

Station Stop Policy Guidance Document

M 3125

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Contents

Chapter 1	Guidance Overview	1-1
1.1	Summary	1-1
1.2	Organization of Guidance	1-1
1.3	Amtrak Cascades service overview	1-2
1.4	Developing Amtrak Cascades Station Stop Policy and Guidance	1-3
Chapter 2	Stakeholders and Partnerships	2-1
2.1	Roles and Responsibilities Delivering the Service	2-2
2.2	Other Stakeholders Indirectly Involved	2-4
Chapter 3	Evaluation Process	3-1
3.1	Key Terms with Special Meaning	3-1
3.2	Process Summary	3-2
3.3	Comprehensive Process	3-5
3.4	Step 1: Concept Development	3-6
3.5	Step 2: Initial Feasibility	3-9
3.6	Step 3: Detailed Feasibility Study	3-14
3.7	Analysis Complete and Next Steps	3-17
Chapter 4	Examples and Other Considerations	4-1
4.1	Examples	4-1
4.2	Other Considerations	4-2
Appendices		
Appendix A	Station Stop Policy Statement	A-1
Appendix B	Acronyms and Terms	B-1
Appendix C	Contact List and Resources	C-1
Appendix D	References	D-1
Appendix E	Cascades Station Ownership	E-1

1.1 Summary

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) adopted a corridor-wide policy on station stops for the state-sponsored Amtrak Cascades service on June 1, 2016. The Station Stop Policy formally establishes a consistent and transparent process and approach for determining the value and benefit of proposed station stop changes to the Amtrak Cascades corridor.

This guidance is a companion document to the policy. It details an information gathering and evaluation process to inform decision making regarding proposals to change station stops for Amtrak Cascades service. The process was developed in coordination with an advisory committee and stakeholders who represent a variety of perspectives along the Amtrak Cascades corridor. It is a process the service providers (e.g., WSDOT, ODOT) will follow and is intended to assist local governments, transportation agencies and authorities, communities and other stakeholders in the development, clarification and review of station stop proposals.

It is important to recognize that use of this guidance does not guarantee agreement or approval regarding proposals, and does not eliminate the need for coordination with WSDOT and ODOT.

The guidance document is subject to periodic revision. Please verify you are using the latest version, based on its version number and month of issue, as listed on WSDOT's Publications¹ webpage.

1.2 Organization of Guidance

The guidance document is organized to provide users with background information in the first chapters and more detailed and technical information in the later chapters and appendices. The contents of each chapter include:

Chapter 1: Guidance Overview

[Chapter 1](#) provides an overview of Amtrak Cascades service, summarizes the process for how the Station Stop Policy and Guidance Document was developed, and introduces the corridor-wide approach for developing and assessing the feasibility of station stop proposals.

Chapter 2: Stakeholders and Partnerships

[Chapter 2](#) provides an overview of the stakeholders and partnerships and their roles and responsibilities regarding Amtrak Cascades service and station stop proposals.

¹ www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/manuals/fulltext/M3125/SSPGD.pdf.

Chapter 3: Evaluation Process

Chapter 3 is considered the “heart” of the document. It presents the evaluation process and provides a three-step approach for determining the value and benefit of station stop proposals.

Chapter 4: Examples and Other Considerations

Chapter 4 provides examples, suggestions and resources that will help proponents through the feasibility process, as well as other things to consider regarding a proposal.

Appendices

The appendices contain supplementary information regarding use of this document.

1.3 Amtrak Cascades service overview

Amtrak Cascades provides a unique transportation service in the Pacific Northwest and is distinct from other rail services that use the corridor, such as Sound Transit’s Sounder serving commuter travel in the greater Puget Sound area; and Amtrak’s Coast Starlight (Seattle to Los Angeles) and the Empire Builder (Seattle/Portland to Chicago) providing long-distance service.

Amtrak Cascades is a state-supported service and operates on the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor (PNWRC), one of 11 rail corridors designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation for high-speed intercity passenger rail service.² With 18 station stops along the 467-mile route between Vancouver, British Columbia and Eugene, Oregon, Amtrak Cascades service plays a vital role in the Pacific Northwest’s multimodal transportation system and provides an important transportation option for regional travelers along the I-5 corridor.

Investment and Funding

Washington State’s investment in Amtrak intercity passenger rail service began in 1994, followed by Oregon in 1995. After incremental infrastructure improvements by the states, as well as other partners, the service became officially known as Amtrak Cascades in 1999. Investment in the service continues today. With the 2017 completion of nearly \$800 million in federally funded passenger rail service improvements,³ Amtrak Cascades will increase reliability, decrease travel times, and improve frequency of service in the corridor. Specific service outcomes are tied to these grant monies, including on-time reliability and adherence to designated travel times.



**Amtrak Cascades Stations
on the PNWRC**

² The PNWRC was designated as a high-speed rail corridor in 1992. www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0140.

³ Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, administered by the Federal Railroad Administration, were used to upgrade existing rail infrastructure and signal systems, relocate an existing station and purchase new locomotives.

The funding structure for Amtrak Cascades service changed dramatically with implementation of the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA), which eliminated federal funding as of October 1, 2013.⁴ Today, Washington and Oregon are responsible for the direct costs to operate the service. These costs are covered by a combination of ticket revenues and state funding. Investing public funds comes with commitments and obligations that require future projects, such as changes to station stops, to align with these investments.

1.4 Developing Amtrak Cascades Station Stop Policy and Guidance

Determining where and when a train stops involves a delicate balancing act. There is a need to provide travelers with sufficient access to the service, all the while maintaining a total travel time that is attractive to customers. On average, a new stop adds approximately five minutes to the train schedule.⁵ A key finding from a previous study indicated that longer travel times can outweigh potential ridership gains from adding stations, which result in incremental losses to larger markets (e.g., Vancouver, British Columbia, Seattle and Portland) traveling through the station.⁶

Corridor Administration

WSDOT and ODOT are responsible for administering the operation of Amtrak Cascades service in which Amtrak is the contracted service operator. Both agencies are accountable for the successful management of the service. This involves meeting federal obligations, state requirements and passenger expectations through successful handling of partnerships, budgets, performance goals and customer service needs.

WSDOT and ODOT operate under a corridor management work plan designed as a unified framework to maximize existing resources and ensure responsible use of public investments.⁷ With support from ODOT, WSDOT developed an interim policy on station stops in 2013.⁸ The Interim Policy established a process for addressing and evaluating new stop proposals for Amtrak Cascades and was the first step toward establishing a transparent, fair process for communities to follow. Following completion of each state's rail plan,⁹ the agencies began work on finalizing a corridor-wide policy.

4 PRIIA is a federal act that eliminated federal funding provided through Amtrak for state-supported intercity passenger rail programs. As a result, states are required to absorb all of the costs to operate the service.
www.highspeed-rail.org/pages/priiasection209.aspx.

5 This additional schedule time accounts for train deceleration, station dwell time, and train acceleration.

6 Amtrak Cascades New Stop Evaluation – Auburn.

7 Cascades Rail Corridor Management Workplan – January 2013.

8 Amtrak Cascades New Stop Evaluation – Auburn

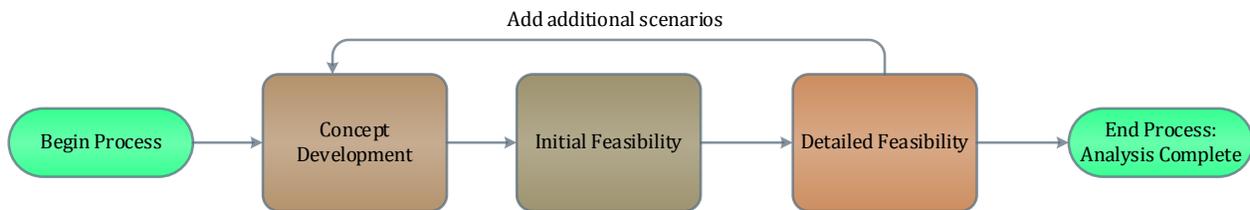
9 Each state rail plan articulates long-term goals, principles and policy recommendations to achieve the vision for the respective rail system. See [Appendix D](#) for links to these rail plans.

Stakeholder Participation

Between October 2015 and May 2016, WSDOT and ODOT convened a Station Stop Policy advisory committee comprised of 30 individuals representing regional and local government agencies, station owners, transit authorities, state legislatures, Amtrak, and host railroads from Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia. This group met on a regular basis and was instrumental in developing a final corridor-wide policy, as well as creating this policy guidance document. In addition, the agencies engaged key stakeholders, including, but not limited to, regional and metropolitan planning organizations and passenger rail advocacy groups, by providing periodic project updates and opportunity to review draft final versions of the policy and guidance document.

Final Policy and Evaluation Process

With advisory committee and stakeholder participation, WSDOT and ODOT developed a final policy that established an evaluation process to help guide development and decision-making for station stop proposals. This process outlines the pertinent information needed to develop the data and facts needed to assess the value and benefits of the proposal. Evaluation of a proposal is broken down into a three-step feasibility assessment process. Each of these steps includes sub-steps which allow proponents to understand the viability of a proposal early and provides the opportunity to decide whether or not to continue on to the next step. [Figure 1.1](#) illustrates the overall process, including the three major steps.



