Welcome!

At today's meeting, you will have the opportunity to:

- Learn about the proposed projects, including the benefits and timeline
- Provide comments on the proposed projects
- Ask questions of project staff
- Learn how the environmental effects were assessed by FRA and WSDOT

Kelso Martin's Bluff Improvement Projects

September 2014

Washington State Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Amtrak CASCADES®

We welcome your input!

Public engagement is an important part of the environmental review process. Your comments on the key issues and effects of the project are appreciated.

Comments on the EA are welcome through **September 27, 2014**. FRA will consider all comments on the KMB Passenger Rail Improvement Projects. A decision document on the EA is anticipated in January 2015.

How to provide comments:

- Speak to the court stenographer in attendance at this meeting, who will record your comments for the public record.
- Fill out a comment form tonight at the hearing and drop it in a comment box or email/mail your comments from home.
- **Email:** *rail@wsdot.wa.gov* with “KMB EA comment” in the subject line
- **Mail** written comments to:

  WSDOT Rail Division Attn: Document Control
  KMB EA comments
  PO Box 47407, Olympia, WA 98504-7407

Kelso Martin’s Bluff Improvement Projects

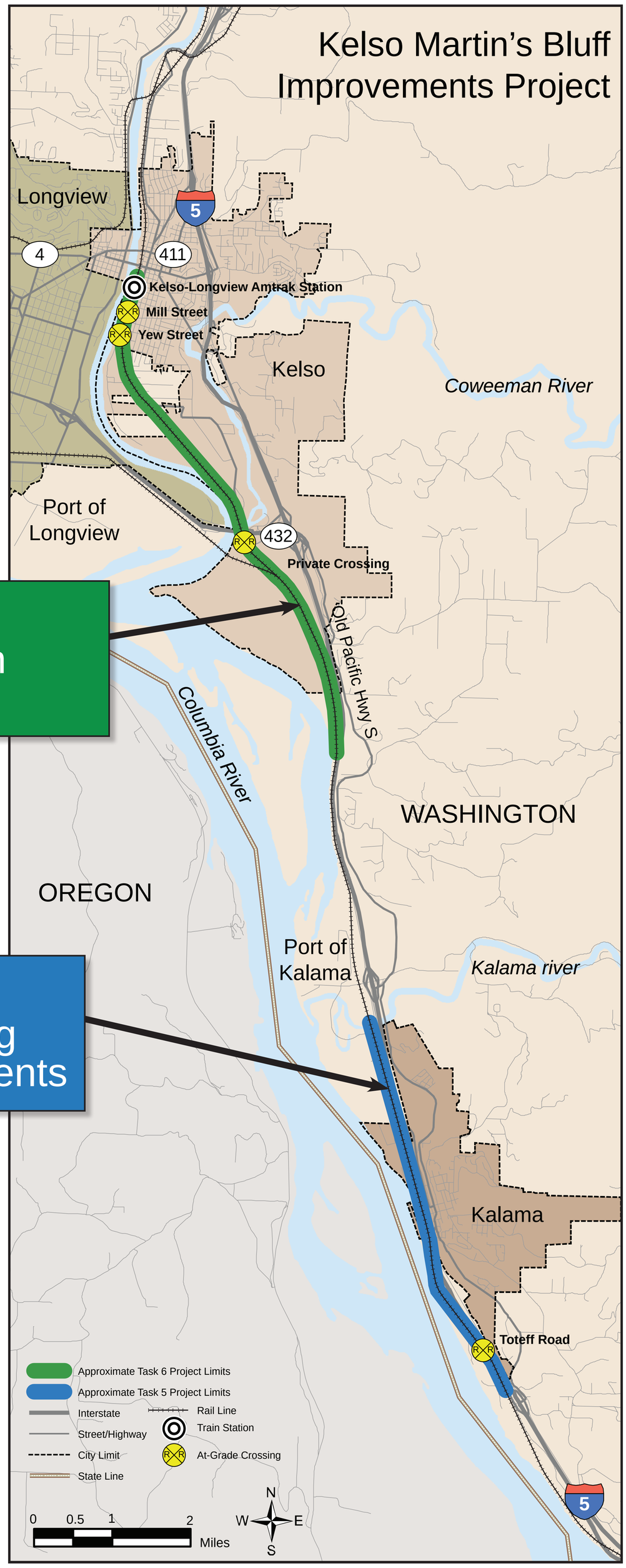
September 2014

Washington State Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Amtrak CASCADES®

