

# Cascades High Speed Rail Program

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# Cascades High Speed Rail Program

## Current program objectives

- Grow the Amtrak Cascades service
- Increase service reliability
- Develop the passenger rail corridor for future growth

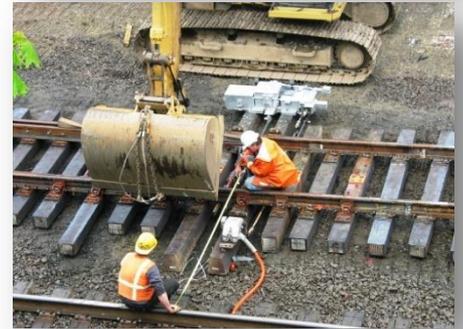
## Program outcomes

- Two additional daily round trips between Seattle and Portland, for a total of six
  - Additional service starts in 2017
- Reduced travel time
- Improved on-time performance

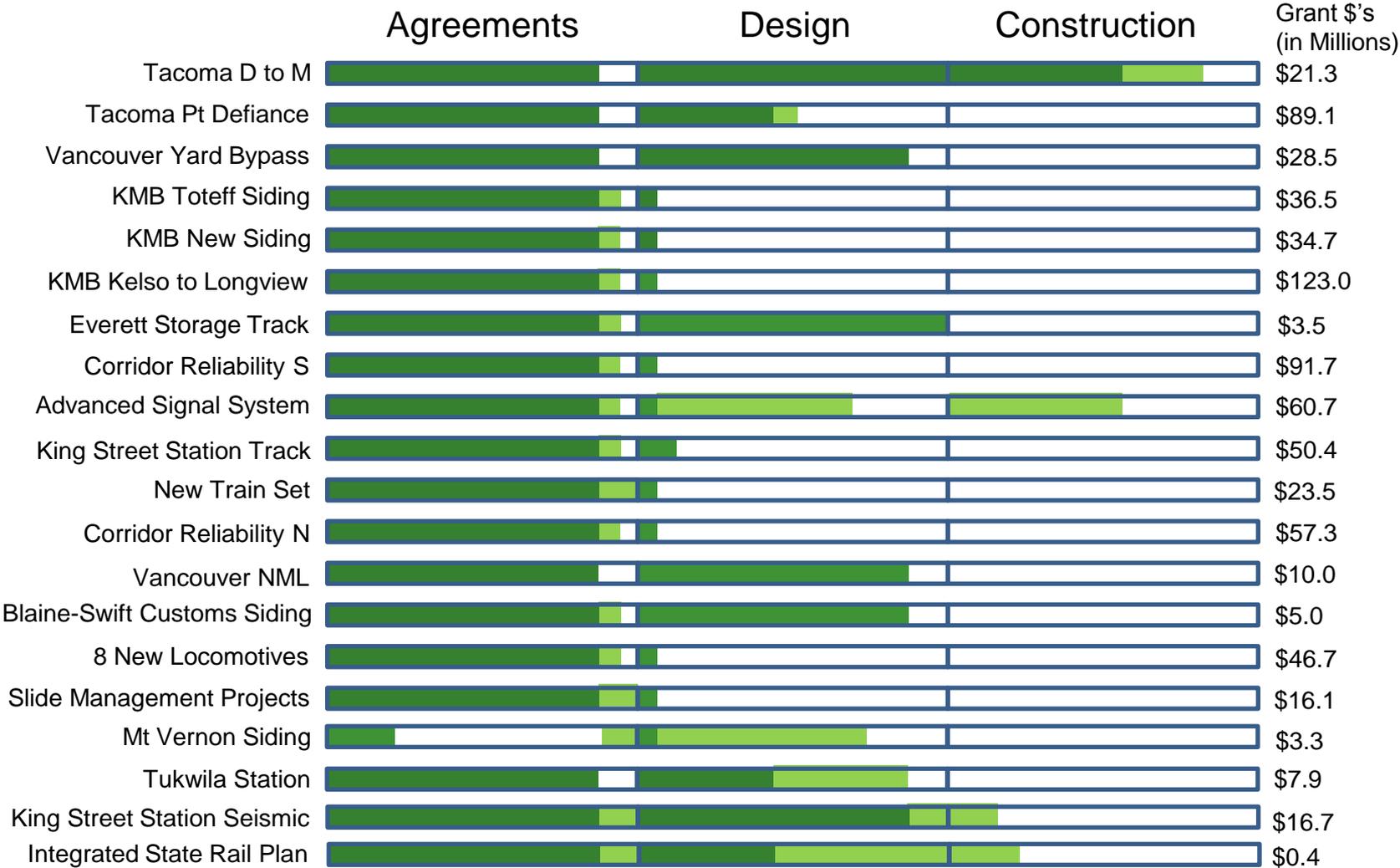


# Cascades program federal funding

- \$791.6 million in federal high-speed rail funds.
- Supports overall program goal of more frequent and reliable Amtrak Cascades service.
- Builds additional rail line capacity and upgrades tracks, utilities, signals, passenger stations and advanced warning systems. Also purchases new locomotives and one new train set.
- Supports skilled construction and operating jobs for railroad crews and regional contractors.



