



# Oasis Rail Transit Project Overview and Findings

The Oasis Rail Transit project is an important element of the Eastern Corridor transportation and land use strategy. The purpose of this update is to offer an overview of the progress-to-date and describe the direction the Oasis project is taking.

## A Regional Approach

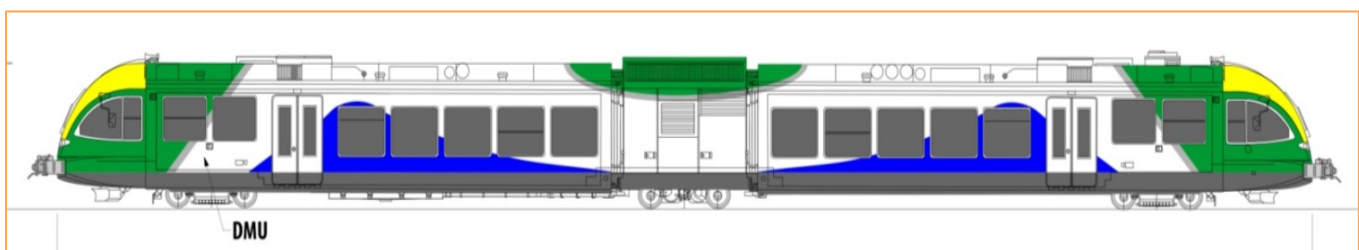
Oasis's approximately 17-mile long corridor can be a complementary element of the region's transportation system. The 2006 Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) finding recommended the Oasis transit plan as a way to provide a **regional-scale alternative** to driving. There were several key factors identified to support the approach. The Oasis Rail Transit project would:

- Increase mobility for non-drivers
- Provide a high-capacity transit mode to support other modes
- Establish stations at effective locations with links to other modes
- Connect downtown Cincinnati with outlying areas of population and employment
- Support neighborhood development and revitalization
- Reduce demand for new highway capacity
- Meet future travel demand

With this regional approach to rail transit service identified, there are a number of characteristics that define how such a system functions. Among the characteristics for Oasis are that it connects outlying communities to downtown; riders may drive up to 10 miles to reach a station; stations are spaced between two to five miles apart; and typical operating speeds between 30-60 miles per hour.

## Matching the Vehicle to Regional Service Needs

The transit vehicle will be one of the most visible aspects of the system. The preferred vehicle is appropriate for regional service, with performance capabilities matched to ridership and station spacing; self-propelled (diesel multiple unit); and quiet, comfortable and odor-free. It is capable of running on existing freight railroad tracks, cost effective and proven in operations in other US locations. Too, the selected vehicle is attractive and scaled to the communities it serves.



## Future Oasis Riders

Ridership estimates were made for 2016 as the starting year and for 2035 as the horizon year. The estimates were developed by HNTB, in conjunction with Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI), using its travel demand forecasting model. Travel data are based on projected socio-economic and land use forecasts at the Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) level and predict movements between zones. Model refinements were made to estimate ridership boardings by station. The estimates are for weekday commuter service only and do not include ridership estimates for evening, weekend and special event service.

With Oasis as a regional rail service, ridership by station increases as the line moves eastward from the Riverfront Transit Center, with the highest daily boardings at the eastern-most stations: Red Bank, Newtown, Ancor, and Milford. Nearly 2,800 daily boardings (inbound and outbound) are forecast for 2016, increasing to 3,100 daily boardings by 2035. These ridership forecasts do not take into consideration the additional riders that can come from new development around the proposed stations.

