OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Central & Eastern

Oregon Station Report

2019

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Cover Photos:

Top — Amtrak *Pioneer* at The Dalles' 2nd Street Station (Dan Haneckow)
Bottom Left — Ontario OSL Depot
Bottom Right — Cascade Locks Station Site

Central & Eastern

Oregon Station Report

ODOT Rail & Public Transit Division
September 2019

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Background

The *Central & Eastern Oregon Station Report* examines the passenger rail markets along the Union Pacific Railroad's Portland, La Grande, and Huntington Subdivisions that combine to run through the Columbia River Gorge and Eastern Oregon. The Amtrak *Pioneer* was the last train to serve this stretch of the UPRR mainline between 1977 and 1997, a long-distance service that connected Seattle and Chicago via Ogden/Salt Lake City and Denver. The goal of the project was to inquire to the conditions of the eight former *Pioneer* stations in Oregon and make preliminary conclusions regarding their capability of hosting future Amtrak passenger rail services. Additionally, the *Oregon Station Report* looked to identify possible station locations that were not served by the previous *Pioneer* service, either as additional stops or replacements for former stations that have uncertain hosting capabilities. The conclusions of the *Oregon Station Report* provide recommendations for which cities are best suited to host contemporary passenger rail service based on the condition of their station and the strength of the each city's market for passenger service. Oregon Department of Transportation's Rail and Public Transit Division completed the *Oregon Station Report* in September of 2019.

Scope

The *Oregon Station Report* is not intended to cover all aspects of regarding the viability of passenger rail in Eastern Oregon. The conditions and viability of station sites along the UPRR mainline, generally the locations served by the Amtrak *Pioneer*, is the focus of this report. While the *Pioneer* was the last passenger service to operate on the route, running between Seattle and Denver, the contents of this document are focused on resources within the State of Oregon and do not consider any aspects of the *Pioneer's* route outside of Oregon. Additionally, while the *Pioneer's* operation is used as the primary source of context for the *Oregon Station Report*, its contents are not limited to a conversation of reinstating the *Pioneer*, or similar long-distance service. As discussed in later chapters, there may be multiple options for passenger service along the route.

Due to the limited scope of the *Oregon Station Report*, there are many significant subjects not covered in this report regarding the implementation of passenger rail in Eastern Oregon. The following areas of interest, as well as any other topics not found within this document, are intentionally left for future study:

- Operating Plan
- Securement of Equipment
- Funding of Operation

- Ridership & Revenue Projections
- Capital Costs of Implementation
- Public Benefits
- Environmental Impact

The *Oregon Station Report* was created for reconnaissance purposes for the Oregon Department of Transportation. Other entities, such as Amtrak, other government bodies, or the Union Pacific Railroad, did not have a role in the creation of this document. The information found within the report is the result of site visits to all of the discussed station sites, as well as further research. The *Oregon Station Report* is not a complete analysis of the potential passenger corridor through Eastern Oregon, but rather a preliminary report that provides a base for further more comprehensive studies at a future date. The drafting of the *Oregon Station Report* does not indicate, or presume, that reinstatement of passenger service to Eastern Oregon is imminent, or that ODOT, Amtrak, or any other government body, are undertaking such a process.

Context

History of Passenger Rail on the Route

Passenger service began upon the completion of the through route across Oregon in the 1880s, the first services offered by railroads such as the Oregon Rail & Navigation Co. and the Oregon Short Line, which later became subsidiary railroads of the UPRR. In the early twentieth century, the UPRR began operating passenger trains under their brand, the most notable were the *Portland Rose* and *City of Portland*. The *Portland Rose* made intermediate stops, while in its earlier years the *City of Portland* provided express service with no intermediate stops in the state east of Portland. Both trains were discontinued in 1971 with the founding of Amtrak.

The Amtrak *Pioneer* was inaugurated in 1977, initially providing service between Seattle and Salt Lake City while utilizing Amfleet equipment; passengers were about to transfer at Ogden to the *San Francisco Zephyr* for connecting service to/from Chicago. Amtrak introduced bi-level Superliner cars to the *Pioneer* in 1981, which allowed for through service to/from Chicago that did not require passengers to transfer trains in Ogden. In 1983, the *Zephyr* was rerouted through Colorado (Rio Grande Route), moving the transfer of *Pioneer* through cars from Ogden to Salt Lake City. Further changes to the service came in 1991 when the *Pioneer* was rerouted through Wyoming (Overland Route), moving the *Zephyr* connection from Salt Lake City to Denver. In 1993, reductions in Amtrak's federal appropriation resulted in the *Pioneer's* designation as the thrice-weekly service. Amtrak made further cuts in 1997, eliminating the *Pioneer* service.

In the two decades since the train's demise, multiple grassroots attempts have been made in support of reinstating the *Pioneer,* as well as Congressional support which led to a study (2009) on the possibility of future Amtrak service on the route as an inclusion of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008.

Passenger Rail Options

The Central and Eastern Oregon communities covered within the *Oregon Station Report* could be served by two kinds of passenger rail: long-distance or intercity trains. Long-distance trains in the United States are operated in-full by Amtrak, making up most of their national network. These trains travel over 750 miles, with some covering a distance of over 2,000 miles, and typically run once a day. Intercity trains, alternatively referred to as corridor trains, cover distances less than 750 and usually run between two cities or through a densely populated corridor. The PRIIA Act of 2008 made intercity trains financially supported mainly by the states where they operate. State-supported intercity services, such as the Pacific Northwest's Amtrak *Cascades*, are usually jointly operated between state transportation agencies and Amtrak. External studies have found that the most successful intercity corridors are generally within 500 miles of length. These trains run typically more than once per day.

Historically, passenger trains along the discussed route have been long-distance services. The Amtrak *Pioneer* provided long-distance service to Denver, before continuing with the *California Zephyr* to Chicago. However, according to the last timetable of the Amtrak *Pioneer*, the segment of the route between Portland and Boise is 491 miles; about 410 of the miles between the cities are within Oregon. This distance allows for the possibility of an intercity corridor between Portland and Boise.

Modern Amtrak Station Standards

Amtrak's standards for passenger rail stations have changed since the last passenger trains operated along the route in the late 1990s to provide increased levels of passenger comfort, safety, and accessibility. The *Oregon Station Report* examines the basics presented in Amtrak's "Station Program and Planning Guidelines," with modern expectations for which amenities to include at newly-built or refurbished stations.

The Amtrak guidelines also provide four categories of station types. All of the potential stations along the route through Eastern Oregon would fall under either Category 3 or Category 4. Both classes are for low-density stations, with most of their operational capacity revolving around platform components. Category 3 stations utilize the interior spaces of

depots that are overseen by a non-Amtrak caretaker, while Category 4 stations rely solely on a waiting shelter. Amtrak does not provide staff for either class of station.

The *Oregon Station Report* also provides case studies on the Amtrak stations located in Chemult, Oregon and Oregon City, Oregon. These stations, both constructed within the last 15 years, are examples of Category 4 stations within Oregon. As a result, Chemult and Oregon City exist as templates for the kind of stations that would likely need to be in place in Eastern Oregon to accommodate any future passenger rail service. The case studies provide details regarding the modern platform amenities implemented at each location, as well as other particulars regarding the projects.

Findings of the Report

Passenger Rail Markets

The *Oregon Station Report* includes a brief market analysis section for each of the possible station location chapters, which make preliminary conclusions regarding each market's demand for passenger rail. US Census data, population estimates and forecasts provided by Portland State University, as well as other economic considerations, provide the context located in these sections of the document.

Based on these considerations, the *Oregon Station Report* finds that several markets along the route have seen significant changes since the last passenger rail service in the late 1990s. Hood River has experienced substantial population growth in recent decades, coinciding with the city's growing prominence as a detestation of leisure and place of commerce. The most significant change along the route is in demand for passenger rail service in Umatilla County, specifically the Hermiston market. Hermiston, due to a rapid increase in population and a growing presence of industrial businesses, has become the largest market along the route in Oregon that is east of Portland. Other markets along the UPRR mainline, such as The Dalles, Pendleton, La Grande, Baker City, and Ontario, have not undergone the same levels of growth compared to Hood River or Hermiston, but remain stable markets that have a reasonable demand for passenger rail as an alternative form of transportation.

The *Oregon Station Report* finds that the market of Cascade Locks does not demand passenger rail service due to its lack of population and limited growth potential. Additionally, this document concludes that the market of East Portland may demand a station with the implementation of intercity or long-distance service.

Condition of Former *Pioneer* Stations

The *Oregon Station Report* finds that the historic depots in Hood River, La Grande, Baker City, and Ontario have the potential to host various levels of passenger operation within their interiors, based on the willingness of each depot's owner. Other depots, such as in The Dalles and Pendleton, are likely unable to be used for future passenger service due to their current uses, and in the case of The Dalles, other concerns regarding the station site. The former station sites at Cascade Locks and Hinkle have no remaining elements from the *Pioneer*-era. The respective chapters of this document contain the full conditions of the previous *Pioneer* stations.

While each of the route's depots has altering conditions, one area of consistency is the universal condition of platforms along the route. While some sites have existing platforms, and others have had their platforms completely removed, none of the platforms along the UPRR mainline in Oregon meet the modern Amtrak standards. Many of the existing platforms built for servicing the *Pioneer* came before ADA and current safety requirements. To be prepared for future passenger service, all of the platforms will have to be rebuilt or significantly refurbished.

Potential New Station Locations

In addition to the station sites that Amtrak used for the *Pioneer*, the *Oregon Station Report* looks at several other station locations along the route. The first location is in downtown Troutdale. A station in or around Troutdale would provide an additional station for the East Portland market. A station here would eliminate the need for potential eastbound passengers to commute west into downtown Portland to Union Station. Also covered is a likely station location in the small city of Stanfield. Stanfield is proposed as a possible alternative location to serve the prominent Hermiston market, as opposed to the former station location at Hinkle Yard. Lastly, an alternative site is provided for a station within Pendleton, due to the historic depot's potential inability to host future passenger operations.

Recommendations

Following on-site visits and research on various aspects of each potential station site, the *Oregon Station Report* recommends that if passenger rail service should return to the route, the following markets are suitable for stations: Troutdale, Hood River, The Dalles, Stanfield/ Hermiston, Pendleton, La Grande, Baker City, and Ontario.

These markets have viable station locations, as well as cities that have a stable passenger rail market.

The *Oregon Station Report* also recommends that further studies consider the possibilities of both long-distance and intercity service between Portland and Boise. Historically, long-distance trains served the corridor between Portland and Boise. However, the route holds many of the essential characteristics of state-supported intercity corridors. Both of these types of passenger service should be considered with any advance of implementing passenger trains on the route.

The Way Forward

The *Oregon Station Report* was created by the ODOT Rail and Public Transit Division to serve as the first step for further study into the possible implementation of passenger rail in Eastern Oregon. As previously discussed, the scope of the *Oregon Station Report* is limited to a specific list of topics. Therefore, the next step in the process would be studying in these areas, which would require the aid of other entities such as Amtrak, the UPPR, and other government agencies outside of ODOT.

Abbreviations

ADA……...……Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
Amtrak……...…...National Railroad Passenger Corporation
FRA……...…….Federal Railroad Administration
ITD…….Idaho Transportation Department
NRHP……...…….National Register of Historic Places
MHRR…….Mt. Hood Railroad Company Inc.

ODOT…….Oregon Department of Transportation

OR&N……..…….Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company

OSL……Oregon Short Line

O-WR&N…….Oregon-Washington Railroad & Navigation Company

PIDS……..……..Passenger Information Display System
PRIIA……..…..Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (2008; Public Law 110-432)
Tri-Met……..……...……Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon
UPRR…….……..Union Pacific Railroad
WSDOT……..Washington State Department of Transportation

Chapter One

Purpose & Methodology

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the *Oregon Station Report* is to provide a base level of understanding for the Oregon Department of Transportation, as well as other State of Oregon agencies and interested parties, regarding the current status of the passenger rail market within Eastern Oregon. The survey and corresponding report were conducted by the ODOT's Rail and Public Transit Division and completed in September of 2019.

The project inquires to the conditions of the former passenger rail stations along the UPRR's mainline through Eastern Oregon; a passenger route that was last served by the Amtrak *Pioneer* between 1977 and 1997. Through a combination of contextual information, on-site data recordings, and market analysis, the goal of this project was to produce conclusions regarding the conditions of individual station sites along the route, as well as preliminary recommendations for which markets are best prepared and have the demand for future passenger rail service.

The *Oregon Station Report* was created for reconnaissance purposes for the Oregon Department of Transportation and is not in association with Amtrak or other government bodies. This document is not a full study of the potential passenger corridor through Eastern Oregon. This document is a preliminary report meant to support more thorough research and conclusions in the future. The creation of this report does not indicate, or presume, that ODOT, Amtrak, or any other government body is involved in the process of reinstating passenger service to Eastern Oregon.

Report Methodology & Scope

The scope of the *Oregon Station Report* is limited, as it is not intended to cover all aspects of passenger rail viability in Eastern Oregon. While the Amtrak *Pioneer* was the last passenger service to operate on the route, this report does not examine the full-length *Pioneer* route, which last ran trains between Seattle and Denver. The contents of this document are focused on resources within the State of Oregon and do not consider any aspects of the *Pioneer's* route outside of Oregon. Additionally, while most of the context is based on the *Pioneer*, this report is not limited to the topic of reinstatement of the *Pioneer*, or similar long-distance service. As discussed in later chapters, there may be multiple options for passenger service along the route.

The following aspects about the possible reinstatement of passenger rail in Eastern Oregon, and well as any other aspect not explicitly addressed within the *Oregon Station Report*, are intentionally unaddressed in this document to stay within the limited scope of the project:

- Operating Plan
- Funding for Operation
- Ridership & Revenue Projections
- Capital Costs of Implementation
- Public Benefits
- Environmental Impact

The *Oregon Station Report* relies heavily on the context provided from the *Pioneer*-era, such as the most recent list of station stops that the train made in Oregon. However, this report does not examine the full Amtrak *Pioneer* route, which last operated trains between Seattle and Denver. The contents of this document are focused on resources within the State of Oregon and do not consider any aspects of the *Pioneer's* route outside of Oregon. Additionally, while the *Pioneer* operation is the source of most of this document's context, the *Oregon Station Report* is not limited to the topic of reinstatement of the *Pioneer*, or similar long-distance service. As discussed in later chapters, there may be multiple options for passenger service along the route.

This document also examines the viability of other possible station locations in addition to reviewing the potential of former *Pioneer* stations. These locations are either possible replacements for station locations from the *Pioneer*-era that are no longer viable, or are entirely new station locations that have not been served by passenger rail in the last half-century since the creation of Amtrak. This reconnaissance effort on the part ODOT aims to consider all of the potential passenger rail markets along the UPRR mainline en route to providing a suggested list of the most suitable markets along the UPRR mainline in the present day. Many of the markets have seen growth or decline since the *Pioneer*-era, making it necessary to reconsider the preferred station stops.

A majority of the observations and conclusions offered in the *Oregon Station Report* are a result of on-site reconnaissance visits to each of the station locations. These visits were conducted during July and August of 2019 by the Oregon Department of Transportation's Rail and Public Transit Division. Property owners were alerted of the fieldwork in advance. At each of the old *Pioneer* stops, observations included remaining elements of passenger rail infrastructure, such as platforms, shelters, and parking lots. For stations that utilized depot buildings, if accessible, the condition of their interior spaces were observed. In addition to

documenting each station's condition with photographs, written observations were made regarding aspects such as ADA accessibility, site usage, building deterioration.

Many of the former station buildings have come under private ownership or have remained under ownership by the UPRR since the *Pioneer's* demise in 1997. Future use of the stations would require lease or purchase negotiations with the private owners before hosting Amtrak operations. This project did not engage in talks with the private owners of the station buildings regarding any agreements of this nature, nor does it speculate whether or not station owners would consider such agreements.

Additionally, the identification of possible future station sites was conducted solely on road-side survey procedures. This process did not consider aspects such as property ownership or property value and did not engage in any discussions with landowners about possible agreements regarding the sites. The identified sites were surveyed to reach an understanding of the possibilities in track-side communities along the UPRR mainline, and are not formally under consideration for hosting future passenger rail stations.

During the *Pioneer's* years of operation, depot buildings were underutilized in favor of waiting shelters. This occurred in instances where stations were placed at sites with no preexisting station building, as well as station sites where a passenger station building did exist. As a result, the *Oregon Station Report* acknowledges that *Pioneer* operations did not use some interiors of depots included in this document. Regardless of the role that a historic station building held for the *Pioneer*, this study examines all station buildings that are located on-site at one of the former *Pioneer* stops. Since the discontinuation of the *Pioneer*, a number of the historic station buildings have been renovated or have changed ownership/usage and may, therefore, be in better condition to host future passenger service than they were during the operational years of the *Pioneer*.

Another component of the *Oregon Station Report* is a market analysis for each of the discussed station locations. While brief, this section of each chapter considered past, present, and future population numbers as well as the general economic trends for each of the markets. Economic trends for each market result from the information provided by the US Census Bureau as well as each municipality's website. Population numbers given throughout the report are from several sources. Up until 2010, this report uses the official US Census data. The data used to represent the period between 2010 and 2018 is from population estimates created by Portland State University's Population Research Center, a part of the university's College of Urban & Public Affairs. Population forecasts through 2065 are utilized to provide

an outlook on the future trends of each market. This data is also a product of PSU's Population Research Center. These elements combined allowed for an understanding of the overall direction of each market, and how the current status of each market has improved or declined since the operation of the *Pioneer*. This locally-produced data allows for a calculated expectation of the potential growth or decline of each market, an essential factor in determining the demand for passenger rail in each market.

The overall scope of this project is limited to topics related to the potential passenger rail markets and the condition of former passenger rail stations along the UPRR mainline that travels through Eastern Oregon. The *Oregon Station Report* is limited to findings within the State of Oregon, and was conducted solely within ODOT Rail and Public Transit Division.

Chapter Two

Route Background

Route Description

The western-most section of the route utilizes UPRR's Portland Subdivision. Leaving Portland's Union Station, the passenger route crosses the Steel Bridge before continuing east in Sullivan Gulch on the UPRR's Graham Line, traveling along I-84 towards Troutdale. At Troutdale, the UPRR Graham and Keaton Lines merge before continuing to parallel I-84 into the Columbia River Gorge. The right-of-way follows the Columbia River through the Gorge, passing through the population centers of Cascade Locks, Hood River, and The Dalles. At Boardman, the right-of-way leaves the Columbia River, passing through Hinkle/ Hermiston before reaching Pendleton. Hinkle, the beginning of the UPRR La Grande Subdivision, is home to UPRR locomotive shops and a discontinued hump yard. The route between Pendleton and La Grande is characterized by steeper inclines and slower speeds, as the line curves through the Blue Mountains.

Figure 2.1 An OR&N passenger train at the depot in Hood River circa 1912. (Historic Hood River)

The right-of-way parallels the Umatilla River out of Pendleton until reaching the town of Gibbon, at which point the line turns to the south and follows Meacham Creek until the summit of the Blue Mountains. South of the summit, the grade follows Dry Creek, and later the Grande Ronde River until reaching La Grande. La Grande is home to a moderately-sized UPRR yard. Except for a series of hills south of Union, the right-of-way between La Grande and Baker City straightens up as it cuts through the valley between the Blue Mountains and Wallowa Mountains. The line south of La Grande is a part of the Huntington Subdivision, which extends to Nampa, Idaho. South of Baker City, the right-of-way leaves the valley to curve through rough terrain. A majority of this section of the route parallels I-84. The town of Huntington features another small yard. Between Huntington and Ontario, the right-of-way crosses the Snake River into Idaho, traveling through the cities of Weiser and Payette before returning to the Oregon side of the river to serve Ontario. The line exits Oregon just south of Nyssa by crossing the Snake River back into Idaho. The route was completed, from Portland through Ontario, in 1884. This corridor will be referred to as the "Eastern Oregon Route" throughout the *Oregon Station Report*.

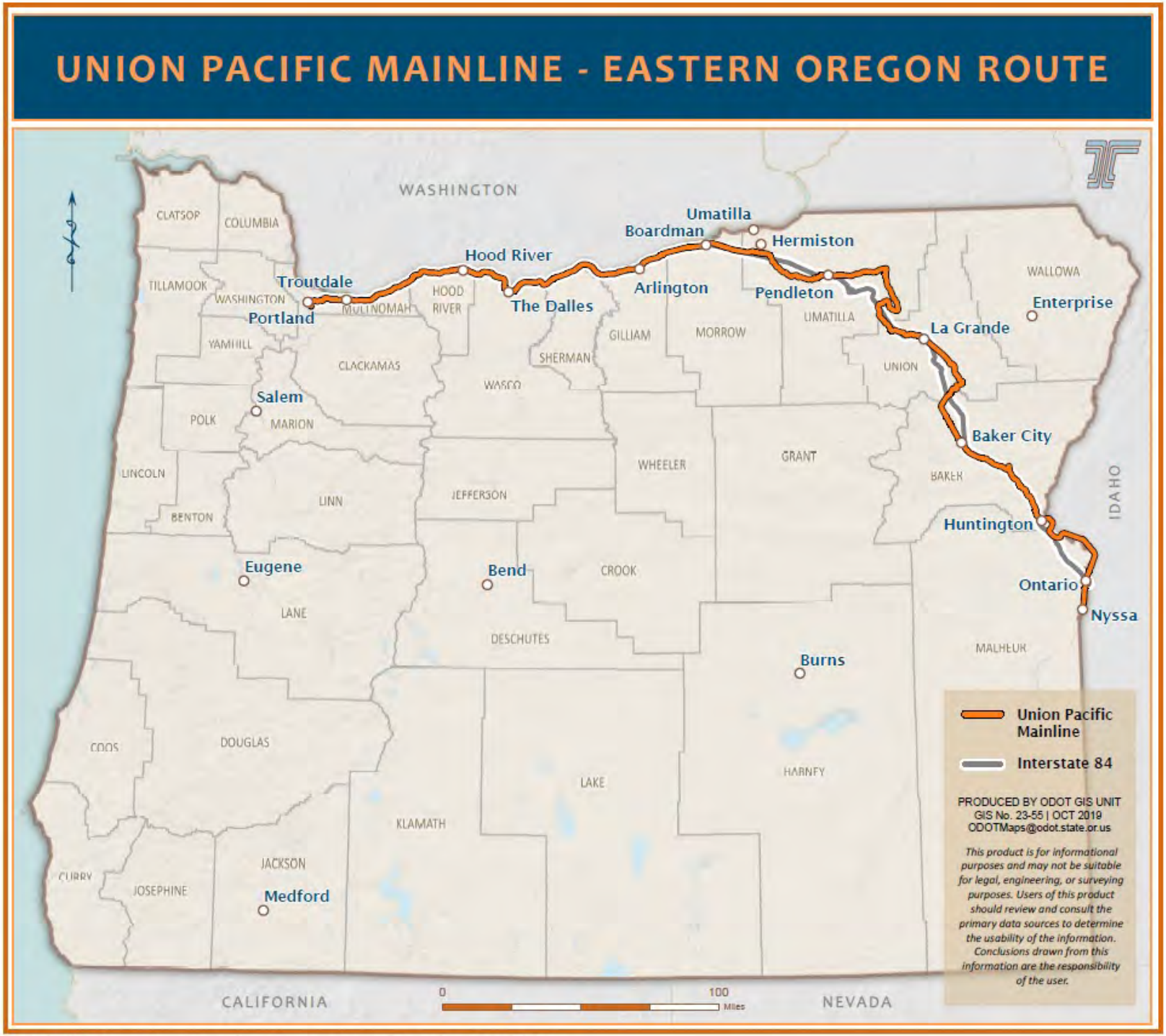


Figure 2.2 Map of the Eastern Oregon Route

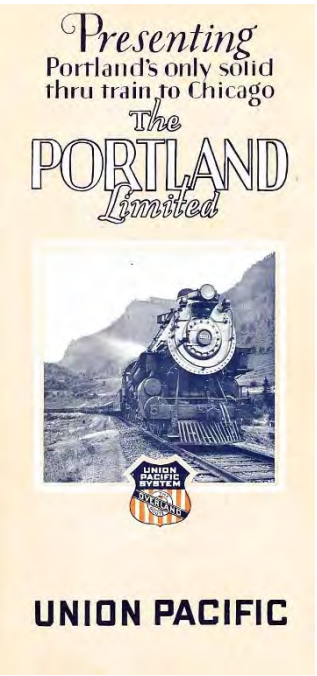


Figure 2.3 Brochure of the UPRR's *Portland Limited* from 1928. (UPRR)

History of Passenger Rail on the Route

OR&N & UPRR Passenger Service

Since the construction of the full right-of-way through the east side of the state in the 1880s, numerous passenger trains operated on the line. All of the markets featured in the *Oregon Station Report* were connected via passenger trains during the control of railroads such as the OR&N and OSL. The OSL, a subsidiary of the Union Pacific Railroad, constructed the right-of-way to Huntington from the south, while the sections further to the north and through the Columbia River Gorge were built and operated by the OR&N. Under Edward H. Harriman, the UPRR bought a majority share of the OR&N in 1900, and in 1910, consolidated the OR&N and other subsidiaries into the Oregon-Washington Railroad & Navigation Company. Passenger trains operated under the O-WR&N brand until the 1930s, when the UPRR looked to market passenger trains along the route under the parent company's brand.

