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## Opportunity Cost of the Opportunity Corridor

The Federal Highway Administration estimates the cost of building Cleveland's Opportunity Corridor at \$331.3 million, including final design, project administration and management, land acquisition, utility relocation, implementation of environmental commitments and mitigation measures, and construction activities.<sup>1</sup> In making a decision about funding for the Corridor, the Ohio Department of Transportation developed and analyzed four alternatives – all road corridors.

Not evaluated were alternative transportation options like improved bus service, bus rapid transit with a dedicated guideway, electrified bus transit, electrified streetcar, monorail, or light rail.

More than 25 percent of Cleveland residents either carpool to work or commute via public transit, walking or biking, and 11.5 percent of Cleveland's commuters have no access to a vehicle. Further, the city has a commitment to sustainability, clean air, and promoting vibrancy and equity in its urban core. Given these realities, Cleveland should consider alternative transportation choices that are built around public transit and include safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

Below are examples of potential alternatives that would cost less than the Corridor's \$331 million:

- For \$133 million, Cincinnati is building an electric streetcar system that will run 18 hours a day, 365 days a year on a 3.6 mile loop. Would something like this make sense for Cleveland?
- A number of projects on Cleveland's transit to-do list could be completed for less:
  - Replace outdated railcars for \$210 million;
  - Extend the Blue line south and east for \$40 million;<sup>2</sup>
  - Extend the Red line and/or the Health line east;<sup>3</sup>
  - Build a new Brookpark Rapid Station for \$16.5 million.<sup>4</sup>
- For \$200 million, Cleveland could replace most of its fleet with CNG buses, cutting fuel costs and reliance on imported oil.<sup>5</sup> For \$331 million, it could switch mostly to electric buses.
- The Norfolk Southern rail line, which runs along the proposed Opportunity Corridor, could be upgraded for commuter rail purposes.

Alternatives like these should be explored before committing to an expensive road project.

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*Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute  
with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.*

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/projects/ClevelandUrbanCoreProjects/OpportunityCorridor/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> [www.riderta.com/majorprojects/bluelineextension](http://www.riderta.com/majorprojects/bluelineextension)

<sup>3</sup> [www.redlinehealthlinestudy.com/overview](http://www.redlinehealthlinestudy.com/overview)

<sup>4</sup> [www.riderta.com/majorprojects/brookpark](http://www.riderta.com/majorprojects/brookpark)

<sup>5</sup> [www.ohio.com/news/local/metro-rta-test-rides-900-000-electric-bus-1.431598](http://www.ohio.com/news/local/metro-rta-test-rides-900-000-electric-bus-1.431598)