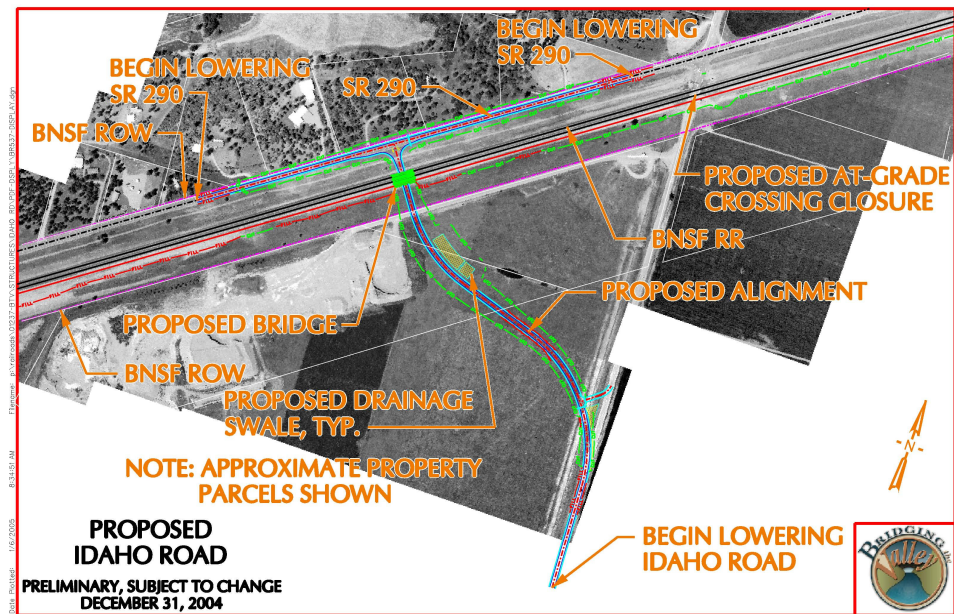


Idaho Road / BNSF Grade Separation

Spokane County, WA

Project Location

Idaho Road is a north-south rural major-collector road in Spokane County. It crosses the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) mainline near SR 290 (Trent Avenue), just west of the Washington-Idaho state line. Idaho Road currently carries approximately 920 vehicles per day. The BNSF line carries between 30 and 50 trains per day. The Idaho Road crossing is currently protected by standard railroad gates and signals.



Project Description

This project proposes to relocate and reconstruct Idaho Road to pass under three BNSF tracks and intersect with SR 290 (Trent Avenue) about 1,600 feet west of the existing intersection. SR 290 will be lowered, similar to the Argonne Road underpass, to take advantage of the natural groundline.

This project is critical because of the projected increase in vehicular traffic in the area over the next 30 years and because of its location, which is approximately half way between the two nearest crossings of the BNSF track. The separation of Idaho Road and the BNSF tracks will provide a vital transportation link to the businesses and residences getting across the BNSF tracks.

Proposed Schedule

The Design Report, completed in December 2004, is based on guidance generated from a preliminary study done in 2001. The Design Report incorporates comments from the railroads, Washington State Department of Transportation, Spokane County, and the public. Environmental approval for the entire Bridging the Valley project was received in August 2006. Final design and construction will begin when funds are available.

Summary of Benefits

When completed, the Bridging the Valley project will separate vehicle traffic from train traffic in the 42 mile corridor between Spokane, Washington and Athol, Idaho. By removing all at-grade rail crossings, Bridging the Valley will:

- Improve public safety by reducing rail / vehicle collisions;
- Improve emergency access to residents and businesses along the corridor;
- Eliminate waiting time for vehicles at rail crossings;
- Reduce noise levels—no more train whistles near crossings;
- Improve traffic flow due to separated grade crossings; and
- Enhance development opportunities with a single rail corridor served by the region's largest railroads.

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