



# Oregon Passenger Rail

## Eugene - Portland

CHOOSING A PATH FORWARD

## Appendix B

### Public and Agency Involvement Summary Report

April 2021





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CHOOSING A PATH FORWARD

# Public and Agency Involvement Summary Report

*Prepared by*



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
Federal Railroad  
Administration

April 2021



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- 1 Public Meeting Information



# Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACT	Area Commission on Transportation
AORTA	Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DOI	(U.S.) Department of the Interior
EPA	(U.S.) Environmental Protection Agency
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FR	Federal Register
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
I-5	Interstate 5
mph	miles per hour
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
ODSL	Oregon Department of State Lands
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation



# Introduction

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released the Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Oregon Passenger Rail Project (Project) in October 2018. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register (FR) on October 19, 2018 (83 FR 53053). Stakeholders were encouraged to provide comments on the Tier 1 DEIS through various opportunities from October 18 through December 19, 2018.

During the public comment period, ODOT and FRA received a total of 212 comments from members of the public and agency/organization representatives at five (5) public events, through the Project website, and by email and letter.

Project stakeholders and the general public were provided with a detailed description of the Preferred Alternative for the Project and the findings included in the Tier 1 DEIS. During the public comment period, there were several opportunities for Project stakeholders and the general public to ask questions and provide formal comment on the Tier 1 DEIS findings.

This report includes a summary of the outreach and public comments received through the following forums and events:

- In-person open houses and public hearing events in five locations along the Project corridor in November and December 2018.
- Online open house from November 28 to December 18, 2018.
- Comments received through the website comment form and emails during the outreach period.
- Informational tables set up at Eugene Saturday Market, Salem Station 100 Year Anniversary event, and Union Station in Portland in September and October 2018.
- Letters and emails received by the Project team between October 18 and December 19, 2018.



# Distribution of the Tier 1 DEIS

The distribution of the Oregon Passenger Rail Project DEIS emphasized the use of electronic media to provide cost-effective access to the public and interested parties. This Tier 1 DEIS was available on the internet on the ODOT Oregon Passenger Rail Project website (<http://www.oregonpassengerrail.org>) and on the FRA website (<http://www.fra.dot.gov/>).

All persons, agencies, and organizations listed below were informed of the availability of, and locations to obtain, the DEIS, as well as the timing of the 60-day formal comment period. A Notice of Availability of the DEIS was included in the Federal Register.

Federal agencies, Native American tribes, state agencies, regional and local agencies, and the other selected interested parties and organizations listed below were sent a link to the electronic copy of the DEIS via e-mail. Additional local elected officials and agency representatives, along with others on the mailing list (approximately 3,700 contacts), were mailed a notification that included information about how to access the DEIS, timing for the formal DEIS comment period, and public hearing dates, times, and locations.

### ***Federal Agencies:***

- Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Railroad Administration
- Federal Transit Administration
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Department of Commerce
- U.S. Department of Energy
- U.S. Department of Interior
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

### ***Native American Tribes:***

- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde Community of Oregon
- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon
- Cowlitz Indian Tribe

### ***Oregon State Agencies:***

- Business Oregon
- Office of the Governor
- Oregon Department of Administrative Services
- Oregon Department of Agriculture
- Oregon Department of Energy

- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries
- Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development
- Oregon Department of State Lands
- Oregon Department of Transportation
- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
- Oregon Transportation Commission
- Oregon Water Resources Department
- Public Utilities Commission
- Travel Oregon

***Regional and Local Agencies:***

*Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs):*

- Albany Area MPO
- Cascades West ACT
- Central Lane MPO
- Corvallis Area MPO
- Lane ACT
- Metro
- Mid-Willamette Valley ACT and Council of Governments

*Counties/Cities:*

- Benton County/Adair Village, Corvallis, Monroe
- Clackamas County/Canby, Gladstone, Johnson City, Lake Oswego, Milwaukie, Oregon City, Rivergrove, West Linn, Wilsonville
- Lane County/Coburg, Eugene, Junction City, Springfield
- Linn County/Albany, Brownsville, Halsey, Harrisburg, Lebanon, Millersburg, Tangent
- Marion County/Aumsville, Aurora, Donald, Gervais, Hubbard, Jefferson, Keizer, Mt. Angel, St. Paul, Salem, Silverton, Stayton, Sublimity, Turner, Woodburn
- Multnomah County/Fairview, Gresham, Maywood Park, Portland, Troutdale
- Polk County/Dallas, Independence, Monmouth
- Washington County/Durham, Hillsboro, King City, Sherwood, Tigard, Tualatin
- Yamhill County/Amity, Dayton, Dundee, Lafayette, McMinnville, Newberg

*Other Agencies:*

- Lane Transit District
- Northwest Oregon Transit Alliance
- Port of Portland
- Salem-Keizer Transit
- SMART Transit
- South Clackamas Transportation District
- TriMet
- Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue

During the public comment period, Project stakeholders and the general public were able to review hard copies of the Tier 1 DEIS at multiple locations throughout the Project corridor and during the public hearings held for the project in November and December 2018. Copies of the Tier 1 DEIS were available at the following locations:

**Oregon Department of Transportation**

ODOT Region 1 Office  
123 NW Flanders Street  
Portland, OR 97209

**Oregon Department of Transportation**

Transportation Building  
355 Capitol Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**Eugene Public Library**

Downtown Library  
100 W. 10th Avenue  
Eugene, OR 97401

**Albany Public Library**

2450 14th Avenue SE  
Albany, Oregon 97322

**Albany City Hall**

333 Broadalbin Street, SW  
Albany, OR 97321

**Salem Public Library**

585 Liberty Street SE  
Salem, OR 97301

**Oregon City Public Library**

606 John Adams Street  
Oregon City, OR 97045

**Multnomah County Central Library**

801 SW 10th Avenue  
Portland, OR 97205



# DEIS Public Hearings

ODOT and FRA held a series of five open houses/public hearings in November and December 2018 in the following locations:

- Portland – November 28, 2018, ODOT Region 1 – 123 Flanders St., Portland
- Oregon City – November 29, 2018, Pioneer Community Center – 615 5th St., Oregon City
- Albany – December 4, 2018, Linn Benton Community College – 6500 Pacific Blvd. SW, Albany
- Salem – December 5, 2018, Pringle Hall – 606 Church St. SE, Salem
- Eugene – December 6, 2018, Main Public Library – 100 W 10<sup>th</sup> Ave., Eugene

Materials used for the public hearings are included in this appendix as Attachment 1.

## 3.1 Purpose and Format

The purpose of these events was to provide the public information presented in the Tier 1 DEIS in a drop-in style format involving display boards, a presentation by members of the Project team and an opportunity for interested persons to give verbal or written testimony.

Attendees received informational handouts about the Tier 1 DEIS findings as well as a public comment card. Participants were encouraged to review the information presented at the open house and discuss the findings with the several Project team members (i.e., ODOT and FRA staff and consultants) who attended the events. At each event, a presentation highlighted the results of the Tier 1 DEIS.

A Spanish-language interpreter was available at each meeting to interpret the informational displays, presentation, and attendee questions or comments.

At each event, there was an opportunity for attendees to give verbal testimony to a representative from FRA or ODOT, documented by a court reporter, or one-on-one with the court reporter.

