles will still be able to use the space, but they will be forced to drive at a very slow speed. This design solution will help to visually anchor the platforms to the sidewalk and create a much safer area for pedestrians to access and wait for the T.

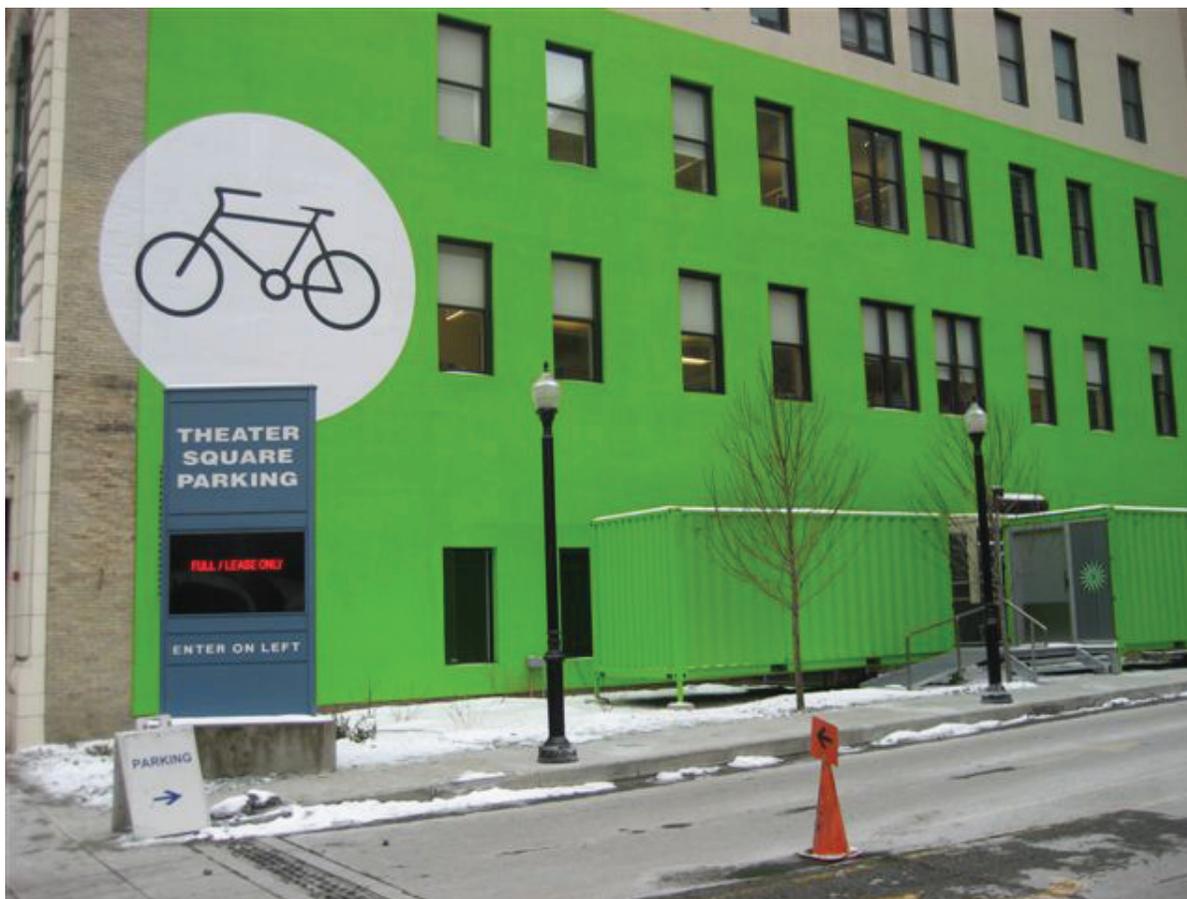
2.6 Provide more space for pedestrians

Providing more space for pedestrians can increase pedestrian safety, encourage more pedestrian activity, and improve economic development in an area. There are three methods in which more pedestrian space can be provided along Broadway Avenue:

Curb Extensions: Extending existing curbs at intersection corners can reduce pedestrian crossing distances and slow the speed of vehicles that are turning at intersections. Since this method requires reconstruction of the sidewalk and curb, it is more time and cost intensive than the other methods.

Daylighting: Daylighting an intersection refers to increasing the distance from an intersection in which parking is prohibited. This can be done easily with signage or small bollards. Daylighting intersections can have the same benefits of extending the curbs and can be used as a temporary measure before extending the curbs.

Reclaiming Parking Spaces: A number of cities, such as San Francisco and New York, have developed programs to allow businesses to use the parking space in front of their business for pedestrian space, often as outdoor seating. Businesses should be encouraged to think about how they can use space to their advantage.



Bicycle parking in downtown Pittsburgh
Source: www.bike-pgh.org

2.7 Introduce bicycle parking near Fallowfield Station and at the Library

One of the successful components of a bicycling community is having enough bike parking. Bicyclists need a place to park their bike in order to encourage them to visit businesses and restaurants. 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.

2.8 Plan for a bicycle network in Beechview

The recommended bike lane on Broadway Avenue will serve as a distinct facility in Pittsburgh and will provide access to the businesses and institutions along Broadway. However, it is necessary to think about how a bike lane on Broadway Avenue could be part of a larger bike network that connects not only to Beechview, but the surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

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 map shows the proposed bike network in Beechview with suggested bike routes that would connect to Banksville, Brookline, and Dormont.



Figure 32. Proposed Bicycle Network

INTRODUCE TRANSIT AMENITIES

2.9 Designate priority stops for investment near retail

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. Fallowfield Station, the primary stop in Beechview, already has amenities such as covered shelters, benches and arrival boards, but could benefit from some additional improvements such as a more distinct buffer between pedestrians and cars on Fallowfield Avenue, better lighting, and bike parking. Additionally, Belasco is recommended as a candidate for investment to improve access to St. Catherine's Church and Carnegie Library, which are central meeting spots in the neighborhood.

2.10 Create new covered shelters for T stops

Improving the quality of transit stops encourages more ridership activity. People are much more likely to use transit when their stop has physical protection from traffic, shelter from weather, and is clean. Residents would like to see 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. A green roof bus shelter has been given the green light in East Liberty as part of a pilot project for the neighborhood and hopefully the City. The green roof bus shelter aims to introduce biodiversity, including butterflies and song birds, to the urban streetscape and



Green roof bus shelter in Sheffield, England
Source: www.eco-artware.com

beautify the commercial core. Such a project would be a good tie-in to the Broadway Avenue corridor's planting strategy and would aid the rain gardens in managing stormwater. Other amenities for the transit shelters and for Fallowfield Station could include solar LED lighting and heat lamps.

2.11 Install real-time information for busses and trains

Wait times can be more costly in the minds of transit goers than the walk to the stop or the ride itself. Many cities across the United States have Global Position Systems (GPS) on their vehicles and have made this information



Heated bus shelter in Chicago
Source: www.flickr.com

available to the public. The Port Authority is currently investigating the feasibility of installing GPS on vehicles. If the Port Authority installs GPS on vehicles and provides the available information to the public, it is recommended that this information be displayed in public. It can be part of an existing stop, or businesses can display the information on a screen inside of their store. Providing this information will encourage more people to ride transit and boost business on the corridor, as riders will be able to pop into a store if they know they have time before the T comes. Additionally, real-time transit information can be provided cost-effectively via smart phone applications.