Project Locations



Task 6: Kelso to Longview Junction Improvements

Task 5: New Siding Improvements

Kelso Martin's Bluff Improvement Projects

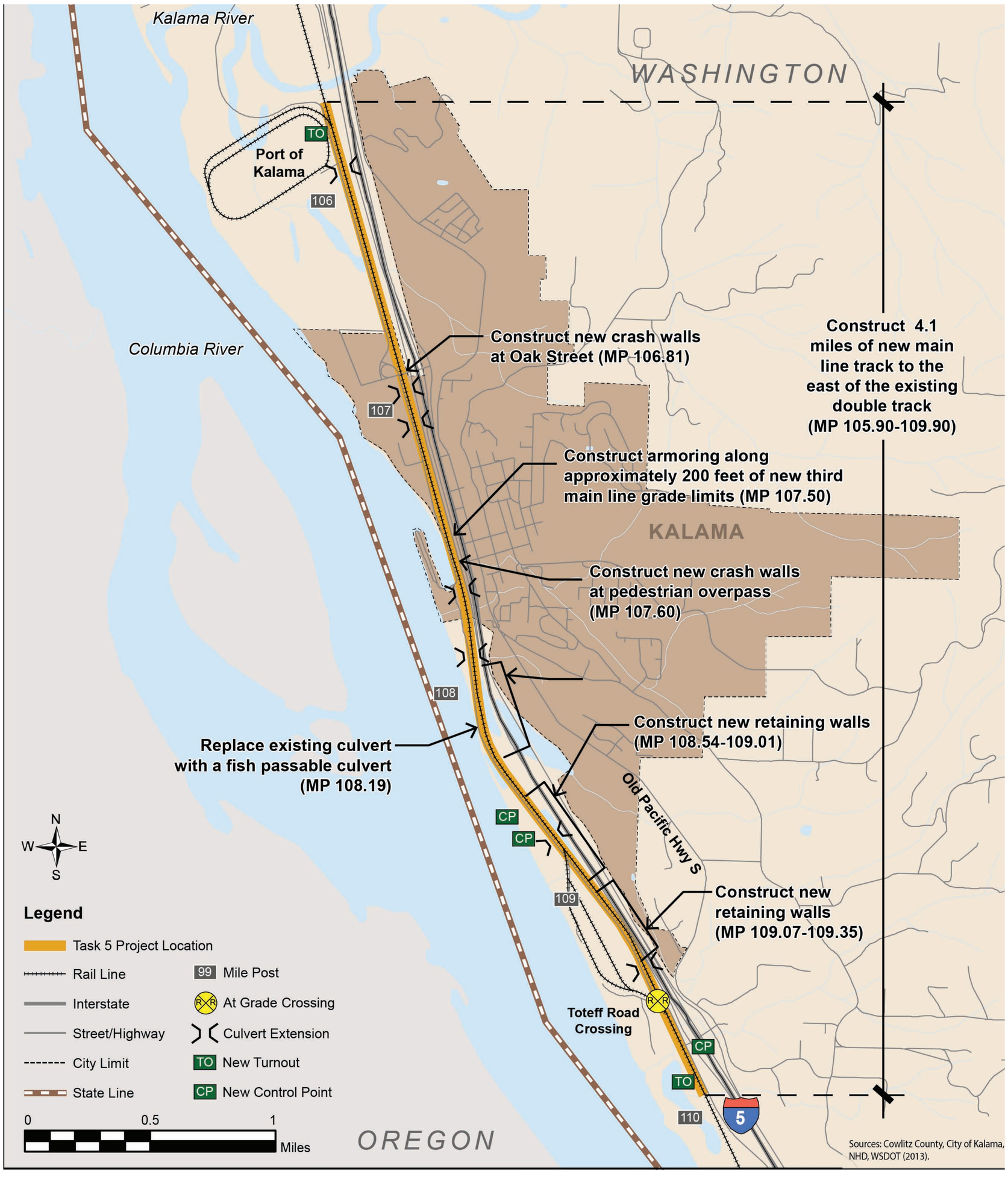
September 2014

Washington State Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Amtrak CASCADES®

Task 5 - New Siding Improvements



Key features:

- Constructs approximately 4.1 miles of a third main line track
- Installs higher-speed turnouts
- Modifies and upgrades signals

