

DRAFT EXECUTIVE STEERING GROUP (ESG) MEETING

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

May 20, 2021, 10 AM - 12 PM

ESG Members in Attendance: Secretary Roger Millar, Director Kris Strickler, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Chair Scott Hughes, President Lynn Peterson, Director of Engineering & Construction Steve Witter, CEO Shawn Donaghy, Chief Public Affairs Officer Kristen Leonard, CEO Julianna Marler, CAG Co-Chair Lynn Valenter, CAG Co-Chair Ed Washington

Welcome, Introductions, Proposed Agenda, and Updates

Deb Nudelman, Senior Facilitator, welcomed the group, reviewed meeting logistics, and reminded attendees about the public comment opportunity later in the meeting.

IBR Administrator, Greg Johnson, announced that the program team had received the letter of guidance from the federal agency partners. He shared that the meeting would focus on summarizing that letter and the IBR approach moving forward. He provided program updates including that technical work sessions with partner agency staff are underway, and that community listening sessions are taking place through June.

Deb Nudelman asked the ESG members to go once around the table to introduce themselves and provide any updates from around the region. Several ESG members made comments.

Director Strickler (ODOT) shared his appreciation for the program team, ESG members, and their staff. He thanked Greg for his work and shared that he is looking forward to the dialogue.

Secretary Millar (WSDOT) informed the attendees that the governor had signed the proposed biennial budget into law with great progress in the environmental arena and some progress in the transportation arena. He shared that the governor and legislature are working on new revenue, and he is looking forward to having conversations this summer about potential revenue to cover design and construction costs for the IBR program.

Shawn Donaghy (C-TRAN) shared that based on the recap shared by Administrator Johnson, it will be important to review the federal agency guidance thoroughly to determine next steps for the program.

Kristen Leonard (Port of Portland) shared her appreciation for the EAG and CAG members, and that she looks forward to hearing updates on the advisory committee's recent discussions. She shared her interest in determining how best to enhance the connection between the program team's efforts and the federal partners, to ensure that the program is moving forward in alignment with a common goal.

Deb Nudelman reviewed the proposed agenda topics and went over meeting ground rules.

Information and Discussion: Framing Equity

Johnell Bell, IBR Principal Equity Officer, began by sharing the basic definition of equity and then reviewed the IBR equity definition as developed by the EAG, which included definitions for Process Equity and Outcome Equity as well as the definition for marginalized and underserved communities. He shared that through conversations with the EAG, the IBR Equity Team has learned that it is important to measure both Process Equity and Outcome Equity.

Johnell informed the attendees that the EAG, Equity Framework, targeted outreach, contract specifications, and community benefits will all be pieces of the IBR approach to centering equity. He reviewed the Equity Framework and shared six Equity Objectives around mobility & accessibility, physical design, community benefits, economic opportunity, decision-making processes, and avoiding further harm. He then shared the process for moving the six objectives to Screening Criteria and Performance Measures.

Johnell and Jake Warr, the program equity lead, shared a demographic snapshot of the IBR program area with a broader look at the Portland-Vancouver Metro region. They shared maps of the spatial distribution of people of color, low-income households, older adults (age 65+), households without a vehicle, concentrations of jobs and transit.

[Detailed demographic data can be found on slides 20-28 in the [May 20 ESG Presentation here.](#)]

Discussion

Secretary Millar noted that census tracts by geographic area do not necessarily depict gross number of jobs nor gross population. He shared that this is good data, but it is important to keep in mind the different makeups of the census tracts.

Jake Warr shared key feedback from the May 17 EAG meeting. He informed the ESG members that there were requests for the program team to share more about how people are moving, demographic overlays/intersections, and how data can inform anti-displacement strategies. He provided an overview of the EAG workplan, sharing that the next steps will include developing and recommending performance measures and screening criteria as well as the development of specific design recommendations.

Scott Hughes thanked Johnell and his team. He shared that where the bridge is going to land for Vancouver is critical. He asked for clarification regarding whether the program is looking at their minority business percentage bases as employee demographics or business ownership. He shared that he believes it seems more important to focus on businesses that employ locally. Johnell shared that he believes an effective strategy requires both. He shared that there will be an ongoing discussion on the topic.

