Planning & Stakeholder Relations Committee

March 20, 2025

Committee Members
Stephanie Turman (Chair)
Ali Doyle
Tom Burgunder
Bobbie Fan

Other Board Members
Aerion Abney
Joe Totten
Emma Shoucair
Lori Mizgorski
Tia McClenney
Jennifer Liptak

1. **Approval of Minutes**
   The minutes of the February 20, 2025, Planning & Stakeholder Relations Committee were approved.

2. **Authorization to Adopt Pittsburgh Regional Transit's Title VI Program for 2025 to 2027 (Amy Silbermann)**
   The resolution to adopt PRT's Title VI Program for 2025-2027 was approved to be sent to the full board.
   Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides that no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (such as PRT).
   This requirement is met by ensuring, through tracking and analysis, that provision of services are not granted in a way that disparately impacts the above groups. Additionally, low-income communities are also required to be included in these analyses (though they are not granted the same protections as minority race and ethnicity communities).
   If disparate impacts are found, PRT must evaluate alternative measures that can be undertaken to lessen, avoid, or mitigate any impacts.
   PRT is required to submit a Board Adopted Title VI Program to the FTA every 3 years, reporting on the prior 3 years to assert its continued equitable provision of services.

   For 2022-2024
   - 78 of PRT's 102 fixed transit routes are designated as low-income, meaning they are routes where at least one-third of the stops along the route are inside of a low-income block group.

- This is an increase of 13 routes, or 22%, from the previous program submission, despite a small decrease in poverty countywide.
    - Routes: 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 40, 43, 44, 48, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 71, 74, 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 83, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91, 93, 28X, 51L, 52L, 53L, 61A/B/C/D, 71A/B/C/D, Blue, G2, G3, O1, P1, P10, P17, P3, P67, P68, P69, P7, P71, P76, P78, Red, Silver, Y46
- 75 of PRT's 102 fixed transit routes are designated as minority routes, meaning they are routes where at least one-third of the stops along the route are inside of a block group that exceeds the County average for minority population.
- This is an increase of 18 routes, or 34%, from the previous program submission.
    - Routes: 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24 26, 27, 29, 31, 43, 44, 48, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 71, 74, 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 83, 86, 88, 89, 93, 28X, 52L, 61A, 61B, 61C, 61D, 71A, 71B, 71C, 71D, G2, G3, P1, P12, P16, P17, P3, P67, P68, P69, P7, P71, P76, P78, Y1, Y46
- One significant disparate impact was identified, with overcrowding occurring on several trips into Oakland on minority race and ethnicity routes. PRT is working to mitigate that impact now and will continue to do so over the coming year.

Communications in Title VI

- Public Participation Plan
- Language Assistance Plan
    - Four Factor Analysis, the Federal requirement for determining, what, if any, languages beyond English an agency is required to translate vital documents into.
        - The population and frequency of interactions with LEP persons at PRT is so low that no language meets the baseline requirement contained in the Safe Harbor Provision for translating vital documents. Even so, PRT aims to provide information in other languages in certain locations.
- Designed to assist PRT officials in identifying the language assistance services needed, as well as evaluating the translation and interpretation resources available, to help persons with limited English proficiency obtain meaningful access to PRT programs, services, information, activities, and public involvement opportunities.

Service Standards

- PRT's Title VI specific service standards include:
    - Vehicle load
    - Vehicle headway
    - On-time performance
    - Service availability
    - Vehicle fleet - age of vehicles
- Distribution of transit amenities
    - Seating
    - Shelters/canopies
    - Signage and maps
    - Schedules

- Waste receptacles
- Park and ride lots
- Escalators/elevators

Major Service Change 2022 – Route 40 Major Service Increase

- Route 40 had a major service increase with the June, 2022 schedule change to reflect PRT's Monongahela Incline Rehabilitation Project's impact on the Mt. Washington neighborhood
- Service was almost doubled to provide a better connection up to the top of Mt. Washington via another mode.
- The Incline project was not completed on time, and the service has still not been reduced back to its original level.
- Thus, the Title VI analysis is included below. This was an addition of service for a low income, non-minority designated route.

