

Point Defiance Bypass Project



Revised Pt. Defiance Bypass Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project is to provide more frequent high-speed intercity passenger rail service between Tacoma and Nisqually. This project has been developed in response to deficiencies in the existing rail alignment around Point Defiance. The project needs are to enhance rail service frequency, reliability and efficiency, and to improve safety. The existing alignment is near capacity and is therefore unable to accommodate additional high-speed intercity passenger rail service without substantial improvements. In addition, the existing alignment has physical and operational constraints that adversely affect both passenger and freight train scheduling and reliability.

Specific elements of the project needs include:

Enhanced frequency: Increase Amtrak *Cascades* round-trips from four to six by 2015 in order to meet projected service demands.

Improved reliability: Improve reliability by reducing or eliminating passenger rail service interruptions caused by natural factors (e.g., landslides) or operational limitations (e.g., drawbridge closures).

Enhanced efficiency: Enhance the efficient movement of people by reducing the amount of time trains spend on sidings to yield to freight movements.

Improved safety: At-grade crossings will be constructed with improved safety features including wayside horns, median barriers, pre-signals, and traffic signal improvements