

EQUITY ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING #1

Subject: Meeting Summary

Date and Time: January 25, 2021, 5:30pm – 7:30pm PT

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

MEETING SUMMARY

1. WELCOME, AGENDA, AND INTRODUCTIONS

Johnell Bell, Chief Equity Officer, welcomed the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) Equity Advisory Group (EAG) members, partner agency staff, IBR team members, and the general public in attendance.

Dr. Roberta Hunte, EAG Facilitator, invited members of the group to introduce themselves and share what excited them most about participating in the EAG.

- Dr. Roberta Hunte, she/her, is a professor of child, youth, and family studies at Portland State University. She is excited about the opportunity to work on equity for a region-changing project like IBR and is looking forward to working collaboratively with the group to figure out what equity can look like in this program.
- Ana Muñoz, she/her, works with the Latino Network and is excited to work on issues of equity and social justice.
- Jake Warr, he/him, is the equity lead for the IBR team, and is passionate about transportation equity and excited by the opportunity of this project to directly benefit the community
- Lily Copenagle, she/they, is an executive committee member at large for the Portland NAACP branch 1120, working on economic opportunity, housing, and equity research. Growing up in the area, she is excited to seize the opportunity of this project to improve the community for all its residents.
- Shona Carter is the Vice President for community engagement at Community Foundation for Southwest Washington and is excited for the Clark County community to have a voice in this project.
- Matt Serres, he/him, is a staff attorney at Disability Rights Oregon focusing on employment, housing, and public accessibility. He is looking forward to making sure that discussions of equity include people with disabilities, and bringing attention to how folks can benefit from workforce equity and accessibility.
- Hai Ton, he/him, is a business analyst who's looking forward to having the chance to help improve and grow the local community.
- Karyn Kameroff is a citizen of the Choctaw nation in Oklahoma currently living in Cowlitz traditional lands in Clark County. Karyn is the coordinator for the Cowlitz pathways to healing program and a child abuse specialist at Randall Children's Hospital and is excited about expanding equity in the community and making sure those voices are heard in this project.

- Sebrina Owens-Wilson, she/her, is the regional impact program manager for the Metro DEI team. She's excited to help shape both the concrete equity outcomes for the project as well as the strategies to get there.
- Dr. Steve Nakana, he/him, is the Port of Portland's social equity program manager. He's excited to engage with the intersectional knowledge of EAG members.
- Jonathan Eder is the Port of Vancouver's director of human resources and is interested in learning more about what equity and diversity in transportation and how this work can inform other Port of Vancouver projects.
- Fernando Martinez is the President and CEO NW Mountain Minority Supplier Development Council. Fernando is excited to help develop a strategy for minority businesses to grow through this project as well as help set up future generations for community growth.
- Caitlin Reff is a project manager for the Portland Bureau of Transportation's major projects and partnerships group. Caitlin is excited by the project's commitment to listening to and engaging with the community, and how that can generate positive outcomes, particularly for those who have suffered from disparities in the past.
- Nikotris Perkins is the Assistant Director for Social Equity at the Oregon Department of Transportation and is excited that the group will help ensure that those who have been historically excluded are included on this project.
- Matt Hines, he/him, is an instructor at the Washington State School for the Blind. He has a lifelong commitment to seeking equal access for blind, low vision, and deaf blind communities on equity projects.
- John Gardner is TriMet's director for transit equity, inclusion, and community affairs, and is excited about the level of opportunity for communities of color in the project.
- Meg Johnson, she/her, is a waste reduction educator and DEI committee member for Waste Connections of Washington. She's excited about expanding accessibility for folks of all income levels as well as those who've been historically underserved by transit systems. She also noted the importance of making sure the youth of southwest Washington who want to see the region modernize are represented.
- Rebecca Kennedy is the planning manager for the City of Vancouver. Rebecca noted that this project is a chance for community member to come together to solve a complex problem in a way that most benefits those who've been left out by these public investments.
- Mark Harrington is a senior transportation planner with the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council working on title VI and civil rights, and is excited to apply that experience with the group.
- Greg Johnson, IBR program administrator, is a Michigan native with 38 years of experience working in transportation. He's excited for the group to keep the project responsible for ensuring equity is considered in every decision that's made.
- Monica Tellez-Fowler is the Deputy CEO for C-TRAN, and is excited about putting equity at the forefront of conversations about transportation.

- Bobby Forch, he/ him, is the DBE compliance and inclusion administrator for Washington Department of Transportation mega projects. He's looking forward leveraging the opportunities of this project to help our communities grow.
- Tanya Adams is the community relations and diversity manager for WSP, and is looking forward to helping create educational opportunities for young people on this project.
- Lee Helfeldt, they/them, was born in the area and has a deep connection to the region. They have deep experience representing labor, queer and trans folks, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color groups (BIPOC), environmental justice organizations, as well as youth groups.

2. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Greg Johnson, IBR program administrator, provided a brief overview of the IBR program and concerns about the current bridge. He discussed the importance of the current planning phase of the project and looks forward to the next steps on the program timeline. He described the Executive Steering Group (ESG), Equity Advisory Group (EAG), and the Community Advisory Group (CAG) as the three-legged stool that will advise the project using a consensus model.

3. OPERATING NORMS

Dr. Roberta Hunte outlined the meeting agreements and ground rules for how EAG members engage with each other.

- Guiding norms
 - Stay engaged
 - Experience discomfort
 - Speak your truth
 - Expect and accept non-closure
- Ground rules
 - Listen and respect diverse views and opinions
 - Listen with an open mind
 - Value learning from different input
 - Stay open to new ways of doing things
 - Treat others constructively and respectfully
 - Respect the role of the facilitator to guide the process
 - Attack the problem, not the person
 - Disagreement, frustrations, and differences of opinion are acknowledged, explored, and addressed.

