



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MORPC, Local Governments Taking Action to Ensure
Columbus Region is a Priority for Amtrak Expansion**

Media roundtable today and CMC Forum tomorrow will include Amtrak representatives and local officials

[COLUMBUS, OH, May 18, 2021] – Central Ohio is taking action to ensure the region is part of expanded passenger rail service – including connecting Columbus to Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and Pittsburgh – as additional conversations related to a federal infrastructure package unfold.

For years, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission has worked with organizations, including the Northern Indiana Passenger Rail Association, to advance passenger rail on the Chicago-Columbus-Pittsburgh corridor. The route would re-establish passenger service along existing rail lines currently owned and operated by freight railroad companies.

With the reauthorization of the FAST Act approaching this fall and the national dialogue regarding the critical role federal investment plays in infrastructure, Amtrak released a map and vision to demonstrate what an expanded passenger rail network could look like by 2035, including the “3C + D” corridor that would connect Columbus with Cleveland, Dayton and Cincinnati.

“Columbus is the largest city in the United States without fixed rail service for passengers. Not being on the national network puts us at a competitive disadvantage with other regions,” MORPC Executive Director William Murdock said. “Ensuring Central Ohio’s place at the heart of new service would mean new jobs and better access, and it would be an economic driver for the region’s communities – urban, suburban and rural – as well as the state of Ohio.”

In addition to supporting the 3C corridor, MORPC and its partners are asking for the Chicago-Columbus-Pittsburgh corridor to be included in the Amtrak expansion. This support is reflected in **30 letters submitted to Amtrak**.

“No direct highway or passenger railway serves the Pittsburgh-Columbus-Chicago corridor today, meaning the expanded service would forge a non-redundant, intercity connection linking some of the strongest-performing regions and transportation hubs of the Midwest,” MORPC Director of Transportation & Infrastructure Development Thea Ewing said. “Communities – not only in Ohio, but throughout the state and in neighboring regions – see the potential economic benefit and, therefore, want to see the route completed.”

MORPC along with partners in Lima, Marysville, Dublin, and Union County recently completed initial components of a Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study for the corridor as part of the Rapid Speed Transportation Initiative. View the **Existing Conditions & Market Analysis** and **Route Alternatives Analysis**.

Media roundtable taking place Tuesday, May 18, 2021:

This afternoon, a conversation will take place with members of the media to specifically discuss the 3C corridor, which would also connect to Dayton. Those participating will include:

- Bill Flynn, CEO of Amtrak
- Stephen Gardner, President of Amtrak
- Nan Whaley, Mayor of the City of Dayton
- Linda Horning Pitt, Mayor of the Village of Crestline
- Frank Jackson, Mayor of the City of Cleveland
- William Murdock, Executive Director of MORPC

The roundtable will take place via Zoom. Members of the media can access it by clicking [here](#). The event will start 3:30 p.m. this afternoon, but registration is required in advance.

Columbus Metropolitan Club Forum to take place Wednesday, May 19, 2021:

Tomorrow at noon, a Columbus Metropolitan Club forum titled, “Trains and Transit, Past and Future” will take place to discuss transit in Central Ohio, with a focus on passenger rail.

The panel will include:

- Derrick James, Senior Manager of State and Local Legislative Relations at Amtrak
- Thea Ewing, Director of Transportation & Infrastructure Development at MORPC
- Jeffree Darbee, Owner of Benjamin D. Rickey & Co. and author/historian

The program will be moderated by Ohio Statehouse News Bureau journalist Andy Chow and will be streamed live. More information is available [here](#).

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The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is Central Ohio’s regional council with more than 70 members comprised of counties, cities, villages, townships, and regional organizations. We take pride in bringing communities of all sizes and interests together to collaborate on best practices and plan for the future of our growing region.