Feasibility Assessment Process
Figure 1.1

Feasibility Assessment and Evaluation Criteria

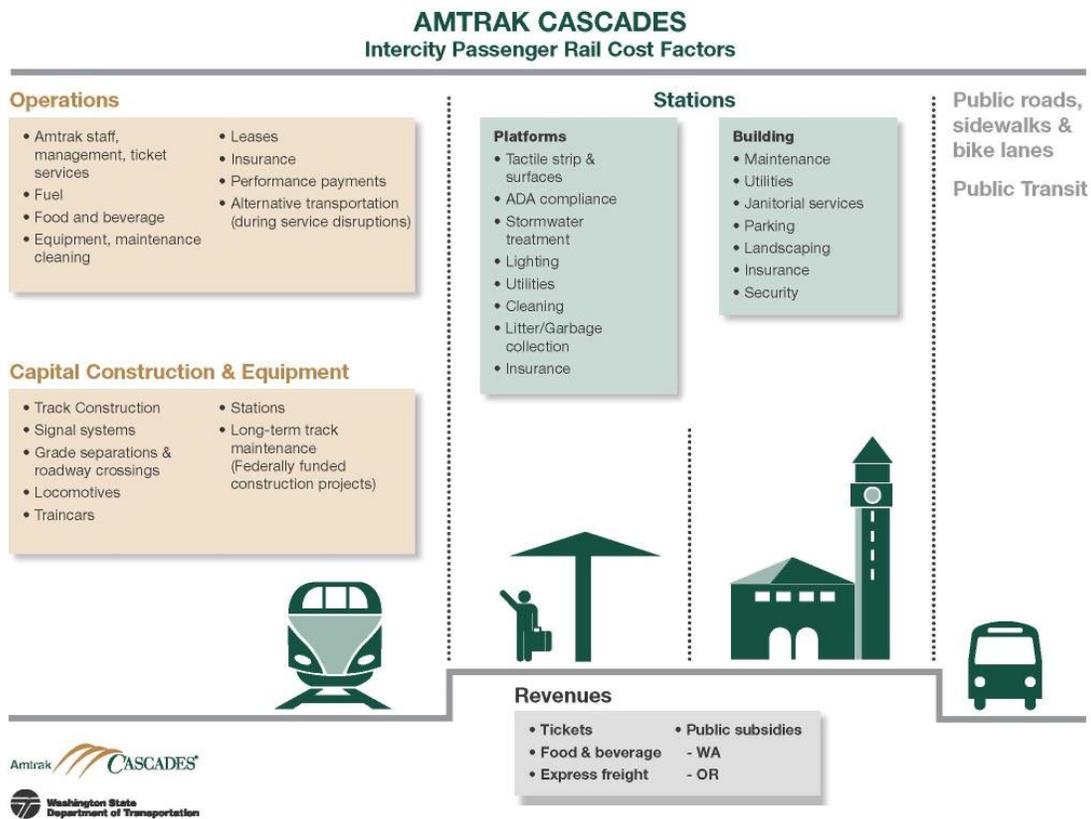
The process begins at the concept development step where the proponent defines the proposal. During initial feasibility and detailed feasibility, the proponent assesses the proposal using the following criteria:

- A. Consistency with Corridor and Agency Goals
- B. Customer Demand
- C. Operational Feasibility
- D. Station Suitability
- E. Interconnectivity
- F. Fiscal Viability

Although the same criteria are used in the initial and detailed feasibility steps, the complexity of the analysis increases as each step is pursued. Thus, each step has different focuses for outcomes, level of analysis, and level of effort—some qualitative and some quantitative. These evaluation criteria are used to assess both the benefits and disadvantages of a station stop proposal. The purpose of the feasibility assessment is not to provide a definitive “yes” or “no,” but to provide the data and facts to help inform decision makers in their project selection process. The evaluation process is detailed fully in [Chapter 3](#).

Before undertaking the task of a feasibility study, it is important to have an understanding of the various entities directly and indirectly involved in delivering Amtrak Cascades service. This chapter provides an overview of roles and responsibilities for each entity and serves as important background material to understand their level of involvement as applied to feasibility studies.

Providing Amtrak Cascades service requires involvement of a variety of public and private entities that cross domestic and international borders. These functional partnerships are typically managed through constant collaboration, contracts and agreements to ensure smooth operation of the service. They include Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, Amtrak, host railroads, station owners and international customs and border control agencies. Changes to station stops must be coordinated through all elements of this network. Other partnerships have equally important, but less formal, roles and include the Federal Railroad Administration, regional and local transportation authorities, transit agencies, and local jurisdictions.



Intercity Passenger Rail Cost Factors for Amtrak Cascades¹

Figure 2.1

¹ The cost factors for Amtrak Cascades provide insight into the type of activities necessary to deliver intercity passenger rail. All of these parts work together to deliver the total customer experience in intercity passenger rail.

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities Delivering the Service

Entities with direct responsibility to deliver the service are outlined below. These responsibilities range from funding and administration to daily operation of the service to infrastructure ownership. The following is the list of partners most-involved in stations.

Agency/Sister Agency

WSDOT and ODOT jointly administer and fund the service and are responsible and accountable for the successful management of Amtrak Cascades service on the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor (PNWRC).

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

The state of Washington provides administration and funding for four (six starting in 2017) daily round trips between Seattle and Portland, and two daily round trips between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia. WSDOT is the entity accountable for deciding Amtrak Cascades station stops on the PNWRC within its borders and, in consultation with the appropriate decision makers, within British Columbia.

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)

The state of Oregon provides administration and funding for two daily round trips between Portland and Eugene. Oregon also funds the operation of the Cascades POINT, dedicated bus service that enhances train service frequencies and provides access to communities not directly served by rail, thereby improving transportation access and boosting the overall utility of passenger rail service in Oregon. ODOT is the entity accountable for deciding Amtrak Cascades station stops within its borders.

Amtrak

Amtrak (National Railroad Passenger Corporation) was created by the federal Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970 to assume the common carrier obligations of the private railroads. Amtrak is a private for-profit corporation with the federal government as its majority stockholder. WSDOT and ODOT have agreements with Amtrak to operate Amtrak Cascades service, including ticketing, station and onboard staffing and equipment maintenance. These agreements address service objectives including schedules (frequency, travel times and station stops), equipment and onboard passenger amenities. Amtrak in turn maintains agreements with the host railroads and station owners for use of their facilities. The costs associated with operating Amtrak Cascades service are paid to Amtrak by WSDOT and ODOT.

In addition to Amtrak Cascades, Amtrak operates two National Network trains in the Pacific Northwest: the Coast Starlight (daily between Seattle-Portland-Los Angeles) and the Empire Builder (daily Portland/Seattle-Spokane-Minneapolis-Chicago). Because of Amtrak's direct role in operating the service, they are involved in proposals that affect how the service operates.

Host Railroads

The rail line that Amtrak Cascades operates on is largely owned by two freight railroads. With short exceptions, Union Pacific Railroad (UP) owns the rail line between Eugene and Portland and BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) owns the rail line between Portland and Vancouver, British Columbia. As owners, each has its own set of requirements that can affect the outcome of station stop proposals.² For example, they determine if there is sufficient track availability and whether changes in schedules are acceptable. In addition to not incurring additional costs or disrupting existing service on the rail corridor, the host (owning) railroad has high interest in the development of station plan elements that are on or immediately adjacent to their right of way.

From an operations perspective, BNSF and UP are responsible for managing the operational capacity of their rail lines and control the majority of dispatching (for all users of the system) along the PNWRC.³ Any changes to passenger service must be evaluated by these railroads to understand the benefits and impacts to freight operations.

Station Owners

Currently, there are 18 station stops on the PNWRC that serve Amtrak Cascades: one in British Columbia, twelve in Washington and five in Oregon. Stations vary greatly in terms of ownership, age, architecture, staffing, and operation. They range from simple bus stop type shelters to historic restored depots to relatively modern buildings. Stations are generally comprised of four main elements: the facility, the area adjacent to the facility, the platform, and the tracks. These elements are owned by any number of different entities, including cities, counties, states, ports, transit authorities, and host railroads. Amtrak coordinates and contracts with owners and bills WSDOT and ODOT for direct costs related to Amtrak Cascades service. See [Appendix E](#) for information regarding ownership of current stations. When considering proposals that affect existing stations, either directly or indirectly, the station owners are important stakeholders.

² Available when requested by a proponent

³ Canadian National Railway (CN) is responsible for dispatching between the Fraser River Bridge and Pacific Central Station in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Sound Transit (ST)

ST provides a variety of services directly and indirectly for Amtrak Cascades. Track ownership on between Tacoma and Nisqually, Wash., means that ST is a host railroad for a short portion of the PNWRC. ST's Sounder commuter trains share track with Amtrak Cascades trains between Everett and Lakewood, Wash. ST is a station owner for a number of stations serving both Amtrak Cascades passenger service and Sounder commuter service. In addition, ST provides regional transit services that help provide multimodal connectivity for Amtrak Cascades passengers. Any proposals that affect Sounder operations or facilities must be coordinated with ST.

