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## **Dead End**

# **Why the Mon-Fayette Expressway and the Southern Beltway Are Bad Choices for the Pittsburgh Region**

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## **Dead End Executive Summary**

This report examines the likely costs and benefits and the overall desirability of proceeding with two major new highway projects proposed for the Pittsburgh region: the Mon-Fayette Expressway and the Southern Beltway. Each of these projects was first envisioned decades ago when continued highway construction was seen as a necessary part of the future of any truly modern city. Today, as evidence mounts that major new highways cost communities large sums of money and bring few benefits in return, people are once again asking "are these projects worth it?"

The Mon-Fayette is a proposed new four-lane, 70-mile, access-controlled toll highway that would run from Morgantown, West Virginia, to Pittsburgh. The Southern Beltway is a proposed new 28-mile, four-lane, access-controlled toll highway that would run south from the Pittsburgh Airport to intersect with I-79 near Canonsburgh, and then run east to the Monongahela River valley where it would connect to the Mon-Fayette Expressway. Altogether, these two projects would result in 98 miles of major new highways in Southwestern Pennsylvania, making them the largest road investments in the region in decades, at an estimated cost of \$3.2 billion.

In preparing this report, the authors reviewed plans for the two proposed highways and the experiences of communities around the U.S. that have built similar projects. We addressed three basic questions:

Will the construction of these roads bring economic activity to the Pittsburgh region that would otherwise go elsewhere? Will the Mon-Fayette Expressway revive the economy of the Mon Valley?

Will the two projects be likely to alleviate the few instances of traffic congestion that currently exist in some places along or near their proposed alignments, and if so, will this relief last?

Will the benefits derived from the projects, if any, be achieved at a reasonable cost?

Based on this review, we conclude that:

These two projects are not likely to make the Pittsburgh area attract economic growth from other areas, and are not likely to revive the economy of the Mon Valley. In fact, current research reveals that new highways, beltways and bypasses shift economic activity within metropolitan areas, usually by enabling the migration of people, businesses and jobs often at the expense of older, existing communities.

Additionally, absent a comprehensive economic development strategy, the Mon-Fayette Expressway is not likely to revive the economic fortunes of the Mon Valley. Indeed, in communities across the country, new highways have proven to be an ineffective economic development tool. For example, the I-79 corridor between Washington, Pennsylvania and West Virginia has done little for job growth in that area. The Southpointe industrial park recently opened along I-79, but the majority of its industries come from Allegheny County. This and other experiences have led to a new rule of thumb among some economic development professionals when you take an economically depressed area and add a billion dollar highway, you get an economically depressed area and a billion dollar highway. Investing the majority of the Mon Valleys resources into one road project is a losing strategy.

The Mon-Fayette Expressway and the Southern Beltway are not likely to relieve traffic congestion for any significant period of time. This is true for two reasons: first, the Pittsburgh region ranks among the lowest in the country for overall traffic congestion in major metropolitan areas, and second, new roads are not an effective medium or long-term solution for even severe traffic congestion problems. Congestion could be relieved in and around some of Pittsburghs tunnels, but these two projects are not the way to achieve that objective.

Any congestion or economic development benefits these projects may bring will come at an enormous cost to the taxpayers of the Pittsburgh region. Some \$900 million is currently available for these projects out of a total projected cost of \$3.2 billion. This leaves a shortfall of \$2.3 billion. Raising this amount locally will require the equivalent of

a contribution of \$2,502 from every family in the six-county Pittsburgh metropolitan region, or \$3,961 for a family of four. Alternatively, paying for the shortfall through a regional gasoline tax would require a 35 cent per gallon surcharge for the entire region for the next ten years.

Up until now, backers of these pinned their hopes on one of Pennsylvania's members of Congress, Rep. Bud Shuster, Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Their hope was that Rep. Shuster could gain a major commitment of federal funds for the project to close a major portion of the \$2.3 billion funding gap. Unfortunately, the new six-year transportation spending bill just approved by Congress and signed by the President, called the "Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century," or "TEA-21" for short, contained only \$25 million for the Mon-Fayette Expressway.

Now that TEA-21 is finished, the last hope for financing the project without a major commitment of local property, sales or other local tax funds from Pittsburgh area residents has evaporated. In light of this development, now is the time to re-evaluate the desirability of proceeding with these projects. Furthermore, any rational evaluation of the costs and benefits involved will conclude that the benefits of the projects to the region are marginal and do not justify the enormous costs.

The citizens of the Pittsburgh region should call upon their elected officials and the members of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to abandon these costly projects once and for all. Instead of an endless cycle of new highway building, the region's leaders should begin developing transportation and economic solutions for the region that invest public resources in existing communities before building new ones, stress development patterns that can be sustained over the long term, and provide people with transportation choices. If these strategies are pursued, residents of the Pittsburgh region can save money and get their communities on the way to a vibrant, sustainable economic future that stresses quality of life perhaps one of the most important locational factors for companies choosing an area for major new investments in the 21st century.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Pittsburgh has come a long way. Once characterized as the "Smoky City" when steel production was at its height, Pittsburgh has emerged as one of Money magazine's top ten most livable cities in the Northeast. Challenges remain, however, as the city continues to lose population, contend with emerging industries, and struggle to allocate scarce resources. Putting the region's money into building new highways like the Mon-Fayette Expressway and the Southern Beltway, however, is not the answer.

The Mon-Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway projects are enormous highway projects that are going to cost the region \$3.2 billion dollars. Local officials were counting on \$500 million in special federal transportation money, but when Congress

allocated only \$25 million of their request, the real cost of the projects became evident. If built, the highway projects will consume enormous resources while delivering negligible benefits, while the citizens of the Pittsburgh region will have to cover the shortfall with higher taxes, tolls, and fees. The authors of this report have analyzed the Mon-Fayette and Southern Beltway projects and have concluded that they will not bring new revenues into Pittsburgh, will not solve congestion problems, and will come at a high price for the entire region.

But the citizens of the Pittsburgh metropolitan region have a choice. In light of the funding deficit, now is the time to re-evaluate these costly projects and examine alternatives that will provide real solutions for the future of the Pittsburgh region. By making smart choices that build on existing resources, improve downtown Pittsburgh, highlight natural and cultural resources, and provide more transportation choices, they will yield a better quality of life for citizens, businesses, and visitors throughout the Pittsburgh region. A place Pittsburgh can be proud of.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

The proposed new Mon-Fayette Expressway would be a 70-mile toll expressway from Morgantown, West Virginia, to Pittsburgh (see Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission map on page 5). When it reaches the Pittsburgh area, it would split in two, with one branch terminating at

