

EXECUTIVE STEERING GROUP (ESG) MEETING

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

May 5, 2022, 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

ESG Members in Attendance: UMO Director Brendan Finn (ODOT)(alternate), SW Region Administrator Carley Francis (WSDOT)(alternate), President Lynn Peterson (Metro), Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty (City of Portland), Executive Director Curtis Robinhold (Port of Portland), Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle (City of Vancouver), CEO Julianna Marler (Port of Vancouver), General Manager Sam Desue (TriMet), Director Matt Ransom (RTC), CEO Shawn Donaghy (C-TRAN), CAG Co-Chair Lynn Valenter, CAG Co-Chair Ed Washington

ESG Members not in Attendance: Director Kris Strickler (ODOT), Secretary Roger Millar (WSDOT),

IBR Program Staff in Attendance: Administrator Greg Johnson (Program Administrator), John Willis (Program Manager), Millicent Williams (Lead Facilitator), Ray Mabey (Assistant Program Administrator), Frank Green (Assistant Program Administrator)

WELCOME, INTRODUCTION, PROPOSED AGENDA AND UPDATES

Millicent Williams, Lead Facilitator, opened the meeting by introducing everyone who was attending, noting that participating staff will introduce themselves. Greg Johnson, Program Administrator, commented on the significance of today's meeting and work over the past 18 months and previous 20+ years to arrive at a recommended locally preferred alternative.

INTRODUCTION OF RECOMMENDED DRAFT MODIFIED LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (LPA)

John Willis, IBR Program Manager, presented the recommended Draft Modified Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) and was supported by the Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) Co-Chairs Lynn Valenter and Ed Washington. John noted that the program has worked with the partners to meet the needs of the region while also supporting the purpose and need of the program and seeking to meet the region's climate and equity objectives. The LPA represents the foundational elements that the local partners agreed to move forward for future evaluation including benefits and feedback from public comment.

John reminded everyone that the LPA represents a 2% design that will be taken into the NEPA phase for evaluation. Slides 12 – 33 looked at the different components of the LPA: Transit Investments, Hayden Island/Marine Drive Interchanges, and Auxiliary Lanes. Each of these components covered key takeaways,

additional design considerations, and feedback from the CAG and Equity Advisory Group (EAG) along with the community.

CEO Shawn Donaghy (C-TRAN) wanted to clarify a statement that was made earlier on in the presentation, that light rail has the ability to obtain federal funding better than bus rapid transit (BRT) does. This is just specific to this project and not necessarily a function of FTA funding. He noted that BRT is getting a lot of support by FTA due to BRT's flexibility and cost effectiveness in other regions.

Curtis Robinhold spoke on behalf of the ESG wanted to thank the CAG, EAG, and community for their engagement on the project. He noted how important it is that community has a meaningful voice.

Community Advisory Group LPA Component Feedback

CAG Co-Chairs Lynn Valenter and Ed Washington provided a brief overview (Slides 1-2) of what they heard from the CAG. These slides covered feed back on funding, high-capacity transit, and ramp-to-ramp connections. She noted how the program has looked at this project holistically between Washington and Oregon and has done a really good job.

Lynn Valenter stated that the CAG is aligned with community's opinion. She noted that the community at-large agrees with the values and priorities document but might see each one of the elements differently which is a strength that they are able to share a diversity of opinions. She added that the CAG are not staff members, but rather volunteers and wanted to extend the program's appreciation for their dedication and hard work.

Questions or Feedback?

Greg Johnson wanted to add his thanks to the IBR team who do their job and do it well. He added that the program promised to listen and hear from as many people as possible. In doing so, the program logged over 30,000 different touches that have occurred during the program, operated in 10 written languages and 8 spoken. Integration of partners and their staff with intergovernmental agreements has been tremendously successful to the program and its success. The program recognized that this is the largest infrastructure investment in the region and understands the importance of the details and getting this right - carefully and thoughtfully.

Moving into the NEPA phase will allow the program to dive deeper into the analysis to ensure they are moving forward and meeting the purpose and need and meeting the expectation of the partners and the community at large. The program will continue their focus on equity and climate outcomes that will satisfy and meeting the needs of the community. Transparency has been at the forefront and feel that the program has been

highly successful. Administrator Johnson ended by quoting CAG member Sam Kim, “The best bridge is a bridge that gets built.”

