

# 2021 Train Trek to the Tri-Cities



**August 14, 2021**

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



# 2021 Train Trek Sponsors



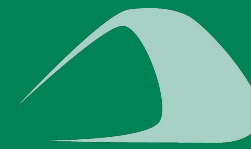
**BIG SKY  
PASSENGER  
RAIL AUTHORITY**

- John Bowen
- Boyce Burdick
- John Carlin
- David Clinton
- Edward Cohen
- Carl Fowler
- Maradel Gale
- Larry Glickfeld
- Robert Gorski
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- Mark Meyer
- In Memory of Jim Neal
- Janice Rudnitski
- Riley Shewak
- Jack Staples
- Gary Wirt
- Warren Yee
- Larry Yok

# 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

- [Spokane](#)

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. AAWA's Current Efforts
  - a. East-West Stampede Pass Rail Service
  - b. Restoring and Improving *Cascades* Service
3. How You Can Help

# What is World-Class Transportation?



# It's More Than Just Trains

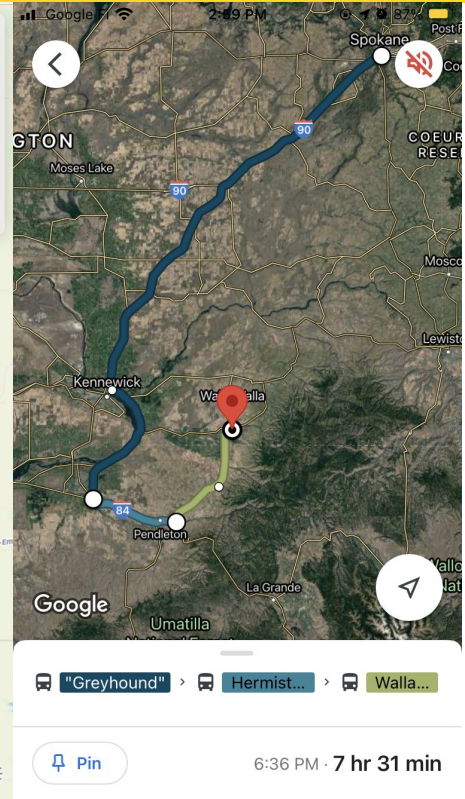
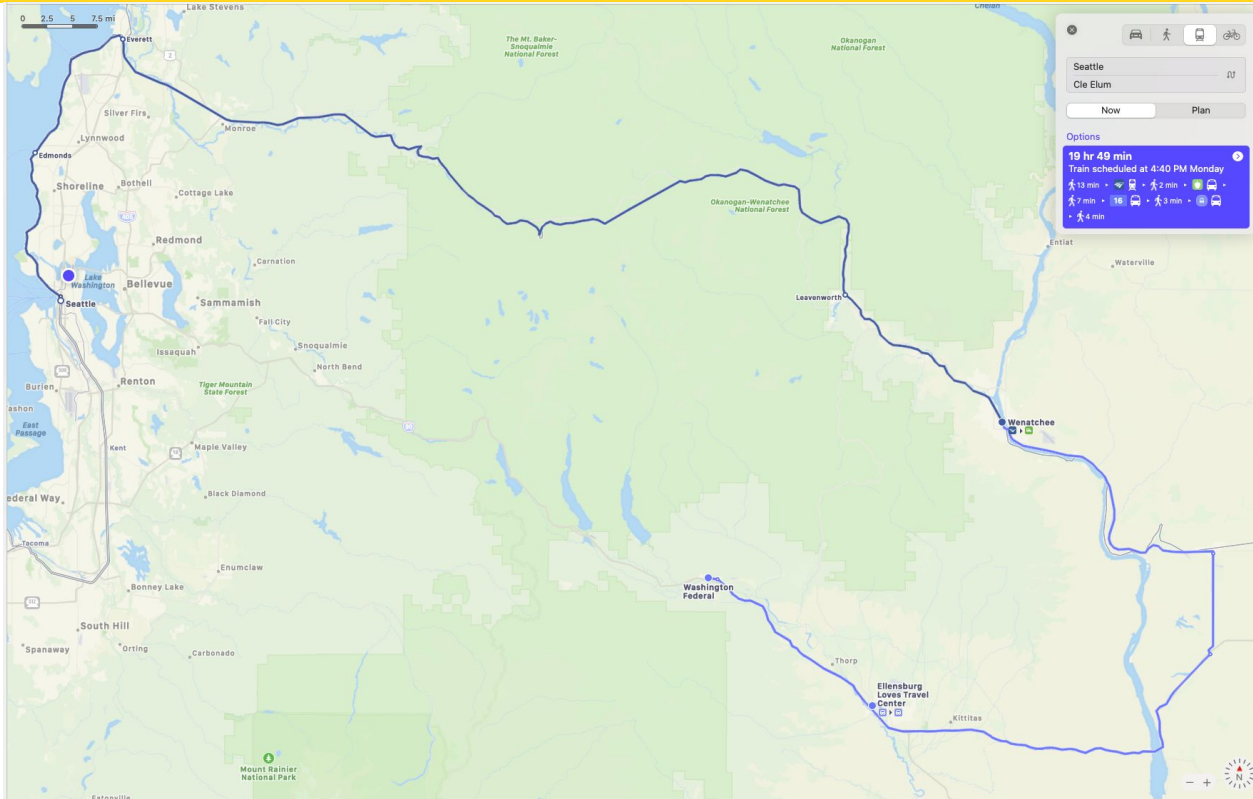


