

## EQUITY ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING #36

Date and Time: Monday, May 20, 2024, 5:30pm to 7:30pm

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

Number of concurrent YouTube viewers: 26

### WELCOME

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

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Greg Johnson, Program Administrator, provided IBR program updates and shared some recent milestones. He stated that the IBR program hosted a visit from USDOT Acting Undersecretary of Transportation for Policy, Christopher Coes, earlier in the month. Greg shared that Mr. Coes received a tour and was very interested in the equity work the program does. Greg stated that he shared information about the Advisory Groups and that Mr. Coes stated that the various efforts to promote equity set the IBR program apart.

Greg also described the recent Construction Industry Event, hosted by the IBR program on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Greg stated that nearly 300 people attended representing businesses of all sizes. The event provided attendees draft information on proposed construction packaging and delivery of IBR investments. This information is available on IBR's website.

Greg shared that the program attended the OAME Trade Show on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. He also stated that the WA State Transportation Commission met on May 15<sup>th</sup> where the IBR program provided an update, and that the Bi-State Tolling Subcommittee met on April 19<sup>th</sup> and is scheduled to meet again May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Upcoming community outreach events were listed by Greg, including: Rose Village, Bridgeton, HiNooN, Vancouver Heights, Arbor Lodge, and Vancouver iTech Prep. Greg also shared that the next IBR Equity Roundtable is scheduled for May 21<sup>st</sup>, the subject of which is "Pathways to Active Transportation: Strategies and Solutions." Greg stated that the goal of the roundtable is to strategize around the intersection of transportation and equity.

Greg updated the group about the executive roadmap from the USDOT Partners. The IBR program recently received and responded to a draft of that roadmap. Greg explained that the roadmap defines the dates of key milestones that will inform the project schedule going forward. Greg stated that the program hopes to finalize the roadmap with federal partners next week.

Greg further updated that the program is still looking at fall for the release of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. Greg stated the program hopes to take a year or less to get a Record of Decision, which he described as the final sign-off from the federal government before breaking ground. He stated that the program aims to break ground before the end of 2025.

Greg shared that he recently traveled to Washington DC with JPACT to meet with some members of Congress and USDOT personnel who were interested in the project. Greg stated that everyone is still supportive of the program.

## TRANSIT STATION DESIGN DISCUSSION

Mahlon Clements and Nolan Lienhart of the Design Team reviewed station design content previously shared at prior meetings with the goal of more robust discussion with the group. Nolan stated there are two existing stations within the program area: Delta Park Station (no expected changes), Expo Station (renovation planned), and three new stations planned: Evergreen, Vancouver Waterfront, and Hayden Island Stations.

Mahlon presented the group with an explanation of terms and concepts. Mahlon stated that the concept of mobility connections includes safe pedestrian and bicycle access, bus stops with shelters, drop-off and pick-up areas, and parking. Mahlon shared that station features include ticketing and informational signage, and access, side versus center platform configurations, weather and noise protection, seating and leaning rails, lighting, and landscaping and public art.

Mahlon presented two station types for the stations being added or renovated in the program area: at-grade versus elevated. Mahlon explained that elevated stations require more ideas to address the issues brought by the height. Two platform types were shown: center versus side. Center platforms accommodate riders going either direction on the train, while side platforms require riders to wait on the correct platform for their train.

Nolan reminded the group of the Equity Objectives and stated the Design Team keeps them in mind while designing the stations. Nolan explained that some choices will need to be made with the station designs, at which time the options will be weighed alongside the Equity Objectives. Nolan stated that the program has collected data about who lives near the respective station areas in order to reflect that in the station design.

Nolan reminded the group that the team has approached the design with urban design focus areas, meaning the project area has been divided into specific areas to create a sense of unique space within each of them. This is a holistic approach to addressing interrelated urban design issues.

### Vancouver Waterfront Station

For the Vancouver Waterfront Station, Mahlon presented an overhead view of the area to help contextual the design. He showed 3 different concepts for a transit station at the location. Mahlon highlighted that each concept has its own advantages and disadvantages and showed a table with a comparison chart to illustrate

them. Mahlon stated that the proposed stations are accounting for the bridge itself to be the single-level option.

Concept A is a two-platform station that straddles the existing Burlington Northern railway, necessitating the station being at a high elevation. The shared use path is also represented on the diagram, which would be accessible at the street level to get on and off for pedestrians and bicycle riders. An additional consideration is creating a station that is safe in terms of crime prevention. Using environmental design to deter crime includes good sightlines, having adequate lighting, and minimizing hidden corners.

