

12 Four-laning US Highway 12

Phase 7 – Nine Mile Hill to Frenchtown Vicinity

Why is WSDOT planning to construct a new US 12 as a four-lane highway near Touchet and Lowden?

This project is part of a corridor plan to construct US 12 as a four-lane highway from the Snake River and the junction of US 12 with SR 124 to the city of Walla Walla. This corridor carries over ten million tons of cargo every year; since 1991 it has experienced over 1,000 collisions resulting in over 400 injuries and 30 deaths.

Four-laning the existing US 12 in its current location is not feasible near Touchet or Lowden due to numerous residential and commercial accesses. A new four-lane highway to the north of the existing highway will be safer and less congested.

The End Result

Phase 7 of the corridor project will build a new US 12 north of the existing highway from Nine Mile Hill to the vicinity of Frenchtown. This 11-mile-long section will be constructed to current standards with four lanes, a wide median, and new connections at Nine Mile Hill, Touchet North Road, Woodward Canyon Road, and Lower Dry Creek Road. These intersections will provide access to existing US 12 and become a county road after construction of the four-lane highway is complete.

Project Benefits

Increased safety. The four-lane highway will separate opposing lanes of traffic with a median, and reduce the risk of collisions by having fewer intersections and eliminating driveways. The intersections will be constructed to current highway design standards with appropriate acceleration and deceleration lanes.

Relieved congestion. Drivers will no longer have to slow for turning vehicles at residences, farms, or businesses, due to fewer intersections.

Freight mobility. A four-lane highway will ease conflicts between slow-moving trucks and passenger vehicles. Commercial trucks make approximately 19 percent of the traffic, causing slowdowns and safety concerns on the current two-lane highway.

Construction Timeline

Currently design and right of way acquisition is partially funded. Environmental documentation is complete. Design and right of way acquisition will continue through 2014. No construction funding is available at this time.

Project Cost Estimate

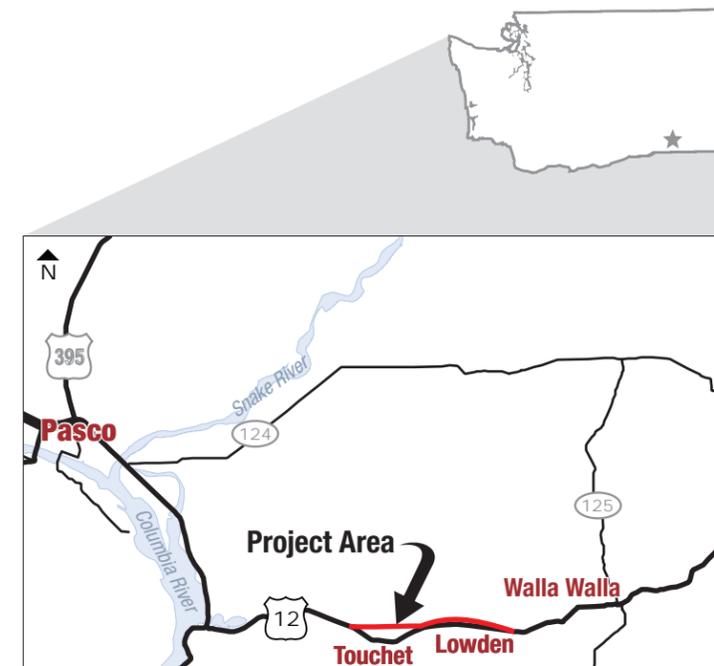
Estimated Total Project Cost \$126.0 million

Note: This estimate includes all engineering, right of way, and construction cost, and assumes funding becomes available by the end of 2013.

Project Design - Partial Funding - \$3.2 million

Right of Way - Partial Funding - \$2.1 million

Construction - Unfunded



Proposed improvements at the intersection of Cummins and Touchet North Road with the new four-lane US 12 highway.



The US Highway 12 Coalition

The US Highway 12 Coalition is an alliance of public and private organizations working to four-lane US Highway 12 from Burbank to Walla Walla.

What has been spent so far?

