

PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR IBR PROGRAM EXECUTIVE STEERING GROUP

Received between June 14, 2022 – July 19, 2022

Chris Smith

6/14/2022

Please accept the attached letter as public comment.

** ADA compliant versions of the attachments can be made available upon request*

Sara Duckwall

7/11/2022

Please find our business letter attached and submit it as written testimony for the July 21st meeting regarding the I-5 bridge replacement project.

** ADA compliant versions of the attachments can be made available upon request*

Zach Lindahl

7/12/2022

Attached to this email is testimony that the Washington County Chamber of Commerce would like to submit to the ESG on the I5 bridge replacement. I would also like to testify verbally, so please add me to the list to testify during the meeting on July 21st.

** ADA compliant versions of the attachments can be made available upon request*

Stephen Smelley

7/14/2022

Please accept this as my written testimony regarding the upcoming public hearing on the I-5 bridge project.

** ADA compliant versions of the attachments can be made available upon request*

Laura Edmonds

7/15/2022

Please find our attached letter of testimony for the IBR Steering Group hearing taking place on July 21, 2022 at 10:00a.m.

We would like our letter submitted as written testimony for this hearing.

** ADA compliant versions of the attachments can be made available upon request*

Bob Ortblad

7/19/2022

ESG PUBLIC COMMENT July 21, 2022

** ADA compliant versions of the attachments can be made available upon request*



JUST CROSSING ALLIANCE

Date: June 10, 2022

To: Bi-State Interstate Bridge Legislative Committee
Metro Council
SW Washington Regional Transportation Council
Portland City Council
Vancouver City Council
TriMet Board of Directors
C-TRAN Board of Directors
Port of Portland Board of Commissioners
Port of Vancouver Board of Commissioners

From: Julia DeGraw, Coalition Director, Oregon League of Conservation Voters
Huy Ong, Executive Director, OPAL
Dan Bilka, President, All Aboard Northwest
Michael Andersen, Transportation Lead, Sightline Institute
Paulo Nunes-Ueno, Transportation and Land Use Lead,
Front and Centered
Art Poole, President, AORTA
Nick Caleb, Climate and Energy Attorney, Breach Collective
Brett Morgan, Transportation and Metro Policy Manager,
1000 Friends of Oregon
Mary Peveto, Executive Director, Neighbors for Clean Air
Ukiah Halloran-Steiner, Co-lead, Sunrise Rural Oregon
Adah Crandall, Campaign Lead, Sunrise PDX
Vivian Satterfield, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Verde
Heidi Cody & Cathryn Chudy,
Alliance for Community Engagement SW WA (ACE)
Monica Zazueta, Sunrise SW WA
Kiel Johnson, Chair, BikeLoud PDX

Sara Wright, Transportation Program Director,
Oregon Environmental Council
Claire Vlach, Plans and Projects Committee, Oregon Walks
Michelle DuBarry, Families for Safe Streets
Dan Frye, Steering Committee, Metro Climate Action Team
Sarah Iannarone, Executive Director, The Street Trust
Abby Griffith, Disability Mobility Initiative
Bob Sallinger, Conservation Director, Portland Audubon
Joe Cortright, Director, City Observatory
Debra Higbee-Sudyka, Conservation Committee Chair,
Oregon Chapter Sierra Club
Aaron Brown, Co-founder, No More Freeways
Stephanie Noll, Coalition Director, Oregon Trails Coalition
Doug Allen, PDX Forward

Re: Significant adjustment of Interstate Bridge Replacement Project is necessary before Environmental Review

The Just Crossing Alliance is committed to ensuring that the IBR project outcomes are centered in Environmental Justice, Social Justice, Climate Justice and Environmental Health. Our assessment is that if the current Modified Locally Preferred Alternative is advanced into Environmental Review as the sole option other than a No Build, we are unlikely to get acceptable outcomes and may well find ourselves with another failed project.

Our significant concerns include:

- We don't have an accurate picture of the costs or funding of this project. This mega-project has the potential to soak up funding that could be used for many other critical transportation and seismic needs.
- The "High Bridge" (i.e., going over the shipping channel) approach is fundamentally monolithic and means the project cannot be broken up into phases.
- At 116 feet over the shipping channel (and the Coast Guard could require an even greater height), the grades on this project will likely make the

bridge crossing inaccessible for active transportation users of all ages and abilities. and may also create challenging conditions for freight at some ramps.

