

**Seattle, WA – Vancouver, BC  
Cross-border Passenger Rail  
Improvement Study  
#2010-CBRS-3**



**Final Report**  
**June 30, 2011**  
*Prepared for the Whatcom  
Council of Governments*

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**CROSS-BORDER PASSENGER RAIL IMPROVEMENT STUDY**  
*Produced for the Whatcom Council of Governments*  
*June 30, 2011*  
**CASCADIA CENTER OF DISCOVERY INSTITUTE**

The following study, commissioned by the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) and completed by the Cascadia Center of Discovery Institute, examines delays encountered by passenger trains at the U.S.-Canada border. The examination includes clearance issues. This report is subdivided into contract-specified tasks, each answering critical questions about freight and passenger operations in the corridor.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Delays in the Amtrak *Cascades* service at the U.S.-Canada border fall into two categories.

**Irregular delays** can occur because of slides along the corridor, including the area immediately adjacent to the border at White Rock/Crescent Beach. There are also operational issues involved in managing the flow of Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and Amtrak *Cascades* trains generally on the primarily single-tracked rail line from Everett to Vancouver, B.C., and specifically between the Swift U.S. Customs facility south of Blaine and the Colebrook siding at Mud Bay, north of the White Rock/Crescent Beach area in British Columbia. This issue is covered under Task 1.

**Regular delays** for southbound Amtrak *Cascades* trains, of 10-15 minutes, are attributable to the current inspection procedures involving pre-inspection for admissibility of passengers to the U.S. at the Pacific Central Station in Vancouver, B.C., followed by physical inspection of documents and baggage at the international border at Blaine. Northbound passengers are inspected only upon arrival at Pacific Central. This issue is covered under Task 2.

With regard to the issue of irregular delays, resolution of the slide challenges inherent in the geology of the shoreline between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C., is a complicated and ultimately costly fix. Mudslides have plagued this route since Great Northern Santa Fe pioneered it over a hundred years ago. In our research and field visits it became clear that the responsibility for solving the problem encompasses the adjacent communities responsible for zoning, drainage and tree cutting ordinances.

To address the disruption in the Amtrak *Cascades* schedules, we note the efforts of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) in trying to secure federal funds to comprehensively address the challenge. While ultimately unsuccessful, the coordinated partnership WSDOT engaged in with BNSF and Sound Transit in the Seattle to Everett sections of the corridor to engage proactively in operations and scheduling communications with the public were noteworthy.

Concerns, however, over what rail advocacy groups consider is an arbitrary rule by BNSF for a mandated 48-hour closure for all passenger trains was a common concern in our outreach while the emphasis on safety was the response from the railroad.

In the United States, the Federal Railroad Administration has federal jurisdiction over rail safety. In Canada, Transport Canada plays a similar role. In the White Rock/South Surrey area, there is also not a regional transit partner like Sound Transit and ultimately BNSF and the local communities are continuing to work to maintain the right of way.

The extraordinary number of slides this past winter has negatively affected (Seattle to Vancouver, B.C.) ridership numbers (although it bounced back in April) and could have an effect on the pending decision by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) to grant a permanent waiver of the proposed inspection fee for the second train. <sup>1</sup>

### **Possible Solutions**

The IMTC rail subcommittee, through the Executive Council formed by Governor Gregoire and Premier Campbell, should identify resources to bring together BNSF and corridor stakeholders in Washington and British Columbia involved in the slide issue. A corridor committee could coordinate the geotechnical data gathering which we believe could marshal resources outside of the budget of WSDOT to resolve the chronic delays.

To solve delays caused by the dual operation of BNSF and Amtrak *Cascades* service at the border, it is suggested that southbound inspections involve extension of the relatively short Blaine siding to the Swift Customs facility. This would provide operational flexibility in the 45-mile gap between sidings at Swift and Colebrook north of the border which bisects the Roberts Bank Rail Corridor to Delta Port and Westshore Terminal.

Our suggestion is based on the counsel of our consultant Read Fay, a former Division Manager for BNSF, who has detailed knowledge of the specific area of the corridor. In our communications with BNSF, operations manager personnel indicated current congestion on the East-West Robert Banks Rail Corridor (which BNSF operates frequently uses) was requiring the railroad to hold up north-south freight south of Bellingham.

Earlier this year, WSDOT was awarded additional federal funding for rail enhancements north of Seattle, including additional trackage at the Blaine Customs facility which will provide more flexibility for the Amtrak *Cascades* at the border. This may resolve the future congestion issue. The scope of our study did not include operational modeling tasks for future growth in the corridor.

Congestion in Blaine as a result of southbound trains waiting for inspections at Swift remains a concern for the community. The Department of Homeland Security and BNSF do not have plans to move the inspection equipment (known as a VACIS machine) at this time.

Blaine and the Port of Bellingham have developed long term plans to develop a Board Walk and pedestrian overpass. Community leaders have also envisioned a future passenger rail stop – possibly as the end point of a future rail system to Everett with connections to Seattle. There may be future opportunities for cost sharing of a facility, parking and open space.

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<sup>1</sup> On August 24, 2011, CBSA, in a media release, announced the extension of CBSA border clearance services to Amtrak's second daily train. The extension was based on a business case submitted by WSDOT. <http://cbsa.gc.ca/media/release-communique/2011/2011-08-24-eng.html>

The International Mobility Transportation Corridor (IMTC) Rail subcommittee should seek resources for a specific project to: 1) incorporate congestion concerns of Blaine leaders into the planning process for an expanded Blaine/Swift facility and 2) explore the relationship with the Roberts Bank Rail Corridor between an alternative northbound inspection location and expanded siding at Blaine. An initial inquiry to the BC WA Executive Council of the Premier and Governor would be appropriate.

## **TASK 1**

*Examine delays at international border crossings to passenger trains and determine a range of solutions to minimize these delays with cost implications.*

**Deliverable:** *List of solutions and estimated costs<sup>2</sup>*

### **Slides and Border Delays**

As outlined in the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) map at right, there are several areas susceptible to slides along the Cascades corridor. The Cascadia consultant team made field visits to sites in Edmonds and White Rock, interviewing local leaders and residents as well as passengers.<sup>3</sup>

In the winter of 2010-2011, six slides were recorded along the Semiahmoo Bay shoreline, encompassing the Semiahmoo First Nation Reserve and adjacent communities of South Surrey. These slides caused Amtrak service to be canceled a total of 10 days over a five-week period. In February, a “surface slide” on a saturated slope caused a closure of the line. In a story in *Peace Arch News*, BNSF Railway spokesman Gus Melonas said, “Our crews were alerted by our signal system that there was a slide ... mud, rock, debris came in contact with the outside of the track on the slope side ... We’re studying the various slope conditions all the way from Seattle to Vancouver... This has been an extremely heavy year for slides in Washington State, between Seattle and Everett.”

In February, White Rock city councilor Grant Meyer led the Cascadia team on a tour of the neighborhoods to illustrate the land-use and rail-, vehicle-, and pedestrian-access conditions and their impact on the communities.

“Tree cutting for ocean views is a major community concern and controversy, particularly along the Ocean Park bluff in Surrey above the BNSF Railway tracks,” Meyer said during the tour. “Our city is working with BNSF, City of Surrey, Amtrak and WSDOT to address the

### **Known mudslide areas**



<sup>2</sup> This task, in keeping with the intent of the Scope of Work, inquires into the existence of data quantifying passenger train delay and found that none currently exists, and that there is a need for such data from future study.

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed account of the interviews conducted, refer to Appendix 1, “Interviews and Community Outreach.”

issue while promoting extension of the boardwalk to connect White Rock and Crescent Beach.”



The city of Surrey has a unique COSMOS satellite mapping system that can highlight areas of concern and property lines as well as the slopes, which can be as steep as 65 degrees.<sup>4</sup>

As is common in geotechnical reports in communities along the corridor, suggestions have been made that slopes should be in vegetation year round to support stability

and prevent surface slides. In the meantime, an active community discussion of sensitive area designation and the city's tree protection bylaw is progressing.

With technological advances in slide detection, BNSF is working with the city of Surrey and geotechnical experts in the specific areas of activity to minimize damage. BNSF has inspectors walking the tracks and looking for slippage on the bluff, as well as remote sensors to detect debris on the tracks. The inspectors also monitor water levels beside the tracks to ensure no erosion of the rail bed.

According to White Rock's city records, *Peace Arch News* and community blogs, there has been a series of slides – some of them in summer months - dating back to the construction of the rail line as the Great Northern.

On June 12, 1999, *Peace Arch News* reported that “spokesperson Gus Melones [sic] said Thursday that 'three freight trains were held until the flood subsided and minor damage to the tracks could be repaired and inspected.' A BN Rail crew was at the site Wednesday, clearing mud off the track with an excavator. 'We didn't let any trains through until the line had been properly inspected', he said. 'Any time there's something like this, we run inspectors ahead of the trains for safety reasons. We did that, and it was OK.'”

On January 21, 2006, *Peace Arch News* reported that, “[A] month of wet weather resulted in two landslides on the bluff near Crescent Beach, forcing temporary shutdowns of passenger service between Seattle and Vancouver. BNSF's Gus Melonas said Wednesday minor slides occurred on the hillside January 8 and 13. 'We've had two slides where debris has come down north of White Rock... two separate areas where mud, rock and some trees came down and made contact with the rail', Melonas said. Several larger slides have occurred on the U.S. side of the line, the largest between Seattle and Portland....”

Slide-prone areas also raise concerns other than delayed freight- and passenger-train schedules.

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<sup>4</sup> More about the mapping system can be found at: [www.surrey.ca/city-services/665.aspx](http://www.surrey.ca/city-services/665.aspx)

“Our community is concerned over hazardous goods derailment because of chronic slides,” local citizen activist Ken Jones says. “We have been pursuing a realignment of the corridor inland with a tunnel to better transport freight and keep our community safe.”

Several neighborhood leaders would like to see the rail line rerouted inland because of blockages of emergency vehicles by BNSF trains in the Crescent Beach area. Acknowledging the concerns of neighborhoods with regard to slides and safety, Surrey city councillor Linda Hepner told us, “our city is working with the railroad and community to ensure continued emergency access as well as protection of slide prone areas.”

White Rock city councillor Meyer also recognizes the challenges faced by a community wedged between the bay and hills and bisected by a major railroad. He points however to the enduring desire of many residents to have a future stop for White Rock on the Cascades line and says that would help residents feel more inclined to support the Cascades operation. “The community, BNSF and Amtrak have worked together on beach access and our remarkable boardwalk which we would like to eventually connect around Mud Bay,” he says.

White Rock mayor Cathy Ferguson and White Rock South Surrey Chamber of Commerce president Doug Hart pointed to the community as a magnet for arts and dining which would benefit from a train stop. Earlier this year the city appointed an “Amtrak Passenger Rail Task Force” to explore a future in consultation with WSDOT, Amtrak, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Canadian Border Service Agency (CBSA) and B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) leaders. For a variety of reasons—including the effect on travel time, complications with consolidated pre-clearance procedures, and infrastructure investments necessary for a stop—based on meetings between WSDOT and local leaders, plans for the White Rock stop are not proceeding.

### **An Inland Rail Route?**

In 2002, the city of Surrey conducted a study to examine alternate alignments for both rail and highway. The road-and-rail scenario is, however, complicated by topography, the expansion of border inspection facilities at the Pacific Highway crossing (with a potential tunnel there), the just-completed four-laning of Highway 15 from Highway 1 to the border, and residential development in the affected area. Local businesses have been more focused on expanding the hours of the Aldergrove crossing, of any crossing, to serve Langley and vicinity.

Delcan, the consultant for the Surrey study (North/South Connector Corridor Study, Road and Rail), following up a 1997 report from Stantec Consulting, found that a north-south road-and-rail corridor warranted investigation. The criteria for the new corridor included maximum speeds of 50 or 60 mph for freight trains, 90 mph for passenger trains, and 50 mph for a four-lane highway expandable to six lanes. The consultants looked at four options. The option recommended assumed CAN\$133.2 million in construction costs, for the alignment with the least environmental and geotechnical impact.

For its part, a citizens' group called Smart Rail and led by Ken Jones has proposed an inland higher-speed rail route, citing the need for investments in three area trestles. According to Smart Rail's report:

“[It] would examine a new industrial route on the East side of the Truck Route (SR543) through Blaine, then along the West side of the Campbell Heights Industrial Park (Surrey), joining up with the Coal Train corridor westward through Surrey, to rejoin the existing track at Colebrook...We feel this will meet the needs of High Speed Passenger Rail through this section; provide a faster, secure, at-grade route for Freight, facilitate grade crossing overpasses, and accommodate double-tracking of the route for passing of trains, on a solid roadbed.”

British Columbia's Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI), through an accord between Washington state and British Columbia, is engaging in a long-term study of future routes for high-speed rail.

### **Slides South of the Border**

The unincorporated area in southwestern Snohomish County between Edmonds and Mukilteo, around Picnic Point, witnessed, by far, the highest number of slides in the 2010-2011 winter. The slides are inextricably related to the pattern of land use, at least in this primary problem area. Clearing of timber and construction of homes on the bluffs overlooking the shoreline that the tracks follow has destabilized soils, leaving the slopes prone to movement. Martin Young, operations manager at Sound Transit, notes that “mudslide mitigation involves stabilization measures such as retaining walls and drainage improvements by the property owner or government agency, slide detection fences BNSF uses, and a variety of vegetation management, catchment, walls and ditches. Sound Transit has ongoing partnership arrangements with BNSF, WSDOT and Amtrak for ongoing operational activities and rider alerts.”

After BNSF crews clear away the debris from the tracks, freight trains are allowed to proceed. Another 48 hours must pass before BNSF, per its internal policy, will allow passenger trains to use the tracks. In the 2010-2011 winter, the result was the complete cancellation of several Seattle-Vancouver route departures – meaning many trains never left Vancouver for Seattle, or vice versa. This translated into a year-over-year decline in ridership between January 2010 and January 2011 that continued into the first quarter of 2011 even as annual ridership on the Cascades trains was climbing. The April ridership numbers were however higher than previous years.

All Aboard Washington director Lloyd Flem has called for elected state leaders to “praise and push” BNSF officials to allow more flexibility in reopening rail lines for passenger use – noting that “the 48 hour stoppage is internal BNSF policy - not federal law - and freight trains are allowed to operate soon after the tracks are cleared.”

In 2010 WSDOT sought \$7.7 million in federal HSR funds to stabilize slopes at 40 locations along the Cascades route in Washington State. That application (which was subject to a 20% state match) was denied, but Andrew Wood, then deputy director for operations at WSDOT's Rail and Marine Office, stated that the department had applied for funding from the \$2.4 billion pool of federal money redirected from the now canceled Florida HSR project.

A WSDOT media release of April 4, 2011, stated:

“Washington State applied today for approximately \$120 million in federal high-speed rail stimulus money, part of \$2.4 billion returned by Florida.... Projects in

WSDOT's application are primarily for environmental and engineering work to stabilize hillsides, add capacity to reduce conflicts with freight, and replace an aging trestle. All projects funded by the ARRA rail grants must be completed by September 2017."

'We're working hard to improve reliability for passenger service along this route,' said Washington Transportation Secretary Paula Hammond. 'In partnership with BNSF, this funding allows us to address those problem areas and ensure that trains get to their destinations.'"

Due to the many complaints from riders, WSDOT engaged in a communication outreach program to answer the most commonly asked questions. WSDOT marketing and communications manager Vickie Sheehan reported:

"There were 16 mudslides that kept 90 trains from reaching their destination in Dec. 2010 alone. Seventy-eight of those trains were on the Seattle to Vancouver, B.C., leg. This happens to be our most mudslide-prone problem area. When a mudslide occurs and disrupts train service, Amtrak works very hard to make sure all affected passengers get where they need to go. All available bus companies are contacted and put in to service if available. In the case of the mudslides over this last weekend, buses were in very short supply and Amtrak was not able to get enough to cover all the affected passengers...

The biggest challenge is funding. Before we can start any improvements, we have to complete an environmental assessment (EA) to determine potential key environmental impacts before beginning any construction. There is currently no funding for the EA – without it, we can't begin construction to fix the problem.

We applied for federal funding for this issue twice in the last year, but have not yet received any awards. We will continue to try and secure funding and collaborate with Sound Transit and BNSF. For the mudslide areas in British Columbia, we are working with the Canadian government to explore options to fix those problem spots on the corridor which are on their side of the border."

### **Border Clearance Issues**

*Delays Approaching Blaine Rail Crossing.* Border-crossing inspection issues for BNSF freight trains vary depending on the direction of travel, whether the train is loaded or empty, and the type of cars and commodity. For the Amtrak *Cascades* trains, northbound inspections are conducted at the destination point of Pacific Central Station in Vancouver, and southbound inspections are conducted there and at the Blaine crossing near the Peace Arch.

As they enter Canada, freight trains are subject to documentation of loads and inspection of all empty boxcars. Southbound at Blaine, BNSF trains are inspected by U.S. CBP personnel as the cars pass through a Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System (VACIS) machine (described in greater detail below).

Most crossings proceed without exceptional incidents. Random incidents or delays can back up trains. It is during these times that enough trackage is required to move trains that are cleared and do not require additional inspections, so as to keep the line free-flowing.

Currently, the Colebrook siding is the first siding north of the U.S.-Canada border. The run time for a train to move between Colebrook and the Swift Customs siding is about 45 minutes. Dispatchers must make multiple decisions on train movements that have a number of variables, including:

- Whether a train is going to pass inspection;
- Arrivals of faster-moving passenger trains; and,
- Shift changes by border inspection personnel.

These variables play into a dispatch decision to keep a train moving or held up in a siding. Stopping a train in a holding pattern with other trains continuing to progress toward the border adds to the congestion by narrowing the operational window.

Addition of trackage at Blaine could greatly enhance the inspection process at the border, enabling the dispatcher to effect multiple movements when passenger trains moving in either direction and freight trains that require different types of inspections (both visual and electronic) are both present.

The randomness of mandated enhanced inspections also clogs the limited siding now being used at Swift. As noted later in this report, WSDOT has secured federal funding for an additional siding at Swift to reduce congestion. Expanded sidings at the border would provide for further inspection flexibility at Swift.

In interviews with BNSF government relations director Terry Finn and Doug Jones, Northwest Division general manager for BNSF, several issues were raised, as follows:

- In the Vancouver area, coal trains that run via the so-called Roberts Bank Corridor are operated by BNSF crews all the way to their terminals and back. Difficulty arises when there is more than the usual train congestion in and around the intermodal and coal terminals at Westshore Terminal at DeltaPort, requiring BNSF to hold trains along sidings on the Bellingham subdivision, south of the border.
- Most of the corridor from the border to White Rock, where CBSA conducts the northbound freight inspection, runs through the Semiahmoo First Nation Reserve. During interviews with Semiahmoo First Nation councillor Joanne Charles and Chief Willard Cook, concerns over noise, access and speed were voiced.

Operational delays at the border occur sporadically, mainly with trains southbound into the United States. For a number of reasons the “randomness” of train times at the border can vary, making consistent and reliable crossing times difficult to predict. This unpredictable variable can cause backups to freight and passenger trains alike, and, depending on the length or number of trains involved, can lead to crews exhausting their legally mandated hours of service, thus further clogging both the mainline and the border crossing.

Since Seattle-Vancouver, B.C., passenger service resumed in 1995, WSDOT and Amtrak have worked well with BNSF to jointly invest in infrastructure improvements so as to reduce congestion at the border and elsewhere along the corridor. With respect to border delays, the most significant improvement was the completion of the Swift siding in 2009. This project relocated the siding track to allow a train to pass by while a second train is being

inspected. This will keep the main line clear at all times, eliminating delays, which can exceed two hours, at the border crossing.

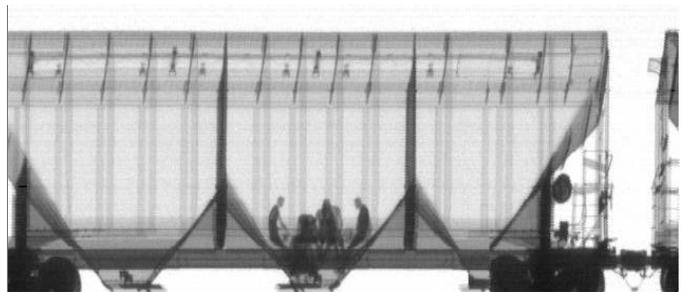
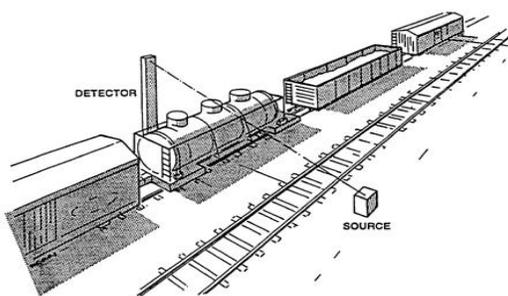
A second WSDOT project funded through the federal government will further reduce delays. According to a recent WSDOT project update:

“In 2011, the Washington State Department of Transportation has received federal funding for expansion of the Blaine Swift Customs Facility to add a new main track approximately 10,000 feet long and conversion of the existing main track to a siding. The new main track will extend around the existing siding at Swift, just south of Blaine, WA and support increased train speeds. These improvements will allow two freight trains to be inspected clear of the main line, reducing congestion and improving intercity passenger rail schedule reliability.”

As referenced earlier, all southbound freight trains are required to pass through the VACIS system at Swift. In addition to the mainline, there is a siding (8,588 feet long, with a set-out track on the south end) for any cars deemed to require additional inspection by the border personnel. To the west of the mainline there is another set-out track for these types of cars. No matter which track is being used - mainline or siding - the mainline is blocked during the inspection or set-out process.



In an interview, Blaine mayor Bonnie Onyon commented that Blaine has been complaining since 2003 about streets that are continuously blocked by BNSF freight trains passing through the VACIS machine. This can interrupt school schedules and emergency responders on Bell Road and Hughes Avenue/Peace Portal Drive. The roads connect the city center, Semiahmoo and Birch Bay, where many retirees reside. The city has requested that the VACIS screening be moved south to open the streets. As of this writing, however, neither the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) nor BNSF has plans to move the VACIS machine south on the siding.



*VACIS - illustration courtesy of Bruce Burrows, Railway Association of Canada*

### **Blaine Redevelopment**

Under this task, no operational modeling was done at the border to determine specific future improvements necessary if BNSF's traffic volumes were to increase significantly. The expanded Swift customs facility, combined with extended sidings at Stanwood and Mt. Vernon, should address delay issues for the Cascades. We recommend that the city of Blaine

become involved, through the International Mobility and Trade Corridor (IMTC) project, in planning for the enhanced Swift siding, to explore opportunities for reconfiguration of the facility to relieve congestion in Blaine.

The U.S. and Canadian inspection agencies have developed some flexibility in terms of border clearance locations for freight rail. Recently, during a Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance meeting in Sarnia, Ontario, Cascadia team members visited to the Canadian National (CN) Railway's Sarnia rail yard and tunnel. The expanded tunnel opened in 1994 to handle tri-level autorack cars. CN trains travel through a VACIS machine staffed by CBP personnel on the Canadian side of the border. Through improved procedures and electronic manifests, inspection times have been reduced from 2.5 hours to 20 minutes.

The WSDOT Rail and Marine Office has raised a concern that any change in the current inspection procedures for northbound freight trains would have a serious negative impact on travel time and efforts to fully implement pre-clearance procedures between CBP and CBSA for the Cascades service at Vancouver's Pacific Central Station. We agree. Our analysis is strictly limited to freight, not passenger, inspections. Delays in freight train clearances stemming from lack of capacity and operational flexibility at the border can also negatively impact the Amtrak *Cascades* schedule.

### **Possible Solutions**

Cascadia's consultant team suggests that the IMTC rail subcommittee convene a working session with representatives of BNSF, CBP, CBSA, Semiahmoo First Nation, WSDOT, British Columbia's MOTI, White Rock, South Surrey, and Blaine to consider the issues outlined above.

