PNWER RIA Regional Infrastructure Accelerator

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High Performance Rail

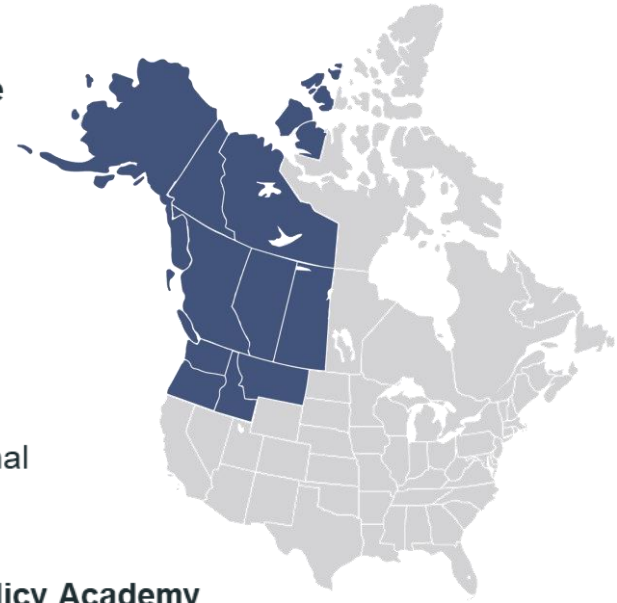
February 4, 2025
Oregon Joint Committee on Transportation
Salem, OR

Bruce Agnew, *PNWER RIA Director*
Tom Lang, *PNWER RIA Rail Program Manager*

About PNWER

The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) is a public-private partnership chartered by the states, provinces and territories of:

- Alaska
- Idaho
- Montana
- Oregon
- Washington
- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon
- Northwest Territories



PNWER is recognized by the federal governments as the model for regional and bi-national cooperation because of its proven success.

- **16 Working Groups**
- **Legislative Energy Horizon Institute (LEHI) – A 60-Hour Energy Policy Academy**
- **FIFA Cross-Border Coordination**
- **2026 Federal Transportation and Energy Reauthorization**

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Build Northwest Public Sector Council

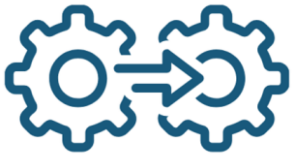
Public Sector Council members include:

- Legislative transportation committee members from OR, AK, ID, MT, WA
- Coordination with state DOTs, Governors' offices and Pacific Northwest Congressional Delegation

Purpose - multi-state, bi-national initiatives

Educate

Assist



Integrate

Convene

- Advised by Build Northwest Private Sector Council

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Northwest Supply Chains
Proposed USDOT Research | 2025-2026

Resilient, Job Creating, Enhanced & Powered by Technology

- Build America Bureau is a portal to USDOT administrations - FHWA, FAA, FRA, MARAD, FTA, Amtrak

- The project will:
  - Compile state trade profiles - origins of commodities and critical minerals to overseas/North American destinations
  - Identify transportation projects to reduce supply chain costs, increase local jobs - BIL reauthorization 2026

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Northwest Supply Chains
Proposed USDOT Research Cont.

- Industry surveys (with state/regional associations) for supply chain planning along:
  - Interstates 5, 82, 84, 90, 15 (truck stops & parking)
  - Class I and short line railroads
  - Sea and inland ports & transload/intermodal facilities
  - Columbia Snake River marine transport
  - Alaska marine highways to ports, RR and road networks
  - Air cargo - commercial and general aviation

- Educate policy makers on AI and supply chain efficiencies
- Highlight need for system resiliency in case of natural disaster or security incidents
  - PNWER / USDOT bi-national supply chain workshop in Bellingham - May 2025

USDOT Direction for Future Federal Spending
January 29, 2025

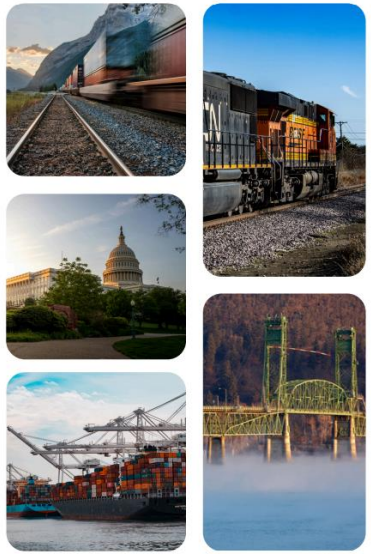
- Economic analysis supported by cost-benefit requirements and data
- Avoiding adverse impacts on families and communities
- No advancement of local goals that are “purely local in nature and unrelated to federal interest”
- Strong co-funding and adherence to Buy America requirements
- Promote user-pay models and local opportunity zones
- Reduce dependence on continued or future USDOT support
- Alignment with administrative priorities

PNWER RIA Regional Infrastructure Accelerator

About the PNWER RIA Program

The PNWER Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA) program is an initiative funded by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation's Build America Bureau that helps **accelerate infrastructure project delivery** through the provision of **technical assistance** and identification of **innovative financing solutions**.

