

DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP (CWG) MEETING #1

Subject: Downtown Vancouver Community Working Group Meeting #1 Summary

Dates and Times: September 29, 2021, 4:30 to 7:00 P.M.

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

WELCOME REMARKS

Monica Santos-Pinacho, facilitator for the Downtown Vancouver (DV) Community Working Group (CWG), welcomed everyone to the meeting at 4:35 PM and began by providing an overview of accessible participation options including closed captions and ASL interpretation. Monica then introduced Frank Green, IBR Assistant Program Administrator, who provided opening remarks. Monica led the team in an introductory exercise where each Community Working Group participant shared one word that summarized their hopes for the meeting's activity. The results of this word exercise were shared in a word cloud. Monica introduced two IBR staff presenters for the meeting, technical leads Tom Bennett and Brad Phillips, as well as IBR program partners C-TRAN, TriMet, City of Vancouver, City of Portland, RTC, Metro, Port of Portland, and Port of Vancouver.

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP AGREEMENTS, ROLES AND COMMITMENTS TO EQUITY

Monica then provided an overview of the CWG framework, and shared that three DV CWG participants, Jasmine Tolbert, Michelle Brewer, and Whitney Mosback are also Community Advisory Group (CAG) members who will provide a direct linkage to the IBR CAG. This CWG will meet two times, with additional engagement opportunities throughout the process, as needed. Feedback on specific transportation design concepts from these meetings will be presented to advisory groups and inform stakeholders to help them better understand public input. Monica shared the program timeline through the development of the IBR multimodal design solution in 2022, and then turned the conversation over to Tom Bennett and Brad Phillips.

PREVIOUS PLANNING OVERVIEW AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

Brad Phillips, IBR Technical Lead, began by reviewing the history of the program and changes that have occurred since the previous planning effort ended in 2013. Notable changes in Vancouver include the

expansion of the Bus Rapid Transit system (The Vine), developments within the downtown district, and new development on the waterfront. Brad then outlined common design assumptions of this program, including the replacement of the Interstate Bridge to the west of the existing bridge, the implementation of a shared use path on the new bridge, as well as the implementation of a High Capacity Transit connection. He then provided an overview of community values and priorities that have already been identified for the program. He also invited participants to voice any additional priorities to help inform program design moving forward.

Tom Bennett, IBR Urban Design Lead, provided an overview of the study area map. The map was divided into three sections for the purposes of conversation. These maps were used for discussion in the upcoming group breakout sessions. Each map section indicated basic land use areas, major civic destinations, parks and open spaces, residential neighborhoods, and other notable destinations. The three sections of the map include:

- **Map 1: Downtown Vancouver & Waterfront**
 - This map showed existing crossing points across I-5, including Columbia Way, Evergreen Blvd. and Mill Plain Blvd. Tom noted that the program is evaluating a Main Street extension to the waterfront and a community connector that would run east-west. This map also highlights Main Street, The Vine bus service, and bus stops located in the area.

- **Map 2: Evergreen Blvd. to 4th Plain Blvd.**
 - This map showed existing I-5 crossing points at 4th Plain Blvd., McLoughlin Blvd., Mill Plain Blvd., and Evergreen Blvd. The map also indicated academic institutions on the east side, parks and open space, and residential neighborhoods on both sides of the highway.

- **Map 3: Fourth Plain Blvd. to 39th Street**
 - This map showed existing I-5 crossings at 4th Plain Blvd., 29th Street, and 33rd Street. It also indicates large residential neighborhoods on both sides of the highway.

MOVE TO BREAKOUT ROOMS AND REVIEW EXISTING CONDITIONS MAPS

Monica provided an introduction to the breakout session format and emphasized that collecting participant feedback is critically important as a component of providing community input to the program. She introduced the following discussion questions that were asked in regarding each of the three map sections in the breakout rooms:

1. What currently works well? How do current conditions allow you to get where you need/want to go?
2. Any specific areas that currently cause significant traffic flow, access, efficiency, or safety issues?

3. Do current conditions allow you to get where you want to go using the means you need/want to get there (transit, bike, car, walk, etc.)? Are there places you currently can't access or better want to access?

REPORT OUT FROM GROUPS

Breakout Room 1

Led by Brad Phillips, with IBR support staff Katy Belokonny taking notes:

4th Plain Blvd. to 39th Street:

- Concern that there is an inadequate safety environment for pedestrians and cyclists to cross and exit the bridge.
- Concern that automobile navigation travelling north on I-5 out of downtown takes too much additional time.
- Concern that access points to get in and out of downtown are dangerous.
- Concern of vegetation overgrowth impacting infrastructure downtown.
- Desire to prioritize adding capacity through additional automobile lanes.
- Question on prioritizing additional multimodal options.