### **Congestion-relieving investments south of the border**

"This tremendous growth in ridership confirms the demand for Amtrak *Cascades* and the need to continue improving the service and reliability," Paula Hammond, Washington state transportation secretary. – **January 2011 WSDOT press release**

Recently, WSDOT and Amtrak celebrated the 10th anniversary of the highly successful *Cascades* service, which runs between Vancouver, B.C., and Eugene, Ore. According to the same WSDOT release quoted above, "ridership on Amtrak *Cascades* finished 2010 with a 16-year high of 838,251 passengers. Total annual ridership exceeded 2009 by 76,641 for a 10 percent increase."

The release went on to note that the second daily Seattle-Vancouver train carried more than 138,000 riders in 2010. The April 2011 ridership report showed a 12.7 % increase from April 2010. The second train began running in August 2009 as a pilot project in advance of the 2010 Olympic Games, and will remain in service through at least October 2011, when CBSA is scheduled to make a decision whether to continue to waive the agency's inspection fee for the train.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> On August 24, 2011, CBSA, in a media release, announced the extension of CBSA border clearance services to Amtrak's second daily train. The extension was based on a business case submitted by WSDOT. <http://cbsa.gc.ca/media/release-communique/2011/2011-08-24-eng.html>

### **Focus on Seattle-to-Blaine**

Since 2009, Washington state has been awarded \$782 million in federal funds, through the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), for infrastructure investments in the Washington state segment of the Vancouver, WA –Eugene, OR corridor. A major focus of the funding is the segment between Seattle and Portland, given primarily on the strength of that segment's ridership and the tenuous nature of the Canadian government's commitment to support for the corridor.

Congressman Rick Larsen and a group of local leaders representing jurisdictions from Snohomish to Whatcom counties have requested federal HSR funds for improvements between Seattle and Blaine. While WSDOT's announcements of FRA awards earlier this year for several corridor and local projects in Blaine and Everett have been welcome, our community outreach also points to a strong desire for a third, mid-day round-trip to complement the existing morning and afternoon frequencies.

### **Canadian support for the Cascades**

In 2007, the Province of British Columbia, Amtrak and BNSF partnered to fund a siding or passing track at Colebrook, north of White Rock. "This project will boost tourism dollars, reduce traffic congestion, and ease vehicle emissions on our major transportation corridors and at our border crossings," said B.C. transportation minister Kevin Falcon in announcing MOTI's contribution of CAN\$4.5 million for the siding. This allowed the second Amtrak *Cascades* service to Vancouver, B.C. to begin before the Olympic Games in 2010.

After significant delay, CBSA officials informed Amtrak and WSDOT officials that a "border inspection fee" of CAN\$1500 would be levied daily on the second train, in view of its arrival after regular business hours, under the agency's cost recovery program. Amtrak and WSDOT refused to defray the fee. Subsequently, Stockwell Day, then Canada's trade minister, announced a pilot project to waive the proposed fee for the train, which necessitates extra staffing because of its late arrival time. The benchmark for the success of the pilot project was ridership.<sup>6</sup>

### **Washington-British Columbia Joint Transportation Executive Council**

Building on the spirit of cross-border cooperation fostered during the 2010 Olympics, Governor Chris Gregoire and British Columbia's premiers - Gordon Campbell and, more recently, Christy Clark, have maintained unambiguous support for cross-border Cascadia Region initiatives, including transportation initiatives. The Competitiveness and Prosperity Action Plan signed by Gregoire and Campbell at the conclusion of the fifth annual BC-Washington joint cabinet meeting in October 2010 reaffirmed the two leaders' support specifically for HSR. According to Washington state's press release on the meeting:

"Gregoire and Campbell also signed a joint letter to President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Stephen Harper recommending a coordinated planning approach to border improvements to reduce wait times and congestion and ensure efficient flow of people and goods between Washington state and B.C. The proposed approach would reduce complex layers of regulation that impede business travel and trade,

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making the region more globally competitive while ensuring borders are safe and secure.”

The governor and Premier Campbell established a working group to oversee four specific initiatives to improve cross-border trade and tourism:

- A border circulation analysis for the Cascade gateway region;
- Freight movement improvements, including better use of FAST lanes for trucking;
- Harbor-to-harbor air service by Kenmore Air between Seattle and Vancouver (currently on hold because of CBSA fee requirements); and,
- Maintaining the second Amtrak train while determining how to increase service between the two metropolitan regions.

Governor Gregoire and newly elected Premier Christy Clark met in Olympia in May 2011. In her news release of May 19, the governor announced the two leaders' common interest in developing more joint initiatives to help achieve shared transportation-related goals at this autumn's British Columbia-Washington Joint Cabinet Meeting and Pacific Coast Collaborative Leaders Forum. They also pledged to support (in the words of the release) “mass transit initiatives” at the border. The two were scheduled to meet again at the National Governors Association's gathering, taking place in Idaho. Governor Gregoire is the association's current chair.

Governor Gregoire has expressed particular appreciation for the Vancouver metropolitan area's application of public-private synergies to its development of light rail, noting (as quoted in *The Seattle Times*), “British Columbia has provided a case study of public private partnership for our state in the development of the Canada Line rail connection.”

WSDOT identified a series of infrastructure projects in its 2006 Long-Range Plan for Amtrak *Cascades* to enable the plan's goal of up to four Seattle-Vancouver round-trips by 2023. The list included several new sidings in Burnaby and Delta, higher-speed tracks in White Rock, a new traffic control system, and a new rail bridge across the Fraser River. Altogether, WSDOT estimated that these improvements would cost about a billion dollars - with the new bridge eating up more than half of that total.

WSDOT's 2008 Amtrak *Cascades* Mid-Range Plan developed four options for future investment, none of them recommending more than two round-trips between Seattle and Vancouver.

The 2008 plan declared, “The availability of capital funding for improvements south of the Columbia River and north of the U.S. Canadian border is uncertain. Each of these entities needs to participate in rail capacity and reliability projects, if there is to be Amtrak *Cascades* service expansion, as described in the long range plan.”<sup>7, 8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 2, “Amtrak Cascades Mid-Range Plan,” December 2008 Page 1015.

<sup>8</sup> Note concerning list of solutions and estimated costs. See Appendix 3, Cascade Gateway Rail Study, Ch 5, pp 5-4 – 5-14.

## **TASK 2**<sup>9</sup>

*Examine clearance issues at the border and determine what can be done to improve the flow of traffic and minimization of inspection-agency issues*

**Deliverable:** *Issues and strategy section of final report. (Found in executive summary)*

### **Review of Border Inspection Procedures**

“It is hard to explain how our state is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to save ten minutes of travel time between Seattle and Portland while the lack of full pre-clearance between Seattle and Vancouver costs us ten minutes.”—**Scott Witt, director, WSDOT Rail and Marine Office, during meeting with David Jacobson, U.S. ambassador to Canada, June 9, 2011, Seattle**

“We have the legacy of two different agencies with different mandates [immigration and customs] merging into a Department of Homeland Security and now the ambiguity [for the Amtrak *Cascades*] of separate clearances for people and their bags . . . With the Beyond the Border and Regulatory Coordinating Council initiatives, the President and Prime Minister are committed to a 'reset' to the relationship between the United States and Canada. We are working to resolve issues like pre-clearance.”—**Ambassador David Jacobson at Pacific Northwest Economic Region session, June 9, 2011, Seattle**

“Pre-clearance involves additional costs to station, educate and house personnel in a foreign country as well as addressing the challenges of limited law enforcement authority. Negotiations between the federal agencies are actively sorting through these issues between Washington and British Columbia and New York and Quebec.”—**Interview with Theresa Brown, U.S. State Department attache, Ottawa, May 2, 2011**

“The economic benefit to British Columbia in its first year of operation, of the second Amtrak *Cascades* is estimated at [CAN]\$11.8 million ([CAN]\$1.9 million directly to governments in sales and hotel taxes), a higher value per visitor than the first train because the schedule of the second encourages an overnight stay, along with more dining and shopping. Amtrak wants to keep the extra train running, deepening the rail link of the Pacific Northwest to develop a more integrated region of Cascadia – a step toward the realization of a long standing dream on both sides of the border. . . . The feds won't find a better return on investment.”—**Editorial, Vancouver Sun, September 29, 2010**

### **Summary**

There are two primary issues involved in inspection procedures for the Amtrak *Cascades* Seattle-Vancouver service, if its continued success and expansion is to be ensured: first, a

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<sup>9</sup> Note concerning modeling: During the course of this study, substantial discussion occurred with BNSF and others concerning a need for rail operations modeling north from Bellingham to Vancouver as this has not been done and is not within the scope of this study. The cost of such modeling has been estimated by BNSF at approximately \$75,000 US.

comprehensive pre-clearance procedure for southbound passengers at Vancouver's Pacific Central Station to save an average of 10-15 minutes of travel time and thus attain a service goal; second, to convince Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) officials to permanently waive a pending \$1500 per-train, per-inspection fee levied for the second Amtrak train, which arrives in Vancouver after regular business hours.<sup>10</sup>

The Cascadia team spent most of the time devoted to this task to facilitating stakeholder sessions with U.S. and Canadian border inspection leaders, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) officials and private-sector leaders. These sessions consisted of full and candid discussions of benchmarks for decision-making. For the first half of this year Cascadia joined partner organizations and the U.S. and Canadian consuls in sponsoring sessions in Seattle, Vancouver, Ottawa and Washington, D.C., in order to promote a cross-border dialog.

A special Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG) session in Burlington, Vermont in May, co-sponsored in part by the Whatcom Council of Governments and dedicated to border-clearance procedures for passenger rail, also provided a timely forum to review the current situation for the three cross-border rail corridors between Canada and the United States.

Fortunately, the February announcement of a new border accord between President Obama and Prime Minister Harper has established a very positive tone for progress under the twin initiatives of the Beyond the Border Working Group and the Regulatory Coordinating Council. Our region benefited greatly from the temporary assignment of U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP's) Blaine port director Greg Alvarez to the Department of Homeland Security to provide local expertise to high-level working groups formed to develop recommendations under the Obama-Harper border accord.

While signals from our national capital on one issue – pre-clearance – appear positive, with substantial momentum coming from the advice and counsel of local officials, the other issue - cost recovery fees - is problematic, with a potentially negative decision set for late summer or early autumn. WSDOT and Amtrak have stated firmly that the CAN\$550,000 annual cost recovery fee is not budgeted, and that, if it is imposed (perhaps at a higher rate), the second train would be discontinued, undercutting the nearly \$1.1 billion in investment that has leveraged \$780 million in competitive grants from the Federal Railroad Administration.

The situation is urgent. In a late June session with Canadian consul general Denis Stevens, it was made clear that Ottawa was waiting for Washington state to present a cost-benefit case for permanently waiving the fee. State leaders, led by Governor Chris Gregoire, feel frustrated with the lack of clarity as to what constitutes a “successful pilot project” for the second train, such as would recommend the permanent waiver. They are unsure of what the exact measure of success is in terms of ridership and overtime or extra shift costs, pointing out that the figure keeps escalating, reaching figures substantially above the original CAN\$550,000.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> On August 24, 2011, CBSA, in a media release, announced the extension of CBSA border clearance services to Amtrak's second daily train. The extension was based on a business case submitted by WSDOT. <http://cbsa.gc.ca/media/release-communique/2011/2011-08-24-eng.html>

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

Cascadia worked with a coalition of Washington state and British Columbia leaders to make a firm business case for a permanent waiver of the border fee

The cost recovery fee waiver began as a pilot project by CBSA, under the Core Service Review of rail. WSDOT and Amtrak rail leaders say they are not clear about the ridership benchmark required for achieving success and the cost of the fee. A decision will be made in October 2011 with regard to a potential permanent waiver. Meanwhile, ridership took a dip during the winter months due to line closures from slides but bounced back in April.<sup>12</sup>

To complicate matters further, in his current budget proposal President Obama has proposed to Congress a \$5.50 fee for travel into the United States, ending a waiver that visitors from Canada presently enjoy and generating \$110 million for the Department of Homeland Security. Birgit Matthiesen of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association says the proposal “contradicts the border vision that Obama and Harper have set out.” She adds that the North American Free Trade Agreement does not afford protection from the fee.<sup>13</sup>

### **U.S.-Canada Pre-Clearance**

Pre-clearance began with a request by American Airlines at the Toronto Airport in 1952. Today, about 12 million travelers clear U.S. customs at Canadian airports annually, making air travel more secure because passengers are cleared prior to disembarkation and avoid customs lines upon arrival in the United States. Further, pre-clearance enables trans-border flights to U.S. airports that do not have customs and immigration facilities.

A 2009 Amtrak report to Congress, “Strategic Service and Security Proposal for Amtrak Service in Vancouver, B.C., During (and Possibly after) the 2010 Olympic Games,” contains an excellent overview of the history of pre-clearance.<sup>14</sup> The report states:

“These pre-clearance arrangements were formalized by the 1974 Air Transport Pre-clearance Agreement between Canada and the United States of America. Under that agreement, air pre-clearance services now process approximately 11.5 million passengers annually at the following Canadian airports: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Halifax, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal (Dorval). Since that agreement was signed, changes have been made to Canadian law; specifically the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982 and consequently part of the Constitution of Canada) that has granted Canadians new individual rights. At the same time, border processing has evolved as a result of the rapid increase in border crossings and the adoption of new technology.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection can examine and seize goods, administer certain monetary penalties and determine the admissibility of travelers who wish to travel to the U.S. The U.S. laws may be administered only in designated pre-clearance areas and are subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and relevant

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid*

<sup>13</sup> From Macleans, “Updated: Obama Proposes Travel Fee for Canada,” 2/16/11. <http://www2.macleans.ca/2011/02/16/obama-proposes-travel-fee-for-canada/>

<sup>14</sup> For additional information, see Appendix 4, “Report to the United States Congress Strategic Service and Security Proposal for Amtrak Service in Vancouver BC During (and Possibly After) the 2010 Winter Olympic Games.”

Canadian laws. No provision of American law that would be considered criminal under Canadian law can be applied in Canada; criminal matters are dealt with by Canadian authorities under Canadian law.

In December 1998, Bill S-22, the Pre-clearance Act, was introduced in the Canadian Senate by the Hon. Sharon Carstairs, the Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate. The bill provides U.S. Federal Inspection Services with the appropriate statutory authority to determine, at designated airport areas in Canada, what people and goods would be allowed entry into the United States. Bill S-22 took effect in 2001. The Pre-clearance Act of 1999 is the Canadian legislative tool that gives force of law to the substantive elements of the Canada-U.S. Agreement on Pre-clearance at Canadian airports. The Canada-U.S. Pre-clearance Agreement is the document that governs USCBP Officers' authority and protections at air pre-clearance locations in Canada. The Canada-U.S. Pre-clearance Agreement does not pertain to rail or sea operations. Any change to the Pre-clearance Act of 1999 requires parliamentary action according to Canadian law. Any change to the Canada-U.S. Pre-clearance Agreement would require a new bi-lateral agreement between both countries."

### **Cross-Border Support for Pre-Clearance**

In a joint 2009 report, "Tracking the Border," the U.S. and Canadian chambers of commerce expressed more specific support for rail pre-clearance. The report states:

"The Canadian and U.S. governments should look to expand the preclearance model to other modes of transportation, such as cargo and passenger travel, in other regions of North America. In fact, [Canadian] Minister [of International Trade Peter] Van Loan and Secretary [Janet] Napolitano [of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security] agreed to renew negotiations to set up land preclearance facilities for trucks at the Buffalo, New York, and Fort Erie, Ontario, border crossing. By moving the inspection and clearance facilities before the border and by having clearance processes done before actually crossing, more cargo can be cleared away from congested bridges where infrastructure constraints inhibit larger customs offices from being put in place."

Pre-clearance is available for travelers at the Belleville marine terminal in British Columbia and as well as rail passengers departing from Vancouver on the Amtrak *Cascades* service. The Canadian and U.S. governments should continue to expand the pre-clearance or on-board clearance model to more bus and rail passengers traveling from Canada to the United States and vice versa. With both countries looking at making rail travel faster through infrastructure upgrades and the U.S. administration touting 10 HSR corridor projects, now is the perfect time to test an enhanced rail pre-clearance model. Although negotiations on land pre-clearance broke down in 2007, legal and sovereignty concerns can be addressed through the Beyond the Border Working Group.

At present rail passengers traveling from Montreal or Toronto to the United States clear customs (at Rouses Point and Niagara Falls, N.Y., respectively) as they enter the United States: the train stops and customs officers enter the train. Once all passengers are cleared, the train can continue. The whole process can take 45 minutes to an hour, discouraging travel to the United States. Northbound rail passengers, furthermore, follow a similar procedure. A modified pre-clearance model applies to Vancouver-to-Seattle passengers:

they are pre-cleared at the Vancouver rail station, but the train still stops at the border for CBP officers to check luggage.

Amtrak's *Maple Leaf*, which connects New York and Toronto, and crosses the border at Niagara Falls, and Amtrak's *Adirondack*, which links New York with Montreal via the Rouses Point crossing, are both current or prospective state corridor trains under Section 209 of the 2008 Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act.

At the TBWG meeting co-sponsored by WCOG in Vermont, Amtrak's Ed Courtemanch identified a number of key issues affecting the ability of Amtrak to expand services between U.S. and Canadian cities, as follows:

- On-train inspections are no longer satisfactory from the perspective of border agencies because of the lack of privacy to interview travelers properly.
- Border agencies often cannot clearly match every item of baggage to its owner.
- Poor connectivity exists with agency information technologies.
- Safety and security risks exist, given potentially unruly passengers and the firearms held by officers.

According to Courtemanch, requirements for de-boarding passenger trains at the border also present safety issues:

- De-boarding is unsafe at low platforms, especially in bad weather.
- Elderly and ADA passengers must get off a train to be inspected.
- Passengers carrying infants and small children are also at risk when de-boarding.
- Long border dwell times lead to longer trip times.
- All passengers must wait until the last passenger has cleared.
- Frequent delays exacerbate poor on-time performance at down-line stations

Possible solutions, in his view, would include: Siting the pre-clearance process at the point of origin (as done with air travel); end-point customs and immigration processing in Canada with non-stop closed-door operation north of the border; and, developing new methods for on-board processing that mitigate concerns of border authorities.

After extensive discussions, the Vermont meeting participants recommended that a working committee be established to suggest strategies that would facilitate the cross-border movement of passenger rail service in an efficient, safe and secure manner. In the working group's consensus opinion, as reported by meeting participant Kris Wisniewski of the Eastern Border Transportation Coalition, the committee should include key stakeholders, such as border agencies, Amtrak, and federal, state, provincial and local transportation agencies. The working group also recommended that the committee be formed under the TBWG's auspices.

### **Cost Recovery**

CBSA faces constant demand for additional services beyond current funding capacity. They have embarked on two-phased Core Services Review of their passenger clearances services. Phase I focused on the air mode while Phase II reviewed the marine and rail modes.

In presentations by CBSA officials at annual Can/Am Border Trade Alliance sessions, “core services” refers to the specific combination of border services provided at a specific port of entry in all modes of travel. They are developing plans for:

- A sustainable policy framework to determine what CBSA services should be publicly funded and what services should be privately funded
- Operational models and processes to assess new service requests, including the economic benefits
- Funding options for expanding CBSA services

*“The current service delivery framework is not sustainable and no periodic review process is in place, nor a funding mechanism to expand services that should be publicly funded.”*

—**Greg Goatbe, Assistant Vice President, CBSA**

While the processing of travellers entering Canada via the highway, air and marine modes has undergone significant changes over time the processing of rail passengers at Canadian points of entry has remained virtually unchanged.

Rail passengers make up a small percentage of visitors.

<b>PEOPLE ENTERING CANADA BY MODE, FYS 2006-2007 TO 2009-2010</b>				
	<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>
Air				
Highway	22,133,553	22,133,553	23,429,651	22,252,784
Marine	69,772,698	69,772,698	64,381,303	59,697,945
<b>Rail</b>	2,816,331	2,816,331	2,961,255	2,929,735
<b>Total</b>	<b>284,242</b>	<b>284,242</b>	<b>255,612</b>	<b>250,352</b>
	95,006,824	95,006,824	91,027,821	85,130,816

*Source: CBSA Criminal Investigations Program (IRPA) – Evaluation Study Final Report December 2010*

### **CBSA Service Locations**

The CBSA provides services at approximately 1,200 service points across Canada and at some international locations, including the following:

- 120 land border crossings
- 27 rail sites
- 13 international airports
- 444 small vessel marina reporting sites
- 12 ferry terminals
- 82 customs warehouses
- 3 postal processing plants
- 4 detention facilities
- 46 international locations staffed with migration integrity officers
- 4 port facilities

### **Total Financial and Human Resources**

The following tables provide summary data on the total financial and human resources of the CBSA for the next three fiscal years.

2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
1,629,707	1,793,738	1,748,680

2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
13,607	13,741	13,841

*Source: CBSA. Planned spending changes from 2010-11 to 2011-12. The planned spending increase of \$164.0 million is a result of adjustments made to approved expenditures, primarily to specific multi-year projects.*

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# Passenger Appendices

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## Passenger Appendix 1

### Interviews and Community Outreach

#### Cross-Border Rail Study for Whatcom Council of Governments

*\*Recordings of these discussions are available for a portion of the individuals listed. Please enquire at the Cascadia Center for further information.*



# Summary of Interviews

## Public Officials and Tribal Leaders



The **City of Arlington** provided a panel of officials to address possibilities and impacts of expanded passenger and freight rail service to the city. The panelists were **Councilwoman Linda Byrnes, Public Works Director Jim Kelly, Assistant City Administrator and City Clerk Kristin Banfield, Capital Projects Manager Paul Ellis, and Community Development Director David Kuhl**. The message from the panel was that any negative impacts of rail on the city of Arlington are “negligible” and the potential for commuter rail service such as Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) trains would “most definitely” factor into the city’s long-range plans. The panel described Arlington’s large contingent of commuter traffic as predominantly single-occupancy vehicles (SOV) so “there would be a great demand for commuter rail service if it were to come up into this area.”

As outlined by the panel, the city plans to expand industrial areas accessible by rail around Arlington Airport, which is currently not involved in the shipping of freight, and is planning a 126-acre light industrial park less than a quarter mile from the rail line. The panel explained that the airport is currently serviced by SR531, a 4-lane highway prone to accidents and bottlenecks, which poses critical infrastructure problems for the city’s goals of industrial expansion. Byrnes pointed out that “in some ways that ought to make some of our businesses more eager to go with rail. I would be if I were them.” Arlington has also participated in conversations with the Port of Everett about the possibility of building a Port sub-district near the city’s industrial center that would be used by shipping agencies and industries without current access to rail; an option that the panelists said “looks feasible.” Overall, the panel agreed, “rail into the city for both freight and passenger... is very good for Arlington’s future.”

**Chairman Brian Cladoosby** is chair of the Swinomish Indian Senate for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community. Cladoosby spoke enthusiastically about possible future passenger rail service to the area, pointing out that such service would provide a much-needed alternative to the current Anacortes Ferry Tribal Casino Shuttle. He went on to explain that the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community has plans to develop their tourism sector further by building a hotel and convention center near in proximity to the Swinomish Casino. This entertainment complex would create a greater demand for public transportation, and the Tribal Community would “definitely” welcome greater commuter services such as passenger rail. This possibility, Cladoosby said, “ties right into economic development [goals] for Skagit County.” He clarified that the reservation currently has no freight rail service but the Tribal Community is planning to build an industrial and a business park in the next few years, as well as an interpretive center south of SR 20.

The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Cladoosby pointed out, is a significant component in the Skagit County economy, contributing \$83M annually before taxes, and has demonstrated their integral role in the local community and state matters by their recent acquisition of Kiket Island and subsequent co-management of the state park with the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. With the Swinomish Tribal Community’s plans for growth, Cladoosby anticipates the expansion of rail into the area would mean a guarantee of further job creation and economic development for citizens and local businesses.



**Representative Judy Clibborn** is a State Representative for the 41<sup>st</sup> Legislative District in the Washington State Legislature and is the Chair of the House Transportation Committee. Clibborn is supportive of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) rail program, and is confident it “is expanding where people want it to expand.” She also highlighted the need to be aware of how decisions about expanding funding for rail means indirectly affecting financial commitments to other sectors. The Ferry Caucus, for example, has already expressed their concern to her, said Clibborn, regarding the issue of allotting state funding to rail that would potentially negatively impact ferry funding and operations. “We need to be aware that the operating side is often what gets pinched because we put the money into the capital side,” she explained.

