

EQUITY ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING #10

Subject: EAG Meeting #10 Summary

Date and Time: Monday, September 20, 2021, 5:30pm to 7:30pm

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

Number of concurrent viewers: 7

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.

1. PROGRAM UPDATES

In lieu of Greg Johnson, who was unable to attend the meeting, Johnell Bell, Principal Equity Officer, gave an overview of recent program activities that took place in the last several weeks including an Executive Steering Group (ESG) meeting and update. The ESG meeting had robust conversations and confirmed a collective understanding of the solutions that do not meet the purpose and need for an I-5 replacement program. ESG also had conversation of technical work, desired outcomes, screening criteria and preliminary options.

- Next ESG meeting: 10/21/2021

Johnell continued to give an update on the Community Advisory Group meeting (CAG). In the recent CAG meeting, members were introduced to the IBR equity framework and received a historical overview of the transit process and alternatives from previous planning efforts. The IBR process going forward to identify a transit option was also a topic of discussion. The launching of the Community Working Groups was shared, including that nine members of CAG were serving across four different working groups.

- Next CAG meeting: 10/7/2021 **(Note that this meeting ended up being canceled)**

Q&A

EAG Member: What are some of examples of solutions that do not meet the purpose and need of the IBR Solution? What are some examples that would meet the purpose and need?

- Jake Warr: Solutions that do not meet the purpose and need of the IBR Solution are past alternatives purposed during the Columbia River Crossing project that have been identified to not meet the IBR purpose and need. Examples are a tunnel, third bridge in addition to the current bridge, and high-speed rail. This is not to say these options could not be considered in the future rather, they currently do not fit within this program.

2. MINI-GRANTS AND ELEVATING EQUITY LISTENING SESSION UPDATE

Salome Chimuku from the IBR Community Engagement team gave an update on the mini-grant applicants. Out of the fourteen applicants that applied, four of them are from Washington, six from Oregon, and four that serve both.

Salome continued to give an update on the Evaluating Equity Listening sessions that took place in the month of August 2021. The nine sessions each had a focus on communities of concern that have been defined by the program. High level notes of each of the listening sessions were presented that emphasized areas of improvement, participants willingness to participate in future sessions, participants demographics, and any questions that were asked during the meetings. One point of concern was that some participants felt uncomfortable with the presence of media in some of the listening sessions.

- Jake Warr, Equity Lead, made a comment saying that having media present is not ideal but the program was required to allow media to attend based on public meeting laws.

Q&A

EAG member: Are the stores where gift cards provided to Listening Session participants accepted easy for people who are houseless to get to?

- Salome Chimuku: The two card options are for Fred Myer and Target. There are plenty of these stores near and around transit. Cards are available to use online and within the store. Some prefer to make orders online and then pickup in store. Some participants asked for the cards to be Visa gift cards rather than store gift cards but there are barriers with federal funding and the incentive that is given.

EAG member: Shared thanks to the program faculty for all the work they have been doing and the detail in presentation.

3. EQUITY-FOCUSED SCREENING CRITERIA

Jake gave a refresher covering the design options including core elements such as high capacity transit, through-lanes and auxiliary lanes, highway interchange improvements, and active transportation improvements.

A summary of the Screening Criteria Subcommittee who have met three times was presented. One exercise the subcommittee did was defining which criteria support which of the six equity objectives outlined in the Equity Framework.

Jake Warr asked the two subcommittee participants if there was anything they wanted to share.

- EAG member: I think the team shared ideas and debated but are wanting to hear what the broader group will say to help us answer what they are thinking when they ask their questions. There was a lot, we would have loved more time but there wasn't a lot of time.

Jake then presented the recommended Equity Screening Criteria and encouraged the group to discuss. The main topic of presentation was pointing out the highlights and recommendations for change within the equity screening criteria.

Jake told the EAG members that he would be forwarding this document to the EAG members asking for their input on the changes, removals, and additions in order to finalize a detailed screening criteria before the next Executive Steering Group meeting.

Johnell Bell shared his thanks to the subcommittee for their time serving on this committee as well as how this work is really on the cutting edge of how you integrate equity into a megaproject.

4. IBR EQUITY FRAMEWORK

Chris Lepe, IBR Equity Panel, gave an overview of the IBR Equity Framework draft that was created by input from the EAG and support from the IBR Program Equity team. The Equity Framework is essentially a blueprint or guide to help create a more equitable project and program. The focus of the presentation was to have a discussion to obtain EAG members' input on how to improve the document and return next month for potential adoption and approval.

Q&A

EAG member: Are the best practices going to be a part of the final document and have just not been completely thought out yet?

