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Nov. 9, 2021

Cascades Service to Resume on the Point Defiance Bypass

Reopening follows collaboration with Amtrak, WSDOT, and Sound Transit to improve safety of railroad operations

SEATTLE – After intensive system testing, crew qualifications, and safety certification in partnership with Sound Transit and the Washington State Department of Transportation, Amtrak Cascades service will resume on the Point Defiance Bypass on November 18. The inland bypass parallels I-5 between the Tacoma Dome Station, Lakewood, JBLM, DuPont and Nisqually.

The first Amtrak Cascades train using the Bypass will leave Seattle at 7:22 a.m., arriving in Tacoma at 8:08 a.m. The first northbound train from Oregon will leave Eugene at 5:30 am and Portland at 8:20 a.m., arriving in Tacoma at 10:54 a.m. A total of eight trains – including Amtrak Cascades and *Coast Starlight* – will use the Bypass daily, with additional trains added in the months ahead as COVID restrictions ease. Operations in Tacoma will move to the new Tacoma Dome Station, near the Sounder and light rail stations on East 25th Street. Train tickets are available at [AmtrakCascades.com](https://www.amtrakcascades.com), [Amtrak.com](https://www.amtrak.com), and in the [Amtrak mobile app](#).

To prepare for a safe and comfortable trip, Amtrak conducted crew qualifications in preparation for the resumption of service on the Point Defiance Bypass route. The training was conducted in coordination with Sound Transit.

“Amtrak is continuously improving safety for the benefit of our customers, employees, and the communities we serve” said Stephen Gardner, President of Amtrak. “We are ready to safely resume service on the Bypass consistent with the steps required by our host railroad, Sound Transit, the Federal Railroad Administration and our own Safety Management System.”

As the host railroad, Sound Transit required Amtrak to verify compliance with an array of safety requirements before resuming passenger rail service on the Point Defiance Bypass.

WSDOT and Amtrak remain committed to returning to the bypass and fulfilling federal grant requirements for increased reliability, less travel time, and the opportunity to add more trips between Seattle and Portland. Over the last four years, all involved agencies have worked collaboratively on the following:

- **Activated positive train control (PTC):** All passenger rail corridors in Washington, including the Point Defiance Bypass, have train control technology that will automatically slow or stop trains that are operating above permitted speeds.
- **Developed and implemented an Amtrak Safety Management System:** The Amtrak SMS Includes policies and processes to proactively identify and mitigate risks, enhanced reporting standards, expanded crew training, and redesigned safety training courses to create an improved safety culture and drive safety performance.

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- **Implemented step-down speed restrictions:** Working with Sound Transit, progressive speed reductions were implemented to ensure trains operate at required speeds across the route.
- **Requalified and trained all Point Defiance Bypass crew members:** Applicable *Cascades* crews have been trained to the standards outlined in Amtrak's enhanced training and qualification policy prior to the restart of service.
- **Upgraded simulator programs:** High-fidelity simulators with route specific details and conditions were utilized to greatly increase training opportunities on the route.
- **Conducted extensive public outreach on railroad safety:** Our partners and Amtrak conducted outreach in communities surrounding the Point Defiance Bypass, including DuPont, Lakewood, Tacoma, and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, prior to the return of service.

Amtrak, Sound Transit and WSDOT have implemented or are continuing to pursue all safety recommendations set forth by the NTSB.

Photos available of [WSDOT Tacoma Dome Station](#)

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