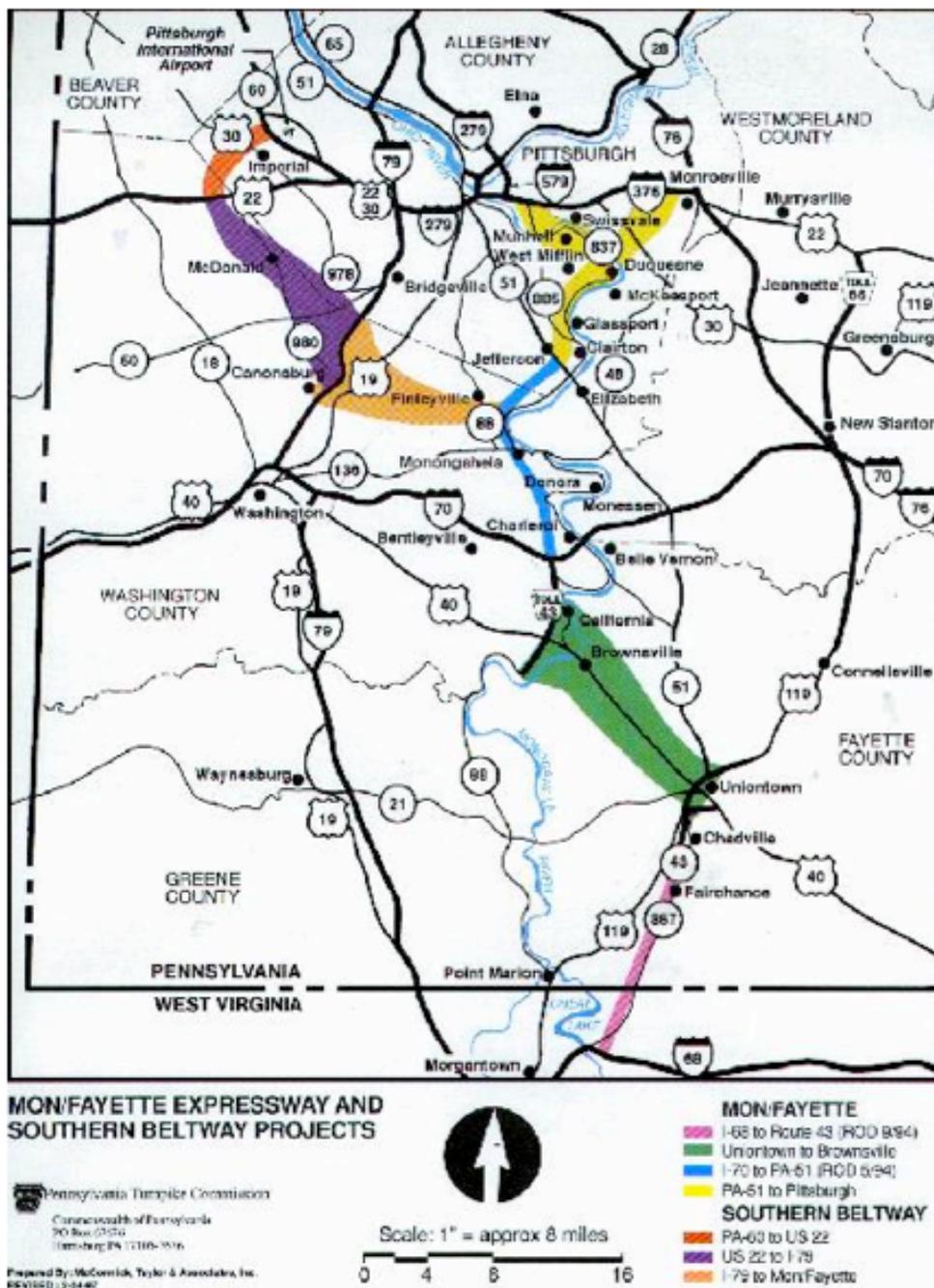
I-376 in the city of Pittsburgh and the other at I-376 in Monroeville. The proposed new Southern Beltway would be a 28-mile toll road that would extend south from the Pittsburgh Airport to connect with I-79 near Canonsburgh, and east to intersect the new Mon-Fayette Expressway.

One piece of the Mon-Fayette Expressway, connecting Uniontown, Pennsylvania and Morgantown, West Virginia, is under construction, and could open to traffic within two years. The portion planned to extend north from Uniontown to I-70 is partially underway, and may be completed in several years. Completion of these two sections will create a high-speed freeway link from I-70 south to Morgantown in addition to the existing link provided by I-79. In spite of the dubious value of this connection for long distance travel purposes, its cost has been relatively low compared to the portion of the Mon-Fayette Expressway that has yet to begin construction. This is due to the rural nature of the land through which the southern sections pass and the fact that they are being built along existing roadways for part of their length. The balance of the Mon-Fayette Expressway and the entire Southern Beltway are still in the planning stages.

The valley of the Monongahela River, where most of the Mon-Fayette Expressway would be located, extends from Pittsburgh southeast through Uniontown into West Virginia. It is an area rich in western Pennsylvania history, but has suffered from an economic decline for the last 30 years. Through the mid-1900's, the thriving coal industry of this region supported the areas residents with many employment opportunities and a strong economic base. However, the steady decline in the economy,

brought on by the demise of the steel industry, sent shock waves throughout the region, leading to the economic depression of the Mon Valley. Today it is still trying to recover.

The Mon-Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway projects have been proposed off and on for the last 40 years. When the highways were first conceived, at the beginning of the interstate highway era, popular thinking dictated that building new roads was the key to prosperity. Today the highways are being promoted as solutions to the basic problems that have plagued Pittsburgh and the Mon Valley since the steel industry left in the seventies. But current research shows that this is wishful thinking, and that these highways are unlikely to provide any significant economic boost.



### III. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECTS

The authors of this report performed a comprehensive review of the Mon-Fayette and Southern Beltway projects and the experiences of communities around the U.S. that have built similar highways to judge the desirability of proceeding with the projects. This review was conducted to address three specific questions:

Will the construction of these roads bring economic activity to the Pittsburgh region that would otherwise go elsewhere, and will the Mon-Fayette Expressway revive the economy of the Mon Valley?

Will construction of these two road projects relieve the few instances of traffic congestion that currently exist near their proposed routes?

Will the benefits of the projects for the region (if any) be cost effective given the expense of the projects?

Based on our review, we determined that the projects are not likely to bring economic activity to the Pittsburgh region or revive the economy of the Mon Valley, are not likely to solve traffic congestion problems, and will be prohibitively expensive for Pittsburgh area taxpayers. By constructing these new roads, the region will face increased exodus to the suburbs, more traffic congestion, a loss of historic landmarks and regional assets, and a huge bill for the entire region. There are many other solutions that are equally, or more effective than road building, and that cost less and deliver more benefits.

Will the construction of these roads bring economic activity to the Pittsburgh region that would otherwise go elsewhere?

These two projects are not likely to attract economic growth to Pittsburgh from other areas.

In addition to the enormous costs of new highways, mainstream research continues to show that building new roads is a poor way to boost economic development. Beltways in particular have far-reaching impacts on land use and central cities by drawing resources out of the city and enabling suburban sprawl. Therefore, while the Southern Beltway might bring new economic activity to Washington County, it would likely reduce economic growth in Allegheny, Westmoreland, Butler, Beaver, Armstrong, and Washington counties.