Regarding the progress of future rail improvement projects, Clibborn believes “we have to balance it and sequence it so that we don’t get at odds” between different sectors such as land use planning, environmental regulations and business interests. Clibborn acknowledged that she is “a little leery” of the possibility of a state-operated regional rail service with Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) trains, and explained that she would “want Sound Transit or one of the other rail entities do it rather than the state take up a new business model.” Clibborn also encouraged coordination with transportation entities in British Columbia to avoid “trying to beat our heads against a wall,” and suggested looking at the process incrementally to discern the next logical spots for improvements- such as Everett and Bellingham before moving too far forward. The Canadians, said Clibborn, seem most interested in tourism than cross-border passenger rail, which indicates a need to seek more private sector involvement from British Columbia.

Clibborn would like state and provincial decision-makers and private businesses from all along the corridor to work together, and referred to Darrell Bryan’s business Clipper Navigations as a prime example of private entities having a significant effect on tourism in the area and their interest in the improvements process. However, if the state will be providing the majority of the operating subsidies, they should “be the tail that wags the dog [and] should have some say on how the marketing goes,” pointing toward a likely public private partnership in the future.



**Mayor Catherine Ferguson** is mayor for the city of White Rock, B.C.. Ferguson is passionate about expanding passenger rail service in the region between Vancouver, B.C. and Seattle. The White Rock City Council “would like to have an Amtrak stop in the city,” she said, and explained how she believes increasing BNSF and Amtrak traffic across the border “would be extremely beneficial to the growth of our city and [would build] on the economic sustainability of our businesses.” Expanding Amtrak service to the city has long been a subject of interest, Ferguson noted, and referenced the Amtrak Passenger Rail Task Force, which the City Council announced in the beginning of 2011 and whose role it will be to assess the future of Amtrak service in the

White Rock area. Former Mayor Hardy Staub is chairman for the committee, and was appointed in large part due to his “instrumental” role in pursuing the Memorandum of Understanding with Amtrak for a train stop in White Rock and getting that agreement signed, but following the attacks of 9/11 “there have been a lot of ongoing ... Homeland Security issues that have prevented that from carrying on.”

Currently, White Rock is a city of approximately 20,000 residents, most of which are seniors, and sports over 600 businesses within the city proper. Ferguson pointed out that “we as a city are obviously a tourism destination,” with the growth area located south of the Fraser River. A potential Amtrak stop in White Rock would fit ideally into the region’s tourism development plans, she explained. In answer to the query of what some of these attractions may be, Ferguson responded,

“Well I say, look around you,” gesturing at the waters of the bay and the beach near at hand. “It’s pretty obvious to me [what would be the star attraction.]”

The city sports a variety of activities for all visitors- from dining to shopping, arts to recreation- and Ferguson believes White Rock would be an ideal participant in the Two-Nation Vacation initiative. “There [are] an endless amount of things to do [here],” she pointed out. Ferguson described the city and surrounding area as “a seaside community” that offers an “incredible promenade and pier, [and] culinary experiences [...] all the way from England to India. It’s a beautiful community.” She also explained municipal initiatives to improve the tourism experience, such as renovations to the White Rock Museum that are scheduled for completion in the late summer of 2011, and plans for extending the promenade along the water toward the Crescent Beach area under regional provisions in the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy. Ferguson believes that with a passenger rail station, “once people stop here, I think they [will] want to stay here and hopefully invest in our community.”



**Senator Mary Margaret Haugen** is the State Senator for the 10<sup>th</sup> Legislative District in the Washington State Legislature and is the Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee. Haugen has been a long-time advocate for passenger rail in Puget Sound, and especially the North Sound region. “Rail is much more appealing to a lot of folks” than buses or single-occupancy vehicles (SOV), said Haugen, and described the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) rail program as “a truly bipartisan effort” that has succeeded at “always [taking] a step forward.” Her experience with championing the construction of the new Stanwood Station has demonstrated that “connectivity... is a real key tool for the future.” Public transit services such as buses, trains and ferries “need to be connective, and people will use

[the] service if there is an easy connector.” She considers Island Transit, Skagit Transit and the Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA) as being very innovative with their connectivity- referencing the Tri-County Connector and San Juan Islands transit and ferry connectors as prime examples. If these agencies can find additional funding, “they will provide this needed service,” which is not only important to residents but also to tourism.

Haugen believes there is a huge need to increase the frequency of round trip passenger rail service between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C.. She pointed out that expansion of passenger rail in the North Sound is long overdue, and noted that “Bellingham is a major part of the Northwest, and Snohomish County is one of the fastest growing counties in our state. People want to have the service.” A possible midday Amtrak *Cascades* train northbound to B.C., suggested Haugen, would give customers better travel options and the greater flexibility would increase access along the corridor and for both students and professionals who are looking for more cost-effective alternatives to driving. “There’s no question that’s what we’re lacking,” she reiterated. “We need that midday train.”

Due to the considerable interest in tourism on both sides of the border, Haugen emphasized that “everyone [cities and communities in B.C. along the border] is saying we need to do more,” and sees the need to cooperate and integrate efforts with Canadian counterparts through a formalized agreement that would facilitate and continue the dialogue surrounding key growth and development issues in the Cascadia corridor. Haugen praised the value of rail access to North Sound communities and businesses by pointing out that these areas “see the value of having another transportation corridor” in their communities and explaining how people view the tracks as more than “just rail spurs, they are transportation corridors just as much as a road is.” She also compared the relationship the state has with Oregon versus the one with B.C., saying Vancouver, B.C. has been “more cooperative than our partners to the south... Oregon has not been that aggressive” about providing ample subsidies for passenger rail service south of Portland. “I think it’s a new era for rail,” said Haugen, “and we need to upgrade... the tracks for passenger and for freight.”



**Councillor Linda Hepner** is a member of the Surrey City Council and a Director at Metro Vancouver in British Columbia. Hepner welcomed the possibility for improved freight rail service to Surrey, B.C., specifically with regards to better movement and connections south of the Fraser River but stressed the safety of communities neighboring the tracks, such as the slide-sensitive areas along Crescent Beach, when planning future expansion. Surrey is “thrilled” to be a part of the discussion, said Hepner, and would strongly favor increased Amtrak *Cascades* passenger service to Vancouver and the surrounding areas because of the “enormous potential for tourism that would benefit local and regional economies.”

While Hepner agreed that a stop at White Rock would align with Surrey’s desires for increased Amtrak service between the border and Vancouver, she advocated strongly for a passenger rail terminus at the Scott Road Sky Train Station instead to better connect Surrey residents and Amtrak passengers to the city center, downtown Vancouver and other rapid transit destinations. Despite Surrey’s \$140M contribution to TransLink in subsidies per year, there are only 0.08 hours of transit service per person available to Surrey residents compared with 2.2 hours of service per person available in Vancouver, B.C..

Hepner explained that any future expansion by Surrey to better accommodate rail is subject to the parameters outlined in Metro Vancouver’s Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP), but emphasized that “the longer we delay those discussions with you, as our neighbors, ...the higher the cost gets because the denser we get and the more populous the region becomes.” Above all, Hepner expressed a commitment to increase passenger and freight rail through the corridor but explained the need for Surrey to be informed of the proposed plans before agreeing entirely.



**Mayor Joe Marine** serves as mayor for the City of Mukilteo and Vice Chair for the Community Transit Board of Directors. Marine anticipates a need for Sounder train service to increase the number of trips per day to better serve non-commuter travelers, but he is sympathetic with the current system constraints in the route’s north leg. Marine and the residents of Mukilteo have requested Amtrak consider add a stop in Mukilteo to the Amtrak *Cascades* route, but that is not currently an option in which Amtrak is interested. However, Marine is hopeful that stance will change in the future as the rail system advances, and pointed out that “it would be more convenient than having to drive to Everett or to Edmonds to pick up the Amtrak train.” Marine believes a midday train run by Amtrak *Cascades* would help supplement the morning and evening service that Sounder provides. “If you get the Amtrak *Cascades* to stop and open up some of that afternoon [to more rail options], I know that it would be used- there’s no question,” he added.

The tracks around Mukilteo station are highly congested, Marine pointed out, and he expressed concern that increasing the frequency of service might “start to impact the commuter and some of the other rail systems that are there.” The city has also taken steps to reduce the impact of rail traffic on the surrounding community by installing a rail crossing “quiet zone” (QZ) to stop a portion of the trains from sounding their horns as they pass through town. The noise from the train traffic through the community is very intrusive to those who live in the area, and following the installation of the QZ, Marine heard from “a lot of our residents [who said] ‘I knew it was bad, but I didn’t know how great it would be when the noise stopped.’” In the interest of mitigating the impacts on residents, Marine is concerned that with increased freight traffic, there may be more trains sitting idle along the tracks, “and that is very rough on residents- not only the smell [from] the idling but the noise and vibrations.”

The city has been working with BNSF on other track improvement projects such as better waterfront access for residents to circumvent the frequent road blockages from rail traffic, and a salmon habitat

restoration project to daylight a section of Japanese Creek that connects to the water at the Tank Farm property. The US Air Force currently owns this property but Mukilteo has long been planning to purchase it and relocate the ferry terminal there. The cost for that project is estimated at \$130M, and while the city is looking for possible sources of funding, they are getting a head start on preparing the area surrounding the site for greater traffic, explained Marine. The “portion of daylighting over the Tank Farm property will be part of the ferry terminal project, and [mitigates] some of the work they are going to be doing” by reducing the required buffer zone by approximately 50 percent, he explained.

Marine anticipates the next step for Mukilteo’s development will be the tank farm ferry terminal site with the possible construction of a parking garage to link the future ferry terminal and Sounder Station. By improving the travel experience for passengers, it would increase ridership and help leverage the waterfront area of the property for shops, “so I think there is a lot of opportunity for some public-private [partnerships] and to have some of the leases pay for [basic infrastructure]” to alleviate the strain on federal funds for the project which have not yet been allotted.

Expanding rail service through Mukilteo would be a delicate process to avoid negatively impacting the community, but Marine is confident that because rail service “is used quite a bit by people coming across on the ferry, that walk on and catch a commuter train into points south,” the scenic route along the Sound will continue to be a draw for commuters and day travelers alike “who just enjoy riding it.”



**Representative John McCoy** is a State Representative for the 38<sup>th</sup> Legislative District for the Washington State Legislature and sits on the State Government and Tribal Affairs Committee. McCoy is strongly in favor of expanding rail service in the Everett, Tulalip and Marysville areas as part of a greater Seattle to Vancouver, B.C. rail corridor enhancement. By improving the BNSF rail line, “there would be huge job development, and there would be spin-off opportunities for additional freight mobility all up and down [the Cascadia] corridor.” The Ports of Everett and Vancouver rely heavily on freight movement via trucks, which contributes to traffic congestion on I-5, so McCoy believes a redistribution of freight and transportation mobility is necessary to better “balance what is on the road and what is on the rail.” He recommended a comprehensive study be conducted to investigate the possibilities of combining the current energy grid with federal and state highway systems to consolidate use of rights-of-way by installing high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission cables under rail lines and roadways. This would reduce the impacts on communities where the grid currently intrudes on personal lands, said McCoy.

The Naval Station Everett and other big employers such as Boeing, Microsoft and Fluke stand to benefit considerably from increased rail service. He explained that Boeing and the University of Washington have done collaborative research to innovate new uses for carbon fiber technology in aerospace manufacturing, and their discoveries have prompted BMW to move one of their manufacturing plants to Washington State to integrate this technology into future production and design. McCoy sees this outcome as is a perfect example of the potential in the Cascadia region for continued progress. He is adamant that “we can’t sit on our laurels- we have got to grow,” and improving rail capacity is vital to maintain this level of performance.

McCoy also sees enormous potential in tourism and trade benefits from increasing rail service. He pointed out the Quil Ceda Village currently receives up to 5 busloads of Canadian visitors weekly, and has the capacity for up to 12, but would prefer the ease of access to their facilities which a rail connection in the area would bring. McCoy sees potential for professional hockey teams on both sides of the border who would see the benefits of more scheduled trips because the improved connectivity would facilitate travel for fans up and down the corridor who would otherwise be

unable to attend away games. He also agreed that other sporting events in the Seattle area- Sounders, Mariners and Seahawks games- would be positively impacted by more chartered train trips on game days that would attract more people to attend games by avoiding the traffic congestion in downtown Seattle and costly parking fees, as well as those traveling much longer distances from areas like eastern Washington and Portland.

McCoy acknowledged there has been doubt over how the WSDOT rail program funds have been used, but said he was pleased with the successes achieved. "The only problem is," said McCoy, "we haven't had enough [money]" and more funding for improving freight, passenger and commuter rail services needs to be allocated. He would like to see road congestion alleviated in the I-5 corridor, and considers rail expansion the best option for attaining this goal.



**Councillor Geoff Meggs** is a member of the Vancouver City Council and serves on several local and regional committees for economic and civic development. Meggs is a strong supporter of increasing accessibility in the Cascadia region to Vancouver, B.C., noting that public transportation connectivity already in place in the city heightens the tourism experience. He mentioned several alternatives to using a personal vehicle to gain access to the downtown core such as TransLink, SkyTrain, SeaBus, cruise ships and float planes, and pointed out the mass transit service within the heart of the city comes every 10 minutes. Meggs feels "the Olympic Games really emphasized the changes that are possible and the public understanding of those changes was really improved because we shifted 30% of trips into the downtown core from cars to other modes of transportation" which he believes will lead to more bottom-up engagement and bipartisan cooperation on sustainable transportation in B.C..

Regarding the second Amtrak train between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C., he explained "the importance of committing to it as a symbol of our engagement" with the Cascadia corridor, and added that the future of higher speed rail and expanded passenger rail in B.C. "lies south" and not east toward Calgary. However, Meggs outlined two challenges for that expansion to Seattle. On the administrative side, he would like to see collaboration with more senior American level officials to improve border-crossing procedures through increasing speed and safety of the passenger border experience- "We could make significant improvements to service time... just by changing those administrative problems," said Meggs. On the infrastructure side, he pointed out the New Westminster Bridge over Fraser River "is a huge infrastructure investment" and the Greater Vancouver region needs to have several reachable short-term goals to "demonstrate success here before we get to the very tough [and costly] question of updating century-old rail infrastructure."

Vancouver does not wish to be at the forefront of community leadership in B.C., but would rather share the knowledge gained through successfully funding regional transit with other municipalities, Meggs clarified. "We are going to have to step out of our comfort zone and start to talk about transport demand finance measures... that the business community has begun to advocate for... [to] directly link transportation behavior with sustainability," he said. Meggs agreed that local level commitment to the rail agenda along with state and provincial cooperation is very important, calling it "a tremendous upside to [the commitment to rail]." Questions concerning passenger rail are always linked to freight mobility issues, a fact that is largely "invisible to taxpayers," said Meggs, but pointed out that Canadians have the advantage of an inborn belief in rail due to the integral role it played in the country's development and therefore sidestep the task of convincing decision-makers of the need for rail in communities.

"The north-south connection is the only logical one" for Vancouver, he explained, and believes discussions with private rail operators on issues of freight mobility will be a crucial next step for B.C.'s plans for rail expansion. By and large, people are "exhilarated by the possibility of... a higher speed rail connection between Seattle and Vancouver" that, even at speeds of 90 mph, "would be

transformative” for the region. Meggs also encouraged people to consider rail as a reasonable investment, and advised lifting it out of the “climate change” debate if that stands as a point of contention, saying people can agree rail is beneficial for the economy regardless of their opinion on that topic.



**Mayor Jon Nehring** is mayor of the City of Marysville and also sits on the Community Transit Board of Directors. Nehring sees rail expansion into Marysville and beyond as a significant opportunity for economic expansion and regional collaboration. The city has plans to improve connectivity on either side of I-5, which bisects the area, by building an overpass to alleviate stress on roads such as 4<sup>th</sup> Street, 88<sup>th</sup> Street and 172<sup>nd</sup> Street. The overpass would also traverse the rail lines that run through the midst of downtown Marysville and cause long delays for commuters, emergency response teams and law enforcement. Such an infrastructure improvement signals the next stage of development for Marysville, explained Nehring, and referenced additional plans to develop a light industrial area in North Marysville where improving rail access and increasing service would compliment the city’s future plans and “economic development-wise would be huge for us.”

The best location for a train station and transit connection would be near where the old depot was previously located on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and would tie in well with the city’s interest in revitalizing the downtown core, said Nehring. He would like to see the waterfront and marina be further developed into a family destination with a children’s water park, kayak rentals, and a longer-term possibility of private investment for restaurants, condos and a small hotel. Nehring would also favor a permanently funded inter-county bus service with connections to the Park and Ride on Grove Street and Cedar Avenue, but “it is a tough time for Community Transit right now to talk about expanding anything.” He recognized that customers want more capacity and agreed that increasing connectivity north and south “is going to be of benefit, [...] but the dollars have to be there for that.”

Nehring values the city’s partnership with the Tulalip Tribes on tourism and transportation, saying “we do not view ourselves as competitors with them” and would like to capitalize on the growing tourism market around the Tribes’ resort casino and outlet mall. “I don’t think it is lost on anybody that they have the attraction power right now,” he pointed out. The tourism from regular busloads of Canadian visitors would factor well into Marysville’s economic development plans, “and rail would just be another aspect of that.”

Nehring would like to see I-5 expansion continue northward from Everett up past the 172<sup>nd</sup> St exit that people “need to get through that 116<sup>th</sup> St. exit with a carpool lane at least.” With the long-term plans for the industrial area development and other commercial areas near there, 172<sup>nd</sup> St would be the ideal end goal for any improvement plans, said Nehring. “If [HOV access could be expanded] at least through 116<sup>th</sup> and then push it through to 172<sup>nd</sup> St, I think it would be a big improvement,” he explained.

Nehring’s goal for Marysville is to see it transform from a “bedroom community” into one with a more diverse job market that encourages people to spend their money locally and reduce the volume of single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) commuters. His vision for the city’s future integrates regional connectivity and local economic development, and “the thought of having the potential of a rail stop here... has been a long-term planning vision for several years, and it is exciting to talk about it.”



**Mayor Bud Norris** is mayor of the city of Mount Vernon. Norris is confident that expanded passenger rail service running north and south from Mount Vernon would receive “widespread support” among citizens living in and around the city. “Increasing the connectivity to both Vancouver and Seattle would be a boon for our area, both from a business and residential standpoint but also [in terms of] tourism,” he explained.

A significant portion of Mount Vernon’s short-term growth area is located in and around the downtown core, and Norris pointed out that the city’s “potential [will be] great when we can improve our flood protection of our downtown area. Right now, that [risk] is a limitation.” The Army Corps of Engineers is currently conducting a General Investigation study of the lower Skagit Valley area regarding flood protection measures, and “right now we’re a little bit ahead of the curve” on what they are suggesting, said Norris. He explained that the city has already completed phase one and is ready to begin phase two of one of the measures suggested if they can find the \$7.5M needed to fund the rest of the project. The second phase would not only protect the downtown area, but also the I-5 corridor, BNSF’s rail lines and a “lot of essential services” such as City Hall, the US Post Office, and the Skagit County Courthouse, Norris explained. He also described how the city has pursued further precautions by purchasing 5 out of 7 key structures involved in flood protection and is planning to acquire the remainder in the near future. Mount Vernon is also planning a 25 ft wide river walk to connect trails and paths on both sides of the Skagit River with the hope that it will be “a great draw,” said Norris, and serve as “one of our best sales tools” to demonstrate concretely for people the city’s vision for future development.

The city plans to improve connectivity between the station and the downtown area, and also “to create a corridor to the [Skagit River] and the Skagit Station that will draw people to the river.” “[It] is a tremendous asset for us” said Norris, and mentioned that the city is planning to start a new Farmers Market down by the water. Mount Vernon has “become more of a bedroom community to Everett and Seattle,” he explained, “and there is nothing wrong with that.” While the Port of Skagit County is the driving force for industrial development in the area, the city has focused on commercial expansion to ensure lasting economic stability “to pay for the services that are necessary when you develop those residential areas,” added Norris. Currently there are plans to make the city center more livable, he said, and explained, “a large component of our downtown and waterfront redevelopment is residential opportunities.” Approximately 300-350 condominium units are planned for the downtown and waterfront areas, and Norris experiences people coming to him “on a weekly basis” asking when the housing areas will be completed. This residential interest in Mount Vernon’s downtown core demonstrates how the area is slated to become burgeoning commercial opportunity.

Norris believes that one of the future challenges for Mount Vernon will be the congestion experienced on I-5 near the downtown area. The Everett area freeway improvements have caused bottleneck problems in the Mount Vernon corridor and “in summertime, if you have events in Vancouver or Seattle, I-5 gets really congested,” he explained, “so anything that we can improve from a passenger rail standpoint is going to lessen that problem,” along with improvements to freight rail service to reduce the impact on traffic from shipping via trucks. For that to be achieved, it would require improvements to the BNSF bridge just north of the city. “Burlington Northern is working very hard on [improving the structure and] we are trying to be a cooperative partner in promoting that” because of the local benefits from the construction, explained Norris. He clarified that the BNSF bridge is the area’s first line of defense against flooding, and “if [it] were to ever fail, it would make the rest of our bridges downstream suspect.”

Overall, Norris believes “people that want to connect and go to cultural and sporting events in Seattle would be great users of increased passenger rail service here in Mount Vernon as well.” A charter train service to the city for specific events “would be a great enhancement,” he said, to the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival that occurs in May and the Highland Games in July. Norris described the Mount Vernon area as sitting at “a crossroads here between the San Juan Islands, the Cascade Mountains,

Vancouver and Seattle so it is a great place to draw people to, and therein lies part of our future from an economic standpoint.”



**Mayor Bonnie Onyon** is mayor of the city of Blaine. Onyon believes that due to the unique circumstances of Blaine’s location on the Canada-US border and its role in the larger Cascadia region, the timing is good for expanding rail service in the area. “I think it’s fantastic that we have this railroad here,” she said. “I certainly don’t see it as a negative, I see it as a real opportunity for connecting our two countries [...] in a local sense.” Onyon pointed out that the proximity to I-5 provides Blaine businesses, residents and visitors with “a lot of opportunities” for transportation and makes it “so easy to get into [the city], both north and south[bound].” One challenge she sees in the transportation, however, is the

locations of the Customs clearance facilities near the city. “Unfortunately there was not a dialogue with us prior to placing it where they did,” Onyon explained, “so as a result the long freight trains southbound across the border do block at least two key east-west roads to Blaine.” At times the trains can block traffic for up to 15 minutes, she said, “and that’s really unacceptable when you’re talking about emergency vehicles having to get across and school buses getting kids to school.” The system as it operates currently “is a detriment to our community,” said Onyon, and explained that the city would like to see the facility moved one mile south, which would mean the trains would no longer block those crossings. This problem with the location “is really the main negative when it comes to the railroad, and I am glad they are making improvements,” she added.

When asked whether future developments, such as upgrading the old BNSF depot to a station for regional DMU service, can be factored into Blaine’s long range plans, Onyon sees “no question about it” and is confident those changes would be welcomed by residents. “I know I personally would love to be able to catch the train and go down, even to Bellingham, and further south,” she said, and added, “I would go to Seattle more [myself] if the train were available.” Regarding a possible Customs facility at the depot, Onyon considers it “another natural [next step]” and would consider such a development as a “wonderful” addition. The depot was built in 1913 and remains the original structure. “It’s got a lot of character,” said Onyon. “We’ve been told that it’s certainly worthwhile to refurbish it and turn it into a really nice looking facility.” On the other hand, BNSF would like the depot removed from the site for “safety reasons, [but] I don’t really understand that,” says Onyon. She sees significant potential for ridership from both sides of the border if the depot became functional. “The whole northern part of the county might choose to come up here and get the train down to Bellingham instead of driving [there],” Onyon added. “I think it could really work, and [Blaine] would welcome that.”

