

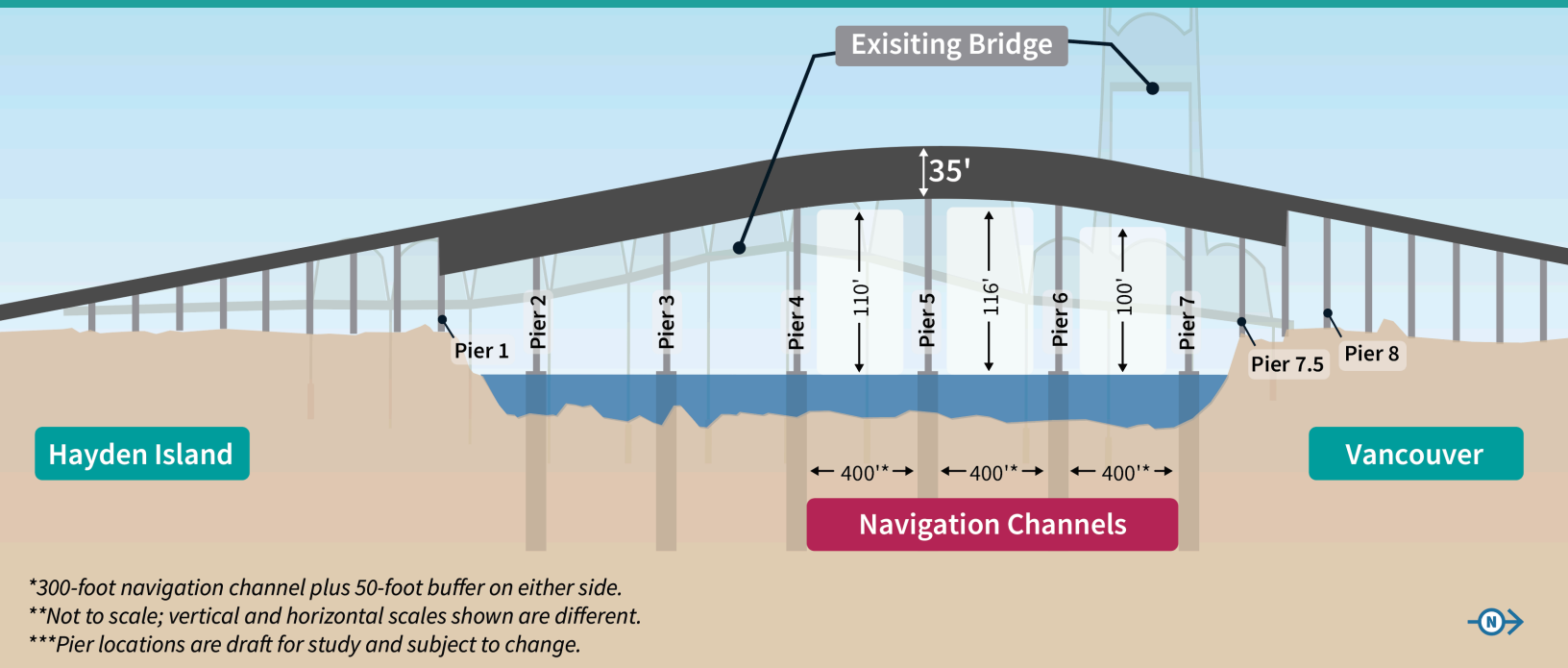


Understanding River Navigation Considerations

The Interstate Bridge Replacement program is building upon decades of past work that successfully led to a federal Record of Decision for the former Columbia River Crossing project in 2011.

As part of the federal environmental review process, the IBR program is analyzing a fixed span replacement bridge with a vertical clearance of 116 feet, which would eliminate bridge lifts. This was the option selected for the previous project that best balanced the competing needs of air, land, and water travel modes while minimizing and addressing environmental impacts and constraints.

The IBR program is also analyzing a moveable span as a potential design option to meet the request of the U.S. Coast Guard to include an option that could provide 178 feet of vertical clearance, which is the maximum clearance provided by the existing bridge when the lift is raised. The program is simultaneously continuing conversations with river users potentially impacted by the 116-foot fixed span river crossing design option.



River Navigation Permitting Process

Since the U.S. Coast Guard is the permitting agency that will ultimately approve the river navigation clearance, coordination regarding the multi-step process for approval of bridge height has been ongoing since 2020. This final step of the process will not occur until after IBR has submitted a bridge permit application, which is currently anticipated to happen in the 2025/2026 timeframe.

In June 2022, the U.S. Coast Guard issued a **Preliminary Navigation Clearance Determination (PNCD)** of 178 feet, consistent with the existing bridge lift clearance. A preliminary determination is one of the many steps in the process to determine bridge height and is not a final decision or permit approval. The program intends to seek a revised PNCD prior to completion of the final environmental documentation. The IBR program is committed to continued collaboration with the U.S. Coast Guard and other federal agency partners to identify a solution that best meets the needs of all travelers through the corridor.



The graphic above describes the existing constraints along the Columbia River that limit the potential for economic opportunities around and east of the Interstate Bridge.

- ▶ Existing **marine facilities** on the banks of the Columbia River east of the Interstate Bridge are designed to support barges and recreation vessels, consistent with the **shallow draft depth** of the federally maintained navigation channel depth of 17 feet.
- ▶ **Bridge heights, dams and associated passage locks**, create vertical and horizontal limitations on any new activities or accommodations involving large vessels.
- ▶ Existing **land-use and zoning parameters** beyond the I-205 bridge, such as the designation of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area – limit any potential for new industrial facilities on the riverbanks of the Columbia River.

Existing and Potential River Users

The program conducted an extensive river users survey and completed a navigation impact report in 2021. The IBR program team has also been in active conversations with river users and businesses located upriver (east of the Interstate Bridge) to help ensure there is a comprehensive understanding of past, present, and future maritime user needs and challenges. Based on information collected to date, a single crane barge and three river users with potential future shipments could be limited by a bridge height of 116 feet based on their current business plans. Analysis of impacted vessels, and bridge lift data, has shown that less than 1% of river traffic would be impacted.

At this time, there are no new or planned maritime developments currently identified upriver of the I-5 bridge that would result in changes to current vessel traffic on the river. In the ongoing conversations with potentially impacted fabricators and businesses, support has been expressed for the replacement of the bridge and interest in agreement discussions.

Known Navigation Constraints

Currently, river traffic upriver of I-5 consists of small vessels such as tugs, barges, marine construction equipment, cruise ships and recreational vessels. Large commercial ships do not currently pass under the Interstate Bridge, as terminals for cargo ships are located downstream (west of the bridge) at the Ports of Portland and Vancouver, and numerous river navigation constraints and land use restrictions limit the size of vessels capable of navigating or docking upriver. Existing topography, and access to transportation facilities adjacent to shorelines, such as SR-14, I-84, BNSF and Union Pacific railroads, also impact potential future upriver uses.

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