



Frequently Asked Questions about the 3-C Corridor

Good questions have been raised about the proposal to establish passenger rail service along Ohio's "3-C" corridor. Here is our perspective on these questions:

1. Why should Ohio subsidize passenger train service?

Passenger rail offers many benefits: fuel economy and emissions reduction; substantially lower business passenger cost per mile traveled; new opportunity for economic development and jobs from private investment in real estate and commercial development near stations; new travel and tourism opportunities; ability to safely talk on the phone, work, and relax while traveling; and an additional travel choice.

2. What will it cost the State of Ohio to subsidize passenger train service?

Capital costs: Preliminary estimates indicate that Ohio will need \$250 million for the equipment, rail line improvements, and station construction to complete the full 260-mile 3-C corridor.

Annual operating costs: Fourteen other states fund state passenger rail service, ranging from \$2 million to \$76 million in annual subsidies. This averages \$12.3 million per year. Excluding the largest (CA: \$148 million) and smallest (ME: \$2 million) subsidies, the average annual state subsidy is \$6.3 million.

3. Can Ohio afford this investment?

Like any investment, the benefit/cost ratio should be carefully examined. According to an analysis completed by All Aboard Ohio, for the 14 states that subsidize state passenger rail service, the benefit/cost ratio of travelers' financial benefit in avoided transportation costs as compared to each state's subsidy ranges from 0.9 in Maine to 5.9 in North Carolina. Travelers in each of these 14 states are saving millions of dollars a year in avoided transportation costs, because of their state's support for passenger train service. In addition, the travel industry is growing and real estate and commercial business interests are investing millions of dollars near train stations in several of these states.

4. What will it cost to ride the train?

Amtrak customer fares average 14 cents per passenger mile in the Midwest. For comparison sake, here are some sample fares from Amtrak.com:

- A one-way train ticket from Kalamazoo to Detroit, MI (143 mi.) is \$24. Driving from Cleveland to Columbus (142 mi. via I-71) in a car that averages 22 MPG @ \$3/gallon of gasoline would cost nearly the same amount.
- A one-way train ticket from Kalamazoo to Ann Arbor, MI (106 mi.) is \$20. Driving from Columbus to Cincinnati (107 mi. via I-71) in a car that averages 22 MPG @ \$3/gallon of gasoline would cost nearly the same amount.
- Applying the current IRS standard mileage deduction rate of 50.5 cents per mile for business mile, the same trips would cost \$78 and \$58, respectively.

5. Will anyone really use the train?

More than 5 million people live along the counties bordering the 3-C corridor. In far-less densely populated corridors, a quarter million people rode the train in Michigan, half a million in Wisconsin, and 1.4 million in Illinois, in 2007. Amtrak and public transit authorities throughout Ohio and the nation reported significant increased ridership in 2008. The 3-C corridor is an excellent candidate for passenger rail

6. Given the poor economy, isn't this a bad time for Ohio to take on this extra investment?

\$8 billion in Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds at a 100 percent federal share are available now and another \$1.5 billion per year for five years in Federal Passenger Rail Investment Act Funds at an 80 percent federal share are now available for investment in passenger rail infrastructure and jobs. These funds will soon be gone—gone to states that are prepared to invest in this transportation mode. Ohio has never had a better opportunity to invest in passenger (as well as freight) rail infrastructure.

7. The “3-Cs” (Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati + Dayton) may benefit, but what about other cities?

Based on the experience of other states and more than 30 years of study of the 3-C corridor, several stops may connect the 3-Cs, possibly including Mansfield/Galion, Springfield, and Middletown/Hamilton. The full Ohio Hub plan envisions 44 Ohio cities linked by high speed rail and feeder buses.

8. Won't passenger trains conflict with freight trains?

As in other states, to accommodate 79-MPH passenger trains, federal and state funds would need to be invested in upgrading track, signaling, and grade crossings and train dispatching and timetables would need to be carefully coordinated. Other states have made these investments – investments that directly have benefited freight rail – and so can Ohio.

9. What happens if we build it, and no one comes to ride the train?

Ohio is not pioneering space travel, here. It can draw on the success and the experience of many other states. Given the 6 million people and dense urban cores that crowd the 3-C corridor, this service certainly should succeed.

10. Why not invest in high speed rail right now? Why wait?

The successful experience in other states is to begin with standard 79-MPH service, foster passenger train demand, and attract growing private investment in communities along the route. This will in turn grow the demand for even faster, more frequent train service, as it has done elsewhere. Thirty years of feasibility studies for the 3-C corridor consistently have found that the 3-C corridor is the best and first route for start-up service that will build to high-speed rail.

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