The PNWER RIA is a field office for the Bureau, and a portal to USDOT modes, including **highway, railroad, transit, maritime and aviation**.



The PNWER RIA serves as a convener for transportation projects, with specific focus on multistate and multi-jurisdictional initiatives that:

- ➔ **Ease supply chain disruptions**
- ➔ **Reduce transportation-related pollution**
- ➔ **Increase economic and environmental justice, especially for historically underserved communities**

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PNWER RIA Program Areas

PNWER's Regional Infrastructure Accelerator is a USDOT-funded program that connects multi-state transportation projects with innovative federal financing mechanisms, including TIFIA and RRIF loan programs and Public-Private Partnerships (P3s).

Build Northwest Center of Excellence

Serves as the overarching platform for all outreach activities, offering education on innovative federal financing tools.

Critical Connections

Improve connectivity of Tribal nations and rural communities by updating, replacing or improving connective infrastructure.

Zero-Emission Commercial Refueling

Supporting development of zero-emission refueling infrastructure for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles along freight corridors.

High Performance Rail

Improve performance and safety of existing passenger and freight rail systems by identifying and bunding rail improvement projects.

- Greater Northwest Rail Summit

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Oregon Projects & Initiatives

1. **Umpqua Indian Development Corporation ZEV Commercial Refueling Facilities:** Working with partners throughout Oregon, including ODOT and Indigenous Resilience, to analyze funding opportunities to support innovative fueling at the Tribally-owned truck stop.

2. **Cascades Corridor Rail and Port Investment Strategy**: Collaborating with stakeholders to identify and bundle rail improvement projects to enhance daily corridor performance along the Amtrak Cascades.

3. **Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Replacement Project**: Supporting the Bridge Authority in navigating federal credit program gap financing.

★ **High Performance Rail Working Group**: Convening leaders and partners to discuss challenges and opportunities for co-investment in the PNW's freight and passenger rail network.

★ **Build Northwest Center of Excellence | Education & Outreach**

- Legislator Outreach & Education
- Project Sponsor Educational Workshops
- Technical Assistance Webinars

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Trains & Tracks 101

Effective strategies for investing in Oregon's rail network

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Agenda

- **Why should we move people and goods by rail?**
- **Why are the trains late?**
- **How do we improve rail infrastructure?**
  - High Performance Rail projects and corridors
- **How do we pay for rail infrastructure?**
  - Federal funding
  - Local match
  - Low-interest federal loans

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Why should we move people and goods by rail?

Rail is the most efficient mode of transportation

- ➔ Rail Fact: **One gallon of gas** moves **1 ton of freight 480 miles** (vs 134 miles by truck)
- ➔ Across the country, **one-third of all freight is moved by rail**

More trains means fewer cars and trucks on the road

- ➔ Rail Fact: **One double stacked train** takes **280 trucks** off the road

Moving freight by rail instead of trucks reduces greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 75 percent

- Tier 4 diesel-electric locomotives reduce NOx emissions by **90%**, save **18,000 gallons** of fuel annually
- Electrifying rail yards will make freight rail even more **environmentally friendly**
- **Hydrogen locomotives** can move intercity passengers long distances with zero emissions

Why should we move people and goods by rail?

People want to take the train

- Amtrak Cascades **ridership continues to increase**, additional service leads to more riders (induced demand)
- Driving is not an option:
  - Across the country, **one-third of all people do not drive** (due to age, ability, and/or choice
  - Winter weather in the Mountain West restricts intercity travel for almost half the year
- Access to **healthcare** and **education** is limited in rural and Tribal areas
- Economic opportunities exist near rail stations (**housing, commercial, shipping**)

