

EXECUTIVE STEERING GROUP (ESG) MEETING

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

Subject: IBR Executive Steering Group Meeting

Date and Time: September 15, 2021, 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

Welcome, Introductions, Proposed Agenda, and Updates

Greg Johnson, IBR Program Administrator, welcomed the group and shared that the IBR team will be providing a progress update on work leading to an IBR solution in the Spring of 2022. He shared that the program team will work to answer questions around the number of lanes on the bridge, high-capacity transit mode, the type of interchange off I-5 around Hayden Island and Marine Drive, and replacement of the North Portland Harbor Bridge. Greg reminded the ESG members of the goal to have an ESG consensus recommendation on the IBR solution for the March Bi-State Legislative Committee. He shared that partner agency staff are working with the IBR team via Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) to move work forward.

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

Deb 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.

Chris Warner, Portland Bureau of Transportation, shared that he is sitting in as the alternate for Commissioner Hardesty while she sits in a council meeting.

Eric Holmes, City of Vancouver, shared that he is sitting in temporarily as the City of Vancouver ESG representative until Mayor McEnerny-Ogle can join the meeting.

Chair Hughes, RTC, shared that they are celebrating a different new bridge in Ridgefield going over the train tracks.

Monica Tellez-Fowler, C-TRAN, shared that she will be sitting in as the alternate for C-TRAN while Shawn Donaghy is unable to attend.

Commissioner Burkman, Port of Vancouver, shared that the Port of Vancouver Board of Commissioners passed a resolution to support the Interstate Bridge Replacement program. He shared that the Port of Vancouver supports the process for high-capacity transit with a dedicated guideway as well as increased funding for a bridge replacement.

Lynn Valenter, CAG Co-Chair, shared that the CAG Co-Chairs have been doing one on one interviews with the CAG members to gain individual input on the IBR process.

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

Information: Re-Confirming Bridge Replacement as the Corridor Solution

Ray Mabey, IBR Program Assistant Administrator, shared that in recent months the program has heard requests to consider previously studied alternatives as potential solutions to the Interstate Bridge corridor from individuals and stakeholders. He listed the following previously studied alternatives: Third Bridge or Supplemental Bridge, High-Speed Rail, Common Sense Alternative II, and Immersed Tube Tunnel. Ray announced that the program team has reviewed and analyzed these potential solutions and summarized the information in a series of memos located on the IBR website (www.interstatebridge.org/library under “Environmental Documents”).

Ray reminded the ESG members that the IBR team had discussed the four NEPA pathways during the May ESG meeting and that the group indicated strong support for the program to use prior work and strive towards a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). To accomplish this, he shared that any solution that is selected will need to address all six of the “Needs” identified in the previous work: growing travel demand and congestion, impaired freight movement, limited public transportation operation, connectivity and reliability, safety and vulnerability to incidents, substandard bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and seismic vulnerability of the I-5 bridge.

Ray proceeded to shared how each of the four proposed solutions do not adequately address each of the needs statements.

The Third Bridge solution would make transit, bike, and pedestrian access out of direction for the I-5 corridor, would not address safety and congestion in the I-5 corridor, would not address seismic vulnerability for the Interstate Bridge, and this solution would not remove bridge lifts at the Interstate Bridge which cause additional safety issues.

The High-Speed Rail (HSR) solution is designed for long-distance travel and could not achieve high speeds between Portland and Vancouver. HSR is not anticipated to sufficiently reduce congestion in the I-5 corridor, safety deficiencies would remain for the I-5 corridor and Interstate Bridge, and it would not address transit, bike, and pedestrian needs in the I-5 corridor and on the Interstate Bridge. Seismic vulnerability would remain an issue for the Interstate Bridge.

The “Common Sense Alternative II” solution would not address safety and congestion in the I-5 corridor. Transit, bikes, pedestrians, and local traffic would remain on the existing bridge, bridge lifts would continue at the Interstate Bridge, and seismic vulnerability would remain.

The Immersed Tube Tunnel Solution would bring safety concerns with locating vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians in a tunnel and would not be able to connect to Hayden Island and downtown Vancouver. It

would be approximately twice as expensive as a replacement bridge and would mean additional impacts to natural and cultural resources.

