

Publication of All Aboard Washington  
A Not-for-profit Consumer Organization  
*"Moving forward... On Rail."*

## More trains for NW may mean no more service

By C. B. Hall

*This article was published November 11, 2011 in Crosscut.com, operated by Crosscut Public Media. It is reprinted by permission.*

The Pacific Northwest's pool of passenger-rail equipment will get a boost next June, when the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) takes delivery of new trains purchased from the Spanish-owned Talgo company. The two trains, built at Talgo's plant in Wisconsin, will complement the five Talgos that already ply the high speed rail (HSR) corridor between Eugene, Ore., and Vancouver, B.C. There's just one problem: the arrival of \$37 million worth of rolling stock won't translate any time soon into any increase in service.

"No new schedules will be added," stated ODOT spokeswoman Shelley Snow, in an e-mail interview.

ODOT is receiving two entire Talgo trainsets – sets of cars operated as single, articulated units. The Talgo equipment has played a key role in reviving the corridor's passenger rail service, branded



Talgo America rendering of the new trainsets under construction for Oregon and Wisconsin. Pictured at the lead is the cab control car.

as Amtrak *Cascades*. Oregon and Washington are the national provider's state partners for the service, furnishing funding, marketing, and strategic direction while Amtrak supplies operational expertise, the locomotives, and some funding of its own.

Because the Talgo cars tilt inward in curves, they can negotiate those curves with reduced centrifugal force for pas-

sengers, and thus at higher speeds, than conventional, non-tilting equipment. This feature translates into a Seattle-Portland trip 25 minutes faster than it would be in a conventional train, such as Amtrak runs elsewhere.

When the trainsets enter service next year, they will do so as part of the existing pool, allowing the other Talgos more down time but not occasioning any new "frequencies," or scheduled services. They will allow flexibility for better scheduling – Oregon "may be able," Snow stated, to shift one Portland-to-Eugene train to a more appealing morning time slot. But beyond that, passenger rail advocates, taxpayers, and travelers will not see much of a return soon.

The new trainsets will essentially act as spares, confirms Laura Kingman, spokeswoman for the Rail and Marine Division of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Whether the corridor needs that much spare equipment is debatable: the existing pool of Talgos is highly reliable. Only once last year, Kingman said, did a Talgo have to be removed from service. A Talgo technician travels on every train, watching the equipment for any possible trouble.

WSDOT's plans call for expanding the Portland-Seattle *Cascades* service from its present four round-trips to six. However, those plans aren't slated to become reality until 2017, when a new alignment through the Tacoma suburb of Lakewood, among other improvements, will be completed. That planning has proceeded more or less independently of what Oregon might be doing. The new trainsets would be available to cover those new round-trips, but 2017 is a long way off. Even those new round-trips, however, will only represent 12 to 14 new hours of service time daily, a good bit less than what the trainsets in theory (See **More trains**, page 4)



Photo by Jim Hamre

**Amtrak's extra Thanksgiving Holiday train 511** passes through Puyallup on November 23. Amtrak added a total of 11 extra trips on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday during the holiday period, traditionally Amtrak's busiest week of the year. The equipment used was a mix of Amfleet and Horizon equipment. Between Seattle and Portland, trains were almost completely sold out on Wednesday, Thursday morning and Sunday.

Then it rained on Wednesday and the inevitable happened: BNSF had an early morning mudslide near Mukilteo and shut down the Seattle-Everett line for its 48 hour embargo of passenger train movements, disrupting travel plans for hundreds of travelers and commuters. Amtrak, as usual, had to scramble to charter buses to move passengers between Seattle and Vancouver, BC.

But passengers want to ride trains, not buses. Many interviewed on TV were not happy about being bused. All Aboard Washington does not understand why people must be bused all the way to Vancouver when the mudslide is south of (See **Thanksgiving**, page 4)

Pres. Obama signed the 2012 funding bill for surface transportation on Nov. 18. The bill, adopted after a conference committee compromise, sets Amtrak's operating grant at a alarmingly tight \$466 million, which is \$95 million below the 2011 level. A House provision to prohibit federal funding for state supported corridors was, thankfully, dropped. Its inclusion would have led to the end of 150 trains a day, including our *Cascades*. The high speed rail program was also zeroed out for the year. For complete details visit the NARP website, [www.narprail.org](http://www.narprail.org), and click on Blog.