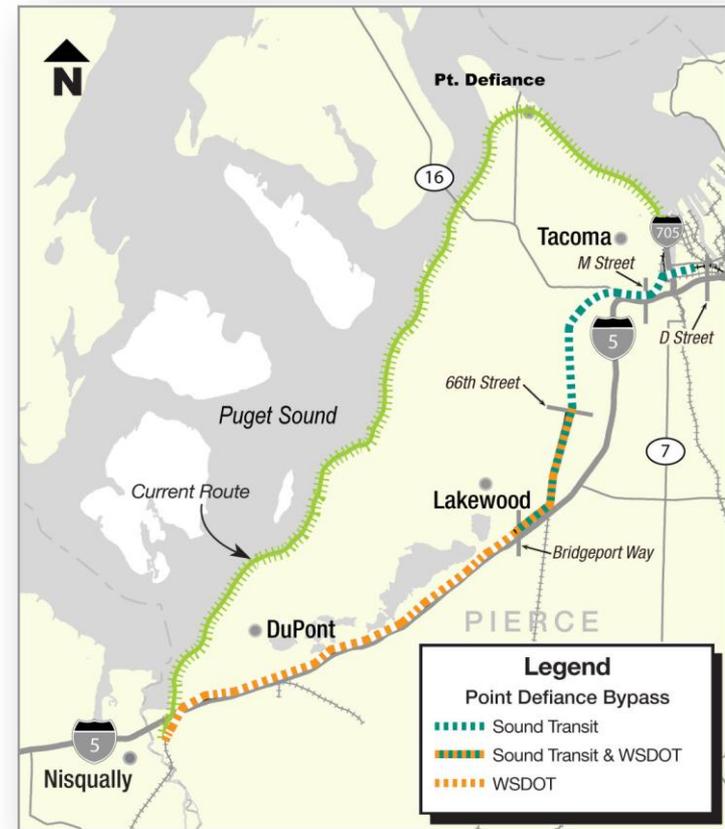
# Update - Rail Capital Projects with Federal Funding



Progress - May 2010 through Dec. 2011:   
 Progress - Jan. 2012 through March 2012: 

# What is the Point Defiance Bypass Project?

- Existing line along 100 year-old freight corridor owned by Sound Transit.
- Part of bypass route also used for “Sounder” commuter service.
- Work includes track upgrades, new tracks, safety equipment, etc.
- Results in added round trips between Seattle and Portland and improved reliability (on-time performance).



# Why is WSDOT proposing to use the bypass route?

- Current route around Point Defiance
  - Shared track with freight - limited capacity
  - Conflicts with freight traffic
  - Subject to mudslides
  - Unable to accommodate future growth of both freight and expanded passenger service
- Future growth and consumer demand
  - Ridership steadily increasing
  - Improving on-time performance

# Project Timeline

- Finalize reports, begin EA development – spring/summer 2012
- Local jurisdiction council briefings – Early fall 2012
- Publish Environmental Assessment – Late fall 2012
- Public comment period – Fall 2012
- FRA decision – Spring 2013

# Amtrak Cascades passenger rail service



- Jointly funded by OR, WA and Amtrak
- 300 mile corridor in WA; 467 miles total between Eugene, OR and Vancouver, B.C.
- Top speeds of 79 m.p.h. on shared BNSF track using “passive tilt” Talgo equipment
- Improves travel choices, preserves roadway capacity



# Amtrak Cascades Ridership and Revenue

- Ridership grows in 2011
  - Double-digit ridership growth in 2011 and record-breaking summer totals
- Amtrak Cascades ridership in 2011
  - Seattle to Portland Segment: 590,474 passengers
  - Total Corridor (Eugene, OR to Vancouver BC): 847,709 passengers
- Growing ticket revenue
  - 2010: 28.6 million
  - 2011: 30.3 million
- Amtrak Cascades Washington farebox recovery increasing
  - 2009 – 54%
  - 2010 – 64.2%
  - 2011 – 65.8%



# Operational Funding Challenges

- Passenger Rail Investment and improvement Act (PRIIA Section 209)
  - Federal mandate shifts 100% of costs from Amtrak to states
  - An additional \$3 - \$5 million may be required in 2013 to maintain existing Amtrak Cascades rail service
- New maintenance fees
  - WSDOT committed ~\$3 million per year with state funds for 20 years for passenger rail maintenance
- Preclearance at the international border

# Questions?

For more information on the Cascades High Speed Rail Program, please contact:

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