

Neighbors For A Better Crossing Urges Public Comment On Interstate Bridge Replacement Program's Impact On Historic Structures (Photo) -06/04/25

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[Portland, OR, Vancouver, WA] – Neighbors for a Better Crossing, a grassroots organization of residents, engineers, and business owners advocating for innovative, cost-effective, and seismically resilient infrastructure solutions for the Interstate Bridge, is calling for public action as the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) Program opens its comment period through June 8, 2025. The [IBR's Historic Built Environment Resources Treatment Plan](#), released on May 9, 2025, details significant impacts on historic structures, prompting widespread concern about the project's effects on local communities, businesses, and seismic safety.

The IBR plan outlines the demolition of both current Interstate 5 bridges - along with the bridge between Delta Park and Hayden Island recognized on the [National Register of Historic Places](#), as well as the harbor shops and a water tower on Hayden Island, and partial destruction to Jantzen Beach Moorage, Officers Row, Vancouver Barracks, and parts of Fort Vancouver.

Neighbors for a Better Crossing argues that the existing bridge, rather than being demolished, could be repurposed as a landmark for events and tourism, creating a lasting legacy rather than landfill waste. "This bridge is a piece of history that can be re-imagined for community benefit, not discarded," said Gary Clark with Neighbors for a Better Crossing. "An [Immersed Tube Tunnel](#) (ITT) would be a better solution, as it would avoid the extensive above-ground construction that threatens our historic landmarks, preserving the Interstate Bridge for future generations while minimizing environmental and community disruption. An ITT will also avoid [5-years of marine life and fish kills](#) on the Columbia River that will result from the IBR drilling the 99 drill shafts required for their mega bridge."

The proposed demolitions and construction pose severe risks to local communities and businesses, with [the plan listing displacements](#) of: 43-76 residential units, 36-39 businesses, and one public use site. On Hayden Island, [35 floating homeowners](#) face potential displacement, with the IBR plan threatening the stability of their unique community. "The floating homes are a unique and cherished part of Hayden Island's identity, but 15 years of construction noise, water quality degradation, and potential structural impacts from bridge construction could ruin our little island paradise" said Denise Vaughn, who owns a floating home next to the Interstate Bridge with her husband.

Local businesses, including the harbor shops, are also slated for demolition, jeopardizing livelihoods and economic stability in the area. The ripple effects could lead to reduced tourism and revenue for nearby establishments already struggling post-pandemic.

On the west side of I-5, the Vancouver Library parking appears to be slated for demolition, while the Normandy Apartments at 318 E 7th Street face partial destruction if the proposed westward bridge alignment is approved. The Regal Cinema also appears destined for removal. Valerie Eliason, a resident of the Normandy Apartments—a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places—raised urgent concerns in a recent social media post, "If the Normandy apartments were to be demolished, it would be a significant blow—not only to its residents but to the housing market. This would be the extinction of basically the only truly affordable rent left in Vancouver."

Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, federal agencies must assess and mitigate harm to cultural resources for federally funded projects, but transparency has been lacking. Washington State Representative John Ley, in his [opinion piece for Clark County Today](#), criticized the IBR's approach: "The map provided along with a brief description does not go into details, leaving one to wonder how citizens can provide proper comment when specifics are omitted." Ley also pointed to broader governance issues, stating, "It's another example of a government agency believing 'We know best' when clearly, they do not. Fort Vancouver is a National Historic Site. We must be extra careful to preserve our history."

Compounding these issues, the IBR Program's email to followers on June 3, 2025, included a corrupt link to its Cultural Resources & Section 106 webpage, further hindering public engagement. The link was later fixed but navigating the IBR's extensive website for specific information remains difficult, as searches for critical terms like "demolition," "historical," and "floating homes" yield no results, further frustrating efforts to access specific information.

How to Comment Before June 8

[Neighbors for a Better Crossing](#) urges the community to voice their concerns before the comment period closes on June 8, 2025. [Comments](#) can be submitted via email to culturalresources@interstatebridge.org or call: 888-503-6735. State "Draft PA public comment" in your message.

[Neighbors for a Better Crossing](#) calls for building an [Immersed Tube Tunnel](#) and preserving the historic Interstate Bridge, a solution that preserves the historic bridge, protects residents and businesses, and prioritizes [seismic resilience](#) without sacrificing the region's cultural and economic fabric.

Attached Media Files: [Property impacts in Vancouver, Hayden Island, north Portland and Gresham, due to the proposed Interstate Bridge Replacement proposal.](#) [Graphic credit IBR, Homes along the west side of I-5 just south of the 38th Street that will be impacted by the proposed Interstate Bridge Replacement project.](#), [graphic credit IBR, Homes along the west side of I-5 just south of the 38th Street that will be impacted by the proposed Interstate Bridge Replacement project.](#), [graphic credit IBR, Portland mainland and Hayden Island impacted buildings - Graphic credit IBR,](#)