*From the desk of  
the Executive  
Director  
by  
Lloyd H. Flem*

### Good Ideas from AAWA Members!

All Aboard Washington's Annual Meeting, held at the Centralia Depot's fine meeting room on Saturday November 19 was full of about 50 AAWA members and guests, many of whom had arrived at the Lewis County city by train, from north and south. (The mutual participation and support between AAWA and our Oregon counterpart, the Assoc. of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates, is the best ever. And this echoes the increased cooperation between the Washington and Oregon DOTs.)



Jeff Miller

Speakers from the Centralia Downtown Association (CDA), Renaissance Chehalis, and Twin Transit spoke of cooperation among the entities thus represented and

the importance of passenger trains for the economic growth of their communities, hard hit in recent years by a variety of economic setbacks. Despite our Centralia host, CDA director Jeff Miller's best efforts to attract local business and elected leaders to attend either our Friday November 18 evening reception or our meeting, very few of them chose to come. However, visiting rail advocates did enjoy lunch at the century-old McMenamin's Olympic Club pub and restaurant (an AAWA member), several stayed overnight at the Olympic Club Hotel, and a number perused the many antique and specialty stores in downtown Centralia.

The principal message AAWA President Loren Herrigstad, Vice President Jim Hamre and I made in reference to state and federal issues was that new government money for rail or most other programs will be scarce, but that we in WA did very well with capital money from federal ARRA (stimulus) grants. We must work, though, to at least maintain federal funding for Amtrak (more High(er) Speed Rail grants seem very unlikely, at least until 2013), and for state dollars to cover the share of operating costs not paid for by the fare box or federal contribution. (Remember, fare box returns continue to

increase for our trains each year.)

A most affirmative aspect of the Annual Meeting was the many important issues and good ideas advanced by our members:

Colin McLean, a member from Blaine, unable to attend, had mailed a strong case for preservation of the currently-unused (old Great Northern) Blaine station. General discussion was strongly in favor of AAWA support for the station's preservation and possible use as a future Amtrak Cascades stop. (See the October/November 2010 **Washington Rail News**.)

Newly-elected Board member Karen Keller, in concert with the theme of connectivity of transportation modes, urged AAWA work to have Vancouver, WA C-Tran transit buses serve the very busy Amtrak Station, now not done. With the growing number of attractions in the vintage Clark County city, lacking that connection is puzzling. Again, it was agreed this is something for which AAWA should advocate.

Board member George Barner felt we have a responsibility to educate the next generation on the importance, advantage – and fun – of passenger trains. Barner said many of us can approach school administrators and get permission to speak with students about trains generally and train riding possibilities in our region specifically. George said the worst result was the possibility of a negative answer. Middle school students (grades 5-8) are the likely target audience. Many teachers and administrators would welcome "experts" like us to spread the idea of this most safe, environmentally sound and enjoyable mode of travel. (I was a middle school teacher in a past life and would assist anyone who plans to speak to school kids about our trains.)

Because the Centralia Depot has regular Amtrak agents for only one work shift a day, the final three (of the total of ten) trains daily not only have no agent, but the nicely-restored facility is locked tight, forcing passengers and guests to stand in the weather and preventing ticketing and checked baggage service. Minimally, the depot, the restoration paid for mostly with non-local public funds, should remain open, with volunteer community members as hosts, such as at the Olympia-Lacey and Kelso stations. AAWA will help Lewis County people who want this to occur.

The lack of any auxiliary services at King Street Station was another concern mentioned. Unlike Portland Union Station, which has a very complete



Guests and members at our annual All Aboard Washington general membership meeting listen to one of the presentations. About 50 people were in attendance.

