



Rail Monthly Update



April 2014 – in review

In this issue:

- **Summer construction season affects train schedules, revenue and operating costs**
- **Sound Transit Board authorizes final agreement with WSDOT**
- **Fleet Management Plan to identify strategies to maximize train equipment**
- **Amtrak Cascades high-speed rail projects update on Tukwila Station**
- **Kelso Martins Bluff-Toteff Road open house reaches out to local residences and businesses**
- **National Train Day event in Seattle May 10, 2014**

Summer construction season affects train schedules, revenue and operating costs

WSDOT expects passenger train delays this summer as crews continue working on \$800 million in federally-funded rail improvement projects. The construction may require train schedule adjustments of 30 minutes or longer. The temporary delays may result in lower revenues and additional operating costs so WSDOT is launching a “pardon our dust” message campaign. When all 20 rail construction projects are complete in 2017, the Amtrak Cascades passenger rail system will feature improved reliability, more round trips between Seattle and Portland, and shorter travel time between Seattle and Portland.

Sound Transit Board authorizes final agreement with WSDOT

The Sound Transit Board approved three rail-related items that help WSDOT’s 2017 commitment to increase capacity, improve on-time performance and reduce Amtrak Cascades travel time between Portland and Seattle. The approved motions/resolution include:

- Authorizing the Sound Transit CEO to negotiate \$765,000 in reimbursement from WSDOT. The costs are for preliminary engineering design of the extended platform at Freighthouse Square, as part of the Tacoma Trestle Track & Signal services for the Point Defiance Bypass project,
- Authorizing the Sound Transit CEO to enter into Point Defiance Bypass project agreements, a service outcome agreement with WSDOT and Amtrak, and construction and maintenance agreement with WSDOT, and
- Approving Sound Transit’s budget for two Point Defiance Bypass actions: review WSDOT and BNSF’s track and signal design, and construction of the track and signals.

Fleet Management Plan to identify strategies to maximize train equipment

In partnership with ODOT, WSDOT is developing a Fleet Management Plan for the Amtrak Cascade fleet. Rail equipment remains expensive, and procurement is a lengthy process. Strategic planning through the Fleet Management Plan will save time and money and maximize the performance of existing equipment to deliver passenger service described in Washington and Oregon state rail plans. A draft report is anticipated in the fall 2014, and a complete plan by spring 2015. The plan is a federal requirement through the ARRA program.

Amtrak Cascades high-speed rail projects update on Tukwila Station

A \$24-million project for a new multi-use train and transit station in Tukwila is close to 75 percent complete. In June 2013, WSDOT and Sound Transit broke ground on the new Tukwila Station, located south of Longacres Way. Current work includes construction of the west side platform and concrete stairs and ramp, and the remaining pedestrian sidewalk. The station, expected to open in late 2014, will serve Amtrak and Sounder trains, plus serve as a transit hub. The project also includes a 390-stall parking lot shared with Sound Transit. The Tukwila Station is part of \$ 800 million in federally-funded passenger rail improvement projects.

Kelso Martins Bluff-Toteff Road open house reaches out to local residences and businesses

Local residents and business owners attended an April open house to learn about the proposed design of the Toteff Road and Hendrickson Drive intersection, located off of I-5 in Kalama. As part of the Kelso Martins Bluff project, the Toteff Siding Extension improves on-time reliability for Amtrak Cascades trains by reducing bottlenecks, congestion and conflicts between passenger and freight train traffic. Railroad improvements include extending four miles of siding track near the south end of Port of Kalama property, and upgrading switch components in the tracks. For the local residents and business owners, safety is improved by eliminating the left turn from Toteff Road to Hendrickson Drive, increasing sight distance on Toteff Road, and reducing time for automobiles to cross the railroad tracks. Environmental review is underway and construction is planned to start in early 2015 and be complete in late 2016.

National Train Day event May 10 in Seattle

National Train Day was May 10, and WSDOT celebrated at King Street Station in Seattle. Hundreds of people stopped by the station to learn more about passenger train service in Washington state. The event included speakers from WSDOT, City of Seattle and Amtrak. WSDOT, Operation Lifesaver, Talgo, All Aboard Washington, and others hosted booths. Seattle's top chef Tom Douglas gave live cooking demonstrations. WSDOT offered a special discount for people to attend the event via Amtrak Cascades. We thank everyone who attended and enjoyed the event.

Archives:

- March 2014 (pdf 30kb)
- February 2014 (pdf 30kb)
- January 2014 (pdf 30kb)

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