

# Rail Monthly Update



Washington State  
Department of Transportation

Lynn Peterson, Secretary of Transportation

## Rail Monthly Update

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### WSDOT, ODOT and Amtrak Testify before the Oregon Legislature

Ron Pate (WSDOT), Hal Gard (ODOT), and Ray Lang (Amtrak) testified before the Oregon Legislature House Committee for Transportation and Economic Development on May 6 in support of funding passenger rail in Oregon. Oregon's Representative Nancy Nathanson and Eugene's Mayor Kitty Piercy also testified in support.

### Progress continues on Amtrak Cascades high-speed rail projects

The ARRA-funded high-speed rail program has 10 of its 20 projects in construction with another seven completed. The three remaining projects will begin construction later this year. All must be completed by spring 2017. Recent updates include:

- **Mount Vernon Siding Extension** – WSDOT work on the road and at-grade crossing portion of this project was completed this month – a major milestone within this project. BNSF will start construction of the “rail” portion of the work in June. This project will add 4,700 feet of siding to create a longer pull out track for passenger and freight trains to pass each other, improving passenger rail reliability.
- **Tacoma – Point Defiance Bypass** – The Sound Transit Track & Signal Improvements portion of this project was advertised this month with bids due early summer and a notice to proceed expected this fall – the final steps before construction can begin. This work constructs approximately 3.5 miles of double track territory and approximately 10 miles of reconstructed single track. Three railroad bridges will be rehabilitated and a fourth will be reconstructed. Four existing highway at-grade railroad crossings also will be reconstructed. The construction administration of this section of the larger Point Defiance Bypass project is being handled by Sound Transit and is expected to be complete in early 2017.
- **Corridor Reliability Supplemental Work** – Final design/logistical work continues on the four remaining landslide mitigation sites, with construction planned for this summer. Together with two projects completed in 2014, the work is designed to prevent or reduce landslides along the northern passenger rail corridor between Seattle and Everett. Work includes installing catchment walls, slide trigger warning devices and improved erosion control and drainage systems. Work will be completed before the rainy season starts in the fall.

### WSDOT involves stakeholders in Freighthouse Square station design

WSDOT hosted the fourth meeting of a subgroup of the City of Tacoma's citizen advisory committee (CAC) on May 14. Subgroup members were apprised of new options related to station design components, including glass doors that can be lifted or folded up at the 25th Street entrance, canopies along the north platform, and a clocktower to provide visual landmark for the station. The subgroup is seeking public input on three clocktower design options, prior to its next meeting on June 11. Participate in the [clock tower survey](#).

### Landslide Mitigation Working Group

The Landslide Mitigation Working Group continues to meet every two months. The group is currently updating the Landslide Mitigation Action Plan to reflect last season's slide data and accomplishments – many of the strategies established by the Landslide Working Group have

been achieved. The group will also examine the role/goal of the group moving forward as funding changes and project area completed. As part of the continued community outreach, the working group will host a Landslide Open House in September.

#### **Fleet Management Plan**

WSDOT, in coordination with ODOT, completed the stakeholder review phase of the Fleet Management Plan. Stakeholder interviews, data analysis and draft report are substantially complete. A stakeholder draft has been circulated and comments have been received. Over the next several months, the plan will be refined per consideration of stakeholder comments. The Draft Final will be submitted to FRA in early June.

#### **Passenger rail service to Canada reaches 20 year milestone**

International passenger rail service to British Columbia reached its 20 year anniversary May 26 and the popular service continues to grow. The service, first started by the Washington Department of Transportation and Amtrak in 1995, now offers two daily roundtrips, one between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia and second that extends to Portland, Oregon. In 2014, approximately 148,000 people used Amtrak Cascades to travel to and from Canada. WSDOT and Amtrak plan to host a formal anniversary event this summer at Pacific Central Station in Vancouver, B.C.

#### **New Folio on Rail Division Action Plan**

The updated WSDOT [Rail Division Action Plan](#) lays out the strategic blueprint for Amtrak Cascades in 2015. The new action plan is consistent with the vision set forth by the State Rail Plan and subsequent steps outlined in the previous action plan. Strategies and objectives identified for implementation in 2015 support four overarching goals:

1. Align with the strategic goals of WSDOT and the Governor's Office
2. Deliver capital projects on time and within budget
3. Manage costs and maintain revenue
4. Implement service enhancements and efficiency improvements