

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #4

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

Subject: Community Advisory Group Meeting #4 Summary

Date and Time: March 10, 2021 4:00 to 6:00 P.M.

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

WELCOME

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

Johnell welcomed new CAG member, Whitney Mosback with the Cowlitz tribe and introduced Jason Hagen, a new Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program support staff member for the CAG.

Johnell explained how to view closed captions, provided general webinar participation tips, and presented the meeting agenda. He also explained how to submit public comments and reviewed the CAG charter and meeting agreements.

Johnell shared updates from the Equity Advisory (EAG) 3/8 meeting where they reviewed and discussed the draft definition of equity. He gave an update on the Executive Steering Group (ESG) meeting where they introduced two new members, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty and TriMet's Executive Director of Engineering & Construction Steve Witter. The next ESG meeting will review and discuss a draft of the Purpose and Need and Vision and Values.

Johnell turned it over to CAG co-facilitator Lisa Keohokalole Schauer to review feedback.

REVIEW FEEDBACK

Lisa shared that she connected with six CAG members individually since the last CAG meeting and received great feedback. She informed CAG members that Lauren Shimer will be reaching out to schedule the rest of these meetings with the remaining CAG members.

Lisa provided a summary of what the program team has heard since the last CAG meeting. She heard the need to connect more and that is why she is working to meet individually with each member. Lisa also heard conversations about the public comment setup and balancing the need for each member to feel safe to share their thoughts.

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Lisa presented a graphic created from the 2/24 CAG meeting that captured the overall conversation. The graphic is a way to engage and communicate with the community about the CAG's work. Similar graphics are going to be created for the EAG, ESG and listening sessions. Any feedback about this graphic is welcomed.

Lisa transitioned to IBR program staff Katy Belokonny to cover ongoing work with community engagement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Katy gave an overview of community value priorities from the online interactive survey and shared how it compared to the CAG member survey results. The results show that the general public's responses and the CAG responses were aligned in most cases. Katy also noted that the survey produced a combination of qualitative and quantitative feedback.

Katy then provided an overview of the engagement and outreach during the month of February. This included the online open house that was a place for people to learn more about that program, the online interactive survey, direct outreach, EAG, and community briefings.

Katy explained that the online open house webpage was translated through a digital service into 8 other languages in order to reach a variety of members in the program area community. The program also translated all of the online open house information and survey into 7 different languages and provided those to multilingual community liaisons to reach those members of the community.

The online interactive survey had over 16,000 people visit the page and received more than 9,000 survey responses with over 14,000 open ended comments. The majority of participants were in the Portland/Vancouver area but there were responses as far north as Seattle and as far south as Medford. The respondents were majority white (73%), which is consistent with the racial demographic of the population in the program area.

The top two values that resulted from the survey for both the community and CAG members within the following categories were shared with members: Commitment to Equity, Environment, Safety & Reliability, Cost & Funding, Transit & Multimodal, and Economy & Community.

Next, Katy went over the virtual community briefing events that took place in February. There were 4 events, with one exclusively in Spanish. Approximately 175 people attended via Zoom and 20 via YouTube. Thirty-four percent of the participants identified congestion and reliability as the top problem.

Katy explained that the EAG has been talking about the Purpose and Need and Vision and Values, through the lens of equity. Some of the themes that summarize EAG conversation include considering affordability and impacts on those experiencing low income.

Katy explained that direct outreach was done through social media, direct mail postcards, print newspapers, online newspapers and e-newsletters, a three-week long digital campaign in the Columbian and Oregonian,

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radio advertisements, outreach to 331 community-based organizations, and direct telephone outreach. The next steps for community engagement are listening sessions with the communities of concern and youth to make sure their voices are included in this outreach.

Katy informed the CAG that the community engagement report with more in-depth findings from this outreach will be made public and available in mid-April.

Katy completed her presentation and Johnell offered members an opportunity to share feedback or ask questions on all the material presented.

Discussion and Question & Answer

CAG Member: I have a question about the last slide. Katy said in April we are going to have meetings with the communities of color, but the slide was saying the communities of concern. Are they the same thing or different?

- Response: Communities of concern, as we are defining it for the program, includes communities of color as well as historically marginalized groups.

