



High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Tier 1 EIS: Eugene to Portland

Fact Sheet #1

Project Background

ODOT will soon begin the process of studying options for high speed intercity passenger rail service between Eugene and Portland. The Project will include completing a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is the lead federal agency for the NEPA project.

Through the Tier 1 EIS process, ODOT and FRA will make a number of important decisions, including selection of the general rail alignment and station locations. The agencies will also determine several service characteristics, such as the number of daily trips, travel time objectives and the technologies to be used (for example, whether the trains will be powered by electric or diesel-electric engines). The project will include a public involvement strategy to ensure stakeholder participation in the decision-making process.

Current Work

To promote collaboration, ODOT is conducting interviews with representatives of local jurisdictions and other stakeholders. The purpose of these interviews is to understand stakeholders' perspectives on the project, to gain input into development of the decision-making structure, and to identify potential members for the project stakeholder committee.

Funding and Schedule

Funding for the EIS will be a combination of state and federal funds. ODOT received a grant from FRA as part of the 2010 appropriation. The unprecedented increase in federal funding for intercity passenger rail over the last two years (\$8 billion total from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 [ARRA], with a \$2.3 billion 2010 appropriation) has strained FRA's previously modest grants program. Based on FRA's current schedule, it appears ODOT will not receive the federal funds to start the Tier 1 EIS until mid to late 2011.

ODOT will continue preparations, such as getting the decision-making structure in place and developing consultant contracts, so we are ready to start the Tier 1 EIS as soon as funding is secured. There will likely be a period of time between completing the current stakeholder work and receiving the federal funds.

Once the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Passenger Rail project is underway, the first phase of work will include public scoping and developing the purpose and need statement, goals and objectives, and evaluation framework.

For more information, contact:

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