Throughout the UPRR-era of passenger service, two trains achieved the most prominence and longevity: the *Portland Rose* and *City of Portland*. Inaugurated in 1930, the *Portland Rose* became the premier train between Portland and the cities of the Mid-West. Traditionally the train ran daily as #17 westbound and #18 eastbound. While the train was a reimagined version of the *Portland Limited*, its predecessor, the *Portland Rose* offered new passenger amenities.

Figure 2.4 A staged 1949 photo of the *City of Portland* at Celilo Falls (UPRR)

In 1935, the *City of Portland* replaced the *Portland Rose* as the highest class service along the route. Initially, the *City of Portland* only operated six trips each way between Portland and Chicago per month. Unlike the *Portland Rose*, following its introduction to the timetables, this service did not make intermediate stops, running the full length of the Eastern Oregon Route without making a station stop until Boise. The *City of Portland* utilized modern, streamlined equipment, furthering its allure as a luxurious mode of transportation. According to UPRR timetables, by this point in 1935, three main passenger trains operated on the Eastern Oregon Route: the *Pacific Limited*, *Portland Rose*, and the streamlined *City of Portland*.

The *Portland Rose* and *City of Portland* services remained operational until the founding of Amtrak in 1971. In the decades between WWII and each train's discontinuation, the services underwent many changes to their schedules and amenities. By 1965, the two trains had lost some of the aspects that once differentiated their services. In 1947, the daily operation of the *City of Portland* commenced. While the *City of Portland* still offered a more rapid travel time and better luxury, during the 1960s the train was making stops at a majority of the same intermediate stations through Eastern Oregon as the *Portland Rose*; these included Ontario, Huntington, Baker City, La Grande, Pendleton, Hinkle, The Dalles, and Hood River before reaching Portland. This list of station stops is comparable to the passenger service that Amtrak would inaugurate along the route in 1977. The *Portland Rose* made the same stops throughout the state, as well as additional flag stops as requested.

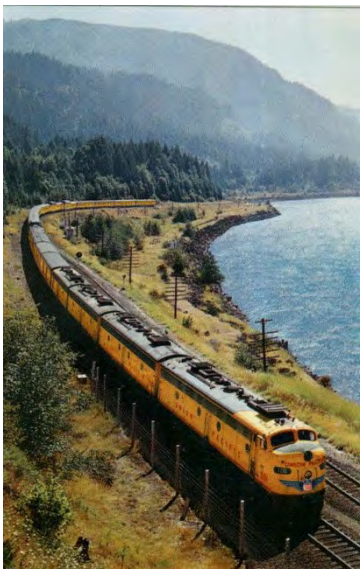


Figure 2.5 *City of Portland* in the Columbia River Gorge, circa 1950. (UPRR)

Amtrak *Pioneer* Era

The Amtrak *Pioneer* operated from 1977 until 1997. Before the unification of the United States' passenger rail system under Amtrak in 1971, the UPRR provided Oregon with passenger services along the route in the form of the *City of Portland* (Chicago-Portland) and the *Portland Rose* (Kansas City-Portland). Immediately following the creation of Amtrak, these services were discontinued, and Eastern Oregon lost the full extent of its rail passenger service. The void left by the absence of passenger service line sparked grassroots efforts by the communities along the UPRR line as well as election officials. As a result, Amtrak inaugurated daily service with the *Pioneer* in 1977.

This initial service provided service between Seattle and Salt Lake City, connecting with the *San Francisco Zephyr* (Chicago-San Francisco) in Ogden, Utah. East of Portland, the *Pioneer's* route followed the Columbia River on the Oregon side, before turning southeast to the communities of Eastern Oregon and continuing to Boise. During this first service, the *Pioneer* made the following station stops in the State of Oregon: Portland, Hood River, The Dalles, Hinkle-Hermiston, Pendleton, La Grande, Baker City, and Ontario. The journey time to cover the Oregon section of the *Pioneer* route was ten hours and forty minutes, running between Portland and Ontario. Although the *Pioneer* operated as a long-distance train, prior to 1981 the service utilized single-level Amfleet railcars, which were intended for short-distance journeys. In 1981, the *Pioneer* was supplied with bi-level Amtrak Superliner cars,

which provided additional amenities such as full dining service and sleeping accommodations. With the addition of Superliners, the *Pioneer* provided a transfer with the *Zephyr* at Ogden for through Chicago-Seattle coach car and sleeper car. The year of 1981 also saw the addition of a station stop at Cascade Locks; fifty minutes to the east of Portland. This station stop was later removed from the timetable in 1988, and the *Pioneer* would serve its original seven stations for the remainder of its existence.

The first major change to the overall service of the *Pioneer* occurred in 1983. During this year the *San Francisco Zephyr* was rebranded as the *California Zephyr* and rerouted over the "Rio Grande Route", which ran between Salt Lake City and Denver. This pushed the *Pioneer*'s connection with *Zephyr* to Salt Lake City. In 1991, the *Pioneer* saw another significant change to its service, as it was rerouted over the UPRR's Overland Route. This route, which took the *Pioneer* off the congested Rio Grande Route through Colorado, utilized the track between Ogden and Denver via Wyoming that had been used by the *Zephyr* prior to 1983. This alteration meant another relocation for the transfer between the *Pioneer* and *Zephyr*, as the two trains made their connection at Denver. A connection bus was provided between Ogden and Salt Lake City, as the two trains no longer shared a station within the State of Utah. The new route through Wyoming took approximately four hours off of the *Pioneer's* overall journey time. This change did not affect the *Pioneer's* path through Oregon but did alter arrival and departure times for the Oregon stations.

In 1993, service was reduced to three times per week, the first step of the *Pioneer's* demise; westbound *Pioneer* trains departed Denver on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, while eastbound trains arrived in Denver on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. The reduction of service resulted from lower Amtrak federal appropriations, which also affected other western long-distance trains such as the *Zephyr* and *Empire Builder*, both of which were reduced to four trains per week. In 1997, further cuts to Amtrak's federal passenger rail fund resulted in the elimination of the *Pioneer*. The decision to cut the *Pioneer* was one move in a broader restructuring of Amtrak's western operations to bring the return of daily *Zephyr* and *Empire Builder* service. The *Desert Wind* (Salt Lake City-Los Angeles) was also cut.

Pioneer's Use of Waiting Shelters

One of the common aspects of Amtrak *Pioneer* station stops in Oregon was the inclusion of waiting shelters. The following stations had waiting shelters:

- Hood River
- The Dalles (1977-1991)
- Hinkle-Hermiston
- Pendleton
- Ontario

It is likely that a waiting shelter would have been at the Cascade Locks stop during its inclusion on the timetables from 1981 to 1988, but no photographs or other documentation can offer confirmation. In the case of Hinkle-Hermiston and The Dalles (and potentially Cascade Locks), the waiting shelters were necessary due to the lack of a permanent station building on the site. In other instances, such as Hood River (early years), Pendleton, and Ontario, waiting shelters handled a majority of the passenger operations as opposed to the historic depots.

The decision to utilize waiting shelters as opposed to on-site historic station buildings was made for a number of potential reasons. One of these reasons was that the installation of waiting shelters required fewer capital costs for construction and could be built more quickly and with less planning. When the *Pioneer* was inaugurated in 1977, many of the existing station buildings had been abandoned or were not in suitable condition to host public passengers. The process of restoring existing depots would have been costly, required coordination with the building owners (in most instances the UPRR), and would have likely been a multi-year process. The installation of waiting shelters sped up the process of commencing passenger service while reducing costs for Amtrak. Additionally, once the *Pioneer* was running, operating shelters was more cost-effective compared to maintaining and staffing station buildings. With only two daily *Pioneer* trains using the station, a full-operation station building would be empty for the majority of the day.

All of the waiting shelters utilized by the *Pioneer* were of identical design. These structures were of metal construction and measured at 10' x 20'. The shelters had windows but lacked insulation, which provided little assistance for passengers in uncomfortable summer and winter temperatures. Overall, passengers found the shelters as not aesthetically pleasing or welcoming. Simple ground-level asphalt platforms typically accompanied waiting shelters

with no adjacent historic depot. This station typology not unique in its implementation for the *Pioneer* and was commonly used by Amtrak nationally. "Amtrak waiting shelter" is the term used to describe these structures for the extent of the *Oregon Station Report*.

Amtrak *Pioneer* Reinstatement

Since the discontinuation of the Amtrak *Pioneer* in 1997, there has been no passenger rail service on the UPRR corridor in Eastern Oregon, as well as the remainder of the train's route between Portland and Denver. During the last two decades, multiple parties have expressed interest in reinstating Amtrak's *Pioneer*. Grassroots efforts began in the years following the end of the *Pioneer* to campaign for the return of the service. Included in these efforts were organizations such as the Association of Oregon Rail Transit Advocates, who have continued to support the idea of reintroducing the *Pioneer* to the present day. The proposal for reinstating the service also got political support in the late 1990s, primarily in Oregon Senator Ron Wyden (D) and Idaho Senator Mike Crapo (R). The support of the two senators continued into the 2000s, as they looked to add language into Congressional legislation that would require a study on the possible restoration of the *Pioneer*. A study that resulted from the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA Section 224) accomplished this feat; backed by additional supporters such as Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson (R) and Oregon Congressmen Greg Walden (R) and Earl Blumenauer (D).

The "Pioneer Route Passenger Rail Study" was conducted by Amtrak with the help of key stakeholders such as representatives from the federal Congressional delegation for the states of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, respective Departments of Transportation for the before-mentioned states, as well as other parties. Amtrak submitted the study to Congress before the October 16, 2009 deadline as outlined by the PRIIA Section 224. The document produced the following conclusion:

> "Restoration of the *Pioneer* would enhance Amtrak's route network and produce public benefits, but would require significant expenditures for initial capital costs and ongoing operating costs not covered by farebox revenues. While PRIIA recognizes the importance of Amtrak's existing long-distance routes, it does not provide funding for capital or operating expenses associated with expanding service beyond current levels. Amtrak supports strengthening and improving the national network of long-distance trains but will need significant additional funding to expand operations beyond today's current services.

> Thus, Amtrak recommends that federal and state policymakers determine if intercity passenger rail service along the former *Pioneer* route should be reintroduced and, if so, that they identify the preferred option for service restoration and provide the required levels of capital and operating funding to Amtrak. Upon such a decision, Amtrak will aggressively work with Federal and state partners to restore the *Pioneer* service." – PRIIA (2008) P.7

Since the publication of the PRIIA in 2008, there have been no major steps towards the reinstatement of the *Pioneer* as recommended by the study. Grassroots support has been continuous with press articles and advocacy groups.

Chapter Three

Route Background

Introduction

If passenger rail were to return to Eastern Oregon, there could be multiple kinds of service implemented along the line. This chapter offers a brief overview of the different characteristics between long-distance trains and intercity trains, and how each type of service could affects the stations of Eastern Oregon should passenger rail be reestablished along the UPRR mainline. Additionally, preliminary conclusions are offered in regards to altering scenarios in which either kind of service is viable. The type of service selected for the route would create varying levels of effect on essential factors such as capital costs, operating costs, type of equipment, timetables, potential ridership, and more.

Long-distance Service

Long-distance trains make up most of what is known as Amtrak's national network, trains that are entirely operated by Amtrak and federally funded. Amtrak currently operates 15 long-distance trains, covering 18,500 route miles and serving 41 states, providing a critical transportation link for many rural communities across the country. These are routes greater than 750 miles, and typically consist of one train per day in each direction. The shortest route of any Amtrak long-distance train is the 764 miles traveled by the *Capitol Limited* between Chicago and Washington D.C. The longest route is traversed by the *California Zephyr*, which goes a total of 2,438 miles from San Francisco to Chicago.

The goal for most of Amtrak's long-distance trains is to provide an alternative transcontinental mode of transportation to flying or driving, as well as to connect rural communities to larger American cities. As a result, these trains make station stops in both large cities as well as small rural communities. Long-distance trains' primary purpose is not to move commuters, but rather as the name suggests, transport passengers on journeys that can take more than two full days.

As of 2019, all of the long-distance trains that operate west of the Mississippi River use bi-level Superliner I and II cars as their primary rolling stock. The *Pioneer* used Superliner railcars for a majority of its operational years. This equipment comes in several variations that supply coach seating, sleeping accommodations, as well as dining and lounge spaces. Currently, GE Genesis P42 locomotives head Superliner equipment. However, they are expected to be phased out of service entirely by the mid-2020s as Amtrak replaces them with a new fleet of Siemens Chargers. Amtrak will use Siemens Chargers for all long-distance trains, including the Pacific Northwest's *Coast Starlight* and *Empire Builder*. During the operational years of

Figure 3.1 A map of Amtrak's West Coast passenger rail network, indicating the routes of the Pacific Northwest's long-distance trains, the *Empire Builder* and *Coast Starlight* (Amtrak).

the *Pioneer*, the train's typical consist included an EMD F40PH locomotive, sleeping car, two or three coach cars, and a diner car. If long-distance passenger service returned to Eastern Oregon, Siemens Charger locomotives would likely pull similar consists.

Figure 3.2 Rendering of the Siemens Charger model to be delivered to Amtrak in the early-2020s. Once the order is fulfilled, all Amtrak long-distance trains will use the new locomotives. (Siemens Mobility).

Intercity/State-Corridor Service

Intercity passenger trains operate along corridors that typically connect two large cities, or provide service to connect a region. State-corridor routes are typically less than 750 miles, but a majority of these corridors are between 200 and 500 miles. These services are intended to move people these moderate distances for business, leisure, or other purposes, but are typically not a mode of long-distance travel.

As a result of the PRIIA of 2008, intercity passenger corridors across the United States are state-supported, including the Pacific Northwest's Amtrak *Cascades*. Amtrak handles the train operations of the *Cascades* in partnership with ODOT and WSDOT, agencies that provide a majority of the service's funding. ODOT and WSDOT also own two-thirds of the *Cascades* rolling stock.

Unlike long-distance trains, intercity trains across the United States utilize a wide variety of rolling stock, with models such as Amfleet, Superliners, Viewliners, and Horizon being amongst the most widely used. The *Cascades* service is unique in its usage of manufactured trainsets, utilizing Talgo Series 6 (two owned by WSDOT and two by Amtrak) and Series 8 (two owned by ODOT) trainsets. The Talgo trainsets use WSDOT-owned Siemens Chargers for power. Overall, intercity trains in the United States utilize a mix between single-level and bi-level rolling stock.

Contrasting Services

While there are significant differences between these two kinds of service, the altering characteristics would have a marginal effect on the basics of the service that would run through Oregon. As previously outlined, both types of operation would presumably continue east and out of the state; a long-distance service would connect to cities in the Mid-West, while intercity trains would likely terminate in Boise or another city within Idaho. Therefore, while the end destinations between the two kinds of service would differ, the section of the route through Oregon would be identical in either scenario. The various markets for passenger rail along the Oregon segment of the UPRR mainline have enough geographic distance between each of them, typically one suitable market per county, that there would likely be no variation in the selected station stops through the state. Each of these markets, the viability of which are covered in later chapters, would be appropriate to service long-distance or intercity trains. Overall, the differences between long-distance service and inter-city service would likely not change aspects such as route specifics or station stops.

There are several altering characteristics between the two kinds of service that would affect individual specifications for future passenger trains running through the Columbia River Gorge and Eastern Oregon. First, while long-distance trains are typically daily or thrice-weekly, intercity passenger corridors usually run multiple times per day. Depending on the kind of service, station details need to match the nature of the operation. While long-distance trains with at most one daily train each direction do not typically require a staffed station, a station that serves an intercity corridor may require more amenities such as staff due to the increased number of trains during a day. Additionally, the type of rolling stock used may dictate several factors regarding platforms. New station standards call for platforms that are close to the full length of the trains serving them. While the former long-distance *Pioneer* consists were relatively short, the current Talgo consists for the intercity *Cascades* are considerably longer, and require platforms of greater length. Another typical

implementation is a platform height that matches the height of the corresponding rolling stock. Therefore, the equipment used can dictate specifications about the platforms that need to be in place at stations. Several of the former stations may have difficulty with train consists of greater length. The kind of service implemented will determine many of these factors.

Figure 3.3 ODOT-owned Talgo Series 8 consist at Portland Union Station.

Conclusions

According to timetables of the Amtrak *Pioneer*, the mileage of the UPRR mainline between Portland and Boise is 491. In comparison, the current route of the Amtrak *Cascades* between Eugene and Vancouver, B.C. is 467. The longest state-supported intercity corridor in the United States is the *Carolinian*, which runs between New York City and Charlotte for 704 miles. The *Capitol Limited*, running between Chicago and Washington, D.C., covers 764 miles, the least amount of mileage for any long-distance Amtrak train. The distance between Portland and Boise is far within the 750-mile maximum for an intercity corridor.

Previous studies have found that intercity rail corridors are most successful within 500 miles, at which point passenger rail service does not compete with air travel. Within 500 miles, passenger rail is expected to be competitive with other modes of transportation, including automobile and air travel. Therefore, at 491 miles, the potential passenger rail route between Portland and Boise would be just within the distance parameters typically found with successful intercity corridors. However, the Amtrak *Pioneer* operated at around eleven hours between these two cities due to some segments of the route that do not allow for more than moderate speeds. While some state-supported corridor trains, including the *Cascades*, offer basic amenities, due to the total travel time between Portland and Boise, full dining and sleeping accommodations may be needed regardless if the service was Amtrak long-distance or state-supported intercity. Long-distance Amtrak passenger service existed along the route between 1977 and 1997, while state-supported *Cascades* trains operate on a corridor of similar length along the Pacific Northwest Corridor.

Based on the context of this chapter, the following scenarios for passenger rail service to return to Eastern Oregon are worthy of future study:

1. **Amtrak *Pioneer* Reinstatement:** The return of long-distance passenger rail service to Eastern Oregon would likely indicate the reinstatement of the Amtrak *Pioneer*. The train would presumably operate daily along a route similar to the *Pioneer* service between 1977-1997, running between Portland or Seattle to link with the *California Zephyr* in Denver. Chapter two describes this service in detail. Long-distance service would be federally-funded and operated as a part of Amtrak's national network.
2. **Portland-Boise Intercity:** This service would only run between Oregon and Idaho, likely from Portland to Boise, making the intermediate stops in Oregon as outlined in this report as well as additional stops in Idaho. Similar to the *Cascades*, Amtrak would operate such a service in partnership with ODOT and ITD, who would provide a majority of the funding. These trains would run at least once daily, with the possibility for multiple trips each day.

While long-distance trains have historically operated along the route in modern history, the *Oregon Station Report* makes the preliminary conclusion that both kinds of service are possibilities for the Oregon segment of the route. This conclusion does not consider factors such as funding, infrastructure requirements, and UPRR's willingness and additional requirements to allow for track rights. Further study is needed to analyze all aspects of either scenario.

Chapter Four

Modern Standards for Amtrak Stations

Introduction

Since the discontinuation of the Amtrak *Pioneer* in 1997, many of Amtrak's standards have changed en route to an overall better passenger experience. As discussed in the previous chapter, many of the stations in Oregon along the *Pioneer* route consisted of uninsulated metal waiting shelters paired with cheap asphalt platforms. In the cases of Hood River, Pendleton, and Ontario, these waiting shelters were installed adjacent to the historic depots, which remained unused or lightly used. Due to their low capital costs and operating budget, many stations consisted of waiting shelters and asphalt platforms. However, these sort of cost-cutting stations would not be able to meet the requirements laid out by Amtrak, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other new regulations that affect designs for new passenger stations today . This chapter provides a synopsis of Amtrak's "Station Program and Planning Guidelines" for modern passenger stations, as well as two case studies from Oregon that further demonstrate the style of passenger stations that could be implemented in Eastern Oregon.

Modern Station Typologies

Amtrak provides the following four categories for characterizing stations based on amenities and annual passenger volume ("Station Program and Planning Guidelines," 2013):

Category 1 stations serve the centers and edges of large urban areas, and are highly integrated with supporting public transportation systems. These stations are typically the heart of urban and regional multi-modal transportation networks, are staffed to provide ticketing and support services, and often include significant retail space or transit oriented development surrounding the station. Terminal stations are often Category 1.

Category 2 stations are staffed and serve a wide variety of communities, and also have significant variability in rail service type and program function. Category 2 stations are primarily oriented to State Corridor service, or major destinations along Amtrak's long-distance services, and have ticket offices and minimal staff.

Category 3 stations are not staffed by Amtrak agents, but include an interior waiting facility, with restrooms, that is opened, closed, and maintained by an Amtrak caretaker or staffed by another entity. Shelter Stations serve smaller communities located on either long-distance or State Corridor routes. These stations may include self-ticketing services as well as Passenger Information Display Systems (PIDS) to supplement the lack of staff.

Category 4 stations are not staffed and include only a shelter and/or platform canopy to protect passengers from the weather. Shelter Stations serve smaller communities located on either long-distance or state corridor routes. These stations may include self-ticketing services as well as Passenger Information Display Systems (PIDS) to supplement the lack of staff.

Since this document does not consider Portland's Union Station, remaining in constant use for over a century, all of the stations along the Eastern Oregon Route fall under Category 3 or Category 4. These categories will be used later in the *Oregon Station Report* for a recommendation for each potential station site.

Platform Design and Amenities

Category 3 or Category 4 define all of the potential stations along the Eastern Oregon Route; these stations consists of a single utilized platform and would likely be unstaffed. While many of the former station sites have historic, potentially usable depots, as was the case during the Amtrak *Pioneer*-era, these buildings would likely not be used to their full capacity either due to other occupants or as a cost-saving measure. Therefore, under Categories 3 and 4, the primary component of these stations are their platforms.

Since the stations along the route have not been used by active passenger rail in more than two decades, the standard for platforms has considerably changed since the late twentieth century. Below are some of the modern features implemented by Amtrak and other involved parties to ensure safety, accessibility, and comfort for passengers:

Tactile Warning Edges: Since it is typical for modern platforms to be raised off of the ground, marking the edge of a platform is a critical safety feature. While in the past a dull yellow painted line was sufficient, these warning edges contrast visually and texturally from a platform's primary surface. As a result, the edges are multisensory and adequate for passengers with or without disabilities. Amtrak's color standard is federal yellow. These edges are typically 24" wide and extend for the full length of the platform.

Increased Lighting: Platform lighting has become more of an emphasis for Amtrak in recent decades. Amtrak's "Engineering Stations Standard Design Practices" provides requirements for platform lighting.