Ray concluded by sharing that the analysis and screening conducted on these potential solutions during the previous project is still valid and noted that the dismissed alternatives do not meet the Purpose and Need for the IBR program and will not be given additional consideration. Ray noted that this conclusion does not prevent additional planning for future projects that may include work on high-speed rail or a third bridge.

Greg added that the four alternatives were not dismissed lightly and recognized the passion and effort on behalf of the people who have suggested them. He shared that the ideas are not a solution for the I-5 corridor, but that they are not dismissed from other regional conversations.

Deb opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion

President Peterson thanked the project team for re-looking at the ideas that have come up. She shared her appreciation that a last look has been made to ensure that they still do not meet Purpose and Need even in today's conditions.

Deb reminded the audience that the cover memo as well as the individual memos are available on the website along with the meeting slides. Deb added that all public comments for the ESG meetings are shared with the ESG members prior to the meeting and posted to the IBR website.

Information and Feedback: Progress on Technical Work toward an IBR Solution

Greg shared that there will be a lot more opportunities for engagement and that there are a lot of details that are not yet ready for discussion. He shared that the program will provide an update on the multimodal commuter, active transportation, Hayden Island, and Downtown Vancouver working groups. He reminded the ESG members that the program is looking to establish the core essential pillars of the program.

John Willis, IBR Assistant Project Manager, shared a short-term work plan and walked through the technical deliverables and ESG Agreement in Principle (AIP) touchpoints towards developing an IBR solution in the Spring of 2022.

Chris Regan, IBR Environmental Manager, shared an initial framing of the conversation, noting that the most important thing to recognize is that previous work frames the conversation around an IBR solution. He shared that the Purpose and Need, Vision and Values, Climate Framework, Equity Framework, CAG Community Values and Priorities, agency partner engagement and input, technical experts, and community engagement will all feed into the IBR solution through the Program Desired Outcomes, Program-Level Performance Measures, and Design Option Screening Criteria.

Chris informed the ESG members that the current work of the program is focused on developing design options to respond to changes as well as Screening Criteria to advance Desired Outcomes. He shared that the

program is working with the partners, the CAG, and the ESG to coalesce around how the Desired Outcomes and Screening Criteria, housed in a screening matrix, will lead to an IBR solution. Chris shared that the program will continue to refine these pieces with the partners to bring back a screening matrix to the ESG at the October 21, 2021 meeting to seek alignment at a conceptual level and agreement in principle (AIP).

Chris then provided an overview of where the program will go next with Desired Outcomes and Screening Criteria, sharing that the IBR team will work with the program partners to establish a framework that maps Desired Outcomes to program-level performance measures and Design Option Screening Criteria. He shared that the program team will work with partners to translate aspirational outcomes into more specific metrics, refine the Design Option Screening Criteria based on the Desired Outcomes, and develop tailored screening matrices for each set of Design Options to differentiate performance, benefits, and impacts.

John shared an update on the progress made on developing preliminary IBR Design Options. He shared that during the spring and summer of 2021, the IBR team has been working with partners to understand the changes since the previous planning effort to identify possible design options to study and evaluate in response to changes. He shared that the summer of 2021 consisted of working collaboratively with partners to develop Desired Outcomes, proposed Screening Criteria and metrics, and a preliminary list of Design Options. John shared that the fall of 2021 will continue to be used to hold technical sessions with all the IBR partners to refine Design Options and develop and review data inputs and modeling results.

John shared that the partner agencies, advisory groups, and the community will be engaged as the program team develops Design Options. He shared that the program team is developing preliminary Design Options that are responsive to changes including river crossing and alignment, interchange improvements and roadway sections, the replacement of the North Portland Harbor Bridge, transit options, and active transportation improvements. John noted that the current design options are only “fat line” drawings used to help generate data and compare trade-offs.

John shared a spotlight on the progress made on transit. He shared the IBR transit objectives and emphasized that the transit solution will be a part of the overall multimodal design solution. He provided a look at how modeling will be used to evaluate trade-offs and performance for transit. John shared that the program will engage with CAG and EAG to get feedback on considerations such as transit access, connections, and priorities, as well as integrate transit options into the multimodal design options for screening.

