

Amtrak Cascades Train 501 Derailment - Dec. 18, 2017

Last Updated: Dec. 18, 2017 at 3 p.m. ET

Where did the derailment of Amtrak Cascades Train 501 occur?

- The derailment occurred in DuPont, Wash., where the railroad crosses I-5 southwest of the Eagles Pride Golf Course – at railroad milepost 19.79. The railroad bridge crosses the highway just west of where Mounts Rd SW and Nisqually Rd SW meet and also cross I-5.

What time did the derailment occur?

- It occurred at approximately 7:34 a.m. Pacific Time.

Who owns the tracks where the derailment occurred?

- The track where the derailment occurred – known as the Point Defiance Bypass – is owned by Sound Transit, which also operates over a portion of it. BNSF dispatches trains over the bypass.

What was the consist of Train 501?

- Amtrak Cascades Train 501 consisted of two locomotives – a Charger diesel locomotive and a P-42 – as well as 12 passenger cars. The latter included Business class and Coach cars and a Bistro food service car. A standard Talgo coach car contains approximately 36 seats. The Talgo trainset and Charger locomotive involved in the derailment are owned by WSDOT.

How many passengers and Amtrak staff were onboard Train 501 when it derailed?

- There were approximately 80 customers onboard, five Amtrak crew members, and one Talgo technician.

What is the Point Defiance Bypass Project?

Rail - Tacoma - Bypass of Point Defiance - Project Map



On the map above, orange indicates the bypass, while green is the BNSF route along Puget Sound used by Amtrak Cascades trains through Dec. 17, 2017. Service via the bypass began on Dec. 18, 2017. The derailment of Train 501 occurred near the southern end of the bypass (close to where the green and orange lines join). Map: WSDOT.

- Train 501 was traveling over a portion of the Point Defiance Bypass between Olympia and Tacoma. The \$181 million Point Defiance Bypass Project was a multi-year, state-led program to reroute passenger trains away from the curving shore of Puget Sound (on track owned by BNSF) to an existing inland rail line between Tacoma and Olympia that has less freight traffic. The bypass project was undertaken to improve reliability and reduce overall travel times for the Amtrak Cascades service.

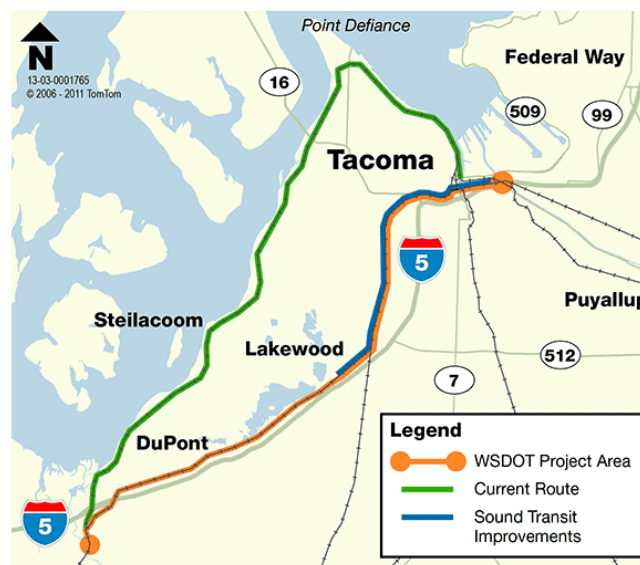
The Point Defiance Bypass Project, which commenced in late 2014, was the final piece of the overarching Cascades High-Speed Rail Program. Funded largely through \$800 million in federal high-speed rail grants under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, it was designed to deliver incremental and critical rail infrastructure improvements for emerging high-speed rail service, expand travel choices, and foster economic growth in Washington State. The bypass project, along with other enhancements, allowed for the launch of two additional daily, round-trip trains between Seattle and Portland. Sound Transit currently uses a portion of the bypass for Sounder commuter rail service to Lakewood.

Learn more at https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Rail/PNWRC_PtDefiance/default.htm

When did Amtrak Cascades trains begin using the Point Defiance Bypass?

- Amtrak Cascades trains between Seattle and Portland began using the Point Defiance Bypass (orange line on map below) on Dec. 18, 2017. Prior to that date, trains ran along Puget Sound (green line). Map courtesy of WSDOT.

Rail - Tacoma - Bypass of Point Defiance - Project Map





Who maintains the Talgo cars used on the Amtrak Cascades trains?

- Talgo maintains this equipment for WSDOT and Amtrak, with Talgo and Amtrak employees. Amtrak is responsible for maintenance of the locomotives.

What is the regular schedule of Amtrak Cascades Train 501?

- As of Dec. 18, 2017, daily southbound Train 501 is scheduled to depart Seattle at 6:00 a.m., arriving at its final destination of Portland, Ore., at 9:20 a.m. It makes intermediate stops at Tukwila, Tacoma, Olympia, Centralia, Kelso and Vancouver.

What is the Amtrak Cascades Service?

- Frequent Amtrak Cascades trains connect 18 cities along a 467-mile corridor from Vancouver, B.C., to Eugene Ore. Learn more at <http://www.amtrakcascades.com/our-train-schedules>

Who owns the Amtrak Cascades service?

- The ownership and management of Amtrak Cascades service is held by the states of Washington and Oregon. While the states coordinate responsibilities, Washington is chiefly responsible for the service in Washington and British Columbia, and Oregon is chiefly responsible for service in Oregon. Amtrak operates the service under contract with the states.