

# **Washington State Rail Plan**

*Integrated Freight and Passenger Rail Plan*

*2013-2035*

**Kerri Woehler**

Rail Operations Program Manager

**Jason Beloso**

Rail Planning Manager

**International Mobility Trade Corridor**

**April 17, 2014**

# What is the Purpose of the State Rail Plan?

- Fulfills federal and state requirements.
- Provides an integrated plan for freight and passenger rail, including 5- and 20-year funding strategies, that meets federal and state requirements.
- Builds on previous plans and guides future efforts.
- Serves as a strategic blueprint for future public investment in the state's rail transportation system.



Years of collaborative, consistent planning and substantial state investment prepared WSDOT to compete for and secure nearly \$800 million in federal funds for passenger rail improvements.

It's time to be thinking about what's next for freight and passenger rail.

# Washington State Rail Network



# The Right Tool for the Right Job

Terminals and Yards



Key links in supply chains

Short-Line Railroads



Provide access to North American freight network

Class I Railroads



Main lines of the North American freight network

Regional/Commuter Rail



Suburbs to major metro

Intercity Rail



Between major metros

Long-Distance Rail



National system

# Rail System Needs

## “What”

Rail Operations and Infrastructure Needs



## “Why”

Rail's Role in Economic Development



## “How”

Rail System Priorities and Goals



# Freight Rail in Washington State

- Rail is critical to the ongoing vitality of the state's major industries.
- Extensive network connects citizens and industry and provides good mobility for existing train volumes.
- Meeting future demand is the challenge.
- Near-term priorities:
  - Use performance measures to assess funding needs.
  - Consider expansion of funding partnerships
  - Investment priorities:
    - maintenance and preservation
    - first and last mile connectivity
    - domestic and international trade



*Box Cars and Port Vancouver Wa. Robert Gaskin.  
April 2013. Flickr. September 24, 2013.  
[www.flickr.com/photos/24039825@N06/8649193535/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/24039825@N06/8649193535/)*



# Amtrak Cascades Intercity Passenger Rail

- Plan confirms long-term vision for high-speed rail and incremental approach to implementation.
- Near-term priorities:
  - Deliver funded projects and implement service improvements in 2017.
  - Focus on existing service: manage costs; improve quality and customer experience to increase ridership and revenue.
  - Consider new operating models such as, “limited” schedules to optimize the service.



*Amtrak Cascades at the International Border. June 29, 2011.*

*AaverageJoe/Michael Chu. Flickr. April 16, 2013.*

[www.flickr.com/photos/mikechu/5888854439/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/mikechu/5888854439/)

# Intercity Rail Connecting Major Economic Centers



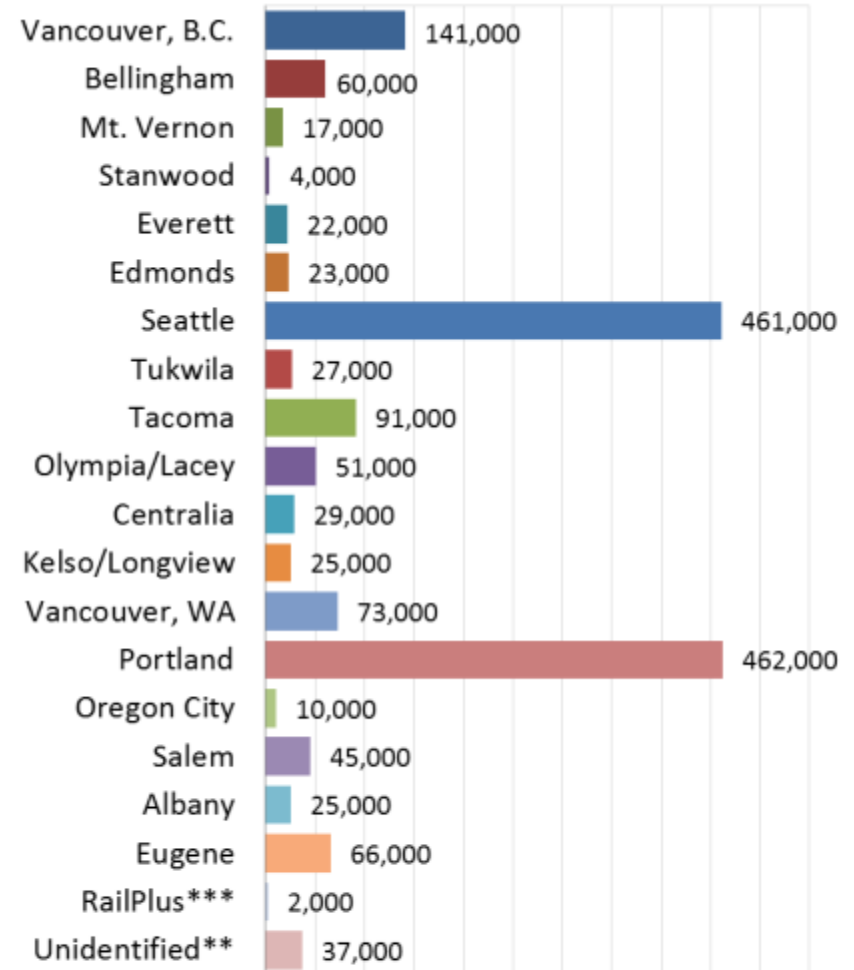
**Vancouver, B.C. (Metro)**  
 2.5 million residents  
 141,000 on/off



