

EXECUTIVE STEERING GROUP (ESG) MEETING

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

April 29, 2021, 8 - 10 AM

ESG Members in Attendance: Secretary Roger Millar, Director Brendan Finn (Alternate for Director Kris Strickler), Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Chair Scott Hughes, President Lynn Peterson, Director of Engineering & Construction Steve Witter, CEO Shawn Donaghy, Chief Public Affairs Officer Kristen Leonard, CEO Julianna Marler, CAG Co-Chair Lynn Valenter, CAG Co-Chair Ed Washington

Absent: Director Kris Strickler

Welcome, Introductions, Proposed Agenda, and Updates

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

IBR Administrator Greg Johnson provided a number of IBR program updates, including:

- A commuter listening session was held April 22. He noted that additional listening sessions on other topics will be held in the coming months.
- The release of the community engagement report, which provides an overview of feedback received during engagement efforts in February and March. He noted that the report can be found on the IBR website.
- The tribal consultation process has begun, and the IBR team has met with four federally recognized tribes. Greg shared his appreciation for these conversations and the opportunity to learn more about what has changed since the Record of Decision from the tribal perspective. [Greg provided this update later in the meeting as an addendum to these program updates]

Deb Nudelman asked the ESG members to go once around the table to introduce themselves and provide any updates from around the region.

The ESG members introduced themselves and did not provide any updates. Brendan Finn shared that he is the Director of the ODOT Urban Mobility Office and is sitting in for ODOT Director Kris Strickler.

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

Information: Recent Federal Guidance and Proposed Approach Moving Forward

Greg Johnson informed the attendees that the IBR team is engaging in ongoing discussions with FTA and FHWA regarding the NEPA process. He shared that the program team is still waiting to receive written guidance from the federal partners, but that recent conversations with them suggest that the program will likely not be able to substantively change Purpose and Need. However, Greg noted that the program team recognizes that changes have occurred and that those changes will be reflected in the work moving forward.

Greg shared that the IBR program team is committed to utilizing and updating past work to maximize past investment, support efficient decision-making, and best position the program to be competitive for future federal funding.

Greg shared that the program team is working with partners to identify what has changed contextually and physically to help determine what design options should be considered. He reminded attendees that stakeholder and community input will continue to inform how the program is conducted as well as the outcomes that are developed. Greg reiterated the point that commitments to equity and climate will be used to develop screening criteria for design options and help shape the details of future solutions.

Greg provided a brief overview of the Four Environmental Process Pathways that the program could potentially go down following the re-evaluation process. Those pathways include:

- Path 1: Re-Evaluation Only
- Path 2: Limited Scope Supplemental EIS
- Path 3: Supplemental EIS
- Path 4: New Project under NEPA

[See slide #14 in the [April 29 ESG presentation](#) for a more detailed diagram of the four pathways]

Chris Regan, IBR Environmental Manager, shared that all of the four pathways introduced by Greg lead through a re-evaluation of previous environmental work, and reminded the attendees that an important step will be making sure that we're looking at the right things as we define changes that have occurred in the program area and how to address them. Chris reiterated the point that in Path 4, which involves starting a new project under NEPA, there is still no guarantee from the federal partners that climate and equity will be able to be infused into Purpose and Need, and Community Vision and Values. Chris shared that the IBR environmental team is working with the ESG, EAG, CAG and the community to solicit feedback regarding values and what has changed to help establish program commitments, objectives, and community priorities in order to develop performance measures and design option screening criteria. Chris shared that these pieces will then be brought to the IBR federal leads for review to inform the NEPA path forward.

Frank Green, IBR Assistant Program Administrator, reviewed the Draft Updated Schedule with the ESG members, sharing draft timelines of program elements such as developing design options, defining screening criteria, screening design options, updating IBR design options, and developing commitments based on

community principles, data collection/analysis/modeling and community engagement. Frank informed the attendees that in order to lay groundwork, the first thing the program team did was conduct 1:1 conversations with staff from each of the partner agencies to identify design options that address changes and improve upon past work. Frank closed by sharing that the efficient decision-making process the program team is implementing aims to set the region up to be competitive for federal infrastructure funds.