- Chris Lepe: Yes, the best practices and its review is going to take more analysis and study through research which could take several months. This section was proposed in the last EAG meeting and is meant to be a place holder that will be further refined and developed.
- Johnell Bell: We want to lift every rock again to find out whether or not there are some good examples out there that the program should consider and the EAG should consider.

EAG member: Are you considering the distinction between best practices as the most commonly used practice vs. this is the practice that produces the best result?

- Johnell Bell: I think it is both. I would even venture out to say promising practices and an opportunity for us to be creative because we do want to be pushing the envelope. Specifically with communities of concern, a lot of the interventions that we know could potentially work would not necessarily be the best practice. We don't want to miss out on those opportunities because they have not been checked off by a politician.

5. BREAKOUT ROOMS

Roberta Hunte prepared the members to go into breakout rooms and reviewed the three questions for discussion.

- Does the document capture your aspirations for a guiding framework?
- Are there elements that could be improved to make them more clear or actionable?
- What challenges do you anticipate the program having in implementation? How might we prepare to address those challenges?

6. REPORT OUT

Representatives of each small group reported highlights of each of their discussions.

Salome Chimuku: When it came to the aspirations, many in our group agreed that the intent met what they wanted or expected. There was some discussion around the deep concern regarding question two. This arose these questions:

- What other areas of the IBR program are waiting on this document before they can start work?
- Who's actually going to use this document once it's completed?
- How will we be holding folks, partners, and people accountable if they are not meeting the aspirations of this document?

We also talked about how this could be improved in the future by being written into contractors and developer agreements.

When it came to question three, one comment that was relevant to IBR but also a general statement to infrastructure projects is that doing this forward-thinking equity is great, but it can sometimes be met with “that should have happened months ago” and “It's too late now”. Many times, THIS is because equity is implemented by those who care about the issue or the equity team alone. We should really start to talk about how this can go beyond the equity team and the EAG and be seen throughout the entire program.

Another thing that was mentioned is there are some words such as segregation and displacement that are only mentioned in the glossary and not within any other place in the document. Something that could be made clearer is the idea of moving past just preventing harm and having more conversation about addressing historical harm and mending as well as how might we prepare to address those challenges.

EAG Member: Are we resourcing someone to help with the implementation at all the different levels or resourcing to help with the accountability of implementation of equity?

Jake Warr: We talked a lot about what we are able to promise or what we are able to do as a program. One thing we want to make clear in the document is what we can influence and what we can't, what are those lines. A positive of the document is that it's transparent and can be used as a tool of transparency. A lot of times we are subject to what public officials say, this can put us in a tricky spot. We don't want that to come across as we didn't adhere to the equity framework. Unsure how to do this but it is something to be aware of.

Chris Lepe: We aligned well with the first group in the intent and the language. A comment made was about borrowing from the city of Portland's approach or framework. What we do, how we do it, and who will be better off?

A question arose about how quickly things are moving in this process and how to ensure that this work and these decisions that are taking place. Are we moving too fast and should the program slow down?

Alignment across all the different teams and this document is very important. How can we ensure we achieve this?

A couple people mentioned comments about communities of concern and the terminology that is used within the document, including marginalized and excluded.

Lastly, going beyond further harm, what happens if there is further harm? Is there a possibility for compensation? And what are the legal aspects of this?

EAG member: I noticed how each of the groups talked about the challenge of how this gets integrated into the program. Once we do have the document finalized I am wondering if there is a way to communicate it more such as having it on the website or other external communications we are using. It could evolve through time with updates about how we are doing during milestones of the project.

- Chris Lepe: I like this idea of reporting back and the communication and alignment. Based on the input we have received in the making of this document if we were to incorporate that into the framework we would have a truly powerful document. A lot of the input you have provided today will really help us get there. I personally would like a subgroup to dig into some of the questions you have raised. Any idea of how we can get that and keep this forward momentum?
- Johnell Bell: I think it's a good idea and we can send out an email and make sure that that's happens.
- Jake Warr: We've talked about having a subgroup focused on those frameworks before. Between now and the next meeting it would be great to have a deep dive meeting with folks.

EAG member: If you want to make it powerful as a document lets be specific about their harms and what their social economy and environmental cost have been so that we actually made them.

EAG member: Is that were we can have data on existing disparities?

- Jake Warr: There is another document that we thought about including that is a historical context overview as well as some demographic data. We were thinking of including this as an appendix or possibly as some kind of resource/tool.

Roberta Hunte: How does the equity framework influence the scope of the project? Also, as the framework is developed, how does it apply to decisions that have been made before it was put forward?

- Johnell Bell: In some ways it's happening now, for example with the screening criteria and how that's going to be utilized. I think something we will have to figure out is how to operationalize it and a number of tools that we have. As a program team we will have to step back and figure out how we actually implement this.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public provided comments.