John noted that the IBR technical team has been using the data provided by the IBR equity team to look at equity-focused transit measures. He shared that the program is also looking at climate-focused transit measures and noted that the IBR Climate Framework will be used for this work. John provided a look at the next steps in the IBR Design Options process, sharing that the team will be further developing the design options so they can be in service of the screening activities. He shared that the team will start by furthering Design Option definitions, generating additional data for analysis, and screening Design Options in November and December to evaluate performance. John then shared a final high level timeline depicting the path toward an IBR solution in Early 2022 [[September 15 ESG Meeting Presentation – Slide 32](#)]

Greg shared that the program is seeking to be as transparent as possible throughout this process. He shared that the program's Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) with partners will help ensure staff are doing a deep dive with the IBR team.

Greg then opened it up to discussion, asking the ESG members what they are worrying about and how best to ensure that each partner has the time to engage with their boards, councils, and commissions, around process to get to an IBR solution.

Discussion

President Peterson thanked Greg for agreeing to come to Metro Council to talk about the IBR program. She shared that there will be a good conversation as Metro Council puts together a resolution around outcomes. She thanked the IBR team for responding to Metro's request around Screening Criteria. She shared that while the team is working on design options and screening criteria in parallel before any options are presented she wants to make sure the ESG members have conversation on the screening criteria. She also shared that in options around Hayden Island, she wants to make sure that there is further analysis on a local bridge from Hayden Island to the Oregon side.

Greg shared a yes to both of President Peterson's points. He shared that the program will be using the iterative process to ensure that anything that is missed can be inserted back to make sure that Screening Criteria for a Design Option has been addressed. Greg shared that the program will be looking at all potential Design Options to make Hayden Island function and operate to fit the needs of the community.

Chris Warner, PBOT, shared that he wants to make sure that we get the Desired Outcomes well defined before jumping to Design Options. He requested that the program team continue to work with City of Portland staff. He noted the importance of making sure that the Desired Outcomes reflect the values of his City Council.

Greg said that the IBR program is focusing on making the partners comfortable with the process. He shared that the program team is focusing on getting the process right and being data driven to help remove bias from decisions.

Director Strickler thanked Greg and shared his alignment with Chris Warner and President Peterson. He shared that from ODOT's perspective it will be important to make sure that the community is driving decisions as opposed to individual agencies. He shared the particular importance of working with the Hayden Island community to build a solution that fits their needs. He requested that the program team explain what the next steps are after Spring 2022 and that it would be helpful to hear those steps to understand what process pieces the program has in front of them to get to a preferred solution.

Greg thanked Director Strickler for his comment. He responded that the program team is working on that broader timeline depicting the work plan after March. He informed the ESG members that they would see that timeline prior to being asked to take any next steps. Greg shared that this piece is critical because of the state and national infrastructure conversations in the legislatures. He shared that the program will need to be ready and understand when dollars are available. He shared that the program will explore labor and community benefits as part of the next steps.

Deb asked the ESG members to go once around the table to respond to the following three questions.

- How is the proposed approach meeting regional partner interests?
- What suggestions or feedback do you have for improving the process, progress, and potential outcomes?
- Anything else you are wondering or worrying about?

Mayor McEnery-Ogle thanked the program team and shared that the City of Vancouver sees their Desired Outcomes in the IBR analysis. She shared that the Vancouver City Council members are voting members on the MPO for RTC and C-TRAN. She shared the interest in making sure that all the information and decisions were included. She shared her concern around her council having enough time to lead up to conversations at RTC and C-TRAN. She shared that the “when” and the “how” are the pieces that she needs to see. She shared the need to begin discussing the transit mode, type and number of lanes, interchanges on both sides of the river, the North Portland Harbor Bridge, and tolling strategies and how revenues will be used. She shared that she will need to make sure that there are opportunities to discuss topics with staff as well as the councils for RTC and C-TRAN.

Greg thanked Mayor McEnery-Ogle for her comment. He shared that the work the program is doing to get to the IBR solution is setting the stage to be able to provide those answers. He shared that tolling will be a tough discussion, and that first the program will have to decide what it is building before it talks about how to fund it. He shared that the pieces she mentioned will be reflected in the bigger IBR program schedule. Greg informed the ESG members that the program team is looking at the “what” and that tolling and community benefits are a part of the “how”. He shared that the program team will be coming back to the partners with specifics on tolling, equity, and climate.

