

Q2-2024 Report to Legislature

Summary

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) co-funds the Amtrak Cascades intercity passenger rail service with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Ridership for the second quarter of 2024 was the highest recorded in the history of passenger rail service in Oregon.

Key Q2 Ridership and On-Time Performance (OTP) drivers:

- Ridership increases can be attributed to travel for holidays, graduations, and beginning of summer.
- OTP challenges included delays caused by freight and passenger train meets and reduced speed orders on the host railroad. Increases in trespasser and police-related incidents caused lengthy delays in this quarter.

Status

Ridership for April - June 2024

- The second quarter of 2024 saw a strong rebound in ridership after a decline in April. All three months in the second quarter had record high ridership culminating in a 33 percent increase over the same quarter in 2023 and a 19 percent increase over the prior quarter of 2024. The month of June produced over 15,000 riders for the first time in the history of the service.
- Eight of the last nine months have been record-setting months for ridership as compared to the same months in previous years.

On-Time Performance for April – June 2024

- OTP for northbound passengers from Eugene averaged 72 percent and southbound passengers from Portland averaged 47 percent.
- OTP improved 5 percent over the second quarter of 2023 and increased slightly by 1 percent from the first quarter to the second quarter of 2024.
- The longest delays this quarter were caused by:
 - freight and passenger train interference; and
 - slow order delays (speed reduction) due to weather and landslides.
- Delays this quarter were caused by:
 - 71 percent - Host railroad
 - 20 percent - Amtrak
 - 9 percent - Unassignable (i.e., trespasser strikes, weather-related delays, and drawbridge operation).

Current Progress and Next Quarter Look Ahead

Oregon Passenger Rail Annual Report:

The [2023 Amtrak Cascades – Oregon Annual Performance Report](#) is now available. This report contains data that provides ridership, service performance, and farebox recovery. This report also contains information on planning efforts and projects to improve the service and passenger experience.

FRA Amtrak Long-Distance Service Study:

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is conducting an [Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study](#) to evaluate the restoration of discontinued intercity passenger rail service and possible introduction of new Amtrak long-distance routes. ODOT, along with other western states, participated in four regional workshops with the FRA, the last of which was held June 6 in Missoula, Montana. The study identified a proposed network of 15 preferred routes to complement Amtrak's existing long-distance service. Two of these, *North Coast Hiawatha* and the Oregon-routed *Pioneer*, were former Amtrak long-distance trains that were discontinued. The *Hiawatha* route has been granted federal Corridor Identification and Development Program status but for the other 14 preferred routes no sustained funding or program currently exists to advance their development beyond the long-distance study. The estimated capital costs of rolling stock, station and maintenance facilities, and track and signal upgrades necessary to resurrect the *Pioneer* ranged from \$2.9 to \$3.7 billion, and annual operating costs were estimated to range from \$96 to \$136 million. The timeline for accomplishing a service restoration such as the *Pioneer* is estimated at 10 to 15 years. The FRA will issue a report to Congress later this year with a list of prioritized long-distance routes, associated costs and perceived benefits. Congress will determine how to proceed.

Corridor Identification and Development Program:

The [Corridor Identification and Development Program \(CID\)](#) is a new FRA program to accelerate federal investment in state-supported passenger rail services. ODOT and WSDOT continue to work with FRA to advance the Amtrak Cascades corridor through the program, which is creating a pipeline of intercity passenger rail projects ready for implementation.

Cascadia High-Speed Rail (HSR) Study:

WSDOT continues to work with FRA to advance Cascadia High Speed Rail through the CID Program with support from ODOT, Metro and the British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