#### Effects on Central Cities and Downtown

Beltways are often touted as a catalyst for regional economies, offering advantages such as construction jobs, facility planning and operations, as well as indirect benefits from less delays and inter-industry effects. Actual research shows that mostly these projects just shift economic activity from one place to another. A study by Professor Marlon Boarnet of the University of California at Irvine showed that in counties where

highway spending accelerated, they experienced increased economic activity, but also found that adjacent counties experienced reduced economic output (Boarnet, 1995). Other research echoes these findings:

Beltways and bypasses, by design, create large areas of highly accessible land outside the city, particularly at interchange sites, which are traditional magnets for development such as office parks or shopping areas. The new land availability attracts businesses to the suburbs where zoning is less restrictive, allowing large parking lots and subdivision lots. This feature of the beltway system has been a powerful force for moving people and jobs out of the central city...the result is more traffic and congestion, and a shift in the business activity away from central cities (Anderson, et al., 1980).

Drawing revenues from downtown Pittsburgh and the airport corridor contradicts current efforts to bring jobs and retail back to downtown Pittsburgh. Many projects are underway to encourage downtown business from a variety of organizations, including the Working Together Consortium, the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, the Pittsburgh Regional Partnership, and the Pittsburgh High Technology Council. Local officials should be concerned about the impacts of the new highways particularly when, "[h]istorically, central cities surrounded by suburban beltways posted lower gains in retail sales and employment than those with beltways within their jurisdiction or where no beltway was built (Payne-Maxie, 1980)."

Furthermore, as jobs, money and opportunities follow highways toward the suburbs, it becomes increasingly difficult to provide employment opportunities for those living in central cities without a car, or who have work hours other than nine to five. Pittsburgh already has a wide racial disparity in the unemployment rates, underscoring the need for better job opportunities and investment for those living downtown.

Studies show that, overall, highways are not a reliable strategy for economic development.

As a comprehensive study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the U.S. Department of Urban Development (HUD), stated definitively:

no strong evidence exists demonstrating that beltways improve a metropolitan areas competitive advantage... a proposed beltway only rarely can be justified on the even partial basis that it will enhance the regions economic position...because any net gains are likely to be small, potential adverse impacts of beltway construction probably cannot be balanced by beltway-induced regional economic growth (Payne-Maxie, 1980).

The Mon-Fayette Expressway is not likely to revive the economic fortunes of the Mon Valley.

The Mon-Fayette Expressway will not solve the economic problems of the Mon Valley. Instead, with a fraction of the cost, income-generating projects such as promoting tourism, education, job training and housing can yield greater results.

Current projects in the Mon Valley engage diverse approaches to economic development from sewer upgrades to other infrastructure improvements like storm water management and efforts to promote tourism. The Rivers of Steel project aims to bring economic development to the Mon Valley by developing riverfront landings that encourage tourboats and local transport, and by showcasing the regions unique history.

Rural economic development around the nation shows that certain kinds of transportation investments can attract revenues to a region in a cost-efficient way. In Virginia, transportation planners identified projects to boost economic development by encouraging tourism, and in northeast Minnesota planners focused on a bikeways plan along with biking and hiking trails, a Scenic Byways Program and a related program on the cultural and natural history of the great pine forests of northern Minnesota. In northeastern Pennsylvania, the local development district is looking at enhancing quality of life and recreational opportunities through transportation facilities and services that are important to tourism and recreational interests, and by developing bikeways and trails (Economic Development Digest, 1998).

Will construction of these two road projects relieve the few instances of traffic congestion that currently exist near their proposed routes?

The Mon-Fayette Expressway and the Southern Beltway are not likely to relieve traffic congestion for any significant period of time.

According to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazettes Benchmarks study, Pittsburgh can boast enviable overall traffic conditions. It ranks second best in traffic congestion, behind only Kansas City, Mo., and sixth best in commute time (Benchmarks, Texas Transportation Institute, 1998). However, the desire to ease congestion around the Squirrel Hill Tunnel and to provide east-west access in western Washington County have bolstered the drive for the Mon-Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway. Nevertheless, any traffic relief will only be a short term result.

### More Traffic

Research clearly shows that building more roads or wider roads will not solve congestion problems. In fact, by providing new capacity, a beltway can create demand by diverting trips from local streets, or because of the accessibility they offer, they may encourage people to make trips that might have been deferred or not made at all. This is called induced travel, or latent demand. One of the most comprehensive new studies on this subject covers 30 urban counties in California from 1973 to 1990. The authors, University of California Berkeley researchers Mark Hansen and Yuanlin Huang, found that at the metropolitan level, every one percent increase in new lane-miles of highway generated a 0.9 percent increase in driving over four years. This finding led the researchers to conclude that "[w]ith so much induced demand, adding road capacity does little to reduce congestion." (Hansen and Huang, 1997) The new roads may also attract people that previously used another mode, such as transit or ridesharing,

because of the shorter trip time. With the attraction of a shorter commute, the time saved may be spent making longer trips or changing residential location, generating new development and longer trips.

In the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area, for example, I-287 was recently extended by 20 miles through New Jersey creating a bypass to relieve traffic congestion near New York City, only to see the new road fill up with traffic two years after its construction. The end result was not only the lack of traffic relief near the city, but an increase in total traffic volume. As Professor David Bernstein of Princeton University criticized, "Its as if we hadnt learned anything in the last 50 years." (Prez-Pea, 1996)

Will the benefits of the projects for the region, if any, be cost effective?

Any congestion or economic development benefits these projects may bring will come at an enormous cost to the taxpayers of the Pittsburgh region.

The Mon-Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway toll roads will cost everyone and those costs will continue to climb. In 1996, the price tag for both projects was \$2.5 billion, but that estimate has since jumped to \$3.2 billion. The 24-mile section of the Mon-Fayette Expressway that would run from Route 51 to Pittsburgh is the most expensive segment at a total of \$1.2 billion or \$50 million per mile. This exorbitant sum earned the Mon-Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway a prime spot in Road to Ruin, an annual report that documents the most wasteful and environmentally damaging road projects in the nation (Taxpayers for Common Sense, 1997).

At one time, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission estimated that it could fund both toll roads without federal support, relying on \$500 million from special federal earmarks and a host of state, private and local sources to provide the balance. Reality hit, however, when the costs began to skyrocket and Congress authorized only \$25 million of the original request--less than one percent of the total cost. Even the managing director of the Pennsylvania Highway Information Association remarked, "That's a dramatic shortfall," adding that the commission may have to start knocking on other doors (Antonelli, 1998).

Despite the efforts of Pennsylvania Governor Ridge to locate some \$350 million by bonding against state oil franchise and gas taxes to finance state road projects, the Turnpike Commission still has to locate funding for two-thirds of the cost of the projects.

Meanwhile, if implemented, these projects would cost every household in the Pittsburgh metropolitan region the equivalent of \$2,500. If the gas tax were raised to help fund the roads, the cost of commuting would go up 35 cents per gallon of gas for the next ten years, adding \$3.54 onto every ten gallon fill-up.

## THE BILL

Cost of the Mon-Fayette Expressway/Southern Beltway projects \$3.2 billion

Cost of just the 24-mile Route 51 to Pittsburgh section \$1.2 billion

Average cost per mile, both projects \$36 million

Amount of federal money for Uniontown to Brownsville \$25 million

Total available funding (including money spent and bonded taxes) \$900 million

Shortfall for the Mon-Fayette Expressway \$2.3 billion

Equivalent cost per household \$2,502

Equivalent cost for a family of four \$3,961

Equivalent gas tax increase (over the next 10 years) 35 Per Gallon

Equivalent gas tax on every 10 gallon fill-up \$3.54

Less Bang for the Buck?

