

For More Information



Michael Williams



Port of Ridgefield
PO Box 55
111 West Division St.
Ridgefield, WA 98642



360.887.3873



MWilliams@portridgefield.org



www.portridgefield.org

The Port of Ridgefield Commission meets at 6 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month in the Port Administration Office, 111 W Division Street.

Rail Facts

- Nearly 50 trains pass by the Port and downtown Ridgefield every day.
- The Mill Street rail crossing has been rated the fifth most dangerous crossing in the state.
- Over 80% of freight in the Pacific Northwest is rail dependent.
- By 2025, freight trains through the Ridgefield-Vancouver-Portland rail corridor are expected to increase by 43%. Passenger trains are expected to increase by 160%.
- It takes longer to move a rail container of freight through the Ridgefield-Vancouver-Portland rail corridor than through Chicago.
- \$1 invested in rail improvements can generate up to \$12 in economic benefits. (*American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials*)
- Increased rail capacity results in reduced harmful air emissions from trucks. (*American Association of Railroads*)

PORT OF RIDGEFIELD

Rail Overpass Project

PORT OF RIDGEFIELD, WASHINGTON

MAY 2008

Project to resolve safety, access issues

Environmental evaluation completed. Funding, final design next on agenda.



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PROJECT STATUS

Currently, the Port and waterfront areas are accessible by two at-grade crossings at Mill and Division streets. The proposed new single crossing would separate road from rail by means of an overpass starting at the western end of Pioneer Street.

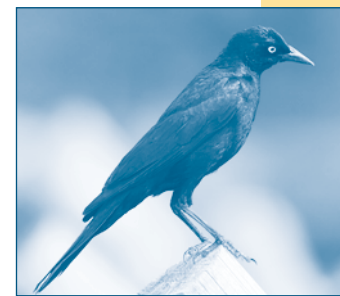
The planning process for the new crossing included community outreach, consideration of nearly 30 design options and concepts, more detailed evaluation of the three most promising options, and a thorough environmental evaluation of the preferred alternative, a Pioneer Street overpass. This first phase of the project was funded by a \$1 million federal grant.

The environmental evaluation of the proposed overpass is now complete. Next steps include funding requests, final design, and permitting. The Port of Ridgefield has committed \$2 million toward the estimated \$12.5 million overpass. About 70% of the funding will be sought from federal and state sources. The balance would come from local sources.

“This new crossing would provide safer, unobstructed access while improving rail mobility through the Ridgefield area.”

Overpass passes environmental test

A major step in planning for a new access route into the Port and waterfront areas was the environmental evaluation of the preferred alternative.



Brewer's Blackbird

A Pioneer Street overpass was measured against a variety of criteria and impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Studies included air quality; biology and wetlands; cultural; floodplain; geology and soils; hazardous materials;

land use; noise; socio-economic and environmental justice; and visual quality. During this rigorous process, the overpass also was compared to the no-build alternative. Research and field studies were conducted in 2007, and a detailed technical memorandum or report was produced on each of the topics.

The Washington State Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration approved this NEPA documentation in February and March 2008, respectively.

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Rail Overpass
Project Status



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Why is the project needed?

The essential purpose of the Rail Overpass Project is to provide safe, unobstructed, and direct access into the Port of Ridgefield and Lake River waterfront areas. At present, safety and access to the Port and waterfront by emergency vehicles, cars, trucks, and pedestrians are considered deficient because of the street-level rail crossings and inadequate emergency access. The Mill Street rail crossing, one of two at-grade crossings into the Port and waterfront area, has been



BNSF rail line looking north at Division Street crossing

rated the fifth most dangerous crossing in the state.

Specific benefits of the project include:

- **Safer access.** Drivers would no longer drive directly across the tracks.
- **Unobstructed access,** especially for emergency vehicles. Access into or out of the Port and waterfront area would no longer be blocked by trains.
- **Improved rail mobility.** Trains would be able to move through the Ridgefield area faster, safer, and more efficiently.
- **Fewer train whistles.** In the absence of street-level crossings, trains would not be required to blow their whistles as frequently.

Community has voice in decision-making process

Stakeholder interviews, open houses lead public involvement effort

The Ridgefield area community had a variety of opportunities to learn about and comment on the proposed rail overpass throughout the planning process.

In early 2006, the project team asked nearly 50 community members and interested persons to voice their ideas, concerns, and comments on the project. These project stakeholders represented local residents, businesses, government agencies, and environmental groups.

Through in-person and phone interviews, the stakeholders provided



September 25, 2007 open house

the team with important feedback, new and unique information, and community perceptions.

In 2007, the project team again reached out to the stakeholders to update them on the project direction, gain “real time” feedback, and provide a road map of upcoming public involvement opportunities. Those opportunities in 2007 included community open houses on March 28, April 25, and September 25. Each open house was preceded by a mailing to the community alerting them to the event and providing the latest project details.

The proposed overpass and approach would start at the intersection of Pioneer Street and Main Avenue, head west along an extension of Pioneer Street, continue over the BNSF rail line, turn north parallel to the BNSF right of way, and meet Mill Street at a new T intersection. A new road would continue north of the proposed intersection, ending with a cul-de-sac at Division Street. The north end of the Port of Ridgefield property would be accessed via the cul-de-sac. The Mill Street intersection would provide access to McCuddy's Marina and the south end of the Port.



Preliminary artist rendering of the proposed overpass, looking east from boat launch ramp.

Project Timeline

2004	2006		2007		2008		2009	2010	2011	2012
4th Quarter	1st Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	1st Quarter	2nd/3rd Quarters			
Congress authorized \$1 million to study project feasibility and complete preliminary design and engineering (funding becomes available in late 2005)	Stakeholder Interviews		Open House #1 (design alternatives introduced)	Planning Process Started Open House #2 (preferred alternative reviewed)	Open House #3 (preliminary environmental and technical field studies and preliminary overpass design reviewed)	NEPA Approval	SEPA Review	Design and permitting (contingent on funding)		Possible completion of Overpass Construction (contingent on funding)
									Possible start of Overpass Construction (contingent on funding)	
Environmental Process										