## The Oasis Corridor Land Use Vision - A Key to Success

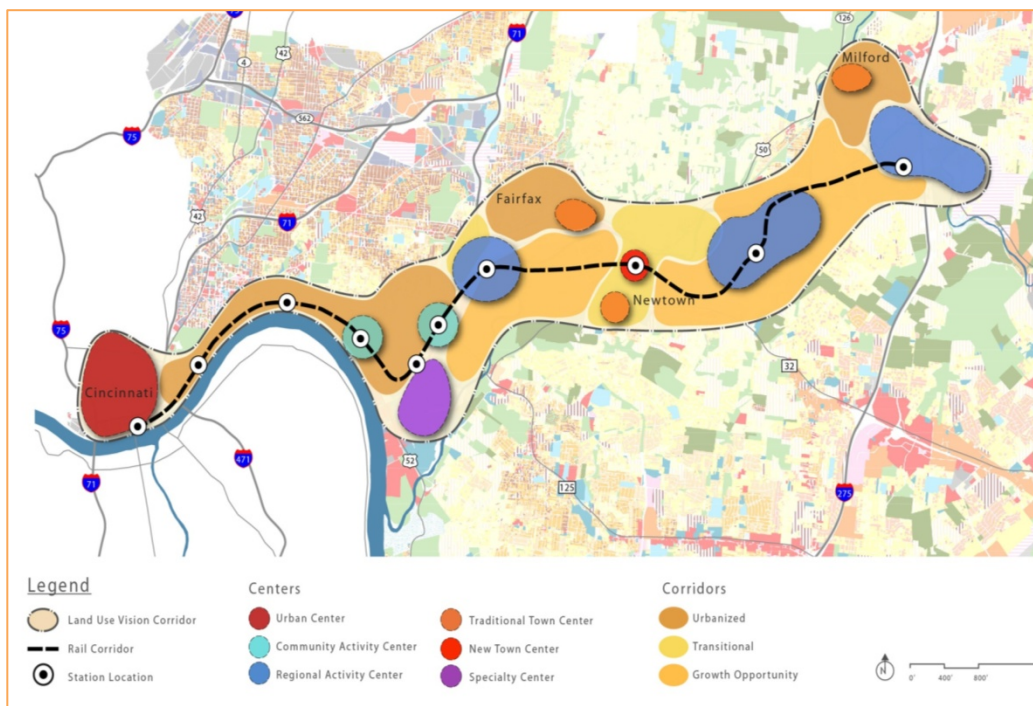
Focusing only on the transit line and a few stations means that longer-term success of the system would be harder to achieve. Since there is a relationship between transit and development, how the corridor grows is critical. Transit is a means to help create more livable places in the Cincinnati region. In the process, new transit-supportive land uses in the corridor and at stations also help improve transit ridership. Such an approach recognizes that transit can be a powerful investment that:

- **Reinforces traditional neighborhoods and towns**, such as in Cincinnati, Newtown and Milford
- **Revitalizes by-passed and under-utilized properties** mid-way along the corridor and
- **Redefines new development patterns** in the more suburban locations to create a critical mass of walkable, mixed use places

Without an essential Vision for the corridor, success will come more slowly and incrementally. The Oasis Land Use Vision builds on the original Eastern Corridor Land Use Vision, but gets more specific along the transit line. The 17 mile corridor was considered in total and three patterns emerged: **Urbanized**, uniformly developed with generally compatible uses; **Transitional**, more industrialized areas with uses from service facilities to distribution users; and **Growth**, locations with larger, undeveloped properties that can be developed as more transit-supportive community assets.

The corridor acts as a “host” for four activity centers, each with a distinctive role and function. They house a variety of station types. The four activity centers are:

- **Urban Activity Center** – Downtown Cincinnati is the sole Urban Activity Center, and it anchors the western end of the Oasis corridor.
- **Regional Activity Centers (RAC)** – Regional is the next level in the activity center hierarchy. The core of a RAC is office and service-oriented commercial and retail uses, but there is a conscious introduction of multi-family housing. RACs are proposed at Red Bank, Ancor and Milford.
- **Community Activity Centers (CAC)** – The third level is the CAC, and its role is to provide a core in areas with multiple existing neighborhoods or emerging community-scale development. Boathouse, East End, Columbia Tusculum, Lunken, Beechmont and Newtown are the candidate locations.
- **Traditional Town Centers (TTC)** – The corridor has several traditional town centers that need to be recognized for the value they bring. TTCs also help strengthen the corridor solely by their presence. Mariemont, Newtown and Milford are TTCs.



## Understanding the Stations' Ability for Future Development

The 2006 Tier I Record of Decision identified ten stations located along the Oasis line from downtown Cincinnati to the City of Milford.

HDR completed an analysis of the stations to assess their development capability. A ½ mile radius around each station (500 acres) was analyzed, since this is the recognized station area walkshed. Since the Riverfront Transit Center is in place, the nine remaining stations - Boathouse, East End, Columbia Tusculum, Lunken, Beechmont, Red Bank, Newtown, Ancor and Milford – were reviewed. Each station's development capacity – how much net acreage was available for future development - was rated as High (Green), Medium (Blue) or Low (Yellow). The following chart reveals the results, and the findings were used as part of the station evaluation process.

