

3. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Each section in this chapter summarizes key findings for one or more elements of the environment. Following a brief discussion of new information or changes in existing conditions since the NEPA evaluation for the Columbia River Crossing project, each section identifies the benefits and effects of the No-Build Alternative and the Modified LPA, including how benefits or effects would differ across the various design options.

Each section includes a detailed discussion of the long-term benefits and reasonably foreseeable effects (those that would remain after construction of the Modified LPA is completed), the temporary benefits and reasonably foreseeable effects (those that would occur during construction). In addition, each section identifies the mitigation measures that can address the identified effects, as appropriate. The analysis of the Modified LPA includes all design options (including the Recommended Design Options) described in Chapter 2, Description of Alternatives, and listed in Table 3-1. If there is a difference in the reasonably foreseeable effects among design options, those differences are identified and described specifically.

The findings summarized in this chapter are based on detailed technical reports prepared for this Final SEIS. The technical reports are cited throughout the chapter, as appropriate, and are incorporated by reference into the Final SEIS. All technical reports are listed in Appendix H.¹ All projections and forecasts are for the design year of 2045 unless otherwise stated.

A summary of the components of the Modified LPA analyzed in the Final SEIS is shown in Table 3-1.

Chapter Contents

- 3.1 Transportation
- 3.2 Navigation
- 3.3 Property Acquisitions and Displacements
- 3.4 Land Use and Economic Activity
- 3.5 Neighborhoods and Communities
- 3.6 Public Services and Utilities
- 3.7 Parks and Recreation
- 3.8 Cultural Resources
- 3.9 Visual Quality
- 3.10 Air Quality
- 3.11 Noise and Vibration
- 3.12 Energy
- 3.13 Electric and Magnetic Fields
- 3.14 Water Quality and Hydrology
- 3.15 Wetlands and Other Waters
- 3.16 Ecosystems
- 3.17 Geology and Groundwater
- 3.18 Hazardous Materials
- 3.19 Climate Change (Rescinded)
- 3.20 Environmental Justice (Rescinded)
- 3.21 Section 6(f) and Federal Lands to Parks
- 3.22 Aviation

¹ All appendices and technical reports are available on the IBR Program's website at www.interstatebridge.org.

Table 3-1. Summary of Components of the Modified LPA

Component	Modified LPA
<p>Columbia River Bridges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two bridges built west of the existing Interstate Bridge (which would be removed). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Three bridge configuration design options: double-deck fixed-span (truss bridge type); single-level fixed-span (girder or extradosed bridge type); or single-level movable-span (vertical lift bridge type). The effects and benefits analysis of a particular bridge configuration would be the same for all bridge types, unless otherwise specified. • Variable-rate tolling for motorists using the river crossing as a demand-management and financing tool.
<p>I-5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auxiliary lanes in each direction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Two design options: one auxiliary lane from Marine Drive to Mill Plain Boulevard; or two auxiliary lanes, including one from Marine Drive to Mill Plain Boulevard and one from Interstate Avenue/Victory Boulevard to SR 500/39th Street. • Improvements to seven interchanges between Victory Boulevard in Portland and SR 500 in Vancouver. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Two C Street Ramp design options: one to retain the existing C Street ramps, or one to eliminate the existing C Street ramps. – Two I-5 alignment design options: one to maintain the existing I-5 alignment, or one to shift I-5 to the west in downtown Vancouver near the SR 14 interchange. • Reconfiguration of some local streets to complement the new interchange designs.
<p>Light-Rail Transit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of the MAX Yellow Line from the Expo Center Station in North Portland to a terminus near Evergreen Boulevard in Vancouver.^a • Modifications to the existing Expo Center Station and new stations at Hayden Island, Vancouver Waterfront, and near Evergreen Boulevard. • Parking capacity to accommodate 1,270 vehicles at designated park-and-rides in Vancouver along the light-rail alignment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Two design options: one to accommodate all vehicles at one park-and-ride serving each LRT station (i.e., a single park and ride at one of three sites near the Waterfront Station and a single park and ride at one of the two sites near the Evergreen Station), or multiple park and rides dispersed among all five proposed sites. • Associated LRT improvements such as traction power substations, an overhead catenary system, signal and communications support facilities, operator break facilities, an overnight light-rail vehicle facility at the Expo Center, 19 new light-rail vehicles, and an expanded maintenance facility at TriMet’s existing Ruby Junction Light-Rail Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility.
<p>Associated Bus Improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside shoulders on I-5 from Victory Boulevard to SR 500 to accommodate express bus-on-shoulder service. • Improvements to local bus transit service to integrate the proposed new LRT service and local bus routes.
<p>Active Transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of improvements for people who walk, bicycle, and roll, including a system of shared-use paths, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks with enhanced wayfinding, and facility improvements to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Component	Modified LPA
North Portland Harbor Bridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement bridges that would carry LRT, I-5 through traffic, traffic to/from N Marine Drive, and an arterial bridge for local traffic to and from Hayden Island.