RE-DESIGN BROADWAY AS A DESTINATION

2.12 Reclaim automobile space for bicycle lanes

Broadway Avenue has many characteristics of a livable, multi-modal street. It has a light-rail line, a good sidewalk network, and land uses that can encourage walking. 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. These vehicles do not shop at local businesses or add any other positive impact to the neighborhood, but they do reduce the safety of pedestrians, reduce the walkability of the area, and add pollution and congestion to the corridor.

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. These types of facilities make streets safer for all users and will help transform the “interested but concerned” population into one that is “enthused and confident.”

Forty percent of trips made in cities are less than two miles, and many of these trips could be made by bicycle if they are supported with the proper infrastructure. Increasing



Figure 33. Existing Conditions on Broadway Avenue

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. Providing a new connection to Beechview will improve the physical, social, and economic health of the neighborhood.



Existing roadway



Figure 34. Broadway Avenue Improvements - Scenario 1



Figure 35. Scenario 1 Buffered Bike Lane

Scenario 1: Stripe bicycle lanes on Broadway and restrict traffic to share the lane with the T

With proper design and safety standards, LRT, bicycles, and other traffic can co-exist safely along Beechview and without disrupting current LRT operations. 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 is similar to the initial recommendation in the *Active Allegheny Plan*, with the exception of the buffer,

which is created by providing less width for the travel, bicycle, and parking lanes. The *Active Allegheny* alternative should also be considered.

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 allow space for vehicles to pull over if they are disabled or need to allow emergency vehicles to pass. The cost of the project is limited to re-stripping the roadway.

This concept, however, does not provide a mechanism to physically prevent vehicles from using the bike lane, either for driving or to double

park. Enforcement would be necessary to help prevent these actions. The other drawback to this solution is that vehicles looking to park on Broadway will need to cross over the 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

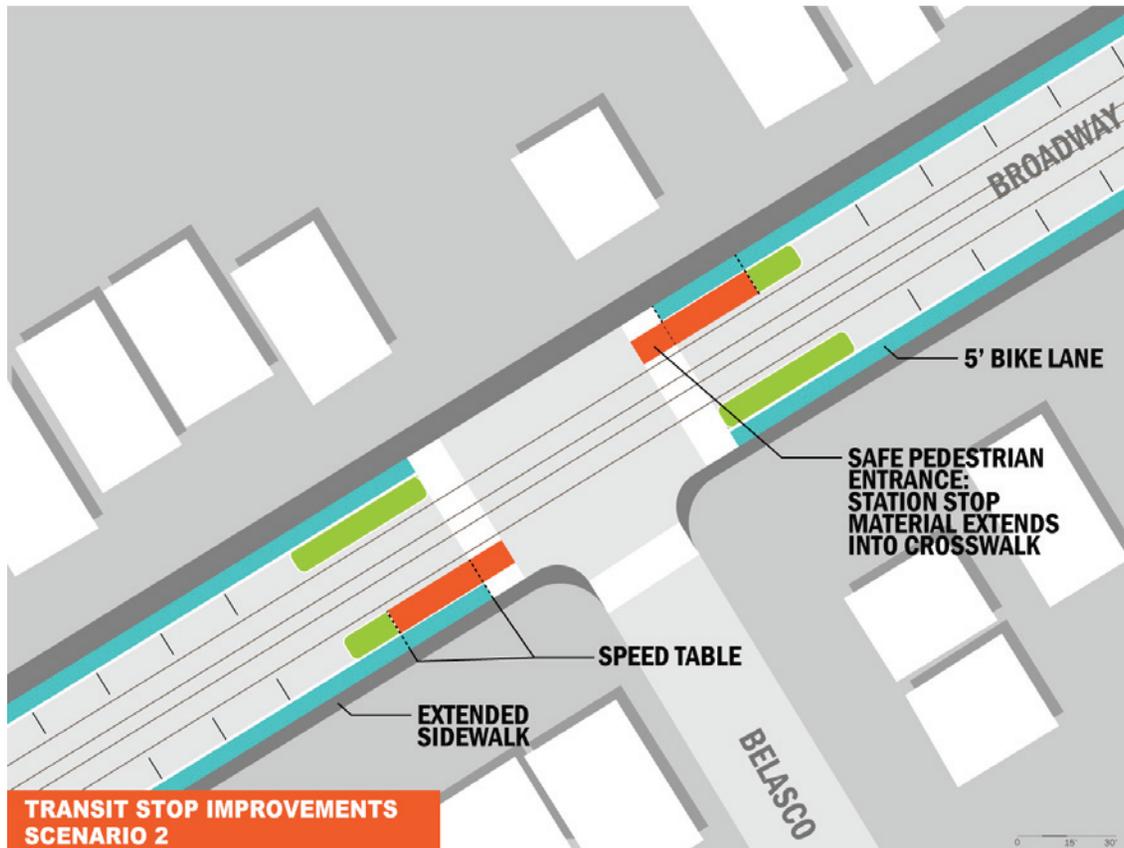


Figure 36. Proposed Broadway Avenue Improvements - Scenario 2



Figure 37. Scenario 2 Bike Lane Buffered by Floating Parking Lane

to increase the width of the sidewalks on each side of the street by two feet. The *Active Allegheny Plan* discusses the potential for this design, but does not include the discussion of the additional pedestrian space.

This design would slow vehicular traffic and create a bicycle facility that would encourage activity and be perceived as safe by the majority of potential bicyclists. It would also improve pedestrian safety and increase the amount of space for pedestrians that could be used for landscaping or sidewalk cafes.

This design involves moving the curbs which could result in substantial costs because of the need to work with the utilities. A special snow

plow will be required to remove snow from the bike lane. Also, this design does not provide space for vehicles to pull over if they are disabled, which would force the T to be stuck behind them.

This design could also be completed without moving the sidewalks in. By not touching the curbs, the cost would be significantly reduced, but no additional pedestrian space at sidewalk level would be created. Dedicated spaces for loading would be necessary, and centralized loading zones should be installed to accommodate this demand.



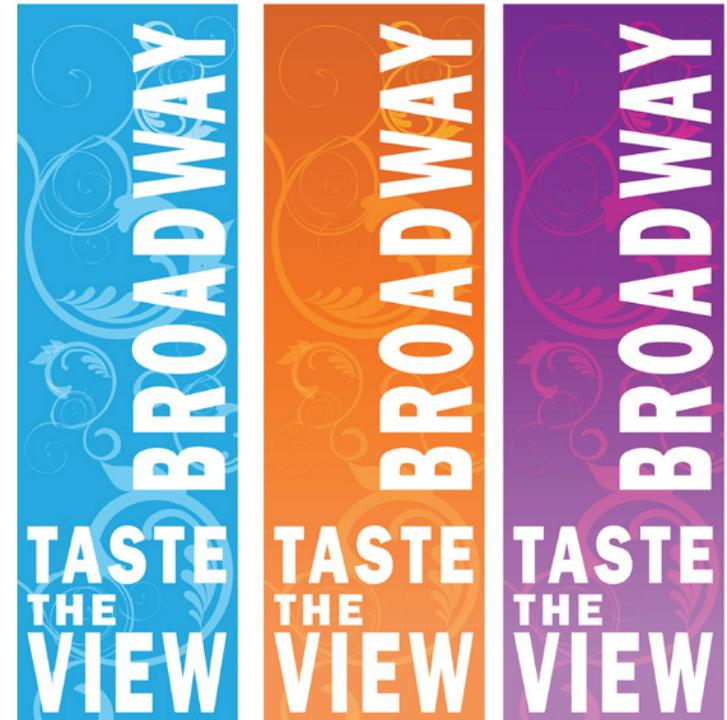
Example of bike lane buffered by floating parking lane in Minneapolis
Source: Sam Schwartz Engineering

2.13 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. This spot is in the heart of the commercial core and is a gateway opportunity to greet T riders as they enter Beechview from Fallowfield Station. In its current configuration, the site consists of a parking lot with 17 spaces and a traffic island that directs southbound cars on Beechview turning left onto Broadway Avenue. This traffic configuration is confusing for pedestrians and diminishes the usability of the space. 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. Eliminating the traffic island and separate left turn lane also simplifies the intersection for pedestrians, making it safer and easier to use the space. 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.

