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Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

Strategies and Lessons Learned for
Permitting Large Infrastructure Projects

May 2026

Introduction and IBR Program

Who Are We?

▶ Olivia Cohn

- ~11 years of environmental consulting; prior public sector experience
- Scope has included: transportation and utility project permitting, agency consultations, environmental document writing, climate and sustainability community planning

▶ Fun Fact

- Has lived in Alaska for about a dozen years
- Biked the ~500-mile perimeter of Puerto Rico right after Bad Bunny's 2025 album came out



Who Are We?

- ▶ **Noreen Roster**
 - 35 years working in the environmental consulting field
 - Experience working on large infrastructure projects
- ▶ **Fun Fact**
 - I'm an Uber driver for my dog
 - He takes guests out on Truffle Foray's in the PNW



Discussion Topics

- ▶ Overview of the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) Program
- ▶ Building the Team Internally and Externally
 - **Full team** overview
 - **Permitting team** overview
 - Working group **meetings** and **cost agreements**
- ▶ Key Tools
 - Using a **web-based mapping** tool to **inform planning and identify which permits are needed**
 - Illustrating **key permit timeline issues** with a swim lane graphic
 - Using a **risk analysis** for **high level decision-making**
 - **Organizational tools** to stay on track
- ▶ Questions, Wrap up

IBR Modified LPA Improvements in Final SEIS

- ▶ Replacement of the Interstate Bridge and I-5 bridges over the North Portland Harbor
- ▶ Improvements to seven I-5 interchanges and local street connections
- ▶ Extension of high-capacity transit (LRT) from Portland to Vancouver
- ▶ New transit stations at Hayden Island, Vancouver Waterfront, and Evergreen Blvd
- ▶ Possible locations for up to two park and rides near the Vancouver Waterfront and Evergreen transit stations



Building the Team - Externally and Internally



The Team

▶ Team

- Lead Federal Agency (FHWA/FTA)
- ODOT/WSDOT (Applicant)
- Consultant Team

▶ Agency Partners

- Tribal Governments
- Federal and State Agencies
- Local Agencies
 - Ports, Cities, transit agencies, MPOs



Aligning Strategies

- ▶ Agency Coordination Meetings
 - USACE, USCG, FAA, EPA, USFWS, NOAA, Tribal Governments, ODFW, WDFW, and Cities (Portland and Vancouver)
- ▶ Agency Agreements
 - Understand roles and responsibilities
 - Streamline permit reviews
- ▶ Communication tools!
 - Web Mapping Tools
 - Field Approval Tools
 - Swim Lane Graphic to show permit connections
 - Tracking documents
 - SharePoint
 - IBR Program website

Key Tools

Web Mapping Tool

The screenshot displays a web mapping application interface. At the top, a dark blue header contains the title "IBR ROW Estimating Review Map" and a search bar with the placeholder text "Find address or place". On the left side, there are navigation controls including a zoom in (+) and zoom out (-) button, a home button, and a location pin button. The main map area shows a satellite view of Vancouver, Washington, with several overlays: a blue shaded area along the Columbia River representing the Right-of-Way (ROW), and a large green shaded area representing Critical Areas. Labels on the map include "Downtown Vancouver", "Hough", "Vancouver", "Hayden Island", "Jantzen Beach Center", and "Heron Lakes Golf Course". A "Permitting" panel is open on the right side, listing various environmental and regulatory categories with checkboxes and menu icons. The bottom of the screen features a toolbar with icons for map layers, data, and other functions.

