



Dave Killen/The Oregonian

The Interstate Bridge between Portland and Vancouver.

Interstate Bridge replacement design too low, Coast Guard says

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
The Oregonian

The U.S. Coast Guard has told project planners that their proposed design for a new Interstate Bridge is too low and that the maritime service would be unlikely to approve the plan in its current form.

A letter from the Coast Guard to bridge planners last month said that a new structure needs 178 feet of clearance, or a drawbridge, to accommodate vessels navigating the Columbia River, as well as products manufactured by several local companies.

The current design for a new bridge is 116 feet high with a fixed span. The existing bridge is two spans, both of which lift up to 178 feet.

Even under planners' most optimistic timeline, construction is unlikely to begin until 2025 or beyond, after a full environmental review of the bridge design. But the Coast Guard will first need to sign off on a permit.

Bridge height also caused friction during a last incarnation of the project, when Oregon and Washington state agreed to pay millions of dollars to three companies located upriver whose products — drill rigs and other massive pieces of equipment — wouldn't fit under the proposed Columbia River Crossing.

Disputes over light rail and the Washington Legislature's decision not to fund the bridge eventually torpedoed that version of the project in 2014.

Greg Johnson, the director of the Interstate Bridge replacement program, said in a written statement that the Coast Guard's decision is preliminary and that his team had anticipated pushback on the height. He said while he understood the Coast Guard is focused on keeping navigation open on the water, his team's goals are much broader.

"The IBR program has a responsibility to identify a multimodal solution that not only addresses the needs of navigation but those of all program area users including air, transit, freight, vehicle and active transportation," he wrote.

Johnson said in the statement that while planners hope to avoid a lift-span bridge, which would likely add considerable cost, they will continue to discuss it with the Coast Guard.

The bridge planning team is present-

ing the design to several local and state government agencies this month, including the cities and ports of Portland and Vancouver and the Metro regional government. Nine bodies in all must approve the design before it can move to the next phase, an environmental assessment.

The design includes a light rail connection between Portland and Vancouver, and it adds one auxiliary lane in each direction to the existing six lanes. The auxiliary lanes would directly connect some of the interchanges near the bridge, easing abrupt merges.

That's been a point of contention for environmental groups who say adding a lane will encourage more people to drive, exacerbating climate change.

In light of the Coast Guard's statement, those activists also urged bridge planners to consider taking another design into the environmental review process.

"We're suggesting the locally preferred alternative they're proposing, and either a lift bridge or tunnel to accommodate the Coast Guard," said Chris Smith, a member of the Just Crossing Alliance, a coalition of about two dozen local environmental and transportation advocates.

A second plan would keep the bridge from being delayed too much in case the design doesn't pass environmental reviews, Smith said. He suggested alternatives could allow the project to be completed in phases, allowing local leaders to prioritize other regional projects as well.

"This plan will just sweep off all additional funding for a decade," Smith said of the current design.

And, he said, a bridge built to 178 feet of clearance as the Coast Guard is seeking would require very steep ramps onto Hayden Island and into downtown Vancouver that would be especially difficult for bikers and pedestrians to use.

State Rep. Khanh Pham, D-Portland, is a member of the Just Crossing Alliance, as well as the two-state legislative committee which will vote on the design in July. She urged the project planners to heed the warning and come up with another potential solution.

"If the Coast Guard decides, as they've signaled this week, that they won't approve a 116-foot bridge, we'll have a Plan B or Plan C," she said.

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Khanh Pham | state representative

OBITUARIES

Dr. Rodney Spexarth Miller

Clatskanie

March 6, 1922 — June 30, 2022

Dr. Rodney Spexarth Miller, a retired dentist, passed away on June 30, at the age of 100, in Clatskanie. He celebrated his 100th birthday on March 6, with a party surrounded by family and friends at Sapphire at The Amber assisted living facility in Clatskanie.

Rod was born on March 6, 1922, to Ira Scoville Miller and May Spexarth Miller, in Astoria. Rod's older brother, Myron, was lost during World War II in 1945. His sister, Marcia Beber, passed away in 2019.

Rod graduated from Astoria High School in 1940. He attended the University of Oregon, Willamette University and Baltimore College of Dental Surgery in Maryland. He graduated from the University of Oregon Dental School in 1947.

Rod practiced dentistry in Astoria from 1947 until his retirement in 1992. He was involved in a program to introduce fluoride into the water system in Astoria to help prevent tooth decay.

Rod married Naomi O'Neal in Astoria in 1948. Together they had one son, Murray Myron Miller. Naomi passed away in January 1964.

Rod married Donna Armstrong on Oct. 31, 1964, adding three more children to the family, Lani Armstrong Bidgood, Sheryl Miller Barron and the late Danny Armstrong. Donna passed away in 1992.

In 1995, Rod married Frances Dietrichs. Rod welcomed Frances' four children, Jay Dietrichs, Janet Dietrichs Owens, Celia Dietrichs Rummell and Alan Dietrichs, into the family. Frances passed away in November 2020.

Rod was a member and elder at the First Presbyterian Church in Astoria. He was also a member of the "Medicare Boys," which was a group that helped to main-

tain the church. Rod was a life member of the American Dental Association, Clatsop County Historical Society, Columbia River Maritime Museum and the Community Concert Association in Astoria.

Rod enjoyed spending time with family, camping, walking, drinking coffee and home do-it-yourself projects. He also enjoyed traveling, especially trips to Hawaii and the Holy Land.

Rod is survived by his son, Murray Miller (Mary), of Astoria; daughters, Lani Armstrong Bidgood (Duane), of Surprise, Arizona, and Sheryl Miller Barron (Tony), of Klamath Falls; and a daughter-in-law, Jan Armstrong, of Hood River.