Commissioner Hardesty thanked the program team for the presentation. She shared her dislike for the term “marginalized communities” as it makes it sound as if the communities marginalized themselves. She likened it to the term “achievement gap”, and shared that it is not the child’s failure, but the education system’s failure that is responsible for the gap.

She shared that at the national level, the transportation administration is talking about undoing harm that has been created by former transportation policy, and she is interested in the program developing a measurement that would document how the program is mitigating previous harm. She informed the group that at the national level there are cases of pushback because of projects exacerbating previous harm. She asked the program team what could be developed to address inequitable outcomes that have been historically built into transportation projects.

Johnell informed the group that his focus is on restorative justice. He shared that many projects focus on mitigating disproportionate impact and that instead, he focuses on disproportionately benefiting previously harmed communities. Greg Johnson added that the program team is also looking at best practices both locally and nationally.

Commissioner Hardesty shared that the program team needs a benchmark that clearly measures restorative justice. She shared that if it is not on paper it does not exist and that this is an opportunity for the program team to walk its talk. She shared that she views any program of this size that does not move people from apprentice to journeyman as a complete failure.

Shawn Donaghy shared his appreciation for the equity team and noted that the C-TRAN Deputy CEO sits on the EAG. He shared that it will be important to look at how equity and climate change are incorporated.

Steve Witter shared his agreement with his fellow ESG members. Regarding workforce development, he shared that TriMet and other partners in the metro region have been working on this issue for a long time and that it is critical to acknowledge and build off the Construction Careers Pathway Program (C2P2).

President Peterson shared that there has been a lot of work done throughout the region to target opportunities for women and people of color. She cited the need to make sure that their hours graduate them to journeyman status. She shared that there will be a need to bring labor contractors into the room. She shared that if the program can also help businesses move from being sub-contractors to prime contractors, the program will be hitting a home run. Johnell added that it is about building the number of available firms as well and highlighted the need to invest in contractors so that they can become prime contractors.

Commissioner Hardesty shared that the region needs to be expanding the pool of contractors. She shared that the state list is only 20% of the licensed businesses doing the work. She emphasized the need to think outside the box and that she does not want the program to go to the same 20% and pretend like there are no other options.

Secretary Millar shared his agreement with the ESG member's statements. He cautioned that WSDOT has been on the same mission and that the department is attacking the issue programmatically. He shared that he wants to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and acknowledged that past practices have had disparate impacts on minority populations. He shared the need to build on and augment existing efforts around the region as opposed to starting from scratch. He informed the group that where we can share best practices we should in order to help make all agency programs on equity better, because as big as this project is, the wider programs of these regional partners are even bigger.

Information: Update on Federal Guidance and IBR Approach Moving Forward

Greg Johnson shared key points from the letter from the federal agency partners (received on May 18, 2021) in response to the program asking if climate and equity can be added to the Purpose and Need statement. He noted that while they identified the risks of inserting climate and equity into the Purpose and Need, they state the importance of equity and climate, and that they generally support them being included in some way in part of the NEPA process.

Chris Regan, IBR Environmental Manager, shared key language pulled from the letter, as well as a brief overview of the following program takeaways.

- Modifying Purpose and Need with climate and equity are potentially substantial enough to require a new EIS and NEPA process, which would mean re-determining a range of alternatives.
- Any effort to identify new alternatives would likely lead to similar conclusions since the previously identified transportation problems continue to exist today.
- Reopening this work would extend the program schedule, delaying the implementation of a solution to address transportation problems in the IBR corridor and adding significant expense to complete work previously completed, with a strong likelihood that similar solutions would be identified.
- The program and our federal partners are aligned to strongly support including equity and climate change considerations in both the environmental process as well as with outcomes.

Chris reminded the ESG members of the current IBR strategy for embedding equity and climate into the program, sharing that the team will use the equity and climate frameworks which will be addressed throughout design and construction in screening criteria to evaluate design, performance measures, design and construction specifications, letters of agreements, program commitments, community enhancements, and mitigation.

