



## High Speed Rail for Chicago to Pittsburgh via Fort Wayne, Lima & Columbus Concept Paper 2003

### THE OPPORTUNITY

As a part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, planning can occur NOW for a high speed rail corridor along existing rail rights of way to link the cities of Chicago (IL), Fort Wayne (IN), Lima (OH), Columbus (OH), & Pittsburgh (PA).

- For 7 years the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative has been designing a 110 mph passenger rail system for 9 Midwest states. The system is based on a Chicago hub with routes radiating to major cities in the region. (See adjacent map<sup>1</sup>).
- For the past couple of years, the Indiana Department of Transportation and the City of Fort Wayne have been evaluating a route that would link Chicago, Fort Wayne & Toledo, as an alternate to a congested route through South Bend. The Ohio Rail Development Commission has been a partner in and financial contributor to this planning activity.
- The route through Fort Wayne creates an opportunity for Ohio and Pennsylvania to think seriously about continuing from Fort Wayne on to Lima and Columbus and Pittsburgh.
- Further, a route to Pittsburgh would permit the Midwest system to be linked to the system planned for the East coast. (See map<sup>2</sup>). The Pittsburgh to Philadelphia link will connect



to Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, which includes 42 daily trains in the Boston-NYC-Philadelphia-Washington, D.C Corridor.



- Please note: ODRC has already been planning a high speed corridor (3 "C") linking Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati. Thus, **the addition of an east-west route through Columbus would create a superior OHIO network of high speed rail.**

<sup>1</sup> Map obtained from the following website: [www.in.gov/dot/multi-modal/rail/high\\_speed.html](http://www.in.gov/dot/multi-modal/rail/high_speed.html).

<sup>2</sup> Map obtained from the following website: [www.dot.gov/affairs/fra2000.htm](http://www.dot.gov/affairs/fra2000.htm).

## THE CUSTOMER BASE

The Fort Wayne, Lima and Columbus communities are not now served by any form of passenger rail. Thus, all passengers originating on this proposed corridor would be increases to the total number of riders, not an exchange of riders from one form of rail transport to another.

Fort Wayne--Indiana's second largest city--and Lima had Amtrak service until 1990, and the combined annual passenger census from both communities was in excess of 80,000 passengers. The tradition of rail transportation in both communities continues to generate high levels of enthusiasm for its eventual return.

Columbus is the 15<sup>th</sup> largest city in the United States and is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest community in the nation to lack any form of passenger rail service. As Ohio's most populous city and the state's capitol, its isolation from passenger rail has created tremendous support for its introduction.

The following is a breakdown of regional populations that would be served:

Fort Wayne and regional trading area:	500,000 persons
Lima and regional trading area:	450,000
Columbus & regional trading area:	1.5 million persons

## TRAIN STATIONS READY TO GO

Fort Wayne's Baker Street Train Station is in the midst of restoration currently. Several commercial tenants occupy portions of the station, while other renovation work continues.

Lima's Pennsylvania Train Station is being purchased by the Downtown Lima organization for renovation and leasing to the City of Lima. The City will occupy the station as a bill payment center for its utilities operations. The renovation will be completed in 2003, and will preserve the opportunity to use the Station for rail passengers.

The Columbus Multi-Modal Terminal will be in the heart of downtown Columbus, in close proximity to the Convention Center, the new Nationwide Arena, and the many exciting developments happening there.

## RAIL BEDS and RIGHTS OF WAY

The proposed route would take advantage of existing rail beds and rights of way and thus keep development costs low.

Through Indiana and western Ohio the route would follow the former Pennsylvania Railroad line. That route carried millions of passengers from Chicago to both New York and Washington for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has a gentle alignment appropriate for high speed trains. Further, this route previously had two sets of tracks, though only one now remains. Thus, space is available for a second set of track set built to high speed specifications.

Through the middle part of Ohio there are several routing possibility, with one logical route being from Lima along CSX to Dunkirk to Columbus and CSX/CUOH from Columbus east. It should be noted that the State of Ohio already owns a portion of the Columbus to Pittsburgh, between Columbus and the Ohio River.

## CITIES WORKING TOGETHER

The Mayors of Chicago, Fort Wayne, Lima, Columbus, and Pittsburgh have endorsed this proposal and are committed to working with all parties to secure the resources necessary. The first step is expert planning for the route and its formal incorporation into the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative.