



# Hayden Island Neighborhood Network

**2209 N. Schofield Street  
Portland, Oregon 97217**

To: The 2021-2022 Interim Joint Committee on the I-5 Bridge  
From: Martin G. Slapikas, Chairman, Hayden Island Neighborhood Network (HINooN)  
Subject: The Forwarding of the Modified Locally Preferred Alternative into the National Environmental Policy Act Process  
Date: December 10, 2022

Oregon and Washington Interim I-5 Joint Committee Legislators:

Oregon

Co-Chair, Senator Lee Beyer  
Co-Chair, Representative Susan McClain  
Senator Brian Boquist  
Senator Lynn Findley  
Senator Lew Fredrick  
Representative Shelly Boshart Davis  
Representative Khanh Pham  
Representative Greg Smith

Washington

Co-Chair, Senator Annette Cleveland  
Representative Jake Fey  
Representative Paul Harris  
Senator Marko Liias  
Senator Ann Rivers  
Co-Chair, Representative Brandon Vick  
Co-Chair, Senator Lynda Wilson  
Co-Chair, Representative Sharon Wylie

I represent the Hayden Island Neighborhood Network (HINooN), a 501(c)(3) recognized neighborhood association in the City of Portland, located in Multnomah County, State of Oregon. Our community is at the epicenter of the I-5 Interstate Bridge Replacement program.

The community is very familiar with the I-5's importance to the local, regional, state, national and international economies as I-5 is described and documented as vital to the supply chain extending border-to-border from Mexico to Canada.

This submission is to request a delay in advancing the Modified Locally Preferred Alternative (MLPA) into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the purpose of a public presentation, and discussion, by independent and qualified experts on the Immersed Tube Tunnel. That alternative was rejected by the Interstate Bridge Program Environmental staff in 2021. It was suggested by the U.S. Coast Guard <sup>1</sup> in 2022.

The HINooN concern is that if you say “Yes” to the advancement of the MLPA at this time, you may be saying “Yes” to the wrong project. The reason is – the appearance of a conflict of interest and lack of community engagement regarding the rejection of alternative river crossings, specifically the Immersed Tube Tunnel option.

## THE FACTS

Governor Inslee, upon signing the Memorandum of Intent stated: *“We intend this process to be a data-driven transparent process.”* Our community has not found that to be the case, particularly as it relates to the Island community in the Hayden Island/Marine Drive Community Working Group. Request for detailed information regarding the bridge, traffic, congestion, level of service was not forthcoming such that the HINooN representative was not able to provide relevant MLPA information to the community.

On Monday, December 6, 2021, the I-5 Columbia River bridge crossing was closed for 7 -15 hours due to a police action. Traffic was diverted to I-205, the one other local Columbia River Crossing<sup>2</sup> in the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA Metropolitan Statistical Area. Massive bumper-to-bumper congestion on I-205 raised equity and environmental issues along the diversion routes.

Tuesday, December 7, 2021, at the third, and last, scheduled Community Working Group meeting, HINooN presented the IBR with Resolution 2021-12- <sup>3</sup> and letter.<sup>4</sup> The Resolution is based on:

- The videos of the December 6<sup>th</sup> congestion;
- The real time experience of members of the Hayden Island community;
- the minimum number (3) of scheduled IBR meetings; and,
- the lack of any substantial data provided the Hayden Island/Marine Drive Interchange Community Working Group.

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<sup>1</sup>CoastGuardPreliminaryNavigationClearanceDetermination, [https://www.interstatebridge.org/media/fi2b3xei/ibr\\_next\\_steps\\_bridge\\_permitting\\_june2022\\_remediated.pdf](https://www.interstatebridge.org/media/fi2b3xei/ibr_next_steps_bridge_permitting_june2022_remediated.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Google December 6, 2021. KATU2abc. Hailey Dunn, Liz Burch, Kelly Doyle. “Police shoot, kill, carjacking suspect along the two I-5 in North Portland.” Accessed December 7, 2021.

<https://katu.com/news/local/all-lanes-of-i-5-closed-in-north-portland-after-crash>.

Scroll down to the video: “Traffic on I-205 at SE Stark Street during the evening commute on December 6, 2021. KATU2abc”

<sup>3</sup> HINooN Resolution Regarding the I-5 Interstate Bridge Replacement Program (IBR), 2021-12-7

<sup>4</sup> E. Churchill to IBR program, Hayden Island Neighborhood Network (HINooN) Statement, 12/2/2021

Mid 2020, Gregory C. Johnson was selected as I-5 Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Administrator. He had worked on large projects in the past and had no prior association with the CRC project. At WSP Consulting, Mr. Johnson ran their Michigan operations. At the time, WSP was ranked ninth out of the consulting firms to win bids with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). With Johnson's leadership, WSP became the No. 1 firm to earn jobs from the MDOT. Johnson was promoted to vice president of national construction services after a year. By mid-June, following a national recruitment process with input from agency partners and local stakeholders ODOT and WSDOT selected Mr. Johnson to lead the IBR on behalf of both states. He is authorized to act on behalf of both ODOT and WSDOT and is equally responsible to both states.

**An August 20, 2021 , IBR Memorandum: Screening and Evaluation of a Tunnel River Crossing** summarizes the IBR evaluation of a tunnel as a potential option to address the transportation problems in the Interstate Bridge corridor. With no community participation, the “...supplemental and replacement tunnels were found to not meet the Purpose and Need statement .” It also stated, “**The recent technical assessment of an ITT demonstrated that it also is not a viable replacement option for the IBR program. Therefore , the tunnel options do not warrant further consideration under the IBR program and no further analysis will be conducted.**”<sup>5</sup>

**The August 20<sup>th</sup> Memorandum** was from the IBR program Environmental Lead and IBR program Environmental Coordinator

The “*recent. technical assessment*” cited above in the August 20<sup>th</sup> Memorandum was a **33 page, July 14, 2021 assessment** by the IBR program assembling “...*a group of engineers with international experience in tunnel design and construction to provide a comprehensive conceptual review of the suitability of an immersed tube tunnel.*”

**The development of the July 14<sup>th</sup> assessment document involved seventeen professional participants. The group included nine IBR staff members, (one of which was the IBR Environmental Lead who rejected the tunnel in the August 20 memorandum referred to above), five employees of WSP USA and three with no association listed.**<sup>6</sup>

December 5, 2022, HINooN hosted a “**Crossings, Coffee, & Christmas Ships**” meeting at the **Holiday Inn Portland** on Hayden Island. The purpose was to introduce the IBR program and the Immersed Tube Tunnel option to the community at a public meeting. . The six speakers included Mr. Johnson, IBR Program Administrator. Mr. Ray Mabey, Assistant Program Administrator; Mr. Bob Ortblad, a retired civil engineer, and an advocate for an immersed tube tunnel. Others included Mr. Chris Smith, a member of the Just Crossing Alliance (which HINooN is a part of) who want a smaller footprint for the bridge; Mr. Zachary Lauritzen from Oregon Walks, and Ms. Be Friend, a HINooN board member.

At that meeting, Mr. Mabry revealed the IBR project spent over \$100,000 looking into the immersed tube tunnel option and ultimately found it does not meet the program's purpose and needs. The ITT option was rejected with no HINooN public engagement.

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6. Findley, Angela, Environmental Lead, IBR Program, Memorandum “Screening and Evaluation of a Tunnel River Crossing” August 20, 2021,

7. IBR program, Tunnel Concept Assessment, July 14, 2021.

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Representing the IBR program, Mr. Johnson and Mr Mabey explained some of the constraints of building a replacement bridge, like the Coast Guard’s preliminary ruling asking for at least 178 feet of clearance. The program is trying to thread a needle and hit a window of federal funding, Johnson said. With geographical and political constraints, the program will not be able to build a perfect, iconic bridge.

Mr. Mabey, assistant IBR program administrator, confirmed that the document (33 pages) assessing the Immersed Tube Tunnel alternative was developed by 17 professional engineers and other professionals. Also revealed was the IBR project spent over \$100,000 looking into the immersed tube tunnel option and found it does not meet the program’s purpose and needs. **The ITT was rejected with no public engagement.**

Mr. Ortblad followed Johnson and made the case for an Immersed Tube Tunnel (ITT). The underwater ITT, is made up of segments floated to the site, sunk and then linked together. The tunnel is also buoyant, making it seismically resilient. A tunnel would also be better for the waterfront as it will be quieter than a bridge and out of sight.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST – No Transparency

During the Columbia River Crossing project, the public opportunity to speak was multi-faceted because of the variety of interested stakeholders. *“Since its inception in 2005, the Project (CRC) has implemented a comprehensive public outreach program the ensure the community’s values are integrated into project development.....”*

*“The Project presented information regularly at neighborhood associations, community organization and business meetings and participates in community fairs and festivals.”<sup>7</sup>*

At the signing of the Memorandum of Intent Governor Inslee stated: ***“We intend this (IBR) process to be a data-driven transparent process.”*** The statement is found in IBR Memorandums, Progress Reports and other IBR documents.

HINooN representatives found the IBR process to be neither Data Driven nor transparent.

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<sup>7</sup> 2011, Interstate 5 Columbia River Crossing Project RECORD OF DECISION, p 45.

The August 20, 2021 Memorandum that dismissed the Tunnel and the Immersed Tube Tunnel alternative was based on a 33 page July 14, 2021 Tunnel Concept Assessment that involved seventeen professional engineers. They were comprised of nine IBR program staff members, five employees of WSP USA, and three with no association listed.

During HINooN's December 5<sup>th</sup> a “**Crossings, Coffee, & Christmas Ships**“ Community meeting the IBR program administrators revealed the 33-page ITT assessment cost \$100,000.” The ITT assessment was not presented, or discussed, in a public outreach forum.

A Columbian article points out that the IBR Program Administrator also came to the IBR program from WSP USA.<sup>8</sup> Parsons Brinckerhoff was acquired in 2014 by WSP, a global professional services consultancy.

The IBR Environmental Lead served on the ITT Concept Assessment team that produced the July 14<sup>th</sup> Immersed Tube Tunnel Concept Assessment Document and then presented the August 20<sup>th</sup> Memorandum that dismissed the Immersed Tube Tunnel alternative to the IBR Environmental Manager. All completed internally without any public review or independent engineers – at a cost of \$100,000.

HINooN asks the following questions :

- Was the Bi-State Legislative Committee aware of the internal review?
- Was the Bi-State Legislative Committee informed of that 5 WSP employees added to the 9 IBR staff made 76% of the 17 professional engineers and other professionals.
- Were ODOT and WSDOT informed that 5 members of the participating engineers were from WSP?
- Did ODOT and WSDOT recognize the group may have difficulty in appearing to be neutral?
- Was there a concern about a conflict of interest?
- On what was the \$100,000 spent?
- Was there a dissenting opinion on the Immersed Tunnel Concept Assessment? What was it?
- Why has the public discussion of IBR alternative crossings, specifically the Immersed Tube Tunnel Alternative, been so summarily dismissed if the combined congestion and degraded travel time is so detrimental to the local, regional, state, national, and international economies?

The engineers may be professional and qualified, however, they do not appear as an independent Tunnel Assessment Team.

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<sup>8</sup> IBID, By [William Seekamp](#), Columbian staff writer, The Columbia, I-5 span replacement chief Greg Johnson has history of building bridges Interstate 5 Bridge Project administrator lauded for ability to successfully oversee complex projects  
Published: October 31, 2022

The Tunnel Concept Assessment stated in the Environmental Considerations, Section 5.6 Permitting:

*“Permitting a new dredge spoil disposal site may not be feasible to complete within the expected project schedule.”*

- What is the expected project schedule to which the Assessment refers?
- Is there a statutory project schedule/deadline for the IBR? If so, what is it?
- Upon what is it based?

## NOT DATA DRIVEN

Issues were raised at the Hayden Island/Marine Drive Interchange Community Working Group meeting such that HINooN was unable to make informed recommendations. Information was not provided on such concerns as:

- \* How high will the bridge be?
- How many lanes will it have?
- How big of a footprint will the bridge have on the island?
- Why were other crossing alternatives dropped from consideration?
- We would like to see a 3D visual of the proposed project.
- We would like to see traffic studies to help make route decisions both on and off the island.
- Traffic studies, size of the proposed Island interchanges, height, and width of the proposed bridge were requested.
- Why has the public discussion of IBR alternative crossings, specifically the Immersed Tube Tunnel Alternative, been so summarily dismissed if this combined congestion and degraded travel time is so detrimental to the local, regional, state, national, and international economies?

A survey was sent via email to a sample of island residents, asking to decide among the 3 proposed interchanges on Hayden Island. Many of the residents requested more information to make an informed decision. Because of lack of information regarding the IBR program, the HINooN representative was unable to provide any of the requested, and needed, information that would permit an informed choice about a project that will affect the livability of the Hayden Island community.

The I-5 Interstate bridge has not moved since 1917. Oregon and Washington population and economies have grown. Reports, studies, advisories point out that the I-5 Columbia River crossing is dealing with congestion caused by regional traffic along with interstate traffic from the Mexican border to the Canadian border. The video film of December 6, 2021 shows what we may expect if one of the two crossings failed. Governors Brown and Inslee believe the population and the economies of their respective states will continue to grow, having announced ***“...the growth of our communities has been spectacular, and we are confident we’ll continue...”***

Their statements of population and economic growth of the Portland and Vancouver illustrates the need for an alternative third crossing.

The following is presented:

**2022-11-12 HINooN RESOLUTION:**

**Regarding the Advancement of the Modified Locally Preferred Alternative into the National Environmental Policy Act Process**

**Resolved,** In the matter of the 2021-2022 Interim Joint Committee on the advancement of the Modified Locally Preferred Alternative (MLPA) into the National Environmental Policy Act process, the members of the Hayden Island Neighborhood Network (aka HINooN), a 501(c)(3) recognized neighborhood association in the City of Portland, located in Multnomah County, State of Oregon, request a delay in the advancement of the Modified Locally Preferred Alternative into the National Environmental Policy Act process for the purpose of a public presentation, and discussion by independent and qualified experts on the Tunnel and Immersed Tube Tunnel alternative rejected by the Interstate Bridge Program Environmental staff.

This submission is based on available data as of the date of this document. It will be updated as additional, relevant, information becomes available.

*Martin G. Slapikas*

Martin G. Slapikas, Chairman, HINooN

Hayden Island Neighborhood Network (HINooN)





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