Concept B is in the same location as Concept A but features a single center platform instead of two side platforms. Mahlon stated that this creates less flexibility in where the stairs and elevators can be placed, but that it creates convenience because the single platform eliminates the need to cross tracks.

Concept C is a somewhat different location, shifting south to no longer straddle the Burlington Northern railway. Mahlon stated this shifted location presents new constraints because it conflicts with plans for development in the area and the necessary clearances make it a much more challenging fit. The concept still satisfies regulations for safety, but it would not be ideal.

Mahlon presented a sideview of the proposed station areas to illustrate the constraints created by the existing railway and the height required to clear it. One of the additional considerations for choosing a design is the station's proximity to the Burlington Northern railway. He explained that they are still clarifying with Burlington Northern what elements and actions will require their approval, and those discussions are ongoing. Mahlon also highlighted the proposed shared use path that is reflected in the diagram. Mahlon concluded the presentation and asked for questions.

EAG member: *"I'm really glad to see two elevators in the designs. With TriMet's experience, when an elevator goes down, it really limits the accessibility of the station."*

Nolan responded that Concept C has two elevators total, whereas Concepts A and B have two elevators for each platform, for a total of four.

Paige Schlupp, IBR assistant program administrator asked: *"Art is such an incredible part of our experience, and there are elements unique to every station. Vanport and Expo Center art elements are especially powerful. What is the plan for that?"*

Nolan responded that they are not at that stage of planning and design yet. He explained that until the station designs are finalized, it will be difficult to plan for that. He also anticipates community involvement in determining what kind of art would be best for the station.

Administrator Greg Johnson asked if any one concept costs vastly more than the others, or if they cost approximately the same.

Mahlon responded that Concept C has more challenging constraints in that it cannot share the costs of some of the structural elements with the transitway alignment, light rail tracks, and vehicular bridge. Being unable to share those costs puts additional financial strain on Concept C. Administrator Johnson stated that he did not want cost to be a constraint on the Design Team's creativity and that he wants to support whatever design is best.

Administrator Johnson also asked if there were other stations with TriMet that go over a freight railway. Mahlon stated that there are not.

Mahlon added that the height presents the need to consider additional weather protection. Weather protection and climate control would add to the cost of the station. He also stated that noise and emissions protection would also be necessary due to the proximity of the freeway.

## Hayden Island Station

Mahlon presented an overhead view of the proposed station location on Hayden Island. He explained it is a proposed elevated station, and that new sidewalks, ramps, and stairs are proposed, along with new roadways to reach the station area.

Concept A is a two-platform station on Tomahawk Drive. The issue with this configuration is that it has two platforms, which is more difficult to use than a center platform. The benefit to this configuration is that it is easier to incorporate a ramp to access each platform.

Concept B is at the same location as A but is a center-platform configuration. The disadvantage to this configuration is that it limits the flexibility in where the elevators, stairs, and ramp can be placed. The disadvantage of this location for both concepts is that the ramp would require a lot of switchbacks to reach the station.

Concept C shifts the station location to beside Tomahawk Drive and features two platforms. Concept D is the same location but with a center platform.

Mahlon concluded the presentation by saying the materials would be available for review and that the Design Team welcomes questions and comments.

## TOLLING UPDATE

Meghan Hodges, Community and Government Relations Manager, presented an update to tolling planning. Meghan stated that her presentation was designed to be only an initial conversation and that additional presenters will return to the group in their next meeting to engage in robust discussion.

Meghan shared that the program is supported by various funding sources, none of which can support all of the necessary investments alone. The program continues to pursue multiple funding sources, including federal, state, and tolling contributions.

Meghan explained that the benefits of tolling include the ability to fund all of the multimodal pieces planned for the program area. This will allow more people to see and use the benefits of the project. This improves the reliability and the safety of the corridor, as well as supports the program's climate goals.

Meghan further shared information about other parties involved in the planning and implementation for tolling. This includes the Oregon and Washington Legislatures, the Oregon and Washington Transportation Commissions, and the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation.

Meghan explained that tolling plans in Oregon on I-5 and I-205 are no longer moving forward; therefore, the Washington Department of Transportation will be the owner of the tolling equipment on the interstate bridge. Meghan stated that representatives from Washington will come to future meetings to share information about the customer experience based on the experience they already have in tolling within the state. Meghan also state that the Transportation Commission representatives who are the decisionmakers for toll rates and policies will come to future meetings to gather feedback from the group.

Meghan stated that projected net toll revenues determine how much can be borrowed to fund the IBR program. The toll on the bridge allows the program to take out loan for funding, as funds from the toll will be used towards paying the loan back.