Director Matt Ransom (RTC) commended the community’s volunteer work and the hard work the program has done to listen. He agreed with Administrator Johnson about how funding is important and looking at ways to minimize the tolling or making it equitable. He sees that there is tension around performance for all users of this corridor, but it is good tension. In the conversation, it was noted that all CAG members have remained in their position and is committed to this program, uniformly behind Sam Kim’s statement that Greg mentioned earlier.

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty (City of Portland) wanted to add her appreciation to community volunteers for their time and effort. She noted that she appreciates the positive tension because it means they are having hard and invested conversations.

Ed Washington on behalf Lynn, the CAG and community members understand the difficulty of the program’s job and appreciates it very much.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

Greg Johnson gave the next presentation, bringing forward the program’s recommendation which includes:

- Partial Interchange on Hayden Island/Marine Drive
- Light Rail to Evergreen near I-5
- One River Crossing Auxiliary Lane on the river crossing segment (per direction)
- Variable Rate Tolling

The presentation also included other components of the recommended modified LPA and the development of program commitments. For example, the LPA includes the removal and replacement of the I-5 bridge over North Portland Harbor which is a technical recommendation that was decided early in the program. The program will continue to study the impacts around bridge configurations: stacked versus side by side.

Administrator Johnson noted that the team has studied all options that have been brought forward from outside of the program: the common-sense alternative, immersed tunnel, etc. Unfortunately, these options do not meet purpose and need and will not be carried forward into the NEPA phase.

The program will analyze these LPA components in the NEPA phase, look at the details, and make sure there are no fatal flaws. Administrator Johnson finished by saying the supplemental process will be very public and transparent.

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty (City of Portland) opened with a statement of concurrence and support for the recommended LPA. She noted the solution's alignment with city of Portland goals, and also prioritizes interstate travel, economic growth, and earthquake resiliency.

President Lynn Peterson provided her appreciation for the hard work and listening of the CAG, EAG, community on both sides of the river. She also thanked the IBR program and partners staff for doing a great job listening and understanding. President Peterson said that, while she could not speak on behalf of the Metro Council, she feels that combining the best of high-capacity transit on each side seems like the right thing to do and lauded the work to right-size the number of lanes. She closed by adding that transit expansion, freight demand management, and tolling options for low income communities are areas she hopes will be further studied in the upcoming phase of the project.

Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle (City of Vancouver) added that the Vancouver City Council is ready for this conversation as they have been brought along throughout this process. They are ready to discuss the LPA and ensure that it meets the needs of the City's desired outcomes. She wants to ensure that the staff continues to advance climate and equity goals. Mayor Anne supports the transit recommendation of light rail coming to downtown Vancouver and landing just before Evergreen Boulevard as the best at integrating with C-TRAN plans and service. It meets all the needs for their community, especially working for their economy and jobs.

With regard to one auxiliary lane over the bridge, they will support with further study along with implementing the variable rate tolling. They support their Oregon partners and their work with the freight community. She closed by noting that there is a lot of work ahead of them, but this is going to be an iconic and remarkable project.

Director Matt Ransom (RTC) acknowledged what Greg Johnson set out to do months ago and his willingness to deliver a proposal supported by the partners and community, and he did it. Mr. Ransom asked about the funding and what portion will be covered by tolling. He also commented on importance of planning for freight movements.

He added and asked that this foundation proposal allows for refinement and adjustments based on new information. He also asked in regard to funding and the topic of variable rate tolling and the expectations of what piece of the pie that might represent within the project. He asked for comments as to how the finance plan and the total program might develop in the months/years ahead? Regarding the freight community and recognizing that within this corridor they have two international port gateways that fundamentally have

unique needs and characteristics in terms of vehicle size, equipment needed Matt heard a comment from a large vehicle driver, “the only way to go is I-5 so don’t stop us”. As the program moves forward talk through all the details including the impacts associated with the width of the bridge.

Greg Johnson, Program Administrator began by addressing the funding piece. With the passing of the interstate funding package last Fall, this will be the biggest investment in infrastructure across the United States with a focus on equity and climate. The program is looking at contributions from each state; at this time Washington has pledged \$1 billion and will be looking for something similar from Oregon. This will allow the program to look at what will be needed from tolling and the ability to go out to their federal partners for grant opportunities both in transit and highways. The program will be looking at a revised conceptual finance plan that will be available later this Fall. Regarding the freight conversation, it is the program’s plan to continue their efforts on making sure their needs are met. Ray Mabey (Assistant Program Administrator) has taken the lead role in working with the freight community.