## **It Really Boils Down to One Simple Question**

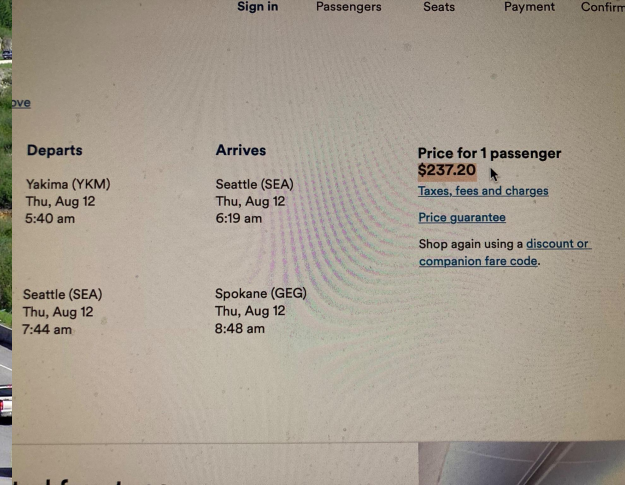
**Is it reasonably easy to  
get from here to there?**



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



# Today's Reality in Central & Eastern WA



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

## Central/Eastern Washington Transportation Issues

- East-West trains via Stampede Pass were discontinued in 1981
  - Seattle *Empire Builder* service was rerouted over Stevens Pass
- Greyhound bus service has declined across the Northwest
- SeaTac charter buses are costly
- Air service is expensive and generally lacks direct routing
- Highway construction, traffic, and closures hamper mobility

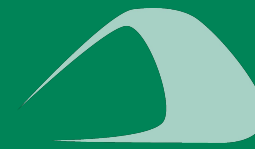


# Significant Cuts to Passenger Rail

During the pandemic, Amtrak service was cut statewide:

