

I am **Laura Chu Wiens**, director of Pittsburghers for Public Transit, and have been working with residents of the Mon-Oakland corridor trying to understand why exactly this project continues to lurch forward despite 5 years of community opposition.

And here's the one thing I've learned: This is a development project masquerading as a transit project.

We know this because anybody who actually needs safe and efficient connections to get to food or jobs or pick up their kids from the bus stop is scratching their head at why exactly we have spent five years of our lives in a convoluted planning process to settle on paying for a shuttle roadway, to accommodate shuttles just like the existing UPMC, Pitt and CMU ones that already clutter our corridor, to transport some 90 people a day back and forth between Hazelwood Green and CMU.

We know this because anyone who plans transportation knows that money- public money- for transportation improvements is very, very finite, and when we spend tens of millions of dollars on a road for a luxury micro-transit shuttle pilot, we do so at the expense of all the other infrastructure needs.

In private conversations, the City and the institutions that are driving this project have dropped the pretense that this is a transportation project. They talk about the economic benefit. How this will develop Hazelwood Green and entice innovators to Oakland and Hazelwood.

So let's have an honest conversation here, in public. All of us, City Residents, we deserve to discuss whether or not the lion's share of our public money should go to subsidize tech-centered development at Hazelwood Green and to support the expansion of Carnegie Mellon University. Let's hear what benefits we will enjoy. Let's hear how the City plans to prevent the inevitable neighborhood development impacts -- gentrification and displacement -- that will accompany this project just like it has happened in the comparable projects that Director Ricks has pointed to in Chicago and Atlanta. And then perhaps we won't continue this charade of discussing a project that will be obsolete as transportation as soon as it's created.

And if I'm wrong, and this is a mass transportation project, well, you guys should fund the Our Money, Our Solutions plan instead because it does everything that this could hope to accomplish, better, faster, cheaper and without any of the associated harms.