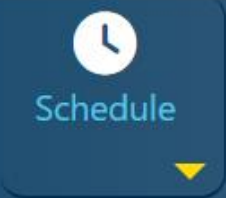
IBR ROW Estimating Review Map

Find address or place

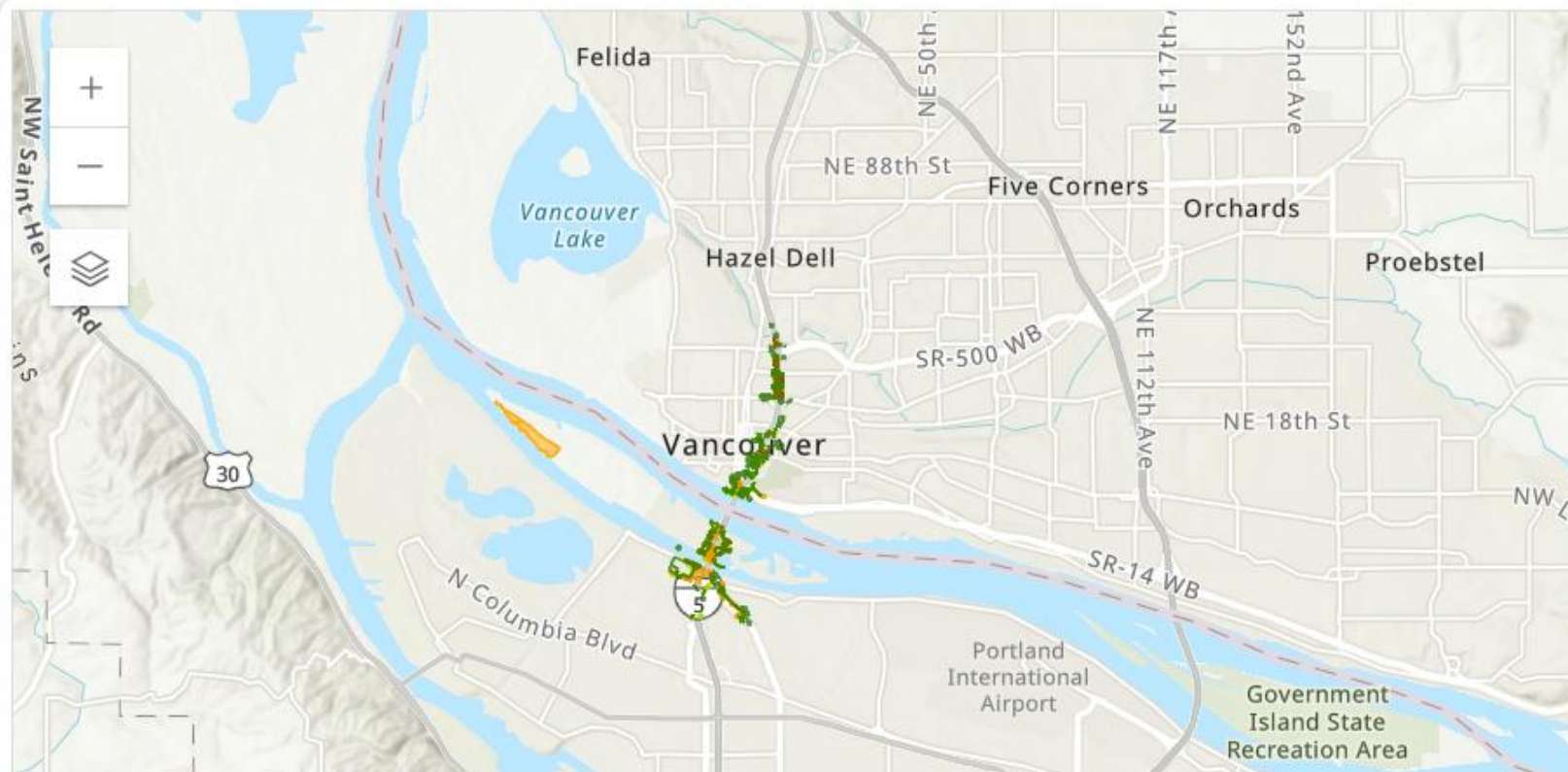
Permitting

- NWI Wetlands
- Flood Hazard Areas (FEMA)
- Critical Areas - Habitat (Clark Co)
- Critical Areas - Land Slip (Clark Co)
- Critical Areas - Shoreline (Clark Co)
- Critical Areas - Wetland Inventory (Clark Co)
- Critical Areas - Wetland Buffer 100 ft (Clark Co)
- Critical Areas - Critical Areas (Clark County)

Field Approval Tool



Field Work Approval > Edit Field Work Approval - IBR Alignment Tour (with FTA)



- Details
- Checklist
- Parcels
- Attachments
- Comments
- Summary
- Status
- Approvers
- Support

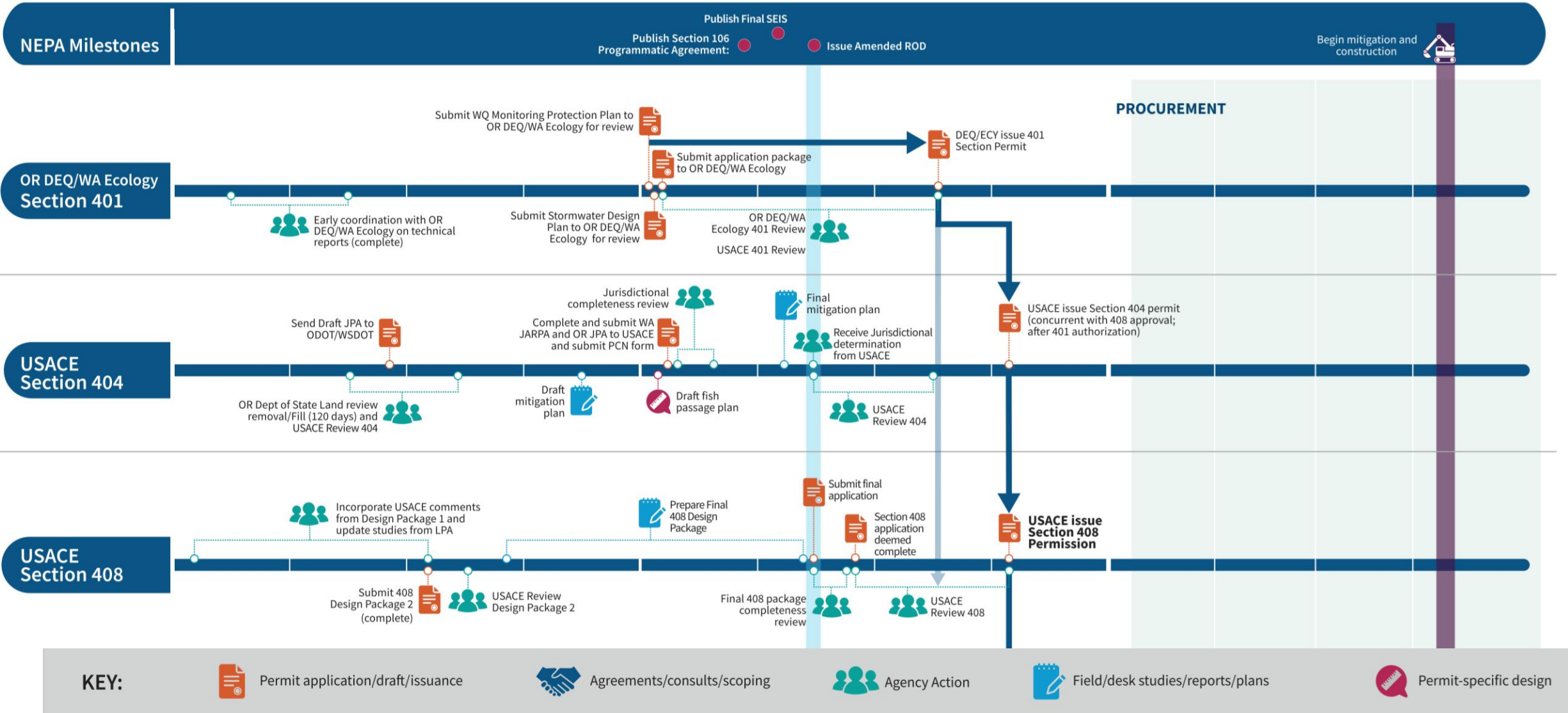


- 00 - Administration
- 01 - Program Management
- 02 - Program Controls
- 03 - Financial Structures
- 05 - Transportation Planning
- 06 - Environmental
- 07 - Transit Planning
- 08 - Design Engineering
- 09 - Major Structures
- 10 - Public Affairs
