Amtrak Cascades: Oregon Service Development Plan Financing Plan

Oregon State Rail Plan Update – 2027
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Table of Contents

1 Motivation and Need....1
2 Service Development Plan Projects....2
3 Funding Plan....4
3.1 Federal Programs....4
3.2 Federal Programs and Amtrak Cascades in Oregon....4
3.3 Agreed Priority for All Projects....5
3.4 Near-Term Oregon Project Priorities....5
3.4.1 Near-Term Projects at Advanced Stages of Development....5
3.4.2 Near-Term Service Development Plan Projects....5
3.5 Annual Funding Plan....6
4 Funding Sources....7
4.1 Non-Federal Match Sources....7
4.1.1 Amtrak....7
4.1.2 Union Pacific Railroad....7
4.1.3 Connect Oregon Program....7
4.2 Federal Funding Sources....7
4.2.1 FY 2026 National Railroad Partnership Program Grants....7
5 Recommendations....7

Figures

Figure 1. Projected "No Action" Growth versus Actual Ridership....1

Tables

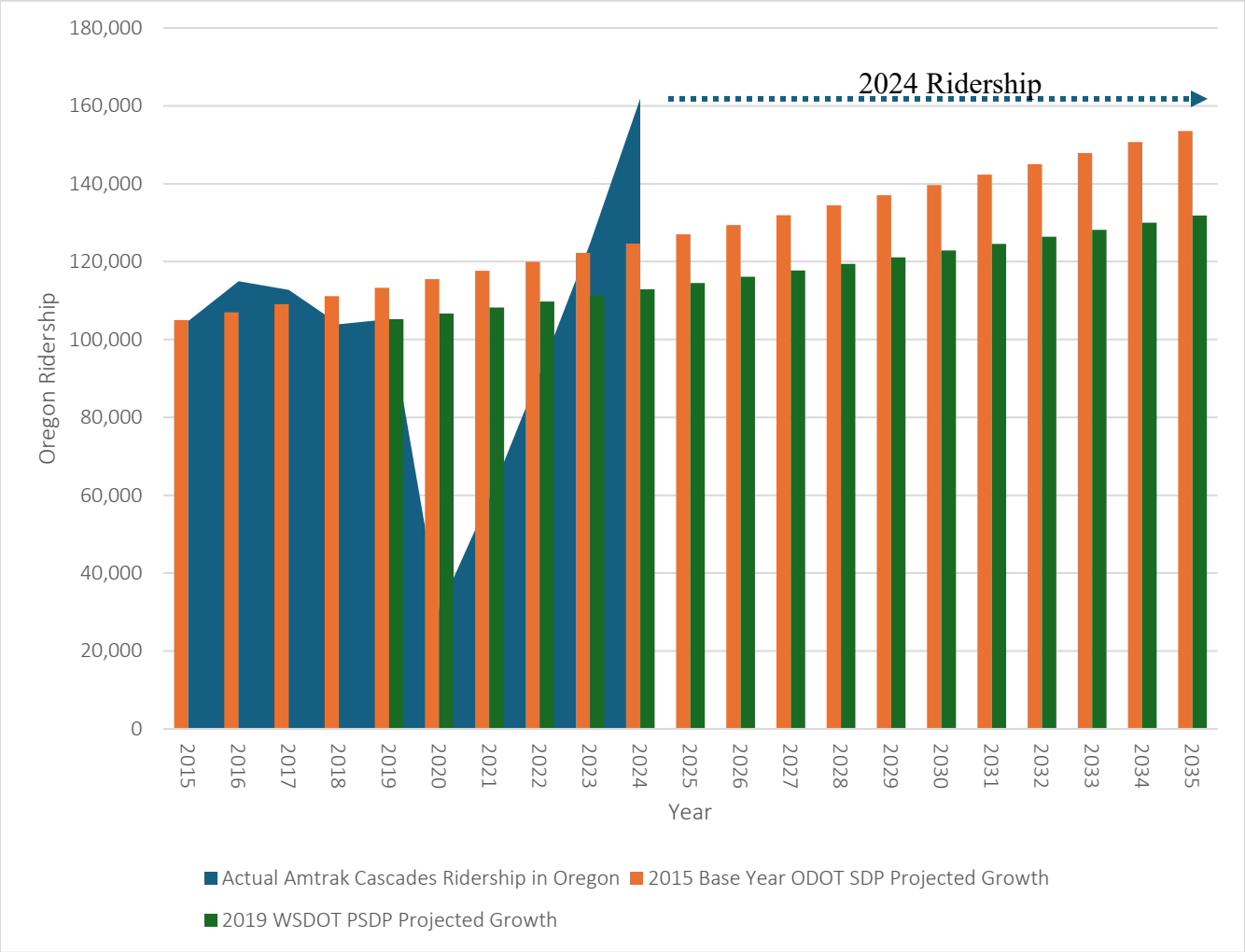
Table 1. Portland to Eugene Priority Passenger Projects....3
Table 2. Annual Local Non-federal Match Funding....6

1 Motivation and Need

The Amtrak Cascades Corridor in the state of Oregon on the segment running specifically between Portland, OR, and Eugene, OR, requires investment to maintain present ridership trends.