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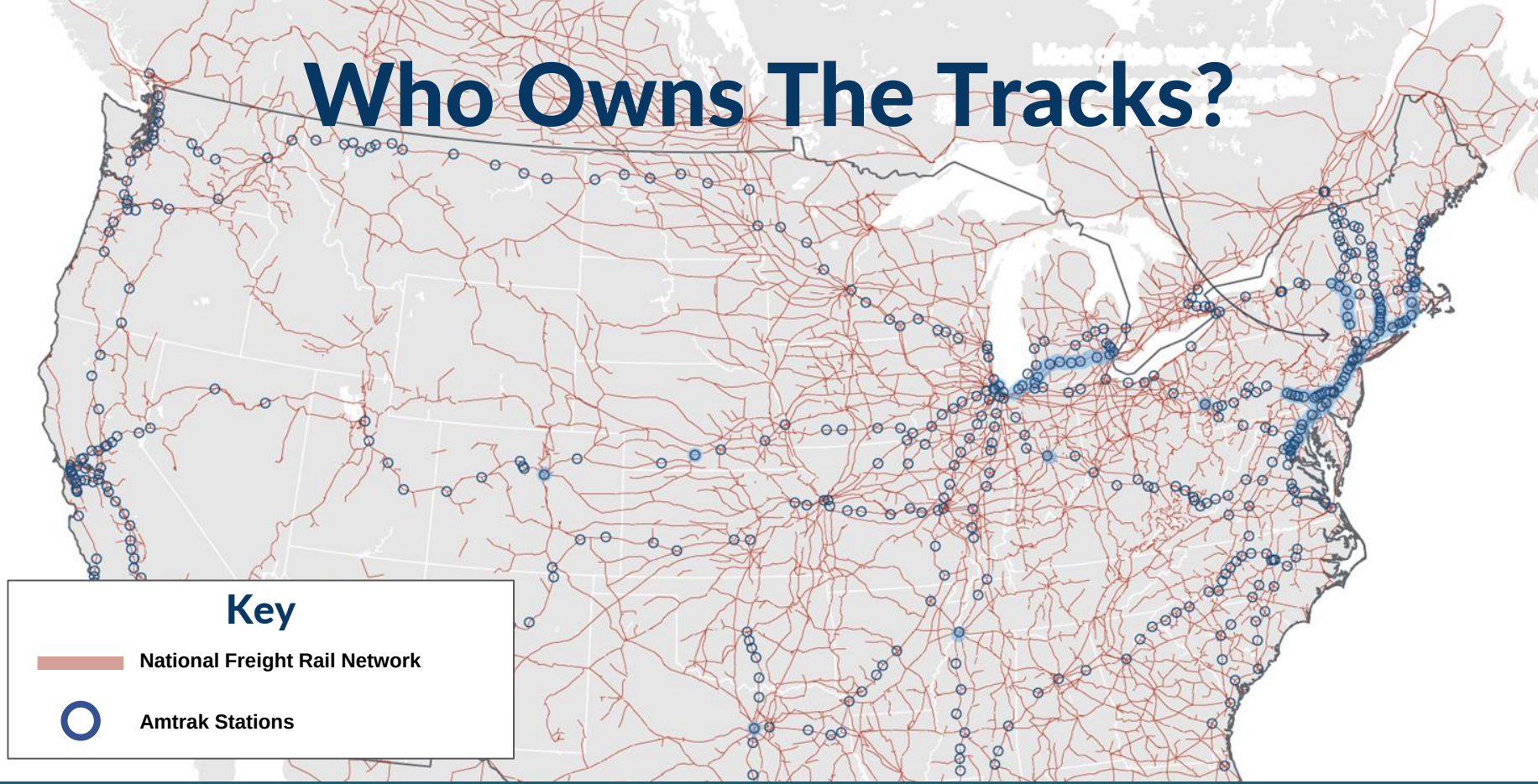
Who Owns The Tracks?



