

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #2

Subject: Community Advisory Group Meeting #2 Summary

Date and Time: February 10, 2021 4:00 to 6:00 P.M.

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

WELCOME

CAG co-chair Lynn Valenter introduced CAG co-chair Ed Washington and IBR program administrator Greg Johnson. She then provided an overview of the agenda, meeting outcomes, and introduced IBR Public Information Officer Kelliann Amico.

Kelliann explained the media protocol for the program, including what information to gather when contacted by a reporter, tips for conversing with reporters, and her 3 C's. Kelliann shared that, while CAG members are able to address questions by the media, they should not speak on behalf of the program since the program has its own spokespeople. She also reviewed the social media protocol and invited questions and discussion.

CAG MEETING AGREEMENTS

Ed and CAG co-facilitator Lisa Keohakalole-Schaer reminded the group of the meeting agreements established during the kick-off meeting. Lisa elaborated on how important these agreements are to program staff and invited feedback from CAG members. The program staff are committed to:

- Sending the agenda at least one week in advance
- Giving members plenty of time to review and provide feedback on materials
- Including information on the agenda for the following two meetings
- Listening to members
- Continuing to ask for follow up questions
- Making sure members know where their input is needed

Lisa reminded everyone that the CAG plays an advisory role for a program that is replacing a bridge between two states and there are a lot of moving pieces. CAG members provided the following feedback:

- One member shared that they really like the agreements. The member said we are going to be spending a lot of time together so we need to enjoy the process. We should also look at the power of the skills and knowledge that are being brought to this group and take advantage of that. Let's make sure this is an accomplishment we can be proud of.
- Another member shared that they would encourage us to normalize things like "I don't agree with that but am willing to move forward with it". Secondly, the member asked what does it look like when we reach consensus?

- A member said that they thought we were all equal, and asked what would be the issue with power dynamics?
- Another member asked how they are supposed to ask questions. Do they use email? During the last meeting, this member asked in the chat: what are the changes in transportation since the new developments at the Port?

Lisa explained that all questions asked by CAG members are being collected and added to a matrix that includes the questions, the status of answering each question (e.g. in progress), and the answer (when available). This matrix will be shared with CAG members as it is updated. Members can ask questions verbally during the meetings or via email after the meeting.

Lisa noted that the IBR communications team is working with IBR technical teams on particularly complex questions, although some questions cannot be answered yet and will be answered further along in the program.

- A member shared they are concerned that someone will push their opinion or agenda and we will go in circles, so they hope this room can be conscious of that power dynamic.
- A member shared that it would help establish confidence if we measured where we are in the project and exactly what the path forward looks like.

IBR: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

A video narrated by Greg was played to provide a detailed, visual overview of the existing conditions and history of the program area. It also provided a high-level explanation of why the Interstate Bridge must be updated.

Surface connections Concept

CAG co-facilitator Johnell Bell introduced Nolan Lienhart, Urban Design Lead.

Nolan provided context at both the local and regional level about the importance of the Interstate Bridge connection. He described why this junction is the center of our region by reviewing all the assets that are involved in the planning for this project, including:

- Natural resources & systems
- Parks and open spaces
- Urban centers
- Regional destinations

Nolan moved on to critical moments in this region's history, including the Vanport Flood and the Portland Assembly Center.

The Ladder

Nolan presented additional factors to consider during the program’s planning and design phases, including local connections, the ladder network, multi-use paths, Denver Avenue, and the most valuable pieces of these components and the gaps within them.

Landscape

Nolan explained how the layers of the program area landscape must be looked at through integrated and separate lenses. He went on to show examples of other large bridge projects and the importance of preventing edge effects to help blend the new structure into the existing community. Existing photos, renderings, and concepts were provided to show what the possibilities for this project could be.

QUESTION & ANSWER

CAG Member: In our last meeting, we asked whether a tunnel was still being considered. From your presentation, I would think that even though they told us yes, it’s actually a no. I live on Hayden Island and I’ve never heard of North Hayden Island Park.

- Response from Greg: The tunnel is still a potential alternative. As we put together a purpose and need, we will be pulling together a number of different things and our team is digging into that.
- Response from Nolan: I believe North Hayden Island Park came up when discussing land underneath or around the existing bridge and that when the new bridge was going to be built, there could have been an opportunity to create a new park during the previous project. This content is definitely a work in progress so if there is content that people believe we have missed, please let us know so that it is representative of the way you see this region.

CAG Member: I push back on the tunnel idea because we are in the Cascadia Subduction Zone, so I don’t think that is wise and I don’t know what the bedrock conditions are for that area. At Hayden Island, what kind of connections are we putting there for folks who are using mobility devices. Is there going to be an elevator? Something that I would prioritize over ramps because of the nature of it. If we are including a dedicated walking lane, will there be bench seating at least every quarter mile?