Sarah Ogier, IBR Climate Officer, shared an overview of the IBR Climate Framework. She shared that the program will be approaching climate by looking at climate impacts in design choices, construction methods, and operations, as well as climate resilience as they relate to the bridge. *[See slides #18 in the [April 29 ESG presentation](#) for a diagram of the climate framework.]*

Greg shared that the next step is to continue discussions with federal partners. He informed attendees that any considerations around tolling will integrate equity foundationally. He shared that the program team is looking at practical examples locally, nationally, and internationally to effectively integrate climate and equity into the IBR program. He shared that the program will be looking at the most effective ways to formalize program commitments through avenues such as letters of concurrence, memorandums of understanding and mitigation commitments, as well as other tools.

Information: Reflections from recent discussions with CAG and EAG on proposed approach and updates on their work

Lynn Valenter, CAG Co-Chair, provided a summary of the April 28 CAG meeting. She shared that the CAG members had received the same update on guidance from the federal partners that had been shared earlier with the ESG. Lynn announced that the CAG had come to consensus on the CAG charter and had discussed the Community Values and Priorities document. She informed the ESG members that the CAG requested stronger language in the document and will be reviewing a revised version at their next meeting.

Lynn provided an update on key feedback from the CAG member individual check-ins. She shared the following summary of themes.

- Strong desire to move faster and begin discussing details of a solution
- Appreciation of historical context, information, and setting of a foundation from the beginning
- Breakout groups are productive and allow for more direct contact member to member – valuable to keep them as part of meetings
- A communication piece for updates between meetings would be helpful
- Appreciation for the individual check-in meetings
- Want to know how and where their voices will influence the program

Johnell Bell, IBR Chief Equity Officer, shared an update on the EAG. Johnell shared that the EAG received an update on the four pathways during the April 19 meeting. He informed attendees that the EAG has approved a recommended program-specific definition of equity and discussed potential equity-focused screening criteria and performance measures as a part of the overall IBR Equity Framework.

Johnell shared that upcoming pieces of the EAG work plan include refining overarching Equity Objectives, developing performance measures and screening criteria, and providing design feedback. Johnell shared the Equity Framework which is made up of the Program Equity Definition, Equity Objectives, Measures of Success and Action.

Johnell then shared the IBR Equity definition, including process equity, outcome equity, and a definition of marginalized and underserved communities. *[See Slide #26 and 27 in the [April 29 ESG presentation](#) for the full equity definition language]*

Discussion and Feedback: Preparing for the May 20 ESG Meeting and Recommendation to the Bi-State Legislative Committee

Greg Johnson framed the discussion and asked the ESG members to weigh in with their input on the IBR team's proposed approach as shared during the meeting.

Deb Nudelman asked the ESG members to go once around the virtual table.

Mayor McEnery-Ogle shared her appreciation for changing the direction of the May 20 meeting as she did not feel that she could make a decision on Purpose and Need, and Community Vision and Values at that time. She shared that the City of Vancouver does not wish to pursue the fourth path. She supported the idea of making refinements while also getting some kind of written agreement from the federal partners to help clarify that they are on a pathway that does not require a new project.

Commissioner Hardesty thanked the IBR team for the presentation. She emphasized that a lot has changed since 2005. She shared that she did not want to pursue the fourth path of restarting the program but acknowledged that the radical change in the community means that the program should be open to paths two and three. She shared that she does not want to rush into a process and ignore communities that have been harmed and communities that need a multitude of transportation options. Commissioner Hardesty shared her concerns about being kept fully informed about projects and stressed the need to be able to hold someone accountable if agreed-upon outcomes have not been met. She shared that she would need to see the accountability before she could commit to support anything. She shared her appreciation for the IBR program's definition of equity. Commissioner Hardesty shared her appreciation for not having a decision point in May and encouraged building support for the program through clear accountability.