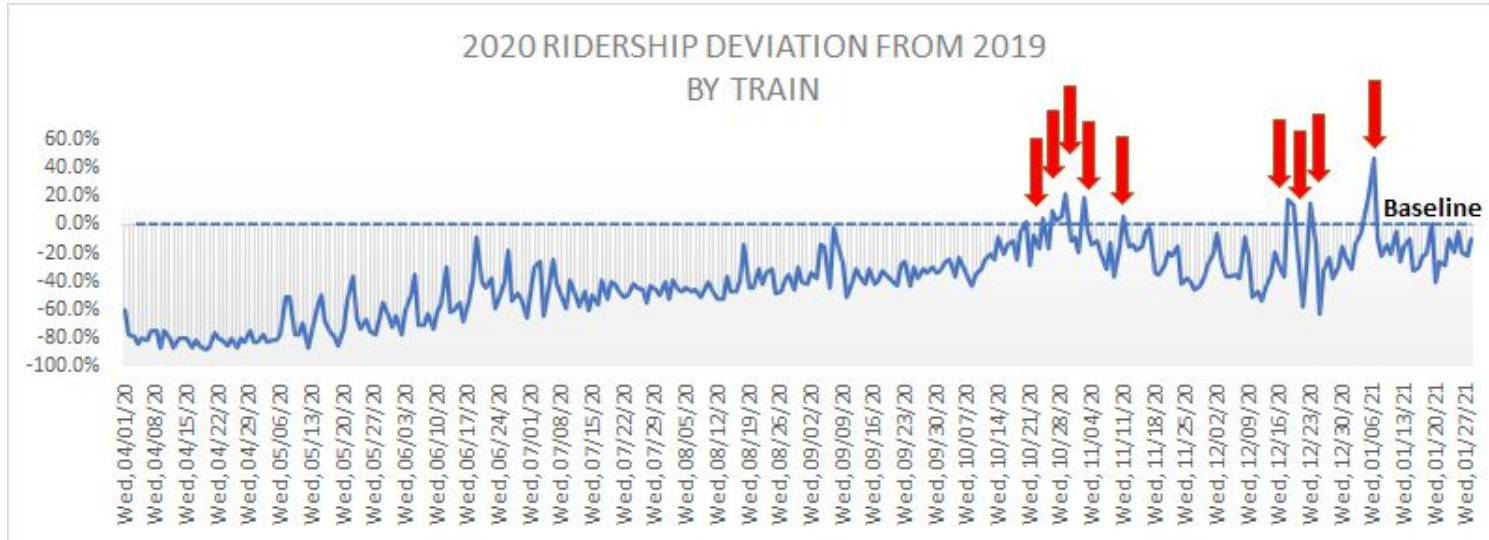
- Amtrak *Cascades* was **discontinued entirely** north of Seattle, (to Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom Counties); Seattle - Eugene service was cut to once daily (now 3 times daily)
- *Empire Builder* to Spokane and *Coast Starlight* to Los Angeles were cut to 3 times weekly (now daily)





# Ridership is Recovering!

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



# 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.

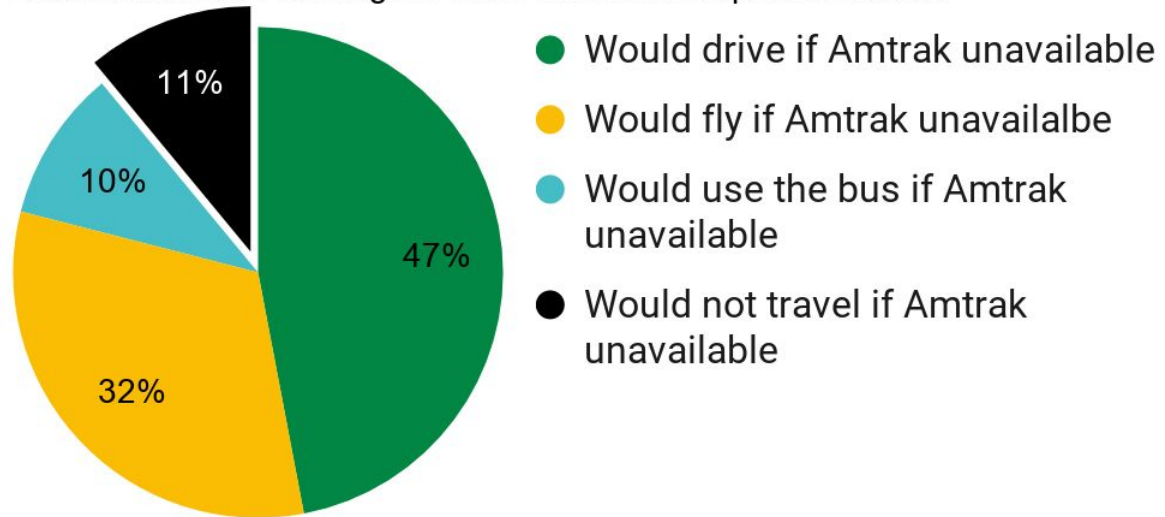
# Boosting Local & Regional Economies

Better *Cascades* trains facilitate and induce 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: some people live outside of the Puget Sound region!

And for those who do, it's really hard to get anywhere without a car.

**Urban communities aren't the only ones who 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 in new East-West and existing North-South *Cascades* corridors



© The Olympian

- Less U.S. DOT 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 keep kicking the can like usual?

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.

