

# EXECUTIVE STEERING GROUP (ESG) MEETING

## HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

July 15, 2021, 10 AM - 12 PM

**ESG Members in Attendance:** Secretary Roger Millar (WSDOT), Urban Mobility Office Director Brendan Finn (WSODT, Alternate), Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty (City of Portland), Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle (City of Vancouver), Chair Scott Hughes (RTC), President Lynn Peterson (Metro), Director of Public Affairs JC Vanatta (TriMet, alternate), Chief Public Affairs Officer Kristen Leonard (Port of Portland), CEO Julianna Marler (Port of Vancouver), CAG Co-Chair Lynn Valenter, CAG Co-Chair Ed Washington

**ESG Members not in Attendance:** Director Kris Strickler (ODOT), CEO Shawn Donaghy (C-TRAN), Director of Engineering and Construction Steve Witter (TriMet)

### Welcome, Introductions, Proposed Agenda, and Updates

Greg Johnson, IBR Program Administrator, welcomed the group and shared that the IBR team has been working to add details to a work plan and timeline in order to meet the needs of the ESG, Bi-State Legislative Committee, and the public. He informed the ESG members that the IBR team aims to identify the IBR Solution in the Spring of 2022. Greg shared that the IBR team will be digging into data and working with partner agency staff via Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs). He shared that the IBR team plans to begin meeting monthly with Bi-State Legislative Committee members in order to keep the committee informed on the IBR decision-making process.

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.

Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle shared that City of Vancouver is preparing a set of desired outcomes for the IBR program which will be discussed by the Vancouver Council in July. She noted that the desired outcomes will focus on safety investments, supporting economic development, ensuring multimodal access, and the efficient movement of people and goods. She shared that the goals are aligned with the IBR program's Purpose & Need statement, and that City of Vancouver will be looking to further their climate and equity goals.

Scott Hughes shared that he appreciated the rapid pace of the program and stressed the importance of doing things correctly and communicating with the community.

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty shared that she is cautiously optimistic that the program is moving at the appropriate pace. She reminded Greg that elected regional leaders on the ESG should accompany the program team at meetings with decision makers at the federal and state level.

Lynn Valenter (CAG Co-Chair) thanked the CAG for their continued and meaningful participation in the IBR process.

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

Greg Johnson reminded the attendees that the program team does not respond to public comments or questions during the public comment portion of the ESG meeting, but that notes are taken, and follow-up is conducted for any actionable comments.

## Information and Discussion: Framing Climate

Greg Johnson shared that the program team has heard that climate needs to be a focus of the IBR program. He reminded the ESG members that the program has brought on a Principal Climate Officer to look at best practices to determine the most robust methods for building a sustainable and climate conscious bridge.

Sarah Ogier, Principal Climate Officer, introduced herself and informed the ESG members that she will be sharing how the program will be incorporating climate as a foundational piece of the project. Sarah noted the importance of climate as a priority for the regional partners as well as the community and outlined key climate impacts from the current condition of the Interstate Bridge. She noted the nexus between climate, equity, and health.

Sarah identified two categories of climate considerations, minimizing climate impacts and addressing climate resiliency. She shared that there will be applications for the considerations in transportation options, construction, and operation. She reviewed the climate framework graphic found on slide 16 of the [July 17 ESG Presentation](#) and shared the strategies for minimizing climate impacts via transportation options, construction, maintenance and operations, and offsets. She then shared the strategies for maximizing climate resiliency regarding environmental changes as well as development and behavioral changes. Sarah shared a high-level overview of feedback heard at the Partner Agency Climate Listening Session on May 26, 2021, as well as at the Public Sustainability and Climate Listening Session on June 17, 2021.

Greg Johnson provided an update on how the program will look to integrate climate into the rest of the IBR program. He shared that ESG members will see climate show up in designs, screening criteria, performance measures, IGAs and Community Benefits Agreements, environmental impacts analysis and mitigation, construction specifications and procurement strategies, and program commitments including community enhancements and mitigation. Greg shared that the program will make strong commitments and will be looking for opportunities to enhance climate-related efforts.

Sarah provided a brief look at the next steps for climate engagement. She shared that June-August will consist of working with agency partners to develop and draft Climate Framework components. She informed the ESG members that the August 5 CAG meeting will provide an opportunity for the CAG to review the draft

Climate Framework and provide feedback, while the August or September EAG meetings will provide opportunities for the EAG to discuss the nexus of climate and equity in the IBR program. Sarah shared that September-December of 2021 will consist of working with agency partners to finalize the Climate Framework, and using it to develop screening criteria, design options, and performance measures.