## 3.2 Notification

The Project team used the following forms of notification to invite people to participate in the public events:

- **Newsletter** – mailed and emailed to 5,360 contacts in the Project’s stakeholder database on October 19, 2018.
- **Website announcement** – posted on October 19, 2018 with ways to comment, event dates and locations.
- **Media release** – distributed on October 19 and November 19, 2018 with ways to comment, including event dates and locations.
- **Community events** – tables at the Salem Station 100 Year Anniversary Event on September 25, 2018, in Eugene at the Saturday Market on October 20, 2018, and in Portland at Union Station on October 23, 2018.
- **Newspaper ads** – there were ads in local newspapers and on a Spanish-language radio channel one week in advance of each meeting. Additionally, the Project team contacted community newsletters at the time of the first media release. Newspapers and newsletters included The Oregonian, Clackamas/Oregon City News, Statesman Journal (Salem region), Albany Democrat-Herald, Lebanon Express, Corvallis Gazette-Times (Lee Enterprises) and The Register-Guard (Eugene region). La Pantera radio channel played Spanish ads a total of 40 times during the dates of the public events.

- **Social media** – the Project team posted about the five (5) open house/public hearing events and the online open house on ODOT’s and Amtrak’s Facebook and Twitter accounts between October 19 and December 18, 2018.
- **Posters** – displayed posters in train stations along the corridor.
- **Reddit** – submitted two posts to the Salem and Eugene subreddits prior to the open houses and public hearing events.

### 3.3 Participation

Of the 176 people who attended the open house and public hearing events, 51 provided input using the comment forms and nine (9) gave verbal testimony. Attendance at each event was as follows:

- **Portland:** 30 participants
- **Oregon City:** 26 participants
- **Salem:** 31 participants
- **Albany:** 16 participants
- **Eugene:** 73 participants

# Additional Public Outreach Activities

## 4.1 Online Open House

There was an online open house hosted on ODOT’s Project website available from November 28 to December 18, 2018. The purpose of the online event was to:

- Present the Preferred Alternative for the Project.
- Present the findings from the Tier 1 DEIS.
- Provide the opportunity for public comment on the Tier 1 DEIS prior to the selection of the Final Preferred Alternative by FRA.

A total of 345 people visited the online open house. Of those, 59 provided comments using the online open house comment form.

## 4.2 Online Open House Format

The same information and materials that were presented or displayed during the in-person open house and public hearing events were available during the online open house. The online open house had four virtual stations:

- 1) **Project Overview** – This station included a brief video featuring Oregon State Representative Nancy Nathanson, who gave an overview of Project considerations and how the public has been informed and has contributed to the Project to date. Additionally, participants could view a map of the Project area and read a summary of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.
- 2) **Purpose, Need, Goals and Objectives** – Information about the Project’s Purpose, Need, Goals and Objectives was available for review.
- 3) **Alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS** – This station summarized the findings included in the Tier 1 DEIS for Alternative 1, Alternative 2 and the “no-build” Alternative. This information highlighted station locations, trip time, accommodation for higher speed, capital costs, ridership, the tradeoffs of benefits and negative impacts and a summary of land impacts for each of the Alternatives.
- 4) **Next Steps and Feedback** – Participants could provide comments in an online open-ended comment form about the alternatives presented in the Tier 1 DEIS. Commenters could choose to provide their name and demographic information with their submission.

## 4.3 Informational Table Events

The Project team hosted informational tables at Union Station in Portland, at the Salem Station 100 Year Anniversary Event, and at the Saturday Market in Eugene in September and October 2018. The purpose of these events was to promote the public comment period, the five (5) open houses/public hearings and the online open house, and to outline the findings included in the Tier 1 DEIS.

Location	Date	Talked to Project Team	Left Comment
Salem 100 Year Anniversary Event	September 25	18	0
Eugene Saturday Market	October 20	48	11
Portland Union Station	October 23	11	3
<i>Total</i>		77	14



# Tier 1 DEIS Comments and Responses

## 5.1 Summary of Comments

Public outreach focused on the findings from the Tier 1 DEIS and the recommended Preferred Alternative. Stakeholders and interested members of the public could provide feedback through public comment forms at the open house events, online through the website, by email, or by mail. During the formal comment period, the Project team received a total of 212 comments from members of the public and agency/organization representatives: 60 via the website comment form, 59 through the online open house, 58 at the open house/public hearing events (51 via comment form and nine via public testimony), 30 by email and three by mail. These comments are summarized below in two sections: key comment topics and other themes. Appendix C includes the original comments received during the public comment period. The comments are organized into sections for agency, organization and individual communications. Appendix C also includes responses to the comments.

## 5.2 Key Comment Topics

### 5.2.1 Support for Alternative 1 as the Preferred Alternative.

A total of 86 comment submissions indicated support for Alternative 1, the recommended Preferred Alternative.

#### 5.2.1.1 Supporting Key Themes:

- Alternative 1 has a reduced cost to taxpayers as opposed to Alternative 2.
  - Participants also noted:
    - The need for a reliable funding source.
    - The savings may provide potential funding for additional improvements to passenger rail and other transportation modes.
    - The reduced trip time for Alternative 2 does not justify the cost.
- The station locations in Alternative 1 best serve the population and needs of the region.
  - Participants also noted:
    - The existing stations are historic and have undergone renovations.
    - Relocating stations in Alternative 2 would be wasteful and potentially detrimental to the historic value of these structures.
- Alternative 1 has fewer impacts to the environment, including agricultural lands, wetlands, and waterways, than Alternative 2.
- Strategic track, signal, and infrastructure improvements will help Alternative 1 serve the region's passenger rail needs, as well as address safety issues and conflicts with freight rail.
  - Many participants suggested creating a double track along the entire route in the future to fully alleviate conflicts between passenger rail and freight rail.
- Increased frequency of service and number of trains, as well as adjustments to the passenger rail schedule and capacity, will help improve ridership.

- Alternative 1 offers more opportunities to scale, phase, and implement track and service improvements incrementally, including potentially creating high-speed rail in the future.
- Improving multimodal transportation connections with passenger rail will improve the effectiveness of Alternative 1.
  - Some comments suggested offering bike storage on trains and at stations and coordinating with local transit providers to develop new transit lines, shuttles, and stops to connect to stations.
- Alternative 1 seems like it can be completed sooner, thereby increasing the benefit to the region.
- The current route with the upgrades included in Alternative 1 with the identified upgrades along the existing track will support economic development and local businesses.
- Ticket prices are already cost-prohibitive for many potential riders. Alternative 2 may increase these prices.
- The ridership projections in Alternative 1 will help make passenger rail a viable long-term transportation option.

## 5.2.2 Frequency, Schedule and Reliability

A total of 63 comment submissions contained input related to improving the frequency, schedule and reliability of passenger rail service.

### 5.2.2.1 Supporting Key Themes:

- Address conflicts between passenger rail and freight rail to ensure reliable service, which in turn will encourage ridership.
- Develop schedules around rush hours and the needs of the region’s population that rely on public transportation to commute to their jobs, and offer more early morning and late afternoon/evening options to increase ridership.
- Increase the frequency of passenger rail to provide more options and better service to the region.
- Delays and disruptions in service discourage riders from relying on passenger rail as their form of transportation between Portland and Eugene.
- Coordinate with local transit agencies to develop public transit buses, trains, and shuttles that are timed with passenger rail arrivals and departures to develop a reliable and cohesive system.

## 5.2.3 Technology, Innovation, Implementation and “Phase-ability”

A total of 50 comment submissions contained input related to passenger rail technology, innovation, implementation, and “phase-ability” (the ability to fund and implement the proposed passenger rail investments in phases).

### 5.2.3.1 Supporting Key Themes:

- Passenger rail service will improve greatly with significant infrastructure, track and signal improvements.
- Improvements to passenger rail need to take into consideration equipment and maintenance requirements and upgrades to support future innovation and regional needs.

