



Cascadia High-Speed Rail Project

June 2024 Status Update

Table of Contents

Cascadia High-Speed Rail Project

Table of Figures.....	2
Title VI Notice to Public.....	3
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information.....	3
Introduction	4
Program Status Update	4
Program Structure	4
Corridor ID Program ¹ (CID) Selection and Progress.....	5
Cascadia HSR Proviso Activities Summary and Status.....	6
Organizational Framework	7
Developed Engagement Approach.....	8
Funding Approach	8
Scenario Analysis	9
Coordinating Entity.....	9
Next Steps in Advancing Cascadia HSR.....	9
Appendix A: 2023 ESHB 1125 Section 223 (2)(a-c)	11
Appendix B: Policy and Technical Committee Members.....	12
Appendix C: Policy Committee Meetings - Key Agenda Items.....	14

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Corridor Identification and Development Program Steps 1,2,3.....	5
--	---

Title VI Notice to Public

It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OECR's Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7090.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Office of Equity and Civil Rights at <mailto:wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov> or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA(4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

Introduction

In March 2022, the Washington Legislature directed and provided funding for the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to continue exploring a new ultra high-speed ground transportation corridor, consistent with the November 2021 Memorandum of Understanding signed by the governors of Washington and Oregon and the Premier of British Columbia. (2023 ESHB 1125, Section 223 (2)(a-c), see Appendix A). Working in partnership with Oregon and British Columbia, including the British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (BC MoTI), Oregon Department and Transportation (ODOT), and Oregon Metro, WSDOT has made significant progress in advancing the Cascadia High-Speed Rail Project (Cascadia HSR¹).

WSDOT was directed to form a Policy Committee made up of partners along the corridor and to advance work in the areas of funding, governance, engagement, and scenario analysis. On June 30, 2023, WSDOT submitted a report to the Legislature summarizing the Project's activities to date.

As required in the 2023 Transportation Budget, ESHB 1125, Section 223 (2)(b), this report provides a status update to the governor and transportation committees of the legislature on the high-level status of items (i) through (v) outlined in the subsection: developing an organizational framework, developing a public engagement approach, developing and leading a collaborative approach to prepare and apply for potential future federal, state, and provincial funding opportunities, beginning work on scenario analysis, and developing a recommendation on the structure and membership of a formal coordinating entity.

Program Status Update

Program Structure

Consistent with legislative direction to coordinate planning work across modes (2024 ESHB 2134 Section 219 (9)), WSDOT integrated the I-5 Master Plan and Cascadia HSR into one program as the Cascadia HSR and I-5 Program, and continues to coordinate planning with air mobility, Amtrak Cascades and other modes. The integrated approach to multimodal system planning will foster long-term success, the strategic use of resources and a comprehensive understanding of area communities, their needs, and opportunities in the region.

¹ The Project was previously known as "Cascadia Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation" or "Cascadia UHSGT. To align with recognized and defined rail system terms used by the Federal Railroad Administration funding programs, the Project has been renamed to "Cascadia High-Speed Rail" or "Cascadia HSR".

Corridor ID Program^[2] (CID) Selection and Progress

In December 2023, Cascadia HSR was accepted into the Corridor Identification and Development Program by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Figure 1 below from FRA outlines the three steps of the CID program, including the scope that is eligible for federal funding and non-federal match required for each step of the program.

What Happens Next – Steps 1, 2, and 3

Figure 1: Corridor Identification and Development Program Steps 1,2,3

Grant	Step 1: Scoping	Step 2: Service Development Plan	Step 3: Preliminary Engineering / NEPA
Funding	\$500k / 0% match	\$X / 10% match <i>(\$X determined during Step 1)</i>	\$X / 20% match <i>(\$X determined during Step 2)</i>
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using SDP SOW framework, sponsor develops scope, schedule, and budget for Corridor SDP, accounting for work ongoing and/or undertaken to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsor develops a service development plan in accordance with Corridor SOW and in coordination with FRA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In coordination with FRA, sponsor completes preliminary engineering for capital projects Sponsor completes environmental review in coordination with FRA for capital projects
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After kick-off meeting, FRA will review work undertaken to date Step 1 grant deliverable is SDP SOW to include corridor-specific scope, schedule, and budget for service development planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final service development plan includes a Capital Project Inventory as part of the Phased Implementation Plan If readiness criteria are met, capital projects identified in SDP may be advanced into Step 3 Project Development, at FRA’s discretion and subject to funding availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital projects that complete Step 3 will move to Project Pipeline and may be prioritized for funding under Fed-State Partnership Program

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation – Federal Railroad Administration

The Program was awarded up to \$500,000 on December 8, 2023 for completion of Step 1 deliverables, including the Statement of Work (SOW), Schedule, and Budget for the Service Development Plan (SDP), which will be delivered in Step 2. The Program is continuing to work with the FRA to develop Step 1 deliverables and will submit draft deliverables for FRA review in Summer 2024.

