

- Strengthen WSDOT-ODOT collaboration for Amtrak Cascades, which allows the states to further leverage resources and improve efficiency through a corridor-wide joint management approach.
- Build upon and evaluate implementing strategies presented in the *Request for Information: Exploring New Options to Reduce Costs and Improve Amtrak Cascades Intercity Passenger Rail Service*. This includes smaller scale improvements to the existing service, engagement in public or private business partnerships, and coordination with host railroads to explore operational requirements and standards for new operators.
- Identify next set of strategic investment projects.
- Prepare, plan and budget for host railroad maintenance costs to be incurred starting in 2017.
- Continue to increase and update technology to improve customer experience.

Service outcomes for 2017

10

Reduction of 10 minutes travel time
The scheduled run time between Seattle and Portland will be reduced by 10 minutes, from 3 hours 30 minutes to 3 hours 20 minutes.

2

Two additional round trips
Two additional daily round trips will be added between Seattle and Portland, for a total of six daily round trips.

88

88% on-time performance
The quarterly on-time performance of the Amtrak Cascades passenger trains operating in Washington state will be improved to 88 percent.

Amtrak Cascades corridor map



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RAIL DIVISION ACTION PLAN – 2015



Washington’s rail system is an integral part of the multimodal transportation system that keeps people and business moving in Washington state. The system provides efficient transportation of both freight and passengers, and is critical to maintaining our economy, environment and quality of life. Traffic congestion on Interstate 5 continues to grow, which makes availability of rail service increasingly important to our transportation system.

The Washington State Department of Transportation plays an important role in rail transportation: the state sponsors Amtrak Cascades intercity passenger rail service, in coordination with the Oregon Department of Transportation, and leads construction of capital improvements for passenger and freight rail.

This Rail Division Action Plan serves as a strategic blueprint for Amtrak Cascades in 2015. The four overarching goals for the WSDOT Rail Division are:

Goal 1: Align with the strategic goals of WSDOT and the Governor’s Office

Results WSDOT, the agency’s strategic plan for 2014-2017, provides the vision, mission, values, goals, priority outcomes and strategies to guide the work of the agency. WSDOT and the Rail Division are implementing common-sense changes that foster a more efficient, effective and accountable government through strategic investments, modal integration, environmental stewardship, organizational strength, community engagement and smart technology.

Goal 2: Deliver capital projects on time and within budget

High-speed intercity passenger rail

The state of Washington was awarded nearly \$800 million in federal grants to improve Amtrak Cascades service.

Fourteen of WSDOT’s 20 federally funded projects to improve Amtrak Cascades service were under construction or completed in 2014. In 2015 all remaining projects will be in construction and scheduled for completion by 2017 or sooner.

Freight rail grant and loan projects

WSDOT’s Rail Division is responsible for administering the freight capital projects awarded through the Freight Rail Assistance Program and Freight Rail Investment Bank Program. For the 2013-2015 biennium, WSDOT provided program guidance through agreements and oversight to recipients to deliver 15 projects worth approximately \$8.4 million.

Goal 3: Manage costs and maintain revenue

WSDOT works with ODOT, Amtrak and other service partners to provide a quality service that customers value: comfort, convenience and clean, safe, reliable travel. Amenities include Wi-Fi and food and beverage service. At the same time, rising costs and increasing budget constraints require WSDOT to minimize the financial impact to the state while continuing to achieve WSDOT’s transportation goals. The Rail Division is identifying opportunities for cost reduction and developing priorities based on what will generate the best value relative to the resources required.

From Oct. 2013 to Sept. 2014, ticket revenues covered 58.1 percent of the state’s operating cost of the Amtrak Cascades service. Maintaining current revenue levels is key to minimizing the financial impact to the state. WSDOT continues to work with service partners and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the service in order to boost ridership.

Goal 4: Implement service enhancements and efficiency improvements

WSDOT is working with Amtrak and others to implement service enhancements, such as border crossing preclearance protocols to reduce travel time for trains returning to the U.S. from Vancouver, British Columbia. WSDOT is also working with a variety of program partners to implement service enhancements including, but not limited to, purchasing tickets and getting real-time schedule and platform loading information and better access to the onboard Wi-Fi system.

2015 STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES — The strategies below will help the Rail Division to achieve the 2015 goals to increase performance, enhance safety, increase access to Amtrak Cascades service, improve service quality and customer experience, increase revenue and decrease costs.

STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES						
	PERFORMANCE: OTP, RIDER, REVENUE	SAFETY	ACCESSIBILITY TO SERVICE	PASSENGER EXPERIENCE	REVENUE	COSTS	
WSDOT's capital construction program: Through 2017, work closely with partners to construct and complete nearly \$800 million in capital improvement projects funded by federal grants and managed by WSDOT. Project list: www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/rail .							
Revenue during busy construction season: Employ operational strategies during track construction to minimize service impacts and subsequent ridership loss.							
COSTS							
Operations: Participate in nationwide committee of states working to examine, understand and negotiate appropriate Amtrak costs to the state; update zero-based budget estimate as a baseline to determine appropriate costs to be charged to the states by Amtrak. This will support Washington's and Oregon's positions when negotiating with Amtrak to identify cost savings and target areas to seek alternatives. Evaluate and plan for impacts of federal requirements for passenger rail.							
Stations: Reduce costs through negotiation of leases with station owners; explore reducing costs through other partners.							
Food and beverage: Apply best practices to reduce costs and increase value and quality within existing contracts; increase sales and revenues.							
Contract compliance: Implement vigorous contract compliance measures to ensure greatest value for our service and identify cost reductions in the next operating contract. Seek contract efficiencies, such as streamlining reporting, invoicing, payments and issue resolutions. Provide oversight that improves performance.							
Holiday train service: Provide holiday service for highest-demand days and times to generate revenue to offset operating subsidies.							
Future plans: Continue or complete development of passenger rail planning and policy documents, such as the Service Development Plan, Fleet Management Plan and Station Stop Policy. These will inform future costs, budget needs and optimizations.							
Quality customer service: Improve Wi-Fi system performance and reporting processes. Add Amtrak Cascades real-time schedules to the WSDOT smart phone app.							
Preclearance: Participate in U.S. and Canada actions to implement preclearance to reduce travel times and increase demand for service from British Columbia to Seattle. Preclearance has the potential to reduce travel times by up to 10 minutes.							
MARKETING AND PARTNERSHIPS							
New and innovative marketing strategies: Help maximize ridership and revenue by raising awareness and benefits the Amtrak Cascades has to offer. Create new partnerships to promote Amtrak Cascades.							
Clipper Vacations and partnerships: Continue this public/private partnership and explore others that may offer special pricing discounts for travel partners that increase ridership and revenue on Amtrak Cascades route.							
Multimodal connectivity: Continue to explore increasing multimodal connectivity to all stations.							
Locomotive procurement: Coordinate with other states to get the best possible value for purchase and maintenance of eight new diesel-electric locomotives.							
2017 Launch Plan: Prepare for 2017 service, through quantifying, tracking and reporting on mission critical items that must be completed ahead of the two new additional round trips between Seattle and Portland.							