Immigration and Customs

Since the Amtrak Cascades service crosses into Canada, the international rail border crossing between the United States and Canada is critical to making international travel possible. Border crossing services are provided by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). Passengers must clear customs prior to entering the country. Any proposals that affect border crossing operations must be coordinated with these national authorities.

2.2 Other Stakeholders Indirectly Involved

There are also additional partners in the service that have different types of involvement that, while important, are less direct or less frequent. Indirect stakeholders are engaged on a case-by-case basis.

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

The FRA is the U.S. Department of Transportation's agency responsible for the oversight of the nation's freight and passenger rail service. FRA's passenger rail activities include:

- Administering federal grants to Amtrak and to states for intercity passenger rail capital improvement projects and high-speed rail development—including those along the PNWRC.
- Supporting the U.S. Secretary of Transportation's membership on Amtrak's board of directors by providing guidance and analysis of intercity passenger rail services and high-speed rail programs.
- Responsibility for the safety and security of passenger and freight train service.

British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (BCMOTI)

BCMOTI coordinates with WSDOT and ODOT regarding operations of Amtrak Cascades service in Canada. For example, BCMOTI staff participates in the on-time performance task force and were on the advisory committee for WSDOT's State Rail Plan. The states and province collaborate on cross-border passenger rail issues and have a history of success in many areas.

Cities and Counties

Municipalities along the PNWRC are served by Amtrak Cascades, and in turn represent much of the employment, population base and attractions that drive the customer demand for intercity passenger rail. Not only does this service include the cities where stations are located, but also communities and destinations within the larger service area of Amtrak Cascades station stops. In some locations, the municipality owns the Amtrak Cascades station.

Regional and Local Transportation Authorities

The participation of transportation authorities is particularly relevant where intermodal and multimodal facilities are present or planned. The development of, or changes to, a station may impact local transportation operations, financial support and service agreements. As a generalization of interconnectivity partnerships, WSDOT and ODOT work with other transit groups to help enhance the interconnectivity of Amtrak Cascades throughout the corridor.

Interest and Advocacy Groups

A variety of formal and informal groups take an interest in intercity passenger rail, and Amtrak Cascades in particular. These groups provide value by creating interest in intercity passenger rail travel, collecting feedback and sharing important information about the service. They have no formal relationship with Amtrak Cascades, but do serve as an important conduit and advocate for the service.

[Chapter 3](#) is the heart of the guidance document, containing the three-step evaluation process. You will find the relevant types of scenarios, key terms, a summary of the process, detailed guidance on completing the three-step process (including links to resources), and a brief summary of what comes after the evaluation process is complete.

Principles of least cost planning¹ guided the development of the evaluation process for station stop proposals. At its core, least cost planning is about comparative analysis and cost effectiveness. The framework allows for the evaluation of one or more scenarios regarding proposed changes to station stops on the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor (PNWRC):

- Add a stop.
- Remove a stop.
- Introduce or remove a “skip-stop service”² for one or more trains.
- Introduce or remove “express service”³ for one or more trains.
- Relocate a station to a different location.
- Any combination of the above options.⁴

The scenarios are evaluated against existing conditions (the baseline scenario) to understand how the proposed change affects Amtrak Cascades service, both positively and negatively.

What is Least Cost Planning?

Least cost planning (LCP) is an approach to making planning decisions that considers a variety of possible solutions that lead to the desired results and identifies those that offer the least cost. Both WSDOT and ODOT use LCP principles throughout the project development process.

For WSDOT, LCP and practical design are the two parts of its Practical Solutions strategy. Using this approach enables more flexible and sustainable transportation investment decisions.

ODOT has integrated LCP methodology into its planning tool called Mosaic.

3.1 Key Terms with Special Meaning

This guidance document contains many terms, some that may not be familiar to everyone. These terms are listed with their definitions in [Appendix B](#). However, due to their frequency of use and possible misinterpretation, two terms of special interest are highlighted here:

- **Lead Agency/Sister Agency** – This term is specific to the Amtrak Cascades service administrators (as described in [Chapter 2](#)): WSDOT or ODOT.
- **Proponent** – Any entity⁵ proposing changes to Amtrak Cascades station stops.

¹ See [Appendix D](#) for additional information.

² “Skip-stop service” is a service pattern which reduces travel times by having some trains not stop at all stations.

³ “Express service” is a service pattern where trains make a very limited number of stops (less than skip-stop), allowing further reduction in travel time between major metropolitan areas.

⁴ The intent here is to provide for a wide range of proposals. Multiples of the same items may apply here and elsewhere throughout this chapter.

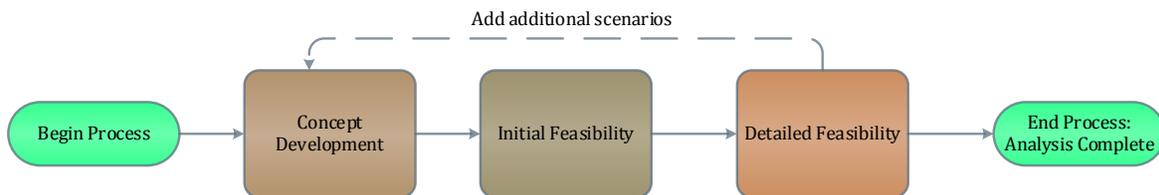
⁵ An entity is considered any public agency (including WSDOT and ODOT) or a publicly sponsored entity.

3.2 Process Summary

The evaluation process involves defining the proposal and assessing the feasibility of a given proposal. A feasibility assessment (i.e., study) is an analysis of the viability of an idea. It focuses on helping answer the essential question of “should we proceed with the proposed project idea?” All activities within the study are directed toward helping answer this question. Feasibility assessments provide the data and facts to help inform decision makers in their project selection processes.

The Three Steps

As illustrated in the Feasibility Flowchart below, there are three major steps in this process: Concept Development, Initial Feasibility and Detailed Feasibility. Although this flowchart depicts a linear process, it is important to recognize that, at the conclusion of each step, an evaluation should occur to determine if it is wise to progress to the next step. Moreover, the process should be completed for each identified scenario, with ongoing evaluation throughout each of the steps. This helps proponents identify potential obstacles early on, thus saving time and money, which is especially important for proponents with limited resources.



Feasibility Flowchart
Figure 3.1

Roles and Responsibilities within Feasibility Assessments

Determining the feasibility of any given scenario involves a variety of stakeholders, each with different roles at different times. Identifying roles and responsibilities clarifies expectations. An easy way to illustrate this seemingly complex network is to use a project management tool known as a RACI⁶ matrix.

A RACI matrix indicates who is involved and the type of involvement each individual has. Each letter in the acronym represents a different type of involvement:

- **R** – Responsible – Identifies *who* is responsible for performing the work (note: responsible entities may contract the work to others).
- **A** – Accountable – Identifies *who* is ultimately accountable to the decision makers for the correct and thorough completion of the work.
- **C** – Consulted – Identifies *who* is consulted during performance of the work (typically key stakeholders or subject matter experts).
- **I** – Informed – Identifies *who* needs to be updated as work progresses.

⁶ See [Appendix D](#) for more information.

Table 3.1 illustrates the RACI matrix developed for the three major steps of the feasibility process. For convenience, example RACI matrices have been developed for each of the major steps outlined in this chapter. Roles and responsibilities depicted in these RACI tables may apply to most scenarios; however, a separate RACI should be established for each proposal being developed.

Feasibility Step	Proponent	Lead Agency	Amtrak	Host Railroad	Sister Agency	Station Owner/Local Jurisdiction
Concept	R	A/R	I	I	I	I/C
Initial	R	A	I	I	I	I/C
Detailed	R	A/R	I/R	I/R	I	I/C

Responsible/Accountable/Consulted/Informed

Feasibility Process – RACI Matrix
Table 3.1

Process Components

Each of the major steps of the feasibility process includes essential elements that proponents need to address. Guidance is most closely tuned to proposals that would add stops, and additional criteria may apply on a case-by-case basis.

Concept Development is framed around a set of questions and interaction with the appropriate lead agency (WSDOT or ODOT). Not only do the questions assist the proponent in defining the proposal, the question and answer format helps the proponent understand the many aspects of Amtrak Cascades service. Concept Development is covered in [Section 3.4](#).

The Initial and Detailed Feasibility steps are based on evaluating scenarios using six distinct criteria. During Initial Feasibility, evaluation is conducted based on easily-accessed indicators. As the process progresses to Detailed Feasibility, the analysis is much more refined and closer scrutiny is necessary to answer the questions. Working first through the Initial Feasibility step and then progressing to the Detailed Feasibility step allows a proponent to assess feasibility in a way that builds on available information first.

Table 3.2 provides an overview of the evaluation criteria and representative questions that proponents will address during the Initial and Detailed Feasibility steps, along with a representative level of analysis during each step.⁷ Complete criteria for Initial Feasibility are covered in [Section 3.5](#), and Detailed Feasibility criteria are covered in [Section 3.6](#).