² <https://railroads.dot.gov/corridor-ID-program>

Cascadia HSR Proviso Activities Summary and Status

WSDOT and the Cascadia HSR Policy Committee conducted work in the five proviso objective areas outlined in 2023 ESHB 1125 Section 223 (2)(a)(i-v). The work conducted in the areas of engagement, funding, scenario analysis and governance build on previous work and position Cascadia HSR to complete the next phase of planning. The table below summarizes the work of the Policy Committee and key achievements since March 2022.

Proviso Objective	Key Program Achievement
(i) Developing an organizational framework that facilitates input in decision-making from all parties;	<p>Committee work strengthened collaborative relationships among the partners in the corridor and enabled effective decision-making to co-develop grant applications and to advance the program.</p> <p>The program is now prepared to transition to an initial Coordinating Entity structure.</p>
(ii) Developing a public engagement approach with a focus on equity, inclusion, and meaningful engagement with communities, businesses, federal, state, provincial, and local governments including indigenous communities;	<p>A draft Strategic Engagement Framework was developed to guide engagement activities through project planning, endorsed by the Policy Committee.</p>
(iii) Developing and leading a collaborative approach to prepare and apply for potential future federal, state, and provincial funding opportunities, including development of strategies for incorporating private sector participation and private sector contributions to funding, including through the possible use of public-private partnerships;	<p>Submission of two federal funding applications, reviewed and endorsed by the Policy Committee.</p> <p>Acceptance into FRA CID Program which will enable partners to undertake necessary planning and engagement to inform a decision on proceeding the Project into the development phase. Private sector participation is anticipated to be assessed more in-depth during planning phase.</p>
(iv) Beginning work on scenario analysis addressing advanced transportation technologies, land use and growth assumptions, and an agreed to and defined corridor vision statement; and	<p>Development of a methodology for scenario analysis and conducted initial key factor analysis.</p> <p>Development of a framework that includes key principles for scenario analysis and a phased approach to undertaking scenario analysis for Cascadia HSR.</p>

Proviso Objective	Key Program Achievement
<p>(v) Developing a recommendation on the structure and membership of a formal coordinating entity that will be responsible for advancing the project through the project initiation stage to project development and recommended next steps for establishment of the coordinating entity. Project development processes must include consideration of negative and positive impacts on communities of color, low-income households, indigenous peoples, and other disadvantaged communities.</p>	<p>Development of a Coordinating Entity structure for the planning phase of work with defined Committees and membership, endorsed by the Policy Committee with the expectation that it will need subsequent alignment to CID Program needs.</p>

Organizational Framework

i. Developing an organizational framework that facilitates input in decision-making from all parties;

Work Conducted to Date:

- Established the Technical Committee and Policy Committee for Cascadia HSR to develop and implement legislative requirements, including advancing HSR work with a focus on equity, emissions reduction, inclusion and community engagement (see Appendix B for membership).
- Policy Committee provided strategic guidance to the WSDOT project team and oversaw and guided Technical Committee activities.
- Technical Committee provided expertise and agency perspective to the project team, and provided staff support to the Policy Committee.
- Policy Committee met approximately quarterly for 2-hour virtual or in-person meetings (see Appendix C for meeting dates and locations, and key agenda items).
- Technical Committee met bi-weekly for 1-hour virtual meetings.
- Prepared the Policy and Technical Committee members for the transition to the next phase of the Project.
- WSDOT stood up the Cascadia HSR and I-5 Program to foster integrated planning for future growth in the region.
- The program is now prepared to transition to the first phase of the Coordinating Entity Structure, including the Executive and Project Leadership Committees.

Developed Engagement Approach.

- ii. **Developing a public engagement approach with a focus on equity, inclusion, and meaningful engagement with communities, businesses, federal, state, provincial, and local governments including indigenous communities;**

Work Conducted to Date:

- Conducted interviews with partners in British Columbia and Oregon, as well as members of the business and advocacy communities.
- Developed key principles to guide Cascadia HSR engagement in collaboration with Project partners.
- Held working sessions with engagement practitioners from ODOT, Oregon Metro, WSDOT and BC MoTI to discuss best practices and agency requirements. Focused on equitable engagement approaches and Tribal engagement best practices.
- Drafted an initial Strategic Engagement Framework that provides a foundation for engagement and will guide critical engagement activities across the corridor for the planning phase.

