

REGIONAL RAIL NEWS

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Involvement Activities Reveal Strong Interest in Regional Rail

Enthusiasm for CORRIDORone echoed in Cumberland, Dauphin and Lancaster counties

HARRISBURG, Pa. (November 17, 2003) — Findings from recent public involvement initiatives revealed widespread interest and enthusiasm for launching a regional rail system in southcentral Pennsylvania. The findings were compiled following public forums and focus group meetings in September and October in Cumberland, Dauphin and Lancaster counties designed to gather feedback on Capital Area Transit (CAT) and the Modern Transit Partnership's (MTP) CORRIDORone project — the first corridor to be developed as part of southcentral Pennsylvania's regional rail system.

A series of eight public forums for residents of Cumberland, Dauphin and Lancaster counties was held at locations where new rail stations are being proposed — East Mechanicsburg, Camp Hill, Lemoyne, City Island and Harrisburg Hospital — and at existing stations in Middletown, Elizabethtown, Mount Joy and Lancaster. Designed to engage the public in the planning process, CORRIDORone project team members provided key information about conceptual station designs and proposed operational characteristics of the regional rail system, encouraged public comments and insight, and responded to attendees' questions.

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ADD 1 — Strong Public Interest and Enthusiasm for Regional Rail

Most attendees supported the introduction of a regional rail system. Many people stated that in order to attract ridership, the system must be affordable and easy to use, transit connections to communities and places of employment will need to be in place, and the train schedule must be accommodating and must run on a frequent basis. The public offered a wide range of suggestions for improving station design within their communities and the overall operation of the rail system.

In addition to the public forums, focus group sessions were held in Cumberland, Dauphin and Lancaster counties with representatives from economic development, tourism, and arts and culture groups. Led by the Harrisburg-based marketing and public relations agency of Sacunas & Saline, key topics of discussion included the perceived impacts of a regional rail system on business growth, public safety, the environment and property values, and the perception of a congestion management plan as it relates to quality of life impacts.

The majority of participants believed that a regional rail system would benefit the area by helping to manage traffic and congestion, contributing to business growth and retention, and positively impacting quality of life throughout the region. However, many participants felt that in order for regional rail to be successful, comprehensive marketing efforts must be initiated, groups from Cumberland, Dauphin and Lancaster counties must cooperate and work closely together, and linkage with other forms of public transit and to Harrisburg International Airport must be utilized appropriately.

The comments and suggestions from the public forums and focus group meetings will be considered as the project moves forward. Future public involvement activities will focus on depicting how public feedback was considered and blended into final project development.

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ADD 2 — Strong Public Interest and Enthusiasm for Regional Rail

“Feedback is essential to this phase of the project,” MTP President John Ward said.

“We were extremely pleased with the amount of public support in favor of regional rail.”

Ward noted that residents interested in providing additional feedback on the regional rail project may do so by posting comments on the *CORRIDORone* Web site at

www.corridorone.info. Web site comments, along with suggestions offered at the public forums and focus group meetings, will be incorporated into the preliminary engineering and environmental analysis phase of *CORRIDORone*, and will help to guide the project’s next steps.

The preliminary engineering and environmental analysis began in May 2003 and represents the final step prior to design and construction of *CORRIDORone*. Regional rail service between Harrisburg and Lancaster is slated to begin in late 2005, with east Mechanicsburg to Harrisburg service to follow in 2007.

CAT is the Cumberland-Dauphin-Harrisburg Transit Authority, providing public transportation with 28 bus routes and 17 park-and-ride locations throughout the region. CAT also provides paratransit service to citizens of Dauphin County.

The MTP is a non-profit organization that supports and promotes public transportation with the ultimate goal of bringing regional rail to southcentral Pennsylvania. Launched in 1997 by the Capital Area Transit board of directors, this partnership is made up of business, community and government leaders who are striving to develop a regional congestion management plan that will meet tomorrow’s transportation and infrastructure needs.

For more information about *CORRIDORone*, visit www.corridorone.info.

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