When asked if she believes there is a market for a form of recreational rail service such as charter trains for special events, Onyon agrees, saying that “if [people] knew that they could drive over into Blaine, catch a train down to the Tulip Festival or anywhere south of here, and have it come back within a few hours [it] would be a really attractive thing [...] for a lot of our citizens.” A large portion of Blaine’s population consists of retirees and seniors, so that type of service would be a more convenient alternative to a car for the majority of them, she explained. The city is also home to a resort with a world-class golf course that also provides a venue for numerous conferences, so “I would think that that [alone] would be a draw for people,” added Onyon.

An expanded rail service would be beneficial for the city’s plans of boosting tourism in the area as well. Onyon explained that the city and the Port of Bellingham are both seeking to build up that sector with a focus on the city center as a key development area. She described the port’s plans as a “mixed use development” to establish more retail, restaurants and residential spaces in the downtown core. “All the zoning is in place, we are ready to go,” said Onyon. “The city has a fast-track permit system [so] for investors, Blaine is really a great place to come to.”



**Mayor Dan Pike** is mayor of the city of Bellingham. Pike favors greater passenger rail access to and from Bellingham and sees plenty of potential for increased ridership from both the tourism and business sectors. Pike said his constituents have expressed their “frustration with the current level of rail service” limiting travel options. He gave the example of people wishing to take day trips to Seattle and Vancouver, B.C., as well as professionals needing to attend meetings at stops along the corridor. Currently, the infrequent service is “making it difficult,” said Pike, to achieve greater regional connectivity.

Bellingham voters’ approval of a transportation benefits district (TBD) has provided the community with a source of funding for transportation projects that is not dependent on state or federal allotments, explained Pike. The funding, which is represented by 0.2% of the sales tax, will be levied in three areas; specifically the repaving of roads, expansion of cycle and pedestrian infrastructure to better integrate with the motorized transportation network, and partial restoration of Sunday transit service from the Whatcom Transit Authority. Having a TBD in place, said Pike, opens the doors for “struggling local governments” to meet their specific needs with a degree of flexibility. He recommended other communities review the structure of Bellingham’s TBD initiative, saying the sales tax implemented was the most equitable option as it incorporated visitors to the area along with residents. Pike pointed out that 20% of retail sales are from Canadians and the majority of sales tax paid in the city comes from non-Bellingham residents, and the TBD tax increase ensures that people who “come and use our services [contribute to maintenance costs] by paying the cost of keeping our transportation facilities updated.”

With regards to the waterfront rail relocation project, Pike foresees an overall increase of as much as 60% in train frequency and rail capacity from the planned realignment. This is particularly important for the waterfront businesses, he explained, because their location is currently isolated from the city center and can only be accessed by traversing the at-grade crossings between scheduled trains.

According to Pike, trade and shipment of containerized cargo between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. has increased in recent years. He expects traffic to increase independent of the planned Cherry Point Gateway Pacific terminal and other rail improvements planned for the Bellingham area such as reconstruction of the Cornwall Bridge to accommodate double-stacked freight trains, although their construction would accelerate further trade increases. Overall, Pike indicated that Bellingham would be receptive to rail expansion and has already acted independently by taking farsighted, incremental steps toward improving mobility along the corridor.



**Mayor Ray Stephanson** is mayor of the city of Everett. Stephanson is strongly in favor of expanding rail service in the Cascadia corridor for both freight and passenger rail. Everett, and Snohomish County more generally, have experienced a greater influx of commuters as people begin to travel farther distances for work, he explained. Boeing is the largest employer in both Snohomish and Skagit counties and has added 11,000 new jobs with the recent \$35 B Air Force tanker contract, remarked Stephanson, which means many people are commuting into the Everett area daily in single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) and “any alternative that provides a convenient way for workers to come to Snohomish County and Everett is a huge plus.” As the economies of Whatcom and Skagit counties begin to see job growth, “that growth [will spread] down the I-5 corridor so the opportunity to travel [both north and south] is critically important.”

The Port of Everett is a unique, “boutique port,” said Stephanson, which will experience a much higher demand for their specialized service with the expansion of the Panama Canal. The type of cargo traffic along the West Coast will change significantly, and “it is going to take that kind of competitive advantage [from exceptional rail access] if we are going to maintain the preeminent

position that the ports on the West Coast have had in the past. And we're going to have to do it better, and we're going to have to do it more efficiently than we have done it before" to compete with ships that can more easily access the East Coast.

Stephanson expressed how satisfied he was with the Everett Station and sees unlimited opportunities to increase commuter presence at the facility. Everett Transit and Everett Station have had "great success connecting lots of different counties and cities across Puget Sound" and the station's capacity for expansion plays a significant role in the region's ability to maintain a high level of service. With the arrival of Washington State University at the University Center of North Puget Sound, Everett will be "charged with the responsibility of educating the counties north of Snohomish County," said Stephanson, in which the station and transit services will play a crucial part. He envisions a rail commute for students coming from Bellingham, Mount. Vernon, Stanwood, and Marysville who would be able to access wireless networks to work on schoolwork during the ride to and from class.

Stephanson also sees the potential for broadening tourism opportunities north of Seattle with expanded rail service in the corridor, and congratulated the Tulalip Tribes, saying they "have done a wonderful job... in encouraging tourism into their nation." Widening this emphasis throughout the Puget Sound region, coupled with the cross-border partnership Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. have forged, would make regional tourism "an important part of both our country's economies." Stephanson recognizes that the opportunities for future gas taxes to fund highway and road maintenance and expansion are finite and constantly changing, and therefore "we are going to have to rely on and look for alternative ways to move people and products, and this opportunity [for expanding passenger rail service] seems right in line with that goal."

## Tourism and Economic Development



**Darrell Bryan** is the President and CEO of Clipper Navigations, Incorporated, whose subsidiary companies are Clipper Vacations and the Victoria Clipper Ferry Service. Bryan is a former Amtrak Senior Director of Stations, as well as a longtime customer of Amtrak *Cascades* by way of his company. Bryan pointed out that historically, Clipper Navigations has been Amtrak's top customer for the Seattle to Vancouver, B.C. corridor and by partnering with Amtrak, they can offer "one-stop shopping... for [visitors] who want to see as much of the region as possible." He sees the possibility of additional Amtrak *Cascades* trips to

Vancouver as a valuable asset to the economies along the rail corridor and urged that "increased frequency helps everyone." Travelers have a "reasonable expectation" that they can come and go when they want, said Bryan, and praised the second round trip train to Vancouver as a "great start" to a larger goal of greater connectivity. "We are really bullish on having increased service," said Bryan.

One challenge facing Clipper Navigations is centered on their booking process, explained Bryan. As a wholesaler, the company has the opportunity to purchase resold products, such as hotel rooms, from various businesses at a minimum net rate of 20% lower than the retail price and bundle them into packages for their customers. Amtrak is the only business Clipper Navigations deals with that does not offer a minimum net rate to wholesalers, said Bryan, whose company is therefore forced to delay the purchase of their services by customers until his employees are able to reserve individual seats per party on an Amtrak *Cascades* train. This net rate is "common commercial practice," he pointed out, referring to the success hotels have enjoyed under such agreements where "the gain is in incremental business on a year-round basis." Working with Amtrak on this seat-by-seat basis adds an extra step that "is not attractive to the consumer, [and is] very inefficient and very inconsistent with what commercial practices are."

Regarding the Canada Border Services Agency's (CBSA) fee of \$1,500 for the second train to Vancouver, B.C. which is currently waived until October 2011, Bryan explained that "we have got to get a lot more people riding so CBSA will look upon [the second Amtrak train] favorably." He listed several ways to boost ridership and improve service, including redesigning the travel experience around enhanced onboard service centered on a better dining experience, better planning for uniform platform heights for ease of passenger access, reducing staff requirements and attracting the younger demographic by having forethought on what services most appeal to demand, such as better bicycle accommodations. Bryan does not believe the broader picture will be capable of any large transformations if Amtrak does not make essential changes to its commercial business practices. He underscored that conviction with the admonition that "if you want to get support from the private sector- because I do believe there is a role for public private [partnerships]- you have got to get [the state] to embrace some private sector practices."



**Guy Occhiogrosso** is the Executive Director of the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce in Washington State. Ferndale has a population of about 11,000 people. Occhiogrosso highlighted how tourism in the region has become an integral part of the Ferndale economy. Whatcom County collects approximately \$65,000 dollars from hotel-motel tax annually. The majority of this tax supports The Visitation Center in Ferndale, but some of the tax is directed to organizations that hold a number of different events

Between May and September annually he mentioned three events that draw the most attraction. The Bellingham Scottish Highland Games draws a significant crowd from the Seattle to lower British Columbia region and has a significant impact on hotel occupancy. The second event is the Whatcom Old Settler's Association Pioneer Picnic, which takes place the last weekend of July, and showcases Pioneer Park. Of the 117 annual picnics recorded, this one has the "longest standing membership in the county". People from Whatcom County plan family reunions, high school reunions, and events in preparation for the picnic. Occhiogrosso notes that people return for this event time and again. The third tourist attraction is a street festival, a free event that takes place in downtown Ferndale Friday through Saturdays in the month of August.

An estimated eight to ten thousand Ferndale residents attend, as do a few hundred outside visitors. Occhiogrosso noted that, during times of high frequency visitation, a majority of the visitors to the visitor center are lower mainland Canadians, looking for shopping opportunities. These visitors bring important revenue to the region. Occhiogrosso asserted that, from a traditional tourist perspective, Ferndale relies heavily on advertisements, press releases and agricultural promotions to highlight Ferndale's farms and local events. From a county perspective, Occhiogrosso asserts that there has been a high uptick in club organizational tournaments and the community is seeing a huge increase of people coming to play sports at organized sports events.

In response to a question regarding freight train activity, Occhiogrosso said that it has a "minimal impact on the community in terms of traffic." RDS, a recycling and garbage/waste disposal center serving the greater Whatcom County and direct user of the freight line, relies heavily on rail service and suB.C. contracts a portion of the rail line. When questioned about additional freight capacity Occhiogrosso said "We've seen that level of service on these tracks before, with GP 10 years ago when it was fully operational."



**Cindy Verge** is the Director of the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival. The Festival was officially inaugurated in 1984 by the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce. Chamber directors saw that people were coming by the thousands to view the tulips and decided to add events and festivities to enhance the visitors' experience to the Skagit Valley. In 1994 the Tulip Festival split from the Chamber of Commerce and became an entity of its own. In the early years, the festival occurred over a single weekend. To help ensure the Tulip Festival dates coincided with the tulip season, the festival expanded to 17 days, and in 2003, was established as a 30-day event. "Even at 17 days, we could completely miss the bloom of the tulips," explained Cindy Verge, executive director of the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival. "So we lengthened the festival".

Verge noted that there are challenges to planning the event, specifically regarding traffic management and muddy parking lots. "We used to have a Tulip Transit to shuttle people but funding was eliminated due to Initiative 695 and the cost of \$20,000 to hire a bus to transport 2500 visitors was prohibitive."

She was enthusiastic with the idea of expanded passenger rail service from Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. as a way to bring visitors to the Festival and felt they could resurrect a shuttle if there were more demand. The shuttle would make scheduled stops at the two growers that continue to showcase the tulips. The ideal trip for passengers would be to arrive at Skagit Station and 10 AM and leave at 4pm.

While Verge noted that economic impact studies are too expensive to perform on a regular basis, the last study in 2000, funded by the Washington Department of Tourism, found that the 17-day festival brought in an estimated \$14M in sales revenue and 350,000 people from outside Skagit County including 12-15 percent of visitors from Canada. Verge indicated one of the most popular activities for visitors is to pin a map showing where they are from, either in the United States or worldwide. So far 49 of the 50 states are represented.

Verge said the \$14M in sales revenue does not include the additional wages and revenue from the expansion of the Festival to 30 days. Non-profit groups have benefitted as well. Verge mentioned the Kiwanis Club serves between 10,000 to 12,000 meals at their salmon barbeque and has raised nearly \$2M since the festival started.



**Don Wick** is the Director for the Skagit County Economic Development Association. Wick believes there is "no question" about the amount of local support- both commercial and private- for expanded regional passenger rail service to and from Skagit Valley. There are 6.5M people living within a 100 mile radius of the Mount. Vernon area, so "imagine what increased rail service could mean to tourism in our region [and] how important that would be to the future," Wick pointed out. He considers tourism in the Skagit Valley to be at a dependable level currently, "but in some way it is undeveloped. We are not capitalizing on [the proximity of] that 6.5M people... and showcasing to a greater degree this beautiful valley. Rail service would help do that, there's no question." The Skagit Valley serves as part of the Gateway to the San Juan Islands, and Wick envisions visitors "coming up from Portland or Seattle with bicycles and making an easy transfer here at the train depot, out to Anacortes, Fidalgo Island and [...] the rest of the San Juan Island chain."

The prospect of opening up the valley to greater access for visitors can be a sensitive subject for some in the community, and he has noticed that there may "certainly be some natural tension there but [as] land use and growth management [efforts] encourage greater density throughout Washington State, that really shouldn't be an issue." Those living in the Skagit Valley area, Wick assured, "would certainly ride the rail if there were more frequent service here... to do business in

Seattle.” He has personally ridden the Seattle-Portland Amtrak route several times and enjoys the experience of taking the train over the car because of the freedom to multitask while traveling.

The ease of access for freight rail out to the refineries in the valley “is very important to the future of economic development, and of job creation and retention in our community,” said Wick. Industries such as Tesoro, Shell and Sierra Pacific have locations in the area that see “rail [as] a vital part of [their transportation] strategy,” he explained. There exists a concern that Skagit Valley’s frequent flooding during parts of the year inhibit growth, but Wick make it clear that all the industrial development areas are outside flood risk areas, areas that are “important to the future economic development of this community.”

Wick explained that “Skagit Valley is a very special community... [and] preserving this valley is very important to all of us.” Despite a strong local interest, Skagit feels very connected to both the Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. metropolitan areas, he said. “We are the gateway to the North Cascade and to the San Juan Islands,” then added jokingly, “but don’t tell too many people [about our great location].” Wick personally appreciates the special service to Seattle for sporting events, adding that he rides the train to Seattle to see the Mariners play and thinks it is “is a great way to go.”

## Transit Agencies and Transportation



**Councilmember Paul Roberts** is an Everett City Councilmember and sits on the Sound Transit (ST) Board of Directors. Roberts sees potential for further commuter rail expansion north of Seattle and Everett, but warned ST is struggling with rigorous budget restrictions so “it is hard to see, right now, much expansion on anything.” He has had personal experience commuting via the Sounder commuter train and sees the benefit of a stop in downtown core, such like the proposed station at the Interbay Yard. That idea was proposed initially with the Sound Transit 2 Plan (ST2) but was “set aside for a number of reasons,” he explained. One of the major issues of this proposal was how to get adequate funding, Roberts clarified, which is why ST shifted its attention to comparatively higher priority ST2 projects. Another was “a matter of stretching... as far north as we could get, and so things [like plans for Interbay] had to get sacrificed in order to pull the rail service further north into Lynnwood.” However, now that he uses the service daily as a commuter, Roberts finds he would gladly use a stop in the downtown core if one were made available, saying “I have a new bias: I always thought it was a good idea, and now I think it is a great idea,” provided someone other than ST pays for it. While Roberts acknowledges enhancing commuter service north of Everett is important to regional development, he pointed out that ST service is restricted from expanding north of Everett. The Sounder, he explained, provides a basic connection, and “if local communities can find ways to embellish on that, then great- let’s work together.” This could mean commuter bus service, as well as a possible northern regional rail service operated by BNSF to connect with the Sounder at Everett Station, an idea Roberts finds worthy of further exploration.

Tying Marysville into the Sounder and Amtrak rail networks would make a lot of sense, he agreed, but foresees complications with transit service provided directly by ST as it is unable to operate any farther north than Everett’s taxing district. As the next logical step in connectivity northward, Roberts suggested Marysville and the Tulalip Tribes should work jointly to operate a supplementary service and decide where the connection with ST would be located. He highlighted that “both governments [have really] done a great job of working together on a number of things now, so now there is some history in doing that. I think it certainly should be something where the Tribes and the city work together, [along with other relevant organizations].”

Roberts referred to Mayor Stephanson's support of enhancing the rail corridor northward and explained that he and the mayor try to maintain a similar perspective on these issues. Regarding the Everett City Council, he is confident that the Council "would be overwhelmingly, if not unanimously, in favor of this direction" toward greater connectivity, but acknowledged a degree of disagreement over the finer points. From a personal standpoint, Roberts believes the region needs to "constantly look at the 20+ year horizon, and [although] these things take a lot of time to pull together, we are going to wish we had [...] done this."



**Richard Walsh** is the General Manager of the Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA). Walsh praised the passenger rail and commuter services currently available in Whatcom County, referring to the Tri-County Connector (whose funding has been renewed in the latest budget proposals in both the House and Senate) and Amtrak *Cascades* service to and from Fairhaven Station in Bellingham. The Connector, he said, "has been a resounding success by any measure" in large part due to state funding for the program. "I cannot think of a better example of a [more] legitimate role for the state than one which connects communities, whether that connection is by rail or by bus," said Walsh, and explained that he feels it should not be the responsibility of private transit agencies to pay for service to areas far outside their boundaries of service. Walsh recommended making state funding permanent for the Tri-County Connector and other similar programs which would allow "customers to rely on that service dependably" while taking the financial burden off agencies like the WTA, and Skagit and Island Transit systems that, like many transit agencies, "are going through fairly significant financial constraints right now [and] would unlikely be able to come up with the funding to operate that service" on their own.

Walsh sees promise in the possibility for greater coordination and joint efforts with his public transit counterparts in British Columbia, and added that "anytime we are talking about regional transportation, I think what is lacking is some type of regional governance structure to manage it." He suggested "a more formal regional transportation planning organization" to more efficiently manage collective development moving forward. Walsh also commended the passenger rail activity at Fairhaven Station as "a huge success," especially with the large volume of students from Western Washington University (WWU) who use the *Cascades* service to travel home on the weekends. However, he clarified that "any changes in the passenger rail schedule are not a significant issue here locally" due to the frequency of commuter bus service to and from the station that connects travelers with local and regional transit options every 15 minutes. Nevertheless, Walsh believes "that the public is way ahead of us all on high speed passenger service up and down this corridor. I think the public wishes it was in place a long time ago."

## Freight Stakeholders- Shippers and Ports

**Chris Brauner** is a Senior Manager of the Transportation line at Boeing. He emphasized how Boeing is "highly dependent on a good rail system". He noted that at the Everett factory there are three programs that are "dependent upon the rail" service and these are normally overdimensional parts that cannot be transported on a surface road. Brauner highlighted how materials for the Boeing 747, 647 and 777 production lines are shipped from different parts of the country, including southern California; Wichita; Kansas; and Grand Prairie, Texas. He mentioned one area where they have a short dependency on rail is with ocean containers.

In response to a question concerning container shipments through the Mount Baker Terminals and Mukilteo, he emphasized that the Mount Baker terminal provides "a lot of flexibility" for their ocean containers and but that there is "a [very] small dependency" on rail. When asked how the production

rate looks for five years, he said some of the Everett programs are increasing [their production]. Boeing expects monthly shipments for the 777 to increase from five to seven per month. He said that while Boeing doesn't have "that much freight on the rail system, but what we do have would shut down a production line". Brauner further explained that if freight rail transportation were interrupted, Boeing would have to "consider looking at alternate ways of reliable transportation".

When prompted about the Stampede Pass and investing in ports and localized delivery in production scheduling, Brauner responded Boeing utilizes Stevens Pass rather than Stampede Pass for transportation. He noted that the only challenge to Steven Pass would be "if the current route we were taking had some problems." In the product delivery system, Brauner noted that mudslides do not affect the production line since "we are shipping ahead of that" 48-hour window should the rail line be temporarily closed due to landslides along the corridor. Brauner continued on saying that "when we ship products up here we're creating some lead time up there in the event there is an issue. " This policy is in place just in case the cargo needs to be re-routed.



**Lisa Lefebber** is the Public Relations and Communications Administrator for the Port of Everett. Lefebber affirmed the Port's interest in High-Speed Rail (HSR) improvements, saying the Port takes an "holistic approach to our support of this: what is good for passenger movement is good for freight, and anything that can be done to improve train speeds helps freight mobility in the area." With specific regard to the proposed \$161M grant, Lefebber indicated "it is very important" to direct the funding toward improvements northward as the Port is the main terminus for western Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) freight traffic. The Port, she explained, has already taken large steps to improve efficiency of movement at their facility by constructing the Mount Baker satellite facility in

Mukilteo which handles exclusively oversized aerospace shipments that otherwise shut down Port access to all other traffic.

The Port also supports major oil and gold mining operations in eastern Russia and, Lefebber revealed, hopes to diversify into the wind energy market soon. Up until the recent economic downturn, she said, the Port was also receiving imported cement shipments from China at their Lehigh Cement bulk storage facility, but they are confident shipments will resume once the economy rebounds, referencing the importance of the cement to the area. The cement imports "support the housing and construction in the streets in this area, and as far north as Canada," and are shipped predominately via rail.

Generally speaking, Lefebber concluded that the Port would support additional investment in enhancing throughput for passenger rail, as it would be mutually beneficial for freight as well. "Anything that improves passenger access on rail also improves freight, so we are definitely supportive of that." She underscored the importance of efficiency and reliability of rail movement, saying that "timing is critical to competition and so having a seamless rail connection and quick and efficient movement of rail is very important for Puget Sound maintaining its competitiveness."



**Patsy Martin** is the Executive Director for the Port of Skagit County. Martin explained that the port currently has no rail access to their facilities in Burlington and does not anticipate a need in the future for rail service. The nearest rail link lies south of the property sites and serves industrial businesses in the area, such as Cargill Animal Nutrition, Sierra Pacific, and several refineries. "We [the port] think, overall for the [Skagit] Valley, that rail [stub line] is very, very important," she explained, and pointed out that it is imperative to continue to provide rail access for those key businesses that rely on it.

The port does own a 30-acre piece of property near Conway, which is leased by Bell Lumber & Pole Company (Bell Pole), Martin added. It is positioned on the BNSF rail line and includes a small siding that Bell Pole finds “important to their business future.” The company, which exports peeled and turned logs, is Canadian-owned with head offices in Vernon, B.C., she explained, “and [their continued use of the line] depends on the timber market.”

The port does not anticipate the current rail line south of the main properties to be expanded, “so we don’t see that [as] an important link in the future,” said Martin. What the port finds more important to future expansion is “getting better access to I-5,” which, she pointed out, has now “significantly improved for us” due to the recent work on Hwy 20. They are also working on improving access for their tenants to the Skagit Regional Airport interchanges to improve the efficiency of movement for their cargo.



**Charlie Sheldon** is the Executive Director for the Port of Bellingham. Sheldon expressed the importance of rail in the port’s future development, referring specifically to Bellingham’s Waterfront Rail Relocation Project. Currently, the track alignment runs through key portions of the city, which significantly reduces the speed of the trains, and requires them to sound their horns multiple times due to the number of street crossings, he explained. Sheldon clarified that relocation to the Milwaukee Road rail lines along the bluff would “eliminate a couple of at-grade crossings, straighten the track out and allow for a faster movement [of goods].” It would also provide options for an additional siding, he said, and the existing track “could become an industrial spur siding to

support some light industry or industrial businesses on the south end of the site in the interim as we move forward.” From that point, the port is interested in building out the rail spur to the shipping yard, which would be very expensive but could be easily completed. The spur would encourage future business but “it’s kind of a chicken and egg thing: if you don’t have the rail capacity, you don’t necessarily see the business but it’s hard to get the business without the rail capacity,” Sheldon pointed out. Both the Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma need much greater railroad infrastructure capacity because of their grain and container trains, whereas with the Port of Bellingham, he went on, there is only an occasional need for the transport of such goods to and through the city. However, Sheldon stressed, “if the railroad tracks are relocated, and we have that industrial spur, we have something that is terrific for us to be marketing for the future.”

Regarding the proposed Cherry Point terminal, Sheldon feels there is a need to “mitigate some impacts from that project [and that] may be an opportunity for us to get some things done down there that alone the Port or City cannot do.” The collective efforts would facilitate the City’s interest in increasing train frequency and the Port’s rail relocation project, he explained. The Port is interested in the relocation because “that makes the [port] property much more marketable, both for general mixed use development and... the possibility for one or two good industrial spurs that could see some of the rail activity [currently moving through] the city,” said Sheldon.