*Two Photos by Jim Hamre*

snack/sundries store and newsstand, and adjoins a high-end restaurant, KSS has only Amtrak services. AAWA will join others in seeking a return to some basic services at KSS.

Amtrak travel literature refers to stations like Olympia-Lacey (OLW) and Kelso as "unstaffed," same status as Tukwila or Stanwood. Yet OLW has its superb corps of volunteers who have kept Centennial Station open and hospitable, never having missed a train – even very late ones arriving after midnight – since the station opened early in 1993! There thus is a class of station which do not have the services of an Amtrak agent, but should be differently described than "unstaffed." We support Amtrak agents at all stations, but recognize the ongoing financial limitations Amtrak endures. And we applaud the initiative local people have exhibited in volunteering to establish successful hosting programs where Amtrak agents aren't found.

Concerned about the future of the Tacoma Station, members hoped more comprehensive plans would be advanced for the use of Freighthouse Square, which will come into play following completion of the Point Defiance Rail Bypass project. (Some folks still think the grand old Tacoma Union Station, now a federal courthouse, is where one catches and meets passenger trains though Amtrak has been at its current location for over 25 years!)

Several people, including new Board member Louis Musso of Cle Elum, advanced the need for a full Amtrak stop at Joint Base Lewis-McCord, also following completion of the Rail Bypass, which will put Amtrak and Sounder trains right near the JBLM Main Gate.

A great set of issues and ideas! While I plan to follow up on all of them, AAWA members, particularly, though not exclusively, those who brought them to the meeting's attention, need now to be further involved.



On November 23, leaders from (See **Flem**, page 5)





## The View Down the Tracks

=====

with Jim Cusick

### Getting in the mood

Along with lobbying for better train service, we at All Aboard Washington also believe more people should try train travel. If you're not sure how to get people to ride the train...

Have them take a plane flight! I just did.

Going through security at the airport gives me a warm fuzzy feeling.

No, the TSA agent wasn't wearing fleece gloves.

Actually, Sea-Tac security wasn't as bad as I expected. I'm making the guess that they are starting to profile people, and came to the conclusion I was harmless.

However, it was the plane flight that really convinces me train travel is the way to go. No, the flight crew was professional and pleasant, given how packed it was, but the key word here is "packed," like cordwood.

Since mine was a coast-to-coast trip, the five+ hours I was shoehorned into the seat is the price I have to pay for speed, I guess.

The economics of plane flight tend to force the issue, since the energy penalty of air travel is much higher than steel-wheel on steel-rail. The higher cost of fuel makes it even more imperative the airlines fill planes and keep fares high. Flying isn't cheap. If it were, airlines would be serving real food and building their own airports with the profits.

Oh yeah, in the olden days the railroads built their own stations, didn't they? But that's what taxes are for nowadays.

But another trip convinced me of the real benefit of rail travel. And it was a much shorter five hour trip, this time to eastern Washington. In this case, the vehicle for the return trip was already there at the summer cabin and it meant we didn't have to take two cars for that outing.

The important part was, since I'm generally the one who is the driver on those trips, the train ride was much more pleasant for me because the only shoe-horning would have been with one packed in my suitcase.

The key for planning a good transportation system is finding where the tipping point is.

Where do you change from the bene-

fits of one mode, and move to another mode? In some cases, the overlap of modes seems like it would be redundant, but in reality, there is a preferable balance.

Do I need a train to go to the grocery store or to Home Depot? Have you ever been able to carry your purchases from Home Depot in anything but a pickup truck? No to both.

If you look at the area surrounding the East Coast cities such as Washington, DC, Philadelphia, New York City and Boston, you see that modes are shared. I'm not talking about the downtown cores of these cities, which are dominated by rail, I'm talking about the suburban areas.

In the suburbs, the freeways don't become 10 lane mega-highways as they do

### ***If you're not sure how to get people to ride the train ... Have them take a plane flight! I just did.***

around the Puget Sound region. Terminating them in the large cities would be impossible, given that no real estate would be available, so the suburban areas have grown up around and continue to make use of their existing rail networks.

