

EQUITY ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING #3

Subject: EAG Meeting #3 summary

Date and Time: Monday, March 8, 2021, 5:30pm to 7:30pm

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

WELCOME

Dr. Roberta Hunte, EAG Facilitator, welcomed members, introduced Greg Johnson, Program Administrator, for opening remarks and previewed the meeting agenda:

- Community engagement
- Recommendation development: defining equity (continued)
- Infusing equity into purpose and need

Jake Warr, Equity Lead, explained how to view closed captions, provided general webinar participation tips, and introduced Lisa Keohokalole Schauer, Strategic Communications Lead, to share what the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program (IBR) Program has heard from the community through its online open house, interactive survey, community briefing events, the program website, social media interactions, stakeholder engagements, and public comments.

1. INFORMATION: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Lisa gave an overview of the IBR Program's outreach tactics to seek community input, which included social media, postcards, print newspapers, online newspapers and newsletters; digital campaigns; radio; outreach to community based organizations, and telephone outreach. The IBR team would be proactively measuring the effectiveness of these tools to continue building on outreach efforts.

Interactive Survey

Lisa shared that the interactive survey received significant attention, with over 9,000 participants and over 14,000 open-ended comments, but noted for EAG members that the survey was not statistically or demographically representative, and represented just one method of how the IBR team is listening to the community. A final report on the open-ended comments is anticipated for release later in March.

The majority of survey participants were from within the Portland/Vancouver area, with significant participation from Northeast Portland neighborhoods on the Oregon side and significant participation from locations beyond the program area on the Washington side. The feedback showed the ranking of top problems in the program area for the community are as follows:

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- Congestion and reliability;
- Earthquake vulnerability;
- Transportation safety;
- Limited public transit;
- Impaired freight movement; and
- Inadequate bike and pedestrian facilities.

Lisa also shared the top two priorities identified by the community in the survey within the below community values categories:

- Commitment to equity;
- Safety and reliability;
- Cost and funding;
- Transit and multimodal; and
- Economy and community.

Community Briefing Events

Lisa described the community briefing events as opportunities to help the community understand where the program is at in the process. During the live audience surveys, over 34% of participants indicated congestion and reliability as the most significant problem experienced with the bridge.

Themes from previous EAG and Community Advisory Group (CAG) meetings

Lisa recapped the themes from the previous EAG meeting relating to the discussion of Purpose and Need, and Vision and Values, which were:

- Not to cause further harm to communities who've been historically victimized;
- Focus on access to opportunities from the IBR Program;
- Collaborate with and empower diverse communities; and
- Consider affordability and impact to low income populations.

Similarly, focused questions from the previous CAG meeting identified themes of:

- Addressing growing travel demand;
- Emphasis on designing a program that meets future community needs; and
- Seismic vulnerability.

Direct Stakeholder Engagement

Lisa gave an overview of the direct engagement methods, which included community organization outreach, multicultural outreach, social media engagements, as well as public comments.

Next steps

Lisa outlined next steps in the IBR Program timeline around community engagement, which include:

- Upcoming listening sessions;
- Developing takeaways;
- Preparation of a community engagement report; finalized Purpose & Need and community Vision & Values statements; and
- Identification of screening criteria and alternatives development.

2. RECOMMENDATION DEVELOPMENT: DEFINING EQUITY (CONTINUED)

Dr. Hunte introduced Jake Warr, Equity Lead, to lead a discussion on defining equity for the IBR program and what it means in regards to the Program's commitments to equity. Jake noted that the draft definition of equity concerned both process and outcome, and included a commitment to: honoring the history of indigenous peoples who've lived in the program area; maintaining transparency and accountability in process and decisions; acknowledge present historic and potential future inequities; identifying strategies to address these inequities; and proactive engagement of members specific communities: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; limited English proficiency communities, low income populations, houseless individuals, immigrants and refugees, and young people.

Jake invited members to share what they liked about this definition of equity, and how it could be refined to better guide the program towards equity.

- Steve N: We should unpack the definition of outcome equity to explore other, non-economic opportunities created by the bridge.
- Lily C: The definitions could aim higher. These definitions could seek to repair harm, instead of just trying to avoid further harm. We should reassess what access means, with consideration of who typically has the privilege and resources to take advantage of that access. We should think about how this definition will lead to a viable assessment plan, and ensures that outcomes are measured by impact rather than effort.
- Yolanda B: How do we actualize centering and empowering voices of marginalized communities when we talk about process equity? Regarding outcome equity, instead of saying ensuring access we could say enforceable and mandatory opportunities for underrepresented communities.
- Ana M: How will the process definition of equity carry over to the selection of contractors?
 - Johnell Bell, Chief Equity Officer, responded: the goal will be to guide the program to equitable outcomes now through construction.
 - Greg, responded: Through the program's commitments to equity and climate, this Program will seek to shift away from the old model of doing business and will try to be innovative in creating equitable outcomes throughout the process. These equity definitions are a template that will allow us to push the comfort zones of what's possible

in terms of equity, but we are operating in the context of a project receiving federal dollars.