The port also has plenty of land for future development and is “expanding on the ground as fast as we can,” said Sheldon. This growth includes a 52-acre portion that recently received a permit for development, as well as plenty of space for future parking needs. “We have been working with Blaine” and are very involved in the Port of Bellingham’s marinas in that area, he explained. The port is currently working on a “fairly major development” plan for a portion of property at the bluffs near Blaine “to have some access going over the railroad tracks so that people could get down to [the marina],” said Sheldon. Investment is needed at the marina properties, he explained, and this project would not only fulfill the port’s goals for growth and development, but would also “[to] some degree increase the attractiveness of Blaine as a [visitor] destination.”

With the growing interest in transportation expansion, the Bellingham Airport is currently working to increase its passenger travel services, and Sheldon believes that “in the grand scheme of [the

Bellingham] region, [a few more passenger trains] would be nice but the real traffic is going to come through the airport or over the road.” However, he acknowledged that the more transportation connections an area can provide, the more it becomes attractive to the tourism industry. What Sheldon sees as the next big challenge for rail is “to integrate the higher speed passenger trains with the slower frequency [freight] trains so they can [run efficiently].” He referred to the success of this kind of work on the line closer to Seattle and pointed out that “we just have to do the same kind of thing up here with better sidings [to] manage the interaction. I think if you did that right you could run a lot more freight trains and a lot more passenger trains on the existing infrastructure.”

## Academics



**Dr. Don Alper** is the Director of the Center for Canadian-American Studies and the Border Policy Research Institute at Western Washington University (WWU). Alper is a fervent supporter of increased passenger rail service and spoke about a significant interest on campus for students to take alternative forms of transportation, especially rail, since it is perceived as convenient, efficient, affordable, reliable and predictable. He explained that the university’s students are interested in both northbound and southbound travel as many WWU students are from south of Bellingham, while they also travel to Vancouver, B.C. for recreation. Despite the interest in northbound student travel, Alper suggested that it is a “potential market that just hasn’t really been tapped very well because the border is a huge psychological barrier... and transportation helps to break that down”.

Alper sees Bellingham’s position near the border as being ideally placed to facilitate a more mutually beneficial cross-border relationship between British Columbia and Washington State. This relationship, he suggests, would benefit from a policy advisory group rooted in academia that would address “key regional economic and trade flow dynamics” and act as “an enormous creative force... for new ideas and fresh thinking on how we move this regional economy forward.” In response to the border agreement between President Obama and Prime Minister Harper, Alper believes this commitment from both sides will foster a more regional approach to border issues. “The change is going to come from regional ideas” such as allowing local border enforcement agencies more autonomy on pilot projects, “and the more leeway for that there is, the better.”

# Further consultations and community outreach

*These individuals contributed additional information to the study*

## Public Officials and Tribal Leaders



**Mayor Ed Brunz** of the city of Burlington

**Councillor Joanne Charles** is a councillor for the Semiahmoo First Nation.



**Mayor Mike Cooper** is mayor for the city of Edmonds.

**Chief Willard Cook** is Chief of the Semiahmoo First Nation.



**Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt** is the 2<sup>nd</sup> District Commissioner for Skagit County.



**Mayor Rick Green** is mayor for the township of Langley, B.C.

**Steve Gobin** is the General Manager for the Quil Ceda Village.



**Ambassador David Jacobson** is the US Ambassador to Canada.



**Mayor Margaret Larson** is mayor for the city of Arlington.



**Mayor Dean Maxwell** is mayor for the city of Anacortes.

**Pat McClain** is the Director of Governmental Affairs for the city of Everett.

**Keith McPherson** is the former director of the Vancouver Gateway Council.



**Councillor Grant Meyer** is a member of the City Council for the city of White Rock, B.C. and serves on the Amtrak Passenger Rail Task Force as an Alternate Council Liaison.

**Kevin Nielsen** is the Public Works Director for the city of Marysville.



**Councilmember Larry Phillips** represents District 4 as a member of the King County Council.



**Councilmember Chris Raezer** is an Arlington City Councilmember.



**Mayor Gregor Robertson** is mayor for the city of Vancouver, B.C.

**Gordon Rogers** is the Deputy Director and the Director of Planning for the Whatcom Council of Governments.



**Mel Sheldon** is the Chairman of the Tulalip Tribes.



**Mayor Dianne White** is mayor for the city of Stanwood.

## Tourism and Economic Development



**Rick Antonson** is the President and CEO of Tourism Vancouver.

**Jack Delay** is the Co-Director and Co-Coordinator for Communitywise Bellingham.

**Vic Ericson** is the Economic Development Director for the city of Arlington.



**KC Golden** is the Policy Director for the Seattle branch of Climate Solutions.



**Doug Hart** is the Executive Director of the South Surrey and White Rock Chamber of Commerce in B.C..

**Don Keenan** is the former president of the Sehome Neighborhood Association and current member of the Bellingham City Club.



**Charles Kelly** is the Chairman of the Cascadia Institute.



**Ross Macfarlane** is the Senior Advisor of Business Partnerships for the Seattle branch of Climate Solutions.

**Jeff Margolis** is a community activist and an affiliate with Safeguard the South Fork.



**Ken Oplinger** is the President and CEO of the Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

**Jim Phillips** is the Executive Director of the Canadian-American Border Trade Alliance.

**Loni Rahm** is the President and CEO of Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism.

**Bill Reid** is the Executive Director of the Cloverdale District Chamber of Commerce in B.C.

#### Transit Agencies and Transportation

**Steve Abernathy** is the Intercity Bus Program Planner for the Washington State Department of Transportation.

**Danielle Adkins** is the Marketing Manager for the Alaska Marine Highway.

**Andrew Austin** is the Field Director for the Transportation Choices Coalition.

**Carol Berry** is the Sustainable Transportation Coordinator for Western Washington University.

**Phillip Davies** is a private consultant, formerly of Transport Canada.

**Blake Delgaty** is the Director General of the Pacific Region for the Canada Border Services Agency.

**Dennis Digges** is an Operations Supervisor for Skagit Transit.

**Rob Eaton** is the Director of Government Affairs for Amtrak NW.

**Dan Engstrom** is the Marketing and Sales Representative for Amtrak NW.



**Larry Ehl** worked on Federal Relations for Washington State Department of Transportation.



**Mark Freiberger** is the Director of Public Works for the city of Sedro-Wooley.

**Gladys Gillis** is the Executive Director of Starline Luxury Coaches.

**Mike Henderson** is the Regional Director General for the Pacific Region of Transport Canada.



**Tom Hingson** is the director for Everett Transit.

**Sue Hunter** is the Chair of the Transportation Committee for Design Stanwood, Inc.

**Richard Johnson** is the President and owner of Bellair Charters/Airport Shuttle.

**Doug Kelsey** is the Director of Rail Operations for TransLink.

**Kurt Laird** is the District Superintendent for Amtrak NW.



**Chal Martin** is the Director for the Skagit County Public Works Department.

**Rick Nicholson** is the Director of Service Development for the Whatcom Transit Authority.

**Dale O'Brien** is the Executive Director of Skagit Transit.



**Bob Paddon** is the Vice President of TransLink.

**Ron Posthuma** is the Assistant Director for the King County Department of Transportation.

**Andrew Wood** is the Deputy Director of Operations for the Washington State Department of Transportation.

#### Freight Stakeholders- Shippers and Ports

**Todd Arnold** is the Manager of Bulk Road and Rail for Shell Oil.



**Commissioner Bill Bryant** is commissioner for the Port of Seattle.



**Bruce Burrows** is Vice President, Public and Corporate Affairs for the Railway Association of Canada.

**Frank Butzelaar** is the President and CEO of Southern Railway of British Columbia.



**Craig Cole** is a consultant for SSA (Stevedoring Services of America) Marine, a Carrix Enterprise.



**Read Fay** is a railway consultant and the former Chief of Operations for BNSF NW.

**James Dahl** is the Production Operations Manager for the Pacific Northwest District of Cargill Animal Nutrition, formerly Ferndale Grain.

**Mark Hinders** is the Manager of Energy Logistics for the Coleman Oil Company.



**Dan Semsak** is the Sales Manager for the Pacific Woodtech Corporation.

**Eric Shelby** is the Transportation Manager for Sierra Pacific Industries.

**Mike Tamilia** is the Vice President of Customs and Transborder Operations for Canadian National Railway.

#### Academics



**Dr. Anthony Perl** is a professor of Urban Studies at Simon Fraser University

## Passenger Appendix 2

Washington State Department of Transportation  
Select pages detailing “Current Funding Status”  
Amtrak Cascades Mid-Range Plan  
Released December 2008  
Pages 10-4 through 10-8



## Current Funding Status

The primary source of funding for the Amtrak *Cascades* capital and operating programs are state funds. These funds, which are generated from non-fuel tax revenues such as licenses, permits and fees, rental car tax, vehicle weight tax, and a portion of the sales tax on new and used vehicles, are deposited in the Statewide Multimodal Account. The state constitution restricts the use of motor vehicle fuel tax revenues exclusively to highway related expenditures.

The Washington State Legislature provided up to \$29 million in the 2007-2009 biennial budget for Amtrak operations of Amtrak *Cascades* and for the maintenance of Talgo train sets attributable to state-supported services.

The state legislature has provided direction on capital investments with an approved project list and 10-year spending plan for rail capital investment. Currently programmed passenger rail investments are \$360.4 million through 2025. The approved project list provides funding for several major projects, including the Vancouver – Rail Bypass and W. 39<sup>th</sup> St. Bridge, the Tacoma – Bypass of Point Defiance Phase 1, and a \$49 million phase of the Kelso-Martin’s Bluff project, as discussed earlier in this mid-range plan.

Limited federal funds have been available for intercity passenger rail development. The Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor (PNWRC), between Vancouver, B.C. and Eugene, OR, is one of 11 regional corridors identified by the USDOT for high-speed rail development. The corridor is one of the original five corridors designated in 1992. An average of \$690,000 per year has been made available through the federal “High-Speed Rail Grade Crossing and Hazard Elimination” program. In September 2008, the Federal Railroad Administration announced the award of a \$6 million grant to WSDOT for intercity passenger rail capital assistance. This grant will be used to partner with Sound Transit to help fund the Tacoma – Bypass of Point Defiance project.

## Challenges and Opportunities

The mid-range plan focuses on infrastructure and operating improvements in the “highest transportation demand” segment of the PNWRC, Seattle to Portland, a segment that is traditionally funded by the state of Washington.

### **Challenges**

- **Limited Multimodal Funding:** The Statewide Multimodal Fund, the primary source of state funding that is available for investment in the Amtrak *Cascades* program, also provides funding for transit, the Washington State Ferries system, bike, pedestrian, and some

highway activities. The amount of funds available is tied to vehicle registrations, various fees, and a percentage of the sales tax on new and used vehicles. The recent economic recession, witnessed by unprecedented volatility of capital market, may adversely impact the overall funding available for multimodal activities. Meanwhile, policies to heavily invest in infrastructure, which are often used by governments to stimulate the economy in prolonged economic recession or depression, could create emerging opportunities in passenger rail funding given its multiple benefits to society. In addition, there will be tremendous competition for available funds due to budget shortfalls and increased costs. Policymakers will be challenged to prioritize the limited resources. This mid-range plan attempts to provide comprehensive information through both quantitative and qualitative analyses to help policymakers make informed decisions.

- **No Dedicated Federal Funding:** Historically, there has not been a dedicated multi-year source of federal funding to provide a partnership similar to other modes of surface transportation.
- **Capital Funding in Oregon and Canada:** The availability of capital funding for improvements south of the Columbia River and north of the U.S./Canadian border is uncertain. Each of those entities needs to participate in rail capacity and reliability projects, if there is to be Amtrak *Cascades* service expansion, as described in the long-range plan.

## **Opportunities**

### Future Capital Funding Opportunities

After many years of deliberation, in October 2008, the US Congress passed the Rail Safety and Investment Act of 2008. This legislation provides, for the first time, a multi-year federal matching program with the states to fund intercity rail passenger capital projects. The legislation authorizes \$1.9 billion in federal grants over five years. This 80 percent federal and 20 percent state program will allow WSDOT the opportunity to use state funds as leverage for federal funds for rail capital projects (infrastructure and equipment) in a manner that is similar to how other modes of surface transportation have been supported at the federal level. This program, if and when funds are actually appropriated, would need to be an essential component for the future development of Amtrak *Cascades*.

Provisions in the legislation allow states like Washington to use state investments as a 20 percent match for federal funds, up to a maximum of

\$15 million per year, applying for up to \$60 million in federal capital funds annually—prior to expending “new” state capital funds. The ability to use state funds as a match will be an important factor to consider when policymakers make determinations on future program funding levels.

### Funding for Future Amtrak *Cascades* Operations

Ticket-buying passengers, the states of Washington and Oregon, and Amtrak currently fund the operating costs for Amtrak *Cascades* service in the PNWRC. It is assumed that any proposed increases in service as provided for in this mid-range plan, which focuses on enhanced Seattle to Portland service, would be funded by ticket buying passengers and by the state of Washington. Projected additional operating costs for each of the options presented in this plan are described in Chapter 6.

One of the major challenges is how to capture the opportunity of strong ridership growth to make the program more self-funded. Currently the farebox recovery ratio is about 50 percent—with strong ridership growth this year, it could reach a higher level. A 50 percent farebox recovery is considered very good for publicly-funded transportation. Policymakers need to determine the appropriate balance of farebox and public costs. It is possible that policymakers could view the many benefits of rail transportation as worthy of an appropriate level of public support. There are several factors that could drive a long-term growth of ridership.

- **High Energy Prices:** Rising fuel costs and the environmental advantages of rail passenger service have contributed to strong ridership growth. As Washington State and other entities in the region attempt to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make environmentally responsible infrastructure choices, intercity passenger rail development as a method of travel should receive stronger consideration in the future. The mid-range plan options provide information on environmental impacts of multimodal investments for consideration.
- **Reliability Improvements:** There is tremendous opportunity to improve Amtrak *Cascades* service reliability through targeted investments in capital and in enhanced maintenance as discussed in this report. On-time performance can be expected to improve from the current 60+ percent to more than 90 percent in the next several years with investments outlined in this plan.
- **Reduced Travel Times:** Mid-range plan options for investment can reduce scheduled travel times in the range of 4 to 30 minutes due to infrastructure and reliability improvements, boosting

ridership by providing a more attractive and dependable rail transportation option in our region.

- **High Frequency of Train Service:** Higher frequency of train services, along with higher reliability (on-time performance and time savings) could trigger significant growth as business travelers start to use reliable train service. The mid-range plan did not forecast such growth due to lack of data. However, experiences in other corridors show this is a likely scenario as Amtrak *Cascades* operates at a service level of eight daily round trips.

Higher ridership could create a strong opportunity for the program to reduce net public costs.

- Higher ridership could increase occupancy that in turn decreases cost per passenger mile. If ticket prices hold, the lower costs mean lower public costs.
- If higher ridership is met by higher levels of service, economy of scale of running train services could also lead to lower costs per passenger mile.

This plan uses conservative estimates in analyzing ridership and farebox recovery. Actions proposed in the plan could lead to further improvements of revenue and cost performance.

- **Marketing Concepts:** For the first time, the mid-range plan includes marketing concepts that lay out actions to expand market reach to targeted customers. With the right marketing concepts, ridership fluctuation caused by seasonality could be improved and the average occupancy rate could be higher. Consequently, state support could be lowered. An investment in marketing could be fruitful in support of infrastructure and operation improvements. More people seek alternative transportation choices for many reasons, including concerns about high energy prices, congestion, and the environment.
- **Increased Ticket Prices:** Higher prices could lead to higher revenue, if the demand is not price sensitive for such a price increase. As the cost of using other modes (auto and airplane) increases sharply due to the fuel price hikes, people might select less expensive modes, such as rail and bus. This creates an opportunity for price increases. A study is proposed in the operation plan to further explore such an opportunity.

- **Improve Revenue Opportunity:** Revenues could be increased by improvements to onboard service quality, improving existing amenities such as the food and beverage service.



## Passenger Appendix 3

Cascade Gateway Rail Study

Chapter 5 “Capacity Improvements”

Wilbur Smith 2002, Pages 5-1 through 5-14



# Chapter 5

## CAPACITY IMPROVEMENTS

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### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the minimum improvements for the rail corridor that will provide sufficient capacity for the freight and passenger train volumes forecasted in Chapters 2 and 3. The emphasis here is on the segment of the corridor between Everett and Vancouver. This emphasis recognizes that improvements planned for future SoundTransit commuter rail services between Seattle and Everett will effectively restore the historic double track configuration and thereby provide sufficient capacity for foreseeable freight and passenger volumes.

### 5.2 CASCADE GATEWAY CAPACITY ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

The Cascade Gateway rail line capacity needs are analyzed in terms of specific segments. These are Pacific Central Station in Vancouver to Everett, Vancouver to Burlington via Sumas (an alternative routing for double-stack trains), and Everett to Seattle. Estimated train volumes for 2002 and forecast volumes for 2012 are noted in Chapters 2 and 3. Freight operators on the Cascade Gateway rail corridor include BNSF, CP, CN, and SRY. Passenger operators include Amtrak, VIA, Sounder, and Rocky Mountain Rail Tours. With the possible exception of Rocky Mountain Rail Tours, all carriers are likely to handle more traffic in 2012 than today.

#### 5.2.1 BNSF Main line between Everett and Vancouver

The BNSF main track between the yard at Everett (PA Junction) and the Pacific Central passenger station in Vancouver is about 122 miles in length. Except for 9.3 miles between Still Creek (just east of Vancouver) and New Westminster, where there is double track, the line is single track.

##### **New Westminster Rail Bridge**

This bridge is approximately a fifth of a mile long and spans the Fraser River. It is owned by the Canadian government and used by the BNSF, SRY, CN, Amtrak, VIA and Rocky Mountain Rail Tours. The bridge has limited clearance above the Fraser River. Thus, it includes a “swing” span that opens to allow marine traffic to pass up and down the river. The rail line on the bridge is single track, with a severe speed restriction. The current operating speed across the river is only 8 mph or 13 kph. According to a recent study on a replacement for the bridge, total train movements over the bridge range generally between 1,200 and 1,300 for both freight and passenger services on a monthly basis<sup>1</sup>.

The study estimated that opening of the swing bridge for marine traffic consumes over 30 percent of the overall availability of the bridge. Given this estimate, coupled with its single track

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<sup>1</sup> “Supporting Rationale for the Replacement of the New Westminster Rail Bridge,” prepared for the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council and Borealis; July, 2002.

configuration, speed restriction, multiple users and volume of traffic, it is reasonable to say the bridge is a corridor bottleneck which will become worse with increasing numbers of passenger and freight trains.

### Principal Sidings

There are 10 significant sidings that can be used as passing tracks. The sidings vary in length from about 6,000 feet to just over 9,000 feet, but the longer sidings are few in number, far from each other, and in some cases, encumbered with one or more internal public road crossings that limit the railroad's ability to hold a long train in the siding.

Passing sidings, or comparatively short sections of double track paralleling the main line track, provide capacity to a single-track railroad. The principal sidings, their length and railroad milepost locations (from south to north), appear in Table 5-1.

<b>Milepost</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Length (Ft)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
45.9	English	9,026	One public crossings
55.5	Stanwood	6,381	Public Crossing
66.8	Mt. Vernon	6,075	Public Crossing
71.9	Burlington	5,900	Between Greenleaf St. and Pease Rd.
79.3	Bow	8,916	Public Crossing
92.9	South Bellingham	6,347	
106.3	Ferndale	8,610	North of Main St.
111.8	Custer	6,400	Distance is clear of road crossing
116.0	Swift	8,710	
119.3	Blaine	6,060	Not in CTC Signal System
139.9	Brownsville	5,908	Two sidings

Source: BNSF track charts and conversations with WSDOT consultant

The relatively long distances between sidings (20 miles Brownsville to Blaine; 13 miles South Bellingham to Ferndale; 12 miles Everett to English) all constrain the maximum practical capacity of the route. Capacity is further limited by frequent speed restrictions, which are either the effect of curves (Samish to South Bellingham), bridges (the Snohomish River and Steamboat Slough at Marysville; the Nicomekl and Serpentine Rivers near Colebrook; the Fraser River at New Westminster), or public law (White Rock, BC).

### Dispatching Systems

Most of the corridor's single track is dispatched remotely, through a Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) system in which the train dispatcher electrically controls switch alignments and signal indications. There is still a 20.5-mile stretch between Swift (just south of Blaine) and Brownsville, and another 2-mile section between Still Creek (west of New Westminster) and Vancouver, that are protected only with Automatic Block Signals, and on which trains require track warrants or other "manual" authority, to operate. BNSF's main track terminates at Still Creek. From there to Pacific Central is yard trackage, and not remotely dispatched by CTC. Also, BC Rail dispatches the eight tenths of a mile of BNSF main line, used by CP and CN to and from Roberts Bank, at Colebrook.

## Tunnels

Between Samish and South Bellingham there are four tunnels (Tunnel 18, 1,113 feet long; Tunnel 19, 141 feet long; Tunnel 20, 326 feet long; and Tunnel 21, 751 feet long) with vertical clearance restrictions that prohibit the operations of some double-stack trains. Presently, the clearances are sufficient for two “low cube” (8’6” high) containers atop one another, i.e. a “low-low” combination. This combination requires a vertical clearance of at least 18’2” above the top of the rail, according to BNSF. However, the vertical clearances are insufficient for either of the two following double-stack combinations: a low cube container and a “high cube” (9’6” high) container, i.e. a “low-high” combination; or two high cube containers, i.e. a “high-high” combination. The former requires a vertical clearance of at least 19’2”, and the latter requires a minimum vertical clearance of at least 20’2” for containers 10’6” wide. The current tunnels permit 19’ of vertical clearance for containers that are 10’6” wide<sup>2</sup>.

## Border Crossing Facilities

All southbound freight trains are subject to U.S. Customs inspection upon entry at Blaine, and some trains are required to set out individual cars for Customs to inspect. Setting out individual cars for U.S. Customs to inspect requires that trains be delayed long enough for the necessary switching to be completed, which can in turn delay other trains. U.S. Customs has indicated that the service will increase the number of inspections as an enhanced security measure. For northbound trains, Canadian Customs inspection is handled at White Rock. Trains are inspected on the main line. Stops frequently last for an hour.

## Main Line Operations

The typical trip, for either a passenger or a freight train, takes relatively long for the distance it covers. A freight train may require 8-10 hours to travel between Everett and the BNSF yard at New Westminster (Sapperton) – especially if the train has any *en route* work to do. Such work may entail setting out or picking up blocks of railcars, or switching at sidings or industries along the line.

Current BNSF operations consist of 6 through freight trains (3 round trips or 3 trains each way) daily, 12 local freight trains (a high number for the main track distances involved), and 2 pairs of Amtrak *Cascades* passenger trains (one pair running between Seattle and Vancouver, and one pair running between Seattle and Bellingham<sup>3</sup>). CP, CN and SRY traffic add several trains a day in the corridor, but only north of Colebrook.

The Amtrak *Cascades* passenger trains operate in the morning and evening, in opposing directions. Five of the 6 BNSF through freight trains operate at night; the locals are a mix of daylight and nighttime operations.

<sup>2</sup> Conventional intermodal containers come with two heights; 8’6” and 9’6”. The latter are termed “high cube” because they provide more cubic space for loading cargo. The high cube containers are therefore becoming increasingly popular with shippers. Indeed, for domestic container shipments, 9’6” high cube containers are becoming what the market demands. Accordingly, double-stack routes ideally should be planned with vertical clearances allowing for a “high-high” double-stack combination.

<sup>3</sup> In the Recommended Improvements discussion that follows, the analysis assumes that a second Amtrak *Cascades* train will be extended to operate between Bellingham and Vancouver in 2004, and a third round trip between Seattle and Vancouver will be implemented in 2008, per Working Paper 1.

### Planned Improvements

Washington Department of Transportation, which sponsors the Amtrak *Cascades* Service, is planning various improvements along the Cascade Gateway rail corridor to facilitate more trains and faster speed up to 110 miles per hour. The list of improvements which WSDOT is contemplating, along with estimated cost costs, appear in Table 5-2.

