

EXECUTIVE STEERING GROUP (ESG) MEETING

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

Date and Time: Oct. 18, 2023 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Location: Zoom and Youtube Livestream

WELCOME, INTRODUCTION, PROPOSED AGENDA AND UPDATES

Facilitator Lisa Keohokalole Schauer opened the meeting addressing when public input will be received during the meeting, reviewed the agenda, listed meeting ground rules and asked ESG members to introduce themselves and share relevant updates.

INTERSTATE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE AND SCHEDULE

Program Administrator Greg Johnson introduced this portion of the agenda, highlighting 2023 legislative actions, such as securing all non-federal matching funds, which demonstrates regional commitment and increases competitiveness in federal grant applications. Administrator Johnson shared a summary of recent state and federal outreach, including meetings and tours with the Washington Joint Transportation Committee, Washington State Transportation Commission, Oregon and Washington State Public Transportation Conference, in addition to state and federal agency tours. Johnson also shared a list of presentations given to various groups at several events and conferences. Johnson's final update included an updated program schedule and mentioned the 'first in water work window' in late 2026 as a primary target that the program is aiming to ensure it meets to stay on schedule with construction.

Eric Holmes, City Manager of the City of Vancouver, inquired about the schedule and resolution of U.S. Coast Guard permits. Johnson asked Assistant Program Administrator Ray Mabey to respond, who shared two paths the IBR program is pursuing to obtain a bridge permit with the U.S. Coast Guard: one path is working with potentially impacted users and fabricators located upriver to reach an agreement to present to the Coast Guard and the second path is studying the option of a moveable span bridge across the river in the environmental documentation. He shared that the permit isn't needed until late 25/early 26 providing time to address needs before then. Assistant Program Administrator Frank Green followed up with explaining the points shown in the schedule are the 'end points' and there are other sequential steps leading up to applying for a permit, which are being worked on now to ensure we can get to the end points.

COST AND FUNDING UPDATE

Green introduced this presentation, starting with updates to proposed funding sources. These updates included federal funding, such as the IBR program's application for the Mega Grant submitted in August 2023 and the upcoming application for the Bridge Investment Program (BIP) due in November. Funding committed

by both Washington and Oregon, as well as tolling authorization, provide the local match contributions necessary for all federal grant programs IBR will pursue to make the program more competitive. If awarded, the program will work with the Federal government to develop an agreement on the terms of funding, which will take time. Green covered the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) and program process. The first step of the process is project development, and FTA approved the IBR program to enter this phase. Green explained that securing large funds, such as the Mega Grant, would secure flexible funds for the program that would allow for work to begin on transit components.

Holmes referred to the program schedule and recommended making changes to the schedule graphic to depict funding factors; Holmes asked about the 15-month period for reaching an agreement on funding terms, with an 18-month requirement to begin construction and how that impacts the construction schedule. Green acknowledged the complexity of funding in relationship to the program schedule and explained that more will be known if/when funds are awarded and the negotiation period begins. Matt Ransom, Executive Director of Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, asked about the impact to the schedule if federal funds need to be reapplied for next year. Green explained that without federal funds, there are elements of the program that would be unfunded, but there are resources that without federal funds allow the program to move forward with other elements; thus, the program would not need to pause or stop.

Mabey shared information on different traffic projections the IBR program will complete and that they serve different purposes. One of the traffic projections recently completed by the program was for financial planning and looked at how tolls impact traffic and revenue. He shared that three toll traffic and revenue studies will be completed for the program. The first study or first level was completed during the Columbia River Crossing; level two is a more comprehensive planning-level study that is completed in parallel with the NEPA analysis, testing seven variable rate toll scenarios to understand the impact on revenue. This level two is currently being finalized. Finally, level three is completed after NEPA analysis and is an investment grade study, anticipated to start in mid-2024 and end in mid-2025. Toll rates for the IBR program are anticipated to be set jointly in 2025 by the Oregon and Washington Transportation Commissions.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Public Affairs Manager Katy Belokonny shared an IBR program community outreach update for the year 2023. The update included metrics reflecting the number of engagements and people engaged in advisory group meetings, presentations and briefings, neighborhood forums, DBE events, tabling events, conferences, tours, equity roundtables, office hours, and more. Belokonny provided a summary of summer tabling events, highlighting engagement with equity priority communities. She also shared that the second round of mini grants have been awarded to eight Community Based Organizations (CBO): Four CBOs in Washington and four CBOs in Oregon. To close this section, Belokonny explained the community engagement events, outreach, and efforts that will support the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SIES) process, some of which is required by NEPA during the public comment period. She also shared that much of the outreach to

support the environmental process will include many activities beyond what is required by NEPA, such as program office hours, tabling at events, and equity roundtables.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS ADVISORY GROUP (CBAG) LAUNCH