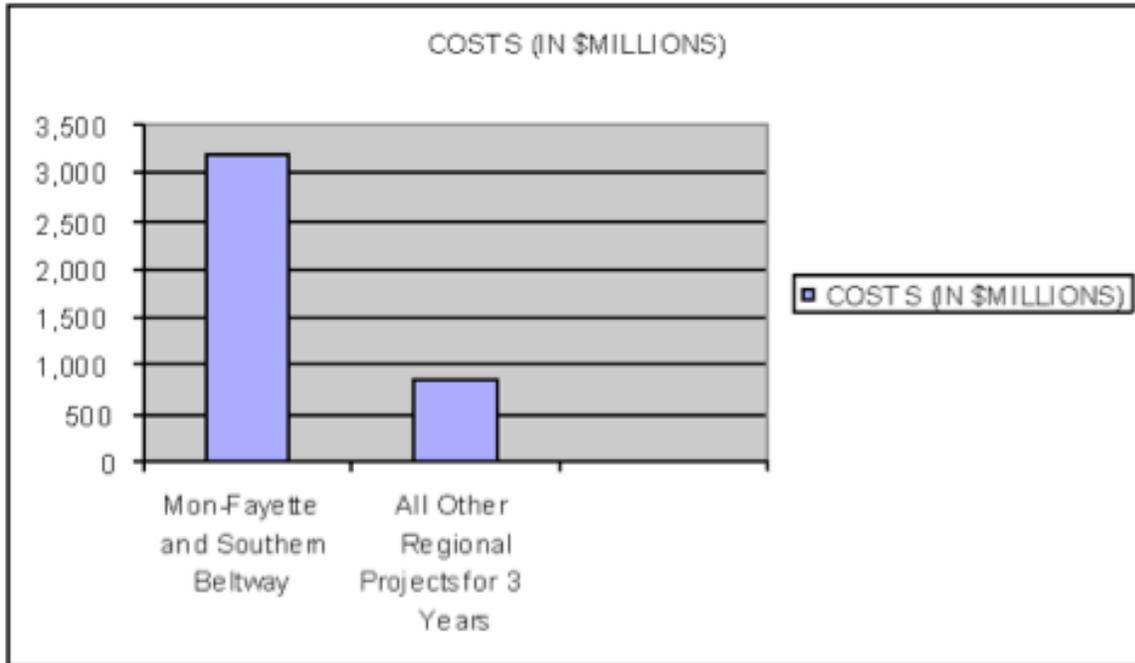
Chart 1 shows that, for the cost of the Mon Fayette and Southern Beltway projects, the Pittsburgh region can fund a variety of necessary projects, benefiting the entire metropolitan population over the next three years for about one-fourth the cost. And by using federal funds, the projects will be constructed without raising gas taxes or imposing excessive costs on regional or federal taxpayers.

The federal transportation law was recently reauthorized for the next six years in a bill called the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Like its predecessor (ISTEA), TEA-21 provides more money to fund rail, bus, bike trail and road projects in Pittsburgh. Under TEA-21, the entire state of Pennsylvania will receive \$1.3 billion each year for the six-year duration of the bill, an increase from the last transportation bill. The Mon-Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway projects would devour nearly two years of the entire state of Pennsylvania's federal money. With the amount spent on the projects, scores of regional improvements could be planned and constructed.

### Project Costs

Instead, TEA-21 funds should be used to finance critical bridge and road maintenance projects in southwestern Pennsylvania, enhance the waterfront with bike and hiking trails, improve local air quality, and encourage sustainable growth throughout the Pittsburgh metropolitan region. The bill provides money for special projects in Pittsburgh, including millions of dollars to extend the Martin Luther King Jr. East

Busway, rehabilitate the Jefferson Heights Bridge in Penn Hills and construct a bridge over the Allegheny River to link New Kensington with the Allegheny Valley Expressway (Route 28). In addition, the bill will include money to improve drivers' access to and exit



from the proposed sports stadiums. City planners also are contemplating improved access to the West End Bridge from the stadiums' parking areas, along with plans to build a second North Shore garage for stadium traffic and commuters.

## Higher Taxes, Tolls and Fees -- Is it Worth it?

Clearly the highway projects are too costly to the region, and research bears that out. The Regional Marketing Coalition commissioned a study to identify projects that accelerate economic growth in southwestern Pennsylvania, and neither the Mon-Fayette Expressway nor the Southern Beltway made the cut. A cost-benefit analysis revealed that the benefits of linking the airport to downtown, and better land use in the airport corridor far outweighed the high costs of the Mon-Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway projects. As the costs continue to go up, other necessary projects will be sacrificed to fund the toll roads. Badly-needed road maintenance and improvements along the airport corridor will lose out, as well as fire, police, school services and other economic development efforts.

With only one-third of the necessary funding for the Mon-Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway projects, the balance will be paid by local taxpayers in the form of higher tolls, and gas, sales and other local taxes. This approach, especially when local taxes are already high in Allegheny County, will not be a popular way to fund these projects. According to the Benchmarks study, local taxes are the fourth highest in the nation, so it is no wonder that historically, Pittsburghers are hesitant to pay more taxes. Last year, voters in the Pittsburgh metropolitan region soundly rejected a half-cent sales tax known as the Regional Renaissance Initiative that would have financed new sports stadiums. Its reincarnation, "Plan B," funds new stadiums and the expansion of the Convention Center, at an estimated total of \$800 million. Despite innovative financing for the construction, it is estimated that taxpayers will bear more than 75 percent of the cost (Lord, 1998).

If the toll roads are built, maintaining revenues through tolls may be difficult especially if traffic projections are inaccurate, as they often are. Examples where toll roads failed to live up to the promise of high ridership and funding without public money give reason to pause. The \$326 million Dulles Toll Road in a rural area of Virginia, for example, was supposed to carry 34,000 cars per day by the end of its first year. But when less than half that amount was counted in the months following its unveiling, the private funders were left scrambling for ways to make up the difference. As a result, a proposal had to be introduced by the Virginia General Assembly to help the investors cover some of the rising costs.

Similarly, in Southern California, the privately owned SR-91 toll road was expected to provide toll-free High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to draw carpoolers. Since the toll road volumes were significantly lower than expected, however, a toll is now charged on the well-used HOV in order to help recoup the loss of revenue on the other lanes. Since its opening in 1995, the HOV toll has gone up four times, jeopardizing the incentives for commuters, and still not generating the necessary finances.

## Additional Costs

When considering the full costs of a highway project, there are other costs to factor in, namely maintenance, opportunity costs, and the environmental and community damages. Maintaining roads is an ongoing financial commitment that lasts throughout the life of the highway. The opportunity costs are those elements that will be lost once the highways are constructed. For example, if the highway does run along the river, then opportunities for residents to use and enjoy the river will be lost, along with the chance to promote the riverfront as a tourist destination. Environmentally, the highways would result in a decline in air quality -- a problem Pittsburgh is slowly overcoming -- loss of open space, and damage to sensitive environmental areas such as watersheds. Increased auto dependence yields sprawl, and lost time in traffic because of the increased congestion, and the loss of historic places and community quality of life is immeasurable. After the exorbitant fiscal costs, these impacts may hurt the Pittsburgh region the most.

