



PNWER Regional Infrastructure Accelerator

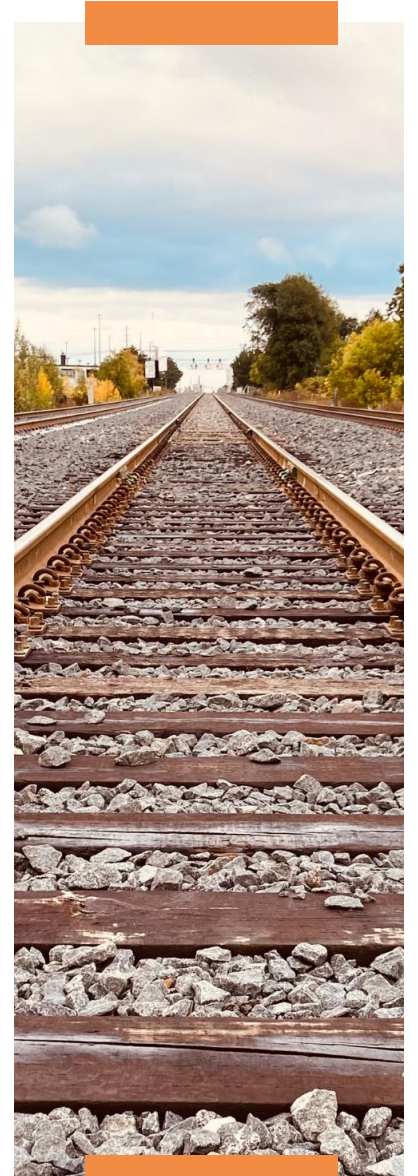
High Performance Rail

October 8, 2024

Greater Northwest Rail Summit

Spokane, WA

Bruce Agnew, PNWER RIA Director



**“Passenger rail
operates in the slip
stream of freight,”**

- US Congressman Al Swift, Bellingham, at inaugural Amtrak Cascades service to Vancouver, BC, 1995



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**.

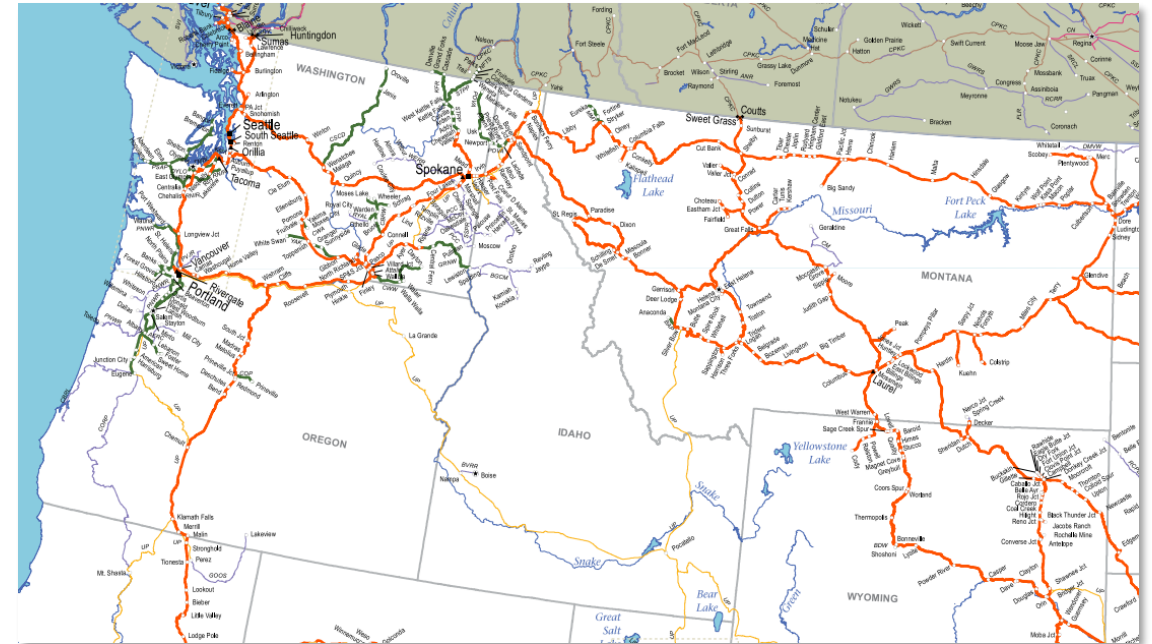
Program Areas

- High Performance Rail
- Build Northwest Center of Excellence
- Critical Connections
- Zero-Emission Commercial Refueling Corridors