- Participants also suggested working with Union Pacific to upgrade the existing tracks to Class 5 or 6 to increase speed and performance.
- Be progressive when considering how the route can be improved through innovation and technology.
  - Suggestions for potential innovation included:
    - Intercity commuter rail.
    - Electric trains powered by solar panels installed along the route.
    - Siemens jet-powered single level passenger trains.
    - Collaboration with notable innovators and inventors to develop an enduring system.
    - Bullet trains.
    - Tunnels rather than roadway crossings (included with Alternative 2).
    - Double tracks along the entire route (included with Alternative 1).
- The reduced cost and faster implementation of Alternative 1 provides increased opportunity for funding and time to support technological and innovative improvements in the future, including moving to higher speed rail.
- Ensure the chosen alternative has the ability to be scaled and implemented incrementally.
- Make investments that will not become obsolete within a short amount of time.

## 5.2.4 Funding and Cost

A total of 48 comment submissions contained input related to funding and cost.

### 5.2.4.1 Supporting Key Themes:

- Improvements to passenger rail are needed, but funding is a significant issue. Therefore, Alternative 1 is the best option.
- The current ticket prices are cost-prohibitive and need to be changed to encourage ridership.
  - Participants also suggested exploring how to make tickets more affordable by creating family packages, day/week/month/year passes and low-income fare/passes.
- Consider combining the alternatives to reduce the cost of funding a project as large as Alternative 2, while still gaining some of the technological benefits.
  - Participants suggested using the segment between south Salem and Millersburg from Alternative 2 combined with the route in Alternative 1.
- Establish a funding plan for incremental improvements.
- The cost of Alternative 2 is not justified by the projected benefits.

## 5.2.5 Station Locations and Expanding Service

A total of 44 comment submissions suggested expanding service or identified new or existing station locations that should be added or maintained.

### 5.2.5.1 Supporting Key Themes:

- Ensure the station locations serve the population centers and have access to goods and services, i.e., food, hotels, grocery stores, etc.
- Maintain service to the existing stations, specifically Eugene and Salem.

- Include Corvallis in the planned service, either by creating a station or providing reliable and strategically timed shuttles between Corvallis and the nearest station.
- Retain the station in Albany regardless of which alternative is chosen.
- Maintain service to Oregon City and increase ridership through improved schedules, reliability and frequency.
- Include considerations for broader passenger rail expansion in this process to provide service to eastern and central Oregon in the future.
- Wilsonville lacks public transportation options and would benefit greatly from the addition of a station.
- Create a station in Springfield, or if not, improve the public transit connections to the Eugene station to increase access to/from Springfield.
- Other station locations mentioned in the comment submissions include:
  - Woodburn
  - Oakridge
  - Tualatin
  - Keizer
  - Junction City
  - Canby
  - Tigard
  - Lake Oswego
  - Tangent
  - Hillsboro
  - McMinnville
  - Astoria
  - Lebanon
  - Mill City
  - Harrisburg
  - La Grande
  - Brooks

## 5.2.6 High Speed and Speed

A total of 43 comment submissions contained input related to high speed rail or the speed of passenger rail in general.

### 5.2.6.1 Supporting Key Themes:

- The alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS are not ambitious enough and need to include plans for high speed rail.
- Alternative 2 offers more opportunities to increase the speed rating of passenger rail.
- Alternative 1 needs to increase speed by a more significant amount.
- Work with Union Pacific to upgrade their existing tracks to allow for higher speeds.
- Develop Alternative 1 so that it can be phased into high-speed rail in the future.
- Decrease the trip time between Eugene and Portland so passenger rail can compete with air and motor vehicle transportation, and effectively increase ridership.

- The 120 miles per hour (mph) speed for Alternative 2 seems slow considering the technology that exists and is in use elsewhere.

## 5.2.7 Ridership and Capacity

A total of 42 comment submissions provided input related to increasing ridership and capacity of passenger rail.

### 5.2.7.1 Supporting Key Themes:

- Provide transit and multimodal connections between stations and points of interest such as airports and schools, to increase ridership.
- Provide safe bike storage at stations and on trains to encourage ridership.
- The existing ticket prices are cost prohibitive to some potential riders.
- Improve the safety, maintenance, and cleanliness of stations and trains to encourage ridership.
- Develop schedules around a typical workday, with increased morning and afternoon/evening service to increase ridership.

## 5.2.8 Support for Alternative 2

A total of 40 comments provided input related to Alternative 2.

### 5.2.8.1 Supporting Key Themes:

- Alternative 2 would eliminate conflicts with freight trains (Union Pacific).
- The station locations in Alternative 2 best serve population centers in Willamette Valley.
  - Interest in having stations in or near Corvallis and Wilsonville because they have few transit options.
- Alternative 2 is the fastest option.
  - This option would reduce congestion on Interstate 5 (I-5), because users would be more likely to take the faster option.
  - Participants also suggested that this would reduce single occupant trips and reduce carbon emissions.
- The 120 mph speed for Alternative 2 seems slow considering the technology that exists and is in use elsewhere.
- Make investments that will not become obsolete within a short amount of time.
- Station locations for Alternative 2 should connect to public transit and other transportation options.
- Alternative 2 is the option that works best for the long-term future and innovation of the region.

## 5.3 Additional Comment Themes

A series of additional comment themes arose from the comment submissions. Fewer comments were received on these themes than the key themes described above, but there was sufficient public interest in the topics to summarize them in this document. All comments received by the Project team, regardless of theme, will be published in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). These themes include:

- General concerns about impacts to the environment, such as agricultural lands, wetlands, waterways, habitats, etc., related to all alternatives (28 comments).
- General support for improved passenger rail regardless of alternative (27 comments).
- Comments regarding how passenger rail can be used as a tool to address climate concerns and community health issues (23 comments).
- Suggestions for including bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the passenger rail plan (17 comments).
- Comments regarding how passenger rail can be used as a tool for economic development (17 comments).
- Appreciation or comments regarding the Project process, outreach, materials, or public involvement (16 comments).
- Support for the “No-Build” option (5 comments).
- Concerns about noise issues (4 comments).
- Concerns regarding environmental justice (3 comments).

## 5.4 Agency and Organization Comments

Agencies, local governments, and organizations submitted a total of 18 comments. The agency commenters included the EPA, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), the Oregon Department of State Lands (ODSL), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Rail Freight and Ports Division, the City of Eugene, the Tangent City Council and Travel Oregon.

A summary of the relevant agency comments (those directly related to the alternatives) is presented below; other agency comments were related to process. Comments in the format in which they were received are included in Appendix C.

### 5.4.1 Agency Comments

The following agencies commented on the DEIS during the public and agency comment period. The agency correspondence is included in this appendix.

Agency	Commenter
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10	Jill A. Nogi, Manager Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit
U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration Region 10	Jeremy Borrego Transportation Program Specialist
U.S. Department of the Interior Office of the Secretary Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance	Allison O’Brien Regional Environmental Officer
Oregon Department of State Lands	Russ Klassen Aquatic Resource Coordinator
Washington State Department of Transportation Rail, Freight and Ports Division	Kirk Fredrickson
Travel Oregon	Sara Morrissey

Agency	Commenter
Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization	Paul Thompson Program Manager
TriMet	Joe Recker Environmental Permits Coordinator TriMet Project Development and Permitting
City of Eugene	Rob Inerfield Transportation Planning Manager City of Eugene – Public Works Engineering
Tangent City Council	Georgia Edwards City Manager

## 5.4.2 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA provided support for Alternative 1 due to maximized use of existing infrastructure and stations and avoidance of greenfield development. Additional comments include:

- Recommendation to identify all potential impacts to waterbodies.
- Concern about the acreage of wetlands potentially impacted by Alternative 2.
- Recommendation to build full-span bridge stream crossings to avoid impact to biological resources within wildlife connections.
- Recommendation to retrofit existing infrastructure to provide hydrological and ecological connectivity.
- Recommendation to include climate change considerations in the FEIS and notable environmental impacts should be examined as a part of the NEPA process.

