

# Oregon House Transportation & Economic Development Committee

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# Pacific Northwest High-Speed Rail Corridor

## Passenger Rail – Amtrak Cascades

467-mile corridor

- 300 miles in WA
- 134 miles in OR
- 33 miles in BC



## BNSF and UP own the tracks

## Amtrak operates the service

- WSDOT and ODOT pay Amtrak via contract
- Amtrak pays the railroads

## Talgo and Amtrak maintain equipment

- States pay Talgo via contract
- Seven trainsets:
  - Washington owns three
  - Amtrak owns two
  - Oregon added two in 2013

[www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail)  
[www.AmtrakCascades.com](http://www.AmtrakCascades.com)



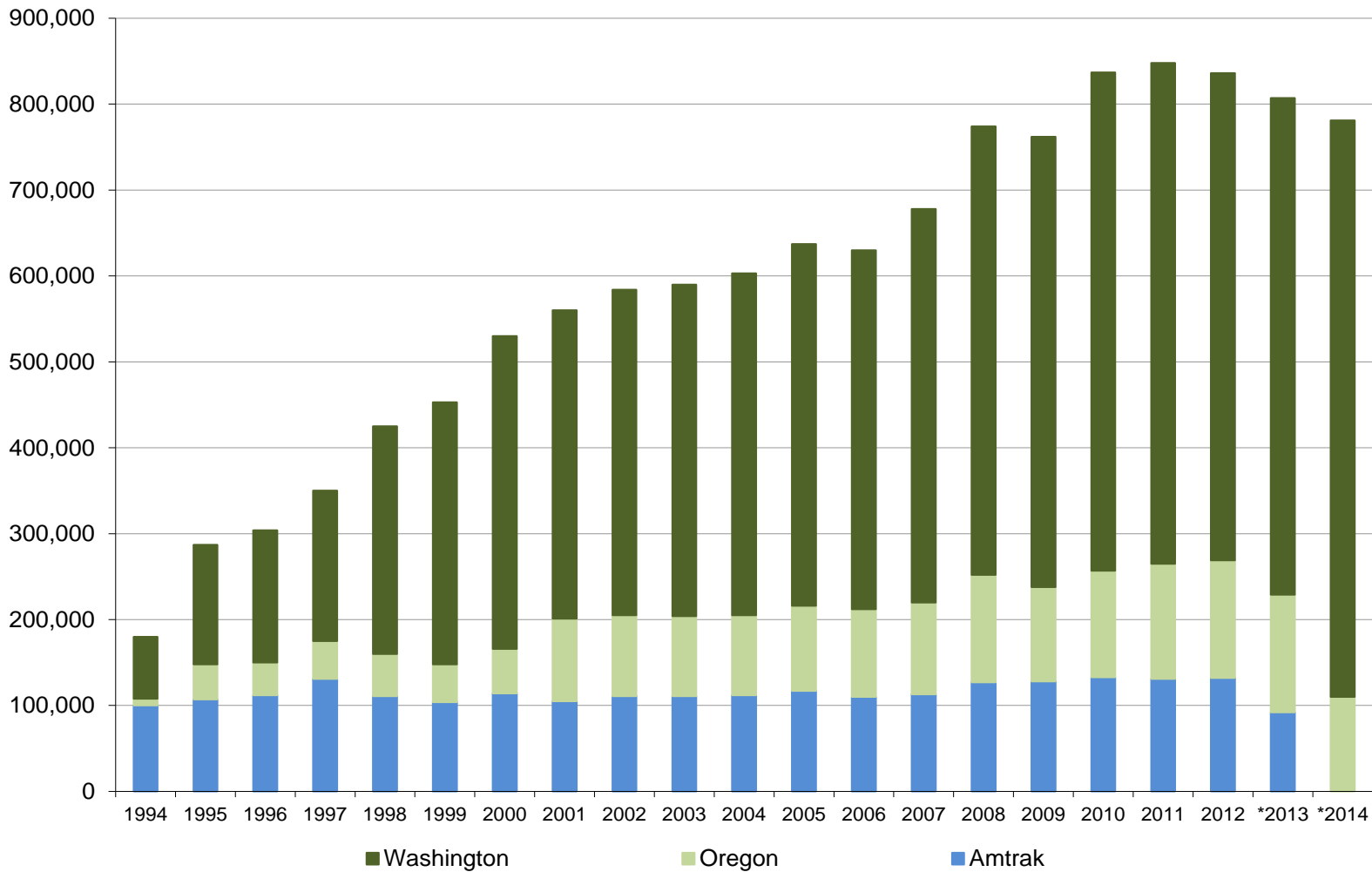
# Amtrak Cascades Program Milestones

Year	Milestone
2015	7 HSR projects complete; 10 in construction; 3 in design; all complete by 2017
2014	ODOT's two new train sets put into service New Tukwila Station
2013	ODOT and WSDOT now pay all costs of service
2012	Bistro and lounge cars revitalized
2010	Wi-Fi service added to trains WSDOT awarded \$800 million for passenger rail improvements
2009	Second daily train service to Vancouver B.C.
2006	Fourth daily trip between Portland to Seattle added
2005	Oregon City stop added
2003	Renovations begin on historic Seattle King Street Station
2002	New Everett station
2000	Second daily round-trip between Portland and Eugene
1995	ODOT sponsors daily service extension to Eugene
1994	Service begins