## Community and Environmental Impacts

Contrary to the image of community consensus that the road supporters have been portraying, many people are opposed to the highway, especially when entire neighborhoods are at risk. Indeed, communities such as Cecil and Jefferson have already opposed the road, and many others may join in as they hear how the Mon-Fayette Expressway will tear through their neighborhoods (Niederberger, 1998). Most Pittsburgh residents do not even know about the toll road, and are only now discovering how their homes and neighborhoods will be destroyed or altered by traffic noise and congestion. Residents of West Mifflin learned in June that many will either be faced with losing their homes or forced to live with a highway in their front yard. As one homeowner summed up in frustration, "[s]o well get to live with the noise and fumes. Some of us will be only 200 feet from the road. Theyve ruined our whole neighborhood (Niederberger, 1998)."

Stories like these are not uncommon, especially in low income neighborhoods. Historically, low income neighborhoods bear the brunt of highway construction in the form of increased noise, air pollution, traffic and physical barriers that cut people off from their stores and neighbors. With the alignment of the Route 51 to Pittsburgh segment on the north side of the river, several residents are facing the destruction of their homes and historic landmarks. Current estimates show that communities like Hazelwood, Rankin, and Braddock will be severely affected by the toll road, wiping out homes and creating traffic problems on roads like Second Avenue.

## More Traffic

Despite the claims that the Mon-Fayette Expressway will relieve congestion, the road will create more traffic problems along its route, and Pittsburghers will likely experience exasperating congestion for the duration of the projects construction. The City of

Pittsburgh expressed the following concerns to be addressed by a thorough analysis of the Mon-Fayette Expressways impact:

Increased traffic on City streets around expressway interchanges, including Swinburne and Bates Streets in Oakland, Second Avenue in Hazelwood, and Second Avenue into downtown.

Congestion on the Parkway from the Fort Pitt Tunnels to Bates Street caused by the limited capacity of the tunnel and I-376 exit ramps into downtown.

The ineffectiveness of the Expressway to serve as a tunnel bypass in light of its limited accessibility and the fact that it is a toll road, its tendency to induce greater auto use, and the congestion created at its terminus on I-376 west of Bates Street; and

Questionable effectiveness of the Expressway to reduce traffic on city streets, including Commercial Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard in Squirrel Hill, Braddock Avenue in Regent Square, Second Avenue in Hazelwood, and West Carson on the South Side (City of Pittsburgh, 1998).

#### **IV. SOLUTIONS THAT BUILD ON PITTSBURGH'S ASSETS**

The Mon-Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway projects are not silver bullets for the region, but they will take the lions share of its resources. And once the money is spent, it cannot be recovered. Instead, Pittsburgh can refocus its resources on downtown, natural resources like the riverfront, and overall quality of life.

Pittsburgh has numerous assets and ranks high in many quality of life indicators, illustrating its attractiveness to residents and visitors. In Money magazines "Best Places to Live" report, Pittsburgh placed seventh in Northeast cities, and in the Benchmarks study, Pittsburgh scored fourth place in overall quality of life. Pittsburgh has been recognized as the "Safest U.S. City Over One Million Population" by Century 21 Real Estate, and the recently-released Mean Streets report shows that the Pittsburgh-Beaver Valley area is one of the relatively safer areas for pedestrians. The Benchmarks study also showed that Pittsburgh continues to have a low crime rate, a high level of medical quality, low cost of living, and enviable traffic conditions. Pittsburgh's strengths in foundation assets and leadership by corporations and foundations, brings a wealth of resources to the area including non-profit organizations and universities.

Growth and progress do not have to take the form of more asphalt. Research shows that building new roads creates as many losers as it does winners. Instead, by making the Pittsburgh region a better place to visit, work and live, everyone can win. In fact, developing an area's quality of life benefits many sectors of the economy. It helps to retain and draw population, especially young people, revitalize depressed areas, and showcase local assets. As the Benchmarks study points out, "Studies have found that

parcs and their outdoor amenities are important quality of life factors in attracting and retaining young professional talent." (Hopey, 1997)

## Tourism

The Regional Marketing Coalitions study showed that a showcase attraction and theme tours would capture travelers seeking cultural and recreational activities. The Rivers of Steel Heritage Area is a visible example, marrying historic preservation and tourism. In 1996, the Rivers of Steel Heritage Area became an official Pennsylvania Heritage Park, designed to celebrate the story of steel production in the Pittsburgh area and educate people on this historic labor site. Along with making Pittsburgh a major historic tourist destination, the Rivers of Steel project aims to reclaim and revitalize the waterfronts and bring economic development to the Mon Valley. The project is a major force of economic development, and includes a museum complex complete with an interpretive center, boat "journeys" to the various sites, and the Steel Heritage hike and bike trail. In total, the project expects to support 424 construction jobs and 501 permanent positions, generating \$25 million in annual receipts, and once tourist and local spending are factored in, the project will bring in \$59 million annually (Steel Industry Heritage Corporation, 1997).

## Making Downtown More Livable with Transportation Choices

The Pittsburgh metropolitan region needs to focus on investments that revitalize its existing communities. Planning a balanced transportation system that ensures a healthy mix of travel choices is the foundation for healthy economic growth and a higher quality of life for residents of the Pittsburgh region. By focusing on land use and transportation connections, local officials can better work together to identify solutions for local neighborhoods, and throughout the region.

In 1988, a new land-use and transportation alternative began to take shape in Portland, Oregon. What began as opposition to the proposed Western Bypass suburban freeway, evolved into an innovative approach to transportation planning. Spearheaded by the non-profit group 1000 Friends of Oregon, the LUTRAQ (Land Use Transportation and Air Quality) study was designed as an alternative land use and transportation plan complete with research on the impacts of pedestrian-friendly design and a set of design and zoning guidelines for transit-oriented development. Ultimately, the LUTRAQ model was included in the Oregon Department of Transportation's environmental impact statement process and was chosen over the Western Bypass.

Not only was the model successful in providing a viable transportation option, but the patterns of investment proposed in the LUTRAQ final report are estimated to lower highway congestion by 18 percent, increase transit trips up to 27 percent, decrease work trips in single-occupant vehicles by 22.5 percent, and reduce air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions compared to the highway scenario. Furthermore, the LUTRAQ principles have been circulated and duplicated all over the country as a model of progressive planning.

The new federal transportation bill, TEA-21, created a program inspired by the LUTRAQ study and STPPs 1997 *Blueprint for ISTEA Reauthorization, called The Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program*. This program provides \$120 million that can be granted to state, local and regional agencies that partner with non-profits, the private sector, and each other to coordinate land use and transportation decisions. The goal is to create a funding source for transportation agencies and local governments to better coordinate their land use and transportation planning. The money could be used to develop, assess and implement alternative investment and growth scenarios. In cases where plans have advanced far enough, the money can be used for project implementation.

In Springfield, Massachusetts, the completion of a river walk and bikeway was cited as a major factor in keeping the National Basketball Hall of Fame in the town. (DiStefano and Raimi, 1996).