8. WRAP UP

Roberta Hunte asks the group for takeaways.

- EAG member: I have been impressed with the degree in which this group has heard the comments that have come out of the EAG and has actively incorporated them.

Roberta Hunte shares appreciation for the members, discussion, and document.

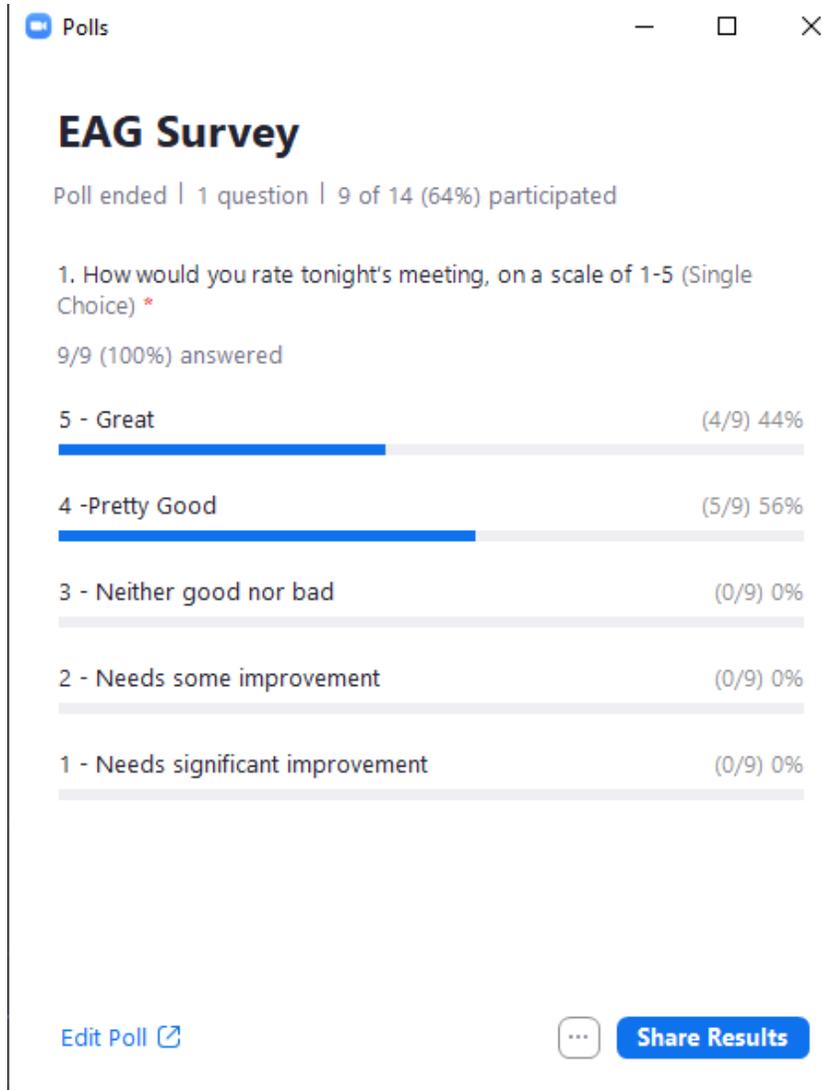
ADJOURN

Roberta Hunte announced the next EAG meetings and what members can expect in the next session.

- Next EAG meeting: October 18th, 2021. 5:30pm-7:30pm
- Following EAG meeting: November 15th, 2021. 5:30pm-7:30pm

Roberta Hunte, shared thanks to the members and closed the meeting.

EAG members completed a meeting evaluation poll. Four members rated the meeting as 5/5 (Great), and five rated it 4/5 (Pretty Good).



The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 pm.

ATTENDEES

Attendees	Organization
EAG Members	
Nikotris Perkins	Oregon Department of Transportation
Lily Copenagle	Community member
Hai That Ho Ton	Community member
Lee Helfend	Community member
Caitlin Reff	Portland Bureau of Transportation
Masha Egorenko	IRCO Slavic & Eastern European Center
Monica Tellez-Fowler	C-TRAN
Matt Serres	Disability Rights Oregon
Alicia Sojourner	City of Vancouver
Shona Carter	Community Foundation of SW Washington
Nina Jones	Washington State Department of Transportation
Steven Nakana	Port of Portland
Jonathan Eder	Port of Vancouver
Pat Daniels	Constructing Hope
IBR Staff	
Jake Warr	Equity Lead
Johnell Bell	Principal Equity Officer

Attendees	Organization
Chris Lepe	Equity Panel
Brent Hamlin	Tech support
Tanya Adams	Equity Panel
Dr. Roberta Hunte	Facilitator
Salome Chimuku	Community Engagement team