



Last Stop

“Money, Money, Money!”

You may remember Norman Glucroft’s famous commercials, “Come to Roaring River Mills where you save only money. Money, Money, Money!” In line with Mr. Glucroft’s slogan, AMTRAN hopes that the Roaring River Mills property will “save only money” for the bus company. Chairman Scott Cessna stated, “There are two reasons for an organization to make a capital investment - to save money or to make money. The Roaring River Mills project will do both for us.”

Funding Crisis

The statewide transportation funding debate made a lot of news over the past few months with Governor Rendell visiting Altoona twice to highlight the problem. Act 44 has solved the immediate crisis for

highways and public transportation, but having lived through such a crisis, it behooves us to look for opportunities to save money or make money anywhere we can.

Joint Development

The FTA’s Joint Development Program allows us to renovate the former Gold’s Gym building facing 5th Avenue to help us save money by reducing daily operating costs.

The program also allows us to partner with a private developer to redevelop the Roaring River Mills property facing 6th Avenue to help us make money through a land lease. One option is to renovate the old Roaring River Mills building. Another option may be to tear down the building and redevelop the property as retail, office, or light industrial depending on what

the local market dictates.

Capital vs. Operating

The funding that AMTRAN will use for this project is federal capital funding through the efforts of Congressman Bill Shuster, Senator Arlen Specter, and Senator Bob Casey. These capital grants cannot be used for operating expenses, but the revenue from leasing the property can be used for day-to-day operations.

The Bottom Line

So why is AMTRAN trying to purchase and redevelop the Roaring River Mills property? The simplest answer is to quote Mr. Glucroft’s commercials from years gone by, “Money, Money, Money!”

Eric Wolf
General Manager

amtran THE TRIP SHEET

Altoona, PA

AMTRAN options Roaring River Mills property



On September 19, AMTRAN’s Board of Directors made an option offer on the Roaring River Mills property directly across 5th Avenue from their bus garage near Mansion Park. The 3.2 acre property is currently owned by long-time Altoona businessman, Norman Glucroft, but was originally part of the trolley works for the Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway.

According to AMTRAN Board Chairman Scott Cessna, “There are two reasons for an organization to make a capital investment - to make money or to save money. This project will do both.”

The savings will come through AMTRAN’s plan to utilize the former Gold’s Gym building, originally a trolley barn, to park buses. This will save the maintenance department hours of service time every day and will keep the entire fleet under roof.

The revenue will come from the largest part of the property facing Sixth Avenue (state route 764) which will be jointly developed by AMTRAN and a private developer to be selected through a competitive procurement process. Through a land-lease with the developer, AMTRAN will receive revenue which can be used for day-to-day operations.

The Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Joint Development Program will enable AMTRAN to utilize

federal grants to make the site pad-ready, then partner with a private developer. The capital-only grants are through the efforts of Congressman Bill Shuster, Senator Arlen Specter, and Senator Bob Casey.

The option offer is the first step in a long process. The 120-day option period allows AMTRAN time to line up all of the necessary documentation for the FTA and to study any potential environmental issues.

During the option period, if AMTRAN decides to purchase the property, the price will be \$1,225,000 minus the actual cost of any environmental remediation. (The value is based on an independent appraisal.)

Once AMTRAN has actually purchased the property, they will begin renovations to the trolley barn that will include meeting and training space for AMTRAN personnel in addition to storage for buses. They will also advertise a Request for Proposals to competitively select a private developer to partner with them on the remainder of the property.

Altoona Mayor Wayne Hippo summarized, “A long vacant property will be developed for private enterprise. The City, the County, and the School District will get additional real estate taxes. AMTRAN will get a long-term revenue stream. This is a win-win-win proposition. Congratulations to AMTRAN.”