Rod is also survived by eight grandchildren, Lisa Hamilton (Bill), Daniel Armstrong, Tana Lerma (Pat), Ron King (Sandy), Chelsea Miles, Joshua Miller (Cori), Molly Wing (Brandon) and Heather Hensley (Marc); numerous great-grandchildren; Frances' children, Janet Owens (Ted), Jay Dietrichs (Matt), Celia Rummell (Brian) and Alan Dietrichs; and special friends, Dr. Philip Bales and his wife, Ann.

The family would like to thank his personal caregivers, Judie Malinen, Echo Cruse, Belinda Steinman, Aja Victorine Vance and Vanessa Ramirez, and all of the wonderful staff at Sapphire at The Amber assisted living facility in Clatskanie.

Contributions may be made to the Clatsop County Historical Society or Lower Columbia Hospice in Rod's name.

A graveside service will be at Ocean View Cemetery in Warrenton at 1 p.m. on Friday.

Arrangements are through Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary in Astoria.



Dr. Rodney Miller

OBITUARY POLICY

The Astorian publishes paid obituaries. The obituary can include a small photo and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge. The deadline for all obituaries is 9 a.m. the business day prior.

Obituaries may be edited for spelling, proper punctuation and style. Death notices and upcoming services will be published at no charge. Notices must be submitted by 9 a.m. the day before publication.

Obituaries and notices may be submitted online at DailyAstorian.com/obituaries, by email at ewilson@dailyastorian.com, placed via the funeral home or in person at The Astorian office, 949 Exchange St. in Astoria.

For more information, call 503-325-3211, ext. 1257.

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SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
66 56	67 55	69 54	67 55	69 57	73 55	70 55
A couple of showers	Rain and drizzle	Partial sunshine	Clouds and sun	Cloudy with a shower	Mostly cloudy	Partly sunny

ALMANAC

Astoria through Sunday

Temperatures

High/low	65/55
Normal high/low	66/53
Record high	88 in 1906
Record low	41 in 1949

Precipitation

Sunday	0.00"
Month to date	Trace
Normal month to date	0.11"
Year to date	42.57"
Normal year to date	37.28"

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2022

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: Earth at Aphelion (farthest from sun). The sun-Earth distance is 1.02 AU.

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today 5:31 a.m.
Sunset tonight 9:09 p.m.
Moonrise today 12:02 p.m.
Moonset today 12:30 a.m.

	First	Full	Last	New
	July 6	July 13	July 20	July 28

TODAY'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks	Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
	5:25 a.m.	6.6	12:09 p.m.	0.2
	6:47 p.m.	6.9	none	
Cape Disappointment	5:07 a.m.	6.3	11:35 a.m.	0.4
	6:34 p.m.	6.7	none	
Hammond	5:18 a.m.	6.8	11:50 a.m.	0.4
	6:42 p.m.	7.2	none	
Warrenton	5:20 a.m.	7.0	11:53 a.m.	0.3
	6:42 p.m.	7.3	none	
Knappa	6:02 a.m.	6.8	12:59 a.m.	2.2
	7:24 p.m.	7.2	1:10 p.m.	0.2
Depoe Bay	4:17 a.m.	6.4	11:00 a.m.	0.2
	5:50 p.m.	6.8	11:50 p.m.	2.7

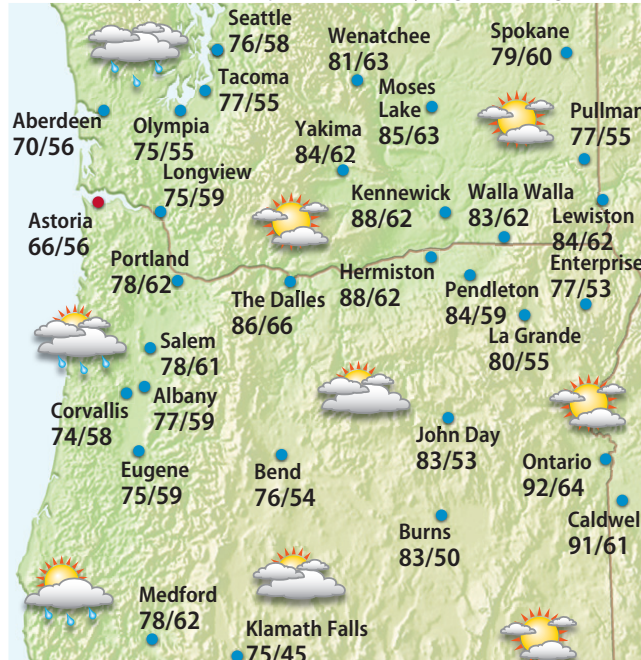
NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Wed. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	90/76/t	93/76/t
Boston	84/68/pc	79/64/pc
Chicago	95/69/t	83/70/t
Dallas	102/81/s	102/81/s
Denver	91/63/c	87/60/t
Honolulu	86/74/sh	88/75/pc
Houston	97/78/s	95/79/pc
Los Angeles	79/63/pc	80/61/pc
Miami	89/79/sh	87/79/t
New York City	84/72/t	87/68/pc
Phoenix	104/84/pc	105/83/pc
San Francisco	73/60/c	72/58/pc
Wash., DC	89/78/t	91/72/t

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.

REGIONAL FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Wed. Hi/Lo/W	City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Wed. Hi/Lo/W
Baker City	80/51/pc	83/53/pc	North Bend	64/57/c	65/53/r
Brookings	61/55/pc	61/52/r	Roseburg	74/61/pc	76/60/sh
Ilwaco	66/57/c	66/57/r	Seaside	67/57/sh	67/56/r
Newberg	77/59/sh	74/57/r	Springfield	76/59/pc	73/57/c
Newport	61/56/pc	62/52/r	Vancouver	78/62/sh	76/61/pc