- Response: There have been tube tunnels that have been built in seismically active areas, so the technology can withstand that. But there are numerous other challenges, such as archeological areas that would have to be disturbed so we are looking through all of that, but no decision has been reached yet. We will be telling the group what we found on that, hopefully, sometime this summer. The decisions for active transportation have not been made yet and we are going to friends from the cycling and walking communities to make sure they have a voice in whatever facility we build so that it is attractive for people to get out of their vehicles for the one way trips.

CAG Member: When we look at the previous work of the Columbia River Crossing team, how has recent construction development changed their provided constraints? I'm thinking specifically about the Vancouver waterfront and whether that is putting limitations on possibilities that were not there before.

- Response: That is something we are going to be asking all the groups to think about: what has changed from the last planning study until now? What different things have come up, whether it's built infrastructure, attitudes, changing habits, etc. that will drive purpose and need.

CAG Member: Greg, you said that the bridge is currently allowing 130,000 trips per day – can you talk about what the bridge was designed to handle? Also, when we are looking at a replacement, what kind of life span are we looking at? Is it going to last for another 100 years?

- Response: Modern bridge design are looking at a minimum of 75 years of useful life. With appropriate maintenance, better materials and better construction methods, these facilities should last well over 100 years. The original bridge was built for horse and trolley traffic so it is an example of outstanding engineering but there are a lot of things we take for granted on modern facilities that just aren't there. The close spacing of interchanges and lack of auxiliary lanes limit capacity and result in the congestion we see on the bridge today.

CAG Member: All of the aspects of what we see in that ladder existed 100 to 1,000 years before the bridge. Those trade routes were there for a long time. The Cowlitz corridor basically follows the route of I-5 from Portland to Olympia. I really like how the video was put together. I like the idea for elevators on each side and the covers in Vancouver are great ideas.

CAG Member: One of the issues that we know the region is facing is houseless folks who are taking refuge in places like parks. I was wondering what plans or ongoing discussions are going on in the Cities of Vancouver and Portland around affordable housing or places where folks can set up safe space for themselves in a way that doesn't negatively impact traffic flow, the environment or surrounding neighborhood safety.

- Response: We recognize the houseless population in the corridor, and we know that as we are planning this program, we are going to have to address this and have no intentions of moving people about. We are going to be asking you all for ideas and information about how best to tackle that question.

CAG Member: There is a great amount of freight that moves between Canada and Mexico on I-5 and so the concept of building a tunnel is just simply not workable from a freight perspective because there are too many products that can't be carried through a long tunnel like that so I hope we don't spend too much time having that discussion.

- Response: We can't prematurely shut down that viable alternative, but we have to talk about freight in finding solutions to this.

CAG Member: When talking about the bridge and what's been done over the last 10 years, I'm assuming that we are talking about the freeway that starts in Hayden Island and ends in Vancouver, that the freeway itself is going to be part of that bridge. I'm assuming that the new bridge is going to go over where the current bridge currently exists – is that a given or is there a place to move it? As you take into consideration some of the habitats, the current structures, and the new things that are going in in Hayden Meadows that are being built right now – there are going to be lots of trucks going through here. So, what are the baseline givens of what the architecture of this new bridge will be?

- Response: We recognize that we are going to be in the footprint of I-5 and we are not shifting the freeway in any significant way. We will look at bending the bridge, when it comes to maintaining traffic, can we build half the new bridge, shift traffic over, demolish the old bridge, and then build the remainder of it. That's a constructability question. We are pretty locked into the existing I-5 footprint.

CAG Member: Has there been, or will there be a robust analysis on the impact to traffic with alternative transportation? I would imagine that the majority of it is truck and passenger traffic. If we are considering walking, biking and transit, what kind of analysis is going to be done? Is there a contingency plan should something happen before we get to construction of this bridge?

- Response: One of the things that will potentially get people out of their vehicles for one occupancy trips, is an attractive alternative. We are going to look at making those alternatives more attractive. Metro and Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) have traffic models that help predict what future travel patterns will look like, so we will be leaning on them to help us determine what the future transportation needs will be. Regarding if there is a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) plan, the only alternative is I-205. I-205 carries approximately 165-175,000 vehicles per day and adding 130,000 onto that is an untenable situation. The pressure to move this thing forward is the impacts on the local and state economies if we don't take action and an earthquake disables the I-5 corridor.

CAG Member: What kind of planning is happening around congestion pricing to manage demand on the bridge?

