

MEETING SUMMARY

Subject: Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting #30

Date and Time: Thursday, November 9th, 2023 / 4:00 – 6:00pm

Location: Zoom Meeting and YouTube Livestream

Number of concurrent YouTube viewers: 47

OUTCOMES

- Develop an understanding of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and discuss how to navigate the document effectively.
- Learn about the public comment process and suggest ways to improve public engagement strategies.

WELCOME

Lisa Keohokalole Schauer, CAG Co-Facilitator, welcomed CAG members to the meeting and introduced Lynn Valenter and Ed Washington, CAG Co-Chairs. Lisa reminded members to create a welcoming atmosphere, center the space, and previewed the agenda. Lynn Valenter extended a warm welcome to our new member, Jay Clark, representing the Portland Business Alliance joined CAG for the first time. CAG members were encouraged to introduce themselves by responding to the prompt: *what is something that brought you joy this month?*

PROGRAM UPDATE

Greg Johnson, Program Administrator, provided IBR program updates. He mentioned that IBR hosted a program tour in October for advisory group members that was well attended. The purpose of tours is to give participants a better understanding of some of the challenges bridge users face. On Nov. 8, IBR the Oregon Transportation Commission for a tour of the program area to enhance their understanding as well. Positive feedback was received from the Commission, given their limited prior knowledge of geographical and spatial challenges associated with the program.

Next, Johnson shared the names of various groups that have recently received an IBR presentation, including the Vancouver Transportation and Mobility Commission, Association of General Contractors, Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO), Pacific NW Waterways Association, City of Portland Historic Landmarks and Design Committee, and three neighborhood associations. He noted that the City of Portland Historic Landmarks and Design Committee holds significant importance in determining how designs will be integrated into the community.

Johnson shared that the program hosted a Contractor Meet and Greet on Nov. 8, with over 50 attendees. This event offered an opportunity for disadvantaged businesses, small businesses, and prime contractors to learn about how IBR is constructing this program, the approach to determining construction package sizes, and the type of delivery method we will be implementing. IBR staff will also be traveling to Tacoma to meet with Tabor 500, a nonprofit which convenes small businesses and minority-owned businesses in the Tacoma/Seattle area.

Johnson shared that the Bi-State Legislative Committee meeting was held on Nov. 3, with two additional meetings scheduled for this fall, on Nov. 28 and Dec. 15. These meetings provide program updates and give the Committee an opportunity to seek clarification.

Lastly, Johnson noted that a sub-consultant is currently studying enterprise-related construction staging, construction package sizing, and delivery methods for effective program delivery. Rather than putting out one large contract for construction, the program is aiming to establish upwards of 20 different contracts to open up opportunities for small, medium, and large businesses to benefit from upcoming opportunities.

Discussion Notes:

CAG member: Where are we at with permitting and dealing with some of the regulatory challenges for this project?

- Johnson: We are currently working on the Coast Guard permit. We are working with impacted river users who have historically needed clearance greater than the 116 feet previously proposed. During previous planning efforts, we reached agreement on a 116-foot fixed span. Now, based on Coast Guard comments and preliminary navigation findings, we have included a moveable span in the federal environmental analysis. We are also working with the US Army Corps of Engineers to receive permits to modify shipping channels and modify levies on the south side of the river. We are on schedule and plan to have the Coast Guard permit secured by early to mid-2026.

CAG member: During a recent program tour, there was discussion about the possibility of having virtual reality or simulation opportunities so people can see what the bridge would look like in terms of size and scope. Can you give an update about when some of those might be available for us to experience?

- Greg: We are considering two approaches. Some will involve a virtual reality drive-through of certain areas of the program. Others will offer more in-depth 3D renderings, providing more scope of the landing areas of the bridge itself as it lands on Hayden Island and touches down in Vancouver. We hope to have these ready in late December, or early January, before releasing the Draft SEIS.

CAG member: I imagine much of the Bi-State Legislative Committee involves reporting activity and choices; but did they have any directives for you that you can share?

- Greg: The committee had several areas of feedback. One was regarding the program schedule and whether we were still on schedule. Originally, the Draft SEIS was scheduled for release in December,

however, some of the reviews and the interaction with our federal partners have pushed it into the first quarter of 2024. The committee was also interested in the preparation of the community on both sides of the river to provide input on the Draft SEIS. It was a good opportunity to present our community engagement approach and some of the innovative strategies we are implementing. They were also interested in federal grant applications and when we will be hearing back. We let the committee know that in September, we submitted our mega grant application, and we are currently receiving feedback. A few questions were raised by the USDOT regarding the application, and we have answered them. By the end of January, we hope to hear back regarding the \$600 million grant. The Bridge Improvement Program (BIP) grant of \$1.2 billion is currently being prepared. Our final grant application is for a Capital Improvement Grant from the Federal Transit Administration. We were recently granted the ability to proceed into the next phase of the application which will span two years.