- 11 - Pre-Procurement
- 12 - Integrated Technology
- 13 - Climate
- 14 - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- 15 - Safety
- 16 - Quality and Document Control
- 17 - Third Party Agreements
- AG - Procurement
- Right of Way
- Permits
- External File Share
- Section 106

Illustrating the Permitting Timeline through a Swim Lane Graphic

Slide 1 of 2

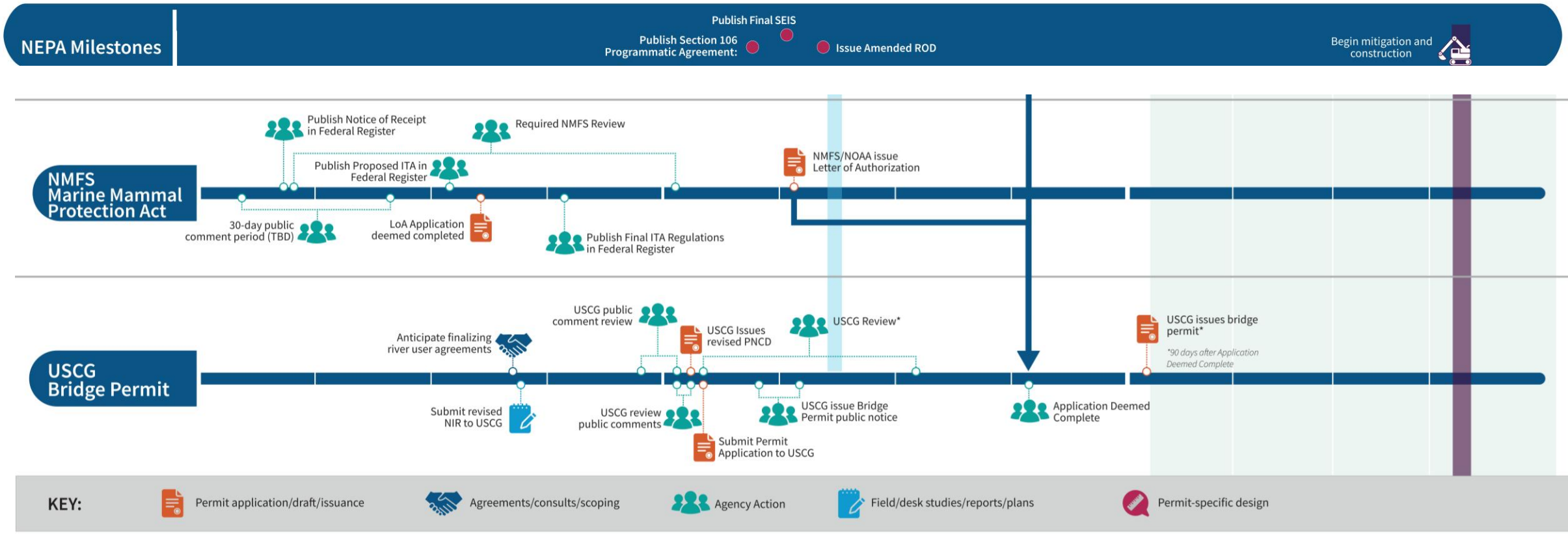
IBR CRB Permitting Workplan: Actions Preceding Issued Authorization