Chris described the NEPA re-evaluation process. He shared that the elements of the IBR approach, together with the response from the federal partners, is considered a NEPA re-evaluation. He informed the ESG members that the information provided to the federal partners in the re-evaluation submittal will answer the following questions.

- What has changed since previous work was conducted?
- What is the IBR program's proposed response to this change?

Chris reminded the attendees that the federal partner's response to the re-evaluation is what determines which of the four pathways the program will continue down for further documentation and analysis. Chris provided an overview of the program's re-evaluation process as it relates to the four pathways.

Ray Mabey, Assistant Program Administrator, provided an overview of the definition of design options, sharing that the program will be working with partners to identify which options will be screened to determine which

options will move forward into the IBR alternative. He defined the Alternative/IBR Solution as a single combination of design options that, when packaged together, address the identified transportation problems. Ray then shared a high-level draft schedule of the approach moving forward.

Frank Green, Assistant Program Administrator, shared that the program will be developing performance measures and screening criteria using the Equity and Climate Frameworks, along with community values and priorities. He provided definitions for Performance Measures and Screening Criteria and shared a hypothetical example of each.

Frank shared that a key step in the process is to examine what has changed since the previous planning effort. He shared a non-exhaustive list of contextual changes. Frank noted that there are several physical changes that have occurred as well. He shared aerial maps and described a few examples of physical changes in the program area. Frank shared that the physical changes directly relate to potential design options that will be considered.

Greg Johnson provided an overview of the IBR approach moving forward, which includes five elements:

- Identify design options with regional partners to address changes that affect the program area and define elements of the IBR program.
- Develop screening criteria and performance measures using equity and climate frameworks along with community values and priorities, to evaluate design options.
- Compile data and perform analysis and modeling to inform, assess and compare design options, where appropriate.
- Formalize program commitments to guide future program designs, construction, and operations and hold the program accountable to shared values and priorities.
- Ongoing stakeholder and community engagement to inform how to conduct the program and what outcomes are developed.

The IBR Approach Moving Forward Graphic can be found on slide 46 of the May 20 ESG Meeting presentation [here](#).

Input and Feedback on the IBR Approach

Greg stated that now they were looking for feedback from the ESG members on the IBR approach. He provided an overview of feedback received from the ESG during the April 29 ESG Meeting, including their desire to utilize past work without restarting planning efforts, acknowledgement that the federal partners will ultimately determine the NEPA pathway, the importance of addressing changes using a transparent, data-driven process informed by community engagement, and the necessity of the program to demonstrate

commitment and accountability through words, actions, and measurable outcomes, particularly regarding equity and climate considerations.

Greg then asked the ESG members to respond to the following discussion questions:

- What input and feedback do you have on the IBR approach moving forward? What is missing? What concerns do you have?
- What messages do you want the Program to share in their update to the Bi-State Legislative Committee?

President Peterson thanked the program for leading with a data-driven approach. She shared that the program team and the ESG need to focus on outcomes and then look at how we can get there. She shared her appreciation for the program's commitment to making sure the ESG's values have been reflected to the federal agency partners and through the process as well as outcomes. She shared her comfort with the approach of using screening criteria to determine if the program is meeting climate and equity commitments. She shared her preference for pathways two and three. She reiterated her point regarding the importance of discussing outcomes before looking at how we can get there.

Commissioner Hardesty thanked Greg and the team for their work. She shared that she pushed the team hard because a lot has changed since the previous planning effort. She shared that she is confident that with intentionality, the team will land in path two or three and that it will be important to look at environmental impacts. She shared her alignment with President Peterson on starting with outcomes. Commissioner Hardesty stated that the program will be failing its communities if climate and equity are not weaved into every story we tell about the program. She reiterated that she does not like seeing congestion pricing and tolling used interchangeably because they mean different things. She said she looks forward to having hard conversations about how to move the region forward.