# Funding Responsibilities - Changes

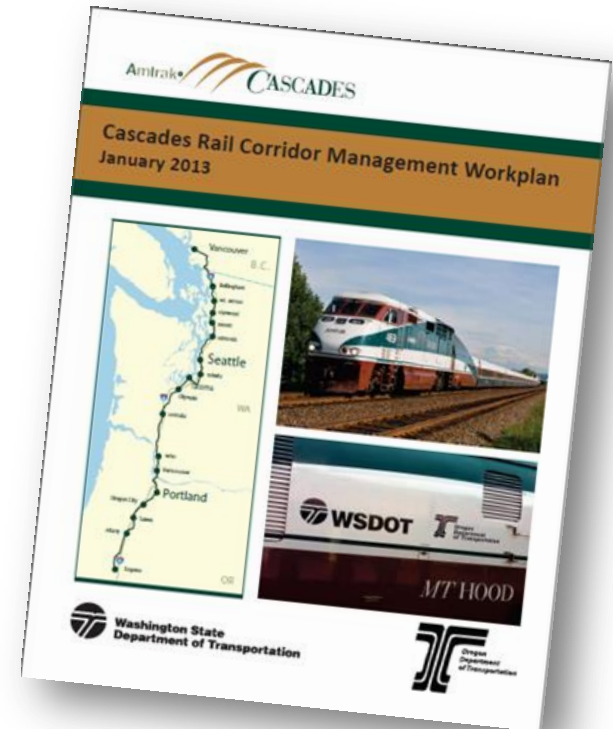
- Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008, Sec. 209
  - State Corridors are defined as 750 Miles or Less
  - States must pay all operating costs beyond ticket revenues starting October 1, 2013
- Washington and Oregon absorb nearly 20% of all costs previously contributed by Amtrak
- Washington and Oregon actively participating in national workgroups to examine and negotiate appropriate costs

# Annual Ridership by Funding Partners



# Cascades Rail Corridor Achievements

- Increasingly strong component of region's intermodal transportation system
- Eleven daily roundtrips; 800,000 average annual ridership
- Single corridor MOU in 2012
- Corridor Management Workplan in 2013
- Established on-time performance task force
- WSDOT/ODOT monthly team meetings
- State rail plan coordination



# Unified Corridor Benefits

- Partnering to overcome significant financial issues through joint participation
- Common set of goals
- Maximize utility and efficiency of service
- Reduce taxpayer subsidies
- Strengthen partnerships with contractors, federal agencies





# WSDOT Rail Division Action Plan

## Strategic Blueprint for Amtrak Cascades in 2015

1. **Align with WSDOT and Governor's strategic goals**
2. **Deliver capital projects on time and within budget**
  - \$800 million in passenger rail improvements by 2017
3. **Manage costs and maintain revenue**
4. **Implement service enhancements and efficiency improvements**

### RAIL DIVISION ACTION PLAN – 2015

WSDOT  
April 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 10 projects worth approximately \$6.4 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.

In FFY2014, 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.





# Ongoing Improvement Strategies and Goals

- Maximize revenue
- Manage costs/contracts
- Improve multimodal connectivity
- Expand marketing and partnerships
- Plan for the future



Amtrak Cascades added more bike racks to increase multimodal travel options



New Siemens Chargers

# 20 High-Speed Rail Capital Projects by 2017

## Corridor Projects



- Nearly \$800 million in federal ARRA funding
- 7 projects complete; 10 in construction; 3 in design
- Work supports overall program goal of more frequent and reliable Amtrak Cascades service :

- Two additional round trips between Seattle and Portland, for a total of six in 2017
- Improved on-time performance to 88%
- 10-minute schedule reduction between Seattle-Portland

# High-Speed Rail Project Outcomes

*Better reliability, more daily service, faster trips*

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## Congestion relief

- Point Defiance Bypass
- Vancouver Bypass
- Port of Vancouver – West Vancouver freight access track
- New siding track – Blaine, Mt. Vernon, Everett, Kelso & Vancouver



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## Safety upgrades and new equipment

- Corridor reliability upgrades – north & south
- Advanced Wayside Signal System
- Landslide prevention projects
- New locomotives



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## Station work

- King Street Station – seismic retrofit & track upgrades
- Tukwila Station – new facility and platform
- Tacoma Amtrak station relocation to Freighthouse Square



# Questions?

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**Web links:**

- Rail Division - [www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail)
- Amtrak Cascades - [www.AmtrakCascades.com](http://www.AmtrakCascades.com)