<b>Table 5-2. Amtrak Cascades Capital Improvements, Everett to Blaine, WA. (2002 US Dollars)</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Everett - Marysville Speed Increases	\$8,500,000	Realignment of curves and bridge improvements reduces current Seattle-Bellingham-Vancouver, BC travel time by 10 minutes.
Track geometry adjustments between Everett and Blaine	\$22,000,000	Cuts another 10 minutes off the travel time.
Bellingham siding extension	\$30,000,000	Capacity improvement to permit RTs 3 and 4. Travel time drops by 1 minute.
English to Mount Vernon second mainline	\$120,000,000	Reaching speeds up to 110 mph. Reduces running time by 4 minutes.
Ferndale to Blaine second mainline	\$120,000,000	Reaching speeds up to 110. Reduces running time by 1 1/2 minutes.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$300,500,000</b>	Assumes current alignment into White Rock.
Note: Accuracy of cost estimates +/- 30%		
Source: WSDOT, November 2002		

### Capacity Challenges

Given forecasts of increasing freight and passenger traffic, this analysis reviewed and evaluated the current capacity of the corridor to identify the challenges of accommodating more traffic.

The effective separation of the BNSF through freight service from the scheduled passenger service helps somewhat to reduce the pressure on the line capacity: most BNSF through trains operate at night, while the Cascades are daytime trains. But this separation is not a viable strategy in the long term if there is to be growth in the freight service.

As it is, if both passenger trains were to operate to Vancouver, then there would have to be two passenger train "meets" near Bellingham or Samish. The current daylight BNSF through freight train would have to meet or be overtaken by the two passenger trains, and all three through trains might have to meet or overtake at least some of the daylight locals.

At night, the 5 BNSF through freight trains must all meet their opposing mates: at least 6 meets per night, if all trains are more or less on time. Furthermore, all these conflicts tend to concentrate in the territory between Colebrook and Bow (that is, in the middle).

So, despite what appears to be a modest total demand, this is currently a difficult route to operate with consistent performance. If a train is delayed, there are likely to be ripple effects for the other trains, and not much the train dispatcher can do to recover.

Chapter 2 explored the potential for double-stack container trains operating on the corridor. However, there are physical challenges to doing this. First are substandard vertical clearances in four tunnels south of Bellingham. These would need improvement to handle two “high cube” or 9’6”-high containers stacked on top of one another, as well as for a high and a low cube (8’6”-high) container combination. Routing containers through the Sumas Gateway (as discussed below) would mitigate this particular challenge. But other institutional challenges remain, as this movement would imply an agreement sorted out between BNSF and most likely CP, which are competing railroads in many markets. Furthermore, there is the challenge of yet other vertical clearance problems for double-stacks in southern Oregon and northern California, which would have to be addressed to allow double-stacks to flow on the I-5 corridor between the Pacific Northwest and Southern California. These problems exist on both BNSF and UP, which has a right to market services in Vancouver. These improvements on the I-5 corridor between Seattle and Southern California reportedly total about \$10 million for each railroad.

Other operators on this segment of the corridor include VIA, CP, CN, SRY and Rocky Mountain Rail Tours. These operations are limited mostly to between Downtown Vancouver and the south side of the Fraser River Bridge and at Colebrook. Double track north of the bridge mitigates some problems there, but the bridge itself remains a challenge for the reasons noted above. An ongoing study is looking at alternatives for replacing the bridge<sup>4</sup>. One alternative is a rail tunnel under the Fraser River. This poses several challenges in itself. The tunnel would have an underwater depth of 25 meters (about 80 feet), which would require an approach of at least 2 to 2.5 kilometers (1.2 to 1.5 miles) on each side. Given these parameters, it is reasonable to assume that the cost for such an alternative would be in the hundreds of millions of dollars. A goal of the study is to develop cost estimates for this and other alternatives.

### **Recommended Improvements**

The following analysis pertains to improvements between the southern end of the Fraser River Bridge and Everett. This is because double track and CTC north of the bridge to Vancouver provides sufficient capacity for increased numbers of freight and passenger trains. Similarly, improvements proposed between Seattle and Everett for new commuter trains would provide sufficient capacity there for new trains. This study notes the need for alternatives to the New Westminster Rail Bridge over the Fraser River. However, it does not quantify these alternatives since they are the subject of the ongoing study referenced previously.

There are four significant issues involved in improving the corridor between Everett and the southern end of the New Westminster Rail Bridge so that it could efficiently handle as much as one to two additional BNSF freight trains a day in each direction, plus the extended (or even an expanded) passenger service. These issues are:

- Reducing the distance between longer sidings.

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<sup>4</sup> “Greater Vancouver Region Major Commercial Transportation System Study”, being prepared for the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council.

- Improving the signal system.
- Providing surge capacity at Swift to mitigate the impact of customs inspections.
- Providing clearance in the tunnels if hi-cube double-stacks are to operate.

To address these issues, the analysis developed the following recommendations for capacity enhancements:

1. Construction of a 9,000-foot controlled siding at Colebrook, BC on existing subgrade (i.e., the earthen roadbed that underlies the track structure) immediately north of the west switch connection to the BC Rail line to Roberts Bank (approximately BNSF Milepost 131.25 to 133.50). BNSF wants 9,000-foot sidings that can handle 7,000-foot trains efficiently. The cost estimate associated with this improvement in Table 5-3 includes only rail, tie and ballast; the signal costs are included in the signal item.
2. Extension of the Centralized Traffic Control System from its present north limit at Blaine (BNSF MP 116.8) 20.5 miles to Townsend (BNSF MP 137.3) – a point just north of the North switch to the new Colebrook Siding, and the current southern limit of the CTC between the New Westminster Rail Bridge and Tilbury Line Junction (Townsend). This improvement would incorporate an existing CTC interlocking between switches at Colebrook. Current BNSF standards require coded track circuits replace line-side wires as a means for supplying the electric current that activates intermediate signals. Therefore, the cost estimates in Table 5-3 include the costs for replacing the entire signal system, not just the addition of CTC controls.
3. Extension of one more of the existing 6,000-foot sidings to 9,000 feet. From an operating perspective, the best location for this extension is probably South Bellingham: that location is about half-way between the long controlled sidings at Ferndale and Bow, and it is far enough north to help with meet/pass conflicts that cluster in the middle of the route. However, this extension may be very difficult to construct at South Bellingham: there is a tunnel to the south, and the waterfront to the north, either of which limit the engineering options. In addition, WSDOT currently has a contract with BNSF that calls for the Stanwood siding (MP 55.5) to be extended as a condition of future expansion of the state-sponsored Amtrak *Cascades* service.

An alternate extension might be Mt. Vernon, which is about half-way between the long sidings at English and Bow, and where a 2,500-foot extension to the south would be significantly easier to engineer than one at South Bellingham. (Even here, however, there may be wetlands impacts from extending the subgrade.)

4. To aid in the handling of customs inspections on rail freight cars, a support track could be constructed immediately south of the Customs inspection shed at Swift, most likely on the west side of the existing main track. If cars for inspection were set out into this track, it would help keep the controlled siding clear for other movements, or even allow the main track and existing siding to exchange roles, so that the controlled siding is between the main track and the Customs shed. An additional recommendation is that U.S. and Canadian Customs inspection be performed at Swift. This will require institutional coordination, but the effect would be to free the main line of northbound trains stopped at White Rock for Canadian inspections.

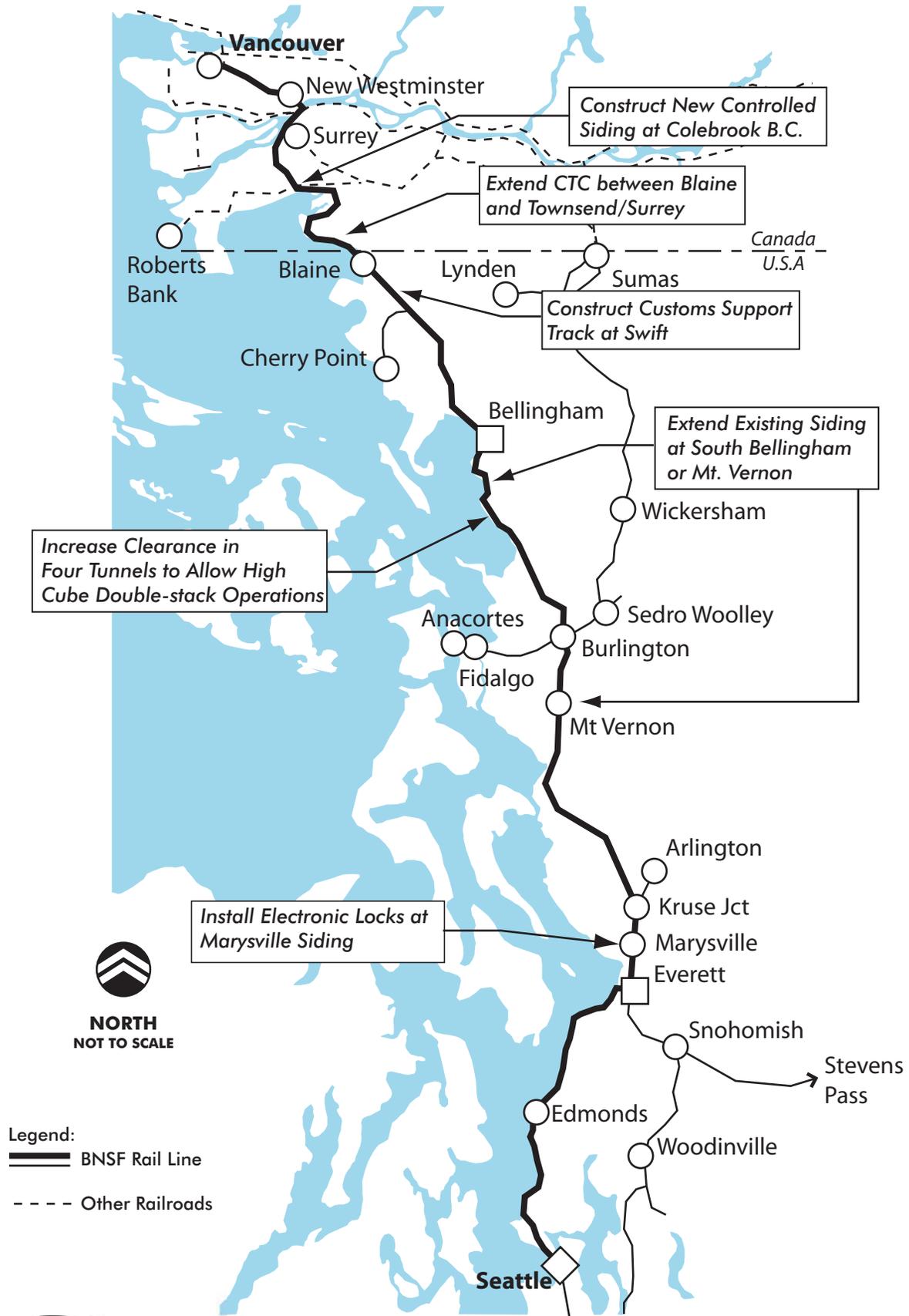
5. If high-cube double-stack container trains are to be operated over this route, lower floors of Tunnels 18, 19, 20, and 21 to permit increased vertical clearance will be required. The assumption for double-stack trains is that they would originate and terminate at the BNSF New Westminster Yard for runs on the corridor to and from U.S. destinations. The costs for improvements in the yard itself for loading and unloading double-stack cars, as well as for the cars, are not part of this analysis.
6. Installation of electric lock protection on the non-controlled siding at Marysville to allow the area's local freight train to clear the main track without causing delay to other main line trains or being delayed itself by other main line trains.

The improvements noted above are located on Figure 5-1 below. Rough costs for these improvements appear in Table 5-3.

1.	A 9,000' controlled siding Colebrook @ \$140/track-foot. (2 controlled No. 20 turnouts @ \$200,000 each).	1.66
2.	CTC 20.5 miles Blaine to Colebrook and Colebrook to Townsend. 4 new control points at \$850,000 each, plus 20.5 miles at \$750,000 per track mile for coded track circuits.	18.78
3.	5,000-foot support track at Swift for Customs inspection (5000' @ \$160/ track-foot including grading), and place in CTC system (2 Turnouts @\$250,000 each).	1.30
4.	Construct a 2,000-foot extension to one existing siding (2,000' @ \$160/ track-foot).	0.32
5.	Lower tunnel floors (2300 feet @ \$820/ft).	1.90
6.	Electric lock protection on the non-controlled siding at Marysville.	.15
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24.11</b>
	Contingency @ 40%	9.64
	Engineering @ 20%	4.82
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>38.57</b>

Source: Washington Infrastructure Services

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These costs do not include any costs for environmental mitigation. Not appearing here are costs for vertical clearance improvements on both BNSF and UP for implementing double-stack services to and from Southern California.

Specifically related to increases in passenger service between New Westminster and Pacific Central Station, other improvements have been suggested. One study, “Vancouver BC Amtrak Service: Infrastructure and Operating Changes for Additional Trains” (1998), identified various improvements. The improvements included, among other things

- ***For a second Amtrak Cascades train:*** a second track between CN Junction and Still Creek Phase 1 (\$5.4 million), a Douglas Road grade separation (\$12 million), CTC between CN Junction and Blaine (\$7.9 million), and a Colebrook siding (\$4 million).
- ***For a third Amtrak Cascades train:*** Various yard area changes at New Westminster (\$2.8 million), a third main track between Piper and Brunette (\$13.2 million), a second main track between CN Junction and Still Creek Phase 2 (\$11.2 million), and a controlled siding Willington Junction to Sperling (\$8.7 million).

Together, these improvements total \$53.2 million in 1998 dollars, exclusive of CTC and the Colebrook siding. The consultant who worked on the study reported that this figure has been revised upward to over \$100 million. Presumably these costs include engineering and contingencies. It is interesting to note that the 1998 estimate for the CTC is only \$7.9 million, versus the \$18.78 million, inclusive of coded track circuit (before engineering and contingencies), cited in Table 5.3. The 1998 study was sponsored by Amtrak, British Columbia Transportation Financing Authority, BNSF, and CN.

### **5.2.2 Main Line Alternative for Double-stack Trains via Sumas**

As noted above, one of the larger cost items for improvements on BNSF Cascade Gateway rail corridor is for vertical clearance improvements to the four tunnels south of Bellingham through the Chuckanut range. This might be avoided if double-stacks were routed via Sumas, Washington. Traveling from Everett north to Vancouver, double-stack trains conceivably could use the following routing: BNSF Cascade Gateway main line from Everett to Burlington, thence on BNSF’s Sumas Subdivision from Burlington to Sumas, thence on CP to Vancouver. This routing has vertical clearances that would allow for high cube double-stack trains. The routing is shown on Figure 5-2 and discussed in the text that follows.

The BNSF’s Sumas Subdivision extends for 45 miles from Burlington via Sedro Wooley to Sumas, where it connects with the Canadian Pacific (CP). The Southern Railway of British Columbia also operates in Sumas, but does not have a direct connection to the BNSF there. The SRY track to Vancouver is accessed off of the CP at Sumas.

The BNSF line, while in very good physical condition, has no passing sidings anywhere between Sumas and Burlington. This segment has no signalization; train operates by track warrant control.



North of Sumas, the SRY operates a single track line to the Fraser River at New Westminster, where physical connections exist to the other carriers, and therefore to Vancouver. The CP operates a line approximately 8 miles from Sumas to its main line at Mission. From this CP line, there is also a physical connection to the CN main line, on the south bank of the Fraser, opposite Mission, but this connection is in the Northeast quadrant of the CN/CP crossing, and is used as part of a CP/CN directional running arrangement that extends east of Mission through the Fraser River Canyon. It is therefore not practical to operate between points on the CN east or west of Mission, and the Sumas border crossing.

There are some other physical limitations to this gateway and its supporting rail routes. The SRY line to New Westminster includes a very steep grade, with extremely sharp curves, as it climbs the Fraser Valley escarpment south of the Fraser River rail crossing near Brownsville<sup>5</sup>. The SRY lines also winds through residential neighborhoods in Surrey. The CP line is maintained to branch line conditions, and would probably need some tie and ballast work if any substantial increase in traffic were to develop.

A routing via Sumas using SRY would be less desirable given the various challenges in the route and alignment noted above. Despite limitations, it is likely that the CP/BNSF trackage could accommodate an additional double-stack through train four times a week (2 rounds trips per week) in 2012, provided that:

- The added train did not require intermediate switching or perform work en route, and
- The train could be scheduled so as not to require a meet in either direction with the daily turnaround local that operates on BNSF between Everett and Sumas during daylight hours (this is currently the only train that uses this route).

This last condition would probably restrict the added train to a nighttime schedule, and would further restrict it from operating daily (in other words, the added train would need to operate northbound one night; southbound the next). Such an operation sometimes produces crew scheduling difficulties, which can contribute to extra operating costs, but on the whole, it is likely such an operation could be implemented without any significant capital investment. In that respect, the Vancouver-CP-Sumas-BNSF-Burlington route may offer an alternate route for added double-stack trains: one that would not require altering any existing tunnels.

Apart from the physical feasibility of such a movement, there are institutional considerations. The purpose of running double-stacks on the Sumas Gateway would be to avoid making improvements in the Chuckanut tunnels, which would be costly, as noted above. However, there would have to be agreements in place between BNSF and CP that would allow this movement. Rates would have to be construed and an operating plan defined. Presumably, the trains would originate and terminate at a CP intermodal facility in Vancouver. However, more detail would have to be specified in the agreement between the railroads.

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<sup>5</sup> A physical inspection of the line in August, 2002 revealed about a 3 percent grade climbing the escarpment and curves of about 10 to 14 degrees (uncompensated).

Also, double-stack trains operated on a BNSF-CP routing via Sumas, albeit infrequently (estimated 1 train every other day, or 2 round trips per week in 2012), could have the potential of causing delays to truck and motor vehicle traffic in Abbotsford and Huntington, BC.

### **5.2.3 BNSF Main Line between Seattle and Everett**

It is unlikely that a small marginal increase in train volumes – either passenger or freight – would trigger a requirement for increased capacity between King Street Station in Seattle and Everett (PA Junction), a distance of 34 miles. It is also clear that a significant change in train counts would require more plant.

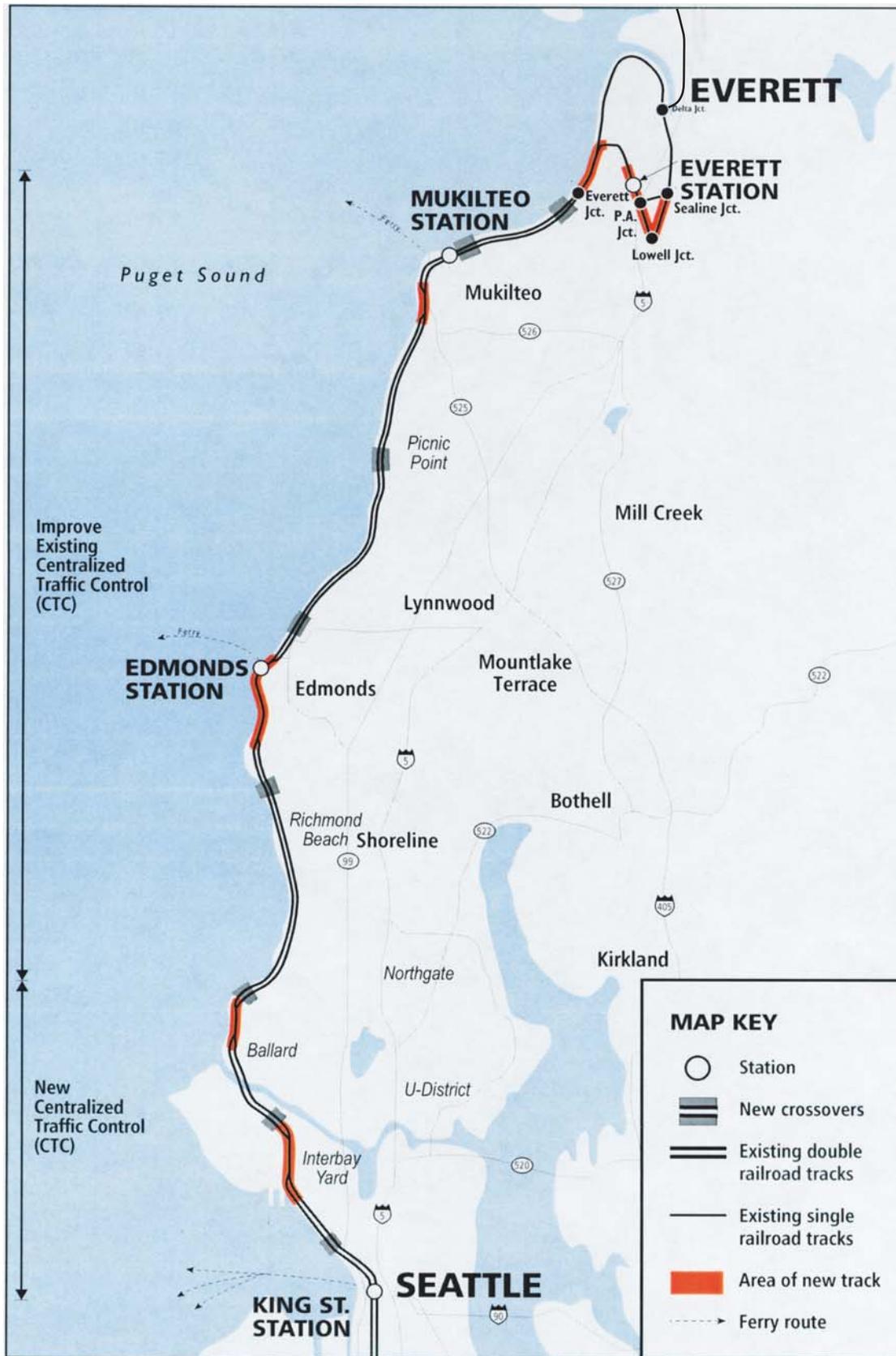
The principal driver of increased train volumes is likely to be extension of SoundTransit commuter service from Seattle to Everett. Previous studies, such as the WSDOT "Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor Passenger Plan" (1995) and subsequent *Sounder* and BNSF analyses have indicated that such an extension would require:

- Improvements and extensions to the existing CTC control system, particularly extending the control system from Ballard to King Street.
- Up to eight new crossovers between North Portal and Everett Junction.
- Construction of a second main track through some or all of the remaining single track bottlenecks: one through Interbay Yard in Seattle; one just north of the Ballard movable bridge; one at Edmonds; one at Mukilteo, and various segments between Everett Junction and Everett Station.

If these improvements are made in connection with increased passenger service, they would almost certainly bring about a sufficient increase in total rail capacity to accommodate any additional freight traffic to and from Canada. For one thing, the 8-mile-long Cascade Tunnel near Skykomish would remain an impediment (because of ventilation requirements) to any large increase in freight trains to and from the east. Consequently, the positive effect of the proposed track and signal improvements between Everett and Seattle on the BNSF freight service would pass down to any increased Canadian traffic. Track improvements planned by SoundTransit are shown in Figure 5-3.

On the passenger side, the Everett-Seattle improvements have been developed specifically to support added peak-period passenger service, and would therefore act also to support the running of an additional mid-day intercity service as well.

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**MAP KEY**

- Station
- ▬▬ New crossovers
- ▬▬ Existing double railroad tracks
- Existing single railroad tracks
- Area of new track
- ⋯ Ferry route

### 5.3 SUMMARY

The Cascade Gateway rail corridor improvements cited in Table 5-2 (between New Westminster and Everett) will create additional operating capacity and improve flexibility in handling of both freight and passenger service. All of the improvements outlined in Table 5-2, except the tunnel clearance projects, will benefit the growth of rail service on the route. These improvements total \$38.57 million. Improvements, identified in a previous study for additional passenger trains between New Westminster and Vancouver, come with a price tag reportedly exceeding \$100 million. These improvements will create additional flexibility and potentially enhance service reliability, but are not essential capacity improvements *per se*, as the line segment there is already double tracked and dispatched by CTC. In addition, the tunnel clearance projects will make full height high cube double-stack service feasible over the route. An alternative to the tunnel work might be operation of double-stack service via the Sumas line with only modest improvements to the connecting CP trackage, but this will only support limited double-stack train operations.

