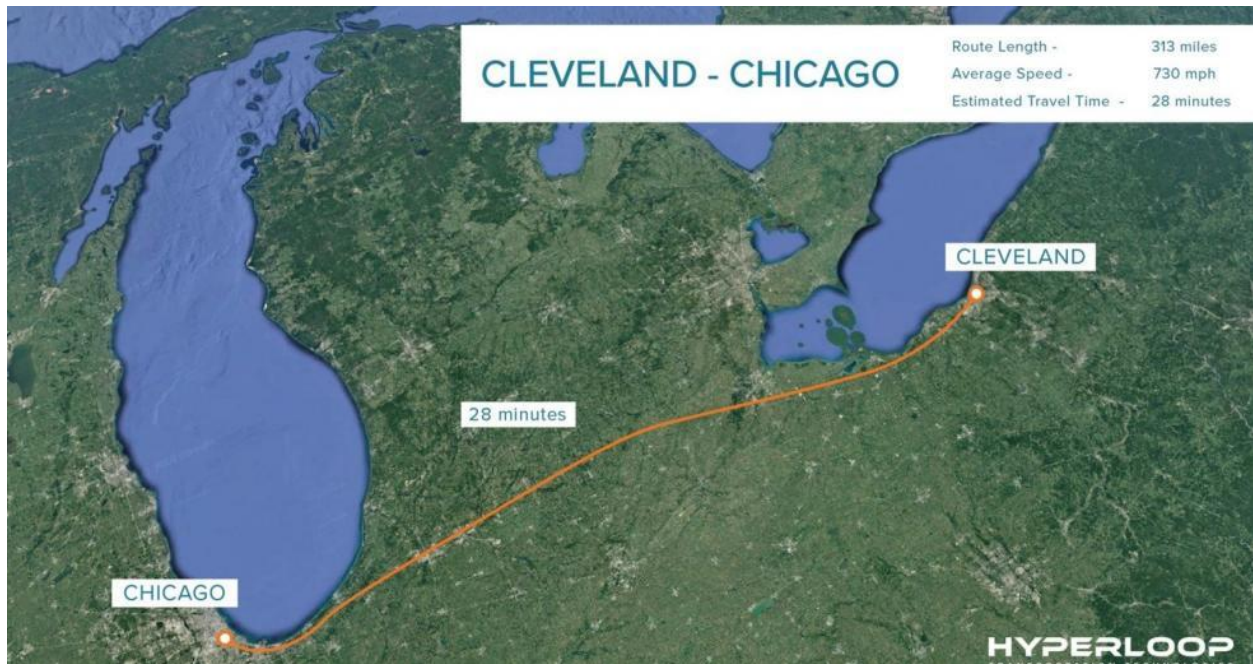




HYPERLOOP: THE TECHNOLOGY THAT SHORTENS DISTANCES

By Claudia Maneggia, Nouveau Policy Associate

Imagine a train that can travel faster than the speed of sound. Hyperloop proponents say it's not that far-fetched. By traveling inside a low-pressure tube that removes friction, a train can cover the 313 miles separating Chicago and Cleveland in less than 30 minutes traveling at 730 miles per hour. While it may not be faster than a speeding bullet, it is definitely faster than a modern jetliner.



(Image courtesy of Hyperloop Transportation Technologies)

Hyperloop Transportation Technologies (HTT) and the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordination Agency (NOACA), and the Illinois Department of Transportation signed



agreements in late February which enable a project study to determine if it is feasible to connect the first Hyperloop train in the United States. This Public-Private Partnership (P3) has thus far benefited from bi-partisan support. If realized, train service between these two Midwestern cities will be truly transformative.

Based in Los Angeles, HTT was co-founded by the Italian entrepreneur Bibop Gresta who founded Digitalmagics and the founder/CEO of Jumpstarter, German born Dirk Ahlborn. Together Messrs. Gresta and Ahlborn have collected over \$100 million in loans to realize the concept of high speed Hyperloop technology popularized by Tesla CEO Elon Musk, who first introduced the concept.

The biggest step thus far was to overcome bureaucratic and administrative hurdles. This agreement however marks a historic moment for HTT as it is the first time a State agreed to invest in an experimental technology that has the capability to revolutionize the way we think about commuting and long-range transportation. By removing air outside the train capsule, aerodynamic resistance is kept to a minimum which then allows the train to travel far faster than would otherwise be possible. Add anti-seismic pylons and solar panels along with a sophisticated energy recovery system and you now have a transportation system that actually produces more electricity than it consumes.

While not yet operational, Hyperloop technology is indeed becoming a potential business model around the world. The company is already studying ways to expand this technology to Europe and the Mideast where it was already commissioned to realize a prototype for an airport near Toulouse, France and in the United Arab Emirates where a partnership with Sheikh Falah bin Zayed al Nahyan may lead to the construction of a 90-mile line between Abu Dhabi and Al Ain.



For the time being Hyperloop remains promising, yet unproven. Technology remains up in the air. Whether or not Hyperloop technology remains the stuff of dreams is best summed up in a tweet of ArsTechnica: “Is Hyperloop destined to be another Tesla or will it be more like Mars colonization (something that, if not exactly impossible, is also not happening anytime soon)?” Only time will tell.