

SE King County DMU Feasibility Study

Presentation to

The Farmhouse Gang

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**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

Legislative Direction

- The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is conducting a feasibility study of commuter rail service from Maple Valley to Auburn on the BNSF Railway.
- The 2009 budget proviso that appropriated funding for the study states:

\$400,000 of the Motor Vehicle Account – State Appropriation is provided solely for a diesel multiple unit feasibility and initial planning study. The study must evaluate potential service on the Stampede Pass line from Maple Valley to Auburn via Covington. The Study must evaluate the potential demand for service, the business model and capital needs for launching and running the line and the need for improvements in switching, signaling and tracking. A report must be submitted to the Legislature by June 30, 2010.

Auburn to Black Diamond Commuter Rail Study Area

Project Study Area:

Southeast King County
Auburn to
Maple Valley



Study Components

- Define an operating scenario for commuter rail service using DMU technology.
- Estimate costs, ridership, potential revenue sources.
- Identify the institutional structure and business model required to provide commuter rail service.
- Assess environmental conditions/issues along the corridor (a formal environmental process is not part of this study).

The study will provide a quantitative basis for evaluating DMU/commuter rail service in the corridor. The study does not attempt to make political judgments about the desirability of commuter rail service.

Project Organization

- The study is being done in cooperation with local jurisdictions: Auburn, Black Diamond, Covington and Maple Valley and in consultation with BNSF Railway, King County, PSRC and Sound Transit.
- The project partners have established a technical committee with participation from local jurisdictions and WSDOT (UPO/Rail Office). Meetings are held monthly in Covington.
- A steering committee of elected officials has also been established and meets monthly. WSDOT provides updates on project progress at these meetings.
- The BNSF Railway has been involved from the study inception and has participated in several key meetings with elected officials. BNSF is also reviewing key products and technical materials as they are developed.

Study Process

- WSDOT developed a draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) with our partners. It describes project roles, responsibilities and deliverables. The MOU was signed by all project partners last fall.
- WSDOT is responsible for managing the work of the consultant and coordination with our partners on the study products, issues and key milestones.
- The project partners are responsible for arranging and facilitating the meetings of staff and elected official groups. Project partners are also responsible for outreach to local communities and elected officials.
- The consultant will develop technical memos and the final report that describes the study process, technical analysis and key findings.

Important Considerations

- **Operation on an active freight rail line raises a number of issues:**
 - Preservation of freight rail capacity
 - Accommodation of future growth in freight-rail traffic
 - Freight/passenger rail dispatching & operations
 - Liability/insurance
 - Signal and train control system requirements
 - Compliance with FRA requirements for DMU vehicles
 - Maintenance

- **Station siting and service considerations:**
 - Ridership
 - Catchment area
 - Modal connections
 - Parking
 - Design, access, and consistency with local plans

Important Considerations (continued)

Institutional and legal issues:

- What appropriate public entity with authority could provide the service?
- How is the governing board constituted?
- What sources of tax revenue are available?
- Is the proposed service consistent with adopted regional plans?
- Is the project eligible for Federal funding through FTA programs?
- Is the consent of existing transit agencies required?
- How would the service interface with Amtrak or other commuter rail service?

Closing

- Draft report in May, review and input from the project partners.
- Submit final report to the State Legislature in late June.
- Follow-up presentation to the Farmhouse Gang this summer or fall?
- Project website:
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/Studies/SEKingCommuterRailStudy/>
- Questions?