Mayor McEnery-Ogle thanked Greg and the program team and shared her commitment to a strong and transparent re-evaluation of what has changed, with a careful look at relevant data related to high-capacity transit. She shared that she is not interested in just mode, but the transit alignment and station locations as well. She informed the group that she has reviewed the letter of federal guidance and that she is confident the team will land in path two or three. She acknowledged that using past work is important but noted that it is important to understand that things have changed and that the team needs to integrate values of climate and equity into the process.

Mayor McEnery-Ogle shared her concern regarding the program's communication with legislators, noting that Oregon Representative Peter DeFazio's comments might show a lack of understanding of the IBR program's status. She shared that it is important for the legislators in Washington and Oregon to understand the process so they can advocate to the federal partners. She suggested the team set up regular meetings to update the delegations. She noted that all the ESG members have government affairs teams, and that it is important for one voice to be shared with Washington DC so that everyone is speaking the same language when they go to Salem and Olympia. She closed, stating that she is comfortable with the direction of the program, pending a response to her comments.

Greg shared that he had held several conversations with principals and discussed aggressively taking back the IBR narrative from others. He informed the attendees that the program team will be working with the government affairs teams at WSDOT and ODOT to get in front of congressional delegations as well as reach out to news outlets.

Shawn Donaghy shared his appreciation for Commissioner Hardesty's and Mayor McEnery-Ogle's comments. He shared that given the federal agency guidance, the program team needs to slow down to course correct and make sure there is a plan in place to move the project forward. He echoed other comments and said he does not want this to be political, but it is clear that there is a political influence. He shared that it is important that the program educate people so there is a full understanding of what the program is trying to accomplish.

Kristen Leonard shared her appreciation for the program team and agreement with the previous comments. She added that she has seen and experienced the great work of the EAG and her hopes that the work on climate is meeting the same level of expertise and community engagement. She shared that she sees the program falling under path two or there, and that she stands at the ready to assist in making sure that the group is advocating together as one voice. She asked the program team to consider the ESG as ambassadors for the program.

Greg shared that the program team plans to provide an update on the climate framework at a future ESG meeting. He shared that alignment will be necessary to show that the region is on the same page. He shared that there will be tough decisions ahead, but that alignment on how the team is going to run the process is critical.

Commissioner Hardesty shared that she envisions three next steps for the program. She shared the need for a work group among ESG members to build a bi-state vision for how to tackle this program, the need to better engage with the congressional delegation, and the need to increase communication with the community in a way that is accessible. She emphasized avoiding "government speak" and insider-language.

Steve Witter shared that he comes from a construction and implementation background and that alignment around a vision is important before talking about blueprints and plans. He shared his appreciation for Commissioner Hardesty's notion of a smaller ESG work group.

Julianna Marler shared her support for the direction the team is going. She shared her agreement that communication is critical and that the ESG members are advocates and representatives of the project. She shared that she appreciates being approached as the project moves on and agreed that accessible terms will be important when communicating messaging.

Scott Hughes shared his appreciation for Greg. He shared his support for the program and the approach moving forward. He shared that the program should keep things as simple as possible and focus on the physical changes. He shared that the public's requests have stayed largely the same.

Ed Washington thanked Greg and the team. He shared that this is one of the most meaningful meetings he has attended and that he has a sense that things are beginning to coalesce. He shared that he was born in Birmingham, Alabama and left when he was seven years old. He did not go back for 40 years. When he did there was a freeway built 3 blocks from where he lived. He went on Google Maps and could not find a single

house from his childhood and everything had been either gentrified or replaced with freeways. He shared the importance of not wiping people or their communities out. He thanked the team for their work and attention to detail.

Greg thanked Ed for his comments. He noted that he knows the history of what transportation departments have done and that it is not a proud history. He shared that the goal here is not to duplicate, but to bring restoration to this area.

Lynn Valenter shared that the CAG is working on finalizing a Community Values and Priorities document to present to the ESG. She echoed Commissioner Hardesty's comments about quality discussion and not just information sharing. She shared that the next CAG would include some opportunity for members to share broadly about where they are in the process.

