Lastly, the plan identified several policy improvement strategies that include working with regional organizations to develop an economic development strategy, and to prioritize and preserve adjacent lands through comprehensive planning and sale of non-essential property. WSDOT will determine criteria for private acquisition of the system consistent with public interest, and update rail benefit methodology to get an accurate understanding of the public benefits of the system. To monitor performance of the system, WSDOT will develop and report on performance measures (Safe Operations, Efficient Operations, and Pursue Economic Development). To address the funding gap, WSDOT will pursue alternate funding opportunities.

The economic vitality of Washington State requires a robust rail system capable of providing its agricultural economies with competitive access to North American and overseas markets. Addressing the infrastructure, operational, and policy issues will ensure the PCC rail system remains a valuable asset for the Washington State economy.

The PCC rail system benefits Washington State in many ways. Because it reduces demand for trucking, it reduces roadway congestion, reduces roadway and bridge maintenance and construction costs, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, reduces shipping costs for its users, and improves roadway safety. Moreover, the PCC rail system currently has capacity to handle additional diversion of freight from roadways in Washington State.

WSDOT is responsible for managing the overall multimodal transportation systems in Washington State. The PCC rail system helps WSDOT reach its goals of modal integration and environmental stewardship by providing an important alternate mode for freight transportation. For the system to be competitive, strategic investments are needed, along with operational changes, and policy improvements.

The plan has identified $58 million of capital project needs. Funding will be necessary to implement strategies to maintain and improve infrastructure on the PCC rail system. Operational and policy strategies can be achieved within the timeframe for this plan. Coordination with all PCC rail system partners is critical to the ongoing success of the system. WSDOT and the PCC Rail Authority will work with all PCC partners and stakeholders to advance the strategies identified in this plan. The PCC Strategic Plan can be viewed at http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/freight/pcc.

The purpose of this plan is to outline the vision and goals for the PCC rail system and to communicate what policies and projects are needed to achieve the goals. The plan is focused around three key system goals: safe operations, efficient operations, and economic development.

This plan has identified and prioritized $58 million in infrastructure projects:
1. Advance priority projects to increase the capability of handling 286,000-pound rail cars;
2. Rehabilitate track located in moderate and sharp curves in order to allow for increased speeds;
3. Identify and replace defective rail through integrity testing.
THE PCC RAIL SYSTEM

Lincoln
Adams
Whitman
Spokane
Franklin
Walla Walla
Asotin
Columbia
Garfield
Albion
Lamont
Almira
Wilbur
Palouse
Rosalia
Spangle
Reardan
Creston
Endicott
Garfield
Hartline
La Crosse
Oakesdale
Saint John
Coulee City
Cheney
Marshall
Colfax
Pullman
Hooper Junction
Davenport
Thornton
Grant
Fallon

CW Cheney to Geiger
Replace rail and rehabilitate track
$7,337,000

P&L Marshall to McCoy
Replace 11 bridges and repair 4 bridges
$5,988,000

Total
Total Cost
$13,325,000

Track Rehabilitation in Curves
Total Track Miles Rehabilitated
Rail Miles Replaced (incl. in total miles)
Cost

CW
16.1
16.1
$15,920,000

P&L/WIM
20.2
5.2
$9,020,000

Hooper
9.3
6.7
$7,260,000

PV
10.8
6.6
$7,520,000

Total
56.4
34.6
$39,720,000

Replace Defective Rail

System wide Allowance
Estimated initial defective rail replacement
$5,000,000*

TOTAL (in 2015 Dollars)
Total Capital Project Need
$58,045,000

*Actual amount to be determined based on implementation of an advanced rail inspection program. The plan recommends that $5 million in funding be in place to purchase new and/or repurposed rail before beginning the integrity inspection program. This will ensure that adequate materials are available within the short time period (30 to 90 days) that the FRA allows the operator to complete remedial action for defects identified through the inspection process.

To support the PCC capital program, the plan recommends that WSDOT add advanced techniques to our existing rail inspection programs to pinpoint deficiencies that are not detected through visual inspection alone. The department along with rail operators of the PCC will inspect load ratings for the bridges by 2017. The plan recommends programs to address maintenance and preservation, tie replacement, and grade crossing rehabilitation. It recommends that rail materials be repurposed, when possible, from other sources to replace substandard rail. The plan recommends that PCC shippers partner with the rail operators to bridge the funding gap that exists in maintenance and preservation.

This plan has also identified several operational strategies to enhance efficiencies. WSDOT will work with partners to improve terms to future operating leases, encourage operators to pursue minimum railcar orders, ensure access to major railroads and river terminals, and strategically consider rail service needs on all segments of the system. The plan recommends that WSDOT establish private crossing agreements, establish industrial track agreements, and evaluate the state Grain Train Program.