a TriMet, which operates the MAX system, would also operate the Yellow Line extension. I-5 = Interstate 5; LPA = Locally Preferred Alternative; LRT = light-rail transit; MAX = Metropolitan Area Express; SR = State Route; TriMet = Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon

Changes in Legal Landscape since the Draft SEIS

Since publication of the Draft SEIS, President Trump signed Executive Order (EO) 14154 – Unleashing American Energy – which, among other things, required the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to issue guidance on implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and propose rescinding its NEPA regulations at 40 CFR Part 1500 et seq. Subsequently, on February 25, 2025, CEQ published an Interim Final Rule (IFR) removing the CEQ NEPA implementing regulations, effective April 11, 2025 (90 Fed. Reg. 10610). The US DOT NEPA implementing regulations at 23 CFR Part 771, Environmental Impact and Related Procedures, were modified to remove cross-references to the defunct CEQ regulations through an IFR that became effective immediately upon its publication in the Federal Register on July 3, 2025.

Reasonably Foreseeable Effects

On February 19, 2025, CEQ issued a memorandum, Implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act, which acknowledged that the amendments to NEPA in the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, known as the Building United States Infrastructure through Limited Delays and Efficient Reviews (BUILDER) Act of 2023, directed that EISs must analyze and disclose the “reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of the proposed agency action.” CEQ encouraged Federal agencies to “analyze the reasonably foreseeable effects of the proposed action consistent with section 102 of NEPA, which does not employ the term ‘cumulative effects;’ [...and the agencies should consider] ‘reasonably foreseeable’ effects, regardless of whether or not those effects might be characterized as ‘cumulative.’”

Further, since the publication of the Draft SEIS, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colorado, which held the focus of NEPA is the project at hand, not other separate projects. 605 U.S. 168 (May 29, 2025). It also reinforced the “reasonably foreseeable” effects standard for measuring effects in NEPA, which was incorporated into the US DOT’s NEPA implementing regulations at 23 CFR Part 771.

Accordingly, relying upon the NEPA requirements, as revised by the BUILDER Act of 2023, and 23 CFR Part 771, effective July 3, 2025, the Final SEIS analyzes reasonably foreseeable effects that result from the proposed action.² The IBR Program considers reasonably foreseeable effects to have a rational link to the IBR Program in terms of geographic and temporal proximity and must be sufficiently likely

² The Final SEIS does not categorize the reasonably foreseeable effects of the proposed action based upon types of effects. As a result of the changes discussed in this chapter, FHWA, FTA and the IBR Program reviewed the documentation supporting the NEPA analysis to determine whether the effects that had previously been characterized as direct, indirect, and cumulative were reasonably foreseeable. The appendices supporting the Final SEIS, , which contain the terms “direct” and “indirect” were included in this review. The appendices contain these terms because the terms were required under the CEQ regulations in effect at the time the appendices were prepared. Although the terms “direct” and “indirect” have not been removed from the appendices, FHWA, FTA and the IBR Program reviewed the effects characterized (or categorized) as indirect in the appendices to determine whether such effects are reasonably foreseeable. Also included in this review was the former cumulative effects section. To the extent any effects in the former cumulative effects section were determined to be reasonably foreseeable, they were included in the Final SEIS along with the discussion of other reasonably foreseeable effects.

to occur. Reasonably foreseeable effects do not include effects that are speculative in nature or causally attenuated³ from the IBR Program.