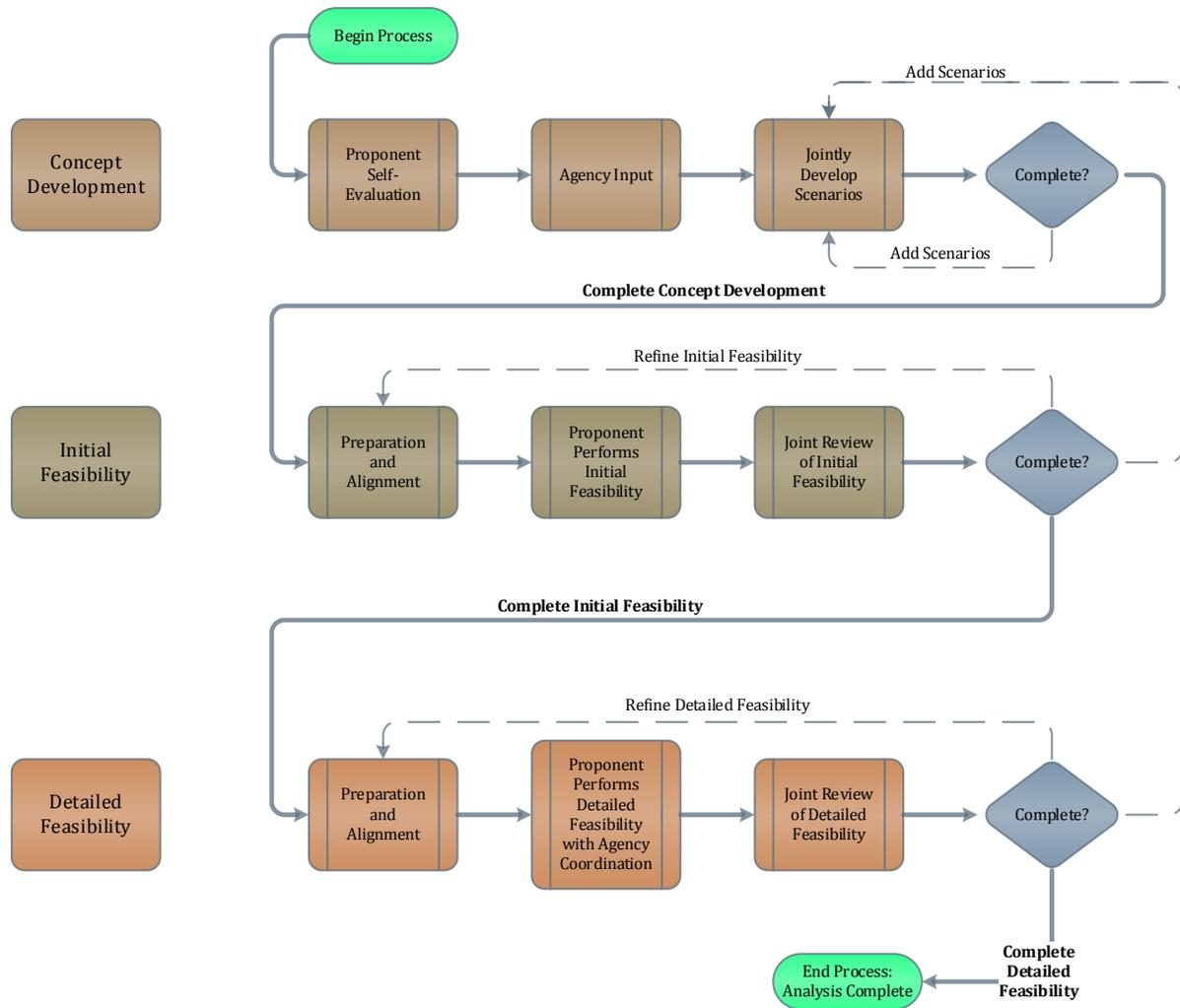
⁷ Initial Feasibility evaluates the criteria from a qualitative perspective; whereas Detailed Feasibility more closely relates to a quantitative analysis.

Criteria	Representative Questions	Initial Feasibility	Detailed Feasibility
A. Consistency with Corridor and Agency Goals	Is the proposal consistent with state/provincial transportation goals and policies and the state rail plans for Washington and Oregon?	Assess	Confirm / Update
B. Operational Feasibility	Are changes consistent with commitments outlined in applicable agreements? How do the changes affect other trains/users of the system?	Preliminary Analysis	Model
C. Customer Demand	How many riders can be expected to use the station stop? How will the stop affect total ridership for the corridor?	Preliminary Analysis	Model
D. Station Suitability	Is the proposal consistent with applicable land use policies and plans? What site changes would be needed to serve Amtrak Cascades safely and efficiently?	Preliminary Analysis	Detailed Analysis
E. Interconnectivity	In what ways would the proposal improve multimodal connectivity for passengers? How will the proposal contribute to or reduce transportation related societal benefits (net positive or net detriment)?	Indicators	Detailed Analysis
F. Fiscal Viability	Based on anticipated costs and revenue, is the effect of the proposal positive, neutral or negative?	Indicators	Assess

Evaluation Criteria for Initial and Detailed Feasibility
Table 3.2

3.3 Comprehensive Process

As described earlier in this section, although the evaluation process has a defined beginning and endpoint, assessing the feasibility of a proposal is not always linear. It can or may involve revisiting steps throughout the process or discontinuing the process, based on agency input and decisions by the proponent. Therefore, while there is a primary path, there also are several alternate paths that may be taken throughout the feasibility process. Figure 3.2 illustrates the different paths the process may follow to reach the endpoint.



Legend for Flowchart

- Process
- Subprocess
- Decision
- Start/End

Comprehensive Feasibility Flowchart
Figure 3.2

Primary path (depicted by a solid line)

- The primary path through the process begins with Concept Development, continues through Initial Feasibility and Detailed Feasibility before the analysis is considered complete.

Alternate paths (depicted by a dashed line)

- **Exit Process** – While not shown on the diagram, a proponent may choose to terminate the process part way through. This choice may result from direction provided by decision makers, lack of funding, or input from assessment of the likely outcomes. The decision to do no further analysis may be wisest choice at the time, but still allows for the option to continue later and re-start the process at the point it was left off.
- **Add Scenarios** – It may be necessary to refine a concept or analyze new/additional scenarios.
- **Refine Feasibility** – Based on review of initial or detailed feasibility, it may be necessary to conduct additional analysis to properly complete a given step. Note that the path links back through the “preparation and alignment” sub-step. Doing so ensures the additional analysis is sufficiently scoped.

Each of the major steps and associated sub-steps are described in more detail in the next three sections.

3.4 Step 1: Concept Development

During concept development the proposal to be assessed is specifically defined, making it the beginning step in any feasibility assessment. Concept development determines each of the relevant scenarios and documents the reasons *why* the proponent would like to see the proposed changes to the service.

Feasibility Step	Proponent	Lead Agency	Amtrak	Host Railroad	Sister Agencies	Station Owner/Local Jurisdiction
Concept Development	R	A/R	I	I	I	I/C
Proponent Self Evaluation	R	A/C	I	I	I	C
Agency Input	C	A/R	C	I	I	-
Creating Scenarios	R	A/R	I	-	I	I

Responsible/Accountable/Consulted/Informed

Concept Development – Example Stakeholder RACI Matrix
Table 3.3

Before starting the process, two key points need to be addressed:

- Proponent identifies the lead agency:
 - WSDOT is the lead agency for proposals between Vancouver, British Columbia and Portland, Oregon.
 - ODOT is the lead agency for proposals between Portland and Eugene, Oregon.
- Proponent secures any necessary funding for concept development.

Proponent Self-Evaluation

After identifying an interest in pursuing a station stop study, the proponent should review and answer as many of the following questions as possible:

- Why is this effort being initiated?
 - Who would like to see this proposal studied?
 - Why is it of interest and priority?
 - What benefits will this study bring to your community?
- What are the key indicators for you (the proponent) and your stakeholders? For example:
 - What are the likely “go” triggers that would lead to prioritizing resources to support this effort?
 - What are the likely “no-go” triggers that would lead to focusing limited resources elsewhere?
- What passenger rail services are affected by the proposal?
 - Amtrak Cascades.
 - Long-distance Amtrak service (Coast Starlight and/or Empire Builder).
 - Long-distance VIA Rail Canada.
 - Commuter rail.
- What are the service changes being proposed?
 - Add a stop.
 - Remove a stop.
 - Introduce or remove a “skip-stop” for one or more trains.
 - Introduce or remove “express service” for one or more trains.
 - Relocate a station to a different location.
 - A combination of items above.
- Describe the physical characteristics adjacent to the proposed/existing stop and how they may be affected. For example:
 - Number of adjacent tracks and track alignment (e.g., tangent or on a curve?).
 - Existing platforms.
 - Existing station building.
 - Areas adjacent to the rail line/existing station.
 - Distance to adjacent at-grade crossings?
- What segments are affected?
 - Between Vancouver, British Columbia and Seattle.
 - Between Seattle and Portland.
 - Between Portland and Eugene.

- What other stops may be affected by this change, and how?
 - Which stops? Adjacent stops, anchor stops (metropolitan areas of Portland, Seattle and/or Vancouver, British Columbia), and/or intermediate stops.
 - In what way? Shifted ridership, skipped stops, new markets, etc.