Kelso Martin's Bluff Improvement Projects

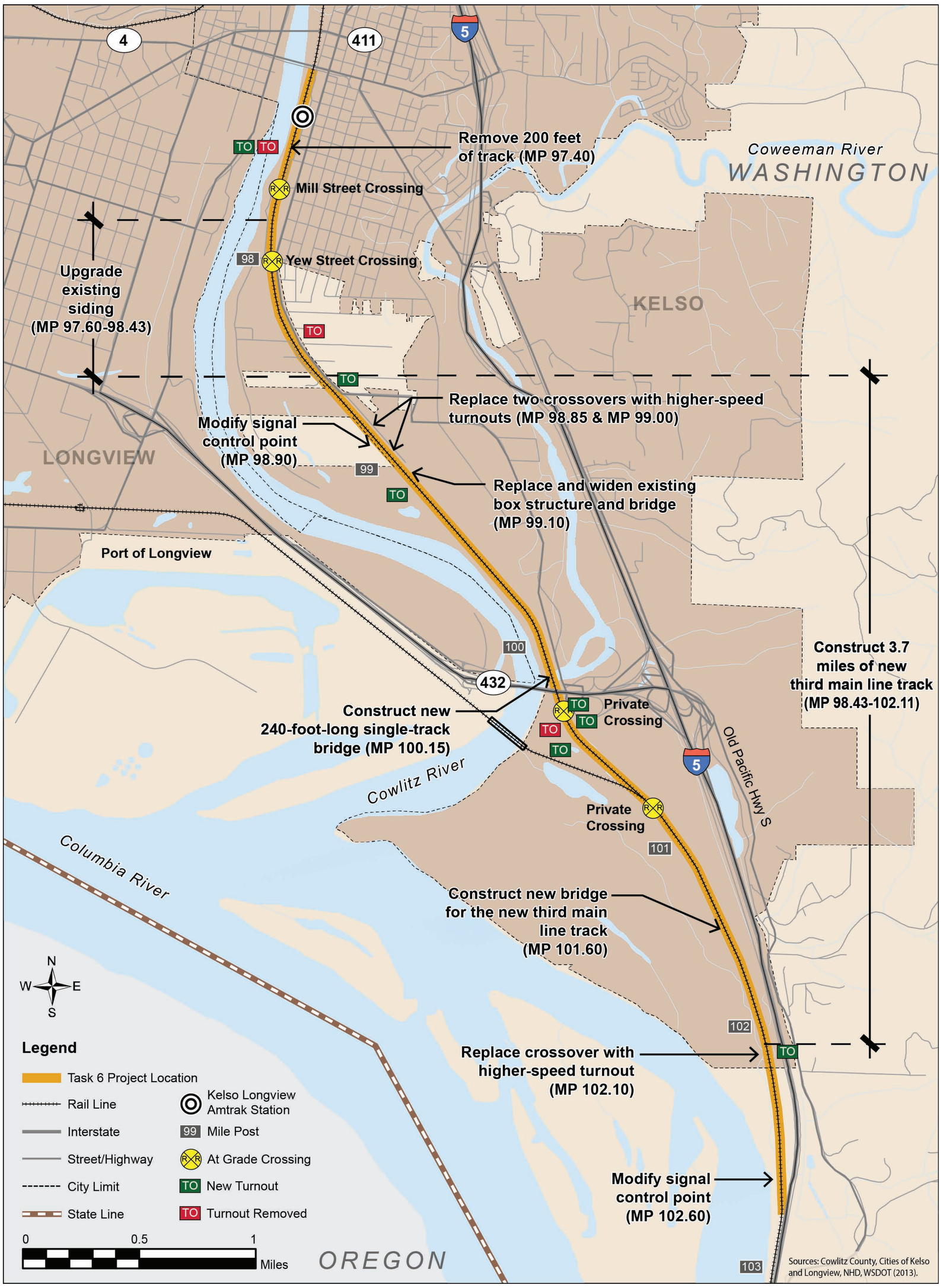
September 2014

Washington State Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Amtrak CASCADES®

Task 6 - Kelso to Longview Junction Improvements



Key features:

- Constructs approximately 3.7 miles of a third main line track
- Constructs a new bridge over the Coweeman River
