

I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

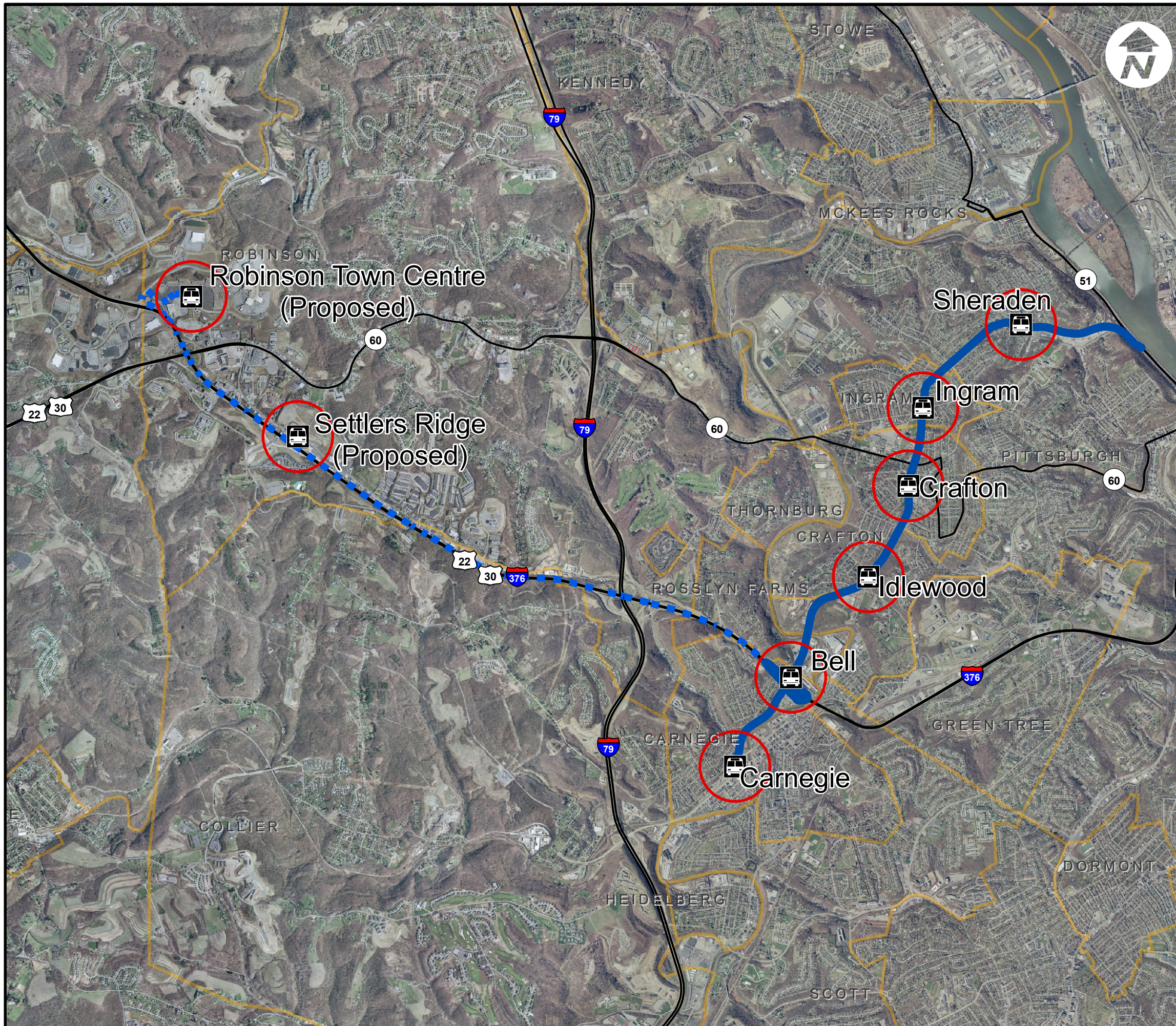
Allegheny County Economic Development (ACED) and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) partnered to create a transit-oriented development (TOD) vision and plan for station areas within the West Busway corridor in western Allegheny County. The West Busway, a five-mile exclusive fixed guideway for buses, directly serves numerous communities at its six stations as well as communities in the Parkway West corridor and provides critical connections to the Pittsburgh International Airport, downtown Pittsburgh, and Oakland. The purpose of the West Busway Area TOD Assessment and Plan was to explore the revitalization potential of the West Busway and adjacent area communities that will support public transportation solutions to the region's transportation and land use challenges. This effort is an implementation activity to advance *Allegheny Places*, Allegheny County's first comprehensive plan, and SPC's *2035 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania*.