## 5.4.3 U.S. Department of the Interior

DOI did not explicitly provide support for either alternative. However, the submission expressed concern about potential impacts to a variety of endangered species and noted that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must be consulted to ensure the Project does not jeopardize these species. Additionally, the submission explained that if the Project impacts parks that are funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund, it will require approval by the Secretary of the Interior, delegated to the National Parks Service.

## 5.4.4 Oregon Department of State Lands

ODSL did not explicitly provide support for either alternative; however, the submission noted the following:

- Delineate and evaluate wetlands and waterways prior to construction.
- Avoid or minimize impacts to water, especially rare and highly valued water resources.
- Mitigate impacts when they cannot be avoided.

## 5.4.5 WSDOT Rail, Freight and Ports Division

WSDOT did not explicitly provide support for either alternative but did recommend including a discussion of a potential passenger rail maintenance facility in Eugene, which would help provide flexibility in developing train schedules, better on-time performance and job opportunities.

## 5.4.6 Travel Oregon

Travel Oregon provided general support for the Project and noted that they deferred to ODOT and the local communities to determine the Preferred Alternative. Additionally, the submission emphasized that tourists expect reliable on-time train service if they are going to choose passenger rail over another form of transportation.

## 5.4.7 City of Eugene

The City of Eugene provided support for Alternative 1 as the Preferred Alternative based on its ability to be phased incrementally over time, affordability, and likelihood of completion. The submission noted that the City supports providing frequent, more reliable and higher-speed passenger rail in the Willamette Valley as a tool for reducing the amount of intercity driving.

Additionally, the City expressed that it is prepared to help implement Alternative 1 by providing upgrades to the existing Eugene station and rail sidings, and the construction of a separated passenger-rail track.

## 5.4.8 Tangent City Council

The Tangent City Council expressed support for either Alternative 2 or the “no-build” option. The submission suggested abandoning the Project and instead adding a lane to I-5 to ease congestion, but noted that if the Project is to be constructed, it supports Alternative 2. Additional concerns include:

- Project funding.
- How the Project will address congestion on I-5.
- Implementation of new technology and innovation in the future.
- How the Project will increase ridership.

## 5.4.9 Organization Comments

### 5.4.9.1 AORTA

The Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA) submitted two comments, both of which provided support for Alternative 1 as the recommended Preferred Alternative. Reasons for their support include the following:

- The existing route is well established, serves station stops that are known to the public, and serves a wide portion of Willamette Valley with the opportunity for expansion in the future to southern and eastern Oregon.
- Higher-speed rail is more feasible at this time than high-speed rail.
- Alternative 1 offers the opportunity to phase into high-speed rail in the future.
- Updates to the existing route with help relieve conflicts with freight.
- The existing route better serves the community and will increase ridership.

## 5.4.10 Oregon Environmental Council

Oregon Environmental Council expressed support for Alternative 1, noting that it maintains the existing alignment and therefore reduces impacts to the environment, preserves the existing stations within city centers and provides the opportunity to incrementally phase in new technology and equipment.

### 5.4.11 The University of Oregon

The University of Oregon provided support for Alternative 1 as the recommended Preferred Alternative based on its ability to support its student and staff needs for transportation between Portland and Eugene, and because it has the potential to greatly improve the region's economic development.

### 5.4.12 Hector Campbell Neighborhood Association

This neighborhood association in Milwaukie, Oregon, had four questions related to the effects of the Project:

- Will there be a sound or retaining wall along the stretch of Railroad Avenue in Milwaukie?
- How much of the present north side right-of-way is needed and will it affect the Railroad Avenue street layout?
- What effect will the Project have on the current Quiet Zone in Milwaukie?
- What are the impacts to the rail crossing at 37th Avenue in Milwaukie?

### 5.4.13 Concordia Neighborhood Association

This neighborhood association expressed concern about the length of the Project development process and, in their view, the limited results. The submission did not support either of the alternatives. The neighborhood association's main objection to the alternatives was that the Project should instead be implementing dedicated high-speed rail tracks from Portland south to Salem, Corvallis, Eugene and the Rogue Valley, and avoiding using UPRR tracks or placing tracks along I-5.

## 5.5 Summary of Responses

After reviewing all of the comments received from agencies, organizations, and individuals, ODOT responded to each comment. Appendix C contains all of the comments in their original form and a matrix of the comments and responses prepared by ODOT.



Attachment 1  
Public Meeting Information  
Copies of presentations and boards



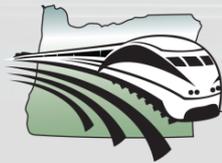
# Public Hearing Presentation



# OREGON PASSENGER RAIL

## Draft Environmental Impact Statement

# PUBLIC REVIEW & HEARING



Oregon Passenger Rail  
Eugene - Portland

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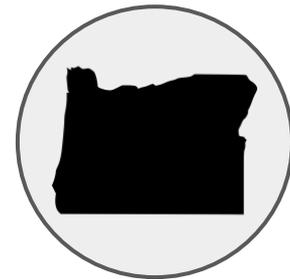
# DEIS PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA



Project Overview  
NEPA Process  
Purpose & Need



Goals and Objectives  
Alternatives  
Alternatives Evaluation

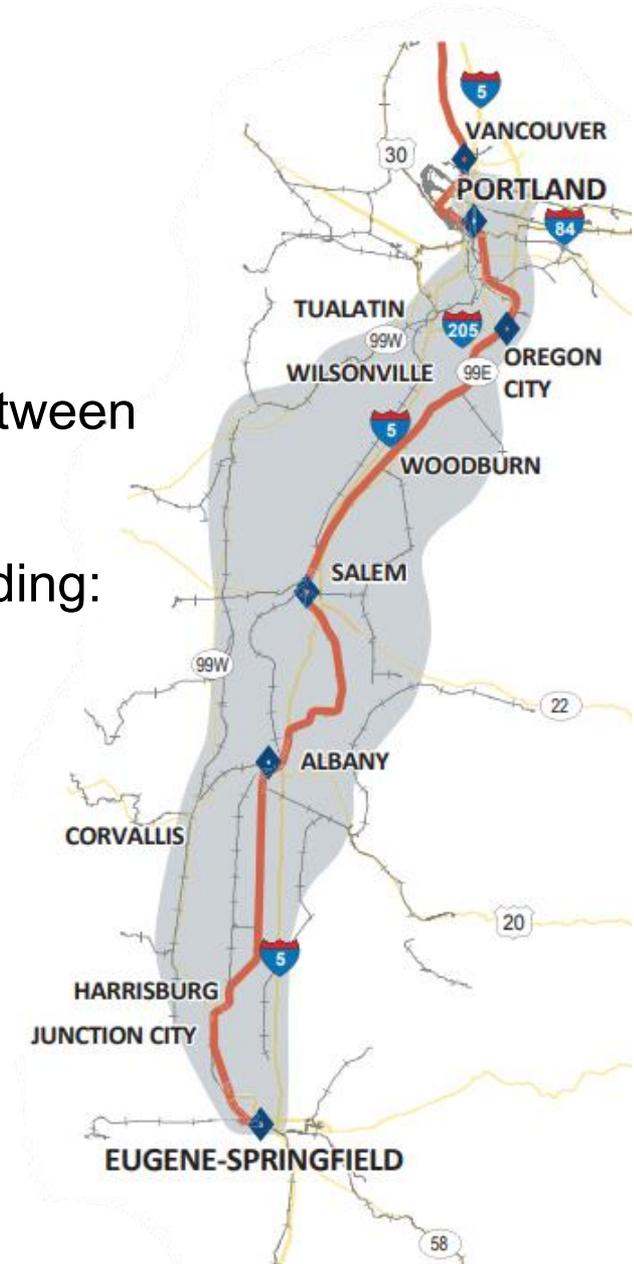


Preferred Alternative  
Stations  
Public Comment



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

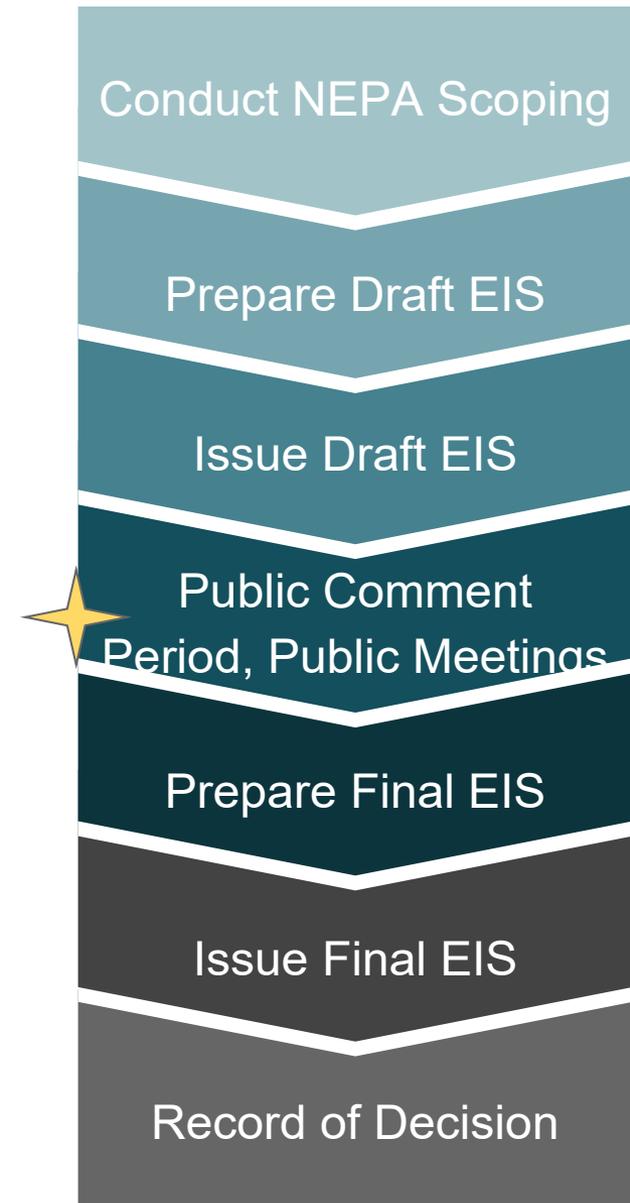
- Studied options for passenger rail service between Eugene-Springfield and Portland-Vancouver
- NEPA review informs decision-making regarding:
  - Frequency and speed of rail service
  - Rail route
  - Types of technology to use
  - Station locations





## NEPA PROCESS

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) considers environmental impacts of project
- NEPA ensures stakeholder input is incorporated into decision making





## DECISION-MAKING & KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is the Lead Agency for the project, and will identify a Preferred Alternative in the FEIS and document the decision in the Record of Decision issued for the project

- U.S. Department of Transportation
  - Federal Railroad Administration (FRA): Lead Federal Agency*
- Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)



# PUBLIC & AGENCY COORDINATION

Proactive engagement with interested parties, stakeholders, government agencies, and tribes:

## **Coordination**

- Leadership Council
- Community and jurisdictional groups
- Agency coordination
- Railroad coordination
- Tribal outreach

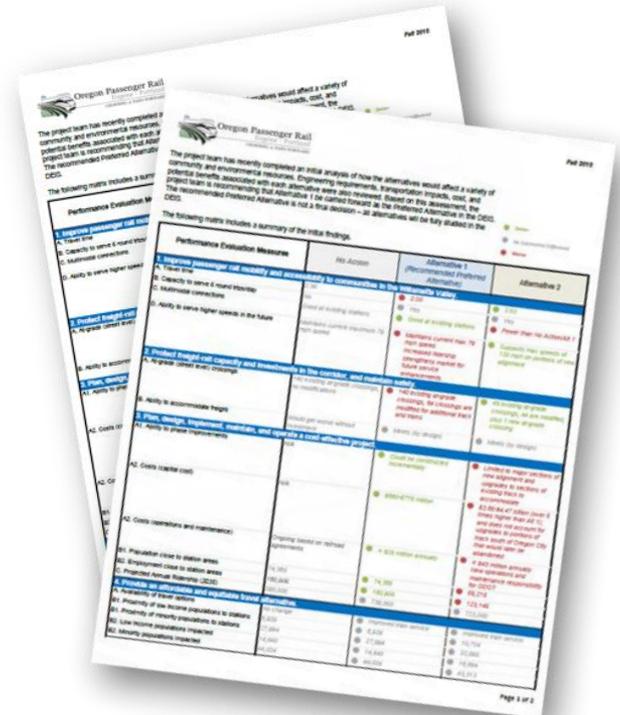
## **Outreach Strategies**

- Open houses / online meetings
- Community events
- Informational videos
- Website / social media
- News media
- Fact sheets / newsletters
- Surveys



# TIER 1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

- Tier 1 EIS addresses corridor-level issues
  - Rail alignment
  - Service improvements
  - Station locations
- Identifies Preferred Alternative





**PURPOSE**

**NEED**



## PROJECT PURPOSE

...to improve the frequency, convenience, speed, and reliability of passenger rail service in a manner that will:

- Provide riders with an efficient, safe, equitable, and affordable travel alternative
- Be a cost-effective investment
- Protect freight-rail carrying capability
- Support ongoing implementation of intercity rail in the PNWRC
- Promote economic development
- Avoid / minimize community and environmental impacts
- Integrate with existing and planned transportation networks



## PROJECT NEED

The project needs were identified as:

- Increasing intercity and regional travel demands
- Limited rail system capacity
- Constrained state and local roadway funding
- Safety and security in transportation
- Transportation demands resulting from demographic changes



**PURPOSE**

**NEED**

**GOALS &  
OBJECTIVES**



## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

**Goal 1:** Improve passenger rail mobility and accessibility to communities in the Willamette Valley.

**Goal 2:** Protect freight-rail capacity and investments in the corridor, and maintain safety.

**Goal 3:** Plan, design, implement, maintain, and operate a cost-effective project.

**Goal 4:** Provide an affordable and equitable travel alternative.



## GOALS & OBJECTIVES, CONT.

**Goal 5:** Be compatible with passenger rail investments planned in Washington State.

**Goal 6:** Promote community health and quality of life for communities along the corridor.

**Goal 7:** Protect and preserve the natural and built environment.



**PURPOSE**

**NEED**

**GOALS &  
OBJECTIVES**

**EVALUATING  
ALTERNATIVES**



# ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION

1. Develop purpose, needs, goals, & objectives
2. Develop an evaluation framework
3. Identify a range of corridor concepts
4. Screen corridor concepts against purpose and need
5. Evaluate preliminary alternatives using the evaluation framework
6. Establish the range of alternatives to be further studied
7. Publish Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement
8. Consider public and agency comments on Draft EIS
9. Select Preferred Alternative
10. Publish Final Tier 1 EIS and Record of Decision





