



Whitman County Economic Development Informational Meeting (EDIM)

December 3, 2025
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
The Center
110 S. Main St.
Colfax, WA

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www.portwhitman.com

Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Update

- Juan Garcia, Business Advisor, juan.garcia@wsbdc.org



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Essential Questions to Drive Insight



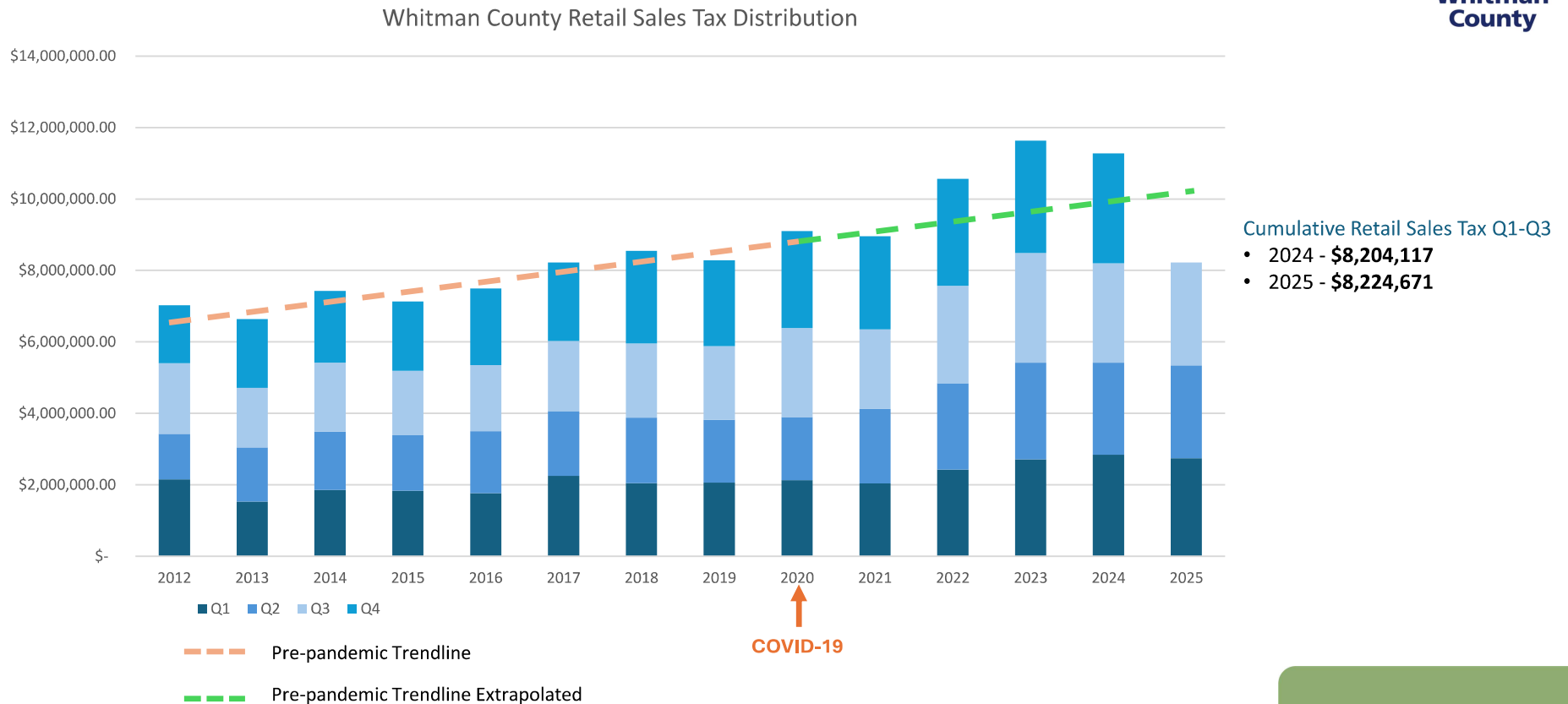
CATEGORY	SAMPLE QUESTIONS
Looking Ahead	Goals for next year, hiring plans, expansion ideas
Customer Feedback	What are people saying? Reading reviews online, feedback methods
Performance & Challenges	Biggest success, recent challenges, barriers to growth
Technology & Innovation	How are you using AI? Automation opportunities, helpful tools
Community & Support	Local program support, networking interest

Whitman County Retail Sales Tax Distribution

Retail sales tax distributions continue to stabilize at pre-pandemic levels while still growing.



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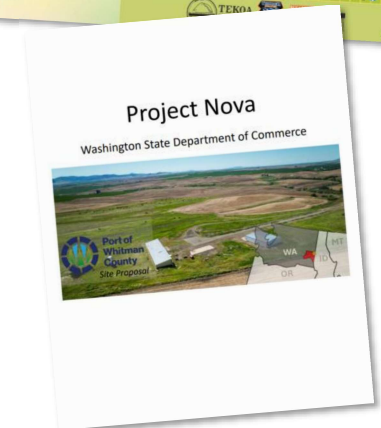
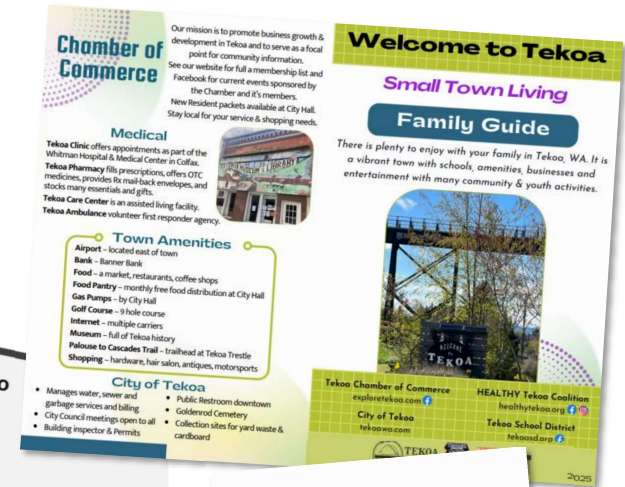
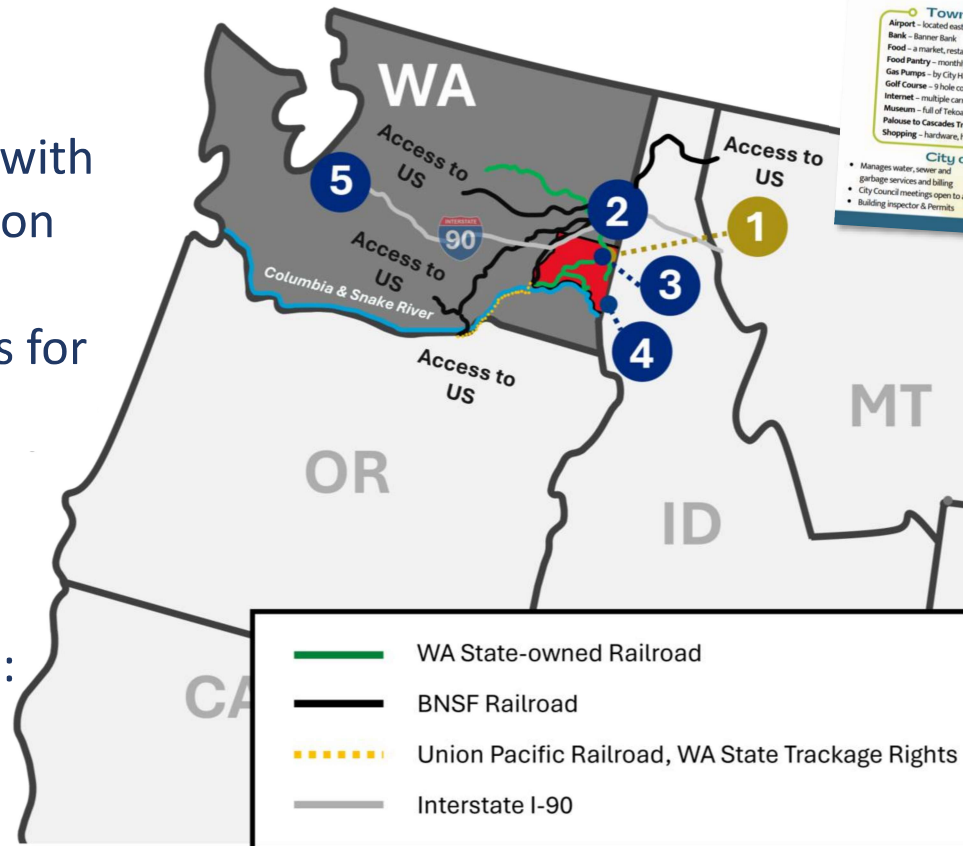
Washington Department of Commerce Leads



DATE	TYPE OF BUSINESS	CRITERIA	BENEFITS	STATUS
August 2025	Nutrition Food Expansion	50,000-100,00 square foot facility with temperature sensitive capabilities	FTE: Unknown Capital Investment: Unknown	No sites meet preferred criteria.
September 2025	Manufacturing (Project NOVA)	250,000 square feet, 10-20 acres, 6M kWh power / year and 50,000 tons water / year	FTE: 100 Capital Investment: \$40-50 million	Site submitted to Department of Commerce.