...Swim Lane Graphic

Slide 2 of 2

IBR CRB Permitting Workplan: Actions Preceding Issued Authorization





U.S. Coast Guard Bridge Permit

- ▶ Obtaining a Fixed Span Bridge Authorization
 - Navigation Impact Report and Jurisdictional Determination
 - Researching
 - *Other similar projects*
 - *Analyzing bridge lift logs and marine databases*
 - *Marine-dependent land use*
 - *River limitations (channel depth, upstream VNC limitations)*
 - *Offsetting impacts to river users*
 - Communications
 - *Ongoing meetings with USCG (client facing)*
 - *Ongoing meetings with bridge authorization team and communications with greater permit team (internal) including design, procurement, and others*
 - Obtaining the fixed span authorization to proceed!

Risk Analysis

- ▶ Showcased scenarios for permitting various bridge design options
- ▶ Showcased scenarios for waiting to permit design options until decisions are finalized
- ▶ Used to discuss permitting timelines, analyze risk in delaying or expediting decisions, illustrated priorities



Decision-Making Matrix to Consider Which Designs to Include In Each Permit Application

Permits/Approvals	Bridge Configuration Recommendation for Permit Application: Design Bridge			No. of Permit Applications	Recommendation	Risk/Rationale for Approach
	Sing Level Fixed	Sing Level Moveable (1 aux lane)	Largest Potential Impact (Sing Level Moveable w/ 2 Aux Lanes)*			
Federal Permits						
Section 404	Yes	Yes	No	4	4 separate permit applications, including two joint 404 applications in Oregon (single-level fixed and single level moveable options), and two joint 404 applications in Washington (single-level fixed and single level moveable options).	USACE recommended submitting two 404 permit applications because applications will be submitted prior to a ROD and submitting one option would be pre-decisional. Additionally, both bridge configurations are included in the NEPA analysis. This will result in two public comment processes. Submitting two bridge configurations would be consistent with USCG permitting strategy.
Section 408 - package 1	No	Yes	No	1		This has already been submitted.
Section 408 - package 2	Yes	Yes	No	1	1 permit application including design details for moveable and fixed span configurations.	Current direction for second design package to be submitted 6/20/2025. This expands on the first design package by including details for a single-level fixed span configuration.
Section 408 - Final	Yes	Yes	No	1	1 permit application including design details for moveable and fixed span conf.	Consistent with USCG bridge permit and 404 applications. Additional risk mitigation submitting two options because this would be ahead of the ROD.
MMPA Letter of Authorization	No	No	Yes	1	1 application including the single-level moveable span with 2 aux lanes.	This has already been submitted. The Biological Assessment included the worst-case (single-level moveable span with two auxiliary lanes) and in-water construction sequencing, as this is the largest possible project footprint.
Section 7 ESA	No	No	Yes	1	1 application including the single-level moveable span with 2 aux lanes.	The Biological Assessment included the worst-case (single-level moveable span with two auxiliary lanes) and in-water construction sequencing, as this is the largest possible project footprint.
USCG Bridge Permit	Yes	Yes	No	1	1 permit application including design details for moveable and fixed span configurations.	USCG directed the Program to include both the single-level fixed and single-level moveable span bridge configurations in the bridge permit application. The GEC team only has direction to proceed with a single-level fixed span design, so we will not be submitting stamped bridge drawings for a moveable-span. However, the design team has confirmed that the level of design completed for the moveable span would be sufficient to meet the



Organizational Tracking Tools

- ▶ Work Plans – permit-by-permit
 - For relevant permit level topics (Biological Opinion, USCG, fish passage, etc.)
 - Document leads, deadlines, and statuses – reviewed weekly by Task Lead, accessible to the owner
- ▶ High-level Tracking Document – for the greater permitting team
 - For all permits and key tasks to move them forward (e.g., meetings, deliverables, statuses)
 - Reviewed weekly by permitting team, reviewed regularly with owner as needed