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RIA
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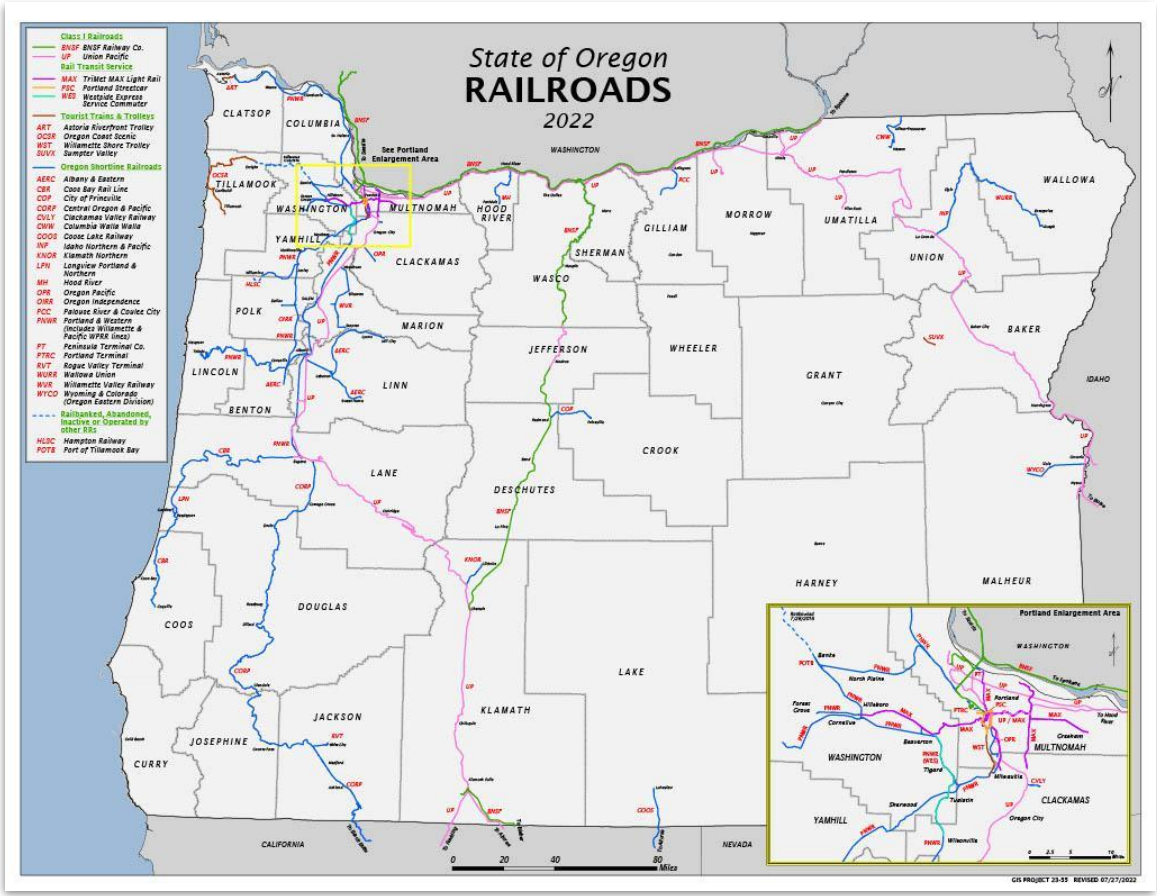
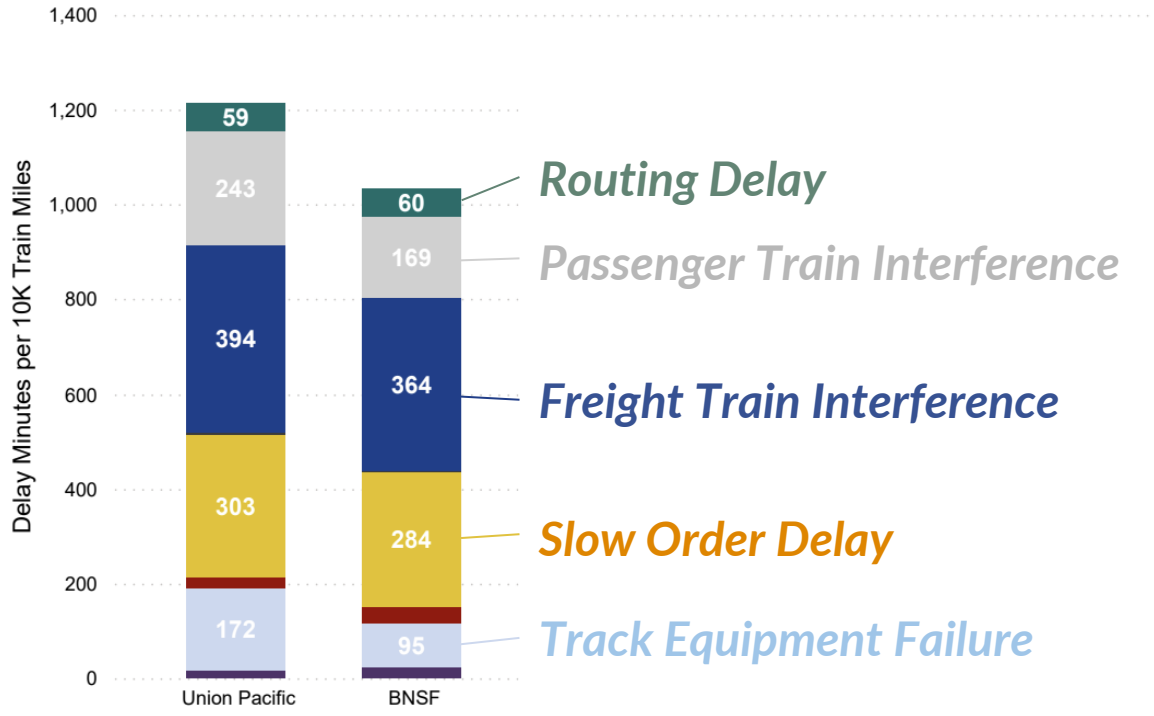
Private Sector Railroading Companies



Why Are the Trains Late?

Figure 5. FY 2024 Q4 Class I Host Responsible Train Delay Minutes per 10K Train Miles



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

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How do we ensure the trains run on time?

Co-Invest in Freight & Passenger Rail Infrastructure

A concept we call “High Performance Rail”

What is High Performance Rail?

Frictionless Supply Chains

Reduce bottlenecks, increase connectivity, expand employment opportunities

Enhanced Passenger Rail Service

Connections to rural/tribal areas, lower emissions from intercity driving

Community Benefits

Eliminate highway crossings, quiet zones through communities, transit oriented development

Components of High Performance Rail

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How do we move our trains faster?

