



# 2021 Train Trek to Edmonds



**August 12, 2021**

Patrick Carnahan, Co-Executive Director  
Charles Hamilton, Co-Executive Director

# 2021 Train Trek Sponsors



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# Who is All Aboard Washington?

- Champions of better passenger and freight rail service in the Pacific Northwest for over 40 years
- Nonprofit advocacy organization of citizens, businesses, and other goal-oriented groups



# 2021 Train Trek

Thursday, August 12

- Edmonds
- Everett

Friday, August 13

- Leavenworth
- Wenatchee

Saturday, August 14

- Yakima
- Toppenish
- Tri-Cities

Sunday, August 15

- Walla Walla
- Clarkston-Lewiston

Wednesday, August 18

- Pacific Northwest Rail Forum Big Sky, MT

Thursday, August 19

- Sandpoint, ID
- Spokane Area

Friday, August 20

- Cheney
- Ritzville

Saturday, August 21

- Ellensburg
- Cle Elum: AAWA Annual Picnic

# What We'll Talk About Today

1. Connecting Our '3 Es' to Transportation
2. Relating Our Mission to High-Speed Rail
3. AAWA's Current Efforts
  - a. Restoring and Improving Cascades Service
  - b. East-West Stampede Pass Rail Service
4. How You Can Help

# What is World-Class Transportation?



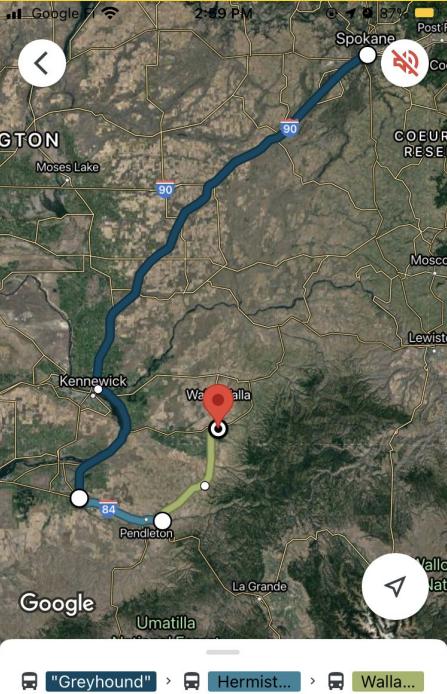
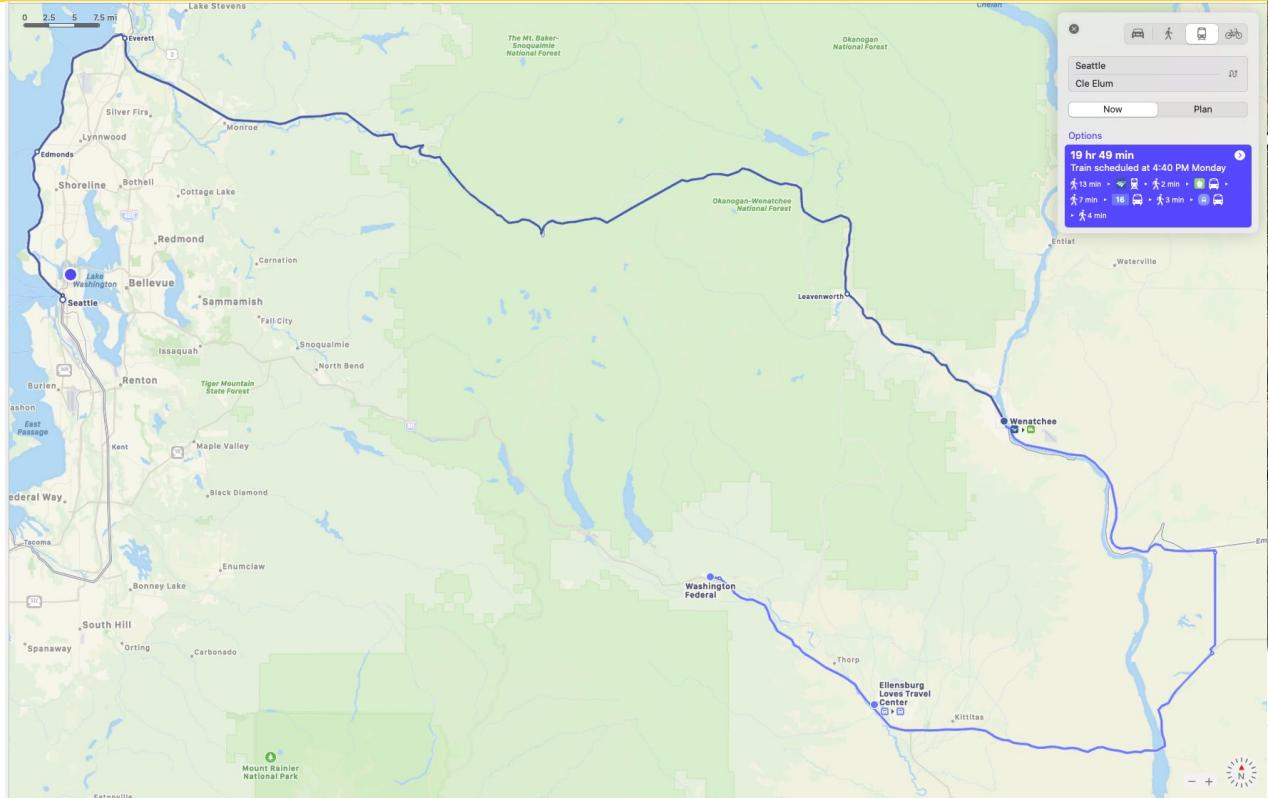
# It's Way More Than Just Fast Trains



## **It All Boils Down to One Simple Question**

**Is it reasonably easy to  
get from here to there?**

# Most of the Time, It Isn't...



# The Reality of Travel in Washington



Sign in Passengers Seats Payment Confirm

Departs Arrives Price for 1 passenger  
Yakima (YKM) Seattle (SEA)  
Thu, Aug 12 Thu, Aug 12  
5:40 am 6:19 am \$237.20  
[Taxes, fees and charges](#)

Price guarantee  
Shop again using a discount or companion fare code.

Tire chains, traffic, and an empty wallet.  
Aren't you looking forward to your next trip?

# We Always Have to Keep This in Mind

Is the project in line with our goals to advance **equity**, protect our **environment**, and foster stable **economic development**?

# The Need for Better Passenger Rail

Passenger rail is an ideal option for addressing ‘the 3 Es’



**Economy**

Intercity passenger trains help strengthen local economies across the Northwest.



**Environment**

Intercity passenger trains provide low-emissions regional transportation.



**Equity**

Intercity passenger trains connect communities small and large.