Schedule Coordination Example

Section 408 Authorization Deliverables Tracking Schedule						Progression Reviews				DRAFT – Section 408 Application (final design) – DRAFT for internal and client review Schedule ID# AE.06.11.03-0050				
						Internal Draft		Tech Edit	Resolve Tech Edits	GEC QC Review	QC Backcheck	QC Verification	Clean / PDF for Submittal	Client Review Complete
Deliverable Title	Originator & Backchecker	Technical Experts	GEC QC & Verifier	Tech Editor	Client/SME Review	Start	Due	Due	Due	Due	Due	Due	Due	Due
						0 Internal Draft				1 Draft Redline			2 Draft Clean	
Hydrology Study Memo	Jerry Ramsden	Steve Seville	Darlene Siegel	Amy Cook and Sarah Bailey	Julie Heilman, Wes Nickerman, David McDonald	9/25/2025	-	-	-	10/28/2025	10/28/2025	10/28/2025	-	-
1D Hydraulic Model Report	Arianna Frender	Steve Seville	Darlene Siegel	Amy Cook and Sarah Bailey	Bill Warnke Julie Heilman Wes Nickerman	9/25/2025	3/16/2026	NA	NA	2/4/2026	2/6/2026	2/9/2026	2/11/2026	TBD
Floodplain Memo	Jessica Field	Justin Lennon	Justin Lennon	Amy Cook and Sarah Bailey	Julie Heilman, Wes Nickerman	9/25/2025	11/14/2025	11/19/2025	11/21/2025	12/9/2025	12/11/2025	12/12/2025	12/19/2025	-
2D Hydraulic Model Report	Tom Smrdel	Justin Lennon	Justin Lennon	Amy Cook and Sarah Bailey	Julie Heilman, Wes Nickerman	9/25/2025	12/16/2025	12/26/2025	12/31/2025	1/13/2026	1/23/2026	1/26/2026	TBD	NA
Permanent and Temporary Alterations to Federal Navigation Projects	Mike Pyszka	Rob Turton	Rob Turton	Amy Cook and Sarah Bailey	Bill Warncke	9/25/2025	4/10/2026	4/15/2026	4/17/2026	4/20/2026	4/22/2026	4/23/2026	4/24/2026	5/8/2026

Milestones Example

Deliverable	Planned	Status	Actions Pending	Lead
404 Access Request	TBD	Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City approved Delta Park wetland surveys. Tentatively <u>planning</u> for May/June 	Noreen, Dusty
CRBA Section 401	2/17/2026	Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response to completeness letter submitted. Responses to Ecology in progress 	Noreen, Dusty
CRBA Bridge permit application	1/27/2027	Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bridge permit application submitted 1/26/2026 Need to consider impacts of USCG permitting for Harbor Line Commission memo for research/findings on temporary navigation impacts submitted to leadership 3/24 Coordination with USCG and public notice period pending government furlough resolution 	Grace, Jodi
COV permit memo	4/30/2026	Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IBR to address City comments on permit memo – responses in progress by 4/16 for internal review. 	Noreen, Jason
COP permit memo	4/30/2026	Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JARPA submitted to request LUCS on 3/6 IBR to address City comments on permit memo - responses in progress by 4/16 for internal review 	Noreen, Jen H
Flood rise for Program	TBD	Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location Hydraulic Study complete IBR need to identify what hydraulic deliverables are needed for city permits Should the Program proceed with the CLOMR? 	Darlene, Steve S
Floodplain variance for COP	Ongoing	Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs buyoff and input from NMFS and city Complete 2D modeling for CoP variance needs. Scheduling meeting with Cities and H&H team. 	Jen H



IBR Program Website Content

www.interstatebridge.org

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[Modified LPA + Next Steps](#)
[Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement](#)
[Cultural Resources & Section 106](#)

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Stay in touch!

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Questions?

Visit the IBR Program website!

www.interstatebridge.org