Phase 1 – COMPLETED - August 2004

Four-lane McNary Pool to Attalia
Total Project Cost \$11.2 million

Phase 2 – COMPLETED - November 2005

Four-lane SR 124 to McNary Pool
Total Project Cost \$12.1 million

Phase 3 – COMPLETED - October 2007

Four-lane Attalia Vicinity
Total Project Cost \$16.0 million

Phase 4 – COMPLETED - June 2009

Wallula Junction to Walla Walla Corridor Study
Estimated Total Project Cost \$5.4 million

Phase 5 – COMPLETED - Fall 2009

Attalia Vicinity to US 730 – Preliminary Design Only
Total Cost \$0.8 million

Phase 6 – COMPLETED - Summer 2010

Four-lane Frenchtown Vicinity to Walla Walla
Estimated Total Project Cost \$51.9 million

US 12/SR 124 Intersection – COMPLETED - May 2012

Build new interchange at US 12 and SR 124
Build new overpass at Humorist Road
Estimated Total Project Cost \$21.3 million

What would it cost?

Phase 7

Four-lane Nine Mile Hill to Frenchtown vicinity
*Estimated Total Project Cost \$126.0 million
Funding secured to-date \$ 5.3 million

Phase 8 – UNFUNDED

Four-lane Wallula to Nine Mile Hill
*Estimated Total Project Cost \$250 million

*Note: These estimates are total costs for engineering, right of way, and construction, and assume funding becomes available by the end of 2013.

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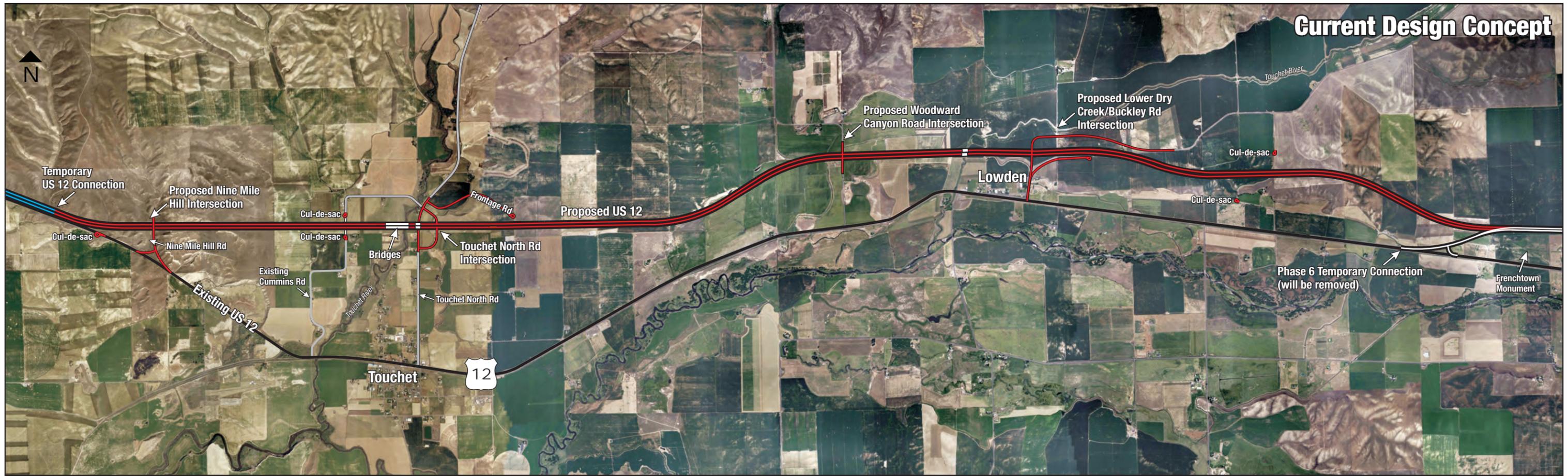
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Not to Scale

