



# 3C CORRIDOR MYTHBUSTERS!

**Background:** The key to making good decisions is having access to accurate information. Unfortunately, in some recent media coverage of Ohio's proposed 3C Corridor train service, inaccuracies are starting to be reported as fact. So All Aboard Ohio, a nonprofit educational organization with 36 years of experience in passenger rail issues, prepared this document to address some common misconceptions.

**Fact-check us!** We encourage it! Inquire about other states' experiences with comparable, state-supported intercity passenger rail (ie: Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, etc). In the end, you will see that Ohio's modest approach to developing passenger rail is not timid or risky, but is a model that has repeatedly proven itself elsewhere in the U.S. and worldwide.

## THE MYTHS...

## THE FACTS!

<p><i>Ohio's 3C Corridor is too slow to succeed.</i></p>	<p>Ohio's 3C "Quick Start" rail service is just that – a starting point. Ten states began all-new state-supported train services since the mid-1980s and all began with average train speeds ranging from 30-53 mph. Low fares (8-14 cents per mile), not speed, are the biggest draw for most rail travelers, per a California Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Board study. Ohio is not unique!</p>
<p><i>Ohio is going to be stuck with this slow train.</i></p>	<p>Other states' train speeds, departures and ridership increased with investment. Ohio's will too. This year, ODOT will start environmental planning over 18-24 months so it can tap more federal funds for 90+ mph trains on five Ohio routes: Cleveland – Columbus; Columbus – Cincinnati; Toledo – Columbus; Toledo – Cleveland; Cleveland – Pittsburgh. These investments will build on the 3C "Quick Start"!</p>
<p><i>The proposed train schedule doesn't meet travelers' needs.</i></p>	<p>It is unfortunate that Amtrak's draft schedule, issued for planning purposes, has been considered by many as the final word. ODOT has yet to conduct negotiations with freight railroads or Amtrak to determine the final schedule, average speeds and more. The draft schedule was issued as a starting point for talks, no more.</p>
<p><i>Who will ride 3C trains?</i></p>	<p>The same people who are filling trains in 15 other states that sponsor intercity (not commuter!) rail. We're talking about Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Oklahoma, North Carolina – not just the Northeast Corridor or California! In those states, ridership more than doubled since the first year because more trains and station facilities were added, trains were speeded up and services were improved. Go see for yourself who's riding!</p>

**MORE**

## **3C MYTHBUSTERS!** *Continued.....*

### **THE MYTHS...**

### **THE FACTS!**

<p><i>OK, I can't get my editor to send me to Oregon to go ride a train. Just tell me who is going to ride!</i></p>	<p>OK, according to the departments of transportation in other states, the people using their trains are college students (ODOT: 220,000 students attend college along 3C), the elderly (Census: 1.1 million people 65 years+ in 3C and growing!), the car-less (Census: 500,000 people without cars in 3C for physical, economic or personal reasons), and households with just one vehicle (Census: 610,000 households or 1.5 million people). <b>That is 3.3 million people total, or half of 3C's population.</b> Plus many young professionals, tourists, families, conventioners and business travelers (especially state workers!) will ride.</p>
<p><i>Ohio should sidetrack this train for High-Speed Rail.</i></p>	<p>Ohio is 0-4 (1977, 1982, 1985, 1992) in trying to go from 0 to more than 110 mph. No state or nation has either. High-Speed Rail is a major investment that requires evolving a supportive culture, politics, center-city density and a network of connecting and parallel regional rail and local transit services. It takes decades for these support systems to evolve, just as it did prior to the Interstate Highway System or Europe's HSR. California invested \$2.2 billion over 30 years to develop rail to where it could pass a HSR bond issue after prior failures. Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania and the Pacific Northwest may be only a few years behind. Ohio is not ready to make the leap to high-speed.</p>
<p><i>If this corridor was such a draw for rail, intercity buses would be crowded.</i></p>	<p>They are crowded – enough that Greyhound in 2008 instituted a priority boarding fee of \$5 at Cleveland and Cincinnati. Others are put on waiting lists and, if available, extra buses are chartered. Greyhound is not so interested in short-distance markets like 3C. Instead, most 3C buses travel to far-off cities like Dallas or Miami to keep more seats filled longer, blocking out Ohio riders. There is no intercity bus service to Dayton (requires a 50-minute city bus ride out to Trotwood), you cannot get to Columbus before 10 a.m. unless you leave Cleveland at 4:30 a.m., and there are no direct daytime buses between Dayton (Trotwood) and Cleveland anymore. Yet riders continue to fill the buses.</p>
<p><i>There will be no local transit when I arrive.</i></p>	<p>Stations are proposed to be built next to major transit services. Cleveland's Amtrak station is served by a frequent downtown loop bus. The Southwest Cleveland stop at the Puritas-W.150<sup>th</sup> Rapid Station provides rail access to the city and airport. The Columbus station will be on the busy High Street bus line to downtown, OSU, etc. Dayton's station will be at Main Street on multiple bus routes including electric trolleys. Both Cincinnati-area stops are next to bus routes to downtown and the universities.</p>
<p><i>This will take money from needed public transit.</i></p>	<p>Transit funding will not be touched. It is only 0.25% of Ohio's \$3.8 billion transportation budget. Ohio should reconsider its priorities, however, as it spends less on transit than it does on cutting grass along its Interstates. Existing federal grant dollars will be used to pay 3C's first three years of operating costs starting in 2012. The balance, including subsequent years, will be funded from ODOT's Logo sign program, corridor/train naming rights, advertising revenues, franchise fees for train/station concessions, wi-fi services, etc.</p>

