

EQUITY ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING #5

Subject: EAG Meeting #5 Summary

Date and Time: Monday, April 19, 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 Update + Q&A
- EAG Work Plan Status
- Recommendation Development: Equity Definition
- Equity Framework

1. PROGRAM UPDATE + Q&A

Greg Johnson, Program Administrator, shared an update regarding ongoing discussions with federal partners on potential pathways to move forward through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The four pathways reflect degrees of potential changes to design options and their related impacts, and how this affects the type of environmental documentation the program will be required to submit by the federal partners.

- Re-evaluation only
- Limited Scope Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Supplemental EIS
- Rescind the 2011 Record of Decision (ROD) and restart the NEPA process

Q & A

- EAG Member: With either EIS option, will we be able to change Purpose & Need?
 - Greg: We are getting guidance on whether we provide minor updates to Purpose & Need, but cannot make significant changes to it. As we talk about equity and climate, we are waiting for federal partners to advise where these changes can be placed in the documentation but the program is committed to finding a place for them.
- EAG Member: Why is rescinding the 2011 ROD not a desirable path forward?
 - Greg: It is the riskiest path forward. That option would add about 2-3 years to the project, during which time the program would have to go back and reevaluate all potential alternatives.
- EAG Member: Do the EIS options include high speed rail?
 - Greg: It does not. High speed rail was looked at and eliminated as a realistic option due to its adverse impacts to Vancouver and surrounding communities. However, it could be evaluated as part of a different project.
- EAG Member: What's the difference in scale and scope between the EIS options?
 - Greg: With a limited scope EIS, if changes are limited in impact, then we'd be close to a re-evaluation, but would have to go through processes that looks at impacts and hold public meetings on those impacts. It would be more adverse than impacts that would be documented

as part of a re-evaluation. A full supplemental EIS would add more time, and would look at design options that have cumulative impacts larger than a few changes on the margins. Our best guess informed by conversations with national experts is a limited scope supplemental EIS would add a couple months, and a full supplemental EIS would add half a year.

- Angela Findley, Environmental Lead: A limited scope supplemental EIS would look at a small change, for example if the interchange configuration at Hayden island had a different footprint, and then you'd document the impacts associated with it. A full supplemental EIS is going to look at impacts of the entire alignment. Both will have a draft document, a public comment and hearing component, as well as a final supplemental document with an amended ROD. The more changes there are, the more time to produce the document, more opportunity for comments to be addressed in the final document.

2. EAG WORK PLAN STATUS

Johnell Bell, Chief Equity Officer, gave a refresher of where we are in the program timeline, and how the EAG's work would continue to inform the project's community engagement efforts. Johnell discussed the work ahead for EAG around developing the program's equity framework, which would not only guide the program's work and center our commitments, but also serve as the lens to ensure we're seeing equitable outcomes. Core to this work is: the shared program definition for equity; equity objectives, which will help develop performance measures; and how the program will put it all into action and operationalize the framework. The framework will help ensure that when the project is complete it represents the values espoused around the community.

Work Plan Through August 2021

- Refine and recommend a program equity definition
- Refine overarching equity objectives
- Develop and recommend performance measures
- Provide design recommendations and feedback based on definitions, objectives
- Inform screening criteria.

3. RECOMMENDATION DEVELOPMENT: EQUITY DEFINITION

Jake Warr, Equity Lead, gave an update on the equity definition, which remained centered on both process and outcomes, and focused on the economic and transportation benefits. Equity has been refined to separate the definition from the commitment, revamp the meaning of process equity, and further define marginalized and underserved communities.

Q & A

- EAG Member: We have to measure the performance of the program's activity that is going to produce the process equity outcomes we seek to achieve, so it is the program's performance that should be measured. If this definition is trying to define both process and outcome equity, I don't see indication of how it is tied to how to the program would achieve its outcomes.
 - Equity Definition Subcommittee Member: As performance measures are developed, they will be evaluated through these criteria.
 - Johnell: Recall that the purpose of the definition is to be clear on equity and avoid misunderstanding and misalignment.