Secretary Millar thanked the group for their comments. He shared that there were great comments about communication with congressional delegations. He shared that as individual team members reach out to congressional delegations they get one touch and noted the value of bringing one message. He noted that we have been doing a good job, but that we will be doing a better job if we do it together. He asked the team to bring that one message forward, so that the ESG can agree on it and share it with constituents and leaders.

Kris Strickler shared his alignment with the comments around building capacity and workforce. He shared that he is looking for change in his agency, the transportation sector, and outcomes. He noted the weight, power, and intellect of the ESG, and shared that outcomes are an important commitment piece. He shared that the program team is working the tension point between outcomes of schedule and outcomes of getting the right thing done. He shared that it is the ESG's job to help the team get there. Director Strickler reiterated his appreciation for the group's commitment to outcomes.

Opportunity for Public Input

Deb Nudelman opened the floor to public comment. Four people shared comments.

- Robert Liberty identified himself as a former member of the Metro council. They shared that they are a proponent of project collapse. They shared their opinion that the IBR program is a repetition of CRC and that the same issues that collapsed the previous planning effort are even sharper today. They shared their hope that attendees have read David Bragdon's critique of the CRC project. They shared that to avoid project collapse, the ESG needs to take control and hold the next two ESG meetings to review the CRC LPA and to discuss other preferable alternatives. They shared that the program needs to examine the benefits and harms the project poses to the whole project area.
- Dave Rowe identified themselves as a commuter and private citizen. They shared that the program should analyze the "common sense alternative" because it avoids building the high mega-bridge designed during CRC. They shared that the program team should consider battery powered inter-city passenger rail.

- John Ley identified himself as a private citizen and resident of Southwest Washington. They shared their appreciation for the program making data-driven decisions. They shared that people want to see data so they can give informed input. John shared that people’s most valuable commodity is time and that they do not want to waste it in traffic. They questioned whether the region needs high-capacity transit. They questioned whether anyone would want to bike or walk across the new interstate bridge.
- Bob Ortblad introduced themselves as a member of the Washington Business Alliance and a teacher at the University of Washington. They submitted written public comment prior to the meeting, and after a show of hands, were disappointed at the number of ESG members who had reviewed it. They shared that their comment highlights the damage highways have done in the past and cited the example of the Bronx Expressway. They proposed the project team consider an immersed tube tunnel.

Confirm Upcoming Meeting Topics, Next Steps, and Summary

Deb Nudelman shared that the next ESG meeting will be held on June 17, 2021. She informed the group that the meeting will include a CAG and EAG update, a high-level review of technical work on data, analysis, and design options, and an update on the Climate Framework. She shared that the Bi-State Legislative Committee Meeting date is still to be determined and reviewed the dates for the upcoming Community Listening Sessions.

Greg Johnson thanked the ESG members for their input and participation. He shared that the program now has guidance and a plan to move forward and will be providing details on data and analysis soon.

Deb Nudelman thanked the ESG members and attendees, and the meeting was adjourned.

Executive Steering Group Members in Attendance

Name and Title	Organization
Director Kris Strickler	Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Secretary Roger Millar	Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty	City of Portland
Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle	City of Vancouver
Board Chair Scott Hughes	Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

Metro Council President Lynn Peterson	Metro
Engineering and Construction Director Steve Witter (Interim ESG rep)	TriMet
CEO Shawn Donaghy	C-TRAN
Chief Public Affairs Officer Kristen Leonard	Port of Portland
CEO Julianna Marler	Port of Vancouver
Lynn Valenter	Community Advisory Group Co-Chair
Ed Washington	Community Advisory Group Co-Chair

IBR Program Staff in Attendance

Name	Organization
Greg Johnson, Program Administrator	IBR program team
Frank Green, Assistant Program Administrator	IBR program team
Ray Mabey, Assistant Program Administrator	IBR program team
Johnell Bell, Principal Equity Officer, Community Advisory Group co-facilitator	IBR program team
Jake War, Equity Lead	IBR program team
Chris Regan, Environmental Manager	IBR program team
Deb Nudelman, Lead Facilitator	IBR program team

Additional Participants

108 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 Recording and Materials

A recording of the meeting and the meeting materials are available on the website:
<https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/esg-may-20-meeting/>