Change Service Requested

www.amtran.org
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3301 Fifth Avenue
Altoona, PA 16602

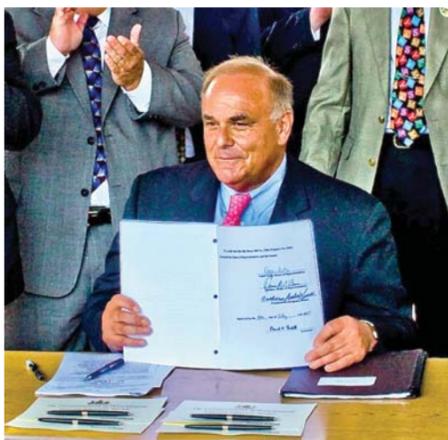


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State Transportation Funding Approved



Governor Ed Rendell signs Act 44 at Heritage Plaza, Altoona

On July 18 in downtown Altoona's Heritage Plaza, Governor Ed Rendell signed Act 44, an historic transportation funding package providing desperately needed financial resources for Pennsylvania's ailing highways, bridges, and public transportation systems.

The passage of Act 44 represents the first statewide multimodal transportation funding legislation in more than a decade. Between increasing costs and flat or declining revenues during those ten years, both highways and transit were in crisis.

Locally, AMTRAN cut fixed route service 24% in June, while local PennDOT District 9 was facing an increasing number of structurally deficient bridges and deteriorating highways.

According to Governor Rendell, the immediate good news for AMTRAN customers is the continuation of Saturday bus service which was facing elimination if there had been no funding solution.

"As painful as the June service changes were for our customers, the elimination of Saturday bus service would have been much, much worse," according to AMTRAN General Manager Eric Wolf.

He estimates that the new funding will result in an additional \$730,000 annually. "That sounds like a lot of money," says Wolf, "until you remember that our projected deficit for this year was originally \$900,000."

New system design is working

"The new service design that we implemented in June is working for most of our customers, so we do not plan to go backwards," said Wolf. "For now, we will be content with stabilizing the system, keeping Saturday service, and bringing some of our laid-off employees back to work."

Wolf stated that the authority will continue to look for ways to become more efficient, including the use of capital grants to undertake projects that can make money or save money for AMTRAN.



Governor Ed Rendell (center) with area transit managers (from left) Eric Wolf, AMTRAN, Altoona; Mike Imbrogno, ATA, Johnsonburg; Rose Lucey-Noll, CamTran, Johnstown; Hugh Mose, CATA, State College

Local effect of new funding on individual customers and the AMTRAN system

The new transportation funding will make it possible for AMTRAN to:

- (1) Facilitate better work shift options for a retail employee with a developmental disability at the new Logan Towne Center shopping complex (service every hour on the Logan Towne Express 8:30-4:30);
- (2) Enable a single mom who works Monday through Friday to take her two kids to the swimming pool on Saturday (Saturday service originally slated to be discontinued);
- (3) Offer direct transportation for early morning work shifts from all across the service area on the AMTRAN-to-Work bus (originally slated to be discontinued);

AMTRAN customers benefiting from this early bus service are employees from companies ranging from Heaven Sent Daycare to North American Communications, from Arby's & McDonalds to Norfolk Southern Railroad.

- (4) Preserve and enhance access for all the senior citizens living in the downtown area to doctors appointments at the Station Medical Center and grocery shopping at the new Martin's – service every 30 minutes on the New Flash (originally slated to be discontinued);

- (5) Preserve critical specialized transportation service for dialysis patients on the Saturday schedule (Saturday service originally slated to be discontinued);

- (6) Create a more balanced overall system of service delivery on a more frequent schedule with a spine and feeder design – responding to the need for greater operating efficiencies called for in the new legislation, Act 44.

Customer Focus

7th in a series



Bob Dubbs is a familiar face to AMTRAN drivers and customers. He has been riding AMTRAN buses for 14 years. He was one of the original residents of the Woodrow Wilson Apartments in Garden Heights and has been riding the bus since he moved in.

Bob takes the bus almost every day to his volunteer job at an adult day care or to Logan Valley Mall and Pleasant Valley Shopping Center. He says that he doesn't like staying at home and staring at four walls. He really appreciates the freedom that the bus gives him.

Bob also appreciates AMTRAN's drivers. "They are a great group of people," he says. "In bigger cities, you feel like a number. Those driver never say hello or good-bye. In Altoona, the drivers treat their customers like family."

Bob says that AMTRAN's new service plan works well for him. He has shorter trips now and gets where he need to go more quickly than before.