With answers to the above questions, make contact with the appropriate lead agency (see [Appendix C](#) for contact information).

Agency Input

With an understanding of what the proponent is trying to study, the lead agency should be given an opportunity to provide feedback, reach out to agency partners and collect comments to submit back to the proponent.

These comments will be aimed at highlighting areas of greatest importance in the study, areas most likely to find challenges and areas most likely to show benefits. The purpose of these comments is to help a proponent understand the context of the proposal, to identify its likely effects on the Amtrak Cascades service and to provide some early indication of “go/no-go” triggers.

Creating Scenarios

Based on the above information, scenarios will be created to scope existing conditions and proposed changes. The “baseline” scenario details existing conditions (or conditions for near-term “funded” changes to the service, if applicable). Each additional scenario looks at some kind of change from the baseline. The lead agency may require additional scenarios at its discretion.

Each scenario shall include:

- A description of the scenario.
- An explanation of why it is needed.
- Preliminary timetables (to be refined during initial feasibility).

A completed concept will contain the following elements:

- Concept – Succinctly describing the proposed changes.
- Agency Input – Incorporating feedback received from the lead agency.
- Scenarios – Outlining baseline and proposed scenarios for study.

3.5 Step 2: Initial Feasibility

Initial feasibility is a preliminary screening exercise to help identify strengths and weaknesses of a proposal. It includes a set of basic questions for proponents to address with easily accessed information. While the following guidance outlines large procedural actions, the entire process is intended to be collaborative, including regular contact between the proponent and the lead agency with multiple opportunities for give and take, feedback and clarification.

Feasibility Step	Proponent	Lead Agency	Amtrak	Host Railroad	Sister Agencies	Station Owner/Local Jurisdiction
Initial	R	A	I	I	I	I/C
Corridor and Agency Goals	R	A	-	-	-	-
Customer Demand	R	A	-	-	-	-
Operational Feasibility	R	A	-	-	-	-
Station Suitability	R	A	-	-	-	I/C
Interconnectivity	R	A	-	-	-	-
Fiscal Viability	R	A	-	-	-	-

Responsible/Accountable/Consulted/Informed

Initial Feasibility – Example Stakeholder RACI Matrix

Table 3.4

Preparation and Alignment for Initial Feasibility

This sub-step includes all actions necessary to bridge the gap between concept development and beginning work on initial feasibility (or choosing to end pursuit of a feasibility assessment). A clear understanding of the effort by all parties is critical for the successful completion of initial feasibility.

There are several key points to address (in no particular order):

- Lead agency and proponent agree on scope for initial feasibility.
- Proponent secures funding for initial feasibility.
- Proponent identifies method to perform and develop the initial feasibility package (for example, staff expertise or consultant support).

Perform Initial Feasibility

The proponent performs and develops the initial feasibility package based on the scope and funding identified during preparation. The proponent is responsible for developing the initial feasibility package; however and if needed, the lead agency can provide certain information regarding the baseline scenario.

The initial feasibility package shall address, at a minimum:

A. Consistency with Corridor and Agency Goals.

Demonstrate consistency with the current state and provincial planning efforts for passenger rail transportation.

Required Criteria

- Demonstrate consistency with state/provincial transportation goals and plans, as applicable:
 - Washington – Consistency with state transportation goals and the Needs and Recommendations in the Washington State Rail Plan.⁸
 - Oregon – Consistency with state transportation goals and the Passenger Service Needs from the Oregon State Rail Plan.⁹
 - British Columbia – Consistency with provincial transportation objectives.¹⁰

Criteria for Consideration

Please describe the following (select as many as appropriate):

- Describe how the proposal aligns with the Cascades Rail Corridor Management Workplan goals.¹¹
- How does the proposal align with other planning goals and outcomes, for example those found in the applicable statewide, regional and local transportation plans?
- Include summary of stakeholder involvement, including involvement of existing station stakeholders, as applicable.

⁸ RCW 47.04.280 Transportation System Policy Goals: app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=47.04.280.
WSDOT State Rail Plan: www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/staterailplan.htm.

⁹ Oregon Transportation Plan: www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/pages/otp.aspx.
ODOT State Rail Plan: www.oregon.gov/odot/td/tp/pages/railplan.aspx.

¹⁰ B.C. on the Move is British Columbia's new 10-year plan for the improvement of the province's transportation network.
www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/bc-on-the-move.

¹¹ See Additional Resources in [Appendix C](#).

B. Customer Demand

Provide an overview of local factors that would affect a transportation demand analysis.

Required Criteria

- Estimate the station level(s)¹² and ridership for any new or changed station stops.
 - Methodology – using principles of transportation theory,¹³ draw parallels to an existing station in terms of the surrounding population, distance to adjacent stations, number of trains stopping at the existing station and other relevant factors. Consider a proposed day of opening and a time horizon of 20 years after the day of opening.

Criteria for Consideration

Please describe the following (select as many as appropriate):

- Provide a brief summary of local trip generators within 2, 5, 10 and 20 miles of any proposed station. Example factors include population, employment, attractions, etc.
- If available, provide relevant information from a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) or a regional transportation planning organization (RTPO) demand model.¹⁴ This information can be used to refine modeling work to be completed under the Detailed Feasibility assessment. Example features include origin-destination tables, congestion information and travel-time information.
- For new and relocated stations, provide distances to adjacent Amtrak Cascades stations for each scenario.

C. Operational Feasibility

Provide a high-level overview of how train operations are modified for the proposed scenarios.

Required Criteria

- Provide a proposed schedule for each scenario, using the baseline schedule as a starting point, and include a narrative to describe assumptions and special considerations.

Criteria for Consideration

Please describe the following (select as many as appropriate):

- Generate stringline diagrams for all passenger trains on affected segments.
 - Methodology – A stringline diagram is a basic tool to visualize train operations, and is easily assembled by rail planners, engineers and schedulers.¹⁵

Primary features of a schedule

- Includes proposed arrival/departure times for all stops.
- Accounts for pure run time, station dwell time and schedule recovery.

¹² See Section 3.2 in the Cascades Corridor Station Design Criteria: www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/Plans.htm

¹³ Relevant experts: transportation modelers, traffic engineers or similar professions using transportation theory.

¹⁴ See Additional Resources in Appendix C.

¹⁵ See Additional Resources in Appendix C.

- Provide equipment rotations for each scenario, using the baseline equipment rotation as a starting point.
 - Methodology – An equipment rotation shows how each piece of equipment cycles through the train schedule and is available for required maintenance. Equipment rotations can be generated by rail planners, schedulers or engineers. More information about corridor-specific requirements may be requested from the agency.

D. Station Suitability

For any changes to physical station locations (adding or relocating a station), describe how well suited the proposed location is for a station.

Criteria for Consideration

Please describe the following (select as many as appropriate):

- Show consistency with applicable land use and zoning policies.
- Generate a map/visual clearly showing features relevant to station planning. For example, show historical resources, urban growth areas, cultural resources, environmental resources.¹⁶
- Use the station level identified in Customer Demand to provide a preliminary evaluation of the footprint with regards to needs as described in the Cascades Corridor Station Design Criteria.¹⁷ For example, arrival/departure, building and platform areas.
- Describe the community benefits for new/relocated stations. For example, how does the station fit within the character and development of the proposed location, or what cultural/social influences are relevant for the area serving the station?¹⁸

The [Cascades Corridor Station Design Criteria](#) was developed to address the specific needs of PNWRC customers. The station design criteria is a reference document that establishes minimum requirements for scaling stations based on ridership, functionality and service characteristics.

E. Interconnectivity

Describe the effects of this proposal to customers and their access to/from Amtrak Cascades.

Criteria for Consideration

Please describe the following (select as many as appropriate based on the type of proposal):

- Summarize station amenities:
 - Parking, including drop-off/pick-up facilities, electric vehicle charging stations.
 - Wayfinding, including transit connectivity information or displays; for example, Passenger Information Display Systems (PIDS).
 - Fare/transfer amenities; for example, kiosks, ORCA pass readers.
 - Other customer or connection conveniences, such as transit shelters, station attendants, Wi-Fi, food, beverage, baggage and pet amenities.

¹⁶ See Additional Resources in [Appendix C](#).

¹⁷ See [Chapter 4](#) in the Cascades Corridor Station Design Criteria: www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/Plans.htm.

¹⁸ See FRA's Station Area Planning in [Appendix D](#).

- Summarize access to transportation networks/hubs:
 - Interstates, major airports and ferry terminals.
 - Public transportation services, including private shuttles, carpool/vanpool.
 - Ridesharing and taxi services, including carpool and vanpool facilities; for example, Car2Go, Zipcar.
 - Bicycle and pedestrian amenities; for example, bicycle lockers, Pronto (bikeshare).
- Provide an overview of connecting transportation services:
 - Public transportation operations, including routes, key destinations, frequency, and evening and weekend service.
 - Highway/roadway signage to and from the station.
 - Connections to regional and long-distance transportation services.