President Peterson shared her appreciation for the program team's level of detail and clarity. She shared that the incorporation of climate and racial equity goals will give people more confidence going through the process. President Peterson shared her alignment with Mayor McEnery-Ogle and Commissioner Hardesty, stating the importance of keeping the ESG and the program team accountable. She shared that she does not support moving towards path four, but that path three is much more in line with what she considers the

program goals. She shared that a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is a minimum. She said she wanted to have conversations about options that have seemingly been taken off the table. She said she looked forward to taking the time and working with the delegations and program team to make sure there is a higher level of accountability on the program.

Scott Hughes shared that while he wants the program to move quickly, he wants to make sure the program is done correctly. He shared that he is not clear on the differences between the first three pathways. Chair Hughes shared that he does not support pursuing path four due to the cost and delay. He shared his interest in hearing the parameters from the federal partners regarding how the program can move along in the right way.

Shawn Donaghy shared that he echoes the comments made before him. He shared that C-TRAN does not want pathway four. He shared that he wants to expedite the process in a responsible manner and that he aligns with Mayor McEnery-Ogle's appreciation for shifting away from the decision point in May. Shawn informed the ESG members that he does not have the necessary information to determine which pathway they would prefer. He thanked Johnell and his team for the strong work on the equity definition and reiterated that equity and climate are key to the process. He shared his recognition that a lot has changed since 2005, especially around the modes of transit that C-TRAN and TriMet are using to support families, particularly in Clark County.

Steve Witter thanked the program team for their due diligence in seeking clarity from the federal partners. He shared that he does not want to fall into path four. He suspected that the program will likely be on path two or three but requested that the program team provide more details on the paths, and specifically the associated logistics. Steve shared his appreciation for the project team and cited the effectiveness of the process.

Julianna Marler shared her appreciation for the team and her support for looking at paths two and three, and not pathway four. She thanked the program team for clarifying the timeline for these different paths. Julianna shared her concern about going down a path that would extend the program timeline. She highlighted the effective communication on the program side and invited the public to reference the IBR website as a strong resource for information. She shared the need to have time to digest information and work with boards, constituents, and partner agencies, to provide meaningful input.

Kristen Leonard thanked the program team for their work. She shared that she hopes to avoid path four. She added that she would like to share her appreciation for the frameworks being added around equity and climate. She shared that she is looking for some kind of framework document that will commit the program to measurable outcomes in both equity and climate.

Ed Washington shared his appreciation for everything that was said. He noted that there is a lot of work ahead, but he is pleased to be a part of a team that will bring the program to fruition.

Lynn Valenter shared that the direction the ESG members have spoken to aligns well with the CAG. She informed the ESG members that the CAG members are looking forward to proceeding with alacrity, but not without measurable process in place. She shared that CAG looks forward to helping influence decisions moving forward. Lynn closed by reiterating that the CAG's role is to answer questions posed to them by the

ESG. The CAG members have a deep desire to have meaningful questions posed to them by the ESG that they can influence moving forward.

Secretary Millar shared that he and Director Strickler are committed to running a participatory process. He invited the ESG members to contact Greg or himself directly if there is concern that the program is on the wrong path. He shared that the program will require complex layers of consensus to move the program forward and the program needs the ESG members' consent around the program outcomes. He reminded the ESG members that the program might not get to a place where every partner thinks the outcome is the best, but that the program will need to get to a place where every partner can live with the result. He shared that the program team will need to get to that same place with the tribal nations, the state legislators, and the program federal partners. If the ESG members are speaking with one voice, it will be much easier to get to consent at the other stakeholder levels. Secretary Millar shared that he has emphasized to his federal connections that it is important to Washington State to measure everything we do through an equity and climate lens. He shared that while it takes time to turn the "ship of state," with the new administration he is hopeful that the program will have a federal partner that is more comfortable with what is being discussed on equity and climate in Oregon and Washington.

Brendan Finn shared his appreciation for everybody's work and his commitment to being creative around our values on equity and climate and how we thoughtfully move the program forward.