About High Performance Rail

- BIL funding 2021-2026
- BIL reauthorization 2026→
- Northwest Congressional delegation in key positions
 - Senate Commerce, Finance and Appropriations committees
 - House Transportation and Infrastructure
 - Energy and Commerce



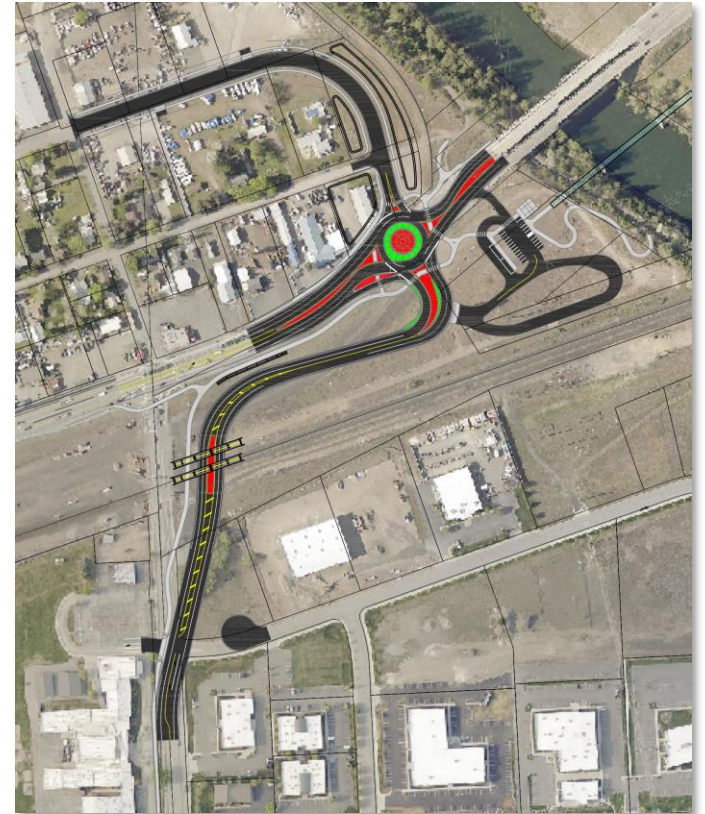
Pacific Northwest Rail Lines

Credit: BNSF



Examples of Federally-Funded Projects

- Spokane Valley and Hauser, ID highway rail grade separations
- Malta, MT BNSF / Amtrak / state highway project
- Montana State University rail training center
- Rebuild of Salmon Bay Bridge in Seattle
- WSDOT's Palouse River Coulee City short line
- Corridor ID funding for Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority
- Amtrak Cascades and Amtrak high speed rail



Pines Road Grade Separation Project | Spokane Valley, WA

Credit: City of Spokane Valley



BNSF & Union Pacific Upgrading Networks

- Joint investments for grade separation, short line and port connections
- Partnerships with intermodal and transload companies
- Leveraging their robust network capital investment programs
- Future federal funding includes pending grant of \$1 billion (due date Dec. 2024) for states, counties, cities and public entities for efforts to expand passenger rail outside the Northeast Corridor
- This follows \$8.2 billion in grants announced Dec. 2023



High Performance Rail Corridors

- **Amtrak Cascades**
 - Vancouver, BC to Eugene, OR
- **Amtrak Empire Builder**
 - Chicago – Seattle via northern Montana
- **Big Sky North Coast Corridor**
 - Chicago – Seattle via southern Montana
- **Pioneer Line**
 - Seattle, Portland, Boise and Salt Lake City
- **Amtrak Coast Starlight**
 - Seattle to OR/CA border



Proposed Network of Preferred Routes | Federal Railroad Administration

Credit: Federal Railroad Administration



High Performance Rail Means...



Reducing friction and delays while adding capacity to Northwest supply chains



Enhancing truck/rail transloading of agriculture (Green Farms to Green Ports)



Modernizing short line railroads and port access with tax credits



De-conflicting freight and passenger rail operations



Adding more rail labor, tourism and manufacturing jobs

High Performance Rail Means...



Separating highway and rail traffic at intersections for safety and community access



Expanding Cascades service & with twice daily service on Amtrak long distance routes



Connecting intercity rail with medical facilities, transit, intercity coach, airports and ferries



Restoring and expanding train stations with retail and housing opportunities



Improving railroad culverts for fish passage and rail/highway wildlife crossings





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[**www.RIAnorthwest.org**](http://www.RIAnorthwest.org)

