

# COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #7

## HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

Subject: Community Advisory Group Meeting #7 Summary

Date and Time: June 3, 2021 4:00 to 6:00 P.M.

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

## WELCOME & OUTCOMES

Lynn Valenter, CAG co-chair, welcomed the group and Lisa Keohokalole Schauer, CAG co-facilitator, reviewed the technical instructions for the meeting and the agenda.

## PROGRAM AND ADVISORY GROUP UPDATES

Greg Johnson, Program administrator, provided an update on what the team has been working on to ensure the project stays on schedule. He shared welcomes all feedback and constructive criticism from CAG members and looks forward to making sure this program meets the community's needs.

Ed Washington, CAG co-chair, provided an update on the April 29<sup>th</sup> and May 20<sup>th</sup> ESG meetings, highlighting the federal guidance letter that the program received along with hearing a presentation on the program's equity framework. Jake Warr, program equity lead, informed members that the most recent Equity Advisory Group (EAG) meeting in May focused on the EAG's upcoming work and a deep dive into demographic and jobs data in the program area. Jason Hagen, Program team, introduced the new CAG member, Julie Doumbia, who is native to the Portland area.

## CAG MEMBER REFLECTIONS

Co-facilitators Lisa Keohokalole Schauer and Johnell Bell asked the CAG to share reflections based on the below question as well as share current thoughts on their participation in CAG and the IBR program. Each member of CAG was asked to respond and share.

**Question:** What does success on this program look like for you or your organization?

### Discussion:

CAG member: success is a new bridge that incorporates better transit between the two regions. As CAG members, we receive some public comments that are sent to the program and would like to know what the program's strategy is to deal with those comments.

CAG member: Success is a bridge that functionally meets its stated goals and improves the quality of the neighborhoods that it touches, and those communities are pleased with the result. Hopes that the proposals that have come our way in public comment will receive fair consideration moving forward. I am concerned about equity and climate not being in the purpose and need and that their absence will prevent them from being cemented into the project. These need to be foundational in some form, though it doesn't need to be in purpose and need, and I want assurances that those are real and will be carried all the way through. I thank you for the opportunity to speak broadly.

CAG member: I echo the previous comments about equity and climate and the hesitations about accountability there. Thinking about reducing vehicle miles traveled while moving people and goods in the most efficient and safe way, light rail, and improved air quality. A successful project would have more jobs, a community benefit agreement and tolling before the project even starts to manage demand. Thank you for this opportunity.

CAG member: Success is addressing the congestion issue to safely and efficiently move goods on the highways as well as the waterways in a way that does not include a lift span to ensure continued movement along the river. Ensuring that traffic moving under the bridge can do so in a safe and efficient manner with design that does not impede freight's ability to navigate the river channel and ensures connections to multimodal freight movement. Ensuring commuters that must use a single occupancy vehicle are also able to move safely and efficiently.

CAG member: I echo the comments about congestion relief and freight movement. Even with the pandemic, there is a pattern of continual growth in on-road freight movement and goods delivery. Success for us is congestion relief, commute reliability and resiliency for our customers to ensure products continue to move.

CAG member: I concur with previous comments. Success is having commuter lanes on both sides and both directions. I would love to see incentives for plug in and hybrid vehicles. Also, rapid mass transit whether it be light rail or dedicated bus lanes to improve flow and ensure environmental protection.

CAG member: Outside of congestion relief, we want to ensure economic empowerment is considered since this is a route for work and recreational travel. When it comes to access, we need to be equitable to different backgrounds and abilities. We need to continue with the plan to reduce our environmental footprint with multiple modes including non-motor and mass transit.

CAG member: Success for us is to look at this bridge for the next 100 years. On top of considering environmental impacts, we must recognize the demands in the coming decades. Currently this is the 23<sup>rd</sup> worst bottleneck in the nation that causes huge issues for freight. While the goal is to make the communities around the bridge happy with their access, we also need to recognize this freeway belongs to both states and there is a tremendous amount of product that moves regionally so it requires a holistic view of needs.

CAG member: It is important to me that we build a solution that lasts so we aren't in this situation 20 years from now. I would love to see other commuting options besides vehicles.

Lynn Valenter: I feel that our group is doing great at investing the time up front to understand first before coming to a common solution. It sounds like we are all very invested in the 6 problem areas identified in the purpose and need statements along with environment and equity. I want to ensure that everyone knows that we can reach a different, locally preferred option.