Project Nova

- Turbofan engine manufacturer
- 250,000 square feet with potential for expansion
- Dept. of Commerce submitted three sites for consideration
- Estimated capital investment: \$40-50 million
- Estimated workforce: 100 personnel



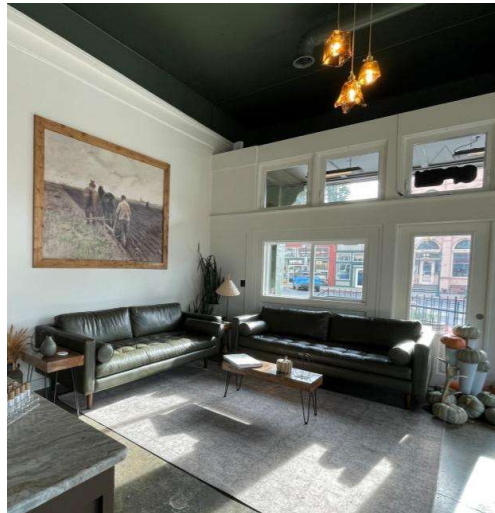
New & Expanding Businesses



New & Expanding Businesses



CULTIVATED
COFFEE + KITCHEN



Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council Conference Reflections



- Roy Schulz, Tekoa Mayor
- Angela Bennett, LaCrosse Clerk / Treasurer
- Matt Hammer, Colfax City Administrator & Public Works Director

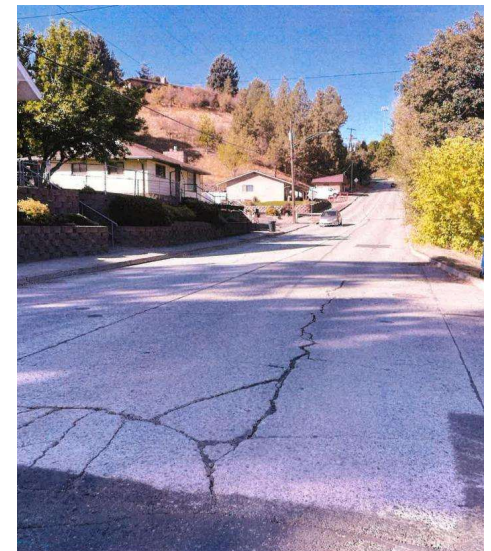


City of Colfax Tech Team Meeting Project

- 2,000 lineal feet of full street improvements on W. Fairview Street



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City of Colfax Tech Team Meeting Project



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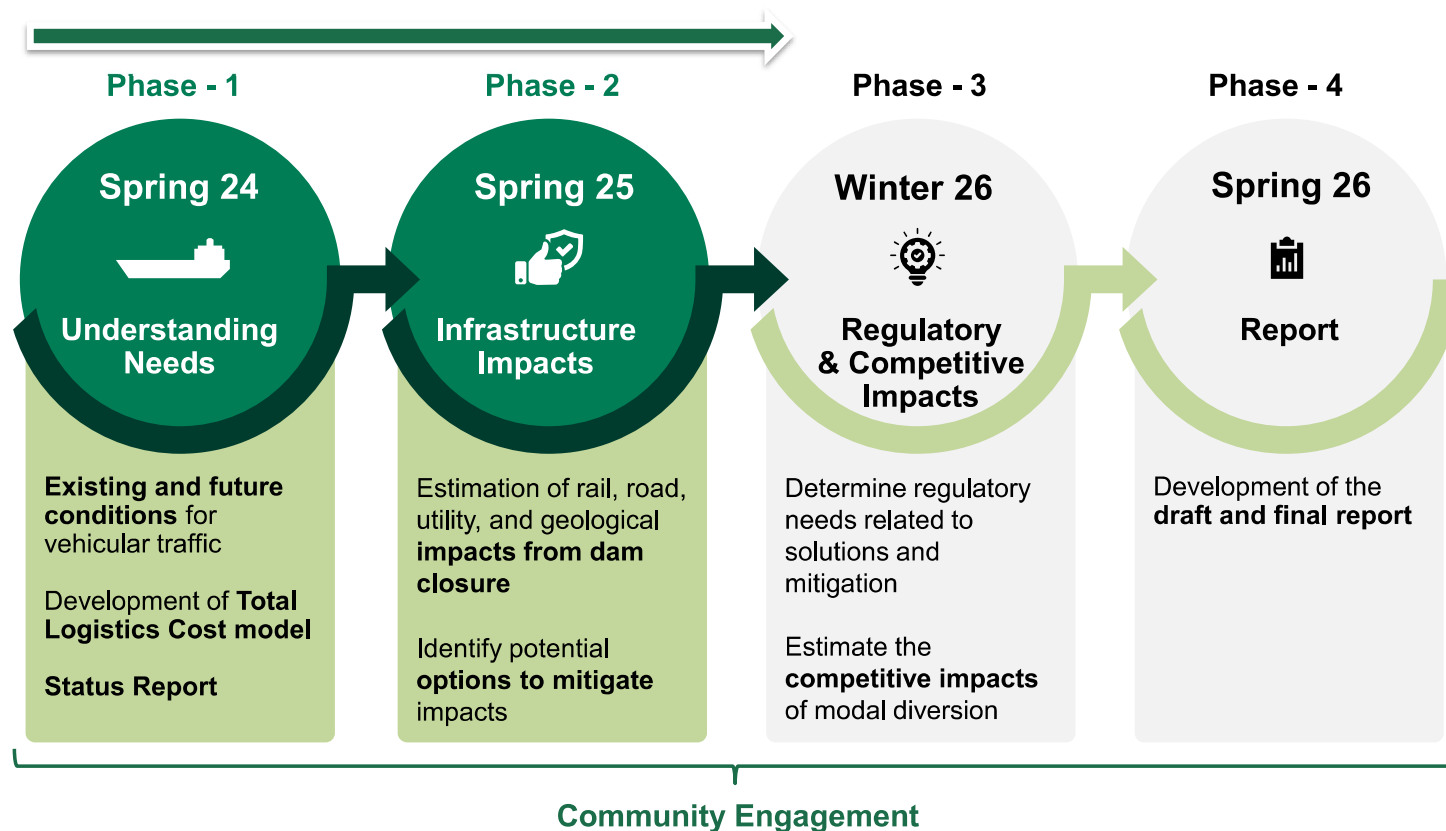


