

EXECUTIVE STEERING GROUP (ESG) MEETING

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

March 21, 2023 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

ESG Members in Attendance: Director Kris Strickler (ODOT), SW Region Administrator Carley Francis (WSDOT)(alternate), President Lynn Peterson (Metro), Commissioner Mingus Mapps (City of Portland), Executive Director Curtis Robinhold (Port of Portland), Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle (City of Vancouver), Commissioner Jack Burkman (Port of Vancouver)(alternate), Executive Director of Public Affairs JC Vannatta (TriMet)(alternate), Executive Director Matt Ransom (RTC), CEO Shawn Donaghy (C-TRAN), CAG Co-Chair Lynn Valenter, CAG Co-Chair Ed Washington

ESG Members not in Attendance: Secretary Roger Millar (WSDOT), CEO Julianna Marler (Port of Vancouver), General Manager Sam Desue (TriMet)

IBR Program Staff in Attendance: Greg Johnson (Program Administrator), Ray Mabey (Assistant Program Administrator), Frank Green (Assistant Program Administrator), Millicent Williams (Lead Facilitator), Brent Baker(Financial Structures Lead), Angela Findley (Environmental Lead), Nolan Lienhart (Urban Design Lead)

WELCOME, INTRODUCTION, PROPOSED AGENDA AND UPDATES

Millicent Williams, Lead Facilitator, opened the meeting by reviewing the meeting ground rules and asked that the partners and/or their alternates introduce themselves and provide brief updates regarding their jurisdictions.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR’S UPDATE

Administrator Greg Johnson and Assistant Project Administrator Ray Mabey provide program updates. The program has been very busy leading bridge tours, participating in a series of meetings with the USDOT, FHWA and FTA in Washington DC, and presentations with various organizations. (Slide 9)

Administrator Johnson mentioned the transit initiatives and how the program has been meeting monthly with C-TRAN and TriMet staff to get an understanding of their needs and to seek alignment on issues internally so that the program can present a united front to the federal partners as they move into the Capital Improvement Grant process. The program will be asking the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for approximately \$1 billion.

Administrator Johnson attended a meeting along with Secretary Roger Millar (WSDOT) and Director Kris Strickler (ODOT) to present the program accomplishments with AASHTO and the US Department of Transportation. The three leaders highlighted the process that led to agreement on a locally preferred alternative (LPA) and the current pursuit for grant opportunities. The program will be preparing for the Mega

Grant as early as May and August for the Bridge Improvement Grant. He added that the most comparative counterpart bridge project was the Brent Spence Bridge over the Ohio River which received \$1.25 billion from one federal program and \$250 million from another. The IBR is twice the size of the Brent Spence Bridge and provides multimodal access.

Assistant Project Administrator Ray Mabey has been working with the US Coast Guard and federal partners to finalize MOUs and MOAs. Recently, the US Coast Guard submitted in writing to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that the program will need to assess a moveable bridge option and incorporate it into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) work efforts.

The program is also working with the impacted users and negotiating mitigation agreements with the US Coast Guard to approve a revised preliminary navigation clearance determination. The program has concluded that there are no marine transportation users that require more than 116' clearance. Concurrence by the US Coast Guard is critical for obtaining a bridge permit. The US Coast Guard is charged with looking at the reasonable means of navigation to ensure the program is meeting their needs.

Moving forward the program is looking at options on the bridge for a moveable span. They are working through the bridge profile and how this movable span may operate. Options include a swing span, like the railroad bridge, bascule or drawbridge, and lift span. The program will primarily focus on a lift span with towers. Additionally, they will be assessing the window of hours when bridge lifts occur and the impacts to the airspace requirements with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Fielding a question regarding cost implications for a moveable span, Mr. Mabey noted that the bridge construction will increase by roughly \$500 million plus the cost of studying at around \$200,000. This request will shift the schedule a couple of months, but the program is still targeting to obtain a Record of Decision (ROD) by next year.

Additional updates were provided on the recent efforts with both the Community Advisory Group (CAG) and Equity Advisory Group (EAG). (Slide 10) The EAG is meeting tonight, March 21, 2023, and will be a repeat of what is being heard today at the ESG. They are presenting an equity profile on the lift span bridge option and discussing how this affects those who work at night.

