

## Rail Line Optimism Grows

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By Dan McGowan, Senior Writer/Reporter



(Image of proposed line courtesy of a feasibility study prepared for the Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association.)

An [environmental assessment](#) is moving forward and a board member with the Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association believes a proposed rail line between Chicago and Columbus, Ohio could be "the next project off the block" for federal approval. Geoff Paddock, who also serves on the Fort Wayne City Council, says he is very optimistic that years of persistence will pay off. He says a previous feasibility study showed an untapped market of Indiana, Illinois and Ohio rail passengers would use the service.

The proposed route, Paddock tells Inside INdiana Business, would have an impact on several Hoosier communities along the way. "We think this is big for Fort Wayne, but also the northern part of the state. You know, stops in Gary, Valparaiso, Plymouth Warsaw and Fort Wayne, and then of course, Lima, with what we hope is eventually, Kinton, Marysville and Columbus," Paddock said. He doesn't anticipate all communities will come on-board right away, but he says if the cities and towns sign-on, the route could eventually become self-sustaining. Trains at first would travel up to 75 miles-per-hour, with [long-term plans](#) calling for high-speed, diesel-powered trains that could carry passengers from Chicago to Columbus in 3 hours and 45 minutes at speeds reaching upwards of 110 mph.

The aforementioned feasibility study, [released in 2013](#), projected the proposed corridor would served 2.1 million riders in 2020 and grow to 3.3 million by 2040, generating estimated fare totals ranging from \$116 million to \$190 million annually.