

# EQUITY ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING #7

Subject: EAG Meeting #7 Summary

Date and Time: Monday, June 21, 2021, 5:30pm to 7:30pm

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

## WELCOME

Dr. Roberta Hunte, EAG Facilitator, welcomed EAG members to the meeting, explained how to view closed captions, gave public input instructions, and previewed the meeting agenda.

- Program Administrator update
- Update on screening criteria & performance measures
- Data deep dive 2.0
- Equity framework development: elements & timeline
- Public comment
- Wrap up

## 1. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Greg Johnson, Program Administrator, shared updates from the May 20<sup>th</sup> 2021 Executive Steering Group (ESG) meeting. ESG members received information regarding EAG's work developing an equity framework for the program; reviewed federal guidance on Purpose and Need and next steps for including equity and climate priorities; and gave feedback on the program's approach moving forward. Greg noted that the July ESG meeting has been canceled to allow the program time to analyze the data for putting forward design options for the bridge. EAG members will have a critical role reviewing the design options that will be presented.

Greg also shared an update from the recent Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting, where program leaders facilitated a listening session to hear CAG members' thoughts and experiences with the program. CAG members also approved their community values and priorities for the program and filled a member vacancy within the group.

## Q&A

- EAG Member: What was the pushback from federal partners about including equity and climate in Purpose and Need Statement?
  - Greg: Purpose & Need is a foundational piece of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) with significant legal implications. We have a previous Record of Decision (ROD) that established

the problems to address, and our federal partners warned that changing Purpose & Need would change the foundational piece of the environmental document, which means we'd likely have to start the process over again and account for all the options and alternatives out there. That is not the consensus path forward, and we have other ways to ensure climate and equity are at the forefront of what we do.

## 2. UPDATE: SCREENING CRITERIA & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Angela Findley, Environmental Lead, gave an update on how we're moving forward to establish screening criteria and performance measures, beginning by defining what the program means when it talks about design options and alternatives. Design options refer to specific choices that address physical or contextual changes, and are a component of an alternative, which is a single combination of design options that, when packed together, address the identified transportation problems. Angela also defined program outcomes, program level performance measures, and design option screening criteria for EAG members.

The program team is ready to get EAG members' input on design options and screening criteria, and will be relying on equity and climate frameworks as well as input gathered on the proposed changes to Purpose & Need to see which design options would promote the best solution for the program. Screening criteria will be used to develop and evaluate design options and inform mitigations and other commitments in the long term. In fall of 2021, the program hopes to finalize screening criteria and develop design options, and by winter of 2021 the program hopes to screen design options.

### Q&A

- EAG member: Who is held accountable and how are they held accountable for the performance outcomes?
  - Greg: The Departments of Transportation (DOTs) will be the parties held responsible for meeting these goals and criteria. We have discussed ways to ensure that what is captured is held accountable via intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) and letters of understanding, that can capture what we're putting on the table.
- EAG member: To dig deeper, for example, if a contractor has small business development goals of 20% and don't meet them 6 months to a year into the program, how would that contractor be held accountable?
  - Greg: We're going to try and prepare Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) to make sure they're ready to participate and create opportunities through how we divide the work to make sure DBEs have a percentage that is recognizable to the EAG as being appropriate.

