Comments regarding Oregon's High-Speed Rail Plan

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True high-speed rail (125 mph +) in the Willamette Valley segment of the *Cascades Corridor* can only become a reality after ridership has grown to justify the huge capital cost.

ODOT should concentrate on how to increase frequency and reliability while incrementally reducing trip times on the existing alignment before expending time and money analyzing how to increase top speed to 110 MPH on new alignments.

ODOT's draft goal, to add only four more round trips in the next 20 years, is pathetically inadequate. The ridership estimates used in ODOT's 2009 *Draft Intercity Rail Study,* based on the use of computer models designed for highway planning, are largely irrelevant. The primary determination of future demand will be the availability of actual service. In other words, the demand for rail service in 20 years will be driven by what is done in the interim to improve service. This "feedback" mechanism is ignored in highway modeling, which looks primarily at projected changes in things like population, employment and economy.

AORTA's proposed *Service Improvements for the Cascades High-Speed Rail Corridor*, (attached) which suggests incrementally improving service over the next 5, 10 and 20 years, is a more realistic approach to building an effective rail corridor.

The *Capitol Corridor* Amtrak route, which runs roughly parallel to I-80 between Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area, is a good example of incremental development. When service was increased to seven round trips a day, ridership jumped almost threefold within eight years. The corridor is now served by 16 round trips a day and annual ridership is about 1,600,000.

In Europe, passenger demand for high-speed trains came only after frequent (hourly) reliable service on existing routes was provided by incrementally improving infrastructure.

The goal of reducing the trip time between Eugene and Portland to two hours can be accomplished with top speeds of 90 mph (average speed 62 mph) on tracks shared with freight trains. Track capacity can be added as more schedules are added so as not to degrade freight operations. Full bi-directional (2-3 tracks) operation will eventually be needed when train frequency, driven by ridership, requires it.

ODOT should focus on what is needed now to add two to four more schedules within the next five years by working with UP, Amtrak and the FRA, rather than spending precious time and money evaluating new alignments.

The sooner more trains are operating, the sooner more people will ride them and the sooner they will demand true high-speed rail service.

Incremental Service Improvements for
the *Cascades*® High-speed Rail Corridor

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Existing Service – 2009

Segment	Type Serv.	Distance	No. Trains	Trip Time	Av. Speed	Inter. Sta.
EUG-PDX	Corridor	123 Miles	4	2:35	48 MPH	3
" "	Long Dist.	" "	2	2:45	45 MPH	2
PDX-SEA	Corridor	187 Miles	8	3:30	53 MPH	6
" "	Long Dist.	" "	2	4:05	46 MPH	6
SEA-VAC	Corridor	157 Miles	2	4:20	36 MPH	4
SEA-BEL	Commuter	95 Miles	2	2:20	41 MPH	3

High-speed Rail Development – First Phase (5 years)

Segment	Type Serv.	Distance	No. Trains	Trip Time	Av. Speed	Inter. Sta.
EUG-PDX	Corridor	123 Miles	8	2:00	62 MPH	3
" "	Long Dist.	" "	4	2:00	62 MPH	3
PDX-SEA	Corridor	177 Miles	16	2:45	64 MPH	6
" "	Long Dist.	187 Miles	4	3:00	62 MPH	6
PDX-VAN	Commuter	10 Miles	16	0:12	50 MPH	0
SEA-VAC	Corridor	157 Miles	4	3:00	52 MPH	4
" "	Long Dist.	" "	4	3:15	48 MPH	4
SEA-BEL	Commuter	95 Miles	8	2:00	48 MPH	3

High-speed Rail Development – Second Phase (next 5 years)

Segment	Type Serv.	Distance	No. Trains	Trip Time	Av. Speed	Inter. Sta.
EUG-PDX	Corridor	123 Miles	16	1:45	70 MPH	4
" "	Long Dist.	" "	6	1:45	70 MPH	3
ORC-PDX	Commuter	15 Miles	32	0:15	60 MPH	1
PDX-SEA	Corridor	177 Miles	32	2:30	71 MPH	6
" "	Long Dist.	187 Miles	6	2:45	64 MPH	6
PDX-VAN	Commuter	10 Miles	32	0:12	50 MPH	0
SEA-VAC	Corridor	160 Miles	16	2:45	58 MPH	4
" "	Long Dist.	" "	6	3:00	53 MPH	4
SEA-BEL	Commuter	95 Miles	16	1:45	54 MPH	3

High-speed Rail Development – 2030

Segment	Type Serv.	Distance	No. Trains	Trip Time	Av. Speed	Inter. Sta.
EUG-PDX	Corridor	123 Miles	32	1:30	82 MPH	4
" "	Long Dist.	" "	8	1:30	82 MPH	3
ORC-PDX	Commuter	15 Miles	32	0:15	60 MPH	1
PDX-SEA	Corridor	175 Miles	48	2:00	88 MPH	6
" "	Long Dist.	185 Miles	8	2:30	74 MPH	6
PDX-VAN	Commuter	8 Miles	48	0:08	60 MPH	0
SEA-VAC	Corridor	160 Miles	32	2:30	64 MPH	4
" "	Long Dist.	" "	8	2:45	58 MPH	4
SEA-BEL	Commuter	95 Miles	32	1:30	63 MPH	3

Note: VAC = Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
VAN = Vancouver, Washington, USA