## Passenger Appendix 4

National Railroad Passenger Corporation  
Report to the United States Congress: Strategic  
Service and Security Proposal for Amtrak Service  
in Vancouver B.C. During (and Possibly After) the  
2010 Winter Olympic Games  
Released October 2009



**Report to the United States Congress  
Strategic Service and Security Proposal**

**For Amtrak Service in Vancouver BC**

**During (and Possibly After) the 2010 Winter Olympic Games**

**Amtrak Cascades at Crescent Beach**



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## **Purpose**

This report is submitted to Congress in compliance with provisions of Section 406 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. These provisions require Amtrak to:

1. Develop a strategic plan to facilitate expanded passenger rail service across the international border between the United States and Canada during the 2010 Olympic Games on the Amtrak passenger rail route between Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and Eugene, Oregon (commonly known as “Amtrak *Cascades*”);
2. Develop recommendations for the Department of Homeland Security to process efficiently rail passengers traveling on Amtrak *Cascades* across the international border during the 2010 Olympic Games; and
3. Submit to Congress a report containing the strategic plan described in paragraph 1 and the recommendations described in Paragraph 2.

This report is due to Congress on October 16, 2009.

## **Approach**

In preparing this report, Amtrak relied upon the results of previous studies and also obtained the input of other organizations.

The strategic plan for train service is based upon a modification to the service inaugurated in August 2009 in partnership with the Washington State Department of Transportation. Amtrak is prepared to operate this service either through the period of the Olympics or on a permanent basis if funding continues to be available and potential obstacles are removed.

In preparing recommendations for the Department of Homeland Security, Amtrak sought advice, input and draft reviews from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP), and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), in addition to local and Amtrak police. This phase was concluded with a joint meeting in Blaine, WA, for a review of the draft of proposed recommendations. All above agencies participated as well as staff members from the offices of Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray and Representative Rick Larsen.

The following report incorporates the results of these efforts.

## Executive Summary

### Expanded service

Amtrak recommends that the two round trips per day now operated between Seattle, WA, and Vancouver, BC, be slightly modified for the period of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The schedule change would be effective on or about February 1, 2010 and revert to the normal pattern on or about March 31, 2010 (if the second round trip continues) giving those who wish to tour Canada before the Games or stay beyond them more benefit from this service. Specifically Amtrak recommends during the period of the Games altering the existing schedule of the southbound afternoon train to a 7:45 PM departure, two hours later than normal. This would allow visitors to stay for the completion of more events.

As of mid-August, Amtrak *Cascades* International service includes one daily round trip operating between Seattle, WA, and Vancouver, B.C. in the morning and returning from Vancouver, B.C. to Seattle, WA, in the early evening. It also includes a second round trip originating in Portland, OR in the afternoon and terminating in Vancouver later the same night, then returning from Vancouver to Portland early the following morning. Both trains make stops in both directions at intermediate stations.

Prior to the inauguration of the second service in August, other options considered for Olympics service expansion included:

- Three round trips to and from Vancouver spaced throughout the day, and
- Two or three morning northbound and evening southbound trains “fleeted” to and from Vancouver for more passenger capacity.

Midday trains, however, would have little appeal to travelers attending the Games since the trains would arrive and depart in the midst of the very activities in which everyone will be interested. Market analysis did not indicate enough demand for more capacity in the morning and evening time periods. In addition, the service now operated with the schedule modification can be operated with present resources. The other optional services would require one or two more train sets. Also, additional border security infrastructure at Pacific Central Station in Vancouver can be avoided if no more than one Amtrak train is in the station at any one time as recommended here. The secure fenced area will hold only one train. The optional services would have two or three trains there at some times. If three round trips were spaced throughout the day, the arrival of some trains would overlap the departure of others. If two or three trains were “fleeted” to and from Vancouver, all would be there at the same time. This would require rebuilding and expanding the fenced enclosure, and perhaps subdividing it, so that sequential trains could be worked individually in parallel.

Recognizing the interest of the State of Washington and the market potential for regular twice daily service, Amtrak could operate the proposed service permanently after the Games are concluded provided funding remains available and continued customs and immigration services are provided by the Canadian Border Services Agency without

cost to Amtrak or WSDOT. In that event, Amtrak would return the evening southbound departure back to the current 5:45 PM following completion of the Games.

### Security Recommendations

The U.S. Department of Transportation has designated Eugene, OR - Vancouver, BC as one of ten High Speed Rail Corridors in the United States. With an overall length of 464 miles and a significant number of major on-line population centers, it is ideally suited for development. While the entire corridor is eligible for federal investment, this report addresses only the portion between Seattle, WA, and Vancouver, BC. Amtrak believes that funding for security infrastructure improvements could be made available by the U.S. Congress perhaps because of its High Speed Corridor designation.

Although there is considerable potential for a rail passenger market, the present Amtrak *Cascades* service is not time-competitive with alternate modes. Map Quest estimates automobile driving time at 3:05. Amtrak thruway buses cover the route in 3:30. Flying time is 48 minutes plus inspections and access time to and from airports. The existing trains, however, take 3:55 northbound and 4:20 southbound for the 155 mile Seattle – Vancouver portion of the overall corridor.

The incremental implementation of high-speed corridor service requires taking trip time out of schedules and eliminating delays. This can be accomplished, for example, by track realignments that reduce curvature or signal improvements to permit faster speeds. Another trip time reduction improvement possibility unique to this corridor would be conducting combined pre-clearance inspections of U.S. bound passengers at the Vancouver Pacific Central Station. Combined inspections would eliminate the current customs stop at the border and thus eliminate 15 minutes of daily delay typically experienced by trains entering the United States. Market studies show that time-standing-still is a major irritant to rail passengers.

To facilitate this improvement, Amtrak offers the following conclusions and recommendations to the U.S. Congress and the Department of Homeland Security.

1. The current combined customs and immigration process northbound into Canada requires no change other than facility improvements at Vancouver Pacific Central Station already under development and addressed later in this report. All these processes are performed by the Canadian Border Services Agency at Vancouver Pacific Central Station.
2. The current process for southbound trains to the U.S. results in delay to rail passengers. It is comprised of two-step USCBP immigration clearance at Vancouver followed by USCBP customs clearance at Blaine, WA. Amtrak recommends that this practice change to combined immigration and customs pre-clearance in Vancouver. This change could be made upon completion of physical facility improvements and authorization of additional staff required by USCBP for the added scope of work. This change would reduce the trip time of southbound trains by at least 15 minutes.

3. Amtrak recommends that Congress provide \$526,500 in funding for facility improvements at the jointly-controlled and used Immigrations and Customs space in Vancouver's Pacific Central Station as identified in this report and/or as requested by the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.
4. Amtrak recommends that the U.S. Congress provide funding for the additional USCBP personnel needed to perform these combined and expanded duties at Pacific Central Station as specified by USCBP and the Department of Homeland Security.
5. Amtrak recommends that the U.S. Congress request the Department of State to ask that the Government of Canada consider amending the Canadian Pre-Clearance Act of June 17, 1999 to extend the protections of this Act currently covering USCBP officers performing pre-clearance activities at certain airports to selected rail and sea ports as well.
6. Amtrak noted that it has no current process to match a traveler's passport name with the name used on the rail ticket. It therefore recommends instituting a name match (cross reference) of immigration documentation during the ticketing process to ensure the same name appears on the Amtrak ticket.

## **Part 1 - Strategic Plan for Expanded Seattle – Vancouver Service**

### Background

Amtrak began operation of the Seattle – Vancouver service as one of the first additions to its original national system network on July 17, 1972. Due largely to poor on-time performance caused by customs and immigration related delay, the service was discontinued in 1981. Subsequent to discontinuance, the United States Department of Transportation in 1992 designated the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor (Vancouver, BC – Eugene, OR) as one of the (then) five high-speed rail corridors in the country.

In May 1995, Amtrak and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) reintroduced rail service between Seattle, WA, and Vancouver, BC. Unique to this Amtrak cross border service, the majority of inspection activities in both directions now take place in Pacific Central Station in Vancouver, BC. The Agency currently performing inspection activities at the border is USCBP. Initially this inspection was performed by the U.S. Customs Agency and was conducted on-board enroute between Blaine, WA and Bellingham, WA. U.S. Customs officers then returned to Blaine, WA, via automobile. Subsequent to September 11, 2001, the agency required Amtrak to stop at the border at Blaine, WA in order for it to perform this inspection. The related delay is approximately 15 minutes.

In September 1999, Amtrak and WSDOT began operation of an additional Seattle, WA - Bellingham, WA service. Connecting bus service between Bellingham and Vancouver was operated until May 31, 2001 but was discontinued due to poor ridership. Other Thruway Bus Service continues to operate in similar time periods between Seattle and Vancouver but does not connect with trains at Bellingham.

In early 2008, WSDOT asked Amtrak to extend the Bellingham, WA, train service to Vancouver, BC. Amtrak prepared plans and financial estimates to implement the service. It hired and trained the required additional staff and was fully prepared for inauguration in mid-August 2008. Due to a requirement by the Canadian Border Services Agency for a payment of \$1500.00 per day to process passengers from the second train, however, the service was not implemented. That cost would have added more than \$500,000 per year to the projected operating deficit. The State of Washington was not able to pay that added cost. That impasse has now been resolved through March 2010.

Ridership on the entire Cascades Corridor service was 94,000 in Fiscal Year 1993 and increased to more than 774,000 in Fiscal Year 2008. Included in that was ridership to and from Vancouver of more than 66,000 in Fiscal Year 2008.

### Cascades Corridor

The Pacific Northwest Cascades Corridor as designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation extends 464 miles from Vancouver, B.C. to Eugene, OR. Fourteen

intermediate communities are served daily by as many as five trains operated in each direction. One of these trains is Amtrak's *Coast Starlight* which travels between Seattle and Los Angeles. The largest intermediate cities served are Seattle, WA, and Portland, OR. Other stations served are: Albany, OR, Salem, OR, Oregon City, OR, Vancouver, WA, Kelso, WA, Centralia, WA, Olympia, WA, Tacoma, WA, Tukwila, WA, Edmonds, WA, Everett, WA, Mt. Vernon, WA, and Bellingham, WA. Service to Stanwood, WA, will begin in the fall of 2009.

While the general route is an excellent candidate for development into a high-speed corridor, sections of the current right of way are not configured for speed. Much of the railroad between Seattle, WA, and Vancouver, BC, was built on a "shelf" carved out of a mountainside adjacent to Puget Sound. Consequently, the railroad follows the profile of the shoreline where the mountains meet the water resulting in almost continual curvature. The route is also characterized by several movable bridges (i.e., drawbridges) with severe speed restrictions. Transit through the Vancouver Metropolitan Area and into Pacific Central Station is slow.

Most of the route, however, is characterized by beautiful scenery. Even if consistent true high-speed service cannot be achieved in the near future, the online population, tourist attractions, scenic views, greater frequency of service and reliable moderate trip time improvement would probably improve commercial viability.

Future incremental right of way development might take the form of speed increases perhaps on dedicated segments of passenger high speed track where the right of way would be tangent. It could also include replacement of movable bridges with high level fixed spans not requiring speed restrictions. Significant new investment would be essential.

#### Train Schedules – Current, Proposed Olympics, and Potential Long Term

Beginning in early August, service between Seattle and Vancouver now includes two daily round trips through March 2010. The first is the long standing daylight round trip that departs Seattle at 7:40 AM and arrives in Vancouver at 11:35 AM. This train makes intermediate stops at Edmonds, Everett, Mount Vernon and Bellingham. Service to Stanwood will be added in the fall of 2009. The return service departs Vancouver at 5:45 PM and arrives in Seattle at 10:05 PM, making the same intermediate stops. The second round trip, initiated in early August, departs Portland at 2:50 PM, Seattle at 6:50 PM and arrives in Vancouver at 10:45 PM. It departs Vancouver at 6:40 AM with arrivals at Seattle and Portland at 11:00 AM and 2:55 PM respectively. The current timetable follows.

Vancouver BC – Seattle, WA – Portland, OR  
DAILY SCHEDULES

Effective August 2009

	TRAIN	TRAIN	TRAIN	TRAIN			TRAIN	TRAIN	TRAIN	TRAIN
	501	513	507	517			506	516	508	510
	DAILY	DAILY	DAILY	DAILY			DAILY	DAILY	DAILY	DAILY
DP		6:40 A		5:45 P	VANCOUVER, BC	AR		10:45 P		11:35 A
		8:35 A		7:40 P	BELLINGHAM, WA			8:53 P		9:44 A
		9:05 A		8:12 P	MOUNT VERNON			8:24 P		9:13 A
		9:57 A		8:54 P	EVERETT			7:42 P		8:31 A
		10:22 A		9:19 P	EDMONDS			7:17 P		8:07 A
AR		11:00 A		10:05 P	SEATTLE	DP		6:50 P		7:40 A
DP	7:30 A	11:25 A	2:20 P		SEATTLE	AR	3:55 P	6:20 P	9:45 P	
	7:45 A	11:40 A	2:35 P		TUKWILA		3:11 P	5:46 P	9:11 P	
	8:15 A	12:10 P	3:05 P		TACOMA		2:41 P	5:16 P	8:41 P	
	8:54 A	12:49 P	3:44 P		OLYMPIA-LACEY		2:03 P	4:38 P	8:03 P	
	9:16 A	1:08 P	4:03 P		CENTRALIA		1:42 P	4:17 P	7:42 P	
	9:54 A	1:49 P	4:44 P		KELSO-LONGVIEW		1:03 P	3:38 P	7:03 P	
	10:29 A	2:24 P	5:19 P		VANCOUVER, WA		12:30 P	3:05 P	6:30 P	
AR	11:00 A	2:55 P	5:50 P		PORTLAND, OR	DP	12:15 P	2:50 P	6:15 P	

Footnote: Trains 513 and 517 depart Vancouver, BC 15 minutes after the published times to ensure adequate inspection times.

During the period of the Olympics, beginning in early February 1 and concluding in late March, Amtrak recommends making only one change to this schedule. That revision would be to move the departure of evening southbound Train 517 to depart Vancouver two hours later at 7:45 PM instead of 5:45 PM. The later departure would allow passengers to attend Olympic events later than would be possible if the current schedule continued to operate. The proposed detailed Olympics Service Timetable follows.

## DAILY SCHEDULES

### Effective During 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games

	TRAIN	TRAIN	TRAIN	TRAIN			TRAIN	TRAIN	TRAIN	TRAIN
	501	513	507	517			506	516	508	510
	DAILY	DAILY	DAILY	DAILY			DAILY	DAILY	DAILY	DAILY
DP		6:40 A		7:45 P	VANCOUVER, BC	AR		10:45 P		11:35 A
		8:35 A		9:40 P	BELLINGHAM, WA			8:53 P		9:44 A
		9:05 A		10:12 P	MOUNT VERNON			8:24 P		9:13 A
		9:57 A		10:54 P	EVERETT			7:42 P		8:31 A
		10:22 A		11:19 P	EDMONDS			7:17 P		8:07 A
AR		11:00 A		12:05 A	SEATTLE	DP		6:50 P		7:40 A
DP	7:30 A	11:25 A	2:20 P		SEATTLE	AR	3:55 P	6:20 P	9:45 P	
	7:45 A	11:40 A	2:35 P		TUKWILA		3:11 P	5:46 P	9:11 P	
	8:15 A	12:10 P	3:05 P		TACOMA		2:41 P	5:16 P	8:41 P	
	8:54 A	12:49 P	3:44 P		OLYMPIA-LACEY		2:03 P	4:38 P	8:03 P	
	9:16 A	1:08 P	4:03 P		CENTRALIA		1:42 P	4:17 P	7:42 P	
	9:54 A	1:49 P	4:44 P		KELSO-LONGVIEW		1:03 P	3:38 P	7:03 P	
	10:29 A	2:24 P	5:19 P		VANCOUVER, WA		12:30 P	3:05 P	6:30 P	
AR	11:00 A	2:55 P	5:50 P		PORTLAND, OR	DP	12:15 P	2:50 P	6:15 P	

Footnote: Trains 513 and 517 depart Vancouver, BC 15 minutes after the published times to ensure adequate inspection times.

Finally, if the trial service to be operated through March 2010 proves to be successful and the Canadian Border Services Agency agrees to continue the services that it will provide during the trial period on a permanent basis, the timetable will revert to the one being operated as of now. Market studies have shown that ridership and revenue would be significantly better on an annual basis if these trains operate in these normal time slots rather than Olympic time slots except during the period of the Games.

### Equipment utilization and maintenance

In 1999, Amtrak and WSDOT purchased four Talgo custom built tilt trains. In 2003, WSDOT purchased another set bringing the Amtrak and WSDOT total to five. Ordinarily these five train sets are used to operate the entire Amtrak *Cascades* Corridor service between Eugene OR and Vancouver BC. One set is typically deployed on the daily daylight round trip of Train 510 and Train 517 between Seattle and Vancouver.

The other four sets cover all other services and ordinarily operate on a four day cycle of consecutive trains before repeating the pattern. This pattern includes the other round trip to and from Vancouver with the late evening arrival from and early morning departure to Seattle and Portland.

All car maintenance other than simple turnaround servicing and daily inspection is done in Seattle by the train manufacturer, Talgo, using Amtrak's skilled workforce. All equipment must periodically cycle in and out of the Seattle maintenance facility for more significant levels of maintenance. Talgo's procedures address all maintenance requirements in rotation so that no train set is out of service except during overhaul.

Recently, due to such an ongoing overhaul program, the Vancouver trains were operated with *Superliner* equipment including a locomotive, baggage coach, diner-lounge and coach. The recently added service to and from Vancouver did not require any additional equipment. Its former Bellingham turnaround point was merely moved to Vancouver. Related cleaning and minor maintenance work performed at Bellingham overnight was likewise moved to Vancouver to be performed during the layover.

### Ridership and Revenue

Ridership and revenue forecasts prepared for Amtrak indicate that the second daily round trip, if operated on a year-round basis, will add 60,000 riders and \$2,300,000 in revenue compared to current service. A further increment of 10,000 riders and \$380,000 in revenue are expected during the period of the Olympics due to the temporarily revised schedule to accommodate those attending the events. The complete ridership and revenue forecast is included as Appendix A.

### Forecasted financial results – Olympics and Annualized Normal Service

As shown in the table below, either service operated just during the period of the Olympics or year-round service (in a typical year), if added incrementally to the existing *Cascades* Corridor service, would substantially increase revenue and recover about two-thirds of related operating expenses from fare box revenues. Service during the Olympics would bring in \$400,000 in additional revenue and incur operating costs of approximately \$600,000 and have a resulting deficit of \$200,000. Annual service in a normal time period would bring in added revenues of \$2.3 million, incur expenses of \$3.3 million and have a resulting loss of about \$1.0 million.

An important distinction between these two time periods is that police and security costs would be higher during the Olympics due to the added cost of redeploying staff from other locations to address a potentially higher threat level. In particular this would include travel and away from home expenses of meals and hotels.

## Summary of Financial Results

	Olympic Period	Annual
<b>Riders</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>60,000</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>\$0.4 million</b>	<b>\$2.3 million</b>
<b>Direct and Shared Costs</b>		
Transportation	\$0.1 million	\$0.7 million
On-Board Service	\$0.1 million	\$0.8 million
Maintenance of Equipment	\$0.1 million	\$0.4 million
Stations	\$0.1 million	\$0.7 million
RSO, Marketing & Sales	\$0.1 million	\$0.3 million
Police/Environmental and Safety	\$73,000 <sup>(1)</sup>	\$16,000
Other	\$50,000	\$0.3 million
<b>Total Direct and Shared Costs</b>	<b>\$0.6 million</b>	<b>\$3.3 million</b>
<b>Net Impact</b>	<b>-\$0.2 million</b>	<b>-\$1.0 million</b>

1. Olympic estimate includes \$70,000 for travel and lodging for security team.
2. The complete P&L is included as Appendix B.

### Capital Investments

In addition to the initial purchase of train sets by Amtrak and WSDOT, capital investments have been made (primarily funded by WSDOT) to the infrastructure between Vancouver BC and Edmonds, WA. A brief summary is shown below:

**Stations:** Vancouver, BC - Facility security improvements were completed for the reintroduction of rail service in May 1995. These improvements allow for the inspection of passengers at the Pacific Central Station by Canadian Customs and Immigration agencies as well as by the USCBP immigration personnel.

Bellingham, WA – A renovated station located in Fairhaven section was opened in 1995.

Mt Vernon, WA – The former facility located at College Street was abandoned and replaced by the newly constructed Skagit Transportation Center in 2004.

Everett, WA – The former station at Bond Street was abandoned and replaced by the newly constructed Everett Station in 2002.

Stanwood, WA – Service will begin at a newly constructed station during the fall of 2009

Investments have also been made in the BNSF right of way between Vancouver, BC, and Edmonds, WA, to increase capacity and advance the state of good repair. These improvements include the lengthening of passing sidings along this single track rail line at Mt. Vernon, WA, and Colebrook, BC. In addition, improved rail was installed in the vicinity of Chuckanut, WA.

#### Continued permanent service

Amtrak is prepared to operate two round trips per day to and from Vancouver, BC, on a permanent basis following the Olympic and Paralympics Games. For this to be realized, the Canadian government will need to find the service during the trial period through March 2010 to be worth continued CBSA support at no cost to Amtrak or WSDOT. Similarly, WSDOT will need to provide continued financial support as it has consistently done for many years for the entire Amtrak *Cascades* service. It would be helpful for Amtrak to know those respective government decisions one month prior to March 31, 2010 since planned employee utilization and job postings will hinge on whether the second round trip will continue beyond that date.

## **Part 2 - Security Recommendations to the Department of Homeland Security**

### Methodology

To prepare a recommendation for more efficient processing of rail passengers traveling across the international border during the 2010 Olympics (and perhaps thereafter), Amtrak representatives from the Amtrak Police and Security Department and Amtrak's Pacific Division conducted an on-site survey and a series of discussions with U.S. and Canadian officials in May. A follow up conference took place in Blaine, WA, on June 3, 2009. Amtrak representatives discussed potential approaches for modifying the current process with the Canada Border Services Agency, the U.S. Transportation Security Administration, and United States Customs and Border Protection. The concerns of those agencies are reflected in this recommendation.

### Customs and Immigration Processes Northbound into Vancouver, Canada

Documentation Check by Amtrak Employees:

An Amtrak Operations Supervisor assisted by a Conductor examines the documentation of passengers traveling across the border prior to boarding northbound trains. Amtrak Conductors have also been trained to perform documentation checks alone in the absence of an Operations Supervisor.

When a ticket is presented prior to boarding, the Operations Supervisor requires the passenger to identify the type of documentation he/she will use for international travel. Acceptable documentation is defined as documentation that is Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) compliant. The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative requires a passport, passport card or an enhanced driver's license for adults to enter the United States. A certified copy of a birth certificate and government issued photo identification is no longer sufficient for adults traveling to the United States. While WHTI compliance is not currently a requirement for Canadian entry, it is for U.S. re-entry. Accordingly, a northbound check for WHTI compliance is necessary. In this process, the Operations Supervisor (or conductor) checks the country of origin against the list issued by the Canadian government for non-entry or visa requirements.<sup>1</sup> The Operations Supervisor has reference copies of what the documentation should look like, and what is required.

Documents are checked carefully to verify that they are:

- Genuine and unaltered
- Valid (not expired)
- Being used by the rightful holder (the photograph and personal details are those of the person in front of the Amtrak employee.)

Amtrak Operations Supervisors use specific steps to examine ID (including passport and visa). These steps include checking for authenticity and matching the biographical

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/ready\\_set\\_go/land\\_travel/](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/ready_set_go/land_travel/)

data and photo to the person presenting the documentation. All documents are examined in the presence of the holder. Passenger names on Amtrak tickets should match the names appearing on WHTI-compliant documentation. Such linkage will facilitate passenger review by Canadian and U.S. authorities, and will bring Amtrak into compliance with other modes of travel.

Minor children are subject to the following requirements:

U.S. and Canadian children under the age of 16 will still be able to present the original or a copy of their birth certificates or other proof of citizenship such as a naturalization certificate or citizenship card.