- Response: In Oregon, the Oregon Department of Transportation Office of Urban Mobility is looking at congestion pricing both on I-5 and I-205. That's in issue on their front burner. We are looking at what that means for traffic coming up to the I-5 bridge. We have one side of the river that is tremendously interested and one side that seems to be less-so. If it were to happen, Washington and Vancouver would have to make that decision. Oregon has already moved forward with that conversation, but this is beyond the scope of the IBR program currently.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Johnell reviewed the core components of community engagement efforts and goals. He explained how this effort is different due to COVID-19 and provided the 2021 outreach timeline. Johnell said that community engagement is an ongoing process, centered around equity, where we expect CAG members to keep us accountable to our commitments. Members provided the following thoughts and advice:

- Have flexible meeting times by giving multiple times for people to attend
- Work through community-based organizations for open houses to reach members of the community that aren't at the table, like non-English speakers.
- Try to reach the houseless community because they will be affected. The physically disabled community (wheelchair users) also needs to be reached because they will need to cross that bridge as well.
- Not just doing virtual efforts because there are people who don't have access to the technology necessary to engage. For example, the houseless community, low-income, or people who just aren't tech savvy.
- I would really encourage all of our organizations who have professional communicators to engage and amplify these messages. A communicators table for all advisory groups would be really helpful for a project of this size.
- Be really clear about what our questions are. With regards to reaching out to our networks, if we have something clear to pass along, I think this would be really great.
- Involve young people – high schoolers, college students, etc. – because these people will be living with these changes for the longest. Engaging with young folks to inspire them and give them a voice is going to be critical.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- *Mark Manti [1:48:10]:* I'm CEO of the Vancouver Clinic, providing medical services to almost 200,000 patients. You received a letter from 7 business groups from across the region and we encourage you to move quickly to replace the outdated and accident prone I-5 bridge. The spans are 64 and 104 years old. They've served us well but need a significant upgrade to meet modern transportation needs and safety standards. We support a replacement bridge that supports freight, commerce and commuters moving in a predictable manner. We need a significant investment to make updates including traffic lanes with safety shoulders, bike and pedestrian access, and high capacity transit. For Vancouver Clinic, we certainly have staff who live across the river and share many of the resources across the region and use I-5 as a lifeline. I really appreciate your intention and thank you for your work.
- *John Ley [1:57:15]:* Southwest Washington concerned citizen. I was delighted to see the beginnings of discussion about the transportation needs for the bridge influence area. I would suggest that instead of focusing on 130,000 daily trips, you look at the larger picture which is over 300,000 daily trips because it is a transportation network between I-5 and I-205. I am wondering when you are going to get into the details of what the transportation network need will be in 2060 and 2100 because, as Greg mentioned, this could be a 100-year-old bridge. We have seen the number of trips double in the last 40

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years since the construction of the I-205 bridge and therefore you are potentially looking at 500,000 in 2060 and up to 100 million daily trips in 2100. Is it best to plan all of those trips down the I-5 corridor, should you consider alternatives like the I-205 corridor to take some of the heat off I-5. Finally, I would love to have an in-depth discussion before the purpose and need statement is released so that we can discuss whether or not there really is a need for high capacity transit. In the present time of COVID, there is nearly no need for transit. You can look at the data by C-TRAN who's fallen off a cliff.

- *Sam Churchill [1:52:06]*: I live on Hayden Island, under the bridge. I just have two words: Elon Musk. Let's look into that, okay? If Elon can deliver something for 1/10th the cost, let's look into that. I realize that's not helpful to ODOT or the transit agencies, but I would like to see some analysis. Thank you.

WRAP UP

Ed thanked the public and CAG members for their attendance and providing comments. CAG meetings #3, #4 and #5 are scheduled throughout March of 2021.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 5:56 pm.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

CAG Members or Alternatives

Attendees	Organization
Ashton Simpson	Oregon Walks
Bill Iyall	Cowlitz Indian Tribe
Bill Prows	Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs
Dena Horton	Pacific Northwest Waterways Association
Diana Nunez	Oregon Environmental Council
Dr. Karin Edwards	Clark College
Irina Phillips	Community member
Jana Jarvis	OR Trucking Association
Jasmine Tolbert	Vancouver NAACP

Attendees	Organization
Javier Navarro	League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Jeffrey Temple	I-205 Business Interest
Jimmy Rotharmel	Community member
Kevin Perkey	Workforce SW WA
Marcus Mundy	Coalition for Communities of Color
Mark Riker	Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council
Martha Wiley	Community member
Michael A. Martin-Tellis	Vancouver Neighborhood Association
Michael Kelly	Human Services Council
Michelle Brewer	Columbia River Economic Development Council, Zoom info
Mikaela Williams	Community member
Randali Desantos-Benromdhane	Community member
Robert Camarillo	Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council
Robin Richardson	Community member
Ryan Webb	The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Sam Kim	Community member
Sarah Hall	Community member
Sheri Call	WA Trucking Association
Andrew Hoan	Portland Business Alliance
Thomas W. Gentry	Community member
Tom Hickey	Bridgeton Neighborhood Association

Attendees	Organization
Victor Cesar	Public Transit Representative, Oregon
Lynn Valenter	Co-Chair
Ed Washington	Co-Chair

Facilitators and Presenters

Attendees	Organization
Greg Johnson	IBR Program Administrator
Nolan Lienhart	IBR Urban Design Lead
Johnell Bell	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator
Lisa Keohokalole Schauer	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator

Additional Participants

111 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 RECORD AND MATERIALS

Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here:

<https://youtu.be/4F0zEK81GbM>

Meeting Recording

The meeting materials are available here:

<https://interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/cag-january-meeting/>