       1240



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



# AAWA's Vision

With prudent short-term investments, we believe Washington State can **revive its rail revolution** and get back on track toward **creating a truly world-class transportation network**.

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

## REVIVING A RAIL REVOLUTION:

Contributed by: Patrick Carnahan – All Aboard Washington

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

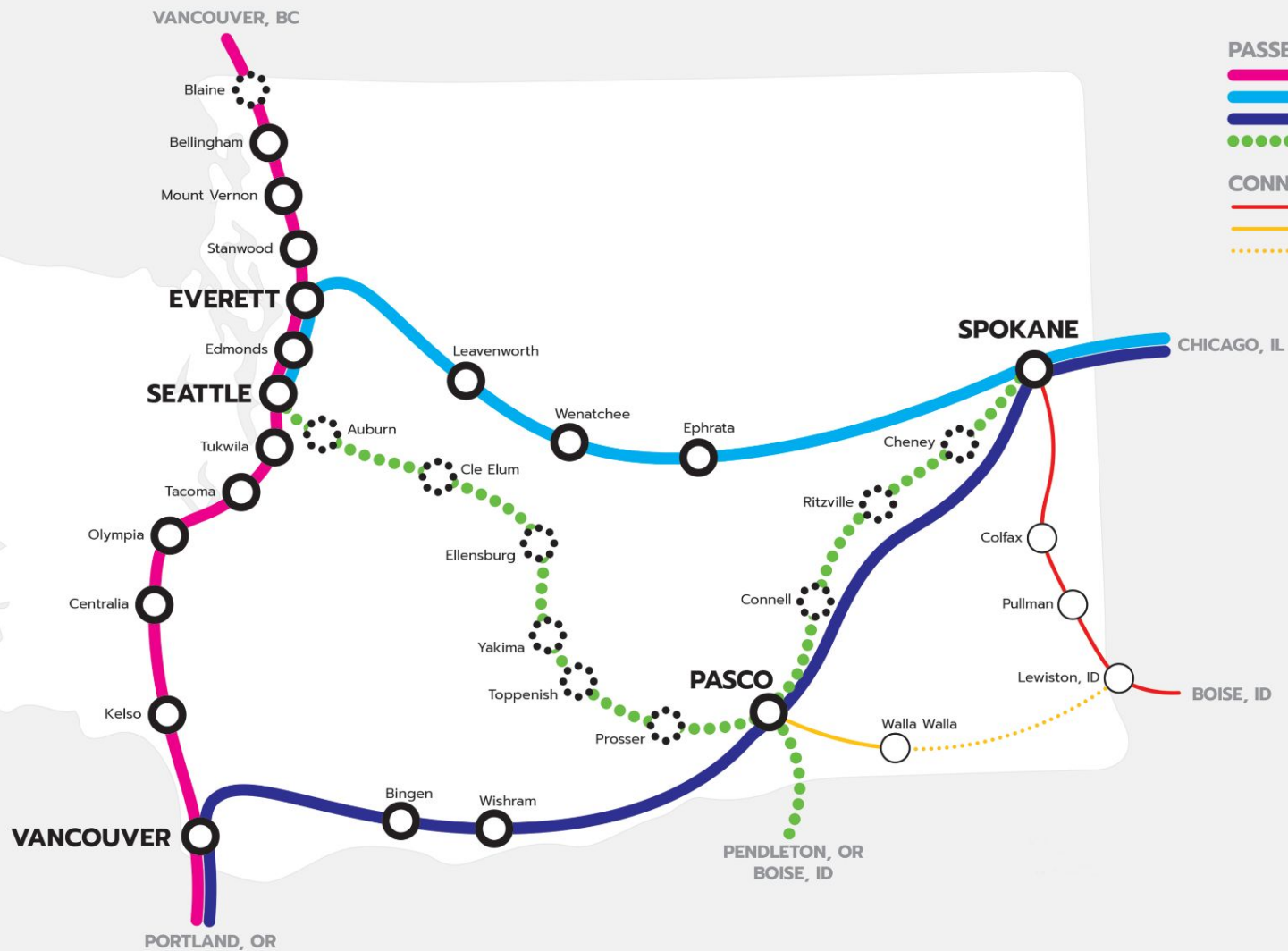
Amidst the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, interest in passenger rail has increased markedly across the United States. With an enthusiastically pro-rail federal administration now in power, talk of our nation's "second great rairoading revolution" has begun among advocates and transit blogs from 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 still recovering from the last recession 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 statewide '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 modern intercity passenger rail service on existing tracks between Vancouver 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



