



Puget Sound Regional Council

Appendix C

Public Comments

October 26, 2020

The public comment period for the Draft 2021-2024 Regional TIP was conducted from September 10 through October 22, 2020. All comments received are included in this Appendix.

October 2020

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Information Center
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500
Seattle, Washington 98104-1035
206-464-7532 • info@psrc.org • psrc.org

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT 2021-2024 REGIONAL TIP

Reflecting all comments received through October 22, 2020

Note: PSRC responds to every comment, and where appropriate forwards the comment to any affected jurisdictions.

Comment 1:

9/16/20

AAWA Public Comment on PSRC Draft TIP

All Aboard Washington is a nonprofit advocacy group that has steady success in promoting improved intercity passenger rail service in our state, and beyond. While not project-specific, we offer these comments so that regional transportation planners and elected officials are informed about passenger rail service current status and future goals and objectives.

Washington State Passenger Rail Progress: Starting in 1994, by 2018 the State-funded AMTRAK Cascades service was providing five trains per day, each way, between Seattle and Portland, with two per day extending to/from Vancouver, B.C. and Eugene, OR. The Cascades that year boarded and deboarded more than 600,000 passengers at Seattle's King Street Station; the one/day each way long distance N-S Coast Starlight and E-W Empire Builder brought King Street's numbers above 800,000. The program was on its way to completion, ready to add two more runs/day between Seattle and Portland, and shifting its route away from the scenic but schedule-unreliable, Point Defiance route onto a time saving short cut across the prairie from Tacoma to Nisqually on Sound Transit tracks.

Current Status: The tragic accident at Nisqually, coupled now with COVID-19's impact on the general economy, travel, and anticipated State revenue, has brought greatly reduced service: Just one Cascades train (plus one Coast Starlight) per day, each way, between Seattle and Portland, no service north of Seattle or south of Portland due to decreased ridership. Despite now having Positive Train Control installed on the route, Cascades trains have not yet shifted to the Bypass. And the plan's goal of six Cascades round trip runs each day between Seattle and Portland seems farther away than before.

Future Goals and Objectives Returning N-S Cascades service to its originally-planned frequency and routes could contribute to increased economic activity. Meanwhile, the Yakima Valley, home of Washington's largest population with no passenger rail service, offers an opportunity to expand State-funded service, using BNSF's Stampede Pass line to connect Seattle and Spokane and points in between: Auburn, Cle Elum, Ellensburg, Yakima, Pasco, and one or more others, such as Connell, Ritzville and/or Cheney. A recent State-funded study by the STEER consulting group concludes that such a service is feasible and strongly desired by those communities. A follow-up study of such a service's likely economic and social costs and benefits is needed for the State to determine whether to proceed. For local communities to contribute to re-establishing YV service, the Legislature should create a local match funding mechanism for County Rail Districts, already authorized in law. And AAWA is working with similar groups in Oregon, Idaho and Montana to explore formation of a multistate Rail Commission, similar to one formed in the Southeastern U.S. By train to Boise, anyone?

Comment 2:

9/24/20

I see posts on Nextdoor about how most public comments are negative. People who are supportive usually won't go out of their way to make a comment on it, while old curmudgeons will fight to keep their property values high and keep the status quo. I support anything that increases bike and rail usage, and decreases car usage.

Sparky Catt

Comment 3:

9/28/20

Very small scale of map, hard to visualize.

Marv Nelson

Comment 4:

10/6/20

Dear Puget Sound Regional Council;

I cannot at this time support the CT-66 Swift BRT Orange Line until such time as Community Transit can verify to you that no cuts to Community Transit front-line service will be used or allowed to be used to cover paying for this line. This is an above-par transit agency looking at a 15% service cut in its next budget and yet has disregarded years of grassroots requests by folks like me to support Boeing's Future of Flight.

To keep Boeing here in the Pacific Northwest to me means in part advertising to Boeing the ample transit already provided and connecting the Future of Flight to Community Transit services at a time & place that works for Future of Flight visitors. Visitors that pay into the 1.2% Community Transit sales tax rate.

So again, before you approve CT-66 Swift BRT Orange Line - ask Community Transit to guarantee no service cuts to pay for it and future prioritization on serving Paine Field. The same Paine Field that is more than just Boeing but also home to a commercial terminal, flight schools, museums, and other aviation manufacturers and maintainers. I hope Boeing Corporate will come to its senses however and understand Community Transit has served its factories at the north end of Paine Field amply. I'm sure they will when they see Community Transit told to focus on a transit-based recovery and on a planning department told to listen to riders.

Also I don't want to hear in 2024 that the resources are not there for local service when the 2020 Community Transit TDP hearing had two out of three folks testifying to the Board asking for local service. That's why I'm coming forward. Reluctantly.

One last thing - for me to have faith in the PSRC having genuine public comment, I hope to see some action based on this. Please.

Many thanks;

Joe A. Kunzler