

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #6

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

Subject: Community Advisory Group Meeting #6 Summary

Date and Time: April 28, 2021 4:00 to 6:00 P.M.

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

WELCOME

CAG co-chair Ed Washington welcomed the group and CAG co-facilitator Johnell Bell reviewed the agenda.

PROGRAM UPDATE

Program Administrator Greg Johnson informed the CAG that the program team has been seeking guidance from federal partners on updates to the Purpose and Need statement, including the possibility of incorporating climate and equity. He let the CAG know that program staff are looking forward to collaborating with the CAG and ESG to identify what has changed since previous planning work.

Greg reviewed the Environmental Process pathways including the following:

- 1 Step 1 - Re-evaluation: Determine whether the previous NEPA decision, analysis, and documentation is still valid OR if additional analysis is required to advance a project. If additional analysis is required, a re-evaluation helps identify what level of analysis is needed.
- 2 Step 2 - 1 of 4 pathways:
 - a Option 1: Re-evaluation only
 - b Option 2: A limited scope supplemental EIS
 - c Option 3: A supplemental EIS
 - d Option 4: Rescind the 2011 Record of Decision and restart the NEPA process.

Greg explained that the program is likely going to produce a Limited-Scope Supplemental EIS or Supplemental EIS, which would add 4-8 months to the schedule, allowing construction to begin in 2025. If the program is instructed to carry out the NEPA process again, the program would look at all the same alternatives that were evaluated in the Columbia River Crossing Project which would add 2-3 years to the existing timeline.

Question & Answer

CAG Member: It seems that there will be limitations to what we [the CAG] can shape and it seems that guidance from federal partners is constantly evolving. What can and can't we, as the CAG and ESG, clearly

change and effect on this program? I'm interested in seeing clear data about what has changed between 2011 and now.

- Response: The program is asking the CAG to help us understand what has changed and what changes in design options the CAG, and other groups, would like to see. These groups can weigh in on interchanges, transit recommendations, including a report out on data. The CAG will play a significant part in what design options will look like, including what type of bridge should be built based on pros and cons. We are gathering data and running models to see how traffic patterns have changed and we will be presenting that to you to help inform the recommendation around the number of auxiliary lanes.

CAG Member: Who are the federal partners? Representative Earl Blumenauer said there would be no bridge if there was no light rail on that bridge – how is that going to affect our group and the opportunities for input on this program?

- Response: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are our federal partners providing oversight. We also work with federal permitting agencies such as the United States Coast Guard and United States Army Corps of Engineers, who we work with to get permits, although they do not provide oversight. To go through the NEPA process, we must be data informed and data driven when it comes to any decisions for the program rather than pre-determining the outcomes. The transit decision will be informed by the data that is gathered during the process.

CAG: How can we establish a sense of urgency for this program with the state legislatures? The sooner we can get funding commitments from both states, the more promising this program will look.

- Response: While it would have been great if funding was approved, we don't want to give false deadlines to the legislature because the funding would have been early. We do have time to get construction funding and they are clearly demonstrating their commitment to the program.

CAG Member: Of the options considered in 2011, which have been rejected and are effectively off the table, so we don't waste time worrying about those? Where are the decision branches that are still open to us?

- Response: I can provide a few examples, but it won't be a full list. The No-Build Alternative did not satisfy any of the needs that were identified. The construction of a third bridge corridor was also pushed off the table because it did not solve the earthquake resiliency or traffic congestion issues. The ones we aren't considering could only be considered in pathway 4. But even if we were to consider them again they likely wouldn't advance because of the reasons they were removed last time since they do not satisfy Purpose and Need.

CAG Member: How is the program considering the conversation regarding a tunnel?

- Response: The tunnel that's been proposed is an immersed tube tunnel. The program looked in depth at this, but what we are hearing from our tribal partners that the shoreline archaeological resources

are of concern with this option given the amount of earth that would be affected with this option. We are continuing to look at the effects of this. Second, how do you get up to grade to reconnect to the surface in Vancouver and Hayden Island? These are just some of the issues with this alternative, but we have to look at how it fits with our Purpose and Need so we have not ruled it out.