Invest in highway-rail grade separations

- Remove train bottlenecks on the mainlines
- Improve traffic flow and rail-automobile conflicts
- Improve emergency access to residents and businesses
- Reduce noise levels near crossings

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How do we move our trains faster?

Invest in siding extensions, turnouts, switches, bridge locks, tracks

- Allow passenger trains to pass stopped freight trains
- Increase speed limit on mainlines
- Increase capacity on short lines
- Increase port access

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High Performance Rail Projects

Rebuilt **Harrisburg Bridge** on the Union Pacific mainline increased max speeds from 30 mph to 70 mph for passenger trains / 60 mph for freight

North Portland Junction and **Peninsula Junction** projects increase track speed from 10 mph to 25 mph and alleviate bottlenecks

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High Performance Rail Projects

Coos Bay Rail Line and **Pacific Coast Intermodal Port** upgrades will improve rail connections and capacity between Eugene Yard and Coos Bay direct-to-rail port

Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail grant application

- **Eugene Layover Siding**
- **Willbridge Crossovers**

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High Performance Rail Projects

State-Supported Routes (under 750 miles)

- Amtrak Cascades - *Annual Operating Subsidy: ~$18M*

Amtrak Long-Distance Routes (over 750 miles)

- Coast Starlight - *Annual Operating Subsidy: $0*
- Empire Builder - *Annual Operating Subsidy: $0*
- Big Sky North Coast (proposed) - *Annual Operating Subsidy: $0*
- Pioneer (proposed) - *Annual Operating Subsidy: $0*

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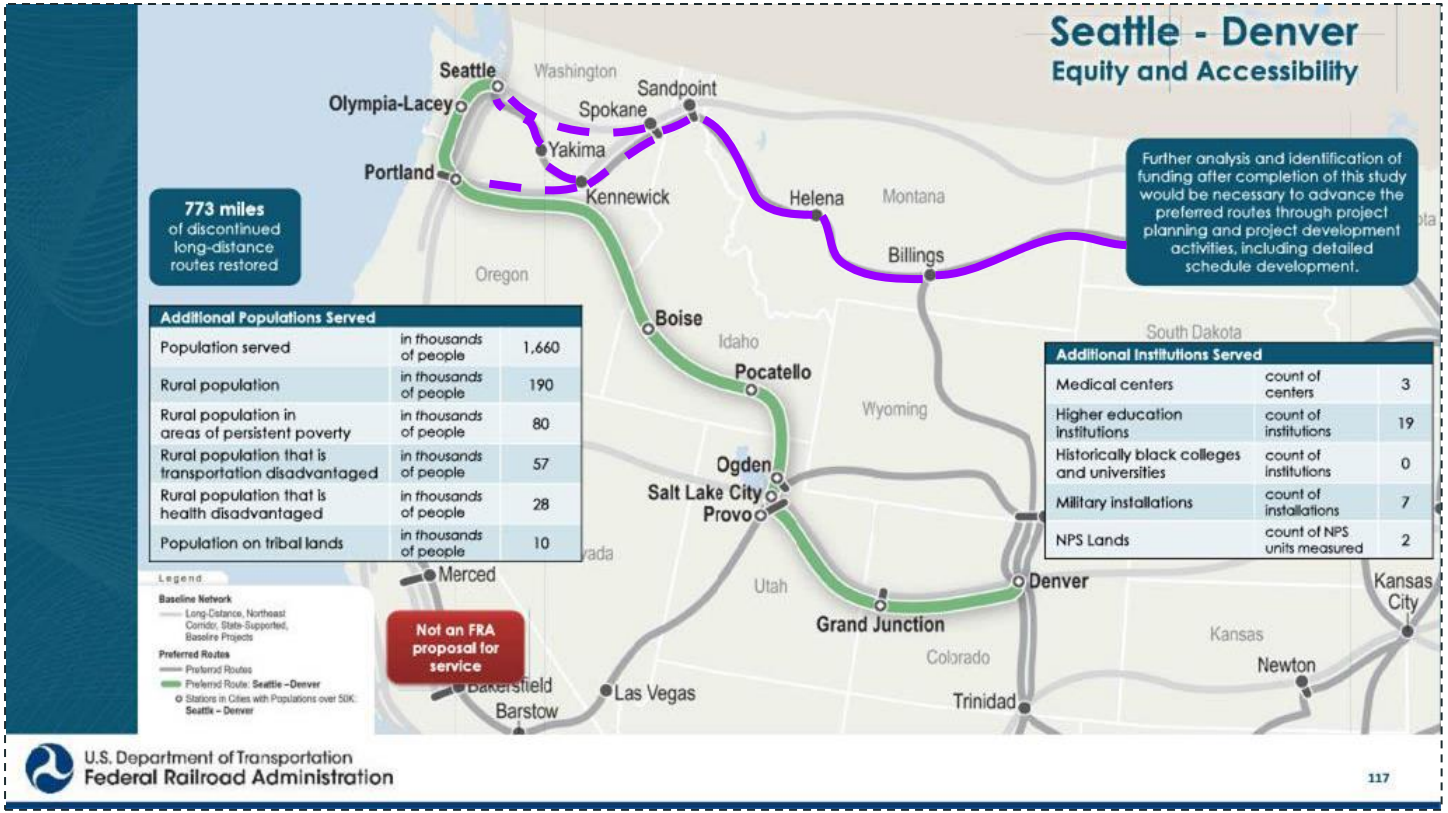
High Performance Rail Projects