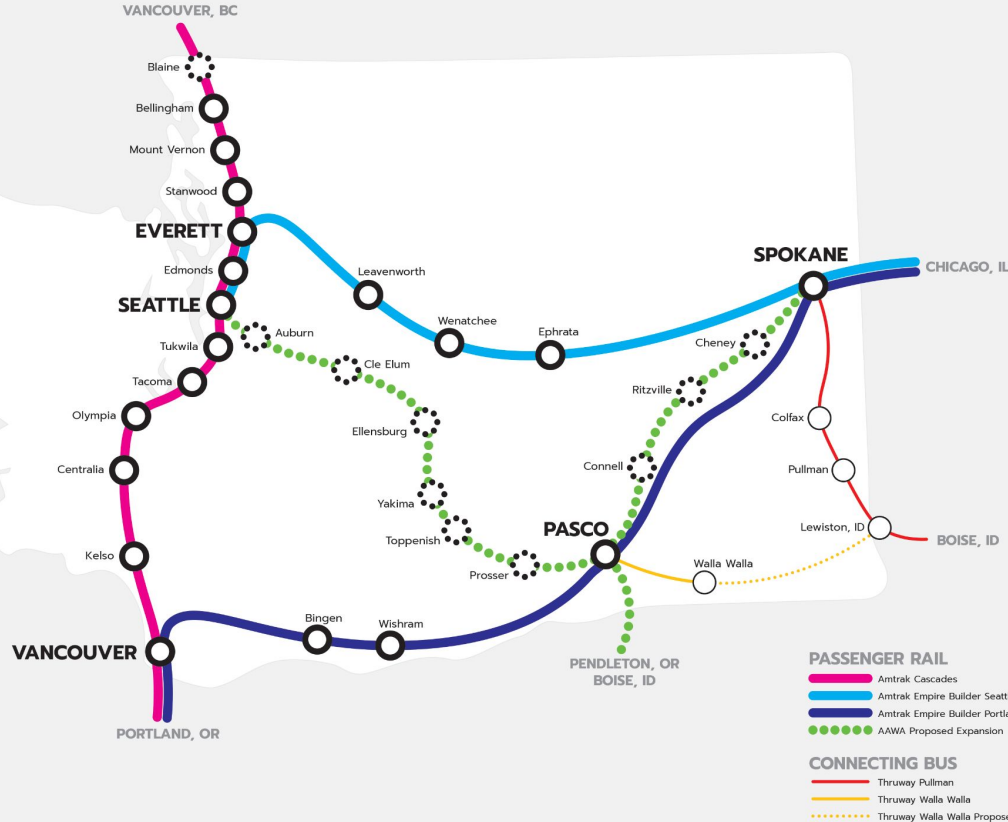
**PASSENGER RAIL**

- 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

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



# East-West Trains Across Stampede Pass



# Where East-West Started

Washington State

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## East-West Passenger Rail Feasibility Study: A Preliminary Analysis

AN ASSESSMENT OF REINSTATING PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE ON THE STAMPEDE  
PASS CORRIDOR

Noah Westbay & John Bowen  
Central Washington University  
December 2017

A report sponsored by All Aboard Washington (AAWA)

Final Report  
July 2020

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

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# June 2001 WSDOT Feasibility Study

“...analysis indicates that Amtrak service along Stampede Pass is physically and operationally feasible.”

Washington State

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**East-West Passenger  
Rail Feasibility Study:  
A Preliminary Analysis**

# 2017 Ridership Assessment Study

Marketing study showed considerable interest in, and need for, cross-state passenger train service through South Central Washington.