- Upgrades existing track with new higher-speed turnouts

Kelso Martin's Bluff Improvement Projects

September 2014

Washington State Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Amtrak CASCADES®

Project Purpose and Need

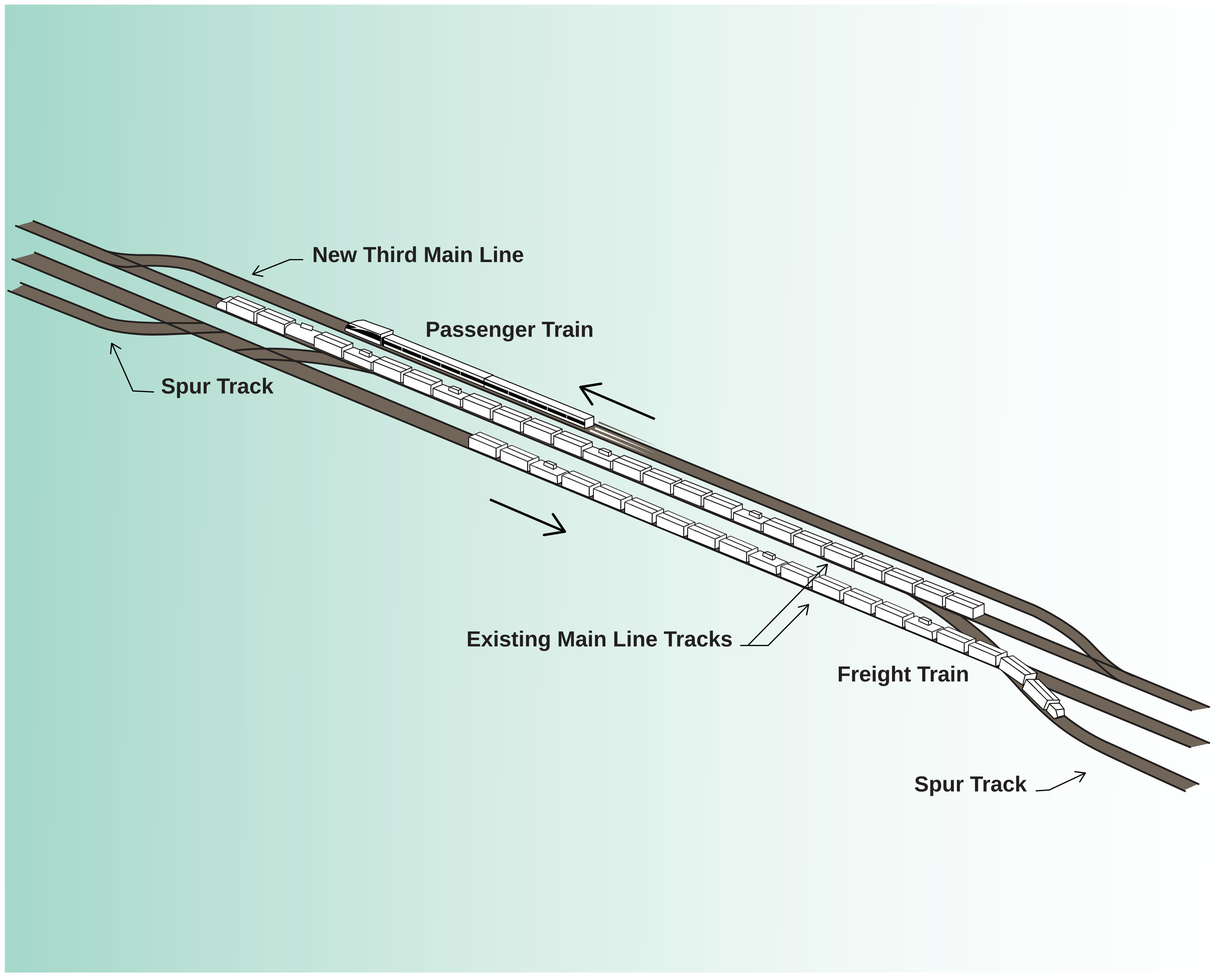
A purpose and need statement guides decisions about the Kelso Martin's Bluff Improvement Projects.

