

HOW WERE ROUTE AND STATION ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED?

ROUTE EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Track class/speed
- Train volumes
- Track capacity
- Route circuitry
- Corridor communities and land use
- Ownership
- Number of at-grade crossings
- Number of bridges, underpasses or tunnel structures
- Right-of-way width
- Signaling

STATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Local preference
- Former station location
- Tangent track
- Adjacent land use
- Distance between stations
- Population center and/or access to connecting infrastructure
- Overall travel time

NEXT STEPS

More funding is needed to continue the environmental studies required for federal approval. As the environmental studies unfold, a preferred alignment and preferred station locations will be selected and confirmed. The goal is to advance to the point of starting a federal environmental approvals process, also known as the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) approval process.

The next Tier I EIS study components for which funding is needed include:

- Service alternatives analysis to know the frequency and volume of passenger rail trips this corridor's market can sustain, as well as what infrastructure improvements are needed
- Cost estimate of capital, operating, and maintenance costs for the preferred alternatives

In addition to seeking funding for the study components above, the RSTI passenger rail project partners are also:

- Continuing stakeholder and public outreach with local officials, state officials, host railroads, and the general public
- Seeking new project partnerships, including with the private sector and jurisdictions between Columbus and Pittsburgh



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43215

614.228.2663
morpc.org



CHICAGO- COLUMBUS- PITTSBURGH PASSENGER RAIL: ROUTE ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS



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Through the Rapid Speed Transportation Initiative (RSTI), MORPC and the Ohio RSTI Corridor Partners are exploring ways to provide new intercity transportation for Central Ohio. MORPC has completed the initial components of an environmental study, which include an existing market and transportation conditions report and a route alternatives analysis report.

These reports will inform a Tier I environmental impact statement (EIS). A Tier I EIS is a study required by the Federal Railroad Administration in order to issue federal approval and/or federal funding for re-establishing passenger rail service between Central Ohio and the remainder of the U.S. passenger rail system.

OHIO RSTI CORRIDOR PARTNERS

Union County

City of Lima

City of Kenton

City of Marysville

City of Dublin

City of Columbus

WHAT IS A ROUTE AND STATION ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS?

Central Ohio had passenger rail service to Chicago and Pittsburgh until 1979, when service was terminated. The Chicago-Columbus-Pittsburgh passenger rail route will re-establish passenger service along existing rail lines, currently owned and operated by freight railroad companies such as CSX and Norfolk Southern.

The current characteristics of each rail route option (also referred to as route alternative) must be considered in order to understand the magnitude of improvements that would be necessary to accommodate the use of the corridor for both freight and passenger rail. Therefore, each route alternative was broken into several segments, and a criteria framework was used to evaluate the route alternatives in a methodical, comprehensive way. The final route will be the focus of intense investment, as it will require significant improvements to enable better mobility for freight in addition to re-establishing passenger rail service.

ROUTE EVALUATION RESULTS

The analysis narrowed the route and station alternatives to those shown here. While portions of the corridorone route option, four segments of the corridor feature more than one route alternative.

More work is needed to determine the preferred route within these four segments, including engagement of the communities east of Columbus. This route alternatives analysis, does, however, screen out unsuitable existing rail corridors and provides the most viable passenger route alternatives between the three anchor cities.

STATION ALTERNATIVES

Potential rail stations are shown in the maps in yellow stars. While some communities such as Marysville and Columbus have more than one potential station location, this does not mean that more than one station will be constructed. These were locations that local jurisdictions wanted to be screened further as the passenger rail corridor federal approval studies continue to be developed.

Most former passenger rail stations along the corridor have been demolished. Lima is the only community that has preserved its historic station. In other communities, station sites were identified through work sessions held with community officials along the route. Three potential sites were identified in Columbus. The downtown site at the Greater Columbus Convention Center received the most support.