- Greg: As an example, if we decide during the construction phase that noise levels impacting surrounding communities is something that the community decides is an equity issue, then we would create a measurement of what that means and then enforce it by saying we won't exceed a certain decibel level day or night.
- Equity Definition Subcommittee Member: This is a good time for members to give feedback, but it's important that we don't get caught up on the definition so we can start talking about objectives. We did the best we could to make sure we captured what we know and thought about the voices we want to represent in this space. This isn't a perfect definition, which I haven't seen anywhere, but it is a foundation we can build upon.
- EAG Member: I would've liked to see more representation on the definition subcommittee from the Washington side of the river.
- EAG Member: I think this definition is way better from where we first started. I really like how it separates process and outcomes, and how it defines marginalized and underserved communities is well thought out.
- EAG Member: Is the focus on transportation and economic benefits limiting for the equity definition?
 - Johnell: This being a transportation project, unfortunately we're not going to solve all things relative to communities of concern. We have to focus on what we can do in the lane we're in and at least be mindful of the transportation and economic benefits, while perhaps looking to performance measures for other benefits.

EAG members voted to approve recommending the equity definition to the IBR program administrator.

4. EQUITY FRAMEWORK: PERFORMANCE MEASURES & EQUITY OBJECTIVES

Angela Findley, Environmental Lead, led a discussion on efforts to update the program's NEPA documentation, starting with evaluation of prior planning efforts, and informed by feedback and recommendations from the Executive Steering Group (ESG), Community Advisory Group (CAG), EAG, and community engagement efforts. The program is seeking to identify where changes are needed and develop measures and criteria to screen design and define design options for the program. The program will then perform a re-evaluation to compare changes of the program's solutions relative to the 2011 ROD to determine the extent of change and impacts, which will inform which NEPA pathway we move down. Angela made a distinction between performance measures, which are indicators of program success over the lifespan of the program, and screening criteria, which are used to assess the performance and impacts among the design options considered.

Jake Warr, Equity Lead, described the six draft equity objectives centered around mobility and accessibility, physical design, community benefits, economic opportunity, decision-making processes, and avoiding further harm.

EAG members broke out into small groups to think about what outcomes we want to see under each objective, and what potential performance measures could tell us how successful we've been in achieving each objective.

Report Out

- Decision-making processes
 - We need to see input from communities, how it was received by the program, and how it impacted decisions
 - We have efforts to hear from the whole community
 - Record outreach on both sides of the river
 - Track stakeholder engagement
 - Ensure we're hearing from transit users as well as drivers
- Avoiding further harm
 - Create a baseline understanding of past harms
 - Come up with definitions of adverse impacts
 - Mitigation measures should be more than proportional
 - Performance measures should be forward-looking
 - If benefits are distributed inequitably, that would also be contributing to harm
- Community benefits
 - Benefits should go to local communities on both sides of the river
 - Assess how many people are hired in the program area
 - Create an aesthetically nice and well-maintained bridge
 - Focus on low-income households
- Economic opportunity
 - Look beyond just southwest Washington to engage DBEs across Washington state
 - Consider timing for firms to be prepared for the program's opportunities, and look at technical needs, what support is needed, and how we can improve their capacity
- Mobility and access
 - Consider accessibility for marginalized communities, specifically low-income households' access to transit options
 - Ensure race and income level don't predetermine access to reliable access to infrastructure.
 - Stabilization efforts for individuals and businesses to stay and utilize benefits from the program
 - Potential for excess property be set aside for affordable housing
 - Walkability of the bridge is rated for high ADA accessibility
 - Ensure timely service
 - Measure length of trips, and how many paratransit trips are people taking
 - High availability of transit options
- Physical design
 - Connecting with direct service organizations serving people with disabilities to ensure access
 - Enhancing pedestrian and bike use
 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
 - Centering conversations around congestion
 - Protecting community around the bridge

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Cortright: As the equity committee considers its work, it needs to recognize that without honesty and forthrightness, there can be no equity. The history of this project is shot through with a lack of honesty. The name of the project is dishonest. It is not a bridge replacement, it's a freeway that happens to cross a river. If equity and climate are not in the Purpose & Need, it will be nowhere, it'll be compromised and value-engineered out of the project. That has been the history of this project. With the Columbia River Crossing (CRC), Vancouver was promised a land bridge, Portland was promised 10 lanes instead of 12, and staff have claimed that if the project doesn't move forward, funds would have to be repaid to the federal government. The committee must push forward with equity and insist it be included in Purpose & Need, and insist on honesty from the staff.