Funding Approach

- iii. **Developing and leading a collaborative approach to prepare and apply for potential future federal, state, and provincial funding opportunities, including development of strategies for incorporating private sector participation and private sector contributions to funding, including through the possible use of public-private partnerships;**

Work Conducted to Date:

- Completed an assessment of the funding landscape for rail infrastructure at the state, provincial, and US and Canadian federal levels.
- Developed an initial funding strategy for early project planning that aligns with Cascadia HSR Project Northstar and megaregion priorities.
- In collaboration with BC and Oregon, developed and submitted U.S. federal funding applications for the FRA Federal-State Partnership (FSP) and CID Programs.
- As part of the requirements for the FSP grant, developed a scope of work (SOW) for the next phase of the Cascadia HSR, Project Planning (as defined by FRA), which includes an assessment of opportunities for private sector financial participation and appropriate delivery model(s) through a robust market sounding, business case analyses, and subsequent procurement processes.
- Upon acceptance into CID program in December 2023, prepared Step 1 materials including the Statement of Work (SOW), Schedule, and Budget for the Service Development Plan (SDP).

Scenario Analysis

- iv. **Beginning work on scenario analysis addressing advanced transportation technologies, land use and growth assumptions, and an agreed to and defined corridor vision statement;**

Work Conducted to Date:

- Developed an initial assessment of key trends impacting the potential role for Cascadia HSR within the megaregion.
- Began initial coordination on multimodal scenario analysis within the Cascadia Program to identify shared activities that will inform planning decisions for the megaregion.
- Conducted interviews with subject matter experts on specific factors and potential impacts on the Project and the transportation system.
- Researched scenario analysis best practices, defined key components and principles of scenario analyses, and developed a workplan to guide future scenario analysis work for the Project.

Coordinating Entity

- v. **Developing a recommendation on the structure and membership of a formal coordinating entity that will be responsible for advancing the project through the project initiation stage to project development and recommended next steps for establishment of the coordinating entity. Project development processes must include consideration of negative and positive impacts on communities of color, low-income households, indigenous peoples, and other disadvantaged communities.**

Work Conducted to Date:

- Conducted literature review of comparable infrastructure projects' governance structures, supplemented by interviews with some of the program offices.
- Held several working sessions with jurisdictional partners to develop and co-create the components of the Project governance structure.
- Received Policy Committee concurrence on an initial governance structure.
- Developed an approach for implementing the governance structure in preparation of potential federal funding for the Project. Implementation of the governance structure will be aligned with the CID program requirements and will be coordinated with other multimodal efforts.

Next Steps in Advancing Cascadia HSR

In concluding the activities under 2023 ESHB 1125 Section 223 (2)(a)(i-v) described above, the Project is now prepared to begin the next phase of planning with additional US federal funding in

Step 2 of the CID Program. This work is made possible by the continued commitment from the Washington State Legislature, including the \$25 million in state match funding for the next phase of high-speed rail work. WSDOT will advance the Cascadia HSR and I-5 Program to take an integrated, multimodal approach to transportation system planning, enabling effective decision-making on how to accommodate future regional growth. The Cascadia HSR and I-5 Program is recognized by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials as one of 13 moonshot projects that are advancing the next era of transportation in the United States.

WSDOT looks forward to continuing its work to advance high-speed rail planning in coordination with its partners in Oregon and British Columbia through the initial Coordinating Entity structure, beginning with Executive and Project Leadership Committees. WSDOT will continue to provide updates to the legislature through existing reporting mechanisms.

Appendix A: 2023 ESHB 1125 Section 223 (2)(a-c)

2 (a) \$2,250,000 of the multimodal transportation account—state appropriation is provided solely for the continued coordination, engagement, and planning for a new ultra high-speed ground transportation corridor with participation from Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia, and is a reappropriation of funds appropriated in the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium.