- Johnell: There are tools that we know work to encourage contractors to meet workforce goals, as well as DBE goals.
- EAG member: Would the DOTs hold them accountable for future projects? Would contractors be putting themselves at risk for future projects if they don't meet their goals?
  - Greg: Those are all things we are looking into and we will bring all available tools to meet the goals we set up.
- EAG member: How do the screening criteria and performance measures relate to the equity definition? Particularly on the process outcomes.
  - Greg: There are ways of contracting that can create equity. We'll look at the ways we contract and what process would be most equitable to DBEs.
  - Jake: We are also working on draft screening criteria to bring to the EAG next meeting.
- EAG member: On decision making and community engagement, will those process points be incorporated into performance measures?
  - Greg: We are looking into whether there will be a community benefits agreement, so that's one way to get accountability into the process. Project labor agreements and other similar tools will be on the table for discussion as we get closer to understating what our project is going to be.
  - Angela: In the near term with design options and screening criteria, we're looking at public involvement events later this year to get input during the decision-making process.
  - Nina: There are a number of tools to ensure compliance. We definitely believe in good relationships, constant communication, and meaningful dialogue, to increase capacity of DBEs and making sure they're supported and successful while working on our projects.
- EAG member: I want to amplify the importance of utilizing contractors' track records on previous projects. We know who has failed to meet their equity related goals on past projects, and I feel strongly that we need to use that information on this project and future projects as well.
  - Greg: There are bidding methods that give points to or take points away from contractors based on their performance on previous projects. Those are all tools we're looking at to hold folks accountable.

### 3. DATA DEEP DIVE 2.0

Jake Warr, Equity Lead, gave a presentation on some additional demographic data that EAG members had requested at the previous EAG meeting. Jake shared commuting to work data by race /ethnicity. Notably, within the program area, approximately 20% of American Indian / Alaskan Native and Black workers use transit, compared to 9% for White Non-Hispanic workers and 13% for people of color as a whole. The data also showed that, within the program area, roughly two-thirds of commuters of color drive alone to work, which is roughly equal to White Non-Hispanic workers.

Jake also shared data on transportation costs, and what percentage of median income households in a specific geographic area spend on transportation. For most of the Portland-Vancouver Region, households spend an average of about 22% of the regional median income on transportation costs. Analyzed in dollars, the data suggests that having fewer transportation options, other than driving alone, tends to increase household transportation costs. Comparing Clark County and Portland, for example, shows that Clark County households spend on average about \$2,400 more per year than Portland households.

Data on commute times in the region by race/ethnicity as well as by income showed that on average commuters of color tend to have longer average commute times compared to White Non-Hispanic commuters. By income, average commutes appear to be similar.

Jake also gave an overview of some of the data analysis tools that the program relies on, which will help inform the development of screening criteria. The Economic Value Atlas, a Metro-developed tool, can be used to identify neighborhoods at risk for gentrification and displacement. Remix is a tool that can determine transit commute ranges from pinpoint locations, as well as analyze how that data changes when overlaid with hypothetical transit options. The program is developing analysis that layers demographics based on the IBR equity definition.

## Q&A

- EAG member: Do the commute time statistics denote one way trips or round trips?
  - Jake: It's one way, so you can double to get a better sense of commute times for round trips.

## 4. EQUITY FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

Chris Lepe, IBR Equity Panel member, gave an update on the development of the program's Equity Framework. The purpose of the framework is to provide a shared understanding of what the program seeks to achieve and how it will be achieved, as well as identify the necessary steps the program will take to advance equity with emphasis on both process and outcomes. The draft framework's key elements include the program's historical context and background, equity definition, the operationalization of equity, a glossary, as well as a list of authors and contributors. EAG members will work collaboratively in the months ahead to integrate these elements into the draft framework, with a final draft framework for the program anticipated by September. Chris shared examples of equity lens questions to integrate into the example frameworks from the City of Portland, Multnomah County, and King County.