Station	TOTAL NET 1/2 Mile (~ 502 acres)*	Vacant 1/4 mile (acres)	Vacant 1/2 mile (acres)	Vacant TOTAL	STC 1/4 mile (acres)	STC 1/2 mile (acres)	STC TOTAL	Vacant/STC TOTAL	Percentage Vacant/STC	Rating
Boathouse	147	3.9	13.9	17.8	0.8	2.28	3.08	20.88	14.2	Yellow
East End	296	5.7	19.9	25.6	0.2	0.3	0.5	26.1	8.8	Yellow
Columbia Tusculum	294	18.9	40.3	59.2	6.2	7.9	14.1	73.3	24.9	Blue
Lunken Airport	250	4.9	11.8	11.8	1.8	2	3.8	15.6	6.2	Yellow
Beechmont	362	6.2	27.1	33.3	1.1	1.2	2.3	35.6	9.8	Yellow
Red Bank	270	7.3	27	34.3	22	128.7	150.7	185	68.5	Green
Newtown (Existing Track)	463	4.6	49.1	53.7	4.3	49.2	53.5	107.2	23.2	Blue
Newtown (B)	486	6.5	48.1	54.6	0	41.4	41.4	96	19.8	Blue
Ancor	396	16.5	121.4	137.9	14.6	61.1	75.7	213.6	53.9	Green
Milford	422	38.2	59.8	98	39.4	141.6	181	279	66.1	Green

## Evaluating the Stations

The purpose of station evaluation is to consider each station based on the regional service model and to prepare an evaluation tool for screening. The evaluation process places stations in a vision framework, with a focus on station issues and opportunities. This resulted in an evaluation matrix that compares the ratings of each station.

Setting evaluation criteria is fundamental to the station rating. For purposes of the station evaluation, nine criteria were used:

- Supports the Oasis land use vision
- Consistent with federal livability principles
- Consistent with local plans or zoning
- Station spacing criteria
- Development potential within ¼ and ½ mile radius
- Access to stations
- Intermodal potential
- Physical constraints
- Ridership

Each station was compared against these factors, and a High (Green), Medium (Blue) and Low (Yellow) rating was given as appropriate. The following chart shows the composite rating.

Station	Oasis Corridor Vision	Livability Principles <sup>8</sup>	Planning / Zoning	Approximate Station Spacing (miles)	Development Potential within 1/2 mile buffer (acres)	Bus/Bike Access to Station	Multimodal Potential	2035 Ridership Forecast	Constraints on Access to Station	Composite Rating
RTC	Yes	HIGH	Yes	0.0	High	High	High	1,550	None	Green
Boathouse	Yes	MED	No	1.0	Low 21/147(14%)	Low	Low	0	Distance, pattern, topo, roadways	Yellow
East End	Yes	LOW	Yes	2.0	Low 26/296(9%)	Low	Low	60	Distance, pattern, topo, roadways	Yellow
Columbia Tusculum	Yes	MED	Yes	1.4	Medium 73/294(25%)	Medium	Medium	180	Distance, topo, roadways	Blue
Lunken Airport	Yes	LOW	Yes	1.5	Low 16/250(6%)	Low	Low	25	Distance, topo, roadways	Yellow
Beechmont	Yes	MED	Yes	0.7	Low 36/362(10%)	Low	Medium	100	Distance, pattern, topo, roadways	Yellow
Red Bank	Yes	MED	Yes	1.5	High 185/270(69%)	Low	Medium	250	Distance, pattern, topo, roadways	Green
Newtown	Yes	HIGH	Yes	2.0	Medium 237/486(49%)	High	High	310	None	Blue
Ancor	Yes	LOW	No	2.7	High 213/396(54%)	High	Low	250	None	Green
Milford	Yes	HIGH	Yes	3.3	High 279/422(66%)	High	High	375	Distance, pattern, topo, roadways	Green



## Types of Stations

The next step in the process was to develop types of stations that are consistent with the Oasis Land Use Vision, meet the regional service model, and satisfy the specific role and function each will play. There are three station types – Regional-serving, District-serving and Community-serving.