# DEIS ALTERNATIVES

**Alternative 1** would follow existing Amtrak rail route with improvements.

**Alternative 2** would be a new route between Springfield and Oregon City and along I-205.

**No Action Alternative** follows Amtrak route with no changes.





# HIGH SPEED RAIL (HSR) CONCEPT PLAN

- Conceptual analysis of HSR conducted as part of EIS
- Identified ridership and population levels required to support HSR
- Recommended phased implementation as ridership grows

## RIDERSHIP & POPULATION



**LEVEL 1**  
Incremental upgrades to existing tracks allowing improvement in travel time, frequency, and reliability

▶ *Depends on ensuring funding to maintain the service we have now*



**LEVEL 2**  
Incremental upgrades plus shifting to a separate non-UP alignment south of the Portland region, allowing even shorter travel time and greater frequency and reliability

▶ *Population/ridership/freight volume increases outstrip the ability to provide adequate service on existing UP tracks and justify expenditures and impacts*



**LEVEL 3**  
Level 2 plus shifting to a tunnel from the south side of Portland, under southwest Portland to Union Station, allowing even shorter travel time and greater frequency and reliability

▶ *Population/ridership increases outstrip the ability to provide adequate service on existing UP tracks in the Portland Metro area*



**LEVEL 4**  
Upgrade to electrified service using the dedicated alignment south of Portland and the tunnel alignment through Portland, allowing for shorter travel time

▶ *Requires a coordinated approach to service and infrastructure upgrades in Washington State that allow for a connected, electrified system*



# PERFORMANCE COMPARISONS

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
<b>Trip Time:</b> Eugene to/from Portland	2 hours, 20 minutes	2 hours, 2 minutes
<b>Accommodate Higher Speeds</b> in the future	Maintains current max: 79 mph	Max speeds of 120 mph on portions
<b>Capital Costs through 2035</b>	\$870 million - \$1.025 billion	\$3.62 - \$4.44 billion
<b>Ridership (2035)</b>	739,000	723,000
<b>Maximizes Benefits and Reduces Negative Impacts</b>	Higher frequency and ridership; improves service to central cities	Higher frequency and ridership; but service focused outside central cities
<b>Supports Land Preservation, Minimizes Negative Impacts</b>	Lower footprint and construction impacts than Alternative 2	New alignment, thus higher right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternative 1



# DEIS ALTERNATIVE STATIONS

Alternative 1		Alternative 2	
Station	Existing or New	Station	Existing or New
Eugene	Existing	Springfield	New
Albany	Existing	Albany	New
Salem	Existing	Salem or Keizer	New
Oregon City	Existing	Wilsonville or Tualatin	New
Portland's Union Station	Existing	Portland's Union Station	Existing

*\* The team considered an Albany Option for Alternative 2 which would use the existing station*



## PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Based on comparison of alternatives, FRA and ODOT recommend Alternative 1 based on the following features:

- Improved ridership
- Rail service to central cities
- Reduced environmental impacts
- Ability to phase implementation
- Lower capital costs



# DEIS REVIEW SCHEDULE

Oct. 19	Oct. 19 – Dec. 18
Announced in Federal Register	DEIS Public Comment Period

Nov. 28	Nov. 29	Dec. 4	Dec. 5	Dec. 6
<b>Public Hearing:</b> Portland <i>5-7pm</i>	<b>Public Hearing:</b> Oregon City <i>4:30-6:30pm</i>	<b>Public Hearing:</b> Albany <i>5-7pm</i>	<b>Public Hearing:</b> Salem <i>5-7pm</i>	<b>Public Hearing:</b> Eugene <i>5-7pm</i>

**DEIS Available at Multiple Locations in the Corridor and on ODOT Website**



# PROVIDE YOUR DEIS COMMENT

## **Tonight**

Fill out a comment form or give testimony to court reporter

## **Online Open House**

Participate in an online open house between Nov. 28 and Dec. 18, 2018

([www.oregonpassengerrail.org](http://www.oregonpassengerrail.org))

## **Email**

Send your comments to [info@oregonpassengerrail.org](mailto:info@oregonpassengerrail.org)

## **Mail**

Comments to Oregon Passenger Rail, 1110 SE Alder St. Suite 301, Portland, OR 97241

## **Contact**

Jennifer Sellers, ODOT Passenger Rail Program Manager, (503) 480-5556



## NEXT STEPS

### **Prepare Final EIS**

- Respond to substantive public and agency comments
- Identify and describe the final selected alternative

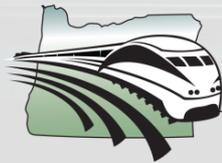
### **Service Development Plan (Implementation Plan)**

### **Pursue Combination of Federal and State Funding**

# OREGON PASSENGER RAIL

## Draft Environmental Impact Statement

# PUBLIC REVIEW & HEARING



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# Public Hearing Boards



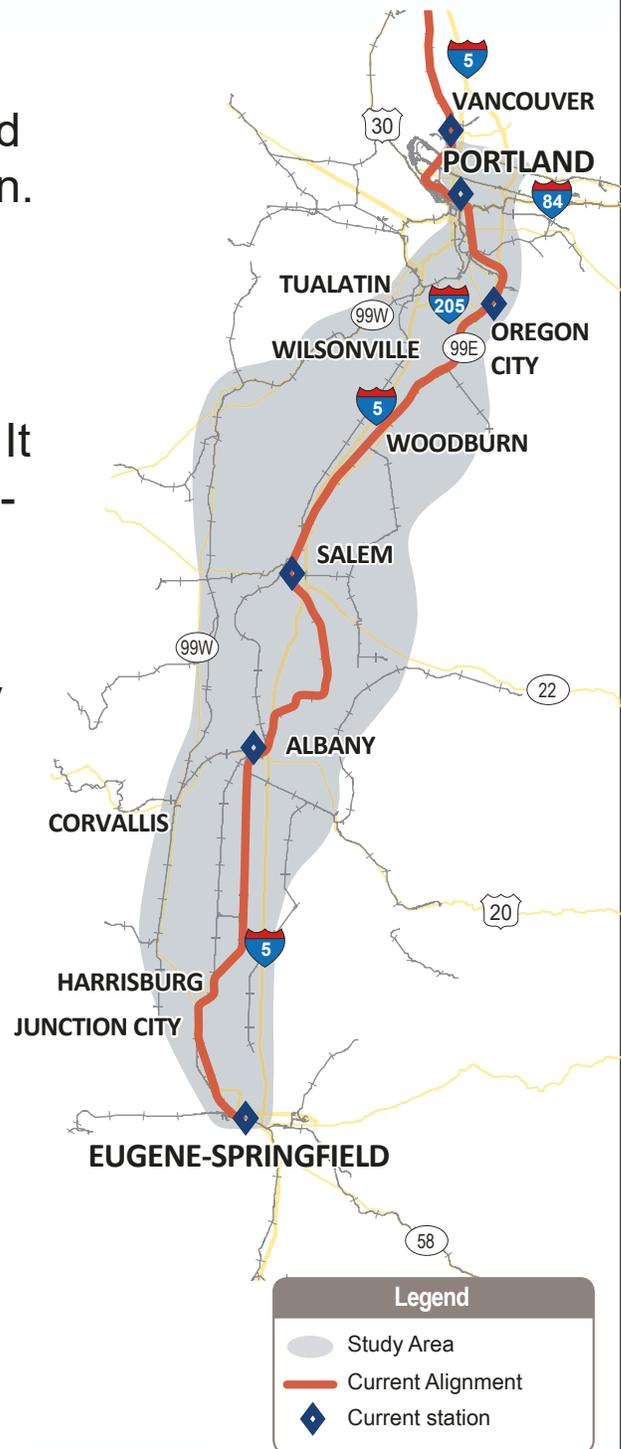
# Project Overview

The project studied options to improve passenger rail service between Eugene-Springfield and Portland-Vancouver, Washington.

