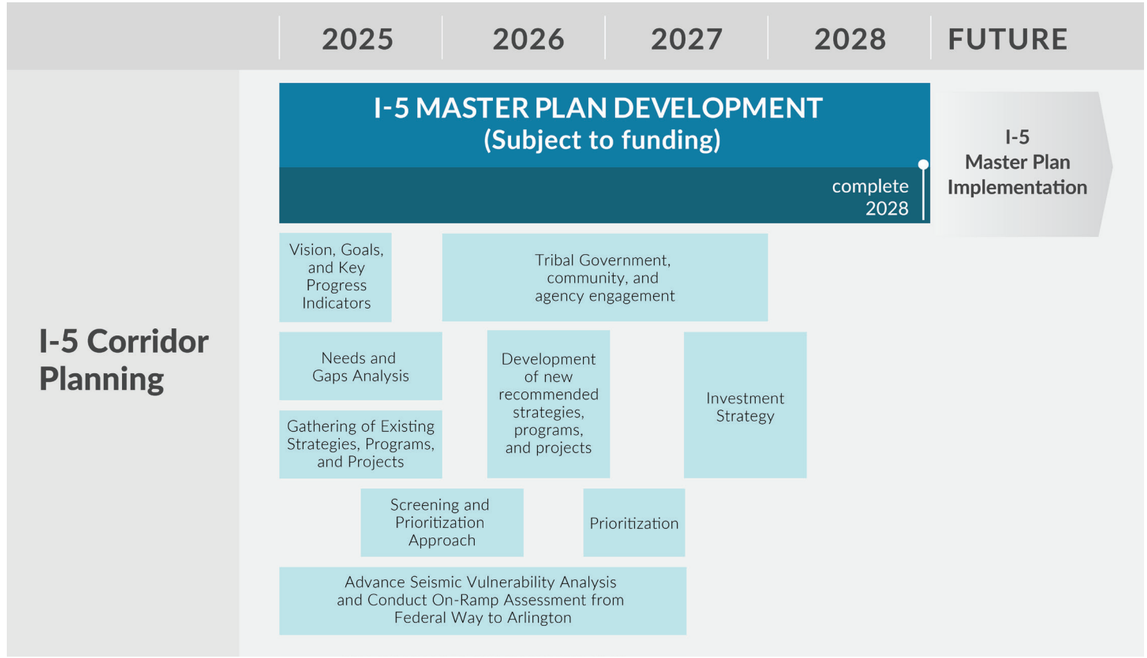
Schedule



An integrated transportation system to move our region

A transportation system that moves people and goods safely and efficiently will provide economic benefits across Washington by connecting communities and promoting job creation. An integrated transportation system connects all modes of travel, from walking and cycling to buses and cars to trains and airplanes, to create a seamless experience for all travelers.

Today, all modes in our integrated transportation system have constraints that make travel times unreliable. Nearly 60 percent of I-5 in Washington is operating at medium-to-high rates of congestion, Amtrak and intercity passenger rail shares tracks with freight, and air travel trips experience delays and there is limited growth for existing airports. These constraints lead to reliability and on-time performance challenges.

The Cascadia Program is working to address increasing system constraints by improving reliability and increasing mode choice. The I-5 Master Plan focuses on maintaining and improving the reliability of the existing highway system. Maintaining and preserving our existing roads and bridges helps us avoid the risk of costly emergency closures, delays, and detours. The Cascadia High-Speed Rail Project is studying how high-speed rail could address system constraints by providing a new way to travel between cities. Both projects would support Washington's economy by keeping people and goods moving efficiently within the megaregion and across the state.

How to stay informed

Visit our website to learn more! ▶

www.wsdot.wa.gov/CascadiaProgram

Title VI Notice to Public: It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO).

For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OEO's Title VI Coordinator at 360-705-7090.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Information: This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Office of Equal Opportunity at wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA (4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

WSDOT

Cascadia High-Speed Rail and I-5 Program

Shaping the future transportation system for the Cascadia megaregion

The Cascadia megaregion is expected to grow by 3.4 million people between 2020 and 2050. This is similar to gaining a city almost the size of Los Angeles. This growth will place greater strain on the existing transportation system. In response, the Washington State Department of Transportation is planning for ways to keep people and goods moving reliably today and into the future.

WSDOT established the Cascadia High-Speed Rail and I-5 Program to address transportation needs of the growing megaregion through two major planning projects:

- **The Cascadia High-Speed Rail Project** is delivering a service development plan which will explore how high-speed rail could efficiently connect the metropolitan areas of Vancouver, British Columbia; Seattle, Washington; and Portland, Oregon.
- **The I-5 Master Plan Project** is developing an actionable master plan for the Interstate-5 system in Washington state. This plan will identify, prioritize, and guide investments to address both near- and long-term needs. The master plan will also identify opportunities for innovation, including leveraging new technology, and integration with other modes.



Map of the Cascadia High-Speed Rail corridor and the study area for the I-5 Master Plan.

WHAT IS A MEGAREGION?

A megaregion is a network of cities with shared culture, economies, infrastructure, and natural ecosystems. There are 11 growing megaregions in the United States. The Cascadia megaregion is roughly the area between Vancouver, British Columbia and Portland, Oregon

Cascadia High-Speed Rail

WSDOT, in partnership with Oregon and British Columbia, is delivering a service development plan (SDP) in accordance with Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requirements. This plan will explore how high-speed rail (HSR) could address projected growth and serve as a catalyst for a stronger, better-connected Cascadia megaregion.