Evergreen Blvd. to 4th Plain Blvd.:

- Great access getting onto I-5 south.
- Accessing the bridge and crossing as a cyclist is challenging, including along waterfront
- Concern that relocation of the transit transfer center will result in a lack of route information and physical space for passengers during transit layovers
- Comment on the spacing between The Vine bus stops being too far apart for users.

Downtown Vancouver & Waterfront:

- Need for a transit circulator through downtown.
- Concern for lack of parking downtown.

- Comment that congestion on I-5 southbound can lead to blockage of parking structures.
- Comment that access to downtown coming off of the bridge into downtown is working very well.

Breakout Room 2

Led by Tom Bennett with IBR support staff Lisa Keohokalole Schauer taking notes:

4th Plain Blvd. to 39th Street:

- Desire for increased reliability and access to transit.
- Concern for existing heavy traffic in areas where there are frequent backups.
- Concern for the lack of bike lanes in this area and desire to see more.
- Comment that 33rd Street is traffic-heavy due to the hospital.
- Comment that 29th street may be a more desirable connection point due to neighborhood proximity.
- Concern for lack of understanding and signage of where it is safe to bicycle.

Evergreen Blvd. to 4th Plain Blvd.:

- Comment that McLoughlin Blvd. works well for cyclists and connects well to get across the city.
- Comment that getting onto I-5 from the east side via car is great.
- Support for businesses that incentivize employees to reduce car trips.
- Concern for the lack of available parking.
- Concern that this map area is a barrier for east-west movement.
- Desire for safe cycling for people of all ages.
- Desire for convenient and reliable access to transit.

Downtown Vancouver & Waterfront:

- Interest and excitement surrounding the Community Connector concept.
- Concern for the lack of parking availability.
- Emphasis on appropriate planning for queueing of traffic.
- Ensuring that bikes and pedestrians have safe connections.
- Support for the extension of Main Street to waterfront.
- Concern for the amount of automobile traffic coming into downtown.

WRAP UP

Monica shared additional engagement opportunities with the group including upcoming advisory group meetings, social media, and the program newsletter, as well as links to the recording of the current meeting, meeting material presented, and the program information library. Monica reminded participants about the date and time of the next Downtown Vancouver meeting on *Thursday, October 28th, 2021 from 4:30-7:00 PM.

*NOTE: The next meeting date has been rescheduled to November 18, 2021 from 4:30-7:00 PM.

Monica thanked the participants for their time and adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Attendees	Role/Organization
Benton Strong	Vigor
Carmen Caraballo	Esther Short Park Neighborhood Association
Christine Whitney	Visit Vancouver USA
Claire Williams	At-Large Community Participant
David Poland	At-Large Community Participant
Elizabeth Harris	At-Large Community Participant
Jasmine Tolbert	Vancouver NAACP
Jeb Doran-TriMet	TriMet

Attendees	Role/Organization
Jeremy White	TriMet
Jim Hagar	Port of Vancouver
Jordan Boldt	Vancouver Farmers Market
Katherine Kelly	City of Vancouver
Marjorie Ledell	At-Large Community Participant
Mary Cronin	At-Large Community Participant
Michael Walker	Vancouver's Downtown Association
Michi Slick	Killian Pacific
Mike Bomar	Port of Vancouver
Mike Paine	At-Large Community Participant
Saeed Hajarizadeh	Vancouver Housing Authority
Scott Patterson	C-TRAN
Shona Carter	Community Foundation for SW Washington
Stacey Graham	The Historic Trust
Sunrise O'Mahoney	LULAC
Tamara J Fuller	At-Large Community Participant
Tom Hagley	Vancouver Public Schools

Facilitators and Presenters

Attendees	Role/Organization
Mónica Santos-Pinacho	Facilitator
Brad Phillips	IBR Technical Lead
Tom Bennett	IBR Technical Lead
Ryan LeProwse	IBR Technical Lead
Vicky Smith	IBR Technical Lead
Casey Liles	IBR Technical Lead
Frank Green	IBR Assistant Program Administrator
Katy Belokonny	IBR Communications
Lisa Keohokalole Schauer	IBR Communications

Additional Participants

Members of the public viewed the meeting via the YouTube livestream during the meeting.

MEETING RECORD AND MATERIALS

Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEE981W-3xs>

Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available here:

<https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/downtown-vancouver-working-group/>