Mayor McEnery-Ogle requested more clarity on the footprint of the program, and more design details. She noted her concern that there is not a lot of time to do the work between October and March.

Greg shared that the program will strive for an ESG Agreement in Principle (AIP) on the Screening Criteria at the October meeting. He informed the ESG members that November and December will be dedicated to the details of the screening process.

Mayor McEnery-Ogle expressed the need to make decisions with the community and the importance of an information resource to point community members towards.

Greg added that the IBR program has heard a commitment from the Bi-State Legislative Committee to meet monthly. Greg noted that the committee members had asked for members of the ESG to help present at those meetings.

Chris Warner shared that the City of Portland is pleased with the IBR program team. He noted the need for a conversation on congestion pricing, sharing that the topic could impact the design of the bridge. Chris stressed the importance of centering climate and equity and shared the increased need to talk about climate after the summer.

Greg thanked Chris for his comments and shared that the IBR program is aware of the congestion pricing work proposed by ODOT and that their work will be incorporated into IBR modelling going forward. Greg clarified that the IBR program considers tolling as the overall umbrella, with congestion pricing as one of the techniques under that umbrella. Greg shared that the program is continuing to center climate and equity and that the IBR program's Principal Climate and Equity Officers are working with partner agency staff. Greg added that the IBR program is looking at adding a climate group to be headed by IBR Principal Climate Officer, Sarah Ogier.

President Peterson thanked Chris Warner for bringing up this point. She informed Greg that tolling will be a major topic for Metro Council. She shared that congestion pricing is not a financial final step from the perspective of Metro, but rather an input into Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and greenhouse gas emission reduction. She shared that she will not be able to have her council make a decision on the bridge if the financials are decided later and the conversation around congestion pricing is held until then. She shared that congestion pricing and tolling need to be discussed prior to making a decision around the IBR solution.

Greg reiterated that the program is coordinating heavily with ODOT's UMO to understand where the agency is at on congestion pricing and that it will be an input into traffic modeling and a part of how the program gets to an IBR solution. He shared that the details of how tolling interfaces will be discussed at a later date, but that the concept and modeling will be taken into account before the program brings the partners the IBR solution.

President Peterson shared the need for coordination with the ODOT tolling project.

Mayor McEnery-Ogle shared her agreement with President Peterson. She shared that for the City of Vancouver to agree to an LPA, there is a need to understand and come to agreement on tolling as we make decisions on modes and other pieces of the program. She shared that she does not think the topic can be left to the end and stressed the importance of bringing the topic to councils.

Director Strickler shared that these points have all been top of mind and are the impetus for creating the ODOT UMO. He shared the need to look at the interconnection between projects as opposed to individual timelines. He shared his agreement on the need to converge on timing for each of the UMO projects as well as the need to move a lot of pieces in parallel.

President Peterson shared the need for iterations of work. She informed the program team that her council will need to have conversations and shared that they will be looking at where we are in the process and determining what is still needed. She shared that her council will need to confirm that the IBR solution will help achieve the outcomes they have identified. She shared that her council will likely need more than one conversation around this.

Chair Hughes shared that the timing is critical for RTC. He shared that RTC hears questions on tolling, and the importance of the resources for information sharing on the IBR website.

Steve Witter shared that from a transit perspective, as the program looks at options, capital costs and operating costs are inputs into the viability of transit options. He shared his concern that the calendar is not

overlaid with the federal capital investment calendar at FTA. Steve shared that TriMet needs to see a bit more of the “how” that goes into the “what”.

Greg shared that the program team does have the FTA process in mind. He shared that the program does not want to let that timeline limit the design options that are discussed.

Monica Tellez-Fowler shared that Mayor McEnerny-Ogle covered many of her concerns. She shared that the schedule has always been one of C-TRAN’s concerns. She agreed with Steve’s comments about the positive, robust conversations between the program team and the transit agencies.

Kristen Leonard shared her support for the process to date. She flagged that the ambitious timeline has the Port of Portland worried. She noted the need to make sure the team is nesting larger conversations with the federal government and states around funding and infrastructure. She shared that while the timeline is ambitious, she appreciates everyone getting the work done.

Greg thanked Kristen for her comments. He shared that there may be a need to hold additional special meetings out of necessity. He stressed the importance of syncing up with some of the bigger picture work going on. He shared that the program team has been requested to begin a freight conversation. Greg informed the ESG members that Ray Mabey, IBR Assistant Program Administrator, will be leading that discussion.