2.14 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 and topography ("it's worth the view") 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. Graphics on signage and flags could also reflect this palette. Given the clustering of food-related businesses, a foodie theme should also be considered.



Examples of branding elements for the Broadway Avenue corridor



Figure 38. Proposed New Plaza at Broadway and Beechview Avenues

Above: rendering of new plaza and kiosk

Below: existing traffic triangle and parking lot



CURRENTLY & COMING SOON

3 DEVELOPMENT

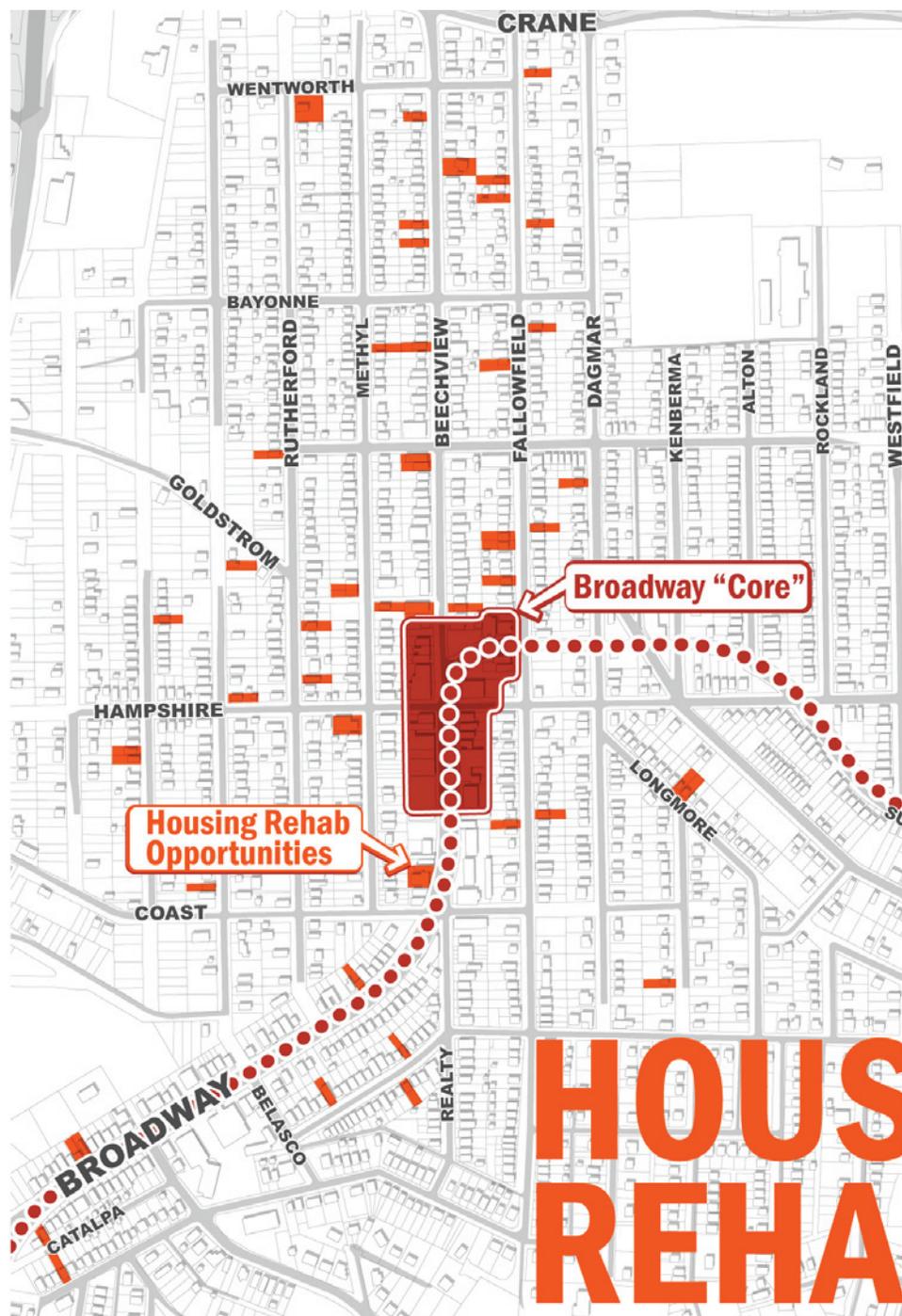
Beechview is a stable community that is mostly built up with few areas containing a critical mass of developable properties. The plan identified the commercial core on Broadway and Beechview Avenues between Fallowfield and Coast Avenues as having the most potential for focused investment. An analysis 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 at this location 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.



Figure 39. Community Assets and Projects Under Development

3.1 Rehabilitate 50 homes in the community near Broadway Avenue

The market study supports the rehabilitation of 50 single- and multi-family (up to four family) homes near the Broadway Avenue commercial core to 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. As housing prices have declined 14.8% over the last 5 years, targeted rehabilitation will help to stabilize these blocks and improve the neighborhood as a whole. The map identifies houses near the core that are vacant or in poor condition for rehabilitation. Using Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funding, the rehabilitation would be phased over three years with 10 houses completed in year one, 10 in year two, and 30 in year three. Additional funding should also be sought to help finance rehabilitations without excessive public sector subsidy. Some options include working with community development organizations and lending institutions to explore strategies to use the Federal Housing Administration's FHA 203(k) program in ways that will encourage homeowners to purchase and rehabilitate homes in Beechview, and targeting Beechview for the Urban Redevelopment Authority's Housing Recovery Program for Developers as a way to offer rehabilitated homes in the neighborhood to prospective purchasers.



HOUSING REHABILITATION

Figure 40. Identified Housing Rehabilitation Opportunities

3.2 Develop a façade improvement program for homes and stores in the community

Some of the buildings in Beechview, especially along the T line and near the commercial core, need substantial upgrades to their façades to support the revitalization of the commercial corridor and help strengthen the neighborhood. A façade improvement program that provides funds and guidance to property owners could be developed to upgrade the whole Broadway Avenue corridor and targeted adjacent blocks to support the core commercial district and community assets. 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.

3.3 Improve the senior center

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. The owner is currently working with the City of Pittsburgh and the Council to push this project forward. City and State funds totaling \$1.4 million have been allocated to this project but are currently frozen due to budget constraints. Once these funds become available, the owner is interested in creating a master plan for the facility that will explore the possibility of adding a fitness center and multipurpose room for the community. Restriping the parking lot next to the senior center can expand its capacity from 4 spaces to 17.