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Short Line Experience in Oregon

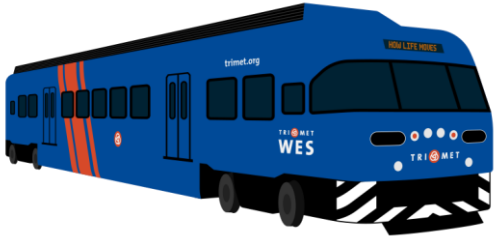
ORULE
OREGON RAIL USERS' LEAGUE

GENESEE & WYOMING

Ross Lane

Board President of Oregon Rail Users League

Assistant Vice President, Government Affairs at Genesee & Wyoming



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Leveraging Federal Funding for Local Projects

[ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS]

From FY22-FY26

$66B in total funding

Amtrak	Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements	Railroad Crossing Elimination	Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail	Restoration & Enhancement
[ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS]	[ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS]	[ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS]	[ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS]	[ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS]
$22B	$5B	$3B	$36B	$250M

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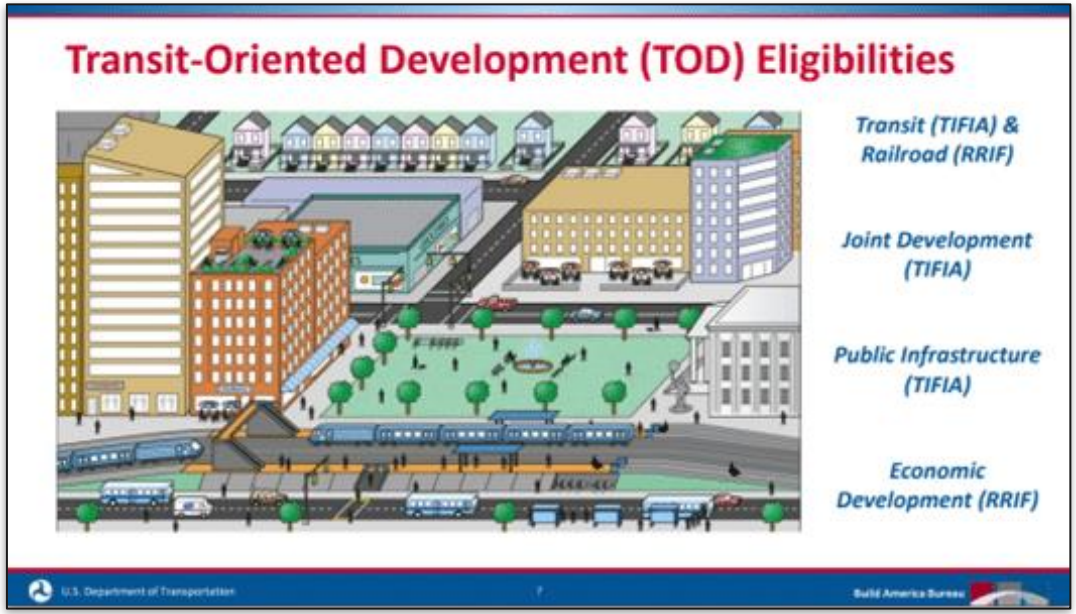
Leveraging Federal Funding for Local Projects



BUILD AMERICA BUREAU

Connect Oregon

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A Vision for the Future of Rail in Oregon

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A High Performance Rail Station

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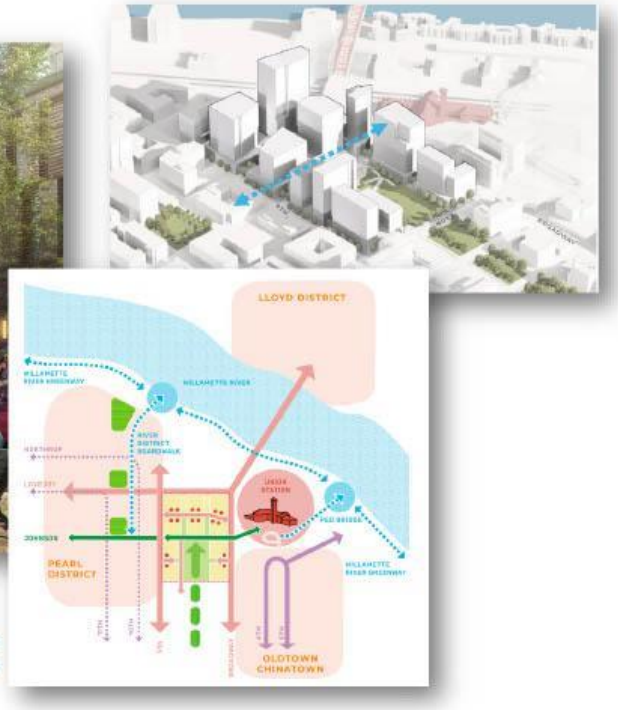
Rail Oriented Development

