

Airport Multimodal Corridor Study Summary

This MIS evaluated “multimodal” transit and highway improvements to address transportation needs for the Airport Corridor. In addition, the Study examined project costs and developed an investment strategy to support these transit and highway improvements. This MIS was a 12-month study that built on prior and related work, including the following:

- Parkway West Multimodal Corridor Study (1989)
- Airport Multimodal Corridor Feasibility and Marketing Study (1996)
- SPC Policy Committee Studies (1998 through 2000)

With a focus on implementation, this Study allowed the selection of modes and corridors for highway and transit improvements, to be used as input to subsequent environmental studies and preliminary engineering. The term “multimodal transportation” as used in this MIS includes vehicular (auto and truck), public transportation (both bus and rail), pedestrian, and bicycle modes of transportation. As part of the corridor and modal evaluation, the Study also examined the relationship between the various modes of transportation, land use in the Airport Corridor communities, and connections to other transportation modes including air, freight, and the proposed Pennsylvania High-speed Maglev system. Opportunities for improvements in the Corridor were studied in regard to linkages, benefits, and mode shifts in this multimodal network. The corridor investment alternatives were evaluated against the project goals and needs, the study “no-build” scenario, and a set of lower cost improvements identified as the project Transportation System Management (TSM) alternative. This comparison afforded the opportunity to reduce the initial Long List of Alternatives down to a Locally Preferred Investment Strategy.

Needs Identification

The following transportation needs of the Airport Corridor were identified:

- There are insufficient transportation choices in the Airport Multimodal Corridor,
- The roadway capacity is insufficient to relieve existing and future predicted congestion,
- The safety characteristics of the major highways in the corridor need to be improved,
- The existing physical deficiencies of the corridor's roadways impede the efficient movement of people, goods, and services through the region,
- The linkages between major highways and between transportation modes in the corridor are insufficient, and
- The transportation services in the corridor are insufficient to support economic development and land use priorities.

Benefits from the Locally Preferred Alternatives

1. Parkway West Widening with BRT Expansion/Enhancement and Core Area Improvements with BRT Enhancements

- Reduces the traffic queue in both directions at the Fort Pitt Tunnels and Bridge.
- Reduces regional travel times to the Airport, Downtown, and Oakland.
- Increases Parkway West capacity, thereby reducing “cut through” traffic on local and neighborhood roadways.
- Directly addresses the 50-year-old Parkway West’s need for updated design.
- Reinforces long-term investments that have been made in the Parkway West Corridor, including infrastructure and community facilities.
- Reinforces investment in the West Busway.
- Allows the expansion of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) further west in the corridor.
- Reinforces community land use plans.
- Minimizes environmental impacts due to extensive use of existing right of way.
- Lowest cost of all highway alternatives studied.

2. Airport Connector LRT

- Provides a new transit alternative to the Parkway.
- Reduces regional travel times to the Airport, Downtown, and with potential future extensions to Oakland and other corridors.
- Provides a rail connection to the Airport from Downtown.
- Serves approximately 19,000 transit boardings per day in the corridor.
- Reinforces community land use plans.
- Provides a component of a potential regional rail system.
- Builds on the opportunity provided by the North Shore Connector for westward expansion of the LRT system.

Transportation enhancements (the TSM alternative) are incorporated into the Preferred Alternatives. Thus, safety enhancements, trail expansion, ITS improvements, park and ride expansion, BRT application, and improved system connectivity become added benefits.

Costs for the Locally Preferred Alternatives

The estimated current year cost associated with the Locally Preferred Alternatives are listed below.

Costs	Parkway West Widening	Airport Connector LRT	
		Robinson Corridor	Ohio Valley – Neville Island
Capital Cost of Alternative	\$911,320	\$1,238,100	\$1,180,600
ROW Cost for Alternative	\$60,300	\$115,000	\$94,000
Annual Transit Operating Cost	\$3,280	\$20,500	\$22,200

Coordination with other Local Projects

The Parkway West Widening and Airport Connector LRT are compatible with other planned local projects. This Study is based upon full build out of the projects that are included in the SPC Long Range Plan. Thus, several major projects included in the plan are included in the “no build” scenario. These projects include the Mon Fayette Expressway, Findlay Connector, Southern Beltway, the Wabash High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Facility, and the North Shore Connector LRT Extension. Importantly, this “no build” scenario includes the completion of the “Missing Ramps” between Interstate 79 and the Parkway West, which are currently under design. Three additional projects require comment, as well:

1. W&LE Corridor
2. Strategic Regional Transit Visioning Study –
3. Pennsylvania Maglev Project -.

Conclusion

The Study concludes that an Airport Corridor Locally Preferred Investment Strategy should incorporate two projects, the Parkway West Widening with BRT enhancements, and the Airport Connector LRT. These projects and their associated \$2,150,000,000 in capital costs should be incorporated in the SPC Long Range Plan.