Passenger Information Display System (PIDS): PIDS is an audio-visual passenger information system that conveys real-time train arrival times and other station information. The system utilizes both audio and visual messages to allow for clarity to all passengers, including those who may have impaired hearing or eyesight. PIDS typically consists of an LED monitor as well as a public address sound system. PIDS may not be necessary for rural stations, provided that the platform has enough static signage for passengers.

Emergency Call Boxes: As a result of costs and low usage, Amtrak no longer requires the installation of public payphones at stations. However, in order to maintain passenger safety, Amtrak requires an emergency call box at each station that provides direct connections with Amtrak or local emergency services. Call boxes are typically located at a centrally-located position on the platform.

Snow Melting Systems: This technology could be relevant for several locations in Eastern Oregon en route to providing safer boarding conditions for passengers.

Amtrak implements most of these platform design principals across its nationwide network of stations. Full design guidelines for platforms can be found within the "Amtrak Station Program Planning Guide."

In addition to these commonly-installed features, during the year 2011, the U.S. Department of Transportation enacted the level platform rule. This rule changed the standard for platform construction across the Amtrak network. According to Amtrak, the rule requires full-length, level-boarding platforms (where the platform surface is level with the floor of the train cars) for all substantially reconstructed or built-new passenger rail stations. In instances where full-length, level boarding is "infeasible," which can be caused by factors such as freight train operations on the track adjacent to the platform, the use of site-specific alternative methods is acceptable pending the approval of the U.S. DOT.

Between ADA (1990), the level platform rule (2011), and improved platform design guidelines by Amtrak, all of the platforms along the Eastern Oregon Route can be ruled as significantly outdated and insufficient to meet modern safety and accessibility standards since they were constructed prior to all of these changes to the standards for platforms within the United States. Regardless, the *Oregon Station Report* examines the physical condition of each remaining platform along the route, as in some cases, a platform could meet the standard through a cheaper refurbishment as opposed to full reconstruction.

ADA Accessibility Requirements

If passenger rail service returned to the Eastern Oregon Route, utilizing former stations or new ones, ODOT and other stakeholders must ensure that the stations are ADA compliant before serving Oregon communities. All newly-built platforms are required by ADA to be fully compliant to current standards.

There are many areas in which stations must be accessible for it to be ruled compliant under modern standards. The *Oregon Station Report* does not cover all of the requirements in detail; however, the American with Disabilities Act provides specifications of these requirements. Additionally, Amtrak has created resources aimed at giving insight into station accessibility, including www.greatamericanstations.com.

On the interior of depots, elements that are subject to ADA compliance include restrooms, ticket windows, water fountains, Passenger Information Display Systems (PIDS), signage, entry doors and other connecting pathways. On the exterior of the station, ADA standards must be met for the design of platforms, PIDS, signage, parking stalls and accessible routes that make use of features such as ramps and appropriate doorway widths.

Figure 4.1 An Amtrak *Cascades* train at Stanwood, WA station, featuring modern features such as tactile warning edges and increased lighting. (WSDOT)

Oregon Station Report does not provide all of the necessary information regarding ADA accessibility at the modern Amtrak station. Additional studies aimed at implementing passenger rail along the UPRR mainline in Eastern Oregon should rely on specialists to fully understand the updated requirements for station accessibility.

Oregon Case Studies

The *Oregon Station Report* considers two case study stations, Chemult and Oregon City, which exist as Oregon's most recent station construction projects. Under the parameters found within Amtrak's "Station Program and Planning Guidelines," each of these stations would be designated under Category 3 or 4. Both stations provide shelter for passengers, but are unstaffed by Amtrak or other entities.

Chemult, Oregon

The Amtrak station in Chemult, Oregon, served by the *Coast Starlight* (Los Angeles-Seattle), is an example of a station that has undergone a complete rebuild to the modern standard for long-distance trains within Oregon. Before 2010, Central Oregon's only Amtrak station in Chemult featured an Amtrak waiting shelter and a short asphalt platform. The shelter was at the base of a trackside bank, which required stairs for passengers to climb to get to the platform. A wood ramp was constructed to provide wheelchair access to the platform. However, this ramp did not meet ADA standards. The station also did not provide restrooms or travel information for passengers. A gravel parking lot and access road served the station area.

In 2010, in a joint effort by ODOT and Klamath County, as well as assistance by Amtrak and Fremont-Winema National Forest, the Chemult station was rebuilt in order to provide a more suitable station for *Coast Starlight* passengers. The project called for the demolition of the existing Amtrak waiting shelter and platform. The new station consisted of the following components:

- Replacement of existing metal shelter with an aesthetically pleasing, insulated structure that provides adequate protection for waiting passengers from natural elements. The new shelter measured at 300 sq. ft., and was constructed in the Cascadian style in hopes of fitting in with the surrounding community.
- New concrete 550-foot long platform with new amenities such as an additional metal canopy shelter, glass panels to protect against wind, overhead lighting, information boards, and yellow tactile warning edges. The platform is also one of the first stations in the United States to incorporate a snow melting system within the construction of the platform; this measure was taken to increase passenger safety during the winter and reduced the costs of manual snow removal.

- Full ADA accessibility for both the waiting structure and platform area, including a concrete ramp with safety rails.
- Paved parking lot and pick-up area

The full rebuild of the Chemult station cost approximately $600,000. The project provided passengers with a superior facility while retaining the benefits of having a waiting shelter as opposed to a larger station building; the unstaffed station will have lower operating costs and was cheaper and faster to construct than a full-size station building.

Figure 4.2 Chemult station prior to reconstruction project.

Figure 4.3 New station shelter and ramp at Chemult.

Oregon City, Oregon

Amtrak *Cascades* is the only service to use the Amtrak station in Oregon City. While the *Coast Starlight* passes the station, the train does not stop at Oregon City due to its close proximity to Portland's Union Station. The station was completed in 2004. Previously the city did not have an Amtrak station. The station was put in place to serve the southern communities of Portland's Metro Area. A Category 4, unstaffed station, was put in place due to Oregon City's location near a terminal station.

Although built six years prior to the contemporary station in Chemult, the Oregon City station was built to modern standards. The construction took place over two phases; however, Phase I of the project implemented the full extent of the necessary passenger infrastructure. The design features a full-length concrete platform and a partially enclosed waiting shelter. The shelter mimics the design of the historic depot that was later installed with Phase II, offering an aesthetically pleasing wood frame design. Other Phase I features included:

- A concrete staircase and an accompanying ADA compliant ramp that allows access to the waiting area.
- Streetlights along the full length of the platform, evenly spaced approximately 10' apart.
- Additional safety features such as a yellow tactile warning edge, an emergency call box, signage, and a metal fence that keeps passengers off of the primary platform area before the arrival of the train.
- Paved parking lot and pick-up area.

According to the City of Oregon City, the Phase I cost $1,185,500. Phase II of the project extended the parking lot and moved a historic depot onto the property (although not to be used for passenger operations) — the latter part of the project cost roughly an additional $1,000,000 in funds. However, as previously stated, this initial Phase I of the project put all of the necessary amenities in place to host passengers. Therefore, the costs of completing the first phase of the project are more reflecting on the overall costs of building a station with such amenities.

The Oregon City station is a local example of a Category 4 station located in a highly-populated area. While several of the potential passenger stations in Eastern Oregon are found within sizable markets, like Oregon City, a station that consists of a platform, shelter, and other basic amenities can be sufficient for station sites that are outside of rural settings depending on the situation.

Figure 4.4 The Oregon City station, featuring tactile warning edges, appropriate signage, lighting, and shelter.

Conclusions

As the following chapters will demonstrate, all of the platforms along the Eastern Oregon Route are not up to the current standards laid out in this chapter. The stations at Chemult and Oregon City ought to serve as a template for future stations or platform reconstruction projects across the route. These station models comply with all regulations, provide modern amenities for passengers, and are constructed to serve their communities for decades to come, unlike the cheap facilities provided for the Amtrak *Pioneer* between 1977 and 1997

Chapter Five

East Portland/Troutdale

Overview

Although not covered in the *Oregon Station Report*, Portland is by far the most extensive passenger rail market within the State of Oregon. While the *Empire Builder*, *Coast Starlight*, and several daily *Cascades* trains provide service to Portland's Union Station, the reintroduction of passenger rail to Eastern Oregon might demand a second station within the Portland market.

Portland's Union Station is located within the heart of downtown and connected to the full extent of Tri-Met's transit system. However, the station's location may cause accessibility issues for potential passengers on the east side of the Portland Metro Area. Traffic congestion along inbound I-84 and other arterials continues to increase. During rush hour, the drive from eastern communities such as Gresham or Troutdale could take over an hour. This is a long-term issue, which will likely increase as Portland's density continues to rise.

There is potential to provide the eastern communities of Portland with an additional station to accompany any new service that heads east out of the city. A station at this location would eliminate the requirement for passengers in the area to travel west to Union Station. Additionally, depending on frequency of service and timetables, it could allow for commuters to board a westbound train as an alternate transit option into the city. This would be similar to the capacity of the station currently located at Oregon City, which allows passengers to board *Cascades* trains without having to travel into downtown Portland.

Potential Troutdale Station

East Portland lost its direct passenger service in 1965 when UPRR trains began to skip the Troutdale station. There is no existing passenger rail infrastructure in East Portland; the situation demands the construction of a new station. Any station in this vicinity would likely only require a Category 4 with an unstaffed waiting shelter. However, due to the size of the Portland market, it would require more parking accommodations and a greater emphasis on connections to public transit.

Due to the lack of passenger rail service in East Portland for over a half-century, there is no clear-cut location for a station. One possible site is along the UPRR mainline in downtown Troutdale. The site is located on the backside of the historic commercial strip of Troutdale, which is along the Columbia River Gorge Historic Highway. Between the back of the commercial buildings and the UPRR right-of-way is an elongated parking lot that provides parking for the adjacent businesses. Based on a preliminary assessment, this site would have

the capabilities to support a modern platform in addition to the existing parking facility. There is a gap of approximately 20' between the edge of the parking lot and the tracks, a space presumably large enough for a platform. Additionally, at a length of over three city blocks, the site would likely allow a platform of full length depending on the train consist.

Troutdale is home to the junction of UPRR's Graham and Kenton Lines. The Graham Line, the first of the two right-of-ways, follows I-84 between downtown Portland and Troutdale. This route historically has hosted the passenger service, including the Amtrak *Pioneer*. The Kenton Line stays to the north, following Sandy and Columbia Boulevards towards the industrial areas of North Portland. The Kenton Line has access to Union Station via a tunnel that cuts underneath North Portland. The junction of these two UPRR lines is about one hundred feet to the west of the historic Troutdale station site. While the two lines convert into a single mainline track, an additional siding continues from the Graham Line, creating double track through the potential station area. The siding ends just before the bridge crossing the Sandy River.

Figure 5.1 Potential Station site in Troutdale, looking west.

The historic Troutdale depot, built in 1907, was initially located on the north side of the tracks at this location. The depot building was relocated to the south side of the tracks to what is now called Depot City Park in 1976 and repurposed into a small railroad museum operated by the Troutdale Historical Society.

Considering that the East Portland station would only require a platform and small shelter, similar to Oregon City's station, this space may be adequate. The largest hindrance to this site is the lack of available space to expand the parking lot; the lot comes close to capacity during weekdays. However, the general downtown Troutdale area is served by Tri-Met buses 79, 80, 81, which could reduce some of the parking needs.

Market Analysis

While the city's infrastructure and public transit system connects to the eastern side of the Portland Metro Area, the area is far enough away from Union Station, with travel times often of up to an hour during peak rush-hour, to discourage the use of passenger rail. Due to this inconvenience, cities such as Gresham, Wood Village, and Troutdale, should be considered a separate market.

On the east side of the Portland Metro Area, the cities of Gresham, Wood Village, and Troutdale had a combined population of 125,434 as of the 2010 census. These three cities form the populated area that would be most directly served by locating a station along the UPRR Graham Line in the area. The population of these three cities is forecast to be approximately 145,300 by 2040. While connected to Portland, these cities provide a sizable population of potential passengers who would have convenient access to rail service, as opposed to traveling inbound to Union Station.

Figure 5.2 Relocation of the Troutdale depot to the north side of the right-of-way. (Troutdale Historical Society)

Conclusions

The placement of a station in or around Troutdale may be dependent on the kind of passenger service implemented along the line. Due to Troutdale's close proximity to Union Station, it is unlikely that a long-distance train would make a secondary station stop within the Portland Metro Area. Most long-distance trains across Amtrak's national network do not have multiple stops within a single station market. For example, the *Coast Starlight* does not service the stations of Oregon City, a secondary station for the Portland market, or Tukwila, a station that supports the Seattle market. As a result, the intercity *Cascades* service is left to serve these secondary stations. There are exceptions to this model, a local example being the station at Vancouver, Washington that is served by both of the passing long-distance trains; the *Coast Starlight* and *Empire Builder*.

Regardless of the type of service implemented along the UPRR mainline, there are reasons to study a station in the East Portland market. A station near Troutdale could be beneficial in either scenario due to the growing auto-traffic congestion heading into downtown Portland from the east, as well as the lack of parking near Union Station.

While the *Oregon Station Report* looks at the potential location in downtown Troutdale, other possible sites should be examined in-full. Any station built to serve East Portland would only require Category 4 amenities, allowing for a quick stop for a train on the way in or out of Portland. A station site along the UPRR Graham Line, or if necessary the Kenton Line, would lessen the inconvenience problem. This report recommends that a station be built to serve the cities of the Eastern Portland Metro Area.

Chapter Six

Cascade Locks

Figure 6.1 Depot at Cascade Locks during the OR&N passenger era. (Historic Hood River)

Station Narrative

Passenger Rail History

In 1882, Cascade Locks saw the arrival of the railroad. The first mention of passenger service in Cascade Locks in newspapers is in 1894 (The Dalles Daily Chronicle, September 22nd, 1894). As early as 1895, a depot existed at Cascade Locks, which had a "large platform" (The Dalles Daily Chronicle, June 3rd, 1895). A newspaper article from 1918 states that Cascade Locks did have a depot in that year, indicating that the town was provided passenger service by the O-WR&N (Rogue River Courier, July 1918). Later UPRR passenger trains, such as the *City of Portland* and the *Portland Rose*, did not stop at Cascade Locks. It is unclear the exact date when services ended in the small city. While the regular passenger service ended during the service years of the UPRR, passenger rail returned to Cascade Locks in 1981 with the Amtrak *Pioneer*, four years following the inauguration of the *Pioneer*. However, the small market did not provide consistent ridership, as in 1988 the timetables dropped Cascade Locks from the schedule; nine years before the demise of the *Pioneer*.

Station Description

By the 1980s, the historic depot building, located on the south side of the tracks, had long been demolished. Therefore, no permanent depot building was available during the 1980s. A new station was constructed for the use of the *Pioneer*. This station, located on the north side of the tracks, across the parking lot from the present-day Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler dock, was unstaffed and provided only the bare amenities. The station consisted of a platform alone, as there are no indications of a waiting shelter. The platform was made of asphalt and bordered by wood beams on the trackside and a concrete curb along its rear side. It was approximately the length of the typical *Pioneer* consist. The station utilized the eastern parking facilities of Marine Park. An asphalt ramp connected the parking lot to the platform area; the parking area sits below the grade of the railroad.

Current Site Ownership and Usage

The site of the historic Cascade Locks depot and of the 1980s *Pioneer* platform are both part of the UPRR owned right-of-way. Marine Park, and the corresponding parking facility, is owned by the Port of Cascade Locks. Both of the former station sites are vacant and unused.

Condition Assessment

Platform

All components of the asphalt platform have been removed. The trackside space has been converted back to ballast. Several of the wood beams that once lined the platform can be found several feet off of the rail bed, but they are not in their original position.

Site

Figure 6.2 An eastbound Amtrak *Pioneer* stopped at Cascade Locks in the 1980s. (trainweb.org)

The site of the most recent passenger service to Cascade Locks, the platform on the northern side of the UPRR right-of-way, is still accessible via Marine Park as it was during the 1980s. Marine Park is connected to WaNaPa Street by SW Portage Road, which passes under the UPRR by an underpass. The section of Marine Park nearest to the station site, adjacent to the Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler dock, has changed little since the demise of the *Pioneer*. The grade of the ramp that once inclined to the platform is still visible, but like the platform itself, all of the asphalt has been removed. This slope is now unoccupied and appears to have not been used since the station's components were removed. While the sternwheeler cruises can occupy a majority of the primary parking lot, directly below the station site, more parking is available a hundred feet further to the west, near Marine Park Pavilion.

Viability to Host Passenger Service

The site of the 1980s Amtrak station has remained unoccupied. The site has adequate parking considering the large adjacent lot as well as additional parking further to the west in Marine Park. Overall, contingent on the UPRR, there are no factors that would restrict this site from hosting passenger rail service at a future date. Cascade Locks requires the construction of a new station for any future passenger service.

Market Analysis

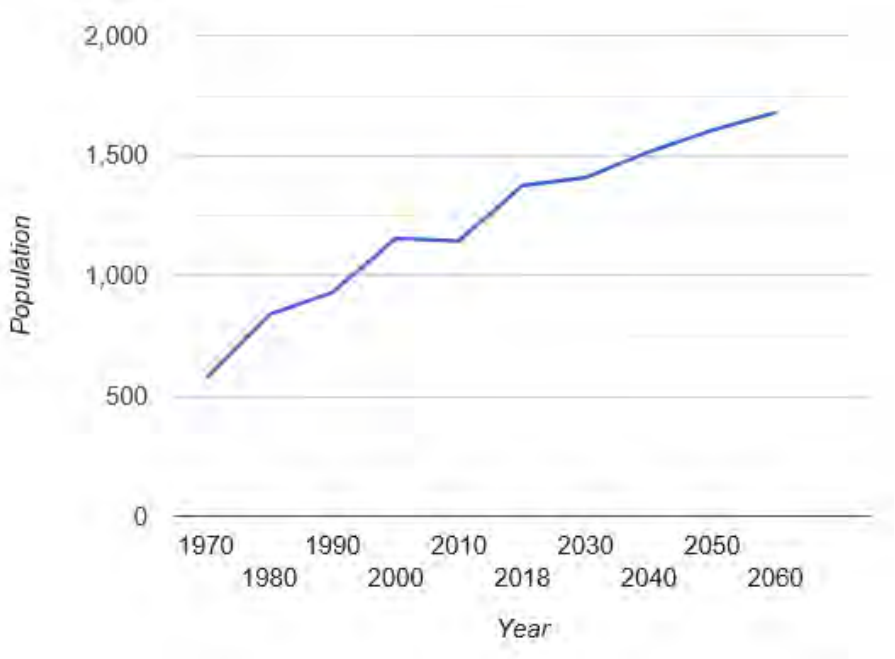
Overview

Cascade Locks is geographically isolated due to its location within the heart of the Columbia River Gorge. Potential riders would mostly be limited to the direct residents of the city. Cascade Locks' market is supported primarily by tourism. Cascade Locks is popular for travelers passing through by automobile, with additional interest drawn by attractions such as the Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler. Located several miles away on the Washington side of the river, Stevenson may generate riders, but this affect would be minimal.

Population Estimates & Projections

Although Cascade Locks has seen sizable growth, more than doubling since the 1970 census, growth has significantly slowed in the last two decades. Despite this growth, the population of Cascade Locks was estimated at only 1,375 in 2018, making it the smallest market examined in this report. Projections do not expect the number of residents of Cascade Locks

Cascade Locks Population



*Value for 2018 is an estimate provided by Portland State University.
**Years 2030 though 2060 are forecasts provided by Portland State University.

to rise soon, with a forecasted population growth of fewer than five hundred people in the next half-decade. Based on the geography of Cascade Locks and the surrounding area, the town is near its peak in terms of growth. Located between the Columbia River and steep sides of the Gorge to the south, there is limited space for the town to expand past its current limits.

Conclusions on Demand

Although the Amtrak *Pioneer* served Cascade Locks for a period between 1981 and 1988, the town's small population is too small to create a significant supply of potential riders. Additionally, community members who wish to travel west to Portland (or continue to Seattle) are an hour away by car, while potential passengers wanting to go east could board a train in Hood River; only a twenty-minute drive from Cascade Locks. This document concludes that with these driving options in place, as well as the city's small population and lack of forecasted growth, the Cascade Locks market does not demand direct passenger rail service in the present day.

Conclusions

Future passenger rail service in Cascade Locks would only require a Category 4 station. However, after an examination of both the station site and the market for passenger rail in Cascade Locks, there is no ground to recommend a station in the city. This conclusion is made based on several different factors. First, the former station utilized by the Amtrak *Pioneer* between 1981 and 1988 has been completely removed, meaning that a new station would need to be constructed. More importantly, the small population of Cascade Locks market does not demand passenger rail service at this time. Therefore, the capital costs to build a station of modern standards in Cascade Locks would likely not be a worthwhile investment. Additionally, the residents of Cascade Locks wishing to travel by train are not far removed from a potential station in Hood River.

Figure 6.3 (top left) Former Cascade Locks station site, platform area, looking west.

Figure 6.4 (bottom left) Former Cascade Locks station site, old approach ramp and remaining wood beams, looking east.

Figure 6.5 (top right) Approaching eastbound *Pioneer* during the 1980s. (trainorder.org)

Figure 6.6 (bottom right) Former Cascade Locks station site, platform area, looking east.

Chapter Seven

Hood River

Station Narrative

Passenger Rail History

Hood River was first served by rail with the arrival of the OR&N in 1882 when the railroad built a two-story wooden passenger station. In 1911, the original station was demolished and replaced with a new structure in the same location. The new passenger station featured a more elaborate and ornate design, built in the Craftsman style, compared to other stations along the OR&N line. This design reflects the significance of Hood River as a place of commerce in the Columbia River Gorge, a status that grew in part to aspects such as the Oregon Lumber Company's newly-completed (built 1906-1909) Mount Hood Railroad, whose junction with the OR&N mainline was adjacent to the station of subject. The Mount Hood Railroad had its depot to the immediate east of the OR&N station; that depot was demolished in 1971.

Figure 7.1 Locomotive crashed into the O-WR&N depot in Hood River. (Historic Hood River)

The 1911 depot was involved in an incident seven years after it was built. According to an article from the Hood River Glacier, in 1918:

"A runaway locomotive...traveling at a speed of from 10 to 20 miles an hour, the locomotive struck a rail passenger auto at the end of the track and plowed for 100 feet over paving until its course was stopped by the thick brick walls of the west end of the O.W.R.&N. Station." –Hood River Glacier, September 26, 1918

In 1930, the UPRR and O-WR&N fully merged, at which point the UPRR took over the station's operation. Under the UPRR, the station continued to offer passenger service until 1958 via trains such as the premier *City of Portland* and the *Portland Rose*. UPRR freight operations continued at the station for a time following the discontinuation of passenger service. The UPRR acquired the Mount Hood Railroad in 1968, and the original Mount Hood Railroad's depot was torn down in 1971. At this point, the station building was used to support both mainline and branch line operations. The building was used in this capacity by the UPRR until 1984. In 1987, the Mt. Hood Railroad Company, Inc., a new company that was not tied to the original railroad of a similar name, was formed and acquired the right-of-way from Hood River to Parkdale from the UPRR. The deal also included the then-abandoned O-WR&N depot building, which began to serve as a headquarters for MHRR freight operations and their newly implemented passenger excursions between Hood River and Parkdale. The depot continues to be used in this capacity to the present day.

The inauguration of the Amtrak *Pioneer* in 1977 saw the return of intercity passenger service to Hood River; however, Amtrak did not utilize the historic depot building and instead built a waiting shelter to the east of the station building. During the early 1990s, roughly half a decade following the sale of the depot building to the MHRR, Amtrak operation moved into the O-WR&N depot. At this time, the waiting shelter was removed, and a siding track was extended to occupy the shelter's former site. The use of the historic depot's interior was short-lived, as *Pioneer* operations ceased a few years later in 1997.

