

# Wilkinsburg and Brushton Station Area Plan: Executive Summary

## PURPOSE

Pittsburgh Regional Transit's (PRT) plan is intended to:

- Improve connectivity, operations, and overall function at the station to encourage high-quality transit-oriented development (TOD) at Wilkinsburg and Brushton Station.
- Engage all the relevant stakeholders to ensure that TOD opportunities are community supported and complementary to other planned projects. This will enable future implementation of TOD—supportive initiatives (e.g., TOD-friendly zoning, strategic purchase of land, recommended roadway improvements, etc.).
- Build new infrastructure that meets the needs of today while enabling future service expansions and network adaptability.

## CONTEXT

PRT's Building on the East Busway program reimagines the role of the Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway in several communities in the City of Pittsburgh and the Borough of Wilkinsburg. The first phase of this program was a multi-faceted planning effort to evaluate, conceptually design additional stations, and re-design existing stations along the Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway. The project study area includes neighborhoods in the City of Pittsburgh and the Borough of Wilkinsburg along the Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway that are within the walksheds of existing or potential stations that could be added in support of the University Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. The section of the Busway that aligns with PRT's University Line BRT project begins at the Neville Street Ramp and extends to Wilkinsburg Station. City of Pittsburgh neighborhoods within this overall study area include North Oakland, Bloomfield, Shadyside, Friendship, East Liberty, Larimer, Point Breeze North, Homewood West, and Homewood South.



Fig. 1 Map of the BOTEB project

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### A New Wilksburg Station, Closer to Downtown Wilksburg:

This change has the potential to improve accessibility and ridership through closer and more direct connection to Downtown Wilksburg. The proposed improvements incorporate enhanced connections, flexible gathering areas and public space, and safer and more equitable access to the Wilksburg Station platforms.

### Add a New Brushton Station at the west end of the Wilksburg Park and Ride Lot:

Shifting Wilksburg Station closer to Downtown provides an opportunity to add a new station, Brushton Station, to serve the neighborhoods of North Point Breeze and Homewood South. When this station is introduced, residents of the neighborhoods surrounding this section of the Busway will all experience shorter travel times to reach the high-speed transit along the East Busway.

### A Multi-Use Path Linking the Stations and Adjacent Neighborhoods:

Another key feature of the overall site concept is a multi-use path that connects the two stations to each other and the rest of the neighborhood. The multi-use path ties Wilksburg and Brushton Station areas into the larger bike and greenway network from the linear park in Wilksburg to the proposed landscaping along the busway near Finance Street. The early design proposal identifies opportunities to integrate green stormwater infrastructure (such as rain gardens), nature-based play amenities, and public art elements.

The path will be an asset for residents in the City of Pittsburgh's Homewood and Point Breeze North neighborhoods and the Borough of Wilksburg and has opportunities to integrate green stormwater infrastructure, nature-based play amenities, and public art.

**Enhance Pedestrian Safety and Access:** One of the most frequent safety concerns expressed by both community members and PRT staff was the conflict of pedestrians and turning buses at the base of the Hay Street ramps next to the historic Wilksburg Train Station. The conceptual design envisions a new pedestrian island and additional roadway adjustments so that space for both pedestrians and buses will be more clearly defined, with fewer opportunities for conflict.

**Separate Local and Express Bus Platforms to Create Wilksburg Multimodal Center:** One of the most important features of the conceptual design from an operational point of view is the addition of a second set of bus platforms at the new Wilksburg Station site. Express and Busway routes will stop at the main platforms on the Busway and on-street routes that begin or end service at Wilksburg Station will utilize the new local platforms.

**A Consolidated Bus Layover Facility with Electric Bus Charging:** The plan recommends replacing the two bus layover areas with a central 15-bus capacity charging and layover site to serve as a central space for bus layover, operator rest stops, and electric bus charging for buses serving the East Busway corridor and the overall system.

## GOALS

### Make it easy for people to get there.

Today's Wilksburg Station is disconnected from the surrounding neighborhoods and there are barriers to accessibility that make getting to the station challenging for people with disabilities.

### STATION ACCESS



### Create safe, welcoming stations.

This plan proposes building a completely new Wilksburg Station as a major transit hub closer to the commercial core of the community and creating a new station at Brushton Avenue between Homewood Station and Wilksburg Station.

### STATION DESIGN



### Encourage Transit-Oriented Development.

TOD allows people to integrate transit use into their lives by creating dense, mixed-use places where they can live, work, shop, and play. There are more than seven acres of PRT-owned land at the Wilksburg Park and Ride that could become TOD.

