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REGIONAL PASSENGER RAIL SYSTEM GETS HUGE BOOST *Oasis Rail Transit Track Extension Receives Funding and Park Approval*

Cincinnati, OH (October 19, 2012) - Local passenger rail proponents won two major approvals this week setting the stage for the introduction of an operational passenger rail system as early as 2016.

The Oasis Rail Transit project, a key element of the Eastern Corridor Program, was awarded this week \$200K in funding from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)'s House Bill 114 (Transportation Improvement District funding) to help secure right of way for the rail line's missing link—the connection between the Boathouse and Riverfront Transit Center. Yesterday, the Cincinnati Board of Park Commissioners unanimously agreed on a preferred track alignment for this link through the northern edge of the Bicentennial Commons/Sawyer Point parking lot. Both actions pave the way for a two county, 17 jurisdiction, passenger rail system to be constructed and completed over the next several years, becoming operational as soon as 2016, if not earlier.

Hamilton County Commissioner Todd Portune, who chairs the county's Transportation Improvement District (TID) which is spearheading the project on behalf of local agencies, called this week's events "historic."

"This is the only passenger rail project in the state supported by ODOT," Portune said. He added: "Getting ODOT funding and Park Board approval to support the track extension into downtown Cincinnati sets the stage for final engineering and construction. It confirms to federal authorities that the Eastern Corridor's Oasis Rail Transit line is a GO!"

The Commissioner noted his continued appreciation for ODOT's support for regional rail and thanked the Park Board for their cooperation with this effort. He assured members that the Eastern Corridor partners will continue close cooperation with the Park Board as planning and design moves forward and that impacts to parking spaces at Sawyer Point will be appropriately compensated.

The Oasis Rail Transit line is the first leg of what officials from multiple agencies anticipate becoming a regional rail network. The project's unique, less-expensive strategy of using existing, but underused rail lines as the foundation for regional transit would allow the passenger rail service network to better connect Greater Cincinnati and its communities with Clermont, Butler and Warren Counties in Ohio and Dearborn County, Indiana to the west. Officials also are advancing talks with Cincinnati Northern Kentucky International Airport officials and federal legislators about constructing a dedicated rail line from downtown Cincinnati to the airport.

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Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners

Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District • Clermont County Transportation Improvement District • City of Cincinnati
Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments • Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority • Ohio Department of Transportation

The Eastern Corridor Program is administered by the Ohio Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners.

Hamilton County Engineer and Secretary Treasurer of the Hamilton County TID, Ted Hubbard, was equally excited about this week's news: "These approvals are significant in moving the Oasis Rail Transit project forward. Oasis is a key component of the Eastern Corridor Program which ties together a broad series of multi-modal transportation projects. Implemented together, they will open many new doors for community enhancement and economic growth."

Hubbard added: "This approach is very unique – this Program could very well become a national template on how to bring major infrastructure improvements and economic development projects collectively to fruition."

Project planners are continuing to develop the funding plan for the remainder of Oasis Rail Transit project, the bulk of which centers around construction of the rail transit stations. However, because the stations offer significant community enhancement and economic development activities, it is expected that the majority of funding will be provided through Private Public Partnerships (P3s). More in-depth work on station planning is scheduled to begin early next year.

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The Eastern Corridor is a program of integrated, multi-modal transportation investments. The Program will enhance our regional transportation network by improving travel and connections between central Cincinnati and the communities extending east through Hamilton County into western Clermont County. Program elements include improvements to existing road networks, new and expanded roadways, rail transit, expanded bus routes and improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Eastern Corridor Program is administered by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners.

Attachments:

1. Map of the Oasis Rail Transit corridor
2. Oasis Rail Transit Rail Vehicle Fact Sheet
3. Oasis Rail Transit Fact Sheet

