Western Washington Transportation System Planning Coordination

Joint Transportation Committee

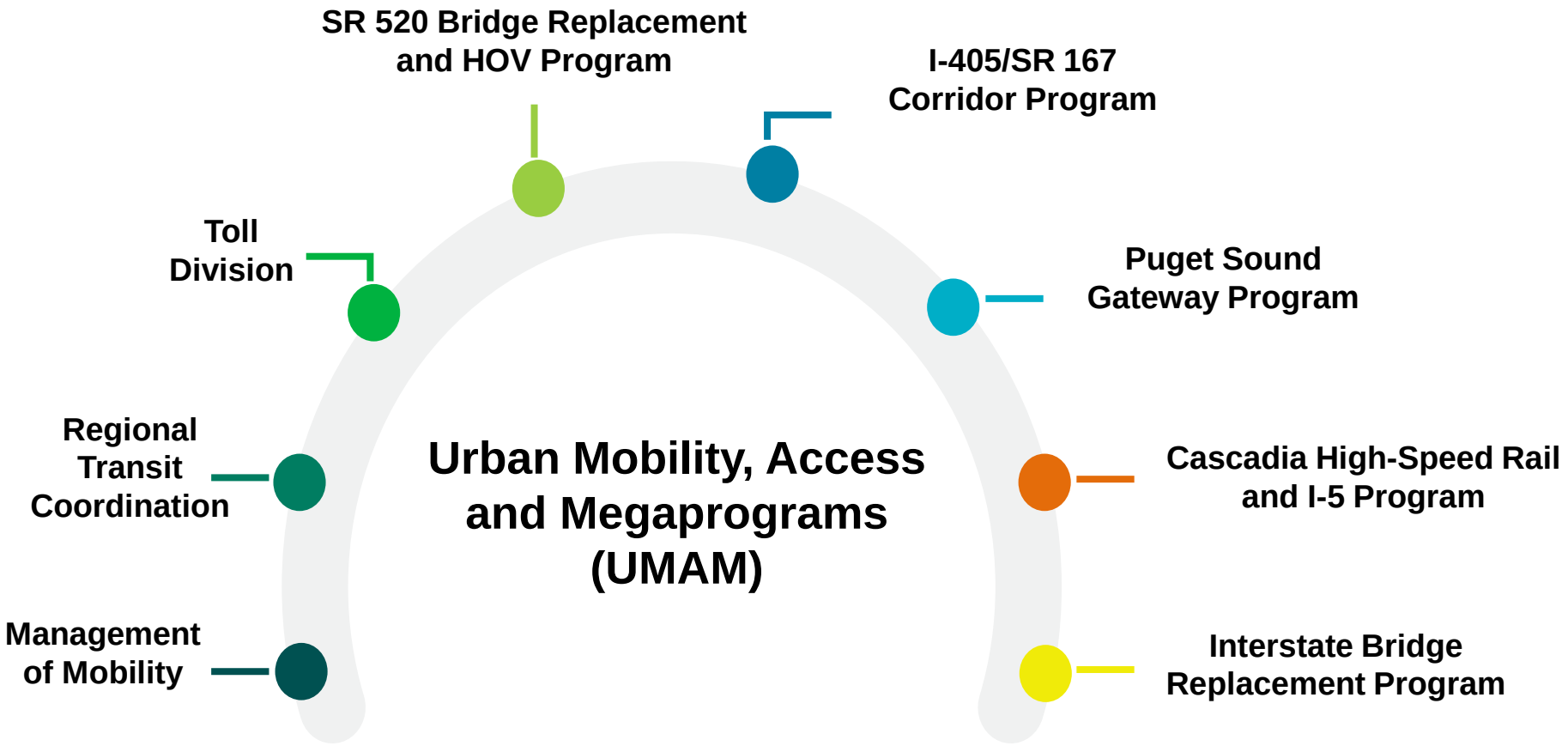
JOHN WHITE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
URBAN MOBILITY, ACCESS AND MEGAPROGRAMS

