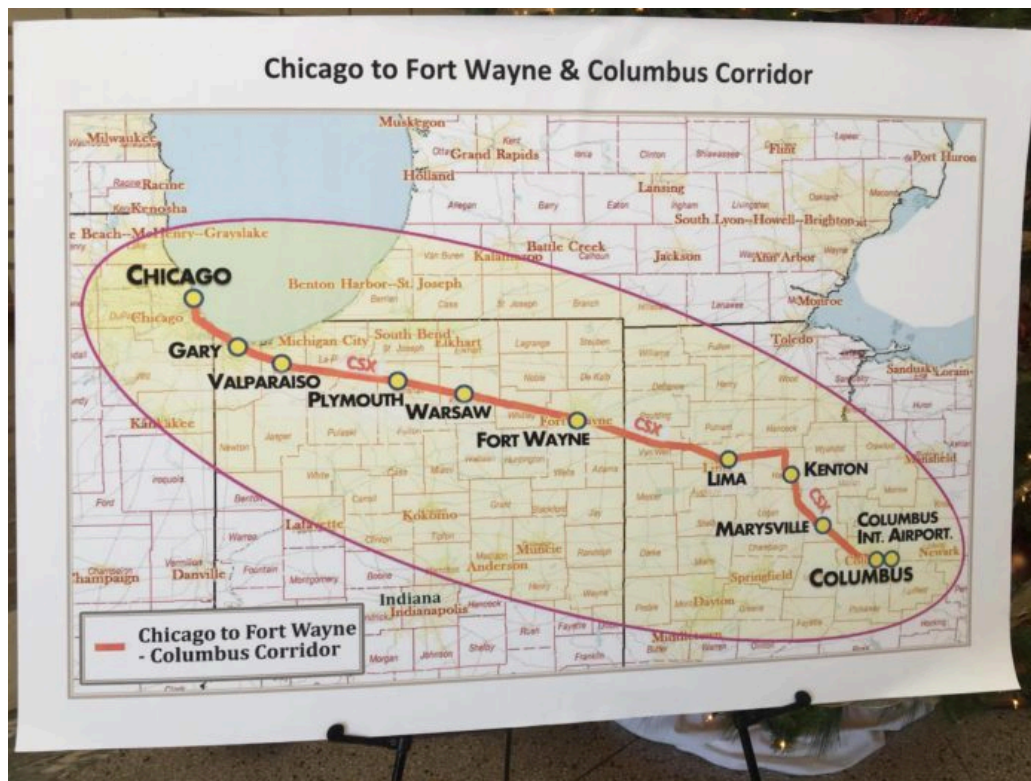


Federal Agencies Approve 1st Step of Fort Wayne Passenger Rail Line Project



FORT WAYNE, Ind. (WOWO): A passenger train might connect Fort Wayne to Chicago and Columbus by 2020.

[Mayor Tom Henry](#) and members of [the Northern Indiana Passenger Rail Association](#) announced on Monday that federal and state agencies have approved the first step in establishing a new rail line.

The first step is the Alternatives Analysis and Public Involvement Process, which will examine the preliminary engineering, technical analysis, service planning and environmental impacts.

The cost of the process will be covered by a number of cities and businesses along the proposed rail. It's expected to be a \$350,000 investment.

The study will start in January 2017 and is scheduled to be finished by the fall.

"I'm encouraged by our collective efforts to develop innovative plans to make Fort Wayne a point of destination," said Henry. "The approval from the FRA allows us to begin the process of establishing passenger rail service through Fort Wayne, northern Indiana and northwest Ohio."

“This is the result of years of hard work and dogged determination on the part of many of us,” said NIPRA spokesperson and Fort Wayne City Councilman Geoff Paddock. “The return of passenger rail to Fort Wayne will be a huge boost for economic development in Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana.”

In 2013, a rail corridor feasibility study was completed. It concluded that about 2.1 million passengers would use the train each year.