Executive Director Curtis Robinhold (Port of Portland) looks forward to more conversation about the freight impacts. He stated that the port is embracing the LPA’s commitment to shared regional values, increase in public transit investment, commitment to climate, equity, active transportation and multimodal facilities, safety and efficiency. He looks forward to future conversation around the bridge configuration around workforce and freight traffic using Marine Drive.

CEO Julianna Marler (Port of Vancouver) wanted to thank the phenomenal work from the program and doing such a great job at listening. She also expressed her appreciation for engaging the freight community and the commitment to understanding their needs and address safety concerns which is a huge component to relieving congestion which is a top priority for their community. She also wanted to make sure or remind everyone that this bridge is going across the Columbia River and that it is a significant navigation corridor for our region and would like to make sure it is incorporated into process. This is a federal channel that is maintained and a gateway to our country.

Greg Johnson responded that the program has completed a river users survey to get an understanding of what has changed from the last project. They have an upcoming conversation with the United States Coast Guard and federal partners later this month to discuss business access and possible mitigation.

SW Region Administrator Carley Francis (WSDOT)(alternate) also voiced her appreciation to the program. She reinforced that a single unified regional voice responding to this program is very critical. The leadership with the ESG has been appreciated and crucial. She also voiced her appreciation to the team, all the volunteers with community groups, and those who have lent their voices to the equity conversation. The DOT’s have been really looking for this unified voice from regional partners and it is clearly being shown today to move this forward.

Before asking the ESG the critical question, Millicent wanted to review the near-term timeline:

- May 10-June 14 – IBR recommended modified LPA briefing to boards, councils, and commissions.
- May 19/20 – ESG and BSLC meet to hear ongoing feedback on the modified LPA.
- June 16/17 – ESG and BSLC meet to review initial feedback form boards, councils, and commissions.
- June 22-July 13 - program partner boards, councils, and commissions endorsement.
- July 21 – ESG and BSLC meet to consider and adopt the modified LPA.

ARE YOU READY TO TAKE THIS PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION TO YOUR BOARDS, COUNCILS AND COMMISSIONS TO GET FEEDBACK?

Millicent Williams (Lead Facilitator) asked each partner if they are ready to take the program recommendations to their boards, councils, and commissions. It was a unanimous decision to move forward with what was presented at today's meeting. Below is a list of those who offered feedback and for which jurisdiction:

UMO Director Brendan Finn (ODOT)(alternate)
SW Region Administrator Carley Francis (WSDOT)(alternate)
Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty (City of Portland)
Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle (City of Vancouver)
Director Matt Ransom (RTC)
President Lynn Peterson (Metro)
General Manager Sam Desue (TriMet)
CEO Shawn Donaghy (C-TRAN)
State Affairs Manager Ivo Trummer (Port of Portland)
CEO Julianna Marler (Port of Vancouver)

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty (City of Portland) wanted to add that, in the coming months, she will focus on key issues, including public transit to leave no rider behind and a low-income toll program.

Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle (City of Vancouver) added that they will be emphasizing the integration of transit, the work for freight mobility, and how the project supports the City's net zero goal climate by 2040.

Director Matt Ransom (RTC) added that they will be looking at this alignment in comparison with their regional transportation plan and confirm its alignment with their growth management and economic development plans.

President Lynn Peterson (Metro) added that Metro has a very extensive values, outcomes, and action memo and that is where they will be relating all of their conversation to make sure they haven't missed anything.

CEO Shawn Donaghy (C-TRAN) added that with the understanding that this is still a great amount of work to be done specifically for freight mobility and with the finance plan.

Millicent followed by asking the CAG Co-Chairs if they were to re-engage in the discussion with the community partners about the LPA?

- Lynn Valenter – Yes we are ready to socialize it
- Ed Washington – Absolutely

Administrator Johnson thanked the ESG for their vote of confidence to allow them to move forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT

[1:47] Karen Gibson: I live about 86 feet from I-5 southbound between Fourth and Mill Plain. I have been following this project every day since it began and the concern that we have is we talk a lot about equity in this program and I don't know where the equity is coming from for the folks who live directly next to a freeway that is going to be impacted by the design of the freeway and the overall project itself, the construction of the project. I don't know how many of the people here even live that close to the freeway to represent that equity and so I question what real equity is going on for those individuals.