## Q&A

- EAG member: Considering the timeline to develop the equity framework alongside the overall program timeline, how will the framework be integrated into the technical work, given that design options are starting to be developed to determine the preferred alternative?
  - Chris: A lot of this is happening concurrently. As we develop the framework, these other pieces are also moving along.
  - Jake: In an ideal world, we would've been able to develop a framework that we could apply to the development of screening criteria and performance measures. We've been on an accelerated timeline to meet our milestones. So, they will be incorporated, but we are doing them at the same time and trying to have them inform each other.
  - Johnell: They are developing concurrently, but in a lot of ways our conversations are elements of the framework. Part of what we have now are pieces that will result in a framework. We've already produced the historical context piece, and we've been working on screening criteria and performance measures. We are applying an equity lens already to develop these elements, but it's not necessarily going through this document. One of the reasons why we're pushing to have the framework complete by this fall is so that as we get into performance measures, we can be intentional about how the framework can inform that process.
  - Angela: the level of design in the design options is still high level. It's not getting into things like where the sidewalks are or Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramps are, which will be addressed in the design refinement. As Johnell said, we want to work with this group to get equity-based screening criteria this summer so it's ready to feed into the screening process.
  - Johnell: This has never been done before on a mega project, so we'll be flying the plane and building it at the same time. We're really on the cutting edge. We've consulted our national partners and equity groups across the country, and the way we're advancing equity in this program hasn't been embedded on a megaproject before. So, we are figuring it out along the way.
  - Greg: We've committed to all the advisory groups: we're not going to miss any steps. We are moving with a purpose. We have deadlines that folks are expecting us to hit, but our commitment is not to miss any steps. And if you feel we are missing steps, call us out on it.

## Small Group Discussions

EAG members broke out into small groups to discuss the development of the equity framework, using the following prompts:

1. Is there anything missing from the Equity Framework outline?

2. Are there elements you would refine and/or change?
3. Equity Lens: What questions should IBR teams be asking when making key program decisions to make sure equity is embedded throughout?

## Notes

1. Is there anything missing from the Equity Framework outline?
  - Like the King County equity impact review process and would like something like that in the IBR framework - appreciate this analysis piece and what we can do to address the inequity
  - Hard to understand the difference between the equity lens and framework. Is the lens embedded into the framework?
  - Multnomah county equity lens added a 5th p - purpose. Requesting that we add this to help us understand why we are doing what we are doing.
  - Part 3 - operationalizing equity - need to define the values of the community around equity that helps us generate discussion of what we want to see. Higher level discussion of values is needed.
  - Like the piece in the proposed framework that includes accountability, who is responsible, what happens to things that may fall outside of a traditional highway project. Thinking about the potential for parallel processes that emerge from this and thinking about how partners can be brought into this.
  - Looks great and want more detail. Glad knowing that this is coming.
  - Activities and accountability is huge. Want to make sure that we have enough time for this to flesh out this section.
  - Description of how equity tools like the equity lens will actually be operationalized
  - Program management and operations section of how the program will be delivered. Implementing this framework is risk mitigation.
  - Decision making- how will decisions be made/how this document will help influence decisions?
  - Values – how will the program team hold itself to equity values/what we are communicating to the public?
  - Outline doesn't seem to be missing anything, but the objectives and indicators aren't defined. Something may need to be added later.
  - Seems sparse - is that by design?
  - Looks good, but need to chew on/form them more. Kind of nebulous. Need more detail.

2. Are there elements you would refine and/or change?

- Question on the equity lens: how does it support the framework? Need to be clear on what the lens questions are.
- Framework seems to be built out fairly well:
  - A lot of jargon, trying to wrap my head around it all
  - I'm focused on measures of success so that we can define the post-bridge-construction opportunities for business, operations and maintenance, etc.
  - Post-construction: there should be a re-evaluation of the program success.
  - Chris mentioned that there could be a list of deliverables that will lay out the actions that will be taken, by whom, etc.
- Allow room for flexibility, but flexibility with structure
- Don't want to redefine to the point where we impede progress

3. Equity Lens: What questions should IBR teams be asking when making key program decisions to make sure equity is embedded throughout?

- Community-directed response and implemented change: would love to see that in our questions. Check in with community to see if they like what we're choosing.
- Is this a human-centered design?
  - The end-users (e.g. transit riders) need to be asked how we're doing
- Assuming that there are going to be issues was in several examples. Do we want to assume that we will fail? Hit a pause button if we're not hitting a certain standard.
- Look at types of projects around the U.S. and their missteps. Talk about it explicitly what we're trying to avoid. Presenting awareness that this has been an issue. Concrete examples/case studies would be helpful in articulating what we want to avoid. Bring in other ideas from end-users of what we want to avoid.
- Need to go to community events (table etc)
- Engagement as its own lens
- What historical injustices have occurred in this place? Highway system intentionally went through black and brown neighborhoods, make sure we continue to have that in our minds as we go through this.
- Cultural sensitivity piece is really important. Maybe contractors or others we bring into this space haven't had the types of trainings we've had. Everyone connected to the program should have a similar type of lens.