CAG Member: One thing that stood out to me is that the more diverse and the less earning communities did not really participate and give any data to that community engagement process. I know that we have upcoming events with those communities, but whatever I can do on my end to make sure we are reaching those communities, I would love to work with you. A lot of those folks need to be involved in this process. I know that given the time and the right communication we can get across to them and get their influence as well.

- Response: We will take you up on that offer because you're spot on and we need to do more and better.

CAG Member: As a member of the CAG, I don't feel like I'm prepared for these meetings. I can't really ask good questions right now; I need to look at the data and all. Why can't we get the slides prior to this meeting?

- Response: That's a great question. We do the best we can to get material to CAG in preparation for these meetings and we will continue to improve and get better. Part of the difficulty we have been experiencing is, often times, the information we are presenting is hot off the press.
- Response: This is a really good point. We are striving to send materials in advance - that is why you are seeing a shift from meetings every other week to meetings once a month. Not only is that part of our commitment to honoring the volunteer time that you're each giving, but it's also to ensure that there's enough time to develop the materials, to process what we heard at the last meeting, and provide you enough time to be prepared. Most of the time when we're asking you, like in this scenario, for any questions is to get your initial reaction so we can determine what other feedback we may need to gather and how to be prepared for the next meeting. We absolutely recognize we're not looking for you to provide any detailed comments when you're just now hearing and seeing the data.

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CAG Member: Frankly, your response concerns me. We are going to once a month when we don't have adequate time as it is to discuss these issues, to look at the draft documents, and we were talking about "hot off the press." We could get the materials the day before and that will give us at least a little more time. I just don't feel like I am living up to my commitment to the CAG and the communities in this area because of this lack of preparation. And so, to go to once a month and still not be prepared and not have the adequate time to discuss is very concerning.

- Response: I think what's important here is to ensure that we're clear about the roles for the advisory group. This is really an opportunity for you to advise us on how we're moving forward and for us to share information. We certainly don't expect you to be in a role where we're asking you to do detailed work. That doesn't feel like it's honoring the commitment to bring in volunteers. At the same time, we want you to be able to add meaningful feedback. I absolutely hear what you're saying, and we will work on improving and ensuring that you have materials with enough time to be ready to react.

CAG Member: I thought I heard in the presentation there had been 14,000 responses that you were working your way through. I know that myself and a couple other members I talked to took their time and answered those questions and gave feedback. I am curious just to see the timing of going through that process; I want to see the comments from the community more so than just categories. That's all. I am curious to see what people said specifically about all those questions. That was a long list that we went through.

- Response: There will be a report, as I mentioned, that comes out in April that will provide an analysis of the open-ended responses. There were so many people that responded and we're trying to make sure we take our time and actually give those responses the time that they deserve. It will be a pretty substantial report that will hopefully give you the answers to your question – it will certainly be more than a high-level, 15 slide, run-through of what we've generally heard. This presentation was more about preliminary results; the report is meant to be more of a comprehensive look at what we heard.

CAG Member: I appreciate that response. And by the way, I did agree that if we could get a little early time, even a day or two, it would help to go over stuff beforehand. I appreciate how difficult it is to crank this stuff out, so thanks a lot.

CAG Member: I was actually just echoing a comment from earlier. I was a little concerned about the responses we received from low-income communities and our communities of color. I just want to make sure I lend my hand as NAACP president for this side of the river, Vancouver, and however I can assist with getting more responses. Whether that's just outreach to black churches or whatever that looks like because I definitely think we need stronger voice from those we didn't hear from.

CAG Member: I wanted to talk more about the youth perspective. I had a chance to talk with Lisa earlier this week and really digging into that portion of the community - recognizing that myself and where I come from as a youth and how that differs from a lot of other people in the community. That was something I really pushed for in my conversation with Lisa; understanding that my privilege and relationship with the bridge is different from other youth in my community. I'm excited for the opportunity to talk to youth in the community

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and gain a wider youth perspective. As we were talking in terms of income levels and the racial bias that comes with taking an online survey, I think that it's really important that we get the opinions of the people that don't come from backgrounds like I do. I think it's really important that we gain that aspect and that vision from the youth in our community on both sides of the bridge.

- Response: Thank for offering to be a volunteer in the youth listening sessions.

