



# Pittsburghers for Public Transit

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*Keeping the public in public transit.*  
www.pittsburghforpublictransit.org

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Port Authority of Allegheny County  
345 Sixth Ave  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Sept 12, 2018

Dear Mr. Jim Ritchie and Mr. Jeffrey Devlin,

We appreciate that the Port Authority is pursuing the use of new fare payment technologies. PPT sees a number of opportunities to make transit more equitable and accessible with a mobile fare app, as well as the ability to address limitations that the CONNECT card cannot overcome. It is critical to have public engagement around the RFP, because the mobile app has the potential to radically alter how riders pay their fares, and will shift focus and investment by Port Authority into a new payment model. We are glad to have the opportunity to meet and discuss the possibilities of this app in the coming weeks.

Our key goals are to help ensure that the mobile app is accessible by as large a ridership as possible; that the software and hardware are adaptable for future needs and not proprietary to an outside entity; that data is anonymized and rider privacy is protected; and that improvements are made to the existing system to allow for payment for multiple riders, multiple fare types, and compatibility with other regional transit services and modes.

As such, some of our recommendations for the RFP are as follows:

- The RFP should have the capacity to upload cash value onto the app from neighborhood stores, whether through gift cards or other means. The technology for corner stores should be as simple as possible, requiring no hardware.
- The RFP should show that PAAC is aware of the significant cut that Apple and Google take for in-app purchases and discusses how they would like that issue to be dealt with.
- The Port Authority should own the source code to any apps, hardware and server software developed. The RFP should be for payment to the vendor for development and possibly to run the app, and payment should not be “per ride” or fare transaction. This is critical to allow the Agency the flexibility to change providers or expand the capacity of the app in future years.

- The app should allow for fare payment across multiple transit agencies and other modes, including ACCESS, other transit agencies in the 10-county region, and Healthy Ride.
- The fare-tapping must be able to work offline/without service.
- The phone technology (RIFD, Bluetooth, bar code or other) required for scanning the fares should have widespread penetration in the market.
- The ride data should be anonymized and owned solely by Port Authority.
- The app should be equipped to allow for payment for multiple passengers' rides, as well as multiple fare values.
- The RFP should be equipped to allow for fare capping.
- The Port Authority should be able to modify the fare policy at any time.
- The RFP should provide, or allow for, the integration of different languages and should be accessible to riders with limited vision.

We recognize that this list is not comprehensive and is limited due to the lack of public information about Port Authority's goals and research around this technology. We believe that this meeting to discuss the RFP in advance of the board decision will be advantageous both to Port Authority and to the public, and look forward to the conversation.

Sincerely,

Laura Wiens, Director  
Pittsburghers for Public Transit

BikePGH

Oakland Transportation Management Association

Just Harvest