US 395 North Spokane Corridor - Spokane River to Francis

WSDOT has changed the design of the North Spokane Corridor (NSC) for the Spokane River to Francis section.

The 2000 Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) Design is no longer the proposed design. The Spokane River to Francis Redesign option is now the preferred design for the following reasons:

2000 FSEIS Design

Placed the NSC alignment in a mostly depressed section, with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad on the east side of the NSC alignment (see page 2 for FSEIS and Redesign comparison maps). This design required six railroad bridges and large retaining walls (up to 50 feet at the Wellesley Interchange). It provided for eight lanes of traffic with interchanges at Wellesley and Francis.

2000 FSEIS Estimated Cost: $720M

Eight years later in 2008, as the NSC construction north of Francis neared completion, a variety of presupposed 2000 FSEIS design conditions had changed:

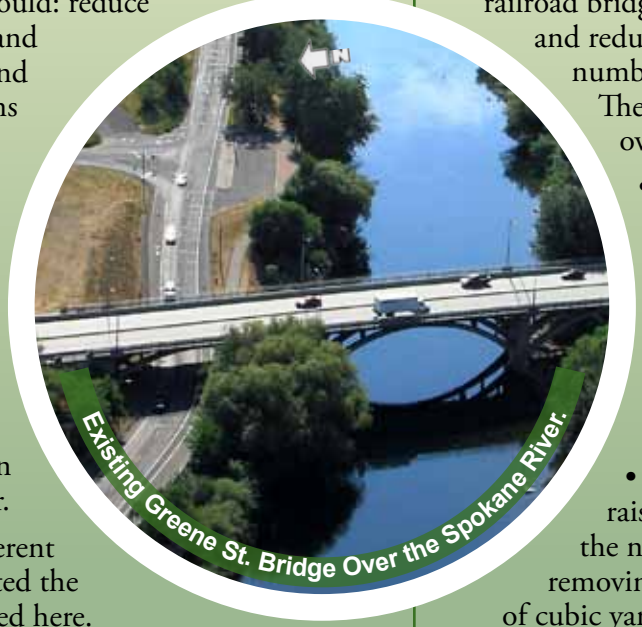
- Construction costs for the Spokane River to Francis section had more than doubled. Due to inflation of construction materials: concrete and steel for the roadway, retaining walls, and bridges, in addition to diesel fuel to power equipment and machinery.
- BNSF expressed safety concerns with having a depressed freeway section next to an active rail line. If a train were to ever derail it could possibly fall into the depressed section and onto traffic. Because of this risk, BNSF requested that crash barriers be built on top of the retaining walls. They also asked that several bridges be built larger than originally planned, to accommodate future rail expansion. Fulfilling these requests would have increased the overall project cost.
- There was no longer a need for the surplus excavated material, from the depressed NSC section to construct roadway embankments north of Francis.
- The availability of state and federal funding for large projects such as the NSC has diminished significantly, due to the weak economy, making it nearly impossible to obtain all necessary funding at one time, from just one source.

As a result of these key changes, WSDOT was compelled to reevaluate the 2000 FSEIS design.

We began an extensive reevaluation. Analyzing other design options that would: reduce costs, address BNSF safety and constructability concerns, and allow for operational sections of the NSC to be built with smaller funding allocations, from consistent sources.

Our design restrictions were: 1.) Any option selected could not deviate drastically from the 2000 FSEIS right of way footprint. 2.) Nor could it diminish the ultimate design functionality of the corridor.

After evaluating several different alternatives, WSDOT selected the Redesign option, summarized here.



- Last of all, the Redesign option calls for a staged construction concept: 1.) To leverage costs in an effort to increase the probability of obtaining funding. 2.) Which permits WSDOT to build in operational phases, as funding becomes available. 3.) That provides WSDOT the flexibility of downsizing the original design of eight-lanes. We plan to build six fundable progressive projects instead of building the ultimate eight-lane configuration all at once.

The six projects outlined would complete four-lanes, the interchanges and walls. Allowing the Spokane River to Francis, 3.5 mile section to open to traffic sooner and at less cost.

In the future when funding becomes available and traffic conditions warrant, we would then build a seventh stage, completing the ultimate eight-lane configuration.

2010 Redesign Estimated Cost: $328M

Staging Plan and Funding Estimate

PROJECT 1	COST
Francis Structure and Intersection Improvements	$38M

PROJECT 2	COST
Rowan North Grading, Structures & BNSF Rail Realignment	$69M

PROJECT 3	COST
Euclid to Rowan Grading, Structures & BNSF Rail Realignment	$70M

PROJECT 4	COST
Wellesley Interchange	$28M

PROJECT 5	COST
Wellesley to Francis Grading, Paving and Structures	$45M

PROJECT 6	COST
River to Wellesley Grading, Paving and Structures	$78M

This Planning Estimate Represents Costs to Build Four Lanes from the Spokane River to Francis, as of April 2011.