- Commissioned and funded by AAWA
- Performed by Central Washington University

[Available online at aawa.us - Stampede Pass Rail Study](http://aawa.us - Stampede Pass Rail Study)

AN ASSESSMENT OF REINSTATING PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE ON THE STAMPEDE  
PASS CORRIDOR

Noah Westbay & John Bowen  
Central Washington University  
December 2017

A report sponsored by All Aboard Washington (AAWA)

# 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)

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

# July 2020 JTC Feasibility Study (*STEER*)

## Key Findings

- The service is technically & operationally feasible.
- High level of community support (77%).
- Could generate ridership above or comparable to other Amtrak state-supported services (up to 205,000 annually).
- Cost (based on 2 Spokane-Seattle round trip trains daily):
  - Infrastructure improvements: \$140M
  - Equipment: \$280M
  - Annual operations: \$30M



# AAWA Comments re *STEER* Study

STEER comment	AAWA response
<p>Ridership model was developed using cell phone data and surveys of existing travelers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● STEER includes only ridership diversion from automobiles, not from other modes.</li> <li>● Amtrak data shows only 47% of rail passengers in Washington are diverted from cars.</li> <li>● 20% of Washingtonians do not have a driver's license.</li> </ul>
<p>Journey times will be long due to slow speeds and the high number of freight services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Slower travel time through mountainous terrain can be expected.</li> <li>● Primary use of the service is to travel to/from cities along the route, not necessarily from Seattle to Spokane.</li> <li>● This service is time competitive with other modes between many city pairs in Central/Eastern Washington.</li> </ul>

# AAWA Comments re *STEER* Study

STEER comment	AAWA response
Infrastructure cost includes 4 new stations, \$17M ea. (Cle Elum, Ellensburg, Yakima, Toppenish)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ellensburg and Toppenish stations are privately owned. Both are potentially available for passenger rail use.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure cost includes 2 platform extensions, \$6M ea. (Auburn, Tukwila)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Only needed if 8 coach trains are used</li> <li>● Could benefit Sound Transit</li> </ul>

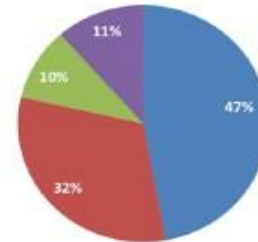
# Car Derived Ridership

- STEER's ridership estimates were derived solely from car trips avoided.
- This does not reflect Amtrak's own data regarding ridership in Washington state.

## WASHINGTON STATE

### Profile of Amtrak Customers

Travel Mode Preference if Amtrak Unavailable



- Would drive if Amtrak unavailable
- Would fly if Amtrak unavailable
- Would use the bus if Amtrak unavailable
- Would not travel if Amtrak Unavailable

Percent of population within 30 miles of a rail station served by Amtrak

**88%**

Percent of Riders who Would Not Travel if Amtrak was Unavailable



Income Distribution of Amtrak Travelers in Washington

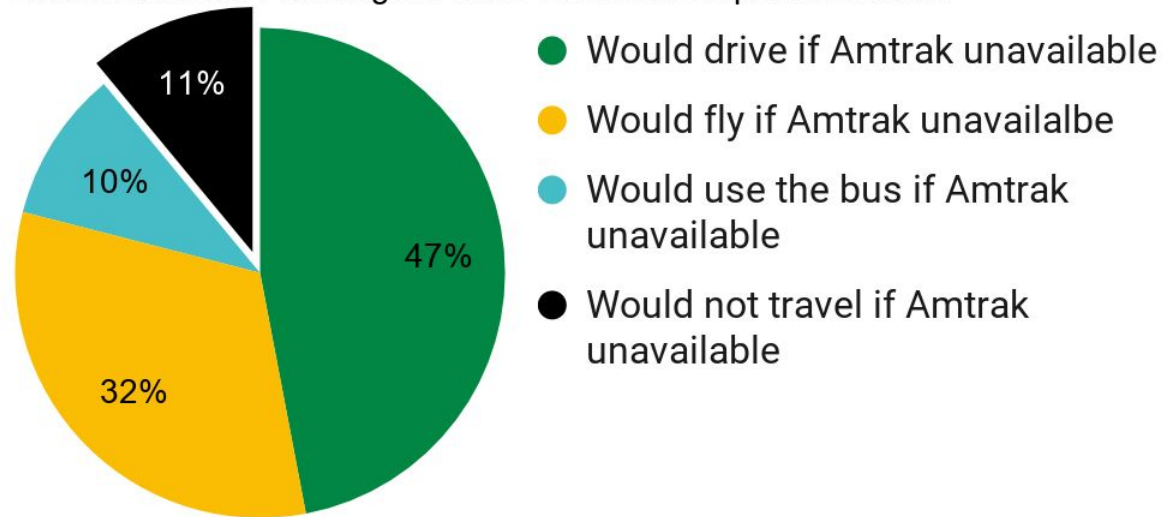


# Ridership is Underestimated

- Amtrak data says **less than half** of potential riders in Washington drive
- This data implies that the STEER report therefore underestimated ridership **by half**

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

Source: Amtrak Washington State Economic Impact Brochure





# 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 Are the Major Needs?

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

# 1. Restore Service to NW Washington

Restore *Cascades* service to Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom Counties as soon as possible.

