

# Washington State Rail Plan *Outreach Journal*



**December 2013**





<b>Timing</b>	<b>Work Products</b>	<b>Outreach Activities</b>
Fall 2012-Winter 2013	Vision, Goals and Objectives System Inventory Baseline conditions and future forecasts	Project Briefings Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting State Rail Plan Workshops Stakeholder Interviews
Spring 2013	Needs and Opportunities Recommendations	Project Briefings Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting Regional Rail Workshops
Summer/Fall 2013	Draft Rail Plan	Project Briefings Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meetings Project Briefings Regional Rail Workshop
Sept. 30 – Jan. 6, 2013	Public Review Draft: Washington State Rail Plan	Project Briefings Open House
December 2013	Transportation Secretary Lynn Peterson approves Final Draft Washington State Rail Plan  Document submitted to Federal Railroad Administration for review and acceptance.	Project Briefings
March 2014	Final Washington State Rail Plan	

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

The material can be made available in an alternative format by emailing the WSDOT Diversity/ADA Affairs team at [wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov) or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA (4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

## Title VI Notice to Public

It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OEO's Title VI Coordinator, Jonté Sulton at 360-705-7082 or [sultonj@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:sultonj@wsdot.wa.gov). [www.wsdot.wa.gov/equalopportunity](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/equalopportunity)

## Notificación de Título VI al Público

Es la póliza de el Departamento de Transportación del Estado de Washington de asegurar que ninguna persona sea excluida de participación o sea negado los beneficios, o sea discriminado bajo cualquiera de sus programas y actividades financiado con fondos federales sobre la base de raza, color, origen nacional o sexo, como proveído por el Título VI de el Acto de Derechos Civiles de 1964. Cualquier persona que cree que sus protecciones de Título VI han sido violadas, puede hacer una queja con la Oficina de Igualdad de Oportunidades (OEO). Para información adicional con respecto a procedimientos de quejas de Título VI y/o información con respecto a nuestras obligaciones sin discriminación, por favor de comunicarse con los Coordinadores de Título VI de la Oficina de Igualdad de Oportunidades (OEO), Jonté Sulton 360-705-7082 [sultonj@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:sultonj@wsdot.wa.gov). [www.wsdot.wa.gov/equalopportunity](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/equalopportunity)



# Table of Contents

Washington State Rail Plan Outreach Journal .....	1
Introduction.....	1
Outreach Goals and Objectives .....	1
Outreach Strategies.....	1
Who are the customers? .....	1
Public Outreach Tools and Methods.....	2
How did WSDOT ensure compliance with Title VI and other non-discrimination requirements?.....	3
How did WSDOT consult with tribes? .....	3
Themes from tribal contact: .....	4
How did the project team involve other WSDOT staff?.....	4
Themes from WSDOT staff: .....	4
How did WSDOT involve external customers? .....	5
Themes from external customers:.....	6
Appendix – Public Comment Log .....	A-1





# Washington State Rail Plan Outreach Journal

## Introduction

The Washington State Rail Plan is a strategic blueprint for future public investment in the state's rail transportation system. It provides an integrated plan for freight and passenger rail, including 5- and 20-year funding strategies, and meets federal and state requirements. The plan will inform the state Freight Mobility Plan, guide strategic freight rail partnerships to support essential rail service, establish priorities for determining which freight rail investments should receive public support, and guide Washington as it works with Oregon and British Columbia to implement intercity passenger rail service. Plan information is available at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/staterailplan.htm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/staterailplan.htm).

Stakeholders from around the state were involved at every step of the process. A series of stakeholder meetings and outreach events were held at various locations around the state. Rail representatives gave informational presentations at a variety of transportation-related events including local, tribal and statewide audiences.

## Outreach Goals and Objectives

WSDOT used the information gathered during outreach to:

- Identify data needs.
- Establish the vision and goals for the State Rail Plan.
- Identify and prioritize system needs.

## Outreach Strategies

WSDOT:

- Provided opportunities to get involved early, often and continuously during the decision making process.
- Minimized surprises by actively engaging customers.
- Promoted use of the Internet and web-based source as the primary source of information.
- Documented customer input and concerns in a central, easily retrievable location for review and consideration.
- Provided customers the outcomes that result from community input.

## Who are the customers?

- The public
- Rail owners and operators:
  - Class I Railroads (BNSF Railway and Union Pacific Railroad)
  - Short-line Railroads
  - Passenger Rail Services (Amtrak Empire Builder, Amtrak Coast Starlight, Amtrak Cascades and Sound Transit Sounder Train)

*NOTE: Light rail (Sound Transit Link) uses different tracks and is considered public transportation and not passenger rail. Light rail issues are in WSDOT's draft Public Transportation Plan at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/).*

- Tribal governments:
  - Tribal chairs
  - Tribal planners
- Community leaders:
  - Mayors
  - County commissioners
  - Legislators and legislative staff
  - Governor's office
- Government agencies:
  - Federal Railroad Administration
  - Oregon Department of Transportation
  - Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
  - BC Ministry of Transportation
  - Washington State Department of Transportation
  - Washington State Transportation Commission
- Transportation officials:
  - Metropolitan Planning Organizations
  - Regional Transportation Planning Organizations
  - Tribal Transportation Planning Organization
  - Washington Indian Transportation Policy Advisory Committee
  - Transit agencies
  - City planners and transportation departments
  - County planners and transportation departments
- Stakeholder groups:
  - Ports
  - Shippers

## **Public Outreach Tools and Methods**

The public outreach process for the State Rail Plan involved a series of interviews, meetings and presentations. The draft plan was available for public comment from Sept. 30 to Dec. 6, 2013.

### **WSDOT:**

- Developed and maintained a customer database.
- Followed the WSDOT Tribal Communication and Consultation Protocols for Statewide Policy Issues.
- Invited customers to participate on a Stakeholder Advisory Committee.
- Invited WSDOT regions to participate on an internal review committee.
- Updated and provided links to Internet and web-based sources.
- Hosted workshops and public meetings.
- Used GovDelivery Listserv messages (timed with significant milestones or announcements).
- Responded to requests for individual presentations.

- Developed custom presentations.
- Provided updates and received comments at:
  - Quarterly Tribal Transportation Planning Organization meetings.
  - WSDOT/MPO/RTPO Coordination Committee meetings.
  - WSDOT Urban, Regional planner meetings.
- Created informational materials (folios and one-pagers).
- Documented and responded to public comments.

## **How did WSDOT ensure compliance with Title VI and other non-discrimination requirements?**

WSDOT met with the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) to discuss how the plan may affect protected groups. Since the majority of the state rail lines are privately owned and not managed by the state, the state has no control of the commodities using the rails or the improvements to the rails. However, the state can recommend strategies for the state rail system and these strategies may affect protected groups. In order to assess these affects, WSDOT targeted education efforts to these groups.

### Website:

- Plan overview, workshop reports, presentations, meeting announcements, maps, press release, meeting summaries, draft documents and public input e-forms were posted on the State Rail Plan website.

### Meetings:

- WSDOT made meetings accessible by holding them at public facilities (ADA accessible) with transit access.
- Meetings were announced via email lists, announcements at stakeholder meetings, and on the website. These announcements included contact information for those requesting accommodations. No accommodations were requested.
- At each meeting, forms requesting demographic information were distributed. These forms will be sent to WSDOT's OEO when the plan is adopted.

### Draft Plan:

- The draft plan included instructions for requesting the plan in an alternate format. These instructions were offered in English and Spanish.

## **How did WSDOT consult with tribes?**

Based on the Centennial Accord, WSDOT's Executive Order E 1025.01 reaffirms WSDOT's commitment to provide consistent and equitable standards for working with the various tribes across the state. This order established roles and responsibilities for WSDOT's Tribal Liaison and WSDOT staff. In June 2011, WSDOT and several tribes agreed to the WSDOT Tribal Communication and Consultation Protocols for Statewide Policy Issues. This protocol details how planners and tribes will conduct consultation.

WSDOT followed this protocol during development of this plan by:

- Conducting initial meeting with WSDOT's Tribal Liaison (Megan Cotton) on June 20, 2012.

- Conducting briefings and answered questions at Washington Indian Transportation Policy Advisory Committee Meetings on September 12, 2012, and on April 23, 2013.
- Updating contact information for each tribe.
- Sending letter to each tribal contact from WSDOT's Tribal Liaison contact list, inviting each contact from each tribe to participate in planning efforts. No responses were received.
- Presenting plan updates and answering questions at Tribal Transportation Planning Organization Meetings on August 9, 2012, February 21, 2013, and August 20, 2013.
- Answering questions and providing contact information through informal interviews at ATNI Tribal Transportation Symposium April 16-18, 2013.
- Sending the draft State Rail Plan link to tribes for 45-day comment period.
- Sending a hard-copy letter to tribal chairs and planners alerting them to the availability of the plan for comment.

***Themes from tribal contact:***

- *At-grade crossings and commodities are concerns, but the tribal planners contacted understood that these two issues are beyond the scope of the state. WSDOT discussed the venue for these issues with the tribal planners.*

**How did the project team involve other WSDOT staff?**

- Created an internal review committee consisting of Kathy Murray (Transportation Planning Office); Chris Herman (Freight Systems Division); Tom Stacey (Northwest Region); Thomas Noyes (Urban Planning Office); Charlene Kay (Eastern Region); John Gruber (South Central Region); Ken Burgstahler (Southwest Region); and Jerry Ayres (Public Transportation). This committee reviewed the technical memos for consistency with WSDOT policies and plans and offered comments and suggested edits. This committee also served as local sources of information and answered questions from other WSDOT staff and external partners.
- Presented progress reports and answered questions at monthly Urban, Regional, and Modal Planning Manager meetings.
- Met with Capital Program Development & Management and Highways and Local Programs to discuss at-grade crossings and issues to present in the plan.
- Chris Herman (Freight Systems Division) acted as technical expert and ensured consistency with Freight Mobility Plan development.

***Themes from WSDOT staff:***

- ***Performance of the highway system at at-grade crossings:*** the state highway mobility performance is impacted by traffic queues at at-grade crossings.
- ***Performance of intercity passenger rail service (Amtrak Cascades):*** the ability to meet the performance targets for Amtrak Cascades is impacted by delays caused by freight rail.
- ***Connectivity with other modes:*** the ability for rail freight and passengers to connect to other modes is a concern. The plan addresses the importance of multimodal connectivity, but does not include projects or changes to service levels that directly impact connectivity.

- *Consistencies with other plans and planning efforts:* WSDOT staff reviewed documents and processes to ensure consistency with the planning efforts of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations and WSDOT.
- *Safety on all rail facilities and connections:* a data-driven approach is and should be used to identify areas where safety improvements could be effective.

## How did WSDOT involve external customers?

- Through four meetings and email/phone contact with Stakeholder Advisory Committee members.
- Through approximately 25 separate freight interviews and regular email and phone contact with ports, cities, shippers, railroad operators, state agencies and producers.
- Through three statewide public workshops and mini-open houses with invited stakeholders and public in the following:
  - Seattle
  - Seattle
  - Spokane
- Through three regional public workshops:
  - Benton-Franklin Council of Governments Regional Rail Workshop at Tri-City Visitor and Business Center in Kennewick on March 28, 2013. Co-hosted by WSDOT.
  - Blaine Regional Rail Workshop at Blaine City Hall on May 13, 2013 hosted by The Whatcom Council of Governments, City of Blaine, and WSDOT.
  - Southwest Washington Regional Rail Workshop at the Centralia Timberland Library on September 30, 2013, and hosted by Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments, Thurston Regional Planning Council, Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council MPO/RTPO, Grays Harbor Council of Governments, and Lewis County Transportation Strategic Council.
- Through WSDOT's State Rail Plan website ([www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/staterailplan.htm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/staterailplan.htm)), which included links to the plan, presentations, additional information, requests for briefings, workshop reports, and provided opportunities to comment throughout the process.
- Through presenting information and answering questions at:
  - Freight Mobility Plan Advisory Group meetings
  - MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee quarterly meetings
  - Oregon Passenger Rail EIS Project Leadership Council meeting
  - Farmhouse Gang general meeting
  - Tribal Transportation Planning Organization quarterly meetings
  - Public Transportation Conference
  - Washington Indian Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (WITPAC) meetings
  - Joint Meeting of Oregon and Washington Transportation Commissions
  - International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC)
  - Washington State Legislature Joint Transportation Committee
  - Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) Economic Leadership Forum

- Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Special Needs Transportation Subcommittee
- SEATS Coalition
- Regional Freight Mobility Roundtable
- South King County Mobility Coalition
- Washington State Transportation Commission
- South (*King*) County Area Transportation Board (SCATbd)
- Benton Franklin Council of Governments
- Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Freight Roundtable
- Port of Vancouver
- Climate Solutions
- Fast – Puget Sound Regional Council Committee
- Spokane Regional Transportation Council
- Through giving briefings requested by:
  - South Tacoma Neighborhood Association
  - Washington Public Ports Association
  - All Aboard Washington
  - Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board
  - Seattle Freight Advisory Board
  - Thurston Regional Planning Council
  - QUADCO RTPO Council Meeting
  - South (*King*) County Area Transportation Board (SCATbd)
  - International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC)
  - Regional Access Mobility Partnership
  - Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) Transportation Working Group
  - Tacoma Propeller
- Through posting information in the All Aboard Washington newsletter.
- Through a State Rail Plan Open House in Olympia.

***Themes from external customers:***

- ***Preservation of existing facilities for freight and passenger rail:*** Complete track maintenance and preservation activities on schedule, prevent rail abandonments and pursue land use compatibility.
- ***Connectivity (freight):*** Facilitate farm to market movements (short lines) and transitions between rail, marine and truck.
- ***Connectivity (passenger):*** Strengthen connections between intercity rail and public transit.
- ***Intercity transportation:*** Maximize use of freight and passenger rail to reduce demand on highways and air transportation.
- ***Financial resources:*** Cut costs, find more revenue or do both.
- ***Agency collaboration:*** Leverage resources to reduce costs and improve service. Includes Pacific Northwest Region partners (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia) and regional and local partners.
- ***Public-private partnerships:*** Facilitate cooperation between various levels of government and the private sector.

- **Streets and highways:** Stakeholders are telling us they're concerned about how increased rail traffic will affect traffic congestion and safety at at-grade crossings.
- **Measure performance and return on investment:** Consider cost effectiveness and monitor success.
- **Rail capacity:** (amount of volume that can be accommodated) depends not only on infrastructure, but also on the railroad's scheduling strategy, use of technology and many other business decisions. Because capacity is dynamic, it should not be used as a sole measure for decision making.
- **Coordination with other plans and current policies:** There needs to be coordination between the various freight plans, such as the Freight Mobility Plan, the Washington Transportation Plan and other plans. These plans should reflect consistent information and more importantly their overall vision should be cascaded across. Also should discuss connection to MAP-21 and other recent regulations.
- **Economic development:** Consider the impacts of rail on communities and their economic development.
- **System congestion:** Consider congestion and bottlenecks and address key chokepoints along the rail line and terminals.
- **Expansion of intercity and regional passenger rail:** Identify and evaluate opportunities for the expansion of passenger rail service.
- **Existing resource utilization:** Important to use existing resources before investing in new, including existing right of way and infrastructure.

*NOTE: For details on outreach events, see [www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/staterailplan.htm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/staterailplan.htm).*

The following appendix includes public comments received and workshop reports for the three statewide workshops and the three regional workshops held during the State Rail Plan process.



## Appendix – Public Comment Log

Over 100 comments were received during the writing and review of the Draft State Rail Plan. Comments were submitted by email, letter and phone calls. Below are some of the comments received. Copies of all letters are located at the end of the comment table.

Almost 20 comments were received requesting a station stop in Skykomish. The existing service across Stevens Pass is Amtrak's Empire Builder. Amtrak has a process and criteria for considering new stops based on potential ridership and financial impact. Therefore, these comments were forwarded to Amtrak.

There were five requests for the technical notes, which were then distributed.

### Emails and Comments

**Comment** Regarding new rail passenger updated equipment-- As you consider passenger equipment upgrades, please consider carriages that accommodate at least 10 un-boxed bicycles along the Washington to California line (Coast and the East/West corridor from Washington to Chicago).

Currently there are limited (6--soon to be 10) bike accommodations on the Vancouver BC to Oregon line. Many here in the NorthWest would use Amtrak to travel to California or Montana if it were easy and convenient to bring bikes.

The train that serves Davis California is a great example of convenient bike storage.

**Comment** I wanted to let you know that I have received calls from legislators, rail caucus members and other concerned freight mobility stakeholders in central Washington in the last couple of days asking why the Port of Moses Lake, Port of Quincy and Port of Warden rail projects are not listed on the "Project List" of Appendix E of the below latest draft State Rail Plan. Also, in the previous draft, Appendix D was the "Project List"; however, in this below latest draft "Appendix E" is the project list.

**Comment** Why do we not have freight rail listed as part of this study?

**Comment** The question is regarding the use of the central rail path through Stampede Pass as a western freight only dedicated line until the interlinking connections can be established. I can see where the money to enlarge the tunnels is problematic, and getting the link through Kittitas County over to Royal Slope (I think that is the connect point) would be spendy but I am convinced that the possibility exists.

Is there anything I can do or information I need to be a part of this freight mobility planning effort?

**Comment** The report is very thorough and well written. Goals are relevant and achievable. I had a few ideas for implementation of the 20-year strategy:

Authorize a separate agency or public corporation to manage mainline railroad track and related infrastructure, similar to models in Europe. This would allow state oversight in order to achieve many of its stated goals, with execution by an independent entity. Class I railroads will continue to operate as carriers over the lines and continue to operate their own yards, but could fund capacity improvements to meet their needs. Trackage rights and/or tonnage fees provide reliable funding for O&M. Capital projects would be funded through a mix of private and public dollars depending on the interest of the improvements. This would facilitate execution of the most important projects that are not cost effective for any one entity to pursue. This may be the best way to solve E-W capacity issues. The state, UP, BNSF, Amtrak, and others could partner through this new corporation to fund a double-tracked low-grade Stampede Pass line that provides significant operational benefits to all parties and stimulate cross-state economic growth.

Also consider property tax exemptions for certain improvements within the ROW. Reducing the property tax on the ROW would promote projects to increase capacity and improve the environment.

Yards would continue to be assessed as currently conducted.

**Comment** I will start out by thanking WashDOT for the opportunity to communicate on this very important subject.

I live in Bellingham, a community that is host to a high-volume freight and passenger line with ever-increasing traffic levels and a prospect of dramatic further increases in the future. There are over a dozen major grade crossings in the city and its environs. Freight trains use their air horns not only at these crossings, but continuously all the way from the Chuckanut tunnel on the south to the northern city limits, at all times of day or night. The noise is so severe and disruptive that it was a major cause of my family moving out of the City in 2006. We were sleep-deprived for ten years. It has gotten worse since. It does not have to be this way. One answer is “quiet zones.” The U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (49CFR222) provides for their establishment. They take some money, considerable public and governmental dedication and effort, but the result is worth it.

Train horns are one of the most intrusive environmental impacts of rail traffic, and at the same time represent one of the greatest opportunities for mitigating those impacts in a future that looks to the increased transportation economies offered by rail.

In my opinion the lack of mention of train noise in the draft rail plan is a huge omission. There is only one very peripheral mention of quiet zones in the whole document. This omission should be rectified.

Train horns are intended to be a safety measure. The plan should contain a critical and analytical discussion of the relationship between safety, accident records, and train horns. Table 4.1 shows no break-out for pedestrian accidents. There should be clear tables and graphs and text on the level of accidents, causes, trends, likely impact from additional freight traffic, etc.

Based on a recent personal observation and subsequent research that I have done, the following quiet zones are already established in Massachusetts; Illinois; Wisconsin; Minnesota; and Texas. Some specific communities with quiet zones are the following:

- Fargo, North Dakota
- Moorhead, Minnesota
- Saint Paul - Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Winona, Minnesota
- La Crosse, Wisconsin
- Dallas - Fort Worth, Texas
- Galesburg, Illinois

Please note that they are located in both large and small communities. Contacts that I have made in these communities suggest that the implementation of quiet zones is working smoothly. Two of them are in the heartland of the BNSF, the railway that dominates rail traffic in Washington State.

**Comment** I was glad to see the draft update released close to your target. I was particularly happy to see that WSDOT used clear statements in the key locations with potential for mis-application (intentional or not). Being clear that report information is predicated on existing forecast models that do not account for the potentially major shift in coal and oil unit train traffic, I believe, will save WSDOT countless hours of work that could have been precipitated responding to misinterpretations. I'd say that was a job well done.

In a first quick read I verified that some of the important public policy issues from the 2006 studies remain unaddressed (as they have been and I expected- although the report very much reinforced those railroad consultants predictions that were cause for concern). I will have more on that (as I promised) and any other issues that come to light once I have opportunity to delve into the work in depth (one of our crack analysts is going through already which will help). We will, of course, use the provided mechanism to submit those formal comment.

What became obvious to me in my quick reading, however, was the absence of the technical appendices (or at least the technical documents themselves if they haven't been - or won't be - organized into appendices). Some of the very questions I have related to Whatcom County cannot

produce meaningful comments without better understanding than the summary provides.

I recognize that WSDOT, BNSF and the consultants must develop and review a lot of information. I also understand that few people in the general public save folks like Gary Lindstrom and myself actually read all the technical documents and interim reports that have been posted with past studies. So I am not in any way surprised that the technical documents were not part of that Executive Summary report - I know you folks have been quite busy.

That being said, it is only because of the robust wealth of WSDOT technical information provided in the past studies that I have been able to add value and clarity in discussions here in Bellingham and Whatcom County. Because of that past knowledge, even a quick read identified subtle changes in text and its data that clearly reflect some shifts in emphasis from past work (for instance details in rail project tables). I am, therefore, very interested in the technical work and reports behind the summary report.

I am happy to accept links to those reports "as is" and realize they may (or may not) be repackaged with more formal "wrappers" for the full report release. If they are not readily available via url would be happy to look at a list of them and identify those of most pressing interest for now to attach. If any of interest are only available in hardcopy I understand that there will have to be some administrative fee to reproduce and mail them.

**Comment** I appreciate the work you are doing on making a comprehensive state rail plan.

However, I would suggest you include a map/study of Washington State 'job density' (in addition to the population density) in considering where to add additional amtrak stops. That would ensure that the needs of business travelers/commuters are also considered in the planning of where to add additional stops.

**Comment** I was a frequent Amtrak user during graduate school, traveling via train from Salem, Oregon to Seattle for holidays and weekends. As a Central Washington University graduate and current Ellensburg resident, I can attest to the usefulness and potential demand for rail service between Ellensburg and Seattle.

Traveling via train during the winter months, especially, would promote safer and more reliable travel across Snoqualmie Pass. As a current Deputy Coroner, dangerous winter conditions is a common cause of fatalities in this area. As a student, it was also very useful for me to utilize travel time reading or doing school work compared to driving. Given the large college population, I anticipate similar needs exist in Ellensburg.

**Comment** I'm really not sure what the point of "Top speeds of 79 mph" is.

Commuter systems in the UK, be it Diesel or Diesel/Electric or Pure electric have been pushing 100MPH as their standard speed for the last few decades. Even the Main-Line Pendolino, good for ~140MPH is nothing compared to the TGV class of full on highspeed systems. France even has double-decker TGV's going ~180MPH..

**Comment** Good day! The planning for any future rail activities needs to include a comprehensive plan for enough State of Washington generated income to support same. This should NOT include any anticipated assistance of ANY type from sources outside of our own State, as other 'contributions' would necessarily be subject to the political whims and not genuinely in line with our true needs. They would be in line with OTHERS perceptions of our needs.

Smarter minds than my own are working on this, and the major freight players are committed to using Washington State as a corridor for many decades ahead of us. Passenger transportation is more in-State regionalized, and should take into account short-run commuter-centered needs, as well as cross-State transportation needs. These ideally will utilize existing right-of-ways.

**Comment** 1). Lay new track on Rail-banked Old Milwaukee Road property from Lind to Ellensburg.

2). Enlarge the Cascade and Stampede tunnels.

**Comment** develop high speed rail....Boeing.. could lead the way...we need a huge endorsement by private enterprise like when we decided as a nation to go to the moon..but graff and inside fighting seems to get in the way

**Comment** Why do WA taxpayers have to fund the freight trains that are running for mega profits through our state? Those trains companies don't even provide crossing guards, lights, etc. at selected locations here in Skagit County. I can think of two off-hand - Hickox Rd. and downtown Burlington, WA where oil trains make a big curve to the west on Spruce Ave, and there are NO lights or guards. Why are we so apathetic toward the arrogant, bullying tactics of railroads? I encourage WA State Rail Plan to demand safe crossings throughout the state, and to monitor speed and rail conditions of trains hauling environmentally unsafe products, specifically coal and oil, over all areas of the state, populated and unpopulated We need to hold them responsible and accountable for their impact on the health of our residents and environment.

**Comment** Thank you for sending me this update. I find what Washington does in Olympia, it raises eyes in Vancouver B.C. The latest project under consideration in Ottawa is Vancouver Island. This former railway was chartered by the America's first trans=continental route. The Central Pacific chartered it from Robert Dunsmuir a coal baron from San Francisco. When it collapsed the railway called the Esquimalt Naniamo became owned by Dunsmuir. It became part of the Terms of Union with B.C. and Ottawa joining the country together from sea to sea. It was leased to the C.P.R. for 99 years and the lease ran out leaving it in bad shape today. So there is a political party formed to break B.C away from Canada unless the B.C. Terms are upheld. The want to ask Washington State to manage B.C instead, stating it it should go back to a U.S. charter as was and planned. What railway in the U.S. took over the Central Pacific and did the E&N charter go with it.

**Comment** Please consider in our long term plan, taking the train routes off the current next to the Puget Sound edge and moving it east to a more stable landscape. The maintenance and challenges posed by the landslides will only increase costs and continue to increase impact each year. In addition, as a local resident, I would prefer to have the ability to use those amazing beaches, access to seeing and supporting more wildlife, and provide increased opportunities for business growth than to have so much of our land blocked by the current agreements.

**Comment** I believe Washington State should first focus on improving our highways and roads BEFORE monies are spent on any rail system. The decay of our roads and bridges should have HIGH PRIORITY over any rails. Eastern Washington has been put on the back burner for major improvements and tax dollars should focus on cities such as Spokane, Pasco/Kennewick and of course improvements in the Puget sound. Trucking is proven to be the most economical way of moving goods and with road improvements would spur growth in most urban areas.

**Comment** I participated in the Feb workshop and just reviewed the draft plan. It was a very fast review, doesn't take long to review what looks like power point slides. What I see so far is lots of generic fluff.  
  
My question is when are we going to get past the fluff and list what needs to be done where and where is the \$\$ coming from with a schedule for completion. THAT is what I thought I would be contributing to at the workshop.

**Comment** Many of our local train tracks have crossings across busy streets. I sat for 15 minutes or more the other day as a 100 car oil train passed across Burlington Blvd.  
  
Even while passing slowly, I worry about the danger in a crowded street, if something should go wrong and a train derail!  
  
I don't mind an occasional train, but a few daily oil and coal trains is way too much.  
  
You need to be strong in making safety a top priority.

**Comment** The Surrey Board of Trade has long been a supporter of the Amtrak “Cascades” Service and would very much like to see it continue to grow and flourish. It is an highly desirable alternative, for BC business travellers who wish to travel to Bellingham or Seattle, conduct meetings and so on, then return to Canada on the same day.

One aspect of this service that we would like to see considered is in accommodation of a very large (1 million plus) population in the south of Fraser who may use the service if they had a convenient way to access the trains without taking considerable time (at least an hour) and effort to access the Vancouver Terminal, and travel another hour on the train just to reach the border.

We support the idea of clearing the train through customs in Vancouver, so it does not have to stop again at the border. We feel that if passengers from the south of Fraser could clear the border inspection themselves, then access a station at Blaine, the passenger exchange could be achieved in a much quicker stop. This may dramatically increase the potential ridership from this region currently inhibited by the inconvenience factor described, involving the Vancouver terminus.

In a letter dated July 3, 2012, the Surrey Board of Trade advised the Mayor of Blaine that it had voted unanimously to support their efforts to establish an Amtrak stop in Blaine in order to service clientele from the South Fraser region of British Columbia.

We remain in support of any measure to remove impediments to travel, access to both our countries, and the ability of our business communities to do business with one another. This proposal is an elegant way to provide service to our communities, eliminating the requirement for our travellers to use the downtown Vancouver terminal, which is extremely inconvenient. Further, it avoids any requirement for additional and expensive customs service involving the train prior to or at the border.