### TOD

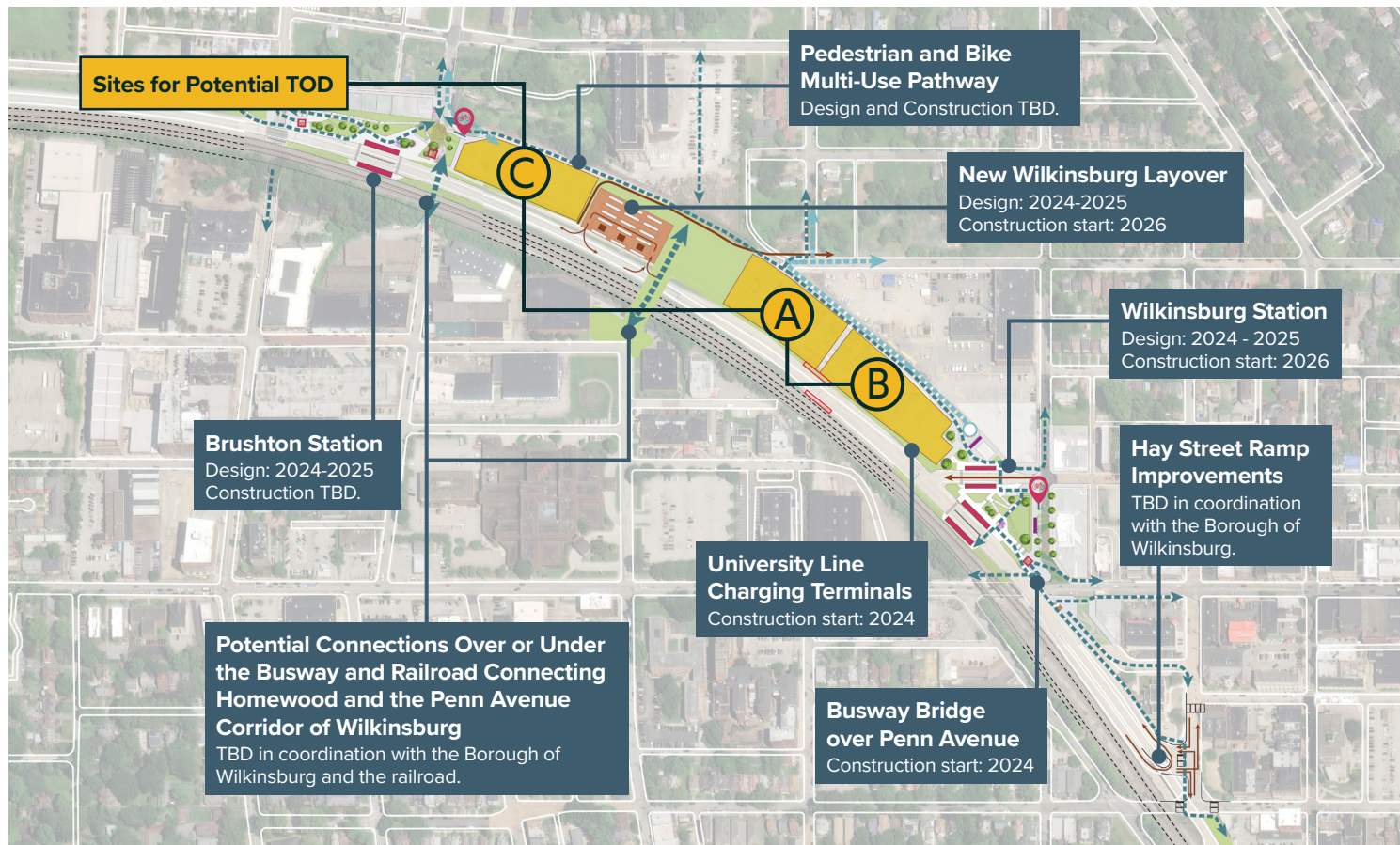
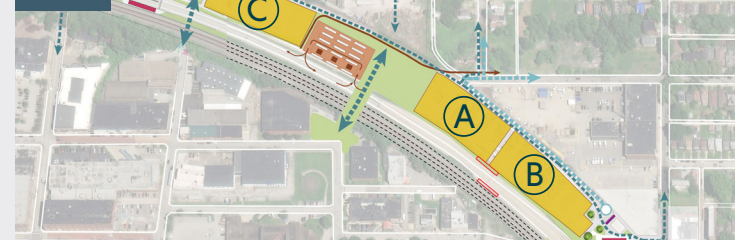


Fig. 2 Map of the Wilksburg and Brushton Station Area

## INFRASTRUCTURE PHASING

**Projects Already in Motion** include electric bus charging terminals near Wilksburg Station and replacing the busway bridge over Penn Avenue. Construction will start in 2024.