Lower Snake River Dams Transportation Study

Colfax Update

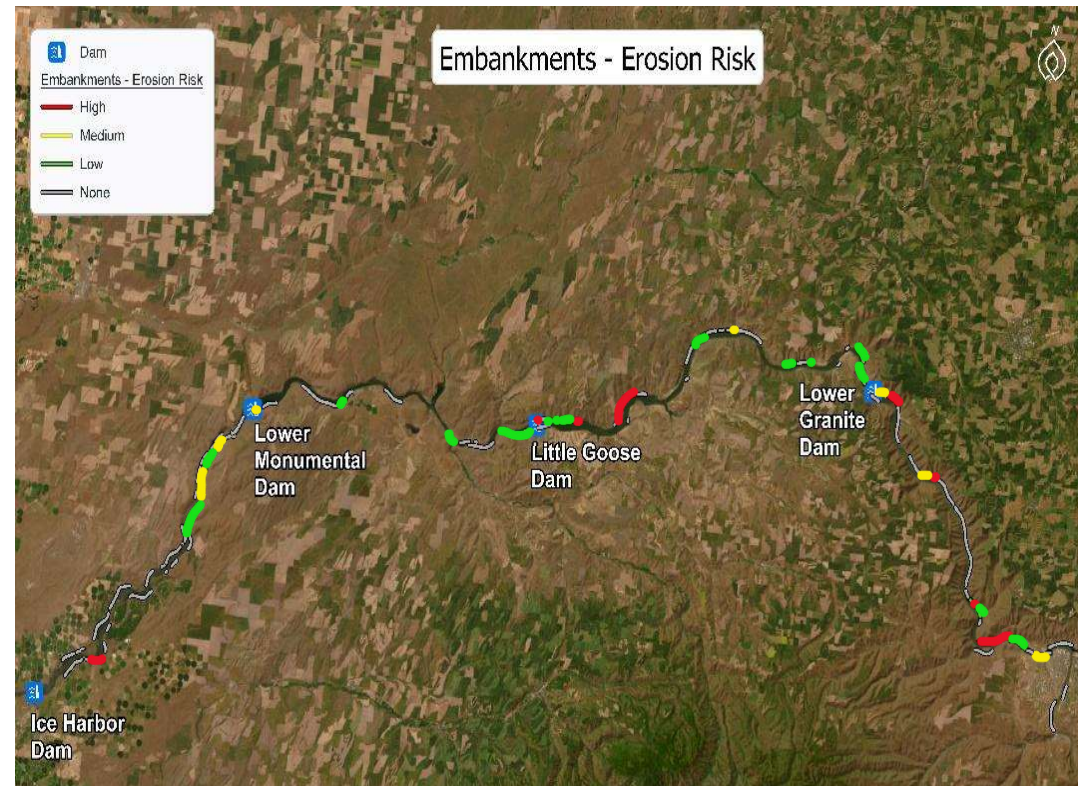
December 3, 2025

Study Phases: Where We are Now



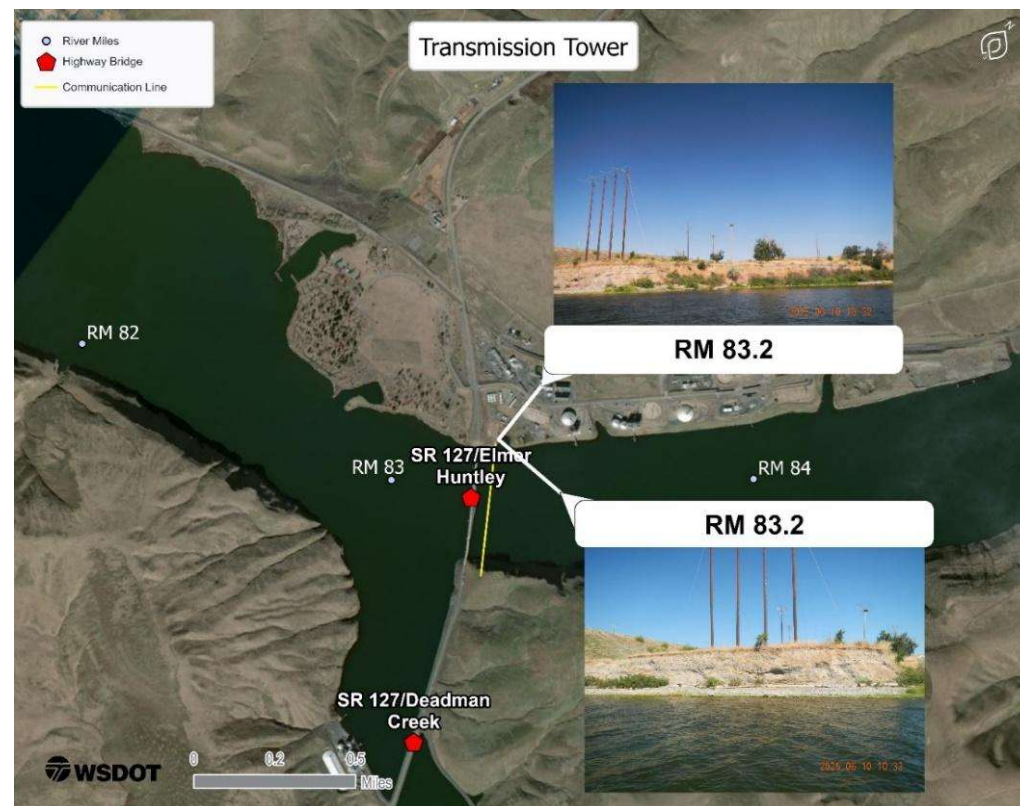
Geologic Impacts

- Site visit to Snake River
- Drawdown risk to embankments:
 - Occurs over the short term (weeks)
 - Impacted by drawdown rates
- Erosion risk to embankments:
 - Occurs over the long term (years)



Impacts on Roads, Rail, and Utilities

- Utilities identified based on existing databases
 - Verified through site visits
- Impacts on roads and rail are developed for locations close to the river



Model Results Future Scenarios

Scenarios 1 - 4

Scenario 1: Base year (2020) model with dams in place

- Discussed at previous TAC meeting
- Showed catchment areas for each port and rail terminal
- Examined lock volumes, pool volumes, and river volumes relative to existing data



Scenario 2: Base year (2020) model with dam breaches

Scenario 3: Future year (2045) model with dams in place

Scenario 4: Future year (2045) model with dam breaches



Scenario 3: Future Year (2045) with Dams Operating

Purpose of Model Run: Determine Impacts of Long-Term Commodity Growth on Transportation Network

Scenario 3: Growth Rates 2020-2045

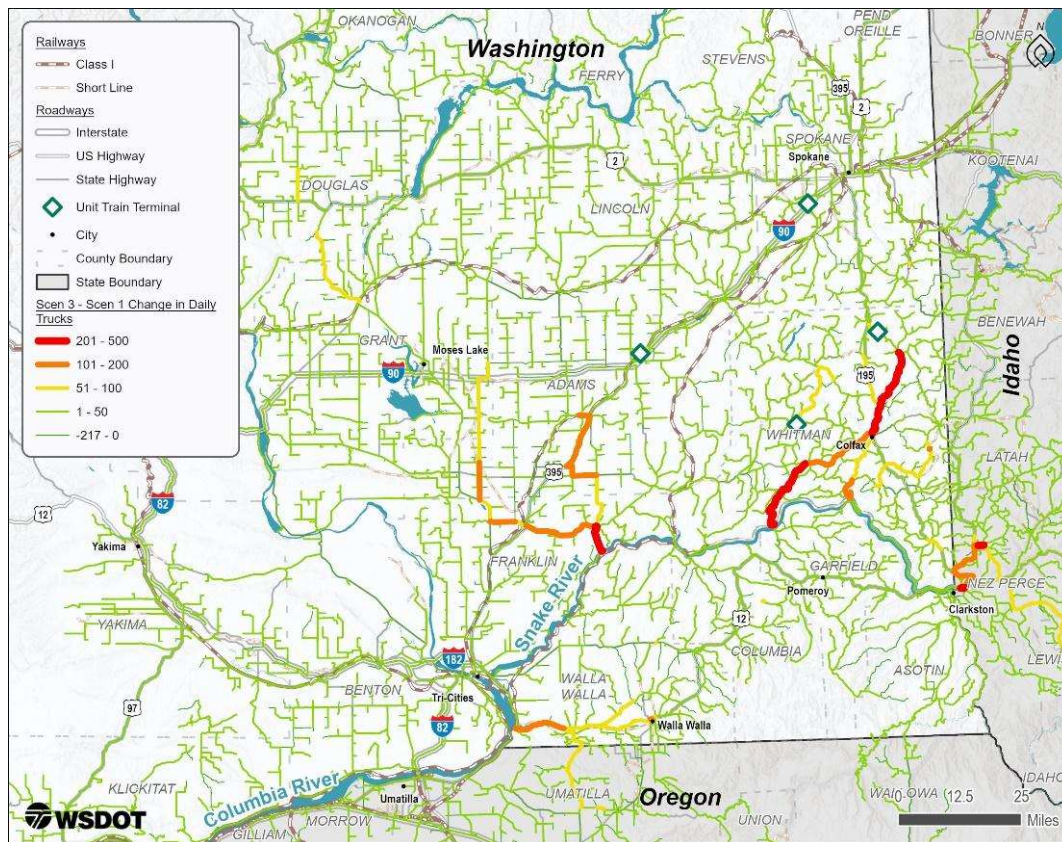
Commodities Within Study Area

Commodity	Annual Growth Rate
Wheat	1.29% (USDA)
Fertilizer	1.35% (based on future acreage)
Wood	0.28% (based on historical growth)

Background Freight Traffic

Mode	Annual Growth Rate	Source
Truck	1.4%	WSDOT counts
Rail	2.25%	FHWA FAF
Barge	n/a	n/a

Scenario 3: Change in Number of Daily Trucks Compared to Scenario 1

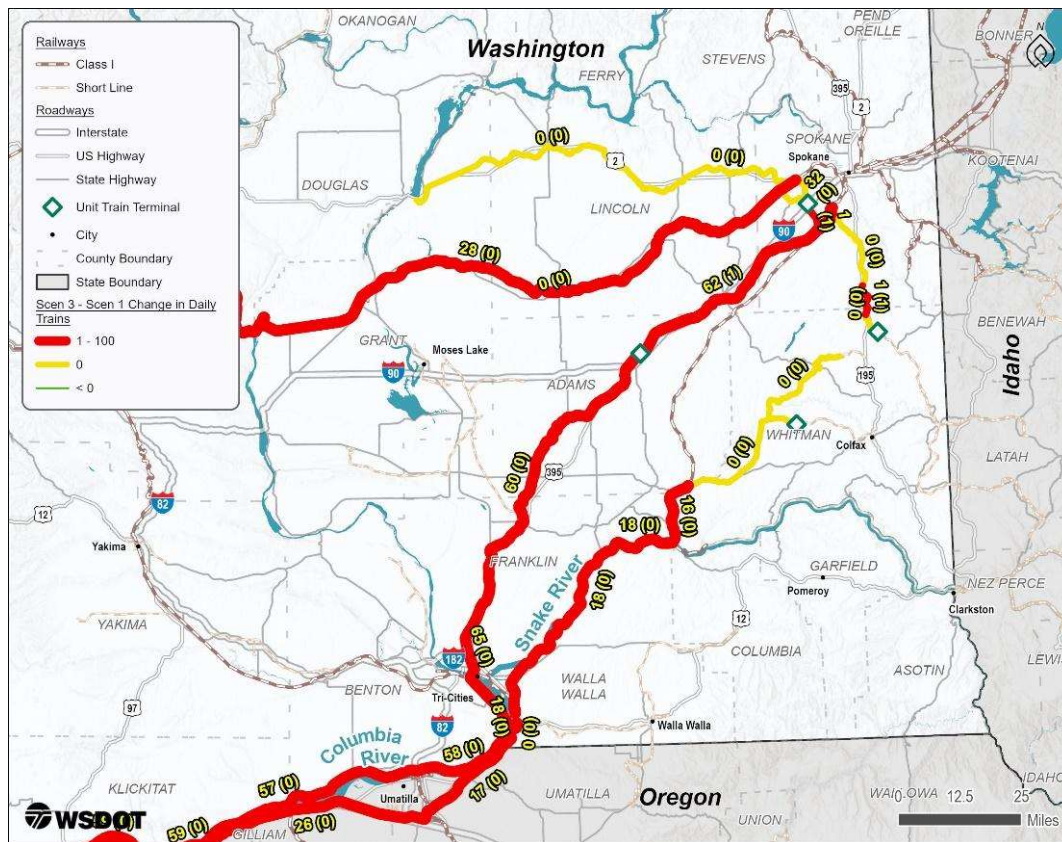


Additional trucks are highest on roads heading into Ports of:

- Lewiston (500)
- Central Ferry (400)
- Lyons Ferry (300)
- Wallula (200)