- Sebrina O: When we think about outcomes, we should also think about for whom, and how are we going to define success in outcomes? Should we include specific communities in the outcome equity definition to indicate who we want to see outcomes for? We should think about concrete, measurable outcomes that support accountability.
- Nikotris P: What process follows after EAG members agree on a definition for equity? Will we define metrics to ensure equitable outcomes for communities who've historically been excluded from this space?
 - Greg, responded: the IBR Program has been reflecting on the distinction between rhetoric and action in regard to centering equity. Having a definition for equity will guide the specific actions committed to and enforce, where we can see the equitable results and outcomes being discussed here.
 - Johnell, responded: the definition of equity will serve as our barometer for accountability. After agreeing on a decision, future EAG meetings will focus on developing an equity framework and conversations around measuring equitable outcomes.
- Matt H: Perhaps these discussions are moving too quickly. These definitions talk about not causing future harm, but we should make sure we're being accountable to why we're here in the first place, before discussion of future harms.
- Caitlin R: Appreciate the intentionality around defining process and outcome equity separately. We should try to get on the same page in terms of what the problem is and what's solvable through this project. What are the disparities that we can ensure we're focusing on and asking if we're making these disparities better?
- Masha: Thinking about outreach to the Slavic community, are current engagement tools effectively reaching immigrant / refugee communities?
 - Lisa, responded: the multicultural liaisons' outreach to the Slavic community showed significant response from the Russian and Ukrainian communities. Would be happy to share additional information with Jake to share with EAG members.

3. INFUSING EQUITY INTO PURPOSE AND NEED

Dr. Hunte introduced Angela Findley, Environmental Lead, to lead a presentation on infusing equity as a critical objective into the Purpose & Need statements. Angela illustrated how Purpose and Need statements relate to evaluation criteria, and how they're used to determine if reasonable alternatives address the program's identified problem statements. Angela shared draft language on including equity as a critical objective:

- Include equity as outcome and process throughout the delivery of the program.
- Seek equitable distribution of transportation costs associated with the program.
- Fair distribution of benefits and adverse effects of the program.

- Consider impact to BIPOC and economically vulnerable communities and populations when determining equitable outcomes for the program.
- Engage diverse community groups to ensure program delivery reflects the cultural context and area history through a celebration of diversity.
- Opportunities for local, small, and growing businesses, including Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, during procurement and contracting.
- Anti-displacement strategy of disadvantaged communities that build on community assets.

Angela shared elements of equity woven into Purpose and Need Statements, which included: seismic vulnerability, congestion and reliability, public transit, safety, and bike and pedestrian facilities.

Breakout groups

Small groups were asked to reflect on the questions:

- Does the draft Purpose and Need statements captured the story of what equity means in term so the needs and goals for the program?
- Is there anything more we need to say to tell the story?
- What would it look like if the story played out inequitably?

Report out

The small groups each reported out their reflections, some verbally and some via email after the fact:

- There is concern around communities who are already excluded from the work. How can we lift up vulnerable communities through these economic opportunities?
- We need to think about training for people, especially young people, in order to provide opportunities for them to be involved, get good paying trade jobs, and increase representation of diverse communities in those trades industries.
- We need to slow down and be more thoughtful about people with disabilities in regards to access to opportunities. There is concern that we are moving too fast.
- We need to go further than the needs of right now, and be more thoughtful about the needs of the community in the future.
- We should be asking questions about benefits for each of the communities of concern, how that community benefits, and what those benefits are.
- Think about the real transportation options available to people
- It would be a problem if we stuck to bare minimum legal requirements for this project.
- We could tell the story better by explicitly identifying economic benefits through contracting and job creation.
- When we talk about benefits, we should be clearer about for whom and how, and focus on how people are impacted and not just the structure itself.

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- An inequitable project would include a lot of outreach without a clear connection to how might be influencing decision making.
- Inequity would mean communities were engaged but not informed of shifts in Program direction.
- Low minority business participation or increase in business property taxes might indicate an inequitable project.
- Economic opportunity in terms of contracting and workforce equity have already surfaced as equity priorities. Does the “need” need to show up in the Purpose and Need?
- The regional demographic data is helpful but doesn’t tell the story of the communities that will be impacted – how do we get closer to the ground?
- Regardless of the issue, it should be communicated in terms of people impact in addition to the structure itself. For example, on the issue of seismic reliability we need to speak to about in terms of people in addition to the structure itself. This will help in conceptualizing this in terms of equity – using the frame of “for whom” “to whom” and “how”. Apply the same lens when thinking about congestion or freight (not just trucks, it’s the small truck owner)
- An inequitable project would lack public transportation
- Inequity would mean the government makes investment that results in some kind of benefit where people of means are able to buy access over time. Folks that are already marginalized will be pushed out. Government invests in places and not people.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received during the meeting.

5. WRAP UP

Dr. Hunte closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their time, noted that the next EAG meeting is scheduled for March 29th from 5:30pm to 7:30pm.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

ATTENDEES

Attendees	Organization
Greg Johnson	IBR Program Administrator
Johnell Bell	IBR Chief Equity Officer

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Attendees	Organization
Jake Warr	IBR Equity Lead
Dr. Roberta Hunte	IBR EAG Facilitator
Lisa Schauer-Keohokalole	IBR Strategic Communications Lead
Angela Findley	IBR Environmental Lead
Shona Carter	Community Foundation of SW Washington
Lily Copenagle	NAACP Portland
Johnathan Eder	Port of Vancouver
Yolanda Brookes	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
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

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Attendees	Organization
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

- The live YouTube stream of the meeting received 22 views.

Meeting Recording and Materials

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