CAG Member: What is it that the program is actually re-evaluating, besides traffic? Is the program doing a full re-evaluation of existing conditions and is there a way for us to look at those?

- Response: In terms of what the program is evaluating, Vancouver, for example, now has a Bus Rapid Transit system that did not exist during the previous planning work and will need to be considered now. The Port of Portland no longer has plans to use west Hayden Island as a development area, which is new compared to previous planning work. These are a few physical changes since the previous project. Since the previous project, the program is also committed to including equity and climate as a program-wide perspective. The entire list is very complex and will ultimately come down to federal decisions about which changes are impactful enough to determine which environmental pathway the program ends up on. The re-evaluation won't be initiated until the program determines what changes there are to the design, which is what will be re-evaluated to document the level of impact those changes cause. The program will look at the differences in impacts compared to what was previously studied in addition to all of the environmental resource changes. The outcome will be a statement on whether those changes have significantly different impacts than what was previously studied. If the program identifies significant impacts, then the program moves beyond just the re-evaluation into a supplemental. The program is also looking at both existing conditions and changes. Now that the program, in collaboration with the public and stakeholders, have identified some of the changes, we can evaluate how these changes will affect next steps.

Question and Answer concluded, and Jake Warr, Equity Lead, provided an update on the most recent Equity Advisory Group (EAG) meeting. The EAG defined "equity" for the program and discussed the EAG's plan to help form screening criteria and performance measures. These will serve as the foundation for the equity framework.

Jason Hagen, CAG Lead, provided an overview of the ongoing one-on-one meetings with CAG members.

ADOPT CAG CHARTER

CAG co-chair Lynn Valenter reviewed the charter and Johnell summarized the changes that members requested. Johnell and Lynn asked CAG members to adopt the charter as presented using their green, yellow, red cards.

Question & Answer

CAG Member: Can you remind us what was settled on under the 'how do we vote someone off the island' section?

- Response: We reviewed and decided we did not need any changes, but if the CAG would like to revisit this, we can.

The CAG Charter was adopted by consensus.

COMMUNITY VALUES

Lynn highlighted the community values and priorities that have been the most significant in all community engagement efforts. She explained how these are used to influence the program and develop screening criteria.

CAG co-facilitator Lisa Keohokalole Schauer introduced the questions that will be addressed by CAG members in their breakout rooms.

After the breakout rooms, each team summarized their discussion. Ed asked for consensus on community values and priorities and five members held up yellow cards signifying they had questions while one member held up a red card in disagreement.

Question & Answer

CAG Member: People had noted that they wanted to strengthen language. What we are going to do with that feedback or why it was asked for?

- Response: We are asking if this is reflective of our community values. In the breakout sessions, we were aiming to talk about how we move these forward but if you're not comfortable, this is the time to talk about that.
- CAG member: I still feel there is more work to be done to elevate voices in the document.

CAG Member: I agree. Language around active transportation needs to be strengthened, particularly around walking and biking infrastructure.

CAG Member: I felt the information was mostly good, but I would have liked to have more opportunity to hear what the group thinks before moving forward.

CAG Member: We had recommended some refinements that weren't included.

CAG Member: I agree with the first and fourth points made.

CAG Member: I'm wondering why we went into the breakout groups if that information wasn't going to be incorporated.

- Response: I propose holding a meeting with interested CAG members to refine the document and get it to a point where all members are happy with the product. There is a very serious commitment to ensuring active transportation is included as well.

Consensus was not reached and the document will be revised and presented at our next CAG meeting.

ADVANCING THE PROGRAM

Environmental Lead Angela Findley reviewed the process required to update environmental documentation. She informed the CAG that the program is beginning work to develop performance measures and design option screening criteria. She explained the previous planning efforts and asked the CAG to bring comments and feedback on design options to their next meeting.

Question & Answer

CAG Member: How is the status of the program viewed at a federal level, especially with all of the new infrastructure bills coming out?

- Response: The program is not shovel-ready, but we are trying to prove that the program is shovel worthy. When the president talks about building back better, that's exactly what we are doing.

CAG Member: I would love to see some deadlines.

CAG Member: What is an interchange?

