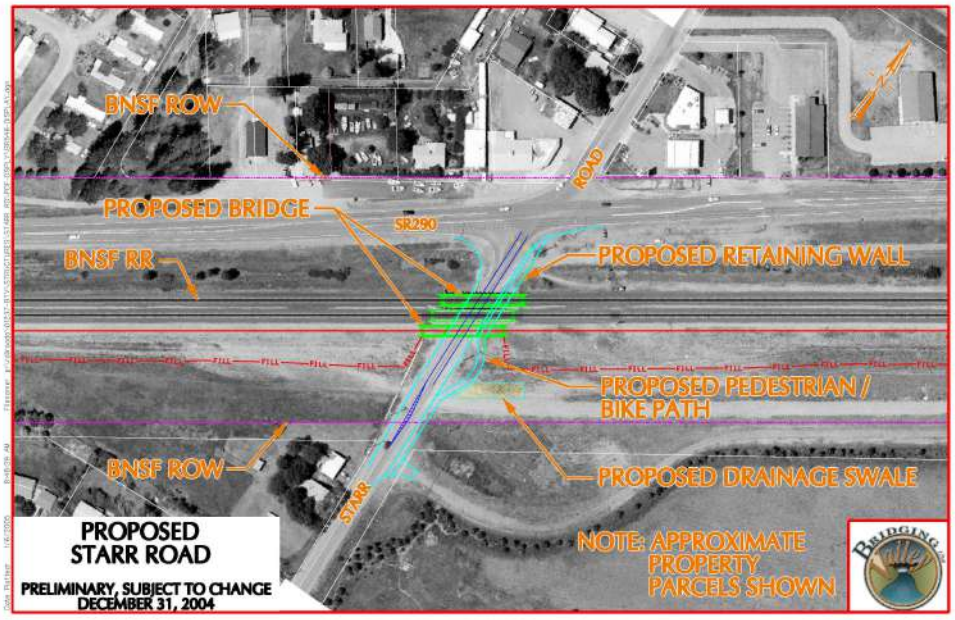
Starr Road / BNSF Grade Separation

Spokane County, WA

Project Location

Starr Road is a north-south rural major collector in Spokane County. It crosses under the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) mainline between North McKinzie Road to the west and Idaho Road to the east. Starr Road currently carries approximately 5,270 vehicles per day. The BNSF line carries between 30 and 50 trains per day. Starr Road is currently a two-lane roadway underpass.



Project Description

The project will rebuild one railroad bridge and add one railroad bridge over Starr Road as part of the construction of one additional BNSF mainline track. The additional mainline track is required to move Union Pacific (UPRR) train operations from their mainline corridor into the BNSF corridor. This will allow free movement of freight and commuter vehicles across all railroad mainlines between Spokane, WA and Athol, ID.

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.