## **V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BETTER TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS**

### **#1. Improve and Maintain Existing Roads**

At the same time that billions of dollars in new highways are being proposed for the Pittsburgh area, its existing roads and bridges are in desperate need of repair. According to the 1997 report by STPP and the Environmental Working Group, *Potholes and Politics*, 36 percent of Pittsburghs roads are in "poor" or "mediocre" condition and 80 percent of Pennsylvanias roads fall in "poor," "mediocre," or "fair" categories (STPP and EWG, 1997).

A 1995 poll found that the voting public overwhelmingly views road maintenance as an important issue. The poll revealed that 49 percent of voters chose "fixing roads and bridges" as a priority for their local community, followed by "incentives for carpooling and ridesharing," "improving local public transportation," and lastly, "building new highways (STPP, EWG, 1997)."

Compared to the enormous costs of the Mon-Fayette Expressway, maintaining existing roads is a more sensible approach. The costs of new road construction can go as high as \$100 million per mile (California Assembly Office of Research 1993), whereas reconstruction on urban highways costs a mere \$1.26 million per mile, according to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA 1993). Furthermore, regular maintenance saves money since postponing regular maintenance of roads and freeways carries an exponential increase in cost. The American Public Works Association calculates that a dollars worth of repairs during the first 12 years of a roads life will cost between \$4.00 and \$5.00 if deferred. Overall, the cost of routine pavement maintenance in good condition is about eight cents per square foot, as opposed to 80 cents per square foot for failed pavement (STPP,EWG, 1997).

Improvements like the major maintenance work being done on the Parkway West and the Fort Pitt Tunnel and Bridge, coordinating traffic signals to assist traffic flow, and fixing bridges will maximize the efficiency of the existing transportation system and save money in the long term. In addition, TEA-21 contains money especially for repairing and improving existing infrastructure including bridges and interstate highways. The increase in these funds provides money for much needed repairs of bridges and potholes.

## #2. Create and Promote Scenic Byways

Once they are fixed and maintained, existing roads offer the possibility of revitalizing an area when designated as scenic byways. Scenic roads are eligible for federal funds, and aim to promote tourism and boost the local economy. In fact, \$1 billion of tourist spending can be attributed to scenic byways, according to the U.S. Travel Data Center.

The Pittsburgh area already has an example in its own backyard. Under the direction of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Heritage Preservation Commission (SPHPC), the Path of Progress was created, which is a 500-mile route through southwestern Pennsylvania that links the many trails, parks, and heritage sites in the region. Traveling the Path of Progress, visitors learn the story more than two hundred years of native American and early European history to the rise of American industry, railroading, and the rise of modern highway transportation. The project focuses on a nine-county area in southwestern Pennsylvania, including Fayette and Westmoreland counties to ensure that the cultural and industrial heritage of southwestern Pennsylvania is recognized, preserved and promoted for the benefit of the public. The ultimate goal of the SPHPC is to use the preservation and interpretation of the region's resources to promote regional tourism and stimulate economic development in the area. The Mon Valley is a prime candidate for a similar project, highlighting its steel history with a "Steel Heritage Road," like West Virginia's "Coal Heritage Road."

The State of Texas decided to promote nature tourism using existing roadways and expanding the economic base of the Texas coast. The Texas Department of Transportation dedicated the coastal roads as the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail, to effectively market the rich diversity of bird species in the area. The Trail draws some 48,000 "birders" to the Laguna Atascosta National Wildlife Refuge each year (79 percent from out of state), who spend an average of \$20 million per year visiting the refuge.

## #3. Promote Historic Preservation

Preserving Pittsburgh's history via its roads would not only contribute to its list of regional assets, but to its economy. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, dollar for dollar, historic preservation is one of the highest job-generating economic development options. For example they estimate that in Pennsylvania, \$1 million in rehabilitation creates 12 more jobs than processing \$1 million of steel, and in

West Virginia, \$1 million of rehabilitation creates 20 more jobs than mining \$1 million of coal. In Philadelphia, from 1978 to 1985, there were 356 historic preservation projects that resulted in 8,640 jobs. The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that if a community had to decide between spending \$1 million in new construction or \$1 million in rehabilitation, the differences would be remarkable. They estimate that rehabilitation will result in the following benefits:

- \$12,000 more will initially stay in the community,
- Five to nine more jobs will be created,
- 4.7 more new jobs will be created elsewhere in the community,
- Household income in the community will increase \$107,000,
- Retail sales in the community will increase \$142,000 as a result of that expenditure,
- Real Estate companies, lending institutions, personal service vendors, and eating and drinking establishments will all receive more monetary benefit

(Rypkema, 1994).

#### #4. Extend Light Rail and Bus Systems

When Pittsburgh's regional transportation planning officials met in May to recommend projects for federal funding, they added a number of transit projects to the long list of necessities. These included the extension of the light rail system from downtown to Rankin along the East. Regional priorities are beginning to shift as Pittsburghers discover that it takes more than roads to provide the economic base that the region needs. Similarly, for the transportation system to serve all of its citizens, expanded transit provides more options for those who are making the switch from welfare to work, cannot afford a car, or want the option not to drive.

In addition, under TEA-21, the portion of federal funding guaranteed to go to transit projects is above the level experienced under the previous bill, ISTEA. Pittsburgh can tap into these funds that focus on urban transit projects, especially since transit has been recognized as a major contributor throughout the Pittsburgh region, from access to the Pittsburgh International Airport to extending the light rail system. Local planners are exploring more options for transit in Pittsburgh. The Airport Busway project, for example, which received substantial funding in TEA-21, calls for 8.1 miles of bus lines that would connect to Carson Street outside of Downtown and the Parkway West at Carnegie. The corridor would provide access for airport-area workers, passengers, and a link to downtown.

Two possible light rail extensions are also being studied by Port Authority and city officials. One would run the line past the Convention Center, cross the lower deck of the Fort Wayne Bridge and turn down the North Shore to the Carnegie Science Center, passing the proposed new Pirates and Steelers stadium sites. A second possibility would extend the system to the North Shore from its current end at Gateway Center, tunneling under the Allegheny River.

New this year, TEA-21 has a program that funds Access to Jobs and Reverse Commute programs, designed to help low-income and former welfare recipients get to jobs. Four types of projects are eligible -- those that promote the use of transit by workers with non-traditional work schedules; transit vouchers for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals; employer-provided transportation; and reverse commute projects that transport residents of urban areas to suburban employment opportunities. The funding through this program could open up employment opportunities to urban residents and encourage innovative programs that can benefit everyone.

Residents of Boulder, Colorado, have seen the benefits of transit in their community. The "Hop" bus is a fleet of clean-burning, small buses that provide a shuttle service connecting the downtown business and retail district, the University of Colorado campus, and a mall. Because of the improved access to Boulders main activity centers, trips into downtown increased seven percent, easing congestion and strengthening the local economy. According to a 1995 survey, 32 percent of all Hop trips were for shopping or eating.

