Transit - Oriented Development in a Changing Urban Corridor

David E. Wohlwill, AICP
Port Authority of Allegheny County

Rail~Volution
Chicago, IL
November 7, 2006
Martin Luther King, Jr. East Busway
East Busway Facts

- Opened in 1983 and extended in 2003
- 9.1 miles, 9 stations and 1 stop
- Port Authority’s busiest BRT facility with 26,700 weekday riders (9/06)
- Links Downtown and Oakland with Pittsburgh’s eastern neighborhoods and suburbs
- Allows buses to bypass severe congestion on major arterials and streets in Pittsburgh’s eastern communities
- Mixture of express and local service
- Built along very active railroad line
Baum - Centre Corridor

- 1.6 miles in length

- With five neighborhoods interfacing in this corridor, the Baum - Centre Corridor has been dubbed the “zipper” joining these communities together
Early Automobile - Oriented Development

- By 1913, Baum Boulevard known as “automobile row” with 13 auto dealers
- First gasoline filling station in US
- Ford built an automobile assembly plant between Centre Ave. and Baum Blvd.

Source: ExplorePAHistory.com

Courtesy of Donald Dougherty
Maturing of the Baum - Centre Corridor

- The Ford plant shut down and many dealers closed
- Corridor continued to be automobile-oriented with gasoline stations, auto parts stores, auto servicing, several remaining dealers and fast-food outlets
- Perception of the corridor being a “no-man’s land” due to the dearth of pedestrian activity and its location at the neighborhoods’ edges
Maturing Corridor Dominated by Automobile-Oriented Uses
New Development begins to occur in the Corridor

- Opening of the Martin Luther King, Jr. East Busway in 1983
- Over $500 million worth of development along East Busway 1983 – 2004
- Much of this development occurred in Baum - Centre Corridor
- Expansion of medical sector from its traditional base in Oakland to the Corridor
  - University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC)
  - Shadyside Hospital
New Development in Corridor

UPMC Hillman Cancer Center

Negley Station with Centre Professional Building in background
Development Opportunities in the Baum - Centre Corridor

- The Baum-Centre Corridor is a key conduit for travel to and within Pittsburgh’s East End neighborhoods.
- Proximity to Oakland (Pittsburgh’s civic, educational and medical center) and to East End neighborhoods makes this corridor attractive to developers.
- Closure of commercial enterprises and industrial operations has made property available for redevelopment.
Planning Challenges in the Baum - Centre Corridor

- Rapid pace of development
- Large scale development
- Transforming automobile-oriented commercial strip development to pedestrian- and transit-oriented development
- Diversity of uses in adjacent communities and in the corridor
- Unmet neighborhood needs
City of Pittsburgh Plan for the Corridor

Baum-Centre Corridor
A Community-based Vision for a High Quality Urban District

December 2004

Prepared by:
Department of City Planning
Community Design Center of Pittsburgh (CDCP)
Trans Associates

With Support and Funding from
Honorable William Peduto
Pittsburgh City Council, District 8
Vision

“Create a diverse, high-quality urban district with easy access to public transportation and neighborhood-serving businesses, with Baum Boulevard and Centre Avenue as boulevards.”
Three Nodes in Corridor

Proposed Transportation and Streetscape
North Oakland - Bloomfield
Redevelopment in Bloomfield

New office and retail development with parking behind building
Reuse of Automobile Factories in Bloomfield

Former Packard Motor Car Plant
Now an Automobile Dealership

Former Ford Plant
Preservation/Reuse Opportunity
Shadyside-Bloomfield-Friendship
Development at Negley Station in Shadyside

Expansion of Supermarket and New Condos at Negley Station
East Liberty
Eastside Development under construction – East Liberty

East Side Mixed Use Development (almost completed) and East Liberty Station

First Whole Foods Store in City of Pittsburgh
Corridor extending east
Nabisco Plant - East Liberty
Bakery Square Proposal for Reuse of the Nabisco Plant

Preliminary concept subject to revision
Courtesy of Walnut Capital
Proposal for New Station Serving the Corridor

Site for station serving UPMC Hospital

Area of potential sites for new station
Baum-Centre Initiative

- Citizens and stakeholders group formed to ensure plan’s vision is carried out
- Comprised of residents from corridor neighborhoods and representatives from UPMC, Port Authority and local businesses
- A means for citizen input into plans for new development projects in the corridor
- Developers review project proposals with the group
In Conclusion . . .

- The Baum – Centre Corridor initially developed with an automobile orientation
- As the corridor matured, many automobile-oriented uses closed, creating opportunities for new development
- The corridor was attractive to developers
  - Growth of the medical sector
  - Corridor’s function as a key conduit for access to and within Pittsburgh’s East End communities
  - Presence of the East Busway
- The City’s Baum-Centre strategy and the Baum-Centre Initiative citizens group will help to guide development in the corridor
Author Contact Information

David E. Wohlwill, AICP
Lead Transit Planner
Port Authority of Allegheny County
412.566.5110
dwohlwill@portauthority.org