Design information

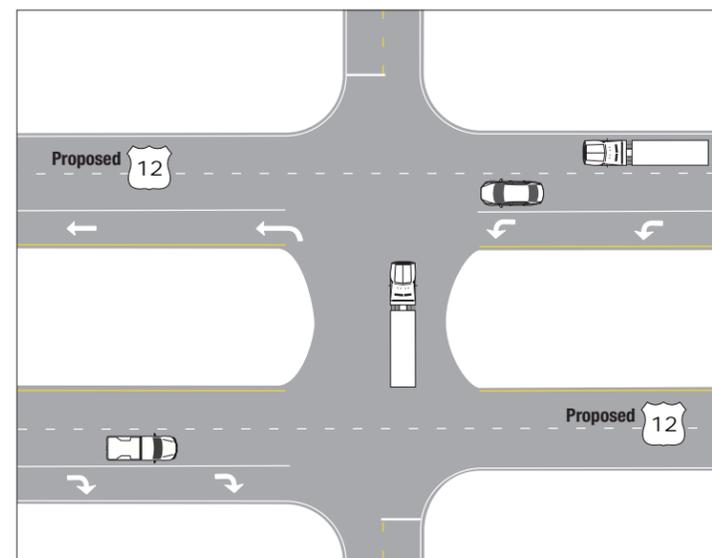
This project constructs a new four-lane alignment for US 12 north of Touchet and Lowden. This highway will temporarily connect to existing US 12 in the Nine Mile Hill vicinity to the west and will connect to the existing four lanes in the Frenchtown vicinity to the east. The new Nine Mile Hill intersection will provide access from the new highway to the bypassed section of existing US 12. The total length of this project is 11 miles.

Intersections at Touchet North Road, Nine Mile Hill, Woodward Canyon Road, and Lower Dry Creek Road will provide access to the new highway. The new intersections will include acceleration lanes for traffic entering the new highway from the crossroad and deceleration lanes for vehicles leaving the new highway at the crossroad. Acceleration and deceleration lanes configuration will depend on the traffic using the intersections.

Cul-de-sacs will be provided for Cummins Road and Nibler Road. A one-lane equipment underpass will be built at Cummins Road for use by farmers and local residents.

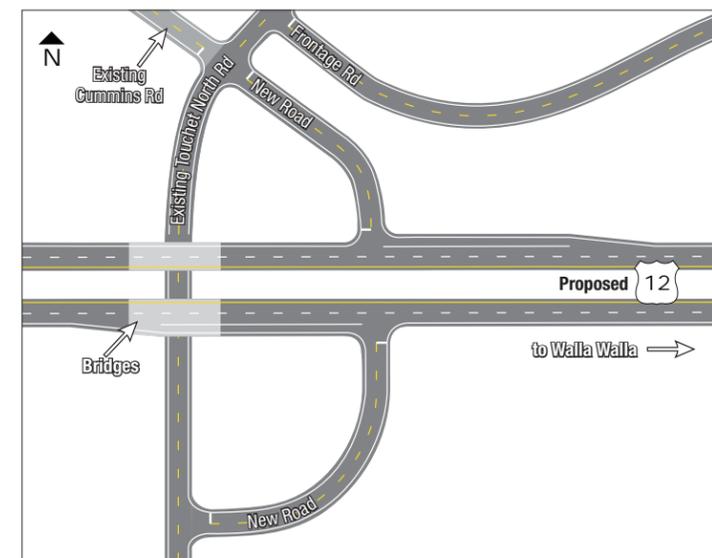
WSDOT will build bridges over the Touchet River, Touchet North Road and Dry Creek. Bridges over Touchet North Road will have a minimum clearance of 20 feet to accommodate tall farm equipment.

Typical Proposed Intersection



Not to Scale

Proposed Touchet North Road Intersection



Not to Scale

To connect Touchet North Road to the new US 12, WSDOT will construct a new road from the intersection of Touchet North Road and Cummins Road southeasterly to form a T-intersection with the new westbound highway. WSDOT will also construct a new road from Touchet North Road, south of US 12, to form a T-intersection with the new eastbound highway. To provide access to property north of the highway, a mile-long frontage road will follow the highway east.

Environmental Information

Floodplain preservation and wildlife movement through bridge construction

The Phase 7 project crosses the Touchet River floodplain. Historically, substantial flooding has occurred within this floodplain near the Touchet River. The proposed project will span the Touchet River with twin bridges. Actual structure lengths and locations will be determined based in a floodway study. WSDOT is committed to maintaining the current capacity of the Touchet River floodplain and will develop a final design that will not impact the floodplain capacity.

Another project objective is reducing the number of wildlife/vehicle collisions. For example, the large bridges that span the Touchet River will also promote wildlife movement, separate from vehicles on the highway, between habitats found around the river and its confluence with the Walla Walla River.

Roadside vegetation

WSDOT will implement an Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) program to establish low-maintenance, beneficial vegetation, and to suppress unwanted plants from establishing along the highway. The IVM Program lowers WSDOT's long-term maintenance costs and greatly reduces the need for chemical weed control.