The purpose of these projects are to meet the commitments in the Service Outcome Agreement as part of the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor Improvements Program, which include:

- **Improved Reliability:** The projects would reduce scheduling conflicts with freight rail trains, thus minimizing and/or avoiding operational delays and improving on-time performance.
- **Enhanced Efficiency:** The projects would enhance the efficient movement of people by decreasing trip times and reducing the amount of time passenger trains spend yielding to freight rail movements in and around the Ports of Kalama and Longview.
- **Enhanced Frequency:** When completed, the projects would accommodate two additional daily Amtrak Cascades round trips, extending daily service schedules, and moving more people.

These projects are needed to:

- Allow passenger trains to bypass slower-moving rail traffic more efficiently
- Relieve congestion in and around the Ports of Kalama and Longview.
- Meet service outcomes and commitments.



Passenger trains will be able to pass slower-moving rail traffic.

Kelso Martin's Bluff Improvement Projects

September 2014

Washington State Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Amtrak CASCADES®

Project timeline

KMB Task 5 and 6 EA evaluates effects to environmental resources for the Kelso Martin's Bluff Improvement Projects

2013		2014				2015				2017
SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	• • •	SPRING
• **Summer 2013** Host public meeting and conduct agency and tribal outreach				• **Summer 2014** Issue Environmental Assessment and hold public hearing		• **Winter 2015** FRA Decision Document Issued		• **Summer 2015** Construction starts		• **Spring 2017** Construction complete

