

**Contact Us:**

**P.O. Box 47407**  
**Olympia, WA 98504-7407**

**Phone: 360-705-7932 Freight**  
**360-705-7900 Rail**

**Fax: 360-705-6835 Freight**  
**360-705-6821 Rail**

**E-mail: freight@wsdot.wa.gov**  
**rail@wsdot.wa.gov**

# Freight Systems Division

## Washington's Freight Systems



Supporting Washington's freight systems by providing strategic planning for all state freight investments and directly managing the state's rail programs.

**Global Gateways**  
*International and National Trade Flows Through Washington*



**Made in Washington**  
*Regional Economies Rely on the Freight System*



**Delivering Goods to You**  
*Distribution of Retail and Wholesale Products*

## The Freight Systems Division Is Responsible for:

- Developing the state's strategic investment plan for freight, which is based on the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) Freight Report.
- Building regional participation and support for the freight investment plan by working together with freight system partners.
- Managing the state's freight and passenger rail capital programs and operations.

## Freight Continues to Grow in Washington

Washington businesses and households depend on the reliable movement of goods using trucks, ships, rail, and air transportation. Across all modes and systems, the amount of freight tonnage is growing, which reflects positive economic growth and development for Washington. Based on the most recent data released by the Federal Highway Administration in 2002, over 477 million tons of freight worth more than \$371 billion was moved to, from, and within Washington State using all modes. Trucks carried most of the freight, both by tonnage (59%) and value (64%), in 2002. By 2035 freight movement in Washington is expected to increase to 975 million tons of freight worth over \$1.2 trillion.

As the state's economy and population continue to grow, WSDOT's Freight Systems Division will continue to stress the importance of freight system efficiency and its critical role in sustaining our competitive position, improving quality of life, and maximizing the benefits of public investment in freight transportation.



## Washington's Freight Systems Are Moving the Economy

Efficient, safe, and secure freight transportation helps support and drive Washington's diverse economy. Washington's freight systems are an interconnected network of highways and local roads, main-line and short-line railroads, waterways and deepwater ports, and air cargo facilities.

### Global Gateways

Washington is a gateway state, connecting Asian trade to the U.S. economy, Alaska to the continental 48 states, and Canada to the U.S. West Coast. About 70 percent of international goods entering Washington gateways continue on to the larger national market. Thirty percent become part of Washington's manufactured output or are distributed in the local retail system.

### Made in Washington

Our state's manufacturers and farmers rely on freight systems to ship Washington-made products to local customers, to the large national markets in California and on the east coast, and worldwide.



### Delivering Goods to You

Washington's retail distribution system is fundamentally crucial in delivering food, fuel, and consumer products to our citizens, with up to 80% percent of the truck trips operating in the local economies.

## Capital Rail Projects Are Moving Forward

*"The economy of the state will be best served by a policy of maintaining and encouraging a healthy rail freight system by creating mechanisms that keep rail freight lines operating if the benefits of the service outweigh the cost."* RCW 47.76.200

The economic vitality of Washington State requires a strong rail system capable of providing its businesses, ports, and farms with competitive access to North American and international markets.

WSDOT's State Rail and Marine Office has more than 40 capital rail projects proposed, funded, or underway to support freight and passenger rail mobility in Washington State. When completed, these capital rail projects will result in enhanced freight mobility, improved safety, reduced rail congestion, track upgrades, and improved frequency of Amtrak Cascades service. For more information on WSDOT's capital rail projects, go to: [www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/rail](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/rail).

Some of the key freight rail projects currently managed through the State Rail and Marine Office are:

### Palouse River and Coulee City Rail Line

In 2007 WSDOT completed the purchase of this debilitated rail line to save it from abandonment. The PCC is the state's longest short-line freight rail line, spanning four counties in eastern Washington. It handles nearly one-fifth of the state's grain harvest each year.

### The Washington Grain Train

WSDOT owns and manages a fleet of supplemental grain cars to help Washington farmers move grain to market.



### Produce Railcar Pool

Developed in 2006, this program helps carry Washington State produce to eastern states in refrigerated railcars.



