

PCC Rehabilitation Plan



For More Information:

Mike Rowswell
Special Initiatives Manager
rowswem@wsdot.wa.gov

WSDOT State Rail and Marine Office
360-705-7900
www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail



Washington State Department of Transportation

WSDOT State Rail and Marine Office
PO Box 47407
Olympia, WA 98504-7407



Washington State Department of Transportation

Palouse River and Coulee City (PCC) Rail Lines Rehabilitation Plan



WSDOT has begun to develop a rehabilitation plan for the PCC. WSDOT performed an independent review of the lines, reviewed track repair documentation, and solicited the opinions of the operators. The information will be used to select the most urgent and beneficial projects, and prioritize them based on available funding.

February 2008

PCC Rehabilitation Plan

Original Plan for Purchase and Rehabilitation

The 2003 Legislature appropriated funds to purchase the former Palouse River and Coulee City (PCC) railroad lines and to rehabilitate one of its branches. During 2003, WSDOT studied rehabilitation needs for all of the branches. Based on that study, the 2004 Legislature appropriated \$7.028 million to purchase the lines, and \$21.089 million for rehabilitation. Bridge repairs were not included in the rehabilitation plan.

Plan Execution and Initial Changes

Two of the three PCC branch lines were purchased in late 2004. Insufficient funds were available to finalize the purchase of the third branch until the beginning of the 2005-07 biennium. Steel prices increased unexpectedly in the interim, causing the salvage value of the third branch to rise substantially. As a result, the previously determined price for the third branch had to be renegotiated. In order to facilitate the negotiations, the 2006 Legislature combined the purchase and rehabilitation line items into one project. Some of the funds previously allocated for rehabilitation had to be used for the new purchase price, which was agreed upon in February 2007.

Changes Resulting from Final Purchase Price

As a result of the change in the purchase price, the 2007 Legislature reallocated the rehabilitation funding as follows:

- \$3.6 million was appropriated for WSDOT to identify and perform rehabilitation required to preserve the lines, to perform an initial study on replacing the trestle that burned near Colfax in 2006 (or rebuilding a line at Thornton as an alternative) and to facilitate formation of intergovernmental entities to operate the railroad.

* Since the state purchased the entire Palouse River and Coulee City Railroad system that consisted of three branches, a company named the Palouse River and Coulee City Railroad continues to operate one of those branches. In order to avoid confusion, the entire system will be called the former Palouse River and Coulee City Railroad, and the operating company will be called the PCC.



Rehabilitation is required to prevent derailments.

- \$7 million was appropriated to rehabilitate the PCC lines after the formation of local intergovernmental agencies. The funds are to be distributed in a competitive grant program administered by WSDOT.

Note: WSDOT requested that the legislature transfer \$1.6 million from the purchase fund to the rehabilitation fund. Those funds were saved during the process of verifying certain aspects of the purchase and sale agreement.

Rehabilitation Project Identification Process

The following steps were taken to identify needed rehabilitation items:

- Basic criteria were determined as follows:
 1. Work items needed to prevent service disruption within two years;
 2. Work items needed to prevent service disruption within five years;
 3. Work items needed to avoid further deterioration for five years.
- WSDOT asked the three railroads that operate the former PCC railroad to submit possible work items based on those concepts.
- Documentation from each rail line was reviewed to determine justifications for imposing speed limits of less than 25 mph.
- Each rail line was inspected with the respective operators to verify the information from the document review and to collect first-hand, current line condition information.
- After collecting the information, each operator was provided the assessment for its line, and meetings were held to discuss the findings and the most important rehabilitation needs.

- A bridge evaluation report, prepared in 2005 by a professional engineering firm for Watco Companies Inc., was reviewed for further rehabilitation opportunities.
- A final list of categories and rehabilitation work items was prepared and provided to the operators for comment.
- After receiving comments, a final list of 171 work items was prepared (see chart below).

Currently, \$3.1 million is available for the work items summarized in this folio. If available funding remains insufficient to perform all suggested work items, WSDOT will work with each railroad to find mutually agreeable work items to delete. After that, WSDOT will use a benefit analysis for each rail line based on the assumption of line failure. Using an estimate of anticipated car loadings – and the alternative shipping mode and distance for the alternative – shipper and road maintenance cost savings will be calculated along with savings in environmental and safety costs.

Note: Additional rehabilitation for the same areas will likely be needed unless a planned, cyclical maintenance program is implemented within the next several years.

Rehabilitation Summary

	Rehabilitation Priority	CW	PV Hooper	P&L	Totals
A. Prevent Service Disruption Within Two Years					
	Bridge Repair	\$75,034	\$339,441	\$228,157	\$642,632
	Spot and track repairs		\$483,082	\$906,972	\$1,390,054
	Subtotal	\$75,034	\$822,523	\$1,135,129	\$2,032,686
B. Prevent Possible Service Disruption Within Five Years					
	Spot and track repairs*	\$693,919	\$466,684		\$1,160,603
	Bridge Repair	\$199,531	\$164,403	\$539,952	\$903,886
	Subtotal	\$893,450	\$631,087	\$539,952	\$2,064,489
C. Stabilize at Current Condition					
	Ditching	\$416,896	\$618,871	\$238,226	\$1,273,993
	Spot and Track Repairs		\$296,886	\$223,262	\$520,148
	Subtotal	\$416,896	\$915,757	\$461,488	\$1,794,141
	TOTAL	\$1,385,380	\$2,369,367	\$2,136,569	\$5,891,316

*An additional \$14,582 of work will allow 25 mph speeds over 15.7 miles of track rather than two segments divided by a slow section. Notes:

1. All costs include permitting, mobilization and bonding, construction oversight, engineering and construction management, sales tax, inflation factor and contingency allowance
2. Field verification must be performed and final specifications must be prepared, which could change a few items from one priority to another.
3. Based on distances for shipping by alternate modes (i.e. trucking) and current and expected shipping levels, work items will be deferred in the following order if funds are not available for all work items: a. Rehab Priority C (P&L track repairs; PV Hooper track repairs; P&L ditching; PV Hooper ditching; CW ditching); b. Rehab Priority B.: (P&L bridge repair).

Other Critical Items

- \$35,000 was set aside to work with the city of Palouse on a street renovation project that would also rehabilitate 600 feet of worn out rail. The city is rehabilitating the rail and WSDOT is providing engineering and construction management support to ensure proper rail work.
- \$300,000 was set aside to repair road/rail crossings that have regulatory defects that require rail rehabilitation rather than just surface repair. The railroads are providing labor in a collaborative effort. Some of the funds must be used to replace active warning systems that require updating.
- The rail trestle replacement analysis and the conceptual analysis for rebuilding another alignment as an alternative cost about \$35,000 to prepare. Additional funds will be needed to take the next steps such as determining rail right of way ownership, business considerations, and more detailed and environmental analyses for rebuilding the alignment from Thornton to Oakesdale (assuming this alignment is preferable to the Thornton to Rosalia alignment).