

Economic Stimulus—*Rail*

Rail projects fall into three potential funding packages

1. FHWA Funds: \$27.2 billion of which the state will receive \$492 million

This is the only source for small freight rail projects and we have been notified of 52 potential projects. Only 11 project proponents have so far submitted their application packet for evaluation. We understand that all the funds are being used for road projects. If it is decided to allocate funds to rail we recommend that we put \$5 m into an extra Freight Rail Assistance Program and we allocate based on the evaluation we do on the 52 projects which the legislature could approve in the usual way during the current session. We would have to comply with the requirement to obligate the funds in 90 days.

2. FRA Amount

There are two sections (**decision dates are much different to FHWA funds**):

1. **Amtrak – \$1.3 billion** (All funds will be submitted to Amtrak by 3/19/09 and they have to complete the projects by 2/17/2011).

Amtrak has one project on their list in Washington State – Amtrak Maintenance Facility in Seattle.

2. High Speed Passenger Rail Corridors - \$8 billion

- This was far greater than expected and so far there is no criteria. The USDOT has to issue a strategic plan for spending the funds by **4/17/09**. They then have until **6/17/09** to issue the guidelines and the competitive selection process.
- Funds have to be obligated by **9/30/2012 but there is no completion date**
- There are only 11 high speed rail corridors and the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor (Vancouver BC to Eugene, OR) is one of them.
- If an equal allocation is given to Washington state, we would receive over \$700 M.
- Our initial list based on a likely total package of \$1.5 B totaled \$454.7 M with shorter obligation timelines.
- The revised list includes additional projects based on the increased funding now available but until the criteria is released we are not certain how these projects will be placed in a competitive process.
- The list is ranked to reflect what can be done in the timeframe but also follows the Mid-Range Amtrak *Cascades* Plan. (It is developed without knowledge of the criteria to know how these would rank).
- As several states have few projects ready to start, (needing environmental work) we recommend applying for as many projects as possible that would be ready as it is likely we could receive extra funds.

Discretionary Funds - \$1.5B (decision dates are further into the future than FHWA funds)

- Applies to both passenger and freight rail. (Other modes are also eligible).
- Minimum project size \$20M—maximum project size \$300M. Maximum per state \$300M .

Criteria will be published **5/18/09**
Submissions have to be made by **8/16/09**
USDOT select projects by **2/17/2010**
Complete by **2/17/12**

Again without the criteria it is difficult to know how projects will be assessed. If for example there are additional points for a mix of modes in the application then we would examine how projects in Everett, Bellingham and Seattle may be linked together.

Currently we have only 3 non-passenger rail projects that are in excess of the \$20M lower limit.

1. West Vancouver Port Access—\$27.8M
2. Puget Sound & Pacific & Tacoma Rail/Blakeslee Junction—(we may be able to link to I-5 widening.) Rail element only Phase 1A and 1B—\$33.81M*
3. Northern Columbia Basin (Moses Lake) \$36.3M

Order based on cost/benefit analysis.

** This project may qualify under the high speed passenger rail funds but it will depend upon how stringent the criterion is when published.*

WSDOT Proposed Intercity Rail Passenger Projects (in recommended order) \$692.3 million total

1. Vancouver – Yard Bypass and W 39th Street Bridge **\$45.1 million**

Constructs capacity improvement that includes a bypass of freight yard and 39th Street grade separation. This project will improve schedule reliability and is part of the improvements for the 5th Amtrak *Cascades* round trip.

Construction is already underway on the project. There is currently \$115 million in funding available. Based upon current estimates, there is a shortfall of \$45.1 million that needs to be addressed to complete the project.

2. Tacoma-Point Defiance Bypass **\$60.0 million**

This project reroutes passenger trains to an inland route. The bypass is on an existing rail line that runs along the west side of Interstate 5, from south Tacoma through Lakewood and DuPont. It reconnects back to the BNSF Railway main line near Nisqually, on the east side of I-5.

Construction is scheduled to begin in early 2009. WSDOT currently has \$59.58 million programmed for its portion of the project, which will not be available for several years. Sound Transit is proposing using FTA stimulus funds for the D to M Street portion of this project. The outcome of their proposal is uncertain. Funds could be obtained from this program if Sound Transit is unsuccessful.

3. Stanwood Station **\$600,000**

A new station platform for Amtrak *Cascades* service will be constructed in Stanwood and will provide connections between local transit providers and Amtrak *Cascades*.