ROB BERMAN, ACTING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
CASCADIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AND I-5 PROGRAM

December 3, 2025

Julie Meredith, Secretary of Transportation
Mike Gribner, Deputy Secretary of Transportation
Steve Nevey, Deputy Secretary of Transportation – WA State Ferries

Urban Mobility, Access and Megaprograms organization



Future growth and transportation needs

Population and Job Growth

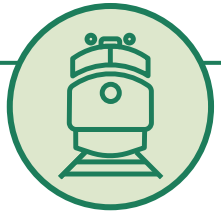
- Over 2 million more people expected in Washington state between 2020 and 2050
  - 26% increase based on latest statewide forecast
- The Cascadia Megaregion, stretching from metropolitan Portland, OR to metropolitan Vancouver, B.C., is also projected to grow by 25% and attract **1.8 million jobs** by 2050

Transportation Needs

- Preserve existing infrastructure
- Modernize the I-5 system
- Plan for future population growth by considering other modes, including high-speed rail
- More extreme weather and seismic risk requires holistic and integrated planning for a **resilient** system

Existing transportation system constraints

Highway congestion means that travel times are unreliable, which affects vehicles, intercity buses, and freight.



Intercity passenger rail shares tracks with freight, which makes it susceptible to **on time performance** and **reliability challenges**.

Air travel trips experience delays and existing airport growth is limited.

Planning for current needs and future growth

Additional coordination for air mobility with **Aviation Division**, which assists the **Commercial Aviation Work Group**

I-5 Master Plan

Funded: $11.7M (2025-2027 biennium)

Purpose: The I-5 Master Plan will establish a shared vision for the I-5 corridor, identify actionable priorities to address critical needs and future opportunities, and outline next steps for implementation.

Vision (draft): I-5 is a safe, reliable, and resilient system that provides accessibility and multimodal travel options for all and supports regional and statewide economic vitality.

I-5 System Needs Heard in Listening Sessions

- Safety challenges
- Environmental impacts
- Mobility challenges and congestion
- Vulnerability to natural events
- Aging infrastructure
- Lack of connectivity and access for underserved communities
- Preparing for future population growth

+ Future-focused opportunities and multimodal integration

Cascadia High-Speed Rail Service Development Plan

Funded:

- Federal Corridor ID Program Step 2 ($49.7M)
- State match funds ($5.5M)

Purpose: Explore how and whether reliable high-speed rail service could address mobility needs between the Cascadia Megaregion metropolitan areas and identify potential route options.

Vision (draft, preliminary): Increase transportation system capacity, improve travel time and transportation network reliability, access and interconnectivity; expand transportation choice; and facilitate economic development.

Project Partners:

WSDOT
Cascadia Innovation Corridor
British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Transit
Oregon Department of Transportation
Puget Sound Regional Council
Metro

Amtrak Cascades Service Development Plan

Funding:

- Federal Corridor ID Program Step 2 – pending
- State matching funds (up to $3.6M)

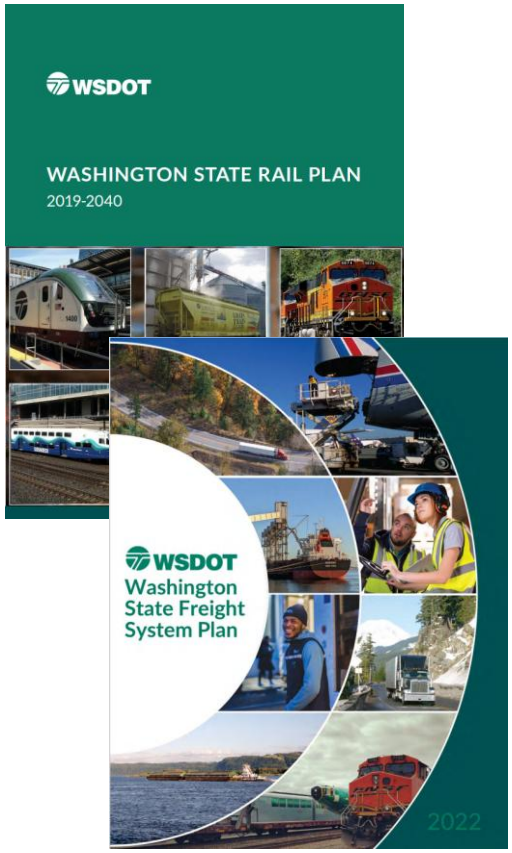
Purpose: Developing a blueprint for future operational and capital improvements for Amtrak Cascades over the next two decades.