## Discussion

President Peterson shared her support for the program's climate goals. She shared that short term goals are good, but that long term goals need to be geared towards reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as opposed to minimizing GHG emissions. President Peterson reminded the group that the bi-state region has put a lot of energy into carefully designed land use and how it can reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) while forwarding equity. She shared that the program will need to think in that context and consider how to align with regional land use to reduce GHG emissions. President Peterson reiterated her point that GHG emission reduction comes from land use and transportation systems working hand-in-hand.

Commissioner Hardesty thanked Sarah for her presentation and for the work that has been done thus far. She shared that the biggest driver for GHG emissions reduction will be congestion pricing. She noted that she didn't hear any mention of climate justice and the need to bring people who have been pushed to the edges of the community back to the urban center. She shared her interest in hearing about what climate looks like through a climate justice lens. Commissioner Hardesty shared that she did not see any mention of reducing GHG emissions and that Portland has a goal of reducing GHG emissions by 50%. She noted that there are similar GHG reduction goals for municipalities on both sides of the river as well as national goals. She informed the group that this project is short term, but the goals should be long term and that if the IBR program doesn't help City of Portland meet their goals, there will not be alignment. She reiterated the importance of measurable outcomes towards accountability.

Secretary Millar thanked the ESG members for their comments. He shared that the ESG members need to be thinking not what this project can do for them, but what they can do for the project. He shared that traffic on the bridge stems from land use, truck, and rail decisions made in both states. He shared that solutions like congestion pricing are regional solutions as opposed to project solutions, and that the program partners need to think about what work they can do to complement the bridge investment to address climate and equity issues.

Mayor McEnerny-Ogle thanked the team and shared that she is interested in hearing about waste due to demolition. She shared her alignment with Secretary Millar's comments and her support for integrating climate and land use to advance the City of Vancouver's goals around achieving carbon neutrality.

Julianna Marler shared that the Port of Vancouver is working in partnership with the City of Vancouver on a Climate Action Plan. She shared that freight mobility can play a role in supporting the reduction of VMT. She stressed the importance of supporting the reduced need for individual trips.

Greg shared that the IBR Climate Framework is a work in progress and that Sarah is taking input and reaching out to the partners to learn more about how the program can answer the questions that have been put on the table. He shared that the team will be updating partners on how the Climate Framework will inform

performance measures and screening criteria. He reminded the ESG members that this is the beginning of a lengthy journey.

Ray Mabey, IBR Assistant Program Administrator [acting as the ODOT representative in the absence of Director Strickler and his alternate Brendan Finn] shared his support for Sarah's exciting and cutting-edge work. He shared that the ESG members' comments support the need for a regional shift and that the IBR program can be a catalyst for that shift. Ray shared his alignment with Secretary Millar's statements.

Ed Washington thanked Sarah for her presentation. He reflected on the 116-degree weather that had recently been recorded in the region. He expressed the importance of gearing language towards being accessible to the community. Ed shared a story about the devastating effect of the extreme heat on his blueberry bushes, and how it is that framing of climate that people understand. He shared that climate impacts have been here for a long time, but that things are only getting tougher. He shared his concern for the agriculture community and that it is important to make sure the climate discussion is accessible and relatable to the community.

President Peterson challenged the ESG members to think about what kind of design elements need to be considered in anticipation of more extreme weather. She gave the example of needing to consider shade cover for people biking and walking the length of the bridge to protect them from extreme heat. She shared that there are national examples of how to be successful and cited the need to take care of all users in extreme conditions.

Sarah thanked the ESG members for their comments and shared that she is looking forward to continuing to work on the Climate Framework with them.

## Information: Community Advisory Group Progress

Lynn Valenter shared that the CAG had reached consensus on the Community Values and Priorities document. She informed the ESG members that the draft document was developed using feedback from community engagement activities, including community listening sessions, survey feedback, and CAG meeting feedback. Lynn shared that a draft of the document was reviewed at the April 28 CAG meeting and that a sub-committee of CAG members with equal state representation was formed to further review and make updates to the Community Values and Priorities document. She shared that the sub-committee finalized the document and recommended it to CAG at the June 3 meeting. After discussion and Q&A, CAG adopted the Community Values and Priorities document with full consensus.

Ed Washington shared a number of key statements from the Community Values and Priorities document.

Lynn Valenter shared an overview of how the Community Values and Priorities document will be used throughout the program. She shared that it will shape program outcomes, identify performance measures, and define screening criteria.

## Discussion

Commissioner Hardesty shared some concern with focusing too much on Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) as it is a federal designation for contracting and has not always been an effective tool for black and brown contractors to get contracts. She shared that she does not want that designation to limit opportunities for people of color in our community.