Even in the more rural areas they keep commuter rail service into the metropolitan areas intact, so that the local roadways don't have to grow out of scale to the surrounding countryside.

Then why run a rail service into the hinterlands?

We don't stop air traffic control over the wide open spaces of the west.

We don't have the interstates revert to dirt roads in the rural areas.

The freight railroads keep the tracks intact in those areas because it's part of the connectivity, and some industries do locate themselves in the hinterlands. Coal and grain shippers, for instance.

Why stop Amtrak service if you're not going to face the logical conclusion that air service and paved roads couldn't pay for themselves providing service to these areas.

I support infrastructure into these areas, both monetarily and politically.

### **I-1125 – FAIL!**

Thankfully this initiative failed at the ballot box. However, the margin was too close, and from looking at the map, some of the voting patterns were odd, to say the least.

I suspect Cowlitz, Clark and Skamania voted for it because of their proximity to Portland, and this would seriously af-

fect their commute with tolling of the Columbia River bridges. After all, if the milk is free, why buy the cow?

Yet King County, the one most affected by passage of this initiative, voted heavily against it.

And most counties in rural eastern Washington voted in favor of it. Yakima, Kittitas and Okanogan lead, with Grant and Douglas right behind.

What would the motivation be, except distrust in government?

Even if you were to try and toll a rural highway, there just aren't that many people that use a particular highway to make it worth the effort. The argument of what private party would invest in a paved rural highway, since the payback would be non-existent, brings up two issues.

Who subsidizes whom, and if you think the government is so bad and the capitalist model so good, then are you arguing for private roads?

All Aboard members in eastern Washington need to help save their uninformed neighbors in the rural areas from themselves.

Have you ever seen the laser light show at the Grand Coulee Dam? This isn't a psychedelic rock'n'roll kind of show, this light show is a history lesson. It tells how and why the Grand Coulee Dam and the surrounding projects are there.

Brought to you by ... the Bureau of Reclamation.

KIRO radio's Dave Ross, in many of his talk shows that deal with "cutting the state budget, starting with the waste," challenges his listeners to identify who's getting what subsidy, and getting no specific response, came to the conclusion in a discussion with a state representative from east of the mountains, that maybe the legislature should just cut anything in a county that isn't paying for itself via the tax base of that county.

The legislator he was talking to contritely agreed with Dave about the disconnect. The legislator understood.

Think about it, if it is an almost religious belief that dictates that government is so bad, then maybe we should dissolve the Bureau of Reclamation and let the farmers form a co-op. Is that what people are really asking for? Dissolve the collective support of our state economy and infrastructure?

We've listened to the likes of Rush Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly, and MSNBC's Ed Schultz (The Ed Show) for too long.

We've lost the ability to argue reasonably with a positive outcome in mind.

But all is not lost.  
(See **Cusick**, page 5)

**More trains**, from page 1  
provide.

Among people who ponder such issues, no shortage of ideas exists as to where the new equipment could fill a need. The Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA) backs WSDOT's plan for new frequencies between the Emerald and Rose cities, but some ask why the thinking remains stuck in the box of the existing Eugene-Vancouver corridor.

"It wouldn't hurt my personal feelings if one of those trains were used to develop a pilot service between Boise and Portland," AORTA president Donald Leap put it. "We've got to think beyond the Willamette Valley."

"These trainsets could be used on a Seattle-Portland-Boise run," wrote Robert Rynerson, expanding on Leap's thinking in an email interview. Rynerson, a Portland native and longtime passenger rail advocate who worked as a transportation planner at ODOT back in the 1970s, crunches schedules these days for Denver's Regional Transportation District. "Some preliminary work regarding improvements to the Union Pacific line east of Portland was done by a consultant for Amtrak, but a serious follow-up to get reliable cost estimates would be needed."

On a 2008 tour, he added, he was "amazed to find so many stations ready to serve passengers."