This area is part of the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor, which extends from Eugene, Oregon, to Vancouver, British Columbia. It is designated as a regional high-speed rail corridor.

The project team is conducting a National Environmental Policy Act environmental review to decide:

- » *Service characteristics and frequency.*
- » *Rail alignment.*
- » *Technology.*
- » *Station locations.*



# Oregon Passenger Rail and NEPA

Oregon received a Federal grant from the Federal Railroad Administration for the Oregon Passenger Rail study, which means the project is following the **National Environmental Policy Act** process:

- » Analysis and reporting are required for all negative and positive environmental impacts — including cultural, natural and social.
- » **The public (you!) will be involved to help us make informed decisions.**

## A Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement:

- » Addresses broad corridor-level issues (rail alignment, service improvements and communities with stations).
- » Concludes with a decision on a **“Final Preferred Alternative.”**
- » Requires additional environmental studies before any construction can begin.

# Project Purpose

The purpose of the Oregon Passenger Rail project is to improve the frequency, convenience, speed and reliability of passenger rail service along the Oregon segment of the Federally designated Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor in a manner that will:

- » *Provide riders an efficient, safe, equitable and affordable alternative to highway, bus and air travel.*
- » *Be a cost-effective investment.*
- » *Protect freight-rail carrying capability.*
- » *Support the ongoing implementation of regional high-speed intercity passenger rail between the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area and Vancouver, British Columbia.*
- » *Be compatible with the Washington State portion of the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor.*
- » *Promote economic development.*
- » *Avoid or minimize community and environmental impacts.*
- » *Integrate with existing and planned multimodal transportation networks.*



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# Project Need

Multiple transportation, land use, socioeconomic and environmental considerations drive the need for this project:

- » *Increasing intercity and regional travel demands.*
- » *Limited rail system capacity and competing service needs.*
- » *Constrained state and local roadway funding.*
- » *Increased economic vitality of the corridor.*
- » *Promoting transportation system safety and security.*
- » *Changing transportation demand resulting from demographic changes.*

The entire Purpose and Need statement can be found on the project website:  
[www.OregonPassengerRail.org](http://www.OregonPassengerRail.org).

The Purpose and Need statement is the foundation of the Oregon Passenger Rail project. The statement was developed based on input from the public, stakeholders and the Leadership Council.



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# Goals and Objectives

## » **Goal 1: Improve passenger rail mobility and accessibility to communities in the Willamette Valley.**

### Objectives:

1A – Provide a viable alternative to auto, air and bus travel between Eugene and Vancouver, WA.

1B – Provide reliable and frequent passenger rail service.

1C – Support multimodal integration at each passenger rail station.

1D – Allow for future passenger rail improvements, including higher speeds.

## » **Goal 2: Protect freight-rail capacity and investments in the corridor, and maintain safety.**

### Objectives:

2A – Does not increase conflicts between passenger rail or freight rail and vehicles.

2B – Protect freight-rail carrying capability.

## » **Goal 3: Plan, design, implement, maintain and operate a cost-effective project.**

### Objectives:

3A – Develop a strategy that can be reasonably funded and leveraged with range of investment tools for construction and operation.

3B – Serve the maximum number of people with every dollar invested.

## » **Goal 4: Provide an affordable and equitable travel alternative.**

### Objectives:

4A – Provide a viable and affordable alternative for all travelers.

4B – Provide equitable investments and service, with consideration to race/ethnicity and income.

# Goals and Objectives

## » **Goal 5: Be compatible with passenger rail investments planned in Washington State.**

### Objectives:

5A – Provide passenger rail service to meet existing and future passenger rail demand for an interconnected system in the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor.

## » **Goal 6: Promote community health and quality of life for communities along the corridor.**

### Objectives:

6A – Benefit communities within the corridor.

6B – Minimize negative impacts to communities along the corridor.

## » **Goal 7: Protect and preserve the natural and built environment.**

### Objectives:

7A – Support Oregon’s commitment to the preservation of resource lands and local land use and transportation planning.

7B – Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in support of national and state policies to slow climate change.

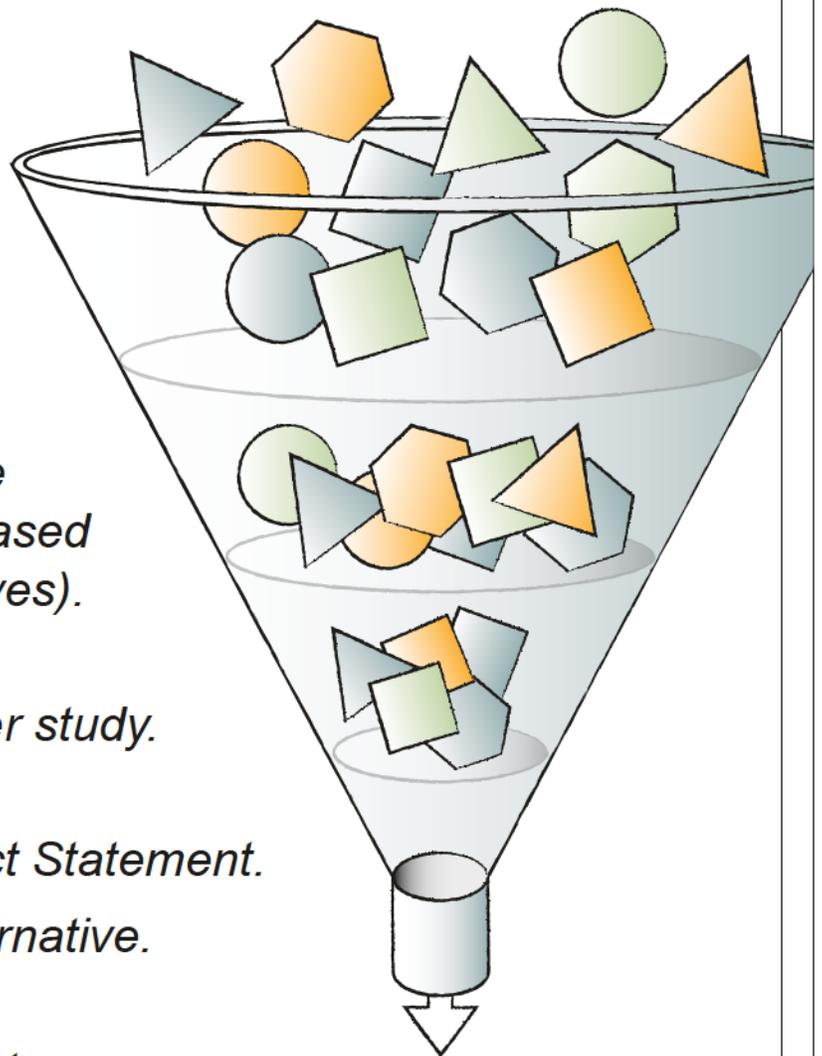
7C – Avoid and minimize impacts to the natural environment and cultural resources.

