

Foreword

The Ohio Hub Plan is a bold vision to invest in a network of fast, frequent and reliable passenger trains while increasing transportation capacity for moving more freight by rail. At a time when Ohio faces critical challenges to our mobility and economy, the Ohio Hub will link passenger and freight trains to Ohio's highway, aviation, transit and port facilities to create a seamless, multimodal transportation system that will benefit our citizens and businesses.

By advancing a policy of investing in our rail system to achieve public benefits and generate economic development activity, the Ohio Hub breaks with the traditional models of how to create and operate passenger rail service. Such a new paradigm is necessary if Ohio and the nation are to effectively address such issues as creating new options for moving both people and freight, growing the economy, creating new jobs, conserving energy and improving air quality.

To do this, we must look upon our railroad network as "*an essential transportation investment,*" just as we have done historically for highways, aviation, transit, waterways, communications, water, sewers and electrical power grids. The time for such investment is now.

Based on criteria established by the Federal Railroad Administration, the system envisioned in the Ohio Hub Plan would generate sufficient ridership to produce revenues that would cover the overall operating costs.

Investing in Ohio's rail infrastructure will help strengthen our state's assets as a premiere gateway to international markets and a North American hub for the distribution and logistics industries. Clearly, transportation planning and economic development in Ohio must go hand-in-hand. The Ohio Hub Plan not only recognizes this, but actively promotes and advances these objectives. It is time to harness our state's strengths and partner with the private railroads to create a regional rail hub that effectively addresses our critical mobility needs now and into Ohio's future.

We invite you to read the Ohio Hub Plan and discover a vision and hope for Ohio's transportation future.

Acknowledgements

The Ohio and Lake Erie Regional Rail - Ohio Hub Study is an ongoing, cooperative and collaborative effort. Transportation agencies from Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York, along with Amtrak and VIA Rail contributed to the feasibility planning for the Ohio Hub System. Norfolk Southern, CSX and Canadian National railroads also provided critical input into the planning process.

The Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) led the planning effort and coordinated with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). Transportation Economics & Management Systems, Inc. (TEMS) and HNTB Corporation, Inc. provided consulting and engineering services. A technical committee was comprised of senior staff from the transportation agencies representing each participating state, as well as Amtrak, VIA Rail and the freight railroads. Project meetings included representatives from local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, transit and airport authorities and other interested parties. Engage Communications facilitated the Ohio Hub Citizen and Agency Participation Program. The Ohio Association of Regional Councils and the State's regional and metropolitan planning organizations hosted nearly 30 Ohio Hub public and agency meetings. Twenty-four Ohio municipalities have sent letters or passed resolutions in support of the Ohio Hub. In 2006, the Ohio Senate unanimously passed Concurrent Resolution No. 30 requesting Congressional support for funding an Ohio Hub Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

Funding for the Ohio Hub Study came from a variety of sources. The Ohio Department of Transportation and the Federal Government funded a majority of the study costs through the State Planning and Research Program. The ORDC, and the Indiana, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania Departments of Transportation, along with Amtrak and VIA Rail, contributed funds and/or in-kind services to the study.

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For related Ohio Hub project information, reports and documents visit

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