

## **EVENT SUMMARY: Downtown Vancouver Listening Session**

The Interstate Bridge Replacement program is committed to engaging in two-way conversations with the community. Listening sessions are one of the tools the program is using to have targeted discussions with members of the community to gain insights on specific topics. The following is a high-level summary of the feedback captured during breakout session conversations and live audience participation survey responses during the Downtown Vancouver Listening Session held on June 1, 2021.

The Downtown Vancouver Listening Session was attended by 29 community members. The majority of participants visit (69%), recreate (50%), or live (44%) in downtown Vancouver. They told us that reducing congestion by improving connections and travel mobility is their most important priority when it comes to replacing the Interstate Bridge. Most participants indicated they use a single-occupancy vehicle, or carpool, to access the Interstate Bridge and I-5 from Vancouver. However, some people expressed dissatisfaction with that driving experience and avoid crossing the bridge when possible. Several participants told us they have used public transit in and around Vancouver in the past, or would like to do so in the future, but the service needs to be convenient, reliable, safe, and bring them to their destination faster than driving. Overall, listening session participants want to reduce congestion, improve active transportation and public transit options, and build a bridge that will help unite the community while minimizing negative impacts.

### AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION QUESTION RESPONSES

- **How would you describe your connection to downtown Vancouver? (choose more than one option if applicable)**
  - I live in downtown Vancouver (44%)
  - I work in downtown Vancouver (38%)
  - I own a business in downtown Vancouver (6%)
  - I visit downtown Vancouver (69%)
  - I recreate in downtown Vancouver (50%)
  - I commute through downtown Vancouver (31%)
  - I have no connection to downtown Vancouver (0%)
  - Other (0%)
- **What is most important to you regarding replacing the Interstate Bridge and connections to Downtown Vancouver?**
  - High-capacity transit options (47%)
  - Active transportation options (bike, walk, roll) (35%)
  - Improve safety of the traveling public (41%)
  - Improve connections and travel mobility, reducing congestion (71%)
  - Seismic safety (41%)
  - Access for freight and delivery of goods (41%)
  - Other (24%)
- **Is this the first time you have engaged with the program?**
  - Yes (24%)

- No (76%)
- **How would you like to be engaged in the future?**
  - Host virtual or in-person events (67%)
  - Use social media (33%)
  - Provide access to team members (office hours) (13%)
  - Seek input through surveys (67%)
  - Other (20%)
- **Which of the following digital tools do you use to get program information?**
  - Program newsletter and website (81%)
  - Facebook (50%)
  - Instagram (31%)
  - Twitter (19%)
  - YouTube (38%)
  - None of the above (13%)

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#### **What is your experience accessing the bridge and I-5 from downtown Vancouver? What transportation mode do you use?**

- Cross the bridge in single-occupancy vehicle. Avoids meetings in Portland during peak travel periods due to congestion. Was involved in an accident on the bridge and there was no space to pull over (safety concerns). Avoids crossing the bridge as much as possible.
- Uses a single occupancy vehicle to travel to cross the bridge. Avoids traveling during rush hour. While in school, used to take CTRAN to Delta Park and then transfer to MAX (took a long time). Would like more transit options.
- Uses services at Jantzen Beach. Concerned about losing access to Hayden Island, would be inconvenient.
- Uses bridge to visit friends and shopping via carpool or single-occupancy vehicle. Avoids peak travel times.
- Drives to downtown for recreation.

#### **Which route do you take to get to downtown Vancouver? How do you get around (drive, bike, walk, transit) and for what purposes (errands, business, recreation, leisure, etc.)?**

- Lives downtown and walks around for recreation. When she used to work downtown, drove single-occupancy vehicle. Traffic is bad and tries to stay off the roads now.
- Drives to downtown Vancouver. Tried to catch the bus but found it inconvenient (time). Would potentially be interested in transit depending on frequency of service.
- Takes HWY 14 to commute from east Vancouver to downtown Vancouver.
- Currently lives off SR-500, parks nearby in Arnada neighborhood where family lives and walks downtown to avoid traffic. Congestion was better during COVID, but generally still bad.

**Do you ever travel through downtown Vancouver to avoid congestion on I-5?**

- Sometimes will go through downtown to avoid I-5 congestion (such as when there is rush hour, a bridge lift or police activity). Waits to make that decision until she encounters traffic (doesn't use navigation app).
- Lives and works in Vancouver, uses bridge to get to shopping in Jantzen Beach. Concerned it would decrease ability to travel due to potential increased cost (tolling) or increase time to get services (have to go elsewhere).
- Wants a new bridge to solve congestion. Congestion is very bad between 2-5pm.

**Do you currently experience issues when using local streets to travel under or over I-5? What transportation mode do you use?**

- Merging from SR-500 to get onto I-5, ramp meters backs-up traffic on 500.
- No issues using local streets. Walking on the trail along Vancouver waterfront is an enjoyable experience.