F. Fiscal Viability

While not all information is available, start setting the stage by arranging known formulas and information into a presentable format (example spreadsheets are available upon request from the lead agency).

Required Criteria

- Provide order-of-magnitude estimates for known costs and benefits.
- Include placeholders for unknown cost and benefit values (either blank placeholders, or estimated ranges based on expert opinion for that type of cost).

Criteria for Consideration

Please describe the following:

- Provide a summary of resources that can/will be provided by local jurisdictions to contribute towards the success of the proposal.

Joint Review of Initial Feasibility

Following completion of the initial feasibility package, the proponent will submit the package to the lead agency for a joint review. The lead agency should review to ensure that the process was followed, and make a recommendation as to whether the proposal is ready for detailed feasibility.

3.6 Step 3: Detailed Feasibility Study

Detailed feasibility is a screening exercise to further identify strengths and weaknesses of a proposal. It includes a more advanced set of fundamental questions for proponents to address. Combined with initial feasibility information, this step provides a thorough picture of the data and facts necessary to determine the comprehensive feasibility of a proposed station stop scenario.

While the following outlines large procedural actions, the entire process is intended to be collaborative, including regular contact between the proponent and the lead agency with multiple opportunities for give and take, feedback and clarification.

Feasibility Step	Proponent	Lead Agency	Amtrak	Host Railroad	Sister Agencies	Station Owner/Local Jurisdiction
Detailed	R	A/R	I/R	I/R	I	I/C
Corridor and Agency Goals	R	A	-	-	-	-
Customer Demand	R	A	R	-	-	I
Operational Feasibility	R	A	-	R	-	-
Station Suitability	R	A	-	-	-	I/C
Interconnectivity	R	A	-	-	-	-
Fiscal Viability	R	A	-	-	-	-

Responsible/Accountable/Consulted/Informed

Detailed Feasibility – Example Stakeholder RACI Matrix
Table 3.5

Preparation and Alignment for Detailed Feasibility

This sub-step includes all actions necessary to create the bridge between completing joint review of initial feasibility and the decision to pursue one of the outcomes. A clear understanding of the effort by all parties is critical for the successful completion of detailed feasibility.

- Lead agency and proponent agree on scope of work for detailed feasibility. Particular attention paid to:
 - Scope of customer demand modeling with Amtrak (or agency-approved equivalent).
 - Scope of operational feasibility assessment with host railroads.
- Proponent and lead agency establish a mechanism to involve Amtrak and the appropriate host railroads for completion of customer demand modeling and operations modeling.
- Proponent secures funding to complete detailed feasibility.

Perform Detailed Feasibility

The proponent performs and develops the detailed feasibility package using the funding identified during preparation. The lead agency will assist coordination of customer demand modeling and operational feasibility; all further development is the responsibility of the proponent. If needed, the lead agency can provide certain information regarding the baseline scenario.

A. Consistency with Corridor and Agency Goals

Demonstrate consistency with the current agency planning efforts for passenger rail transportation.

Required Criteria

- Check the assessment performed under Initial Feasibility and revise as necessary to accommodate any changes in corridor/agency goals or baseline conditions.

B. Customer Demand

Quantify changes to total Amtrak Cascades ridership, revenue and passenger-miles-traveled.

Required Criteria

- Perform travel demand modeling to quantify ridership, revenue and passenger-miles-traveled relating to baseline and each additional scenario.

Note: It is assumed that Amtrak's model or an agency-approved equivalent will be used. The lead agency can act as the intermediary and act as a pass-through funding mechanism for work funded by the proponent. Scoping this effort will be performed during preparation for detailed feasibility.

At a minimum, this report should include the following outputs totaled/subtotaled, as applicable.

- By lead agency/sister agency.
- At year of opening and a horizon 20 years after year of opening
- Markets north of the affected stop(s).
- Markets south of the affected stop(s).
- Markets connected to the affected stop(s).
- Markets passing through the affected stop(s).

C. Operational Feasibility

Assess all operational changes for the proposals, and comprehensively quantify costs associated with those changes.

Required Criteria

- Perform all preparation work required by the host railroads prior to operational modeling. Scoping this effort will be performed during preparation for detailed feasibility.
- Perform operational modeling acceptable by host railroads, service operator (Amtrak) and the lead agency.
- Calculate costs for all necessary operational changes identified through modeling.

D. Station Suitability

Quantify all station costs and document all required station site changes relating to each scenario.

Required Criteria

- Perform a full evaluation of proposed station changes for each scenario (if applicable). Use the Cascades Corridor Station Design Criteria¹⁹ to determine which features are considered “needs” for Amtrak Cascades customers. Note: Host railroad requirements are captured under Operational Feasibility.

E. Interconnectivity

Quantify societal benefits.

Required Criteria

- Calculate the net change to societal benefits according to the methodology established in the 2008 Amtrak Cascades Mid-Range Plan.²⁰ Include:
 - Congestion relief.
 - Safety improvement benefits.
 - Environmental benefits.

F. Fiscal Viability

Quantify the various criteria used to assess fiscal viability. Fiscal viability evaluates the benefits relative to costs.

Required Criteria

- Calculate total costs and benefits for each scenario:
 - ΔCosts = sum of all individual cost changes (positive and negative).
 - $\Delta\text{Benefits}$ = Net change in benefits (benefits = revenue + societal benefits)
- Evaluate the change to corridor benefit/cost ratio:
 - Corridor B/C is calculated as $(\sum\text{Existing Benefits} + \sum\Delta\text{Benefits})/(\sum\text{Existing Costs} + \sum\Delta\text{Costs})$
- Evaluate net effect to corridor subsidy:
 - When costs exceed revenue, subsidy is calculated as the difference between total cost and total revenue.
- Evaluate net effect to subsidy for each sponsoring agency.

Criteria for Consideration

Please describe the following:

- Evaluate net effect to farebox recovery.
 - Farebox recovery is calculated as ticket revenue/total cost.

¹⁹ Cascades Corridor Station Design Criteria: www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/Plans.htm.

²⁰ Amtrak Cascades Mid-Range Plan Appendices – December 2008, Appendix 8: Societal Benefit Assessment www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/Plans.htm.

Joint Review of Detailed Feasibility

Following completion of the detailed feasibility package, the proponent will submit the package to the lead agency for a joint review between the agency and the proponent.

The lead agency will use the following factors to evaluate proposals:

- Completeness.
- Technical accuracy.
- Reasonableness of assumptions.

All criteria will be evaluated. Particular attention will be given to the following criteria:

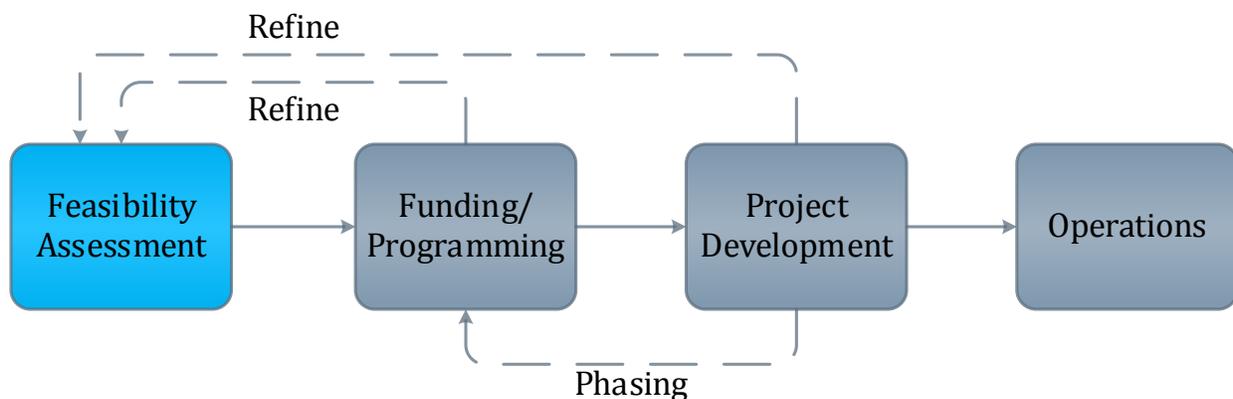
- Goals (Does the scenario continue to align with corridor goals?)
- Customer Demand (Does the scenario improve overall demand for the service?)
- Operational Feasibility (Is the scenario possible?)
- Fiscal Viability (Do the net benefits outweigh the net costs among the various criteria?)

Upon completion of the joint review, the lead agency will prepare a summary report. The summary report should address each criterion and the questions stated above. Answers to these questions help to illustrate the value and benefit to the Amtrak Cascades corridor.

3.7 Analysis Complete and Next Steps

After a feasibility assessment is completed, the natural question is, “What now?”

The purpose of the feasibility assessment is not to provide a definitive “yes” or “no,” but to provide the data and facts to help inform decision makers in their project selection process; next steps may vary depending on how favorable (or unfavorable) an assessment shows a proposal to be. If the proposal is deemed favorable by the decision makers, the proponent will work with the lead agency to determine how best to proceed with implementing the station stop proposal. [Figure 3.3](#) outlines some of the possible steps in that process. However, this guidance document is not designed to provide further details on such an implementation phase.



