MULTIMODAL COMMUTER COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP (CWG) MEETING #2

Subject: Multimodal Commuter Community Working Group Meeting #2 Summary

Dates and Times: November 16, 2021, 4:30 to 7:00 P.M.

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

WELCOME REMARKS

Anita Yap, facilitator for the Multimodal Commuter Community Working Group (CWG), welcomed everyone to the meeting and began by providing an overview of accessible participation options including closed captions and ASL interpretation. Anita led the team in an introductory exercise where each CWG participant introduced themselves and shared the modes most of transportation they have used in a single commute.

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP FRAMEWORK

Anita then provided an overview of the CWG framework and shared that two Multimodal Commuter CWG participants, Victor Caesar and Mikaela Williams, are also Community Advisory Group (CAG) members who will provide direct linkage to the IBR CAG. This is the last scheduled meeting for the Multimodal Commuter CWG, but the group may reconvene on as needed basis. Feedback on specific transportation design concepts from these meetings will be presented to advisory groups and program partners and will inform stakeholders and decision makers to help them better understand public input. Anita then turned the conversation over to Brad Phillips, IBR Technical Lead, to discuss preliminary design options.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN OPTIONS

Brad began by discussing the program timeline between now and early 2022. The program will continue to refine design options to address changes since the previous planning effort, embed equity and climate considerations within the design options, finalize screening criteria to evaluate design options, and engage in a two-way dialogue with the community around design options. By early 2022, the program seeks to develop and reach consensus on the IBR multimodal design solution in collaboration with partners and stakeholders. Brad shared that design options were developed in collaboration with agency partners, and in response to changes since previous planning efforts, while incorporating current regional values and priorities. Interstate Bridge transportation concerns expressed by CWG participants during the last meeting include congestion,

bridge lifts, inadequate number of lanes, poor sight distance, difficulty merging onto I-5 (specifically from SR-14 west to I-5 south).

All design options include a dedicated transit guideway and wide shared-use path. Bridge height and type will be determined by future design work informed by data, partner input, and community engagement feedback. Brad shared the three options for the bridge crossing and alignment:

- 2013 Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) option: Two separate bridges with a curved alignment.
- Straight alignment option: Similar to the 2013 LPA option but a straight alignment, rather than curved, which allows for easier constructability.
- Stacked alignment option: One bridge with southbound traffic stacked on top of northbound traffic. This option has a smaller footprint over the Columbia River compared to other options.

The two options for how the Interstate Bridge will connect to downtown Vancouver and the I-5 corridor:

- 2013 Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) option: Allows connectivity to downtown Vancouver and SR-14 via on/off ramps.
- Option with stacked crossing: Limits direct access to downtown Vancouver via I-5 due to stacked alignment structural considerations.

Vancouver interchanges (Mill Plain to SR-500) will be reconstructed with braided ramps and/or auxiliary lanes to help improve traffic flow and safety. All bicycle and pedestrian connections near Vancouver interchanges will see improvements that support east to west travel.

The options for Hayden Island and Marine Drive interchanges:

- Full interchange option: Ability to access Hayden Island directly from I-5 in either direction.
- Partial interchange option: Hayden Island accessible via I-5 interchanges to and from Washington. Hayden Island access to and from Oregon available via Marine Drive interchange and arterial bridge.
- No interchange option: No access to Hayden Island via I-5 interchanges in either direction. All Hayden Island access available via Marine Drive interchanges and arterial bridges from Portland to Hayden Island.

All Hayden Island and Marine Drive interchange options include replacing the North Portland Harbor Bridge due to seismic vulnerability.

QUESTIONS

CWG participant: Do all options include the replacement or removal of the I-5 bridge?

Brad: Yes, in all cases the program plans to replace the existing Interstate Bridge for seismic and river navigation reasons. The new bridge will be at a height that will allow most vessels to travel underneath the bridge, therefore removing bridge lifts.

CWG participant: Can you clarify what the colors represent on the Hayden Island and Marine Drive Interchange Options maps?

Brad: Grey is the underlying highway alignment and configuration of the interchanges. Blue represents high-volume streets where interchange ramps connect. Purple lines are lower volume streets suitable for active transportation. Circles on the maps represent intersections.