- Response: An interchange is where you can get on and off the interstate; there are 7 in the program area.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- *Aaron Brown [1:47:58]:* My name is Aaron Brown; I'm calling on behalf of No More Freeways. I wanted to call to thank the CAG members for giving a good faith effort to help shape this region and make sure that any transportation project across the Columbia River addresses all of these community values. I heard a lot that I personally agree with including reducing congestion, prepare for seismic events, act on climate, and be anti-racist in how we invest in mega projects. I'm calling because I'm concerned that these issues you flagged won't actively be addressed by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) without your continued vigilance. All the values I heard today are ultimately worthless if they are not reflected in the Purpose and Need documents. Please don't let ODOT and WSDOT move forward without reflecting these values in Purpose and Need and Vision and Values. A lot has changed since 2011 and I don't want any of you to get hoodwinked by this project when this is exactly what was in the Purpose and Need for the old Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Project. If you as the CAG believe ODOT needs to

pursue pathway 4 to get this agency to truly live these community values, I hope you will actively pursue this route regardless of what the project consultants say. You should be extremely resistant to any recycled plans from CRC to continue to add more lanes which robs funding for transit, clean air and current and future generations from a livable future. I know there is an urgency to get this project build, lets not squander this opportunity on a project that does not meet our goals.

- *Robert Liberty [1:50:42]:* Hi I'm Robert Liberty a resident of Portland. I was a member of the Metro Council during the time that the Columbia River Crossing alternatives were being considered and the federal EIS and record of decision were adopted. You need to know that many alternatives that would have clearly met the generic Purpose and Need statement were eliminated just based on opinions at an abstract level without any data or analysis. Despite the \$200 million spent on the EIS, there was no quantification of the eliminated alternatives to determine whether they could have given the same or better benefits with fewer burdens at a lower cost. You deserve to be briefed about the alternatives from the CRC and how or why they were eliminated. Doing so now will reduce your risk of another project failure which is a greater risk than a delay of 2 or 3 years. The risk of another project failure is higher when the project is more expensive than it needs to be and is greater the more forcefully you try to marginalize people who have constructive suggestions for a better project. Finally, it would be helpful to confirm that the members received the materials I sent on Sunday night.
 - *Confirmation was provided that CAG members received materials since they were sent more than 48 hours before the meeting.*
- *John Ley [1:52:34]:* I'm John Ley from Camas, and a private citizen. I want to thank everyone here, especially those that asked for more data. That is extremely important and one of my concerns over this enduring process is that we have an awful lot that has changed in the last decade in terms of population growth, where they work, origination and destination and I believe you should make informed decisions in this process. It was said earlier that there couldn't be a tunnel because it failed to meet the needs and was stated that we couldn't have a third bridge crossing because it failed to pass the test. What's the test? It's the Purpose and Need statement. I would suggest modifying the Purpose and Need statement so that it would allow a tunnel or a third bridge and other options based on what the people today want, not what people a decade ago wanted. Thank you very much. Time is people's most important commodity.
- *Joe Cortright [1:54:15]:* I'm Joe Cortright with No More Freeways and thank you again for the time you are spending as citizens in this process. I want to suggest that we are on the titanic and what you're being asked to do by the staff is discuss the arrangement of the deck chairs and nobody is talking about the iceberg. The iceberg is really what is the project being proposed here? It's clear now that sticking to the existing EIS and Record of Decision is simply to recycle the failed CRC proposal. While they call it a bridge replacement project, that is an intentionally misleading title. The only part that is right about it is the number 5. It's about 5 miles long, will cost about \$5 billion and people will have to pay about \$5 per round trip to use it. It's not a bridge replacement, it's a 5-mile-long, 12 lane wide freeway that happens to cross the river. It's even wider over Hayden Island where it is 14 to 16 lanes.

It's going to cost upwards of \$5 billion and probably more because they routinely have cost overruns on these big projects with ODOT and WSDOT. And according to the tolling financial estimates, which is what they used in their financial plan that they are working on right now, they will charge a minimum of \$2.60 each way for people crossing the I-5 bridge. It'll be higher during peak hours at \$3.25 per trip. If you're talking about equity, affordability, and all the things you say you're concerned about, you should be talking about what this project actually includes and not a superficial list of design considerations.