Typical Project Implementation Process

Figure 3.3

The intent of this chapter is to provide proponents with examples and guidance in implementing the processes presented in [Chapter 3](#). Some of the examples provide resources and options, while others provide how-to guidance for some of the required criteria. This chapter is considered a work in progress and will be updated periodically as information becomes available.

4.1 Examples

Case Studies – Evaluation Process

The following examples provide insight into how similar evaluations were conducted previously. These are not intended to be the “right” way of doing things, but to illustrate possible ways of doing things.

New Stop Evaluation – Auburn Study 2013¹

In a study funded by the Washington Legislature, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) evaluated the feasibility of adding a station stop in Auburn. This study is the first published report by WSDOT to evaluate the benefits of adding a new station to the Amtrak Cascades route. The study established an interim policy on evaluating new stop proposals.

The main document provides a general overview of the study outcomes and the supporting array of technical reports cover baseline conditions, a corridor market analysis, and individual reports for each of the evaluation criteria used in the study. These technical reports are available upon request from WSDOT.

2010 Southeast King County Commuter Rail Feasibility Study²

This study was funded by the Washington State Legislature. The objective of this study was to assess the feasibility of implementing a Diesel-Multiple Unit (DMU) commuter rail service between Maple Valley/Black Diamond and Auburn, via Covington on the BNSF Railway Stampede Pass line. The study included an analysis of estimated revenue, expected capital and operating costs, projection of ridership and analysis of institutional issues.

1 www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/10C7002D-B6DF-436F-98D9-5C9A87E06103/0/Task5NewStopEvaluationAuburn_Final.pdf

2 www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/Studies/List.htm

Oregon Passenger Rail Station Area Assessment 2014³

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is leading the Oregon Passenger Rail (OPR) Project, which will include a draft and a final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to identify a preferred alternative for improving passenger rail service in the Oregon segment of the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor (PNWRC) between Eugene/Springfield, Oregon and Portland, Oregon.

The Station Area Assessment evaluated the suitability of 21 locations in 15 cities suggested as possible station stops by the public. The assessments were done with readily available information using four of the five evaluation criteria used for the New Stop Evaluation – Auburn study (see above): operational feasibility, customer demand, station suitability and interconnectivity. This approach roughly parallels the level of analysis needed to conduct an initial feasibility study.

4.2 Other Considerations

Who will conduct the analysis?

The feasibility process outlined in [Chapter 3](#) taps a broad range of topics spanning rail planning, rail system engineering, urban planning, environmental considerations and intercity travel demand. The full range of expertise may not be available as an in-house resource. As such, proponents may need consultant support. WSDOT's Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) manual⁴ has established procedures that must be followed if using a consultant for projects in Washington that are funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). However, the LAG manual is also a helpful resource for a general understanding of the overall process for retaining a consultant.

Additional Environmental Screening

While outside the scope of the feasibility study, proponents may want to consider additional or more detailed review of environmental resources. Doing so will assist in identifying potential constraints early on and will help inform decision-making.

³ www.oregonpassengerrail.org/library

⁴ www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/LAG/

Appendices

- [Appendix A](#) Station Stop Policy Statement
- [Appendix B](#) Acronyms and Terms
- [Appendix C](#) Contact List and Resources
- [Appendix D](#) References
- [Appendix E](#) Cascades Station Ownership



Ron Pate 1 June 2016 H. A. Gard 1 June 2016
Ron Pate, Director Date H. A. (Hal) Gard, Administrator Date
WSDOT Rail, Freight, and Ports Division ODOT Rail and Public Transit Division
Cascades Rail Corridor

Station Stop Policy for Amtrak Cascades Service

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

This Policy Statement establishes an objective method to assist in future decision-making about adding, removing or skipping stops for Amtrak Cascades service. This Policy Statement applies to intercity passenger rail service on the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor (PNWRC) as administered by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

B. Background

Amtrak Cascades provides intercity passenger rail service on the PNWRC that runs between Vancouver, British Columbia and Eugene, Oregon, via Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon. With 18 station stops along the 467-mile route, Amtrak Cascades service plays a vital role in the Pacific Northwest's multimodal transportation system and provides an important transportation option for regional travelers travelling along the I-5 corridor.

Funding for Amtrak Cascades service changed dramatically with implementation of the U.S. Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 ([PRIIA 209](#)), which eliminated federal funding as of October 1, 2013. Today, Washington and Oregon jointly fund Amtrak Cascades service through ticket revenue and state sponsorship.

Thorough planning helped establish existing service and set future direction for intercity passenger rail. Also, significant capital investments in critical rail infrastructure improvements and equipment, scheduled for completion in 2017, will further expand travel choices and foster economic growth across Washington and Oregon. These decisions and obligations come with commitments that require future projects, improvements and additions or changes to station stops to align with these investments.

WSDOT and ODOT operate under a Corridor Management Workplan designed as a unified management framework to maximize existing resources and ensure responsible use of public investments. This policy is consistent with a corridor management approach and strategic business directions of the agencies.

II. Policy Statement

It is the responsibility of the PNWRC administrators to evaluate proposals that add, remove or skip station stops and determine the value and benefit to the Amtrak Cascades corridor.

III. Information to Carry Out This Policy Statement

- A. WSDOT and ODOT are working to manage their respective services together as a unified corridor. Rail operating budgets are dynamic and subject to legislative approval. The agencies will work together to achieve and maintain service goals, commitments and minimize taxpayer subsidies.
- B. Station stop proposals (adding, removing or skipping stops) will be evaluated based on benefits and disadvantages for the entire corridor using the following criteria: Consistency with Statewide, Regional and Local Transportation Plans; Operational Feasibility; Customer and Travel Demand; Station Suitability; Multimodal and Societal Benefits; and Fiscal Viability.
- C. The addition, removal or skipping of a station stop should not degrade service or increase net cost for WSDOT, ODOT, Sound Transit, BNSF Railway (BNSF), Union Pacific (UP), Amtrak or other partners in intercity passenger rail service. Proponents are expected to participate in the costs to operate and maintain station stops.
- D. Rail budgets at WSDOT and ODOT are insufficient for conducting feasibility studies without additional funds. Proponents are expected to provide funding for feasibility studies.
- E. Proposals will be evaluated as they are submitted. Implementation of proposals should be coordinated with other major service changes pursuant to PNWRC determination.

IV. Additional Guidance

In support of the policy and to assist in the development of station stop proposals, a guidance document is provided to clarify expectations and describe the process and information needed to inform decision-making. The Station Stop Policy Guidance Document is found on our website:
www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/StationStopPolicy.htm.

V. Updates

Future amendments would be reviewed through State Rail Plan updates.

VI. Contact for More Information

Washington State Department of Transportation, Rail, Freight, and Ports Division
360.705.7900 | rail@wsdot.wa.gov
Oregon Department of Transportation, Rail and Public Transit Division
503.986.4321 | passengerrail@odot.state.or.us

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Office of Equal Opportunity at 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 policy of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) 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 either agency.

For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact WSDOT's OEO Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7082 or ODOT's Office of Civil Rights Intermodal Title VI Coordinator at (503) 986-3169.

Acronym/Term	Meaning
Agency	In feasibility assessments, agency refers to those entities directly responsible (accountable) for sponsoring Amtrak Cascades and directly making decisions regarding station stops – either WSDOT or ODOT. The entity not directly working with the proponent is the sister agency.
Amtrak	National Railroad Passenger Corporation (American Track)
Amtrak Cascades	The intercity passenger rail service that operates in the PNWRC, between Vancouver, British Columbia and Eugene, Oregon. This service is funded by ticket sales and sponsorship by WSDOT and ODOT.
Anchor Stop	From north to south: this refers to the stations in Vancouver, B.C. (VAC), Seattle, Wash. (SEA), Portland, Ore. (PDX) and Eugene, Ore. (EUG).
ARRA	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
Arrival	The time when a train shows up at a station and passengers are able to disembark.
B.C.	British Columbia
BCMoTI	British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
BNSF	BNSF Railway
Concept Development	The first of three steps in the feasibility assessment.
Decision Maker	A person or entity making decisions.
CN	Canadian National Railway
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
CBSA	Canada Border Services Agency
Departure	The time when a train leaves a station, immediately following when passengers board.
Detailed Feasibility	The last of three steps in the feasibility assessment.
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EUG	Train station in Eugene, Oregon.
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
Host Railroad	Refers to the owner of the rail line
HSR	High-Speed Rail
Initial Feasibility	The middle of three steps in the feasibility assessment.
Least Cost Planning (LCP)	An approach to making planning decisions that considers a variety of possible solutions that lead to the desired results and identifies those that offer the least cost.
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MOSAIC	Mosaic is the state of Oregon's value and cost informed transportation planning tool.