Additional trucks on roads heading into rail terminals are minimal

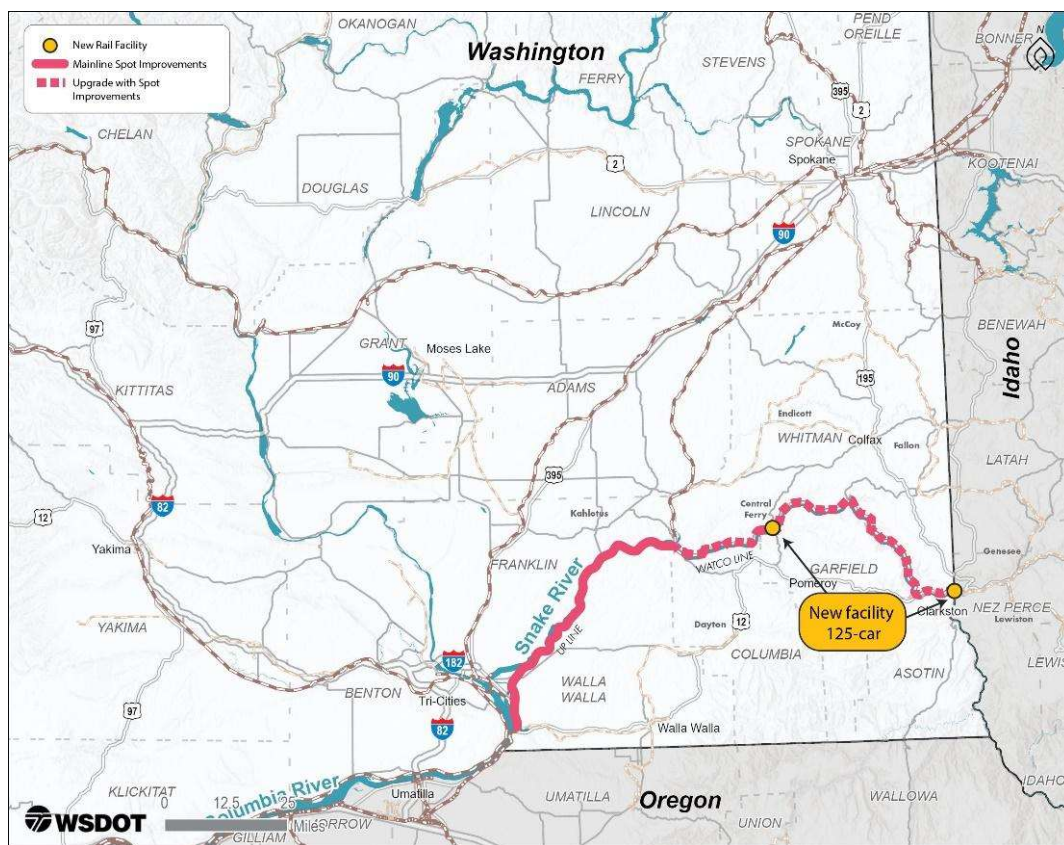
Scenario 3: Change in Number of Peak Daily Trains Compared to Scenario 1



Map includes an increase in both local and through rail traffic

Scenario 5: Future Year (2045) New Unit Train Terminals in Lewiston/Wilma and Central Ferry with Dams Breached

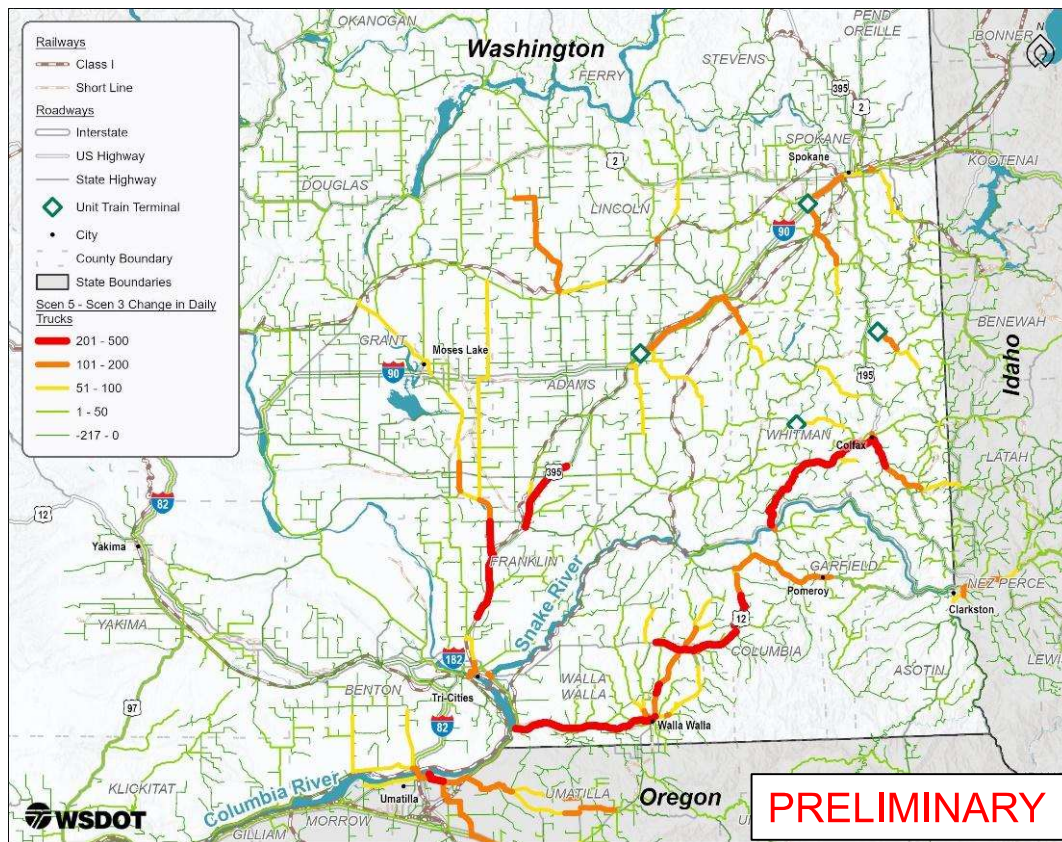
Scenario 5: Two New Unit Train Rail Terminals



New terminals at Lewiston/Wilma and Central Ferry

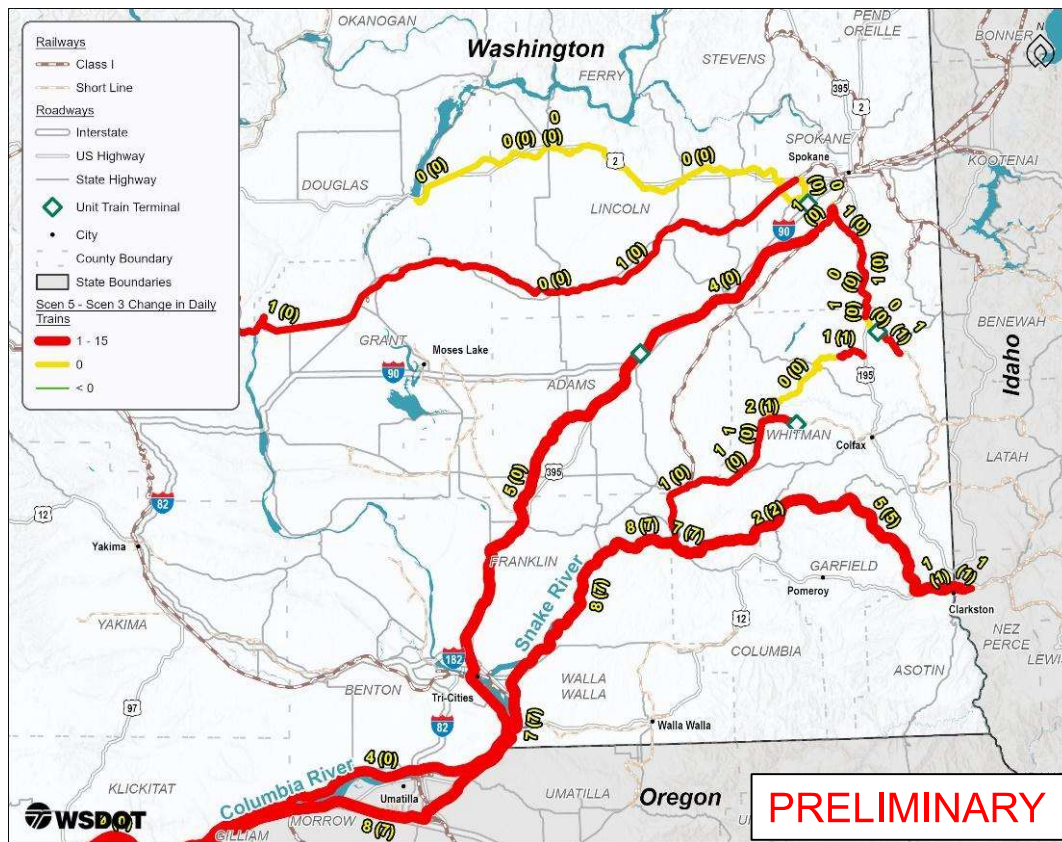
Preserve/Improve WATCO and UP rail lines between Lewiston and Tri-Cities