## Amtrak Cascades Shows Steady Growth

Since 1994 WSDOT has worked with Amtrak, the state of Oregon, the Province of British Columbia, and the railroads to provide fast, reliable, and more frequent intercity passenger rail service along the I-5 corridor. Travelers ride Amtrak Cascades trains between Vancouver, B.C. and Eugene, Oregon and 15 cities in between.

Ridership on Amtrak Cascades has seen steady increases every year since its beginning in 1994, and is projected to grow substantially over the next several years. Service has been increased to include additional trains resulting in four daily round-trip trains between Seattle and Portland. A second train between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. is planned for summer 2008.

Washington State plans to improve Amtrak Cascades service over the next 20 years based on market demand, partnership investment, and legislative authorization. Improvements to track, safety systems, train equipment, and stations will reduce travel times, increase train frequency, and improve safety and reliability.

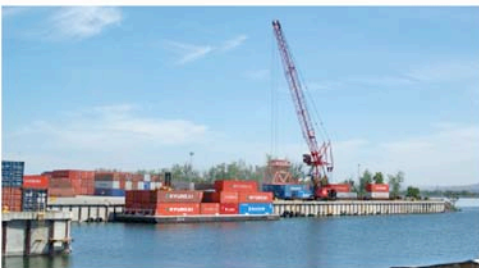


# Washington State Needs a Strategic Plan for its Freight Systems

## Strategic Investments Are Critical

The value and volume of goods moving in Washington's freight systems is huge and growing. Globalization, competitive industry trends, and new technologies are pushing freight volumes up twice as fast as Washington's overall population and traffic growth. Washington's economic future requires that we address freight constraints in all areas. The Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) proposes several strategic investments necessary to increase the state's economic vitality, improve our marketplace competitiveness, and ensure our resiliency:

- Address freight constraints in the Interstate 5 (I-5) corridor:
  - ◊ Continuously improve WSDOT's Traffic Management System and Incident Response Program.
  - ◊ Complete missing links in the major north-south freight corridor system: Highway 167 to I-5; Highway 167 and Highway 18; Highway 509 to I-5; complete Highway 18 to I-90.
  - ◊ Replace failing structures: Alaskan Way Viaduct and I-5 Columbia River Bridge.
- Identify, establish, and fund a statewide all-weather county road system.
- Complete the statewide Commercial Vehicle Information System Network (CVISN)/Weigh-In-Motion system.
- Create fuel pipeline capacity and distribution alternatives to meet long-term demand.
- Support growth in main line rail capacity and port-rail connections and preserve rail yards in metro areas.
- Support an ongoing, appropriate level of funding for regional freight projects that advance economic development.
- Maintain and improve the Columbia-Snake River barge system.



## Seven-step plan for building a strategic freight system plan

### 1. Quantify freight customer requirements

The first step in building a strategic freight plan requires determining freight needs of industry sectors, current freight system deficits, and economic growth opportunities through industry surveys and freight mobility research.

### 2. Identify existing performance gaps

Existing performance gaps include bottlenecks, chokepoints, accident locations, capacity constraints, and highway deficits and priorities.

### 3. Get good data

Very little system-wide data exists to inform decision makers about the freight systems in Washington State, and what does exist is not linked and shared among stakeholders.

### 4. Predict future freight demand

Industry sector and population growth are good predictors of truck trip growth across the state. WSDOT's Freight Systems Division is analyzing freight-dependent sectors and regions to estimate freight demand.

### 5. Value freight investments

WSDOT's Freight Systems Division is working with the University of Washington, Washington State University, and University of California Los Angeles' national Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events (CREATE) center to develop tools that will estimate economic output.

### 6. Develop solution proposals

WSDOT's Freight Systems Division is working with partners to develop solutions.

### 7. Prioritize solutions based on their ability to meet the state's goals

Investment priorities can be judged on how they meet the state's goals of increased economic growth for the state's regions and citizens, efficient use of public funds, and the preservation of the citizen's quality of life.

# Achievements Made in the Freight Systems Strategic Plan

## Freight project highlights

Here are some examples of the many freight-related projects in Washington that have been funded, are underway, or have been completed:

### Freight Transportation Resiliency Study

Phase I of this study allows the state to appropriately consider the requirements of the freight transportation system users and the state economy, when responding to disruptions to the transportation system.