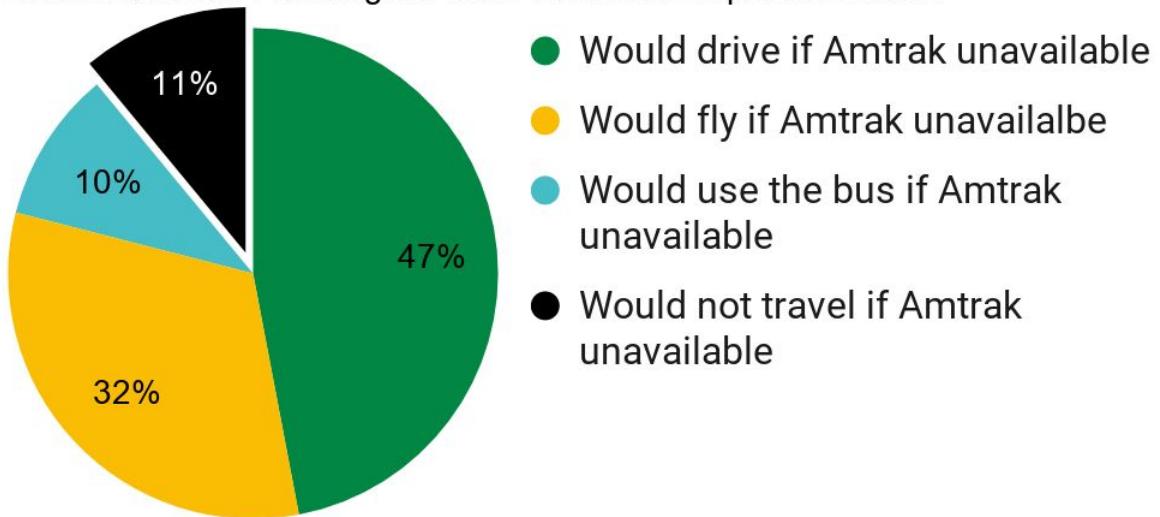
# Boosting Local & Regional Economies

Better Cascades trains facilitate regional travel

- About **11% of train riders in WA would not have traveled** if the train wasn't available to them

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

Source: Amtrak Washington State Economic Impact Brochure



# Boosting Local & Regional Economies

Induced travel is valuable to WA communities

- \$84 per day-trip visitor
- \$366 per overnight visitor
- \$7m tourist spending impact of Stampede Pass East-West passenger train service

# Emphasizing Equity & Accessibility

Fun fact: owning and maintaining a car is expensive for individuals and society!

And for those who are unable to drive or can't afford to own a car, it's really hard to get around.

Communities of all sizes benefit from better transit access.



# Emphasizing Equity & Accessibility

AAWA is encouraging the state to implement recommendations from several plans and studies:

- Connect **local public transit** more conveniently with the intercity transportation network
- Provide **convenient and equitable rail service** throughout the state, both North-South and East-West



© The Olympian

- Less USDOT emphasis on **travel time saved**, more on **safety & value to society**

# Fast Environment & Climate Action

We have less than 10 years to cut emissions by **45% of 2010 levels.**

Do we have enough time to wait for High-Speed Rail to open?

The New York Times

[Climate and Environment](#) > | [IPCC Report](#) | [Resilience Funding](#) | [Wildfire Tracker](#) | [F.A.Q.'s](#)

***A Hotter Future Is Certain, Climate Panel Warns. But How Hot Is Up to Us.***

Some devastating impacts of global warming are now unavoidable, a major new scientific report finds. But there is still a short window to stop things from getting even worse.



The Dixie Fire, which destroyed one town and forced thousands to flee their homes in

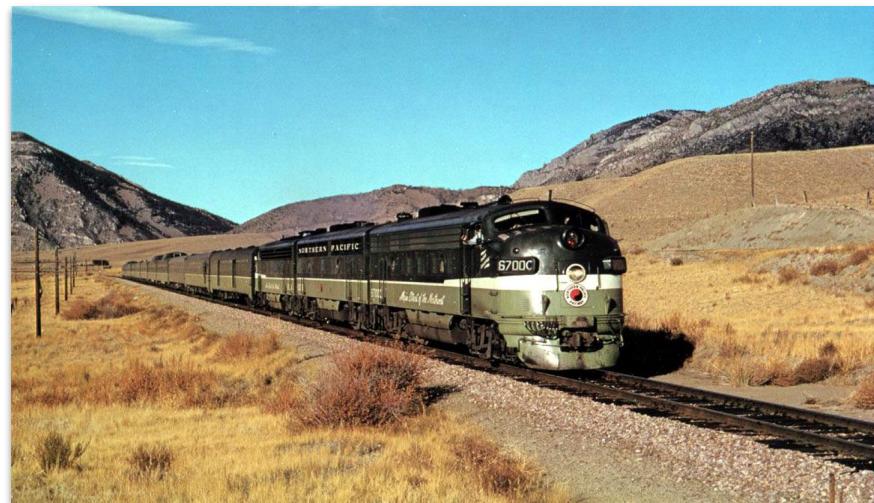
# **Top Priority: Getting Out of Our Cars**

**Transportation: 29% of U.S. emissions**

**Autos: 82% of transportation emissions**

# Northwest Transportation Problems

- East-West trains via Stampede Pass discontinued in 1981
  - *Empire Builder* rerouted over Stevens Pass
- Private coach bus service has declined across the Northwest
- Amtrak Cascades upgrades
  - haven't finished on schedule
- Highway & airport congestion necessitate alternative modes
- Many people cannot drive



# Significant Cuts to Passenger Rail

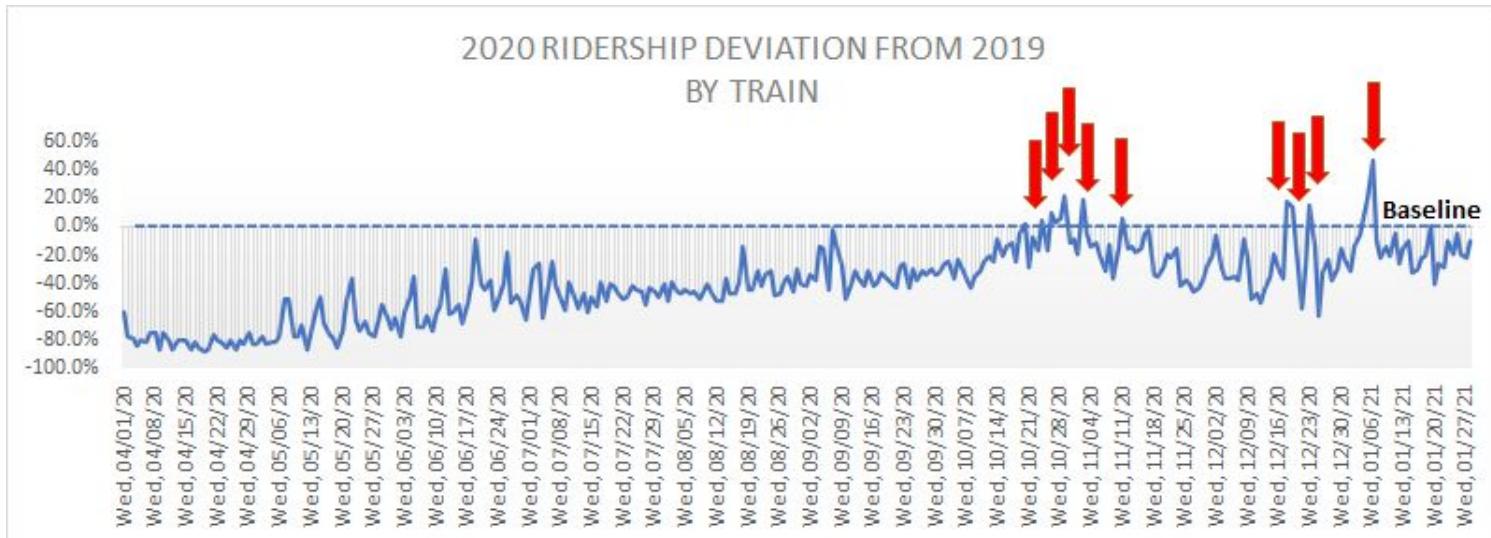
During the pandemic, *Cascades* service was:

- **Discontinued entirely** north of Seattle, to Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom Counties
- Reduced to **one train daily** Seattle - Tacoma - Olympia - Vancouver WA - Portland - Eugene



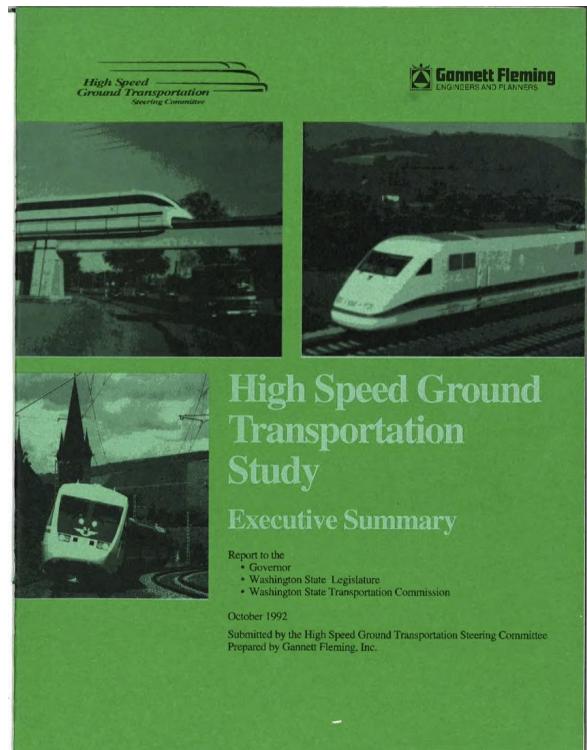
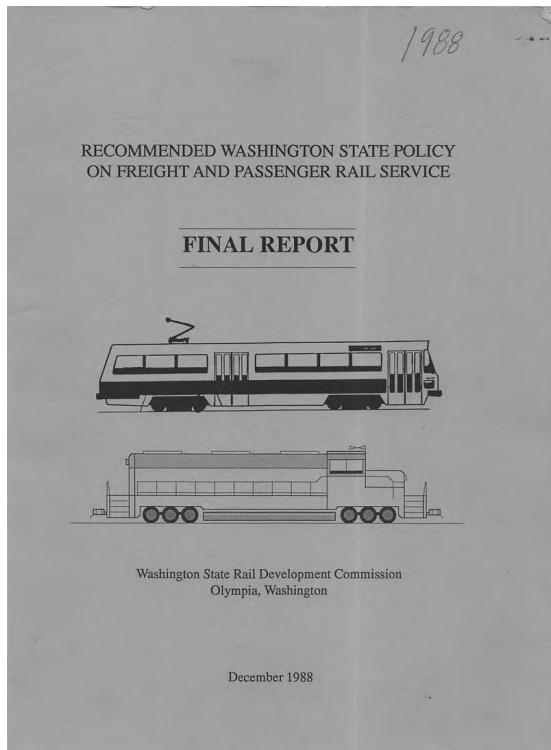
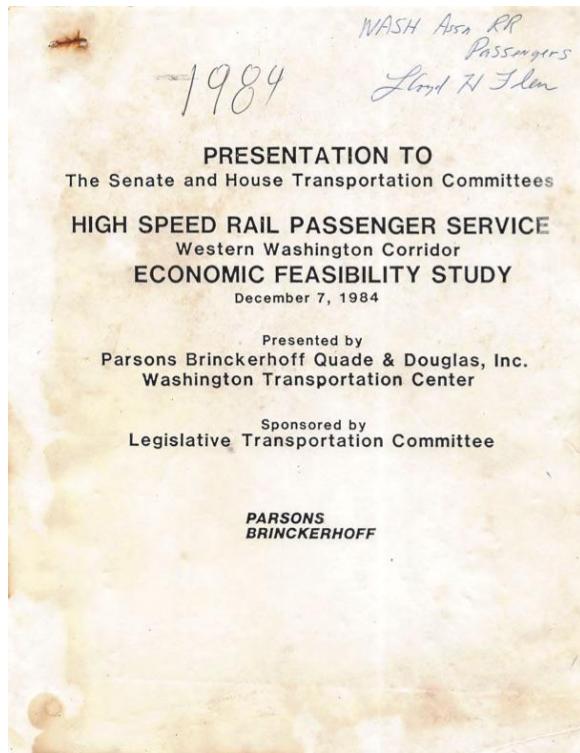
# Ridership is Recovering

Trains today are performing much like trains pre-pandemic, and in a **few cases**, outperforming them





# Cascades & HSR Go Hand In Hand





# Building a Solid Foundation on Cascades

## Questions?

For more information on the Pacific Northwest High Speed Rail Corridor contact:

**Washington State Department of Transportation**  
Transit, Research & Intermodal Planning Division  
Public Transportation Office,  
Rail Branch  
Transportation Building  
Olympia, Washington 98504-7370  
(206) 705-7900

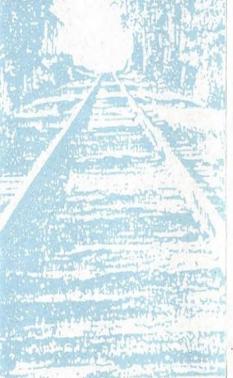
**Oregon Department of Transportation**  
Transportation Development Branch  
Public Transit Section  
131 Transportation Building  
Salem, Oregon 97310  
(503) 378-8201

## Pacific Northwest

## High Speed Rail

## Corridor:

## Tracks to the Future



Anyone who has driven a car or flown in a passenger jet knows that many areas of the Pacific Northwest have growing transportation concerns. Traffic jams, decaying highways and congested airports are daily aggravations. And the problems are expected to only get worse.

But there may be an alternative. One that's fast, convenient, efficient and environmentally sound. That alternative is high speed rail.