2024 Oregon State Rail Plan (OSRP):

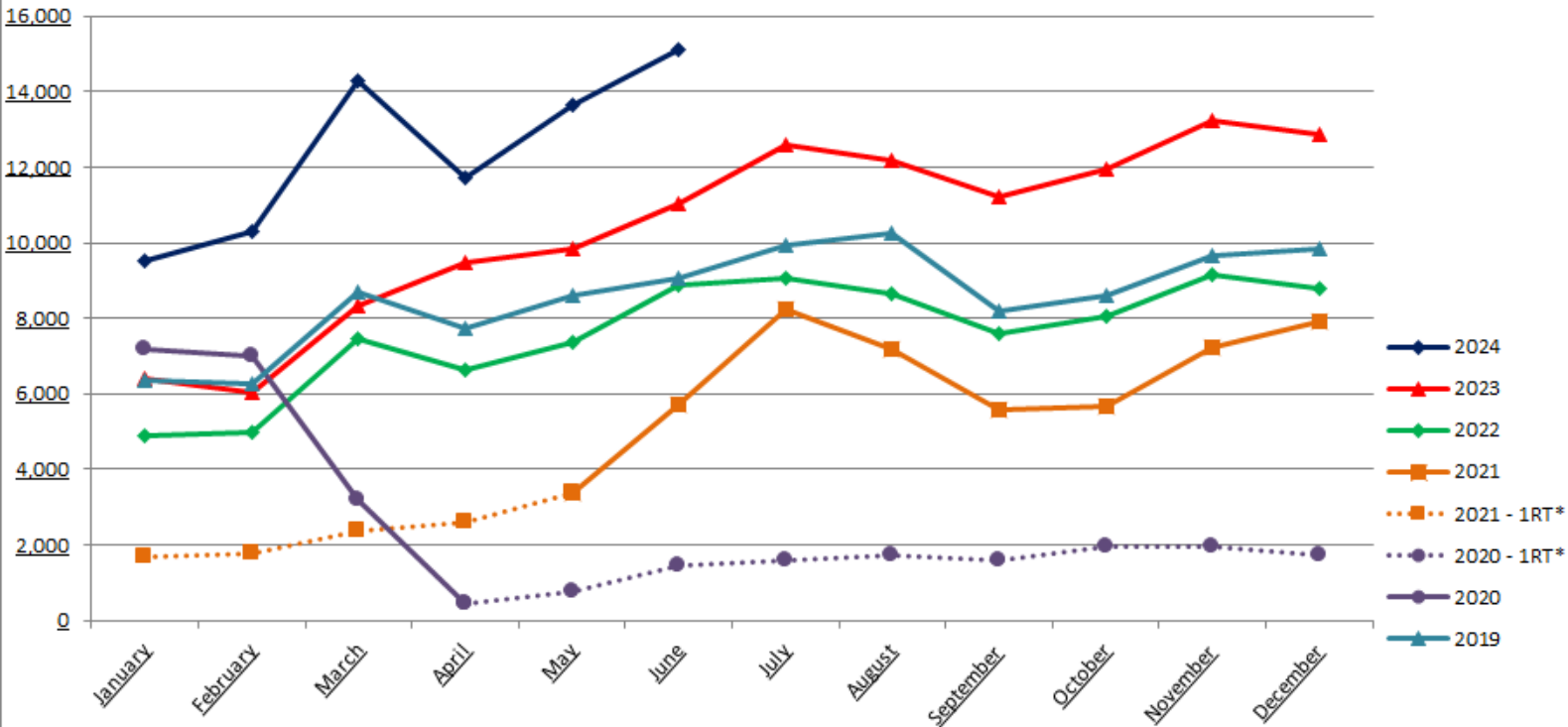
The FRA requires an update to state rail plans every four years. The OSRP was last revised in 2020 and ODOT has started a 2024 update. A formal kick-off meeting was held May 30. Information in the newly adopted [Oregon State Rail Plan-Implementation Plan](#) will be considered and the OSRP will identify highway-rail grade crossing (intersections where a highway crosses a railroad at-grade) elimination opportunities as well as other crossing safety improvement projects to pursue increased federal grant funding for this sector.

FRA Funding and Grants:

ODOT submitted an application in May for \$1,500,000 of Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) funds from the FRA for a passenger rail planning grant. The CRISI Program is designed to improve railroad safety, efficiency, and reliability; mitigate congestion at both intercity passenger rail and freight rail chokepoints to support more efficient travel and goods movement; enhance multi-modal connections; and lead to new or substantially improved Intercity Passenger Rail Transportation corridors. The award date is expected this fall.

If awarded, funding from this grant will support assessment, phasing, and prioritization of infrastructure projects to provide passenger and freight rail improvements between Eugene and Portland. These grant funds will support additional scoping and design of infrastructure improvements from projects identified from the Oregon Rail Advisory Committee.