For purposes of this section, "Ultra high-speed" means a maximum testing speed of at least 250 miles per hour. These efforts are to support and advance activities and must abide by the memorandum of understanding signed by the governors of Washington and Oregon, and the premier of the province of British Columbia in November 2021. The department shall establish a policy committee with participation from Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia, including representation from the two largest caucuses of each chamber of the Washington state legislature, and coordinate the activities of the policy committee to include:

- i. Developing an organizational framework that facilitates input in decision-making from all parties;
- ii. Developing a public engagement approach with a focus on equity, inclusion, and meaningful engagement with communities, businesses, federal, state, provincial, and local governments including indigenous communities;
- iii. Developing and leading a collaborative approach to prepare and apply for potential future federal, state, and provincial funding opportunities, including development of strategies for incorporating private sector participation and private sector contributions to funding, including through the possible use of public-private partnerships;
- iv. Beginning work on scenario analysis addressing advanced transportation technologies, land use and growth assumptions, and an agreed to and defined corridor vision statement; and
- v. Developing a recommendation on the structure and membership of a formal coordinating entity that will be responsible for advancing the project through the project initiation stage to project development and recommended next steps for establishment of the coordinating entity. Project development processes must include consideration of negative and positive impacts on communities of color, low-income households, indigenous peoples, and other disadvantaged communities.

(b) By June 30, 2024, the department shall provide to the governor and the transportation committees of the legislature a high-level status update that includes, but is not limited to, the status of the items included in (a) (i) through (v) of this subsection.

(c) By June 30, 2025, the department shall provide to the governor and the transportation committees of the legislature a report detailing the work conducted by the policy committee and recommendations for establishing a coordinating entity. The report must also include an assessment of current activities and results relating to stakeholder engagement, planning, and any federal funding application. As applicable, the assessment should also be sent to the executive and legislative branches of government in Oregon and appropriate government bodies in the province of British Columbia.

Appendix B: Policy and Technical Committee Members

Policy Committee

Agency	Representative
BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure	Kaye Krishna, Deputy Minister
BC Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat	Silas Brownsey, Deputy Minister
TransLink	Kevin Quinn, CEO
Washington State Department of Transportation	Roger Millar, Secretary of Transportation
Washington State Department of Transportation	Ron Pate, Director
Washington State House of Representatives	Representative Jake Fey
Washington State House of Representatives	Representative Andrew Barkis
Washington State Senate	Senator Marko Liias
Washington State Senate	Senator Phil Fortunato
Puget Sound Regional Council	Josh Brown, Executive Director
Oregon Department of Transportation	Kris Strickler, Director
Oregon Department of Transportation	Suzanne Carlson, Public Transportation Division Administrator
Oregon Metro	Lynn Peterson, President
Oregon Metro	Ashton Simpson, Councilor
Cascadia Innovation Corridor	Amy Grotefendt
Cascadia Innovation Corridor	David Hoff

Technical Committee

Agency	Representative
BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure	Madeline Dams
BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure	Peter Argast
BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure	Sean Nacey
Cascadia Innovation Corridor	Amy Grotefendt
Oregon Department of Transportation	Jennifer Sellers
Oregon Metro	Ally Holmqvist
Puget Sound Regional Council	Ben Bakkenta
Puget Sound Regional Council	Craig Helmann
Washington State Department of Transportation	Jason Beloso
Washington State Department of Transportation	Ron Pate
Washington State Department of Transportation	Adam Leuin

Appendix C: Policy Committee Meetings - Key Agenda Items

January 25, 2022

Location: Virtual

- Purpose and Expectations for Policy Committee Members
- Current State of Cascadia HSR Efforts
- Next Steps for Project Initiation

April 20, 2022

Location: Virtual

- New Funding for Cascadia HSR
- Initial Draft Project Scope
- Forming Technical Committee

July 6, 2022

Location: Virtual

- Cascadia HSR Program Update
- Project Plan Overview
- Draft Cascadia HSR Charter

September 12, 2022

Location: Olympia, WA

- Cascadia HSR Program Overview and Update
- Consultant Project Plan Overview
- Draft Cascadia HSR Charter

December 8, 2022

Location: Portland, OR

- Development of Cascadia HSR “North Star” Guiding Principles
- Engagement Overview Through Project Lifecycle
- FRA Corridor ID Application Update

March 13, 2023

Location: Olympia, WA

- Review of FRA FSP and CID Applications
- Legislative Report Overview and Timeline
- Legislative Report Topics: Engagement, Governance, Scenario Planning

May 23, 2023

Location: Vancouver, BC

- Legislative Report Overview and Timeline
- Legislative Report: Engagement
 - Alignment on key principles for engagement
- Legislative Report: Governance
 - Alignment on Coordinating Structure
- Legislative Report: Scenario Planning
 - Alignment on Road Map

September 18, 2023

Location: Portland, OR

- WSDOT Cascadia HSR and I-5 Integrated Program Introduction
- Draft Strategic Engagement Framework Overview
- Coordinating Structure
- Agreements for Transition
- Preparing for CID and FSP Award Announcements

May 21, 2024

Location: Virtual

- Program Update
- Corridor ID Program Status and Next Steps
- Multimodal context