Figure 7.2 Amtrak shelter at Hood River in 1977 (trainweb.org)

Station Description

The O-WR&N depot at Hood River is a one and a half-story structure that is characterized by a rectangular shape. Craftsman style of architecture best describes the depot's design. The building's orientation is parallel with the UPRR mainline, which runs east-west through Hood River. A gable roof with overhanging eaves that extend beyond and below the gable ends tops the structure. The north elevation features a dormer with a fixed multi-pane window as well as an additional intersecting gable roof which corresponds with a protruding entrance that provides passenger access to the platform area. The southern elevation has two dormers with fixed multi-pane windows and a brick chimney. The gable ends on both the east and west elevations feature half-timbering. A majority of the building is clad in rough stucco, which covers load-bearing red brick walls. An exposed brick coursing is at the base of the structure. Initially, the building's main passenger entrance was below the east elevation's gable end. The south elevation is now home to the depot's main entrance. The design incorporates different kinds of windows of wood construction, the most common being double-hung 8/1 or 12/1 windows.

When constructed, the interior of the O-WR&N station incorporated two waiting rooms, restrooms, ticket counter, railroad offices, boiler room, and storage area. Despite some alterations and modernizations over the last century, these spaces mostly exist unchanged. The front double doors open into a large waiting area, which occupies the central space of the depot. According to the newspaper articles covering the opening of the depot in 1911, two separate waiting rooms made up this space; the women's to the east, and the men's to the west. The UPRR later combined the separated waiting rooms. The waiting room also has an additional set of double doors on its northern side, which allows for access to the platform area. Off of the eastern side of the waiting room are two restrooms, one for men and the other for women. The ticket office is located off of the northwest corner of the waiting room, and features a glass ticket window. The remaining western potions of the depot's interior were constructed for baggage and freight operations.

The primary platform of the station is of poured concrete. This platform, the closest to the depot, serves a siding that is utilized by MHRR. The eaves of the depot building slightly cover the platform, with some lighting elements in place. A secondary platform of asphalt, aligned with the UPRR mainline track, was utilized by the Amtrak *Pioneer*. A narrow asphalt walkway, framed with wood beams, spans the siding track and provides access to the secondary platform from the primary platform. The secondary platform does not feature shelter or a source of lighting.

Figure 7.3 O-WR&N Hood River Depot, east elevation, looking northwest

From 1977 until the early 1990s, Amtrak used a waiting shelter as opposed to the depot's interior. The shelter was located immediately to the east of the station building, with access to both platforms. A metal fence separated the waiting shelter from the platform area; as a result, a gate was incorporated to allow passenger access to the platform without having to go through the depot building.

Current Site Ownership and Usage

The depot building and Hood River-Parkdale right-of-way are owned by MHRR (Iowa Pacific Holdings), while the mainline track is the property of UPRR. MHRR's freight and passenger excursion operations utilize the full extent of the depot's interior; making it the only station on the old UPRR/Amtrak passenger route that hosts passengers in the present day. The passenger waiting room is still used in its original purpose and is furnished with wood benches on the west side of the room. The east side of this space is used as a gift shop. The ticketing area still serves its original purpose, now for the excursion trains, while also hosting MHRR reception and offices. The original baggage rooms are also used as MHRR office space, as well as storage. A small railyard for MHRR as well as a parking lot makes up the remainder of the property.

Condition Assessment

Depot Building

The MHRR has kept the historic depot in good condition. Due to the building's continued use as the home of railroad operations, the interior spaces have largely retained their original appearance with few alterations. No alterations exist that would deter future use as a host of passenger service. The only confirmed surviving element on the building's interior from the Amtrak-era is a reader board, which is currently used to post information about the MHRR excursions. However, the wood benches are likely from the Amtrak-era.

The depot's primary entrance to the waiting room, as well as the rear doorway that provides access to the platforms, comply to ADA standards (refer to Chapter One for more on ADA requirements). While the pair of double doors are not automated, the doors appear to meet the requirements to make them ADA compliant. Both of the landings on the exterior of each set of doors are open and flat.

One aspect that would require upgrades is the restrooms, which feature historic amenities. There is one male restroom and one female restroom, each of which is single-user and equipped with a single toilet and sink. There are no family or gender-neutral restrooms included in the depot. While the restroom facilities add to the historical integrity of the depot, their current status does not appear to meet ADA standards for single-user restrooms.

Outside of modernizations to the restrooms, few alterations would be necessary for the interior space to host future passenger rail operations. Due to the depot's listing as a contributing resource of the Mt. Hood Railroad Linear Historic District, any proposed alterations to the building, including those to provide further ADA accessibility, must be approved by the City of Hood River Landmarks Review Board.

Site

The site around the historic depot is in good condition, likely due to its continued use. A majority of the space surrounding the depot building is asphalt and used as a public parking lot, which extends eastward from the depot. The parking accommodations include two dedicated handicap parking spaces placed at the eastern foot of the depot. The level of available parking spaces would likely be able to support Amtrak parking demands on top of its current usage. A small additional parking lot is located on the west side of the building,

partially under the 2nd Street overpass. Only MHRR employees are authorized to use this parking. The area in front of the depot's main entrance is level poured concrete. Concrete steps connect Cascade Ave. to this area. The depot site is ADA accessible by Cascade Avenue via two asphalt ramps that are utilized by vehicles. No improvements are necessary to increase the depot's accessibility to the city's streets. A metal fence separates the public parking lot from the UPRR right-of-way and creates a safe barrier between the public and private areas. Overall, no upgrades are needed to improve the space surrounding the depot.

Platforms

The primary platform of the depot is in good condition and continues to be used by the MHRR operations. The platform's concrete surface is cracked in various locations, but not to the extent that it would cause issues for passengers. The secondary platform, located between the MHRR siding and UPRR mainline, is in a state of disrepair. This platform is not currently used by MHRR to board passengers for their excursion trains and has therefore not received consistent use since the *Pioneer's* demise in 1997. However, if passenger rail service returned to Hood River, this would be the platform utilized for boarding due to its access to the UPRR mainline. The surface is damaged in areas with noticeable cracks and missing chunks of asphalt, resulting in an uneven surface. Debris covered the platform surface; primarily ballast. There is also a lack of safety features, such as a yellow safety line, lighting, and proper signage. Due to the platform's current condition, it would require upgrades to these identified problems to be safe for regular passenger service.

Viability to Host Passenger Service

Due to the building's continued use for railroad business, including a form of passenger rail, the transition to hosting intercity or long-distance passenger rail would likely be a small scale project. As discussed, upgrades to the UPRR mainline platform would be necessary to ensure the safety of boarding passengers in the future. The depot's restrooms also need upgrades to become more ADA accessible; however, the depot's listing within a historic district could complicate MHRR's ability to make such upgrades. Beyond these areas of improvement, the depot building's current condition would allow it to host regular passenger rail service. The waiting room is still used for its original purpose, and despite the presence of the MHRR gift shop, there is enough open space in the room to accommodate MHRR's current use of the room as well as additional rail passengers. MHRR uses the historic ticket window for its passenger excursions. While it is plausible that Amtrak could use this window in the future for ticketing, MHRR thoroughly utilizes the corresponding offices. However, if the ticketing

area cannot host Amtrak, or it is decided that it would not be necessary to have a station employee, there is adequate space in the waiting room for a ticket machine.

Market Analysis

Overview

Hood River has vastly changed since the departure of the *Pioneer* in 1997. Historically the city served as the economic base that supports the fruit orchards and logging operations of the Hood River Valley to the south. While Hood River still plays this commercial role, it has also grown into a popular tourist destination and center for sports recreation in the region. The city has also seen additional industrial growth with the arrival of several high-tech businesses and the creation of several well-known producers of adult beverages. Overall, Hood River has been experiencing substantial economic and cultural growth for more than two decades.

Across the Columbia River in Washington State is the Bingen-White Salmon Amtrak station. This station serves the daily Amtrak *Empire Builder*, one of the national rail company's flagship long-distance trains, which connects Portland to Chicago over the former Great Northern Railway route. As compared to passenger service on the Eastern Oregon Route, this Bingen-White Salmon stop would serve similar service for those traveling west to Portland and beyond, but provides a much different service for passengers heading to the east. The *Empire Builder* goes north towards Spokane after leaving the Columbia River at Pasco, while the Eastern Oregon Route turns to the south towards Boise. In the occurrence of the establishment of passenger trains on the UPRR mainline, the two trains would serve different markets with altering purposes.

Population Estimates & Projections

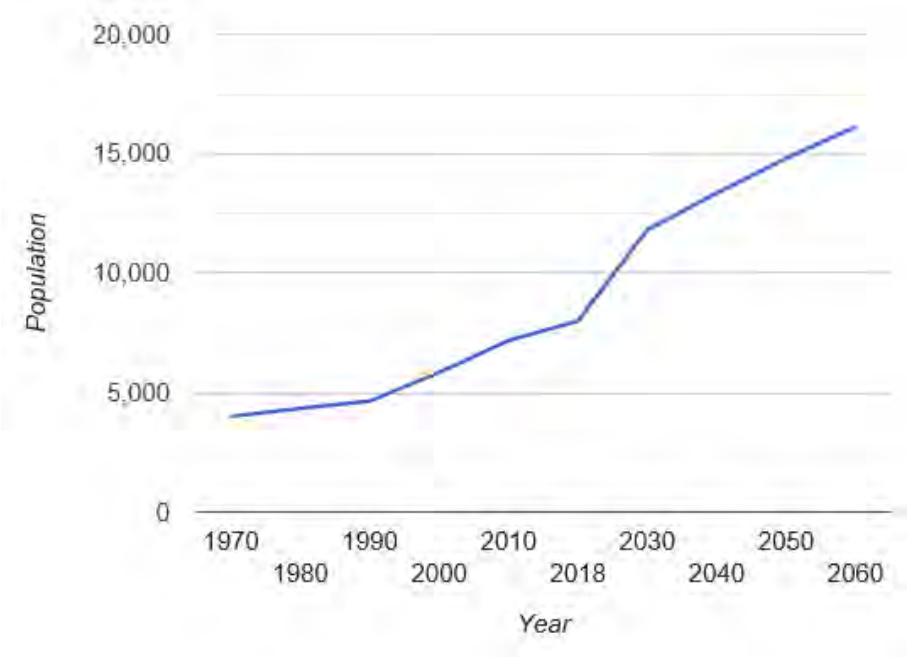
While Hood River has grown in terms of economic and cultural significance, it has also seen steady growth in its population numbers. In the two decades between 1990 and 2010, Hood River's population soared to 7,167, an increase of 54.7% during that period. In 2018, the population was estimated to be just shy of 8,000 residents, an additional boost of 11.5% from 2010. Considering these numbers, Hood River's population has roughly doubled since the inauguration of the Amtrak *Pioneer* in 1977. Hood River County, which confines Cascade Locks, Odell, and other populated areas of the Hood River Valley, has an estimated population of 25,310 as of 2018. This number was up from 16,903 in 1990 and 20,411 in 2000.

The growth trend is expected to continue within the city and the county due to the area's growing popularity and economic success. External projections have the city's population rising to 11,811 by 2030, an expansion of 47.6% since the 2018 estimate. Following 2030, projections have this number continuing to grow by approximately 1,500 people each decade. Hood River County's population is expected to increase by roughly 3,000 people per decade for the projected future. Due to the geography surrounding Hood River, with the Columbia River to the north and the Gorge on each of the city's flanks, much of this growth can be expected to the south of the city's center.

Conclusions on Demand

Based on the current state of Hood River, there is a considerable demand for passenger rail service to the city. The market in Hood River, as well as Hood River County as a whole, has seen significant and continuous growth in the areas of industry, cultural significance, and population since last being served by Amtrak in 1997. Overall, this is a vastly different market since the mid-1990s, as Hood River started to see its growth just as the *Pioneer* ceased operation.

Hood River Population



*Value for 2018 is an estimate provided by Portland State University.
**Years 2030 though 2060 are forecasts provided by Portland State University.

Future service would not only provide an outlet for the city's rapidly growing number of citizens, but passenger rail could also further support Hood River's status as one of Oregon's top tourist destinations. Compared to the other markets assessed in the *Oregon Station Report*, Hood River has the most potential as a destination of leisure for rail passengers. Alongside tourism, should the city continue to attract moderate levels of industrial business, rail service would provide a supplemental connection to Portland and other links. Additionally, I-84 through the Gorge, particularly between Multnomah Falls and Hood River, has remained a troublesome corridor during the winter. Passenger rail could provide a safe alternative for individuals who need to travel through the corridor during extreme weather conditions.

After considering the current state of Hood River, as well as the population projections, there is a demand for passenger trains to serve the city either by long-distance or intercities service. Due to its growing popularity as a place of residence and leisure, Hood River is a significant market along the Eastern Oregon Route.

Conclusions

After considering both the condition of the O-WR&N depot and the city's market, Hood River is an ideal candidate to host future passenger rail service. Hood River has grown considerably as a market for passenger rail in recent decades. This boost is due in part to the city's rising population, a result of increased industry and Hood River's desirability as a place of residence. The city's value as a passenger rail market has also significantly risen due to its quick rise as a tourist destination within the Columbia River Gorge. The historic O-WR&N depot, owned and used by MHRR, provides no significant challenges that would deter passenger trains from stopping in Hood River at the site. The depot's platform that allows access to the UPRR mainline would need to be rebuilt or significantly upgraded to meet current safety and accessibility standards for passenger stations. However, the capital costs of this project would be justifiable en route to creating access to the potential held in Hood River's market. Hood River's inclusion as a station stop is significant for any future passenger rail service along the corridor.

This station would fall under Category 3. The historic depot would likely be able to serve as a shelter while also providing restrooms and other amenities. In this situation, MHRR would remain as the depot's owner, and as a result, satisfy the requirements of a caretaker. If the station hosted a daily long-distance train, it is unlikely that the station would require Amtrak station staff. The lack of Amtrak staff would create minimal disruption to the current MHRR

operations within the depot, which occupies spaces such as the ticketing office. If the passenger service provided more than one train in each direction per day, there would be more reason to supply the station with Amtrak staff or create an alternative arrangement with MHRR to allow for in-person assistance and ticket sales on the site.

Figure 7.4 (top left) Waiting room.

Figure 7.5 (above) Waiting room, ticket window.

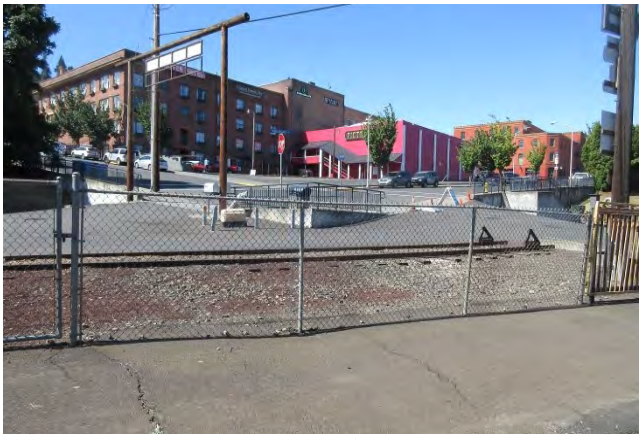
Figure 7.6 (bottom left) Waiting room, doors to platform area and MHRR gift shop.

Figure 7.7 (top right) Amtrak platform.

Figure 7.8 (far top right) North depot elevation.

Figure 7.9 (right) Amtrak waiting shelter former location.

Figure 7.10 (far right) Siding track crossover to Amtrak platform.



Chapter Eight

The Dalles

Passenger Rail History of The Dalles

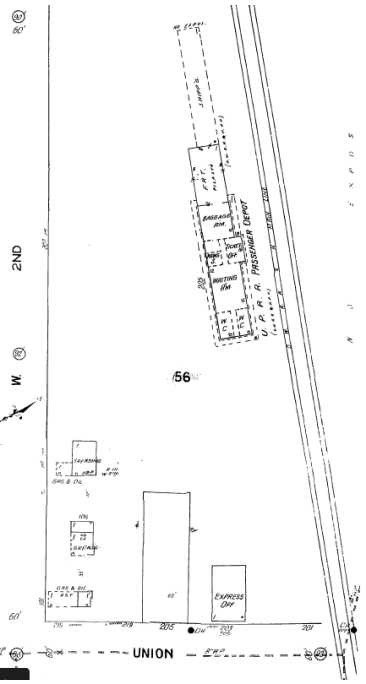


Figure 8.1 1926 Sanborn map showing the location of the historic OR&N depot in The Dalles. (Library of Congress)

The OR&N line reached The Dalles in 1882, providing passenger service to the east and Portland to the west. Photographs and Sanborn Fire Insurance maps place the original depot site near the intersection of 2nd Street and Liberty Street. A wood-framed, two-story structure with a gabled roof stood on the site by the early twentieth century. The design followed the architectural trend of other depots along the line, as it closely resembled the 1911 depot located in Hood River, indicating that the neighboring stations were built around the same time. Historical aerial photos suggest that the depot was standing in 1947. Timetables show that UPRR trains such as the *City of Portland* and *Portland Rose* served The Dalles before the Amtrak era.

When Amtrak inaugurated the *Pioneer* in 1977, the absence of the previously demolished historic depot required a new station. The station located near 2nd Street and Liberty Street was built in the exact location of the historic depot, although there were no remaining aspects of the former station.

After more than a decade of operations at the 2nd Street and Liberty Street station, it was determined to move the *Pioneer's* stop several blocks to the east. A new permanent depot was constructed in 1991 at Federal Street and E 1st Street, a more central location in downtown The Dalles. Amtrak and Greyhound bus service operated out of the new depot, providing The Dalles with a single transportation center. The Federal Street depot served the *Pioneer* for the final six years of its operation, at which point it continue to be used by Greyhound for two decades.

The remaining sections of this chapter is separated to cover each of the two station sites of the Amtrak *Pioneer:* 2nd Street station and Federal Street depot.

Station Narrative: 2nd Street Station

Station Description

The first Amtrak *Pioneer* station in The Dalles was located on the far west end of downtown The Dalles; the closest intersection to the site is W 2nd Street and Liberty Street. While this location was the home of The Dalles' demolished historic OR&N depot, Amtrak's contemporary station consisted of an Amtrak waiting shelter and two asphalt platforms. The right-of-way has double track through the station site.

As a result, a narrow platform was located between the two tracks to serve westbound trains on the northern track, while eastbound trains on the southern track used a more substantial asphalt pad located between the track and waiting shelter. The station had a gravel parking lot with a driveway that aligned with Liberty Street. This arrangement appears to have been constructed as a temporary home to passenger service before more suitable accommodations could be provided with the Federal Street depot starting in 1991.

Figure 8.2 Eastbound *Pioneer* at 2nd Street Station. (Dan Haneckow)

Site Ownership and Usage

Due to the small footprint of the platform and shelter, the station's built components were likely located on the UPRR right-of-way. Between 1977 and 1991, Amtrak used the gravel lot adjacent to the platform for parking; however, it is unclear who owned the parcel of land. Since Amtrak's absence at the site, the United States Postal Service has developed the gravel lot with a modern post office building as well as a paved parking lot.

Condition Assessment: 2nd Street Station

Site

There are no remains of the original Amtrak station on the west end of The Dalles. All station components were removed following the construction of the new station in the early 1990s. The platform area has been returned to ballast, with no asphalt present. A gravel access road parallels the right-of-way, and occupied the site of the waiting shelter. United States Postal Service currently occupies the general area. While their main post office building occupies the corner of W 2nd Street and Union Street, the exact location of the station and gravel parking lot is approximately two hundred feet to the west of the building. The post office uses this area as paved parking. The station site is still well situated off of 2nd Street (which becomes the Mosier-The Dalles Highway a block to the west) and provides direct access to the commercial core of The Dalles.

Viability to Host Passenger Service

The exact location of the former station is not viable for future use. The United States Post Office has occupied the site with development. However, about two hundred feet to the west of the former station site, a parcel of land exists that could potentially host a passenger station. This property, along the Mosier-The Dalles Highway between Lincoln Street and Mill Creek, has been paved since the site last served rail passengers in 1991. An expresso stand, as well as several other trailers, occupies this paved lot; however, no permanent structures are on the site. Conversion of the asphalt area into an organized parking lot appears to be possible. There is ample space between the paved lot and the UPRR right-of-way for a platform, as well as a waiting shelter or small-size depot building.

Station Narrative: Federal Street Depot

Station Description

The contemporary station building takes on many of the design principles of the historic O-WR&N stations located at Hood River (existing) and The Dalles, which is of the Craftsman architectural style. The building is rectangular and is covered by a gable roof, with the gable ends facing north-south. Eaves extend beyond and below each of the gable ends. The gable ends are half-timbered, and feature signage that read "The Dalles: Elv: 100 Feet". The east and west elevations each have a gabled-dormer with half-timbered gable-ends. A majority of the building is clad in a rough plaster. An exposed brick coursing is at the base of the structure on all sides. The building utilizes fixed 6/1 windows.

The platform for the former *Pioneer* at The Dalles is located along the UPRR mainline on the opposite side of E 1st Street from the station building. A dedicated crosswalk was provided between the station building and the platform, as well as a gap in the street guardrail that allowed passengers trackside access. The platform consists of a thin strip of asphalt between the guardrail and the track.

Site Ownership and Usage

Following the discontinuation of the Amtrak *Pioneer* in 1997, the depot building on Federal Street continued its use as the city's Greyhound bus station and well as a base for the city's transit system. However, a new transit center, located at Chenowith Loop Road and W 7th Street, which is not along the UPRR right-of-way, opened in 2016. This new transit center removed the last transportation operations from Federal Street depot.

The building currently is occupied by the Wasco County Veteran Services and is not used as a passenger station in any capacity. Wasco County is the owner of the building.

Condition Assessment: Federal Street Depot

Depot Building

There have been few alterations to the exterior of the depot building in the absence of Amtrak. This is due in part to the building's continued use as a bus passenger station until 2016. The interior of the depot was unable to be assessed.

Site

The area surrounding the depot remains in good condition. The large paved parking lot, which was once utilized by passengers, is in good condition. The most significant alteration to the station site is the removal of the crosswalk that once connected the depot building to the platform, located on the opposite side of E 1st Street. The crosswalk paint has been covered, and the gap in the guardrail that allowed access to the platform has been filled in to create a solid barrier between the street and railroad. The location of the station site is ideal, located in the heart of The Dalles' commercial district on 2nd and 3rd Streets.

Platform

The former asphalt platform is in overall good condition. The asphalt has cracked along the length of the platform, but not to the point of significantly degrading the surface's quality. Ballast has covered sections of the platform. The yellow safety line is still visible, but would require an upgrade. The immediate concern with this platform is its width; there is only 2' between the guardrail and yellow line, with 4' between the guardrail and railroad tracks. While the train would stop before passengers entered this area, the platform space does not provide a safe distance for boarding passengers to navigate. More importantly, the platform is too narrow to accommodate individuals with disabilities and their necessary equipment. There is no space for a lift, nor the space for a wheelchair to maneuver onto a train-side lift. Despite the apparent good condition of the platform's asphalt, this station location requires significant upgrades to address the width of the platform and ensure the safety and maneuverability of passengers.

Figure 8.3 Federal Street depot, looking north.

Figure 8.4 Former asphalt platform with surviving yellow safely line.

Viability to Host Passenger Service

Although this is the most recent Amtrak station to serve The Dalles, and despite the depot's construction in the early 1990s, this station site has several challenges that could prevent it from hosting passenger service. First, the depot is no longer used for passenger services and stands as the home to Wasco County Veteran Services. It is unclear if this space could be obtained to once again be used as a station. Second, the platform does not seem to be adequate for meeting ADA standards due to its limited width. Due to the position of the platform between the UPRR right-of-way and E 1st Street, there is limited space to expand the width of the platform. The Amtrak Station Program Planning Guidelines of 2013 states that for side platforms with baggage loading, the preferred width of a platform is 15', while the minimum width is 12'. Construction of a platform with these specifications at this location is unlikely; doing so would require occupation of space currently used by E 1st Street. The site's position in downtown and high quantity of adjacent parking are the most substantial benefits of this potential station location. If the site's problems could be addressed, the Federal Street depot would be the ideal location to serve passenger rail service to The Dalles.