The Amtrak consultant performed the work Rynerson mentioned for a study on restoration of the Seattle-Boise-Denver *Pioneer* train, which Amtrak killed in 1997 and has no plans to reinstate. In an email interview, a spokesman for Boise Mayor David Bieter stated that the city, which owns and maintains the Boise depot as an event venue, "supports the re-establishment of the train service through the Boise Depot because it would put Southern Idaho back on the passenger rail map and would be tremendously beneficial to our state's economy. We have joined with members of our congressional delegation in support of bringing the Amtrak *Pioneer* line back."

Sen. Mike Crapo, an Idaho Republican, has worked with Oregon Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden in support of the Portland-Boise service concept, and Crapo's thinking accords with Leap's and Rynerson's proposal. "The request made by Senators Crapo, Wyden and others for Amtrak to examine a return of the *Pioneer* remains active," said Lindsay Nothern of Crapo's Boise office in an e-mail. "The possibility of minimizing costs for a potential test train on the *Pioneer* route is exciting and may eventually provide some of the answers that Amtrak says it needs to determine a return of service to the region."

Speaking for Wyden, Tom Towslee of the senator's Portland office was more inclined to see the glass as half-empty, stat-

ing that his boss "has always supported restoring passenger rail service east out of Portland, but the availability of passenger cars is the least of the problems facing this issue. The biggest issue is the willingness of Amtrak and the Union Pacific to restore passenger service from Portland to Boise and beyond."

Rynerson also suggested a daytime train between Portland and the passenger rail hub of Sacramento. In Washington state, a service linking Seattle and Spokane via Yakima, which hasn't seen passenger service since 1979, has its backers.

Kingman had heard the arguments for a new Spokane train occasionally "just from people writing in," but said, "we have to maximize revenue in the area that we're currently working in before we look at anything else."

"We don't have the money to do that currently," referring to the Spokane idea, or even the drafting of a business plan for such an eventuality.

In Oregon, ODOT's Snow wrote in an email follow-up, "no proposals [for service outside the Willamette Valley] have been proffered by any entity (Amtrak, WSDOT, ODOT, Idaho or California) that we know of – we do know neither Oregon nor Washington have financial resources to support passenger rail service outside the *Cascades* corridor."

Her statement contrasts with the views of, among others, Bruce Agnew, director of Seattle's Cascadia Center for Regional Development. "Having them [the new trainsets] sitting around unused is going to cause a public backlash," he said. "You gotta use the equipment. If it is in fact available, then we ought to look into, with our congressional delegation, operating it between Seattle or at least Portland and Boise, as a case study for east-of-the-mountains use of the Talgo trains, with lessons that can be applied to our proposal to add a second, daylight passenger rail service to Spokane from Seattle. We're pushing for that in the new revenue package." He alluded to his own organization and Washington's passenger rail advocacy group, All Aboard Washington, and to their position on transportation funding talks under way in Olympia.

Agnew stressed that he didn't favor diverting the new equipment from eventual use west of the mountains, "but if they're sitting there, we should use them on a pilot basis. If we can do it [a Boise service] operationally without endangering the *Cascades*, we'll get political support for capital and operating funds for rail in the legislature from the east side of the mountains."

WSDOT's Kingman emphasized the fluidity of the situation. "We're working with ODOT to develop a fleet management plan that will look at both the short term and the long term to reduce costs and maximize service. I don't know exactly which equip-

ment is going to go where. That's part of what the fleet management plan is going to determine." Completion of the plan, she said, is expected within a couple of months. Still, given how well the Talgos have performed to date, it seems that the new trains will be little more than extra equipment for several years.

One can perhaps ascribe the situation to a lack of coordination between the two states that has existed in spite of their being coupled to each other in an HSR corridor designated as such 19 years ago. As late as 2009, the year before Oregon finalized the Talgo order, "WSDOT was predicting it would add two additional Portland-Seattle round-trips by 2012 or 2013," Snow said, elaborating on ODOT's reasoning in a phone interview. "So there's only five trainsets available for that, none of them owned by Oregon. So we had to step in to protect the Portland-to-Eugene route. We were using borrowed equipment. That's when we decided to buy the two trainsets and add them to the corridor pool. So WSDOT can do their expansions as they want and it will not endanger the Oregon [Portland-Eugene] round-trips."