- The visual impact of the structure, particularly on Hayden Island and the Vancouver Waterfront, has not been sufficiently explored. The project has been careful to show bird's eye views. We need to see "from the ground up" renderings of what this structure will look like.
- Hayden Island and Vancouver will incur displacement of homes and businesses.
- Relying on screening choices made 15 years ago is insufficient. We deserve a public debate on options for both cost and performance from this project.

We also note that in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, which is intended to ensure agencies consider the significant environmental consequences of their proposed actions and inform the public about their decision making, a "locally preferred alternative" (LPA) is not selected until *after* a range of alternatives have been advanced and thoroughly vetted. Choosing an LPA before doing the analysis is logically backwards, likely violates NEPA and deprives the region of fully informed choices about its future. Given the scale of this project--\$5 billion, and likely more--we deserve a thorough analysis before selecting an alternative. Therefore we are calling on the local partner governments to vote against moving this project to environmental review until the following things happen:

- The project prepares updated cost estimates for the high bridge alternative and a credible and complete finance plan for how those costs will be funded.
- That finance plan should include an Investment Grade Analysis of toll revenue for three purposes:
 - To understand how the countervailing impacts of tolls (suppressing demand) and additional lane capacity (inducing demand) will resolve, so that we understand how this project will affect overall amounts of driving, and the climate and air quality impacts from that driving.
 - To help the public better understand the cost of tolls as part of the equity analysis of the environmental review.

- To understand how much tolling can realistically contribute to the funding of the project.
- The project must create a “phaseable” alternative (e.g., a lower bridge with a lift span, or a tunnel), with sequencing priority addressing seismic resilience and transit connectivity, to advance into environmental review alongside the high bridge alternative.

Unless this is done, we believe there is significant risk that we will emerge from the environmental review process with another unfundable project, with no “Plan B” to prevent a repeat of the Columbia River Crossing failure. We are relying on you to make sure this does not happen.





All Aboard
NORTHWEST



FRONT
— **AND** —
CENTERED



July 11, 2022



Interstate Bridge Replacement Program
Executive Steering Group
VIA EMAIL: info@interstatebridge.org

Dear Members of the IBR Executive Steering Group:

Duckwall Fruit, our 103-year-old family business operating in Hood River, Oregon, supports a multi-modal I-5 bridge that will move people and goods safely and efficiently. We must replace the bridge now to address the vulnerability of the two structures to seismic activity. The new bridge also must move people and goods efficiently even as our region continues to grow.

We appreciate the effort undertaken to replace the bridge. The inclusion of light rail and safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists will help move greater numbers of people over the bridge more efficiently. Yet, we remain concerned that other needs have not been adequately addressed. These include the need for additional capacity to serve commuters and businesses that rely on the timely delivery of raw materials for use in manufacturing and the movement of finished products to markets.

With Portland and Seattle serving as our transportation hubs, virtually 100% of our transportation system must cross this congestion filled bridge, empty or full, to get to Hood River to load over 114,000,000,000 pounds of our fresh packed pears annually. Duckwall Fruit only packs approximately 30% of the region's pear tonnage, so the overall amount is much greater! Our highly perishable product simply cannot wait.

The transportation infrastructure needs of our region in 2022 are dramatically different than in 1917 when the older, northbound span opened or even in 1960 when the "new" southbound span was completed. Even with the addition of multi-modal options, we worry that the overall future capacity needs of the bridge have not been met. Our region continues to grow, and employers are recalibrating their workforce to be highly mobile. In addition, the single auxiliary lane under consideration will not serve freight needs adequately. The Interstate Bridge Replacement Program estimates that the addition of a single auxiliary lane will improve travel times by a mere handful of minutes. It does not serve our region to add a fraction of the capacity needed to improve the seven to 10 hours a day of congestion that currently persists.

The modified locally preferred alternative may satisfy the vocal few who would prefer no expansion of vehicle capacity – or no new bridge at all. However, our transportation system is integrally connected to our economy, and the new bridge must better convey the more than \$70 million in freight it carries every day.

We support the replacement of the bridge but remain concerned that it lacks adequate vehicle capacity and urge you to consider an option that provides for two auxiliary lanes in each direction.

