

# Ohio Passenger Rail News

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## Booming! Chicago-NYC passenger rail

Current improvements: \$2.2 billion; Yearly riders: 1.6 million; And growing!



Robert Butler photo

**Amtrak's eastbound Lake Shore Limited** meets the dawn while streaking through Ashtabula, Ohio at 79 mph on its daily dash between Chicago, Toledo, Cleveland, Buffalo, New York City and Boston, plus other enroute station stops. Ridership on the Lake Shore has risen to a record 400,000 per year. To put that number into context, see the graphic on Page 4. When combined with other trains traveling on at least 100 miles of this route, there are 1.6 million Amtrak riders per year in the Chicago-New York corridor. See also the center pages for a list of capital improvements planned, underway or recently completed in this corridor.

There are more than 1.6 million reasons why passenger rail is very much alive between the Midwest and East Coast rail hubs. That's how many people rode trains in the 960-mile Chicago-Toledo-Cleveland-Buffalo-Albany-New York City travel corridor – one of the world's most populous.

Or, we could have bragged there were 2.2 billion reasons, pointing to the dollar value of rail infrastructure safety and performance improvements built since 2010, underway or in detailed engineering – today.

Either way, All Aboard Ohio is committed to encouraging Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, Congress, en route communities and host railroads Norfolk Southern and CSX Transportation to keep partnering, working, improving, building and expanding.

The need is there. A decade of growth in rail travel is due to the rising cost and growing inconvenience of car and air travel, more young people preferring public transportation over driving, aging baby boomers lacking the stamina for long-distance driving and improved rail service quality.

There are nearly 4,500 people per day riding on trains that traveled on at least 100 miles of the Chicago-Cleveland-Buffalo-New York City route. That ridership includes 613,640 passengers in 2011 on long-distance trains (*Lake Shore Limited* and *Capitol Limited*), a 5.2 percent rise over 2010.

And it includes 1,023,698 riders on short- and medium-distance trains (*Empire Service* and the *Maple Leaf*), a 4 percent increase over 2010. This does not include Amtrak's Chicago-Michigan trains which use the westernmost 40 miles of the Chicago-New York City route and

carried 797,017 riders in 2011.

Unlike government-owned and financed airports and highways, the Chicago-New York City rail corridor is owned mostly by private interests, namely Norfolk Southern Corp. west of Cleveland and CSX Transportation Inc. east of Cleveland. NS and CSX operate about 150 freight trains per day on substantial portions of this route.

If this rail facility did not exist, at least 40,000 trucks per day would be added to a highway system whose physical condition consistently receives poor grades by the American Society of Civil Engineers in its annual report cards. Thus All Aboard Ohio is committed to creating win-win situations for passengers and freight when advocating infrastructure improvements that accommodate growth for both modes.

— Continued

### It's official!

Amtrak in 2012 broke its ninth ridership record in 10 years, carrying more passengers than all but four airlines and 50% more passengers than Greyhound. The Chicago-New York City/Boston *Lake Shore Limited* is Amtrak's fourth-most popular train, carrying 403,700 riders in 2012. That's a 33% increase since 2000 when the *Lake Shore* carried 303,087 riders! Other trains using major portions of this route also gained riders in the past year.



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# BOOMING: Chicago —

The following significant rail infrastructure improvements (planned or underway) are important for accommodating the growth of passenger and freight rail services in the busy Chicago-New York City corridor. Information is presented in this format: (LOCATION – Project title – dollar amount – lead sponsor – status – description). Links to source documents are at [allaboardohio.org](http://allaboardohio.org).

**CHICAGO, IL-NEW YORK, NY** – Viewliner II railcar order – \$298.1 million – First railcars due for delivery Winter 2012-13 – Amtrak in 2010 ordered 130 Viewliner II railcars from CAF USA in Elmira, NY including 25 sleeping cars, 25 diners, 55 baggage cars and 25 baggage/dormitory cars for use primarily on long-distance trains including Amtrak’s Chicago-New York/ Boston *Lake Shore Limited* plus potential future expanded services on this growing passenger route.

**CHICAGO** – Union Station renovations – \$25 million – Amtrak – Completed 2012 – Restoration of Great Hall, offices, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and safety systems.



