



## Port Authority's Values

Growth-Oriented, Safe, Accessible

### Overview

Transit centers are locations where transit vehicles operating on several routes converge to allow riders the opportunity to transfer between routes to continue their trips. Many transit centers also provide connections to other modes such as bicycle and pedestrian paths, intercity bus and rail services, and, through park-and-ride lots, automobiles. Transit centers typically include bus layover facilities (considered in more detail in a separate whitepaper). Transit center design considers such features as passenger volume, number of transit vehicles on the site at any one time, local auto and pedestrian traffic levels, and existing development.

### Analysis

Transfer facilities are an essential part of transit systems. Throughout public engagement efforts for the NEXTransit Long-Range Transportation plan, there was support for transit centers at several locations in Port Authority's service area. This support aligns with the earlier research indicating that many trips within the Port Authority service area are from one community to another without the need to travel through downtown. Increasing the number of locations for transfers would facilitate those community trips.

Researchers have found personal safety while traveling to and from and while waiting for a transit vehicle is a major factor in a potential rider's decision to choose transit. Modern transit centers provide amenities to enhance rider safety such as lighting, various levels of protection from weather, areas for pick-up and

drop-off, and areas to walk and stand safely away from traffic.

Modern transit centers often can be designed with the following features:

- Spaces for bike and scooter share stations
- Sustainability elements through incorporating of renewable energy collection (i.e. solar or wind) facilities, providing locations for recharging electric buses and mitigating stormwater runoff through incorporation of bioswales
- Facilities for training of riders with disabilities
- Spaces for nonprofit-organizations and for small businesses such as a café
- Connections to intercity bus and Amtrak services

Regardless of Port Authority's future system design, transit centers located in places with high passenger volumes are likely to support its operations. Obtaining the required land for the transit centers can be challenging, especially when factoring in equity and environmental justice considerations. Potential strategies to overcome this include locating transit centers in underutilized parking areas or incorporating transit centers into the fabric of a central business district.

Currently, Port Authority is preparing to begin a study of the Central Business District's bus network in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership. This study will include at least one network option which incorporates a larger transit center into the Downtown core. While a location has not yet been selected, NEXTransit offers some basic criteria for discussion purposes that will help to advance public review and selection of alternatives (and

the requirements that will be used to create the alternatives).

Although NEXTransit presents several options for future connectivity that aim to create better neighborhood-to-neighborhood connections that don't require riders to pass through or connect Downtown Pittsburgh if it's not on their way, Downtown will continue to remain the center of Port Authority's transit network. The core rapid transit network routes currently terminate within or near Downtown, but in the future, through routing across the County from east to west or north to south with Downtown as a central hub may be feasible. While this is already possible based on where busways and light rail assets are located, a transit center that can provide flexible connections is necessary to make these connections comfortable, consistent and easier to understand.

### Peer Examples

#### Sparks, NV

The Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) Centennial Plaza opened in 2008 and serves bus rapid transit (RTC Rapid Lincoln Line), local buses, paratransit, and Megabus. The transit center design was inspired by Sparks' 117-year history and the railroad's importance to the city, and also will all be able to support service expansion to 2030 and beyond. It includes a mobility center, where in-house eligibility and travel training for persons with disabilities is conducted. The training includes multiple floor surfaces and a bus mock-up. In addition, weather-permitting, trainees can utilize the outside area of the transit center.

#### Springfield, OR

The Lane Transit District's Springfield Station is a transit center that has an innovative and environmentally friendly design. Green features include a rainwater catchment device and a system of bioswales to assist in cleaning and reducing the amount of stormwater runoff

from the facility. It also includes pedestrian amenities such as open shelters, ample parking, and natural gardens. The transit center houses several businesses and provides bus rapid transit and local bus service, as well as Greyhound bus service.

#### Champaign/Urbana, IL

The Illinois Terminal is Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District's (MTD) multimodal facility located in downtown Champaign that is served by local buses, rural transit providers, intercity bus providers, passenger rail, and a ride share zone. The building has retail space within the building as well as meeting spaces and banquet halls. With assistance of grant money from the Federal Transit Administration, the transit terminal will be renovated and expanded to transform under-utilized land for more productive public use in the downtown area, while improving access and allowing for faster, easier transfers and reduce wait times.

**Level of Effort for Implementation:** Moderate to High

- Construction of new transit centers may require land acquisition, planning, engineering, and construction.
- At a minimum, platforms would be needed for rider waiting areas and bus pads would be required to maintain pavement integrity at the facilities.
- Larger more complex transit centers could be major construction projects.
- Transit centers could be constructed in conjunction with other corridor related improvement projects.

### Resources

[Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District](#)

[PIVOT Architecture Firm](#)

[Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County](#)