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## Trains Save Washingtonians Money

Public transportation projects are often dismissed on the grounds of expense, but Amtrak *Cascades* and similar intercity passenger rail services deserve a second look for what they deliver for Washington taxpayers. These costs and benefits aren't time savings that have no value in cold hard cash. These are costs that Amtrak *Cascades* helps the state and individuals avoid, as well as visitor spending that communities would have missed without the presence of the train.

In 2019, for just \$23.7m (once income from fares is accounted for), Washingtonians received about \$89.8m in benefits:

- \$54.3m in reduced road maintenance expenditures
- \$1.6m in reduced vehicle fatalities
- \$900k worth of reduced carbon output
- \$19.3m in airfare saved
- \$13.6m in additional visitor spending

Based on *Cascades* ridership between 2013 and 2019, that's over \$500m in benefits that have accrued, in terms of overall lower private and state expenditures, all for a total taxpayer cost of only \$188m.

## Using *Cascades* to Reduce VMT

As we examine our budget, it is paramount for us to prioritize investments that give the biggest returns to Washington taxpayers and advance our state's long-term goals. In the 2006 Washington State Long-Range Plan for Amtrak *Cascades*, WSDOT laid out some astounding service goals to be implemented by 2023:

- 13 daily Seattle - Portland departures with travel times of 2:30
- 4 daily Seattle - Vancouver, B.C. departures with travel times of 2:37
- Top speeds of 110 MPH in several sections of the corridor
- Projected annual ridership of 2,995,300

In 2008, RCW 47.01.440 codified Washington's intent to reduce **vehicle-miles traveled** (VMT) by **18% for 2020**, and by **50% for 2050**. While we will face immense budgetary challenges over the coming months, it is not too late for our leaders to take steps in the right direction. Amtrak *Cascades* can save taxpayer money and help us achieve our VMT reduction goals if we give it the commitment it deserves.

# The Numbers Say It All

## 2019 Operating Costs and Benefits of Amtrak Cascades

- Net Operating Cost to State: \$23,672,000
- **Benefits to State: \$89,800,000**

Net operating costs from WSDOT 2019 Amtrak Cascades Performance Data Report, pg. 15

### State Benefits in detail

- \$54,300,000 in Road Maintenance (from the 47% of diverted **car trips**)
- \$1,600,000 in reduced vehicle fatalities (from the 47% of diverted **car trips**)
- \$900,000 in pollution saved (from the 47% of diverted **car trips**)
- \$19,300,000 in airfare saved (from the 32% of diverted **air trips**)
- \$13,600,000 in visitor spending (from the 11% percent of **induced travel**)

### Highway Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Costs in detail

- Wear & Tear: \$2.00/VMT
- Accidents & Death: 12¢/VMT
- **Assumed Costs: \$2.12/VMT**

Based on roadway maintenance and expansion cost figures from the American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Bottom Line report, pg. 2; and Victoria Transportation Policy Institute's (VTPI) Transportation Cost and Benefit Analysis II

### Carbon Dioxide Emissions per passenger km

- **Passenger trains: 14g**
- Carpooling: 55g
- Single-occupant car: 104g
- Single-occupant SUV: 158g
- Plane flight: 258g

### Passenger Train Emissions Intensities

- 25.45% as much as carpooling
- **13.46% as much as SOV cars**
- 8.86% as much as SOV SUVs
- **5.43% as much as flying**

European Environment Agency (cited in 2019 WSDOT Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation Business Case Analysis, figure 11, pg. 61)

### Traveling Costs per mile

- **Amtrak Cascades: 26¢**
- Flying: 47¢

BTS 2018 Air Carrier Profile; and WSDOT 2019 Amtrak Cascades Performance Data Report average Cascades fare (\$40.10)/Average trip length (155.37 miles)

### Visitor Spending

- \$84 per day-trip visitor
- \$366 per overnight visitor

Email with Mike Moe, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Tourism Development at Experience Washington, June 29th 2020

### Passengers Without Trains Don't Just Take the Bus

Source: Amtrak Washington State Economic Impact Brochure