#### #5. Develop the Riverfront to Promote Recreational and Residential Access

The citizens of Pittsburgh take pride in one of their city's greatest assets: its rivers. In beautifying the rivers, the city is ensuring the livability of its neighborhoods and their long-term investment. A 1995 report on Allegheny County Greenways found that almost 80 percent of the citizens agreed that rivers and their banks should be reclaimed for new types of planned development such as housing and recreation, and that 90 percent of the people in Allegheny County believe new land development should encourage walking (Allegheny County Planning Department, 1995). If the Mon-Fayette Expressway is built, it will come within 50 feet of the riverfront, restricting recreational use of the riverfront, creating environmental and physical barriers and threatening one of Pittsburgh's few remaining green spaces.

According to Mayor Murphy's Riverfront Development Plan, Pittsburgh's rivers should be reclaimed from their industrial past to serve as the "front door to the city." This vision would connect the various tourism, residential and commercial developments along Pittsburgh's rivers. The riverfront offers history and recreational opportunities, which can attract many more citizens and visitors as a green space. There is a blossoming "green net" of trails around Pittsburgh, bringing in tourists and revenue. Existing trails, such as the Youghiogheny Trail and the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, will connect the South Side trail that runs along the Monongahela and the soon to be opened two and a half mile Eliza Furnace Trail, linking downtown (behind the Allegheny County Jail) with south Oakland and connect with Schenley Park, possibly this summer. The Steel Heritage Trail is a link to Pittsburgh that, with the completion of the Cumberland Trail between Pennsylvania and Maryland, would tie Pittsburgh to Washington, DC. The Schuylkill River Park Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Schuylkill River Park will connect heavily-used bikeways and serve commuters, cyclists, and pedestrians. As part of the Schuylkill River Heritage Park, this project is a key element in a five-county effort to foster public appreciation for Pennsylvania's industrial heritage. The Schuylkill River Park will serve as an important link to historic and cultural sites, provide intermodal connections to rail facilities, and provide an attractive and safe alternative to driving.

North Shore Esplanade Extension - Staten Island, New York

Planned as a tourist attraction and a transportation hub for visitors with ISTEA enhancement funds, an abandoned industrial waterfront is being reclaimed as a vital link to surrounding communities. The project includes new sidewalks, a bicycle parking area, and is planned to accommodate performances and events while linking all of the major parks, business centers, cultural and historical destinations and residential neighborhoods by a continuous network of trails (DiStefano and Raimi, 1996).

#### #6. Create and Promote Trails for Recreation, Transportation Links and Economic Development

Pittsburghers take pride in their unique geography, and investing in the riverfront and its trails is a natural opportunity for recreation and profit. If Pittsburgh is going to be a leading destination for business and recreation, as Mayor Murphy and those concerned with economic development have agreed, the riverfront should be developed as a scenic link to downtown. Many local businesses such as the downtown hotels understand the economic benefits of recreational opportunities and are looking at riverfront activities as a way to expand their draw of tourists. The general manager for the Hilton, Conrad Wangeman, has looked into bicycle rental at the downtown hotel this summer, though he has encountered obstacles. Wangeman, a former San Franciscan, sees biking here fitting as naturally as it does in Golden Gate Park and feels that, "our waterfront vistas would rival any in North America -- if we could only get to them. It's past time for Pittsburghers to connect the spokes." (O'Neill, 1998)

Abandoned rail lines that are converted to recreational trails have generated much more than widespread support, they are bringing money into local economies. Waterfront developments from New York to London have attracted investments and tourists to what were once industrial, unusable pieces of land. These successes demonstrate that trails are both beautiful enhancements to our cities and towns, and serve as a focus of revitalization and local revenue generation.

In Dunedin, Florida, the Pinellas Trail has helped bring a community's storefront vacancy rate from 35 percent to an occupancy rate of 100 percent. And in Wisconsin, hotel rooms along the 32-mile Elroy-Sparta State Park Trail are booked up a year in advance.

The evidence of trail-generating economic development can be found in Pittsburgh's backyard. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources chose the Youghiogheny as its River of the Year, pointing to its natural beauty and the business attracted to the Youghiogheny River Trail. Trail manager Bob McKinley declares, "[t]his trail is affecting the whole valley," citing the 500,000 annual visits that are being logged

on -- most of them by bicyclists. He offers stories of formerly stagnant towns such as West Newton that now have to regulate weekend traffic jams of bicycles, and the many businesses that have opened up and down the trail, including an outdoor clothing store. McKinley said the trail was also the main reason four of five bed and breakfasts in the area had opened recently, with two more on the way. A rundown trailside building was converted into the Rivers Edge Cafe after Robert Bennis and his wife went biking on the Youghiogheny River Trail.

Trailside businesses in Connellsville are flourishing too, including a bike shop and a restaurant called the Mile Marker. There, the trail goes straight through town on its own flower-decorated, dedicated bike lane along Third Street, where a sensor activates the green traffic light, allowing bikes to cross at the main drag. State Senator Richard Kasunic was skeptical of the economic potential of the trail when it was first proposed, but has become a convert since trail users are spending money. Whether it was to open the outfitting store or the new jewelry store or to renovate old houses, "The bike trail definitely was the shot in the arm that got people interested in coming into the west side." (Batz jr., 1998)

Many of Pittsburghs flourishing biking and hiking trails are made possible by federal Transportation Enhancement funds. Through the Transportation Enhancements program, TEA-21 provides funding for projects that "enhance" the transportation environment such as bicycle trails, benches, lights, landscaping, and historic preservation. Enhancement projects broaden support for various transportation projects and boost local economies. Another program, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program (CMAQ) provides funding for transportation planning and projects that assist areas that exceed federal air quality standards. Projects must demonstrate the potential for improving air quality. Eligible projects include transit system expansion and improvements, travel demand management such as carpools or telecommuting, traffic flow improvements such as signal coordination and high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and automobile inspection and maintenance programs.

The Embarcadero - San Francisco, CA

With the removal of the Embarcadero Freeway after the 1989 earthquake, San Franciscos waterfront was able to flourish. Not only is it still a transportation hub, but a vital pedestrian promenade. Although waterfront merchants had initial fears that the loss of direct vehicle access would translate into a loss of business, now find the mix of pedestrians, streetcars and cars a winning combination (Chardy, 1998).

Waterfront Park - Portland, Oregon

Along with the urban growth boundary, the citizens of Portland made a conscious decision to reclaim the riverfront from Harbor Drive, a six-lane freeway abutting the river. The impact to the city of removing the freeway was tremendous, sparking the revitalization of the downtown area. In place of the freeway, a 37-acre waterfront park was built and now hosts events throughout the year, attracting citizens and tourists to what is proudly referred to as "Portlands backyard." Because of the hard work of the

citizens, downtown has become a destination. The light rail system is a testament to the success of downtowns attractions. In fact, it serves a higher ridership on the weekends than during the weekday rush. Walking is also a celebrated mode of transportation. Along with Pioneer Courthouse Square, a former parking lot-turned-public space in the middle of the city, Portlands thriving downtown has attracted the praise of tourists and local officials worldwide (Kruse, 1998).

#### #7. Redevelop Brownfields To Create New Uses For The Community

As defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), brownfields are abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial sites where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. In the ten-county area around Pittsburgh, there are more than 1,000 brownfield sites covering 20,000 acres (Antonelli, 1997). Aside from the regulatory and legal issues, brownfields also present opportunities to create innovative links between land use and transportation. Although toll road supporters claim that the Mon-Fayette Expressway will open up these sites to new industry or other business, it will instead create obstacles to new riverfront development and access.