Broadway Corridor – USPS Site Master Plan

Future Johnson St. extension through the USPS site connecting the Pearl District and Union Station



USPS Master Plan
(Prosper Portland, 2020)

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Challenges

- Lack of capital funds and federal match
- Infrastructure is privately owned and shared with freight
- Lack of coordinated vision for a state (or regional) rail system

Opportunities

- Local and host railroad support
- Ridership growth and support for passenger rail
- Growing bipartisan support for rail
- Federal grants and low-interest loans available

Stay in Touch

PNWER Annual Summit

July 20-24 in Bellevue, WA

2025 Greater Northwest Rail Summit

October 16-18 in Portland

Tom Lang, High Performance Rail Program Manager

PNWER Regional Infrastructure Accelerator

tom.lang@pnwer.org

Enhancing Regional Supply Chain Networks

Agriculture & commodities moved via

- Interstate 5
- Interstate 84
- Columbia River (product moved by barge)
- UP Coos Bay rail link

Continuing the Conversation: Public and Private Investment in Regional Supply Chains

- **PNWER Annual Summit** | Bellevue, WA | July 20-24
- **2025 Greater Northwest Rail Summit** | Portland, OR | October 16-18

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Why are the trains late?

Figure 5. FY 2024 Q4 Class I Host Responsible Train Delay Minutes per 10K Train Miles