CWG participant: Has bridge height assumption been verified by Army Corps of Engineers?

Brad: We are currently renewing bridge height studies and coordinating with Army Corps of Engineers. We should have a clearance conclusion by next year.

CWG participant: What was the design intent for having a curved bridge (2013 LPA option)?

Brad: A curved alignment was convenient because it allowed for replacement of the Interstate Bridge next to the existing bridge, while still able to connect to the existing North Portland Harbor Bridge. However, now that the North Portland Harbor Bridge will be replaced, not retrofitted, a straight alignment allows for easier constructability and maintenance of traffic.

BREAKOUT ROOMS: DESIGN OPTIONS DISCUSSION

Anita presented questions for discussion during the breakout session. Questions seek CWG participant feedback around design options initial impressions, challenges, opportunities, and concerns. Participants then discussed design options in breakout rooms for approximately 15 minutes.

HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT

Ben Deines, IBR Technical Lead, presented an overview of high-capacity transit (HCT). Ben began with how high-capacity transit is defined and existing HCT modes used in the Portland/Vancouver region. The program is studying bus rapid transit (BRT), light rail transit (LRT), a hybrid option, and bus on shoulder (BOS) options. All options will have dedicated guideways across the Interstate Bridge and enhanced stations.

QUESTIONS

CWG participant: Will LRT be integrated with the MAX system?

Ben: Yes, a light rail mode would very likely be operated by TriMet and as an extension of MAX.

CWG participant: Is there a planned LRT station on Hayden Island?

Katy Belokonny: Yes, there is a planned LRT station on Hayden Island under consideration.

CWG participant: Is there a plan for high-speed rail from Portland/Vancouver to Seattle?

Kelly Betteridge: High-speed rail is outside the scope of this program but should be discussed at the regional level.

CWG participant: Why are we limiting transit options? Can we have both LRT and BRT?

Kelly: We will be discussing transit options in an upcoming presentation.

CWG participant: Is there opportunity for federal funds/grants if LRT is selected over BRT?

Kelly: New Starts is competitive federal grant program the previous planning effort identified as a potential funding source for the transit component. This program is still in place and IBR is looking at New Starts as a potential funding source for transit. Funding is available for both LRT and BRT projects, so which mode this program selects will not necessarily determine if funding is received through New Starts.

CWG participant: Are operation costs being considered? We don't want to build something that will be expensive to operate. Are the local transit agencies providing input?

Katy: Transit agency partners (TriMet and C-TRAN) are attending this meeting for that reason. The program is working collaboratively with agency partners to reach an IBR solution that can be supported by all stakeholders.

The group took a break for approximately five minutes.

TOLLING

Ryan LeProwse, IBR Technical Lead, provided an overview of tolling considerations for the IBR program. The details of how tolling may be implemented have not yet been determined, but the projects of this scale typically require tolling as a funding component. The IBR program is committed to identifying an equitable tolling system informed by national best practices. Tolling authorization and rate setting will rest with legislatures and transportation commissions in Oregon and Washington.

PRELIMINARY TRANSIT DESIGN OPTIONS

Kelly Betteridge, IBR Technical Lead, provide an overview of preliminary HCT design options. Ten options were created in cooperation with transit agency partners. The program is gathering data from the regional model and design work about how the transit options perform regarding measures like travel time, ridership, and access. Transit options include:

- No Build Option (used as a tool for measuring effects of other options)
- Bus on Shoulder Option
- 3 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Options
- 4 Light Rail Transit (LRT) Options
- BRT/LRT Option

All transit options include a dedicated space for HCT between the Expo Center and Hayden Island, dedicated space for HCT on the replacement bridge, and allowances for express buses to operate on freeway shoulders where possible in the program area. Future work will determine transit terminus locations, station locations, and Park & Ride facility size and locations.

QUESTIONS

CWG participant: How do these options impact vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse emission goals? Will ridership be measured for all options?

Kelly: We are in the process of gathering information to understand impact of VMT and ridership for all transit options. Many things factor into ridership including frequency of service and connections.

