

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #10

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

Subject: Community Advisory Group Meeting #10 Summary

Date and Time: November 4, 2021 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

WELCOME AND OUTCOMES

Lynn Valenter, CAG co-chair, welcomed the group and Lisa Keohokalole Schauer, CAG co-facilitator, reviewed the technical instructions for the meeting and the agenda.

BRIDGE STORIES

Lynn introduced the [bridge story video](#) featuring CAG member, Irina Phillips.

PROGRAM UPDATE

Greg Johnson, IBR program administrator, provided a brief update on the program and an explanation on why the October meeting was canceled. Greg let the group know that while the Bi-State Legislative Committee and Executive Steering Group have seen the preliminary list of design options and screening criteria nothing has been removed to ensure CAG has an opportunity to provide feedback.

Question and Answer

CAG Member: what feedback was given from the bi-state legislative committee?

- Greg: the Bi-State committee was very complimentary and very appreciative of how IBR reflects the changes to the area since CRC. They were very enthusiastic about what had been presented

CAG Member: thank you to Lynn Valenter for abstaining in the ESG meeting as CAG had not yet seen materials. When looking at the 68% who say congestion is the major issue, do we have any idea of the time saving that will occur?

- Greg: we will be running those models looking at what the time saving will be but it's important to remember that we are only a 5-mile corridor and have no control over some of the issues that drive congestion. Our goal is to make sure this 5-mile corridor operates as efficiently as possible.

ADVISORY GROUP AND WORKPLAN UPDATE

John Willis, Deputy Program Manager, reviewed the program workplan and updated scheduling, emphasizing that the workplan is still a draft as the program continues to shift. He shared that early next year, the program anticipates having an initial technical recommendation with the best performing solution based on a variety of criteria and data, including equity and climate criteria. In early 2022, the program will ask the CAG for feedback on the technical recommendation before the solution goes to ESG. The goal is to have alignment on the local adopted IBR solution in the spring leading into the form NEPA process.

Question and Answer

CAG Member: why is there an arrow at October when we are in November? Is that since we missed a meeting and is everything pushed back a month as a result?

- John: this graphic should have been updated, and I apologize that it's not, we will be combining the October and November materials for a very packed meeting tonight.

Lynn: just because CAG stops on the graphic in March, that's not when we are released from service, correct?

- John: Correct, all these groups continue throughout the program; the charge may change but for now we are holding everyone to their two-year commitment.

COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Kayla Dunn, from the IBR Communications Team, provided an overview of the four community working groups and how community participants were selected for the groups. These groups are focusing on active transportation, downtown Vancouver, Hayden Island/Marine Drive, and the multimodal commuter.

Jasmine Tolbert, CAG Member, serves as a liaison to the Downtown Vancouver working group and shared how the group discussed their hopes for the bridge and how the group will influence the bridge design.

Victor Caesar, CAG Member, serves as a liaison to the multimodal commuter working group and shared about his experience and how the group did an exercise mapping out how they commuted prior to COVID-19.

DESIRED OUTCOMES & SCREENING CRITERIA PROCESS UPDATE

Angela Findley, IBR Environmental Team, shared that the team is moving toward the IBR solution. She began by reviewing a timeline of what's been done, and where the team is currently. The list of desired outcomes were shared, which were developed from the program priorities including purpose and need, climate, equity, and cost/financing. She then shared how the screening criteria will be used to look at the tradeoffs of different design options. The CAG's role in the screening is reviewing design options and providing feedback, providing feedback that informs the screening matrices and performance measures, and sharing input with the Executive Steering Group.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF DESIGN OPTIONS

Brad Phillips, IBR Design Lead, shared how design options have been created in response to changes in the program area. He clarified that active transportation, and high-capacity transit (HCT) is included in all options for the program, though are not emphasized in all graphics. He shared the three options for the bridge crossing over the Columbia and Alignment:

1. 2013 locally preferred alternative option
2. Straight alignment option
3. Stacked alignment option

The two options for downtown Vancouver:

1. The 2013 Locally Preferred Alternative
2. Option with stacked crossing

The options for Hayden Island and Marine Drive interchanges:

1. Full interchange
2. Partial interchange
3. No interchange

Brad then shared the different alignment options for four Light rail transit options, three bus rapid transit options, and one combined light rail transit and bus rapid transit option.

Question and Answer

CAG Member: regarding the Hayden Island interchange, there is an assumption in all presentations that there will be no interchanges, that then necessitates, two distinct local access bridges and I don't understand why that is true? When we started these conversations, we talked about how the impact area extends all the way south to Columbia boulevard so I'm also wondering if there will be any updates to the Columbia Blvd and Delta Park intersections as those have not been discussed yet. I would like to plug a northbound access ramp from Columbia Blvd to I-5 to relive freight traffic from Marine Drive.