Scenario 5: Change in Number of Daily Trucks Compared to Scenario 3



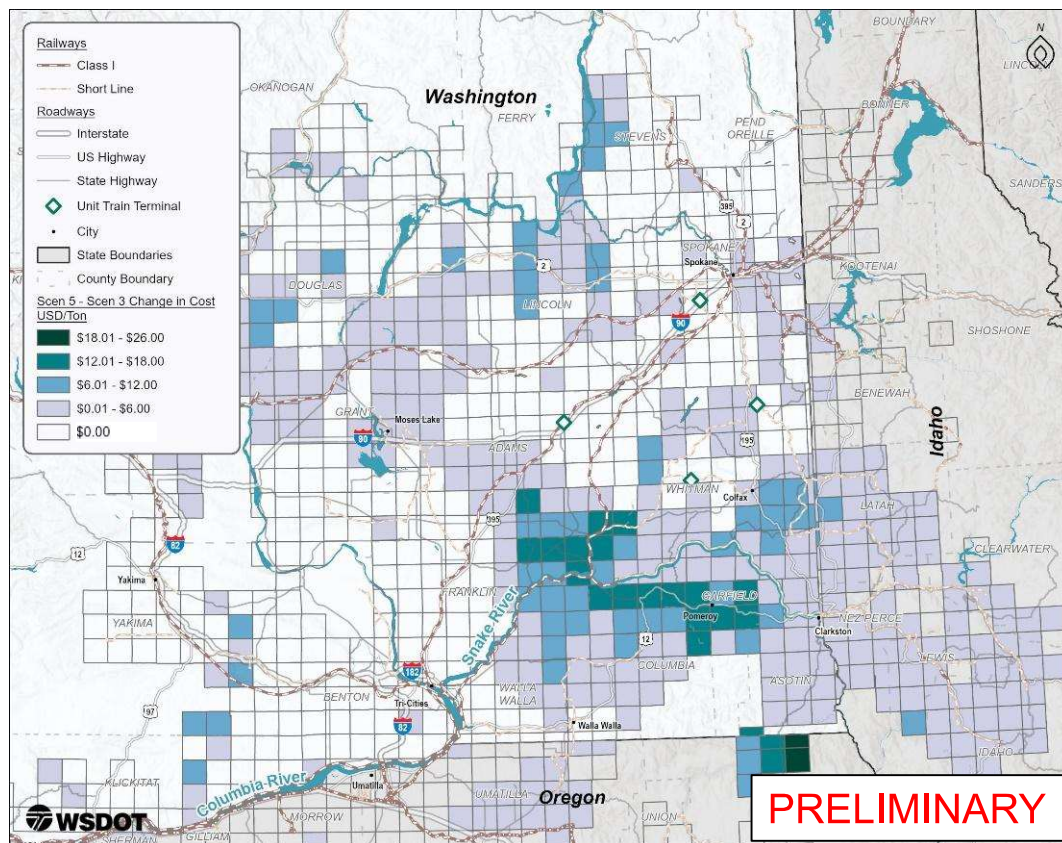
Truck volumes increase to both unit train and shortline terminals

Scenario 5: Change in Number of Peak Daily Trains Compared to Scenario 3



Train volumes increase alongside the Lower Snake River and on the BNSF mainline

Scenario 5: Change in Transportation Costs Compared to Scenario 3



Increased costs are experienced by shippers located along the LSR due to higher relative rail costs

Implications from Scenario 5 Model Run

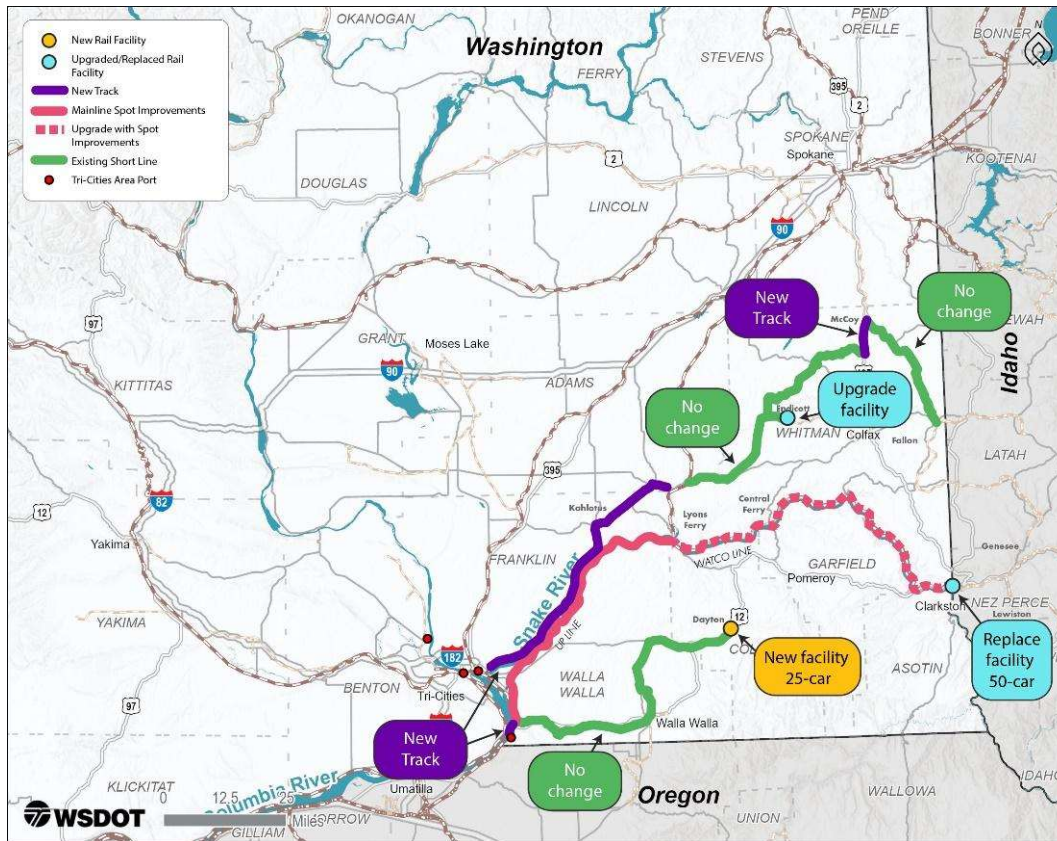
Most additional truck volumes are attracted to riverports rather than rail terminals

Unit train terminals do exhibit growth in train volumes, particularly at Four Lakes and Ritzville

A concentration of increasing transportation costs along the LSR

Model Run Results – Scenario 6: Future Year (2045) Shortline Rail to Pasco Area with Dams Breached