The following is our resolution;

The Surrey Board of Trade supports the development of a mid-trip stopping-point for the Vancouver–Seattle Amtrak Cascades train to allow for the embarkation/ disembarkation of passengers (travelling from/to the South Fraser Valley region) at Blaine, to allow for their convenient use of the service, avoiding the use of the Vancouver terminal, avoiding additional customs inspections for the train and creating a minimum stop for its through passengers.

The Surrey Board of Trade is the largest Board of Trade/Chamber of Commerce in the South of Fraser region, which is immediately adjacent to the border. and second largest in BC and anything we can do to assist in furthering the flow of commerce between Canada and the United States is something we are keenly interested in.

**Comment** The Lands Council and the Spokane Riverkeeper, a program of the Center for Justice, would like to comment on the Washington State Rail Plan Public Review Draft. The Lands Council is a non-profit conservation organization based in Spokane that has 1500 members in Washington State. The Spokane Riverkeeper is a non-profit program of the Center for Justice that is dedicated to protecting and restoring the health of the Spokane River Watershed. We are concerned about the potential impacts of communities along the rail lines, as increased freight traffic occurs. In general the draft is lacking in details about future rail traffic, even as proposals to greatly increase coal and oil trains are being proposed. Below are some specific comments relating to the Review Draft.

1. Quantify the Potential Impacts. The Review Draft (pp. 54, 57, 59, and 60) says that coal may cause the projected change in volume to be achieved faster. The draft defers to the environmental review process underway. It would be useful for the document to indicate the ongoing proposals for coal export terminals and oil car shipments, and project how those proposals would impact congestion, rail capacity, passenger travel, and rail upgrades.

In Washington and northern Oregon, 12 crude refineries and terminals are in various stages of permit review to receive and/or transfer over 50 million tons of crude oil per year. For perspective, all freight on Washington rails is roughly 130 million tons, yet in spite of the risks associated with crude oil, and near capacity of rail lines, most proposals proceed with no studies of cumulative impacts.

Many of those crude oil trains would terminate on Washington’s coasts, at refineries and terminals on

the Columbia River, Grays Harbor, and Puget Sound where the crude would be shipped as refined or unrefined product, by barge or tanker, to end users in the U.S. and abroad. Combined with coal terminal proposals in the region, conservative estimates of fossil fuel-related vessel traffic increases are 21% in the Puget Sound, 153% on the Columbia River, and 383% in Gray's Harbor.

Another problem with moving crude oil by rail is accidents and flammability, as in Gainford, Alberta, Lac-Megantic, Quebec, and most recently in Alabama. Derailments have resulted in tragic consequences for these communities and this should be addressed in the rail plan.

The Review Draft a regional discussion with Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia, to address coming fossil fuel shipments. This is consistent with the programmatic approach the federal and state EPAs recommend when proposals are unprecedented in number or scale. We support this dialogue.

In addition, more detail should be available to quantify the following impacts:

**Connectivity:** The Review Draft states: "Facilitate farm to market movements (short line); connections to international markets—via the Ports of Seattle, Tacoma and others—including product transfer between rail, marine and truck. Strengthen connections between intercity rail and public transit. Improve transitions between rail and non-motorized transportation to encourage biking and walking." The Review Draft should consider impacts on eastern Washington, including opportunities for agricultural products for the export markets, the impacts of directional running on prospective rail customers, and impacts on small volume freight haulers in urban areas. It is unclear how Spokane, which Washington's second largest city, is included in the improvement of transitions between rail and non-motorized transportation.

**Community impacts:** The stated goal is to "Address the potential that increased rail traffic may affect traffic congestion and safety at at-grade crossings. Evaluate opportunities for freight and passenger rail service to contribute to local economic development." Without modeling and analyzing the impacts of proposed coal and oil terminals it is impossible to make any assessment of the impacts. Alternatives such as constructing a by-pass for some of the freight traffic around Spokane, Cheney and other cities with multiple at-grade crossings should be analyzed.

**Environment:** The Review Draft says: "Communicate the environmental benefits of rail transportation, such as greenhouse gas reduction and reduced need for highway expansion. Identify and address negative impacts, such as noise and delay at at-grade crossings. " Other negative impacts include PM2.5 diesel emissions, impacts on schools and health services, and loss of revenue from time spent at grade crossings.

**Passenger Travel:** The stated goal is to "Maximize use of freight and passenger rail to reduce demand on highways and air transportation and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Consider rail in multimodal planning for high-capacity transportation corridors. Identify and evaluate opportunities to expand passenger rail service to population centers in eastern Washington. Continue and expand development of high-speed rail."

We note that emphasis is placed on the Bellingham to Vancouver (WA) corridor, while the Spokane to Seattle passenger rail service is barely mentioned. Passenger service to and from Spokane is very poor, often not on time, and occurs at very inconvenient hours. If the purpose of the Review Draft is to plan for the future, we can only conclude that poor passenger rail service to and from Spokane is the plan.

## 2. Demand and Capacity Analysis Methodology

A key weakness in the Review Draft is how future freight demand is analyzed, this is stated:

The forecast does not take into account specific known or potential developments, such as the scheduled closure of a coal-fired generating station, construction of new terminals for shipping coal and crude oil...

We appreciate the candor, but in effect that statement negates the following description of how future demand is modeled, and it raises considerable concern that utilization will far exceed capacity and

there is no concrete plan to address this. The Review Draft states:

Underlying the analysis of future freight demand in 2035 is an economic forecast that is incorporated into FAF3.3.

This analysis suggests the following conditions by 2035:

- Pasco-Spokane at 170 percent utilization.
- Seattle-Spokane via Wenatchee at 150 percent utilization.
- Spokane-Hauser Junction, Idaho at 150 percent utilization.
- Vancouver-Pasco at 140 percent utilization.
- Seattle-Portland and Everett-Burlington are just under the 100 percent utilization mark, which would make it difficult to handle variations or additional traffic without adding excessive delays.

The new demand is described in a qualitative manner, and we appreciate the following section, but believe actual projected demand and rail volume could be made from the applications and projects that the private sector has been making in the past two years.

Factors that could significantly affect future rail volumes include:

- New bulk exports. The most significant near-term development facing Washington's rail system is the introduction of additional coal traffic that would be exported from the Pacific Northwest to Asia. The source of this coal would be the Powder River Basin, which now has an excess of production capacity following declines in domestic demand. Currently, several proposals are under consideration to enhance port capacity, including two potential sites in Washington: Cherry Point and Longview. The development of these terminals, or similar facilities in Oregon and British Columbia, will increase train volumes in Washington. For example, the development of a bulk export facility at Cherry Point in Whatcom County, if developed as planned, could add up to eight coal trains and one train handling other dry bulk products each day to the Seattle to Everett segment (each one arriving full and leaving empty for the return trip). More information is expected to emerge during the environmental review processes currently underway.

Parallel to the development of new coal export capacity, discussions are underway to develop high-capacity transfer and storage facilities for crude oil. This oil would come from the Bakken formation in North Dakota and Saskatchewan, and shipped to West Coast refineries by ship from ports in the Pacific Northwest. At present, U.S. produced oil can only be refined at U.S. refineries, while the Canadian oil could be exported.

If all twenty current fossil fuel proposals came online, 35 additional trains from the Powder River Basin coal mines and North Dakota shale beds would move west to the Columbia River Gorge heading to their destinations - and the same travelling empty the other direction. This should be put into the demand and capacity model.

**Comment** as rail traffic increases we need strong regulation for the safety of all trains, and especially those those transporting hazardous materials and oil.the current oil cars are unsafe as has been proven by disasterous derailments. the cars must be upgraded before more oil is shipped, especially thru populated places or waterways or delicate places.

**Comment** I would like to add specific information to the excellent summary in the rail plan of the implications for other freight of proposed fossil fuel terminal proposals and refinery rail expansions. I am part of a group that has been researching the various proposals, and what we have realized is startling and has huge implications for WA's container ports. Currently there are crude by rail proposals totaling 53 mmta, in addition to the coal proposals on the Columbia River and in US and Canadian territorial waters of the Salish Sea. Our data has been summarized and can be located at the link at <http://protectwhatcom.org/table-wsources-2/>. An info graphic representation of all proposals known as of a month ago can be found at the link at <http://protectwhatcom.org/fossil-fuel-transport/>.

We hope this data compilation supports your call for a regional dialogue among the states of

California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, as well as British Columbia. We will be urging the Federal Railroad Administration to act as co-lead, with the US Army Corps of Engineers, on SEPA EIS's for the proposed terminals and refinery rail expansions. What is required is a programmatic EIS that considers all implications, environmentally and economically (as well as fiscally) of the combined proposals and any combination thereof. The President's Council on Environmental Quality should be involved in this discussion.

**Comment** I am founder of The Lower Mainland Commuter Rail Consortium. The Consortium has worked with Amtrack in Vancouver B.C. helping to to implement the service between 1992 and 1995. At the same time we planned and implemented the West Coast Express. We linked them with an an inter-city bus terminal at the Via-Amtrack Station. Since that time we have worked on the Canada Line and Skytrain plans.

Today we have submitted to The Government of Canada a proposal called Twinning the Fraser Valley with Commuter Rail. There are a few sections. The first is an Abbotsford to Langley (200th St.) and onto Surrey (Guilford). The new Port Mann Bridge has a place for rails from Lougheed Mall to Guilford. This matches the north side W.C.E from Vancouver to Mission. Canada has funds set aside for High Speed Passenger Rail and prefer the Toronto -Montreal route. We think the west is part of Canada too. We think Guilford to Abbotsford is a good plan for a growing population.

The south side of the river runs very close to the U.S.Border and has the advantage of running by Abbotsford to Sumas wher B.N. is located. This track is interesting because of the old Northern Pacific track abandoned at Concrete and runs through is a straight line to Everett. We believe it is all connected from Sumas. At are latest meeting a few railroad types said would it be an alternative to the main B.N. line now in use? It seems there are slow orders from the border through White Rock and Crescent Beach areas. It was also thought to be getting more coal traffic that could slow the trains down for Amtrack. In all consideration we are asking you for a response which always makes for a learning experience if nothing else.

Here is the plan

In November 2012 the City of Vancouver passed a motion to have light rail built from Skytrain to U.B.C.

Lougheed Mall is the east end of Skytrain and is a developing Junction.

In 2008 Abbotsford City Council passed a motion for a rail line running from Lougheed mall area up the Freeway to Abbotsford. This is a straight line with no level crossings after completion of the upgrades in 2013. We have all the letters and som engineering emails we have gathered by contribution to the Consortium.

We have no funding and we are not an Association. The consortium is anybody interested in passenger railway that can contribute to the betterment of alternative transportation. Many have said we work as liason between government and railways. I have be awarded many non-monetary awards for the work I do. It has worked so far.

**Comment** Glad to hear there is an active rail planning effort. While Spokane is fortunate to have daily Amtrak service I find that many people are unaware of it or don't use it, both due to the scheduling (midnite to 2AM in both directions). Most people never see the trains, even tho they pass thru downtown every day. The Eastbound is workable but the Westbound is difficult, particularly as it can be late coming from Chicago. My suggestion is that funding be used to preposition a sleeper car in Spokane so that Seattle bound passengers could board earlier (10-11PM) and settle in without worrying about the exact arrival/departure times. Since the Empire Builder is split here anyway it would be a simple car movement. Unfortunately Amtrak doesn't have the funding to do this so it would take a State initiative. I think this would increase the passenger count and practicality of using the trains we have quite considerably. Please add my email to your mailing list.

**Comment** I think that the state rail plan should include elements of emergency management and homeland security (unless these are dealt with elsewhere). Any major component of our transportation system

could be adversely affected by a natural disaster, a major accident, or a terrorist action (probably the least likely of the three). Our rail system may be called upon to compensate for difficulties in other parts of the transportation system, and the rail system itself can be harmed and need to reallocate traffic, either to other rail lines or to other transportation modes. We need to think carefully about how to build greater safety and security into the system and to improve our abilities to shift traffic from one mode to another in an emergency (we've already had to do this at times with landslide problems on the Cascade Corridor and avalanches on I-90, but we could face something a great deal larger.)

- Comment**
- 1) A great well thought out plan.
  - 2) You need to address that private companies can run tourist type trains skimming off revenue from the public funded rail. Especially during this need to grow and generate as much revenue as possible the Cascade service must be exclusive.
  - 3) What can I do to help promote and help this project move forward?

**Comment** I'd like to see Cascades rail service extended to Spokane, Washington, the largest city in the eastern half of the state. Yes, the Empire Builder already serves it, but not at a convenient time for most people. I'm thinking of a morning departure from Portland and a late afternoon return into Portland. If it's timed right, it could connect with 500, 508, and 509. The intermediate stations of Bingen/White Salmon (also serving Hood River) and Pasco (serving the entire Tri-city Area) would add quite a few riders while keeping the intermediate station count down to the two existing stations, also keeping the route time down.

**Comment** Glad to hear there is an active rail planning effort.

While Spokane is fortunate to have daily Amtrak service I find that many people are unaware of it or don't use it, both due to the scheduling (midnite to 2AM in both directions). Most people never see the trains, even tho they pass thru downtown every day.

The Eastbound is workable but the Westbound is difficult, particularly as it can be late coming from Chicago. My suggestion is that funding be used to preposition a sleeper car in Spokane so that Seattle bound passengers could board earlier (10-11PM) and settle in without worrying about the exact arrival/departure times.

Since the Empire Builder is split here anyway it would be a simple car movement. Unfortunately Amtrak doesn't have the funding to do this so it would take a State initiative.

I think this would increase the passenger count and practicality of using the trains we have quite considerably.

**Comment** A suggested edit on Technical Note 4a- Freight Forecasts and Capacity Analysis

Key Findings

WHAT ARE THE MARKET FACTORS DRIVING FREIGHT GROWTH?

- The three main factors that drive freight growth are population, income, and global demand. (Global trade should be added onto this bullet. Population and income growth only address domestic consumption. International trade is mentioned below, but not as a main factor, yet it creates a significant portion of the income. Local income does not drive global trade, it results from it.)

**Comment** This letter is in response to information posted on the website: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/staterailplan.htm> which invites public comment in the process of developing an updated statewide strategic rail plan.

I have lived in Prosser for seventeen years and been involved in the agricultural industry as an irrigation design engineer. This work has brought me into close contact with many of the leading wine grape growers, and other industry leaders seeking to develop and promote new opportunities for an industry which continues to experience significant growth. I was raised and educated in Scotland, and

while on a return visit there recently, my enthusiasm for travelling by rail was re-kindled by the relaxation and stunning scenery which one enjoys while on board. While travelling and hiking in the Yakima River canyon a few weeks ago, these memories made me wish for such a way to experience Eastern Washington's stunning scenery and the idea of a "Wine & Sun" Train travelling between Seattle and Walla Walla was born.

I am sending along with this letter a map showing the route for such a train, and some suggested stops that could be made. With the completion of the Walter Clore Wine and Culinary Center in Prosser expected soon along with several other similar attractions, and the ever increasing popularity of Washington wines, I believe the opportunity is ripe to explore such an opportunity.

The company which operates the trains in Scotland is Scot-Rail, which is owned by First Group plc (see <http://www.firstgroup.com/corporate>) headquartered in Aberdeen (where I went to college). This company also owns and operates Greyhound Bus Lines and a host of School bus companies across the US. Their latest annual report can be seen at: <http://report2012.firstgroup.com> The equipment they use on the single track lines in Scotland is primarily Class 158 DMU's because of their flexibility. The pictures on the map are of this model taken from Google images. These trains are easily reversed, and shortened or lengthened as demand requires. They are also shorter per unit of passenger capacity than traditional locomotive powered trains, and therefore are easier to accommodate on by-pass tracks. To make this route attractive, I envision creating several new platform stops, as at Kiona (for the Red Mountain Appellation) serviced by community transit for local travel, and Columbia Center Blvd in Richland (for access to major shopping, hotels and convention center). This route would also provide a safer, reliable and comfortable means of crossing the Cascades when inclement weather affects Snoqualmie Pass on I-90. The train could easily accommodate cyclists wishing to explore "wine country" or rafters wishing to "float the Yakima" or golfers looking for the sun, etc. etc.

The condition of BNSF's track between Seattle and Pasco would allow for immediate implementation of this service provided a suitable schedule could be operated and maintained. I believe eventually two train units could make three trips per day each, providing a 6am, noon and 6pm departure time from each end of the route.

For examples of the Scottish schedule, one can check the service on the "Highland Line" or the "Kyle Line" where the communities served are much smaller than the ones along the "Wine & Sun Line".

It would be appreciated if this letter and the accompanying map could be entered into the record of public comments for the development of the State's passenger rail plan. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

## Letters

On the following pages are copies of letters received regarding the State Rail Plan.



March 4, 2013

Dear Legislators,

**Columbia Basin Railroad (CBRR) supports the Port of Warden's (Grant County Port District No. 8) request for \$1 million in state funding for the Port's "Rail Infrastructure Expansion Project".** CBRR is a locally owned and operated short-line railroad company headquartered in Yakima, Washington and operates two railroads in Eastern Washington including one in the Columbia Basin (Columbia Basin Railroad: Moses Lake-Warden-Othello-Connell) and one in the Yakima Valley (Central Washington Railroad: Yakima-Moxee-Toppenish-Granger-Sunnyside-Prosser).

The Port of Warden Rail Infrastructure Expansion Project would increase rail capacity and enhance rail service within the Port of Warden by constructing approximately one mile of new rail storage siding track in the Port of Warden along the Columbia Basin Rail Line (which runs between Connell and Moses Lake).



In the past few years, a great deal of economic development has occurred at the Port of Warden, including development and construction of a new canola oil production facility ([http://pacificcoastcanola.com/warden\\_crusher.php](http://pacificcoastcanola.com/warden_crusher.php)), additional fresh produce packing and frozen and dehydrated food processing, and the associated warehousing for these products. **As a result of the growth and expansion of the above mentioned industries in the Port of Warden, the rail infrastructure in Warden is near capacity and more rail storage track is needed to allow for the efficient loading and unloading of rail cars and movement of trains on the Columbia Basin Rail Line to and from Warden.**

Furthermore, with continued rising fuel costs in the United States, access to rail is becoming increasingly important in the expansion and/or site selection of businesses and industries in Washington State that need to competitively ship cargo fairly long distances (such as to major population centers in the Eastern United States) as rail on average is four times more fuel efficient than trucks.

**In summary, Columbia Basin Railroad supports the Port of Warden's request for \$1 million in state funding to build and construct nearly a mile of new rail storage siding on port-owned property to increase rail capacity and enhance rail service within the Port of Warden.**

Thank you for your consideration of the Port of Warden's request. If you have any questions or need further information, please email [CBRR.PublicAffairs@gmail.com](mailto:CBRR.PublicAffairs@gmail.com) or call 360-878-7073

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brig Temple'.

Brig Temple  
President/CEO  
Columbia Basin Railroad



## CHS Sun Basin Growers

A Division of CHS Inc.  
P.O. Box 608  
10555 Rd. O NW, Quincy, WA 98848  
(509) 787-3511

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of CHS Sun Basin Growers in support of the Port of Warden's request for \$1 million in state transportation funding for the Port's "Rail Infrastructure Expansion Project".

The Port of Warden Rail Infrastructure Expansion Project would increase rail capacity and enhance rail service within the Port of Warden by construction approximately one mile of new rail storage siding track in Warden along the Columbia Basin Rail Line (which runs between Connell and Moses Lake).

In the past few years, a great deal of economic development has occurred at the Port of Warden, including development and construction of a new canola oil production facility, additional fresh produce packing and frozen and dehydrated food processing, and the associated warehousing for these products.

As a result of the economic and business growth in the Port of Warden, the rail infrastructure in Warden is near capacity and more rail storage track is needed to allow for the efficient loading and unloading of rail cars and movement of trains on the Columbia Basin Rail Line to and from Warden. In particular, our company continues to grow and we are increasingly using rail to ship our products either inbound or outbound.

Furthermore, with continued rising fuel costs in the United States, access to rail is becoming increasingly important in the expansion and the competitiveness of our company and for other businesses and industries in Washington State that need to competitively ship cargo fairly long distances (such as to major population centers in the Eastern United States) as rail on average is four times more fuel efficient than trucks.

In conclusion, we support the Port of Warden's request for \$1 million in state funding to construct nearly a mile of new rail storage siding to increase rail capacity and enhance rail service with the Port of Warden.

Thank you for your consideration of this important infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Kopczynski".

Ron Kopczynski  
General Manager  
CHS Sun Basin Growers



6904 Patton Boulevard NE Moses Lake, WA 98837  
Ph: 509.764.6579 Fax: 509.762.5161  
www.grantedc.com

March 4, 2013

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to express support of the Port of Warden's request for \$1 million in state transportation funding for the Port's "Rail Infrastructure Expansion Project."

The Grant County Economic Development Council was involved in the siting of the Pacific Coast Canola oil processing facility in Warden. This facility has hired approximately 30 employees and became operational earlier this year.

The Pacific Coast canola facility receives<sup>1</sup> canola seed in bulk rail shipments increasing the demand for rail service in Warden. The existing rail infrastructure is near its capacity and new rail needs to be constructed in order to accommodate this new economic growth.

The \$1 million requested by the Port of Warden will be used to construct a new rail storage siding track of approximately one mile in length. This new track will allow trains to pull off the mainline for loading and unloading of rail cars without blocking the main track. This will also improve the movement of trains on the track that are headed north to Moses Lake or south to Connell and Pasco.

Thank you for your consideration of this important infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Smith', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jonathan Smith  
Executive Director  
Grant County EDC



March 4, 2013

To whom it may concern,

The Port of Warden Rail Infrastructure Expansion Project would increase rail capacity and enhance rail service within the Port of Warden by constructing approximately one mile of new rail storage siding track in Warden along the Columbia Basin Railroad Line (which runs between Connell and Moses Lake).

In the past few years, a great deal of economic development has occurred at the Port of Warden, including development and construction of our new canola oil production facility, additional fresh produce packing and frozen and dehydrated food processing, and the associated warehousing for these products.

As a result of the economic and business growth in the Port of Warden, the rail infrastructure in Warden is near capacity and more rail storage track is needed to allow for the efficient loading and unloading of rail cars and movement of trains on the Columbia Basin Railroad Line to and from Warden. In particular, our company relies heavily on rail to ship our products both inbound and outbound.

Furthermore, with rail considered on average being four times more fuel efficient than trucks and with continued rising fuel costs in the United States, access to rail is increasingly important in the competitiveness of many businesses and industries in Washington State that need to cost effectively ship cargo long distances.

In conclusion, Pacific Coast Canola supports the Port of Warden's request for \$1 million in state transportation funding to construct new rail storage siding (the Port's "Rail Infrastructure Expansion Project") to increase rail capacity and enhance rail service with the Port of Warden.

Thank you for your consideration of this important infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joel Horn".

Joel Horn  
President

3401 Fremont Ave N, Suite 241, Seattle, WA 98103 ♦ phone 206-547-1078 ♦ fax 206-547-9244



**Terry Finn**  
Executive Director  
State Government Affairs

**BNSF Railway Company**  
2454 Occidental Ave. South, Bldg. 1A  
Seattle, WA 98134-1451

tel 206.625.6135  
fax 206.625.6125  
email [terry.finn@bnsf.com](mailto:terry.finn@bnsf.com)

March 14, 2013

Honorable Members  
Washington State Legislature  
Olympia, WA

Dear Legislators:

BNSF Railway supports the \$1 million funding request from the Port of Warden for the purpose of expanding the port's rail infrastructure to support new business and employment in Central Washington. The desired project to construct a mile-long siding to accommodate rail car storage and use will serve the new Pacific Coast canola oil processing facility at the port and also improve main line efficiency of the Columbia Basin Railroad, which feeds into the BNSF interstate rail system.

The new canola facility, which began operation earlier this year, has increased employment in the county. Track expansion at the port also promotes the clustering of rail-served business so important to continued rail investment within the state.

We at BNSF believe that Washington and its manufacturers, ports and agricultural producers are highly dependent on efficient rail service and that rail transportation in general is the "greenest" way to grow the state's economy.

We urge your support of this funding request.

Sincerely,

Director, Government Affairs



ConAgra Foods  
Lamb Weston BSW, LLC  
2203 Basin Street  
Warden, WA 99882

TEL (509) 349-2210  
FAX (509) 349-9510

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of ConAgra Foods, Lamb Weston / BSW in support of the Port of Warden's request for \$1 million in state transportation funding for the Port's "Rail Infrastructure Expansion Project".

The Port of Warden Rail Infrastructure Expansion Project would increase rail capacity and enhance rail service within the Port of Warden by construction approximately one mile of new rail storage siding track in Warden along the Columbia Basin Rail Line (which runs between Connell and Moses Lake).

In the past few years, a great deal of economic development has occurred at the Port of Warden, including development and construction of a new canola oil production facility, additional fresh produce packing and frozen and dehydrated food processing, and the associated warehousing for these products.

As a result of the economic and business growth in the Port of Warden, the rail infrastructure in Warden is near capacity and more rail storage track is needed to allow for the efficient loading and unloading of rail cars and movement of trains on the Columbia Basin Rail Line to and from Warden. In particular, our company continues to grow and we are increasingly using rail to ship our products either inbound or outbound.

Furthermore, with continued rising fuel costs in the United State, access to rail is becoming increasingly important in the expansion and the competitiveness of our company and for other businesses and industries in Washington State that need to competitively ship cargo fairly long distances (such as to major population centers in the Eastern United States) as rail on average is four times more fuel efficient than trucks.



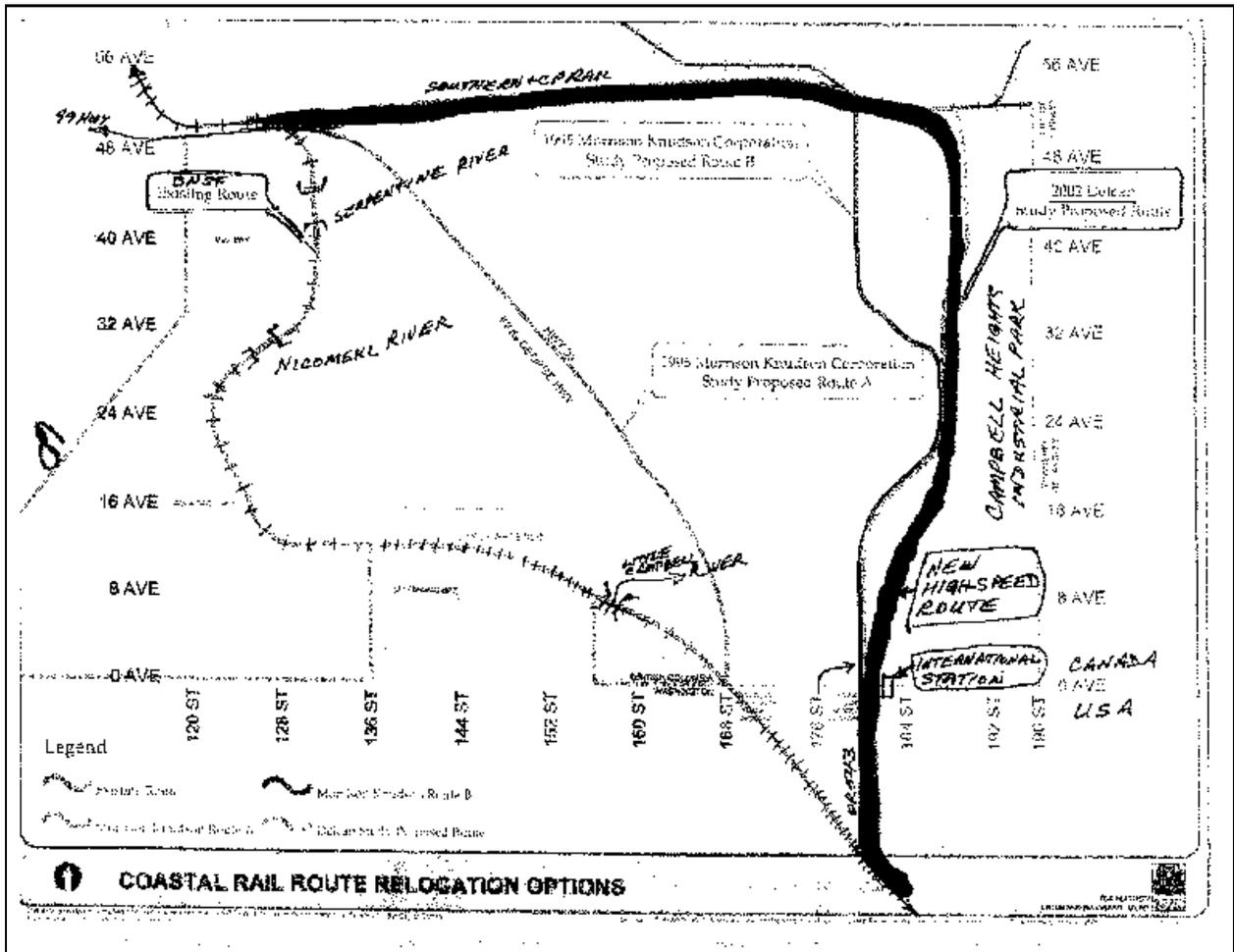
In conclusion, we support the Port of Warden's request for \$1 million in state funding to construct nearly a mile of new rail storage siding to increase rail capacity and enhance rail service with the Port of Warden.

