

NEWS

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Ohio Hub Plan “Laying New Tracks” *Recent Workshops Sends Messages of Innovation*

(Columbus) -- Though it has yet to be built and see its first high-speed trains, the Ohio Hub Plan is getting positive comment and even praise for its innovative approach to creating a greatly improved statewide and regional rail network for moving more people and freight.

“We are literally and figuratively laying new tracks with this plan”, says Ohio Rail Development Commission Executive Director Jim Seney. “The Ohio Hub Plan is like nothing that’s been done either in the past or currently when it comes to rail transportation, both in how is being planned and how it would be funded.”

Seney points to several differences:

- “This isn’t the kind of rail service your parent’s or grandparents may remember”, says Seney. “What we’re planning here are fast, frequent, and timely trains that get you anywhere in or around Ohio in less time than it takes to drive. That’s certainly becoming an even more important as gasoline prices continue to rise. Why shouldn’t we all have that option?”
- “This plan is as much about moving more freight as it is about moving people. If we plan to run high-speed passenger trains in rail corridors that are owned by the freight railroads, there ought to be a significant benefit for them and their shipping customers. The Ohio Hub will expand capacity

- for the growing and increasingly critical need to move freight, and this strengthens Ohio's already strategic place in the global economy.”
- “This plan is also about making better connections between rail and other modes: airports, highways, local transit systems, even waterways, bikeways and creating walkable access to new retail, office and residential developments around station sites and along the Hub's rail corridors. It's about bringing balance back to our overall transportation system, and allowing us to better manage things like traffic congestion and air quality”
 - “Unlike failed attempts in the past by state or local entities, the Ohio Hub does not seek to go to taxpayers vote for a levy or bond issue. We're already spending tens of millions of state and local dollars on rail and highway-related rail projects in Ohio. Our plan calls for capturing the credit for those dollars and using that credit as the state's matching funds when a federal rail funding plan is passed by Congress. We fund our excellent highways and aviation systems on a federal/state matching basis and have done so for decades. There's no logical reason we shouldn't do the same to upgrade and expand our rail infrastructure.”

Speakers and attendees at the recent Ohio Hub Station Development Workshop also made note of the plan's innovative approach.

(The Ohio Rail Development Commission is an independent agency operating within the Ohio Department of Transportation. ORDC is responsible for economic development through the improvement and expansion of passenger and freight rail service, railroad grade crossing safety and rail travel & tourism issues. For more information about what ORDC does for Ohio, visit our website at <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail/>)