Reasonably foreseeable effects of the No-Build Alternative and Modified LPA on environmental and community resources are evaluated in the resource-specific sections of the Final SEIS (Section 3.1 through Section 3.22). The Final SEIS does not carry forward the former cumulative effects chapter of the Draft SEIS, Section 3.23. Unless otherwise defined in the resource-specific section of the Final SEIS, for the purposes of assessing reasonably foreseeable effects, the following parameters apply:

- Geographic proximity includes effects within or directly adjacent to the primary study area for the IBR Program, which is the area where most physical changes associated with the Modified LPA would occur (see Figure 3-1). The primary study area is the proposed construction footprint (i.e., the proposed limits of permanent improvements), and it runs along a 5-mile stretch of the I-5 corridor that extends from approximately Victory Boulevard in Portland to SR 500 in Vancouver. It also includes the TriMet-owned Ruby Junction Light-Rail Operations and Maintenance Facility in Gresham, Oregon.
- Temporal scope includes long-term effects that are expected to occur between 2023 (the year the Notice to Prepare an SEIS was published) and 2045 (the design year of the IBR Program as developed by the Oregon Metro and Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council regional travel demand model (RTDM)⁴) and temporary effects that are expected to occur during construction, as described in Table 2-5 of Section 2.3, Modified LPA Construction. Construction of all components identified in the Modified LPA could last more than 10 years.
- Sufficiently likely to occur includes effects associated with projects for which funding has been committed, including, for example, projects included in the fiscally-constrained list of projects in the Regional Transportation Plan with dedicated funding for construction.

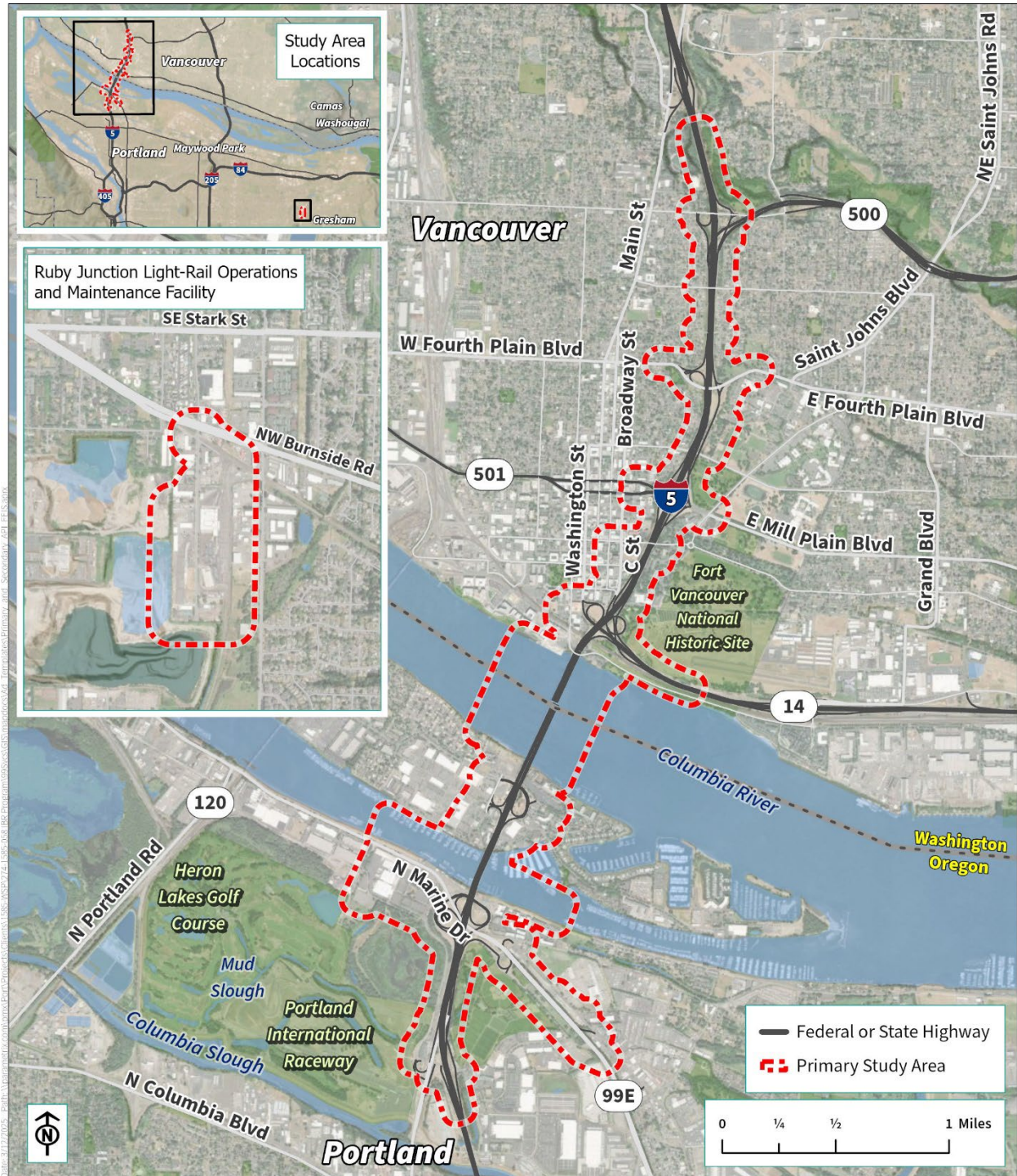
Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Analysis