Acronym/Term	Meaning
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
OPR	Oregon Passenger Rail
ORCA	The ORCA (O ne R egional C ard for A ll) is a stored value card used for payment of public transport fares in the Puget Sound Region of Washington state.
PDX	Train station in Portland, Oregon.
PIDS	Passenger Information Display System
PNWRC	Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor
Practical Solutions	At WSDOT, Practical Solutions is a two-part strategy consisting of Least Cost Planning and Practical Design. More info at www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/PracticalDesign/
PRIIA	Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008
Proponent	The leading entity advancing a proposal.
Proposal	In feasibility assessments, a proposal is the idea being studied.
Pure Run Time	In train operations, it is the amount of time a train takes to travel from point A to point B without any interference or delay.
RTPO	Regional Transportation Planning Organization
RACI Matrix	R esponsible, A ccountable, C onsulted, I nformed
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
Schedule Recovery Time	In train operations, it is the amount of time reserved in a schedule for planned or unplanned delays.
Scheduled Run Time	In train operations, it is the length of time shown on published schedules between destinations. The scheduled run time is equal to the pure run time plus station dwell time plus schedule recovery time.
SEA	Train station in Seattle, Washington.
Segment	The PNWRC is divided into three segments based on anchor stations: Vancouver, B.C. to Seattle, Wash.; Seattle, Wash. to Portland, Ore.; and Portland, Ore. to Eugene, Ore.
Sister Agency	In feasibility assessments, a sister agency refers to those entities responsible for administering Amtrak Cascades service but not directly accountable for making decisions regarding station stops.
Sound Transit (ST)	Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority
Stakeholder	Entities directly and indirectly involved in delivering Amtrak Cascades service
Station Dwell Time	In train operations, station dwell time is the amount of time reserved for trains to stop for passengers to get on and off the train.
Stringline Diagram	A graphical representation of train schedules. The vertical axis is time of day, the horizontal axis shows location, and train schedules are represented by lines (literally: string lines) showing origins, stops and destinations.
UP	Union Pacific Railroad
U.S.	United States
VAC	Train station in Vancouver, British Columbia.
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation

Agency Contact Information

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Rail, Freight, and Ports Division 360-705-7900, rail@wsdot.wa.gov

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Rail and Public Transit Division 503-986-4321, passengerrail@odot.state.or.us

Additional Resources

Consistency with Corridor and Agency Goals

Cascades Rail Corridor Management Workplan:
www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/RailCorridorManagement.htm

Planning

WSDOT Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations:
www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/TribalRegional.htm

ODOT Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations:
www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/Pages/index.aspx

Federal Rail Administration (FRA) Station Area Planning for High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/Details/L03759>

Stringline Diagrams

For more information on stringline diagrams, see the example string charts on page 16 of the National Cooperative Freight Research Program Report 27:
http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/ncfrp/ncfrp_rpt_027.pdf

Cultural, Historical, and Environmental Resources

Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation:
www.dahp.wa.gov

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office:
www.oregon.gov/OPRD/HCD/SHPO/Pages/index.aspx

Washington State Department of Ecology:
www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sepa/e-review.html

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality:
www.oregon.gov/DEQ/Pages/index.aspx

Amtrak

- Station Program and Planning Guidelines: www.greatamericanstations.com/planning-development/station-planning-guidelines
- Great American Stations: www.greatamericanstations.com/Stations

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

- High-Speed Rail Timeline: www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0140
- Station Area Planning for High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail: www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/Details/L03759

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)

- State Rail Plan: www.oregon.gov/odot/td/tp/pages/railplan.aspx
- Least Cost Planning Mosaic: www.oregonmosaic.org/1/home.html

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

- Amtrak Cascades New Stop Evaluation – Auburn: www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/10C7002D-B6DF-436F-98D9-5C9A87E06103/0/Task5NewStopEvaluationAuburn_Final.pdf
- Cascades Rail Corridor Management Workplan – January 2013: www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/RailCorridorManagement.htm
- State Rail Plan: www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/staterailplan.htm
- Rail Planning: www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/Plans.htm
- Practical Solutions: www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/PracticalDesign/
- Results WSDOT: www.wsdot.wa.gov/Secretary/ResultsWSDOT.htm

Other

- RACI process: <http://project-management.com/understanding-responsibility-assignment-matrix-raci-matrix>

Appendix E

Cascades Station Ownership

Location	Ownership	Passenger Rail Services
Vancouver, British Columbia Pacific Central Station 1150 Station Street Vancouver, BC V6A 4C7	Facility Ownership: VIA Rail Canada Parking Lot Ownership: N/A Platform Ownership: VIA Rail Canada Track Ownership: Canadian National Railway, VIA Rail Canada	Amtrak Cascades VIA Rail Canada
Bellingham, Washington Fairhaven Station 401 Harris Avenue Bellingham, WA 98225	Facility Ownership: Port of Bellingham Parking Lot Ownership: Port of Bellingham Platform Ownership: Port of Bellingham Track Ownership: BNSF Railway	Amtrak Cascades
Mount Vernon, Washington Skagit Transportation Center 105 East Kincaid Street Mount Vernon, WA 98273	Facility Ownership: Skagit Transit Parking Lot Ownership: Skagit Transit Platform Ownership: BNSF Railway Track Ownership: BNSF Railway	Amtrak Cascades
Stanwood, Washington 27111 Florence Way Stanwood, WA 98292	Facility Ownership: WSDOT Parking Lot Ownership: N/A Platform Ownership: WSDOT Track Ownership: BNSF Railway	Amtrak Cascades
Everett, Washington 3201 Smith Avenue Everett, WA 98201	Facility Ownership: City of Everett Parking Lot Ownership: City of Everett Platform Ownership: BNSF Railway Track Ownership: BNSF Railway	Amtrak Cascades Empire Builder Sounder Commuter Rail
Edmonds, Washington 211 Railroad Avenue Edmonds, WA 98020	Facility Ownership: BNSF Railway Parking Lot Ownership: Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority Platform Ownership: BNSF Railway Track Ownership: BNSF Railway	Amtrak Cascades Empire Builder Sounder Commuter Rail
Seattle, Washington King Street Station 303 South Jackson Street Seattle, WA 98104	Facility Ownership: City of Seattle Parking Lot Ownership: City of Seattle, King County Platform Ownership: BNSF Railway Track Ownership: BNSF Railway	Amtrak Cascades Empire Builder Coast Starlight Sounder Commuter Rail
Tukwila, Washington Sounder Commuter Rail Station 7301 Longacres Way Tukwila, WA 98188	Facility Ownership: Sound Transit Parking Lot Ownership: Sound Transit Platform Ownership: BNSF Railway Track Ownership: BNSF Railway	Amtrak Cascades Sounder Commuter Rail
Tacoma, Washington 1001 Puyallup Avenue Tacoma, WA 98421	Facility Ownership: BNSF Railway Parking Lot Ownership: BNSF Railway Platform Ownership: BNSF Railway Track Ownership: BNSF Railway	Amtrak Cascades Coast Starlight Sounder Commuter Rail
Olympia, Washington Centennial Station 6600 Yelm Highway SE Lacey, WA 98513	Facility Ownership: Intercity Transit Parking Lot Ownership: Intercity Transit Platform Ownership: BNSF Railway Track Ownership: BNSF Railway	Amtrak Cascades Coast Starlight

Location	Ownership	Passenger Rail Services
Centralia, Washington 210 Railroad Avenue Centralia, WA 98531	Facility Ownership: City of Centralia Parking Lot Ownership: City of Centralia Platform Ownership: BNSF Railway Track Ownership: BNSF Railway	Amtrak Cascades Coast Starlight
Kelso-Longview, Washington 501 South First Street Kelso, WA 98626	Facility Ownership: City of Kelso Parking Lot Ownership: BNSF Railway Platform Ownership: BNSF Railway Track Ownership: BNSF Railway	Amtrak Cascades Coast Starlight
Vancouver, Washington 1301 West 11th Street Vancouver, WA 98660	Facility Ownership: City of Vancouver Parking Lot Ownership: BNSF Railway Platform Ownership: City of Vancouver, BNSF Railway Track Ownership: BNSF Railway	Amtrak Cascades Empire Builder Coast Starlight
Portland, Oregon Union Station 800 NW Sixth Avenue Portland, OR 97209	Facility Ownership: City of Portland Parking Lot Ownership: City of Portland Platform Ownership: City of Portland Track Ownership: City of Portland	Amtrak Cascades Empire Builder Coast Starlight
Oregon City, Oregon 1757 Washington Street Oregon City, OR 97045	Facility Ownership: City of Oregon City Parking Lot Ownership: City of Oregon City Platform Ownership: Union Pacific Railroad Track Ownership: Union Pacific Railroad	Amtrak Cascades
Salem, Oregon 500 13th Street SE Salem, OR 97301	Facility Ownership: State of Oregon Parking Lot Ownership: State of Oregon Platform Ownership: Union Pacific Railroad Track Ownership: Union Pacific Railroad	Amtrak Cascades Coast Starlight
Albany, Oregon 110 10th Avenue SW Albany, OR 97321	Facility Ownership: City of Albany Parking Lot Ownership: City of Albany Platform Ownership: Union Pacific Railroad Track Ownership: Union Pacific Railroad	Amtrak Cascades Coast Starlight
Eugene, Oregon 433 Willamette Street Eugene, OR 97401	Facility Ownership: City of Eugene Parking Lot Ownership: City of Eugene Platform Ownership: Union Pacific Railroad Track Ownership: Union Pacific Railroad	Amtrak Cascades Coast Starlight