The vision of high speed trains carrying passengers in the Pacific Northwest rolled a bit further along the track in late 1992, when the Federal Railroad Administration designated the Pacific Northwest High Speed Rail Corridor as one of five high speed rail corridors in the United States.

It is the only rail corridor in the nation with both international and bi-state ties, extending from Eugene, OR, through Seattle, WA, to Vancouver, BC. It stretches 464 miles and includes approximately 134 miles in Oregon, 296 miles in Washington and 34 miles in British Columbia.

### What is a high speed rail corridor?

A high speed corridor is a federally designated rail corridor between two or more major metropolitan areas where high speed rail offers the potential for cost-effective public transportation. To be considered "high speed," the corridor must have rail speeds above 90 mph or can reasonably be expected to have such speeds in the future. The Federal Railroad Administration determines which corridors qualify as priority high speed rail corridors, making them eligible to receive federal funding for improvement projects.

### What are the goals for the corridor?

The ultimate goal for the corridor is to permit operational speeds of up to 125 mph for intercity passenger service. The long range service goal is to provide up to eight round trips daily from Portland to Eugene, nine round trips between Portland and Seattle and four round trips between Seattle and Vancouver, BC.

There are two short-term goals for the corridor; one is re-establishment of service between Seattle, WA, and Vancouver, BC, by October 1994. The other goal is increased frequency of service between Eugene, OR, and Seattle, WA, along with track improvements to allow maximum speeds of 79 mph. Currently, speeds along the corridor average 47 mph.

Oregon and Washington have jointly developed a comprehensive program of specific projects, totaling nearly \$1.3 billion, to achieve top speeds within the corridor and to allow increased frequency of service. With federal financial support, the Pacific Northwest corridor could have all required improvement work underway by the year 2000.

### Why is the Pacific Northwest High Speed Rail Corridor important?

The Pacific Northwest High Speed Rail Corridor parallels Interstate 5 and connects the metropolitan areas of Portland, Seattle and Vancouver, BC. Population along the I-5 corridor is currently 7.7 million and is expected to increase by nearly 40 percent within the next 20 years. Intercity travel is expected to increase by more than 75 percent.

Already, the impacts of rapid growth are being felt within the region, resulting in highway and airport congestion, air pollution, urban and suburban sprawl and lost economic productivity. Ways to accommodate this growth are being explored to protect the quality of life enjoyed by residents of the Pacific Northwest and to ensure economic vitality and competitiveness in the global economy.

Development of high speed rail will play a key role in creating a balanced, region wide, multimodal transportation system. Enhanced rail passenger service offers a safe, efficient, all-weather and environmentally responsible alternative to building more highways or increasing airport capacity.

### How will high speed rail be implemented?

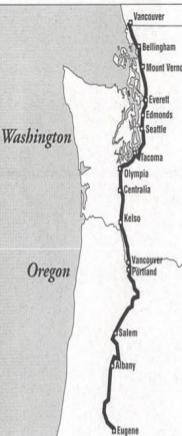
Corridor development is a cooperative effort between the states of Oregon and Washington, Burlington Northern Railroad, Southern Pacific Railroad, Amtrak and the Province of British Columbia. Agreement has been reached that achieving a high speed rail system, given today's fiscal reality, should be done through incremental upgrades of existing Amtrak service.

An incremental approach permits enhanced rail passenger service to be offered immediately and at an affordable price by using the existing rail infrastructure. It allows continuing improvements in reliability and frequency, while reducing travel times and enables service to expand as ridership increases and funding allows.

Of the estimated \$1.3 billion needed for the Pacific Northwest High Speed Rail Corridor, approximately \$800 million will be required in Washington, \$450 million in Oregon and \$25 million in British Columbia.

This sizable investment is needed to improve grade crossings, upgrade signals, renovate depots, extend centralized traffic control and build new track and bridges. Additional trains will be acquired as ridership increases. Capacity improvements, such as double tracking and high speed crossovers, to minimize conflicts between freight and passenger trains will also be provided. A significant effort will be focused on updating and eliminating grade crossings to avoid conflicts between rail and automobiles.

### Pacific Northwest High Speed Rail Corridor



### What kind of train will be used on the corridor?

Initially, improvements will be made to allow conventional diesel engine trains to run at higher speeds along the corridor.

Future efforts will focus on use of tilt technology high speed trains. Trains of this type are designed to run on existing freight rail track, eliminating the need to purchase expensive right of way to build additional track. Tilt technology allows travel up to 30 percent faster through curves than conventional trains, without discomfort to passengers.

### How will this benefit the Pacific Northwest?

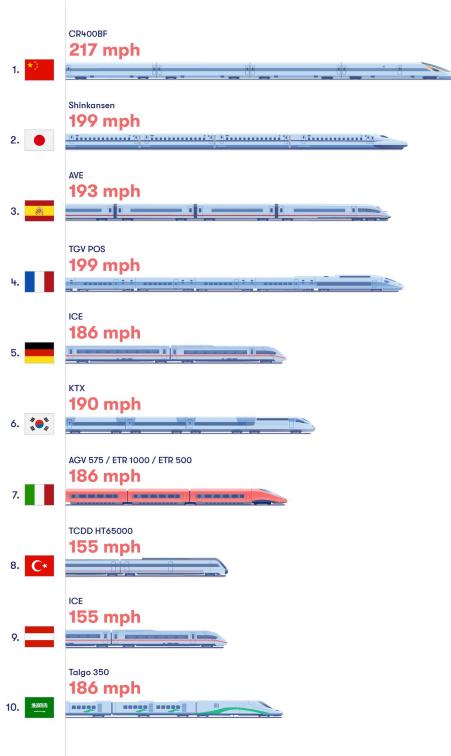
High speed rail is a key component in creating a more direct link between our major metropolitan cities and at the same time strengthening all transportation systems in the Pacific Northwest. It could cut pollution by reducing auto and jet travel. It could also extend the life of existing highway systems and has the ability to lessen airport congestion.

We no longer can meet traffic demands simply by building more freeways or continually adding traffic lanes to existing routes. A high speed rail corridor is a step toward a balanced transportation system that will help meet the Pacific Northwest's mobility and livability needs in the years to come.

# Building a Solid Foundation on *Cascades*

What do 9 of the world's 10 most advanced HSR systems have in common?

They were built atop conventional intercity passenger rail services similar to Amtrak Cascades.



# Building a Solid Foundation on *Cascades*

“Ultra-high-speed ground transportation is **not intended to replace the Amtrak Cascades** intercity passenger rail system.... Amtrak Cascades **trains serve 18 cities** in Canada, Washington and Oregon - more than an ultra-high-speed option would serve.”

WSDOT website:

[https://wsdot.wa.gov/planning/studies/  
ultra-high-speed-travel/ground-transportation-study](https://wsdot.wa.gov/planning/studies/ultra-high-speed-travel/ground-transportation-study)



© Cascadia Rail



# Building a Solid Foundation on *Cascades*

- Airports and highways depend on local nodes and routes for access
  - Similarly, HSR depends on a broad-based constituency with well-connected transit access



# AAWA's Vision

With a stronger emphasis on Amtrak Cascades, we believe Washington State can **revive its rail revolution** and get back on track toward **creating a truly world-class passenger rail network**.