[1:48] Chris Smith: I am part of a group known as the Just Crossing Alliance. That's a partnership of more than 20 organizations that is seeking to make sure this project is centered in climate justice, environmental justice, and social justice. We have been spamming your inboxes this week with some of our points on this project. We actually turned off that email after about 50 messages, we figured it was getting duplicative. I want you to know that, in the end, 186 people signed that petition; we will submit that list in written comment. The action you took today is certainly closer to our objectives than the version you rejected, but we are not all the way there yet and we will be continuing to work with you to make sure those justice objectives are achieved. We'll be talking with some of you about adding conditions of approval to help move some that direction and set up conversations to happen in environmental review. I'll just take the time to highlight one which is the same comment Commissioner Hardesty made: we want to leave no transit rider behind. We're very attuned to that famous footnote that says that at peak hour we cannot accommodate all the transit demand; we would very much like to understand where those constraints are so we can help advocate to remove them and maximize the transit potential of this project. Thank you very much.

[1:49] Dave Stone: I am calling as a citizen that uses the interstate and has since 1995 and prior. I am a long-term user and I would like to say that I do engineering for a living and I just want to make sure that this is a long term plan and not short term. Think long term a lot of people live in the area and tolls are a really burdensome thing for the local people on their economies and the scale of narrowing a bridge site doesn't bode well for the future since there's going to be a lot more interstate travel and traffic. I personally cannot afford to shop in Jantzen Beach if there's going to be tolls from the Vancouver area. I have to make a trip to the coast twice a week personally to take care of family and so those impact my bottom line and others and I just really want to make sure that those things are being thought of and that we are making as many lanes as we can as opposed to the other folks who want as little lanes. Future is just going to be more demand, the interstate commerce traffic is a fight, the Marine entrance and the Columbia entrance into the I-5 is definitely burdensome. Lots and lots of heavy truck traffic so they almost need a private lane so hopefully you guys take that into effect.

[1:51] John Lei: Good morning ladies and gentlemen, John Lei private citizen in Clark County. We live in a region with about 2.6 million people. The choice of light rail is astonishing because at best it can handle 1064 people each hour taking them off the road. The proposal appears to project that by 2045, average citizens will spend twice as much time stuck in traffic congestion as they do today. That's not helping the people at all. Light rail is actually 51% more expensive on a cost per passenger than BRT. TriMet's own numbers show an average light rail boarding passenger at \$8.25 per passenger whereas C-TRAN's BRT cost \$5.44 per passenger. This is an amazing expenditure of three to five billion dollars of the people's money and overwhelmingly 78% of SW Washington citizens and 70% of overall people in the region want to reduce traffic congestion and this does none of that. We can do better. Thank you.

[1:53] Bob Ortblatt: Washington resident, civil engineer for 40 years. Just commenting on what I saw today; I think transit's great. Four lanes seem like a good compromise. I think the Hayden Island interchanges could be improved. I think the project, I am advocate of an immersed tunnel. I think by putting an immersed tunnel you would eliminate half mile of elevated exchanges on both sides of the river that would bring down noise and pollution on both sides of the over for over 100 years.

Again, building a bridge across the Columbia River with 200 feet of mush is a very challenging project. You might reference the bay bridge, they thought it was going to be a billion dollars to build a bridge across the bay, the mushy bay, cost them six billion. The immersed tunnel basically supports itself through buoyancy, you don't need massive drilled shafts, piers, and 500 ton trusses when an earthquake hits. Other cities in the world, Sydney, Hong Kong, Gothenburg, have developed much more environmental acceptable solutions. Thank you very much.

CONFIRM UPCOMING MEETING TOPICS, NEXT STEPS AND SUMMARY

Two ESG meeting are scheduled for May 19th and June 16th from 10:00 am -12:00 pm. Millicent noted that the program will not be holding any additional meetings.

Final comments from the Greg Johnson Program Administrator. He thanked everyone again for helping the program get to this point.

MEETING RECORD AND MATERIALS

Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaYIsLkZQhM&t=2s>

Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available here:

<https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/esg-may-5-2022-meeting/>