



Talking Points – for policymakers

Cleveland – Youngstown – Pittsburgh "Tech Belt Tracks"

Passenger Rail Talking Points

In your talks with friends, family or colleagues, and in letters to newspaper editors, state and federal legislators and metropolitan planning organizations (NOACA, AMATS, Eastgate, SPC), kindly emphasize the following points...

Planning: The Ohio Rail Development Commission and the Ohio Department of Transportation are developing a funding-ready plan for improving passenger rail service between Cleveland and Pittsburgh, starting with several daily round trips at 79 mph on upgraded tracks and upgrading to 90-110 speeds as funding becomes available.



Supporters: Numerous organizations have gone on record as supporting the development of modern, convenient, affordable passenger rail service in the Cleveland – Youngstown (CYP) – Pittsburgh "TechBelt." They include most cities where station stops are proposed plus the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, Mahoning River Consortium, CASTLO,

Youngstown State University, Ohio Contractors Association, Ohio Environmental Council, United Transportation Union, Council of Carpenters and Operating Engineers and others.



Route and market: The existing, 135-mile-long CYP rail corridor is mostly in excellent condition and links four of the United States' top-100 markets. The CYP Tech Belt is home to 6 million people, making it one of the most densely populated intercity travel markets (Source: U.S. Census).

Economic Benefits: At full build-out, rail service would stimulate \$50 million to \$70 million in development in downtown Youngstown, add 285 to 390 permanent jobs and boost household income by \$20 million to \$25 million (Source: Ohio Hub Economic Impact Study 2007).

Accessibility: Linking Tech Belt assets with rail transportation that's one-fifth the cost of driving and is fully ADA-accessible will increase economic opportunities for all. The greater access and interaction fostered by passenger rail will lift the entire region's economy.





Commuting: More than 10,000 people commute farther than 40 miles each way each weekday from low-cost housing in the center of the CYP Corridor to jobs in Cleveland, Akron, Pittsburgh and surrounding areas (Source: U.S. Census).

Retain and grow: Low-cost passenger rail service will help cities in the CYP Corridor retain residents and increase the region's attractiveness to young families seeking affordable starter homes and access to more jobs.

Comfort and cost: Speed isn't the biggest draw for most travelers as they save time by being productive on trains, such as getting work done, socializing, texting, relaxing, eating and drinking. Instead, cost is most important. Cleveland-Pittsburgh rail fares of 8½ to 14 cents per mile are one-fifth the cost of driving (AAA: driving costs 56.6 cents per mile).

Increased travel: Trains are projected to increase travel in the CYP Corridor by 100,000 annual trips and attract 25,000 and 78,000 riders per year to stations at Warren and Youngstown, respectively (Source: Ohio Hub System Study, 2005).

The last mile: Station sites will be located in the hearts of towns and cities where most transit routes are already concentrated. Some bus routes may be adjusted to provide curbside service at train stations. Planning has begun for "intermodal" transportation centers in several cities that unite trains, transit, taxis and bikes.

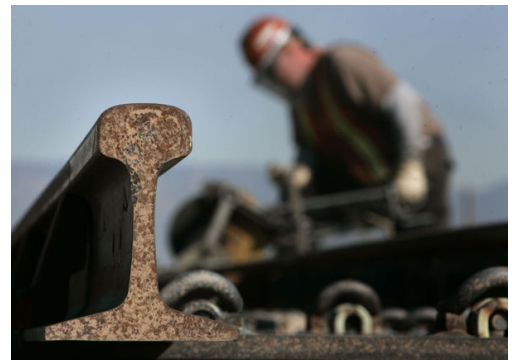
Greyhound going: Greyhound cut its services to long-haul trunk routes nationwide, leaving only several daytime buses serving just four cities in the CYP Corridor (Source: Greyhound). Buses are not as fast, affordable or comfortable as trains.



A needed option: Driving isn't a "choice" for many in the CYP TechBelt. In Youngstown 18 percent of households are without cars, 25 percent in Cleveland and 29 percent in Pittsburgh. Ohioans 65 years and older are 13 percent of the population today and will be 20 percent in just 20 years (Source: U.S. Census).

Smart travel: College students are a huge rail travel market, according to Amtrak. There are more than 15 colleges and universities with 150,000+ students within 15 miles of the CYP rail corridor (Sources: Ohio Board of Regents and college Web sites).

Freight fit: Passenger rail infrastructure improvements for the CYP rail corridor are one piece of ODOT's and PennDOT's overall strategy to improve goods and people movement in the region. Passenger rail investments in the CYP rail line will also enhance freight rail movement in the future.



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