Our vision has been [published](#) in [Speedlines](#), a newsletter of the American Public Transportation Association.



Contributed by: Patrick Carnahan – All Aboard Washington

## HOW WASHINGTON STATE CAN GET BACK ON TRACK TOWARD CREATING A WORLD-CLASS PASSENGER RAIL NETWORK

Amidst the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, interest in passenger rail has increased markedly across the United States. Most notably, with the Biden administration now in power, talk of our nation's "second great railroading revolution" has begun among advocates and transit blogs from coast to coast. But is this only our second, or even third, attempt at such a revolution? What about the one that started in the Pacific Northwest about 30 years ago, the one that aimed to create the most advanced rail system in North America?

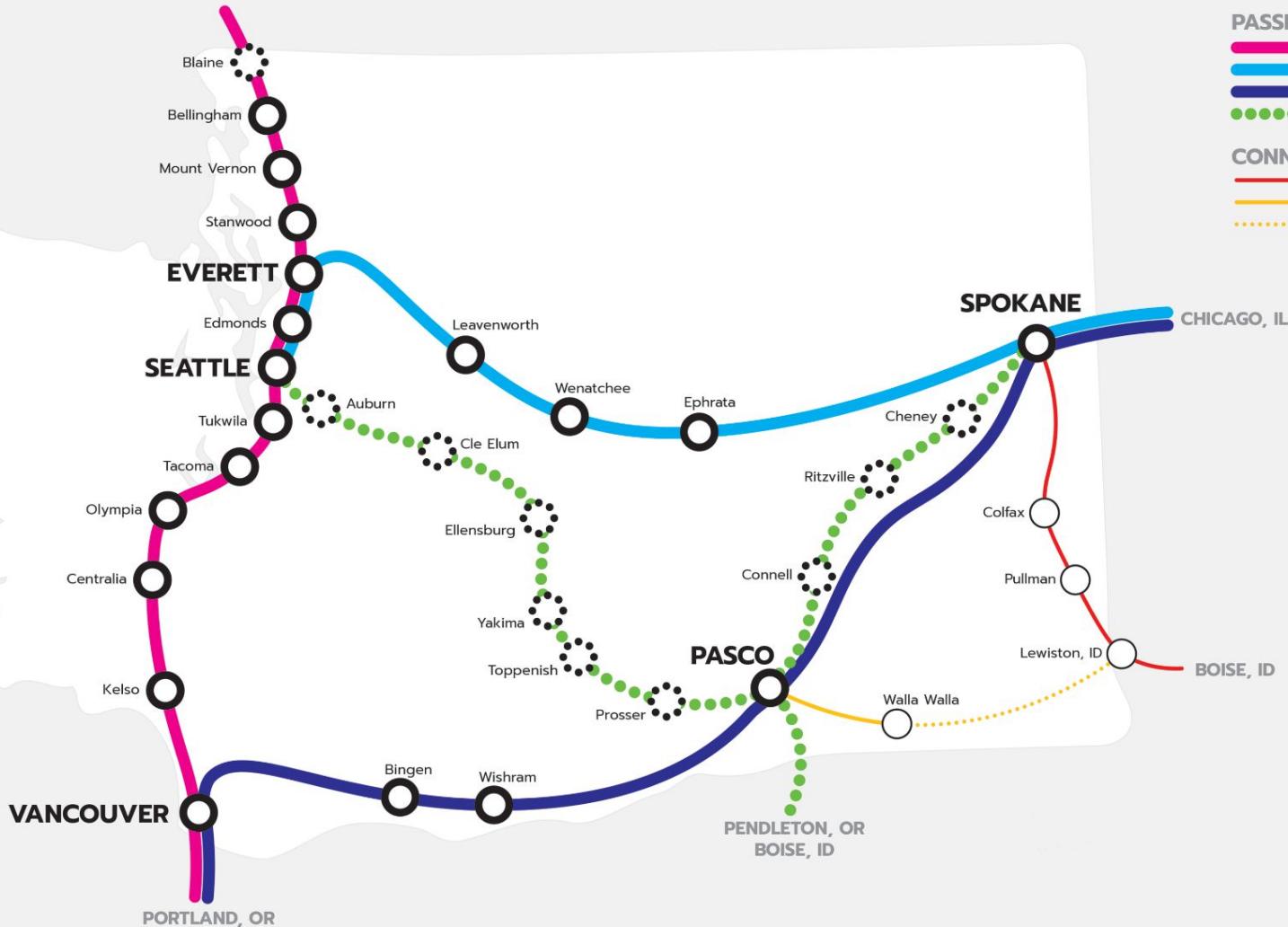
### WHERE IT STARTED

It was the early 1990s, and change was afoot in Western Washington. Many parts of the region were experiencing population growth in the 1980s, in addition to earlier declines of Boeing's space program and the logging industry. Bellevue and Redmond were feeling the impacts of Microsoft's meteoric rise. Amazon didn't even exist yet, but Washington's leaders were taking proactive steps to accommodate major economic and population growth. There was a new awareness of the environmental pollution caused by car dependence and the impossibility of "building our way out of" congestion with more highway lanes. The state was

steadily easing its way into implementing the 1990 Growth Management Act and several Commute Trip Reduction provisions, all to mitigate the impacts of a projected population boom in the Puget Sound. In 1991, the Washington State Legislature directed that a comprehensive assessment be made of the feasibility of developing a state-of-the-art High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) system. The next year, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) designated the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor, which runs through the heart of Seattle, as a high-speed rail (HSR) corridor.

With the results of the earlier HSGT study in, the 1993 Washington State Legislature passed RCW 47.79 and created something revolutionary: a goal to build a regional HSR network connecting Seattle with Portland, Vancouver, BC, and Spokane by 2030. As recommended by the study, Washington and Oregon began implementing funding models for passenger rail services in existing tracks between Everett and Eugene, OR, with the goal of increasing this service's top speed to 110 mph. From this, Amtrak Cascades originated, one of the nation's most successful intercity passenger rail services. Following the study's vision, the Washington State and Oregon Departments of Transportation both created bold long-range plans for Cascades that would dramatically increase their frequency and usefulness. Washington also studied the idea of using existing