Thank you for your consideration of this important infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Bateman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Andy Bateman  
Plant Manager  
ConAgra Foods Lamb Weston / BSW  
1203 Basin Street  
Warden, WA 98857





## **Factors for Surrey-Blaine BNSF/Amtrak Rail Relocation Now**

1. Increasing number of slides interrupting passenger rail (cancellations for 48 hours at a time), and freight rail carrying many hazardous goods.
2. Funding available now for High Speed Rail in the US extending into Vancouver, BC.
3. Trestles over Mud Bay and the Little Campbell River nearing time for replacement (could cost nearly \$50 million).
4. No space on the existing Right of Way (ROW) for passing or double tracking.
5. The proposed route is at the lowest point on the east-west aligned North Bluff gravel moraine, therefore requiring the least amount of excavation to provide an at-grade route from the Border to the BC Hydro/Southern/CP Coal ROW (which would be used to return to the existing track at Colebrook).
6. The relocation would be at the eastern edge of the ALR, adjoining the Campbell Heights Industrial Park, and could provide rail access to this industrial area.
7. Heavier and longer trains are being run on the existing route, with more to come. The existing roadbed was not designed for these factors. Eg.; 100 plus railcar coal trains, and similar length freights, with upwards of 25 hazardous material cars.
8. High speed passenger and higher speed freight require more straight routes to accommodate desired speeds.
9. An International Passenger Station could be established at the Pacific Border Crossing (Hwy 15/SR543), with pre-clearance similar to an airport, to accommodate Surrey, White Rock, Langley, Blaine, and Whatcom County residents. Another station could be located at the Scott Road Skytrain Station.

15701 Gregg Avenue, White Rock, B.C., V4B 2N8 [www.smartrail.ca](http://www.smartrail.ca)

SmartRail Inc.



10. There is a high risk to people, property and the environment if derailed or damaged tanker railcars have hazardous contents escape. For example: Chlorine, De-odorized Propane, Anhydrous Ammonia, Hydrochloric Acid, and Caustic Soda. This risk would be drastically reduced on the new route.
11. Existing rail roadbed is vulnerable to ocean erosion and hillside slides of mud, rocks, and trees.
12. Light rail between Metro Vancouver and Bellingham might also be possible.
13. The proposed route would be more survivable in any future major earthquake.
14. The existing route is vulnerable to possible terrorist activity.

Submitted by: Kenneth "Ken" Jones  
President,  
SmartRail  
604-535-2204, 604-786-8805 cell  
kenjones@gmail.com

September 23, 2013

Amy Asher  
Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments  
207 N. Fourth Ave.  
Kelso, WA 98626

Re: Formal Comment on Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Improvement Projects  
2014-2017

I would like to formally comment on the subject draft specifically the SR 432 rail and road realignment. This project dates to the late 1990's and stems in part from the Port's consultant studies and decision to construct an alternative route to the Port of Longview for large volume unit train cargo and in general for grains, bulk, project and steel commodities. Most of the Port's business now arrives and departs between the mainline via the new route which included the construction of an overpass to provide Longview Fibre with unimpeded truck/auto access to the mill. The Burlington Northern did not participate in the funding of this significant undertaking. The entire project was paid for through public funding. Today the Burlington Northern and the Union Pacific are able to move high volumes of grain to EGT and other commodities to the Port's arrival tracks without impeding traffic on SR432. Railroads do not as a general rule participate in funding public grade separations or other improvements to traffic situations, such as reflected in the Port's project.

As regards the single rail bridge across the Cowlitz River owned by the BNSF, I understand that there is consideration to spend public funding to double track this river crossing. Certainly the BNSF is and should be responsible for funding any improvements to their own bridge. Considering the new EGT grain terminal and high volumes of grain and other commodities, the BNSF may already be planning to make improvements before the SR 432 options and any funding are known. I request that the improvement project makes clear that no public funding will be made available to the BNSF for bridge improvements across the Cowlitz River.

I attended the Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> "public officials" CWCOG update on the SR 432 project study. The consultant's market data through 2035 seemed broadly general and referred to "trains and short ton volume" without specifics. Much of the current rail traffic west of the Longview Switching Co.'s yard is smaller car train sets referred to operationally as "switching" of rail cars between the rail switch yard owned by BNSF/UP and primarily private companies along the Industrial corridor on the west side of town. Surprisingly, at this meeting, there was no mention of the known proposed coal terminal at the Alcoa site and coal volume projected in the short and long term. Market data for rail and truck needs to be far more sophisticated, including the naming of commodities and number of railcars than was presented in the update which leads me to believe that data is still very fluid and limiting.

Gary Lindstrom  
1403 18<sup>th</sup> Ave., Longview, WA 98632, tel. 360-431-8653

**TO:** State Rail Plan Input  
319 Maple Park Ave., S.E.  
P. O. Box 47500  
Olympia, Washington 98504

**FROM:** Robert H. Heltrick  
10403 8th Dr., S.E.  
Everett, Washington 98206

*Robert H. Heltrick*

**DATE:** November 18, 2013

**SUBJECT:** State Rail Plan

**ATTACHED:** 1 page

Since I am not on the Internet, I have entered my basic response on the attached page. My additional comments are as follows.

1. As a person who has worked in private industry, I believe differentiation should be made between capital expenditures and current expenses.
2. The preservation of existing infrastructure, and restoration of infrastructure where it has been converted to other uses such as bicycle trails, should be included.
3. For intercity rail passenger transportation, the provision for an increased frequency of the "Cascades" service should not be delayed from 2018 to 2030. Provision of daytime service between eastern and western Washington should be included.
4. Speeds in excess of 79 miles per hour are prohibited by Federal regulations unless automatic train control or positive train control are provided. Tax incentives for the BNSF Railway to install automatic or positive train control, and guarantees reliability and additions of services similar to those to encourage Boeing to continue production in Washington should be considered.



# COMMUNITYWISE BELLINGHAM

*informing the conversation*

Comments – DRAFT 2013 State Rail Plan Update  
Washington State Department of Transportation

November 21, 2013

Periodic updates to the State Rail Plan are important to incorporate new or changing circumstances as well as to review past recommendations and accomplishments. They are snapshots, overlays on a foundation built by major public investments like the exhaustive 2006 *Statewide Rail Capacity and System Needs Study*, a priority of the legislature and a fundamental base of the plan.<sup>1</sup> That broad analysis includes significant information that is specifically relevant to the important question of potential impacts from the coal terminal permits currently under review.<sup>2</sup> Those studies identify not only key issues for ports, agriculture, rail dependent businesses and rail corridor communities but also specific cautions concerning coal freight traffic. All identified issues would be exacerbated by the proposed rapid expansion of rail freight. There is a clear need to understand these impacts for jurisdictions, state agencies and the general public. The search for answers will drive many to this update so the fullest possible treatment of the subject is of paramount importance. The update would depreciate much value in past investments to the extent it does not apply that knowledge.

We understand that much intense work was required in conforming to new federal rules about the plan format. That does not diminish the need, however, to address developments that could have the single largest effects on the state's rail system in modern times. A significant improvement to the 2013 update would be to summarize those known issues. A quick reading of the *citations below from the 2006 Rail Plan in the summaries highlighted by this style clearly demonstrate this.*

Treatment of the subject is in Chapter 4. Current language emphasizes the lack of relevant data in the existing standard transportation models. It notes that no analysis was attempted. This is prudent given that the scale of rail growth required is historically unprecedented. It is a radical shift that was totally unanticipated by any state or federal study. The conclusion, however, is far from informative, "If growth occurs more rapidly than forecast, then the primary change is that projected volumes would be reached sooner".<sup>3</sup> This has the feel of a hasty effort to "say something". It would take little effort to, instead, do justice to the wealth of relevant information already present in the Rail Plan.

The 2013 update, in fact, very much demonstrates a need to focus attention on those very concerns. The EIS for each terminal will be limited to the specific project and cannot deliver the necessary level of understanding or remedies that a comprehensive statewide study could. WSDOT is uniquely suited to express such need and this update seems a most suitable vehicle for such an expression.

Existing Knowledge • The State Rail Plan has done an excellent job of identifying key issues for ports, businesses and communities along the rail corridors. Part of that value is in technical analysis of intermodal, agricultural, passenger, and local business rail issues. Part of that value is in

identifying the major public policy concerns from the changing Class 1 railroad business model. Principal identified issues are summarized below. The issues are significant and have not been addressed to date. Rapid growth of unit train traffic places unrealistic fiscal burdens on rail corridor communities for mitigation with no funding mechanism. Cambridge Systematics discussed the underlying incompatibility of slow-moving coal trains and time-sensitive intermodal traffic in concluding that out of state coal train congestion had undermined the competitiveness of our ports. That traffic may now dominate in-state rails and demands careful analysis to protect state interests.

**Scale & Timing** • The scale and time frame is stunning. In 2010 total statewide inbound rail freight was 58 million tons. The terminals being reviewed would add 98 million tons. This represents over 12 times the size of 25 year coal growth predicted under normal circumstances and would be introduced over a mere 2-4 years.<sup>4</sup> This wouldn't simply hasten the years before anticipated freight volumes are achieved. Rather, in the matter of just a few short years, it would overwhelm multiple rail segments within the state operating at, or near, practical capacity.

The attached graphics from national transportation studies show the essence of the problem – a historic shift in Powder River Basin (PRB) rail freight destination. As eastern and southern coal-fired power stations shut down or convert to natural gas, demand has spiraled downward and the industry is seeking to redirect (or hopefully grow) that volume, shipping it through Washington ports. The freight graphic shows all rail, highway and marine freight in the U.S. with the thickness of each line indicating respective volume. Nowhere on the map - even marine traffic on the mighty Mississippi – does volume jump out like the huge red PRB swath. That traffic travels over several multi-track mainlines (2-3 parallel tracks each). With only a fraction of that coal traffic on the Billings multi-track mainline east, the level of coal congestion has still resulted in PNW bound intermodal traffic being routed on the alternate “Hi-Line” near the Canadian border.

Redirecting coal train traffic westward places it on a woefully inadequate single mainline that is primarily single-track. That traffic will merge with the Hi-Line intermodal and Amtrak before it enters Spokane. Graphics show this situation more clearly than many pages of technical discourse.

**Basic System Capacity** – The current draft shows that practical capacity is exceeded or marginal in several areas over the projected 25 years of normal growth. The main areas in which the system is stressed are the same areas that will bear the brunt of the coal train expansion (heavy slow-moving loaded coal trains must use the Columbia Gorge rather than the steep grades of alternative routes). Defining the infrastructure required and where it will be located is essential to understanding the impact from a planned 2-4 year build-out of these terminals. Practical capacity is directly related to maintenance needs so for coal traffic the assumed capacities may, in fact, be overstated.

*“In addition, the use of longer and heavier trains will mean more, and more frequent, track maintenance”.*<sup>5</sup>

**Ports & Intermodal Traffic** –As pointed out in the Rail Plan excerpts from Cambridge Systematics, the very nature of coal unit trains represents a direct threat to both intermodal and passenger rail

services. That fundamental incompatibility has resulted in both intermodal and passenger services being placed on the separate "hi-line" bypassing all major Montana and Idaho cities in order to avoid the Powder River Basin traffic from Billings. Their comments concerning negative impacts for Washington ports are based on indirect effects of PRB coal. The physical presence on our own mainlines clearly establishes a new and serious need for comprehensive study modeling such traffic.

*"The high volume of coal trains moving east out of the Powder River Basin (PRB) has made it virtually impossible to route time sensitive intermodal trains moving from PNW ports to central and southeast gateways such as Kansas City and Memphis through the near continuous flow of slow-moving coal trains. Adjusting to this, BNSF has shifted most intermodal traffic destined to locations south of Chicago to the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach."<sup>6</sup>*

*"To avoid conflict with the coal trains, UPRR now routes their time-sensitive intermodal traffic over their Sunset Corridor, bypassing the large volume of coal trains of the Central Corridor. These routing changes make it more difficult for the Ports of Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, and Vancouver to compete with the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach for intermodal traffic destined for central and south-central U.S. and East Coast markets."<sup>7</sup>*

**Agriculture and Other Local Rail Business – Despite all the state investment in short line railroads that serve important agricultural and local business interests, the advent of large volume coal traffic has significant potential to cripple those services in fairly short order. This is an area in urgent need of study.**

*"Carload shippers who generate small volumes of cargo and who ship small numbers of carloads to many different destinations will find it harder to get service, will find the service increasingly costly, and will see their service receiving the lowest priority of all the cargo that is being moved."<sup>8</sup>*

*"Short-line traffic that does not fit the "hook and haul" operating strategy of the Class I railroads will find it increasingly difficult to get cars, get timely service, and get low rates, especially for small shipments. It will take more time and cost more for short lines to service their customers. This may affect the long-term financial viability of some of the short lines."<sup>9</sup>*

*"Railroads are using pricing to turn aside lower-profit carload freight in favor of intermodal and coal traffic, which can be handled more cost-effectively and profitably in bulk unit trains."<sup>10</sup>*

*"Addressing capacity issues alone may not be sufficient to ensure that the Washington State Rail system is responsive to the needs of traditional carload shippers and receivers within Washington State. Given changing business models of the Class I railroads and their approaches to improving velocity through operations, the low density, small shipper markets in which many of Washington State's traditional rail users find themselves are likely to continue to see declines in service even if capacity in the system is increased."<sup>11</sup>*

*"Railroads are also using pricing as a demand management tool to encourage traffic that is easiest to serve and most profitable, and to discourage traffic that is difficult to serve and least profitable."<sup>12</sup>*

**Community Fiscal Challenges** – One of the most important results of rapidly accelerating unit train volumes is the impacts on communities, especially our small cities – many of which are split by the mainline. None of these communities stand to gain from this additional traffic yet they must bear the major costs of enabling this enterprise because of mitigation costs shifted to their taxpayers. Even a single grade-separated crossing to knit the community together is well beyond the means of most small communities. This is especially true since Class 1 Railroads have insured that regulations are in place to immunize them from any liability. The state has recognized this as a clear public policy issue since 2006. Current circumstances suggest no room for further deferral of this issue. Additional analysis needs to address this critical threat to the economic viability of the state’s small communities.

*“In addition, growth of mainline rail volumes is causing impacts on local communities along the rail system, and the costs of capital needs to mitigate those impacts is a public policy concern. The State will need a clear policy on how best to address the needs of these shippers in the context of this changing business environment.”<sup>13</sup>*

**Passenger Rail**– Given that time sensitive intermodal traffic is known to be incompatible with coal unit train traffic, it is certain that Amtrak service on the the same mainlines will be seriously at risk. This is yet another subject that demands careful analysis in a new comprehensive study.

---

<sup>1</sup> For example all the the rail projects funded with over a billion dollars in the last few years have come from those

<sup>2</sup> At Cherry Point (48mt coal, 6MT bulk) and Longview (44mt coal), build-outs for the terminals are 2-4 years.

<sup>3</sup> Draft Plan at pages 36, 41 (sidebar), and 42.

<sup>4</sup> Even that 25 year normal growth projection may be overstated if both NW coal fired power plants shut down.

<sup>5</sup> Statewide Rail Capacity and System Needs Study, 2nd Interim Report, 2006 pp 1-3

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. pp 1-4, 1-5

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. pp 1-5

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. pp 1-3

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. pp 1-4

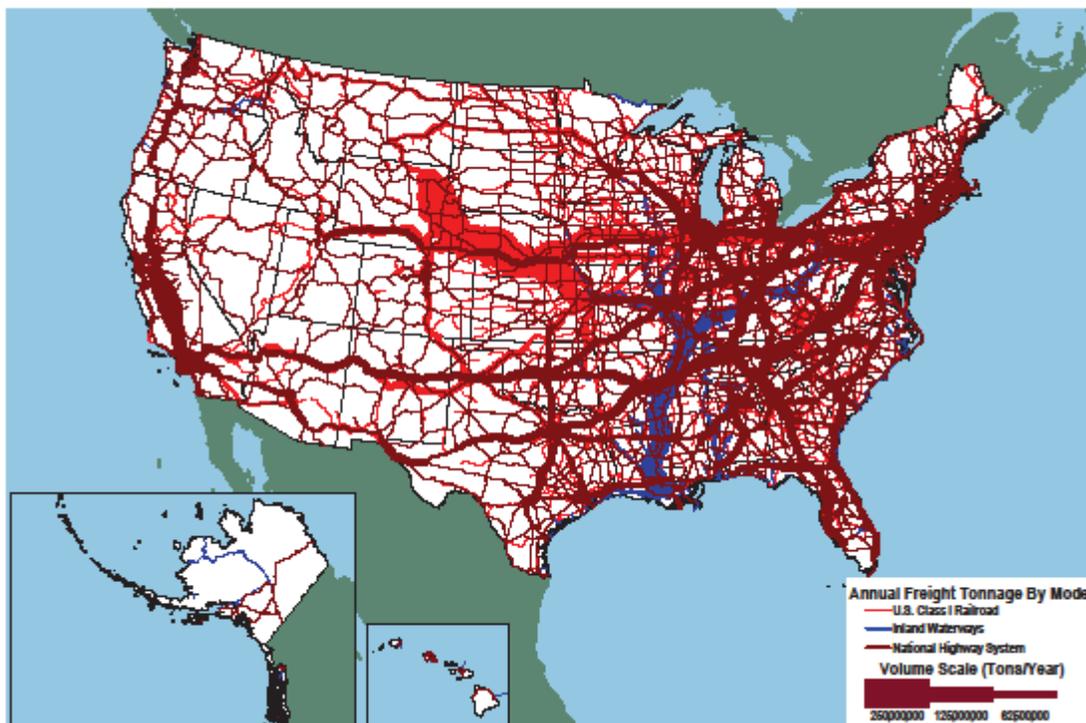
<sup>10</sup> Statewide Rail Capacity and Needs Study, Addendum to Interim Report #1, 2006 pp 2

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. pp 3

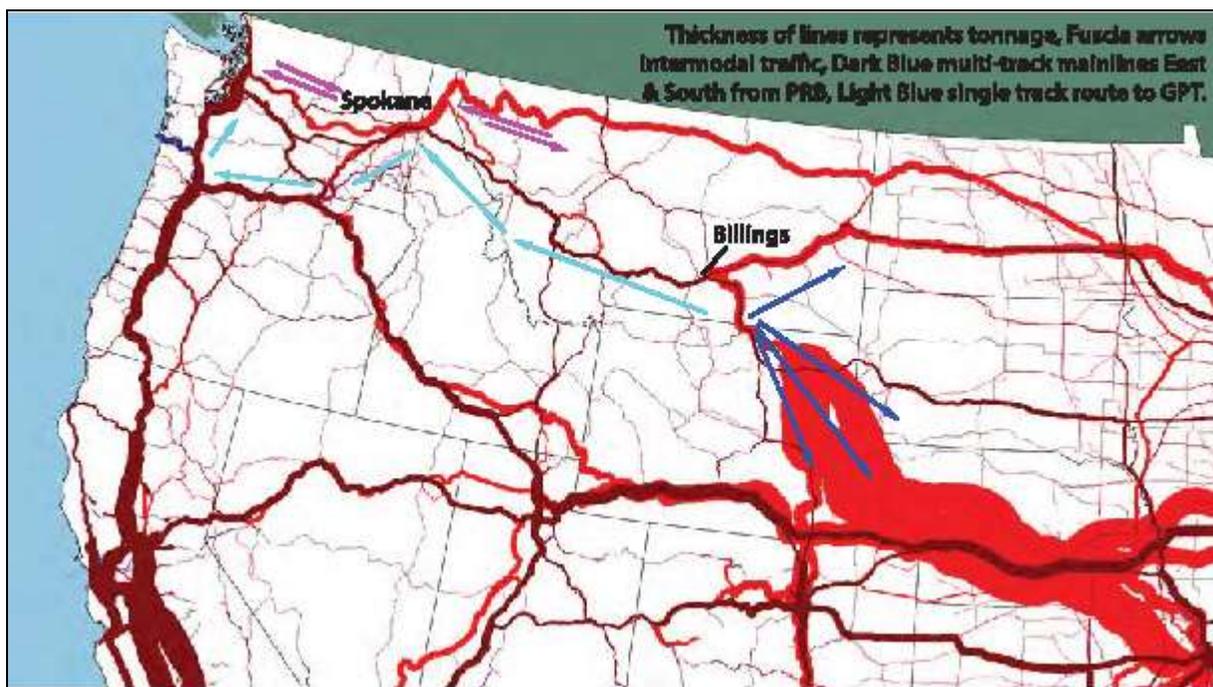
<sup>12</sup> Ibid. pp 2

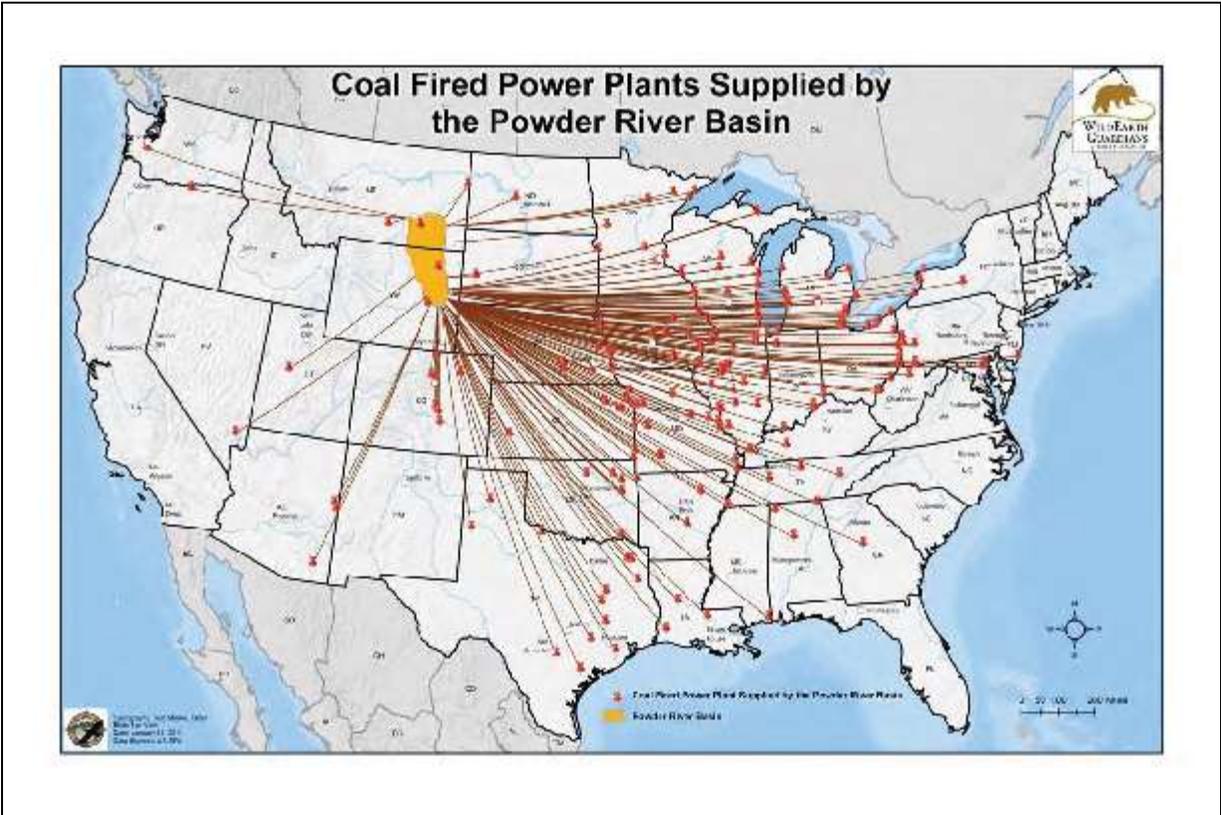
<sup>13</sup> Ibid pp 3

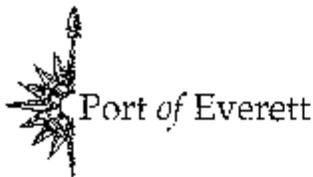
Tonnage on Highways, Railroads and Inland Waterways: 2002



Sources: Highways: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Freight Analysis Framework, Version 2.2, 2007. Rail: Based on Surface Transportation Board, Annual Carload Waybill Sample and rail freight flow assignments done by Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Inland Waterways: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Annual Vessel Operating Activity and Lock Performance Monitoring System data, as processed for USACE by the Tennessee Valley Authority; and USACE, Institute for Water Resources, Waterborne Foreign Trade Data, Water flow assignments done by Oak Ridge National Laboratory.







November 21, 2013

Kerri Woehler, Rail Operations Program Manager  
WSDOT  
PO Box 07407  
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: Draft State Rail Plan  
Port of Everett Comments

Dear Ms. Woehler:

The Port of Everett appreciates the work that has gone into preparing the Draft State Rail Plan, and in response to your invitation for public input, we would like to offer the following comments for WSDOT's consideration:

**General Comments**

- The projection of future rail traffic (2035) points to routes that will not be able to handle the expected traffic. It also points to alternate routes that will not have capacity in 2035. It would seem appropriate for the State Rail Plan to more clearly address this capacity issue.
- The Draft Plan does not appear to address rail infrastructure improvements to better handle over-width/over-height freight on the State's rail network.
- The Draft Plan does not mention or include improvements to rail tunnel ventilation, which is the source of some of the limits of train movement over various mountain passes.
- The State Rail system will likely need to accommodate the new six-axle engines, which will not be able to traverse certain track curves in the existing system.
- While the Draft Plan mentions the difficulties associated with at-grade road/railroad crossings, further discussion of potential solutions to facilitate freight rail movement is warranted.

**Specific Comments**

- On page 13, in Table 2.2 on Intermodal Facilities in Washington, the Port of Everett Deep-water Terminals, from which there is a short haul of oversized containers, and the BNSF Delta Yard in Everett are not listed. They should be considered for inclusion in the Table.
- On page 68, in the Landslides and Corridor Reliability section, the Port of Everett should be included as a partner, as we have been and currently are engaged in discussions with BNSF and the City of Everett on the landslide and slope stability issue in the Everett area.

1200 Crofton Way, Suite 200 • Everett, WA 98201 • Phone (425) 260-5184 • Fax (425) 252-7266  
Web site: www.portofeverett.com • E-mail: gen@portofeverett.com • P.O. Box 528 • Everett, WA 98206

- Starting on page 108, Section 6.3, the listing and tables on federal and state rail funding sources are very helpful- thank you for including them in the document.
- On page 144, the Port is pleased to note the inclusion of improvements for the passenger/commuter rail projects in Mukilteo.
- The Draft Plan does not appear to include specific rail projects or improvements to the Everett area. BNSF consistently operates in a condition of severe congestion at the Bayside/Delta area. If the bulk rail projections hold true, some main line track investment north of Seattle will be needed to ensure the efficient movement of rail cargoes.
- While some Port junction improvements are mentioned in the Draft Plan, there appear to be none identified for the Port of Everett area. The rail junction at the Port's Marine Terminals functions as the Port's set-out track for rail freight. Further improvements to this junction are important.
- No freight rail projects are listed for Snohomish County. The County's North Manufacturing Corridor includes several grade separation projects that are critically important to this area
  - o Grade separation: SR 104 Main Street/Dayton Street: \$80 million
  - o Grade separation: SR 529/SR 528 Half Diamond: \$60 million
  - o Grade separation: 136<sup>th</sup> St. NE Interchange Marysville: \$42 million
- The Draft Plan does not mention any future pedestrian bridge projects (over BNSF tracks) within the City of Everett. The City may be able to provide more specific information on potential projects within its jurisdiction.

We recognize that some of our comments may be addressed to a certain degree through comments on the Draft Plan by other stakeholders, such as BNSF. Therefore, we would certainly be interested in seeing comments that WSDOT receives through this public review process.

