

Rail Monthly Update



February 2015 – in review

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Progress continues on Amtrak Cascades high-speed rail projects

The ARRA-funded Cascades high-speed rail program now has 11 projects in construction and 5 completed of the 20 total projects. The remaining projects will begin construction this year and all must be completed by 2017. Recent updates include:

- **Blaine-Swift Customs Facility:** Phase 1 construction for this project started in February 2015. Improvements include adding a 9,000-foot-long main track and converting the existing main track into a second siding, which will allow freight to pull out of the way of passenger trains. Work is expected to be completed in July.
- **Vancouver-Port Access Rail Improvements:** Work is expected to wrap up next month on this project, which expands rail access at the port property and eases congestion between freight and passenger rail cars. This will be the sixth completed project. It's one of three projects improving rail in the Vancouver area.
- **Kelso Martin's Bluff:** Final design has begun for both the New Siding and Kelso to Longview Junction projects. Construction on these two projects is slated for this summer. Construction continues on the Toteff Siding Extension project, which will be complete later this year. The projects will alleviate congestion near the ports of Kalama and Longview, enhancing the passenger rail experience.
- **New Locomotives:** WSDOT hosted the first of three Final Design Review workshops in Seattle this month. Stakeholders from around the country and the world converged on Seattle to participate in the five-day workshop.
- **Point Defiance Bypass:** Construction continues on Nisqually Crossover (Tract A), the southernmost part that will divert passenger trains onto the new Point Defiance Bypass along Interstate 5. Work is scheduled to be complete this summer. The design is now complete for the Track and Signal work (Tract B), and WSDOT is reviewing comments from stakeholders. For the Freighthouse Square Station, the WSDOT design team is meeting monthly with the City of Tacoma's citizen advisory committee subgroup, wrapping up responses to 30 percent design comments, and starting 60 percent design.

Landslide mitigation projects move forward

Final design on the remaining four of the six landslide mitigation projects between Seattle and

Everett is anticipated to be complete this spring. This will clear the way for construction this year for the catchment walls on the lower half of the projects. The other two slope stabilization projects were completed in 2014. The work includes slope stabilization, slide containment walls, slide detection fences and drainage and erosion control improvements. The goal is to reduce slides in the historically slide-prone area, thus reducing passenger rail disruptions.

Dignitaries attend Tukwila Station Dedication; Rider Appreciation event follows

During the Tukwila Station Dedication event in February, WSDOT Assistant Secretary Amy Scarton described the station's multimodal connectivity with communities and the accomplishments that multiple partnerships can achieve through a project like Tukwila. Other speakers included Senator Patty Murray, Congressman Adam Smith, Tukwila Mayor Jim Haggerton, and Sound Transit Board Chair Dow Constantine. WSDOT teamed up with Sound Transit to hand out Amtrak Cascades and Sound Transit materials to nearly 1,000 passengers, and answer questions about the services during the Rider Appreciation event.