4. DEVELOPING AN EQUITY FRAMEWORK

Jake Warr, IBR equity lead, initiated a conversation on developing an equity framework by leading with a demographic overview of the region to better understand the community and provide context for the EAG's work. He noted that the general description of our region as not being diverse, while statistically true, is problematic because it ignores and further marginalizes the diverse communities who comprise a significant part of the population. The slides showing these demographics can be found in the [meeting materials](#) posted on the website. Moreover, categorically grouping all BIPOC communities together further undermines the diversity within them.

5. SMALL GROUP BREAKOUTS

EAG members broke out into small groups to discuss the meaning of equity.

What does equity mean to you?

- What actions do we need to see to know that this project is working towards equity?
- How to show up to bring in the voice of the community.
- Conflicts around equity in relation to this project is disruption. We need to be open to new things so we don't get the same outcome
- Examining equity for this bridge project is looking at those who have been excluded before and having impactful feedback
- Multigenerational project and must have a robust disability focus
- Seeing many missing. Trying to have everyone at the table no matter what.
- The harm that inequity has caused. Requires reparations. More than to do no more harm. Equity leaves in a historical context to address the harm that has been caused.
- Equity is the effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in participation and outcomes. Equity actionably empowers communities most impacted by systemic oppression and requires the redistribution of resources, power, and opportunity to those communities.
- State of Oregon language from the congestion pricing conversations created last summer
- Part of the actual decision-making process

What comes to mind when you hear that the IBR program is committed to 'centering equity'?

- Refreshing, collectively existed to make this happen. Finally tangible. Really tangible
- Centering equity - every step of the way. Never glossed over or ignored
- Difficult for a project to have equity as an outcome without focusing on justice
- How will we contract with everyone. How will this be fair and equitable
- How can we tie influence from the group to performance measures
- Resources behind ensuring people stay at the table and are engaged. Need more resources towards those who do not usually get to sit at the table.

- Supporting everyone who wants to cross the river however they do - bicycle, ped, transit. Need to remember that everyone needs this bridge.
- Centering equity as a process and the outcome. Disruption and decolonization are part of this.
- Need the same level of rigor to the analysis around how we are going to do this work and how different communities are impacted by this project - similar to the way we do around environmental issues.
- Implementing practices, procedures, and policies to remove disparities and ensure resources and benefits are distributed based upon availability
- Homeless population needs to be included and we need to think more about who is not at the table

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Johnell Bell opened the floor to welcome public comment.

- John: What power does EAG have to deliver equity? Does EAG have the power to limit the size and scope of the bridge if that the group considers that to be the equitable outcome, particularly for the residents of North Portland? Can EAG deliver equity for small businesses, particularly in downtown Vancouver, who felt left out during the Columbia River Crossing project?

7. WRAP UP

Dr. Roberta Hunte led a wrap up discussion on the EAG members' takeaways from this first meeting.

- Matt Hines acknowledged that EAG was convened to tap into the collective knowledge of its members, and how that can inform the group's discussions to tackle critically important issues around equity.
- Shona Carter noted the diversity of perspectives in the EAG and called for the inclusion of more communities not currently represented, particularly houseless folks.
- Fernando Martinez felt members were truly committed to the work of equity and shared that EAG's work would be beneficial to everyone involved and represented.
- Ana Munoz asked to clarify if members would have opportunities to discuss perspectives shared during public comment, or if the role of the group was to listen.
 - Johnell Bell clarified that members will receive public comment for their consideration, and IBR staff will endeavor to respond to inquiries presented to the EAG during public comment.

- Meg Johnson added that equity should be a component of every piece of the construction of the bridge.
- Shona Carter noted the potential for contentious and heated discussion by the group and, with consideration to the political climate, raised concerns about the safety of EAG members.
 - Johnell Bell shared that the safety of members is of critical importance, and that harassment of any form will not be tolerated. He advised members to please be in contact with IBR staff if issues arise.

Johnell Bell thanked everyone for attending the first EAG meeting.

Adjourn – the meeting adjourned at 7:45pmPT

ATTENDEES

| Attendees | Organization |
|---------------------|---|
| Greg Johnson | IBR Program Administrator |
| Johnell Bell | IBR Chief Equity Officer |
| Jake Warr | IBR Equity Lead |
| Dr. Roberta Hunte | EAG Facilitator |
| Shona Carter | Community Foundation of SW Washington |
| Lily Copenagle | NAACP Portland |
| Johnathan Eder | Port of Vancouver |
| Bobby Forch | Washington State Department of Transportation |
| John Gardner | TriMet |
| Mark Harrington | SW Washington Regional Transportation Council |
| Lee Helfend | Community Member |
| Matthew Hines | Community Member |
| Megan Marie Johnson | Community Member |

| Attendees | Organization |
|----------------------|--|
| Karyn Kameroff | Community Member |
| Rebecca Kennedy | City of Vancouver |
| Fernando Martinez | Northwest Mountain Minority Supplier Development Council |
| Ana Muñoz | Latino Network |
| Steve Nakana | Port of Portland |
| Sebrina Owens-Wilson | Metro |
| Nikotris Perkins | Oregon Department of Transportation |
| Caitlin Francis Reff | Portland Bureau of Transportation |
| Matt Serres | Disability Rights Oregon |
| Monica Tellez-Fowler | C-Tran |
| Hai That Ho Ton | Community Member |
| Elona Wilson | Coalition of Communities of Color |

Meeting Recording and Materials

A recording of the meeting and meeting materials are available on the [program website](#).