- Requirements in bids?
  - All levels of an organization
  - Can we help build capacity going forward?
- Shouldn't look at how a decision causes harm - that just mitigates to the status quo (before construction conditions); this is too passive
  - Instead, think about how the program can make the existing conditions better.
- Without investing in preparing firms you won't have enough participation.
- Need to ask if the program will directly meet the needs and expectations of the communities
- How do we support people who don't drive? This includes not just the people that cross the bridge, but also people who need to connect to the project area to receive benefits from the program
- There are opportunities/challenges associated within the entire project footprint. How do we address them? The answer needs to not just be about avoiding impacts.
- There could be generational, long-term impacts from this program. What is the ripple effect 10+ years after the bridge is built? What are we doing to continue addressing the communities' interests?
- Making sure that we have data reflective of the program definition
- What are we going to do? How will you be doing it? Who will be impacted? Who will be better off?
- Who needs to be in the conversation? Who is missing? (Could be a cross section of our advisory groups depending on the issue)
  - Something to get at non discrimination/ anti-violence
- Making sure that design takes into account these things
- Questions to get at community needs/issues so that we can come up with equitable solutions
- Targeted universalism as a design concept
  - Culturally infused design as a concept
- What are the key points where decisions need to be made? This will help us weigh in on the questions that we need to ask.

## Report Out

- Roberta: one question that came from our group was whether the equity lens is embedded into the framework? As I understand it, we have the equity definition guiding the priorities of the framework, and



the framework looks at different areas of equity to focus on, and the lens guides our inquiry for the focus areas of the framework.

- Chris: The same question was posed in our group, and the lens is really what we want it to be. We thought about it as a set of question for the project team through the arc of the project, but it can be used in the development of the framework itself as well.
- Jake: The way we've been discussing it is as one of the tools in the framework. I was thinking of it as being for program staff, but it really could extend beyond to everyone connected to the project. We can use it however this group thinks we should.
- Chris: Nikotris made the point that, depending on what we want to use these questions for, that will guide EAG members' input in terms of questions to pose. So if it's for the framework development, that's probably a different set of question than for the project team.
- Johnell: Our group had talked about how tools like the equity lens would be operationalized. We also talked about risk mitigation and how, if we do this effectively, we are achieving an equitable project as well as reducing risk from a program management perspective. We talked about getting clearer about how decisions will be made and how this document will help influence program decisions. We discussed values and how the program team will hold itself to the equity values that we hope will be espoused externally. We also discussed what we're going to do, how we'll do it, who'll be impacted, who'll be better off, who needs to be in the conversation, and who's missing from the conversation? We have our advisory groups, and might there be opportunities to pull these groups together to tackle these things. On the topic of targeted universalism, how do we integrate it into our design concepts and how do we get a culturally informed design as a concept.
  - EAG member: With regard to culturally informed design and indigenous communities, we asked how do we pay homage and respect to the history and cultural heritage that surrounds the bridge, and how do we make that part of the design thinking without tokenizing the history and culture.
- Angela: There was discussion about not only looking at measures for delivering the project, but looking to the future and asking what are the post-construction opportunities for businesses in terms of operation and maintenance, so that it can feed into more generational benefits in the long term. We also had good discussion on making sure that the questions aren't just asking whether there's harm or not. If the project doesn't cause any harm it keeps the status quo, so how do we frame the question on how a particular element of the program makes it better so there's more equity advancement?
  - Chris: There was also discussion about opportunities to make improvements for those who do not drive, as well as addressing opportunities and challenges regarding the project footprint that can advance equity.
- Jake: One thing that stood out from our group was the relation between the equity lens and some of the examples Chris mentioned where that went back to community to solicit feedback. In that sense community engagement can be its own component of the lens.