The overall goal of this plan is to help shift development activities into established communities as a result of enhanced understanding of development opportunities and site characteristics in the vicinity of transit-served stops and park-and-ride locations along the Busway and in the vicinity. The plan focused on development and re-development patterns that would serve to stimulate economic growth and promote the attraction, retention, and expansion of business, industry, commerce, and the arts. The plan also focused on sustainable patterns of development that would promote the construction of residential, educational, and cultural facilities in mixed-use configurations near transit facilities to create holistic communities where people can live, work, play, learn, create, and invest. The plan's concepts will promote the reduction of congestion in the region's most highly congested corridor and foster multi-modal connectivity between hubs by including "Active Transportation" and "Complete Streets" concepts, as well as safety considerations, lifestyle benefits, context sensitive design, and "green" building principles.






This project is unique in that an assessment of the corridor's overall potential for TOD led to the identification of two areas for which targeted TOD development plans were developed (Sheraden and Carnegie). The information collected during a review of existing conditions in the corridor, coupled with a broad demographic and market assessment, served as input into a screening process that indicated the locations with the most immediate potential for TOD. The Carnegie and Sheraden plans serve as crucial first steps towards creating "West Busway Places," places along the West Busway that are characterized by relatively dense, mixed-use development that maximizes pedestrian access to transit and includes infill and new development. The TOD plans will serve as prototypes for the other West Busway stations by providing an example of a planning process that can be utilized as well as examples of the types of actions and improvements that can be undertaken to facilitate TOD community development.

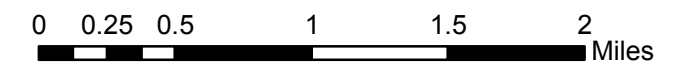
The project's study area is shown in Figure 1.1. The West Busway stations are located in the City of Pittsburgh's Sheraden and Oakwood (Idlewood Station) neighborhoods, Ingram Borough, Crafton Borough, and Carnegie (Carnegie and Bell Stations). Because many of the West Busway transit routes extend beyond the busway along the Parkway West (shown on the map as the West Busway Service Corridor), the study also evaluated the TOD potential of the Settlers Ridge and Robinson Town Centre developments in Robinson Township.

Figure 1.1 Study Area



Legend

-  1/4 Mile Radius
-  West Busway
-  West Busway Service Corridor
-  Transit Station
-  Municipal Boundary



Sources: PASDA (www.pasda.psu.edu)
 SPC (Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission)
 Port Authority of Allegheny County

PLANNING PROCESS

The West Busway plan included four primary work tasks. Over the course of the 12-month process, the following work tasks were completed.

- Document Existing Conditions:** The existing conditions analysis included a review of the physical and regulatory characteristics of the stations along the West Busway Corridor including transit service, land use and zoning, and multimodal transportation access (e.g. parking, bike access, walkability). The project team assessed each station area's zoning ordinance to determine if modifications may be needed in order to facilitate TOD. In addition, the task included a demographic and socioeconomic analysis and real estate market assessment.
- TOD Evaluation Methodology:** The project team developed an evaluation and screening methodology to select two sites in the study area that warranted a more targeted TOD evaluation. Sheraden and Carnegie were selected as focus areas for further TOD planning efforts.
- TOD Program of Development:** The focus of this task was the development of TOD plans for the Sheraden and Carnegie station areas. A vision for each station was developed through two rounds of public meetings with station-area stakeholders. The project team translated each vision into concept plans that included land use diagrams, generalized building massing concepts and densities, transportation access and circulation plans, and zoning recommendations.
- Final Report:** The final task included compilation of all project work products into one report document that also included an implementation plan for the two TOD plans.