- Brad: there is a substantial volume of traffic trying to access Hayden Island, there is also a significant volume of traffic using Marine Drive. When combined that is too much traffic for one intersection. By looking at having two local access bridges, we are testing whether that disperses enough that the intersections can handle the traffic volume. To your second question, in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) there were some braided ramps between Victory Boulevard and Marine Drive and at some point those were cut out and I'm unsure of all the reasons. We have not talked too much about adding them back in but it would not impact the decisions and level of design we are working on now.

CAG Member: We cannot afford to overbuild this bridge and the interchanges due to equity, climate, and cost. Is there any analysis, or numbers, on how tolling may impact the building of those interchanges?

- Brad: that analysis will certainly be done. We are working on the preliminary numbers now and in 2022 we will have much more information on tolling's impact in the corridor and what that means.

CAG Member: I'm flabbergasted that we are considering no interchanges on Hayden Island. There's already been the decision that there will only be 3 lanes, so you're going to send people back to exits 306a and 306b, 307 and 308 between 2 and 6 in the afternoon as there is a huge amount of traffic there in the afternoon. Three through lanes is going to be a huge problem unless you remove a lot of interchanges and entrances onto the freeway farther back to exit 304.

- Brad: the screening we will be doing will be looking at traffic to understand those concerns.

CAG Member: I would like to know how we will define "right-sizing" the bridge and for what time period. My perspective and from discussions we've had, is that we're trying to build a bridge to last the next 100 years. My other question is how are we looking at the cost for building additional bridges for Hayden Island? Is that part of the calculation? Will building additional bridges cost more than building ramps off the bridge?

- Brad: that will all be components in the screening. We don't have that information now but are developing it so that the information will be available. Comparing to ramps, it would depend on the width and square footage of the bridge.

CAG Member: on Columbia Blvd, looking at Hayden Meadows, it has become a transportation hub for amazon and other big trucking companies with lots of freight moving around the area. If it does have a bottleneck, it will be getting on and off I-5. So, I think we need to look at further down and not just right off Marine Drive.

CAG Member: Sorry if I missed it, but at the North Portland Harbor Bridge, all interchange options include replacing that bridge, isn't that a railroad bridge?

- Brad: No, it's an I-5 bridge between North Portland and Hayden Island.

CAG Member: what is the ask here? Just looking at all these designs it seems like analysis paralysis. So, if you are looking for input it would be helpful to have a table benchmarking each table against key goals.

- Brad: all the things you're mentioning, are the things we are putting in the screening and will be available at the end of the screening process.

Lisa Keohokalole Schauer: there was some discussion around how this is an iterative process and we felt strongly not having the analysis done, ready to go through all the screening didn't mean we shouldn't share where we are at with the design options. This meeting is really focused on being as transparent as possible about where we are in the design process without conclusions being made.

CAG Member: I'm wondering if we have flexible models of how time saving will change depending on what factors were modified. I appreciated the screening pieces, but I didn't see much on how equity is included. Can equity be weighted or emphasized? Assuming what we want to do is make an equitable project - as I want the best options for those least able to be flexible about their transit. On the LRT in the last set of slides, do the further stops lead to more people taking transit and increase ridership?

- Johnell Bell, CAG Co-Facilitator: the EAG has spent about 3 months helping develop the equity specific screening criteria, only some of which you saw this evening. Following their vote last meeting to advance the equity screening criteria, they wrote a letter also advocating to weight the equity screening.
- Brad: how many riders are provided access and the speed of travel are part of the screening and the numbers are being developed now.

Lynn: are the yellow circles proposed stations for LRT?

- Brad: there are three yellow circles on the graphic at Expo, Turtle Place and McLoughlin, there should be one at Kiggins Bowl but it goes off the graphic, and are representations of approximate of station locations and termini.

CAG Member: I'm really looking forward to seeing how the screening criteria align with the purpose and need.

- Angela: we have started to match the screening criteria with the purpose and need, climate and equity so that might be something we bring back in the future.
- Johnell: the EAG is working on the equity framework and part of that will be operationalizing that to help guide the program toward equitable outcomes.

CAG Member: if the HCT can bypass all traffic that would really entice people to use those services and make them much more enticing for people to utilize.

CAG Member: Greg and I had the opportunity this week to do some press conferences with high school and university students in the Portland/Vancouver Metro area and something that was very impactful to those students is that we are building this bridge to create other transportation options and get people out of their single occupancy vehicles onto different modes of transportation that weren't an opportunity before. Also, from the commuter working group, people are really looking to not have to transfer, which is important for people in Vancouver who want to take transit.

Lynn: I think this will be in future analysis but in terms of the height of the bridge and walkability/bike-ability of access ramps, those are all things that will be studied?