Construction of the station began in winter 2008. SEPA environmental documentation is complete. Construction would be completed by June 2009. Work could begin in less than 90 days. The current project cost estimate is \$4.4 million, which is \$600,000 greater than available state funding for the project.

4. Everett Curve Realignments and Storage Tracks **\$2.2 million**

This project realigns curves to improve speeds for passenger trains up to 50 mph, a 15-20 mph increase. Results in a 2-minute reduction in Seattle-Vancouver, BC schedule. Also guarantees the continued operation of the second train on this route.

There is currently \$14 million in state funds available for the project. Based upon current estimates, there is a budget shortfall of approximately \$2.2 million. The SEPA environmental documentation is complete. Environmental permitting is scheduled for completion in December 2008 with construction beginning immediately after permitting is obtained.

5. Cascades - Four New Train Sets **\$108 million**

This project would purchase new train sets with a seating capacity of approximately 300 each, providing necessary equipment for up to four additional daily Seattle-Portland round trips. In addition, the existing Amtrak *Cascades* fleet will be reconfigured to provide four train sets with a seating capacity of approximately 300 for consistency throughout the entire fleet.

The purchase of rail equipment is difficult to estimate. A larger order of equipment generally results in lower per unit costs. In addition, the ability to option into an existing production run could reduce unit costs by up to 25%.

6. Capitalized Maintenance

97.4 million

WSDOT has been working with BNSF to determine capitalized maintenance needed to bring the rail corridor up to a “state of good repair” that will virtually eliminate slow orders throughout the corridor. These funds would provide for a multi-year program that is anticipated to improve reliability and on-time performance from approximately 62% of today to more than 90% within five years.

7. Kelso to Martin’s Bluff Rail Project

The Kelso to Martin’s Bluff Rail Project has been planned in multiple phases:

7a. Phase 1 - New Siding—Milepost 105.5 to 110.0

\$47.1 million

This initial phase of the project adds a signalized arrival and departure track, associated switches and crossovers that would hold up to two full-length freight trains. The project would clear the main lines, providing capacity necessary for additional and more reliable Amtrak *Cascades* service.

7b. Phase 2 – Kelso to Longview Jct 3rd Main (MP 96.2 to MP 102.1)

\$110 million

This project phase builds upon other phases to construct a 4.5 mile 3rd main line between Kelso Station and Longview Jct. South. Three bridges would be constructed and a 5,000 foot storage would be converted to a main line. The project would allow passenger and freight trains to get around freight trains entering and leaving the highly congested Longview Yard area.

7c. Phase 3 – Kalama 3rd Main (MP 105.8 to MP 108.9)

\$64.9 million

This phase builds upon other phases to construct a 2.9 mile main line track around the Port of Kalama area. Completion of this work will allow passenger trains to get around freight congestion in the area.

8. King Street Station Track and Signal Upgrades

\$120 million

This project will allow access from all main lines to all station tracks and improve reliability for trains entering or leaving King Street Station from the north. Improvements include track upgrades, platform upgrades, switches and interlockings to allow for Amtrak long distance, Amtrak *Cascades* and Sounder Commuter trains to move in and out of the station simultaneously.

9. Blaine—Swift Customs Facility Siding

\$3.8 million

The project provides additional siding track to allow freight trains awaiting customs inspections to move out of the way of oncoming Amtrak *Cascades* trains. The siding will allow freight train inspections to occur off the main line, helping ensure that passenger trains operate on time.

The project was originally scheduled to begin construction in September 2008. NEPA documentation is complete and minor wetland permitting is pending with the Army Corps of Engineers. Final engineering design indicates that the \$6 million currently funded is not adequate to build the project. An additional \$3.8 million is necessary to build the project as designed. Construction can begin within 120 days.

10. Advanced Signal System/Positive Train Control

\$30.2 million

In conjunction with BNSF’s federally mandated implementation of Positive Train Control, this project would equip 16 passenger locomotives, control points and active warning system devices (grade crossing warning devices) with system interface to allow improved safety, rail capacity, reliability and potential for higher speed travel.

11. Centralia – New Crossover near China Creek

\$3.0 million

Construction of this crossover provides flexibility for trains to move between tracks when entering and departing Centralia’s Union Depot, ensuring that passengers can exit the train on the west side of the rail line adjacent to the station. The estimated construction cost of this project is \$3.0 million (2008 estimates).