CAG member: I am concerned that we have cookie cutter solutions. I feel like we are being very limited here. As long as we are restricted to thinking within this corridor, we will find a solution but not a step forward. I heard that there were 8 metal pillars that were put under the passageway on Hayden Island to support that overpass which makes me wonder if something is going on there as far as liability. We also haven't heard about salmon and steelhead who are endangered. I think that utilizing and updating past work has become a handcuff because many changes have occurred in the area—we shouldn't be saying that things have changed and haven't changed at the same time. This bridge is not going to end congestion, we may improve it, but we are not looking at this as a part and parcel of this corridor from Washington to Canada. In my opinion, we are looking at this as a corridor project only. I can't answer questions if I'm told I can't offer other solutions.

CAG member: I think it is important to see data that outlines how things have changed in this area related to the project in the last 10 years. Congestion is a quick example of something that has changed dramatically. I would like to see information that outlines exactly how that has changed in that time to inform us as we look to reach consensus on solutions.

CAG member: It's nice to be part of a group that is dedicated to this issue and appreciate Lynn's comments and have no disagreement with the successes that have been mentioned. One of my concerns is how chained we are to the issues and processes of the past because that is what killed it the last time. The will to build the bridge wasn't greater than issues or concerns. I am concerned we won't be able to get this done on time because we are tied to old processes that will bring surprises that will prevent us from achieving our goal.

CAG member: My only thought at this point continues to be the fact that our Congressional representatives, weighing in on the issue (Blumenauer and DeFazio) particularly. And the Washington Legislature not passing any support this session, makes one ask, will the decisions be made without any of the CAG's considerations. Particularly now, DeFazio saying we probably won't get any infrastructure money because we do not have a "plan" in place. To quote the article: "The problem is we don't have a plan" according to DeFazio. He feels there is no sense of urgency among either state, or in the ODOT/WSDOT effort overseeing the project. He too is saying Light Rail is a must. Along with what Blumenauer has previously stated "there will not be a bridge without light rail. I feel to some extent the decisions are being made for us, and maybe we ought to be starting with those givens as a base. Because other ideas may support that but not others, like pedestrian and bike lanes, maybe they should be forced to ride light rail to cross then go from there (just a far out example of an alternative consideration).

CAG member: we need a functional bridge that is going to be earthquake proof and accommodate regional needs. We are concerned about relieving local congestion on I-5, the bridge height, river travel and transit (whether light rail or busses). We prefer less impact on climate, whatever the transit solution is. I need the

experts to come and present to us the data that forecasts and projects what the region needs in the future, not now. People, goods, workers – I need experts to present to our group about the future of these topics.

CAG member: There has been some great suggestions and I agree with a lot of them. There is so much information and materials. It would be helpful to have our objectives used against every suggestion so we can designate how these compare against our common goals. We also have a greater responsibility to the region, beyond just the local metro area.

CAG member: I agree with the need for a resilient bridge, ensuring mobility issues are addressed by including as many modes of transportation as possible. The rivers in the area are lifeways and protecting the salmon runs is critical both during construction and during the life of this bridge. This area is very culturally sensitive so how it goes in and protects the culture in this area is important as well.

CAG member: I feel that we are super lucky to have a project that has existing plans. The impact that politicians have on the project might be our biggest hurdle since this is where the last project got stuck. I feel like we are moving in the right direction, and it is smart of us as a community to take previous plans and make them better to build a bridge that will last for 100 years.

CAG member: At the end of the project, I hope I will be able to see the discussions and concerns we have talked about in implementation of the bridge. I am concerned that building a bridge for the future that can't meet future needs, so hopefully we can make the bridge adaptable in the future without needing to rebuild.

CAG member: I want access to the bridge and access to jobs to be as equitable as possible. I agree with the importance of the environmental work and equitable respect for land.

CAG member: What we are doing here really does matter, process matters, and this happens in big projects where background noise occurs. If we stick to our committed process, we will have successful outcomes.

CAG member: I want to emphasize the equity piece, active transportation piece and resiliency piece.

CAG member: I really liked the comment about using the objectives to sort through the suggestions. Also thinking about the future of the bridge and how trends will be changing over time.

CAG co-chair Ed Washington emphasized that the background noise that inevitably will come can be overwhelming, but the voices of the CAG can be deafening if we stick together. We all know we need a bridge, but it needs to address the region as opposed to an individual. So, let's remember to keep on moving forward.

Program administrator Greg Johnson explained that despite the interesting alternative ideas being suggested, the program team has to consider and address the cumulative impacts because of the high standard that we are being held to. If we do not proceed with a suggestion, it is because we've had to look tremendously seriously at the costs, the environmental, archaeological and other impacts. We do not have the same luxury as politicians to make claims that this program must proceed with certain features, so we will go through a process and look at all the data to inform what decisions are made. Both me personally, and the

program continues to emphasize that climate and equity are at the core of this program so we will continue to demonstrate our commitment to these foundational values. If nothing comes from this project, we hope to build more lines of trust between the program's intentions and the regional values. I appreciated your comments because it shows that you are passionate about this and that you care—we need to hear your voices.