Administrator Johnson highlighted that he had successful meeting with the Just Crossing Alliance, a partnership of organizations focused on environment and sustainable solutions. The program will continue to meet with this group; they are in support of the project and seeing it through completion.

FINANCE UPDATE

Assistant Program Administrator Frank Green provided a finance update (slide 12). This year the program will be looking to move forward the finance plan which allows them to begin submitting to the identified grant programs. He noted the finance plan is a dynamic plan and the program plans on turning over every rock to find the appropriate funding to help with the success of the project.

Slide 13 covered the building blocks of the cost estimate and what elements are included in this cost. As previously stated, the program is focused on a total construction cost of \$6 billion. Slide 14 is a new slide that shows a breakdown of the cost estimate and where those specific costs will be applied within the design. He asked that the ESG look at this each breakdown is a “bucket” of funding:

- A. Washington Interchanges (\$.99-\$1.49 billion)
- B. Transit Investments (\$1.32-\$1.99 billion)
- C. Interstate Bridge Replacement and Approaches (\$1.64-\$2.45 billion)
- D. Oregon Interchanges (\$1.05-\$1.57 billion)

Slide 15 has been a reoccurring slide that outlines the different funding sources and the potential from each. The program has updated this table by now including a column that shows the status as they move forward with acquiring the needed funding.

Slide 16 highlights that the program will move forward with considering a variable toll rate that the program needs from tolls. The range, depending on the time of day, is \$1.50 to \$3.55 per passenger vehicle, which yields about \$1.24 billion in funding to meet the needs of the financial plan. Assistant Program Administrator Frank Green noted that there is still a lot to do to complete the Level II Transportation Needs Study (TNR) study and looking at other scenarios in conjunction with the commissions from each state.

Slide 17 discusses the federal funding updates for the three grant opportunities that the program will be applying for this year.

Executive Director Curtis Robinhold (Port of Portland) asked about the range of tolling that is being considered noted, at the time of opening. He understood this would be for pre-completion tolling as well or this not considered part of the modeling. Assistant Program Administrator Frank Green responded by saying that yes, this would be pre-completion tolling as well as the more permanent tolling on opening day. The program does anticipate periodic escalation in toll pricing, but this would be something the program will determine with each State’s commission. The \$1.50 to \$3.55 range is the anticipated toll on opening day.

Commissioner Jack Burkman (Port of Vancouver) asked about low-income toll program and wanted to know if the \$1.50 to \$3.55 was inclusive of options for low-income users? Assistant Program Administrator Frank Green responded by stating that this has not been included in the recent scenario analysis but as the program moves forward this will be a continued discussion with the two state commissions. He added the \$1.24 billion generated from tolling is conservative.

Executive Director Matt Ransom (RTC) opined that his understanding was that pre-completion tolling was studied in the previous program. He asked if it was a policy issue for the commissions and if the program was running multiple scenarios? He also asked if the program was running scenarios with and without tolling? Assistant Program Administrator Frank Green stated that right now the program is assuming pre-completion tolling in all of the scenarios but different scenarios will look at different rates and the inclusion of a low-income program. The program is looking at six or seven different scenarios in Level II TNR. Right now, the

program is looking at a financial plan perspective and the benefits pre-completion tolling. This will allow them to test the toll rate to help inform their studies.

Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle (City of Vancouver) requested that the program “go big” on their funding asks when approaching the different federal funding grant opportunities.

Assistant Program Administrator Frank Green continued by stating that the program is setting themselves up to be as competitive as possible when approaching the Capital Investment Grant. He then reviewed slide 18 which covers the next steps for funding.

Executive Director Matt Ransom (RTC) clarified that the cost of \$6 billion is not today’s dollars but the future cost, taking inflation into consideration. He stated that he feels really good about the approach, and it seems reasonable. Assistant Program Administrator Frank Green confirmed what was said was accurate based on a 10-year construction period, concluding in year 2035.