CAG Member: I want to give a different perspective. I appreciate the previous members wanting things earlier. I've been on numerous boards and commissions and be careful what you ask for. I read everything you send me, I watch every video, and when you get a thousand-page homework assignment to do then you're going to want to get this stuff a week earlier or a month earlier. It is a tremendous amount of work and I really do appreciate the program team summarizing this information for us and just giving us the essentials. I appreciate making good use of my time because I'm swamped day, evening and weekends so I have to be very judicious. However, I agree if we can get them earlier – great. I would definitely read them earlier and perhaps even be better prepared. So, I'd like to both echo but also fear in trepidation of getting a thousand-page document that I have to read the night before. Second thing I just want to say is I'm very impressed with the great response, great outreach. That's just tremendous! I'm glad I didn't have to talk to thousands of people. And so, I think there's some credence to the work that we're doing that we're reflecting, for the most part, what the community is thinking. Thank you for validating that. That's great work.

- Response: Thank you, I appreciate that. I think what you saw in Katy's presentation is reflective of a lot of hard work and a lot of attention to this program. Those survey responses were about four times what we're seeing in terms of responses to other transportation programs in the area, but we're also seeing the gaps. If we are committed to centering equity, then we need to do things differently. That's why you're seeing some changes in our strategy and that individual outreach where we really do want the opportunity to connect with each of you. We know we send you a lot of emails, so we want to make sure that we're having the dialogue to learn from you about how else we can utilize the communities you're connected with. Thank you, Katy, and to the team for making all of that happen just one month.

PURPOSE AND NEED AND COMMUNITY VISION AND VALUES

Lisa transitioned the group to Purpose and Need and Vision and Values work. The CAG members moved into breakout groups to dig into the Purpose and Need and Vision and Values.

Program Administrator Greg Johnson joined the meeting and introduced this part of the agenda along with Environmental Manager Chris Regan.

Greg introduced himself and ensured that CAG members had the language in front of them to review and enough time for feedback. He assured the CAG members they will have time to give input and have time for other groups to give theirs too before anything is final. Greg reiterated that this is an important engagement and thanked CAG members in advance.

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Chris thanked Katy for all of her work and information from the community engagement. Chris summarized the orientation and how the program team used previous work and what they are doing now. The program is looking at environmental documents from previous planning work. They have a Record Of Decision (ROD) which is the final step in the federal environmental process through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The ROD was published and remains in the federal register. Chris explained how we can use this as we define what is today's context. In summary, we are looking at updating our Purpose and Need and establishing Vision and Values.

Chris provided the Purpose and Need definitions. He then explained that the environmental team is reviewing the CAG's feedback on the draft Purpose and Need statement. There will be a revised draft with that feedback and sent before the 3/24 meeting.

Chris explained the process to use Purpose and Need for alternative screenings and explained the evaluation criteria process.

He then provided the definition of Vision and Values. Chris explained how it goes a little deeper into content and leans towards the solution focus. He noted that Vision and Values are critical to program progress.

The draft Vision and Values statement that was provided to CAG members has two critical objectives, draft critical objectives and draft community values. The draft critical objectives are a Vision and Values statement that is elevated to have a pass/fail element to it.

Chris presented two questions for the group to consider in the 20-minute breakout sessions.

- What values best capture the community's priorities for a bridge replacement?
- What do these values mean to you?

Small Group Report Out

Johnell welcomed the group back to the main meeting and asked for one person from each breakout group to report out on their discussions. The groups made the following points:

- Group 1
 - Cooperation between two states – this time it will be different
 - Commuting for work and not wanting to sit in traffic
 - Safety is huge and brings quality of life
 - It is very important to let the community know what we heard and how that is applied to the actual program
 - Cost effectiveness
- Group 2

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- Safety and mobility are the two biggest values for the Washington trucking industry to improve capacity
 - Keeping the work and money here in Washington and Oregon
 - Future-proofing the bridge
 - History of the area must be taken into account on decision making for this program
 - Build something sustainable
 - Congestion: we move bottlenecks, we don't fix them (this is a problem)
 - Invest in the community with this program
 - Economic empowerment comes from all communities and includes marginalized community having access to Oregon/Washington with this bridge
 - Cyber security
- Group 3
 - Equity embedded throughout the process
 - Lifecycle of this new bridge/maintenance of the new bridge
 - Transportation equity means that no matter one's income, they can access this bridge and use it. Biking and walking are high priorities for this bridge.
 - Quality of life – helping these communities come together
 - Transparency
 - Tribal consultations – waterways are tribal land, and tribes need unencumbered access to the Columbia River
 - Group 4
 - Modal choice and designing a bridge for the future – consider driverless vehicles
 - Congestion and safety
 - Reliability
 - Regional economy
 - Design must take a multimodal approach so all people are safe regardless of how they are crossing
 - Community engagement

After the groups reported back, Johnell thanked the CAG for their feedback. He then gave an overview of the next CAG meeting on 3/24.