Market Analysis

Overview

Unlike its neighbor city to the west, Hood River, the market for The Dalles has not seen significant changes since the last direct passenger service in 1997. This is in part due to The Dalles earlier establishment as a center of commerce for the region along the Columbia River. Many of the entities that have provided The Dalles with its economic stability, such as Mid-Columbia Medical Center, the largest employer in Wasco County, have been in place for decades. However, The Dalles has seen new economic development in the last decade. In 2006, Google constructed a significant data center in The Dalles. While The Dalles has stable business ventures, it lacks the tourism of nearby Hood River. As a result, the residents of The Dalles and other surrounding Wasco County towns make up the entirety of the passenger rail market.

The Dalles is relatively close to the Amtrak station in Wishram, located 17 miles to the east and across the Columbia River in Washington State. Amtrak's *Empire Builder* stops at Wishram daily in each direction during its journey between Portland and Chicago. Following Wishram, the *Empire Builder's* route follows the Columbia River until Pasco, before continuing north towards Spokane. The Eastern Oregon Route leaves the Columbia River at Boardman and begins its southeastern heading. While these two routes are in close proximity through the Columbia River Gorge, they do not serve the same communities to the east. The *Empire Builder*'s existence has a limited impact on determining the market for direct passenger rail service to The Dalles.

Population Estimates & Projections

The Dalles saw its most prominent spike in population between the 1940s and 1960s, coinciding with the construction of The Dalles Dam. In 1960, the city's population was 10,493. Since this time, The Dalles as seen slow but consistent growth. The city's estimated population in 2018 was 14,735, giving the city's population an increase of 40.4% over the last six decades. While The Dalles' growth is not as rapid as compared to that of several other cities along the route, there are approximately 5,000 more residents in The Dalles compared to the beginning of the *Pioneer* in 1977. Wasco County contains smaller towns along State Highway 197 such as Dufur and Maupin; however, a vast majority of the growth within Wasco County is within the city limits of The Dalles. Therefore, the growth rate for Wasco County is consistent with that of The Dalles. In 2018, the county had an estimated population of 27,200 people; half of those residents living in The Dalles.

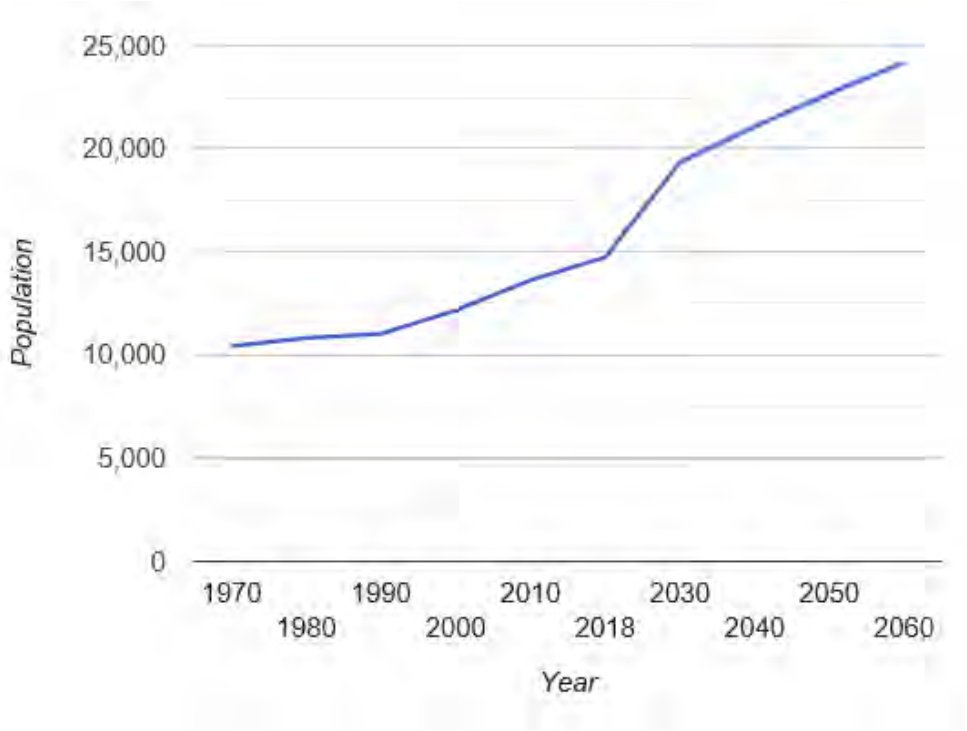
According to external projections, the trend of gradual population growth for The Dalles is expected to continue. Over the next few decades, the city's population is projected to increase by around 1,500 to 2,000 people each decade. Wasco County is projected to average about 2,000 new residents each decade, meaning that a majority of the growth within the county is still expected to be in The Dalles for the foreseeable future.

Conclusions on Demand

The Dalles remains one of the prominent markets along the Eastern Oregon Route. As of 2018, the city ranks third in population compared to other analyzed population centers; Pendleton and Hermiston holding more residents within their city limits. However, by 2025, The Dalles is expected to surpass Pendleton in population, which will make it the second-largest market along the route.

If passenger rail service were implemented on the Eastern Oregon Route, a station in The Dalles would be all-but expected. Historically the city has been a center of commerce along

The Dalles Population



*Value for 2018 is an estimate provided by Portland State University.
**Years 2030 though 2060 are forecasts provided by Portland State University.

the Columbia River, a characteristic that has no indications of changing in the near future. Due to the city's comparably large population, as well as its connections to Wasco County and the greater Central Oregon region via Highway 197, The Dalles holds the potential to be one of the key stations along the route in terms of providing consistent ridership.

Conclusions

While the market of The Dalles has a demand for passenger rail service, the primary challenge in implementing service would be the securement of a station site. After reviewing the two former station sites within the city, neither are prepared to host passenger service in their current conditions. Despite being the more contemporary of the two locations, the old Federal Street depot provides more challenges compared to 2nd Street station. Wasco County Veteran Services office fully occupies the interior of Federal Street depot. More importantly, the former platform at this location is not up to modern standards for multiple reasons, and there is insufficient space to install an appropriate platform due to the proximity to E 1st Street. Despite the availability of the depot's interior spaces, this location provides significant design challenges for a new platform.

While the outlook on the Federal Street depot's viability to host passenger rail is unclear, other sites may be more accessible while providing adequate space for a modern station. The first of these locations is the former site of 2nd Street station. As previously discussed, there is available space at this location for a modern platform, a waiting shed or a small depot, and a parking lot. The site is occupied by a coffee drive-thru and parked trailers, but no permanent structures west of the USPS building. Another possible location is Lewis and Clark Festival Park. While this report does not analyze Lewis and Clark Festival Park, the site is located on the north side of the UPRR mainline near Federal Street depot. The site features a fully-developed parking lot, as well as covered park pavilion that features modern restrooms. While these amenities were not built to support passenger rail, and their availability for such use may be questionable, this site holds potential for a modern platform and is a site worth considering.

As the third-largest market along the route, it is recommended that The Dalles have a station stop with the return of passenger trains to the line. The Dalles would require a Category 4 station. However, due to the size of the market, a Category 3 station would be more appropriate; providing basic amenities such as shelter and restrooms, but not attended by Amtrak staff. Regardless of the selected station site, a sizable project would be necessary to provide a compliant Category 3 or Category 4 station with modern amenities. While the process of securing a station may be challenging, The Dalles is a vital market along the route.

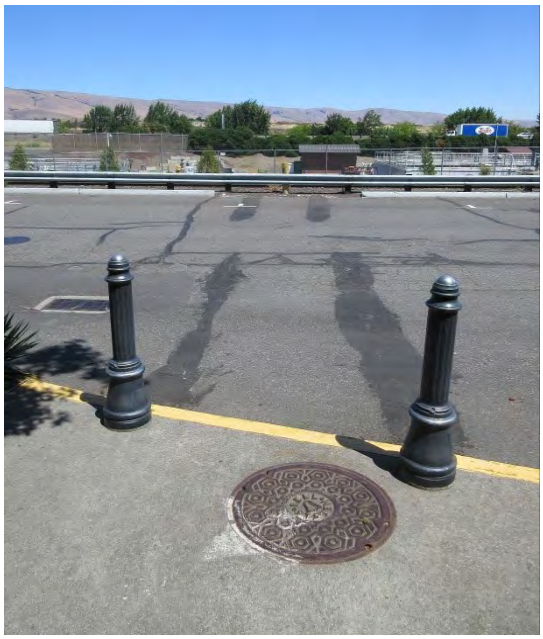


Figure 8.5 (top left) Former location of 2nd Street station, looking west.

Figure 8.6 (above) Former crosswalk to platform from Federal Street depot, looking north.

Figure 8.7 (far left) Federal Street depot from platform area, looking south.

Figure 8.8 (left) Federal Street depot platform, looking west.

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Chapter Nine

HERMISTON

Station Narrative

Passenger Rail History

When the OR&N finished its Eastern Oregon line through Huntington, Oregon in 1884, the route followed the Umatilla River between Umatilla and Pendleton; at Umatilla, the right-of-way followed the Columbia River to the west. In 1915, a new cutoff line was constructed from Boardman to rejoin with the line at a new junction south of Hermiston at what would be called Hinkle. The cutoff allowed for a shorter route as opposed to traveling north to Umatilla and along the Columbia River. However, the creation of the cutoff meant the mainline bypassed Hermiston. A depot was constructed at the Hinkle junction to continue passenger service to the Hermiston market. Joseph T. Hinkle is the namesake of the depot and future yard; the individual who sold the land to the railroad. Following the construction of the McNary Dam in 1951, which caused the relocation of the right-of-way along the Columbia River east of Umatilla, the Union Pacific built a major railyard east of the Hinkle Junction; which became known as Hinkle Yard.

Following the construction of the 1915 cutoff, Hinkle became the main passenger depot of the immediate area. The UPRR's passenger trains continued to serve the station through the end of the railroad's passenger operations with trains such as the *City of Portland* and *Portland Rose*. These passenger trains utilized single-level depot building that was located on the site.

Passenger rail service returned to Hinkle in 1977 with the commencement of the Amtrak *Pioneer*. Historic aerial images indicate that the historic depot building was standing for a majority of the *Pioneer*'s operational years, however it was not used by Amtrak and was demolished by the UPRR in the late 1990s. Amtrak utilized a waiting shelter as opposed to the historic depot. Amtrak used the Hinkle shelter to serve the Hermiston community until the end of the train's operation in 1997.

Station Description

The Hinkle Amtrak station was located on the south side of the UPRR right-of-way at the west end of the railroad's Hinkle Yard, across a single track from the historic Hinkle station building. The station utilized by the *Pioneer* consisted of an unstaffed Amtrak waiting shelter and an asphalt platform. A guardrail wrapped around the sides and rear of the waiting shelter and a single street light was in place on the east side of the shelter. The station did not have

a fully-developed parking lot, but a gravel space along the south side of the shelter and platform provided a space for vehicles. A span of wood beams separated the gravel lot from the right-of-way. While the historic depot existed for a majority, if not all, of the *Pioneer's* tenure, all of Amtrak's operations remained on the south side of the track.

Current Site Ownership and Usage

The UPRR owns the site that once hosted the Hinkle station as a part of their right-of-way. The site has been under the ownership of the railroad since the land was acquired from Joseph T. Hinkle in 1915. The site is still within Hinkle Yard, near its western edge, and remains as an unoccupied gravel area.

Condition Assessment

Platform

The only remaining physical indication of the station's location is the remnants of wood beams that separated the gravel parking area from the railroad bed. There are no remaining elements of the waiting shelter or the asphalt platform. Aerial photos indicate the removal of the waiting shelter, guardrail, and platform occurred before 2005. The location of the platform is slightly raised above the surrounding gravel area.

Figure 9.1 Amtrak station at Hinkle Yard, looking north. (Alan Halfhill)

Site

Much like it was during the entirety of the Amtrak *Pioneer* era, Hinkle Yard is private UPRR property and closed to the public. The access road that served the station is still in place, providing an outlet to Hermiston via Highway 207. The surrounding area consists of large industrial operations, while the immediate station site has continued to be an undeveloped gravel lot. Since the site sits vacant, there are no physical obstructions that would prevent a passenger station at this location at a future date.

Viability to Host Passenger Service

While this site served Amtrak in the past, there are many aspects of the location that cause concern. First, the remote location within UPRR's Hinkle Yard could lead to safety issues. While the UPRR has reduced its activity at Hinkle Yard compared to the *Pioneer* era, the yard is still home to significant freight traffic. Additionally, the general public is unlikely to have familiarity with how to navigate the area. While the station area is accessible with some ease from Highway 207, inexperienced passengers could attempt to approach the yard from the north via Hinkle-Hermiston Road. This situation would have them enter into the heart of Hinkle Yard, trespassing onto UPRR property that is unsafe for the public. Additionally, there are no safe routes to and from the site for pedestrians or bicycles, as Highway 207 from Hermiston does not have developed sidewalks or bike lanes.

Another issue with the site's remote location would be the potential negative effect on ridership. The station site is approximately five miles from downtown Hermiston, with no residential developments nearby. Further public transit options are needed; otherwise, passengers would be solely reliant on automobiles for transport to the station. Furthermore, the site's aesthetic limitations, surrounded by industrial properties, could damage the ability to attract potential passengers who are traveling by rail for leisure or the benefit of relaxation. Based on these issues, this site is not well suited for passenger rail service. This site may have had more merit when selected during the 1970s, due to its placement alongside the historic Hinkle station building. However, in the present day, there are few benefits to place a passenger station at this location.

Alternative Location: Stanfield

Overview

Due to the lack of potential to host passenger rail at the former Hinkle Yard station site, this report examined an alternative location within the Hermiston market. The search for potential sites looked for essential elements such as undeveloped land along the UPRR mainline, proximity to Hermiston, and accessibility via existing infrastructure. The search also considered additional site characteristics that could provide a safer, more enjoyable environment for potential passengers. Following this process, a location in Stanfield was determined as the best alternative to serve the Hermiston market.

Site Description

The small city of Stanfield, with a population of around 2,200, is located just over five miles to the southeast of downtown Hermiston. Stanfield consists primarily of a small commercial strip along Highway 395 that is enclosed by several city blocks of the residential neighborhood. The UPRR mainline passes through the west side of the city, about a mile removed from the eastern edge of Hinkle Yard.

Located between the UPRR mainline and SW Sherman Street, the land is undeveloped. The site runs along Sherman Street for about two city blocks, between W Coe Avenue and SW Taft Avenue, with some of the area being across from Coe Park. The parcel of land is 50' width near Coe Avenue, but expands to closer to 90' wide near Taft Avenue.

The field is level, with the railroad grade slightly raised above ground level. The UPRR mainline has a single track through the site and has a gradual curve to the south. A grade-level crossing is located at the northern edge of the parcel, where Seymour Street/Coe Avenue crosses the UPRR mainline. Other site features include two power poles and a small gabled structure. It is unclear who owns the full extent of the property.

Figure 9.2 Potential Stanfield station site, looking north.

This site would be able to accommodate a Category 4 station, which would include a modern platform and waiting shelter. There is space for a small parking facility on the south side of the site. Angled street parking is currently in place along the northern side of Coe Park, along Coe Avenue.

Benefits

Many potential benefits make this site a suitable alternative to the former station at Hinkle. The critical factors that make the site plausible are that it is undeveloped and easily accessible. There are few locations along the UPRR mainline near Hermiston that hold both of these characteristics. The site's accessibility is due to the proximity to Highway 395, which connects Stanfield and Hermiston with a drive of about ten minutes. The highway is one of the main corridors in and out of Hermiston and does not require passengers to venture into private property as was the case with the station at Hinkle Yard. Additionally, Hermiston and Stanfield are connected by limited bus service provided by Hermiston Area Regional Transit. Overall, this station site is a quick, safe, and accessible journey away from Hermiston.

One of the other elements that make this site viable is its potential to offer increased safety and comfort for passengers. The setting is far more appropriate for a passenger rail station, as it avoids the industrial area in and around Hinkle Yard that could prove to be dangerous for members of the general public. In terms of increased passenger comfort, the site's location adjacent to Coe Park and the residential areas of Stanfield offers a better setting compared to Hinkle. Many of the well-suited stations along the route, such as Pendleton and Ontario, are located adjacent to parks. The site is also walking distance to Stanfield's small commercial strip, which has several restaurants.

Hermiston has grown into one of the staple markets along the route. Therefore, since a station serving the market would be expected to contribute a larger quantity of riders, aspects regarding passenger safety, comfort, and accessibility should be given more prominence than they were at the Hinkle station during the operation of the *Pioneer*.

Market Analysis

Overview

Located on the west side of Umatilla County, Hermiston is the largest market along the Eastern Oregon Route. In the last forty years, Hermiston has transformed from a rural city supported by agricultural production into a key industrial center for Eastern Oregon. Hermiston and surrounding area is home to major employers such as Lamb Weston, Wal-Mart Distribution, Amazon data centers, and many large-scale agricultural companies. While some of these businesses are located outside of Hermiston city limits, the city supports

the businesses and is home to most of the area's workers. Hermiston creates no demand for tourism, leaving its market dependent on the city's many industries. One of the keys to the market's growth as an industrial boom-town is its proximity to the I-82 and I-84 interchange, making Hermiston a convenient location for trucks to use the interstate system. Placement along I-82 also provides quick access to Washington State's Tri-Cities, a population center of nearly 300,000 people, in less than a half-hour.

Hermiston's status as an expanding industrial city is not likely to cease soon. The area has ample space, mostly flat and undeveloped, to continue to expand in the following decades. The Amtrak *Pioneer* service existed during the first decades of Hermiston's transition phase but was discontinued in the early stages of this growth. The market in its current state remains untested by passenger trains.

In addition to the development within the limits of Hermiston, this market is also influenced by the surrounding area. Cities such as Stanfield, Umatilla, Boardman (Morrow County), and Irrigon (Morrow County) surround Hermiston and have their own industrial businesses on smaller scales. Any passenger station along the UPRR mainline near Hermiston would be able to serve these communities as well.

Population Estimates & Projections

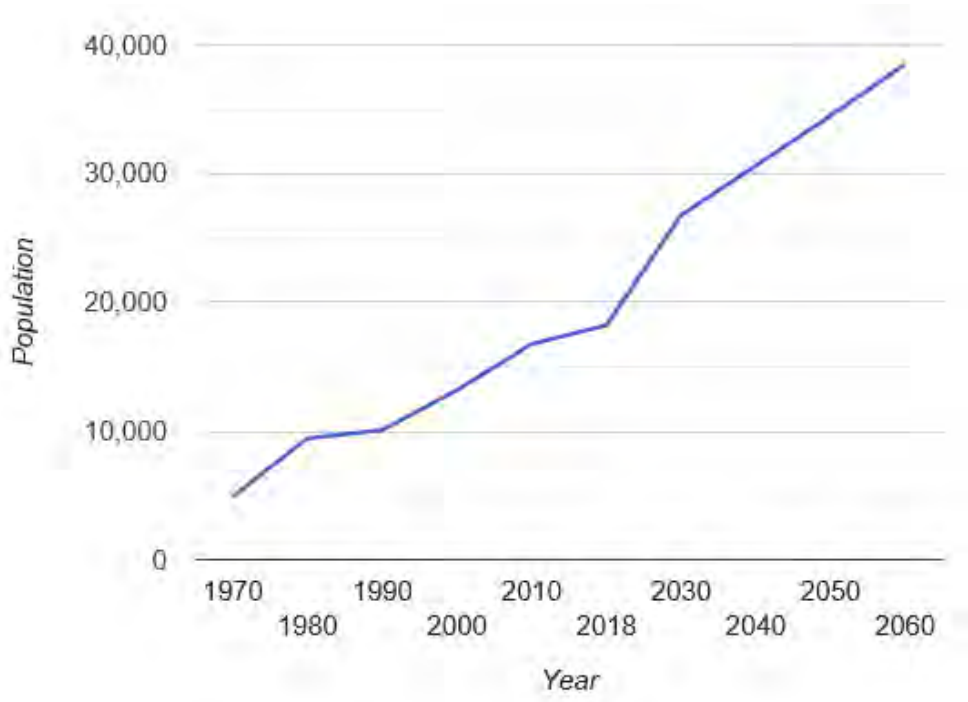
The contemporary industrial boom in Hermiston began in the 1970s. Between 1970 and 1980, Hermiston's population almost doubled; the population grew from 4,893 to 9,408; an increase of 92.3% during the 1970s. This decade also saw the introduction of the Amtrak *Pioneer* at nearby Hinkle in 1977. The population growth slowed during the 1980s, increasing by 632 people during the decade. The following two decades would bring the return of significant growth for Hermiston. In 2000, the city had 13,154 residents, an increase of 31% from 1990. A similar growth rate happened between 2000 and 2010, with a rise of 27.3% and finishing the decade with 16,745. External population estimates had the city's population at 18,200 in 2018. Since 1970, Hermiston's population has expanded by 261.2%. Between 1970 and 2018, Umatilla County's population grew from 44,923 to 80,765. However, included in the Umatilla County total is the community of Pendleton; this report considers Pendleton a separate market.

Hermiston is located within the Hermiston-Pendleton Mircopolitan Statistical Area. As designated by the United States Census Bureau, this comprises the combined areas of Morrow County and Umatilla County, with Hermiston and Pendleton as the two primary population centers within the boundary. Between 2000 and 2010, Hermiston overcame

Pendleton and became the most populated city within the statistical area. At this point in 2010, the area had an official population of 87,062.

Hermiston is expected to continue its trend of sharp growth for the foreseeable future. By 2030, Hermiston is projected to have a population of approximately 26,700. If accurate, these external projections have an increase of 8,500 new residents between 2018 and 2030. The growth continues with an average gains of about 4,000 for each decade until 2060, at which point the population of Hermiston would be over 40,000. In conclusion, these projection models have the community of Hermiston more than doubling in the next forty years. It is projected that 80% of growth within the Hermiston-Pendleton Micropolitan Statistical Area before 2035 will occur in Hermiston.

Hermiston Population



*Value for 2018 is an estimate provided by Portland State University.
**Years 2030 though 2060 are forecasts provided by Portland State University.

Conclusions on Demand

Hermiston is currently the largest population center in Oregon east of Bend. While the UPRR mainline does not travel through the heart of Hermiston, a station site within several miles would be sufficient in serving the broad market. Since last being served by Amtrak in 1997, the city's growth has significantly altered the nature of the market. As a result, and as Hermiston continues to grow as an essential contributor to Oregon's economy, a reliable connection to Portland and the Willamette Valley will be more critical.

Additionally, as Hermiston expands to hold more people, there will be more of a demand for alternative modes of transportation to and from the area. Currently, travelers are generally limited to driving on I-84 west through the Columbia River Gorge or east over the Blue Mountains, two areas that can cause hazardous driving conditions during the winter. Passenger rail service that runs at least once daily could be a solution in providing a safe mode of transportation year-round.

Due to going prominence of Hermiston as a place of business and residence, this report concludes that there is a demand for passenger trains to serve the city either by long-distance or intercity service. If passenger trains returned to the route, Hermiston would be the largest market and could be expected to contribute more ridership than the *Pioneer*'s Hinkle stop provided during the 1970s until the 1990s.

Conclusions

Hermiston provides a challenge in that is has grown into the most extensive market along the Eastern Oregon Route, but is not directly served by the UPRR mainline. As previously discussed in this chapter, a Hinkle Yard station was the historical solution to this problem. The Hinkle station site is about a ten-minute drive from downtown Hermiston. However, the assessment of the Hinkle site provided the conclusion that the site is no longer viable for future use. The site has no remaining infrastructure related to passenger service and provides safety concerns when inviting the public into UPRR's Hinkle Yard.