Buildings viewed from the T along Broadway

3.4 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 5-story building is proposed for senior housing on a site located on Broadway Avenue across from the IGA supermarket, assembled from parcels at 1613, 1617, and 1619 Broadway (see (d) in Figure 41). The ground floor, consisting of 6,900 square feet would be available for retail use. Developing senior housing on Broadway Avenue supports active, independent lifestyles where seniors have easy access to everyday needs, the senior center at Broadway and Hampshire Avenues, and transit. Parking is accommodated by creating new alleys to connect Hampshire and Fallowfield Avenues to the parking lot behind the senior housing development, providing 11 additional on-street spaces in the alleys and 12 spaces in the parking lot.

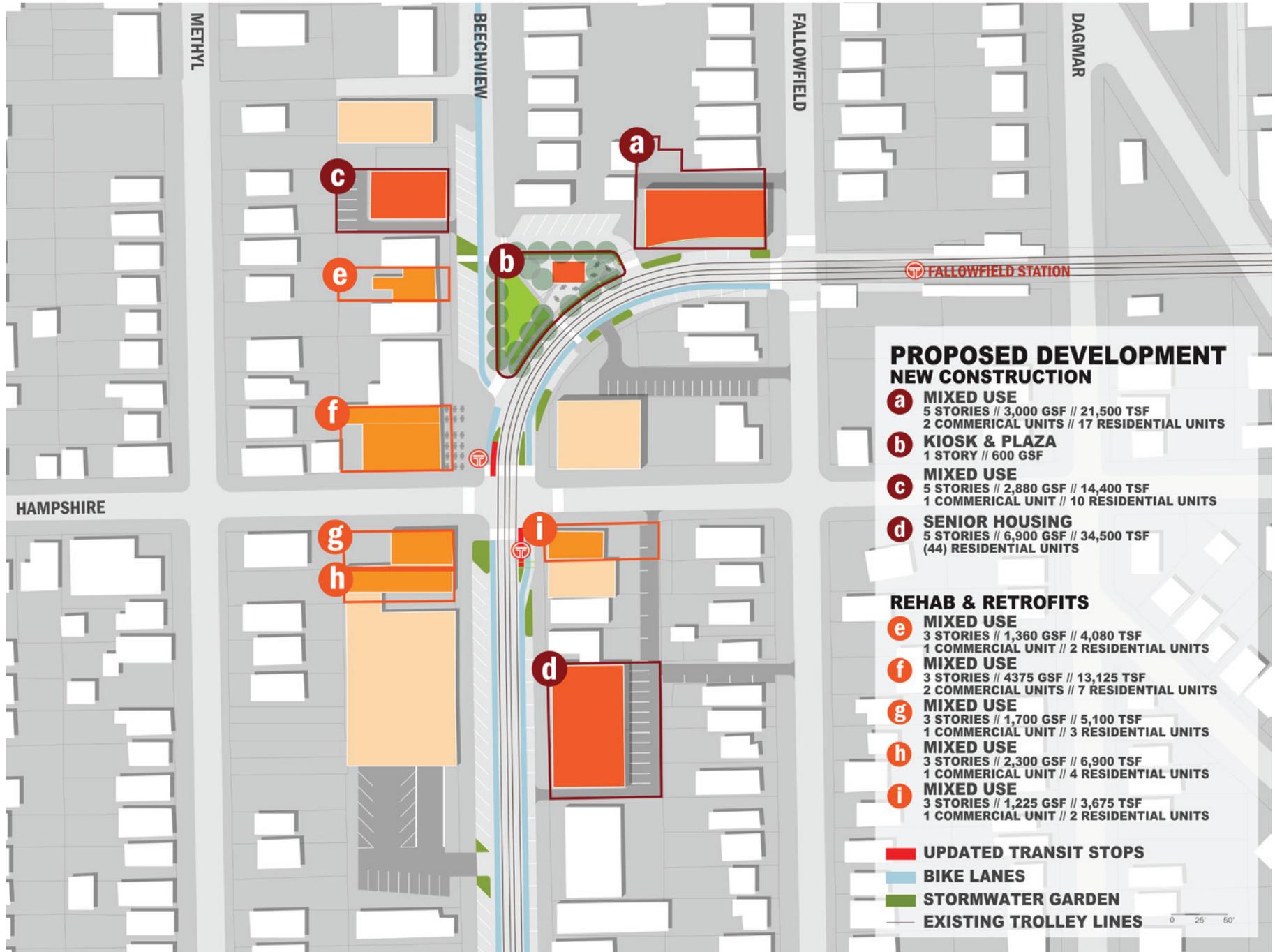


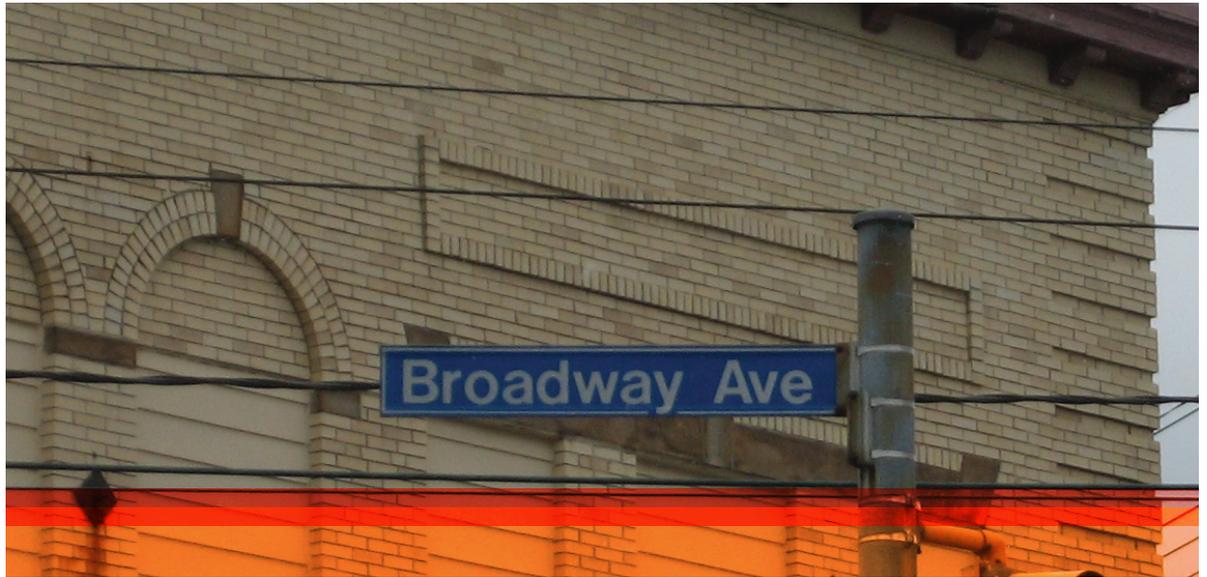
Figure 41. Proposed Development

3.5 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. The housing typology in the commercial core of Broadway Avenue consists of mixed use buildings with ground floor businesses and upper floor residential units, which offer shops and transit right at their doorstep. Many of the mixed use buildings in the core are currently in poor condition and either vacant or partially vacant, but they have the potential to be upgraded into attractive apartments for young professionals and students. 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. Three are owned by the URA and the other two have the same owner who is in the process of renovating. These buildings are all 3-story and could yield 18 apartments on the upper floors. Higher density new construction consisting of 5 stories could be built at Fallowfield and Broadway Avenues, and on Beechview Avenue, yielding 27 apartments.

3.6 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 farmer's market. A kiosk at the new plaza could host a café, farmer's market or other activities and would expand the level of programming for the plaza. Holding community events and



Broadway Avenue

developing regular programming at the new plaza would generate street-level activity that would also benefit the businesses in the commercial core.