This is motivated in part by the present ridership performance experienced by the corridor, which in the post-pandemic era has significantly exceeded all previous forecasts, as shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Projected "No Action" Growth versus Actual Ridership



Ridership on Amtrak Cascades has exceeded both ODOT and WSDOT's projections, implying that initial projected ridership numbers were too conservative. As shown in **Figure 1**, actual ridership is 10 years ahead of the anticipated projections from the ODOT Service Development Plan's anticipated growth and 20 years ahead of the WSDOT Preliminary Service Development Plan's projected growth. Both projections pertained to "no action" cases, which predict ridership under a scenario where no additional services are implemented.

At the current rate of ridership growth, the existing two daily Portland-Eugene round trips will not provide sufficient capacity to meet growing demand. To accommodate increased ridership, ODOT must execute plans to add additional trains in its Service Development Plan. While

temporary equipment capacity constraints have tempered the high levels of growth in 2025 and 2026, this artificial constraint is being eased with the arrival of new Siemens Airo trainsets in late 2026. As these new trains are placed into service, ridership growth will resume. However, if the previously assumed rates of growth are tied to the new baseline set by actual ridership numbers, the system's two daily round trips are projected to exceed 60 percent of capacity – which, for intercity passenger rail systems, is functionally sold out – within the Service Development Plan planning horizon of 20 years. This means that the present offering of two round trips will be inadequate to service observed rates of demand. Therefore, ODOT should advance the service improvements identified in its Service Development Plan to ensure sufficient capacity as ridership continues to grow.

2 Service Development Plan Projects

In 2025, after over a decade of collaboration with Union Pacific Railroad, the Federal Railroad Administration, and Amtrak, ODOT finalized a prioritized corridor project inventory to accomplish adding more train trips to Amtrak Cascades services in Oregon through approximately a dozen discreet capital projects via three respective stages. Each stage results in increased passenger rail service between Portland and Eugene:

- Stage 1 enables a third round trip.
- Stage 2 enables a fourth round trip.
- Stage 3 enables fifth and sixth round trips.

Each stage is planned to be conducted sequentially, and present understanding between Union Pacific and ODOT means that service improvements cannot be advanced until each respective stage is completed.

These capacity improvements will reduce conflicts between freight and passenger rail, which will improve on-time performance and overall reliability of both passenger and freight services. The improvements will also support the expansion of Amtrak Cascades service between Portland and Eugene to accommodate growing ridership demand. The full list of priority projects, a brief description, conceptual cost estimates, and corresponding project stage is provided in **Table 1.** Also listed in **Table 1** is Portland Union Station, a distinct project separate from the staged projects planned with Union Pacific. This keystone facility for intermodal transportation in Oregon has urgent needs including seismic safety upgrades, platform upgrades, and accessibility compliance necessary for expanded passenger rail services.

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Table 1. Portland to Eugene Priority Passenger Projects

Project	Priority	Description	Stage	($M)[1][2]
Swain / Irving	1-A	Connect Swain and Irving sidings to provide a second main track. Upgrade existing Swain siding to main line. Creates two main tracks from Milepost 653.4 to Milepost 659.13. Add a single crossover at Milepost 652.3.	1	$163
Eugene Depot Layover Track	1-B	Add an 800-foot siding track at the station to allow passenger train layovers without occupying the main line track.[3]	1	$17
Willsburg Jct./ Clackamas	2	Construct a second main track from Willsburg Jct. (Milepost 764.9) to Clackamas siding (Milepost 760.8). Add four crossovers. Results in two main tracks from Milepost 759.3 to Milepost 770.	1	$195
Woodburn/ Gervais Phase 1	3	Phase 1: Connect Woodburn and Gervais sidings. Combined phase 1 siding length is from Milepost 732.2 to Milepost 734.4 (2.2 miles) with two universal crossovers.	1	$52
Salem/ Renard	4	Connect Salem yard and extend Renard siding. Expanded Renard siding is from Milepost 713.9 to Milepost 716.1. Extend Salem yard lead south to connect. Extend Salem yard lead north to approximately Milepost 718.3. Add one universal crossover.	1	$114
Irving/ Eugene Phase 1	5	Perform right-of-way and utility work for Eugene siding track to Irving (from Milepost 647.5 to Milepost 652.4).	1	$41
Millersburg	6	Extend Millersburg siding north. Expanded siding is from Milepost 694.5 to Milepost 697.6 (3 miles).	2	$62
Shedd Phase 1	7	Phase 1: Extend Shedd Siding north. Phase 1 expanded siding limit is from Milepost 677.7 to Milepost 681.25 with one universal crossover.	2	$95

[1] All dollar amounts are 2025 estimates

[2] All estimated values shown are the 'high' values from the estimated 'low-high' range

[3] A National Railroad Partnership Program/Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program Grant for final design and construction for this project was applied for in February 2026.