To provide an alternative, this report inquired into a possible station site along Sherman Street in Stanfield. When the Amtrak *Pioneer* began service to Hinkle/Hermiston in 1977, the market was one of the smallest among the train's route through Oregon. During that era, an Amtrak waiting shelter at Hinkle was sufficient for the relatively low demand. Now that Hermiston has rapidly grown into the heart of Eastern Oregon's economy, the market would

demand a more prominent station with better access and amenities. Upon review of the former site at Hinkle, as well as the potential site at Stanfield, it is clear that Stanfield offers the best prospects in supporting the market. This report recommends a modern station in Stanfield should serve Hermiston with the coming of any passenger rail service on the UPRR.

The first reason that Stanfield is the preferred option is that the site offers more safety for passengers compared to the heavily industrial area in and around Hinkle yard. A station at Stanfield would keep the public away from the freight activity at Hinkle Yard and would prevent accidental trespassing on UPRR property. Second, while the drive-time between Stanfield and Hermiston is the same as between Hinkle and Hermiston, Stanfield is accessible with more ease along Highway 395. Additionally, Hermiston and Stanfield are connected by limited bus service along Highway 395 operated by Hermiston Area Regional Transit. Stanfield would also be more appealing for passengers, located off a neighborhood and adjacent to a city park as opposed to the gravel lot previously used at Hinkle. Lastly, Stanfield had an estimated 2,185 residents as of 2018. While this is not a large concentration of people compared to the Hermiston market as a whole, there could be ridership benefits from placing the station in a location with a few thousand residents as opposed to Hinkle where no people reside. A Stanfield station could be a mutually beneficial occurrence for both the passenger rail service and the city, as the station could help revitalize Stanfield to a certain extent.

While some of the outlined benefits of locating a station in Stanfield are speculative, there are few elements of the Hinkle Yard location that create such potential. Regardless of the selected site, the construction of a new station is needed. While Hermiston is currently the largest city in Eastern Oregon, a station to serve the market would fall under Category 3 or Category 4. Due to the UPRR right-of-way's location outside the city, likely a Category 4 station located at either Hinkle Yard or Stanfield would be sufficient. To be a Category 3 station, a full depot building with restroom facilities would need to be constructed.

Hermiston is experiencing rapid growth in population and its economic value for the State of Oregon. Any passenger rail service to serve the east side of Oregon would likely need to have a stop in this market to be successful. While either of these station sites could support the basic requirements of a modern passenger station, not considering the process of obtaining access to the spaces, Stanfield provides the best option for a station to serve the market in the present day.

Figure 9.3 (top left) Former Hinkle station site, looking west.

Figure 9.4 (above) Wood remnants of Hinkle station.

Figure 9.5 (left) Potential Stanfield station site, looking south.

Chapter Ten

PENDLETON

Station Narrative

Passenger Rail History

Pendleton's history is closely tied to the coming of the OR&N railroad in 1881. The OR&N line was built a few blocks south of the incorporated town of Pendleton on a right-of-way provided by the Native Americans of the Umatilla Reservation. The northern boundary of the Umatilla Reservation and southern border of Pendleton met at the determined right-of-way. The original station to serve Pendleton was constructed simultaneously with the railroad's construction in 1881 and took the shape of an ornate two-story, wood-frame Victorian stick-style design. The arrival of the OR&N sparked a wave of commercial development near the station and along Main Street; establishing Pendleton as one of Eastern Oregon's prominent hubs for commerce. In 1884, the OR&N line through Eastern Oregon was complete, and Pendleton had direct rail access to the Eastern United States.

The current station building was constructed in 1909 by the OR&N, replacing the original 1881 wood structure. The 1909 station was to the immediate west of its predecessor. The station first opened for public use as a passenger station on July 9, 1910. In the same year, the OR&N was consolidated into new UPRR subsidiary O-WR&N, that took control of passenger services at the station. In 1912, the building was extended at the cost of $31,556. The UPRR operated passenger service at the station for a majority of its history, through services such as the *City of Portland* and the *Portland Rose* until 1971. Fright handling at the station was discontinued shortly following the end of UPRR passenger service.

When the Amtrak *Pioneer* was inaugurated in 1977, passenger serve returned to the site. However, the new Amtrak service did not utilize the historic depot and instead opted to construct an Amtrak waiting shelter to complement the existing concrete platform. In 1997, Pendleton saw its last passenger rail service with the discontinuation of the *Pioneer*.

In 1986, the OR&N station was listed on the NRHP as a part of the Pendleton South Main Street Commercial Historic District, listed as a contributing resource in the secondary period of significance (1907-1937). A year later in May 1987, an agreement was struck between the UPRR and the City of Pendleton, which allowed for the station building to be adaptively reused as a museum. In October of the same year, the Historic Preservation League of Oregon issued a Certificate of Merit for the station's preservation through the reuse as a museum.

Station Description

The OR&N station (1909) at Pendleton is a single-story, rectangular-shaped structure. The length of the station parallels the UPRR right-of-way, which runs along the southern side of the building. The station's front façade faces north, towards SW Frazer Avenue and the central commercial district of Pendleton. The station features a mix of various building materials and characteristics, which creates difficulty placing the building's design under a single architectural style. A majority of the station's construction is of red brick, with wood utilized for detail work.

A low-hipped roof with cross gables tops the rectangular mass of the station. The roof features overhanging eaves with wood corbelled brackets supporting the eaves. Tiles, likely of terra cotta, make up the roof. The exterior cladding of the building is primarily red brick of the Flemish bond and is complemented by decorative bands of header and stretcher courses that form the sides and lintels of the windows and doors. Other brickwork includes shallow pilasters; located between paired windows at the building's corners. A majority of the windows are multi-pane upper sash over single-pane lower sash, primarily 16/1 or 12/1; featuring a mixture of fixed and double-hung windows. Fixed multi-pane transom windows are located above the entry/exit doors. Doors that were intended for public use are paired wood doors that include single-pane windows. Doors and windows are of wood construction. There is a lack of historic photographs that depict the interior of the depot, which has since been rehabilitated. This space would have contained the typical areas such as a waiting room, ticket office, freight/baggage room, and restrooms.

The Pendleton depot's platform is of poured concrete and stretches the full length of the depot and adjacent park to the east. Around the depot, the poured concrete fills the entire space between the structure and the tracks, as well as wrapping around each of its sides. On the ends of the platform, the concrete pour is approximately 5' in width. The full extent of the platform is level, with no need for ramps or steps. This platform has been in place since at least the beginning of the *Pioneer* era.

Current Ownership and Usage

In 1987, the UPRR and City of Pendleton made an agreement that allowed the Umatilla County Historical Society to rehabilitate the depot building into a public museum. Following this agreement, the depot building and site were altered to fit the needs of the historical society. The Heritage Station Museum has continuously occupied the depot since the creation of the agreement. It appears that the original deal is still in place, with the UPRR

owning the building and leasing it for use as the museum. The depot is a contributing resource within Pendleton's South Main Street Commercial Historic District.

Condition Assessment

Depot Building

The historic depot stands in overall good condition. However, the current state of the building is a result of major renovation work that has occurred since the depot lost its role as the passenger rail station for the City of Pendleton. This renovation work was completed during the building's rehabilitation into the Heritage Station Museum of the Umatilla County Historical Society. This project added a wing to the building, located to the historic depot's west, as well as a new pavilion building between the two structures that serves as the museum's entrance. This assessment only covers the historic depot.

Figure 10.1 Pendleton depot (center), north elevation with modern museum entrance (right) and relocated school house (left), looking west.

The exterior of the depot is in mixed condition. Its north elevation, the depot's public façade, has been well maintained. The rear of the building, which corresponds with the platform and UPRR mainline, has a slightly more deteriorated condition. This side of the depot is partially fenced off. Therefore it does not receive the same regular maintenance as the depot's front.

A majority of the depot's restoration work was completed on its interior. As a result, this space is significantly altered, as the entirety of the interior has been rehabilitated into exhibit space. The project included the refinishing of the room's perimeter walls and floors as well as the removal of interior subdividing walls. All of the windows and doors within the exhibit space have been covered from the inside by the new interior walls, except for a pair of doors at the east side of the building that function as emergency exits. The building appears to be compliant with ADA accessibility standards.

Platform

The concrete platform is still in existence at the rear of the depot building. This platform extends the length of the depot building and continues east to the sidewalk of S Main Street. Debris such as ballast covers the concrete surface of the platform; however the concrete is in suitable condition to be used by passengers. Refurbishment is needed in several areas, but not to the point where reconstruction of the entire platform would be necessary. All safety signage has been removed, and the yellow safety line is no longer visible. The waiting shelter, which was used by the *Pioneer* between 1977 and 1997, has also been removed from its location to the east of the depot building. Aerial imagery indicates that the removal took place in the early 2000s. The light post which accompanied the shelter remains, but does not appear to be operational or serve a purpose. The platform, as well as pathways to the platform area, do not have issues of ADA accessibility.

Site

Since the depot's vacation by the UPRR, the surrounding site of the station has also seen several significant alterations. The most significant change are the additional buildings that came with the establishment of the museum, including the depot's addition, as well as an old schoolhouse that sits close to the former location of the Amtrak waiting shelter. The parking lot exists as it has historically, and has a large quantity of available capacity. The park to the east of the depot mostly remains as it was during the Amtrak era. A chain link fence extends outward on the east side of the depot to the former site of the waiting shelter, blocking off sections of the platform. This fence is overgrown with vegetation. Historic photos show that the rear of the building was blocked in this manner in 1988; Umatilla County Historical Society acquired the depot a year earlier. A more permanent black metal fence has been installed at some point following the year 2015. This fence is starts at the former location of the waiting shelter and splits the platform as it runs to the east. The fence stops once the platform reaches S Main Street. These two fences create a full barrier between the depot and the adjacent public park.

Viability to Host Passenger Service

Due to the rehabilitation of the interior of the depot, the building can be ruled out for future use as a passenger station. The Heritage Station Museum utilizes all of the depot's interior space. If the building were vacant, an extensive restoration project would be necessary to convert the building from its current form back into a functioning depot.

Despite the depot's inability to host future passenger service, the site remains the best location for a passenger station in Pendleton. This conclusion is due primarily to the site's proximity to downtown Pendleton, as well as its established parking lot. While there is likely not enough space for a new permanent depot building, the adjacent park provides ample space for a small waiting shelter as it did for the *Pioneer*.

While this historic station site has clear advantages, the property's successful rehabilitation leaves a certain level of uncertainty. The park does not have the open space for a structure that is larger than a waiting shelter; the existing trees of the park would need to be removed to do otherwise. If Pendleton desired a station that consists of more than a small waiting shelter, a new site would need to be found along the UPRR mainline. For this reason, an alternative location for a Pendleton station is discussed later in the chapter.

Market Analysis

Overview

Since the city's establishment in the late nineteenth century, Pendleton has been one of the commercial and cultural centers of Eastern Oregon. While other markets in the vicinity have undergone extreme growth within the last few decades, Pendleton has retained its significance for the area. Overall, the city is still supported by the same economic factors as it has been historically. Businesses such as Pendleton Woolen Mills, as well as the surrounding agricultural production, provide financial stability for Pendleton. Other steady employees include the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, St. Anthony Hospital, and Umatilla County.

Unlike neighboring Hermiston, Pendleton does have a tourism draw. Pendleton's downtown commercial district is listed as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. Along with late nineteenth-century architecture, the district includes the Pendleton Underground, a series of tunnels accessible by public tours. The city is also home to the annual Pendleton Round-Up. This event draws roughly 50,000 people each year, making it one of the largest yearly rodeos in the United States. Additionally, downtown Pendleton is only several miles from Wildhorse Resort & Casino, a large casino located on the Umatilla Indian Reservation that is the only casino of its size in Eastern Oregon.

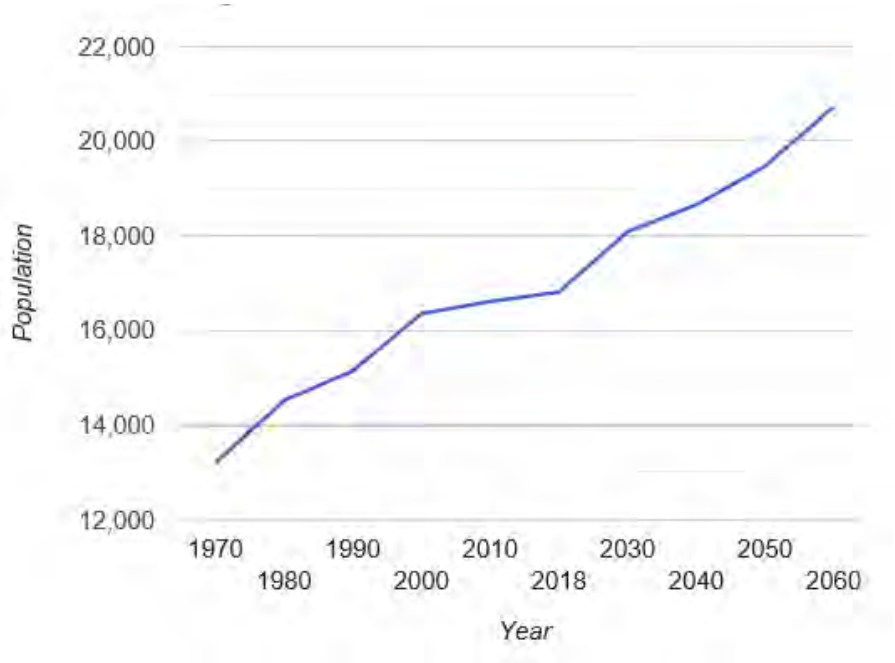
The overall market of Pendleton has not seen significant changes since the Amtrak *Pioneer* operated between 1977 and 1997. However, Pendleton has sustained its economic and cultural significance for Eastern Oregon.

Population Estimates & Projections

As of 2018, Pendleton has an estimated population of 16,810. This number has only increased marginally over the last half-century. In 1970, Pendleton's population was at 13,197. By 2010, the city had 16,612 residents, rising at roughly a rate of 1,000 people per decade. Since 2010, Pendleton has remained mostly dormant in terms of population gain, rising by only 198 people during those eight years. During 2017 and 2018, Pendleton's population decreased by 80 residents.

While the population numbers of Umatilla County are rising at a steady rate, 80% of the county's population growth is from Hermiston. Pendleton is included in the Hermiston-Pendleton Micropolitan Statistical Area, as designated by the United States Census Bureau, and is now the smaller of the two cities within the boundary. Hermiston surpassed Pendleton in population between the 2000 and 2010 censuses. Important to note, Pendleton's population numbers include the roughly 1,600 inmates incarcerated at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

Pendleton Population



*Value for 2018 is an estimate provided by Portland State University.
**Years 2030 though 2060 are forecasts provided by Portland State University.

Despite the lack of growth within the last decade, Pendleton is projected to continuously grow at a marginal rate for the decades to come. By 2030, the population is supposed to surpass 18,000 residents. Beyond this point, Pendleton can expect growth of between 500-1,300 residents per decade. This would put the city's population at just over 20,000 people in 2060. While the current projections only predict a slow growth rate for Pendleton, as demonstrated by neighboring Hermiston, the industrial potential of the area could spike the growth rate within a decade under unpredictable circumstances.

Conclusions on Demand

While Pendleton has not experienced a similar trend of extreme growth as compared to Hermiston, the city remains an active market within Eastern Oregon. However, despite the lack of substantial growth, the market widely exists as it did during the Amtrak *Pioneer* era. Along the Eastern Oregon Route, Pendleton has the second largest population, being recently passed by Hermiston as the largest city along the route. Pendleton has also demonstrated a pattern of economic consistency with its top employers. Additionally, the city remains a place of interest for passing tourists and has increased its value as a destination of leisure with the presence of entertainment venues such as the Pendleton Round-Up and Wildhorse Resort & Casino. As outlined in previous chapters, Pendleton has a need for passenger rail as an alternative form of travel for I-84 during the winter months.

Figure 10.2 Court Place site, looking west.

Considering these factors, Pendleton is undoubtedly a prominent market along the route. The city has demonstrated economic stability along with continuous growth, providing the conclusion that Pendleton will retain a strong market along the route for the foreseeable future.

Alternative Location: Court Place

Overview

In the occurrence that the historic station location along SE Frazer Avenue cannot be used in the future, a possible alternative station site is located to the east of downtown Pendleton. A stretch of land along SE Court Place, near the intersection with SE 17th Street, could provide ample space for a station.

Site Description

The site is approximately 500' in length and 50' in width.. It is the former home of St. Anthony Hospital. Following demolition of the old hospital, a majority of the block is vacant. The hospital used the space between Court Place and the right-of-way for additional parking. As a result, the site exists as an unused paved parking lot. There would not be room for a depot building at this particular location, however, there appears to be adequate room for a typically Category 4 station. While this location does not have direct connection to downtown Pendleton, it is one of the few spaces along the UPRR mainline through the city that is approximately the length of a train consist and open from other development.

Conclusions

Pendleton exists as one of the primary markets along the potential passenger rail route, second in population only to Hermiston. Based on the market's significance, as well as holding multiple station options, this report recommends that Pendleton have a station with any passenger service along the route.

While Pendleton has remained as one of the markets with potential along the route, the city's station situation is not as defined as in other cities. While the historic depot building is standing, as discussed earlier in the chapter, future use of the depot's interior can be ruled out due to its rehabilitation into exhibit space. However, due to the availability of the platform area, parking lot, and other site components, this location could still host a future station. This would require the construction of a modern shelter to supplement for the inability to use the historic depot. A station under this situation would be under Category 4 unless a small depot were constructed with additional amenities that would fall under Category 3. Additionally, the retention of the passenger station at this location would have the most positive effect on downtown Pendleton. For these reasons, as well as the placement within downtown Pendleton, this site is still recommended as the best station site to serve Pendleton.

If the preferred station location is not able to host future passenger service, the area along Court Place holds the potential to be a successful station site. This site would be able to host a Category 4 station; there is room for an adequate platform, waiting shelter, and use of the existing parking lot.

Figure 10.3 (top left) Amtrak waiting shelter and platform after the end of *Pioneer* operations, looking west. (trainorder.org)

Figure 10.4 (middle left) Amtrak waiting shelter and platform after the end of *Pioneer* operations, looking east. (trainorder.org)

Figure 10.5 (above) Former site of the waiting shelter in the present day, looking west.

Figure 10.6 (bottom left) Platform area with contemporary metal fence in the present day, looking east.

Figure 10.7 (above) South elevation of the depot from the platform, looking north.

Figure 10.8 (top right) Former waiting room, now exhibit space, in the rehabilitated depot.

Figure 10.9 (bottom right) Platform area, restricted by contemporary fence, from the adjacent park , looking west.

Chapter Eleven

La Grande

Station Narrative

Passenger Rail History

Following the arrival of the OR&N, the city saw consistent growth due to the surrounding area's production of agricultural products. While La Grande was one of the railroad hubs of Eastern Oregon due to the early presence of the OR&N, the existing station building was not constructed until 1930. Three other station buildings, all of wood construction, served La Grande prior to the current structure; the first being built with the arrival of the railroad in 1884. Fire destroyed both the first and second (dates unknown) station buildings. The third station was built by 1904 near the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and Depot Street, and served the city until the erection of the 1930 structure.

The Great Depression severely damaged La Grande's booming economy, and as a result the UPRR depot was one of the only substantial buildings constructed in La Grande during the Depression era. Despite the station's erection during the economic downturn, the design, by architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood, incorporates some of the most ornate architectural detail found within La Grande. Underwood was experienced in constructing passenger stations for the UPRR, as between 1924 and 1930, he designed twenty small and moderate size train depots for the UPRR. He also designed the large Art Deco station in Omaha, the headquarters for the UPRR. The La Grande station was one of his last railroad-related designs, as the continuation of the Depression halted further construction on the railroads. Other auxiliary buildings have been constructed on the premises by the UPRR, such as a centralized traffic control building (1944) and a small office building (1947).

A majority of the building's usage as a passenger station has been under the UPRR, hosting services such as the *City of Portland* and the *Portland Rose*. There were no passenger operations immediately following the creation of Amtrak in 1971, as the former UPRR trains that served La Grande were not incorporated into Amtrak's national system. Passenger rail returned to La Grande in 1977 in the form of the *Pioneer*, before the service was discontinued in 1997. The station has not seen use by passenger rail since the elimination of the *Pioneer*, and continues to be owned by the UPRR and utilized by the railroad for office and storage space.

Station Description

The station building is a two-story structure in a long rectangular shape, oriented in a north-south direction. The west side of the building is the primary façade, while the east side faces the platform and railyard. The design is primarily of the Mediterranean Revival style. It is mainly of red brick cladding, with tan glazed terra cotta elements around entrances that feature ornamental classical motifs and incorporates "La Grande" as well as UPRR branding. The tan terra cotta is also used around the building's windows, as well as an entablature at the east and west elevations. The building has a gable roof of terra cotta tiles, with the gable ends corresponding with the length of the structure. A secondary set of gable roofs are centrally located on both the east and west sides of the building and correspond with the front and rear entrances.

The station building had two primary uses during its years of full operation, serving both as the UPRR's passenger station, as well as the railroad's division offices. Passenger operations occupied the first floor, while the UPRR utilized the second floor for office space. The lower level hosted the waiting room, which can be accessed from the trackside at the east and Jefferson Avenue from the west. This prominent space featured scored concrete floors, wood wainscoting, plaster walls, and a ceiling that utilized plaster as well as wood beams. The waiting room also featured Art Deco-style light fixtures. The ticket office and a newsstand were located south of the waiting room, with the restrooms directly to the north of the waiting room. Freight and baggage rooms were located at the far north end of the building. A majority of the public and office spaces of the building's design were characterized by the use of plaster for walls and ceilings, as well as wood wainscoting for the walls.

The primary platform is finished with brick pavers laid in a herringbone pattern. This platform covers the length of the depot as well as approximately 150' to the east and 300' to the west. The brick pavers also wrap around the sides and front of the depot. The Amtrak *Pioneer* used a secondary platform of asphalt, which served the track that is second closest to the station building. This platform extends the full length of the depot as well as around 200' to the east.

Current Ownership and Usage

The UPRR has retained ownership of the historic La Grande depot. In the present day, the UPRR uses the building as the base for its La Grande Subdivision and is the standard location for train crew changes. Since the depot's construction, the UPRR has kept the building in a constant state of use. The depot is a contributing resource of the La Grande Commercial Historic District.

Condition Assessment

Depot Building

Although the depot has not served passengers since 1997, the building has continued to be used by the UPRR in support of their freight operations. While the depot is two stories, historically the lower level was home to passenger operations. The former waiting room has received few changes since 1997 with many elements from the passenger rail era; these include wood benches, bulletin boards, and historic overhead light fixtures. This space is currently used as a reception area, as well as a break room for UPRR employees. Due to its upkeep, only minor modernizations would be needed to ready this room for passengers. The bathrooms attached to the waiting room are dated, but acceptable for public use.

The ticketing area, adjacent to the waiting room, is being used as office space and dispatch room for the UPRR. The former baggage rooms, which occupies the northern section of the building, is home to offices and storage. Overall, the majority of the depot's passenger-related interior spaces have not undergone significant physical alterations, but the UPRR has repurposed these spaces to support their freight operations.

The depot building does have an issue with meeting ADA accessibility standards. The front entrance, which opens to the waiting room, is not ADA accessible in its current configuration; the double doors are raised a single step above the exterior brick sidewalk. No ramp is present at this entrance. The waiting room's back door to the platform is at ground level. The secondary entrance on the building's front, which corresponds with what was historically the baggage department, is equipped with a concrete ramp.

Site

The surrounding site is as it was at the end of the *Pioneer* era. The parking lot is large, but it is typically at full capacity during business hours. The lot is occupied primarily by UPRR employees.

Platform

Each of the station's two platforms are in place. The primary brick platform is in good condition. The secondary asphalt platform, which was utilized by the *Pioneer*, shows age and has deteriorated considerably since its time of consistent use. Many sections are cracked and

Figure 11.1 La Grande depot, front façade.

have missing chunks of asphalt. These issues have created a surface that is uneven in most areas and could cause problems for elderly passengers or those with disabilities. Basic safety implementations, such as a yellow line and signage, are also absent. Due to the condition of its surface, the Amtrak platform requires replacement for long-term use.