**MORE**

## **3C MYTHBUSTERS!** *Continued.....*

### ***THE MYTHS...***

### **THE FACTS!**

<p><i>If 3C made so much sense, it wouldn't need a subsidy.</i></p>	<p>If roads and airports were cost-effective, they would be privately owned and funded. Instead they are government controlled but private vehicles use them. It is the exact opposite with passenger rail. Nearly all railroad infrastructure is privately funded and owned, incurring huge taxes, interest and insurance costs that roads and airport don't pay. To offset the infrastructure costs, passenger trains are government funded and owned.</p>
<p><i>Ohio lacks the population density for rail.</i></p>	<p>Population density is not a case for or against rail. See Norway, its 34 PPSM (people per square mile) and its excellent rail system. But we'll play along. Ohio has 267 PPSM, similar to France's 256 PPSM (per World Almanac) which has tens of thousands of slow and fast trains. Of America's 17 most densely populous states, all but two have state-supported regional or intercity passenger services: Ohio (8<sup>th</sup> most dense) and Hawaii (13<sup>th</sup>). When it comes to rail, Ohio acts like it is an island.</p>
<p><i>3C trains are too slow because they go through Dayton, and won't carry enough people because they don't go through Akron.</i></p>	<p>The Dayton rail corridor is only 8 miles longer and has 1 million more residents along it than the most direct rail corridor via Wilmington which requires more costly improvements. The Akron rail corridor is 49 miles longer than the direct route, will cost \$100 million more to improve and add more than 1 hour to the 3C travel time, resulting in no net ridership or revenue gains.</p>
<p><i>These trains may create some jobs, but they're not worth \$400 million.</i></p>	<p>Smart Growth America, the Center for Neighborhood Technology, and the U.S. Public Interest Research Group disagree. They say rail and transit stimulus spending creates nearly twice as many jobs per dollar as highway stimulus projects. Ohio is home to more than 100 rail industry suppliers who would rather do business in their own state than build rail systems for other states and nations. The U.S. Dept. of Commerce says the economic benefit from 3C will be three times greater than the initial capital investment. Traveler savings from having low-cost train service will pump into Ohio's economy \$111 million per year – that's five times the state's \$17 million annual operating expense.</p>
<p><i>Ohio could end up with these trains forever!</i></p>	<p>Hopefully! The 3C trains will use existing freight tracks that will be improved to benefit both passengers and freight. Because of that, the 3C "Quick Start" by itself doesn't commit the state to anything long-term. If the trains and their infrastructure are nurtured, improved, expanded and speeded up, then Ohio will probably enjoy them for many, many decades.</p>

**THEIR MYTHS HAVE BEEN BUSTED.**