

Components of SE Washington Rail Service Expansion Study & 2023-2025 Budget

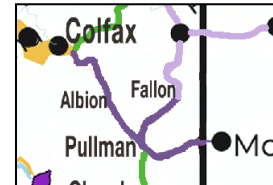


The recommendations below are based upon the research conducted by Solutionary Rail, available at SolutionaryRail.org/lrbarge2rail or via this QR code. For more information, access to spreadsheets, etc. contact: Bill Moyer at 206-356-9980, or info@SolutionaryRail.org



Solutionary Rail strongly suggests that the following components are included in Governor Inslee's plan for replacing transportation services of the LSR dams and are in the scope of his proposed WSDOT transportation study, or preferably listed as line items in his proposed 2023-2025 budget for the Washington state legislative session:

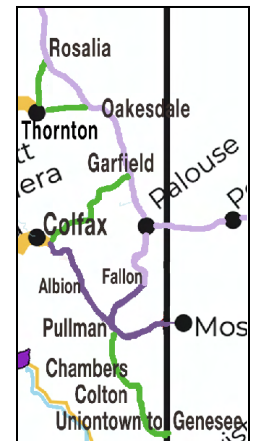
1. **Return WA state-owned PCC system track to service**, specifically:
 - a. Fallon to Pullman
 - b. Colfax to Pullman
 - c. Pullman to Moscow



2. Do a **Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA)** of returning **Columbia Plateau Trail (CPT)** to rail **service**. Include in the BCA the typical wear and tear, road safety, and emissions costs of the current state versus potential future with returned service.

Analyze the potential impacts on community development, agricultural transport, and short line/main line railroad price competition. Consider scenarios of Pasco to Hooper Junction, Pasco to Benge, and Pasco to Cheney area. Include options for connecting to other rail lines such as in Hooper Junction, Pasco and north of Benge without losing most utilized northern sections of the trail. Include impacts on freight capacity in the overall system and the potential of increased capacity to allow an expansion of passenger service, especially between Pasco and Spokane and Pasco to Pullman.

3. Do a **BCA of returning short line connectivity on a select number of routes**. Include the potential to reduce truck miles traveled and cost to farmers, emissions and road safety. Analyze the impacts of and potential for additional traffic from Idaho-based shippers. Assess the potential for each connection or combination that opens options for delivery to more than one mainline and/or Columbia River barge service to increase price competition and lower shipping rates and expense to farmers on the following abandoned lines:
 - a. Thornton to Rosalia and Thornton to Oakesdale
 - b. Colfax to Garfield
 - c. Pullman to Uniontown
 - d. Bolles to Starbuck and Lyons Ferry



4. Conduct **Analysis of Traction vs Braking Power for rail** in SE Washington. Determine the feasibility and BCA of replacing diesel-electric with battery electric locomotives. Include consideration of discontinuous electrification in sections where additional traction power may be necessary for climbing a steeper than 1% grade and where power generation from braking may exceed battery charging capacity. Analyze the impact of fuel costs to short line operators and how fuel cost savings can be passed on to farmers in the form of lower rates. Assess what charging capacity is needed and where it needs to be located along the various routes.



5. Investigate the potential of transitioning an **expanded WA state-owned rail system to an Open Access system** that shares the track with various operators moving freight as well as passengers. Address what would be necessary to transition existing contracts, what benefits would each current operator gain, and what potential this could have on rates, service, shipper utilization, and increased traffic, and methods of managing that traffic.
6. Investigate whether the current trend and assumptions on building 110-car unit trains for class 1 railroads is necessary, and in what **scenarios shorter trains meet the service needs of farmers** and/or are superior for short hauls or hauls that terminate at a Columbia River barge loading facility.
7. Analyze the impacts of potential barge to rail mode shift and whether the **grain car inventory** is adequate to guarantee farmers and co-ops reliable service, or whether investments in new cars are necessary. Recommend a method for addressing shortfalls and managing future allocation of cars.
8. **Establish a Rail Solutions Office (SRO) with funding for staff inside or independent of WSDOT to partner with municipalities, counties, port authorities, PCC Rail Authority, co-ops, and elevator operators to expand rail-related capacity for freight, grain, and, where relevant, passengers.** Mandate the RSO to assist partners with identifying and procuring funding from the federal government such as FRA, USDA, DoE, and regulatory support or intervention from the STB. The SRO office would be tasked with but not limited to the following:
 - A. Providing focused and urgent attention to:
 - a. Port of Wilma train loading capacity and possible additional siding
 - b. Almota elevator access to GRNW tracks and potential recovery of siding
 - c. Central Ferry Terminal train loading capacity, possible additional siding
 - d. Hwy 127 bridge for additional traffic from Pomeroy Grain Growers
 - e. New rail spur, siding, and train loading configuration at Lyons Ferry elevator
 - B. Supporting the restoration and establishment of elevator and train loading capacity at sites along current PCC system such as Albion, Whelan and Pullman
 - C. Supporting infrastructure along the CPT, such as:
 - a. Elevator to Train conveyor between CPT and Windust
 - b. Return of trackside elevator and rebuild siding in Kahlotus
 - c. Return of trackside elevator and rebuild siding in Washtucna
 - d. Train to barge transloading capacity improvements at Tri-Cities Grain in Pasco
 - D. If eventually necessary, aiding in the recovering of elevator and train loading capacity at sites along any other additions to the PCC system such as the Pullman to Uniontown, Colfax to Garfield, and Bolles to Lyons Ferry sections.

Taking action on the above in the 2023 legislative session is an essential step toward accomplishing the Governor's stated goal of replacing dam services, while providing multiple benefits to farmers, communities, and the environment in SE Washington state.