Robert Liberty: I'm a private citizen in Portland and I want to offer an outcome-oriented definition of equity and a framework for measuring equity impacts. Equity means that the burdens and benefits are distributed fairly between social and economic groups, taking into account the need to reconcile past injustices imposed on marginalized communities. Potential benefits are reduced travel time; reduced deaths and property damage for people using bridge facilities; increased land value; increased access to jobs; increased safety for marine traffic; and increased transportation options for transit, bikes, and pedestrians. The burdens would be taxes and tolls for construction, operation, and maintenance; health impacts from increased air pollution; increased traffic deaths; injuries and property damage attributable to higher speeds of travel; additional congestion from construction delays; decreased land values; increased climate change and pollution; adverse impacts on water quality and fish populations. In order to do a proper equity analysis, both benefits and burdens for the full program area must be quantified and allocated fairly, and it must consider how this project impacts past inequities and tribal rights.

Chris Smith: I've had the privilege of serving on the planning, assisting, and building commission in Portland for the last dozen years, during that time we've rewritten the Portland strategic plan, comprehensive plan, and the zoning that implements it, all with the goal of centering equity. I can tell you that my understanding of equity is very much different now than at the beginning of that process and we continue to learn as we have to center anti-racism to be effective. I say that to share that a framework developed 10 years ago cannot include a current understanding of equity. I don't know how we make the project equitable starting with a ROD more than a decade old. Same with climate change, our perception and understanding of how to mitigate it is very different now than it was 10 years ago. I believe we need to scrap the ROD and start over to really build a project that will serve the generations that have to deal with climate change.

WRAP UP

Dr. Roberta Hunte, EAG Facilitator, invited EAG members to share 3 takeaways, noted the next EAG meeting would be held on May 17th, and closed the meeting.

- EAG Member: I've missed a couple meetings but just want to see it's an honor to be a part of this group's work.
- EAG Member: We're going to be organizing subcommittees to come up with measurements
- EAG Member: We now have multiple definitions for equity.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

ATTENDEES

Attendees	Organization
Greg Johnson	IBR Program Administrator
Johnell Bell	IBR Chief Equity Officer
Jake Warr	IBR Equity Lead
Dr. Roberta Hunte	IBR EAG Facilitator
Angela Findley	IBR Environmental Lead
Pat Daniels	Constructing Hope
Shona Carter	Community Foundation of SW Washington
Lily Copenagle	Community Member/NAACP Portland
Johnathan Eder	Port of Vancouver
Yolonda Brooks	Washington State Department of Transportation
Obie Ford III	WSU Vancouver
Sydney Johnson	Fourth Plain Forward
John Gardner	TriMet
Mark Harrington	SW Washington Regional Transportation Council
Lee Helfend	Community Member
Matthew Hines	Community Member
Megan Marie Johnson	Community Member
Karyn Kameroff	Community Member
Fernando Martinez	Northwest Mountain Minority Supplier Development Council

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Attendees	Organization
Steve Nakana	Port of Portland
Sebrina Owens-Wilson	Metro
Nikotris Perkins	Oregon Department of Transportation
Caitlin Francis Reff	Portland Bureau of Transportation
Matt Serres	Disability Rights Oregon
Alicia Sojourner	City of Vancouver
Monica Tellez-Fowler	C-Tran
Hai That Ho Ton	Community Member
Elona Wilson	Coalition of Communities of Color

Meeting Recording and Materials

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