Deb Nudelman thanked the ESG members for their comments. She reminded the attendees that robust civil discourse is a strong tool for moving forward. She reflected on the importance of ESG members sharing openly when they disagree with each other. Deb reminded the attendees that the best outcomes result from a diversity of interests that are offered in a forthright, direct, and kind dialogue.

Lynn Peterson shared that she wants to be clear on intent. She shared that before the program gets to tension spots and design, partners need to get to analyses that have been requested. She shared that it is difficult to go back once we get into 30% design and that there are several analyses that need to be done including traffic, transit, and racial equity. She shared that she is not willing to go into a design conversation until she knows how accountability will be embedded into the program and until they have the analyses of how things have changed.

Commissioner Hardesty shared that she wants to reiterate the necessity of talking about congestion pricing as opposed to tolling. She shared that it is important to understand the distinction and that she does not support tolling. She asked to hear from the program managers that they are talking about congestion pricing and not tolling. She shared her alignment with President Peterson and her concern with looking at design options without ensuring we are on the right path and that designs reflect the values of the ESG.

Mayor McEnery-Ogle shared that she was surprised to see design on the timeline before analysis is complete. She shared the importance of the program team not getting ahead of itself.

Secretary Millar shared that as the program team engages in analysis there is a certain level of design that needs to be done to conduct analysis. He shared that the intention is not to move forward with a design but to do design to compare options.

Frank Green shared that throughout the process the program team is collecting data to help influence design options. He informed the ESG members that the team is laying out high level potential alignments and things of that nature. He shared that the program team has only started the initial process of listing design options so data can be collected.

Greg Johnson confirmed that the program team will not be doing 30% design but will be identifying design concepts to do modeling going forward.

Greg Johnson thanked the ESG for their comments and informed the ESG members that he looks forward to bringing back an update in May. He reminded the ESG members that ultimately the federal partners will be deciding which path the program team will be on. He shared that the program team will communicate that paths two and three are preferred. He thanked the ESG for their input.

President Peterson shared that some ESG members can influence federal outcomes and her interest in having that conversation.

Opportunity for Public Input

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

- Robert Liberty identified himself as a former member of the Metro council. They shared that the CRC Purpose and Need statement is broad and that they believe the program should revisit potential alternatives that were eliminated during the previous planning effort. Robert shared that the program would benefit from an in-depth discussion and that the program should draw on expertise in the region to look at other alternatives that integrate equity and climate.
- Joe Kunzler shared that the program team should continue to encourage the open sharing of views. They shared that they are concerned that the program team has already decided to move forward with light rail on the Interstate Bridge. They shared their opinion that C-TRAN should be allowed to run BRT and that there needs to be a toll on the bridge to create an incentive to take transit.
- Dave Rowe shared that their support for looking at a drawbridge as a design alternative and that they want the program team to consider commuter rail.
- Sarah Iannarone identified themselves as the Executive Director for the Street Trust. Sarah shared that they have been attending the advisory group meetings as well as the commuter listening session. They shared a request for the program team to make the written federal guidance public as soon as it is received. Sarah shared their support for Commissioner Hardesty's request for congestion pricing and the need to practice the implementation of a systemwide equity pricing system.
- Joseph Cortright identified themselves as part of No More Freeways. They shared that it is their opinion that the IBR program team is pushing to use the ROD from the previous planning effort. Joseph shared that the IBR program is a freeway project that will expand lanes and costs. They shared that they think Administrator Johnson should be working more closely with principals and that the

program staff have not been accurate when describing the federal requirements. Joseph said they believed that the program would not have to pay back funds to the federal government, as stated by the program team, and that there is a new administration that is paying close attention to equity and climate.

- Chris Smith identified themselves as part of No More Freeways. They shared that Secretary Millar talked about a climate lens and their wish to highlight President Biden’s commitment to the reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions. They shared that the program would need to reduce VMT in order to meet climate resilience goals. They shared that the project team should consider how much higher the Columbia River will be during the lifespan of the new bridge.