Hopeful examples like Nine Mile Run along the Monongahela River encourage housing and commercial development on brownfields, along with access to the surrounding area via commuter bike lanes. Nine Mile Run is a river that runs alongside the neighboring former steel manufacturing dumping site where a slag heap (a byproduct of steel production) currently stands. The site is one of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) pilot brownfield sites and, in conjunction with the Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority, was awarded funds to construct 1,100-1,200 housing units and 13,000 square feet of commercial space. Mayor Murphy is a proponent of the innovative mixed-use project, and has made it one of the city's highest priorities for economic development and riverfront improvement.

The proposed alignment of the Mon-Fayette Expressway would threaten the environmental and economic potential of the riverfront. The alignment is opposed by the Nine Mile Run Watershed Committee because of the because it threatens the watershed of Nine Mile Run and will have a negative impact on the quality of life for nearby residents and visitors. The road would come within 50 feet of the riverfront, and would offer no offramps to access the river. Although it would be elevated along the riverfront so as to allow through access underneath, the Mon-Fayette Expressway will still create a noisy, visual disturbance. If the highway goes through, it will severely change the environment from a peaceful riverside location to a noisy, polluted area. Access to rivers, the Committee asserts, is a valuable asset for the Pittsburgh region, and should not have to compete with the adjacent cacophony of traffic (Nine Mile Run Watershed Steering Committee, 1998).

## #8. Attract Business Through Quality of Life Improvements

In an increasingly global economy, a regions ability to present the outside world its assets in a coordinated way will be its best advantage. Those wanting to do business in Pittsburgh face bureaucratic impediments, such as the fragmented political system and its multiplicity of agencies, which complicates a cohesive regional action. Considering there are 20 chambers of commerce in Allegheny County alone, coordination is a challenge. Despite the numerous economic development efforts, most local officials can agree that, along with economic growth and downtown revitalization, encouraging the emerging high tech industry is of particular importance to the region. Nevertheless, encouraging this growth will require cooperation from the entire Pittsburgh metropolitan region and a new approach to attracting business.

In many ways, Pittsburgh has established itself as a great place to do business. The city has pioneered programs to make the transition from the manufacturing sector to a service economy, acting as a model for cities around the world. Being surrounded by universities and community colleges, along with a dedicated work force has also attracted and maintained many corporate headquarters. In recent years, the downtown complex earned Fortune magazines rating as the "Third Best City For Business," and more recently, claimed the 14th spot on a list of the 100 most wired towns published in Yahoo! Internet Life magazine. The high technology industry has the potential to flourish if efforts are made to provide the necessary support.

The high tech industry relies less on road access, and more on a good airport and the mix of a supportive business environment and citywide amenities. As the CEO of Free Markets Online summed up, "What swayed us to Pittsburgh was the combination of industrial skills and the software community. The presence of a hub airport was also a factor," he said, "as was the relatively inexpensive cost of living (Newman, 1998)." Michael Porter, a professor at Harvard Business School and specialist in research on competitive strategy observed, "I think it already is a high-tech town in many ways." Gary Mueller, president and CEO of ISI, moved his company from Pittsburgh to Boston, a well-known high-tech center. Mueller agrees that, "Pittsburgh is a Boston waiting to happen" but adds, "Its got a lot of the seeds. The climate just needs to change so they can grow (Kovatch, 1998)."

Part of the changing climate is developing Pittsburghs biggest competitive advantage, its quality of life. One opportunity that continues to slip away is capturing the numbers of students who graduate from the areas colleges and universities. If efforts are not made to retain graduating students, companies in emerging technologies will have to recruit from outside the city for employees. About 18 percent of Allegheny County residents are 65 or older, according to U.S. Census data, not because of an older population, but because young people do not stay. As ISIs Gary Mueller observed, "Pittsburgh has some of the most incredible entrepreneurial talent, but they're leaving faster than you can put two positive electrons together. And they're leaving because Pittsburgh does not think towards its young. And it's going to have to, if things are going to change (Kovatch, 1998)."

Efforts to attract people, especially young people, to a region by improving the regions quality of life can only benefit the city's rust belt image, and bring new life to the younger business community. Ken Lang, a 30-year old CEO for WiseWire, an internet service provider, noted, "[t]his is a young industry, and Pittsburgh doesn't know how to attract those people obviously part of the attraction is the job market, but a big part of the attraction is quality of life." Lang also submits that, "[q]uality of life is a key ingredient in our ability to come back economically. We've got to understand the importance of things like trails, the cleaning up of brownfields, limiting greenfield development, and preservation of our rivers and our landscape. Indeed, many high-growth areas such as Portland, Oregon, Seattle, Washington and Minneapolis, Minnesota have attracted young professionals based largely on quality of life issues." (Hopey, 1997)

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The results of our analysis demonstrate that these two projects are not likely to make the Pittsburgh area attract economic growth from other areas and will not revive the economy of the Mon Valley. In addition, they are not likely to relieve traffic congestion for any significant period of time. And any benefits these projects may bring are far outweighed by the cost to the taxpayers of the Pittsburgh region.

Examples around the country show that there are better ways to improve access, reduce congestion, and improve a region's "livability" all for less cost. For the price of the Mon-Fayette Expressway and the Southern Beltway, Pittsburgh will derive more benefits from projects that focus on improving overall quality of life, build a balanced transportation system, and explore new options for economic development. Specifically, we recommend: improving and maintaining existing roads, creating and promoting scenic byways, promoting historic preservation, extending light rail and bus systems, developing the riverfront, creating and promoting trails, redeveloping brownfields, and attracting business with quality of life improvements.

The transportation investments made today can either take Pittsburgh down a road of debt, increased congestion and sprawl, or create a path of development that makes the city a great place to live, work and play. Now that the smoke of the steel industry has disappeared, the choices seem clear.

### **Methodology**

Cost per Household:

Total Cost of the Mon-Fayette Expressway and the Southern Beltway Projects: \$3.2 billion, and the shortfall is \$2.3 billion.

Total Population in the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area which is comprised of six counties: Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Beaver, Washington, and Westmoreland

1990 Total Population (including group quarters) = 2,322,767

1990 Household Population = 2,268,198

1990 Households = 919,197

1997 Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) = 35,557,000 (multiply by 365 for annual)

Gas Tax Equivalent:

The Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area generates 35,557,000 vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per day, which translates into:

15.3 VMT per person per day, or 5,584.5 per year and

38.7 VMT per household per day, or 14,125.5 per household per year.

The U.S. personal motor vehicle fleet average fuel economy is 20.0 mpg (source: Transportation and Energy Data Book 1996).

Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area residents consume 1.94 gallons per household per day (38.7 VMT/20 mpg), and 706 gallons per year (14,125.5/20) and 0.77 gallons per individual per day (15.3/20) and 279 gallons per year (5,584.5/20 mpg)

The shortfall of the Mon-Fayette and Southern Beltway projects is \$2.3 billion, or \$2,502 per household over ten years is \$250 per household per year. \$250 divided by the 706 gallons of gasoline consumed per household per year equals a 35 cent tax increase per gallon of gasoline for 10 years.

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