Greg Johnson shared that since the program is using federal dollars to build the replacement bridge they will need to use the DBE designation as the baseline minimum. He shared that the program is looking to exceed those baseline goals to reach where the community wants the program to be in this space so DBE is just a starting place.

Secretary Millar thanked Commissioner Hardesty for her comments and cautioned the need to be careful with regard to case law in the 9<sup>th</sup> circuit. He shared that the lots of regional agencies, including WSDOT, have aggressive goals for improving opportunities in the contracting space for people of color and women, but that there are a lot of people in the contracting space that push back. He encouraged the program to seek opportunities for women-owned and minority-owned businesses to participate in the program, and to make sure to be consistent with the case law that is out there.

Commissioner Hardesty shared her appreciation for Secretary Millar's statement. She noted that in her experience, if the federal government has a DBE goal of 5%, people of color and women are not used in any other parts of the contract.

Secretary Millar shared that at WSDOT they are trying to improve upon the baseline DBE goals that the federal government sets. He shared details on efforts WSDOT has been making to aggressively add to opportunities for communities of concern. He shared that WSDOT is looking to exceed goals not meet them.

Commissioner Hardesty shared that she is looking forward to sharing information across the river.

Greg Johnson shared that the IBR team recently met with Sound Transit in Seattle to learn more about their leadership in contracting with women-owned and minority-owned businesses. Greg shared that there will be decisions to make with regard to how we deliver the program that will help to include people and businesses that have not historically been able to participate in these opportunities.

## Iterative Progress Towards the IBR Solution

Greg Johnson shared that the IBR team has identified key dates and key decisions that are critical to moving the program forward and is excited to share details of those with this group.

Frank Green, Assistant Program Administrator, shared the IBR program timeline and reminded the ESG members that the program will be looking to enter the construction phase in 2025. He shared the IBR 'North Star' Targets which include target goals of delivering one integrated program that includes a new river crossing over the Columbia River, high-capacity transit, interchange improvements, and active transportation improvements. Other North Star Targets include, identifying and advancing a single IBR alternative by the end

of 2021, NEPA with a goal to achieve a Supplemental EIS, evaluating high-capacity transit options, replacing the North Portland Harbor Bridge on I-5, and beginning construction no later than 2025. Frank then shared an updated IBR program timeline with details identifying the process towards identifying an IBR Solution. [[July 15 ESG Meeting Presentation – Slide 39](#)]

Frank shared that the program will need to look at design options related to the bridge such as bridge height, bridge type, number of lanes, tolling, interchange improvements, transit options, and active transportation. Frank shared that the program team will be working with regional partners and the advisory groups to look at what has changed since the previous planning effort, develop these design options, gather data, and evaluate.

Chris Regan, IBR Environmental Manager, shared definitions for design options and alternatives. He shared that the program team is drawing from previous and ongoing work to develop program outcomes, program-level performance measures, and design option screening criteria. Chris shared an example of potential outcomes, performance measures, and screening criteria for equity and climate.

Chris provided an example of baseline data and shared some draft categories the IBR program has developed for screening criteria. He noted that currently the program is looking at equity, climate, efficient movement of people and goods, environment and community health, cost, constructability, and structural screening criteria categories. Chris shared that oftentimes, screening criteria are most useful when they identify the differences between design options. He noted that decisions about which option is selected will be based on the trade-offs that are differentiated among the screening criteria.

Chris identified next steps for screening criteria and shared that the program will continue to develop and refine screening criteria and associated metrics to evaluate the magnitude of impacts and benefits, develop design options to address changes or provide other improvements, inform the design option development with screening criteria, and evaluate design options using screening criteria to identify an IBR solution that will be advanced to the NEPA re-evaluation. Chris shared that in this summer the program and partners will work to identify and develop design options and screening criteria and that in the fall the ESG will review draft design options and screening criteria to help finalize prior to the screening process. He shared that the program will work to identify and compile performance measures through 2022 and then from 2022-2025 the program will establish program commitments and clear metrics to hold the program accountable on performance measures during construction and operation.

## Question and Answer

President Peterson shared that she believes the elements are being discussed in the wrong order and that screening criteria being developed after design options could create a feeling of distrust. She shared that conversations on screening criteria should be held first with a complete policy discussion around how they align with Purpose and Need. She shared that right now it feels like design options are being created internally creating a trust issue. She noted that trust is built on getting things done in the right order. She shared that design options are based on community engagement and how we weigh them is based on screening criteria.