Sheraden public input meeting – March 23, 2010
Photo Credit: URS

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The plan was co-managed by ACED and SPC. At the beginning of the planning process, the project team selected community-based stakeholders to oversee and guide the completion of the plan. The steering committee met four times during the course of the project. The project team and steering committee included the following individuals:

Project Team

- Lynn Heckman, ACED, Project Co-Chair
- Sara Walfoort, SPC, Project Co-Chair
- Tom Klevan, SPC
- David Totten, SPC

Steering Committee

- Michael Finnerty, Allegheny County Council
- James Ellenbogen, Allegheny County Council
- Theresa Kail-Smith, City of Pittsburgh City Council
- Michael Finley, City of Pittsburgh City Planning Department

- Debbie Stecko, Ingram Borough Secretary
- Douglas Sample, Crafton Borough Manager
- Steve George, Rosslyn Farms Borough Council
- Whitney Brady, Carnegie Borough Manager
- Richard Charnovich, Robinson Township Manager
- John Paul Jones, Governor's Southwest Regional Office
- George Scarborough, Char-West COG
- Lynn Manion, Airport Corridor Transportation Association
- Lucinda Beattie, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership
- Denny Puko, PA Department of Community and Economic Development
- Court Gould, Sustainable Pittsburgh
- Mary Jo Morandini, Beaver County Transit Authority
- David Wohlwill, Port Authority of Allegheny County



West Busway Steering Committee Meeting – June 2, 2010
Photo Credit: URS

ACED and SPC selected URS Corporation in association with 4ward Planning LLC and Maynes Associates Architects as the consulting team to perform technical analyses; make design, development, and transportation improvements recommendations; and facilitate the public involvement process.

Project Team Members included:

- Ann Ogoreuc, AICP, URS, Project Manager
- Mark Leese, AIA, AICP, URS
- Keith Johnson, URS
- Sarah Trbovic, AICP, URS
- Todd Poole, 4ward Planning LLC
- Paula Maynes, AIA, Maynes Associates Architects
- Greg Maynes, AIA, Maynes Associates Architects
- Erica Bertke, Maynes Associates Architects



TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Transit oriented development (TOD) is a form of development that is conducive to increased use of transit by residents. This usually implies dense development around mass transit stations that provides a range of destinations within walking distance, including multifamily homes, shops, and workplaces.

A successful TOD preserves and builds upon an area's strengths and diversity while positioning it for a vital and sustainable future. Transit-oriented development is the perfect fit for communities that are already urban in character. Design elements implemented through streetscape improvements and façade treatments among others offer opportunities to unify the urban fabric in a transit-oriented district.



Before

Described below are basic planning and design principles that support each unique TOD community and assure an enduring and engaging urban realm. These principles should be applied in each TOD planning area.

Distinctive Destination: The components of a TOD community should be linked to but distinct from its surroundings and other districts in the vicinity. By virtue of its compactness, clear edges, human-scaled architecture, walkable streets, public spaces, amenities and eye-catching detail, it should be perceived as a distinctive place in its own right; a singular and appealing destination whose character and vitality make it more than the sum of its individual parts.

Mixed Uses: Redevelopment and new infill development should support a goal of higher density mixed use, including restaurants and retail (with emphasis on locally owned businesses), civic uses, offices, residential, entertainment and basic goods and services. A diverse use mix helps insure activity beyond traditional business hours.

Compactness: For good interconnectedness and variety, the blocks composing the village or neighborhood should be no more than a 5- to 10-minute walk around their perimeters (about 1,320 feet). Essential land uses should be established within a quarter-mile radius, promoting a compact, walkable village.



Sidewalk sales, unique business signage, and awnings

Pedestrian refuge island with landscaping, signage, and seating

New plaza area with public art and short-term parking in front of Post Office property

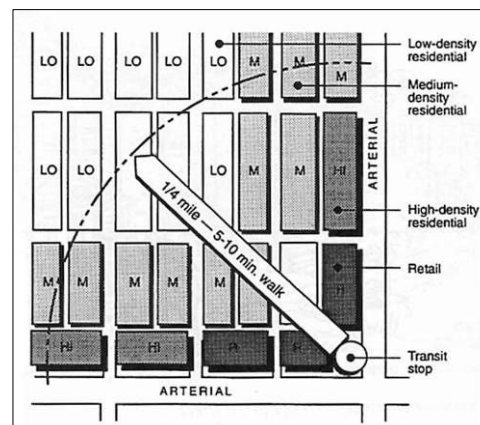
After

Bump-outs provide more space for street trees and decorative pavers, while improving pedestrian safety

Pedestrian crossing distances are reduced due to the bump-out and island

Wayfinding signage, banners, and/or hanging planters can be affixed to new pedestrian lighting

Photo Credit: URS



Great Streets: Street design should reflect a dual concept of the street as both vehicular thoroughfare and civic space. Attributes such as design speed, travel direction (one-way or two way), lane widths, corner radii, on-street parking, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, street trees and amenities should be conceived in a comprehensive fashion to achieve a balance of the needs of drivers, transit users, bicyclists and pedestrians, and to offer real choice of mobility options.

