

Amtrak *Cascades*: Intercity Passenger Rail in the Pacific Northwest

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What is the Amtrak *Cascades* Service?

A state and Amtrak-funded service on a federally designated 466-mile high-speed rail corridor between Eugene, Oregon and Vancouver, British Columbia.

- 4 roundtrips daily, Seattle - Portland
3 subsidized by WSDOT, 1 by Amtrak
(Fourth run was added in July 2006.)
- 2 roundtrips daily, Portland - Eugene
Subsidized by ODOT
- 1 roundtrip daily, Seattle -Vancouver, BC
Subsidized by WSDOT
- 1 roundtrip daily, Seattle and Bellingham
Subsidized by WSDOT



Why are the states of Washington and Oregon developing intercity passenger rail service?

- Concentrated population and economic growth along the I-5 corridor.
- Additional transportation option between major cities along the I-5 corridor.
- Helps foster economic development around stations and in downtowns.
- Plays a role in attracting tourists and promoting northwest tourist destinations.



Amtrak *Cascades* near Bellingham



Portland's Union Station

Who are the partners in developing the *Cascades* intercity passenger rail service?

- Washington State DOT
- Oregon DOT
- Amtrak
- BNSF
- UP



Who is funding the *Cascades* intercity passenger rail service?

Washington and Oregon have invested \$359 through 2005.

State of Washington:

Capital funds - \$120 million

Operating funds - \$150 million

State of Oregon:

Capital funds - \$54 million

Operating funds - \$35 million



Other corridor investments have been made by Sound Transit (in central Puget Sound), port districts, and cities to increase rail line capacity and to build and renovate train stations.

How is Amtrak *Cascades* service performance?

- Ridership was 637,000 in 2005, and in 2006 will climb to approximately 665,000 – the 12th consecutive year of ridership increases.
- Limited rail line capacity, increasing line congestion, and weather-related events (e.g., mudslides) are degrading on-time performance.
- Future ridership growth may be limited unless on-time performance improves.

Amtrak *Cascades* Annual Ridership 1994-2005

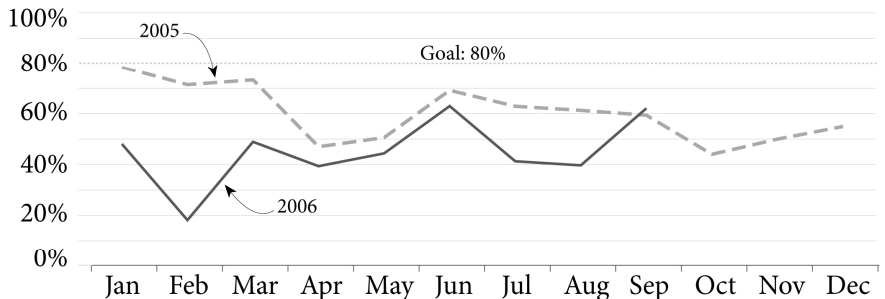
Number of Passengers



Source: Amtrak and WSDOT Rail Office.

State Supported Amtrak *Cascades* On-Time Performance

Percent on Time



Source: Amtrak and WSDOT Rail Office.

The on-time performance goal for Amtrak Cascades is 80% or better. A train is considered on-time if it arrives at its final destination within 10 minutes or less of the scheduled arrival time.

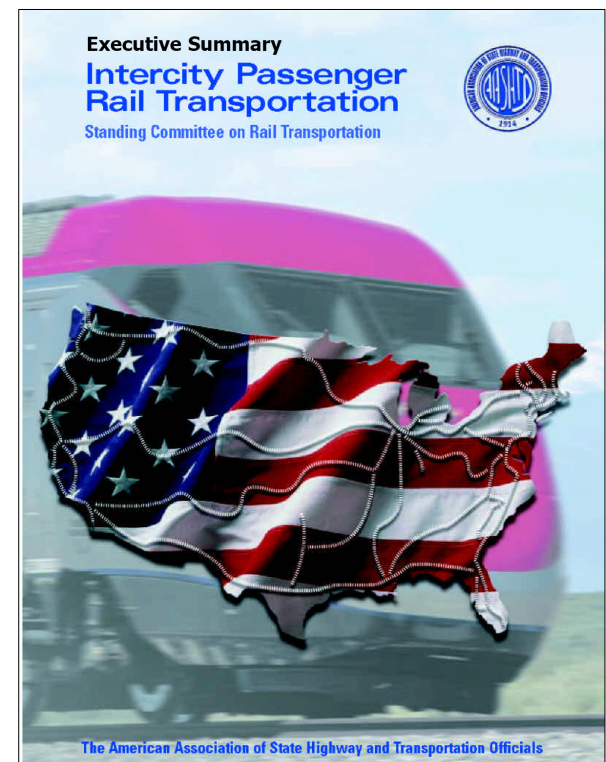
What might be invested in the future for Amtrak *Cascades*?

- Washington State will invest more than \$300 million through 2015 to improve schedule reliability and reduce travel times, but no additional service will be added.
- Oregon has funds to support operations only and has planned no capital investment due to severe budget constraints.
- British Columbia may invest up to \$4 million to allow extension of one Amtrak *Cascades* roundtrip to Vancouver, BC before the 2010 Winter Olympics.



2002 AASHTO study identified opportunities for strategic and successful investment in intercity passenger rail

- Rail corridors of less than 500 miles in length offer the best opportunity for intercity passenger rail; frequent service, reasonable travel times, broad market appeal.
- 81 percent of all intercity trips are between 100 and 500 miles.
- State-defined passenger rail corridor investment needs over 6 years (2002-2008) total \$10.4 billion.
- A dedicated federal funding program is critical to the ongoing and future success of state-supported intercity passenger rail programs.



Implications for the Commission's consideration.

- A dedicated federal funding program is needed to complement state investment; states cannot succeed alone.
- Meeting on-time performance goals is critical to sustaining and increasing ridership, and is impacted by growing freight rail volumes and necessary rail infrastructure improvements.