3.7 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 5-year period. The market study shows that while there is unmet demand for certain retail and services, the commercial market is also limited by population and number of households within the neighborhood. Additionally the small size of existing spaces is a constraint but, at the same time, suitable for the types of businesses able to be supported by the demand in the neighborhood.

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, chiropractor, optometrist, realtor, insurance, and legal services.

Given the increasing Latino and other immigrant populations in the neighborhood, there are likely to be other opportunities for new businesses – and business entrepreneurship – in Beechview by Latinos, among others. According to area residents and business owners, the Mexican restaurant that closed on Broadway was popular and did not lack customers but rather struggled with high rent that was inappropriate for the location.

Real Estate Strategies' full commercial market analysis is included as an Appendix to the plan.



Red Line train on Broadway

V IMPLEMENTATION

VALUE CAPTURE OVERVIEW

As federal and state economic development resources become scarce, value capture strategies have become a critical part of the funding mix for complex urban development projects. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a value capture method of funding or financing project costs (typically those elements with some public benefit, such as infrastructure) based on a stream of future net new tax revenues associated with a real estate development project. Generally real estate taxes are designated for TIF capture; however, other taxes, such as earned income tax and local sales tax can also be included in the TIF structure. The TIF process is at the root of the TRID concept. In looking at a prospective TRID, it is helpful to understand the details of TIF as it has been implemented in Pittsburgh.

TIF is authorized by state legislation¹⁰ which restricts the use of this tool to projects in areas certified as blighted. (TRID is not restricted to blighted areas.) To date, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) has been the implementing entity and conduit for TIF financings in the City of Pittsburgh. As a policy, the URA directs TIF proceeds to public infrastructure rather than developer subsidy or other uses.

A TIF agreement defines the following:

- > The geographic boundaries of the TIF district—typically a single project site, but can be a larger area
- > The taxing jurisdictions (municipal, School District, County) and tax types (real estate, earned income, sales) to be included in the TIF as well as the participation rate for each jurisdiction
- > The base year (before the impact of the project). Revenue from the specified taxes generated over the base year tax yield are diverted from general government purposes and deposited in a TIF fund, according to the participation rates agreed to by the taxing jurisdictions
- > The term of the TIF (limited to a 20 year maximum)

¹⁰ PA General Assembly, Tax Increment Financing Act (1990)

To date, most TIFs in Pittsburgh have been limited to a single project location. TRID expands the value capture geography to reflect the potential overall increase in property values associated with proximity to both transit and new transit-oriented development (TOD). In addition to expanding the scale of the potential increment that can be captured, the district approach expands the area within which the value capture proceeds can be utilized. The ability to use TRID funds on improvements that extend beyond a single project site opens additional options for community revitalization activities.

As the TRID enabling legislation anticipated, TRID proceeds alone will not be adequate to fund major transit-oriented development projects and should be used to leverage investment from a range of public and private sources. A draft review of TRID planning studies¹¹ completed to date in the Commonwealth confirms the fact that the TRID funds are typically only a small portion of the overall investment planned for a district. It is anticipated that financial resources from many sources will be layered in order to implement and maintain TRID projects. Beyond the TRID management entity, a wide range of organizations have a role in TRID implementation including:

- > The Commonwealth, in addition to enabling value capture, puts forth additional financial resources, particularly for gap financing
- > The City has responsibility over ongoing streetscape, maintenance, policing, and other services
- > Other overlay jurisdictions, such as special

¹¹ “Transit Revitalization Investment Districts: Challenges and Opportunities draft report”, April 2011, prepared for the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development (“PCRDG report”)



Broadway at Hampshire Avenue

service districts or business improvement districts, may add their own streetscape, maintenance, policing, and other services on top of the City’s functions

- > Neighborhood groups, such as community development corporations or business associations, may provide services such as landscaping, greening, and safety initiatives
- > The private developer invests his or her own equity, as well as soliciting investments, loans, and/or grants from other sources
- > The Port Authority budgets ongoing dollars for station maintenance and capital improvements¹²

¹² Conceptual framework for roles outlined in “Implementing Transit Revitalization Investment Districts in Philadelphia”, October 2008, prepared for Neighborhoods Now by Econsult

TRID value capture funds should not replace any outlays that would otherwise be made by the Port Authority, the City, other overlay jurisdictions, or neighborhood groups. Instead, the tax increment offers an opportunity to leverage additional investment by supporting initiatives that improve the overall climate for TOD development in the TRID. The projected tax increment generated can be used to pay debt service on a bond issue or other financing or can be utilized for “pay as you go” projects such as marketing of businesses and other developments in the TRID, signage banners and wayfinding improvements, and development and maintenance of non-transit infrastructure such as sidewalks, streets, bike facilities, and street furniture over the lifespan of the TRID. Realistically, a combination of the two approaches will allow development of a front-end catalyst project as well as a flow of funds to support smaller scale improvements and management of the TRID over time.

BEECHVIEW TRID TAX INCREMENT ESTIMATES

Based on the development scenario presented in this planning study, Real Estate Strategies (RES) prepared estimates of the real estate tax and earned income tax increments associated with the initial development program. The development program presented is phased to take place in the first five years of a 20-year TRID term. Ideally this early investment will trigger additional development as well as an overall increase in market value for properties within the TRID boundaries.

The assumptions used in the RES model and the resulting tax increment estimates presented in this section are purposely conservative. Additional development beyond the proposed program would result in higher tax increments and increased financing capacity. The Appendix includes more detail on the 20-year flow of tax increment funds.

Real Estate Tax Increment: TRID Development Program

It is assumed that the projected real estate tax increment associated with the identified development program will be used to pay debt service on a bond or loan to support early up-front investment in the TRID. An estimate of potential bond proceeds, as well as the present value of the tax increment projected to remain after debt service (available for pay-as-you-go projects), is provided.

- > It is assumed that the full increment from City and County taxes flows to the TRID district. This 100% participation is based on informal guidance from the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), which indicates that the intent of the TRID enabling legislation is for the full increment generated to be diverted to the TRID. It is unclear if this intent pertains to the School District increment. Therefore, two estimates were prepared: one for 100% School District participation and a second estimate assuming 50% School District participation.

- > It is assumed that Year 1 of the TRID is 2014.
- > The incremental assessed valuation attributable to taxable improvements in the development program was estimated based on the assessments of comparable properties both in and outside of the TRID, discussions with representatives at the County Office of Property Assessments and URA, and a review of a previous analysis of the relationship between market value and building assessed valuation conducted by ERA as part of that firm's TRID/TIF analysis for East Liberty.¹³

- **Townhouses:** approximately \$120,600/unit
- **Multifamily apartments:** approximately \$51,700 for new units and \$38,800 for rehabilitated units.
- **Retail:** \$65/square foot for renovated space, \$80/square foot for new construction

The increment is based on projected incremental increases in the building portion of the assessment only. Land assessments were not modified. In cases where a currently tax-exempt parcel is brought back on the tax rolls, additional tax revenues will be generated beyond the levels reflected in these estimates.