The purchase, she added, "puts Oregon at the table in discussions about passenger rail service in the Northwest. We were something of an outsider before this."

"WSDOT is excited ODOT is taking this step to acquire equipment for the Amtrak *Cascades* fleet," Kingman responded in an e-mail. "We look forward to continuing to work together."

While discussions between Olympia and Salem proceed, a lot of hopes are still standing in the station – waiting for a train.

*C.B. Hall is a freelance writer and has been following Pacific Northwest transportation issues since the 1990s.*

**Thanksgiving**, from page 1

Everett. Amtrak needs to bus its customers the shortest distance possible. In this case, when BNSF reopens the track to freights and passenger equipment without passengers between Everett and Seattle, Amtrak needs to deadhead equipment and bus passengers between these two cities, and then allow passengers to ride the *Cascades* between Everett and Vancouver.

WSDOT issued a press release about the service disruption on Wednesday the 23rd. The agency also noted it is working with BNSF on the mudslide problem:

Providing reliable passenger rail service is critical to the success of Amtrak *Cascades* and WSDOT is taking action to reduce these service disruptions. WSDOT and BNSF continue to discuss the 48-hour moratorium, exploring options for reducing the amount of time that passenger service is restricted after a mudslide. Washington state recently received \$16.1 million in federal (See **Mudslide**, page 5)

**All Aboard Washington Officers**

Loren Herrigstad, Centralia..President .....360 736-5783 ..lbhrgstd@isomedia.com  
 Jim Hamre, Puyallup..Vice President .....253 848-2473 ..jimhamre@mindspring.com  
 Rocky Shay, Federal Way..Secretary.....253 925-2085 ..HarmonShay@aol.com  
 Bill Myers, Anacortes..Treasurer .....360 588-8772 ..anacortesbill@frontier.com  
 Lloyd Flem, Olympia..  
 Executive Director.....360 943-8333 ..washarp@q.com  
 Office FAX.....360 943-0136  
 Address.....3704 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave SE, Olympia 98501

Jim Hamre, Puyallup..Newsletter Editor .....253 848-2473 ..jimhamre@mindspring.com  
 Warren Yee, Seattle..E-newsletter .....206 723-0259 ..washarp@earthlink.net  
 Zack Willhoite, Puyallup..Membership Director .....zackw@allaboardwashington.org  
 Harvey Bowen, Seattle..Fundraising Chair. 206 322-2729 ..harveyb@allaboardwashington.org

All are evening numbers, except Lloyd's, which is available 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily.

**Important Addresses and Phone Numbers**

U. S. House of Representatives:  
 Washington, DC 20515  
 U. S. Senate: Washington, DC 20510  
 Capitol Switchboard (all members): 202 224-3121  
 State Legislature: State Capitol, Olympia 98504  
 Hotline for leaving messages: 800 562-6000  
 Amtrak Reservations/Information: 800 872-7245  
 All Aboard Washington: AllAboardWashington.org  
 NARP: www.narprail.org  
 NARP Hotline: www.narprail.org/cms/index.php/hotline/  
 Amtrak: www.amtrak.com  
 Amtrak Cascades: www.amtrakcascades.com  
 Sound Transit: www.soundtransit.org

**Mudslide**, from page 4

funding to identify, design and construct slope stabilization needs along tracks between Vancouver, WA and Vancouver B.C. WSDOT and BNSF are collaborating on environmental and engineering work to survey problem areas and determine appropriate repair solutions in order to reduce mudslide delays.

All Aboard Washington is pleased DOT is pursuing the Flex and Fix policy we have advocated. We will continue to watch this issue and provide our input. (See the April/May 2011 **Washington Rail News**.)