Once again, the Port of Everett appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on WSDOT's Draft State Rail Plan. Please note that the Port of Everett would be happy to discuss our comments with you in further detail.

Should you have any questions, please contact Graham Anderson, Port Staff, at 425.388.0703.

Very Truly Yours,



Les Reardan  
Deputy Executive Director/Chief Administrative Officer

## South County Area Transportation Board

Attn: KSC TR-0814  
201 South Jackson Street  
Seattle, WA 98104-3856

Phone: (206) 427-3822 Fax: (206) 684-2111

November 26, 2013

Ron Pate, Rail Director  
PO Box 47407  
310 Maple Park Avenue SE  
Olympia, WA 98501-7407



Dear Mr. Pate,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Washington State Rail Plan, public review draft. The South County Area Transportation Board (SCATBd) is a collaborative effort of local elected officials who are committed to improving the region's transportation system. SCATBd represents an area that encompasses 16 south King County cities including 690,000 city and county residents, and is home to over 300,000 jobs. The south King County area also has one of the largest manufacturing and industrial areas in the Pacific Northwest, and our area's transportation system plays an important role in supporting the economic vitality of the region and state through the efficient movement of people and goods. The State's two Class 1 rail lines run through the south King County area.

### Local Transportation Funding Short-Falls

The draft plan forecasts increasing demand for passenger and freight rail services in Washington State, and an increase in rail traffic will affect traffic delay and safety at at-grade crossings in our valley cities. Table DE of the draft plan lists a number of partially funded and unfunded grade separation projects in the south King County area. However, because of mounting funding shortfalls, SCATBd jurisdictions are unable to fund these needed grade separation projects. SCATBd members recommend the draft plan highlight the local agency funding shortfalls for these grade separation projects and the impacts of not building these grade separation projects on the movement of people and freight. In order to continue and facilitate state-level revenue and funding discussions, we need to acknowledge our local funding shortfalls in our various local and state transportation planning documents such as the Washington State Rail Plan and the Washington State Freight Mobility Plan.

### At-Grade Crossings Transportation Impacts to Local Communities

One of the themes that emerged from the draft Washington State Rail Plan stakeholders outreach efforts included community impacts of rail. Stakeholders identified the need to address traffic congestion and safety at at-grade crossings, and to evaluate opportunities for freight and passenger rail to contribute to local economic development. The draft rail plan section entitled "Challenges and Other Issues Facing Class 1 Rail Roads, Relationships Between Communities and Class 1 Railroads (page 46)" should be expanded to include a more in-depth analysis on the impacts of freight rail and passenger rail traffic at at-grade crossings. The analysis should include a focus on the impacts of freight and passenger rail operations on surface movement of people

Alvina • Auburn • Black Diamond • Burien • Covington • Des Moines • Duwamish • Federal Way • Kent • King County • Maple Valley • Mukwonago Indian Tribe • Normandy Park • Renton • SeaTac • Tukwila • Pacific • Pierce County • Everett/Tosco • Port of Seattle • Port of Tacoma • Puget Sound Regional Council • South Sound Chambers of Commerce Coalition • Sound Transit • Transportation Improvement Board • Washington State Department of Transportation • Washington State Transportation Commission

and freight at at-grade crossings. The analysis should also include the economic and social impacts of travel delays experienced by travel of emergency vehicles, truck freight traffic, passenger vehicles and transit.

#### Impacts of Potential Increase in Coal and Crude Oil Train Traffic

SCATBA would also like to see an expanded discussion and analysis on the impacts of potential coal and crude oil train traffic on the capacity for existing and future freight and passenger rail traffic. Currently, several proposals are under consideration to enhance port capacity, including a bulk coal export facility at Cherry Point in Whatcom County. If the Cherry Point bulk export facility were to be developed, it could add up to 18 mile-and-a-half long trains per day. Oil refineries in our state have typically received crude oil shipments from Alaska and elsewhere by ship, barges or pipelines, but refiners are increasingly turning to trains to take advantage of a boom in oil from North Dakota's Bakkan region. This potential increase in coal and crude oil rail traffic could result in significant impacts to both current and future freight and passenger train traffic in our state, including our region's Sounder Commuter Rail Service.

This potential increase in coal and crude oil train traffic is a major concern for SCATBA members because of the possible impacts to south King County cities, our regional and statewide economy. Our region's economy relies on the rail corridor to move parts and finished products and an increase in coal and crude oil train traffic could impact existing and future rail-dependent economic development. This increase in coal and crude oil train traffic would also have significant impacts at at-grade crossings, impacting the flow of freight and goods flowing to and from our ports to the industrial and warehousing areas in the Green River Valley area.

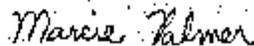
SCATBA supports the draft rail plan's vision that is guided by the six transportation system policy goals established by the state legislature which includes: economic vitality, preservation, safety, mobility, environment, and stewardship. SCATBA members are keenly aware of the economic importance of Washington's freight and passenger rail system and the key role it plays in the multimodal transportation system that keeps people, freight and goods moving in Washington State. Our local transportation systems also provide an important foundation for Washington's economy. It provides the vital connections that link our homes to our work places and carry products to market.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Washington State Rail Plan and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Pete Lewis  
Chair



Marcie Palmer  
Vice Chair

South County Area Transportation Board

Agwa • Astoria • Black Diamond • Burien • Covington • Des Moines • Enumclaw • Federal Way • Kent • King County • Maple Valley • Middlebrook Indian Tribe • Normandy Park • Renton • SeaTac • Tukwila • Duwamish • Pierce County • Pierce Transit • Port of Seattle • Port of Tacoma • Puget Sound Regional Council • Puget Sound Chambers of Commerce Coalition • Sound Transit • Transportation Improvement Board • Washington State Department of Transportation • Washington State Transportation Commission

## **One Contribution to the Public Input Process towards the WS-DOT Rail-Plan 2013-2014 (December 2, '13)**

This Contribution of the WS-DOT Rail-Plan 2013-14 reflects much of that document's core-assumptions, structuring this particular perspective under the emphasis of Two Major Guiding-Policies:

### **Policy #1. Introduction to Washington State of Diesel-Electric/Electric-Electric DUAL-MODE locomotives:**

- a.) to significantly boost CASCADE TUNNEL throughput-capacity addressing growing demands on that and other corridors,
- b.) to thus allow temporary shut-down of STAMPEDE PASS to upgrade it to 'double-stack 20+' high rolling stock capacity and to power the locomotives electrically while in that tunnel,
- c.) to also allow selected 'Quiet-Drive' Rail-Operation-Zones in Urbia, Suburbia and even selected regions of Exurbia for both passenger and freight trains, assuming matching limited electrification-zones.
- d.) to also allow electric-power-only use in stations as Zero-Diesel-Idling and Least-Acceleration-Noise operations, again assuming respective local-only electrification-provisions.

### **Policy #2. Reintroduction of Routine Daily Passenger-Train Operations (incl. commuter-style) across the Cascades through progressive Segregation of Passenger- from Freight Train Operations wherever technically and fiscally possible:**

- a.) to allow maximum effectiveness of regional and national freight-operations in response to projected growing demands from within and without the state,
- b.) to allow increasing spread and effectiveness of local and regional (intra-state) Passenger-Rail traffic.
- c.) to enhance matching economic development through greater transportation-efficiency and even just-accessibility for near any type of cargo.

### **Policy # 1. Introduction to Washington State of Diesel-Electric/Electric-Electric DUAL-MODE locomotives – Details and Effects**

#### **1.1. Technology**

- 1.1.a. **Basic Locomotive Technology:** In North-America, Diesel locomotives for passenger or freight-hauling are powered by one or multiple Diesel-engines, which generate electricity, which in turn power electric motors on their axles, turning their wheels, thus pulling the train.
- 1.1.b. **The DUAL-MODE Locomotive Approach:** DUAL-MODE locomotives are identical, except that they also feature a means to optionally pick up that electricity from 'Third Rails' or Overhead Wires/Catenary - as typically used for street-cars, subways, and of course electrically-powered trains, like the 165mph-capable all-electric AMTRAK ACELA on the 456 miles North-East High-Speed Rail Corridor. A DUAL-MODE locomotive drawings its power from such 'Third Rails' or Overhead Wires will generate its traction-power to pull/push its train without its Diesel-engine running. With that engine shut down, no noise-, heat- or combustion-gas emissions are generated while the train is moved at speeds up to or even in excess of those generated by regular Diesel-electric locomotives.
- 1.1.c. **External Electricity Supply:** To support this DUAL-MODE operation across short or longer sections of

trackage, either 'Third Rail' or Overhead Wires have to be installed for that given length to feed externally-supplied electrical energy to power the locomotive and train.

### **1.2. Current US-Uses and Types**

The primary market for DUAL-MODE locomotives is the Greater New York City Region with its very high population and traffic-density.

The age of steam-locomotives had driven home the incompatibility of related emissions of noise, steam, ash, fumes in an increasingly dense urban environment. By the early 1900s the emergence of electric locomotives allowed construction of tunnels into and on Manhattan Island to disentangle sub-surface mass-transit from surface-traffic. Electrification reached off the island into Long Island and upstate NY, and well into CT and NJ.

However, typically, electric locomotives had to be uncoupled and regular steam- and later Diesel-electric locomotives connected to the trains to travel to un-electrified regions of each state and farther destinations.

- 1.2.a. **EMD FL9 (1956)**: As the first generation of these electric locomotives aged, the 'New Haven Railroad' ordered 60 units of so-called DUAL-MODE Diesel-electric Locomotives from the well-established Diesel-locomotive builder General Motors Electro-Motive Division (EMD). Produced between 1956 and 1960, these EMD FL9 locomotives were rated at 1750hp, and came equipped with both 'over-' and 'under-running' 'Third Rail' pick-ups to draw electricity from alongside the rails, and with a pantograph to optionally draw electricity from an overhead wire. Into and out of Manhattan, the FL9s would routinely switch between the 148-liter V-16 Diesel engine and the external power-sources. They remained in service into the early years of the 21st century.

- 1.2.b. **GE P32AS-DM (1991)**: Beginning in 1991 locomotive builder General Electric was contracted by AMTRAK to produce the 2<sup>nd</sup>-generation DUAL-MODE type using Third Rail pick-up, the GE Genesis P32AC-DM, rated at 3200hp to reach up to 110mph with the lighter commuter trains.

- 1.2.c. **EMD DM30AC (1997)**: By 1997 EMD would design and build for the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) the EMD DM30AC, rated at about 3000hp in either mode, and geared to reach about 100mph.

- 1.2.d. **BOMBARDIER ALP-45DP (2010)**: Between 2010 and 2012 Bombardier Transportation built for New Jersey Transit (NJT) 35 copies of the state-of-the-art ALP-45DP, designed to use a pantograph to draw energy from the NJT's 25,000Volt overhead wire/catenary. In diesel-mode on un-electrified tracks powered by two Diesel engines (4200hp), the type can reach 100mph. However, in catenary-based Alternating Current electric-mode, the maximum output at the rail is 5,900hp for 125mph, essentially up to par with the currently most powerful (6000hp) Diesel-electric freight-locomotives doing duty across the Cascade Tunnel tracks.

With BNSF having around 5000 medium (4000hp) to heavy-weight (6000hp) locomotives on its roster built by GE and EMD, with such a sizable market it may be technically conceivable that *modifications-packages* could be developed to just upgrade a good number of these towards DUAL-MODE-duty as well.

### **1.3. Hard Challenges on one of the Nation's most demanding Freight-Train Corridors across Stevens**

First railroad tunneling was begun under Stevens Pass beginning in 1897 with service commencing by late December 1900 on the 2.6 mile Cascade Tunnel. After serious operational challenges (e.g. snow-slides) and significant loss of life, this first Cascade Tunnel was abandoned for rail-service by 1929, remaining unused since except to pedestrians.

The current tunnel was opened January 12 1929 between Berne on the east side and Scenic on the west side. Both tunnels run approximately 2-miles apart near parallel under Stevens Pass and Rte. 2.

In service for near 85 years, Cascade Tunnel serves the northern-most Class-1 railroad corridor in the lower 48 states, connecting the country with its north-western-most ports of Seattle and Tacoma, closest to Asia.

However, Cascade Tunnel's particular attributes have a serious impact upon its rail-operations:

- 1.3.a. **Length:** Cascade Tunnel is America's *longest* railroad tunnel at 7.8mile straight ('bore-sighted') length.
- 1.3.b. **Internal Grade:** Its western entrance at about 2300-feet of elevation also is some 600 feet lower than its eastern portal at about 2900-feet. (*In contrast, apart from being much shorter, both the 1.86mile Stampede Tunnel at about 2900-foot elevation and the 2.34 mile Snoqualmie Tunnel at about 2600-foot elevation are more or less level.*)
- 1.3.c. **Limited Speed:** With a maximum tunnel-speed of 25mph, Class-1 heavy-weight freight-trains spend over 20 minutes inside the tunnel; passenger-trains are allowed 30mph.
- 1.3.d. **Heavy Power and thus Air-Use:** With such freight-trains often moved by three 4000hp (each) Diesel-locomotives pulling up-front with perhaps another two such units (for 20,000hp combined) pushing on the train's end, these 5 locomotive will consume much of the oxygen in that tunnel, replacing it with sooty noxious hotter exhaust-gases.
- 1.3.e. **Elevated Temperatures:** On hot days, temperatures inside the tunnel can significantly degrade the capabilities of the Diesels' engine-cooling systems.
- 1.3.f. **Single-Track Layout:** While the immediate approaches on both ends are double-tracked to allow trains headed in opposite directions to pass each other, Cascade Tunnel itself is single-track wide only.
- 1.3.g. **Forced Ventilation:** To address these air-quality- and temperature-problems, two 800hp (1200kW) electric fans have been installed on the upper/eastern end of Cascade Tunnel, along with doors that close off that tunnel end to allow drawing in of fresh air from the lower west-portal almost 8 miles away. However, it takes between 20 and 30 minutes to replace the fumes with fresh air, fit for people and diesel-engines. And no train can enter the tunnel from the east while that unavoidable process is underway.
- 1.3.h. **A Maximum of 1.2 Trains per Hour:** With at best one train possible every 50 minutes - 20 minutes travel plus 20-30 mins of ventilation - this ventilation-process is expensive primarily in terms of the time the tunnel is actually usable - quite apart from *energy-consumption* and the production of *significant 'point-pollution'* at the fans' exhausts.
- 1.3.i. **28 trains possible versus demands for 44:** Taken together, these hard challenges limit the *maximum daily 'through-put'* of trains through the Cascade Tunnel to about 28 trains. However projections for demands in 2035 indicate the need to run 44 trains daily.
- 1.3.j. **A Serious Economic 'Bottleneck':** This is thus not just a serious impediment to the two-way shipment of inter-state freight, and the *sole* daily AMTRAK passenger-train, the "Empire Builder". For Washington's economy this operational 'bottleneck' has also negatively affected the capacity and costs to *intra-state* shippers to access and pay for this route across the Cascades.

Online YouTube Videos allow a quick impression of the situation around the air-quality reality and of course to see length and 'double-high' height of trains, pulled and pushed along by multiple locomotives, which in one sequence amount to 5x 4000hp at work, with a full-size freight-train possibly weighing in at 12,000tons and more; one typical 40-tons 18-wheeler interstate truck may have 500hp to haul their load over the mountains:

- 3:49 min video "BNSF Cascade Tunnel Operations pt. 1" (shot at the East Portal)  
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOG06c7O-NE>)
- 1:57 min video "BNSF Cascade Tunnel Operations pt. 2" (shot at the West Portal)  
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWbZohgm6D8>)
- 15-min. video "Railroad Operations at the Cascade Tunnel/Stevens Pass, WA"  
([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G\\_aDAh2TCAg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_aDAh2TCAg))

**1.4. DUAL-MODE Locomotives along with limited-length Electrification open up Unprecedented Operational Opportunities for WS-DOT, Class-1 National Freight-Haulers, AMTRAK Intra- and Inter-State Passenger Service, and Intra-State Rail-Freight**

It is proposed that BNSF acquire a limited dedicated fleet of Cascade Division DUAL-MODE locomotives - perhaps nicknamed "Cascade Motors" - along with electrifying these 7.8 tunnel-miles plus several miles of both approaches for most efficient tunnel-operations. To support the current 4-6 locomotives-combinations per heavy-lift freight-train through Cascade Tunnel, that fleet of 'Cascade Locos' would initially number around perhaps 100-140 units; as the nation's #2 railroad, BNSF current runs a fleet of around 6000 locomotives.

This upgrade to tunnel-operations would immediately have several significant operational advantages:

**- 1.4.a. Electric-Propulsion-Only:**

Powering trains (either direction) through that tunnel *only on clean electrical power* - with the Diesels completely shut down (!) -, this dedicated fleet of 'Cascade-Motors' would *immediately eliminate* the grave air-quality problems inside Cascade Tunnel.

**- 1.4.b. Increasing Train-Speed (?):**

Without the air-quality restrictions from using Diesel-power inside the tunnel, it may be possible to run the trains at higher speeds, thus adding to the hourly through-put of trains.

**- 1.4.c. Energy-Regeneration:**

'Down-Hill' trains would use the rolling weight of the train towards 'energy-recovery/regeneration' to feed electricity back into the supply-line, reducing the energy-bill for the next 'Up-Hill' train.

**- 1.4.d. Multiplying Daily Tunnel Through-Put:**

Daily through-put of trains would then robustly exceed the current 28-trains limitation.

Instead of one train every 50 minutes, a peak-performance of perhaps four trains in one direction may be possible for every hour, only to be limited by the closest safe spacing inside the tunnel of trains running in the same direction. In more likely random daily directional mix, three per hour may be achievable on average, for a total theoretical maximum through-put of some 72 trains. This would thus leave ample room for maintenance, weather-challenges, routing delays. Thus electrified and leveraging DUAL-MODE locomotive technology, Cascade Tunnel should offer perfectly adequate capacity to match the demands for 42 trains as projected for 2035 in Figure 4.3 of the Draft Plan.

**- 1.4.e. Unburdening other Congested East-West Routes (?):**

It is conceivable that this immediate significant increase in Cascade Tunnel capacity would through re-routing through Cascade Tunnel also help alleviate similar but non-tunnel-related east-west-capacity bottle-necks, for instance as projected for the Pasco-Spokane division.

**- 1.4.f. Electrification of Limited-length Dual-Track Tunnel-Approaches:**

The most efficient use of electrification of the tunnel and the use of DUAL-MODE types depends upon determining the most effective length of dual-tracks on either approach to allow lining up groups of trains to enter the tunnel in rapid succession.

- Currently the eastern approach features one 2.1 mile long stretch of double-track.

- The western approach offers double-track of about 1.75 miles in length, with a 'third' .7 mile long track for 'maintenance-of-way'/repair/snow-plow rolling stock available.

The tracks facing each tunnel-portal would have to be electrified as well to allow waiting trains to shut down their Diesels and then proceed up and into the tunnel under electricity only, overall adding another 3.8 approach-miles

to the 7.8 tunnel-miles of catenary-based electrification. It is likely that the growth in through-put rate will suggest extending those double-track approaches further down each side not require stopping of single and multiple trains as trains leave the tunnel opening it for opposite-direction traffic.

There would appear to be much room for development of the most 'tunnel-efficient' traffic-patterns approaching either end.

**- 1.4.g. No Need for Additional Cross-Cascades Tunnels:**

With Cascade Tunnel thus perfectly fit to address the otherwise overwhelming projected growth in tunnel-use demands over the next decades, using this technology would avert any need of additional tunneling projects of likely prohibitive cost - money that could be better spent broadly enhancing intra-state freight and passenger rail-usage. One such example would be to the 'next'-most important project #1 B - the upgrading of Stampede Pass for 21<sup>st</sup>-century demands in order to support growing intra-state passenger-trains along with freight-trains typically originating in smaller-scale rail-systems. In fact, between the 'relaxing' of Cascade Tunnel operations, the opportunity to add vertical height to Stampede Tunnel, plus 'holding in Reserve' of Snoqualmie Tunnel, WS-DOT and its rail-traffic stakeholders appear to have all the cross-Cascades rail-traffic capacity necessary for the most optimistic growth-projection of both freight and (hopefully) passenger-rail.

**- 1.4.h. Electric Power-Supply already in place:**

Fortuitously, a major electrical supply-point happens to be located only a few hundred feet from the track at both portals of Cascade Tunnel, due to a major high-voltage overland-wire corridor running over the pass. No doubt, the electrification of first and second Cascade Tunnels initiated this routing.

**- 1.4.i. BNSF 'Cascade Motors'-base in Hauser ID:**

Many of the BNSF freight-trains coming from the Mid-West through Montana stop just east of Spokane in Hauser ID. That facility features over 20 parallel tracks for mile+long trains to refuel and change crews, with the longest tracks offering about 3 miles of length. Hauser could be the eastern base for the dedicated Cascade-Corridor DUAL-MODE locomotives-fleet. Explicitly acquired for this purpose, these 'Cascade Locos' would likely just shuttle between Hauser and Puget Sound, keeping the total number of units limited to just those needed to maintain that Division's particular transportation-capacity, as stated earlier.

**- 1.4.j. Further Evolution of DUAL-MODE Locomotives:**

As shown above with the greater New York City examples, DUAL-MODE technology has evolved towards 21<sup>st</sup> century operational demands. Given same horsepower-rating and thus Diesel-electrical equipment of the lighter-weight higher-speed passenger-train locomotives of typically 4-axle B-B wheel-geometries, for heavier-duty Class-1 freight-rail applications the most significant difference would likely be the lower gearing of either 4-axle (8 wheels) B-B geometry for greater pull from a stand-still and uphill, or the shift to (equally) lower-g geared 6-axle (12 wheels) C-C geometry to allow most tractive effort through 4 more wheels at limited freight-correct top-speed. Since the first generation of diesel-electric locomotives, mature propulsion-system cores have been successfully leveraged for an increasingly broader range of applications. As for conventional Diesel-electric locomotives, the emerging economies-of-scale for DUAL-MODE types are self-explanatory.

Whether 'as is' in the higher-speed-g geared B-B commuter-rail geometry of ALP-45DP, or a geared-down B-B medium-weight freight-hauler, or even as a geared-down maximum-traction C-C heavy-freight power-house, the technology appears mature enough to pursue this technology to significantly boost Cascade Tunnel's freight through-put performance deep into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As stated earlier however, with BNSF having around 5000 medium (4000hp) to heavy-weight (6000hp) locomotives on its roster built by GE and EMD, it may be technically conceivable that with such a sizable market modifications-packages could be developed to just upgrade a good number of these towards DUAL-MODE-duty as well.

- **1.4.k. Reconnecting with an All-Electric Cascade-Tunnel Rail-History begun in 1909:**

It should be noted that the first Cascade Tunnel was already electrified by 1909. The second Cascade Tunnel of 1929 again was fully electrified as part of a larger network of catenary-based freight and passenger electric-train operations. Snoqualmie Pass built and opened 1914 by the Milwaukee Railroad and by 1917 was part of a much larger electrification-effort across both Cascades and the Rockies.

Furthermore, on the Cascade Tunnel track, almost 85 years ago even 'energy-recovery' was utilized from down-hill passages by heavy-trains feeding electricity back into that system to supply either other trains or reduce electric bills.

However, between certain management decisions, and even the collapse of one of the leading electric-supply-based railways - the Milwaukee Railroad - heavy-duty-operations electrification of both Rocky Mountain and Cascade tracks would eventually disappear - obviously a tragic infrastructural loss of long-lasting negative consequences, for instance affecting to this day Cascade Tunnel operation with limited through-put, damaging economic constraints, and ecological burdens.

**1.5. Throughout the Northwest AMTRAK and Commuter-Rail Corridors DUAL-MODE Locomotives would allow incremental Establishment of 'Zero-Diesel-Idling-Zones' and 'Least-Acceleration-Noise Zones' in Sensitive Environs – with perhaps gradual (Re-) Electrification of certain Divisions**

With the proposed introduction of that mature technology to Washington State by BNSF, purchase of additional 'go-fast' versions for AMTRAK passenger applications would offer desirable opportunities to reduce passenger- and freight-rail-produced noise and exhaust pollution-emission via (initially) limited-length zones for purely electrical-propulsion. Following the first such case with the Cascade Tunnel, then perhaps Stampede Tunnel, particular neutralgic locations could be incrementally addressed one case at a time.

Long-term, such accumulating numbers of episodes may incubate the willingness and budgets to invest in broader-scale (re-) electrification of selected major and minor stretches for passenger- and freight-rail. Much longer noise-emissions and no exhaust-gas emissions would significantly reduce the risks of NIMBY-opposition to rail-traffic growth and especially reestablishment of long-ago- defunct rail-service over still extant 'right-of-ways, typically fully-engineered long ago, but laying fallow, just lacking new ties, rails, and signal-equipment.

**1.6. AASHTO PRIAA 305 NGEC DUAL MODE Locomotives Working Group**

DUAL-MODE locomotives have received particular attention in recent years on highest national transportation-policy levels.

The 50 states are represented by their leading governmental transportation officials (e.g. WS-DOT's Secretary of Transportation Lynn Petersen) in the American Association of State Highway And Transportation Officials 'AASHTO'. AASHTO is working with AMTRAK in the 'Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee' (NGEC) within the mandate of the 2008 'Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act' (PRIIA).

Known as PRIAA 305, NGEC has a 'Locomotive Technology Task Force' (also referred as Section 305) which produced an August 11, 2011 Whitepaper, entitled "Potential New Locations to Use DUAL-MODE Locomotives to Solve Operational Constraints" (available online). While primarily focused on passenger-rail operations, this effort broadens significantly the discussion, understanding, and opportunities inherent in extending that technology towards specific challenges in freight-rail operations as well in ways already touched upon above under 1.4.h.

**Policy #2. Reintroduction of Routine Multiple Daily Passenger-Train Operations across the Cascades through Selected Segregation of Passenger- from Freight-Train Operations**

- 2.a. to allow maximum effectiveness of regional and national freight-operations in response to projected growing demands,
- 2.b. to allow increasing effectiveness of local and regional (intra-state) Passenger-Rail traffic.
- 2.c. to enhance matching economic development through greater transportation–efficiency and accessibility for near any type of cargo.

The point is to establish ‘plain’ Passenger-Rail Service at technically perfectly-affordable ‘rated’ top-speeds at somewhere around 100mph - topography and traffic dependent.

So-called ‘High-Speed Rail’ in European and Asian parlance tends to assume 180-220mph. Here the ambition is to just re-establish routine cross-Cascades Commuter-Rail and Intra-State train service, connecting Puget Sound with Washington’s South-East and North-East.

Leveraging mostly extant and already ‘civil engineered’ ‘right-of-ways’ seems a fiscally and politically much more attainable model. And doing so to effectively boost *Intra-State* passenger and freight-rail should make these opportunities more feasible yet.

In fact, tracking through the following ‘Stages’ will still require significant funding – but spread out over time, with frequent but modest successes in the expansion of service, with the public and private enterprise learning to use that growth to best effect. Proposed is steadfast incrementalism - versus ‘traffic- revolutionary’ grand schemes. The point is a sequence of smaller and mid-sized projects planned, funded and executed in clearly outlined stages, in actually ‘doable’ individual efforts, which, over time, will amount to a well-developed network of passenger and freight rail-traffic, and the economic development those tend to bring to counties and communities with access to these infrastructural improvements.

**2.1. A Symbiotic Reality between Freight- and Passenger-Rail Service**

**- 2.1.a. A Few Basics on Passenger-Train Travel in the US:**

Since the invention of railroading in the UK in 1827, the economics of building track, locomotives and cars with few exceptions depended typically upon a mix of both passenger and freight haulage. In the US this pattern persisted until the progressive growth of significantly-subsidized post-WW-2 air-travel along with later the fully publicly-funded Interstate Highway System and the indirectly-subsidized massive growth in personal transportation through cars, all of which eventually made competing passenger-services along the same corridors increasingly unviable. Despite a number of policies by railroads, Federal and State Governments to subsidize passenger-service budgets from profitable freight-transportation and taxes, most railroads were interested in shutting down passenger rail-service. While on local and certain regional levels commuter-rail passenger-services had evolved into a variety of private and public partnerships, much of national interstate passenger rail-service would come to be consolidated by May 1, 1971 in the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, doing business as AMTRAK. The ‘Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad’ ran the last privately operated passenger train-service – the Rio Grande Zephyr between Denver and Ogden – until 1983. Today, AMTRAK operates 374 trains on over 31,000 miles of track, connecting about 900 destinations across some 46 states and three Canadian provinces. In 2012 AMTRAK served 31.2 million passengers. This is a mere fraction of the likely guesstimated traffic that would exist if more rail-options were available to schedules, interconnectedness and ticket-cost that would match prevailing needs - particularly for intra-state passenger rail-service.