- Brad: they were heavily studied in previous planning with lots of community input. On the bridge that input resulted in multiuse paths being on the lower level and east side so its shaded and less wind. The question is do we revisit those or is it okay to take off from where we left off? As far as the height, there will continue to be studies because it's a long way to travel and it means a lot for the comfort of riders who want to use this bridge and we want to make it as pleasant as possible.
- Angela: the height of the bridge is a thread the needle situation from a vertical perspective as we have requirements from the US Coast Guard to manage and for navigation but then on the upper side, we have Pearson Airfield which has an airspace restriction and we need to consider at what height does the bridge become a hazard to that airspace. We are working with federal agencies such as the FAA and the Coast Guard on the height of the bridge. But where pedestrians and bicyclists are to navigate that grade there are some options there.

CAG Member: In terms of grade for height, and bike/ped there is also a consideration for grade a light rail train can achieve.

CAG Member: Looking at the lines on the map it's hard to see all the details and how the bridge is designed and how it will impact the navigation channel. I assume we will get more of those structural details later.

- Brad: there is a tremendous amount of additional detail that we will get to.

RECENT AND UPCOMING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Lisa reviewed the recent and upcoming community engagement activities. The IBR team held 9 elevating equity listening sessions, awarded 11 small scale low barrier grants to community-based organizations, launched an online open house, and 4 community working groups.

WHAT'S NEXT, PUBLIC COMMENT

Johnell Bell then reviewed the upcoming meeting dates, including the [EAG on November 15](#), and topics for the next [CAG meeting on December 2](#).

Public Comment

Commenter [1:49:28]: This is David Rowe I live in Battleground. I am a commuter to Lake Oswego. The headline on the IBR program website is a modern connection to the growing community. The IBR program design is 1960s highway transit. The IBR solution does little to reduce global warming and does not reduce commute time. The replacement for the I-5 bridge needs more than just one corridor. Vancouver is not the only growing community that relies on the Columbia river Crossing. Ridgefield, La Center, Battleground, and Washougal are all growing faster than Vancouver. These expanding communities have common corridors with railroads that cross the Columbia River. A commute time could be 15 minutes across the Columbia river. A commute time could be 15 minutes from Vancouver to Portland if regional rail transit were an alternative to the I-5 bridge. The transit options presented are Light Rail Transit which would be a commute time of 30 minutes while Bus Rapid Transit would be 25 to 30 minutes to get into Portland. Regional Rail crossing is 15 minutes. But battery powered rail transit would be less costly to build than freeway and light rail expansion. Regional rail can solve equity and environmental issues. The IBR program needs to seriously consider more options than what is presented today. Irena commented at the beginning of tonight's program and I think she would love a regional rail system given how popular regional rail is in Europe. Thank you.

WRAP UP AND THANK YOU

Lynn thanked CAG members for their continued engagement and authentic perspectives as the program continues to move forward. The meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

CAG Members or Alternatives

Attendees	Organization
Andrew Hoan	Portland Business Alliance
Bill Prows	Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs
Dena Horton	Pacific Northwest Waterways Association
Diana Nuñez	Oregon Environmental Council
Ed Washington	Co-Chair
Irina Phillips	At-Large Community Member
Jana Jarvis	OR Trucking Association
Jasmine Tolbert	Vancouver NAACP
Javier Navarro	At-Large Community Member
Jeffery Temple	Fred Meyer
Julie Doumbia	At-Large Community Member
Kevin Perkey	Workforce SW WA
Lynn Valenter	Co-Chair
Marcus Mundy	Coalition for Communities of Color
Mark Riker	At-Large Community Member
Martha Wiley	WA Transit Representative
Michael Kelly	Human Services Council
Mikaela Williams	At-Large Community Member
Randali Desantos-Benromdhane	At-Large Community Member
Robert Camarillo	At-Large Community Member
Ryan Webb	The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Sam Kim	At-Large Community Member
Sarah Hall	At-Large Community member
Sheri Call	WA Trucking Association
Thomas W. Gentry	At-Large Community member
Tom Hickey	Bridgeton Neighborhood Association
Victor Cesar	Public Transit Representative, Oregon
Whitney Mosback	Cowlitz Indian Tribe

Facilitators and Presenters

Attendees	Organization
Jason Hagen	IBR Program Staff
Greg Johnson	IBR Program Administrator
Johnell Bell	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator
John Willis	IBR Deputy Project Manager
Brad Phillips	IBR Design Lead
Angela Findley	IBR Program Staff, Environmental
Kayla Dunn	IBR Program Staff, Communication
Lisa Keohokalole Schauer	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator

Additional Participants

18 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 RECORDING AND MATERIALS

Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3K4nmjJFnM>

Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available here: <https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/cag-nov-4-2021-meeting/>.