Thank you for your consideration,


Ed Weathers
President, Duckwall Fruit



July 21st, 2022

Executive Steering Group

Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

Dear Members of the IBR Executive Steering Group:

The Washington County Chamber of Commerce is a business organization comprised of more than 820-member business throughout the region, employing over 75,000 people. The Washington County Chamber has a robust public policy division that advocates on many different business issues, including regional transportation.

Back in May, the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) team released new details on the status of the I-5 bridge when they unveiled the plans for the new Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The LPA detailed an I-5 bridge that would maintain 6 lanes with an additional auxiliary lane in each direction, an interchange on Hayden Island, and light rail expansion.

Currently, our century old bridge faces both safety and congestion related issues. It is not a question of if, but whether a question of when a serious earthquake could cause the collapse of the bridge. Time is of the essence, so it is imperative that we build a new bridge that will provide peace of mind that a critical part of our transportation grid is secure.

However, building a safer bridge with similar capacity only solves half of the problem. The existing bridge serves 140,000 vehicles daily, resulting in heavy traffic for at least 7, but up to 10 hours a day. By 2040, the number of crossings is predicted to climb as high as 175,000 vehicle trips daily, or a 125 percent increase, due to the growing population of our region. The effects of congestion are felt in numerous ways, an increase in GHG emissions from idling vehicles, it reduces free time for commuters, and increases financial costs associated with the delayed delivery of goods.

At this point, the proposed solution for congestion offered by the IBR appears to be a bridge with improved bicycle, pedestrian, and transit options. While this multi-modal approach is important and provides commuters additional options, it is our opinion this will only result in minor relief for our congestion problems. These options are a viable solution for those who are taking short commutes from state to state but will not help commuters traveling beyond downtown Portland, or the freight trucks carrying vital and time sensitive goods across the region or beyond.

With the growing population in our region, a decline of ridership in public transit, and a higher than ever demand for vehicles, we must plan better. A replacement bridge will cost more than \$4 billion, and it is important that leaders in our region prioritize constructing a bridge to accommodate demand. As this process moves forward, we must build a bridge that adds capacity, as this will be the key to reducing the congestion. This proven method of reducing congestion will help all commuters and freight get to where they need to be more efficiently. This will provide commuters and businesses that utilize this bridge every day and will result in less idling which will help us toward our climate goals.

Thank you for considering this critically important request.

July 21st, 2022

Executive Steering Group

Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

Dear Members of the IBR Executive Steering Group:

My name is Stephen Smelley, and I am the founder and CEO of Goldfinch Consulting, as well as the current Board Chair of the Beaverton Area Chamber of Commerce and a current Board Member and Past President of the Independent Agents and Brokers of Oregon. My business for over three decades has focused on risk and risk mitigation. My volunteer work as well as my business allows me to meet with and work with many employers of all size businesses which help contribute to our region's vibrant economy. Over the past 30+ years, I have lived in the Portland metro area and managed over 30 offices in OR, WA, ID, and MT. I have watched our challenges with the I-5 bridge grow and I applaud you all for the work you are doing to solve those challenges.

It is not news to you that this heavily used bridge faces both safety and congestion issues on daily basis. Our current bridge has been operational for over a century and would collapse by an earthquake of decent magnitude. As a risk mitigation professional, that is a concern to me for all commuters who use this bridge with any frequency. For that reason alone, it is important that we move forward to construct a new bridge that can be in service for another century.

However, if we are going to spend over \$4 billion to build a new bridge, we should also address a few other concerns so that the end solution isn't outdated by the time it is built. Based on my research and observation (and I am sure that you've all done more), I believe that our community deserves serious consideration of the following:

- ➔ We MUST build multi-modal options to increase accessibility, safety and preference for citizens and short distance commuters to be able to utilize improved bicycle, pedestrian, and mass transit options. The more recent local growth of the Vancouver waterfront and the increased housing and businesses in the surrounding area need to be accessible with or without a private vehicle.
- ➔ Transit studies in both Oregon and Washington have projected increases in total daily trips well into the lifespan of the new bridge yet to be built and there is agreement that most of that traffic will be via vehicles and freight.
- ➔ Under its current design constraints there are 7-10 hours of congestion that we experience every day by people trying to cross the Columbia river on this freeway.
- ➔ The existing bridge serves 140,000 vehicles daily and by 2040, that number could be as high 175,000 vehicle trips. Those vehicles may be electric vehicles, solar vehicles, gas (natural or petroleum powered) vehicles, cars and/or trucks but despite whatever best in class mass transit or light rail or pedestrian or bicycle path we build, this bridge is one of the top 30 bottlenecks in the US and is a major arterial for not only local commuter traffic but also the transportation of international goods and services from Mexico to Canada.
- ➔ Mass transit ridership to date has declined significantly as reported by both C-TRAN and TriMet and while those numbers should and WILL likely increase as the population increases and we build and maintain mass transit with safety and security in mind for the riders, all studies I have seen suggest