Scenario 6: Shortline Rail to Tri-Cities



New shortline rail terminals

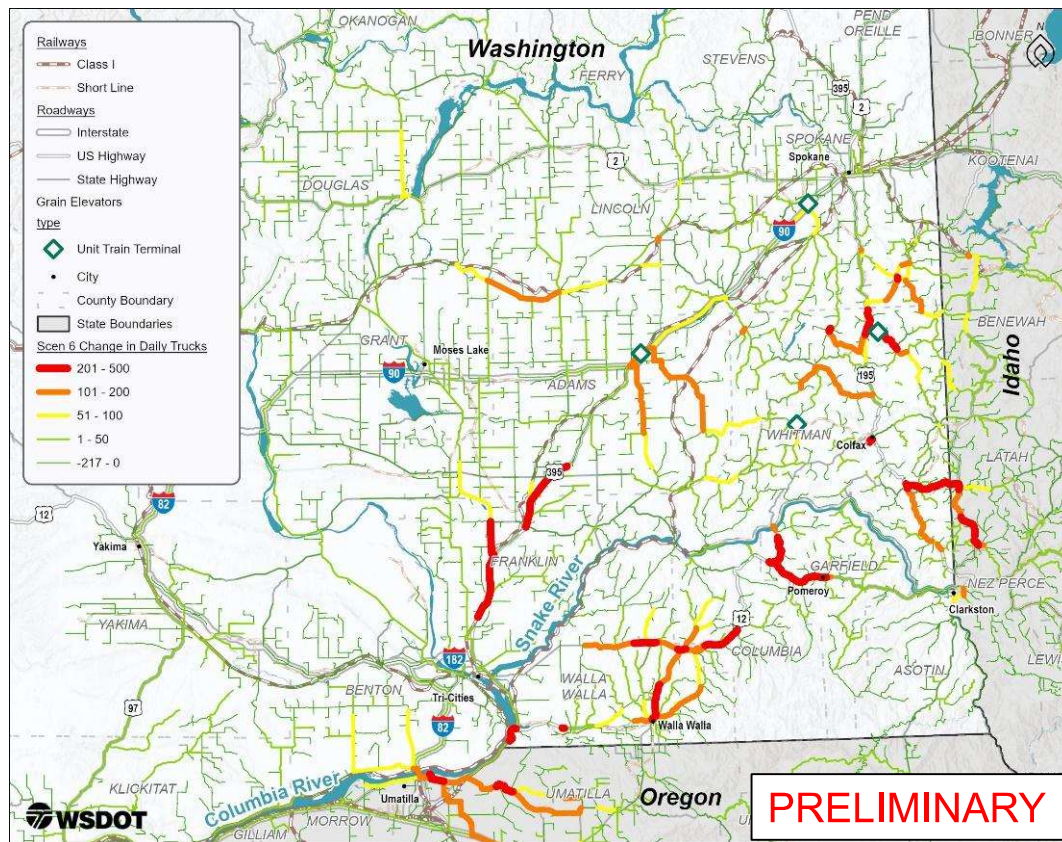
- Dayton
- Lewiston/Wilma

New track

- Columbia Plateau Trail
- Thornton to McCoy
- Wallula

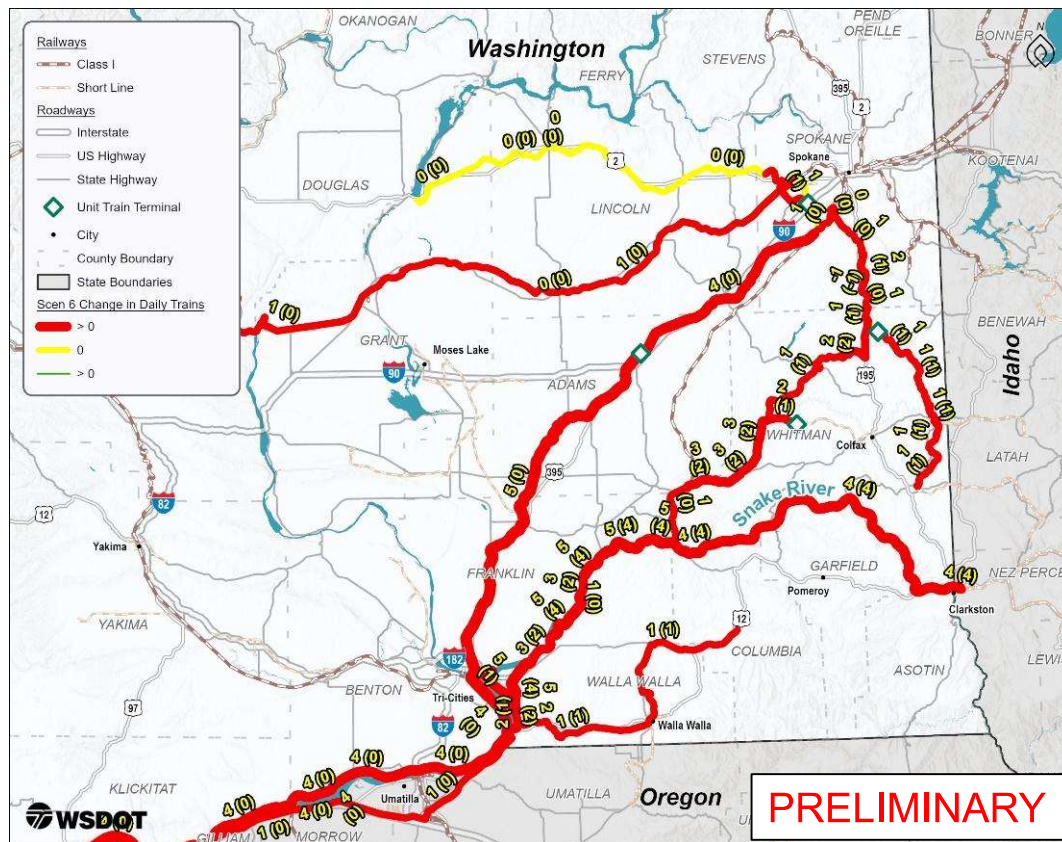
Same track improvements as Scenario 5 along the LSR

Scenario 6: Change in Number of Daily Trucks Compared to Scenario 3



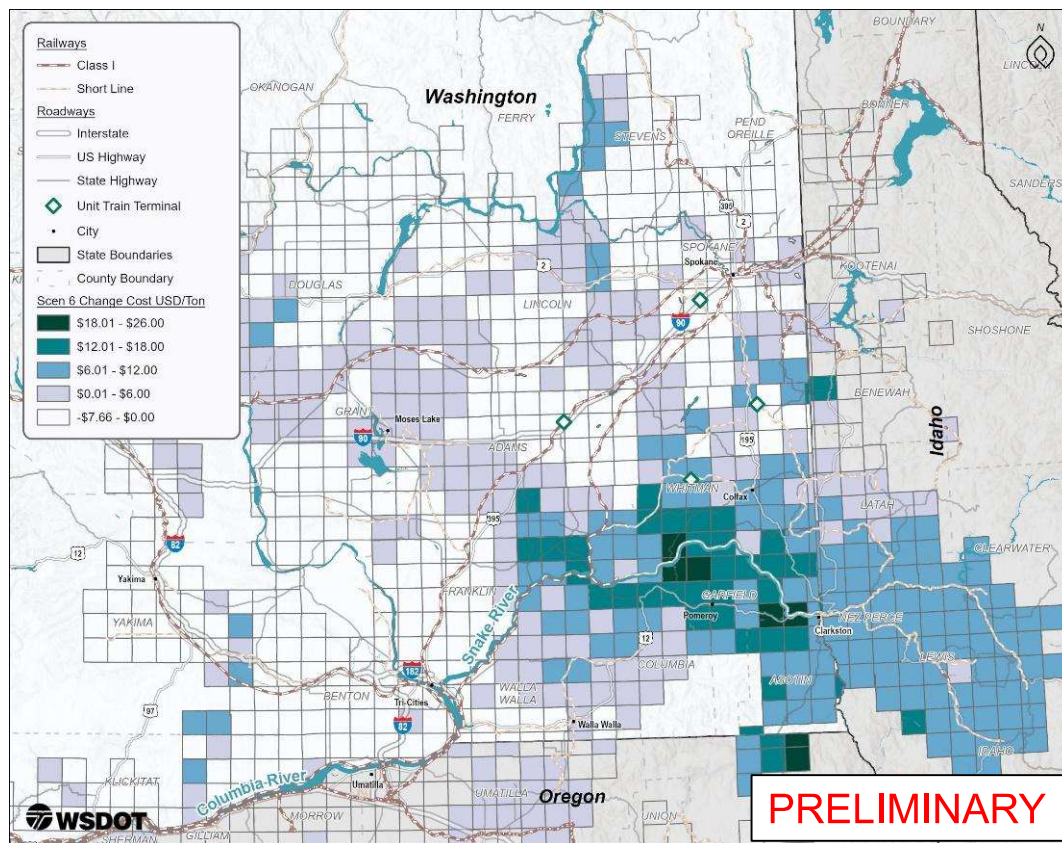
Increase in truck volumes to shortline terminals

Scenario 6: Change in Number of Peak Daily Trains Compared to Scenario 3



Train volumes increases are more spread across the rail network

Scenario 6: Change in Transportation Costs Compared to Scenario 3



Increased costs are experienced by shippers located along the LSR due to higher relative rail costs, particularly at Lewiston and Central Ferry

Implications from Scenario 6 Model Run

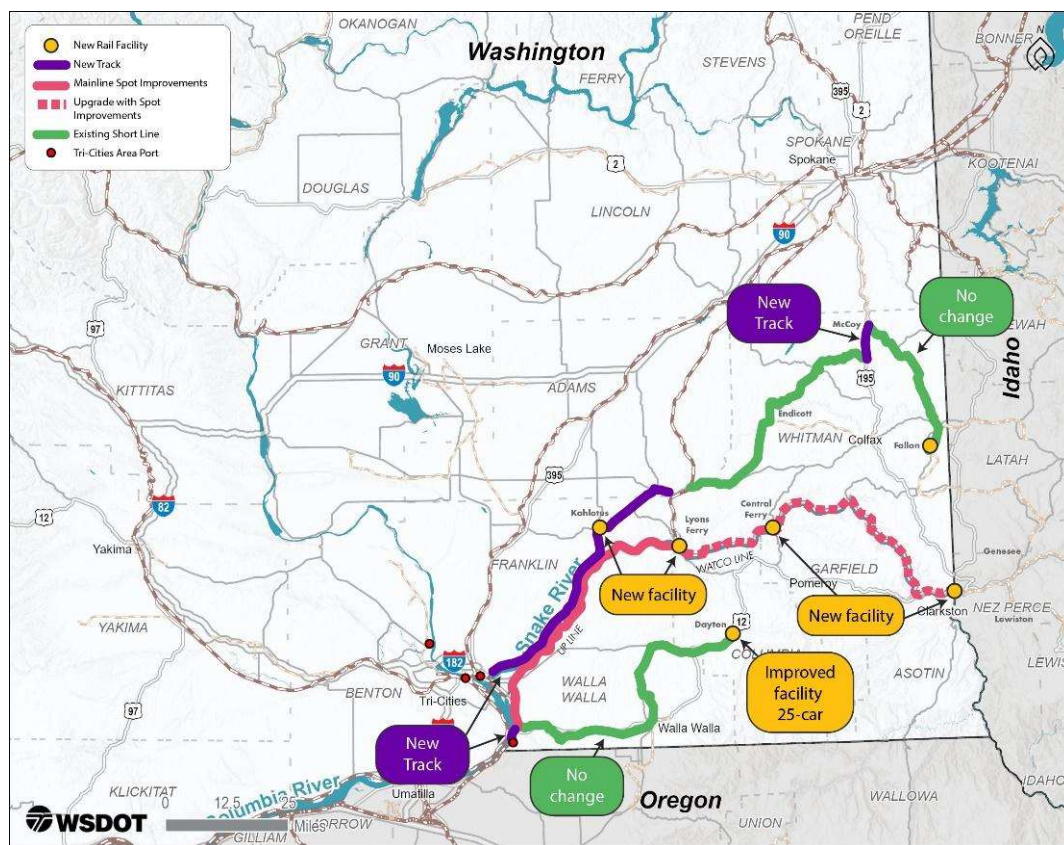
Most additional truck volumes are attracted to rail terminals rather than downstream riverports

Both unit train terminals and shortline terminals increase volumes, but unit trains grow faster

A concentration of increasing transportation costs along the LSR, similar to Scenario 5

Model Run Results – Scenario 7: Future Year (2045) Many Solutions with Dams Breached