VANCOUVER, BC



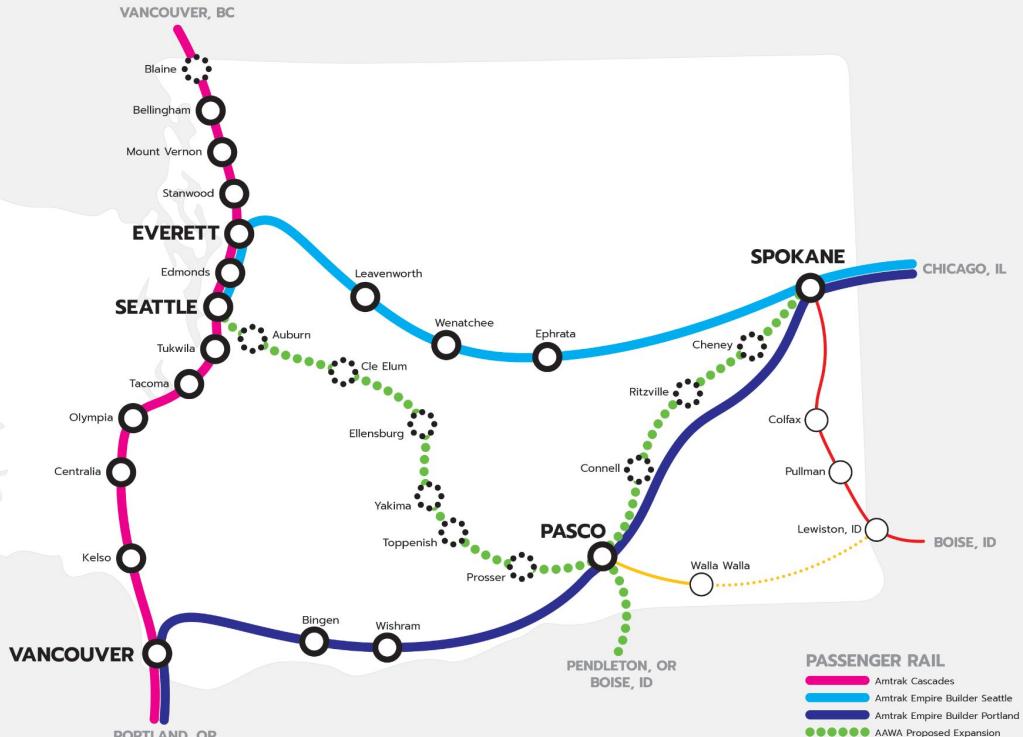
PASSENGER RAIL

- Amtrak Cascades
- Amtrak Empire Builder Seattle
- Amtrak Empire Builder Portland
- AAWA Proposed Expansion

CONNECTING BUS

- Thruway Pullman
- Thruway Walla Walla
- Thruway Walla Walla Proposed

# WASHINGTON VISION MAP



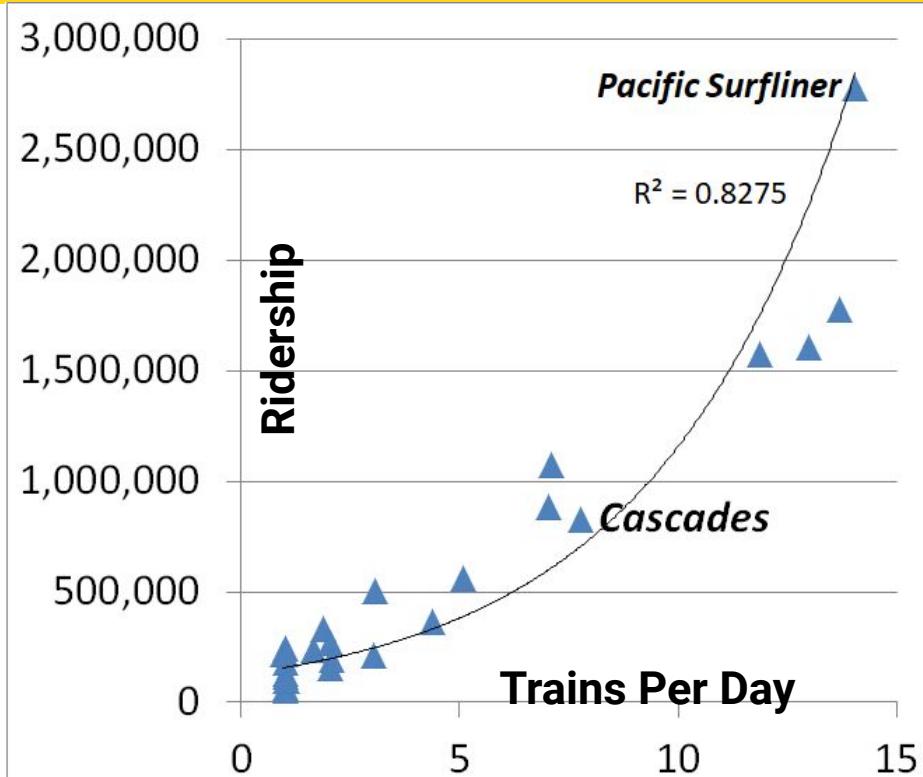
## AAWA's Vision

- Frequent Amtrak Cascades service
- Daytime East-West passenger trains
- Better connections to local transit and other modes
- More stations

# Restore Cascades Service

- **Restore pre-pandemic frequencies** as have ferries and local transit
- Increase Seattle-Portland Cascades service **from 4 to 6 round trips** as planned before 2017 DuPont accident
- If Cascades behaves like other rail corridors, 6 daily SEA-PDX round trips could easily generate **well over 1 million annual riders**