**- 2.1.b. ‘Chicken-&-Egg’ Challenge: Public Cost and likely Economic Development Benefits versus Potential Passenger-Rail Demands:**

Personal mobility by foot, bicycle, motorcycle, cars, street-cars, buses, commuter-trains, planes, plus ferries has

grown massively over time, with most people taking for granted the right and plausible economics to travel at will – distances depending. However, while the US freight-railroad system is the most capable in the world, passenger-service in passenger-numbers travel market-share and average speed compares poorly with well-established rail-systems in Europe and Asia. What unites all the world's leading rail-systems is the persistent fact that *on national average just about all passenger-service has to be subsidized*. This is justified by passenger rail-travel related indirect economic development such supporting commuting to work, direct savings from not having to expand on other modes of travel – such as building wider freeways, more airports, bigger bridges, etc. -, or even having to cut new corridors of transportation with its massive political, fiscal, legal, ecological, and long-term maintenance challenges.

For WS-DOT and this Rail-Plan this has meant across recent decades the incremental leveraging of

- active-duty extant infrastructure by introduction of new through-put efficiency-increasing technology, such as the light-weight Talgo-trains,
- refurbishing and upgrading older under-performing traffic-corridors – well underway e.g. in the I-5 railroad-corridor -
- and
- occasional re-activating recently- or long-defunct 'right-of-ways'.

The point has been to gradually build public interest and then (hopefully) embrace of this (reintroduced) option for local and regional travel in the context of other more local means of public transportation. Many of these WS-DOT rail-infrastructure enhancements were, are, and will continue to be fairly low-risk localized improvements, ranging from basic repairs to tracks, bridges, underpasses etc., over straightening and upgrading certain routes for greater passenger-comfort and higher speed schedules, introduction of WiFi, all the way to the acquisition of modern passenger-cars and locomotives for comfort, reliability, and higher average speeds.

If anything, time has been on the side of this step-by-step approach, with the public acquiring increasing degrees of 'literacy' in matters personal –time-economics of travel i.e. doing professional reading on the train to work, and of course the ecology of travel and thus impact of personal choices upon the environment, with train-travel typically understood to be amongst the most favorable modes of travel, whether locally, regionally, or long-distance.

In many ways, a good part of the chicken-&-egg conundrum has already been addressed with this gradual growth of rail-opportunities and the public's increasing use of them.

#### - 2.1.c. Lessons from the I-5 Corridor and the Cascade Tunnel Situation: Freight-Weight versus People-Speed

The I-5 Corridor between Vancouver, BC, Seattle, Portland and Eugene features both challenges and a growing range of solutions to the fundamental differences between Freight and People on rails:

- Freight-movement usually requires steady moderate-speed access to the given stretch of tracks to move its heavy loads with least losses from stopping and running, often using long trains, with freight-rail thus preempting much of the track longer due to slower speed and much larger 'foot-print';
- Passenger-movement contrast with the need for substantially higher-speed but quite frequently interrupted by scheduled stops in respective communities, with extended periods of little- to zero-traffic overnight.

WS-DOT efforts at straightening trackage for higher-speed varying-density passenger-rail use will always have to co-exist with the 'neighboring' heavy-weight lower-to-medium-speed freight operations. On an hourly basis for likely around 16 hours every day, careful coordination between moderate-speed freight- and higher-speed passenger-trains is necessary, likely limiting long-term the maximum attainable passenger-train speeds, unless a separate 'High-Speed' Right of Way were developed.

Apart from that coordination-effort, another way to maximize overall average passenger-train speed is the employment of lighter-weight trains that allow more rapid acceleration after each stop and less energy-wasteful deceleration.

Cascade Tunnel in its current situation is perhaps one of the most poignant examples of serious impact upon

Passenger-rail operations. Its increasing congestion by slow-moving, very long trains over mostly single-track rail would make any routine swift passenger-train passage very hard to 'coordinate' indeed. At this point, only a single passenger-train per day - the Empire Builder from Chicago – is inserted into that slower-moving procession of heavy freight-operation. Routinely sending multiple intra-state passenger-trains during multiple peak-hours per day from Spokane via Wenatchee to Seattle would likely result in much slower actual passenger-train average speeds than technologically otherwise readily available.

Both cases will see improvements, particularly across Cascade if DUAL-MODE 'Cascade Locos' are introduced to speed up the actual tunnel-traffic, likely opening up several 'windows' across the day to allow insertion and hopefully reasonably faster movement of passenger-trains between the heavy-freight trains.

Of course, a lot of that would depend upon the capacity of the 50-100miles either side of Cascade to actually allow maximization of faster passenger train-sets. And short of double- and triple-tracking such a corridor, those opportunities may remain physically quite limited, assuming Cascade Tunnel traffic-management would allow the more frequent routine intrusion of shorter, lighter, faster trains. And this strongly suggests exploring plausible options to *segregate trans-Cascades freight-rail traffic from emerging passenger-rail traffic!*

#### - 2. 1.d. Pending Federal Railroad Administration Acceptance of European lighter-weight Fast Passenger-Trains by 2015

Due to many exceedingly stringent crash-performance related restrictions by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), this prevented the introduction of lighter-weight, much more efficient European passenger-trains. Europe has always been a fertile market for the development of a rich range of propulsion-concepts, drive-train geometries and relative evolution of passenger-comforts. For example, modern high-strength light-weight composites have been successfully used without any degradation in rail-traffic safety. Routine 180-200mph-based train-scheduling (on usually dedicated tracks!) has indeed come to depend on the lighter-weight/high-horsepower formula. And to use much older more curvy trackage to greater effectiveness, a broad variety of 'Pendolino'-type tilting trains have come to offer up to 30% higher average speeds than previously safely attainable,

Fortunately, as announced late October 2013, the FRA has revised its respective package of regulation – with some dating back to the 1920s – now deemed too restrictive and an obstacle to higher passenger-train-efficiencies. By 2015 many European models may become available for American transportation planners to consider the integration of in their national-, regional- and state-wide planning, such as WS-DOT around Washington's particular infrastructure, topography, weather, population-centers, industry and respective rail-needs. And with advanced passenger-train technology becoming available, a policy of 'Segregation' of faster-&-lighter passenger trains from heavy-&-longer-&-slower freight-trains will become even more desirable – whenever fiscally and operationally feasible.

#### - 2.1.e. Why a "Symbiotic" Relationship ?

There would have been no passenger-trains without freight-trains, and in some cases vice versa, no doubt. Today, active-duty right-of-ways must be shared by both in whatever relative balance of competing demands.

However, as proposed here, technological opportunities on the freight-operational side via DUAL-MODE locomotives will directly open up opportunities for passenger-rail operations as well. And those will in turn actually come to (again) benefit freight-rail efficiencies as well. As WS-DOT long-term planning has and will, this package here of 'Two Policies' depends upon this symbiotic relationship, including the further development of public- next to private ownership of rail-capabilities. Leveraging technological and mostly extant infrastructural opportunities will boost the WA rail-system's growth in performance and broader-spectrum services on offer. Symbiosis along with optional Segregation will increasingly be co-drivers of WS-DOT rail-policies, with a varying case-by-case analytic-balance of both. Much of the following proposals reflect this growing reality.

**2.2. 'Smart' 'Symbiotic' Rail-Development Policies in an Age of Fiscal Austerity – One Sequence of mutually-reinforcing Initiatives in Six Stages**

After WS-DOT freight-related initiatives such as the 'Grain-Train' or the 'Eastern Washington Gateway Railroad', the I-5 passenger-rail efforts, it would seem prudent to continue WS-DOT's incremental approach to gradually have rail absorb more of personal transportation-demands as well. 'Smart' use of limited fiscal resources must continue to drive rail-development policies. The proposal to introduce DUAL-MODE locomotives is intended to be one such example, as it would be a *catalyst for a whole range of subsequent other lower-cost/higher-returns opportunities*. Policy #2 can likely only be pursued by a steady sequence of such initiatives. In fact, Policy #1 is more or less a direct pre-condition to the subsequent incremental improvements to the state's freight and passenger rail-infrastructure.

Here what could be one 'Schedule' of 'Stages' to both upgrade freight-rail capacities and nurture and grow trans-Cascades passenger-service:

**- STAGE 1. Dual-Mode Diesels and limited tunnel-related Electrification for BNSF heavy-freight use through CASCADE-TUNNEL**

This would be *all* on BNSF-budget as part of their routine locomotive acquisition-program. Cascade is part of the BNSF right-of-way, and BNSF has a strong interest in maximizing that major freight-corridor's mid-to-long-term performance. As appropriate, WS-DOT could help on selected 'down-stream detailing'. However WS-DOT and Federal funding would partake in project 2.2.b..

**- STAGE 2. STAMPEDE TUNNEL 'Double-High' capacity Carve-Out**

With Cascade Tunnel-capacity upgraded under STAGE 1. to multiples of its current capability, it could temporarily absorb now-Stampede-bound freight-traffic. Thus BNSF's Stampede Tunnel could be temporarily shut down for a *Major Capabilities Upgrade* following Cascade Tunnel's example. With WS-DOT and Federal fiscal participation, using a *high-intensity* construction-approach from both ends of the 1.86 mile tunnel would come enable Stampede to fully support full-scale 'double-high' container traffic along with DUAL-MODE locomotive-service. Thus prepared - and depending upon 'down-stream' supporting infrastructure - Stampede Tunnel could in an emergency/catastrophe carry much of Cascade Tunnel's traffic.

**- STAGE 3. With WS-DOT and Federal stake in the upgraded tunnel, Priority-Usage of Stampede for dedicated Cross-Cascades Passenger-Train Usage (80-90%) over mostly (inherently lower volume) Intra-State Freight-Service (20-10%)**

**- 3.a. Seattle to Ellensburg Commuter-Rail Service:**

The extant track would now allow opening up of a Seattle to Ellensburg Commuter-Rail Service, tying both regions closer together with corresponding economic development along that corridor on both sides of the mountains. Based on DUAL-MODE 'quiet' locomotives and with double-high tunnel capability, Stampede Tunnel could accept high passenger cars such as the 130+seater Double-Deckers common in many Commuter-Rail services, with one 8-car train able to haul over 1000 passengers across Stampede on selected occasions, with that hardware rated at over 100mph, likely requiring two locomotives to maintain higher speeds uphill.

**- 3.b. Seattle to Tri-Cities Passenger-Service:**

This would then invite exploring demands for a Seattle to Yakima, the Tri-Cities Richland, Pasco Kennewick , and Walla-Walla Passenger-Rail service.  
Interestingly enough, certain sections of a parallel set of rails between Benton City and just about Zillah still exist, with a full right-of-way once extending up to Parker, where the active BNSF-line and I-82 run though the gap below Union Gap and then Yakima.

**- 3.c. Intra-State Freight-Trains Corridor:**

Under this rail-traffic-policy, Stampede would become the primary route for intra-state Class-2 and low-to moderate volume freight-trains, in the past often disadvantaged by both access and cost on the Cascade-Tunnel Corridor.

**- 3.d. Emergency-Only Class-1 Heavy-Freight-Rail Capability:**

As stated earlier, upgraded to double-stack height and electric train-power, Stampede Tunnel could serve as a detour on an emergency-only basis by full-size Class-1 freight trains.

**- 3.e. Stampede-Corridor Rail-Based Tourism:**

With routine multiple daily (commuter) passenger-rail connections between Seattle/I-5 Rail-Corridor and Ellensburg (and further east/south-east) new rail-based year-round tourism would allow 'car-less' access to Kittitas Valley, Ellensburg CWU and its Annual Rodeo, the 'Three Lakes District' of Keechelus Lake, Kachess Lake, Cle Elum Lake, with Easton becoming the hub for locals, such as up to Snoqualmie Ski-Area in winter or the Pacific Crest Trail in summer.

**- 3.f. A 'Local' from Pasco to Lewiston/Clarkston:**

With a link from the Tri-Cities to Puget Sound, and to Spokane (?), a single-car rail-car could connect the South-Eastern most communities.

*STAGE 4. Exploration of reconstructing the (ex-) Milwaukee Railroad Corridor – now known as the 'John Wayne Iron Horse Trail' - east of Ellensburg to connect to Lind via Warden, Othello, Crab-Creek, Beverly-Bridge across the Columbia River and Kittitas to specifications matching all Classes of freight railroads and passenger-service. A fair bit of it would be WS-DOT owned to favor Intra-state rail-interests.*

This would likely be the most ambitious project of all those proposed here – however much, much more modest than cutting some new 'high-speed' rail-line across the country, with massive legal and political challenges before the sobering/prohibitive fiscal ones emerge.

With Stampede upgraded, and passenger-rail to Ellensburg, this new (old) 'corridor' would take advantage of existing trackage between Royal City, Othello and Warden, and between Lind and Spokane. The currently 'abandoned' old right-of-ways' still exist in their basic civil engineering contours, as engineered over 100 years ago, but without rails, missing some small bridges, but otherwise reasonably well intact – walkable ! - , and after a thorough survey (!) and local repairs/replacements essentially 'ready' to receive tracks and safety-equipment again. No fundamentally new rail-corridor would need engineering, with land-purchases/-trades/-taking etc. and a whole lot additional politics necessary.

A number of further Intra- and Interstate rail-capacity-improvements would open up:

**- 4.a. Optional AMTRAK 'Empire Builder' Service via Stampede:**

Movement of all of east-west Seattle-Spokane Inter-States AMTRAK traffic to Stampede for best passenger-traffic-correct scheduling – versus freight-dictated 'slotting' amongst slow-&-long haulers !

Between Spokane, Marshall, Cheney Lind, Othello, Beverly and Ellensburg this may achieve higher average speeds across a less congested route, plus the good match with speed-matching passenger-service across the Stampede-

Tunnel Corridor from Ellensburg to Auburn.

- 4.b. Intra-State Freight-Rail link for the shortest route over the Cascades, to more favorable scheduling-terms and costs.

- *STAGE 5. With the Milwaukee Corridor in limited parts reestablished, the need for routine or intermittent connection between Seattle/Ellensburg with Washington State University in Pullman would be worthy of exploration. The Community hosting the second largest State University with 25,000 students has No High-Capacity High-Safety Public Transportation Access-Route.*

This route would be based on a mix of active (moderate mileage) Class-1 and lower types of lines, some mileage of only recently-abandoned right-of-ways' such as between Hooper Junction and Kahlotus, and one much older abandoned stretch between Kahlotus and Connell. However 'ambitious' this might seem, the actual mileage involved is limited, with the communities in question already part of mostly active north-south rail-corridors already, possibly appreciating the opportunity to attract east-west rail-based tourism to the Palouse.

Whether as intermittent WSU-schedule-driven or more regular service, this would be a major contribution to road-safety headed towards Central Washington and Puget-Sound. If 8 double-decker passenger cars can haul over 1000 folks, 'WAZZU-Specials' could be coupled to run 16 cars from King Street Station to bring 2000 students to Pullman per train; this is a length not uncommon on certain AMTRAK routes. Here it would take many cars and their young drivers off the road across all seasons and weather-conditions. It could even be WSU-policy to encourage particularly Freshmen to come to Pullman by train. Special 'WSU-Student-Rates' (w/ ID) would attract older miserly students to that option as well.

Experience via online booking would allow on-demand coupling of respective numbers of cars and locomotives to match the given traffic out of either terminus.

- *STAGE 6. Should, against expectations, both Cascade and Stampede-Tunnels emerge to be in serious freight-rail demand, the option exists to reopen Snoqualmie Tunnel for rail-service as the eventually 100% dedicated fully-WS-DOT-owned Passenger-Only Trans-Cascades Corrido. It would recycle the Milwaukee Right-of-way from Ellensburg west to Easton and then on to Hyak and the tunnel, with 100% electrified 'Quiet-Drive' western-slope*

- a. via Cedar River corridor to either BNSF to Auburn, before hard right turn up the I-5 rail-corridor,  
- b. via Cedar River corridor to Maple Valley and Renton for least dependence of I-5 rail-corridor, and to connect those communities to electric-quiet commuter-rail service.

Optional pre-opening punch-out to 'double-stack' duty is conceivable to accept in preparation for respective developments in higher volume shorter-length passenger-transport, matching smaller station platforms, and shorter sidings.

**Progressively Growing List of State-Rail Planning-Results/Policy-Accomplishments:**

- 1. Stevens Pass/'Cascade' Tunnel = 100% Class-1 uninterrupted and optimized freight-traffic due to DUAL-MODE locomotive usage.

- 2. Stampede Tunnel = Upgraded to full height and optimized for 80+% passenger and 20% Intra-State Freight-Traffic.

- 3. Optionally ('in reserve') Snoqualmie = 100% Passenger-Rail Only corridor optimized for highest attainable speed and frequency for local, intra-state and inter-state passenger-service.

- 4. Significant alleviation of economic and capacities-challenges not just for Inter-State heavy-weight Class-1 freight-operations, but particularly well-supported intra-state-based Class-2 freight operations.

- 5. Open-ended intra-state passenger-train capacities-evolution to enhance economic development, feeding rail-based commuters in any direction, almost unaffected by weather-related degradations of commuting, thus with significant reduction of road-accident-potential. All with a growing network of Park-&-Ride Locations and local feeder-services to the train-station.

- 6. Significant boosting of Intra-State Tourism-traffic with this re-introduction of respective rail-based local, regional, intra-state and inter-state opportunities lost so many decades ago.

----- Offered by Susanne Altenburger and Erin Condit -----

Susanne Altenburger  
66 Atlantic Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930-1627  
[Susannealtenburger@comcast.net](mailto:Susannealtenburger@comcast.net)

Erin Condit  
215 E9th  
Ellensburg, WA 98926  
or  
11536 Riviera Place NE  
Seattle, WA 98125  
[econdit@aol.com](mailto:econdit@aol.com)

## Indisputable Northwest High Speed Rail

The following plan and proposal is the work of private US citizens which take the ethics and civic duty sincerely.

To our fellow citizens

To the government of the State of Oregon

To the government of the State of Washington

To the government of BC Canada

So we are talking and planning about High Speed Passenger Rail here in the Northwest.  
(NW)

Now, let us look at the current rail routes and the possible upgrades for rail here in the Northwest to provide real high speed rail HSR or CHSR for the Cascadia corridor.

Our freight rail corridors were built around the late 1800<sup>s</sup>. Those corridors are curve rich and have at some places considerable steep grades. At that time we did not have construction machinery as we do today, i.e. tunnel boring (TBM) machines and other modern equipment. We did not have diesel or electric propelled trains, but they were steam and needed water along the routes.

In order to bring real high speed rail in to our NW corridor we need to consider a new systems route with the shortest mile distance between the points and the best achievable grades and curve radiuses (curve degrees), we call this the Cascadia High Speed Rail (CHSR) corridor. This new corridor is multiple, that means we need to consider a variety of possible route corridor option layouts.

By proposal of "the visionary's" in the State of Oregon is, we would use the I-5 corridor from Eugene to Tualatin OR, see partial drawings available for the public (HSR Eugene\_04) and then go via a tunnel to just south of the Ross Island Bridge in Portland OR, see the drawings under (HSR RQ South\_03) and then go to the Rose Quarter and on to Vancouver WA via a new Multi-Modal Bridge see partial drawings (HSR PP Final\_04). The Oregon Rose Quarter will receive a grand redo to modernize the current situation in to a prosperous and well-functioning transit hub to accommodate the anticipated CHSR and commuter traffic from the north and the south. Provisions for excellent and effective, "low emission producing", people moving is highly desired.

The new proposed Multi-Modal (M-M) Bridge will convey freight rail, commuter rail, CHSR and motor traffic. This new bridge will reduce motor traffic on the existing I-5 bridge and reduce bottleneck conditions in the Portland I-5 sector were we cannot widen the existing bottleneck scenario south of the I-5 bridge. Rail and motor traffic across the Columbia River will also benefit with this new (M-M) bridge since we can allow through traffic in an unimpeded manner to conduct transits. No lift or swing bridge closures! In addition, during an eventual overhaul of the current BNSF rail Bridge we will still have rail access for north and south rail traffic.

Next, along the Washington State Rail Route we have the BNSF rail right of way (ROW), wide enough to run four rail tracks. Along this BNSF ROW we would by proposal of the CHSR use some segments of the BNSF ROW as shown on the proposed drawings, see (WA HSR\_2013\_05) with installation of a third track. This third track would then be electrified. Trains in this segment would be of the dual power mode, "available on the market, i.e. by Talgo". That means a combination of diesel and electric in the same trains consist, where and when available the catenary electrical power will work as a boosting power to propel the trains at HSR speed. Upon completion of the whole corridor will then run on electrical power in its entire length.

However by design at other sections we would be away from the BNSF ROW freight rail corridor and therefore have a fully independent, grade separated and already electrified CHSR corridor.

The ultimate goal is; zero grade crossings for the CHSR and in some sections for the BNSF as well (in the built-up triple tracked corridor). [See Over Passes] Ultimately, this will bring us to a fully and achievable electrified CHSR route system for the total NW corridor. This CHSR route proposal is an investment worth while over the long range for our people residing here in our area, and for businesses and visitors, the economic driver. The desired goals are energy conservation by the application off regenerative braking, reduction off fossil fuel consumption, reduction off the carbon foot print and speedy pleasant people moving's.

The reduction of the carbon footprint, the reduction of fossil energy use, the reduction of air loading by pollutants will help us to address the current environmental conditions. This investment will provide employment for our people to produce results for the overall common good. This investment will support the sustainability and the correct stewardship as it is meant to be for mankind. Let us consider this!

The incremental method to construct the CHSR.

Sequence off construction of the CHSR, 1<sup>st</sup> we would do the Columbia River crossing to the Rose Quarter as illustrated in the partial public available drawings (HSR PP Final\_04) other drawing are available. 2<sup>nd</sup> in Washington we may start to triple track along the BNSF corridor as shown in drawings (WA HSR\_2003\_5). 3<sup>rd</sup> we may then expand the route line to Tualatin OR in Oregon, and in Washington, Lakewood to Olympia-Lacey WA. By doing this we will now provide track corridors to not just accompany CHSR but also commuter rail service in the respective corridor sections, "all electrified". 4<sup>th</sup> we will expand the corridor as shown in the drawings given under the web sites proposal to complete the whole NW CHSR corridor. It is important that we utilize this new ROW and tracks segments to the fullest extent for economic reasons and the provisions for top notch service to the people moving aspect as well as allowing rail freight to do their work. Through trains from Vancouver BC to Eugene OR and visa verse would have 1<sup>st</sup> and coach class plus dining and snack car provisions. Sleeper cars would not be needed on the CHSR for connections to and from the Amtrak Coast Starlight Train in Eugene OR due to the connecting HSR speed...

We must acknowledge that by following in certain freight rail ROWs the real HSR can never be attained and therefor the effective people moving and the upcoming need for high capacity service not either. After all, the NW corridor is a federally designated High Speed

Rail Corridor and should therefore be treated, planned for the long range and fulfilled accordingly and not something else. We should not spend capital for line sections which never can achieve the end goal – but in the NW case capital investments should go according to the CHSR visionary master plan! A trip from Seattle to Portland would take 1Hr and 45 minutes with the Inter-City Express (ICE) The ICE would only stop in Seattle, Tacoma and Olympia-Lacey on the run to Portland and then become an Inter-City (IC) to Eugene and vice versa. The IC Trains stops would be Seattle, Sea-Tac, Tacoma, Lakewood, Olympia-Lacey, Centralia, Kelso, Vancouver, Portland, Tualatin, Salem, Albany, and Eugene and vice versa. The ICEs would only run as justified by the markets demand, but as speed, connections and frequency's increase, so will the ridership.

Commuter service for the greater Portland area would have commuter route stops in Vancouver, Rose Quarter, OMSI, Tualatin and Woodburn with possible extensions south and north in upcoming time...

In Seattle, it will be for the people off greater Seattle to decide the stops. But this CHSR corridor will provide off freight rail track ways for the Seattle area as well.

More so, we also must address people transit connections to and from outlying areas. Example; Olympia-Lacey WA would have scheduled express "limited stops" Busses to connect on time with the CHSR and commuter Trains from/to Olympia points as well as the planned greater Seattle commuter network running on the now, by design, mostly independent corridor. Such will allow passenger collection and distribution in its respective region and provide speedy transit between the respective points, "the transit mode integration" transit center to transit center (TC). The same would be in Oregon, where we would provide good and timely connections i.e. from the new CHSR Rose Quarter Station to say Astoria and the coastal region and back as well as to other points. The Astoria connection could also go via CHSR to Kelso WA and then from there by Bus to Astoria and vice versa, all by it missing St. Helens OR. Similar from Albany CHSR Station to Corvallis (TC) via I-5 and (HWY 34) and on to Newport and so forth... All this will help us to conserve energy and also help the environment as well as provide pleasant, relaxing quick trips for business and holyday traveling. The re-education of people moving and therefore the full support by the fellow citizen are needed to accomplish this grand master plan!

Estimated time to accomplish this whole corridors system is 20 years ±. Lots of work for our regional people and with rewards!

Not done as off this time is the planning for the Tacoma/Seattle section and the Seattle/Vancouver BC route, I will work on this during the winter of 2013/2014...

Rudy Niederer

Perkins Niederer & Associates

Please visit the web site for additional information or contact the visionaries.

[cascadiahighspeedrail.org](http://cascadiahighspeedrail.org)

Letter to Kerri Woehler, State Rail Plan Comments  
December 2, 2013



December 2, 2013

Kerri Woehler

Planning and Strategic Assessment Manager, WSDOT Rail Office

Washington State Rail Office

Kerri,

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the Washington State Rail Plan. The efficient movement of freight rail is critical to the region's economic competitiveness and to the Port of Seattle's economic mission. The Port appreciates the efforts of WSDOT to include the interests of Washington container ports by inviting a Port of Seattle staff member onto the project's Stakeholder's Advisory Committee. As a Stakeholder member, I appreciated the effort WSDOT staff did in reaching out to stakeholders throughout the state to gather their varied input.

The draft Plan clearly describes the existing rail network and its importance to the Washington State Economy. In addition, the Plan acknowledges the important role that Washington ports play as international gateways for products to and from the USA. The Washington state rail network is intricate and complex and must serve a variety of interests to meet the needs of many. The system is further complicated by the mix of private and public ownership of rail lines. For this reason, it is important that the state take a key role in understanding the capacity and condition of the rail system and partner with the railroads to keep the private and public rail lines operating efficiently and safely.

While the Plan describes the potential growth in commodity movement and pinpoints where capacity will be limited in 2030, the Plan does not spend time evaluating solutions to determine if specific projects will guarantee needed capacity. The Plan assumes that the Class 1 railroads will make capacity or operational improvements when and where they're needed. Historically, this type of planning is how rail investments have been made in Washington State, but the Port hopes that recent coalition efforts will improve the

1

Letter to Kerri Woehler, State Rail Plan Comments  
December 2, 2013

coordination and implementation of new facilities. We hope that the next update can do a more complete analysis of the benefits of future projects.

One of the key goals of the Plan was to examine the role of WSDOT in the statewide rail system, and the Stakeholder Advisory Committee agreed and supported a major role for WSDOT. That role includes monitoring the rail system's capacity, preserving and maintaining public short lines, seeking funding opportunities, directing state grants and loans and fostering communications between communities and rail lines when issues arise. The Port concurs that WSDOT should play a major role in overseeing the rail system and the plan's recommendations support that need.

While the Port of Seattle and the other container ports have a strong interest in freight rail, we do understand the importance of moving passengers on rail as well as goods. To do this successfully, it's important that investments are made to the rail network to accommodate the growing passenger rail market as new service comes on board. The Port strongly recommends that funds paid for passenger rail commuter access go to improve the capacity and efficiency of the local rail system where needed.

The Port of Seattle also appreciates the Plan's mention of the importance of preserving existing rail capacity and infrastructure. In Need A2 (pg. 88), the Plan includes a reference to the 2008 Container Ports Initiative which declares key freight transportation corridors serving qualifying marine ports to be "transportation facilities and services of statewide significance." The Container Port's Initiative was created by Governor Gregoire to support investment in rail and ports and to protect key industrial lands near the ports. The Port of Seattle would like the Plan go a bit further in highlighting the need to protect industrial zoned lands near rail and port facilities from non-industrial uses and gentrification. In July, 2012, the Puget Sound Regional Council adopted an updated Regional Economic Strategy which included Strategy 4.6 calling for preservation and protection of industrial and military lands from encroachment and incompatible uses in order to support the economy's industrial base.