that vehicle and freight traffic over the I-5 bridge will exceed mass transit and all other forms of travel by a significant margin for decades to come.

- ➡ The effects of traffic congestion are felt in numerous ways, as it reduces free time for commuters, increases financial costs associated with the delayed delivery of goods, and an increase in GHG emissions from idling vehicles.
- ➡ Failure to address the GHG emissions from idling vehicles is NOT an option for the health and safety of the commuters, the local citizens who live in the area, the disproportionately impacted communities, or the long-term health of our planet. Those vehicles will be there however unless they can travel more safely and freely at decongested speeds.
- ➡ We MUST address multi-modal options AND increase capacity by increasing the number of lanes across this bridge. **Auxiliary lanes are a help in the surrounding area for safety but they don't solve the entire problem we are already facing.**

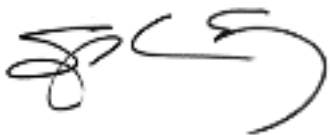
In May 2022, the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) team released new details on the status of the I-5 bridge when they unveiled the plans for the new Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The LPA detailed an I-5 bridge that would maintain the current 6 lanes with an additional auxiliary lane in each direction, an interchange on Hayden Island, and light rail expansion.

So far, the solution offered by the IBR appears to be a bridge with improved bicycle, pedestrian, and transit options. While this enhanced multi-modal approach is important and gives people more options, this will only provide slight relief to our congestion woes. These options are good for those who are taking short commutes from state to state but will not help commuters traveling beyond downtown Portland or Vancouver, or the freight trucks carrying vital and time sensitive goods across the region.

As we move forward with the design of the bridge replacement, **I urge you to add capacity by increasing the number of lanes in both directions.** This will reduce the amount of congestion, which will decrease vehicle idling leading to less GHG emissions, gives critical free time back to our employees, and ensures freight can reach its intended destination on time and reduce this disparate impact on communities already having to suffer from the noise and other pollution caused by bottlenecked traffic.

Thank you for considering this critically important request.

Sincerely,



Stephen Smelley

Founder and CEO of Goldfinch Consulting

Board Chair of the Beaverton Area Chamber of Commerce and Board Member and Past President, IIABO



July 21st, 2022

Executive Steering Group
Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

Dear Members of the IBR Executive Steering Group:

The North Clackamas County Chamber of Commerce is a business organization comprised of more than 500-member businesses throughout the region, employing thousands of people. The North Clackamas County Chamber has a robust public policy division that advocates on many different business issues, including regional transportation.

Back in May, the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) team released new details on the status of the I-5 bridge when they unveiled the plans for the new Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The LPA detailed an I-5 bridge that would maintain 6 lanes with an additional auxiliary lane in each direction, an interchange on Hayden Island, and light rail expansion. Currently, our century old bridge faces both safety and congestion related issues. It is imperative that if a new bridge were to be built, that it must provide peace of mind that it is done right.

Building a safer bridge with similar capacity only solves half of the problem. The existing bridge serves 140,000 vehicles daily, resulting in heavy traffic for at least 7, but up to 10 hours a day. By 2040, the number of crossings is predicted to climb as high as 175,000 vehicle trips daily, or a 125 percent increase, due to the growing population of our region. The effects of congestion are felt in numerous ways, an increase in GHG emissions from idling vehicles, it reduces free time for commuters, increases financial costs associated with the delayed delivery of goods, and will only create more hazards for travelers due to increased drivers on the roadway growing ever more frustrated with gridlock.

At this point, the proposed solution for congestion offered by the IBR appears to be a bridge with improved bicycle, pedestrian, and transit options. While this multi-modal approach is important and provides commuters additional options, it is our opinion this will only result in minor relief for our congestion problems. These options are a viable solution for those who are taking short commutes from state to state but will not help commuters traveling beyond downtown Portland, or the freight trucks caring vital and time sensitive goods across the region or beyond.