## Small Groups Notes

1[HM1]

## WRAP UP

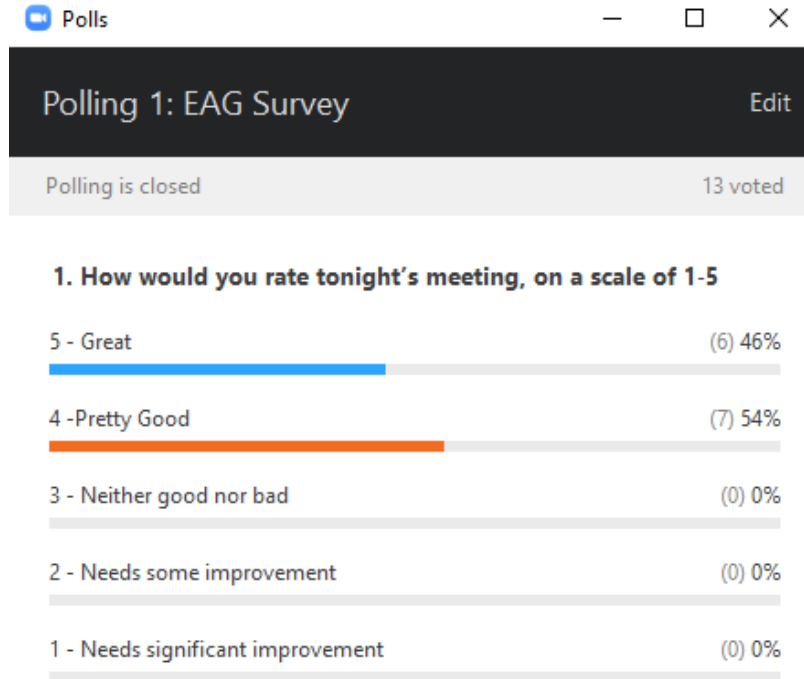
Dr. Roberta Hunte invited EAG members to share 3 takeaways, noted the next EAG meeting would be held on July 19<sup>th</sup>, and closed the meeting.

- Roberta: I'm appreciating the data deep dive. It was useful to think about the layering of different experiences and identities and thinking about what needs are represented in those experiences and identities.
- EAG member: I really appreciated seeing the dedicated timeline, and I like that we're approaching this with a fast pace. I think it's possible!
- EAG member: I'm coming away with a more concrete idea about how the things we've been talking about are going to be actualized and implemented. And I really appreciate the work staff put in between our last meeting and this one.

## ADJOURN

EAG members were asked to answer a Zoom poll: How would you rate tonight's meeting, on a scale of 1-5?

The meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.



## ATTENDEES

Attendees	Organization
Greg Johnson	IBR Program Administrator
Johnell Bell	IBR Principal Equity Officer
Jake Warr	IBR Equity Lead
Dr. Roberta Hunte	IBR EAG Facilitator
Angela Findley	IBR Environmental Lead
Chris Lepe	IBR Equity Panel
Nina Jones	IBR Civil Rights Compliance Officer

Attendees	Organization
Shona Carter	Community Foundation of SW Washington
Lily Copenagle	NAACP Portland
Mark Harrington	SW Washington Regional Transportation Council
Megan Marie Johnson	Community Member
Karyn Kameroff	Community Member
Steve Nakana	Port of Portland
Sebrina Owens-Wilson	Metro
Nikotris Perkins	Oregon Department of Transportation
Caitlin Francis Reff	Portland Bureau of Transportation
Alicia Sojourner	City of Vancouver
Monica Tellez-Fowler	C-Tran
Hai That Ho Ton	Community Member
Obie Ford III	Washington State University - Vancouver
Masha Egorenko	Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)
Sydney Johnson	Fourth Plain Forward

The YouTube live stream of the meeting had 12 views, with 15 additional views of the recording as of 6/30/21.

## Meeting Recording and Materials

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