
PORTLAND HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION BRIEFING COVER LETTER

Project: Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

Date: May 23, 2022

To: The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission

From: Hayli Reff, IBR Cultural Resources Program Manager

The Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program would replace the aging Interstate 5 (I-5) bridge across the Columbia River with a modern, seismically resilient, multimodal structure. Current planning work has defined the physical and contextual changes that have occurred in the program area since 2013 and builds upon previous planning efforts accomplished as part of the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project. To address these changes, the IBR program, in coordination with program partners and the community, developed design options, desired outcomes, and transit investments, in order to identify a Modified Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to be further studied through a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement is estimated to be published by late 2023.

The IBR program recommendation for the Modified LPA includes key components representing foundational transportation improvements: transit investments, interchange configuration for Hayden Island/Marine Drive, and the number of auxiliary lanes across the bridge. The modified LPA recommends extending light rail transit from the Portland Expo Center across the bridge, through Hayden Island and Vancouver, to a terminus near Evergreen Station in downtown Vancouver. On Hayden Island, the program recommends a partial interchange and a full interchange at Marine Drive. The modified LPA recommends one auxiliary lane between Marine Drive and Mill Plain Boulevard, meaning there will be four lanes in each direction on the bridge.

As part of the SDEIS, the program is re-initiating work for Section 106. The program has identified agencies and organizations with a vested interest in the cultural resources potentially impacted by the program and has invited them to participate as Section 106 Consulting Parties. A total of 47 organizations were invited; of them, 26 organizations have accepted the invitation to be a Consulting Party. There will be monthly Consulting Party meetings to provide general progress updates on Section 106 efforts, which the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission has been invited to participate in. These meetings will be recorded for any organizations or individuals who are unable attend.

In addition to the coordination with the Section 106 Consulting Parties, the IBR program will continue to conduct extensive government-to-government consultation with the program's ten federally recognized consulting tribes and one non-federally recognized tribe. The IBR Tribal Liaison, Carolyn Holthoff, meets with representatives from each tribe regularly, and provides updates on the program. In addition, recent tribal history listening sessions occurred with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakama Nation, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, the Confederated Nations of the Grand Ronde, and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians. The goal of each listening session was to provide time for the tribe to share the importance

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of the program area, what the IBR program can learn from the history of the area, and examples of completed projects that they felt honored tribal history.

Building upon the Section 106 evaluations and analyses completed during the CRC project, the IBR cultural resources team has been identifying information and resources that need to be studied further as part of the IBR SDEIS process. Currently the team is focusing on outreach to the consulting parties with the goal of deepening the understanding of cultural history in the program area. The IBR cultural resources team will be sending all Section 106 Consulting Parties a preliminary survey on known historic information and where it can be collected from. In addition, the team is working on a number of deliverables as requested by the consulting tribes, such as a map book of chronologically ordered maps and aerial images and an annotated bibliography of survey reports. The team has already prepared a summary of previously evaluated built environment resources and is also generating a summary document that details all archaeology work that has occurred in the program area. Lastly, the cultural resources team is planning to begin the first phase of fieldwork this summer. The team will be performing Built Survey work on the resources closest to the impacted areas. Once a final Area of Potential Effect (APE) is established, based on the modified LPA and Consulting Party feedback, additional Built Survey work will be conducted to ensure all potentially impacted historic resources are analyzed.

The IBR Cultural Resources team looks forward to the continued collaboration with the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission and its participation as a Section 106 Consulting Party. Should the commission have any questions or concerns, please email CulturalResources@interstatebridge.org.