

## **OHIO OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE TRAILBLAZING INITIATIVE TO STUDY VIRGIN HYPERLOOP ONE TECHNOLOGY FOR CHICAGO-COLUMBUS-PITTSBURGH ROUTE**

*First Time Hyperloop Included in an Environmental Impact Report, a Federally Required Study Necessary to Move a Transportation Infrastructure Project Forward in the US.*

COLUMBUS, OHIO, JUNE 20, 2018 – Today, transportation officials in Ohio announced that Virgin Hyperloop One’s technology will be included in a federally-required Environmental Impact Study, marking the first time hyperloop will be considered as a transportation mode in such a process. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) announced that this step will be taken as part of its Rapid-Speed Transportation Initiative (RSTI), which will include both a feasibility and environmental impact studies (EIS) to explore intercity routes that could utilize two rapid-speed transportation technology options – traditional passenger rail or Virgin Hyperloop One technology – between Chicago, Columbus, and Pittsburgh.

“MORPC and its public and private partners in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Pennsylvania are excited to take this important next step in moving innovative transportation technology forward in Central Ohio and across the Midwest,” said William Murdock, Executive Director of MORPC. “This is the first route in the world that incorporates hyperloop technology into both a feasibility study and an environmental impact study. Adding AECOM and WSP to the RSTI team demonstrates our commitment to this effort.”

“It is because of visionary transportation agencies like MORPC that hyperloop is moving forward in the United States. We are excited to collaborate with these world-class public and private sector partners to connect the Midwest with rapid speed transport that will fuel future economic activity,” said Virgin Hyperloop One CEO Rob Lloyd. “The potential is enormous – to connect some 20 percent of the nation’s population and economic activity and create a vibrant, globally-competitive Great Lakes Megaregion.”

Midwest Connect, spearheaded by MORPC and other regional partners, was one of 10 global winners of the Virgin Hyperloop One Global Challenge. It was the only route selected in the United States to cross over four states; Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. It is also the first in the U.S. to focus on leveraging major freight assets in the Midwest, the epicenter of freight movement in North America. Virgin Hyperloop One, sponsors of the global challenge, is the only company in the world to have a built a full-scale hyperloop.

### **Phase 1: Hyperloop Feasibility Study**

In the first phase of this initiative, AECOM, a design, engineering, construction, and management firm, will conduct the feasibility study of hyperloop technology for the corridor,

building upon the work already completed by MORPC that submitted the winning proposal to Virgin Hyperloop One as part of its "Global Challenge" competition last year. The study will include visioning and technology application, route planning, transportation demand and economic benefit analysis, regulatory framework and implementation strategy, project management, and stakeholder and public engagement. The study will also include two potential route alignments for evaluation. One option follows the rail corridor featured in the original Midwest Connect corridor proposal; the other is an alternative to be defined as part of the study work. At minimum, the potential routes will include the following cities: Chicago, Fort Wayne, Lima, Marysville, Columbus and Pittsburgh. The study is expected to be completed by March 2019.

## **Phase 2: Environmental Impact Study (EIS) of the Corridor**

For the second phase of the initiative, WSP USA, a professional engineering firm, will conduct Tier One of the environmental impact study (EIS) of the corridor. The study complements and incorporates work for the corridor portion between Chicago, Fort Wayne and Lima currently underway by the Indiana corridor partners that includes the city of Fort Wayne in collaboration with the Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association. The Columbus to Chicago Passenger Rail project began as an effort to study passenger rail and identify investment needs to improve freight flows and freight rail congestion between Chicago and Columbus. The project has since evolved to include Pittsburgh in the corridor and expand the scope of study to include other high-speed transportation options that are available, such as hyperloop.

The EIS is expected to be completed in July 2019, and the study will collect data, document existing conditions, prepare a purpose and need statement, provide route alternatives and service alternatives for proposed routes, and evaluate infrastructure investments.

Note for editors: For press assets, click [here](#). Additional Virgin Hyperloop One images can be accessed [here](#).

## **About MORPC**

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is a voluntary association of local governments and regional organizations that envisions and embraces innovative directions in economic prosperity, energy, the environment, housing, land use, and transportation. Our transformative programming, services and innovative public policy are designed to promote and support the vitality and growth in the region. For more information, please visit [www.morpc.org](http://www.morpc.org).

## **About Virgin Hyperloop One**



Virgin Hyperloop One is the only company in the world that has built a fully operational Hyperloop system – complete with a levitation system, propulsion, power and electronics systems, controls, vacuum structures, and an autonomous pod. Our team has the world's leading experts in engineering, technology, and transport project delivery, working in tandem with global partners and investors to make Hyperloop a reality, now. For more information, visit [www.hyperloop-one.com](http://www.hyperloop-one.com).

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