Attached also is a separate document with rail projects which the Port would like to include on the State Rail Plan project list. These projects have been listed in previous plans or on the Port of Seattle's plan to expand the Port's TEU capacity to 3.5 million. The seven-rail projects, submitted earlier but not included in the current draft, include:

- Stampede Pass
- Ellensburg to Lind Cut-Off
- Green River Lead tracks
- Sumner Connection

2

Letter to Kerri Woehler, State Rail Plan Comments  
December 2, 2013

- Duwamish Corridor Concept
- Tukwila-Tacoma Track Improvements
- Duwamish/SoDo Grade Separation(s)

For your reference, I have attached the Port of Seattle's Preparing for Growth Matrix.

Finally, I am including some minor grammar edits:

**Page 4, 1.3 Outreach:** The Plan says that there will be a meeting in Centralia on September 30, 2013. This will be out of date when the final Plan is printed.

**Pages 31, 83 and 101:** Chapter Titles readability would be improved if the second line of text was lined up directly under the first line of text.

**Page 39:** In Freight Movement Definition's box: Intrastate: Remove "is" from first sentence.

Again, thanks for the opportunity to comment on the Washington State Rail Plan Public Review Draft.

Sincerely,



Dan Burke,

Program Lead Planner

Port of Seattle

206-787-3376



ALASKA CALIFORNIA FLORIDA MID-PACIFIC NORTHEAST NORTHERN ROCKIES  
NORTHWEST ROCKY MOUNTAIN WASHINGTON, D.C. INTERNATIONAL

December 2, 2013

*Via Email*  
*Kerri.Woehler@wsdot.wa.gov*  
*rail@wsdot.wa.gov*

Kerri Woehler  
Program Manager  
Washington State Dep't of Transportation  
310 Maple Park Avenue S.E.  
P.O. Box 47300  
Olympia, WA 98504-7300

Re: Comments on Washington State Department of Transportation Draft Rail Plan

Dear Ms. Woehler:

I am writing on behalf of Climate Solutions, Sierra Club, Washington Environmental Council, Friends of Columbia Gorge, and Columbia Riverkeeper to offer comment on the Washington State Department of Transportation ("WSDOT") Draft Rail Plan. The undersigned organizations have played a leading role in promoting a broad public conversation about the adverse impacts of proposed coal export terminals in Washington State that would transport Powder River Basin ("PRB") coal through the state, including impacts to the state rail system. Also of concern to many groups are proposals that would increase the number of crude-by-rail projects on railways in Washington to new or expanded terminals or refineries. Please include these comments in the official agency record for this plan.

We have three concerns with WSDOT's draft rail plan. All three issues relate to how the draft rail plan treats potential increases in coal-related rail traffic that would be caused by construction of the proposed coal export terminals. These issues are of critical public concern because it is likely that the state rail plan will perform an important function serving as a comparative baseline against which the impacts of the proposed coal terminals will be measured. We appreciate WSDOT's commitment to not include the proposed terminal traffic in its forecast projections and believe that this is the correct approach for contingent and controversial projects like the three proposed coal terminals, and crude-by-rail projects, currently under review. However, there are areas where this commitment could be sharpened and made more explicit.

NORTHWEST OFFICE 705 SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 203 SEATTLE, WA 98104

T: 206.343.7340 F: 206.343.1526 NWOFFICE@EARTHJUSTICE.ORG WWW.EARTHJUSTICE.ORG

Kerri Woehler  
December 2, 2013  
Page 2

BNSF railway has sought to make the case that the rail-related impacts associated with the coal export terminals are either insignificant (because, in their view the coal trains would travel through Washington to Canadian terminals if the Washington terminals are not built) or not measurable (because freight volumes are subject to multiple variables). *See, e.g.*, BNSF Comments on Gateway Pacific Terminal Project (Jan. 22, 2013).<sup>1</sup> We strongly disagree with their arguments but are very concerned that BNSF could exploit WSDOT's rail planning process—which is highly technical, as well as unknown to many citizens who follow the coal terminal debate—to insert seemingly innocuous language in the state rail plan that will support its position in future discussions about the terminals, including potential litigation around the ongoing environmental analyses for the projects.

In one of the technical notes accompanying the draft plan—which we are surprised to see are not available on the WSDOT website—there is language that seems to support BNSF's position that coal will travel through Washington with or without the ports. In Technical Note 4a accompanying the draft plan, the following statement appears:

Not included in the volume projections is any volume resulting from the development of new bulk export terminals in the Pacific Northwest. These developments could add additional daily train traffic over and above what is shown in this memo. For example, the Gateway Pacific Terminal in Bellingham is projected to increase by nine trains per day on the Seattle to Everett track segment (each one arriving full and leaving empty for the return trip). BNSF traffic will flow through Washington state irrespective of whether the terminal(s) are located in Washington, Oregon or British Columbia. If handled by UP, traffic destined for export terminals in Washington and British Columbia would travel through Washington state.

*Id.* at 5-6 (emphasis added). To the extent that this statement can be read to support the claim that the amount of traffic will remain unchanged without the Washington projects because of Canadian ports, that is simply incorrect and needs to be revised. As demonstrated by Seattle's Sightline Institute, the Canadian coal terminals operate at full capacity and do not have room for any additional export volumes from the PRB at this time.<sup>2</sup> Some of the terminals have proposed expansions that could result in increased volumes in the future, but those terminals are facing the same broad public opposition as the terminals in Washington, as well as poor market conditions that make expansion unlikely at this time. Additionally, many market experts believe that expansions in Canadian coal terminals would be reserved for higher value Canadian

<sup>1</sup> Available at [http://scopingcomments.eisgatewaypacificwa.gov/Written\\_Comments/attachments/pdfs/BNSF%20Railway\\_Scoping%20Letter.pdf](http://scopingcomments.eisgatewaypacificwa.gov/Written_Comments/attachments/pdfs/BNSF%20Railway_Scoping%20Letter.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://daily.sightline.org/2013/02/20/no-the-coal-will-not-just-go-to-canada-episode-9274/>.

Kerri Woehler  
December 2, 2013  
Page 3

metallurgical coal, rather than U.S. PRB thermal coal that would have to travel through Washington state. Finally, whether or not any U.S. coal exported from Canada would travel through Washington remains uncertain—other rail routes that travel North through Montana directly into Canada may be available.

Accordingly, while terminal proponents like to repeatedly claim that coal trains “will come anyway” with or without the terminals, there has been absolutely no evidence to support the claim. We ask that you excise this language and make abundantly clear in your analysis that projected freight volumes do not include any new coal terminal, or significant expansion of an existing coal terminal, in Washington, Oregon, or British Columbia.

Second, the draft plan describes how projected increases in freight volumes over coming decades will push statewide rail use past capacity in many areas—in some places, significantly so. Included in the report is the occasional mention that if volumes are higher than anticipated—e.g., if the coal export terminals are built—then “projected volumes could be reached sooner.” Draft Plan at 36. This seemingly casual line, while technically accurate, masks very important issues. By overwhelming system capacity in a few years rather than a few decades, key concerns identified in the Plan will be greatly exacerbated. Those concerns include threats to time-critical intermodal traffic, affecting the competitiveness of Washington ports, and the major unfunded fiscal impacts on rail corridor communities (for critical mitigation like grade separated crossings). The fact that projected volumes will be reached decades ahead of what is anticipated carries significant implications that should, at a minimum, be disclosed with direction for greater specific study in the terminal EIS processes.

Third, the draft report estimates that 11 million tons of coal will be coming into the state (a near-doubling of current volumes) by 2035. We understand from conversations with you and other WSDOT staff that the Plan uses fairly crude forecasts using national data to determine an overall freight forecast. However, there is no reason to include projections that are simply wrong—as Technical Note 4a concedes, the coal forecast does not include the planned closure of the only two coal-fired power plants in Oregon and Washington during the same time period. Once these power plants close in 2020, coal volumes in the state will dramatically decrease. And, since there is currently no coal export capacity in either Washington or Oregon, there should be no coal moving into the state for that purpose either. Simply put, by 2035, there should be virtually no inbound coal volumes, and at most only a relatively small volume of continued movement of coal through the state to Canada. We ask that this be corrected in the final report.

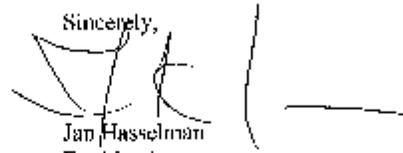
In closing, we appreciate WSDOT’s commitment to ensuring that potential increases in freight volumes associated with the proposed coal export terminals are not included in its upcoming report. Given the high level of public interest and controversy around these terminals, we ask that WSDOT be particularly vigilant to ensuring that this commitment is carried through, and that the report does not inadvertently contain language that supports BNSF’s public positions

Kerri Wochler  
December 2, 2013  
Page 1

that these proposed terminals will have minimal, or difficult to assess, impacts to the state railway system. Moreover, to the extent that the final rail plan should not serve as a comparative baseline against which to compare the impacts of the proposed terminals, we ask that the report explain why this is so and offer suggestions for what additional data is needed in order to make such a comparison. We would be happy to continue working with you in this regard.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments on the state's Draft Rail Plan.

Sincerely,



Jan Hasselman  
Earthjustice  
705 Second Avenue, Suite 203  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 343-7340  
jhasselman@earthjustice.org

*On behalf of Climate Solutions, Sierra Club,  
Washington Environmental Council, Friends of  
Columbia Gorge, and Columbia Riverkeeper*



## City of Tukwila

6200 Southcenter Boulevard • Tukwila, Washington 98188

Jim Haggerton, Mayor

December 2, 2013

Ms. Lynn Peterson, Secretary of Transportation  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
PO Box 47316  
Olympia, Washington 98504-7316

**Subject: Draft Washington State Rail Plan Comments**

Ms. Peterson:

The City of Tukwila would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the Draft Washington State Rail Plan.

Tukwila is often referred to as a community at the crossroads, due to the span of transportation elements that pass through the City. Specifically, in regard to rail, the Class I mainline rail corridor that runs north-south along the western half of Washington State plays a significant role in economy, transportation, and livability of the City. Additionally, both freight and passenger rail operations occur within City boundaries. For example, Burlington Northern Santa Fe's (BNSF) South Seattle Intermodal Facility is located and operates in the City, and Sound Transit's Tukwila Longacres Station is the second highest passenger commuter rail stop on Sound Transit's south corridor and serves as an Amtrak intercity stop. Since the City of Renton shares a jurisdictional border with the City of Tukwila in relation to the Tukwila Longacres Station, the cities are working jointly to create major land use and infrastructure investments that support transit-oriented development and vehicular and non-motorized access to the Station. Tukwila's Southcenter Urban Center Plan also contains policy, capital investment proposals, and regulations that implement this vision of supportive land use and transportation investments. In order to improve accessibility between the Tukwila Longacres Station and the City's Urban Center, construction is planned for a non-motorized bridge which will connect the commuter rail station to the east and the Urban Center core (including the City's Transit Center) to the west.

After reviewing the Draft State Rail Plan, the City of Tukwila would like to submit the following comments:

- In Chapter 5.1 of the Draft Plan, the City supports the recommendations for the Rail Infrastructure and Service category. With respect to Recommendation #A3.1 on page 91, we would like to emphasize that the City wants to be involved in any discussions as well as review of service models that would change the frequency, impact, or accessibility of rail service at the Tukwila Longacres Station.

---

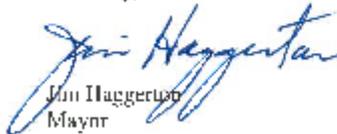
Phone: 206-433-1800 • City Hall fax: 206-433-1833 • [www.tukwilawa.gov](http://www.tukwilawa.gov)

Ms. Lynn Peterson  
December 3, 2013  
Page 2

- Also in Chapter 5 Section 5.1, we support Recommendation #A3.2 on page 92, regarding the proposed interim stop policy for Amtrak Cascade. While a formal policy is under review, the City of Tukwila would like to be a partner in its development.
- In Chapter 5, Section 5.2 concerning the Rail's Role in Economic Development, the City supports Recommendations #B1.1 (page 94), recognizing that BNSF's South Seattle Intermodal Facility located in Tukwila is an operations hub for trailers and containers with domestic origins and destinations.
- In direct relation to the above bullet point, the City also supports Recommendations #C2.1 and #C2.2 (pages 97-98). Due to the proximity of the Intermodal Facility's location to a residential neighborhood, facility operations have a direct impact onto the community, many of which are listed in Recommendation #C2.2.
- In regard to Appendix D: Illustrative Project List beginning on page 133, the City would recommend that the SW 27th/Strander Boulevard Extension project be added to the list of Intercity Passenger and Commuter Rail Projects under the planned projects section. This project includes construction of a railroad underpass, and will provide better cross-valley transportation access by extension of an arterial that connects the cities of Tukwila and Renton. The extension will connect Renton to the Tukwila Longacres Station (Sounder and Amtrak) and will provide an alternate truck route, removing 55,000 vehicles from nearby I-405 and SR-167 as well as 40% of the traffic on the parallel route of South 180<sup>th</sup> Street.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on Washington State Department of Transportation's planning efforts that guide and inform public investments and action on the State's rail system. We look forward to continued collaborative refinements and implementation.

Sincerely,



Jon Haggerton  
Mayor

CC: Joni Earl, Chief Executive Officer, Sound Transit  
Jay Covington, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Renton  
Colleen Weatherford, Director of Public Private Partnerships, BNSF



December 4, 2013

Ms. Kerri Woehler  
Rail Operations Program Manager  
WSDOT Rail Division  
PO Box 47407  
310 Maple Park Ave SE, Rm 3D3  
Olympia, WA 98504-7407

Subject: Washington State Rail Plan, Public Review Draft

Dear Ms. Woehler:

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is pleased to comment on the Washington State Rail Plan, Public Review Draft. We commend the State Department of Transportation's leadership in making this important effort to guide our transportation future.

SDOT participated in the open houses and scoping sessions at the outset of the planning process. Most recently, WSDOT generously made presentations to the Seattle Freight Advisory Board earlier this year and to SDOT staff in September.

The access provided by rail and other components of the transportation network is critical to the distribution of freight and the movement of intercity passengers. Seattle is an international gateway to many forms of transport. One of Seattle's advantages as an industrial center is access to diverse rail, waterborne, truck, and airborne freight shipping modes that converge in the city.

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan policies support continued operation of freight rail lines and intermodal yards that serve industrial properties and the Port of Seattle and that transport goods and services. Multi-modal connections among rail yards, industrial areas and regional roadways are also critical components of the Puget Sound's function as an international trade gateway.

Specific comments on the draft State Rail Plan are included below.

- In accordance with the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Transportation 2040 Plan, intermodal rail movements will be nearly four times greater in 2040 than they are today. This suggests that consideration should be given to facilities that connect rail yards ("first and last mile movements"), especially with respect to drayage activities. Therefore, the City supports recommendation #B1.1 that "the state should support efforts to identify those intermodal and multimodal connectors



Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 3800, PO Box 34996, Seattle, WA 98124-1996

Tel: (206) 684-ROAD Tel: (206) 684-5000 Fax: (206) 684-5180

Web: [www.seattle.gov/transportation](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation)

An equal opportunity employer. Accommodations for people with disabilities provided on request.

that provide first and last mile connectivity to business and locations that generate freight and passenger demand." The draft plan should also clarify that first and last mile connectivity for passenger rail includes connections to multi-modal travel options such as transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities within a reasonable walking distance.

- Efficient movement of containerized cargo shipments is critical to maintaining a healthy, vital economy in the region. Rail volumes and train lengths are anticipated to increase greatly by 2040, potentially increasing safety conflicts between modes – vehicles, trucks, buses, bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Increased rail traffic can also increase barrier to east/west movement and emergency response functions. Thus, improved safety and operations at rail crossings is of uttermost importance for the City.

In order to address these issues, the plan should include a more robust discussion of operational changes and infrastructure improvements intended to improve grade crossing controls, better coordinate rail/street traffic conditions, improve safety and reduce delay. Examples include advanced signal systems (pre-signals with interconnects) and dynamic variable message signs providing information regarding waiting times and redirecting roadway traffic from closed rail crossings to alternative routes. Opportunities to coordinate with local intelligent transportation system (ITS) improvements, such as "Seattle's Next Generation ITS," should also be discussed.

- Transportation 2040 policies encourage coordination of "regional planning with railroad capacity expansion plans, and support capacity expansion that is compatible with state, regional, and local plans." SDOT supports draft plan recommendation # A1.4 stating that "WSDOT should support rail stakeholders and metropolitan and regional transportation planning organizations to facilitate discussion and enhance communication" regarding future rail investments. We encourage WSDOT to directly extend an invitation to municipal governments so that local plans (e.g., Seattle's upcoming Freight Master Plan) can be considered as well.
- The draft plan references a proposed commuter rail project to increase rail speeds on the Ballard Bridge. The City would like to receive additional information on what process the state will undertake to increase these speeds. How will the public be involved? Will infrastructure improvements to the bridge and its approaches be necessary? What are the related safety and environmental impacts on adjacent land uses?
- Pages 50 to 53 of the draft plan discuss challenges of deferred maintenance and rail abandonment. Maintenance activities such as installation of new crossovers and switches, crossing signs and flashing lighting signals are important to maintain safety and operational conditions at at-grade street-controlled crossings and their adjacent approach streets. In addition, poor street pavement conditions result in

traffic delays and disruption to motor vehicles and bicycles crossing the tracks. Although the draft plan recognizes the importance of preserving existing rail capacity and infrastructure, it does not include a recommendation on how the State could work with local governments to ensure that maintenance activities are completed. Further, the draft plan should recognize problems of rail track abandonment and need for street maintenance, and suggest measures to provide financial relief to local governments to restore surface roadways. Generally, these are local streets that do not effectively compete for scarce local improvement funding.

- The draft plan (Recommendation #B1) recognizes the benefit of rail system connectivity to reduce business costs and associated impacts to roads, and proposes to develop a grade crossing management evaluation and prioritization. Transportation 2040 and the City's Transportation Strategic Plan support grade separation of key truck streets of heavily used rail crossings (e.g., Lander Street grade separation in the Duwamish Manufacturing Industrial Center, non motorized crossing of the BNSF mainline tracks along the Seattle Waterfront). The draft plans needs to provide further details on the development of the proposed evaluation and prioritization criteria, metrics to be used, and how local governments will be given the opportunity to participate in the process.
- The draft plan should acknowledge the proposal to increase rail freight traffic to transport coal across the Washington State and through Seattle. City of Seattle elected officials have expressed concern (Seattle Resolution # 31379) with potential increases in Puget Sound coal train volumes that would impact system capacity, reduce at-grade crossing capability, increase travel time for general traffic, transit, trucks and emergency services, and create potential negative impacts to community health and to the Earth's climate. In addition, the City urges thorough and continued review of those impacts in the separate processes being conducted by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Washington.

In closing, the City of Seattle is committed to ensure efficient rail freight and passenger mobility in city plans and infrastructure investments. If you have questions please contact Cristina VanValkenburgh at (206) 684-3649 ([cristina.vanvalkenburgh@seattle.gov](mailto:cristina.vanvalkenburgh@seattle.gov)) or Ron Borowski at 206/ 684-8370 ([ron.borowski@seattle.gov](mailto:ron.borowski@seattle.gov)).

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Tracy Krawczyk, Director  
Policy and Planning Division, SDOT



# City of Seattle

Mike McGinn, Mayor

## Seattle Freight Advisory Board

- Wesley Anderson, Chair
- Glenn Anderson
- Paul Brackley
- Katherine Coakley
- Deryn Finn
- Timothy Hill
- David Madsen
- Mike Shuster
- Robert Smith
- Caroline Williams

The Seattle Freight Advisory Board shall advise the City Council on the impact, and development of a freight and related freight system and on all matters related to freight and the impact that all such freight system have upon the freight system.

City Council Resolution  
31203

December 3, 2013

Kerri Woehler  
Planning and Strategic Assessment Manager, WSDOT Rail Office  
Washington State Rail Office

### Re: Seattle Freight Board Comment on State Rail Plan

Dear Ms. Woehler,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Washington State Rail Plan, and for your presentation to our Board in August. We appreciate your efforts to provide us with an early view of the plan and enable us to ask questions. For the members of Seattle's Freight Advisory Board, two issues are critical to be addressed in the Plan: the efficient movement of freight rail and the ability of truck traffic to cross rail lines at grade, in particular in the City's Duwamish Manufacturing Industrial Center.

The draft plan clearly shows the importance of the rail network to Washington's economy. Yet, to meet the state's needs, it must serve both freight and passengers in a variety of ownership, service, and running rights arrangements. Because of the complexity of these arrangements we agree with the draft plan's assessment that there is a role for the state in monitoring the rail system's capacity, preserving and maintaining public short lines, seeking funding opportunities, directing state grants and loans and fostering communication between stakeholders, communities and rail line owners and service providers. The Freight Advisory Board supports the plan's recommendation for WSDOT to focus on "actions that improve the state's interests, including a thriving and diverse economy, environmental efficiency, resiliency and safety."

The Freight Advisory Board also agrees with the draft plan's assessment of the rail system's role in supporting economic development, and its recommendations for meeting the economic development goals identified in the plan. The state, we believe, should recognize the growing importance of the rail mode as the most efficient and most environmentally sensitive way to grow the Seattle and Washington economies.

Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 3800, PO Box 34996, Seattle, WA 98124-0996  
Tel: (206) 684-4102 Tel: (206) 684-5000 Fax: (206) 684-5180  
Web: [www.seattle.gov/fab/](http://www.seattle.gov/fab/)

An equal opportunity employer. Accommodations for people with disabilities provided on request.

We are particularly heartened by the recommendations for the state to support efforts to identify first and last mile connectors and facilitate inclusion of this designation in future project prioritization processes, such as projects that enhance connectivity to ports, in particular the Port of Seattle, in Washington's Freight Plan. The Board also appreciates the draft plan's mention of the importance of protecting industrial lands to support continued economic growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan. We hope that its guidance can help facilitate future needs analysis and support public investment decisions in the rail network in a way that maximizes benefits.

Sincerely,



Warren Aakervik  
Chair, Seattle Freight Advisory Board



<b>Colleen K Weatherford</b>	<b>BNSF Railway Company</b>
Dir. Public Private Partnerships	2414 Occidental Avenue E. #100
	203-525-8233 office
	203-55-8540 fax
	817-894-0311 cell
	colleen.weatherford@bnsf.com

August 15, 2013

Kerri Woehler  
Rail Planning and Strategic Assessment Manager  
Washington Department of Transportation  
310 Maple Park Avenue SE  
Olympia, WA 98504-7407

Dear Kerr:

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Washington State Rail Plan technical reports. Overall, BNSF is impressed with the amount of detail the technical reports contain and the efforts to forecast volumes, which is always a difficult endeavor.

One area is of concern to BNSF. Although we agree that for most commodities the best way to determine the possible growth is by using the FAF3 Growth Rate, one commodity has become the focus of enough attention and is in enough of a state of flux that we believe Washington State would be better served by using a different method to estimate its growth. That commodity is coal, specifically coal intended for export.

Several of the studies contain statements that in the event any export capacity project is approved, the high estimates using FAF3 Growth Rate are lower than the projected volumes that will occur. BNSF is of the opinion that Washington Department of Transportation's planning efforts will be better served by assuming that coal will leave the West Coast, either through Washington or British Columbia, for foreign markets. The U.S. Energy Information Administration, in their report titled "International Energy Outlook 2013," projects:

"U.S. coal exports increase from about 107 million tons in 2011 to 169 million tons in 2040, buoyed primarily by the overall increase in world coal trade. Although most of the coal exported from the United States originates from mines in the Appalachian coal basin, all of the increment in U.S. coal exports through 2040 in IEO2013 is from the Interior and Western supply regions."

The same report lists capacity expansion for coal either planned or completed in British Columbia:

"All of Canada's western coal export terminals have either recently increased or are in the process of expanding their capacity, primarily as a result of increasing demand for coal imports by Asian countries. Westshore Terminals recently increased its annual capacity from 32 million tons to 36 million tons, and its plans for upgrading equipment at the terminal will increase capacity by another 2 to 3 million tons by 2018. Neptune Terminals is planning to increase capacity from 13 million tons per year to 20 million tons, and Ridley plans to double annual throughput capacity from 13 million tons to 26 million tons."

Recent reports from British Columbia indicate that a significant percentage of that capacity likely will be used for U.S. export coal. BNSF currently moves coal through the state of Washington for export through both Westshore and Ridley and therefore believes those numbers should be used for capacity planning.

We are happy to discuss this issue if you wish. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the plan and, again, commend the WSDOT Rail Office for its excellent work on the State Rail Plan.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Colleen K Weatherford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Colleen K Weatherford  
Director Public Private Partnerships

Cc: Chris Herman, Freight Rail & Project Manager, Washington Department of Transportation  
Sophie Hartshorn, Cambridge Systematics, Inc.



# Washington State Rail Plan

## Public Workshops Summary Report

Fall 2012

**For more information:**

- Visit [www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail)
- Email comments to [rail@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:rail@wsdot.wa.gov)
- Call the WSDOT Rail Division at 360.705.7900
- Write to the WSDOT Rail Division at P.O. Box 47407, Olympia, WA 98504-7407

# Washington State Rail Plan Public Workshops Summary Report

WSDOT invited the public to participate in three workshops during Fall 2012. Over 150 participants shared their views about rail in public workshops held in Spokane and Seattle in October and November to help develop the next version of Washington's State Rail Plan. Participants included members of the public and representatives from industry, advocacy groups and public agencies who expressed interest in preserving and strengthening freight and passenger rail, funding sources and rail connectivity. Safety and maintenance and preservation issues were emphasized, and economic impacts discussed. The input will be used to develop the vision, goals, objectives and evaluation criteria for the state rail plan.

## State rail plan overview

The Washington State Rail Plan will serve as a strategic blueprint for future public investment in the state's rail transportation system. It will provide an integrated plan for freight and passenger rail, including 5- and 20-year funding strategies, that meets federal and state requirements. The plan will inform the state Freight Mobility Plan; guide WSDOT as it develops strategic freight rail partnerships to support essential rail service; and establish priorities for determining which freight rail investments should receive public support. It will also guide Washington as it works with Oregon and British Columbia to implement intercity passenger rail service. WSDOT will release the final state rail plan by the end of 2013.

## Collaborative planning process

Rail transportation is dependent on many partnerships between government agencies, private industry and other stakeholders. The plan cannot be successfully implemented without strong support which makes collaboration necessary for a successful outcome. The plan will be a product of broad participation. We are connecting with stakeholders and members of the public in a variety of ways:



- **Stakeholder interviews:** The purpose of these brief interviews is for information gathering and to solicit perspectives on the existing rail system and identify significant issues and opportunities for the near and long term.
- **Stakeholder Advisory Committee:** The committee, comprised of individuals selected from multiple rail constituencies, will act as a sounding board as we proceed through development of the plan.
- **Public meetings (workshops and open house):** Three meetings were held at the beginning of the process and more will follow with the release of the draft state rail plan to solicit public input.

In addition, the project team will provide briefings to groups, send email updates and post updates online throughout the project.

## State rail plan timeline



## Workshop format

The goal of the workshops was to introduce the state rail plan project; describe the timeline and highlight opportunities for public involvement; share information about the state's rail transportation system; and identify key issues and priorities to be addressed in the plan. We will incorporate factual information collected at the workshops into the technical reports that will serve as building blocks for the state rail plan. Feedback concerning priorities for the plan will be translated into a vision statement, and goals and objectives, for the rail system.

Workshops were held on October 30 in Spokane and October 31 in Seattle. Interest in the October 31 workshop exceeded capacity which required an additional meeting held in Seattle on November 29. Approximately 150 people attended the three meetings, including members of the public and representatives from industry (rail service providers and companies who ship via rail), advocacy groups and public agencies.



Each of the three workshops followed a similar format. Attendees were seated by interest area: freight, passenger, or freight and passenger. WSDOT opened with a welcome to participants and introduction to the state rail plan project. Project staff presented freight and passenger rail highlights from the system inventory. There were two small group discussion sessions during the workshop, to address the following questions:

- *What issues do you want to see addressed in the plan?*
- *Which vision statement themes are most important to you? Why?*

Each small group shared highlights from its discussion during a report-out session at the conclusion of each workshop.

## What we heard (summary)

Workshop participants shared diverse opinions and points of view on a wide variety of topics. Themes that emerged as common priorities during the three workshop meetings are summarized below.