¹³ "Eastside TOD TRID/TIF Analysis," April 2008, prepared for URA by Economics Research Associates (ERA)



- > For the purposes of this analysis, once an element of the development program comes on line, its assessment is held constant over the remaining TRID time frame. Current real estate tax rates are used: 10.8 mills for the City of Pittsburgh, 13.92 mills for the School District, and 4.69 mills for Allegheny County. Tax rates are inflated one percent annually during the term of the TRID.
- > Though bond interest rates are usually much lower, the model assumes a rate of eight percent to include costs of issuance, administrative costs, and to remain conservative.
- > A debt coverage ratio of 150 percent was used. This assumes that the bond issue or financing is sized based on two thirds of the available increment. The remaining third is “coverage”—a cushion to ensure that the anticipated cash flows will be adequate to pay debt service. If the increment is produced as expected, any funds beyond what is used to pay debt service will be deposited in the TRID fund and be available for additional expenditures in the TRID.
- > The increment that is projected to remain after debt service is discounted to 2011 dollars, using a three percent deflator.
- > We assume that commercial, multifamily residential, and mixed-use properties within the TRID will not be eligible for a LERTA (Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance) tax abatement.¹⁴ For homeownership properties, the standard Pittsburgh Act 42 three-year residential abatement¹⁵ is included in the model.

¹⁴ Commercial or mixed-use property owners undertaking new construction or rehabilitation of an existing property may apply for a five-year LERTA abatement of the incremental City taxes up to an annual maximum of \$50,000. TIF enabling legislation prohibits the award of LERTA abatements to properties within a TIF district. Because the increment generated within a TRID is directed to improvements that benefit property owners, it would be reasonable to place the same restriction in the TRID Agreement.

¹⁵ Act 42 Residential Abatement (Pittsburgh Code Chapter 265) offers an assessment reduction of 100 percent of increase associated with improvements up to \$86,750 for new residential construction and \$36,900 for renovations. Multifamily apartments are not eligible.

Background Growth in Assessed Value

In addition to the project-specific tax revenues associated with the development program, there is likely to be “background” growth in the market value of existing properties over the timeframe of the TRID. In theory, the increment generated from a parallel growth in assessed valuation should be captured and reinvested in the TRID. However, Allegheny County uses a base year method for property assessment. In the years between County-wide revaluations, assessments are revised infrequently, and only when new improvements are constructed, a building permit is pulled for renovations, a property owner applies for a tax abatement, or the School District appeals an individual property assessment.

The last revaluation of all property in the County took place in 2005 based on 2002 base year values. The time that has elapsed between revaluations has led to complaints of inequity in assessed values. The County is under Pennsylvania Supreme Court order to conduct a new revaluation, which is under way. New assessed values will be introduced in 2012, with a new base year of 2010. Although the Court has opined that the base year method of assessment is unacceptable, it is unclear how the County will modify its assessment approach moving forward. The County has recently petitioned the Court to halt the reassessment and to set standards for when counties need to reassess properties.

Because the ability to realize the benefits of this background growth is uncertain for the Beechview TRID, an estimate is provided separately and not aggregated with the increment associated with the proposed development program. The

estimate is conservative and is based on the following assumptions:

- > The current aggregate assessed value within the proposed Beechview TRID boundaries is approximately \$114.8 million. At current tax rates (29.4 mills total), this assessment base results in a combined tax yield for the City, County, and School District of just over \$3.37 million annually (2011 dollars).
- > No background growth occurs in Years 1 through 5.
- > In Years 6 through 20, as the impact of implementation of the development program is realized, the overall assessment in the TRID is projected to grow by 0.25 percent annually.

The City of Philadelphia (which is coterminous with Philadelphia County) has rolling assessments. As a result, increases in the overall market value of real estate in a TRID can be captured in “real time.” A planning study conducted for two proposed Philadelphia TRIDs notes that the increment from background appreciation in the TRID can offset the loss of increment from tax abatements.¹⁶ Without the background increment, Philadelphia’s 10-year tax abatements for new construction and renovations would severely limit the value capture until after Year 10 of the TRID term. Without the ability to regularly capture an increment from background appreciation in the Beechview TRID, it is necessary to restrict commercial abatements (LERTA) in the TRID to maximize the increment captured.

¹⁶ Econsult, 38

Earned Income Tax Increment

Because the Beechview development scenario included a commercial component, a separate estimate of the tax increment associated with new earned income tax payments by workers in the TRID is provided. The City of Pittsburgh imposes a one percent earned income tax; the School District imposes a two percent earned income tax. The estimates were developed based on the following assumptions:

- > FTE (full time equivalent) job counts were estimated based on 400 square feet per employee.
- > An average annual wage per FTE was estimated using the most recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupation Employment Statistics series. The wage assumption used is the average of the “retail salesperson” and “cashier” wage categories for Allegheny County: \$21,150.
- > The estimate assumes that both the City and the School District divert a one percent earned income tax increment to the TRID (it is assumed that the School District also retains one percent).

Preliminary Results

Preliminary estimates of the total 20-year tax increments projected for the proposed Beechview TRID development program are provided below. Each estimate is presented in 2011 dollars. These amounts represent preliminary, conservative estimates. The actual value captured will be determined by the specific design of the improvements, the actual assessed valuations and tax rates in effect during the TRID, and the timing of individual components of the development program.

The development phasing model assumes that 44 units of senior rental housing comes online as well as 10 rehabilitated single family homes. In Year 2, 6,900 square feet of newly constructed retail space is put on the tax rolls as well as 27 apartment units and 10 rehabilitated single family homes. In Years 3 through 5, a total of 30 single family homes are rehabilitated, and 18 apartments and approximately 11,000 square feet of ground floor retail space are renovated.

BEECHVIEW

20-Year Increment by Type (2011 dollars)	School District Participation	
	50%	100%
<u>Real Estate Tax</u>		
Total Increment from Development Program (a)	\$2,454,743	\$3,263,390
Estimated Bond/Loan Proceeds	\$1,084,582	\$1,449,348
Remaining Increment	\$818,248	\$1,087,797
Increment from "Background" Growth (b)	\$783,950	\$1,024,362
<u>Earned Income Tax</u>		
Earned Income Tax from Development Program	\$332,052	(c)

RES

(a) Sub-totals (bond/loan proceeds and remaining increment) will not add to total increment. Difference is interest and issuance costs for bond/loan.

(b) This increment will be difficult to realize under the current property assessment system, because revaluations are too infrequent to capture changes in market value as it occurs.

(c) Not modeled

Figure 42. Projected Tax Increment

Implications of the Tax Increment Analysis

The tax increment calculations raise several important issues with implications for the structure of a TRID. First, the potential earned income tax increment is relatively small, totaling approximately \$19,000 (2011 dollars) after full build out and occupancy of the programmed commercial space. In aggregate the total increment from the earned income tax is approximately 14 percent of the total real estate tax increment. While the addition of this tax to the overall value capture would increase the funds available for both debt service and pay-as-you-go expenditures throughout the TRID term, the modest increased increment may not justify the administrative issues associated with tracking these funds.

Second, although conservative estimates of the potential increment from background growth of market values in the TRID are provided, it should be emphasized that the opportunities to capture this growth in a predictable way are severely limited without a system of rolling assessments. Unless Allegheny County transitions to a rolling assessment approach or designs another method for capturing changes in real estate market value in “real time,” this

portion of the estimated tax increment should not be counted as a source of funding for projects in the TRID. It is likely that an increment will be generated when the County does undertake a revaluation during the TRID term; however it is impossible to model the timing or magnitude of the increment.