Arturo Carmona photo

*Chicago Union Station’s Great Hall sparkles after Amtrak’s \$25 million renovation of the overall facility. However much of the rest of the station is overcrowded and needs expansion to handle more rail travelers, especially to Ohio and the East Coast.*

**CHICAGO** – Union Station improvements – No dollar amount yet – Chicago Department of Transportation – Master plan completed 2012 – Medium- and long-term improvements to ease track, platform and street access capacity constraints.

**CHICAGO** – Englewood Flyover – \$146 million – Illinois Department of Transportation – Fully funded, construction due to begin by end of 2012 – Separates the busy at-grade crossing of Metra Rock Island commuter tracks and Norfolk Southern/Amtrak tracks by elevating the Metra tracks.

**CHICAGO-PORTER, IN** – South of Lake Bypass – \$1.2 billion (approximate) – Michigan Department of Transportation – Alternatives Analysis completed, Preliminary Engineering funded at \$4 million – Planning for building a 40-mile-long, two-track, high-speed passenger rail line from Chicago to Porter.

**ILLINOIS/INDIANA STATE LINE-PORTER** – Indiana Gateway – \$75.5 million – Indiana Department of Transportation – Fully funded, construction due to begin by end of 2012 – Provides a third track along more than half of the 25-mile NS right of way to relieve rail traffic congestion.

**SOUTH BEND, IN** – Amtrak Station expansion/ADA – \$434,323 – Amtrak – completed in 2011 – Built second station platform on south side of mainline tracks, added tactile edges to existing and new platforms and improved station build-



Ken Prendergast graphic

ing on north side of tracks. Second platform allows station processing of trains from both main tracks.

**MISHAWAKA, IN** – Grade separation of Capital Avenue/SR331 – \$42 million – City of Mishawaka/ Michiana Area Council of Governments – Under construction – Roadway underpass below the NS/Amtrak mainline is part of converting SR331 into an urban expressway project.

**ELKHART, IN** – Grade separation of Prairie Street – \$29.7 million – City of Elkhart/ Michiana Area Council of Governments – Planned for construction in 2014 – An underpass of the NS/Amtrak mainline is planned with more than \$14 million in hand.

**WATERLOO, IN** – Amtrak Station expansion/ADA – \$5.8 million – Town of Waterloo – Construction due to start in early 2013 – Construct new station building, replace existing concrete platform, add second concrete platform on south side of mainline tracks and pedestrian walkway to allow station processing of trains from both main tracks.

**BRYAN, OH** – Amtrak Station ADA improvements – \$113,900 – Amtrak – Construction completed in 2011 – New wheelchair lift and ADA-compliant tactile edges on the existing concrete platform.

**SWANTON, OH** – Grade separation of Hallett Avenue/Fulton-Lucas Road – \$12.7 million – Village of Swanton – Construction underway – New overpass on a new roadway alignment over NS/Amtrak tracks on the east side of town.

**HOLLAND, OH** – Grade separation of McCord Road – \$35.2 million – Lucas County Engineer – Construction due to start in 2014 as \$29.9 million is in

hand – New underpass of NS/Amtrak tracks as well as nearby roundabout with temporary tracks and roadways.

**TOLEDO, OH** – Airline Junction Rail Project – \$12.3 million – City of Toledo – Completed in 2012 – New switches and signals at three locations west of Airline Yard to improve traffic flow and train speeds on the mainline.

**NORTHWOOD, OH** – Grade separation of Wales Road – \$15.8 million – Ohio Department of Transportation – Construction underway – New overpasses of NS/Amtrak and CSX tracks, plus relocations of Wales and Drouillard roads.

**ELYRIA, OH** – Amtrak Station ADA improvements – \$161,446 – Amtrak – Construction completed in 2011 – New wheelchair lift, walkways and facilities that are ADA-compliant.

**ELYRIA, OH** – Lorain County Transportation Center – \$7.6 million – Lorain County – Construction on third phase completed in 2010 – Renovation of the historic New York Central Railroad depot into a multi-modal transportation and community center. Funding and railroad agreements for the \$1.3 million fourth phase (Amtrak station facility) are not yet in hand.