Cascades ridership in 2019 vs. other state corridors



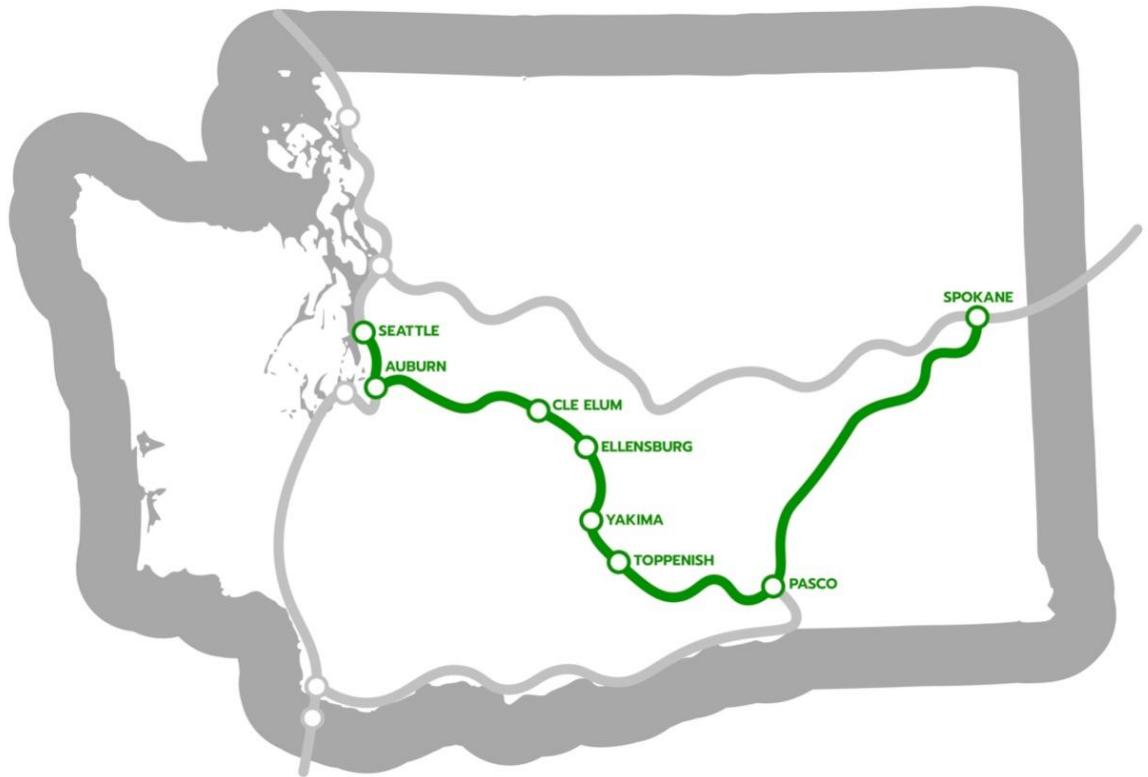
# Restore Service to NW Washington

**Offer Cascades service to Blaine serving Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom Counties.**

- Provide critical connections to the state ferries, better linking the mainland to San Juan and Island Counties
- Restart service to Vancouver BC when border reopens



# East-West Trains Across Stampede Pass



# 2020 JTC Feasibility Study

**Purpose:** To assess the feasibility of Spokane-Seattle service through Central Washington via BNSF Stampede Pass tracks (Tri-Cities, Yakima, Ellensburg)



# Public Support Is Exceptionally Strong

“Over 70% of participants agreed they would try the service”

“Several stakeholder meetings revealed support for the service and interest in the project amongst representatives of the surrounding cities of Yakima and Pasco and the Yakama Nation, as well as senior representatives of BNSF Railway”

“Only 4.4% of participants were opposed or strongly opposed to the service”

Final Report  
July 2020

Feasibility of an East-West Intercity Passenger Rail System for Washington State



Washington State Joint Transportation Committee  
Our ref: 23685001



steer

# STEER Recommendation

“... further work will be required to confirm or refine...findings, including service definition, track and station design along with possible ridership and financial outcomes.”

Final Report  
July 2020

Feasibility of an East-West Intercity Passenger Rail System for Washington State



Washington State Joint Transportation Committee  
Our ref: 23685001



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## **What is Needed Next?**

1. Restore service
2. Increase frequencies
3. Acquire equipment
4. Build a robust rail & transit network
5. Improve feedback channels

# 1. Restore Service to NW Washington

Consider specific criteria for restoring *Cascades* to Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom Counties.

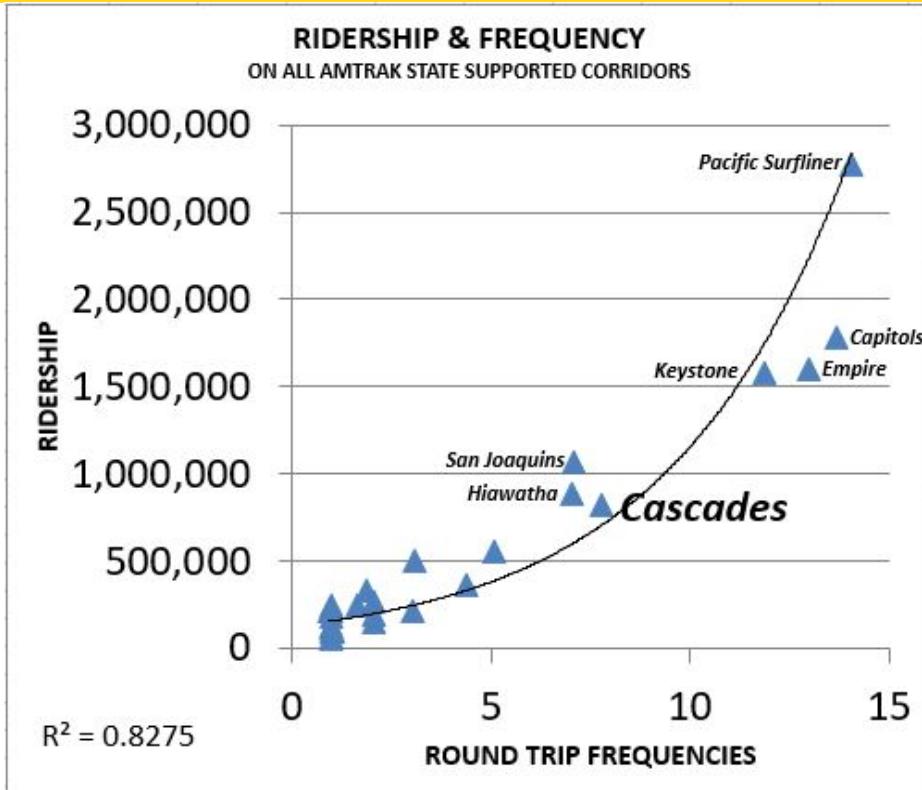
- Reevaluate connections to the state ferries, better linking the mainland to San Juan and Island Counties
- Restart service to Vancouver, BC when the border reopens



## 2. Increase *Cascades* Frequencies

- Restore pre-pandemic frequencies as have ferries and local transit
- Increase Seattle-Portland Cascades service **from 4 to 6 round trips** as planned before 2017 DuPont accident
- If Cascades behaves like other rail corridors, 6 daily SEA-PDX round trips could easily generate **well over 1 million annual riders**

Cascades ridership in 2019 vs. other state corridors



# 3. Acquire New Equipment

TRANSFORMING RAIL TRAVEL

**Venture trainsets**  
for Amtrak



#SUSTAINABLE  
MULTI-POWERED TRAINS  
DUAL-POWER TRAINS  
WHICH ELIMINATE EMISSIONS  
WHEN RUNNING ON CATENARY LINES

REDUCING EMISSIONS  
**70%** COMPARED TO TIER 1

INTRODUCING FIRST OF ITS KIND  
**HYBRID BATTERY POWER**

Proudly serving routes in eight states  
COMING 2024

**SIEMENS**

---

#AVAILABILITY

ACTIVE DATA-MONITORING

FULLY INTEGRATED DIGITAL DIAGNOSTICS

---

#PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

FULL AMENITY SEATING  
HIGH-TECH & CONNECTED

SHORTEST TRIP TIMES  
EXPANDED CAPACITY

ENHANCED ACCESSIBILITY  
FOR FOOD SERVICE, RESTROOMS, AND NEW DOOR SOLUTION WITH WHEELCHAIR LIFTS

EXPECTED TO ADD  
**1.5 MILLION**  
PASSENGERS ANNUALLY

---

#AMERICAN MADE

MANUFACTURED BY SIEMENS MOBILITY IN SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

**2100+** TEAM MEMBERS      **2.1MW**  
SOLAR POWERED

- Trainsets are being purchased for Amtrak and local services
- Estimated in service 2024-26

