

Western Pennsylvanians for Passenger Rail (WPPR) Passenger Rail 2040 Vision

Overview Statewide 2040

By 2040 passenger rail reemerged as a vital transportation mode throughout the state of Pennsylvania because of its efficiency, affordability, comfort and environmental friendliness. Every city and town and at least 15,000 residents (including its surrounding communities) has access to a robust network of intercity public ground transportation options.

This network includes at least six trains a day in each direction between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, thus providing the two major employment centers in the state with a robust and affordable transportation link. Feeder buses link cities and towns that are not on a passenger rail route to passenger rail. Philadelphia itself continues to be a major hub for intercity and commuter passenger rail service.

Rail links between Allentown and Philadelphia, Allentown and the New York City area, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre and Philadelphia, and Scranton/Wilkes-Barre and the New York City area have been reestablished with ample bus connections connecting major cities outside the state, such as Morgantown, WV and Columbus, OH, to Pennsylvania passenger rail. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Transportation and Rail manages this network of public ground intercity transportation systems.

Southwestern Pennsylvania Vision 2040

The rail line for the Pennsylvanian has been improved and upgraded, making the trip between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg smoother and faster. Train stations between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh have been made ADA-accessible and, where needed and possible, rehabbed into focal points for multi-modal transportation in the communities they serve. New train stations are serving communities where only transit shelters were available in 2020.

Service between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh provides a choice of 6 daily trains, many serving as commuter trips for people in Johnstown, Greensburg and Latrobe who work and/or go to school in Pittsburgh. The high ridership on the train has relieved pressure on PennDOT to invest more in expanding the Parkway East in Pittsburgh. As a result of the combined reduction in car emissions and the increase in passenger rail use, the region has seen significant traffic congestion reduction and improvements in air quality.

How do we achieve these twenty-year goals for Southwestern Pennsylvania?

Five-Year Goals 2025

1. Three daily trains serve the Pennsylvanian route. The state budget includes a line item for passenger rail that funds the additional train service on the Pennsylvanian as well as some of the necessary improvements to train stations on its corridor. PennDOT and

local communities negotiate with Amtrak to speed up ADA improvements to stations between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. Rail infrastructure along the Pennsylvanian's corridor is being repaired and improved through state and Federal rail grants.

2. PennDOT engages the PA Department of Tourism to work with local Chambers of Commerce and local Visitors' Bureaus to market passenger rail service on the Pennsylvanian.
3. PennDOT begins work negotiating with Amtrak and host railroads to reestablish passenger rail links between NYC region and Allentown and Scranton/Wilkes-Barre region.
4. PennDOT is working on a statewide public transportation and passenger rail plan that includes the establishment of a separate state Department of Public Transportation and Rail, in recognition of the efficiencies and environmental benefits of public transportation broadly.

Plan

While estimated costs are provided for the five-year plan, those costs for the ten and twenty-year plans are beyond the scope of this visioning exercise.

Infrastructure

- Norfolk Southern's completed 2020 operational feasibility study lists potential rail improvements.
Estimated costs: \$100M – 500M¹.
- Counties, PennDOT and Norfolk Southern negotiate set of rail infrastructure improvements benefitting passenger rail to be implemented over a twenty- year period and apply for Federal and State funding to begin implementing them.
Estimated costs depend upon the results of Norfolk Southern's 2020 operational feasibility study.

Operational Costs

¹ Norfolk Southern/PennDOT Study of adding two more trains in 2003 for a total of four trains daily - 2005

<http://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/bureaus/PublicTransportation/Keystonestudyvol1.pdf>

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Lower Cost Option A

http://www.planthekeystone.com/Keystone%20West%20Documents/Keystone_West_Menu_Of_Options_August_2014.pdf

- Legislation is introduced and passed to make operational costs of three daily trains a line item in the state budget with the second train beginning operations in 2021 and third in 2024.
Estimated costs: \$10M – 12.9M/annually².
- PennDOT acquires additional rail cars and locomotives to support service beyond two daily trains on the Pennsylvanian.
Estimated amortized costs for two new train sets composed of 2 locomotives and 12 passenger cars: \$2.4M – 4.9M rolled into above annual cost of operating 3 daily trains³.

Train Station Improvements

- Amtrak implements ADA improvements to train stations between Harrisburg – Pittsburgh.
Cost is borne by Amtrak.
- Counties and PennDOT begin multi-year process of improving all the train stations between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh beyond the ADA improvements made by Amtrak.
Estimated costs range from \$1.5M – 15M depending upon the type and level of needed repair.

Planning

- PennDOT completes a statewide passenger rail plan based upon expansion of the current passenger rail service to other parts of the State.
- An important feature of the state rail plan is the concept of establishing a separate State-level Department of Rail and Public Transportation reporting to the PennDOT Secretary and modeled on that of the state of Virginia.

Ten-Year Goals 2030

1. As a result of increased ridership demand, PennDOT is investing in additional rail cars so that four daily trains serve the route of the Pennsylvanian. The local communities continue working with PennDOT on upgrading the train stations along the Pennsylvanian’s rail corridor, using multiple local, state and Federal funding sources. With increased, reliable service on the Pennsylvanian, feeder bus service from Erie, State College, and the Scranton Wilkes-Barre area is introduced to provide a connection to the rail network.

² *On Track to Accessibility: Increasing Service on the Pennsylvanian Benefits and Costs*

³ *On Track to Accessibility: Increasing Service on the Pennsylvanian Benefits and Costs*

2. State-managed food/beverage service is expanded to all intercity passenger rail routes.
3. In Pittsburgh the Amtrak Station, the adjacent Penn Station of the East Busway, and the Grant Street Transportation Center/Greyhound Terminal collectively form a major intermodal transportation hub. This hub would maximize access provided by Port Authority and the region's other public transit systems to the Amtrak Station as well as enhance connections to intercity bus service such as Greyhound and Megabus. Safety improvements at the Liberty Avenue/11th Street intersection and a new aerial pedestrian crossing over Liberty Avenue would enhance pedestrian access to the station. Additional facilities would link to the network of bicycle lanes in Downtown and the Strip District to provide another mode of access to the station.
4. The newly established PA Department of Public Transportation and Rail, modeled on the state of Virginia's Department of Public Transportation and Rail, is working to implement expanded passenger rail service in Allentown, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre and elsewhere in the state. Funding for the expansion comes from bonds issued by the state of Pennsylvania.

Plan

- The Legislature votes funding to set up the Pennsylvania Department of Public Transportation and Rail.
- Counties, PennDOT and Norfolk Southern continue implementing rail infrastructure improvements.
- Amtrak continues ADA improvements to trains stations.
- The Legislature votes additional funding to Pennsylvania budget line item to support four daily trains.
- The Legislature votes additional funding to support work on the Pennsylvania's rail infrastructure and for expansion of passenger rail service in the Allentown, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area.

Twenty-year Goals 2040

The twenty-year vision on the first page assumes the completion of the previous steps listed under the five-year and ten-year plans. Below are final goals.

- There are six daily trains between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh.
- All train and bus stations meet ADA standards.
- All train stations have at least two useable rails and platforms, with safe and ADA-compatible access between the station and the platforms.
- Incremental improvements to travel times, as a result of the improved rail infrastructure, have been achieved to reduce the scheduled time between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh by 45 minutes or better.
- Passenger trains and feeder buses achieve a high on-time performance (OTP).