

Rail Monthly Update



Washington State
Department of Transportation

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Rail Monthly Update

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In this issue:

- **Progress continues on Amtrak Cascades high-speed rail projects**
- **WSDOT involves stakeholders in Freighthouse Square design workshop**
- **Initial Preclearance Agreement begins work to streamline Canada to Washington travel**

Progress continues on Amtrak Cascades high-speed rail projects

Two more of the ARRA-funded high-speed rail program projects are now in construction, bringing the total to 12, with another seven already completed. The remaining project in design, King Street Station Track Upgrades, begins construction later this year. All projects must be completed by spring 2017. Recent updates include:

- **Kelso Martin's Bluff** – Two projects, the New Siding and Kelso to Longview Junction, started construction this month, another important milestone for the overall program. Combined with the Toteff Siding Extension already in construction, the three Kelso Martin's Bluff projects will alleviate congestion near the ports of Kalama and Longview, providing a quicker and more reliable passenger rail experience.
- **Blaine-Swift Customs Facility** -- Work continues on new ties and rails and reconstruction of an at-grade crossing will start in August. The project constructs a new 9,000 foot track to allow passenger trains to avoid freight train inspection congestion. Work is scheduled to be complete in October.
- **King Street Station Track Improvements** -- The 90 percent designs have been submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration, Sound Transit, BNSF, and Amtrak for review, a critical step before design is completed and the project moves into construction. The project extends tracks, installs additional turnouts and adds a new station platform and canopy in addition to upgrading the signal system within the station tracks. The station is the busiest in the Pacific Northwest. Work is expected to start in early 2016 and be completed in early 2017.
- **Freighthouse Square/Point Defiance Bypass** – The WSDOT collaboration with city and community leaders on the design of the new Amtrak station in Tacoma recently received an Outstanding Achievement for Historic Preservation Planning, Policy or Initiative award from the Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission. The group praised the way the historic nature of the Freighthouse Square building is honored in plans for the new station. WSDOT's design team has conducted extensive community outreach about the station location and design. The station will open in 2017 as part of new bypass route for passenger trains.

WSDOT involves stakeholders in Freighthouse Square station design workshop

WSDOT hosted the fifth meeting of a subgroup of the City of Tacoma's citizen advisory committee (CAC) on June 11. The CAC Subgroup reviewed the results of the clocktower survey and it was determined that the city of Tacoma will identify and take next steps in this process, including potentially coordinating a design competition, with some construction funding contributed by WSDOT. The subgroup also supported design decisions on vertical lift doors and a continuous glass canopy at the 25th Street entrance, and interior glass wall partitions inside the station.

Initial Preclearance Agreement begins work to streamline Canada to Washington travel

U.S. and Canadian officials took an important first step to improve passenger rail service from Canada earlier this year by signing a Preclearance Agreement. New preclearance standards would allow Amtrak Cascades trains to eliminate a second border inspection in Blaine after an

initial security screening in Vancouver, British Columbia. This should reduce travel time and further streamline the international service.