- *Joe Conslor [1:57:02]:* Hi, Joe Conslor and a private citizen. I sadly didn't make the time to send an email ahead of time. I'm very supportive of a new bridge, however, I hope that this time, minds will be more open about mode and efficiency. This is a project that is a huge share of any Washington transportation package and if there is any way to shave the costs so that there's more money for transit and sidewalks – that's equity. I think if light rail is going to be brought across, bridge height is going to be a legitimate issue. In fact, voters in Washington said no to TriMet and its multitudes of problems like a steel bridge that delays all lines and it's governance issues. I think it's better to just have C-TRAN be asked to provide double tall busses to connect downtown Vancouver to a point that's agreeable to Oregonians in a dedicated lane; that will move more people in a more equitable way to move people, not cars and dollars. The point of this bridge needs to be moving humans and freight, in that order, and not have special boutique things like light rail with governance and financial issues. I'd much rather see this bridge with bus only lanes.
- *Bob Ortblad [1:59:21]:* Hi this is Bob Ortblad, I have a Masters in Engineering and have provided some information on the Immersed Tube Tunnel. I'd like to correct two misconceptions about the tunnel. First is that they dig up a bunch of historical sites; actually, there are some good maps from the CRC EIS that show the excavation of the ramps into the tunnel and that they would have no impact on historical sites. Second, that the tunnel will have trouble connecting to existing interchanges; actually, that's a major advantage because it would have a slower grade which is better for light rail, truck traffic, bicycles and pedestrians. Otherwise you'd have to go up the equivalent of a 15 story building so it's much easier if you go underneath the river for these modes. Please look at the materials I submitted. The Fraser River had an immersed tube tunnel built in 1959 at the bottom of a 38 foot channel and the Columbia River channel is only 15 feet deep making it easier to build an ITT.

NEXT STEPS

Lisa reviewed future listening sessions for the program and shared highlights from previous listening sessions.

ADJOURN

Ed thanked the public for attending and CAG members for their participation in the breakout rooms. He reminded everyone that the level of effort for this program requires all of us to continue to have these discussions. CAG meeting #7 is scheduled for June of 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 6:04 pm.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

CAG Members or Alternatives

Attendees	Organization
Ashton Simpson	Oregon Walks
Whitney Mosback	Cowlitz Indian Tribe
Bill Prows	Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs
Dena Horton	Pacific Northwest Waterways Association
Diana Nuñez	Oregon Environmental Council
Dr. Karin Edwards	Clark College
Irina Phillips	Community member
Jana Jarvis	OR Trucking Association
Jasmine Tolbert	Vancouver NCAAP
Javier Navarro	League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Jeffrey Temple	I-205 Business Interest
Kevin Perkey	Workforce SW WA
Marcus Mundy	Coalition for Communities of Color
Mark Riker	Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council
Martha Wiley	Public Transit Representative, Washington
Michael A. Martin-Tellis	Vancouver Neighborhood Association
Michael Kelly	Human Services Council
Michelle Brewer	Columbia River Economic Development Council, Zoominfo

Attendees	Organization
Mikaela Williams	Community member
Randali Desantos-Benromdhane	Community member
Robert Camarillo	Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council
Robin Richardson	Community member
Ryan Webb	The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Sam Kim	Community member
Sarah Hall	Community member
Sheri Call	WA Trucking Association
Andrew Hoan	Portland Business Alliance
Thomas W. Gentry	Community member
Tom Hickey	Bridgeton Neighborhood Association
Victor Cesar	Public Transit Representative, Oregon
Lynn Valenter	Co-Chair
Ed Washington	Co-Chair

Facilitators and Presenters

Attendees	Organization
Jason Hagen	IBR program Staff
Greg Johnson	IBR Program Administrator
Johnell Bell	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator
Lisa Keohokalole Schauer	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator

April 28, 2021

Additional Participants

Members of the public, partner agency staff, and the IBR program team viewed the meeting via the Zoom webinar and 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=8g4tid7OBk0>

Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available here:

<https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/cag-april-28-meeting/>