Meghan shared that the program is in the process of completing the level two of three in the traffic and revenue analysis, which is used to test the effects of different toll policy levers and rates to help guide the rate-setting process. The findings of this will help obtain the construction loan. The analysis tested eleven variable rate toll scenarios, including accounting for annual escalation, a low-income program, scenarios with no Oregon toll projects, and scenarios that consider lower pre-completion toll rates. Meghan explained that the analysis will not determine the toll rates, but it will be used to support future rate-setting work. She stated that the toll rates for the IBR program will be determined in 2025 by the Oregon and Washington Transportation Commissions.

Meghan emphasized that there is a long process ahead for setting toll rates and that the group will be engaged for feedback throughout that process. Meghan stated that tolling is anticipated to start on the existing interstate bridge in 2026 after construction begins, and that rates will be set between 6 and 8 months before that. She shared that tolling will move to the new bridge once it is open to travelers.

Meghan stated that EAG's upcoming involvement in the process is to gain an understanding of what it is like to travel on a WSDOT facility as a customer and providing feedback to staff supporting the I-5 Bridge Bi-State Toll Subcommittee. She stated that staff from each Transportation Commission will also come to obtain feedback from the group for issues to consider in toll-setting.

EAG member: *Will the revenue from tolls also help pay for construction needs or upkeep, or is it only to pay back the loan?*

Meghan responded that revenue will indeed be used to maintain the bridge, its equipment, and customer service.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment

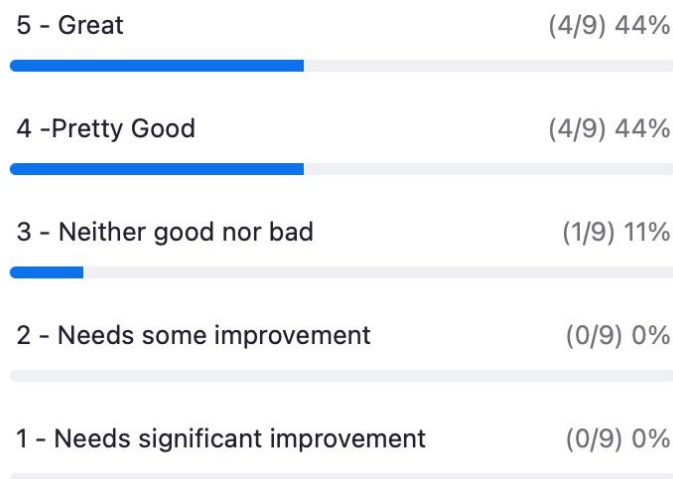
## MEETING EVALUATION POLL

### EAG Survey

Poll ended | 1 question | 9 of 18 (50%) participated

1. How would you rate tonight's meeting, on a scale of 1-5 (Single choice) \*

9/9 (100%) answered



## ADJOURN

- Next EAG meeting: June 17, 2024, 5:30pm-7:30pm
- Following EAG meeting: July 15, 2024, 5:30pm-7:30pm

## ATTENDEES

Attendees	Organization/Affiliation
<b>EAG Members</b>	
John Gardner	TriMet
Aidan Gronauer (they/he)	WSDOT
Vicki Nakashima	Community member
Jennifer Campos	SW Washington Regional Transportation Council
Nicole Chen	City of Vancouver
Pat Daniels	Constructing Hope
Sebrina Owens-Wilson	Metro DEI Team
Shawnea Posey	City of Portland
Chandra Washington	C-TRAN
Shona Carter	Washington State Black Future Co-op
<b>IBR Staff</b>	
Greg Johnson	Program Administrator
Johnell Bell	Chief Equity Officer
Paige Schlupp	Assistant Program Manager
Mahlon Clements	Design Team
Steve Katko	Design Team
Meghan Hodges	Community and Government Relations Manager
Tanya Adams	WSP Inclusion and Diversity
Nolan Lienhart	Design Team

Attendees	Organization/Affiliation
Dr. Roberta Suzette Hunte	Facilitator
Salomé Chimuku	Community Engagement Lead
Yemaya Hall-Ruiz	Equity Team
Erika McCalpine	Equity Team
Tracy Ukura	Captioner
Amanda and Andrea	ASL Interpreters
Robert Arreola	Tech Support

## MEETING RECORDING AND MATERIALS

### Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here: [Equity Advisory Group \(EAG\) May 20th, 2024 5:30PM PST](#)

### Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available here: [EAG May 20, 2024 Meeting | Interstate Bridge Replacement Program](#)