Commissioner Hardesty joined the ESG meeting.

Commissioner Burkman thanked Greg for his comment and reiterated the need to start freight conversations. He shared his appreciation for the program team’s presentation on solutions that do not meet Purpose and Need. He shared that he is pleased with the IBR process and how partner feedback has been incorporated along the way. He shared that he has no major concerns at this time.

Lynn Valenter shared that the CAG is looking forward to digging into details of the bridge and understands that the group will be responding to a package. She shared that the CAG members would appreciate getting details piece by piece as much as possible.

Carley Francis shared that the strength of the project comes from unity in the region. She acknowledged the clear and direct feedback heard at the meeting today. She noted that there is a space moving forward where items will need to be discussed with a need to suspend disbelief. She thanked the ESG members for the comments and conversation.

Director Strickler reflected on the things the ESG has already agreed to. He thanked the project team for all the progress that has been made, specifically the decision to replace the bridge. He aligned himself with the need to center the community, equity, and climate. He shared his appreciation for the ESG members and the program team for continuing to have the hard conversations.

Greg thanked everyone for their thoughtful input. He shared that the program is doing important work and that he wants to get to a point where folks are supportive of the process and understand that it is transparent and data driven. He asked that the ESG members continue to bring up their thoughts and ideas.

Deb shared that the program team is working to make the outcome something that people are proud of.

Commissioner Hardesty thanked Chris Warner for standing in and shared that she looks forward to reading the meeting notes.

Opportunity for Public Input

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

- David Rowe shared that the program should study regional rail. They shared that the solution to climate change is to add electric regional passenger trains to existing rail corridors from Ridgefield to Camas. They noted the emissions reduction of rail transit. They shared that there are international examples of rail transportation and that adding to existing railways is less costly than expanding the freeway or adding light rail. They informed the ESG members that the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific might be open to these solutions.
- Bob Ortblad shared that he is a Washington resident and a civil engineer. They shared that the bridge replacement will be the steepest and most dangerous bridge in the country. They shared that the IBR team has made a serious error in their evaluation of the Immersed Tube Tunnel Option and called for an independent peer review of the design option.
- Sarah Iannarone introduced themselves as the Executive Director of the Street Trust and thanked the committee and program team for their time. They shared that they submitted a memo to the IBR program and that they would like to know where the funding for the bridge will come from and what the program is building for. They shared the need to move along the congestion pricing conversation as well as performance metrics. They noted that the program should be thinking about VMT and GHG reduction as well as air quality in designs. They stated that it will be important to think about rail and the need to listen to what is happening in Washington DC regarding funding. They added that modeling should account for the future we want to realize as opposed to the present moment.

Confirm Upcoming Meeting Topics, Next Steps, and Summary

Deb Nudelman shared that the program did not talk about the Community Working Groups today, but that they are listed on the website and will be discussed at the next ESG meeting. She shared that the IBR team will be kicking off a community engagement effort in the fall.

She shared that the October 21st ESG meeting will include seeking alignment and an Agreement in Principle (AIP) on desired outcomes, screening criteria, and the screening process, and progress on developing design options.

Greg Johnson thanked the ESG members for their input and participation. He shared that the program is getting national attention for its equity team and that they will be making presentations for FHWA on the nexus of equity and climate. Greg shared that he and Johnell Bell, IBR Principal Equity Officer, will be

speaking at a national small business and DBE seminar on efforts to engage the community in an equity-based mega project.

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)
Southwest Washington Regional Administrator Carley Francis (alternate)	Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Director Chris Warner (alternate)	City of Portland
Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle	City of Vancouver
Board Chair Scott Hughes	Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)
Council President Lynn Peterson	Metro
Director of Capital Improvements and Construction Steve Witter (interim)	TriMet
Chief Public Affairs Officer Kristen Leonard	Port of Portland
Commissioner Jack Burkman	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

Ray Mabey, Assistant Program Administrator	IBR program team
John Willis, Assistant Program Manager	IBR program team
Chris Regan, Environmental Manager	IBR program team
Deb Nudelman, Lead Facilitator	IBR program team

Additional Participants

79 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-september-15-2021-meeting/>