**Seattle (Metro)**  
 3.5 million residents  
 461,000 on/off



**Portland (Metro)**  
 2.3 million residents  
 462,000 on/off



\*On-Offs are a measurement of how many passengers got on and off the train at each station.

\*\*Unidentified passengers either deferred their trip to another day or were unidentified by Amtrak.

\*\*\*RailPlus are riders transferring from Sound Transit to Amtrak Cascades.



# High-Speed Rail Capital Investments

- Federal high-speed rail funds: \$794.9 million
- Program goal of more frequent and reliable Amtrak Cascades service
  - 2 additional round trips Seattle to Portland (total of 6)
  - Improved on-time performance to 88%
  - 10-minute savings per trip
- 20 projects in Washington
- Jobs for skilled construction and operations for railroad crews and regional contractors
- Federal funds must be spent by 2017.



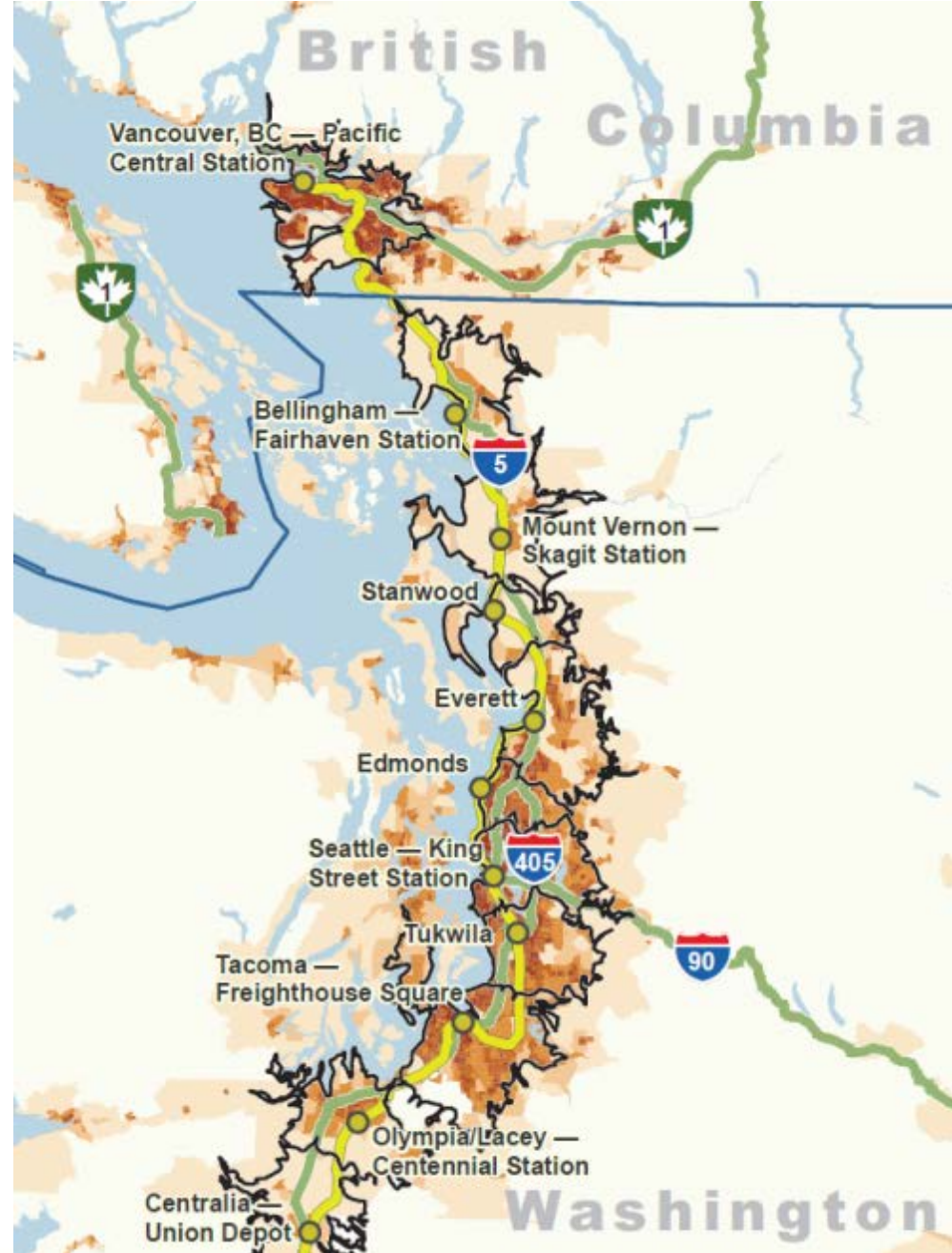
# Cross-Border Service is Key to Future Growth