Groups of U.S. and Canadian children ages 16 through 18 traveling with a school or religious group, social organization, or sports team, will be able to enter under adult supervision with original or copies of their birth certificates or other proof of U.S. citizenship.

If any question arises about proper documentation, Amtrak's Operations Supervisor contacts Canadian or U.S. agencies regarding country of origin and allowable travel. All Operations Supervisors carry a copy of Canada's "Guide for Transporters" that outlines the specific obligation Amtrak has for transporting passengers into Canada.

Passenger Information Transmittal Process:

The United States and Canada both require advance manifests for rail passengers entering their territories in order to screen for non-admissible persons. Amtrak uses two methods to transmit passenger manifest information – Fax and Arrow command. (Arrow is Amtrak's reservation system.)

Amtrak set up the Arrow command in response to a USCBP request for a document they can manipulate in either a spreadsheet or data base format. The Arrow command is only accessible for U.S. agencies since the request was from them. Amtrak sends manifest information to Canadian authorities by fax only.

Amtrak sends the information to both U.S. and Canadian authorities to numbers provided by respective US and Canadian agencies. For Trains 510 and 517, the Seattle Crew Base sends daily passenger information at the following times:

- 6:45 AM - via fax to CBSA and USCBP-provided fax numbers.
- 7:00 – 8:00 AM - using the Arrow commands to USCBP only.
- 9:45 – 10:00 AM - via fax. This is sent after train 510 departs Bellingham and is the only information transmittal that is subject to a time change if the train is delayed.
- For Trains 516 and 513, Amtrak, CBSA, and USCBP have a separate schedule for transmittal.

Each transmittal uses the latest updated passenger and crew information from Arrow and may be different from the previous transmittal. Each crew member assigned to the

train is listed under an individual and permanent reservation that appears on the manifest. Information for crew is equivalent to that required by CBSA and USCBP for passengers.

The fax transmittals include:

- General Declaration (GenDec)
- Crew Lists
- Projected daily passenger counts one week in advance. (Sent on Sunday and Thursday to help CBSA and USCBP determine required staffing levels.)
- Border Crossing Name List that is an Arrow Command. This includes full name last/first; Passenger Name Record (PNR); fare class; date of birth; citizenship; gender; and form of ID that will be used to cross the border (for example, BC = Birth Certificate, PP = Passport, PR = Legal Permanent Resident Card, MO = Military Orders); Yes/No field that shows whether the document number for the ID they have said they will be using is included in their PNR.

The facsimile transmitted documents are stapled and stored for one year.

All parties should be prepared to adopt other means of passenger information transmittal, as technological advances permit.

#### Customs Declarations and Canadian Immigration

The Amtrak Operations Supervisor distributes customs declaration forms prior to arrival at Vancouver, BC. Upon disembarking in Vancouver, passengers remain in a restricted admittance area where Canada Border Services Agency officers perform Canadian immigration and customs duties. Individuals requiring additional processing move to an adjoining space allocated within this secured area. Passengers with checked baggage reclaim their items train-side, and bring them into the immigration and customs inspection area.

The following photographs show the outdoor fenced restricted waiting area (left photo) that precedes entry into the primary processing location shown on the right.



### Amtrak Train Consist Security at Vancouver

Following the station stop in Bellingham, WA, Amtrak *Cascades* trains, make no intermediate stops until arriving at final destination, Vancouver's Pacific Central Station. This station also hosts VIA Rail Canada intercity trains, intercity and local buses, and Amtrak's *Thruway* buses. The Vancouver station track reserved for Amtrak *Cascades* use is the station's southernmost, and is physically separated and isolated from other tracks and access roads by a chain link security fence. This fence has a gate that is closed behind the arriving train after it stops to begin passenger disembarkation. This fenced and gated area is designed to contain passengers prior to CBSA processing and to prevent unauthorized access to the equipment during its layover. It also prevents the passing of documents and contraband from the gated track area to the open non-gated area. All servicing is performed while the train is enclosed within the isolation area; Amtrak *Cascades* are normally push-pull Talgo, which simplifies endpoint servicing. Non push-pull Superliner equipment is substituted when Talgo equipment is not available. The following two photographs show the fenced and gates area where the *Cascades* trains arrive and depart. Both photos are shown facing the station.



## Northbound Recommendations

Amtrak finds that the current processes for entry into Canada require no significant changes other than physical improvements to the Vancouver facility already under development. These are addressed later (see Required Security Site Improvements). Amtrak should, however, review its ticketing procedure to cross reference traveler documentation (passport) name with the name appearing on the Amtrak rail ticket.

## Customs and Immigration Processes Southbound into the United States

### Documentation Check by Amtrak Employees

The Amtrak Operations Supervisor greets each passenger at the check-in booth at the Vancouver Station. The Operations Supervisor conducts an examination of the passenger's documents. All documents are examined in the presence of the holder.

The Amtrak examination of documents at the Vancouver station is cursory because USCBP officers immediately thereafter perform a thorough and final immigration screening prior to a passenger boarding the train in the fenced secure area at Vancouver station. USCBP officers use the same procedures and technologies that they would employ at other U.S. ports of entry.

Minor children are subject to the same WHTI-compliant travel document requirements as adults. Additionally, if a child under the age of 18 is traveling alone, or with person(s) other than both parents, they should be in possession of a letter from the parents/legal guardian containing:

- Authorization for the child to travel with another person and to be outside the country;
- The name and telephone number of the parents/guardian; and
- The destination and length of stay in either Canada or U.S.

Because USCBP officers do not carry weapons in Canada, and because of the potential for individual liability under Sections 12 and 36 of Canada's Pre-clearance Act of 1999, Amtrak coordinates with the Vancouver Police Department to provide coverage for the USCBP during the southbound immigration process.

### Passenger Information Transmittal Process to USCBP

The process is the same as for northbound trains.

## Customs Declarations and U.S. Immigration

USCBP immigration officers clear departing southbound passengers at Pacific Central Station. Immediately following immigration processing, passengers place their bags through an x-ray machine monitored by Amtrak contract security personnel. VIA staff then take all checked baggage to the train's baggage car. The photograph following shows the x-ray machine.



After the train departs, Operations Supervisors and / or Conductors distribute customs declarations forms. Upon crossing the U.S. Border at Blaine, WA, the train stops to board USCBP officers who conduct Customs and Agricultural inspection activities. Occasionally, a passenger requiring more intensive questioning is removed from the train and transported to the USCBP facility at the Peace Arch highway border crossing.

When USCBP releases the train at Blaine, WA, all U.S. immigration and customs activities are complete. The average delay at the border stop is 15 minutes.

## Southbound Recommendations

Amtrak recommends that the current processes for entry into the United States be modified to include U.S. customs as well as immigration at Vancouver's Pacific Central Station. This would eliminate the need to stop at Blaine, WA. USCBP officials interviewed expressed several concerns about implementing this change:

- Additional USCBP personnel may be required. USCBP estimates that it will require a headcount increase of 15 personnel to perform all immigration and customs functions in Vancouver Pacific Central Station,
- Existing facilities in Vancouver are inadequate and require upgrade,
- Canadian law (Pre-clearance Act of 1999) does not specifically address pre-clearance activities at rail and sea ports of entry, and does not directly afford sufficient indemnity protection for USCBP officials, and

- A mechanism must be developed to ensure the sterility and security of the southbound train. This mechanism must be able to definitively prevent the introduction of any passengers and/or goods onto the train and must be readily and easily audited by USCBP. Due to the fact that the southbound train frequently travels at low speeds or comes to a full stop in Canada, USCBP must have assurances that the train retains its sterile and secure status from the point of pre-clearance until its arrival into the United States. USCBP reserves the right at any time to re-inspect any pre-cleared conveyance at a domestic U.S. port of entry.

#### Required Security Site Improvements at Pacific Central Station

Based upon discussions with USCBP personnel, the following site improvements at Vancouver are identified as requirements for implementing the recommendations in this report. All facility renovations must be made in consultation with the USCBP and CBSA technical design standards. The estimated costs for these improvements, including a new x-ray machine, are approximately \$526,500.

Structural changes include (see the architectural drawing in Appendix C):

##### 1. Front office area

- Build new storage and server rooms
- Build new service counter
- Replace existing doors to Main Hall with new security hardware and glass
- Install new flooring and refinish existing terrazzo vinyl tiles
- Repair wall and ceiling tile (on-going now)
- Install emergency generator power

##### 2. Primary screening area

- Redesign layout/arrangement of existing offices; redesign four workstations
- Replace ceiling tiles (on-going now)

##### 3. Secondary screening area

- Redesign floor layout
- Build two new screening stations with privacy dividers
- Relocate and upgrade x-ray machine
- Build detainee wet cell
- Repaint walls and replace ceiling tiles (on-going now)
- Update signage

#### Proposed Amendment to Canadian Pre-clearance Act of June 17, 1999

Canada has allowed U.S. Federal Inspection Services to operate air passenger pre-clearance in Canada since the 1950s. "Pre-clearance" is the processing by U.S. federal

inspection agencies of travelers and goods that are beginning their journey in Canada and seeking entry into the United States.

These arrangements were formalized by the 1974 *Air Transport Pre-clearance Agreement between Canada and the United States of America*. Under that agreement, air pre-clearance services now process approximately 11.5 million passengers annually at the following Canadian airports: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Halifax, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal (Dorval). Since that agreement was signed, changes have been made to Canadian law; specifically the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Part I of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and consequently part of the Constitution of Canada) that has granted Canadians new individual rights. At the same time, border processing has evolved as a result of the rapid increase in border crossings and the adoption of new technology.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection can examine and seize goods, administer certain monetary penalties and determine the admissibility of travelers who wish to travel to the U.S. The U.S. laws may be administered only in designated pre-clearance areas and are subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and relevant Canadian laws. No provision of American law that would be considered criminal under Canadian law can be applied in Canada; criminal matters are dealt with by Canadian authorities under Canadian law.

In December 1998, Bill S-22, the Pre-clearance Act, was introduced in the Canadian Senate by the Hon. Sharon Carstairs, the Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate. The bill provides U.S. Federal Inspection Services with the appropriate statutory authority to determine, **at designated airport areas** in Canada, what people and goods would be allowed entry into the United States. Bill S-22 took effect in 2001.

The Pre-clearance Act of 1999 is the Canadian legislative tool that gives force of law to the substantive elements of the Canada-U.S. Agreement on Pre-clearance at Canadian airports. The Canada-U.S. Pre-clearance Agreement is the document that governs USCBP Officers' authority and protections at air pre-clearance locations in Canada. The Canada-U.S. Pre-clearance Agreement does not pertain to rail or sea operations. Any change to the Pre-clearance Act of 1999 requires parliamentary action according to Canadian law. Any change to the Canada-U.S. Pre-clearance Agreement would require a new bi-lateral agreement between both countries.

According to the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency, expansion of pre-clearance operations would also require additional staffing, facilities, equipment, security modifications and policies. Some of these requirements are detailed below.

USCBP has established certain guidelines which must be met in order to expand Pre-clearance at existing or new ports of entry (POE):

### *Law Enforcement Authorities*

- The host government must provide full law enforcement authorities to USCBP officers. These authorities must be equivalent to those enjoyed by USCBP officers functioning at facilities within the United States, including:
  - **Search** – includes the authority to search all persons and their personal effects prior to entry into the United States. The authority encompasses a progressive personal search authority from initial pat down up to and including body cavity searches. The authority also includes the examination of personal effects and/or baggage of passengers seeking entry in the United States, as well as those individuals working in the USCBP processing area who may be suspected of engaging in illegal activities. Commercial aircraft that have been pre-cleared for departure into the United States will also be subject to search.
  - **Seizure** – Goods and/or contraband, destined for the United States through any proposed Pre-clearance facility, found to be in violation of U.S. law, will be subject to seizure by USCBP officers. Items to include: fraudulent passports, undeclared merchandise, prohibited/restricted merchandise, undeclared currency in excess of U.S. reporting requirements, etc. In conjunction with seizure authority, USCBP officers must also have the authority to assess and collect appropriate fees, duties, taxes, and penalties.
  - **Arrest** – the authority to arrest individuals found in violation of U.S. laws. Examples include: narcotics smuggling, alien smuggling, terrorist activity, NCIC Wanted Persons.
  - **Detention** – Authority to detain individuals who are in violation of Inspecting Party (U.S.) laws.
  - **Weapons Carry** – USCBP officers will require 24-hour weapons carry to ensure officer safety at the worksite or on-site support from Canadian law enforcement officials to provide worksite safety in lieu of weapons carry authority.

### *Bi-Lateral Agreement Negotiations*

- The foreign government must submit a Diplomatic Note to the Department of State (DoS) formally requesting Pre-clearance operations.
- USCBP must then obtain DoS authorization to negotiate and conclude any bilateral agreement with the foreign government.
- The bilateral agreement will address issues such as officer authorities, host nation responsibilities, privileges and immunities granted to USCBP personnel, physical security standards, training, facilities, future amendments to the agreement, etc.
- The negotiation and conclusion of a bilateral agreement is typically a lengthy process.

### *Department of State (DoS) Requirements*

- The Government of Canada must meet DoS standards in providing sufficient quality health care practitioners and facilities, safe and acceptable housing, and

educational facilities with curriculums meeting U.S. standards for USCBP employees and their dependents.

#### *Workload Requirements*

- A minimum yearly workload of 350,000 to 400,000 passengers and crew must be demonstrated before a country will be considered for Pre-clearance operations.

#### *Facility Requirements*

- The foreign government must provide a passenger processing facility for USCBP that meets USCBP's Airport Technical Design Standards (August 2006). Airport passenger security screening operations must be designed to screen passengers and baggage before they enter the USCBP area. These screening services must meet the standards set forth by the Transportation Security Administration
- In addition, the foreign government must ensure that local law enforcement is present to protect USCBP employees and secure the facility. (Note: Amtrak contracts with the Vancouver Police Department to perform this function at Pacific Central Station.)

#### Required Legislative Actions / Recommendations

The Canadian Pre-clearance Act of 1999 and the bi-national Pre-clearance Agreement between the government of Canada and the government of the United States provide policy, precedence, authority, and some protections for USCBP officers performing their duties at airports in Canada. Neither provides these same accommodations for USCBP officers performing the same duties at rail and sea ports. The logical goal would be to establish provisions for rail and sea port pre-clearance that parallel those currently in force for airports. Dialogue with the Canadian government concerning amendment of Section 7 of the 1999 Pre-clearance Act and the bi-national Pre-clearance Agreement may address this issue; however, there are a series of considerations to be taken in implementing such amendments. Such an undertaking has potential long term benefits for rail travel along the entire Canadian-U.S. border.

**Amtrak believes that adoption of the security recommendations in this report will satisfy the Congressional intent to expedite the movement of rail passengers across the Canadian-U.S. border to and from Vancouver, BC.** It will also enhance the ability to detect and prevent contraband trafficking across the border. These recommendations require only a modest cost in infrastructure improvements to Vancouver's Pacific Central Station. Staffing issues, however, may challenge USCBP's ability to fulfill the recommendations for southbound passenger trains and may require a separate dialogue between Congress and the Department of Homeland Security. Extension of the Canadian Pre-clearance Act and the Canadian-U.S. Pre-clearance Agreement provisions to specified rail and sea points of entry and exit has the potential for greater long term impact. Such extension could facilitate pre-clearance, hence passenger convenience, at other existing and potential rail crossing venues along the entire Canadian-U.S. border. Congressional authorization and appropriation of funds to provide for improvements at Vancouver Pacific Central Station will facilitate

implementation of the recommendations in this report. As noted above, however, any change to the Pre-clearance Act of 1999 requires Parliamentary action according to Canadian law. Any change to the Canada-U.S. Pre-clearance Agreement would require a new bi-lateral agreement between both countries.

## Next Steps

If Congress desires implementation of the improved border service as outlined above, it should direct Amtrak and the Department of Homeland Security to begin preparations:

- Congress should provide directly or through DHS \$526,500 for physical facility improvements in Vancouver Pacific Central Station's customs and immigration area;
- The Department of Homeland Security should request approval from Congress for staffing needed for consolidated pre-clearance processing for rail travelers;
- The Department of State should engage with the Government of Canada regarding the extension to (at least) Pacific Central Station of the provisions of the Canadian Pre-Clearance Act and the Canadian – U.S. Pre-clearance Agreement that now apply only at selected airports;
- Once staffing and facility needs are met, the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Customs and Border Protection should modify pre-clearance processes for rail border crossings between Vancouver, BC, and Seattle;
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection may need to redeploy or hire additional staff to perform the combined and expanded work in Pacific Central Station;
- Amtrak must develop and implement train operating practices that insure all trains departing Vancouver remained sealed until crossing the international border at Blaine, WA. This must be done in a way that can be readily audited by USCBP; and
- Amtrak must develop and implement a process to insure that the names on tickets issued match the names on passports and other WHTI compliant identification.

**APPENDICES:**

**A. Ridership and Revenue Forecast**

**B. Complete Profit and Loss Estimate**

**C. Customs and Immigration Facility Drawings**

## Appendix A

### Forecast Results for Proposed Cascades Schedule with 2nd round trip extended to Vancouver, BC (prepared 5/11/09)

Route	FY09 Baseline*			New Schedule w/ 2nd train extended to Vancouver** plus Olympic impacts**					
	Ridership	Annual Totals		Ridership	Annual Totals		Ridership	Annual Increment	
		Ticket Revenue	Passenger Miles		Ticket Revenue	Passenger Miles		Ticket Revenue	Passenger Miles
Cascades	719,100	\$19,687,000	111,430,000	779,600	\$21,744,000	124,080,000	60,500	\$2,057,000	12,650,000
Coast Starlight	469,000	\$34,817,000	244,040,000	468,700	\$34,810,000	244,000,000	(300)	(\$7,000)	(40,000)
TOTAL	1,188,100	\$54,504,000	355,470,000	1,248,300	\$56,554,000	368,080,000	60,200	\$2,050,000	12,610,000

Route	New Schedule w/ 2nd train extended to Vancouver** plus Olympic impacts**					
	Increment for Oct-Jan & Apr-Sep			Increment for Feb-Mar****		
	Ridership	Ticket Revenue	Passenger Miles	Ridership	Ticket Revenue	Passenger Miles
Cascades	50,720	\$1,720,400	10,571,000	9,780	\$336,600	2,079,000
Coast Starlight	(260)	(\$6,000)	(34,000)	(40)	(\$1,000)	(6,000)
TOTAL	50,460	\$1,714,400	10,537,000	9,740	\$335,600	2,073,000

These forecasts are based solely upon information available to AECOM Consult as of 5/11/09.

These forecasts are provided for the sole use of Amtrak. They are not intended for disclosure in a financial offering statement.

**Notes:**

\* FY09 Estimate (prepared 3/13/09) and current timetable

\*\* Proposed new schedules (provided by Amtrak 5/6/08) extending 513 & 516 to Vancouver, BC and, for March & February, shifting existing 517 two hours later

\*\*\*Estimated incremental demand associated with Winter Olympics in February 2010 (based on local expectations that 1-5 traffic will be at peak summer level)

\*\*\*\*Includes Winter Olympics (February 12-28)

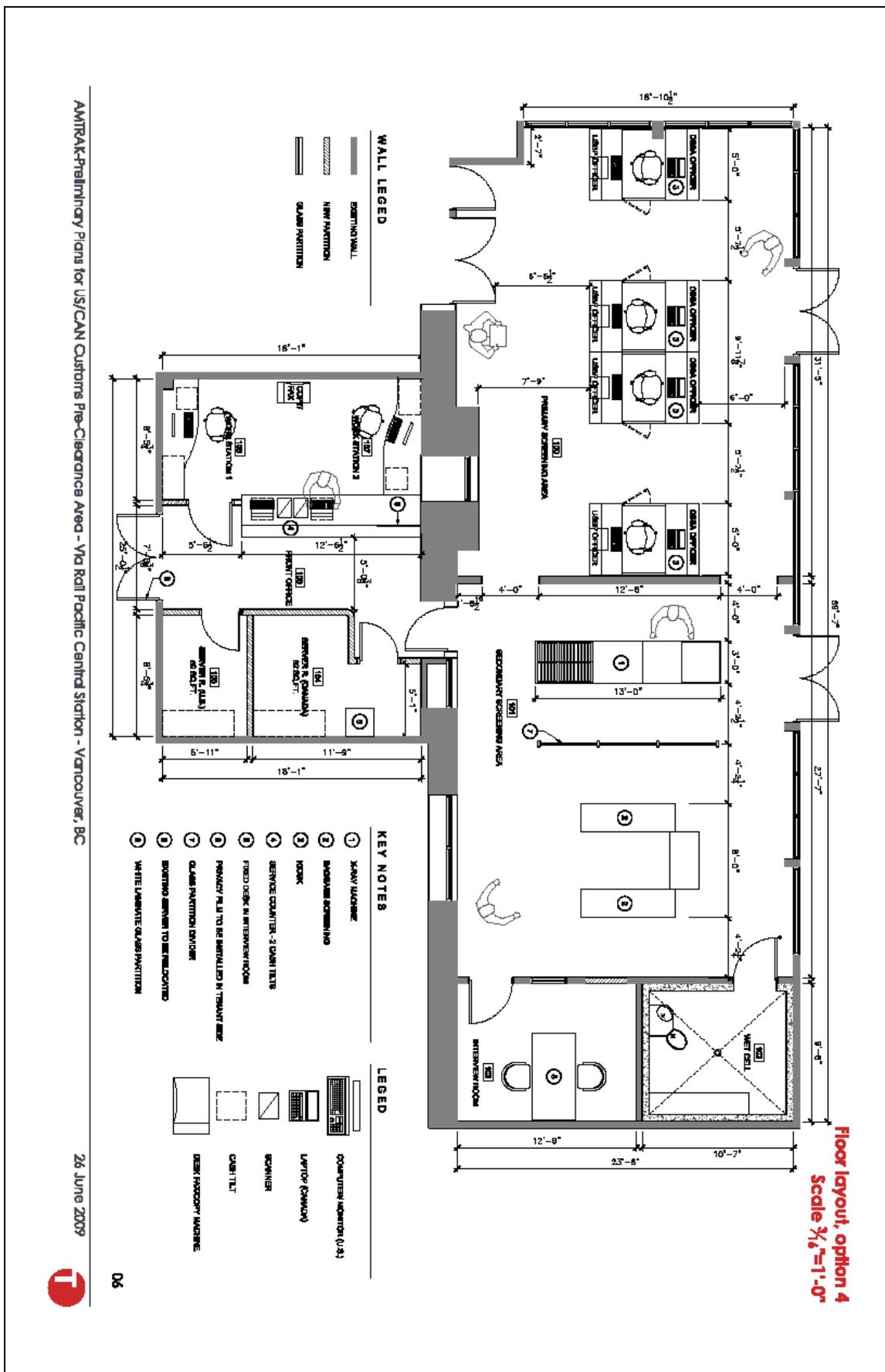
## Appendix B

### Summary Table for Financial Impact of Second Round Trip Extension to Vancouver

	Olympic Period	Annual
<b>Riders</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>60,000</b>
<b>Revenue <sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>\$0.4 million</b>	<b>\$2.3 million</b>
Direct and Shared Costs		
Transportation	\$0.1 million	\$0.7 million
On-Board Service	\$0.1 million	\$0.8 million
Maintenance of Equipment	\$0.1 million	\$0.4 million
Stations	\$0.1 million	\$0.7 million
RSO, Marketing & Sales	\$0.1 million	\$0.3 million
Police/Environmental and Safety	\$73,000 <sup>(1)</sup>	\$16,000
Other	\$50,000	\$0.3 million
<b>Total Direct and Shared Costs</b>	<b>\$0.6 million</b>	<b>\$3.3 million</b>
<b>Net Impact</b>	<b>-\$0.2 million</b>	<b>-\$1.0 million</b>

1) Olympic estimate includes \$70,000 for travel and lodging for security team.

2) Includes both ticket revenue and food and beverage revenue



AMTRAK-Preliminary Plans for US/CAN Customs Pre-Clearance Area - Via Rail Pacific Central Station - Vancouver, BC

26 June 2009



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