Commissioner Mingus Mapps (City of Portland) asked when and where does the program and partners discuss the low-income programs for tolling. Assistant Program Administrator Frank Green responded that the program needs to create an engagement and coordination with both commissions. The program will be conducting a study and looking at the different programs, including low-income programs, that will be part of the traffic and revenue study and determine the right public process to support the commissions moving forward.

Administrator Johnson added that both DOT’s are looking at drafting low-income tolling policies and the program will be looking nationally at other tolling programs as examples. When they complete the NEPA process, they hope to have a better assessment of low-income tolling.

DRAFT SEIS PROCESS AND NEXT STEPS

Environmental Lead, Angela Findley, began her presentation with an update on the NEPA process and where the program is within the process. The focus today will be on the Modified LPA and No build alternatives that are being evaluated. Slide 20 covered the Modified LPA and its elements including the different design options and where there are some decisions pending.

In the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), the program is working to identify where the options are and their associated impacts and benefits so that when the public reviews the Draft SEIS, they can understand the trade-offs of the different options. This will allow the public to make informed comments.

Slide 21 further outlined the modified LPA and design options that are being studied within the Draft SEIS.

Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle (City of Vancouver) stated her appreciation to the bullets under design options on slide 20. This shows a comprehensive approach to conveying to the community that the SR500 Corridor might look different and what the potential design components might be.

Slide 22 provided the timeline for the SEIS. Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle (City of Vancouver) highlighted that the timing for the distribution of the Draft SEIS for public review plus the 60-day public comment period should not extend past December 15th. Administrator Johnson and Environmental Lead, Angela Findley, noted that the public will have the full 60 days, not including the holiday period, to review and provide feedback.

Administrator Johnson followed by reviewing slide 23 with the partners that provided an overview of upcoming engagements the program has leading up to the release of the Draft SEIS. He also asked the partners if they had any engagements coming up that would require the program's attendance and participation.

URBAN DESIGN OVERVIEW

Urban Design Lead, Nolan Lienhart, opened by stating that over next 18-24 months, the team will be launching into the urban design process. Through this effort, the program and partners will further develop concepts for what the built elements will look like and how they will relate to the many unique places within the corridor. This team has already begun to engage the CAG and the EAG.

Slide 26 provided a holistic conceptual urban design graphic that represents the different systems that fit together. Slide 27 provided the urban design focus area within both the Portland and Vancouver areas. He noted that around all of the identified focus areas, there was a larger "bubble" around the entire area. This represents addressing the issues of equity and climate at a corridor level.

This team will be building off of what the program has already established for the purpose and need, vision and values, and desired outcomes, slide 28. The urban design team will be working with the stakeholders to help translate these ideas into urban design specific goals which will be used to inform the development of urban design concepts. Slide 29 provides the initial ideas for defining urban design goals. These will help stimulate discussion and the team anticipates there being more. The goals will be refined as they continue to meet with staff from the program's partners.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Lead Facilitator Millicent Williams opened the floor for public comment. Brent reported that there were no hands raised. Ms. Williams continued by thanking everyone for their participation in today's meeting.

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

Lead Facilitator Millicent Williams thanked everyone for their time and noted that the program has changed the frequency of the meetings from what was originally established. Moving forward the meetings will be scheduled based on the information that is available for the program to share. The next meeting is scheduled

for May and the program will be reaching out to establish a date/time that works for everyone. She ensured that information will still be forthcoming through written format and communication with the partners' staff at the various meetings.

Administrator Johnson discussed the outreach and communication plans to ensure the right amount of information is being shared. He added that a Bi-State [Legislative Committee] meeting is being scheduled and is looking to be a three-hour session on a Saturday.

CAG Co-Chair Ed Washington asked the program to consider doing another bridge tour meeting with the CAG as the previous one was so successful and recommended this summer. This could also be extended the ESG members.

Before closing Lead Facilitator Millicent Williams acknowledged a request to schedule an in-person option for upcoming ESG meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 2:49 p.m.

MEETING RECORD AND MATERIALS

Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here:

<https://youtu.be/JrfkCvirFzs>

The meeting materials are available here:

<https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/esg-march-21-2023-meeting/>