## Strengths:

- Strong anchors in population centers
- Supports regional efforts to improve international travel and trade

## Key challenges:

- Passenger inconvenience due to southbound stop at the border
- Slow travel speeds due to infrastructure needs north of the U.S. border
- Strategies for developing and strengthening operating partnerships between states and province in response to funding needs



*Population density adjacent to Amtrak Cascades stations, 2010/2011*

# Preclearance for Amtrak Cascades

**Saves 10 minutes by eliminating southbound international border train stop**

## Results:

- Reduced travel time
- Improved on-time performance
- Reduces risk of unanticipated delays (can be up to 60 mins)

## Benefits:

- Improves convenience for passengers
- Makes international rail travel a stronger component of the transportation system
- Supports strategy to increase ridership in our 2<sup>nd</sup> largest market

Beyond the Border: full preclearance at Vancouver, B.C. for passenger rail



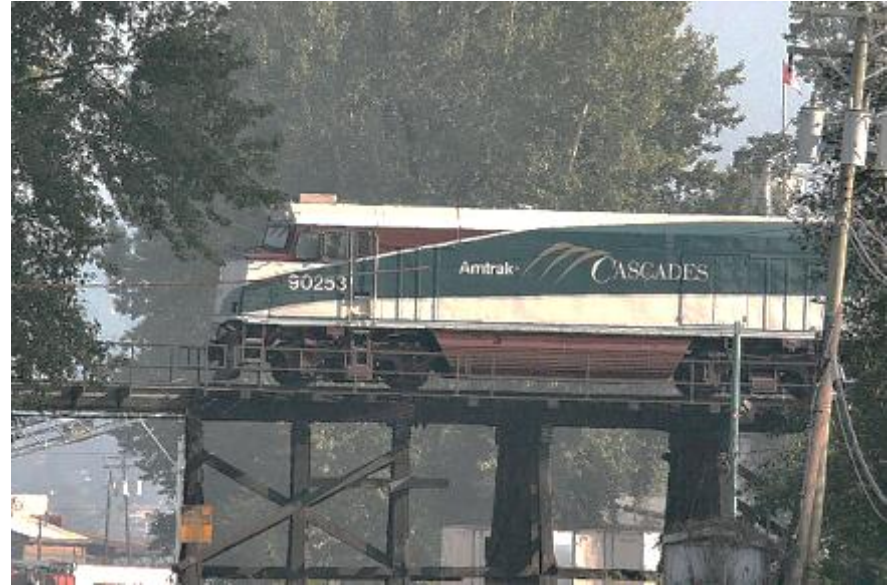
# Cross Border Collaboration

## Washington and British Columbia

Joint Transportation Executive Council,  
established by Governor and Premier

Current work program focus:

- Continued joint advocacy requesting the implementation of integrated customs and immigration preclearance pre-clearance for passenger rail in Vancouver, B.C. per the stated commitment in the joint federal “Beyond the Border” Action Plan
- Assess responses to financial operating pressures resulting from the elimination of U.S. Federal Amtrak funding. Options include increasing fares, reducing service, or increasing partner contributions.
- Deliver capital improvement projects



*Amtrak Cascades over the Fraser Bridge heading to Vancouver, B.C. Rog45/Roger.  
Boats N Stuff - Brownsville - Surrey BC. 28 September 2006. Flickr. April 16, 2013.  
[www.flickr.com/photos/rog45/256066529/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/rog45/256066529/)*

# Priorities and Next Steps

- Deliver funded projects.
- Maintain and preserve existing infrastructure.
- Establish short line system inventory.
- Manage costs and maintain revenues for Amtrak Cascades.
- Incorporate plan results into Freight Mobility Plan and Washington Transportation Plan.
- Continue collaborative planning with stakeholders and partners to refine and focus investment priorities.
- Initiate scoping and project development to prepare for future funding opportunities.



# Contact Information

## **Kerri Woehler**

Rail Operations Program Manager  
360.705.6902 or  
woehlek@wsdot.wa.gov

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

## **Jason Beloso**

Rail Planning Manager  
206.464.1259 or  
belosoj@wsdot.wa.gov