Title VI Evaluation Route 40 Major Service Increase

- There are no disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens as this is an increase of service on a low-income route.

Resolution to Adopt PRT's Title VI Program for 2025 - 2027

- In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, PRT maintains a Title VI Program to ensure individuals are protected from discrimination based upon race, color, and national origin
- The Title VI Program is updated every 3 years by PRT staff
- PRT staff review, analyze, and update the Program to remain in compliance with all Title VI requirements and compile a complete accounting of all Title VI activities over the program period
- Before PRT can submit the Program to the FTA, the Program must be reviewed, approved, and authorized for adoption by PRT's Board
- This program adoption will cover PRT for years 2025 through 2027, and reflects the previous 3 calendar years of service (2022 through 2024)

3. Authorization to Proceed to Public Comment Period for FY 2026 Fare Increases and Service Reductions (Amy Silbermann)

The resolution to enter a public comment period from March 31 to June 18 to receive input and testimony on these proposed changes, including three public hearings, was approved to be sent to the full board.

Western PA Transit Funding Background

- Act 44 of 2007 funded less than a third of the amount needed for public transit identified by the Pennsylvania Transportation Funding Reform Commission
- Act 89 of 2013 provided an additional $75 million in capital funding for PRT

Financial status

- State funding has not kept up with the public transportation needs of Allegheny County, causing PRT to have a structural deficit that will continue to grow each year without additional investment.

- PRT would need a $117 million infusion of funding (with compounding annual increases) to support current service levels for the next decade.
- This would also require a proportional growth in the local match.
- The cost of doing nothing today increases the need for an even greater investment tomorrow.

Summary of Proposed Changes

- Fixed Route (Bus, light rail, incline) - Up to 40% decrease in service; 9% increase in fixed route fares
- ACCESS Paratransit Service - 20% increase in paratransit fares; Decrease in ADA service area by 62% to minimum requirement

Historical Service & Ridership Levels

- From FY01 to FY23, PRT has already lost 36% of its service and 50% of its ridership over the course of 4 major service reductions:
    - 2002 -4%
    - 2007 -15%
    - 2010-2011 -14%
    - 2020-2023 -14%
- Allegheny County's population only decreased 4% during this period
- Cuts now will mostly impact riders who have no other options.

Service Preservation Priorities

- Maintain High Ridership and High Efficiency Routes
    - Retain robust service on high efficiency routes to avoid a death spiral of ridership decline in Allegheny County
- Minimize Adverse Equity Impacts
    - Maintain service coverage to the greatest extent possible in communities identified as being high equity areas
    - No significant service coverage loss in top 10% equity communities
- Minimize Adverse Coverage Impacts
    - Focus route eliminations where there is duplicative service
    - Turn routes into shorter version that feed into busways, rail, etc.

Service Reduction Prioritization

1. Eliminate very low efficiency routes (regular and commuter) – 7, 18, 71. O5, P13, Y45
2. Eliminate local and commuter routes that have significant service overlaps with other routes – 65, 19L, G31, P67, P71, Y1
3. Shorten select routes to become "feeders', including Airport service – 28X, 44, 69, Red
4. Eliminate service after 11 pm for all routes, seven days a week
5. Eliminate most low efficiency routes and all low efficiency commuter routes – 2, 4, 20, 36, 40, 58, Silver, 52L, G3, O1, P10, P12, P16, P7, P76
6. Reduce service frequencies on many routes - 1, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28X, 31, 44, 54, 56, 64, 69, 74, 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 87, 88, 91, G2, P68, P78, Y46

7. Eliminate high efficiency commuter routes – 51L, O12, P17, P69
8. Eliminate some moderate efficiency routes where there is minimal service equity impact – 14, 26, 29, 38, 39, 41, 43, 53L, Y47, Y49

Summary of Changes

- Routes Eliminated (41 Routes)
- Major Service Reduction (34 Routes)
- Minor Service Reduction (20 Routes)
- 180,000 residents and 50,000 jobs will lose access to public transit