## 4. Build a Robust Rail & Bus Network

### HSR Must Build on Amtrak Cascades Service

- Limited resources + serious needs = **getting our priorities straight**
- More communities need to be connected to local and intercity public transportation services in order to achieve our goals
- Without a strong statewide transit and rail network, HSR will not have enough support to succeed at the polls



## 4. Build a Robust Rail & Bus Network

Obtain Federal grants, which require:

- a. **Benefit-Cost Analysis** to measure the value of:
  - Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
  - Safety benefits (reduced highway fatalities, injuries, property damage)
  - Reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
  - User benefits (reliability, accessibility, increased resilience)
  - Transportation to rural and underserved areas

## 4. Build a Robust Rail & Bus Network

b. Economic Analysis to measure the impact on:

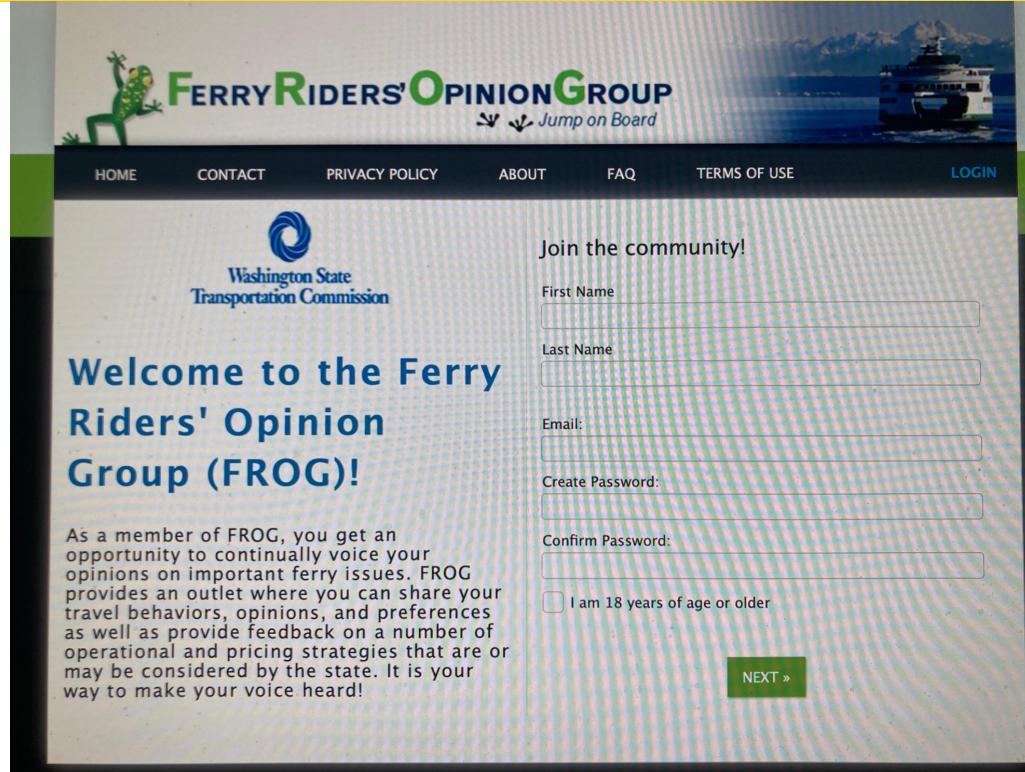
- Retail spending
- Business activity
- Tax revenues
- Jobs/wages
- Quality of life
- Property values

## 5. Improve Feedback Channels

Ferry riders have a WSTC feedback mechanism known as the Ferry Riders' Opinion Group.

We should establish a

**Passenger Rail**  
**Opinion Group**



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Ferry Riders' Opinion Group (FROG). At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for HOME, CONTACT, PRIVACY POLICY, ABOUT, FAQ, TERMS OF USE, and LOGIN. To the left of the navigation is a green frog icon and the text "FERRY RIDERS' OPINION GROUP" with a subtext "Jump on Board". To the right is a photo of a ferry ship on the water with mountains in the background. Below the navigation, there's a logo for the Washington State Transportation Commission featuring a blue circle with three dots. To the right, there's a section titled "Join the community!" with fields for First Name, Last Name, Email, Create Password, Confirm Password, and a checkbox for "I am 18 years of age or older". At the bottom right is a "NEXT »" button.

**FERRY RIDERS' OPINION GROUP**  
Jump on Board

HOME CONTACT PRIVACY POLICY ABOUT FAQ TERMS OF USE LOGIN

Washington State Transportation Commission

Welcome to the Ferry Riders' Opinion Group (FROG)!

As a member of FROG, you get an opportunity to continually voice your opinions on important ferry issues. FROG provides an outlet where you can share your travel behaviors, opinions, and preferences as well as provide feedback on a number of operational and pricing strategies that are or may be considered by the state. It is your way to make your voice heard!

Join the community!

First Name

Last Name

Email:

Create Password:

Confirm Password:

I am 18 years of age or older

NEXT »

# What Are We Asking For in Olympia?

1. Restore and expand Cascades service
2. Take the next steps for East-West trains
  - Benefit-Cost Analysis
  - Economic Impact Analysis
3. Create a Passenger Rail Opinion Group

# How Do We Make Things Happen?

1. Better local awareness
2. Support from your representatives
3. Stronger grassroots advocacy

## 1. Awareness

Talk with your family, friends, and neighbors about transportation issues.

Make sure everyone knows about  
East-West passenger trains!

## 2. Support from Representatives

Talk with your representatives in

- Local government
- Regional organizations
- Our state legislature
- Congress

### 3. Stronger Grassroots Advocacy

We are your voice in Olympia and beyond!  
Our work isn't possible without YOU!

How can you help?

- Volunteering
- Donations
- Leadership

## We Want to Hear From You!

1. What are the biggest challenges facing your community?
2. What are your top priorities for addressing these challenges?
3. Is there something we're missing from our vision that would help you?

# Snohomish County Discussion

How can we get these types of businesses informed of the benefits of passenger rail, and involved in efforts to improve service to Snohomish County?

- Hospitality industry
- Universities
- Businesses serving commuters
- Recreation
- Healthcare industry
- Others

How can we work to provide passenger rail service for those who need it, including:

- Those who need to travel for specialized medical care
- Those who cannot drive due to disabilities, or cannot afford to drive

How can we get elected officials interested in promoting passenger rail?



# YOU Can Help Make It Happen!

# \$7,000 by August 21

Our Fundraising Goal

Visit [aawa.us/impact/2021-train-trek/](https://aawa.us/impact/2021-train-trek/)  
to make the 2021 Train Trek happen

# Questions?

Contact us at  
**(360) 529-5552**  
**(509) 213-0070**

or

[aawa.us](http://aawa.us)



Amtrak's *Empire Builder* at Yakima, Aug. 1971. Photo: Drew Jacksich.