In addition to EO 14154, on January 20, 2025, President Trump signed EO 14148 – Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions. Together, EO 14154 and EO 14148 revoked EO 13990 – Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis (January 20, 2021) and EO 14008 – Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (January 27, 2021). Subsequently on January 29, 2025, Secretary Duffy signed a Memorandum for Secretarial Offices and Heads of Operating Administrations – “Implementation of Executive Orders Addressing Energy, Climate Change, Diversity, and Gender.” As a result of these actions, coupled with CEQ’s rescission of its NEPA implementing regulations, FHWA and FTA will not include GHG emissions and climate change analyses in the federal environmental review process, and any purported GHG emissions or climate change impacts, including comments on GHG emissions or climate change, will not be considered in the federal decision. Accordingly, no GHG emissions or climate change analyses are included in this Final SEIS.

³ “Causally attenuated” in this context means effects that are remote in time or place, or are the result of a lengthy causal chain (meaning intervening variables such as other actions may contribute or cause an effect), thereby making it difficult to establish a sufficiently close connection between the proposed action and a particular environmental impact. Generally, an outcome or effect is causally attenuated if it cannot be directly attributed to one particular action, but rather may result from another action or series of actions.

⁴ The RTDM is the Metro/RTC model based on the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) with a forecast year of 2045 (see Appendix A of the Transportation Technical Report).

Figure 3-1. Primary Study Area



Source: ODOT, WSDOT, Mapbox, OpenStreetMap

Environmental Justice

EOs 14148 and 14154 also revoked EO 14096 – Revitalizing Our Nation’s Commitment to Environmental Justice for All (April 21, 2023). Subsequently on January 21, 2025, President Trump signed EO 14173 – Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity. This EO revoked EO 12898 – Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (February 11, 1994). As a result of these actions, coupled with CEQ’s rescission of its NEPA implementing regulations, all federal environmental justice requirements are

Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

revoked and no longer apply to the federal environmental review process. FHWA, FTA and FRA's joint NEPA regulations (23 CFR Part 771) and the agencies' Interim Final Guidance on "Section 139 Environmental Review Process: Efficient Environmental Reviews for Project Decisionmaking and One Federal Decision" (12/17/2024) do not require an environmental justice analysis. Accordingly, no analysis of environmental justice is included in this Final SEIS. Any purported environmental justice impacts, including comments on environmental justice or equity, will not be considered in the federal decision. Social, economic, and community impacts will continue to be disclosed where applicable in accordance with 23 CFR Part 771.

State Requirements

To the extent the laws of the States of Washington or Oregon require WSDOT or ODOT to consider the effects of GHG emissions, climate change, environmental justice, energy use of forecasted vehicle fleets, or cumulative impacts as part of the state environmental review, any such analysis is provided in the IBR Program's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Addendum, which will be available on the IBR Program's website. Because the SEPA Addendum was developed by WSDOT and ODOT solely for the purpose of complying with State law, FHWA and FTA were not involved in the development of the SEPA Addendum. FHWA and FTA are not expressing agreement or concurrence through this reference to the SEPA Addendum and did not consider the document in the Final SEIS. This includes responding to comments related to GHG emissions, climate change, environmental justice, forecasted vehicle fleet energy use under state assumptions, or cumulative impacts. FHWA and FTA are not expressing agreement or concurrence through this reference to the SEPA Addendum.