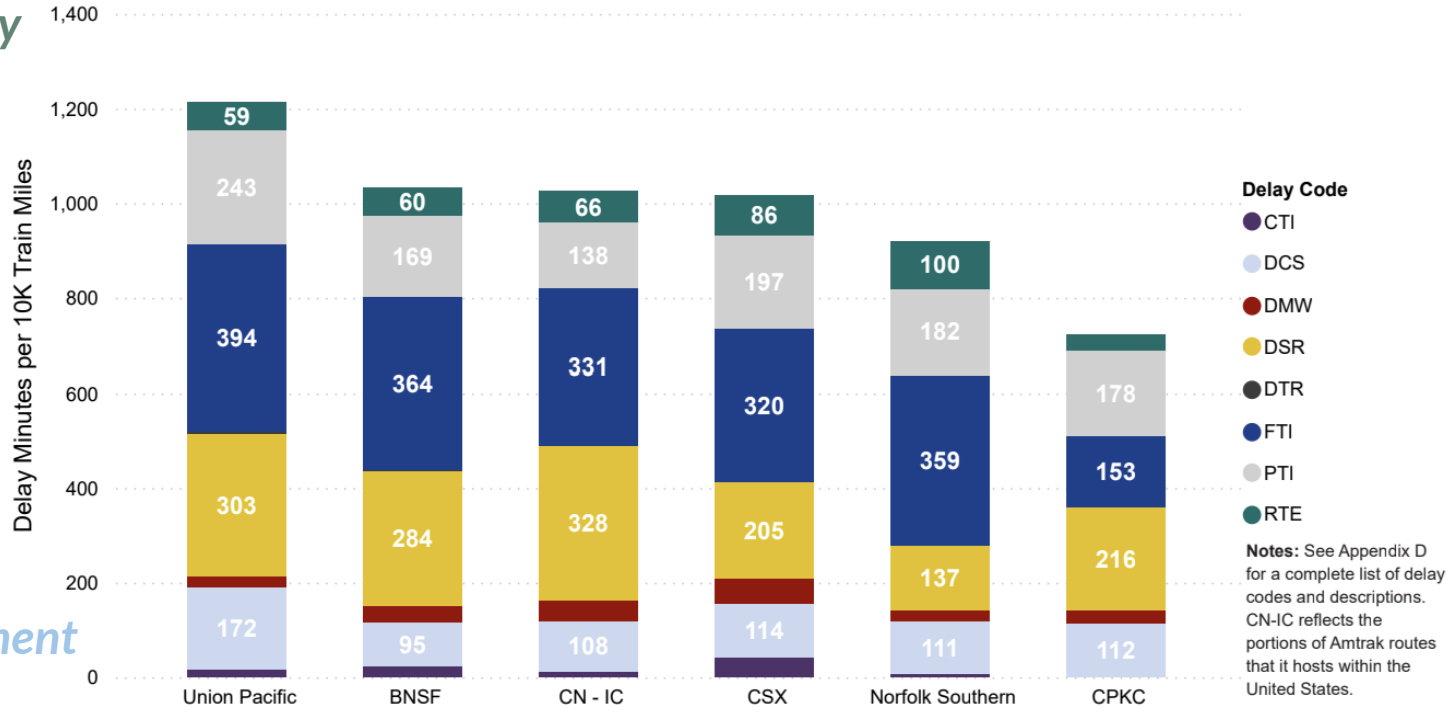
Routing Delay

Passenger Train Interference

Freight Train Interference

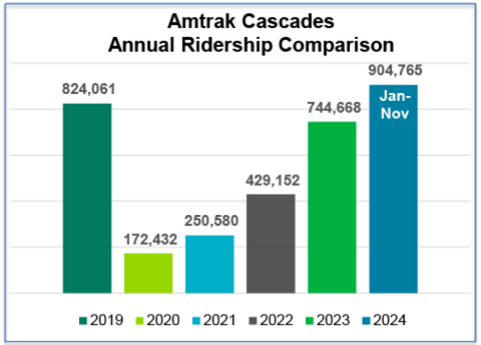
Slow Order Delay

Track Equipment Failure



High Performance Rail Corridors

Ridership and revenue increasing

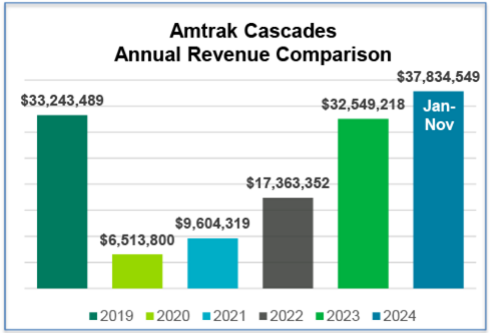


Ridership

- Preliminary numbers for 2024 show record high levels – exceeding 2019 ridership
- Anticipate one million riders in 2025

Revenue

- Record high ridership and adjustments to the fare structure led to higher revenue in 2024
- Ticket sales now pay for 60% of operating costs



WSDOT

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High Performance Rail Corridors

Route of

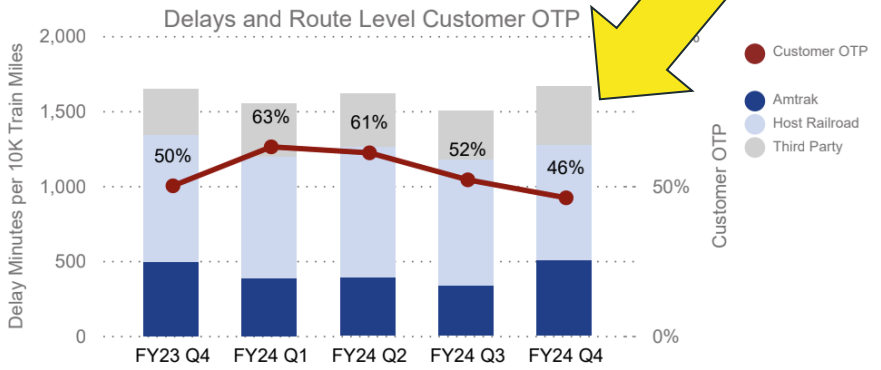
Empire Builder facts

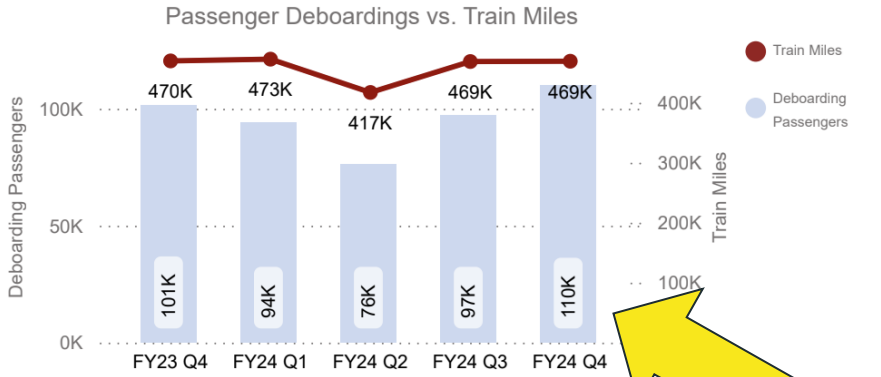
- AGE
  96 YEARS old
  The first Empire Builder originated out of Chicago on June 10, 1929.
- NAME
  James J. Hill,
  founder of the Great Northern Railway, inspired the name.

- TRIP LENGTH FROM SPOKANE
  to Chicago, 1,879 miles
  to Seattle, 326 miles
  to Portland, 376 miles
- TRIP TIME FROM SPOKANE
  to Chicago, 36 hours, 30 min.
  to Seattle, 8 hours, 10 min.
  to Portland, 7 hours, 25 min.

- TOTAL RID
  454,625
- TOTAL REV
  $51.8 mill

Source: Am





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