## COMMUNITY VALUES & PRIORITIES

Jason thanked the sub-committee for their time and work in the process as well as CAG members for their feedback on the Community Values & Priorities document.

Many CAG members expressed their appreciation for the work done on the document and were impressed with how well their feedback was incorporated.

Lynn asked for a signal of consensus from members on the community values. Two members held up yellow cards. Their feedback is as follows:

CAG member: After the comments today, I am concerned about the first paragraph. I think we expressed today that we are too reliant on the previous work that has been done. The elephant in the room is the federal environmental impact statement. I have concern with utilizing and implementing past work.

- Greg Johnson responded by saying, you had spoken earlier about being hand cuffed to the work from the past. I believe the past work is a steppingstone to our new process. A lot of time and work has been spent and there was no evil intent. Folks did not agree with it and therefore it didn't go forward. We are not hand cuffed to the outcomes of that project, but we are building and learning from the things that were done there.

CAG member: I did not get the handout you are talking about so I cannot comment on it.

- Johnell: we will make sure you get a copy of that, however, not to put you on the spot, would you be willing give support given the conversations you heard today?
- CAG member: I will use my yellow card to accept the document.

CAG member: there is a sentence I do not understand about mobility and access. We are not trying to move mobility and access?

- Lisa and Jason: The intent is that increased access can move more goods and services. The sub-committee went back and forth on this and landed on that as the complete bullet.

Lynn requested another vote after discussing some of the discrepancies. Three members held up their yellow cards while the rest held up green for agreement.

Johnell Bell, co-facilitator, introduced the Program Climate Officer, Sarah Ogier. Sarah shared that she is excited that this group is so concerned about climate and elaborated on the efforts that she plans on undertaking to ensure the project exceeds these expectations. She will be giving a detailed presentation to the group at the August 5<sup>th</sup> CAG meeting.

## Question & Answer

CAG member: I participated in the freight listening session on the 27<sup>th</sup> and I heard some disappointment on the quality of the discussion. Will there be another opportunity to provide comments on the freight needs for the bridge?

- Lisa: We would welcome any feedback in addition to hosting another session. These listening sessions take on a life of their own depending on who is available to join us.

CAG member: I'm interested in the freight conversation as well but more so, where and when can we get access to the commentary made at those sessions?

- Lisa: Absolutely, we have summaries that the program is currently working on a strategy to make available.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Johnell shared dates for the upcoming ESG and EAG June meetings as well as what will be on the agenda for the next meeting. Lisa wanted to ensure the connection was made between the community working groups and the CAG since many CAG members have expressed interest in the focused topics of the community working groups. These working groups are to help the team address very specific pieces of the program and we want to make sure that feedback is threaded into CAG discussions. For example, there is a Hayden Island working group that will discuss access to Hayden Island. Everyone is welcome to share the information with their networks; however, we have an abundance of interest and applications. Johnell emphasized that targeted engagement may be conducted to ensure representation within these working groups includes communities of concern.

CAG member: What is active transportation?

- Lisa: This is focused on all types of transportation across the bridge, specifically walking, biking and rolling.

An opportunity for the listening public to provide comments was given and no one from the public delivered comments.

## ADJOURN

Ed thanked CAG members for their continued engagement and authentic perspectives as the program continues to move forward.

The meeting adjourned at 5:53 pm.

## MEETING PARTICIPANTS

### CAG Members or Alternatives

Attendees	Organization
Ashton Simpson	Oregon Walks
Dena Horton	Pacific Northwest Waterways Association
Diana Nuñez	Oregon Environmental Council
Irina Phillips	Community member
Jana Jarvis	OR Trucking Association
Jasmine Tolbert	Vancouver NCAAP
Javier Navarro	League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Jeffrey Temple	I-205 Business Interest
Julie Doumbia	Community member
Marcus Mundy	Coalition for Communities of Color
Martha Wiley	Community member
Michael A. Martin-Tellis	Vancouver Neighborhood Association
Michael Kelly	Human Services Council
Mikaela Williams	Community member
Robin Richardson	Community member

Attendees	Organization
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
Victor Caesar?	Public Transit Representative, Oregon
Lynn Valenter	Co-Chair
Ed Washington	Co-Chair

### Facilitators and Presenters

Attendees	Organization
Jason Hagen	IBR Program Staff
Greg Johnson	IBR Program Administrator
Johnell Bell	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator
Lisa Keohokalole Schauer	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator

### Additional Participants

27 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.

June 3, 2021

## MEETING RECORD AND MATERIALS

### Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VIWBB07x5I0>

### Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available here:

<https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/cag-june-3-2021-meeting/>