**How has new development in and around downtown Vancouver changed your transportation habits? (e.g., south waterfront development, bus rapid transit [The Vine] connections)**

- Walks to waterfront from home in downtown Vancouver. Friends will drive to meet her and walk around downtown.
- Lives in La Center and improvements in downtown are attractive. Will drive to downtown Vancouver and visits more often with family because of improvements. Would like to encourage sense of community across the Columbia River (similar to both sides of the river in downtown Portland).
- New development has created more walkability. Walking along the Vancouver waterfront is an enjoyable experience.
- Developments have not changed habits, continues to walk around downtown since she lives there.
- Uses the Vine for leisure – will drive to downtown Vancouver, then ride Vine for entertainment with child, and return to downtown to get car. Stopped using Vine during COVID, but wants to use again. Free bus service in Seattle allowed for positive leisure activities. Encourage the program to keep east side interests in mind, not just west Vancouver. Need amenities to safely secure bike (currently limited).
- Uses Bus 6 to travel from Delta Park. In order to return, you have to walk under a bridge with no lights and catch a returning bus. The Vine will take you on the same route without having to access that dangerous bus stop. Uses the Vine more often as a result.
- Doesn't use the Vine personally, but notices that it is often empty (not utilized).
- Uses the bus to get to downtown Vancouver and wishes it was used more by the community.
- Will walk or ride bike (or drive/transit) to downtown Vancouver from Hayden Island. Appreciates that Vancouver is dog friendly. Increased desire to travel to downtown Vancouver from Hayden Island.

**Do you value having the option to utilize different transportation modes (bike, walk, drive, public transit) to access the I-5 bridge from downtown Vancouver? If so, what modes are you most interested in using? What destination would you most like to get to?**

- Interested in walking path across the river.
- Feels unsafe to walk on the street as a pedestrian. Need a physical buffer from cars (and potentially from bikes too). Look at cyclist/pedestrian shared use path impacts on other bridges.
- Yes, all modes listed and rail. Destinations include Hayden Island, Portland Expo Center, and downtown Portland.
- Scenery (ability to enjoy the view) is important.
- Tilikum Bridge has turn outs for pedestrians to step away from bikes. Grade is very steep and high. You need a lift to get you to the top.
- Need elevator for bikes/pedestrians if building a high-level bridge.
- Important to have enough room for bikes and pedestrians to use the space safely.
- Cycling over I-205, the path in-between cars is not a good user experience.
- Park benches needed for pedestrian/bike use (2 or 3 along the bridge). Encourage rest and opportunity to enjoy scenery.
- Honor cultures relevant to the bridge and program area.

**Are you interested in improved access and improved ped/bike/car/transit connections to TriMet's light rail system and its connections to destinations in and around Portland?**

- Very interested in improved access to TriMet's light rail system. Lived in Vancouver and went to school in Portland, but didn't have a car. It took 1.5 hours to get to downtown Portland. Wants to decrease number of cars coming into downtown Vancouver.
- Would not utilize other transportation options to get to Portland (transit doesn't get to the destination they want or needs room for shopping). Took too long when they did utilize light rail. Not built for commuting – too many stops/takes too long.
- Would utilize light rail from Salmon Creek into Portland. Used light rail when living in Portland.
- Yes! Emphatically yes.
- Connection to light rail is critical. While not everyone uses it, this is an important mode of transportation.

**Do you currently use Bus Rapid Transit (the Vine) stations in downtown Vancouver? If so, how do you currently access them (drive, walk, bike, public transit)? If not, what would make you more likely to use high-capacity transit (either light rail or bus rapid transit) in downtown Vancouver?**

- Would be more likely to use public transit if it were convenient. I don't want to use multiple modes of transportation or have to catch numerous connections to get around.
- For pedestrians on a bridge path, good lighting is important in order to feel safe, as is having enough room that a bicyclist isn't going to come up behind you and make you jump out of the way.
- Wish list item: there are beautiful sunrises featuring Mt. Hood and the river. I would love to still be able to take photos from the pedestrian path and not have an obstructed view.
- Little if any use of the Vine now. I love light rail as it's on major streets and more convenient than bus. I can stand and bring a stroller or bike on the rail. A loop on major streets that goes north to Uptown or 39<sup>th</sup>

**As the program considers active transportation facilities (for example, sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared use paths) as part of a replacement bridge solution, are there specific locations for connections in downtown Vancouver that should be considered?**

- Uses daycare close to Clark College and highly dependent on vehicle, but would like to use public/active transport options if convenient and able to accommodate the needs of traveling with children.
- Rose Village. There are communities of diversity in this area and will connect with youth of Vancouver.
- Washington state does not have can deposits. People will use carts on the bridge to transport cans and sell them in Oregon. Need to be aware and have accommodating space.
- Need for increased accessibility in historic downtown core and primary commerce areas.
- Clark College students might not have their own transportation, but need to get around.
- Fort Vancouver/Historic Reserve
- Grand Central Station
- Waterfront

**What is most important to you regarding replacing the Interstate Bridge and connections to downtown Vancouver?**

- Keep construction as short as possible. Businesses have been suffering due to COVID-19 and we need to maintain access to downtown Vancouver businesses.
- Pay attention to how this will affect communities on both sides of the river in terms of construction, long-term changes, and livability.
- Increase walkability downtown (currently neighborhoods are segmented). Accessibility to new grocery store in downtown Vancouver. Be mindful of historic and cultural resources, make sure they are not distributed or removed.
- Community and legacy.