Finally, planning studies for several other TRIDs proposed in the Commonwealth¹⁷ have recommended excluding certain key parcels located within the TRID boundaries from the initial round of value capture. Because the TRID enabling legislation is unclear about the trigger for the 20-year value capture period, these studies have assumed that once these parcels are developed at a later date, they can then be added to the TRID, which will then enjoy a full 20 years of value capture from these parcels. Because Beechview is an intact, built-out neighborhood, there are not obvious key opportunity sites beyond those identified in the development program. Therefore, it is recommended that all parcels within the TRID boundary be included in the initial value capture schedule.

17 Marcus Hook and Dormont/Mt. Lebanon

PRINCIPLES OF THE TRID AGREEMENT

A sample Beechview TRID agreement template is included as in the Appendix. As TRID implementation proceeds, this document would be refined with additional detail as well as input from legal professionals. The sample TRID agreement addresses the following principles:

- > URA will serve as the financing and implementing agency for the TRID.
- > The TRID management entity will be constituted as a non-profit corporation (“Beechview TRID, Inc.”). The Board of Beechview TRID, Inc. will provide oversight, guide the expenditure of the tax increment, and be responsible for complying with monitoring and reporting requirements. The Board should consist of one representative from each taxing authority (City of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh School District, and Allegheny County), a Port Authority representative, a URA representative, and

two or four (to maintain an overall odd number of Board members) representatives of the neighborhood—representing CDCs and business associations active in the TRID area.

- > For preliminary discussion purposes, it is assumed that the Agreement reflects 100 percent participation by the City and County and 50 percent participation by the School District.
- > The agreement includes only the tax increment associated with the real estate tax. The sample agreement could be modified to include revenues from the municipal and School District earned income tax.
- > The tax increment will be calculated based on increased assessments over

the base year assessed valuation for all **taxable** parcels located within the TRID boundary. Any increment generated on the base year assessed value as a result of a tax rate increase will revert to the taxing authority. All tax increments associated with increased assessments over the base year assessed value will flow to the TRID. All tax increments associated with exempt properties returning to the tax rolls will flow to the TRID.

- > No commercial LERTA will be awarded within the TRID boundary over the term of the TRID.
- > Any tax increment retained by the TRID or proceeds of the TRID financing will be used for public infrastructure, transit facility improvement or other community revitalization activities within the TRID boundaries.



Mural on the side of Sip & Spin

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

The Transit Revitalization Investment District Study outlines a series of strategies to make transit-oriented development meaningful and achievable in Beechview. But while the plan is targeted toward the Red Line, many of the issues identified here are shared by communities throughout the Southwestern Pennsylvania region.

Addressing the barriers to transit oriented development in Pittsburgh will require continued 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 the surrounding community with or without new development. In accordance with community feedback, this plan identified opportunities to enhance open spaces, calm traffic, and create safer streets to name a few. 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. While many recommendations will need outside financing, other strategies are low-cost solutions that can be implemented in part by volunteer efforts and through the existing capacity of local organizations.

What do we do tomorrow?

Initiate a Discussion Among Taxing Bodies

The first action item is to convene a discussion among taxing bodies (City, County, and School District) and other entities such as the URA and Port Authority about implementation roles. The purpose of the discussion would be to assess each entity's interest in and capacity to implement any of the recommendations. Given limited staff and already full schedules within each entity, implementation will likely require additional staff to help market properties for development and assist with contracting and agreements, engineering, design, and construction. If a TRID is enacted, much of this work will be handled by the Management Entity formed to administer the TRID district and manage implementation.

Submit the Plan for Adoption & Recognition

The next action item is to submit the plan to Mayor Luke Ravenstahl's office, Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak, and State Representative Chelsa Wagner. The intent is to get the plan recognized by political leadership and to raise awareness that significant strides have been made toward creating an achievable, community-based TOD approach in Pittsburgh.

Work to Designate the TRID

The immediate next step is to work with the State Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and State and local political leaders to establish the TRID. Making TRID a tool to finance the improvements identified in this plan will provide a significant spark to encourage greater attention to TOD and improve Broadway Avenue and the surrounding community. To help guide the TRID process and budgeting, RES has created a draft TRID agreement that can be used as the first step toward establishing a TRID district. This agreement is included in the Appendix of this plan.

Coordinate with Funding Partners

The range of recommendations for each transit stop's revitalization will require coordination and financing well beyond what Beechview can organize locally. City and State agencies, local institutions, and interested developers must form an active dialog about these recommendations. As with any implementation strategy, the City and its partners should seek to blend dollars from both public and private sources to maximize impact. The plan should be hand-delivered to local foundations, as foundation dollars and grants will be needed to maximize the potential of this plan.

Build Organizational Capacity

There are many community organizations in Beechview that have maintained an active interest in this plan and the earlier *Beechview Community Plan*. Recognizing that the range of recommendations contained in this plan adds to the City and community's to-do list, new staff support will be needed that is focused on the opportunities around transit in Beechview. Local political representatives, the Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development, and Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group should work toward building more capacity in local community organizations such that they can become active drivers in the revitalization process. As a part of the TRID Management Entity, funding should be considered for a full time TOD / TRID coordinator that would focus on community organizing and act as a liaison between residents, community organizations, and City agencies.

show us the money.