With the growing population in our region, a decline of ridership in public transit, and a higher than ever demand for vehicles, we must plan better. A replacement bridge will cost more than \$4 billion, and it is important that leaders in our region prioritize constructing a bridge to accommodate demand. As this process moves forward, we must build a bridge that adds capacity, as this will be the key to reducing the congestion. This proven method of reducing congestion will help all commuters and freight get to where they need to be more efficiently. This will provide commuters and businesses that utilize this bridge every day and will result in less idling which will help us toward our climate goals.

Thank you for considering this critically important request.

Regards,

Laura Edmonds, CEO

Bob Ortblad MSCE, MBA

An I-5 Bridge with a USCG require 178-foot clearance will be higher and more frightening than the Astoria Bridge.

Imagine 150,000 vehicles/day making this climb.

Immersed Tunnel best option

[@USDOTFHWA](#) [@FTA_DOT](#) [@USCGPacificNW](#)

[@PortlandCorps](#) [@justcrossingall](#) [@IbrProgram](#)

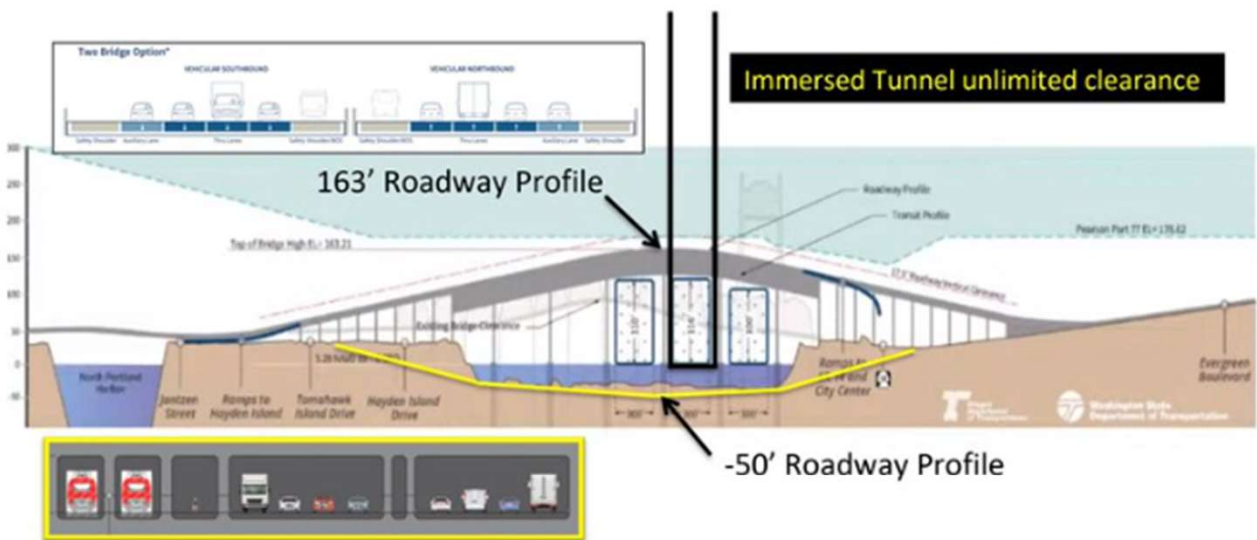


Bob Ortblad MSCE, MBA

IBR's has new bridge alignment, moved primary channel near center of river.

Immersed Tunnel has; half total grade, one channel, better navigation, no piers, unlimited clearance, and better connections to SR-14 & Hayden Island

@USCGPacificNW @PortlandCorps @IbrProgram @wsdot



Bob Ortblad MSCE, MBA

Columbia River bascule bridge at twice its size is not engineering / economic feasible

175' vs 300' channel

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[@oregonmetro](#) [@lbrProgram](#)



Bob Ortblad MSCE, MBA

Tampa Bay has steepest interstate bridge 4%, but never black ice

New High I-5 Bridge at 3.99% has potential black ice 6 months/year & will be a killer

@EPAnorthwest @USDOTFHWA @FTA_DOT @USCGPacificNW
@PortlandCorps @trimet @ctranvancouver @VancouverUS @lbrProgram
@oregonmetro

