

Passenger Rail Ridership

Number of state-supported passenger rail and bus riders in the Willamette Valley

Our strategy

ODOT's Public Transportation Division (PTD) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) co-fund and contract with Amtrak to provide passenger rail service (Amtrak Cascades) in the Pacific Northwest from Eugene, OR to Vancouver, B.C. This coordination supports passenger rail as a part of the statewide multimodal transportation network in Oregon and provides connections for regional travel on passenger rail.

PTD also funds an intercity bus route along the Portland-Eugene corridor as part of its POINT service. This POINT route is contracted with a private transit company.

Both Amtrak Cascades and POINT are an integral part of the statewide transit network and supplement the national passenger rail network.

ODOT's goal is to provide transportation options along this corridor that are reliable and safe. One indicator is the number of riders on the Amtrak Cascades and POINT services.

The Amtrak Cascades service was accepted into the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development (CID) Program. The CID Program is a comprehensive planning and development program that will help create a pipeline for

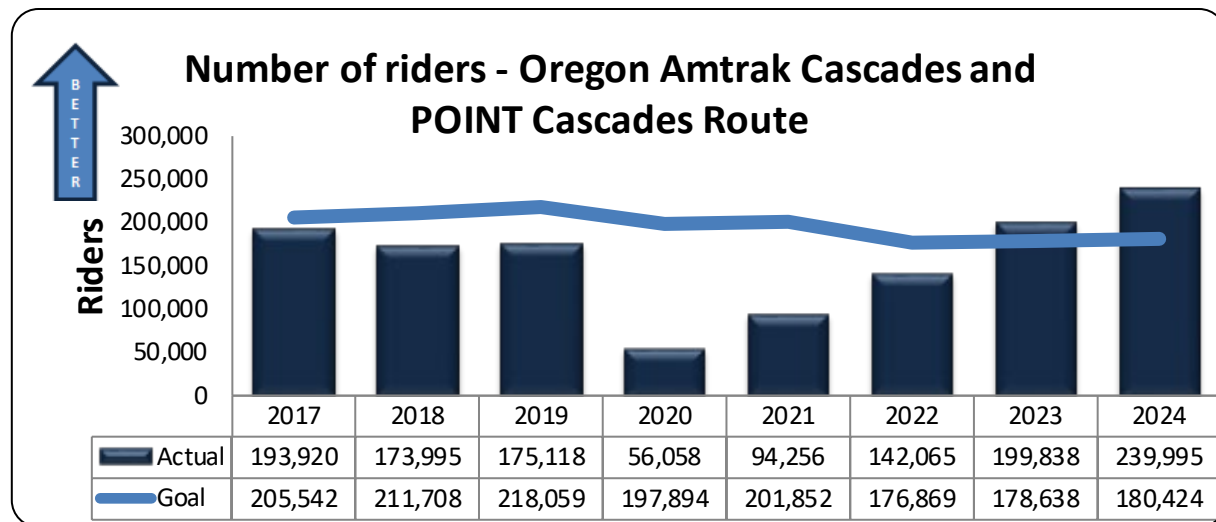
passenger rail projects. Entry into the CID Program enables ODOT to be competitive for federal funds for infrastructure improvements to improve service reliability. Increasing ridership, reliability, and the passenger experience are ODOT priorities.

About the target

A new ridership goal began in 2022 based upon 2019 actual ridership with a goal of a one percent annual increase. Both 2023 and 2024 ridership exceeded the goal.

How we are doing

Amtrak Cascades ridership growth continued in 2024 as ridership in Oregon exceeded the goal for the second year. Ridership exceeded the previous 2012 record by 15 percent. The Amtrak Cascades corridor had the highest ridership growth of all state-supported



Fact

Oregon and Washington select locally sourced food and beverages to be served on the Amtrak Cascades service.

Passenger Rail Ridership, cont.

services in 2024, with a 27 percent growth in ridership. Passenger rail was 20 percent higher in 2024 compared to 2023.

Factors affecting results and recommendations to improve

ODOT monitors ridership on Amtrak Cascades trains to determine which trains attract the most passengers. ODOT and WSDOT work with the host railroads and Amtrak to adjust train schedules to achieve maximum ridership as necessary. To the maximum extent possible, the POINT schedule is coordinated with Amtrak Cascades trains to provide seamless connections at Union Station while providing additional travel options throughout the day.

An additional two round trips between Portland and Seattle began in December 2023 (for a total of six round trip options), and existing train schedules were adjusted to accommodate this new service. The morning train out of Eugene moved from 5:30 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. The new departure time has been successful with high ridership. In response to the change, the POINT added an early morning option to ensure Oregonians could continue to connect to the northbound morning train out of Portland.

Amtrak and ODOT continue marketing and communications to increase awareness of the service and amenities offered. ODOT promoted the Amtrak Cascades at the Portland Rose Festival in 2023 and 2024. ODOT regularly interacts with riders via social media and an interactive website, AmtrakOregon.com.

ODOT works closely with Amtrak's Pricing and Revenue Management group to monitor fares, ridership and capacity. Based on the performance of the service, this group provides recommendations to ODOT and WSDOT regarding the fare structure and potential fare increases.

In September, POINT fares were lowered to approximately match the train's dynamic fare pricing. This coincided with a dramatic ridership increase with October-December being more than 30 percent higher than the all-time average for this period. November 2024 smashed the route's all-time monthly ridership record with over 9,000 riders, surpassing the previous May 2014 record.

ODOT works with the host railroads such as Union Pacific and BNSF, and with Amtrak to identify and prioritize infrastructure investments to make train schedules more reliable. ODOT plans to apply for federal grants as they become available to fund infrastructure projects to improve on-time

performance, support increased service frequency, and improve the passenger's travel experience.

PTD continues analyzing ridership and performance of the train and bus schedules to best meet the needs of the traveling public.

About the data

PTD analyzes monthly ridership and on-time performance data provided by Amtrak and by MTRWestern for POINT ridership.

Contact information

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Data sources

Amtrak
MTRWestern