Scenario 7: Many Solutions



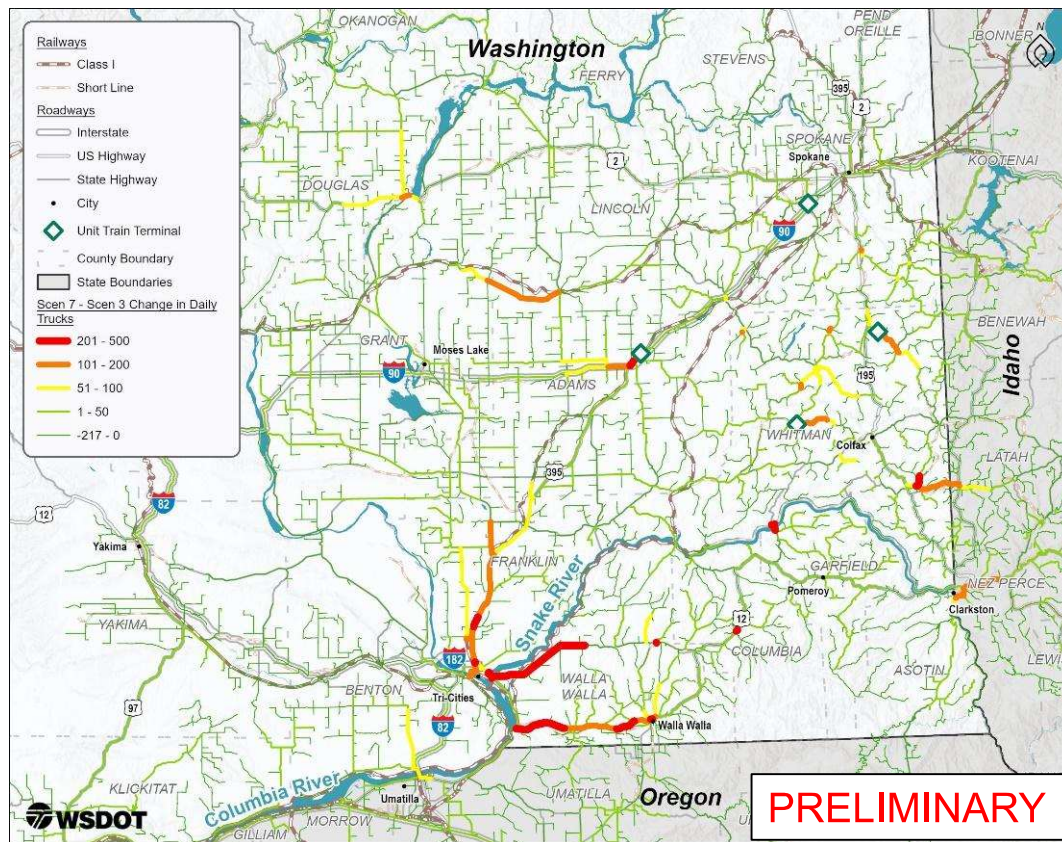
Transportation costs for some townships

- Product of the relative pricing (barge vs. shuttle rail)

Some of sections of highways are not used

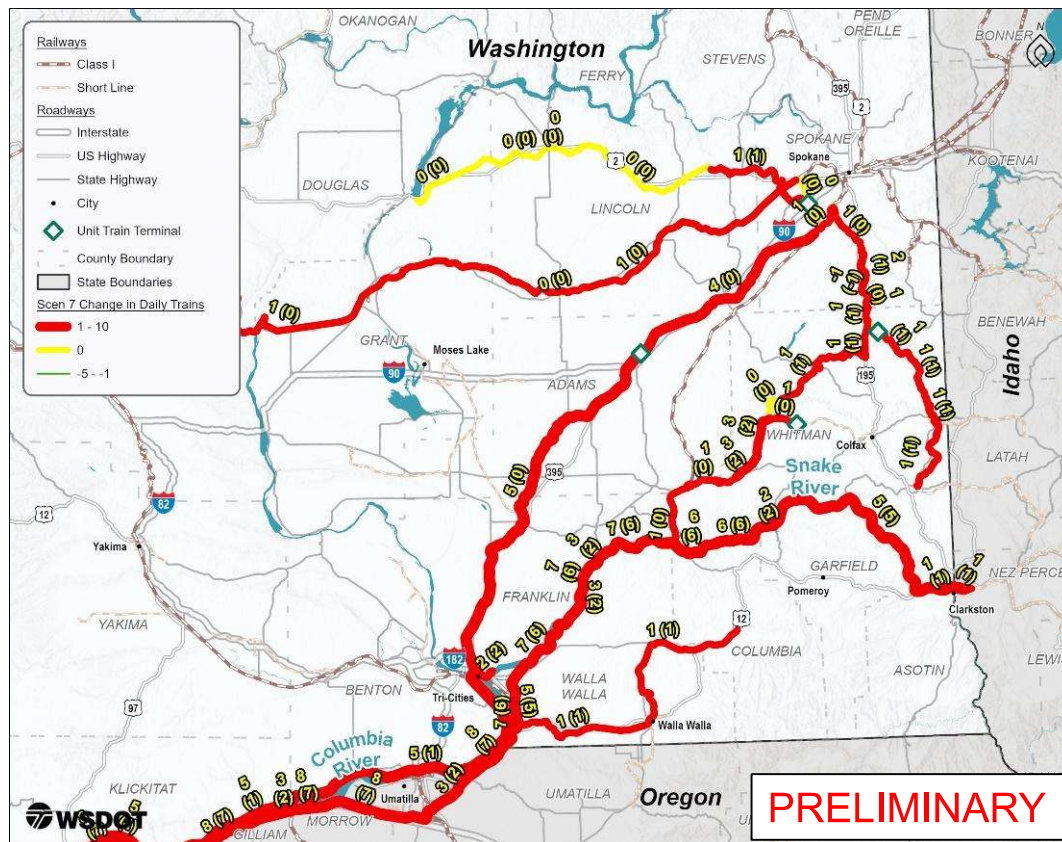
- Origination points limit geographical dispersion

Scenario 7: Change in Number of Daily Trucks Compared to Scenario 3



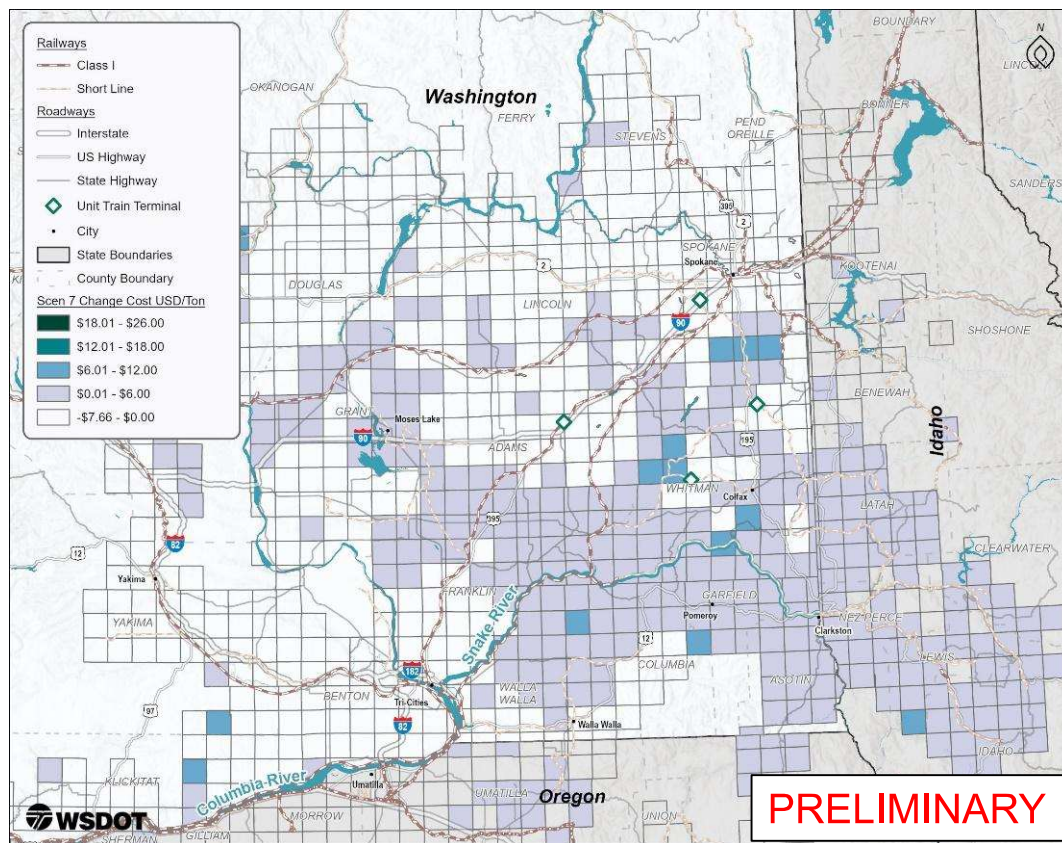
Truck volume increases are highest leading into the Tri-Cities area