**The Pedestrian and Bike Multi-Use Pathway** through the site will provide enhanced community connectivity to the new busway stations. This can be constructed in advance of the new stations.

**The New Wilksburg Layover** will replace the Wallace and Brushton layovers to make way for the new stations. This will be constructed in advance of the new stations.

**New Wilksburg and Brushton Stations** can begin construction once the new busway bridge and layover facility are completed. PRT has funding to support the construction of Wilksburg Station and construction for Brushton Station is dependent upon funding availability.

**Potential Connections Over or Under the Busway** could be built to make more and better connections between the two sides of the busway after the new stations are built.

**Hay Street Ramp Improvements** can be implemented separately from the PRT's other investments and will be coordinated with the Borough of Wilksburg's planned reconstruction of Hay Street.

## DEVELOPMENT PHASING

This plan identifies three potential sites in Figure 2 that could be developed after PRT completes construction of the new stations. The three sites could be developed in any order or as a single project. One possible sequence could have Site A developed first, followed by site B, and then site C.

Building the development in this sequence provides the following benefits:

### Middle of The Site

- Starting development here after Wilksburg Station is built allows for redevelopment with limited disturbance to park and ride users.

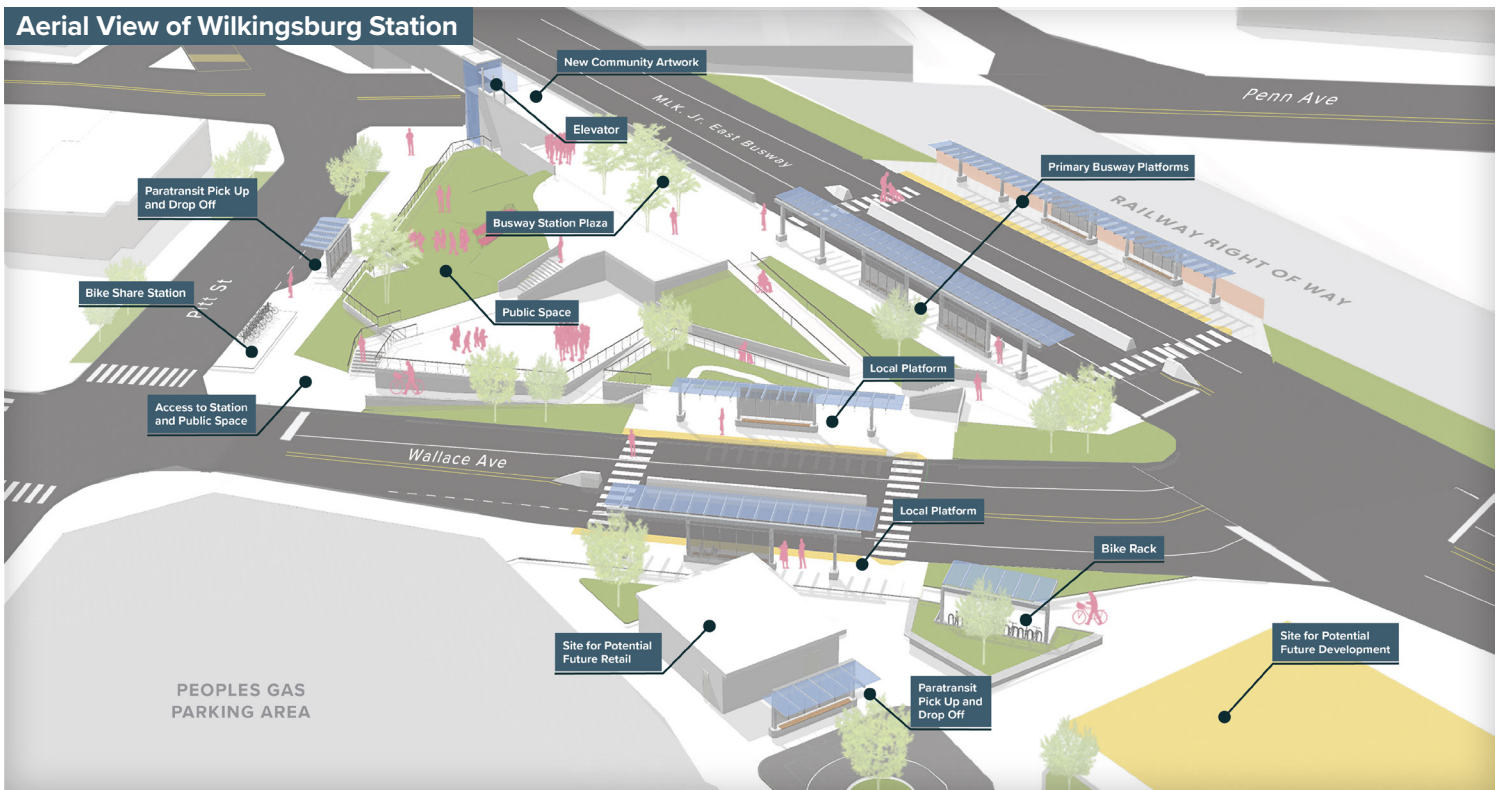
### Near Wilksburg

- Could start after the middle of the site is built.
- New park and ride spaces could be included here on demand.

