



Washington Rail Opportunities

Population, Petroleum, and Pollution are going to force change to Transportation in Washington State

- Between 1980 and 2000, Washington's population grew 43% from over 4 million to nearly 6 million, and is predicted to increase to nearly 8 million by 2020.
- Future diminishing petroleum supplies and greenhouse gas challenges mean we will have to move people and goods far more efficiently than we do now.
- A rail line can carry over 9,000 people per hour per track, while emitting 50% to even 100% fewer greenhouse gases per passenger mile than autos.
- Rail passengers are 40 times less likely than auto occupants to be fatally injured in an accident per million passenger miles.

Bottom Line: ➤ Each dollar invested in Rail can move over twice as many people than a dollar invested in Roads, while using 90% less energy, 50% less land, and emitting 50% (diesel) to 100% (hydro-electric) less pollution, and with much greater safety.

Intercity Trains and Rail Transit are successes in Western Washington — but more is needed

- Amtrak/WSDOT's *Cascades* trains carried over 636,800 passengers in 2005, but funding cut-backs to track improvements and train acquisitions have stunted the service's growth 50% below what was originally planned by 2003, and smaller lineside communities lack passenger service. The Seattle – Portland *Cascades* service has just 4 round trips daily; while the comparable Munich – Stuttgart, Germany route has 40 *express* and *regional* round trip trains daily!
- While rail is growing elsewhere throughout the world, we are still facing rail line abandonments, like the Snohomish – Woodinville – Renton Line.
- Sound Transit *Sounder* Commuter Trains carried 1,267,973 riders in 2005 and Tacoma *Link* Light Rail carried 884,895. Meanwhile, there are at least 65 million car trips a year on parallel Interstate 5.

Bottom Line: ➤ Fund *Cascades* towards its planned 13 Seattle – Portland daily round trips, and look at secondary *Cascades Regional* services serving smaller corridor communities.

- Preserve rail lines like Snohomish – Renton for future use.
- Increase *Sounder* services; and continue expanding *Link*.

It's time Eastern Washington had daytime passenger trains, too

- Greyhound buses have reduced service to many Eastern Washington communities.
- Air fares are high to Inland Empire cities other than Spokane.
- Driving in much of Eastern Washington can be difficult and treacherous in Winter.
- Existing Seattle/Portland – Spokane Amtrak *Empire Builder* trains cross Eastern Washington only at night.
- Yakima, with over 231,000 area residents in 2005 is the largest metro area in the Pacific Northwest without intercity passenger train service.
- Leavenworth is currently building its own station to serve the *Empire Builder*. Other Eastern Washington communities like Cle Elum, Yakima, Ritzville, and others would likely welcome passenger trains with community-sponsored stations, if given the trains.

Bottom Line: ➤ In addition to Amtrak's *Empire Builder* via Leavenworth, consider at least twice-daily Passenger Train service between Seattle and Spokane via Yakima.

➤ Increase state support for regions and communities in developing their own passenger stations and trains.

More Freight Rail Capacity is needed

- Rail freight volumes on mainline railroads in Washington State are at all time highs, with major freight railroads saying their lines are approaching maximum capacity.
- Freight rail is a safe, fuel-efficient, environmentally-friendly means of moving goods, and helps bring economic development and prosperity to smaller communities and rural areas in Washington State.
- Since 1990, WSDOT's Freight Rail Assistance Program has helped to save over 400 miles of shortline railroads, brought new rail-served industries and jobs to places like Grays Harbor, Morton, White Swan, and the Palouse, and saved taxpayers millions of dollars in avoided road damage by keeping over 29,000 heavy truck trips annually off the roads in these areas.
- However, international cargo container traffic is appearing to dominate US freight rail traffic, and risks displacing some shortline-generated agricultural, forest products, and other freight traffic — possibly placing both smaller rail-dependent communities and the State's shortline rail investments at risk.

Bottom Line: ➤ Seek opportunities for cooperation and joint public-private investments in expanding freight rail capacities in Washington.

➤ Continue the important role of WSDOT's Freight Rail Assistance Program, and facilitate closer working with WSDOT's Passenger Rail Program.