Scenario 7: Change in Number of Peak Daily Trains Compared to Scenario 3



Train volume increases are more spread across the rail network

Scenario 7: Change in Transportation Costs Compared to Scenario 3



Transportation costs rise relative to Scenario 3 in many locations

However, the increases are much lower than Scenarios 5 and 6

Implications from Scenario 7 Model Run

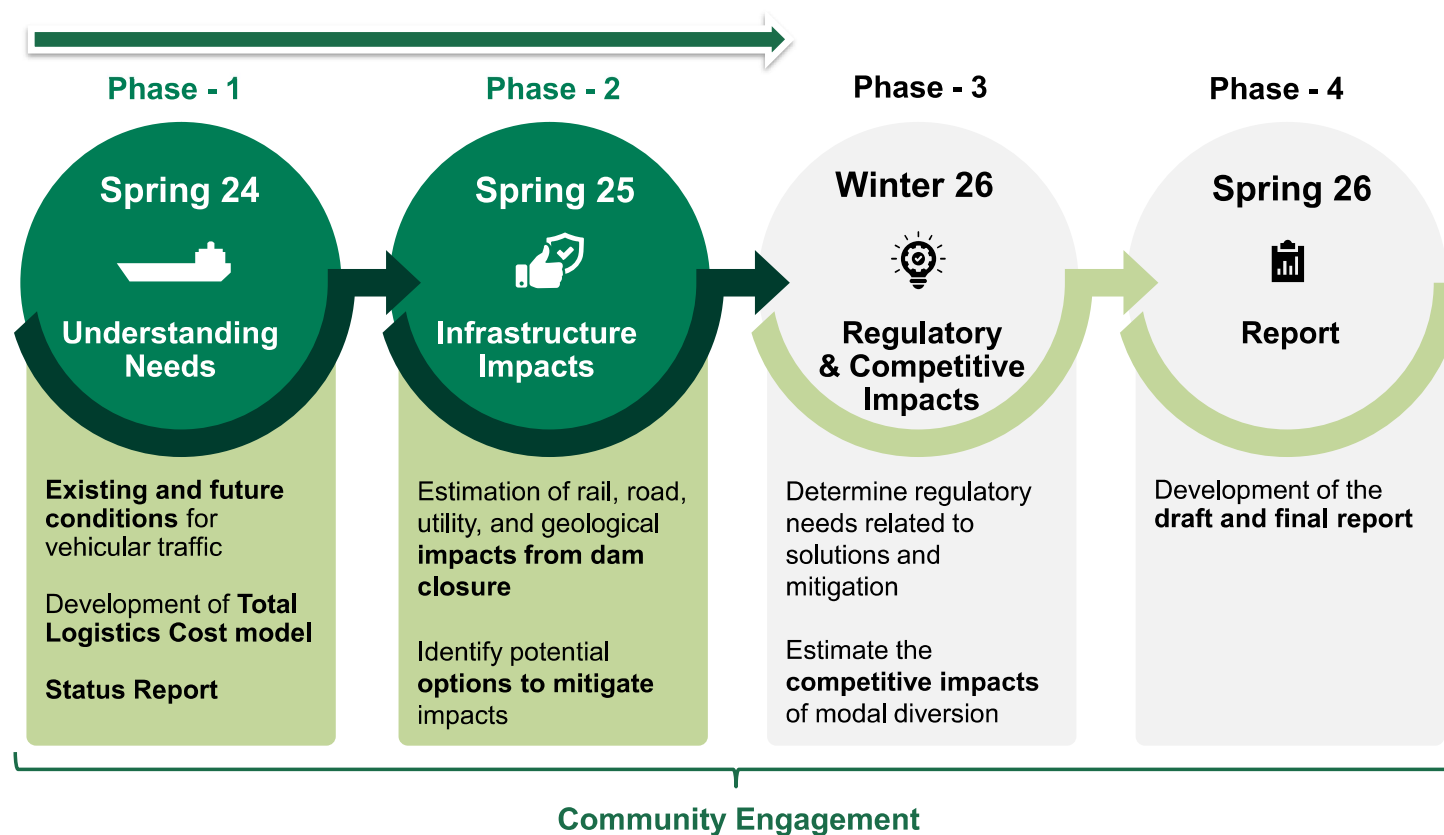
Shortest truck trips of all scenarios

Key effective terminals are Dayton, Lewiston/Wilma, and Kahlotus

Lowest increase in transportation costs of all scenarios

Next Steps

Study Phases: Where we are now



Next Steps

- Quality Control Review of Scenarios 5-7
- Develop and Run Scenario 8
- Determine capacity enhancements needed at rail and port terminals
- Finalize costs for alternative future scenarios
- Engagement
 - CAC meeting – December 15th
 - Online open house (January 24 – February 7)
- Begin competitive and regulatory analysis

Contact



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

Jim Mahugh, P.E.

WSDOT LSRD Study Lead

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Jim.Mahugh@wsdot.wa.gov



Economic Development Advocacy

Kris Carlson

Port of Whitman State Lobbyist

Carlson Public Affairs

2026 Legislative Session Preview

A look back at 2025:

- Legislature passed biennial budget of \$77.9 billion
 - \$7.4 billion in new spending
 - \$9.4 billion in new taxes; ~\$21 billion proposed
 - \$15 billion transportation package

What's next in 2026:

- November revenue forecast is bleak; down \$390 million
- Shortfall will drive conversations in Olympia during 2026 session.
- Democrats signal reviving tax proposals
 - High wage earner payroll tax (JUMPSTART)
 - Financial Intangibles Tax (Wealth Tax)
 - 9.9% tax on households with AGI >\$1 million

2026 Legislative Session Preview – cont'd

What's next in 2026:

- Senator June Robinson told colleagues “don’t ask” on earmarks in operating budget
- Governor Ferguson will release supplemental budget in Dec.

Other possible legislative issues in 2026:

- Energy consumption by data center growth
 - Sustainability of CCA milestones/implementation
- Public Records Act Reform
- Minimum Wage Increase
- Cleaning up SB 5814 – Sales Tax on Services
- Healthcare funding amid federal cuts
- \$500 million in tort liability



Whitman County Local Government Coalition

Here's why this matters:

- Eastern Washington often gets left out of conversations in Olympia
 - King & Pierce County, big tech, manufacturing companies on the West side dominate
 - At federal level, urban centers are prioritized over rural communities
- Whitman County is rural and interconnected
- We need a voice – a unified voice that moves forward regional priorities



Whitman County Local Government Coalition

Benefits of Coalition:

- Access to a lobbyist in Olympia and DC at a lower cost
- Collaboration on regional priorities and project funding strategies
- Assistance on process and requests
- Up-to-date information on policy issues that impact Whitman County



Questions

Thank you!

Kris Carlson

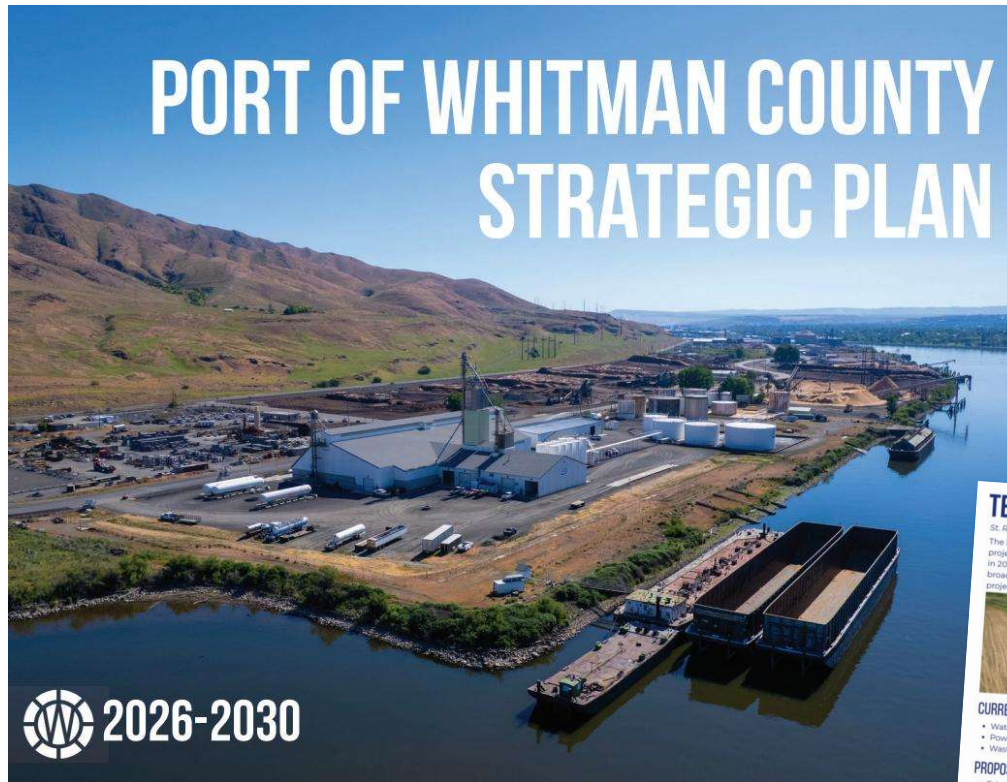
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Port Planning



**Port of
Whitman
County**



TEKOA PROPERTY

St. Route 27, Tekoa, WA 99033

The Port of Whitman County is developing a 156-acre industrial park at the former Faunce Airstrip near Tekoa, WA. The project is the first Port-owned industrial site in northern Whitman County. Fully funded and scheduled for completion in 2026, the site will feature up to five building pads with utilities including three-phase power, water, and high-speed broadband. Located 2.5 miles from Tekoa, a farming community with local services and recreational amenities, the project aims to boost economic development in the region.

CURRENT UTILITIES

- Water: Well
- Power: Single phase power up to 240 V
- Wastewater: Septic

PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

- Telecommunications extension
- New well and water system
- Three-phase power
- Right turn lane on SD-27
- Access road

QUICK FACTS

- 156 total acres, heavy industrial
- First Port-owned industrial site in northern Whitman County
- Former airstrip
- Lots for sale or lease

FUTURE USE

- Industrial park

For the most up to date information about this project, visit portofwhitman.com

A NOTE FROM THE COMMISSION

Thank you to everyone who engaged with the Port of Whitman County in 2025. Whether you joined our commission meetings, provided input during community outreach events, attended the 2025 Office Hours Family Hearing, participated in our Economic Development Informational Hearings, or checked with us one-on-one, we are grateful for your continued involvement.

In 2025, the Port expanded its presence in communities across Whitman County through partnerships and projects. We joined multiple economic development and business agreements with local organizations, including the Town of Republic and the Whitman County Historical Society. We continued efforts to broaden industrial and estate opportunities in Whitman County through projects like the industrial park outside of Tekoa, the Technology Transfer opportunities in Whitman County through projects like the industrial park outside of Tekoa, the Technology Transfer opportunities in Whitman County through projects like the industrial park outside of Tekoa, the Technology Transfer opportunities in Whitman County through projects like the industrial park outside of Tekoa.

The following pages of this report card outline the projects completed or underway this year and explain how they support the Port's vision and goals. This 2025 report card is the last report for the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and we are excited to see the Port's vision and goals come to life. As the end of 2025, the Port adopted a new strategic plan for the years 2026-2030 and a Comprehensive Scheme of land use improvements for 2026. To view these documents, please visit portofwhitman.com and select "Port Planning" under the "Our Port" tab. While these plans document the future and provide a vision for the future, we welcome feedback at any time during our public meetings. You may also contact Port staff at 509.387.3719 or email port@portofwhitman.com.

Karl Webber
District 1

Kristine Meyer
District 2

Tom Kammerzell
District 3



Closing

Follow us on
social media:



Email: ado@portwhitman.com
Next EDIM: January 2026



www.portwhitman.com