

# ***NEWS***

## ***OHIO RAIL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Ohio Hub May Benefit From Freight Rail Project** *ORDC sponsorship of CSX intermodal project carries positives for passenger rail plan*

**(Columbus)** – ORDC Commissioners have voted unanimously to allow ORDC to sponsor a CSX railroad plan to build a bypass track and a high capacity intermodal freight yard at the railroad’s Parsons Avenue Yard in South Columbus. CSX is applying for funding through ODOT’s Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC).

In addition to the immediate improvements to Parsons Yard, the CSX project would also improve the flow of rail traffic through downtown Columbus, Buckeye Yard in West Columbus and northwest through the communities of Marysville, Ridgeway and Mount Victory. These improvements would involve increasing clearances for double-stack container trains, building new passing sidings and new connections to other CSX rail corridors.

“What these improvements will also do is help create a rail traffic flow that will facilitate the kind of high-speed passenger train service we are planning under the Ohio Hub Plan”, says ORDC Executive Director James Seney. “We want to see more projects like this around Ohio, because they help ease or remove rail bottlenecks and create a rail system that better accommodates freight and passenger rail. What’s more, these are the kind of projects for which Ohio can capture the costs as a potential state match for any future federal dollars, if a federal passenger and freight rail funding and development program is passed and enacted by Congress and the President.”

The proposed improvements to the CSX Parsons Yard would help CSX deal with what has become the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. rail industry: container freight. Currently, CSX

handles the loading / unloading of rail containers at its Buckeye Yard facility which has become overcrowded and requires hauling containers in and out by truck to a storage facility over a mile away. That truck traffic is putting an increasing load on local streets and Interstates, and is causing delays for shippers who demand faster service. A new “lift” facility at Parsons Yard would allow not only more room, but would enable an increase from around 135,000 “lifts” of containers and trailers annually that are currently handled at Buckeye yard to an estimated capacity of 450,000 “lifts” at the proposed Parson Yard terminal.

The cost of the Parson Yard facility is an estimated at between \$65 and \$75 million and could take up to two years to build. Additional track improvements through Columbus, Marysville, Ridgeway and Mount Victory would bring the total project cost out to an estimated \$100 million.

ORDC became involved in the project because in order to apply for funding from TRAC, CSX had to have a public entity as a sponsor. Since the project has potentially statewide implications and benefits, ORDC is the logical sponsor.

***(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/> )***