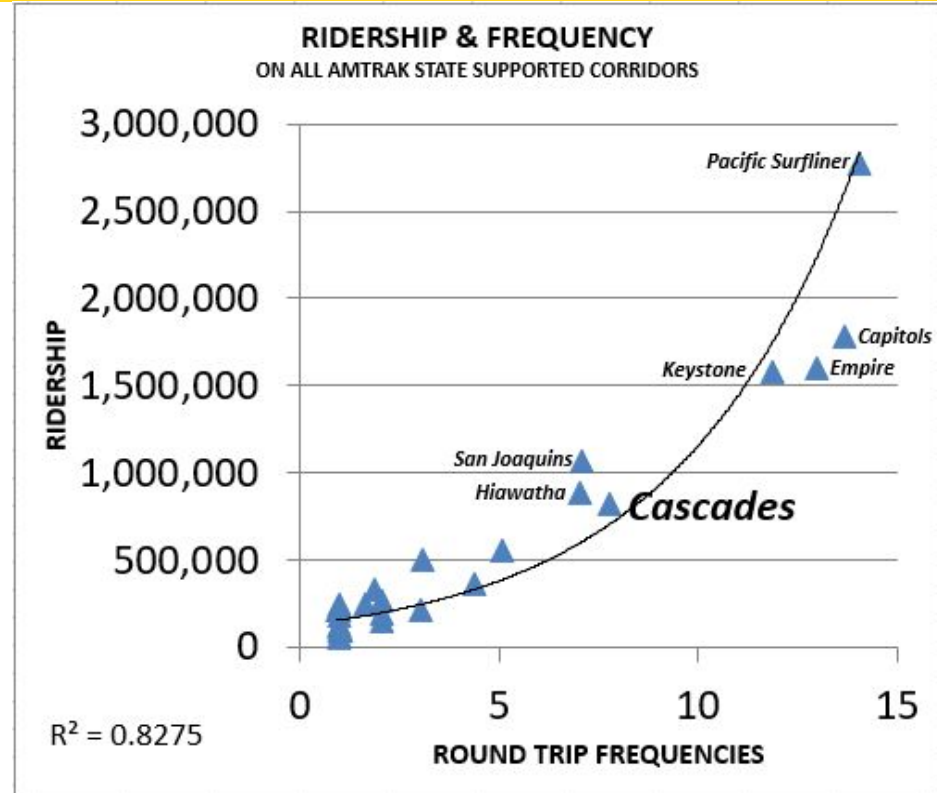
- Reevaluate connections to the state ferry system, better linking the mainland to San Juan and Island Counties
- Restart service to Vancouver, BC when the border reopens



## 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 SHORTER TRIP TIMES EXPANDED CAPACITY

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

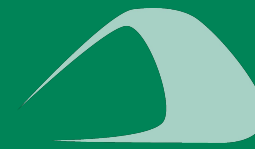
EXPECTED TO ADD  
**1.5 MILLION**  
PASSENGERS ANNUALLY

**#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 for East-West, 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