**CLEVELAND, OH** – Downtown Lakefront Multimodal Project – \$46.7 million – City of Cleveland – Preliminary Engineering complete, local funding of \$26.7 million in hand, \$20 million sought from local port authority, Amtrak pledges another \$4.25 million for station facility improvements not accounted for by the city – Construction of outdoor and enclosed walk/bikeway linking Medical Mart/Convention Center with North Coast Harbor, parking deck, bike station and potential linkages to or accommodations for Amtrak and RTA Waterfront Line stations.



*Cleveland’s new Multi-Modal Transportation Center would unite Amtrak, regional light rail and bus transit services, pedestrians, bicycles and taxis at a single, \$50 million facility. Cleveland would contribute \$26 million, the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority \$20 million and Amtrak \$4 million. The port authority’s funding depends on it getting a larger tax levy OK’d by county voters.*

City of Cleveland graphic



# New York City passenger rail

**ERIE, PA** – Railroad crossing improvement – \$350,000 +/- per year – Erie County – ongoing – Erie County and PennDOT have flexibility to prioritize future projects and allocate funds following their established procedures, to maximize the benefits of this program.

**RIPLEY, NY** – Ripley Grade Crossing Elimination – \$10 million – NYSDOT – Environmental Impact Studies of alternatives completed – Grade separation of State Route 76 at CSX/Amtrak and NS crossings as well as elimination of up to four other at-grade street crossings in Ripley.

**BUFFALO, NY-ALBANY, NY** – Signal system modernization – No dollar amount available (potentially \$100 million) – CSX Transportation – Construction underway – Replacement of 60+ year old New York Central RR electric signal system on CSX’s Hudson, Mohawk, Rochester and Buffalo Terminal Subdivisions with new electronic traffic control system and infrastructure.

**BUFFALO/DEPEW, NY** – Station improvements – \$770,668 – Amtrak/New York State Department of Transportation – Construction underway – ADA and state-of-good-repair improvements to station parking, buildings, interiors, walkways and platform.

**BATAVIA, NY-ROCHESTER, NY** – First phase of Third Main Project – \$58.27 million – CSX/NYSOT – A 100-percent federal grant was awarded to NYSDOT but not obligated as no agreement exists yet among Amtrak, CSX, FRA and NYSDOT – This is the initial 11-mile section of new track on the CSX right-of-way to reduce congestion between freight and passenger trains and increase safety with enhanced grade crossing warning device systems.

**ROCHESTER, NY** – Intermodal Transportation Center – \$37.7 million – City of Rochester – Construction due to begin in 2013 – About \$25.8 million from several sources has been gathered, enough to begin construction on replacing the 1978-built Amtrak station with a new, larger facility that allows passenger trains to do their station processing from more than one track.

**SYRACUSE, NY** – Syracuse Area Congestion Relief – \$23.2 million – CSX/NYSOT – An 80-percent federal grant (matched by \$4.6 million in state funds) was awarded to NYSDOT but not obligated as no agreement exists yet among Amtrak, CSX, FRA and NYSDOT – Work includes 13 miles of improvements near De Witt Yard and Amtrak station including new crossover tracks and rebuilt through-tracks to allow higher speeds.

**SCHENECTADY (HOFFMANS)-ALBANY, NY** – Albany-Schenectady Second Main Track – \$92.2 million – Amtrak/ NYSDOT – Construction on second main track, interlockings and crossings for 110 mph passenger trains is due to start following the start of Amtrak’s lease of 94 miles of CSX tracks from Hoffmans, NY to Poughkeepsie, NY, which is slated to occur as early as Fall 2012.



Courtesy of The Daily Progress  
*It’s all about the people! All of the projects shown on these pages exist to make travelers’ journeys more enjoyable.*

**SCHENECTADY, NY** – Intermodal Station and Track and Platform Improvements – \$14.15 million – Capital District Transportation Authority – Construction due to start in early 2013 – Replacement of existing station, addition of new platforms and re-configuration of track layout at the Schenectady station. This work is part of the overall project to construct a new intermodal station on the site, which is now fully-funded and is expected to open in 2014.

**ALBANY-RENSSELAER, NY** – Rehab/Replace Livingston Avenue Bridge over Hudson River – \$28.9 million (rehabilitate) or \$126 million (replace) – Preliminary engineering at \$4 million is underway – The 100-year-old railroad bridge is near the end of its useful life. Deterioration limits trains to crossing one at a time at 15 mph and the aging swing-span mechanism allowing ships to pass, delays rail and marine traffic.

