

Choo-choo, Cha-ching! Ohio lands Amtrak expansion planning money.

Where could routes be?

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Ohio is in line for potential expansion of Amtrak passenger rail service through four key corridors, the Federal Railroad Administration announced on Tuesday.

Routes selected for development plans are:

- Cincinnati-Dayton-Columbus-Cleveland
- Cleveland-Toledo-Detroit
- Chicago-Fort Wayne-Columbus-Pittsburgh with connector service via Lima, Kenton, Marysville, Newark, Cochocton, Newcomerstown, Uhrichsville and Steubenville.
- Increasing Amtrak's current route frequency to Cincinnati from New York, Washington, D.C., and Chicago.

The Federal Railroad Administration will provide \$500,000 in funding for planning in each of the four corridors.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, praised the announcement as a great first step toward expanding Amtrak in Ohio.

The investments are made possible by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that Brown helped write and pass.

“Good Amtrak service shouldn’t be a privilege only for people on the coasts. These new routes would expand opportunity, help grow businesses and create jobs, and connect communities in Ohio and across the Midwest,” Brown said in a written statement. “I fought for the investment to make Amtrak expansion in Ohio possible – and I will keep fighting to make sure that Ohio receives these critical infrastructure projects.”

But don't pack your bags just yet. The announcement signals the planning stage only.

Ohio can use the federal planning money to work out what is needed to make the corridors happen. That includes information on everything from state funding to operating costs and track improvements.