While a specific route has not been identified, the project would connect the three metropolitan areas of Vancouver, B.C.; Seattle, WA; and Portland, OR in the megaregion. HSR would provide fast, long-distance travel service to complement existing travel options such as driving on I-5, taking Amtrak Cascades passenger rail, and using local transit systems.

Current work

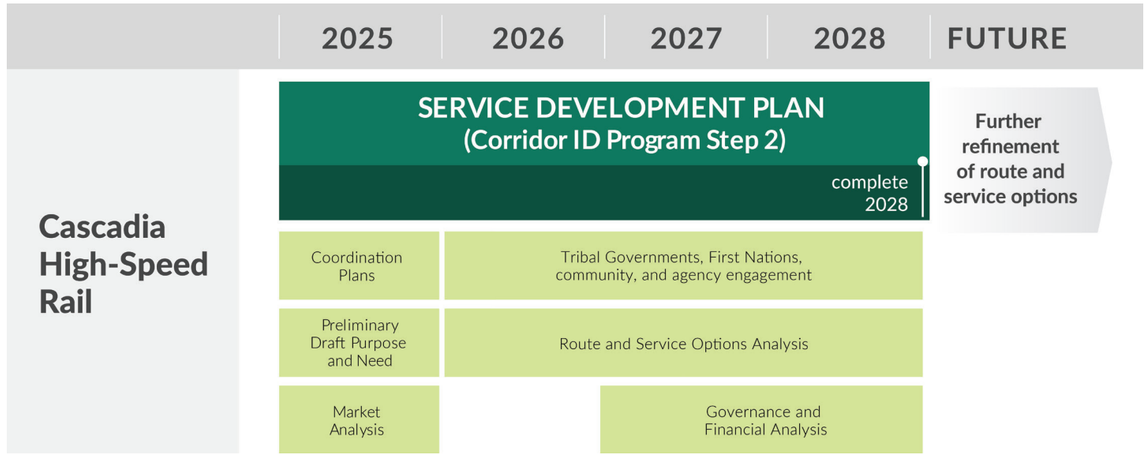
The project is in the preliminary stages of delivering the SDP. This work is focused on the economic and technical viability of HSR in the megaregion and will result in a range of potential route options for further analysis. Specific route alignments and station locations will be identified in a future stage of work.

Project planning analyses, studies, and work products developed with agency, Tribal Nations and public engagement as a part of the Corridor Identification and Development Program may be incorporated into future project development and environmental review processes, as applicable. (23 CFR 771.111)

Funding

The SDP is funded through the FRA's Corridor ID Program ($55.2M) with a Washinton state match ($5.5M).

Schedule





WOULD HIGH-SPEED RAIL REPLACE AMTRAK?

No. Cascadia High-Speed Rail would complement the existing Amtrak Cascades passenger rail service. High-speed rail would make fewer stops and travel at greater speeds than conventional rail services, likely running on new, dedicated tracks. Think of high-speed rail as the express train, while Amtrak Cascades would be the local route.

I-5 Master Plan

I-5 in Washington state is 277 miles long and runs through some of the state's fastest-growing counties and metropolitan areas. As the megaregion continues to grow, additional transportation investments are needed for the highway to remain functional.

To achieve the vision for a safer, more reliable and resilient system, WSDOT is developing an I-5 Master Plan that will include prioritized recommendations and strategies to address current and future needs for the corridor.

Current work

Since 2022, WSDOT has engaged communities and partner agencies throughout the I-5 corridor through 91 listening sessions and has completed a comprehensive review of existing conditions. These efforts helped identify corridor needs, opportunities, and priorities that informed the development of the I-5 Master Plan vision and goals.

The Master Plan now includes the vision for the I-5 corridor which states "I-5 is a safe, reliable, and resilient system that provides accessibility and multimodal travel options for all and supports regional and statewide economic vitality."

The plan also outlines six goal areas focused on improving safety; enhancing system resiliency, preservation and environmental stewardship; improving mobility and accessibility; advancing equity and community connectivity; supporting economic vitality and freight movement; and preparing the corridor for future technologies and transportation needs.



In 2026, the team completed a comprehensive needs and gaps assessment, which confirmed several key themes for the I-5 corridor. This assessment highlighted the need for a strategic combination of projects and programs to optimize the I-5 system, rather than one single solution.

In late 2026, WSDOT will continue to engage technical experts, partner agencies, regional organizations, and communities to inform screening and prioritization of projects and potential investments along the corridor. The I-5 Master Plan, to be completed in 2028, will identify and prioritize policies, projects, strategies, and future studies that address both current and long-term corridor needs. Once the I-5 Master Plan is complete, the focus will shift to a corridor-wide implementation approach.

In parallel with the planning effort, WSDOT continues to advance improvements in near-term safety, resiliency, preservation, and operation that can be implemented to address immediate corridor needs.

Funding

Funding for the current biennium comes from $11.75 million from Washington state's Move Ahead Washington transportation package.

I-5 SYSTEM NEEDS FROM LISTENING SESSIONS

- Safety challenges
- Environmental impacts
- Mobility challenges and congestion
- Vulnerability to natural elements
- Aging infrastructure
- Lack of connectivity and access for underserved communities
- Preparing for future population growth