Engaging Street Wall: New and redeveloped buildings should generally be placed at the sidewalk to give streets and blocks a comfortable sense of enclosure. Continuity of windows and doors should create a permeable relationship between the buildings and a sufficiently



wide sidewalk, connecting inside to outside. A consistent "visual texture," for the street wall, created by complementary arrangements of floor lines, window and doors openings and other features is more important to a cohesive image than a consistent architectural period or style.

Parking: Parking should be on-street and/or at the center of blocks, using liner buildings to mask the lots or structures. When it isn't possible to mask surface lot parking, lots should be behind or to the side of buildings to minimize disruption of the street wall.

Authenticity: Preserve and build upon the unique assets that differentiate the village from other villages or districts in the region. Respect historic patterns, precedents and traditions. Preserve the best natural features and link them to the TOD area. Retain older buildings and blocks that lend a sense of roots and character, and that provide lower rent options for creative entrepreneurs and new business startups. Recruit and retain locally owned businesses when possible.



Public Space: Establish a primary public space to serve as the symbolic heart of the TOD area. It should be augmented with a diverse offering of secondary public spaces—small greens, plazas, pocket parks, and pedestrian ways that are linked by walkable streets and furnished with amenities that support and encourage activity in the public realm.

Photo Credit: URS



Third Places: Encourage establishment of "third places" distinct from home and work—coffee shops, internet cafes, alfresco dining areas, pubs, bookstores and the like—that foster a culture of informal gathering, socializing, conversing and the exchange of ideas. The best third places are adjacent to sidewalks and public spaces; each benefits greatly through association with the other.

Mind the Details: Great places engage both the senses and intellect with diverse and detailed architectural facades, preservation of key views, engaging signage, attractive furnishings, colorful plantings, sidewalk commerce, public art and many other points of detail. The city's regulatory framework should be flexible enough to allow the unfolding of a diverse and stimulus-rich environment over time.



Photo Credit: URS



Credit: Maynes Associates Architects

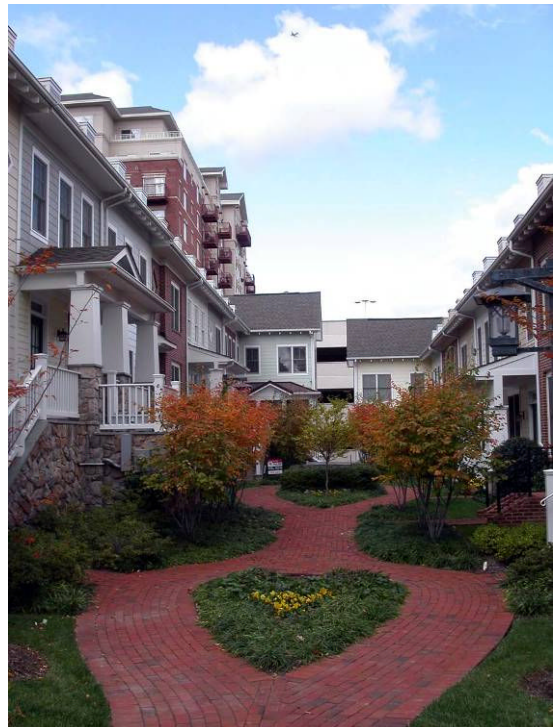
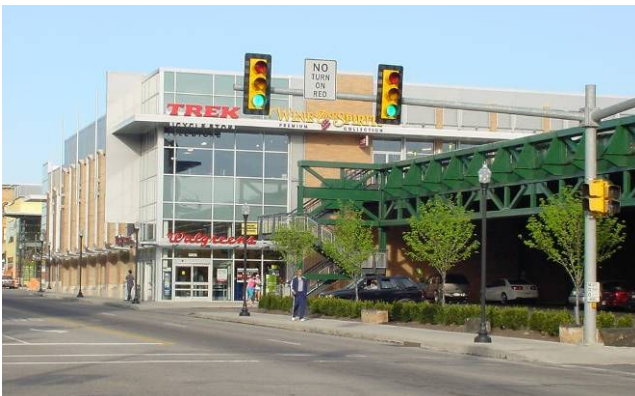


Photo Credit: URS



TOD Development at the East Busway Station in East Liberty

Photo Credit: Port Authority of Allegheny County