

Havana Street / BNSF Grade Separation

Spokane, WA

Project Location

Havana Street is a north-south principal arterial in Spokane Valley. It crosses the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) mainline between Broadway and SR 290 (Trent Road). The BNSF line carries between 60 and 100 trains per day. Havana Street is currently protected by standard railroad gates and signals, and is blocked 18 hours per day by BNSF operations.

Project Description

The project will reconstruct Havana Street to pass over the BNSF tracks. This will allow free movement of freight and commuter vehicles. Havana Street is in a highly industrial area of Spokane with access to SR 290, the Interstate Fairgrounds, and the Spokane Indians baseball stadium.

This grade separation will dramatically affect traffic patterns and reduce traffic congestion. If the project is not constructed, the average daily trips (ADT) along the Havana Street corridor is projected to only increase from 1,190 to 1,700 over the next 30 years. If the project is completed, the ADT would increase to 19,500. This will draw vehicular traffic, especially trucks, from nearby Freya Street and Fancher Street and improve overall traffic flow.

In addition to the overall Bridging the Valley project benefits listed below, the separation of Havana Street and the BNSF tracks will:

- Eliminate delays waiting for trains;
- Provide a vital transportation link to the businesses and residences north of the BNSF tracks and I-90; and
- Improve public safety by eliminating a conflict between vehicles and trains.

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, City of Spokane, City of Spokane Valley, 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.