Kelso Martin's Bluff Improvement Projects

September 2014

Washington State Department of Transportation

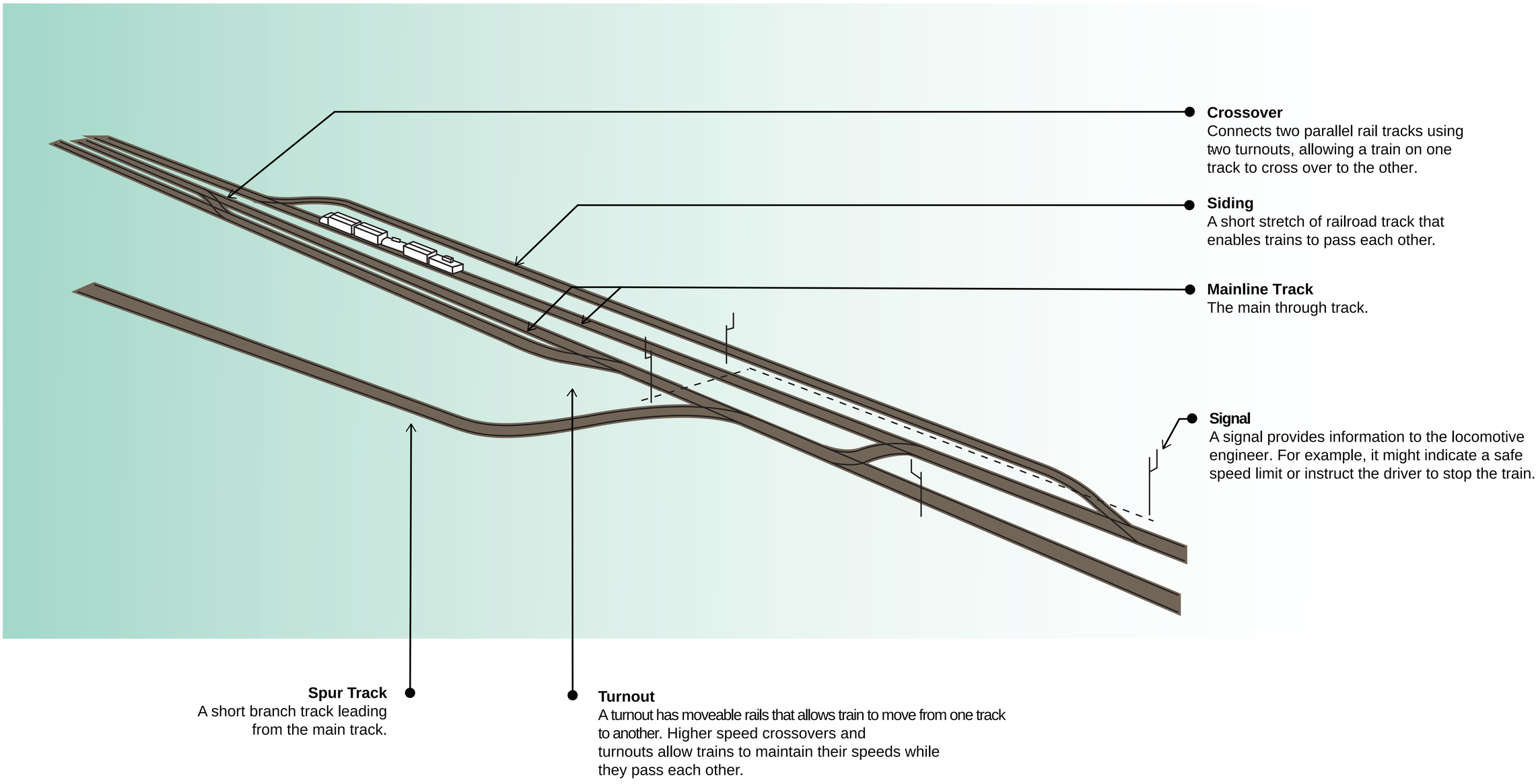
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Amtrak CASCADES®

Potential effects to the resources evaluated in the EA

Environmental Resource	Short Term Effect	Long Term Effect	Indirect Effects	Cumulative Effects
Geology and soils	✓			
Air quality				
Water resources (surface waters and floodplains)	✓			
Wetlands	✓	✓		✓
Ecological resources (wildlife, vegetation, threatened and endangered species)	✓	✓		
Energy and climate change	✓	✓		
Noise	✓	✓		
Vibration				
Hazardous materials	✓	✓		
Land use				
Recreation	✓			
Cultural resources	✓			
Section 4(f)	✓	✓		
Socioeconomics and environmental justice	✓			
Aesthetics	✓	✓		
Transportation	✓	✓		
Public services	✓			
Utilities	✓			
Safety	✓			

What are typical rail design elements?



Kelso Martin's Bluff Improvement Projects

September 2014

Washington State Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Amtrak CASCADES®

Project Effects on Wetlands

How will wetlands be affected by the Build Alternative?

- 3.6 acres of fill would be placed in wetlands for Task 5 and 6.8 acres for Task 6.
- Long-term decrease in flood water conveyance and habitat functions.

How will effects be mitigated?