**The goals and objectives were used as the basis for evaluating the alternatives. Alternatives that better meet goals and objectives score higher in the evaluation.**



# How alternatives were narrowed

1. *Develop Purpose and Need, along with goals and objectives.*
2. *Develop an evaluation framework.*
3. *Identify a broad range of corridor concepts.*
4. *Screen corridor concepts against Purpose and Need.*
5. *Evaluate preliminary alternatives using the evaluation criteria (based on goals and objectives).*
6. *Narrow the range of alternatives for further study.*
7. *Publish Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement.*
8. *Select Preferred Alternative.*
9. *Publish Final Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement.*



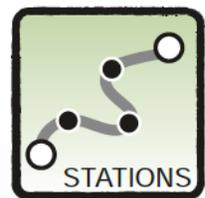
*We are here!* *Publish Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement.*



ROUTES



SERVICE



STATIONS



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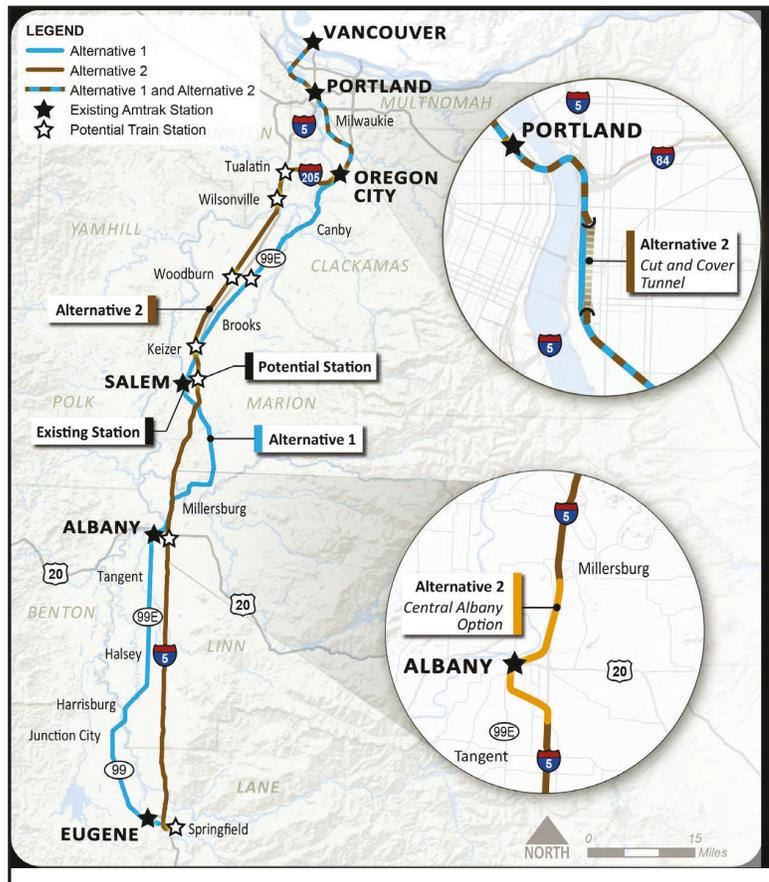
# The Draft Alternatives

Two “build” alternatives and a no-build alternative analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement are shown below. The project’s Leadership Council recommended Alternative 1 as the Preferred Alternative.

**Alternative 1** follows the existing Amtrak Cascades passenger rail route with track, signal and communication improvements.

**Alternative 2** is primarily a new route between Springfield and Oregon City along Interstate 5, an existing freight rail line and Interstate 205. It would follow the existing alignment north of Oregon City.

**No Action Alternative** follows existing Amtrak route with no additional service or improvements.



Alternative 1 Stations		Alternative 2 Stations	
Station	Existing or New	Station	Existing or New
Eugene	Existing	Springfield	New
Albany	Existing	Albany	New
Salem	Existing	Salem or Keizer	New
Oregon City	Existing	Wilsonville or Tualatin	New
Portland's Union Station	Existing	Portland's Union Station	Existing

# Performance Comparisons

The two “build” alternatives and related options were evaluated using the project goals and objectives.

## Notes:

- » *Cost estimates are planning-level construction and engineering estimates and do not include ongoing operations or maintenance costs. Costs are in 2015 dollars.*
- » *Estimated travel times assume stops at five stations (same as existing service). Each additional stop would add time.*
- » *The current scheduled travel time from Portland to Eugene is 2 hours, 35 minutes.*

	<b>Alternative 1</b>	<b>Alternative 2</b>
<b>Passenger rail trip time: Eugene to/from Portland</b>	2 hours, 20 minutes	2 hours, 2 minutes
<b>Ability to accommodate higher speeds in the future</b>	Maintains current maximum speed (79 mph)	Maximum speeds of 120 mph on portions of new alignment
<b>Capital costs through 2035 (2015 dollars)</b>	\$870 million-\$1.025 million	\$3.62 billion-\$4.44 billion
<b>Ridership (2035)</b>	739,000	723,000
<b>Produces benefits and minimizes negative impacts</b>	Higher frequency and ridership; improves service to central cities	Higher frequency and ridership, but service focused outside central cities
<b>Support preservation of land, avoid and minimize negative impacts</b>	Lower footprint and construction impacts than Alternative 2	New alignment, thus higher right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternative 1

# Station Activity

## Annual Amtrak Cascades Train and Thruway Bus Station Activity

Station	Station Activity (Number of riders both on and off)			
	Existing Conditions (2015)	No Build Alternative (2035)	Alternative 1 (2035)	Alternative 2 (2035)
Eugene	85,800	172,500 <sup>a</sup>	362,300	—
Springfield <sup>b</sup>	85,800	172,500 <sup>c</sup>	—	350,400
Albany	31,800	54,800 <sup>a</sup>	119,300	122,500 <sup>d</sup>
Salem <sup>e</sup>	65,300	97,100	203,700	203,500
Oregon City	15,100	17,000	40,500	—
Willsonville <sup>f</sup>	15,100	17,000	—	39,800
Portland <sup>g</sup>	458,800	961,100	1,136,900	1,125,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>656,800</b>	<b>1,302,500</b>	<b>1,862,700</b>	<b>1,841,700</b>

<sup>a</sup> There were no plans to extend the current Portland to Salem bus south to Eugene when the ridership forecasting was done. Therefore numbers for Albany and Eugene do not include a seventh bus round trip.

<sup>b</sup> Existing conditions and No Action Alternative values represent ridership at the existing Eugene Station. The analysis for Alternative 2 assumed a new station would be located near the potential new Springfield station (an existing transit center).

<sup>c</sup> There were no plans to extend the current Portland to Salem bus south to Eugene when the ridership forecasting was done. Therefore numbers for Albany and Eugene do not include a seventh daily bus round trip.

<sup>d</sup> All alternative values represent ridership at the existing Albany Station.

<sup>e</sup> Existing conditions and No Action Alternative values represent ridership at the existing Salem Station. The analysis for Alternative 2 assumed a new station would be located along I-5.

<sup>f</sup> Existing conditions and No Action Alternative values represent ridership at the existing Oregon City Station. The analysis for Alternative 2 assumed a new station would be located at the Wilsonville South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) Transit Center.

<sup>g</sup> Activity at Portland's Union Station encompasses all Amtrak Cascades train and Thruway bus passengers in Portland, including those from north of the Portland market.



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# Next Steps

2018

2019

- Public Review of Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (60 days)



Public Hearing on Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement

- Review and Consider Public Comment

- Select Final Preferred Alternative

- Key milestone



Public outreach, including in-person and/or online open houses, and other outreach efforts such as newsletters, website updates, online surveys, email blasts and news releases. These efforts will inform Leadership Council deliberations.

- Publish Final Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision, and Respond to Public Comment



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# Ways to Comment

During the Open Comment Period  
through Dec. 18:



» Submit a comment form or give testimony *tonight*.



» Participate in our online open house through Dec. 18:

*www.OregonPassengerRail.org*



» Mail a comment:

Oregon Passenger Rail, 1110 SE Alder St. Suite 301,  
Portland, OR 97214

» Email: *info@oregonpassengerrail.org*.



» Contact ODOT:

Jennifer Sellers, ODOT Rail and Public Transit

(503) 480-5556

Jennifer.Sellers@odot.state.or.us

*ODOT and the Federal Railroad Administration will review all comments and testimony. Responses will appear in the final Environmental Impact Statement.*



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