Information: Report Out on Recent Legislative Discussions Regarding the IBR Program

Representative McLain shared that it has been a pleasure to work with Senator Cleveland and the Washington and Oregon Legislatures on the IBR program. She shared that Administrator Johnson has done a good job of making sure that the state legislators are kept up-to-date on the federal responsibilities of the program. She shared that both Washington and Oregon governors have signed an agreement to move forward on this program and look at modernization, environmental, and technological opportunities that have changed for this program. She shared that the legislative delegations have given walking orders to agreed-upon program principles and are updating those principles as we move forward. She recognized that we do not need to start from scratch but need to update and improve what has changed in the system as it relates to the IBR program.

Representative McLain shared that we need to recognize that we are in competition for the federal infrastructure package that is coming, so there is some urgency, and the region needs to make sure we have projects ready to go for when it arrives. She thanked the ESG members for serving the program and reiterated that she and her colleagues are well aware of the changes that have occurred since 2013. She informed the ESG members that the transit system issue is one that legislators have asked staff to keep all options on the table with a commitment that we want transit on this facility for the future. She said that means looking at all aspects of what could be done for transit including bus and train options. She shared that she will be asking for staff to come forward with a complete look at what can be done on transit both now and in stages. Representative McLain shared that the IBR program is a high priority for Washington and Oregon to listen to community and agency partners and identify funding.

Senator Cleveland shared that she has sat on the Washington Senate Transportation Committee for nine years, and currently sits on the Bi-State Legislative Action Committee as a Co-Chair. She provided a brief synopsis of the recent Washington State Legislative session.

She shared that much of the session was focused on health, safety, and economic impacts from the pandemic. She shared that there are a multitude of complicated moving pieces associated with a final transportation revenue package, and that some of those pieces include a Carbon Policy and a Low Carbon Fuel Standard along with the infrastructure projects. She shared that the package, which includes the IBR program, made great progress and did pass out of committee. She shared that the Legislature did pass a cap and invest bill, and that 1/3 of the cap and invest revenue will go toward the transportation revenue package. Senator Cleveland informed the ESG members that they will continue work on the transportation revenue

package, with a group convening next week to continue negotiations with a focus on obtaining agreement between the House and Senate. She shared that part of the discussions will be around levels of spending from the cap and invest bill which would help fund \$5.2 billion of the transportation package.

She shared that both she and Representative McLain understand the sense of urgency and that the state of Washington’s commitment to the I-5 bridge replacement as well as passing a transportation revenue package is stronger than ever. She shared her appreciation for the work conducted by the ESG as well as her commitment to make sure that the IBR program is not left out of any funding discussions at the federal level or within the respective states.

Greg shared that the program team is still in the planning process for the May Bi-State Legislative Meeting and asked the ESG members to submit any questions they would like to go to the group.

Confirm Upcoming Meeting Topics, Next Steps, and Summary

Deb Nudelman shared that the next ESG meeting will be held on May 20, 2021. She informed the group that the meeting will include a program progress update, a report out on CAG and EAG activities, and that ESG members will be asked to provide feedback on the proposed approach to move program work forward, which will in turn be presented to the Bi-State Legislative Committee.

Greg Johnson thanked the ESG members for their input and participation.

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

Executive Steering Group Members in Attendance

Name and Title	Organization
Brendan Finn (Alternate)	Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Regional Administrator Carley Francis	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)
Metro Council President Lynn Peterson	Metro

Engineering and Construction Director Steve Witter (Interim)	TriMet
CEO Shawn Donaghy	C-TRAN
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

Bi-State Legislative Committee Members in Attendance

Name and Title	Organization
Representative Susan McLain	Bi-State Legislative Committee
Senator Annette Cleveland	Bi-State Legislative Committee

IBR Program Staff in Attendance

Name	Organization
Greg Johnson, Program Administrator	IBR program team
Frank Green, Assistant Program Administrator	IBR program team
Johnell Bell, Chief Equity Officer, Community Advisory Group co-facilitator	IBR program team
Chris Regan, Environmental Manager	IBR program team
Sarah Ogier, Chief Climate Officer	IBR program team
Deb Nudelman, Lead Facilitator	IBR program team

Additional Participants

88 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-april-29-meeting/>