### Near Brushton

- Align with Brushton Station construction timeline.
- Park and ride spaces could be included here based on demand.

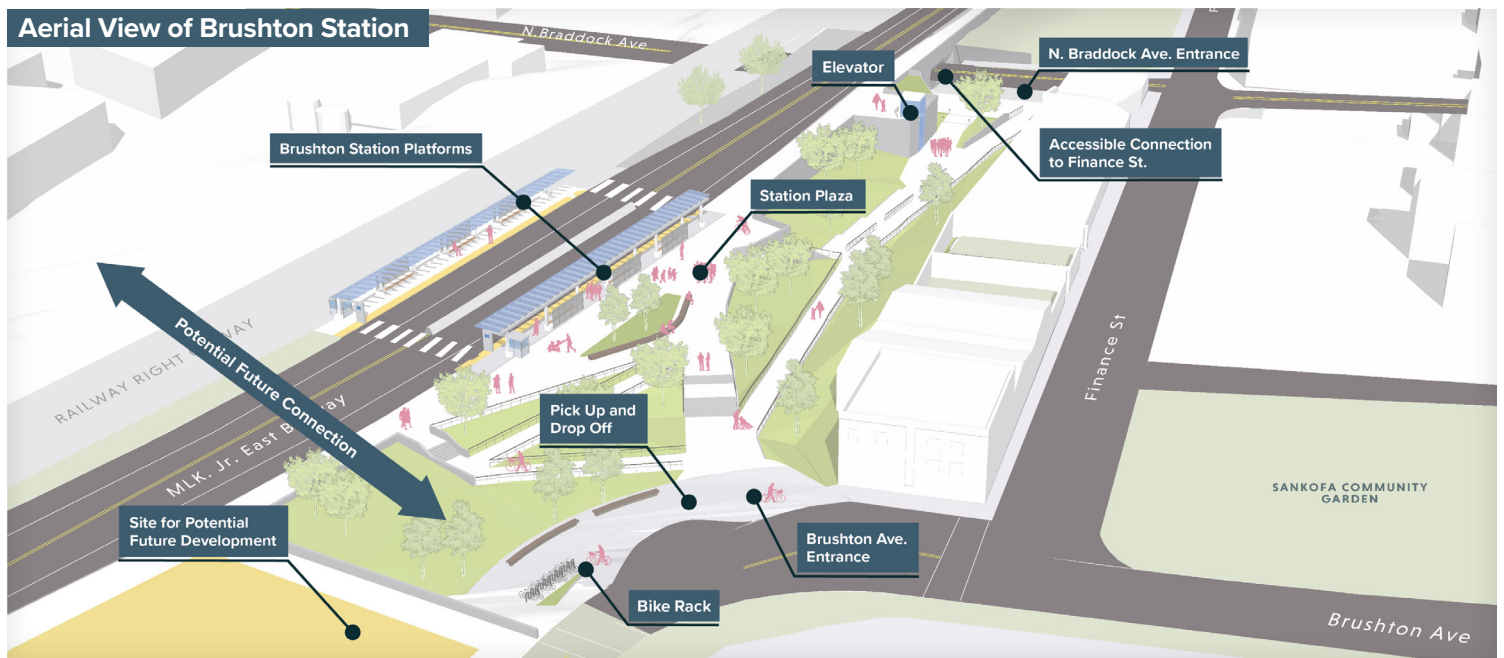
PRT may change the order and timing of project implementation.



**A new Wilkinsburg Station and a new station at Brushton Avenue present the opportunity to:**

- Proposed public space for community programming and family-friendly recreation includes integrated play infrastructure that uses site topography to propose a set of slides.

- Potential for retail development within the station area, to promote site activation and enhanced safety through “eyes on the street.”



**This plan developed a conceptual design for an improved Brushton Station.**

- Strong stakeholder desire for connection at Brushton Avenue and priority for that station entrance.
- Potential to add a sidewalk across North Braddock Avenue using the existing busway bridge.

- Potential to add a connection above or below the busway at Brushton Avenue.
- Proposed elevator access at North Braddock Avenue allows people to bypass Finance Street, which has limited sidewalks.