



Ohio Environmental Council

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[UNLEASHING THE POWER OF GREEN]

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Statement of Jack Shaner, OEC Deputy Director

Today, some 28,000 people will board an intercity passenger train somewhere in the United States. Another 29 million will board a transit bus or train.

In Ohio, a half a million people will ride a transit bus or transit train to work or school or other local destination.

But along the 3-C corridor – one of the most densely populated corridors in the nation not served by passenger trains – all is quiet.

That silence is like a big red signal light, derailing affordable, safe, convenient, and environmentally friendly public transportation between Ohio's biggest cities and blocking economic progress along the 3-C corridor

For 30 years, we've been studying the restoration of passenger rail service along the 3C corridor. And finally, the time for action may be at hand.

This could be a momentous week for Ohio's proposal to "quick start" passenger train service between Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati.

- On Tuesday or Wednesday, the Ohio Department of Transportation and the Ohio Rail Development Commission will announce their recommended route and station alternatives, preliminary ridership, and travel-time estimates. Also this week, Amtrak is expected to release a much-anticipated operations proposal for the 3C, announcing schedules, assumed start-up station locations, and its own ridership projections.
- ODOT and ORDC are hosting a public open-house meeting in each of the 3Cs (Columbus-Tuesday; Cleveland-Wednesday; Cincinnati-Thursday) to give the public an opportunity to ask questions and voice preferences about train fares, routes, etc.

- Rail advocates plan a series of briefings this week for local business and community leaders in Columbus, Springfield, Dayton, and Cincinnati.

We hope to come out of this week with more momentum—momentum from the public and business and community leaders to keep moving the 3C rail plan forward, down the track to final funding.

In just a couple of weeks, on October 2nd, state officials plan to submit a formal application for federal stimulus funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to initiate 79 MPH service along the 3C corridor. Ohio plans to use federal funds to make capital and infrastructure improvements, upgrading tracks, signals, and crossings and acquiring train cars and locomotives.

Competition for federal stimulus funds is fierce. Forty states have submitted pre-applications, seeking \$102 billion from a pool of \$8 billion available for passenger rail. The U.S. Department of Transportation is expected to make its funding decisions this fall.

That's why we—a diverse set of stakeholders, representing business, regional planners, rail passengers, and the environment—are beginning this week's "whistle stop tour" of cities along the 3C corridor, urging Ohioans to get on board Ohio's 3C "Quick Start" Passenger Rail Plan.

3C stands for more than Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati. It also stands for conservation, convenience, and commerce.

Fourteen other states have figured that out, including our Big-10 rivals, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. They're investing in state supported passenger train service. And they're growing jobs, stimulating new investment, and saving travelers millions on travel expenses. Ohio cannot afford to be stuck at the end of the line. It's high time for Ohio to get on board modern passenger rail service. We urge every Ohioan who supports the 3C plan to tell their lawmakers to get on board, today.

Joining me today to push the 3C plan are:

- Robert Martin, Chief Operating Officer, Mattson Development (Saco, Maine)
- Chester Jourdan, Executive Director, Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission
- Ken Sislak, Associate Vice President, AECOM Transportation; Board Member, All Aboard Ohio