Viability to Host Passenger Service

The overall state of the La Grande depot is good. The building is in a similar state as it was when it hosted the Amtrak *Pioneer* between 1977 and 1997. However, as before mentioned, several improvements are likely necessary to bring the station to current standards; these include enhancing the accessibility of the front entrance and improving the quality of the mainline-serving platform. These measures would not require a significant restoration of the station. Due to the depot's stable physical condition, as well as its placement in the heart of downtown La Grande, the historic station is still the ideal location for passenger rail service in the city.

Market Analysis

Overview

La Grande is the largest city within Oregon's Union County. As a result, La Grande is base for the county's logging operations and as well as the agricultural production in the surrounding valley created by the Blue Mountains and Wallowa Mountains. The city's largest employers include Boise Cascade (lumber), City of La Grande, Union County Grande Ronde Hospital, and UPRR. La Grande is also home to Eastern Oregon University, which has averaged around 4,000 students in recent years. The university is among one of the city's largest employers. The city also has the potential for moderate levels of tourism. La Grande's downtown commercial district has been designated as a Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places.

The city also serves as an essential connection to the communities further to the east. State Highway 82 leaves La Grande and passes through towns such as Wallowa and Enterprise. Most residents who live along the highway who travel outside of the area pass through La Grande for access to I-84.

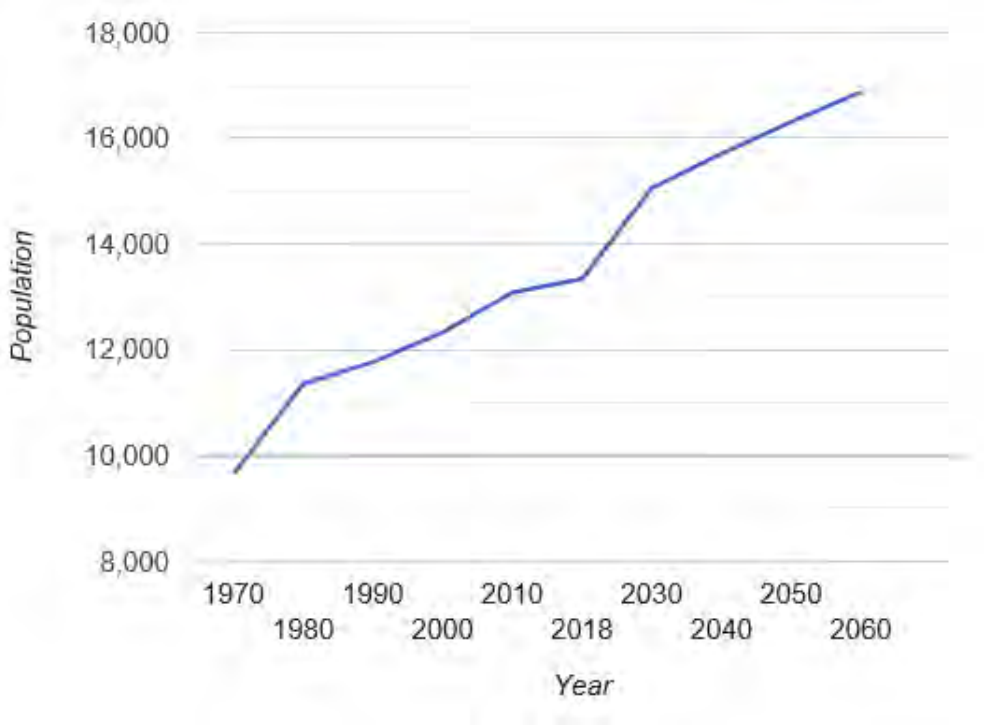
The characteristics of La Grande's economy have seen few alterations over the decades of the recent past. The market exists largely as it was during the operational years of the Amtrak *Pioneer*.

Population Estimates & Projections

Throughout the last half-century, the City of La Grande has seen slow but consistent growth. The most significant decade of growth was between 1970 and 1980 when the population of La Grande grew by nearly 2,000 residents. Following 1980, the population growth became more gradual. By 2010, the population had reached 13,082. Between 1980 and 2010, La Grande averaged a population gain of approximately 600 people each decade. The city had an estimated 13,340 residents in 2018. Since La Grande is the largest city in Union County, the county's growth is consistent with that of La Grande since 1970. The county's population started this period at 19,377 and was estimated at 26,885 in 2018.

Population forecasts indicate that the gradual growth rate of La Grande's population is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. By 2030, La Grande could have over 15,000 residents. At this point, Union County is expected to have just over 29,000 residents. Following 2030, the City of La Grande will likely grow at a rate of between 500-1,000 people per decade, similar to the growth rate that has been seen from the 1970s to the present day.

La Grande Population



*Value for 2018 is an estimate provided by Portland State University.
**Years 2030 though 2060 are forecasts provided by Portland State University.

Conclusions on Demand

The demand for passenger rail in La Grande is found both in support of the city as well as the surrounding rural communities. Much like the other cities along the route, passenger rail would serve as a reliable mode of transportation for a region that currently lacks alternatives to I-84. La Grande is four hours from Portland by automobile and two and a half hours from Boise, distances that many have trouble traveling by car. Within La Grande, passenger rail would support institutions such as Eastern Oregon University, one of the vital components of the city's economy. Outside of La Grande, passenger service would help connect the rural communities of Union County to the rest of Oregon and potentially Idaho.

La Grande exists as the economic center for Oregon's Union County and well as the host of the largest educational institution in Eastern Oregon. Since the county is currently not connected via non-vehicular modes of transportation, a market exists for passenger rail service. However, it seems unlikely that the market will grow beyond its current levels of demand in the foreseeable future.

Conclusions

La Grande is one of the moderately-sized markets along the Eastern Oregon Route. While the city's economy is not as thriving as some of the other markets to the west, this report recommends that La Grande have a station stop with the implementation of passenger trains on the UPRR as a leading market in Union County.

One of the positive aspects that La Grande holds over other markets is the viability of its depot to host passengers. The La Grande depot, owned and operated by UPRR, has changed little since the discontinuation of the *Pioneer* in 1997. The waiting area and other passenger amenities such as restrooms would require few alterations to be used by passengers. Like all other stations along the route, the platform would need to be rebuilt to meet current standards. Additionally, several small upgrades may be required for the depot's interior to be ADA compliant. Overall, a significant restoration or rehabilitation project would not be required to complete these upgrades. If the UPRR were willing to permit the use of several of the interior spaces for passenger rail use, it appears that it would not have a substantial effect on their daily usage of the building. Pendleton's market does not require a staffed station; therefore, the depot could operate as a Category 3 station. Classifying the depot as a Category 3 station would allow UPRR to remain as the primary operator and owner of the depot while providing the waiting room and restrooms for public use. This would not displace UPRR out of their offices. Due to the depot's location in downtown La Grande, as well as other site features such as the developed parking lot, the historic depot remains as the best site to host passenger trains in the present day.

A passenger station in La Grande would provide an alternative mode of transportation to the city and surrounding Union County. Due to the market's demand, in addition to the overall good condition of La Grande's historic depot, there are no major challenges in providing a stop for passenger trains in the city.

Figure 11.2 (top left) Former waiting room.

Figure 11.3 (above) Primary brick platform, looking south.

Figure 11.4 (left) Amtrak era platform, looking south.

Chapter Twelve

BAKER CITY

Station Narrative

Passenger Rail History

As with the rest of the OR&N line through in the eastern counties of Oregon, Baker City was first connected with rail service in 1884. Passenger rail service began with the arrival of the railroad, with a depot located on the east side of the tracks near present-day Broadway Street.

Within several decades, Baker City had two adjacent passenger rail depots. In 1904, a second depot was constructed, known by its historic name Sumpter Valley Railroad Depot. The depot initially served the Sumpter Valley Railway (SVRy), a narrow-gauge line that ran west from Baker City that at its peak connected towns such as Sumpter, Whitney, and Bates before terminating in Prairie City. The narrow-gauge railroad connected with the OR&N mainline in Baker City. The two passenger stations were located on opposite sides of the OR&N mainline, with the OR&N station on the east side of the tracks where Broadway Street crosses the line in the present day. The SVRy depot was located on the west side of the mainline in the middle of the SVRy wye**.** The SVRy depot was retired from hosting passenger service in 1948, and the SVRy was entirely abandoned by 1961.

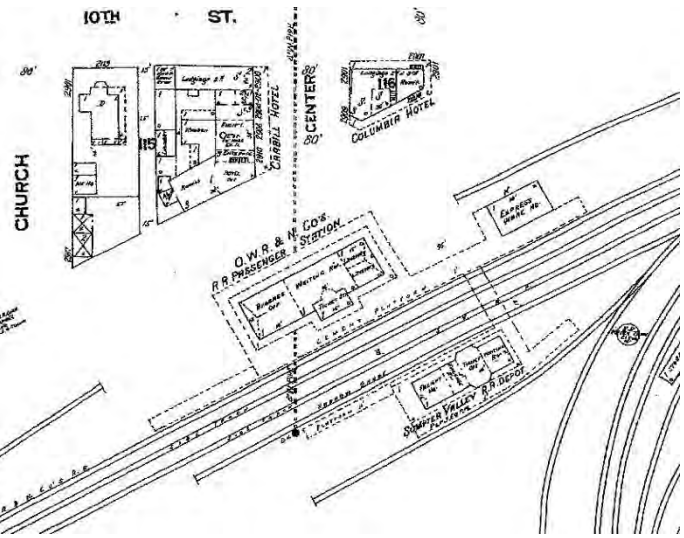


Figure 12.1 A Sanborn map of Baker City showing the original locations of the OR&N depot and SVRy depot on opposite sides of the mainline. The SVRy depot currently occupies the approximate location of the former OR&N depot. (Library of Congress)

The UPRR demolished the original OR&N brick passenger station that served the mainline in 1974. This depot had hosted passenger rail service by both the OR&N and UPRR since its construction. The *City of Portland* and *Portland Rose* passenger trains operated through Baker City during the last decades of UPRR passenger rail. Passenger trains returned to Baker City in 1977 with the Amtrak *Pioneer*. Since the UPRR had demolished the OR&N depot three years prior to the arrival of Amtrak, the SVRy depot was eventually relocated across the right-of-way to near the site of the demolished UPRR station. Once the depot was relocated, the SVRy depot hosted the *Pioneer* until the train was discontinued in 1997. In 2000, the depot underwent renovation, three years following the discontinuation of the *Pioneer*.

Station Description

The Baker City station (Sumpter Valley Railroad Depot) is a single-story station building of a rectangular shape. The length of the building runs parallel with the UPRR track in a north-south orientation. The building design is not specific to any specific architectural style; however, a vernacular characterization is most appropriate. It is primarily of wood construction with horizontal board cladding. The building has a hipped metal roof over the majority of the structure, with secondary gable roofs on the east and west. The hipped roof has overhanging eaves on all sides of the building. On the north, east, and west sides of the station, the overhanging eaves, supported by wood brackets, extend approximately three or four feet over the exterior walls. The south elevation features an eave that creates a more substantial overhang, continuing roughly eight to ten feet to provide a sheltered outdoor loading deck that corresponds with the interior baggage room. This additional overhang is supported by three wood posts. The two gable roofs correspond with the protruding sections of the building on the east and west. Both of these sections are in identical placement, with the eastern version hosting the building's primary entrance and the western utilized for windows.

The interior of the SVRy depot is made up of three primary spaces. The northern-most room formerly served as the passenger waiting area. The central hall was the SVRy's ticket office. A ticket window allowed for transactions between railroad employees in the office and waiting passengers in the waiting room. Freight and baggage operations were historically housed in the depot's southern-most room.

Since the depot has been relocated from its original position on the opposite side of the UPRR right-of-way, the original platform has been replaced with an asphalt platform. This platform covers the full length of the depot, as well as about 100' to the north of the building. There are no additional features of the platform other than the typical painted yellow safety line and a small concrete ramp that connects the platform to the depot.

Current Ownership and Usage

Under the current arrangement, the depot building is owned by Baker County, while the lot is owned by UPRR. Baker County Parks & Recreation Department has control of the former waiting room and ticket offices, while the UPRR uses the baggage room as a small office space.

Condition Assessment

Depot Building

The Baker City depot has been maintained in good condition around the exterior and on the interior. Baker County Parks & Recreation Department, as well as the UPRR, currently occupy the depot's interior. However, despite the presence of these two entities, there are no significant operations within the buildings. UPRR fills the southern-most room, the former baggage room. This space is now home to several desks and supplies; however, it is not the home to substantial UPRR operations. The other two main interior spaces, the former waiting room and ticket offices, are occupied by Baker County Parks & Recreation. The old ticket office, the depot's centrally located room, is used as the office for the director of the Parks & Recreation Department and is outfitted with office furnishings. The adjacent waiting room, on the far north side of the depot, is available for use by Parks & Recreation but is currently not used. As a result, this space is mostly empty. The restroom, located in the hallway between the ticket office and baggage room, has contemporary amenities and appears to be ADA accessible with appropriate interior space and features such as a grab bar.

Despite the varying levels of usage for the three primary interior rooms, each of the rooms has been up kept to a high standard. However, there are no remaining interior elements from the Amtrak era. For the interior spaces; potential use for passengers, there is a need for appropriate furnishing and basic passenger amenities. The depot is in physical condition to host passenger operations without a significant renovation.

Site

The site surrounding the depot is clean and well developed. The brick pavers, which surround the building on the north, east, and west, are maintained in sufficient condition with little to no signs of deterioration. The handicap ramps, one at the building's front and one at its rear, are in similar condition. The wood surface of the outdoor loading dock is in good shape. The metal fence along the building's backside, which separates the brick paver surrounds from the platform, is functional. The platform area is accessible by a gate in the fence, which is aligned with the back door of the waiting room. Along the back fence are two signs that date from Amtrak operation which read, "Extreme danger from moving trains. Do not go beyond building until Amtrak train is completely stopped." These signs are dated and would need to be replaced or refurbished for future use.

The asphalt parking lot is relatively small, with fifteen regular parking spaces and a single dedicated handicap space. The lot, easily accessible from Broadway or Church Street, is used by the depot's two tenants as well as surrounding businesses. The UPRR often stores trucks or other equipment in the lot. However, the lot would be likely able to accommodate the needs of passengers as it did during the *Pioneer* era.

Platform

The asphalt platform is in poor condition, as the surface is heavily cracked and weathered. In most places, the platform's surface is no longer level due to the cracking and could be problematic for individuals with mobility difficulties. Vegetation grows through the cracks. Overall, the surface is no longer suitable for everyday use by boarding and unloading passengers. The yellow safety line is visible but faded to the point that it would need to be redone to be functional. The concrete ramp that offers access to the platform area is in good shape and can support future use. Considering its current condition, the platform requires reconstruction to ensure a safe surface and addition of modern safety features for the benefit of passengers.

Viability to Host Passenger Service

After evaluation, it is clear that future passenger service based at the depot is plausible. This conclusion is due to several reasons. First, the depot's owner, Baker County, has kept the structure in ideal condition. There are no significant flaws regarding the building's physical state. Outside of refurbishing the interior, the building does not require any considerable renovation or rehabilitation work to be used in its former capacity. Second, the location of the depot is ideal. While not located in downtown Baker City, the depot's placement along Broadway Street makes the site accessible. There are no other sites along the UPRR right-of-way through Baker City that exists as a superior location for a station.

Several obstacles would need to be addressed before the return of passenger rail service to the depot. The primary obstacle is the building's current usage. While the UPRR's occupation of the baggage room could likely be ongoing during the building's use as a passenger station, Baker County Parks & Recreation's office is more problematic. The spaces occupied by their office, the waiting room and ticket office, would be needed for passenger operations. Therefore, the current Baker County uses would likely not be able to coexist. The second concern is the condition of the platform. As discussed, the current asphalt platform is not in good condition, would likely require a full renovation before use by passengers.

Despite these issues, the historic Sumpter Valley Railroad Depot is the best location within the city to provide passenger rail service. The before-mentioned issues require solutions but are not insurmountable. It is reasonable to conclude that this station site could be used in some capacity should service return to Baker City.

Market Analysis

Overview

Overall, Baker City is the base for the surrounding agricultural production of Baker County. Unlike other cities along the route to the north, there is a noticeable lack of industry within Baker City. While Baker City lacks the presence of major industrial or manufacturing companies, it does host several stable entities that provide employment for residents. As the biggest city within Baker County, Baker City is home to a majority of the county's management and operations. Therefore, Baker County is one of the city's largest employers. Additionally, the city is home to Saint Alphonsus Medical Center and Powder River Correctional Facility.

There are two primary tourism draws for Baker City. The first is the Baker Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which makes up downtown Baker City and features buildings such as the Geiser Grand Hotel and the former Baker Hotel. The city is also home to the popular National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. The center is one of the largest museums dedicated to the Oregon Trail in the United States.

While supporting the county, Baker City is not a significant place of commerce compared to other markets in Eastern Oregon. However, the city does have a high cultural value. The overall market of Baker City has not changed since the discontinuation of the *Pioneer* in 1997 and remains a steady place of employment for its residents.

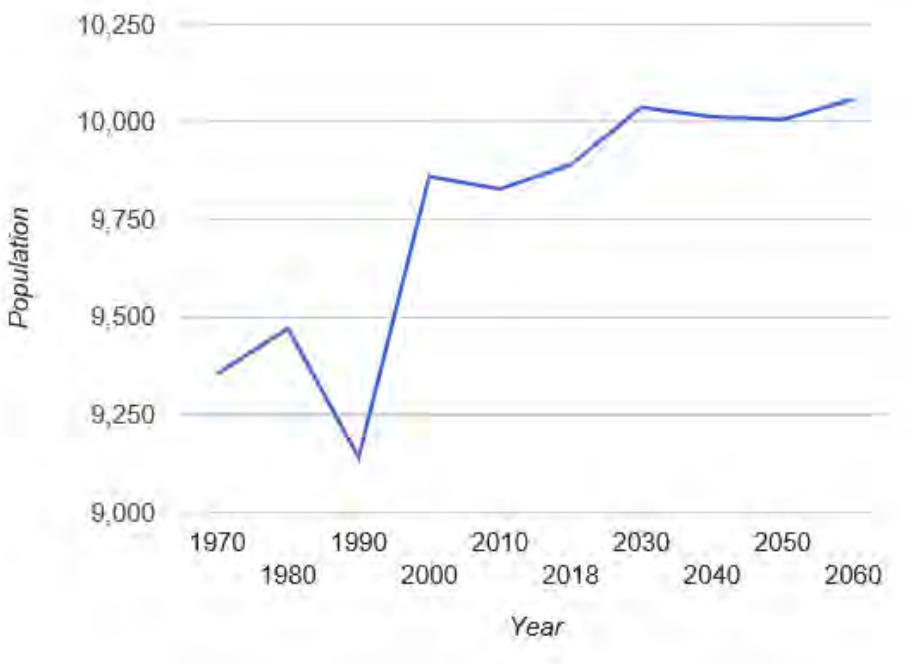
Population Estimates & Projections

More than any other market on the Eastern Oregon Route, Baker City has seen practically no growth or decline in the last half-century. In 1970, Baker City's population stood at 9,354. As of 2018, the population has only risen to 9,890 for an increase of 536 people over the course of those five decades. The level of growth is even less extreme in the last two decades, with only an estimated growth of 30 residents between 2000 and 2018. Due to more than half of Baker County's residents living within Baker City, the county has seen identical growth numbers. As of 2018, the county has 16,765 residents.

Baker City is forecasted to retain its current population for the next four decades; predicting a rise of only 100 people during that time frame. For most of the twenty-first century, Baker City's population is expected to remain within 100 residents of 10,000. Between the present day and 2030, Baker County's population is expected to hold steady at approximately 16,500. The county population is expected to decrease following the year 2030 gradually, a trend that continues to the end of projections at 2060, dropping from about 16,600 to 16,400 during that time frame.

The increases and decreases in Baker City's population, as well as those that are projected, are gradual to the point that they do not affect the overall market. Since the end of the *Pioneer* in 1997, the Baker City market has seen little change.

Baker City Population



*Value for 2018 is an estimate provided by Portland State University.
**Years 2030 though 2060 are forecasts provided by Portland State University.

Conclusions on Demand

Since the market has not seen significant changes in the last half-century, nor is it expected to experience alterations in the next forty years, future passenger rail would likely have similar performance levels as previous services such as the Amtrak *Pioneer*. Any passenger trains to Baker City would support residents of the city, the low-level tourism draw, as well as the surrounding rural areas of Baker County.

Figure 12.2 SVRy depot, front façade.

Baker City was served by the *Pioneer* for the full period of the train's operation. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that any future passenger service on the UPRR mainline would stop at the city to provide an alternative method of transportation for Baker County. However, compared to the other markets examined in this report, Baker City does not hold the potential for any growth under current circumstances. All other markets along the route have demonstrated at least some gradual level of growth over time, with projections to continue doing so. Therefore, outside of Cascade Locks, Baker City exists as the weakest market along the route.

Connection to the Baker City market via passenger trains would not be critical for the success of either a long-distance or intercity service through Eastern Oregon. Despite this conclusion, providing service to the market that does exist in the city would offer benefits to the residents of Baker City and the surrounding county.

Conclusions

Baker City is one of the weakest markets for passenger rail along the route. However, Baker City should be provided service with a return of passenger trains on the UPRR mainline, given the expectation that Baker City would be one of the lower-density stations along the route.

Several factors lead to this conclusion, the first being the current state of the Sumpter Valley Railroad Depot. This depot is in peak physical condition, and while occupied by Baker County Parks & Recreation and UPRR, should be available with minimal disruption to these current uses. While the platform needs upgrades to meet modern standards, the depot building exists in a state where all it lacks is customary passenger rail furnishings. Therefore, outside of platform improvements, there would be few capital costs in returning the depot to use for passenger rail. Additionally, since Baker City is not expected to see a measurable growth in the coming decades, passenger rail service could help discourage any decline in Baker City's economic situation. Passenger trains would only further connect Baker City to the remainder of Oregon. The city's current status, as one of the smallest markets on the route, would only require a Category 4 station. However, if the interior of the depot were accessible, the station would operate as a Category 3 station, providing amenities such as an interior waiting area, a restroom, and a caretaker in Baker County.

Figure 12.3 (top left) Former waiting room.

Figure 12.4 (above) Ramp at the depot's rear, looking south.

Figure 12.5 (left) Front access ramp, looking south.

Figure 12.6 (top right) Platform area, looking north.

Figure 12.7 (top far right) Ramp to platform.

Figure 12.8 (right) Trackside waiting area.

Figure 12.9 (far right) Old platform signage from Amtrak-era.


EXTREME DANGER
FROM MOVING TRAINS
DO NOT
GO BEYOND BUILDING
UNTIL AMTRAK TRAIN IS
COMPLETELY STOPPED

ONTARIO

Station Narrative

Passenger Rail History

The first depot that provided passenger service to Ontario was constructed between 1884 and 1885 by the Oregon Short Line (OSL), a subsidiary railroad of the Union Pacific. The OSL was built between 1881 and 1884, connecting Granger, Wyoming to Huntington, Oregon. The OSL was a significant east-west connection for the UPRR, as the line connected to the OR&N (that would later become the O-WR&N, a UPRR subsidiary railroad) to the west and the UPRR transcontinental system to the east. The coming of the OSL sparked the interest of four entrepreneurs who had secured land claims along the proposed OSL right-of-way west of Boise in the hope of securing a depot on their claim; these were William Morfitt, James W. Virtue, Daniel Smith, and Mary Richardson. It was agreed that a depot would be built along the OSL tracks on James Virtue's, resulting in the laying out of a street grid that would become Ontario. By the end of the nineteenth century, Ontario had been established as a shipping capital for livestock and other goods, providing a vital link in the connection between the Mid-West and coastal cities to the west.