- **Economic development:** Address the importance of rail transportation in moving people and goods for a vital state economy. Recognize that Washington industries rely on a competitive freight rail system.
- **Preservation of existing facilities for freight and passenger rail:** Complete track maintenance and preservation activities on schedule; prevent loss of rail right-of-way; and pursue land use compatibility. It is important to use existing resources before investing in new, including existing right-of-way and infrastructure. Preservation of existing assets should be prioritized over expansion or new construction.
- **Rail capacity and system congestion:** Understand which bottlenecks and congested spots have the greatest impact on the operations of the state's passenger and freight rail services. Address key chokepoints along the rail line, accompanying infrastructure (rail yards, etc.) and terminals. Chokepoints may also include insufficient railcar supply to meet shipping needs. Recognize that the amount of volume that can be accommodated depends not only on infrastructure, but also on the railroad's scheduling strategy, use of technology and many other business decisions. Because capacity is dynamic, it should not be used as a sole measure for decision making.
- **Connectivity:** Facilitate farm to market movements (short-lines), connections to international markets via the Ports of Seattle, Tacoma, and others, and transitions between rail, marine and truck. Strengthen connections between intercity rail and public transit. Improve transitions between rail and non-motorized transportation to encourage biking and walking.



- **Community impacts:** Address the potential for increased rail traffic to affect traffic congestion and safety at at-grade crossings. Evaluate opportunities for freight and passenger rail service to contribute to local economic development.
- **Environment:** Understand the environmental benefits of rail transportation, such as greenhouse gas reduction and reduced need for highway expansion. Identify and address negative impacts, such as noise and delay at at-grade crossings.
- **Mode share:** Maximize use of freight and passenger rail to reduce demand on highways and air transportation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Identify and evaluate opportunities for the expansion of passenger rail service to population centers in eastern Washington. Continue and expand development of high-speed rail.
- **Financial resources:** Reduce costs, find more revenue or do both. Pursue sustainable funding for rail transportation.
- **Agency collaboration and public-private partnerships:** Facilitate cooperation and leverage resources between various levels of government and the private sector, in particular for freight rail or shortline expansion projects. Includes Pacific Northwest Region partners (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, British Columbia) and regional and local partners. These partnerships may involve sharing information, funding capital projects, or improving service.
- **Criteria for decision making** Recognize that the state's rail system can yield significant benefits to Washington State passengers and industries. These impacts can include environmental, safety, efficiency, and mobility benefits. These benefits should be recognized within any decision-making framework. Consider cost effectiveness and monitor success of any project using public money.
- **Coordination with other plans and current policies:** There needs to be coordination between the various freight plans, such as the Freight Mobility Plan, the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), and other plans. These plans should reflect consistent information and, more importantly, their overall vision should be incorporated. Also should discuss connection to MAP-21 and other recent regulations.
- **State's role:** Stakeholders suggested the state's role includes providing funding; serving as an advocate for rail; and facilitating partnerships. Participants emphasized the need for a long-term vision (50 years) as well as practical plans for the near and mid-term.



## How will we use this public input?

Workshop discussion revealed a number of priorities for the state’s rail transportation system. We will use the information to establish the vision and goals for the state rail plan. The **vision and goals** set the direction for **what** we want to achieve. They will help us identify and prioritize needs. The **objectives and implementation strategies** describe **how** we will achieve the vision and goals by identifying recommended future state investment in Washington’s passenger and freight rail system.

### Draft vision statement:

As an integral part of Washington’s multimodal transportation network, the rail system provides for the safe, reliable and environmentally responsible movement of freight and passengers to ensure the state’s economic vitality and quality of life.

### Draft goals:

Washington’s transportation system policy goals RCW 47.04.280	Freight and passenger rail focus areas for the state rail plan
<p><b>Economic vitality:</b> To promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the reliability of existing rail services</li> <li>• Scale rail services to meet future demands</li> <li>• Improve connections between rail and other modes</li> <li>• Strengthen rail as a competitive transportation option for freight and passengers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preservation:</b> To maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior and future investments in transportation systems and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain infrastructure in a state of good repair</li> <li>• Minimize loss of rail right-of-way</li> <li>• Encourage compatible land use development near rail infrastructure</li> </ul>

**Washington's transportation system policy goals**  
**RCW 47.04.280**

**Freight and passenger rail focus areas**  
**for the state rail plan**

**Safety:** To provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system

- Enhance safety on the rail and at crossings
- Preserve rail transportation to contribute to transportation system redundancy

**Mobility:** To improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington State

- Improve efficiency
- Decrease travel times
- Preserve and expand facilities and services to accommodate future demands
- Improve competitiveness of rail with other modes for long-distance travel
- Address bottlenecks

**Environment:** To enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment

- Encourage the shift from highway travel to an environmentally sustainable and competitive rail system
- Minimize negative impacts through collaboration with communities

**Stewardship:** To continuously improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system

- Develop inter-agency and public-private partnerships
- Consider cost effectiveness and return on investment of public investments and monitor success
- Achieve financial sustainability
- Employ new technologies to gain efficiencies

## Next steps

The public workshops provided the project team with an opportunity to share information from the system inventory and gather feedback on development of the vision, goals and objectives for the plan. Starting in Winter 2013, the team will shift its efforts to the following:

- Needs and opportunities: define the set of problems and demands that will be the focus of plan recommendations.
- Identify and evaluate capital projects, funding programs, operational improvements and policy changes to address system needs and opportunities.
- Recommend priority actions to achieve vision and goals.
- Create an implementation plan.



Written comments are welcome anytime throughout the planning process. Briefings will be available by request, and the team will post project information online and share via email updates. The draft state rail plan will be published for public review and comment in Summer 2013.

More detail about the next steps in the planning process is provided in the tables below.

## Draft plan development

Timing	Work products	How will WSDOT use the information?	Opportunities for public participation
Winter 2013	Vision, goals and objectives	These elements communicate values and priorities. We will translate the vision, goals and objectives into evaluation criteria that will help identify and prioritize plan recommendations.	Project information available on our website and via email updates.  Written comments (letter, email) are always welcome. Feedback will be incorporated into technical reports, which will serve as the building blocks of the state rail plan.
	Baseline conditions and future forecasts	We will use this information to define rail transportation system strengths and challenges.	
Spring 2013	Needs and opportunities	We will define the set of problems and demands that will be the focus of plan recommendations.	There will be one advisory committee meeting in the winter and another in the spring.  Project briefings available by request.
	Improvement options	We will identify and evaluate capital projects, funding programs, operational improvements and policy changes to address system needs and opportunities.	

## Draft and final plan

Timing	Work products	How will WSDOT use the information?	Opportunities for public participation
Summer/ Fall 2013	Draft rail plan, including implementation plan	We will summarize the results of the planning process and identify recommended priorities to achieve vision, goals and objectives. Recommendations may include capital projects, funding programs, operational improvements or policy changes.	The draft plan will be revised in response to comments prior to final publication.
December 2013	Publish final Washington State Rail Plan	Plan recommendations will inform our work program.  Findings will be incorporated into the Washington Freight Mobility Plan and Washington Transportation Plan.	There are lots of ways to stay in touch with the rail program after completion of the state plan, including website, email list serve, monthly newsletters and program briefings.



# Workshop participants

Bruce Agnew, Cascadia Center  
Graham Anderson, Port of Everett  
Sean Ardussi, Puget Sound Regional Council  
Chuck Ayers, Cascade Bicycle Club  
Keith Bailey, AgVentures NW  
Jim Bain  
Ben Barstow, Washington Wheat Growers  
Levi Basinger, Eastern Washington University Planning Student  
Greg Becken, Port of Moses Lake  
Jeannie Beckett, The Beckett Group  
Mike Beehler, Chehalis-Centralia Railroad and Museum  
Bill Binnig, Kiewit Infrastructure West Company  
Dan Block, Track One Ag, LLC  
Bob Boltz  
Ron Borowski, Seattle Department of Transportation  
Carol Bua, Tidewater  
Cara Buckingham, Birch Equipment  
Dan Burke, Port of Seattle  
Rich Burnett  
Bruce Butler  
Brian Campbell, Campbell Maritime  
Clark Capwell, McGregor  
Heather Carter, Campbell Maritime  
Katherine Casseday, Casseday Consulting  
Carole Cenci, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency  
Gil Cerise, Puget Sound Regional Council  
Byron Cole, Ballard Terminal Railroad  
Sheila Collins, Governor's Office  
Erin Condit, Ellensburg Depot Project  
Pat Connelly, Port of Quincy Commissioner  
Kevin Cook, Consulate General of Canada  
Don Davis, Idaho Transportation Department  
Carol Doering, Sound Transit  
Donald Dover

Robert Eaton, Amtrak Government Affairs, West  
Doug Engle, Eastside Community Rail  
Dan Engstrom, Amtrak  
Greg Figg, WSDOT Eastern Region  
Damon Filan, Tri-Cities Grain, LLC  
Lloyd Flem, All Aboard Washington  
Matt Folwell, HDR  
Richard Ford, Washington Transportation Commissioner  
James Forgette, Ballard Terminal Railroad  
Hugh Fuller, HNTB  
Susan Gardner, APM Terminals Pacific Ltd.  
James Garrett, Local 370  
Jaclyn Gault, CH2M Hill  
Elliot Gitten, LTK Engineering Services  
John Gruber, WSDOT South Central Region  
Nick Haindl, Port of Vancouver  
Jim Hamre, All Aboard Washington  
Jim Hansen, Ravenna Capital Management  
Lisa Hendriksen, Port of Longview  
Jim Henry, City of Poulsbo  
Loren Herrigstad, All Aboard Washington  
Kathy Hunter, Utilities & Transportation Commission  
Sandra Jarrard, Greater Spokane  
Kevin Jeffers, David Evans and Associates  
Matt Jensen, Lewis Clark Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Matt Johnson, Seattle Transit Blog  
Mayor Sherman Johnson, Town of Reardon  
Ted Kadau, Great Northwest Railroad & Palouse River Coulee City Railroad  
Kyle Kellem, City of Tacoma  
Ross Kelley, HDR  
Tim Kelly, Columbia Basin Railroad and Central Washington Railroad  
Kitty Klitzke, Futurewise  
Walter Kloefkorn  
Louis Klusmeyer, BergerABAM

Joe Knight, Safeguard the South Fork  
Norm Krehbiel, Port of Longview  
Herb Krohn, United Transportation Union  
Dennis Kylo, Commodities Plus, Inc.  
Kurt Laird, Amtrak  
Brian LeBlanc  
Timothy Luper, US Coast Guard  
Sam Mace, Wild Salmon  
Brian Mannelly, Port of Tacoma  
Jeff Margolis, Safeguard the South Fork  
Jourdan Marshall  
Alan Matheson, City of Tacoma  
Mick Matsuzawa, Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises  
Keith Metcalf, WSDOT Eastern Region  
Mark Miller  
Cathy Mooney, City of Kent  
Jonathan Mullin, Interfleet Technology  
Ralph Munro, Former Secretary of State  
Kevin Murphy, Skagit Council of Governments  
Lloyd Neal, Neal Consulting, LLC  
Susan Perong, City of Tacoma  
Rob Price, KPFF Consulting Engineers  
Robin Randels, Cascade Bicycle Club  
Michael Reilly, Port of Tacoma  
Doug Rider  
Carolyn Robertson, City of Auburn  
Gary Roman, Department of Homeland Security  
Sue Sander, Normandeau Associates, Inc.  
Robert Scheuerman, Eastside Rail Now!  
Paul Scott, All Aboard Washington  
Zach Shaner, Seattle Transit Blog  
Jason Sharp, Birch Equipment  
Curtis Shuck, Port of Vancouver USA  
John Shurson, BNSF Railway

Rosemary Siipola, Cowlitz-Wahkiakum COG  
Aaron Silver, AECOM Transportation  
Ann Stanton, City of Snohomish  
Mike Stein  
Matthew Sterner, Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
Richard Stevens, Grant County Commissioner  
Burr Stewart  
Ryan Stewart, Spokane Regional Transportation Council  
Carl Stork, Ciconia Co.  
Jackie Tee, CoAg and McCoy Land Company, LLC  
Eric Temple, Portland Vancouver Junction Railroad  
Rich Tokarzewski, KC Office of Emergency Mgmt.  
Joe Tortorelli, Washington Transportation Commission  
Lt. Mike Turcott, Washington State Patrol  
Ben Upsall, Hart Crowser  
Jeanine Viscount, Parsons Brinckerhoff  
Glenn Wagemann, WSDOT Eastern Region  
Rick Wagner, BNSF Railway  
Karen Waterman, Sound Transit  
Colleen Weatherford, BNSF Railway  
Paul Weber, HDR  
Stephanie Weber, WSDOT  
Joe Welsh, City of Auburn  
Ravyn Whitewolf, City of Blaine  
Tim Whittome  
Lance Wollwage, Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
Robert Wonh, Amtrak  
Mike Wren, Port of Ephrata  
Lihuang Wung, City of Tacoma  
Warren Yee, All Aboard Washington  
Martin Young, Sound Transit  
James Zumwalt, All Aboard Washington

# Washington State Rail Plan Stakeholder Advisory Committee

Bruce Agnew, Cascadia Center  
Dan Burke, Port of Seattle  
Rob Coffman, PCC Rail Authority/Lincoln County Commissioner  
Pat Connelly, Port of Quincy  
Lloyd Flem, All Aboard Washington  
Randy Hayden, Port of Pasco  
Kurt Laird, Amtrak  
Eric Maier, Washington Association of Wheat Growers  
Cathrine Martin, RailAmerica  
Brock Nelson, Union Pacific Railroad  
Dan O'Neal, Washington Transportation Commissioner  
Gordon Rogers, Whatcom Council of Governments  
Karen Schmidt, Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board  
Glen Squires, Washington Grain Alliance  
Ryan Stewart, Spokane Regional Transportation Council  
Steve Stivala, MacMillan-Piper  
Karen Waterman, Sound Transit  
Colleen Weatherford, BNSF Railway

## Partner agency participants:

Susan Herre, Federal Railroad Administration  
Leo Wetula, Federal Railroad Administration  
Michael Rock, Oregon Department of Transportation  
Bob Steele, British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Industry  
Jeff McConnell, British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Industry



# Workshop project team

## **WSDOT Rail Division Leadership:**

John Sibold, Cascades Rail Corridor Director and State Rail Director  
Ron Pate, Operations Program Manager

## **Workshop locations:**

October 30, Spokane:  
WSDOT Eastern Region Headquarters  
2714 N. Mayfair Street

October 31, Seattle:  
WSDOT Alaskan Way Viaduct Office  
999 Third Avenue, Suite 2424

November 29, Seattle:  
City of Seattle  
600 Fourth Avenue

*Special thanks to Christopher Eaves,  
Traffic Operations, Investigations and Implementation,  
Seattle Department of Transportation for  
assisting us with the November 29 workshop.*

## **Core Team:**

Kerri Woehler, WSDOT Rail Division  
Laura Kingman, WSDOT Rail Division  
Chris Herman, WSDOT Freight Systems Division  
Lisa Popoff, WSDOT Rail Division  
Kathy Murray, WSDOT Transportation Planning Office  
Bill Bennion, WSDOT Transportation Planning Office

## **Consultant team:**

Sophie Hartshorn, Consultant, Cambridge Systematics  
Beth Wemple, Consultant, Cambridge Systematics  
Yi Lin Pei, Consultant, Cambridge Systematics

## **Facilitators:**

Sheridan Botts, WSDOT Rail Division  
Ken Burgstahler, WSDOT Southwest Region Planning  
Todd Carlson, WSDOT Northwest Region Planning  
Robert Hodgman, WSDOT Aviation Division  
Charlene Kay, WSDOT Eastern Region Planning  
Thomas Noyes, WSDOT Urban Planning Office  
Michael Port, WSDOT Rail Division  
John Romero, WSDOT Rail Division  
Elizabeth Sjostrom, WSDOT Northwest Region Planning  
Tom Slimak, WSDOT Rail Division  
Bob Westby, WSDOT Rail Division

## **Project support:**

Teresa Graham, WSDOT Rail Division  
Angela Risher, WSDOT Rail Division

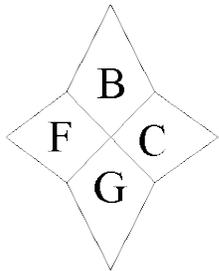


# Benton-Franklin Council of Governments

## Regional Rail Workshop for the Washington State Rail Plan

March 28, 2013

Hosted by:

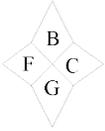


**Benton-Franklin Council of Governments**



**Washington State  
Department of Transportation**

Rail Division



# Benton-Franklin Council of Governments

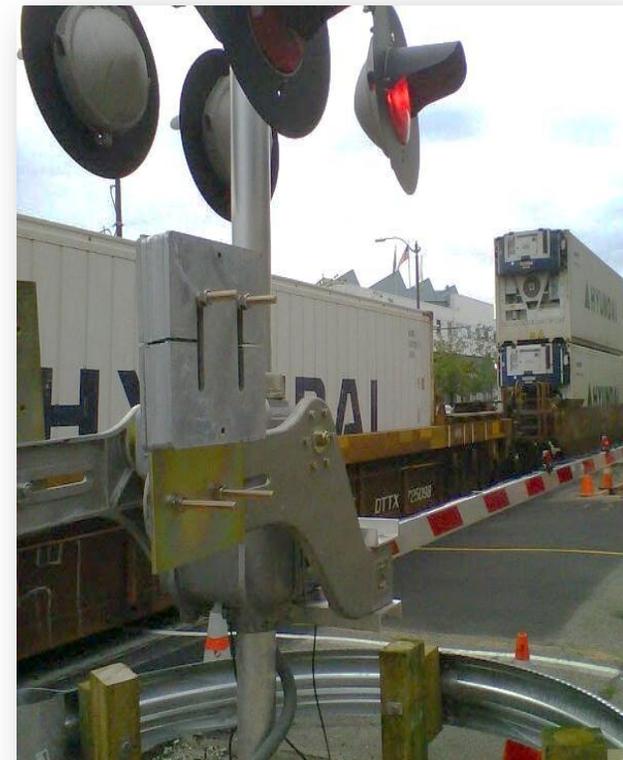
## Regional Rail Workshop for the Washington State Rail Plan

Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG), in partnership with WSDOT, hosted a regional rail workshop in Kennewick to solicit stakeholder input on the State Rail Plan, as well as regional freight planning efforts. Stakeholders were invited to discuss freight rail transportation in Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla Counties and to help develop the next [State Rail Plan](#). Workshop participants received an update on ongoing technical analysis and discussed priority needs and opportunities for the state rail system.

*Freight rail is a vital component of the multimodal transportation system in the Mid-Columbia Basin. Short-line rail provides a critical link in successfully shipping and receiving agricultural products and other commodities from the rural areas of our region to the mainline rail system. Improvements to the system have been made, but in order to stay competitive globally, nationally and regionally, investment in rail improvement projects will be needed.* – Introduction from Mark Kushner, BFCG

### State rail plan overview

The Washington State Rail Plan will serve as a strategic blueprint for future public investment in the state's rail transportation system. It will provide an integrated plan for freight and passenger rail, including 5- and 20-year funding strategies, that meets federal and state requirements. The plan will inform the [State Freight Mobility Plan](#); guide WSDOT as it develops strategic freight rail partnerships to support essential rail service; and establish priorities for determining which freight rail investments should receive public support. It will also guide Washington as it works with Oregon and British Columbia to implement intercity passenger rail service. WSDOT will release the final State Rail Plan by the end of 2013.



In 2005-2006, WSDOT Freight Systems Division (FSD) worked closely with the Washington State Transportation Commission to develop the Freight Report in the 2006 Washington Transportation Plan. FSD has relied on that work as the state freight plan since 2006, updating the freight report's statistics in 2008. In January 2011, FSD started developing a new State Freight Mobility Plan to be published by December 2013.

Following completion of the State Rail Plan, the plan results will be incorporated into the State Freight Mobility Plan and Washington Transportation Plan.

## BFCG role in freight/rail planning

BFCG actively works with both WSDOT and the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) on freight issues. As a historic rail hub, the preservation of mainline and short-line railroads is important to the local and regional economy.

In 2011, BFCG and WSDOT hosted a set of three eastern Washington focused workshops for the State Freight Mobility Plan, as well as the current work on the 2013 State Rail Plan. BFCG also sits on the Advisory Committee of FMSIB to assist in developing a statewide MAP-21 compliant freight plan.

Regionally, in 2008, BFCG issued the report "Freight Rail in the Benton Franklin Walla Walla RTPO," summarizing the status of freight rail in the RTPO, discussing the issue of rail abandonment, as well as addressing funding issues related to improvements on short-line rail systems. Additionally, policies in the 2011-2032 MPO/RTPO Regional Transportation Plan support freight mobility.



## Workshop format

The goal of the workshop was to introduce the State Rail Plan; describe the timeline and highlight opportunities for public involvement; share information about the state's rail transportation system; and discuss eight specific needs that have been identified. These needs include the infrastructure, operational or institutional issues that are impacting the safety, capacity or efficiency of the state's rail system. The needs were identified through several different sources, including the technical work completed in the State Rail Plan and stakeholder outreach efforts.

The workshop was held on March 28 in Kennewick with 36 participants representing short-line railroads, ports, cities, and other advocacy groups.

The eight rail system needs discussed were:

- **Need 1:** Address constraints to ensure capacity meets future demand.
- **Need 2:** Preserve existing rail capacity and infrastructure.
- **Need 3:** Enhance the efficiency and reliability of existing services.
- **Need 4:** The rail system should support economic development by providing access to people and industry.
- **Need 5:** Preserve access to global markets by ensuring access to Washington's ports.
- **Need 6:** Prioritize cost-effective investments into the state's rail system.
- **Need 7:** Strengthen rail as an environmentally and community friendly mode of transportation.
- **Need 8:** Continue to support safe and secure passenger and freight rail movement.

The workshop had a 30-minute discussion to address:

- How do the statewide needs we identified reflect local and regional rail/freight needs?
- Did we miss any rail needs that are important for this region?
- What responses (capital, operating, policy/programmatic) should be considered in the State Rail Plan?
- What is the state's role in addressing the needs?



## What we heard (summary)

Workshop participants were asked to go to the need that they believed was the most important need. This process determined that they would address seven of the eight needs. Need 3 was not addressed. Brainstorming brought up the following issues:

**Need 1: Address constraints to ensure capacity meets future demand:** Six participants discussed reopening the old Milwaukee Corridor from Ellensburg to Lind and the benefits, risks and options for hauling coal in Washington.

**Need 2: Preserve existing rail capacity and infrastructure:** Ten participants discussed the benefits and costs of preserving our rail capacity and infrastructure. The most important factors were cheaper to maintain now, rail capacity is limited by track conditions, investments in the rail system can lead to new business opportunities, and there is a realistic level of hauls that short lines could reach where they could be self-sufficient. Actions needed would be a dedicated state funding source for short lines, public campaign to explain benefits of rail, and tax credit program for short lines.

**Needs 4 & 5: The rail system should support economic development by providing access to people and industry and preserve access to global markets by ensuring access to Washington's ports:** Eight participants discussed the need to support economic development and preserving access to global markets for our ports. The most important factors identified were healthy (financial/infrastructure) short lines that focus on the first mile/last mile; a statewide increase in economic growth that could decrease the impact to the region due to congestion, emergency services, noise, and mobility; and better coordination of planning efforts that have a more deliberate regional outreach.

**Needs 6, 7 & 8: Prioritize cost-effective investments into the state's rail system, strengthen rail as an environmentally and community friendly mode of transportation, and continue to support safe and secure passenger and freight rail movement:** Five participants focused on investments to our state's rail system, including money for grade separations, opening the Ellensburg to Lind line and reducing noise in small communities.



## Next steps

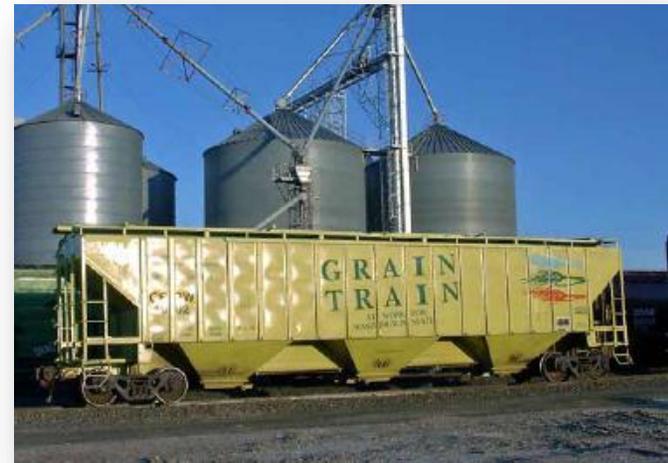
The next steps for the plan development include:

- Identify and evaluate responses to needs: capital projects, operational improvements, program and policy changes.
- Recommend priority actions to achieve vision and goals; create an implementation plan.
- Release draft Washington State Rail Plan for public review and comment in Summer 2013.
- Publish final Washington State Rail Plan in December 2013.



# Workshop participants

<b>City of Connell:</b>	Gary Walton
<b>City of Kennewick:</b>	Peter Beaudry, John Hubbard, Ken Nelson, Steve Plummer
<b>City of Pasco:</b>	Rick White, Maryann Zukowski
<b>Eastern Washington Gateway Railroad:</b>	Eric Bickleman, Steve Gibson, John Howell
<b>Frontier Rail, YCR:</b>	Paul Didelius
<b>HDR Engineering:</b>	Mike Murray
<b>Lampson Int.:</b>	Bill Lampson
<b>Pasco Chamber of Commerce:</b>	Colin Hastings
<b>PCC Railroad:</b>	Ted Kadau
<b>Port of Benton:</b>	John Haakenson, Roy Keck, Bob Larson
<b>Port of Kennewick:</b>	Don Barnes, Gene Wagner
<b>Simplot:</b>	Terry Threlfall
<b>Spink Engineering:</b>	Bob Spink
<b>Tidewater Barge Lines:</b>	Andy Stephens
<b>Tri-City &amp; Olympia Railroad:</b>	Rhett Peterson, Tobi Peterson
<b>Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce:</b>	Patrick Conrad, Lori Mattson
<b>TRIDEC:</b>	Bryson Bailey



# Workshop project team

**Benton-Franklin Council of Governments:**

Mark Kushner  
Len Pavelka

**Washington State Department of Transportation:**

Paul Gonseth, South Central Region  
John Gruber, South Central Region  
Chris Herman, Freight Systems Division  
Laura Kingman, Rail Division  
Kerri Woehler, Rail Division



**For more information:**

- Visit [www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail)
- Email comments to [rail@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:rail@wsdot.wa.gov)
- Call the WSDOT Rail Division at 360.705.7900
- Write to the WSDOT Rail Division at P.O. Box 47407, Olympia, WA 98504-7407
- Fax comments to 360.705.6821

# Washington State Rail Plan

## Regional Rail Workshop

May 30, 2013  
Blaine, Washington

Hosted by:



Report Date: August 19, 2013

**For more information:**

- Visit [www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail)
- Email comments to [rail@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:rail@wsdot.wa.gov)
- Call the WSDOT Rail Division at 360.705.7900
- Write to the WSDOT Rail Division at P.O. Box 47407, Olympia, WA 98504-7407
- Fax comments to 360.705.6821

# Regional Rail Workshop for the Washington State Rail Plan

The city of Blaine and the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG), in partnership with WSDOT, hosted a regional rail workshop in Blaine to help develop the next [State Rail Plan](#). Workshop participants learned about the rail plan process and shared their views about priority needs and opportunities for the state rail system.

## State rail plan overview

The Washington State Rail Plan will serve as a strategic blueprint for future public investment in the state’s rail transportation system. It will provide an integrated plan for freight and passenger rail, including 5- and 20-year funding strategies, that meets federal and state requirements. The plan will inform the [State Freight Mobility Plan](#); guide WSDOT as it develops strategic freight rail partnerships to support essential rail service; and establish priorities for determining which freight rail investments should receive public support. It will also guide Washington as it works with Oregon and British Columbia to determine next steps for intercity passenger rail service. WSDOT will release the final State Rail Plan by the end of 2013. Following completion of the State Rail Plan, the plan results will be incorporated into the State Freight Mobility Plan, the Washington Transportation Plan and the Federal Railroad Administration’s National Rail Plan.

Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2013	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013
Final Approval of Detailed work Plan from FRA	Vision, goals and objectives Rail system inventory: baseline conditions and future forecast Advisory committee meeting Public workshops		Rail system needs and opportunities Improvement options: capital projects, funding programs, operating procedures and policy changes Advisory committee meeting	Plan recommendations Implementation plan Advisory committee meeting	Draft State Rail Plan Feedback during formal comment period: letter, email, online comment form Public open house	Final State Rail Plan

## Workshop format

The goal of the workshop was to introduce the State Rail Plan; describe the timeline and highlight opportunities for public involvement; share information about the state's rail transportation system; and discuss the Amtrak Cascades New Stop Evaluation for Auburn.

The workshop was held on May 30 in Blaine with 72 participants representing 44 different groups, including short-line railroads, ports, cities, and other advocacy groups.

### Agenda

- WCOG opened the meeting and welcomed participants. City of Blaine and WSDOT also provided introductory remarks.
- After the welcome and introduction of participants, there was a discussion of the State Rail Plan, overview of rail system and rail system needs, and an opportunity to ask questions.
- Then WSDOT presented information regarding the New Stop Evaluation Study and gave participants an opportunity to ask more questions.
- This was followed by small group discussion of local and regional perspectives on state rail system needs. Participants were asked to share their thoughts about rail transportation in the region.
- An opportunity was provided for participants to have an open discussion and ask any further questions.
- WSDOT described next steps were presented in the planning process.
- WCOG, WSDOT and City of Blaine ended the meeting with reflections and closing remarks.



# Washington State Rail Plan information

WSDOT provided an overview of the State Rail Plan and described key findings. The presentation also included discussion about WSDOT's efforts to develop criteria that will guide future evaluation of potential new stops for Amtrak Cascades. Highlights from the presentation are provided below.

## State Transportation Planning Goals

State Transportation Planning Goals set the direction for what we want to achieve and help us identify and prioritize needs.

- **Economic Vitality:** To promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.
- **Preservation:** To maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services.
- **Safety:** To provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system.
- **Mobility:** To improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington State.
- **Environment:** To enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment.
- **Stewardship:** To continuously improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.

## Washington's Rail System

### Strengths

- Providing good mobility for existing train volumes.
- Extensive network connects citizens and industry.
- Supports industries that contribute \$106 billion to GDP and support 1.2 million jobs.
- Most fuel-efficient mode and produces the least amount of carbon.

### Challenges

- Bottlenecks, constraints and access issues on Class I system.
- Delays and reliability concerns.
- Deferred maintenance degrading level of service on short-line railroads.

- Access to national and global markets.
- Meeting future demand.
- Maintaining a safe rail system.

## **Rail System Needs and Opportunities**

### **Rail Operations and Infrastructure Needs**

- Address capacity constraints in order to meet future passenger and freight rail demands.
- Preserve existing rail capacity and infrastructure.
- Enhance the efficiency and reliability of existing rail services.

### **Rail's Role in Economic Development**

- Support economic development by providing access to people and industry.
- Preserve access to global markets by ensuring access to Washington's ports.

### **Rail System Priorities and Goals**

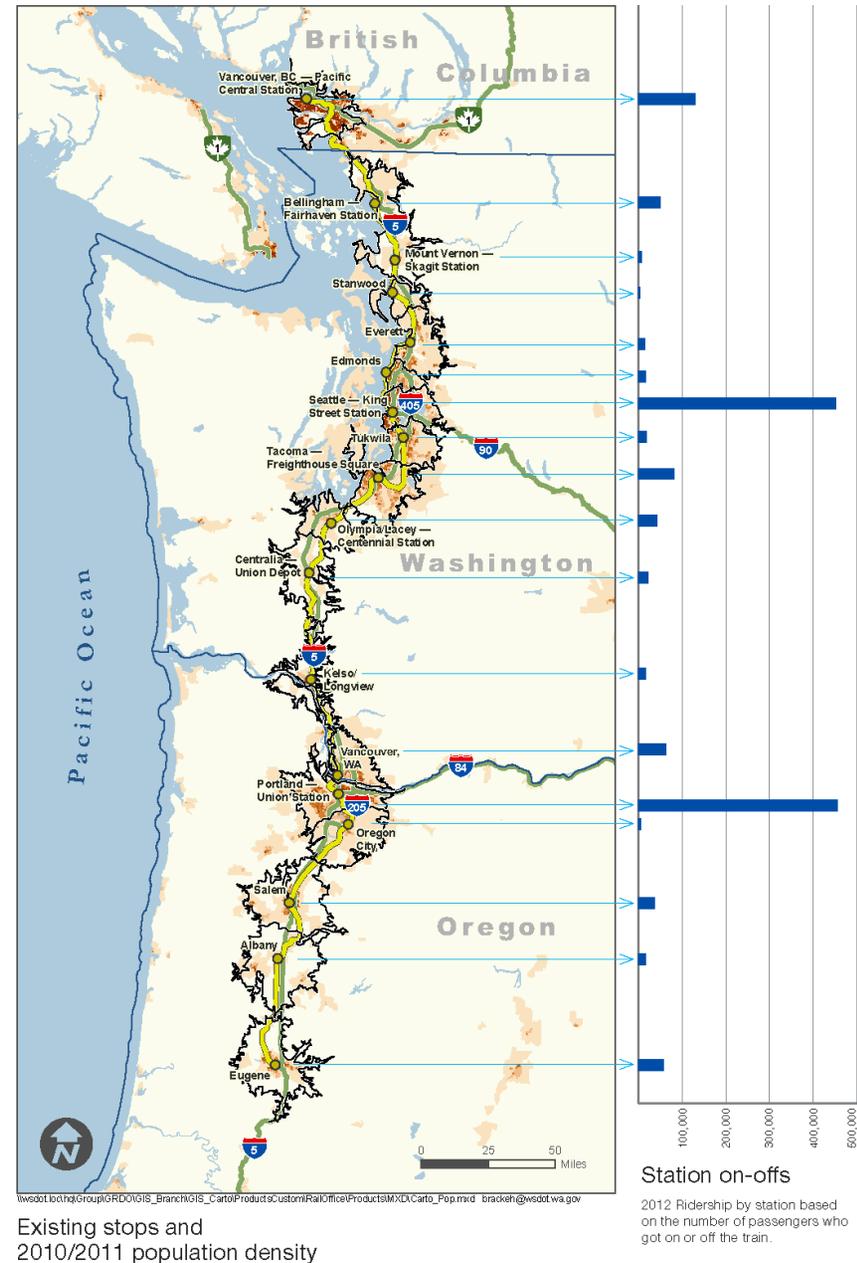
- Prioritize cost-effective investments into the state's rail system.
- Strengthen rail as an environmentally and community friendly mode of transportation.
- Continue to support safe and secure passenger and freight rail movement.

## New Stop Evaluation Study

The Washington State Legislature directed the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to study the feasibility of an Amtrak Cascades stop at Auburn, and to conduct a market analysis of adding or changing stops on the route. This opportunity comes at a challenging time for the program: while we are implementing \$800 million in capital projects that will greatly improve the service, we are also facing increasing operating costs that will strain our budget. It is against this backdrop that the New Stop Evaluation – Auburn study provides an analysis of a potential Auburn stop based on benefits and disadvantages for the service, corridor wide. Establishing a transparent, fair process for evaluating new stop proposals is an important part of implementing state transportation policy guidance for the benefit of the Amtrak Cascades service, interested communities and Washington taxpayers.

### Proposed Evaluation Criteria

<b>Operational Feasibility</b>	Assess the effect of the stop on travel time and reliability.
<b>Customer Demand</b>	Assess potential market demand for the stop.
<b>Station Suitability</b>	Assess the strengths and challenges of a station or location as an Amtrak Cascades stop.
<b>Interconnectivity Benefits</b>	Assess the benefits of a stop compared to baseline conditions.
<b>Fiscal Viability</b>	Based on anticipated costs and revenues, is the effect of the new station positive, neutral or negative?



# What we heard

Workshop participants shared their perspectives on rail transportation during small group discussion. A summary of their comments is provided below.

## New Amtrak Cascades Stop at Blaine

- Consider population north of the border to evaluate the feasibility of a train stop at Blaine.
- Compare feasibility and implementation of a stop at Blaine to Stanwood Station.
- Consider implementing a variable stop schedule.
- Study should include travel time savings for Lower Mainland customers.
- Determine population density south of the Fraser River.
- Look at bi-national impact.
- Work on cross-border proposal.
- Include biometric screening in the border crossing passenger screening system.
- Restore Blaine's train depot.
- White Rock supports Blaine stop.
- Connectivity benefits:
  - North Whatcom County
  - Lower Mainland, British Columbia
  - Potential for future direct line into Bellingham airport
- Through-trains don't produce community benefits, but trains that stop could produce benefits for Blaine.
- Blaine depot needs public/private partnership.
- Don't close Pacific Central Station in Vancouver, B.C.
- There is a huge market for Amtrak Cascades in the Lower Mainland.
- Use the European security model at the border crossing.
- What is the effect of fuel prices on rail ridership?
- How do we continue the process of analyzing Blaine without funding?
- Need an implementation "Action Plan."
- Blaine community members interested in adding a stop on Amtrak Cascades should contact other successful stops.
- Is B.C. willing to help fund a stop in Blaine?



- Petition gatherers talked with many people who say they don't currently ride the train, but would cross the border from Canada and ride Amtrak Cascades from Blaine.
- Consider charging for parking to generate revenue.
- Isn't there a similar story with the growth in Bellingham Airport that could be applied to a Blaine stop?
- There is a difference between commuter rail and intercity rail.

## At-Grade Crossings

- Longer and larger trains will require improvements to rail crossings.
- Need to protect existing infrastructure and anticipated increases in vehicular traffic.
- Huge traffic impacts at Cherry Point likely to result from new bulk terminal.
- It appears that freight is overtaking all existing capacity of rail line.
- All grade crossings block the roads.
- Growing volume of trains.
- Funding for overpasses is needed.
- How are improvements prioritized?
- How are Washington and B.C. working together?

## Congestion – VACIS (Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System)<sup>1</sup> Impacts

- Backups are typically:
  - 15-20 minutes plus
  - Additional 10-15 minutes for traffic queue to clear
- Move VACIS now!
- VACIS inspection is at Bell Road. It causes delays in traffic on the highway. This causes many serious impacts. For example, children miss school-provided breakfast due to delay and emergency vehicles are affected.



<sup>1</sup> VACIS is an x-ray system using gamma ray imaging to verify the contents inside the package or container without breaking the seal. A VACIS facility is currently located near Blaine.

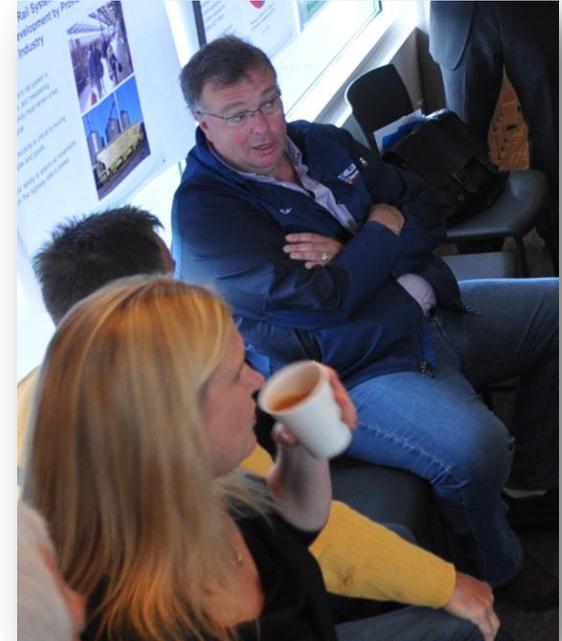
- There is concern that improvements could be made to the rail system without input from local government and citizens (e.g., VACIS installation).

## Safety

- How do we provide emergency access during Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System (VACIS) delay?
- How do we implement emergency air service during train (VACIS) backups?
- Provide education component for emergency options during VACIS backups.
- Research directional wayside horns at crossings.
- Determine usage/time impacts based on forecasted rail and vehicular traffic.

## Freight and Passenger Impact

- Economic impact of rail in Blaine. Today, the city experiences impact but not benefit. Adding the station could result in possible increase in jobs in industries that use rail.
- Does the plan prioritize between freight and passenger?
- Increasing on-time performance (OTP) on the Amtrak Cascades would be beneficial to Vancouver, B.C. and all other stakeholders:
  - Ridership increases as a result of better OTP.
  - Challenges:
    - Lack of dedicated track for passengers
    - Geographical constraints:
      - Slope stability
      - Space for additional track
      - Need to have MOU with local transit during slides



## Freight Rail in Whatcom County

- Increasing freight rail (coal/oil).
- At what point should Washington and British Columbia engage in new freight/passenger high-speed line?
- Who should be paying for upgrades?

## Preclearance

Pre-clearance means clearance is at point of departure. Implementation of preclearance at Pacific Central Station in Vancouver, B.C. would eliminate the need for an inspection stop at the border, reducing corridor travel time by 10 minutes or more.

- Inter-border agreements in process.
- Admissibility – Immigration done in Vancouver, B.C.
- Customs – done at point of entry.
- It needs to be more seamless.

## Roles and Responsibilities for Capital Investment

- Better involvement with local communities. Local communities might have to assist with funding or submit proposal.
- Scheduling of passenger rail needs to meet work schedules and airport timing at Sea-Tac. This is limited at this time with the current schedule. It's hard for passengers to make their connections.
- We need real “high-speed rail.”

## Open Discussion

We thanked participants for following our agenda and invited them to share any comments — “What do you want to tell us?”

- Mr. Bill Becht provided WSDOT with copies of petition signatures gathered by the Save Blaine Station group. There were more than 5,000 signatures under the heading, “Support for Blaine Station remodel and Amtrak Service.”
- WSDOT needs to recognize that a trip from the Lower Mainland, B.C., is inefficient — customers must travel northwest to station and then back down to the border.
- To make a Blaine stop work, travel times need to improve from Bellingham to Vancouver, B.C.



- A more direct route and real high speeds (250 mph) for Amtrak Cascades will draw more ridership for the service.
- If you are going to improve service to have an attractive passenger service, an alternative line (freight/passenger) is needed.
- Several participants believe that if a study is done by Blaine for Blaine, it won't go anywhere. Others shared their perspective that "we" (Blaine stop proponents) need to bring WSDOT a proposal that will work.

## Next steps

The next steps for the Washington State Rail Plan include:

- Identify and evaluate responses to needs: capital projects, operational improvements, and program and policy changes.
- Recommend priority actions to achieve vision and goals; create an implementation plan.
- Release draft Washington State Rail Plan for public review and comment in September 2013.
- Finalize Washington State Rail Plan in December 2013.

There was also discussion about possible next steps for those interested in adding a stop at Blaine to the Amtrak Cascades schedule. WSDOT explained that the agency does not have funding to conduct an evaluation at this time. The draft Auburn report will be released at the end of June, and WSDOT plans to initiate an interim policy on new stops at that time. We will begin a public process to solicit input on New Stop Evaluation Criteria and formalize a policy in late 2014.

## Workshop participants

All Aboard Washington  
Blaine Chamber of Commerce  
Blossom Management  
BNSF Railway  
BP  
Canada Border Services Agency  
Canadian Consulate  
Cardno ENTRIX  
Cascadia Center  
Circle of Trees Homestead  
Citizens  
City of Bellingham  
City of Birch Bay  
City of Blaine  
City of Ferndale  
City of Lynden  
City of Surrey  
City of White Rock  
Community Transportation Advisory Group of Whatcom Council of Governments  
Consulate General of Canada  
Corporation of Delta  
Cottage by the Bay

Customs and Border Protection  
Horseshoe Coins and Antiques  
International Longshore and Warehouse Union  
National Association of Railroad Passengers  
National Railway Equipment Company  
Nooksack Indian Tribe  
Northern Lights  
Oregon Department of Transportation  
Pacific Coast Pensioners Association  
Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council, BC Chamber of Commerce  
Port of Bellingham  
SmartRail  
South Fork Valley Community Association  
South Surrey White Rock Chamber of Commerce  
Transport Canada  
Tribal Transportation Planning Organization  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Washington Indian Transportation Policy Advisory Committee  
Washington State Department of Commerce  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
Washington State Public Works Board  
Whatcom Council of Governments

# Workshop project team

## **City of Blaine:**

Ravyn Whitewolf, Public Works Director  
William Bullock, Assistant Public Works Director

## **Whatcom Council of Governments:**

Gordon Rogers, Deputy Director/Director of Planning  
Hugh Conroy, Manager, International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program

## **Washington State Department of Transportation:**

Ron Pate, Rail Director, Cascades Corridor Director  
Todd Carlson, Planning and Engineering Services Manager, Northwest Region/Mount Baker Area  
Kirk Fredrickson, Operations Supervisor, Rail Division  
John Shambaugh, Planning Manager, Northwest Region/Mount Baker Area  
Kerri Woehler, Planning and Strategic Assessment Manager, Rail Division

## **Oregon Department of Transportation:**

Hal Gard, Administrator, Rail and Public Transit Division  
Jennifer Sellers, Northwest Rail Corridor Project Manager

# Washington State Rail Plan

## Regional Rail Workshop

September 30, 2013  
Centralia, Washington

Hosted by:



Report Date: October 29, 2013

**For more information:**

- Visit [www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail)
- Email comments to [rail@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:rail@wsdot.wa.gov)
- Call the WSDOT Rail Division at 360.705.7900
- Write to the WSDOT Rail Division at P.O. Box 47407, Olympia, WA 98504-7407
- Fax comments to 360.705.6821

# Regional Rail Workshop for the Washington State Rail Plan

The Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG), Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC), Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (SWRTC), Lewis County Transportation Strategy Council (LCTSC) and the Grays Harbor Council of Governments (GHCOG), in partnership with WSDOT, hosted a regional rail workshop in Centralia to discuss the next [State Rail Plan](#). Workshop participants learned about the rail plan process and shared their views about priority needs and opportunities for the state rail system.

## State rail plan overview

The purpose of the Washington State Rail Plan is to outline a strategy for addressing changes in freight and passenger rail transportation and provide a blueprint for ensuring the continued movement of people and goods on the rail system in support of a healthy economy. Consistent with federal and state requirements, the plan describes what is working well, identifies the challenges, highlights policy priorities and sets a course for state action and investment to ensure that these vital services continue to meet transportation needs in the future. WSDOT will finalize the State Rail Plan by the end of 2013. The results will be incorporated into the State Freight Mobility Plan and the Washington Transportation Plan.



# Workshop format

The goal of the workshop was to share information about the State Rail Plan and solicit questions and comments from participants.

The workshop was held on September 30 at the Centralia Library. Over 40 individuals participated.

## Agenda

- Welcome:
  - Lon Wyrick, Executive Director, Thurston Regional Planning Council
  - Scott Patterson, Executive Director, Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments
  - Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director, Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
  
- State Rail Plan presentation:
  - System overview.
  - Rail system needs.
  - Recommendations.
  
- Group discussion regarding local/regional perspectives on rail system needs.
  
- Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments, Thurston Regional Planning Council, RTC, GHCOG, LCTSC and WSDOT ended the meeting with reflections and closing remarks.



# Washington State Rail Plan overview

WSDOT provided an overview of the State Rail Plan and described key findings. The presentation also included discussion about WSDOT's efforts to develop criteria that will guide future evaluation of potential new stops for Amtrak Cascades. Highlights from the presentation are provided below.

## Rail in Washington State

The state of Washington has several freight railroads and passenger railroads operating within its borders.

- **Class I Railroads:** BNSF Railway and Union Pacific Railroad
- **Short-line and Switching/Terminal Railroads:** 25 Class II and Class III operating in Washington.
- **Long-Distance Passenger Rail:** Coast Starlight and Empire Builder.
- **Intercity Passenger Rail:** Amtrak Cascades.
- **Regional/Commuter Rail:** Sound Transit's Sounder.

## Freight Rail

There are two Class I railroads: BNSF and UP. These are privately owned enterprises that fund their own improvements. While they own the majority of the rail infrastructure, they do occasionally partner with the public sector on capital projects, such as grade crossings.

There are 25 short-line and switching or terminal railroads (Class III) operating in Washington. Class III railroads own 40 percent of the rail mileage in the state. Of this mileage, 50 percent is publicly owned.

WSDOT has two programs to assist with funding: Freight Rail Assistance Program and the Freight Rail Investment Bank.

Rail Services in Southwest Washington



## Amtrak Cascades

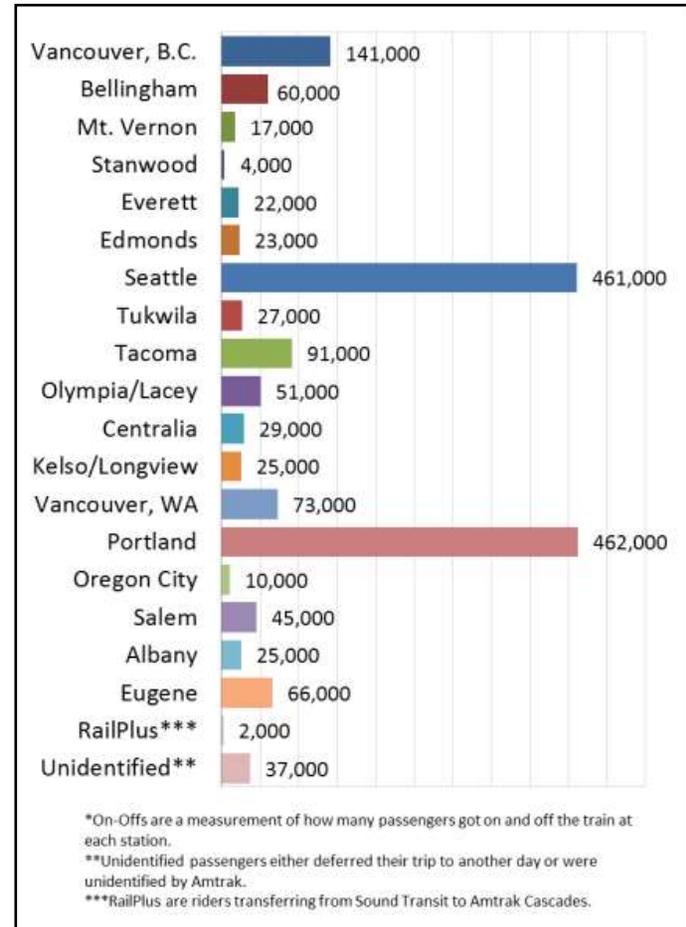
The presentation provided an in-depth discussion about the state-sponsored Amtrak Cascades intercity passenger rail service. Amtrak Cascades operate 11 daily trains between Vancouver, B.C. and Eugene, Oregon—a 467-mile route. The trains operate primarily on BNSF and UP tracks. Amtrak operates the service, with the Washington State Department of Transportation and Oregon Department of Transportation subsidizing the service.

### Ridership

Passenger rail ridership is driven by a number of factors, including population and population density, average income, the type of rail service offered, the presence of competing transportation options (such as intercity air service, bus or highways), travel time, schedule reliability and travel costs.

Total ridership on Amtrak Cascades has nearly tripled since 1996, with significant growth in the late 1990s as new services and equipment were added. In 2012 the most recent year for which complete data are available, total ridership was approximately 836,000. Ridership is also highest during the summer tourist season in the second and third quarter of each year.

On-offs, which are shown in the chart, reflect how many passengers got on or off an Amtrak Cascades train at each station in 2012. Portland’s Union Station and Seattle’s King Street Station serve the most riders.



## Amtrak Cascades High Speed Rail Program

The WSDOT Rail Division was awarded \$749.9 million in federal high-speed rail funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The Rail Division’s previous planning efforts provided program goals for incremental improvements. When the 20 projects are completed in 2017, the Amtrak Cascades will operate two daily additional round trips between Seattle and Portland with a 10-minute reduction in corridor travel time. The program also guarantees on-time performance at 88 percent. The program supports approximately 2,600 jobs in Washington.

### High-Speed Rail Capital Investments – Seattle to Portland



## What we heard

Workshop participants were given 3x5 cards and asked to write their questions. Workshop organizers grouped participants' questions into the following categories and facilitated discussion about each one.

- At-grade crossings.
- Commodities.
- Exclusive high-speed rail corridor.
- Planning Process.
- Infrastructure.
- Performance measures and priorities.
- Other passenger questions.

### Infrastructure

- Main line rail improvements are done by the railroads as needed to meet capacity needs as they do business.
- State not obligated to do improvements on freight – only rail lines. Partnering with private entities keeps them off the public “dole.”
- Capacity analysis shows no bottlenecks. In the future (2035), there are bottlenecks. This is up to Class-1 railroads to fix.
- “Maple Mills” line to mill. Remainder is trail.



## At-Grade Crossings

- Funding to address railroad-highway crossings is limited.
- State highways – safety funds, congestion funds.
- The Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) provides grant funding to support highway and rail projects, including grade separations to improve freight mobility.
- Issues with blockage to emergency vehicles.
- Inventory of grade crossings – need to close, separation, etc.
- A criteria to prioritize projects:
  - No prioritized list of projects.
  - Set performance measures and how to address them, but no funding.

## Performance Measures

- Coordinating between freight mobility plan and rail plan.
- Performance Measures:
  - On state-owned short lines.
    - How much is 25 mph.
    - Capable of heavy railcars.
  - No uniform system of grading short-line railroads.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> and last mile: no money to prioritize.

## Planning Process

- How can cities implement?
  - Uniform voice, toolbox.
- Encourage areas to promote regional service.
- Boundaries of responsibilities.



## State Legislature

- Recommend attend state legislature.
- Difficult to tell if legislature is grouping needs.

## Amtrak and FMSIB

- Amtrak Cascades is working with ODOT for joint service.
- FMSIB corridor ratings.
  - Contact them directly.
  - Governor appointed board.

## Rail-Barge Truck Interchange

- Effect on pavements.
- FRA plan, FHWA plan.



## How are we forecasting volumes in 2035?

- Hazardous loads handled by other agencies.
- 2010 information projected to 2035, same commodities.
- If coal or oil add to this, capacities maxed early.
- Light rail not addressed in rail plan.

## Next steps

The next steps for the Washington State Rail Plan include:

- Open house on Nov. 13 in Olympia.
- Public comment period ends on Dec. 2.
- Finalize Washington State Rail Plan by the end of Dec. 2013.

## Workshop participants

Jim Amador, Port of Olympia  
George L. Barner, Jr., Port of Olympia/All Aboard Washington  
Jeannie Beckett, The Beckett Group  
Mike Beehler, Chehalis-Centralia RR Museum  
Peter Bennett, Millennium Bulk Terminals  
Mike Burnham, Thurston Regional Planning Council  
Dave Burns, City of Lacey  
Bonnie Canaday, Centralia  
Bill Deutscher, Western Washington Railroad  
Diane L. Dick, Cowlitz County Citizen  
Roger L. Fields, Centralia  
Lloyd Flem, All Aboard Washington  
Mark Foutch, All Aboard Washington  
Rich Gushman, Gibbs & Olson  
Marc Horton, Port of Grays Harbor  
Wayne Harner, Tacoma Rail  
Loren Herrigstad, All Aboard Washington  
Rob Hill, City of Centralia  
Bob Holman, Intercity Transit

Graeme Jackinson, TPB  
Patrick Kerr, PSAP Railroad  
Rod Lakey, Lewis County  
Merlin MacReynold, City of Chehalis  
Tim Mallory, Timberland Regional Library  
Bill McGregor, Port of Olympia  
Don Melnick, Lacey Planning Commission  
Jeff Miller, AAN Centralia  
Dave Nicandri, Citizen  
Rudy Niederer, Cascadia High Speed Rail  
Jeff Parker, David Evans & Associates  
Brad Perkins, Perkins Niederer & Associates  
Ruth Peterson, Senator Braun's Office  
Carol Ruiz, Gibbs & Olson  
Darlene Sharar, Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments  
Debra Seeman, David Evans & Associates  
John Sitkin, Millennium Bulk Terminals  
Jeff Swanson, Clark County

# Workshop project team

## **Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments:**

Scott Patterson, Executive Director  
Amy Asher, Planner

## **Grays Harbor Council of Governments:**

Vicki Cummings, Executive Director  
Dirk Brier, Planner

## **Lewis County Transportation Strategy Council:**

Michael Kroll, Transportation Planner

## **Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council:**

Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director  
Lynda David, Senior Transportation Planner

## **Thurston Regional Planning Council:**

Lon Wyrick, Executive Director  
Jailyn Brown, Senior Planner

## **Washington State Department of Transportation**

Ken Burgstahler, Southwest Region  
Chris Herman, Freight Systems Division  
Kerri Woehler, Rail Division