### I-5 Columbia River Crossing

The I-5 Columbia River Crossing project is a bridge, transit, and highway improvement project for I-5 between Vancouver and Portland, which will address the congestion, mobility, and safety problems on I-5 between SR 500 in Vancouver and Columbia Boulevard in Portland.

### I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East

This project will improve I-90 by providing a safer, more efficient 6-lane interstate from Hyak to Easton and will reduce avalanche closures, increase capacity, stabilize slopes, and enhance freight mobility.

### Rail Bank & Emergent Freight Rail Assistance

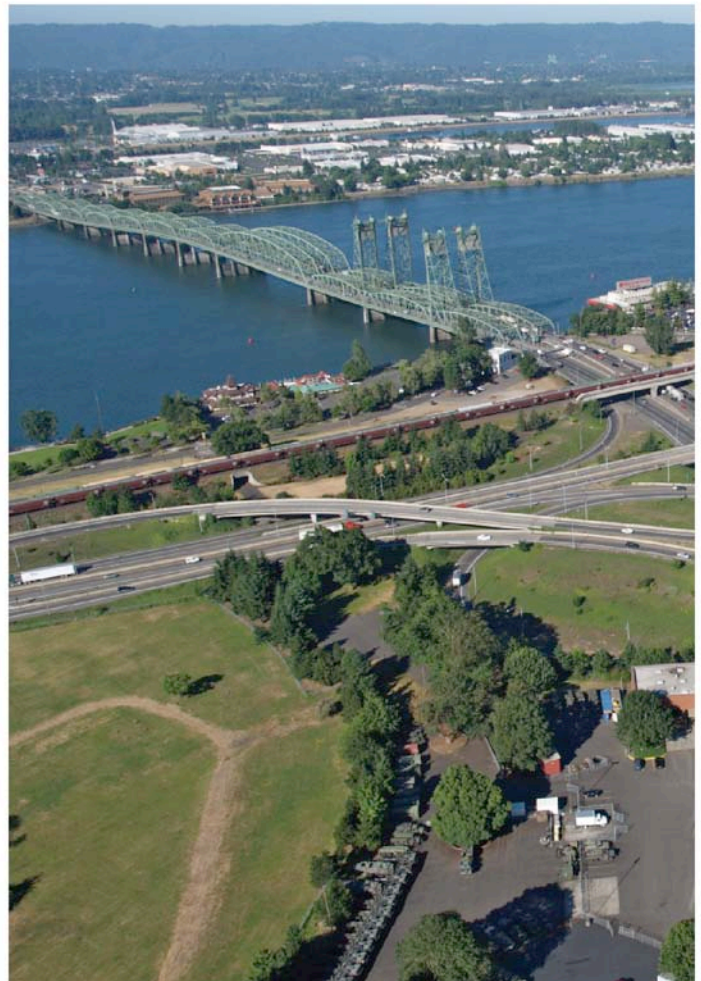
The Emergent Freight Rail Assistance provides funding for freight rail capital projects and the Rail Bank provides loans for smaller freight rail capital projects. Both programs are products of a regional economic investment by the legislature.

### SR 518 Sea-Tac Airport to I-5/I-405 Interchange

The SR 518 Sea-Tac Airport to I-5/I-405 Interchange Project improves existing mobility and safety, and accommodates projected airport traffic by adding a third eastbound lane on SR 518 between the North Airport Expressway and the I-5/I-405 Interchange.

## National Recognition for Washington State's Strategic Plan for Freight Systems

WSDOT's Freight Systems Division was recognized in 2006 by the Federal Highway Administration and American Planning Association for the development of the "Washington Transportation Plan Update: Moving Freight" strategic plan. This award recognizes outstanding initiatives across the country that involve innovation, community and public involvement, partnerships, demonstrated results, and effectiveness. The Freight Systems Division was recognized with an "Honorable Mention" award, which gave them the distinction of being ranked second in the nation in transportation planning excellence.



I-5 bridge crossing Columbia River at Vancouver to Portland, OR.