Amtrak Cascades Ridership in the Eugene – Portland Corridor Trains Operated Under Contract for the Oregon Department of Transportation

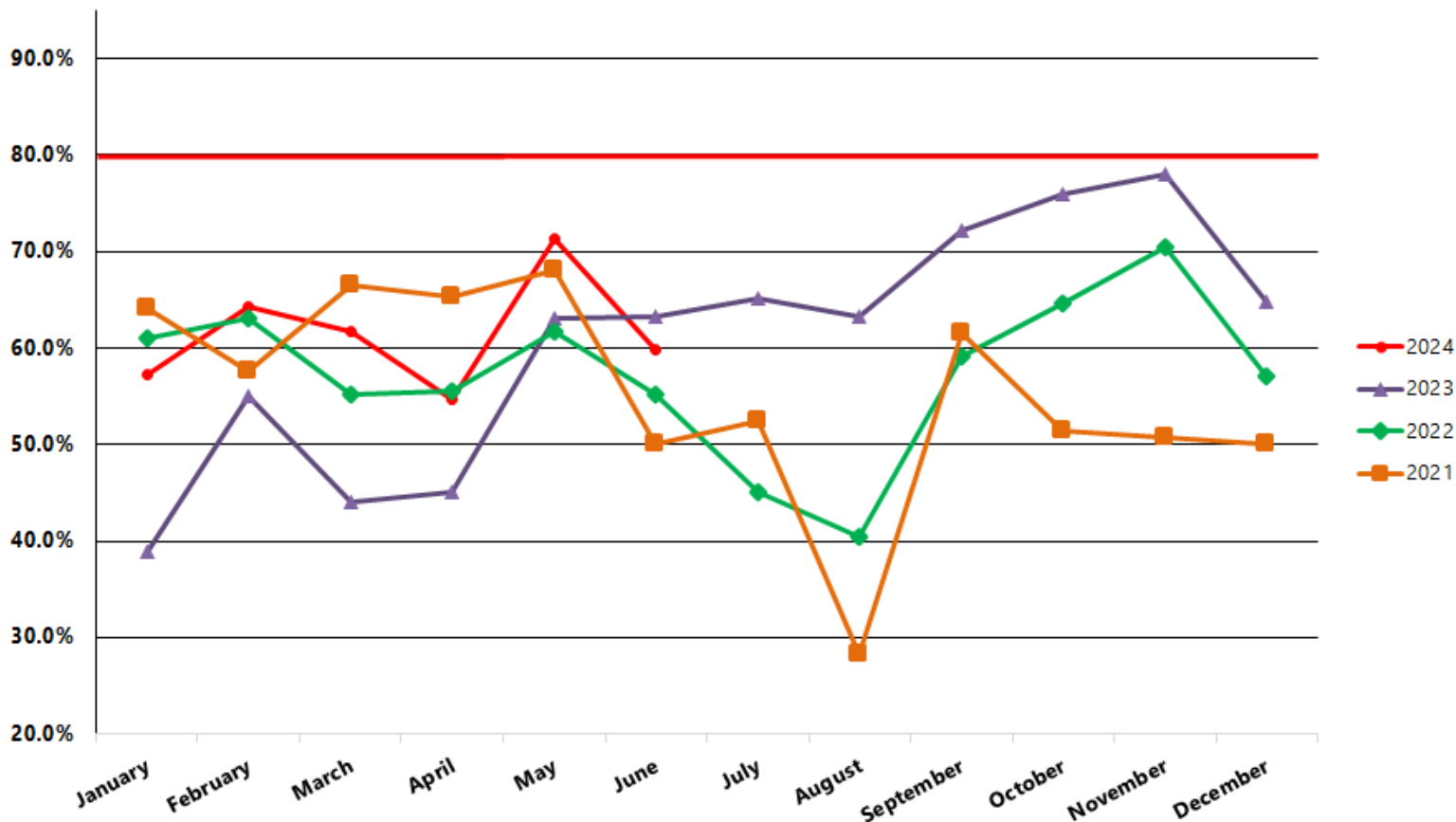


The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting decreases in demand led to the decision to reduce service to one roundtrip per day between Seattle and Eugene. Service was resumed to two daily round trips on May 24, 2021. The dotted lines above depict the timeframe when the service was reduced to one roundtrip daily.

*RT = Roundtrip PDX-EUG

Amtrak Cascades Customer On-Time Performance Eugene-Portland Corridor

Trains Operated Under Contract for the Oregon Department of Transportation



The data presented is based on the new federal standards for OTP. This new standard measures the timeliness of each individual passenger rather than the train and represents the percentage of customers who reached their stations in Oregon no later than 15 minutes after their published scheduled arrival time.