- Task 5 would purchase no less than 4.4 acres of mitigation bank credits at the Columbia River Wetland Mitigation Bank.
- Task 6 would be a combination of the purchase of mitigation bank credits at the Coweeman River Mitigation Bank, wetland enhancement, and acquisition of wetland properties for preservation.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Name	Federal Status	Affected by Task 5	Affected by Task 6
Coho salmon (Lower Columbia River ESU)	Threatened	✓	✓
Chinook salmon (Lower Columbia River ESU)	Threatened		✓
Chum salmon (Columbia River ESU)	Threatened		✓
Steelhead (Lower Columbia River ESU)	Threatened	✓	✓
Bull trout (Coastal Recovery Unit ESU)	Threatened		✓
Pacific eulachon (Southern DPS)	Threatened		✓
North American green sturgeon (Southern DPS)	Threatened		✓
Columbia white tailed deer (Columbia River DPS)	Endangered	✓	✓
Marbled murrelet	Threatened		✓
Streaked horned lark	Threatened		✓

Threatened and Endangered Species

How will Threatened and Endangered Species be affected by the Build Alternative?

- Habitat effects to listed fish species from wetland fill.
- Temporary construction effects to Columbia white tailed deer, listed fish species, marbled murrelet, and streaked horned lark.
- Additional train traffic may cause Columbia white tailed deer train strikes.

How will effects be minimized and mitigated?

- For Task 5, a culvert at the Port of Kalama would be replaced to provide a fish passable culvert.
- For Task 6, the wetland near Talley Way between Coweeman River and Owl Creek would be enhanced to reconnect Owl Creek to the Cowlitz River system to improve access to salmon habitat.
- Construction will be timed to minimize impacts on listed species.

Project Effects on Transportation

How will transportation resources be affected by the Build Alternative for Task 5 and Task 6?

- During construction, minor effects on traffic from construction vehicles.
- Minor increase in the traffic delays at grade crossings due to two additional passenger trains per day.
- Beneficial effects to faster passenger rail train trips and on time performance would result from improved flow of passenger rail traffic.
- Minor increase in the frequency of traffic delays at at grade crossings.

How will effects be minimized during construction for Task 5 and Task 6?

- Provide information about construction schedules and temporary closures to local newspapers and local jurisdictions for distribution.
- Schedule delivery of construction materials during off-peak hours.
- Develop and implement a traffic control plan.

Kelso Martin's Bluff Improvement Projects

September 2014

Washington State Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Amtrak CASCADES®

Project Effects on Section 4(f) Resources

What is Section 4(f)?

- Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966 protects significant public parks, recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and public and private historic sites from being “used” in transportation projects carried out or funded by the USDOT.
- “Using” a Section 4(f) resource in a transportation project requires an evaluation to describe the type of use (e.g. direct, constructive, or de minimis), determine the potential effects, and provide mitigation, if necessary.
- FRA may find the effects to be insignificant (called “de minimis”) if, after opportunity for public review and comment, the transportation project, including mitigation, will not adversely affect the activities, features and attributes of the Section 4(f) resource.