Greg Johnson shared that for this phase of the program, the team is drawing fat lines on paper and that it is not developing final design options until later. He shared that the program is working through the iterative process and added that the program team is not limiting input to design options, but that the program needs to continue to move forward. He reminded the ESG that new options that are developed will be put on the table and that no steps will be missed. He shared that the program will work to be as transparent as possible and will be working with partner agency staff to develop options and screening criteria.

Commissioner Hardesty shared her appreciation for President Peterson's point. She shared that as the program is gathering data, she is interested in looking deeper into data and potential effects on different racial groups. Greg shared that the program has done demographic slices of data to look at disparate impacts on different groups in the region. Johnell Bell, Principal Equity Officer, shared that the EAG will be looking at the demographic analysis relative to the IBR definition of equity. Commissioner Hardesty shared her interest in the program using racial data to inform equitable outcomes. She shared her interest in thinking through the high-capacity transit option and the potential benefit to the region.

## **Discussion**

Deb Nudelman opened it up to discussion and shared the following question as a prompt: How can we ensure the screening criteria process and use of data will represent core values, is credible and resonates for program partners, and utilizes best practices from around the region?

Commissioner Hardesty shared that she hopes the program will be using global best practices instead of just regional best practices.

Kristen Leonard shared that she is anxious to get more details on the screening criteria as they become available. She requested that there be a moment mid-process to do an ESG check-in and deeper dive to review progress. She requested that the program apply the IBR screening criteria to the previous Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to test any blind spots or gaps in the screening criteria in order to strengthen trust among partners and confirm the right criteria before moving forward.

Greg Johnson shared that the program team is evaluating whether applying the screening criteria to the previous LPA is valuable. He noted that it is a lot of effort to do this process for something that the program knows it will not build. He shared his willingness to discuss the topic further but noted concern that it would not be an efficient use of time and dollars.

Kirsten Leonard shared her interest in making sure that we test screening criteria to make sure we do not miss anything down the road.

Mayor McEnery-Ogle noted the complexity of the IBR program. She shared that the schedule seems ambitious and that she would like details regarding key milestones to ensure ample time to have conversations with councils and constituents prior to any decisions. Greg shared that the program team is looking to have a diagram for the next ESG meeting that will define the timeline in more detail.

Deb Nudelman shared that the program team has an interest in Agreements in Principle (AIPs) to check in at a conceptual level to determine if pieces are heading in the right direction.

## Opportunity for Public Input

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

- David Rowe identified themselves as a commuter and private citizen. They asked if anyone on the IBR program team has had any conversations with the railroads. They shared that the three railroads are the corridors that go through the fastest growing parts of Clark County. They shared that an electrified rail system would be the fastest way to move people through the county, and requested the program pursue a feasibility analysis of this.
- Dan Packard identified themselves as a member of the Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee. They shared their concern that the CAG does not have a bicycle or pedestrian-focused representative from Vancouver or Portland. [Program note: Ashton Simpson, Executive Director of Oregon Walks, a pedestrian advocacy organization in Oregon, is a member of the CAG. Full CAG membership is available on [the IBR website, the program is also standing up an active transportation Community Working Group this summer.](#)] They noted that they have seen renderings of added lanes on Hayden Island being built in current business footprints and that the idea is not sustainable.

## Confirm Upcoming Meeting Topics, Next Steps, and Summary

Deb Nudelman shared an update on recent and upcoming engagement and invited all meeting attendees to visit the IBR website for updates on the May and June Community Listening Sessions, launching of the Community Working Groups, the Case for IBR Video and Fact Sheet, and the IBR Bridge Stories.

Deb noted that the September ESG meeting was inadvertently scheduled on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, and that the program team is working to reschedule that meeting to respect the needs of staff, partners, and community members that want to observe that holiday. She shared that upcoming meeting topics include progress and feedback on technical work, an update on legislative communications, and CAG and EAG report outs.

Greg Johnson shared that he has heard from the ESG as well as the Bi-State Legislative Committee the desire to be included and engaged as data is analyzed, and screening criteria and design options are developed. He emphasized the importance of finalizing IGAs with the partners, and noted that the program is tracking the federal funding discussion.

Greg Johnson thanked the ESG members for their input and participation. He shared that the program is listening and working to meet their expectations.

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



## Executive Steering Group Members in Attendance

Name and Title	Organization
Urban Mobility Office Director Brendan Finn (Alternate)	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)
Council President Lynn Peterson	Metro
Public Affairs Director JC Vannatta (alternate)	TriMet
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
Sarah Ogier, Principal Climate Officer	IBR program team
Chris Regan, Environmental Manager	IBR program team
Deb Nudelman, Lead Facilitator	IBR program team

### Additional Participants

105 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-july-15-meeting/>