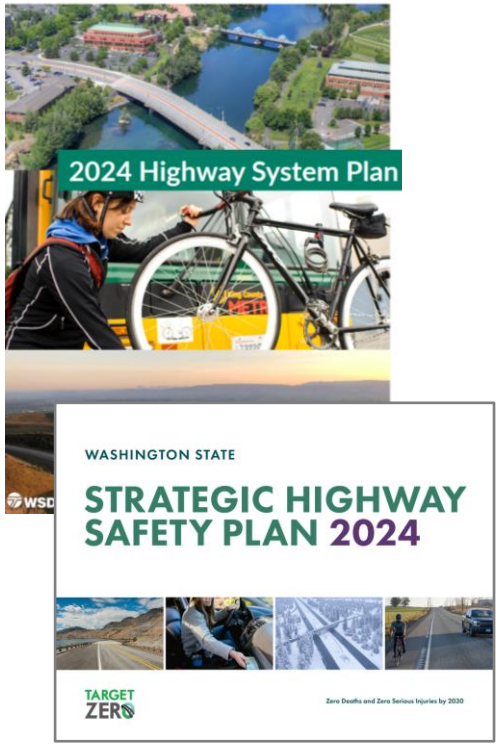
Vision (preliminary): Improve intercity passenger rail service for travelers for the existing route in Washington state to meet growing demand and support statewide transportation policy goals.

Service partners:

WSDOT, Amtrak, Oregon Department of Transportation, BNSF Railway, Sound Transit

Coordination and alignment with WSDOT multimodal plans





Legislative engagement moving forward

- Will continue to provide briefings as requested, which will include updates across modes and projects.

- Several WSDOT and other reporting requirements will provide additional updates in 2025 and 2026.

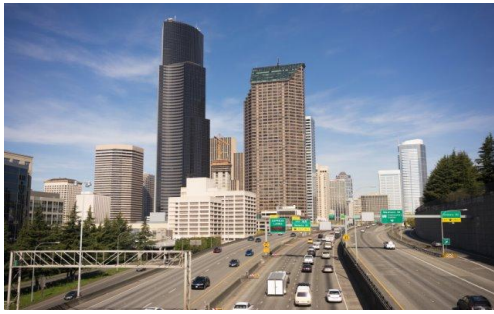
WSDOT Reporting	Due
Cascadia HSR Corridor ID Program Annual Report *ESSB 5161 Sec. 310 (4)(b)*	Dec. 1, 2025, and Dec. 1, 2026
Amtrak Cascades Annual Update *ESHB 1837*	Annually – Dec. 2025, Dec. 2026
I-5 Master Plan Interim Report *ESSB 5161 Sec. 219 (2)(c)*	June 30, 2026
Additional Reporting	**Due**
Commercial Aviation Work Group Progress Report *ESSB 5161 Sec. 722*	Dec. 1, 2025, and Dec. 1, 2026

Next steps

- Continue with existing planning for improvements to Amtrak Cascades and I-5, including **preservation needs** on the I-5 corridor.

- **Coordinate engagement opportunities,** including engagement with MPOs and implications for future land use planning.

- **Align methodologies where possible**, including future ridership analysis for high-speed rail with consideration of potential future I-5 policy changes and Amtrak Cascades.



Thank you

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