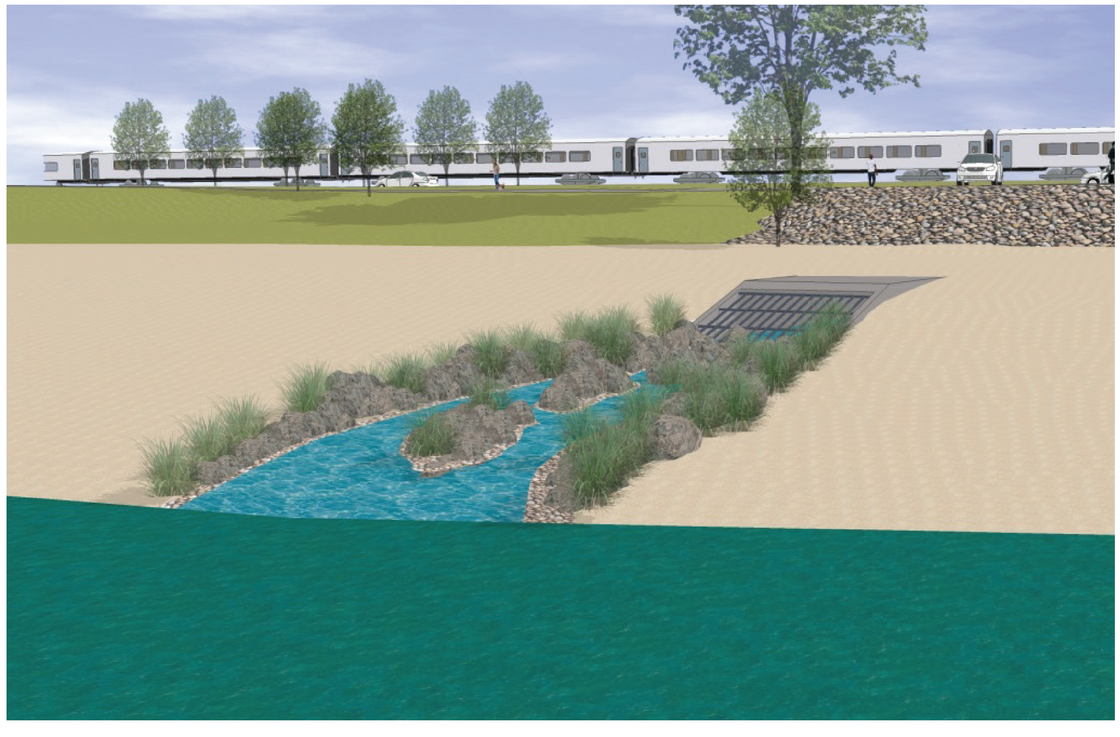
What Section 4(f) resources are present in the Task 5 and 6 study areas?

- Coweeman River Bridge would be modified to accommodate bridge maintenance access for Task 6.
- Of the four 4(f) resources described in the EA, only the Louis Rasmussen Day Use Park would constitute a Section 4(f) “use.”

Project Effects on Section 4(f) Resources

What will happen at the Louis Rasmussen Day Use Park?

- A culvert will be replaced with structures that will allow for fish passage. This replacement will require temporary closure of Hendrickson Drive access, the adjacent parking area and the beach in the area of the existing culvert.
- After construction, the beach, parking and access roadway will be fully restored.
- Recreational activity on the beach is not expected to change, as the unnamed tributary 3 culvert outfall would be designed to provide a continuous sandy beach for pedestrians to freely travel north and south along the Columbia River.
- Vehicle access to the beach would not be affected, as motorized vehicles are not allowed south of the culvert location.
- The physical attributes of the culvert and the stream it conveys will be affected, however this should be considered a beneficial effect in that the replacement culvert and outfall is more harmonious with a park setting.
- User access to the Park would remain largely the same during construction with the exception of boater, fishing, and other recreational user access in a small area during construction.



Project Effects on Section 4(f) Resources

What mitigation is proposed for Task 5?

- The culvert will be constructed, and following construction the area will be restored, in a manner that conforms to the Port's Louis Rasmussen Day Use Park Master Plan.
- The culvert outfall and natural stream conveyance will be constructed to ensure the safety of park visitors.
- WSDOT will use construction best management practices (BMPs) to control dust, noise, etc.
- WSDOT will coordinate construction activities to avoid scheduled activities within the park.

How can I comment about the Potential Effects on Section 4(f) Resources?

Comments can be submitted:

- At the Port of Kalama Commission meeting – date to be determined.
- By filling out a comment form at today's meeting and dropping it in a comment box or emailing/ mailing your comments from home.

  Email: *rail@wsdot.wa.gov* with "KMB EA comment" in the subject line

  Mail written comments to:

  WSDOT Rail Division Attn: Document Control
  KMB EA comments
  PO Box 47407, Olympia, WA 98504-7407