**Flem**, from page 2

Thurston County, hosted by Ralph Munro, met with gubernatorial candidate Jay Inslee (currently Democratic representative from Washington's First District). He said good things about passenger rail. I'll have extended comments on Inslee and the likely GOP candidate, current Washington Attorney General Rob McKenna, who was a guest at the Munro farm several weeks ago, in a future column. WSDOT Secretary Paula Hammond, surely our ally in terms of support of passenger rail, is always among the Munro guests.



Hope to see you at AAWA's annual Christmas Holiday meeting at Centennial Station on December 10. Our featured guest speaker will be John Sibold, Acting Director, WSDOT Rail and Marine Office. In my judgment, Mr. Sibold has made excellent decisions involving in moving forward with our state rail program. In addition, we will have a silent auction of some great stuff that didn't sell at the Centralia meeting.

Finally, the Centennial Station Volunteer Hosts invite all of us to their annual Holiday event at Centennial Station on Saturday Dec. 17 from 10-noon. It has always been a fun and festive time. See you there, too.

**Cusick**, from page 3

I write this from the floor, having fallen

off my chair after hearing on Monday November 14<sup>th</sup> that the Bellevue light rail plan gets a 7-0 city council OK. After years of debate and months of suspense, an often-divided Bellevue City Council put its differences aside that Monday night and unanimously approved an agreement with Sound Transit establishing a light rail route that tunnels through downtown.

"We pushed it as far as we can," said Councilman Kevin Wallace, who was part of a council majority that for a year and a half, fought Sound Transit's preferred route south of downtown. "We have a choice. We can cooperate with Sound Transit and the rest of the region to deliver on this project, or we can fight. I think the answer is we've got to cooperate."

"It's not perfect," said Councilwoman Jennifer Robertson, who also has been critical of the transit agency, "but it makes sure that we do have a tunnel, and it gets us into the project where we're working with Sound Transit to reduce the cost and do mitigation."

**North Corridor Link**

You know, this is one of Sound Transit's projects that I can actually stick my nose into, and use (as opposed to just sticking my nose into things).

At the latest Sound Transit open house concerning the High Capacity Transit North Corridor Project, we learned the results of the scoping meetings last year.

One result: **People want RAIL.**  
**Well Hallelujah Hanna!!**

Now I can say I live in a sub-area that is looking forward to light rail service.

The initial analysis proposes two alignments, I-5 and SR 99.

Now the Shoreline City Council can get something real meaty for the money they contribute! Well, depending on what their Light Rail Guiding Principles document that they adopted a number of weeks ago translates into.

Plans are for both to be grade separated, either in an exclusive ROW, or elevated. The preliminary nod seems to be going to an I-5 alignment. Why?

Because no wants to listen to me, no doubt.

I'll have to agree that a full Interurban Trail alignment runs into problems in certain areas, some very difficult to mitigate. In my discussions with staff, even though the first "sketch" is for an all elevated alignment along SR-99, parts of that Interurban right-of-way aren't completely off the table.

What Sound Transit wants is a grade separated system, so they can have the frequency that the system will demand.

The Shoreline document, while vague, raises their concerns about disturbing the work they've already done and their plans for the future.

The SR 99 alignment has more Transit Oriented Development potential, but doesn't conform to the current Growth Management Act's plan for Lynnwood being the major activity center, and for no heavy development in the SR 99 corridor.

The problem is, an I-5 alignment is not conducive to future development. That was the argument against the "Freeway Monorail."

The ridership vs. cost estimates favor the I-5 alignment also. However, one of the problems I have is with the horizon year.

Sound Transit is using 2030, with light rail up and running in the early 2020s.

That means there's much more potential in the Shoreline area than the analysis reveals.

And station spacing on some commuter lines back east between communities that have suburban, not city, densities have preserved their small town feel while accommodating high volumes of commuter traffic through their town – not on the highways – but on the rail line. The station spacing of these lines varies between less than a mile to up to three miles.

This is an area where Shoreline can build something that the rest of the region can be envious of. After all, the Interurban did serve the area successfully in the past. They need to look positively towards the future.

Maybe they can be like Bellevue.