CBAG Facilitator Shannon Singleton presented an overview of the Community Benefits Advisory Group. Singleton shared the importance of community benefits discussions in order to consider mitigation of impacts construction can have in the community and to help acknowledge the historical treatment of equity priority communities. She explained community benefits as defined by the IBR program and that the group will advise IBR on how to leverage the program's work to achieve the greatest positive benefit for the communities in the program area and broader region. Shannon then shared how community benefits will be captured: in contract specifications, environmental documents, referred to in future Project Labor/Community Workforce Agreements, or as a commitment between program patterns and other parties. The perspectives represented in CBAG membership were listed, in addition to information on how the CBAG works with the other IBR program advisory groups. Finally, information about the cadence of CBAG meetings was shared. Program Administrator, Greg Johnson, followed up and offered examples of issues the CBAG will address so the IBR program is not only an infrastructure project, but also fits into the context of the community.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Keohokalole Schauer opened the meeting for public comment.

[1:32:13] Bob Ortblad, Washington resident and former professional civil engineer of 40 years, made a public comment. Ortblad expressed concerns with the IBR program's current modified LPA and the program's ability to receive federal funding. Ortblad continued that the program should pursue a tunnel option versus a bridge replacement; he believes the program should retract its current tunnel study and have another study conducted independent of the IBR program.

CLOSING STATEMENTS OF CONFIRMATION OF UPCOMING MEETING DATES/TOPICS, NEXT STEPS AND SUMMARY

Johnson shared that the IBR program is in the process of developing a construction delivery plan, including 20 or more individual contracts to complete the work. Construction sequencing will start with the river crossing but won't be the first contract; early works contracts such as utilities are aimed for a year from now and will take place outside of the river. Early next year, the program anticipates providing preliminary information on packaging including sequencing, schedule, delivery methods, and number and value of contracts.

Johnson shared that conversations regarding workforce development are occurring, looking at other projects in the region that will be competing for workforce. Johnson reviewed upcoming work, including the completion of the BIP application and continued project development work to address requirements of the

FTA CIG process; tribal consultation; refinements to design that will be made to address public comments, identify mitigation, and confirm a corridor-wide alternative; discussions on design elements such as bridge design, transit station design and access, bridge aesthetics, and active transportation design; tolling coordination between the Oregon and Washington State Transportation Commissions. He shared that the final SEIS and Amended Record of Decision are anticipated in late 2024/early 2025 and that construction is anticipated to begin in late 2025 or early 2026.

Ransom commented on applying lessons learned from other regional projects regarding bids and cost. WSDOT Secretary Roger Millar commented on cost escalation across the country, stating the importance of creating the best construction packages to receive the highest bids. Johnson affirmed that the IBR program is in conversation with other projects and applying lessons learned, sharing that the program has consistently heard getting information out early and often is important.

C-Tran CEO Shawn Donaghy Shawn gave a credit to the important work of the ASL interpreters.

Keohokalole Schauer stated that this is the last ESG meeting of 2023, and a future meeting is anticipated in early 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 3:49 pm.

ATTENDEES

Attendees	Organization/Affiliation
ESG Members	
Director of Urban Mobility Office Brendan Finn	ODOT, alternate for Director Kris Strickler
Executive Director Curtis Robinhold	Port of Portland
Ed Washington	Community Advisory Group Co-Chair
City Manager Eric Holmes	City of Vancouver, alternate for Anne McEnerny-Ogle
Executive Director of Public Affairs JC Vannatta	Tri-Met, alternate for Sam Desue
CEO Julianna Marler	Port of Vancouver
Council President Lynn Peterson	Oregon Metro
Executive Director Matt Ransom	Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council

Commissioner Mingus Mapps	City of Portland
Secretary Roger Millar	WSDOT
CEO Shawn Donaghy	C-TRAN
IBR Staff	
Frank Green	Assistant Program Administrator
Greg Johnson	Program Administrator
Katy Belokonny	Public Affairs Manager
Lisa Keohokalole Schauer	Facilitator
Ray Mabey	Assistant Program Administrator
Shannon Singleton	CBAG Facilitator

MEETING RECORD AND MATERIALS

Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1siD3eCFHY&list=PLlzHp4MXqDjb7vAl42U8Dyb1QCItoF9ht&index=24>

The meeting materials are available here:

<https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/esg-october-18-2023-meeting/>