Spokane River to Francis Redesign

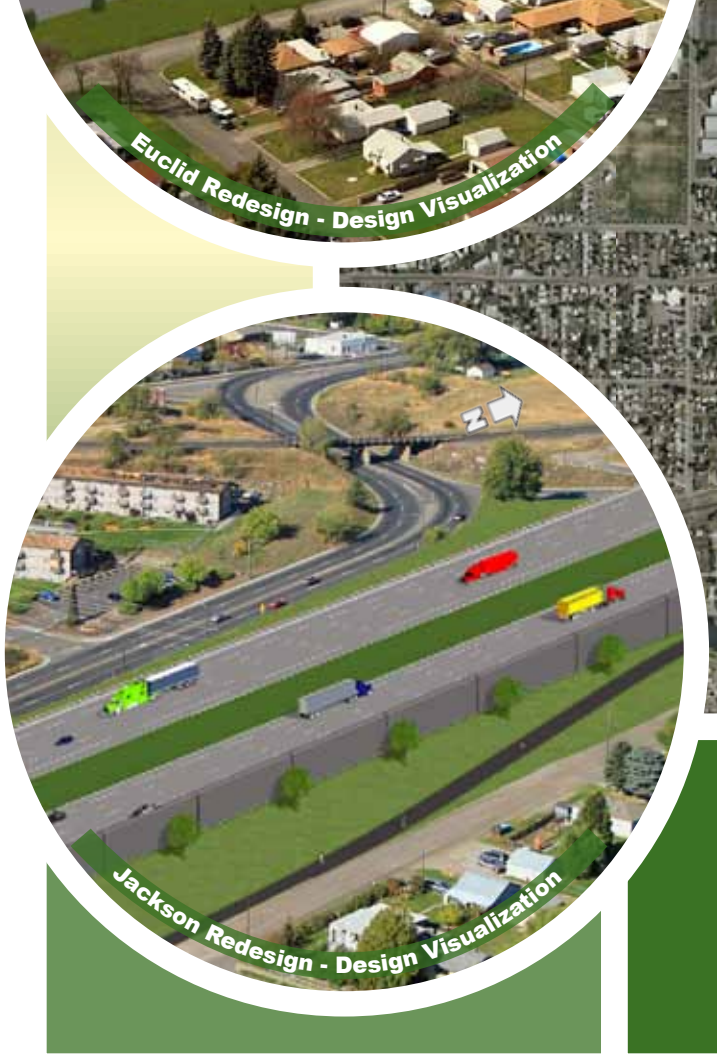
Elevates the NSC alignment and places the BNSF rail line on the west side of the alignment (see page 2 for FSEIS and Redesign comparison maps).

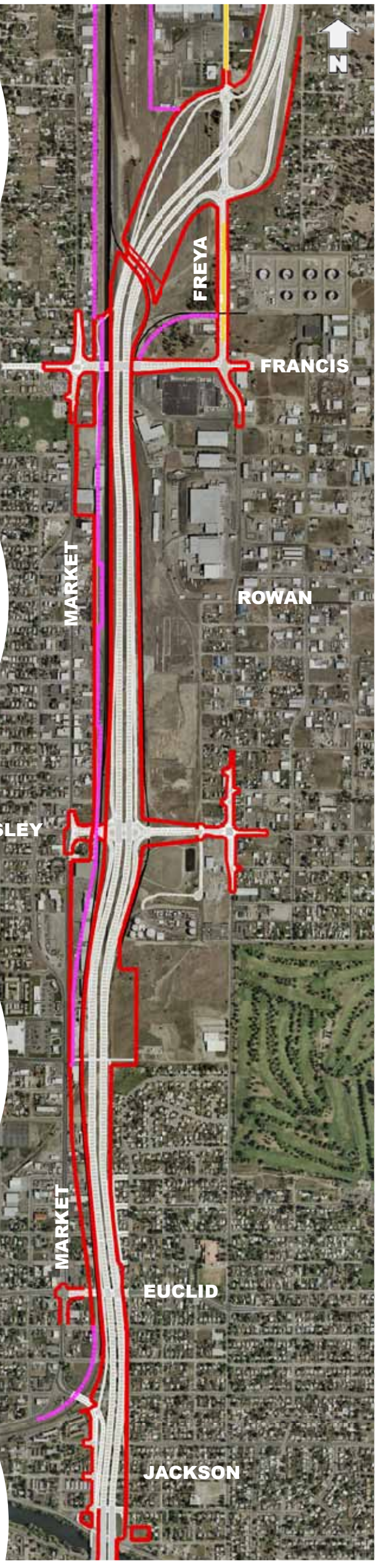
- Raising the elevation of the corridor eliminates the need to build four railroad bridges, three roadway bridges and reduces the size, location and number of retaining walls needed. These major changes reduce the overall project cost.
- Raising the elevation of the corridor also eliminates BNSF's safety concerns of having a depressed freeway corridor next to an active rail line (and its potential derailment consequences).
- As a final benefit, raising the elevation eliminates the need, cost and risk of removing hundreds-of-thousands of cubic yards of roadway excavation material necessary to create the depressed section. When removing large quantities of material under an industrial corridor such as the rail line there is always a risk of discovering hazardous materials and the associated cost risk of cleanup and disposal.

Washington State Department of Transportation

REDESIGN

2000 FSEIS





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North Spokane US 395 Corridor

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