**ALBANY-RENSSELAER** – Fourth Track at Rensselaer Station – \$35.4 million – Construction due to start in 2012 – Project includes addition of a fourth boarding track at the station, extension of the current platforms for longer trains, a re-configuration of the station’s track layout and a new signal/interlocking system to increase speeds of trains moving in and out of the station.

**RENSSELAER-POUGHKEEPSIE, NY** – Hudson Line Signal Pole Replacement – \$28.6 million – Construction on final phase due to start in 2012 – Pole-mounted signal cables along 67 miles of rail line operated at 110 mph are extremely susceptible to weather-caused damage, causing slow orders and delays. Cables on the northernmost 48 miles of rail line are being buried and the remaining 19 miles are set to be buried.

**RENSSELAER-POUGHKEEPSIE** – Hudson Line grade crossing improvements – \$2.45 million – Construction due to start in 2012 – Enhanced grade crossing warning device systems in a section operated at 110 mph will replace outdated devices at 13 road crossings and other improvements as identified.

**NEW YORK, NY** – Moynihan Station Phase I – \$267 million (Phase I) or \$1.184 billion (total) – Construction to start in 2012 – Phase I improvements include two new entrances into the Penn/Moynihan Station complex through the corners of the old Farley Post Office building, the extension of the West End Concourse to serve eight additional tracks, the doubling of the width of the concourse, and new stairs, escalators and elevators from the platforms up to the station to meet ADA requirements.

It’s an impressive list. But it’s one that needs to keep growing to accommodate the ongoing growth and expansion of passenger rail service. All Aboard Ohio will join with railroad officials to educate local, regional, federal and railroad officials on the need for continued expansion and improvements to meet the changing mobility and economic development demands in this heavily populated, heavily trafficked travel corridor.



Photo courtesy of Elmira Star Gazette  
*Amtrak’s new Viewliner II railcars will start rolling out this winter from CAF USA’s factory in Elmira, NY, not far from the Chicago-New York corridor — one of the routes these 130 cars will travel. While some of the cars will replace aging equipment in Amtrak’s long-distance eastern fleet, most will allow Amtrak to lengthen its existing trains or add new trains to ease sold-out conditions.*



John Fuller photo  
*Additional tracks are being installed along sections of the Chicago-New York corridor in Indiana, Ohio and New York to accommodate growing freight and passenger rail traffic. Both have co-existed along this route for up to 150 years and will continue to co-exist with further investment in rail capacity. This rail corridor removes about 40,000 trucks and 4,000 cars from Interstate 90 and other decaying highways each day.*



Empire State Development Corp. graphic  
*New York City’s Moynihan Station will be developed in phases in the existing, historic Farley Post Office next door to Amtrak’s subterranean Penn Station. When complete, this will provide an appropriately grand entrance for long-distance rail travelers to America’s largest city.*



# Amtrak's *Lake Shore Limited* service (Chicago-Toledo-Cleveland-Buffalo-Syracuse-New York City/Boston) has one eastbound and one westbound train daily.

## These two trains average 1,100 riders total each day.

**TWO** east/westbound *Lake Shore Ltd.* service trains carry 1,100 people on average daily.



**FOUR** jumbo jets (333-seat, Airbus A340-600, 82% of seats occupied) carry 1,100 people.



**TEN** regional jets (146-seat, two-class Boeing 737-700, 75% occupied) carry 1,100 people.



**18** intercity buses (81-seat, double-deck Megabus, 75% occupied) carry 1,100 people.



# Sign me up!

## I WANT BETTER RAIL PASSENGER SERVICES!

A one-year membership in All Aboard Ohio includes a subscription to the *Ohio Passenger Rail News*, plus action alerts, notice of rail-oriented events, e-mail updates and local meetings.

(Dues and contributions to All Aboard Ohio may be tax deductible.)

You can join on-line at: [www.allaboardohio.org/join-us/](http://www.allaboardohio.org/join-us/) or  
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- ☐ \$ 25 **On Track** (limited income, Military or Student) #LSL

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