If you had



how would you spend it to improve the community



BEECHVIEW

Create a small kiosk at the proposed plaza

Bring new stores to Broadway

Improve lighting

Develop a façade improvement program

Rehabilitate 50 homes in the community near Broadway Avenue

Develop new housing for younger tenants

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

Improve the T station stops with speed tables to slow traffic

Develop new independent senior housing above retail on Broadway

Create a new "Welcome to Beechview" mural on the side of the Senior Center

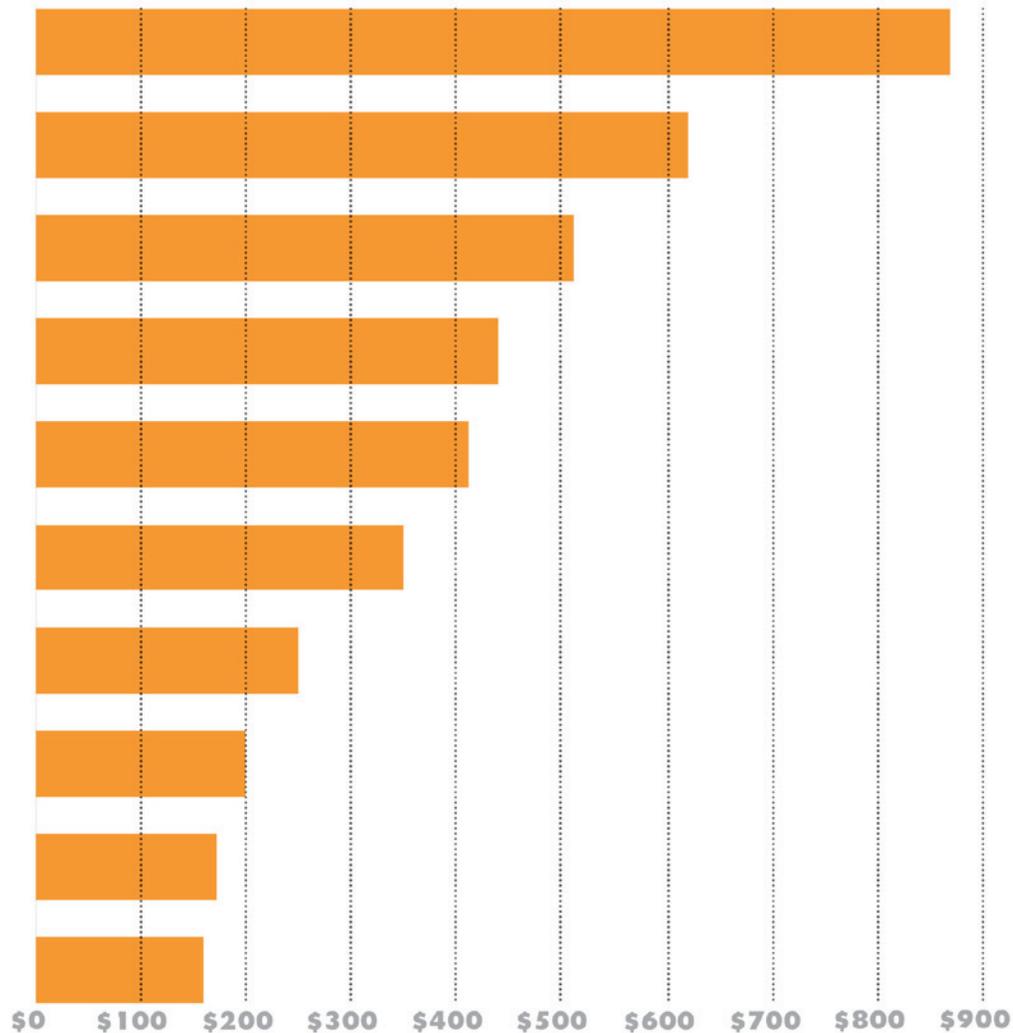


Figure 43. Community Priorities for Implementation

Phasing and Priority Projects

Attached is an Implementation Matrix that details the timeframe and potential partners for each recommendation. The spreadsheet is intended to serve as a guide to help organize and track the progress in implementing the plan's components. It should be used actively, updated, and changed once implementation commences.

The priority projects identified in the Matrix are informed by the results of an exercise conducted with residents at the last presentation where preliminary recommendations were presented. After the presentation, those in attendance were asked to do three things:

1. Spend play money (\$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100) on the recommendations that mattered most to them to help the team get a sense of priorities
2. Make a note of any additional ideas that were missed or forgotten
3. Sign up to be involved and help with implementation

After spending the play money, the dollars were tallied to reveal some community priorities which are represented in Figure 43. Overwhelming support was given to creating a new plaza with a small kiosk at the bend on Broadway. Improved lighting, new stores, and rehabbed facades were also top vote getters. The top ten included three separate priorities related to housing both in the form of rehabilitating the existing stock of homes but also in building new housing along Broadway Avenue. The results also clearly demonstrate community support for improving Broadway Avenue and the station stops / platforms in the context of these other recommendations.

Some of the recommendations identified by residents will take time to accomplish. Taking into account the timeframe and cost of implementation, the attached Matrix identifies short-term, medium-term, and long-term projects as well as key priority projects as identified by residents and stakeholders.

The ball is rolling; the challenge now is to maintain the energy and momentum about the future of TOD in Pittsburgh. *Good luck... and have fun!*



Participants at the last public meeting spend play money to prioritize the recommendations

SMART TRID PLANNING STUDY: BEECHVIEW IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

All costs are order-of-magnitude only. Costs will need to be updated as implementation progresses

Priority Projects Indicated by: ▶

short-term=2 years
medium-term=3-5 years
long-term=5+ years

1. SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS					
Priority?	Number	Action	Timeframe	Potential Supporting Funding Sources	Estimated Cost
▶	1.1	Create a new "Welcome to Beechview" mural on the side of the Senior Center	short-term	Foundations, private donations, local businesses	\$40,000
	1.2	Consider other surfaces along Broadway for murals to brand the corridor	short-term	Foundations, private donations, local businesses	\$40,000
	1.3	Use the billboards to share information and improve the landscaping around them	medium-term	City, advertising \$\$	\$75,000
	1.4	Temporarily reuse vacant storefronts with art and Beechview marketing	short-term	Foundations	\$25,000
	1.5	Improve signage at key intersections to direct people to Broadway Avenue	short-term	Port Authority, City	\$200,000
2. PUBLIC REALM & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS					
Priority?	Number	Action	Timeframe	Potential Supporting Funding Sources	Estimated Cost
		Corridor Basics			
	2.1	Repair Broadway's potholes and restripe crosswalks	short-term	City, County	\$50,000
▶	2.2	Introduce lighting in the neighborhood, along steps, and along Broadway Avenue	medium-term	City, County, CMAQ, PCTI, TE funds	\$1,000,000
	2.3	Integrate new trees on residential streets and stormwater gardens along the corridor	medium-term	City, County, CMAQ, PCTI, TE funds, FTA New Freedom	\$160,000
		Promote Walking and Biking in Beechview			
	2.4	Integrate pedestrian crossing signage	short-term	City	\$10,000
▶	2.5	Connect the sidewalks with T station stops with speed tables to slow traffic	medium-term	City, County, CMAQ, PCTI, FTA New Freedom, TE funds	\$50,000
	2.6	Bump out curbs at intersections where possible	medium-term	TE funds	\$100,000
	2.7	Introduce bicycle parking near Fallowfield Station and at the Library	short-term	City, CMAQ, Private	\$50,000
	2.8	Plan for a bicycle network in Beechview	medium-term	City, advertising \$\$	\$5,000
		Introduce Transit Amenities			
	2.9	Designate priority stops for investment near retail	short-term	Port Authority, City	-
	2.10	Create new covered shelters for T stops	long-term	City, Port Authority, advertising \$\$	\$240,000
	2.11	Install real-time information for buses and trains	medium-term	City, Port Authority, advertising \$\$	\$20,000
		Redesign Broadway as a Destination			
▶	2.12	Reclaim Automobile Space for Bicycle Lanes	medium-term	City, County, CMAQ, PCTI, TE funds, TIGER grant	\$400,000
	2.13	Reuse the public parking lot and concrete triangles at Broadway & Beechview as a new central plaza	long-term	Trust for Public Land, Foundations	\$400,000
	2.14	Design and build street furniture, green elements, planters, graphics, and flags that are unique to Beechview	long-term	City, County, CMAQ, PCTI, TE funds	\$250,000

3. DEVELOPMENT					
Priority?	Number	Action	Timeframe	Potential Supporting Funding Sources	Estimated Cost
▶	3.1	Rehabilitate 50 homes in the community near Broadway Avenue	medium-term	HUD 203(k), NSP	\$2,500,000
▶	3.2	Develop a façade improvement program for homes and stores in the community	medium-term	Elm Street	\$300,000
	3.3	Improve the senior center	short-term	City, State	\$1,500,000
▶	3.4	Develop new independent senior housing above retail on Broadway	medium-term	LIHTC/HUD Section 202	\$6,000,000
▶	3.5	Develop new housing for younger tenants seeking good connections to downtown	medium-term	Private equity	\$4,275,000
▶	3.6	Create a small kiosk to host a café, farmers' market or other program in the proposed plaza at Broadway & Beechview	long-term	Foundation grants, Main Street	\$50,000
▶	3.7	Bring new stores to Broadway: focus on food (with outdoor dining), liquor store, offices, and services	ongoing	Main Street, CDFI small business loans, private equity	\$1,885,000

Acronym Glossary

CDFI	Community Development Financial Institutions Fund
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
LIHTC	Low Income Housing Tax Credit
NSP	Neighborhood Stabilization Program
PCTI	Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative
TE	Transportation Enhancement Funds
TIGER	Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grant