CWG participant: How are you handling phased construction?

Brad: First we will build the new bridge, move traffic over to it, then remove the old bridge.

CWG participant: Why do HCT transit options terminate at Kiggins Bowl? Park & Ride facilities already exist at 78th, 99th, and 139th.

Kelly: Previous planning efforts terminated transit near I-5 and McLoughlin. The Kiggins Bowl option came from partner discussions to provide transit options that go further north than previous planning. We will be having discussions around Park & Ride facilities.

CWG participant: Is there consideration to extend light rail further north than Kiggins Bowl?

Kelly: Current regional planning work does not include further extension of light rail.

Brad: While there is no current plan for further extension of light rail, we don't want to preclude the ability for it to extend in the future from a design perspective.

CWG participant: Do any transit options require local funding? If so, how much does that impact decision criteria for what is selected?

Kelly: Conversations around transit have not yet focused on funding. The previous planning efforts pursued federal grant funding, but a decision has not been made if the IBR program will pursue the same funding source.

BREAKOUT ROOMS: TRANSIT OPTIONS DISCUSSION

Anita presented questions for discussion during the breakout session. Questions center around participant's user experience, what considerations make the use of transit attractive, and which transit options would most likely impact travel behavior. Participants then discussed transit options in breakout rooms for approximately 15 minutes.

Breakout Room Report Out

Factors that make transit appealing to CWG participants:

- Availability of WIFI to transit users
- Reliability
- Shortened ride time
- Few to no transfers ("one seat ride")
- Parking access, availability, and convenience
- Use of technology to understand parking availability in real time
- Transit stations linked to existing Park & Ride locations in Vancouver
- A regional transit system that provides connectivity to both sides of the river
- One payment needed to get from origin to destination
- Placing HCT guideways next to automobile traffic allows transit users to see the benefit of using transit
- Bus perceived as safer than light rail due to visible presence of operator and transfers are closer walking distance

Highway design options takeaways:

- Preference for straight alignment
- Concerns about stacked alignment option due to lack of direct connections to downtown Vancouver
- Support for stacked alignment because having on/off ramps near end of the bridge creates a backup
- Need to consider need for expansion in the future
- Hard to imagine what riding a bike underneath traffic would feel like – need more details around active transportation user experience expectations
- Believe a steel bridge design is stronger and more aesthetically pleasing compared to concrete design
- Need more information about how Hayden Island interchange options would impact travel times. How much time would be saved with no interchanges?
- Not a fan of the no interchange option on Hayden Island, seems like it would create more congestion
- Ensure connectivity between HCT and active transportation facilities
- Need to consider emergency services – what options do providers of those services prefer?

Anita shared the program timeline and next steps. There are currently no plans for the Multimodal Commuter CWG to meet again, however the program may wish to reconvene the group for additional feedback at a later date. Anita shared additional ways to learn about design options and provide feedback including an online open house and design options survey.

Anita thanked the participants for their time and adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Attendees	Role/Organization
André Lightsey-Walker	The Street Trust
Cecelia Antonio	At-Large Community Participant
Dane Hobbs	At-Large Community Participant
Mikaela Williams	IBR CAG Member
Peter Bryant	At-Large Community Participant
Roger Haslett	At-Large Community Participant
Shane Nehls	At-Large Community Participant
Soren Roth	At-Large Community Participant
Steven Goff	At-Large Community Participant
Steven Koch	At-Large Community Participant
Susan Pitchford	At-Large Community Participant
Victor Caesar	IBR CAG Member
Jim Hagar	Port of Vancouver
Mike Corrente	TriMet
Randy Parker	C-TRAN

Facilitators and Presenters

Attendees	Role/Organization
Anita Yap	Facilitator
Ben Deines	IBR Technical Lead
Brad Phillips	IBR Technical Lead
Kelly Betteridge	IBR Technical Lead
Ryan LeProwse	IBR Technical Lead
Katy Belokonny	IBR Communications

Additional Participants

Members of the public viewed the meeting via the YouTube livestream during the meeting.

MEETING RECORD AND MATERIALS

Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRSXXS0ryoo

Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available here: https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/multimodal-commuter-working-group-2/