PUBLIC COMMENT (5:44)

- *John Ley [1:45:20]:* This is John Ley from Camas calling as a Private Citizen. I'm asking a question. I am wondering if any of the members of this committee have seen the U.S. geologic survey map of what the Portland region would look like in the aftermath of a 9.0 Cascadia earthquake. It's absolutely devastating. It's very eye-opening and basically the most devastation happens along the Willamette

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River and along both sides of the Columbia River. Obviously, Interstate 5 travels along that same corridor. Furthermore, I was stunned people would choose light rail as the preferred method of transit. If you understand that a Cascadia fault would devastate not only the bridge but also everything along I-5. Because every single light rail train crosses the Steel Bridge. That is five years older than the Interstate Bridge at 109 years old. Therefore, it makes no sense to have the transit option that potentially crosses a new bridge - all the bridges into downtown Portland would be destroyed in that level of an earthquake. Finally, I would like to mention to the committee that there is zero demand for a high-capacity transit crossing the Columbia River. Last year in the aftermath of COVID, only 486 people, on an average day, rode any of the 7 express bus lines from Clark County into Portland. That's 69 people per day traveling any of the 7 lines into Portland. That's basically 2 buses of people on each of those lines going into Portland. So, there is no demand for high capacity.

- *Joe Cortright [1:48:05]:* I am Joe Cortright with No More Freeways. I have submitted a PowerPoint presentation that I would like to give. Unfortunately, you only allow phone comment, so at some future meeting I would like the same opportunity that is afforded your staff to present information. The PowerPoint presentation, which you can review, provides documentation on three facts. First, widening freeways does nothing to reduce congestion. There's something called the fundamental law of road congestion that's well documented in literature - adding more lanes simply creates more traffic. This encourages more pollution, and you end up not solving the congestion problem by having more capacity. Second, it's apparent this project cannot be financed without tolls. I know the group is very concerned about equity, but the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT's) own numbers say that the tolls needed to pay even a portion of the cost of this project would be \$3.25 each way at the peak hour and a minimum of \$2.60 for every crossing. When you think about what kind of bridge you want, be aware that it requires tolls. ODOT's own numbers show if you toll only I-5, you'll produce unacceptable diversions to I-205. The I-5 bridge will be underutilized the next 20 years. It will carry only two thirds as much traffic it carries now if you have to pay the toll levels according to ODOT's own forecast. Finally, despite all of the hyperventilation about freight, freight and freight movement in this corridor is essentially irrelevant to Oregon's long-term economic prospects. As long as there's a road there, freight can move, and freight moves adequately. Freight has decoupled from the Oregon economy. Freight movement over the Columbia River on the two bridges is down 20% in the last 15 years and Oregon's economic output is up 70%. Half a million fewer trucks cross the Columbia River today than 15 years ago.

WRAP UP

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. Listening sessions are currently underway. The next CAG meetings are scheduled for 3/24 and 4/28.

Greg thanked everyone for their support.

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ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 5:53 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
Irina Phillips	Community member
Jana Jarvis	OR Trucking Association
Jasmine Tolbert	Vancouver NAACP
Javier Navarro	League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Jeffrey Temple	I-205 Business Interest, Fred Meyer
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	CREDC

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Attendees	Organization
Mikaela Williams	Community member
Wayne Chow	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, Portland
Victor Cesar	Public Transit Representative, Oregon
Ed Washington	Co-Chair

Facilitators and Presenters

Attendees	Organization
Greg Johnson	IBR Program Administrator
Chris Regan	IBR Environmental Manager
Frank Green	IBR Assistant Program Administrator
Johnell Bell	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator
Lisa Keohokalole Schauer	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator
Katy Belokonny	Community Engagement Presenter

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Additional Participants

48 members of the public, partner agency staff, and the IBR 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://youtu.be/dPlgNqJvhM>

Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available here:

<https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/cag-march-10-meeting/>