Project	Priority	Description	Stage	($M)[12]
Irving/ Eugene Phase 2	8	Connect Eugene siding track to Irving with a second main track (from Milepost 647.5 to Milepost 652.32). Construct a double crossover at Milepost 652.32.	2	$49
Woodburn / Gervais Phase 2	9	Phase 2: Extend Gervais siding south 2.3 miles. Full length of combined siding is from Milepost 730.1 to Milepost 734.4, with two universal crossovers.	3	$101
Albany/ Hallawell	10	Extend Albany yard lead and extend Hallawell siding. Extended Centralized Traffic Control siding length will be from Milepost 687.2 to Milepost 690.2 and will connect with Albany Yard lead. Add two additional crossovers.	3	$87
Shedd Phase 2	11	Phase 2: Extend Shedd siding south. Fully expanded Shedd siding limits are from Milepost 675.35 to Milepost 681.25 with one universal crossover, providing 6 miles of passing track capacity.	3	$73
Judkins	12	Extend Judkins siding south. Expanded siding would be from Milepost 621.2 to Milepost 645.7 (1.8 miles).	3	$71
Portland Union Station	N/A	Restore the station building including seismic stabilization and rebuild platforms with modernized reconfigured access.	N/A	$264

3 Funding Plan

3.1 Federal Programs

The National Railroad Partnership Program, previously known as the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program, was established with $36 billion in pre-appropriated[4] funding to execute capital investment programs that expand passenger rail. The Corridor Identification and Development Program supports the planning and development of passenger rail corridors and creates a pipeline of projects that may advance to implementation through the National Railroad Partnership Program.

3.2 Federal Programs and Amtrak Cascades in Oregon

Of the 69 corridors accepted into the Corridor Identification and Development Program, Amtrak Cascades is positioned competitively among its peers to be able to fully take advantage of available funding, thanks to the collaborative work with Union Pacific, the Federal Railroad

[4] Not subject to congressional pre-appropriation. At time of writing, these funds remain with the Federal Railroad Administration to award to eligible corridors such as Amtrak Cascades.

Administration and Amtrak, as well as a long and extensive track record of operations over the past 30 years. As evidence of this, ODOT and its portion of Amtrak Cascades between Portland and Eugene has been explicitly encouraged by the Federal Railroad Administration to identify capital projects for advancement to the project development phase while its service development plan is updated and finalized.

3.3 Agreed Priority for All Projects

As mentioned in **Service Development Plan Projects**, the projects in **Table 1** have been identified and prioritized collaboratively by ODOT, Union Pacific, Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration. The projects listed are conceptual and must enter two phases: (1) project development, involving preliminary engineering and the National Environmental Policy Act process and then (2) final design and construction. All projects in **Table 1** are consistent with Corridor Identification and Development Program requirements and may be eligible for an 80/20 federal/local funding match for project development, final design, and construction.

Initial match funding needed to progress project development and prepare projects for construction is approximately $2.3 million for Stage 1, each year for the first three years, 2027-2030. The higher annual total for these years in projected non-federal funding for the entire program, given the present structure of federal support, is shown in **Table 2**. Also reflected in **Table 2** is the non-staged inclusion of Portland Union Station's needed seismic retrofits and platform upgrades, a keystone investment for intermodal transportation in the state of Oregon necessary for expanded passenger rail service.

3.4 Near-Term Oregon Project Priorities

The Corridor Identification and Development Program allows for a Near-Term Service Development Plan for specific eligible projects that are ready to advance into project development while other projects continue to be planned under the regular Service Development Plan. While the Oregon State Rail Plan recognizes these ongoing initiatives, actual project delivery continues to be coordinated outside of the plan.

3.4.1 Near-Term Projects at Advanced Stages of Development

Two projects within the overall suite shown in **Table 1** are more advanced than the others, with completed preliminary engineering plans and environmental clearances received from the Federal Railroad Administration, demonstrating readiness for a Near-Term Service Development Plan:

1. Eugene Siding Project, a $17M construction ready project; and
2. Portland Union Station, a $264M final design ready project, with environmental clearances.

