



3-C Corridor Rail Infrastructure Long-Term Benefits & Beneficiaries

After the state invests in improved infrastructure necessary for startup passenger rail service in the 3-C Corridor, what might that infrastructure look like and what could the benefits be to the public, communities, safety and freight service?

In short, the 3-C Corridor project will leave Ohio with one of the safest, most modern, efficient and fluid rail corridors in the country for the hundreds of freight trains which travel on some or all of it each day. The benefits to Ohio will last for decades.

SAFETY IMPACTS

Approximately one-fifth of the 3-C Corridor's \$250 million cost would likely go toward installing Positive Train Control (PTC) over the entire 260-mile right of way (ROW). This would make the 3-C Corridor one of the safest rail corridors in the state of Ohio.

PTC is an advanced signaling technology which interacts with a locomotive's controls. It can prevent train-to-train collisions, over-speed derailments, train incursions into roadway work zones, and movement over switches improperly lined. The installation of PTC by 2015 on all routes used by passenger trains nationwide is mandated by the recently enacted Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008.

Also thanks to PTC, nearly 60 miles of CSX's lightly used ROW north of Columbus to Galion could offer 90 mph passenger train speeds.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Enhanced grade crossing safety devices would be added, with most focused in towns where there are high traffic crossings or poorly designed crossings. Another advantage of these crossing improvements is that they could be submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration for consideration as a Quiet Zones where locomotive horns no longer have to be sounded.

While station sites along the 3-C Corridor haven't been finalized, it should be noted that a successful passenger rail service will require the integration of 3-C passenger rail services with local/intra-city public transit, inter-city bus services such as Greyhound, Lakefront or Megabus, bike facilities, Flexcar-type services, and future regional commuter rail and light-rail transit services. Perhaps as much as one-fifth of the investment in 3-C Corridor will be for these facilities, but some cities such as Cincinnati are independently seeking federal funding for more elaborate passenger rail stations.

Stations built for passenger rail will need to be designed to accommodate all of these modes now or at least be expandable to accommodate them in the future. Either way, to call the places where 3-C Corridor trains will stop as “train stations” is a misnomer. Indeed, they will be “transportation centers” that will be magnets for commerce in our communities and spur economic development in Ohio’s town centers.

FREIGHT BENEFITS

More than two-thirds of the \$250 million start-up cost of 3-C Corridor will alleviate existing freight traffic congestion “choke points” to make freight and passenger rail service more reliable. These will probably include:

- Cleveland/Rockport Yard-area track capacity enhancements so freight trains switching the yard don’t delay through traffic on Norfolk Southern’s mainline;
- Adding passing sidings on CSX between Berea and Greenwich to increase the fluidity of rail traffic;
- Building a second main track on CSX between Greenwich and Shiloh where more than 30 freight trains a day must squeeze through a 17-mile long section of single-track line;
- Extending CSX’s Columbus Line 1,500 feet north to Galion station to provide a combination station/pocket track;
- Resurfacing track and replacing ties on CSX’s Columbus Line between Galion and Columbus to provide a smoother, faster ride for passengers and freight;
- Increasing track capacity with sidings and crossovers between tracks to relieve rail traffic congestion on joint CSX/NS tracks through downtown Columbus;
- Providing a passing siding near the mid-point of NS’s 25-mile section of single-track between London and Enon;
- Adding a third main track to relieve freight traffic congestion on joint NS/CSX tracks through downtown Dayton; and
- Building a third or fourth main track north of Cincinnati’s Queensgate Yard to ease considerable rail traffic congestion.

Far being “white elephant” investments, these some of the improvements which are necessary for the fluid movement of rail traffic today. While the railroads have made significant improvements to the 3-C Corridor, they cannot afford to make as many as they would like. These and other capital improvements to railroad infrastructure are necessary whether the 3-C Corridor passenger rail service lasts two years or 200 years.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

This is a public-private partnership because state and especially federal funding will be used for construction. The long-term maintenance of the infrastructure will be funded by private entities, namely the freight railroads which own their rights of way and pay property taxes on them.

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