All Aboard Washington  
P. O. Box 70381  
Seattle, WA 98127

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U. S. POSTAGE PAID  
PUYALLUP WA 98371  
PERMIT NO. 468

Return Service Requested

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

New Renewal

Address Change

\$ 200 Leadership Membership

\$ 100 Contributing Membership

\$ 75 Sustaining Membership

\$ 50 Family Membership

\$ 25 Individual Membership

\$ 18 Student/Fixed Income Membership

Extra Contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me my newsletter through e-mail only.

Note: if you move, let us know in advance and save us the fee for address correction service.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## All Aboard News

**December 10:** All Aboard Washington holiday gathering from **noon-4 p.m.** at **Centennial Station**, 6600 Yelm Hwy, **Lacey**. Cost is \$10 per person cash or check for pizza, subs and beverages. Program will feature the new Director of the WSDOT Rail and Marine Office. Topic: Vision for the Washington passenger rail program in the near future. Also a legislative outlook for 2012 for passenger rail. Use the *Cascades* or the *Coast Starlight* to and from the meeting.

**January 14:** All Aboard Washington business meeting from **noon-4 p.m.** at **Basil's Kitchen**, Embassy Suites Hotel, 15920 W. Valley Hwy, **Tukwila**, adjacent to the Amtrak Station. Please RSVP to Harvey Bowen, if you can (contact info p. 5). Put "Jan 14 RSVP" in Subject or Body of your email.

**January 31:** All Aboard Washington will again be participating in **Transportation Advocacy Day in Olympia**. This event usually starts around 9:00 so use trains 500 and 501 to get to Olympia. Shuttle service from Centennial station will be provided. Please contact Lloyd Flem, if you want to attend and have his help in setting up appointments with your legis-

lators. Contact info on p. 5.

**March 17:** Joint northwest passenger rail advocates membership meeting in **Whitefish, MT** at **The Lodge at Whitefish Lake**. Meeting is timed between the morning arrival of the eastbound *Empire Builder* and the departure of the westbound *Empire Builder*. A special NARP hotel room rate will be available by mid-December. It's not too early to think about making reservations on the *Builder*. Registration information for the meeting will be provided in early February. Hotel: 877-887-4026 or [www.lodgeatwhitefishlake.com](http://www.lodgeatwhitefishlake.com).

All Aboard Washington welcomed the following new members in October and November: Donald Thieman, Washougal; Christina Dawson, Vashon; Randy White, Tacoma; Marjorie Snell, Edgewood; William Butler, Spokane Valley; Mary Jo Braaten, Greenacres; Judy Dresser, Vancouver; Alex Hall, Winthrop; David Harrowe, University Place; Arlene Keenan, Walla Walla; Jeanne Large, Kirkland; Melody Nemerever, Lynnwood; Peter Quast, Selah; David Schroeder, Port Townsend; Floyd Smith, Portland, OR; Bob Yarnell, Issaquah; Rich Mason, Bothell; Allan Parker, Jr., Seattle; Lola Rogers, Seattle; Naomi Spinelle, Clarkston; Ruth Seplogle, Port Angeles; Colin McLean, Blaine; David

Kookan, Vancouver; Brian Fairchild, Seattle; and Kathy and Don Campton, Longview. We especially thank all the members of NARP that have joined us.

At the All Aboard Washington Nov. 19 membership meeting the following were reelected to the Board of Directors: Jim Hamre, Puyallup; Stephanie Weber, Kirkland; and Zack Willhoite, Puyallup. Newly elected to the Board are Karen Keller, Lacey and Louis Musso, Cle Elum.

Members contributing to this newsletter include Jim Cusick, Loren Herrigstad, Kathy Davis, Lloyd Flem, Warren Yee, Zack Willhoite and Harvey Bowen.



AAWA Board member Kathy Davis and her husband Eric Korndorffer were featured in Sound Transit's Fall 2011 **RIDE** newsletter. The two met riding Central Link, became friends and were married

in January 2010. Kathy and Eric went on the *Empire Builder* to Chicago for their honeymoon. Sound Transit even gave All Aboard Washington a plug. **RIDE** is available on ST buses and trains.