3.4.2 Near-Term Service Development Plan Projects

Due to mature planning and coordination with Union Pacific, all Stage 1 projects listed in **Table 1** are candidates for a Near-Term Service Development Plan, which could allow the projects to be expedited into project development phases. This work could commence in 2027 and be completed by the end of 2030. Project development is critical to keeping the projects on schedule and represents approximately 6 percent of total project cost at the conceptual engineering stage.

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3.5 Annual Funding Plan

Projected non-federal funding for the entire program, given the present structure of federal support, is shown in **Table 2**. As seen in **Table 2,** each stage is estimated to require three years of project development, and three years for final design and construction. The total suite of projects is estimated to cost between $950 million (low estimate) - $1.4 billion (high estimate), requiring the state of Oregon to assemble approximately $267 million in non-federal matching funds from a combination of state, local and private sources over a 20-year timeframe.

Table 2. Annual Local Non-federal Match Funding[5]

Year	Stage 1 (3 Round Trips)	Stage 2 (4 Round Trips)	Stage 3 (6 Round Trips)	Union Station	Annual Needed Local Match	Average Annual Local Match
2027	$2,333,000			$1,056,000	$3,389,000	$15,377,667
2028	$2,333,000			$1,056,000	$3,389,000	$15,377,667
2029	$2,333,000			$1,056,000	$3,389,000	$15,377,667
2030	$36,333,000			$12,408,000	$48,741,000	$15,377,667
2031	$36,333,000			$12,408,000	$48,741,000	$15,377,667
2032	$36,333,000			$12,408,000	$48,741,000	$15,377,667
2033		$826,000		$12,408,000	$13,234,000	$15,377,667
2034		$826,000			$826,000	$15,377,667
2035		$826,000			$826,000	$15,377,667
2036		$12,841,000			$12,841,000	$15,377,667
2037		$12,841,000			$12,841,000	$15,377,667
2038		$12,841,000			$12,841,000	$15,377,667
2039			$1,335,000		$1,335,000	$15,377,667
2040			$1,335,000		$1,335,000	$15,377,667
2041			$1,335,000		$1,335,000	$15,377,667
2042			$20,998,000		$20,998,000	$15,377,667
2043			$20,998,000		$20,998,000	$15,377,667
2044			$20,998,000		$20,998,000	$15,377,667
Project Development **Local** Match Total					$276,798,000	$276,798,000*
Final Design & Construction Projects with **Federal** Funds Total					$1,338,000,000	

**Note: Rounded to the nearest thousand for consistency with the level of precision used throughout the table. 2025 $*

[5] All estimated values shown are the 'high' values from the estimated 'low-high' range

4 Funding Sources

4.1 Non-Federal Match Sources

Multiple stakeholders and programs exist beyond ODOT to secure non-federal match dollars.

4.1.1 Amtrak

Amtrak service directly benefits from these investments. Amtrak has a National Network Account that funds services and investments outside of the Northeast.

Amtrak also has the ability to implement passenger fees, which can generate user revenue to fund projects. Given present passenger demand, modest fees implemented, $2 per passenger at Portland Union Station for instance, could generate $1.2 million or more annually.

4.1.2 Union Pacific Railroad

Union Pacific helped develop the suite of capital improvement projects which were specifically designed as whole-corridor enhancements benefiting both freight and passenger rail traffic.

4.1.3 Connect Oregon Program

Connect Oregon is an Oregon state program with dedicated source funding presently providing match funds for grants to advance Amtrak Cascades focused improvements.

4.2 Federal Funding Sources

The Stage 1 Corridor Identification and Development Program project development period will likely extend over the course of the upcoming federal transportation reauthorization expected to start in 2026. Match strategy should be calibrated to the new federal funding environment emerging after that point.

4.2.1 FY 2026 National Railroad Partnership Program Grants

An estimated $7 billion in funding is anticipated to be available between fall and winter 2026 for capital improvements aimed at improving and expanding passenger rail services. The funding provides an 80/20 federal/non-federal funding split, with the federal government covering up to 80 percent of eligible project costs and the remaining 20 percent provided through non-federal matching funds. Given their advanced stage of development and wide stakeholder buy-in, the ODOT projects highlighted in this document would be competitive for this funding.

5 Recommendations

Extensive work with Union Pacific and the Federal Railroad Administration has placed ODOT in a very competitive position to secure federal funding to achieve major transportation plan goals through the expansion of passenger rail. Recognizing a constrained fiscal environment through 2030, ODOT should leverage federal support by collecting sufficient state, local, and private funding with its project partners to assemble:

1. $1.1 million per year of non-federal match to focus on Eugene Depot layover track and Portland Union Station projects to move to final design and construction; and
2. $2.3 million per year of non-federal match to develop Stage 1 projects to continue valuable and hard-won cooperation with Union Pacific and the Federal Railroad Administration and work to expand service to accommodate observed ridership trends.

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