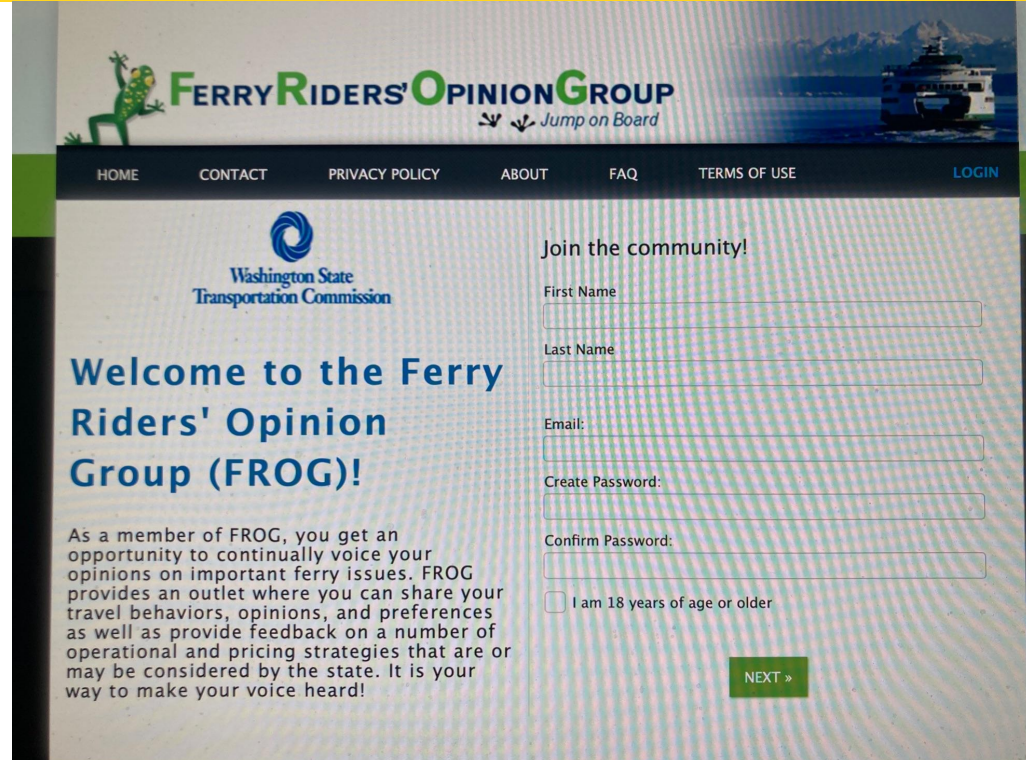
- b. Economic Analysis** to measure the impact on:
- Retail spending
  - Business activity
  - Tax revenues
  - Jobs/wages
  - Quality of life
  - Property values

# 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 registration page for the Ferry Riders' Opinion Group (FROG). At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, CONTACT, PRIVACY POLICY, ABOUT, FAQ, TERMS OF USE, and LOGIN. The main heading reads "Welcome to the Ferry Riders' Opinion Group (FROG)!" and includes a brief description of the group's purpose. To the right, there is a registration form with fields for First Name, Last Name, Email, Create Password, and Confirm Password. A checkbox for "I am 18 years of age or older" is also present. A green "NEXT »" button is located at the bottom right of the form area.

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

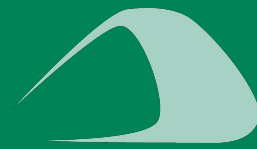
NEXT »

# What Are We Asking For in Olympia?

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

# How Can YOU Help 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 the East-West passenger rail project!**

## 2. Support from Representatives

Talk with your representatives in

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

## 2. Support from Representatives

### Key Talking Points

- Get our transportation priorities straight
  - Equity, economics, and environment
  - Accessibility and interconnectivity
- We need prudent short-term action
- Better East-West passenger rail and Amtrak *Cascades* are beneficial to the entire region

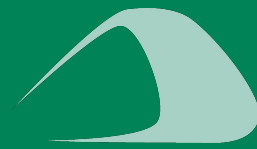
## 3. Stronger Grassroots Advocacy

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

How can you help?

- Volunteering
- Leadership
- Donations





# Volunteering

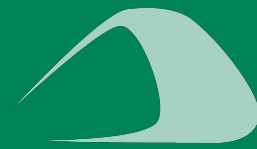
We need help in a number of areas

- Community Outreach
- Content Writing
- Newsletter Editing
- Event Planning

# Leadership

Join our Board of Directors and contribute to AAWA with

- Fundraising
- Organizational Policy
- Government Relations
- Networking



## Donations

# \$7,000 by August 21

Our Fundraising Goal for the 2021 Train Trek

Visit [aawa.us/impact/2021-train-trek/](https://aawa.us/impact/2021-train-trek/)  
to support our mission and work

## **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?

# Tri-Cities Discussion

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

- Wineries
- Hop growers
- Fruit growers
- Hospitality industry
- 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 to Central Washington?

# 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.