Ultra High Speed Ground Transportation Study
Business Case Analysis

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Timeline of studies

- **2017 Legislative session** - $300,000 approved for preliminary feasibility study (Microsoft and trades contributed an additional $60,000 for an economic analysis)
- **Dec. 2017** – Report submitted to legislature and presented to Joint Transportation Committee
- **Jan. 2018** – Economic analysis addendum shared with legislature
- **2018 Legislative session** - $750,000 approved for business case analysis (Microsoft, British Columbia and Oregon contribute a combined additional $650,000 towards the analysis)
- **June 2019** – Business case analysis will be completed and submitted to the legislature
- **2019 Legislative session** – Governor has requested $3.25 million to develop a new ultra-high-speed transportation authority, conduct outreach and undertake preliminary environmental review
Overview of ultra-high-speed ground transportation

- Would link Seattle, Portland, and Vancouver, BC, with possible additional stops in between
- Travel time between each city expected to be less than an hour
- Speeds up to 250 mph
- Analyzing rail, maglev and hyperloop options
- Connections to existing trains, transit, and rideshare options
- Requires separate new right-of-way
- Probably significant tunneling and/or elevated tracks and bridges
- Anticipates public and private investment
- Seen as improving mobility, environment, and quality of life
- Viewed as a catalyst for economic growth in the entire Cascadia mega-region
2017 preliminary feasibility study

Very high-level, preliminary analysis

- Advisory group of representatives from the public, private and nonprofit sectors in Washington, Oregon and British Columbia provided input
- Found 12 daily round trips may be optimal
- Looked at scenarios ranging from three to seven station stops
- Evaluated effect of connecting to a new east-west route to Spokane
- Annual ridership projected between 1.7 and 2.1 million soon after opening
- Capital construction costs ranging from $24 to $42 billion
- Potential to ultimately cover annual operating and maintenance costs with ticket sales, but how soon varies by technology

Economic analysis (supplement to the feasibility study)

- Preliminary analysis shows large economic development potential
- Forecasts generating 200,000 jobs (both construction and long-term)
- Forecasts GDP increasing by $321 to $388 billion over 20 years
- Projects decreasing greenhouse gas emissions by more than 28,000 metric tons/year
2019 business case analysis

Purpose and Goals

• Independently assess economic, environmental and financial strategic case for ultra-high-speed system
• Analyze how it might be a catalyst for regional economic growth and integration
• Develop ridership projections and economic impact forecasts
• Identify service, route and possible stations
• Identify funding options from a range of possible sources
• Explore potential governance models
Initial findings amongst current travelers

Stated preference survey of travelers in the corridor
• Surveyed both leisure and business travelers
• 2,400 respondents
• Found significant interest, with 74% saying they would “definitely try” ultra-high-speed system

Mode choices of current drivers and flyers if ultra-high-speed travel was available

Portland, OR ↔ Seattle, WA
- 23%

Portland, OR ↔ Vancouver, BC
- 25%

Seattle, WA ↔ Vancouver, BC
- 14%

Mode share capture potential between cities
Initial findings from Advisory Group members

Insights from Advisory Group – 40 stakeholders representing businesses; non-profits; local, state and provincial governments

- ease of travel
- improved linkages
- better connections
- new communities
- more opportunities
- smart investment
- environmentally-friendly
- quality of life
- affordable housing
- healthy
- prosperity
- competitive in the world economy
- tourism
- concerts and sports
- increased
- faster travel
- regional growth
- shared resources
Initial findings from business leaders offer similar opinions

**Insights from interviews with business leaders**

- Given today’s congestion and population growth, can’t imagine Cascadia Region in 30-50 years without it
- View this PNW corridor as similar to east coast’s New York to Washington, D.C. corridor
  - Conducting business
  - Connecting with family and friends
  - Attending cultural, entertainment and sporting events
- Improve ability to access, recruit and retain talent
- Availability of more affordable workforce housing
- Ease of doing business (a meeting between cities vs. a full-day or two-day trip)
- Increased opportunity for collaboration
- Able to compete in world economy in future years
- A better quality of life through:
  - Improved access to education, training and jobs
  - Less time spent commuting
  - Less greenhouse gas emissions, better health
- Reduced cost of doing business
- A transportation system that might be crucial for natural disaster recovery
- Creating additional capacity on I-5 corridor for freight and broadband

*26 interviews with large and small businesses from various sectors, trade organizations, and government entities throughout the region*

*They’re confident our region can make it happen*

*Business leaders believe we need to develop a broad vision that is compelling, exciting, coalescing, and easy to comprehend*
Work in progress through June 2019

Analyzing various station stop scenarios

- Looking at scenarios with up to nine stations and modal connections
- Comparing stations in downtown cores vs suburban sites vs airport locations
- Finding the sweet spot between benefits and costs of adding more stations and/or increasing speed of travel
- Developing possible schedules with a mix of express service and multi-stops (perhaps not every train needs to stop at every station)

Construction considerations

- Comparing cost of right-of-way acquisition and land use issues through high-population centers vs more suburban alignments
- Analyzing ability to construct a fairly straight alignment that's necessary for some of the technologies being considered
- Looking at topography of corridor that will require tunneling, elevated tracks, bridges, and grade separation from roadways

Economic analysis

- Ensuring equity is at the forefront of decisions
- Analyzing this region’s future growth potential in global market
- Looking at enhanced connections across industry clusters
- Examining more infill development possibilities and opportunities for innovative start-ups
- Thinking about possible transformations in small towns and weighing job opportunities with quality of life issues

Funding and finance

- Important to create a governance authority able to seek public and private funding
- Identifying a range of funding options and tools
- Ensuring revenue-sharing related to economic development around stations
Governor’s 2019 proposal to continue project work

Seeking funds to develop a corridor authority

- Participation from Washington, Oregon, British Columbia
- Abides by MOU signed by Governor Inslee and British Columbia Premier Horgan in October 2018
- Builds on results of the current business case analysis being conducted
- Will address governance and operating structures, legal instruments, and contracting requirements
- Requires robust community engagement process to help refine the alignment of the corridor
- Requires preliminary environmental review of the project
- Requires recommendations to advance the development of the corridor
- Premier Horgan pledged an additional $300,000 CAD to continue work on the project in February 2019

Report due to Governor and Legislature by June 30, 2020, to include:

- Assessment of current laws in Washington, Oregon and British Columbia related to this project
- Summary of community engagement process

Requesting total of $3.25 million to undertake this work

- Department of Transportation – Program Y
- $3,000,000 from the multimodal transportation account – state appropriation
- $250,000 from the multimodal transportation account – private/local appropriation
Questions?

For more information, please contact:

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