The original OSL passenger depot, a one and one-half-story wood structure, served Ontario for twenty-two years until the current station was planned and completed by the UPRR in 1907. At the turn of the century, UPRR leadership, specifically president/director Edward H. Harriman, pushed to replace wood station buildings with grander, more impressive depots. The masonry design was one in a series of rebuilt stations along the OSL route fulfilling Harriman's vision. Several station buildings included in this series of rebuilds incorporated the same overall design as Ontario's station; these stations were located in the Idaho territory and included Caldwell, Payette, and Weiser. From the OSL depot's construction, the station served Ontario passengers as well as freight.

While the depot provided Ontario with a connection to larger cities to the east and west, it also functioned as a popular public gathering space for the community. "Whistle-stop" speeches from bypassing dignitaries such as Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Richard Nixon, and Robert Kennedy, as well as many annual events, kept the depot as a center of the community. A large park, which was carefully landscaped, occupied the two blocks across from the depot to the west. The park contributed to the station's role as a center for the community, and provided activities to the area.

Passenger service provided by the UPRR, through services such as the *Portland Rose* and *City of Portland*, continued operation at the depot until 1971. Once the Amtrak *Pioneer* brought passenger service back to Ontario in 1977, the interior of the depot was not used in full capacity. By this point in time, the old depot had lost its role in the community and had fallen into a state of disrepair. An Amtrak waiting shelter was installed near the platform to serve passengers. Ontario was provided service by the *Pioneer* until the train's demise in 1997.

Station Description

The OSL depot holds design principals that are typically associated with the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Most of the building is one and a half stories, with a two-story section at the front entry and rear bay. The design is primarily of concrete block cast to imitate cut stone. Redbrick is used at corners, around windows, and in other decorative ways around the structure. The building features a flared roof, which is supported by decorative wood brackets. The north side of the building features an ornate brick chimney. Seven flared, hipped-roof dormers are located on the building; one on each short end, two on the east side and three on the west side. The dormers feature one over one double-hung windows of wood construction. The building's remaining windows are mainly larger double-hung windows. An arched fanlight window is located above the main entrance door on the west side of the depot.

The interior of the depot is broken into several key components. The depot's front doors open to a foyer. Men's and ladies' restrooms are on either side of the entrance doors. The room to the east of the foyer functioned as the OSL ticket office and telegraph office. The depot had two waiting areas for passengers, both located off of the foyer. The space north of the foyer was the women's waiting room while the waiting room south of the foyer was dedicated to male passengers. The depot's southern-most rooms were used by the OSL for baggage services and freight offices.

Amtrak did not utilize the interior of the Ontario depot due to its unsuitable conditions. Just north of the depot, an Amtrak waiting shelter provided a space for passengers. Amtrak also used an asphalt platform to accompany the shelter. The asphalt platform was contemporary; however, there are no historical photos to indicate what kind of platform was in place during the UPRR passenger rail era. The parcel adjacent to the depot to the north is a park maintained by the City of Ontario. For the first several decades of the depot's existence, the two large city blocks across the street from the depot were also parks. These blocks were converted to parking lots during the post war era.

Current Ownership and Usage

In 1997, the same year of the *Pioneer*'s discontinuation, the City of Ontario acquired the OSL depot from UPRR. With the purchase, a committee was formed to begin the process of restoring the historic depot. The restoration project improved the condition of most interior spaces, as well as the exterior of the depot. A majority of the work was completed by volunteer workers who identified the significance of the building in Ontario's history, as well as its potential to further contribute to the community. In 2007, the Ontario Basque Club conducted further work on the depot. The depot is currently used for private events as well as Basque Club events and remains under the ownership of the city. In 1999, the OSL depot was individually listed on the NRHP.

Condition Assessment

Depot Building

The OSL depot stands in the present day in superior condition compared to when the site last hosted passenger service in 1997. During the years of the Amtrak *Pioneer*, the interior of the building was not in a state to be used by the public. However, since the full interior and exterior renovations completed in the last two decades, the full extent of the depot's interior is in prime condition. The depot's interior spaces are available for private events and as a result, are furnished with tables and chairs as opposed to the historic depot amenities. The northern-most room of the first floor, as well as the second floor, are used by the Ontario Basque Club

The front entrance of the depot is ADA accessible from Depot Lane and the neighboring parking lots. The door on the rear of the building, which provides access to the platform area from the waiting room, is not ADA compliant. Two concrete steps are located at the outside of the door. However, the platform is accessible by concrete paths on either side of the depot's exterior. The two restrooms located at the building's front entrance, one designated for each gender, are not ADA compliant. These restrooms are small and do not allow enough ADA clearance in the stall with the swinging door. A secondary family restroom, located off of the baggage room, is ADA accessible.

The physical condition of the OSL depot is not a concern when considering future passenger service for Ontario. Outside of possible adjustments to the rear platform access door to become ADA compliant, few changes to the building's physical state would be required to prepare the structure for service.

Site

Similar to the depot building, the surrounding site has seen improvements since the farewell of the *Pioneer* in 1997. The immediate area around the depot has been enhanced, specifically the approach to the building from Depot Lane, which features a brick ramp to the front entrance and other features such as two ornate lampposts. A paved walkway surrounds the structure, providing additional access to the platform area. A contemporary metal fence blocks access to the platform area; the installation of the fence was a part of the renovation project. This fence extends from the depot down the majority of the length of the Railroad Park, creating a barrier between the site and the UPRR right-of-way. The Railroad Park, to the north of the depot, is well maintained. The land to the south of depot is occupied by UPRR equipment and railroad office.

The site is served by three large parking lots on the opposite side of Depot Lane. These lots support the businesses along Ontario's main commercial strip on Oregon Street, but have the capacity to supply sufficient parking for passenger service in addition to their current use. A bus stop, served by the city's transit service, is across the street from the depot.

Figure 13.1 OSL depot, front façade, looking east.

Platform

There are no remnants of the platform that existed through the operation of the *Pioneer*. The asphalt platform has been removed and replaced with ballast. There are no signs of the waiting shelter or corresponding amenities. This platform area is currently blocked by the contemporary metal fence that was installed during the renovation of the depot's interior and exterior. As a result, the construction of a new platform will be necessary. The location of the former platform is unoccupied, and there is ample space for a platform of modern standards along the UPRR right-of-way. If necessary, there is likely space for a waiting shelter as well.

Viability to Host Passenger Service

Following an assessment of the OSL depot and surrounding area, it is clear that this is still the ideal home for passenger rail service in the City of Ontario. The depot is in excellent condition following renovations, and the site has been improved during the last two decades. Additionally, the station site has access to large amounts of parking, a bus stop for local transit, and is only a block away from the main commercial strip of Ontario.

However, while the site is well suited as a stop for passenger trains, there may be issues in securing the use of the depot. The parties who own, operate, and renovated the depot, the City of Ontario and Ontario Basque Club, did so to create a private event space. This usage would be difficult if the depot were returned to a state of hosting passengers as a public station. Therefore, access to interior spaces is an obstacle that could prevent future use of the depot's interior. However, in this situation, and due to the site's ability to host a contemporary waiting shelter, the site is still viable without access to the depot's interior.

Market Analysis

Overview

Ontario is the largest city within Malheur County. The market holds limited value as a tourist destination, and as a result, its economy is supported almost exclusively by its industries. Most of the city's economic support comes from agricultural production in areas such as beef cattle, onions, and potatoes. Ontario is home to the primary production facility of Heinz Frozen Food Company (Ore-Ida) for its production of frozen potato food products. Their facility employs about 1,000 workers. Another sizable employer of the city is Saint Alphonsus Medical Center, one of the largest hospitals in the region outside of Boise. While outside of the city limit, the approximately 900 employees of the Snake River Correctional Facility, reside in and around Ontario. The city is also home to Treasure Valley Community College. While Ontario's economy relies heavily on agricultural industries, these operations and the other institutions in the city have provided the market with stability.

Population Estimates & Projections

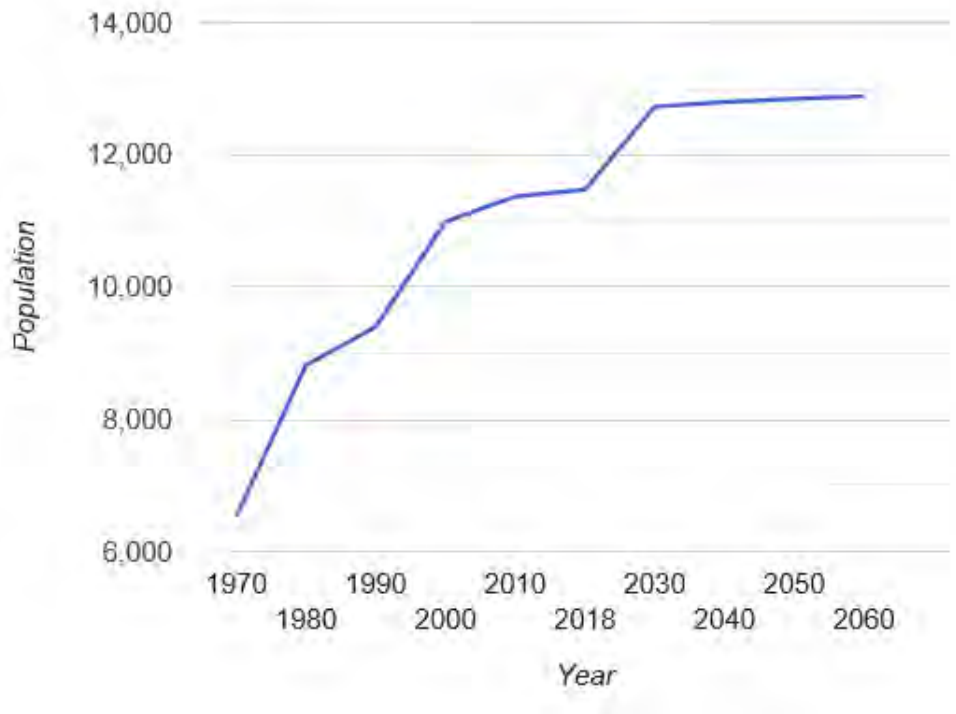
As the largest city within Malheur County, Ontario had an estimated population of 11,470 in 2018. In the last half-century, the city has seen sizable growth; however, a majority of this increase in population occurred during the late nineteenth century. In 1970, Ontario's

population was at 6,523, rising to 8,814 in 1980 and 9,394 by 1990. By the end of the century, Ontario had 10,985 residents. During these three decades, the population of Ontario increased by 68.4%. By 2018, the population was estimated at 11,470, a reduced growth rate of 4.4% since 2000.

Additionally, Ontario is the anchor city within the Ontario Micropolitan Statistical Area. This statistical area, as dedicated by the United States Census Bureau, consists of small incorporated and unincorporated communities throughout Oregon's Malheur County and Idaho's Payette County. In 2010, the area had an official population of 53,938, up from 52,193 in the 2000 US Census. As of 2018, it had an estimated population of 54,276.

Despite steady growth during the latter decades of the twentieth-century, the City of Ontario is forecasted to enter several decades of little to no population growth. By 2030, external projections have the city's population around 12,700. In the following decades, Ontario is only expected to grow by about two hundred people by 2065.

Ontario Population



*Value for 2018 is an estimate provided by Portland State University.
**Years 2030 though 2060 are forecasts provided by Portland State University.

Conclusions on Demand

Despite the lack of forecasted growth for Ontario's population, the market is more extensive than it was during the operational years of the Amtrak *Pioneer* from 1977 to 1997. Due to Ontario and the surrounding area's current situation, there is an existing demand for passenger rail. Located along the far eastern border of the State of Oregon, passenger rail would provide a reliable long-distance form of transportation that would aid in connecting the market to the rest of the state. Ontario is about six hours from Portland by automobile. For some people, a drive-time of that length could be problematic. Passenger trains would provide an alternative method of traveling west to the other regions of the state.

Additionally, if such a service were to travel out of Oregon and into Idaho, the route would better connect Ontario and the west side of Treasure Valley to Boise. The City of Ontario currently has an economy that offers stability for decades to come in the form of agricultural production and its institutions. While the city does not have projected growth in the coming decades, the current market has a need for passenger rail.

Conclusions

It is recommended that Ontario have a station with any future passenger service. Outside of Boise, Ontario is one of the most significant places of commerce within the Treasure Valley of Eastern Oregon and Southwest Idaho. A station would serve Ontario as well as other communities of the valley. Ontario's market is not one of the largest along the route; however, it offers stability with its agricultural industries and other supporting institutions.

Of all the former passenger depots along the Eastern Oregon Route, Ontario's is in the best physical condition due to the extensive restorations that it has undergone since the departure of Amtrak service in the late 1990s. While the building is in excellent condition, the interior waiting room would need to be refurnished to support passengers. Additionally, the rear exit to the platform needs upgrades to become ADA compliant.

Despite the physical condition of the depot, there may be challenges in obtaining access to the interior spaces of the building. These spaces are rented out for private events; the depot's restoration efforts were taken to prepare the building for use as an event space. It is unclear if the City of Ontario would entertain an agreement to convert some of the interior space back into an operating passenger rail station.

In the situation where the interior of the depot is not able to be used, the station site is still viable to host a station. As a smaller market, Ontario would only require a Category 4 station. While the use of the depot's interior could allow for a Category 3 station, this would not be necessary for the return of either long-distance or intercity passenger rail service to Ontario. In either scenario, the site is ideal because of the adequate space for a new platform, plenty of parking, and the proximity to downtown Ontario. This report recommends that Ontario have a station stop at the historic OSL depot site if passenger trains return to the UPRR mainline.

Figure 13.2 (top left) Former platform area, looking north.

Figure 13.3(top right) West elevation, looking east.

Figure 13.4 (bottom left) Back walkway showing contemporary fence and back door with step, looking south.

Figure 13.5 (above) South elevation of the depot in 1982, showing waiting shelter and platform looking north. (trainweb.org)

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Chapter Fourteen

Conclusions

Recommendations

After considering factors such as depot and platform condition, market demands, and other characteristics of cities along the Eastern Oregon Route, the *Oregon Station Report* recommends that stations be located in the following markets along the UPRR mainline: Troutdale, Hood River, The Dalles, Stanfield, Pendleton, La Grande, Baker City, and Ontario.

The recommended stations given by this report differs in several places compared to the stations of the last passenger rail service along the route, provided by the Amtrak *Pioneer* between 1977 and 1997. First, there is a demand for a new station to serve the east side of the Portland Metro Area, located around Troutdale. A station in this general area would allow for better access for the citizens of communities in and around Gresham, who would be left to travel through worsening auto-traffic into downtown Portland to use the service. Second, a station at Cascade Locks is not recommended. From 1981-1988, the *Pioneer* made a stop at Cascade Locks, however, the market does not currently have the demand to warrant the construction of a new station, nor does it have the forecasted population numbers to expect any significant change it the city's potential as a passenger rail market. It is also recommended that the Hinkle station, which served the Hermiston market, be moved several miles to the east to the town of Stanfield. Stanfield offers a safer, more comfortable environment for passengers. Additionally, the station site would be located within the city blocks of Stanfield, providing opportunities of growth for the town and removing the public station from the private property of the UPRR.

Station Findings

While each examined station location is covered in detail within their respective chapters, there are common findings that apply to most of the potential stations along the route. One area of commonality regards the station categorization found with Amtrak's Station Program and Planning Guidelines. Under the given categories, all of the markets along the UPRR mainline would only need to meet the specifications of Category 4. This classification is the lowest rank for modern Amtrak stations; consisting of a platform of current standards, a waiting shelter, and no Amtrak staff. The markets in this report are mostly small to moderately-sized rural cities that are outside of major metropolises. Therefore, due to the relatively small population numbers, as well as the expected low frequency of passenger trains, Category 4 stations would be sufficient infrastructure to support any implemented passenger service. Any station that utilizes the interior of a historic depot could be

*The "recommended station" labeled Hermiston is representative of the proposed station at Stanfield..

Figure 14.1 Map of the Recommended Station Along the Eastern Oregon Route

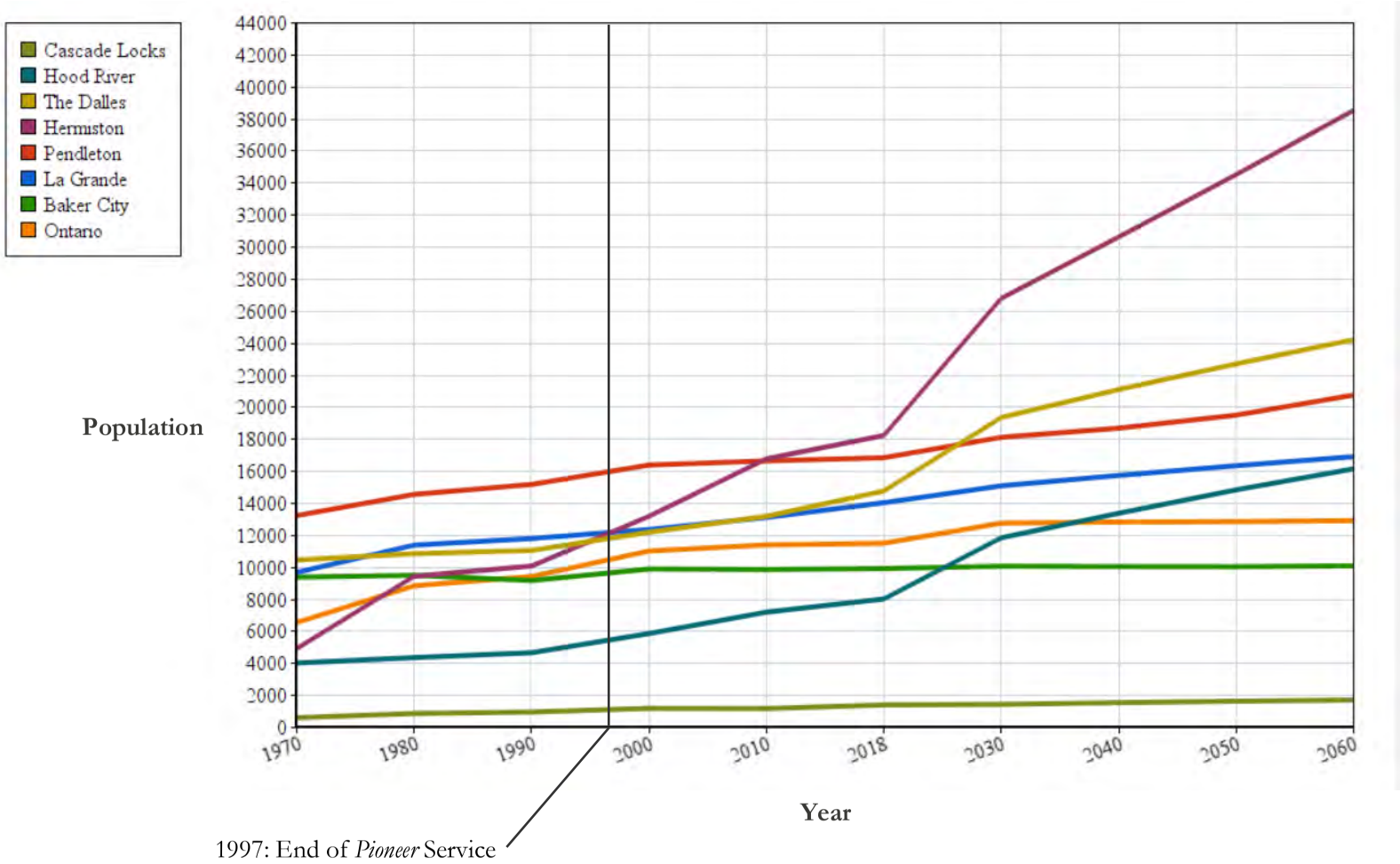
classified under Category 3. This category requires the use of a depot that provides amenities such as restrooms in addition to an interior waiting area. These stations are not staffed by Amtrak, but are overseen by caretakers, who are often the owners of the building. The findings of this report indicate that the following stations have the potential to operate under such an arrangement: Hood River, The Dalles (Federal Street depot), La Grande, Baker City, and Ontario. While Category 4 stations would sufficiently serve the studied communities, the use of the historic depots would provide overall better amenities for passengers. The other stations along the route, as well as the locations where the interior of the historic depot is unobtainable, will fall under Category 4.

There are also consistencies found within the conditions of individual stations; the most significant of these being the universal inadequacy of platforms. As detailed in Chapter Four, Amtrak has adopted new standards for platforms since the discontinuation of the *Pioneer* in 1997. These standards, found within Amtrak's Station Program and Planning Guidelines, have been issued to ensure safety, accessibility, and comfort for passengers. In their current state, all of the platforms along the route through Eastern Oregon do not meet these modern standards. As a result, all of the existing stations will require new platforms to be built, or have their existing platform undergo a renovation to meet the modern standards. The *Oregon Station Report* concludes that the most significant challenge preventing the route's stations from hosting contemporary passenger rail service is status of the platforms.

Analysis of Markets

There are significant variations in the state of each market along the route. Some markets, such as Hood River and Hermiston, have undergone high levels of growth in recent decades. These cities have increased their significance as markets for passenger rail. Hermiston has become the center of industrial production within Eastern Oregon, and Hood River has found increased popularity as a place of leisure while also seeing new business ventures. Other cities, such as The Dalles, Pendleton, La Grande, and Ontario have not experienced similar levels of population and economic growth, but have remained steady passenger rail markets along the route. Baker City's market shown minimal growth in industry and population, and at some points has experienced a decline in residents. However, as the seat of Baker County, the market remains as a staple of the far eastern counties of Oregon. Cascade Locks has a similar outlook, with little growth or potential for supplying a better passenger rail market. Unlike Baker City, the location of Cascade Locks is near other proposed station locations such as Portland, Troutdale, and Hood River. The market of East Portland/Troutdale is more prominent than it was during the *Pioneer* era, both in terms

Populations of Markets Along the Eastern Oregon Route



*Value for 2018 is an estimate provided by Portland State University.
**Years 2030 though 2060 are forecasts provided by Portland State University.
***East Portland/Troutdale is excluded for formatting purposes.

of its growing population as well as its demand for access to direct transportation options.

When considering the market of the route as a whole, it holds more potential for passenger rail then it did during the operational years of the *Pioneer*. During this era, agriculture was the key stabilizing factor of the Eastern Oregon economy. While agriculture production remains a critical component of Oregon's overall economy east of the *Cascades*, the last few decades have seen a further diversification of economic development; especially in Umatilla County. As Eastern Oregon continues to grow as a region of business and significant player in Oregon's economy, the demand for increased transportation options will increase. The UPRR mainline generally parallels I-84 for the full extent of its crossing of Oregon. With the increased significance on these markets in the present day and decades to follow, there will be greater prominence in supplying alternative modes of transportation that do not rely on I-84, which is extremely susceptible to winter road conditions. For these reasons, there is a reasonable demand for passenger rail in Eastern Oregon; a need that can be expected to rise with the overall growth of the region in the coming decades.

Next Steps

As stated in Chapter One, the *Oregon Station Report* was created by ODOT's Rail and Public Transit Division as a preliminary study into the topic of passenger rail service to the numerous markets of Eastern Oregon. As a result, additional multi-state agency studies are needed to further any progress towards implementing such a service. Furthermore, the *Oregon Station Report* is limited to the scope of Oregon stations. Any passenger rail service, whether long-distance or state-supported intercity, would presumably continue eastward into Idaho and potentially into Washington north of Portland. Consultation with state agencies such as ITD and WSDOT, federal entities such as Amtrak and the FRA, and private railroad companies such as the UPRR, would be necessary for further steps of studying the route. While the *Oregon Station Report* examines the current conditions of former stations and potential new sites for stations, there were no formal discussions with property owners regarding the use of each location. These negotiations, as well as conversations with the UPRR over potential track rights on the Portland, La Grande, and Huntington Subdivisions, are steps that are required to take place to estimate the price of implementing rail service along the route.

The *Oregon Station Report* provides context and preliminary findings which are intended to serve as a base for more thorough study of passenger rail in Eastern Oregon.

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Central & Eastern

Oregon Station Report

ODOT Rail & Public Transit Division
September 2019

Oregon Department of Transportation