Boroughs, Townships, Neighborhoods losing all service

- Municipalities (19)
    - Ambridge
    - Ben Avon
    - Brackenridge
    - East McKeesport
    - Edgeworth
    - Emsworth
    - Glen Osborne
    - Glenfield
    - Hampton
    - Harrison
    - Haysville
    - Leetsdale
    - North Fayette
    - Pitcairn
    - Reserve
    - Shaler
    - South Park
    - Trafford
    - Upper St. Clair
- Neighborhoods (3)
    - Banksville
    - Ridgemont
    - Swisshelm Park

Critical Direct Route Losses (weekday):

- Downtown Pittsburgh -30%
- Airport -63%

Hospitals and Educational Institutions – Complete service loss:

- St. Clair Hospital
- CCAC West campus
- Many K-12 schools

Other Direct and Indirect Impacts

- No funding in budget for overtime special services to meet demand:
    - Steelers, Pirates Penguins, Pitt sporting events
    - 2026 NFL Draft
    - Parades, festivals, holidays, races
    - Large entertainment events (concerts like Taylor Swift, Kenny Chesney, etc.)
- Closure of Infrastructure:
    - Collier and Ross Operating Divisions (two of PRT's four bus garages)
    - Wabash tunnel
    - Three bridges that support the 19L – Emsworth Limited bus and general traffic in Emsworth
    - Ten park and ride lots (2,000 parking spaces)
    - Twelve light rail stops/station pairs on the Silver Line Library
- Pause of PRT's community sponsorship programs
- Bus Line Redesign project is not implemented

Conclusions: Reduced Network Impacts

- No late evening service
- More transfer requirements
- Longer travel times
- More bus and train overcrowding
- Significant event traffic after sports, cultural, and other major events
- Elimination of commuter routes
- Higher peak / rush hour traffic volumes
- Environmental impacts to regional air quality, climate change
- Reduced access to jobs

Proposed Fare Increases Bus, light rail, and incline

- Fare revenue in 2024 was $57.1 million
- PRT assumes a 35% reduction in service will result in a 20% reduction in ridership.
- With a proposed fare increase of $0.25 to $3.00 and proposed service reductions:
    - 2026 Revenue $53.9 million
    - 2027 Revenue $49.3 million
- Revenue loss compared to FY 2024
    - 2026 Revenue -$3.2 million
    - 2027 Revenue -$7.8 million
- A $3 base bus* fare would be 5th highest in the country

Paratransit – Changes to Service

- ADA law guarantees PRT provide (via ACCESS paratransit) trips for persons with disabilities within origin and destination 3/4 miles of a non-commuter fixed route operating at that time of day/day of week
- PRT's proposed service cuts will make more trips eligible for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) Program which applies when riders are outside this service area

- Riders in the PwD program, however, are NOT guaranteed the same protections as they are under ADA. Their trip times can be changed, and they will likely experience more trip denials
    - These riders with disabilities lose their service protection and full confidence that paratransit will always be able to get them where they need to go.
- This is a reduction in the ADA service area of 62%

State Funding Recap

- Without additional State funding, PRT will have to cut service and raise fares.
- These proposals will go into effect in February 2026 without State action to support transit through additional funding.
- PRT needs an additional $117 million beginning in FY2026 to maintain current levels of transit over the next decade.
- PRT will provide lists of PA State House of Representative and Senate Districts by routes should residents wish to contact their state leaders

Resolution: Authorization to Enter into Public Comment Period for Fare Changes and Major Service Reductions

- Without additional state funding, PRT faces a $100 million FY2026 operating deficit.
- To prepare a balanced budget, PRT staff propose reductions to services and increases in fares, including fixed route and paratransit services and fares.
- This resolution would allow PRT and ACCESS staff to enter into a public comment period on the proposed changes for the public to provide formal testimony on the proposed changes.
- PRT staff will organize and report out on the public testimony at the end of the public comment period and consider any changes to these plans before finalizing plans in fall 2025.
- A public comment period to receive input on these proposed changes beginning at 8 a.m. on March 31 through 5 p.m. on June 18.

With no further business, the Planning & Stakeholder Relations Committee meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 17, 2025, in the fifth floor Board Room at Pittsburgh Regional Transit offices.