- **Regional-serving** – This is the largest scale station type and typically at the “end-of-the-line”. It has major intercept points and offers modal interchange and service functions. Additionally, it can have bus/transit staging and large Park & Ride lots.
- **District-serving** – The mid-level station has a sub-regional function and is connected by highways, arterials and main bus routes. It also serves as a major bus/rail transfer point, along with Park & Ride lots. They have limited walk-up riders but can expect bike-up riders.
- **Community serving** - The third station type is a significant station with the added benefit that it can provide an important community focal point. It is served by major arterials and by a feeder bus system. It has a higher number of walk-up/bike-up riders, and Park & Ride lots are more limited.



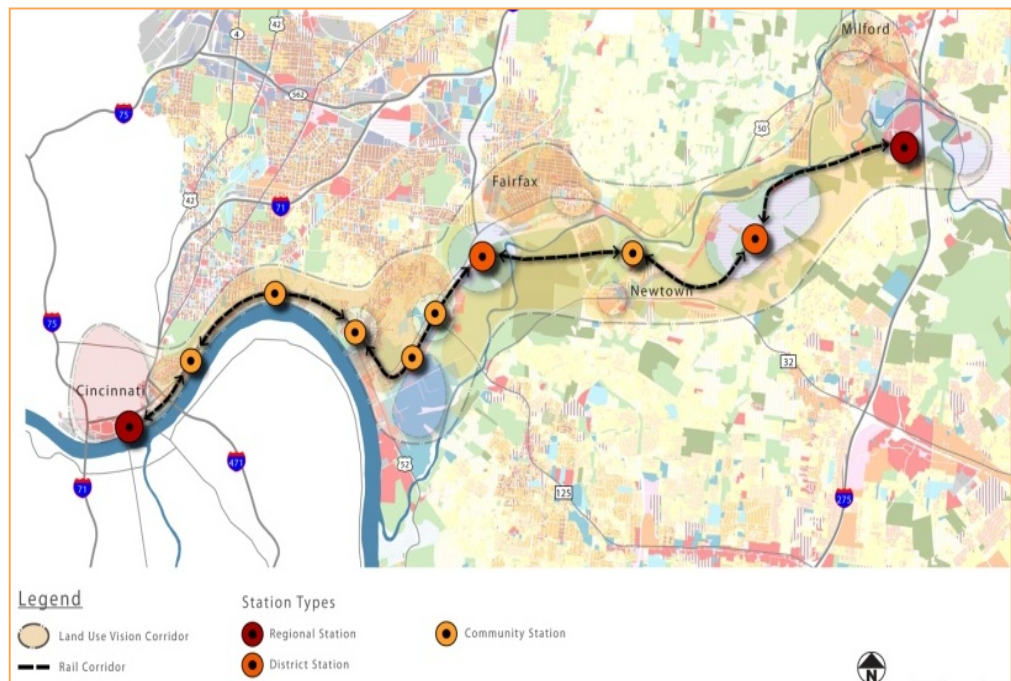
Regional-serving



District-serving



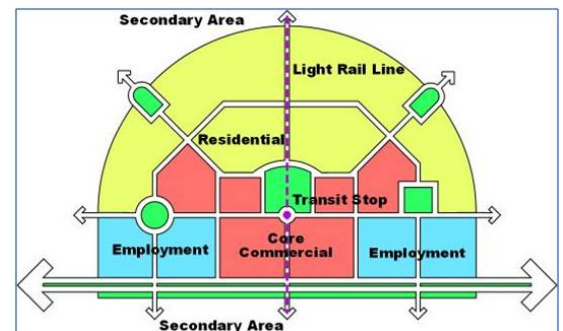
Community-serving



## Next Steps

Once the Summer 2012 Public Involvement meetings are concluded, the Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners will be making decisions regarding the type of regional transit service; the preferred vehicle; and the type, number and location of stations along the Oasis line. With these decisions made, the next steps for station area planning are to:

- Prepare and apply a Station Area Planning model and apply to each station
- Conduct targeted Station Area Planning workshops to better fit the stations with the communities and to help the stakeholders understand the features and benefits
- Prepare a series of Station Area Plans that reflect the community vision and opportunities to grow and mature over time.



For more information, visit [www.EasternCorridor.org](http://www.EasternCorridor.org) or call the Eastern Corridor hotline at 513.888.7625. Questions and comments can be submitted on the [website](#).