CAG member: I was interested to hear you talk about a movable section of the bridge because I thought that was one of the things you were trying to avoid. Is that something you talked about at the recent program tour?

- Greg: The federal partners requested that we incorporate a moveable span option into the bridge this past February. It is not a separate alternative; it is a design option. We are studying potential impacts of the moveable span, but we have heard from several partners that it is not the preferred option. It is not desired by local transportation partners, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration.

DRAFT SEIS

Angela Findley, IBR Environmental Lead, provided an update on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). A key objective of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is to define the IBR program's purpose and need and develop potential solutions by evaluating design impacts. Through that evaluation, IBR will be able to make informed decisions and select a preferred alternative to advance to further design and construction. The program is preparing a Draft SEIS because IBR is supplementing the work that was done previously and considering changes in the physical environment and demographics in the last 10 years. The problem statement was adopted from previous work because the six needs identified are still issues today. The six needs include congestion, public transit connectivity, active transportation, seismic resiliency, freight, and safety. In the Draft SEIS, two alternatives are being evaluated. One is the Modified Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) and a No-Build alternative. The modified LPA is based on conceptual design, not final design. It identifies the key components we are proposing within the program corridor. The results of the analysis will be published in the Draft SEIS, which will be available for public review and comment. After the public comment period, refinements will be made and a Final SEIS will be published and the federal Record of Decision (ROD) will identify the selected alternative to move into design and construction.

The Modified LPA vs. No-build alternatives analysis is a comparison between improvements vs. no action. The Modified LPA is investigating a variety of design options. The program is looking at the benefits and impacts of each alternative and considering future population growth or other future conditions.

The Draft SEIS will provide a summary of the full report at the beginning. The first main chapter will lay out the purpose and need statement and the problems this program is addressing. Next will be a full description of the two alternatives and the process of identifying them. The next chapter will be broken up into discipline-specific subsections related to the environmental impact analysis. The last two chapters will include a financial analysis summary and section 4F evaluation which is an analysis of recreational, wildlife, and historic resources as required by the USDOT. Finally, there will be an appendix section that will include full technical reports associated with the various sections within the report itself.

Findley described key components of the modified LPA using a graphic representation of the program corridor. On the Portland side, this includes aspects such as light rail facilities, the potential Expo Center Station Overnight Facility, and the reconfiguration of the Marine Drive Interchange. Other notable points included replacement of the North Portland Harbor bridge, transit improvements on Hayden Island, and improvements between Hayden Island and Downtown Vancouver. Findley also highlighted considerations for a Vancouver waterfront station park and ride, the north terminus of a Yellow Line Max at Evergreen Blvd, and improvements planned at Mill Plain, Fourth Plain and the SR 500 interchanges.

During this stage, IBR is considering impacts to wetlands, air quality, and various neighborhood improvements outlined in the Draft SEIS. This evaluation uses both quantitative and qualitative analysis. This may include, for example, looking at the design footprint and how it overlays on neighborhoods and delineated wetlands. The team is also looking at long-term and permanent impacts, short-term and construction related impacts, indirect environmental or future impacts, and impacts in combination with other projects. Lastly, when there are adverse impacts that IBR is unable to avoid, mitigation measures are identified in line with best practices and legal requirements.

Findley addressed the role of the CAG during this phase of work. She highlighted that information will be shared in the next few CAG meetings and CAG members should aim to understand what the Draft SEIS is and what it contains so they can be a point of contact, share information and answer questions as they arise in the broader community they represent. CAG members will also play a role during the public comment period by promoting public reviews, providing comments on aspects they support or areas they feel need more work.

A variety of community engagement and outreach activities will be taking place up to the release of the Draft SEIS in early 2024. During the public comment period, members of the public will have the opportunity to meet with the program team and solicit additional information. The Final SEIS and ROD are anticipated to be completed between the end of 2024 or the beginning of 2025.

Finally, Findley shared upcoming decisions to get to the Final SEIS. In addition to the public comments and tribal consultation, decisions are still pending related to three bridge configurations, auxiliary lanes, C-street

on/off ramps and possible park and ride facilities. Those decisions will be made after the public comment period.

Discussion Notes:

CAG member: Thank you so much, this is really helpful information. Will the Community Advisory Group have a chance to preview and be able to explain [this] ourselves with our constituencies, or will we be subject to the same 60-day timeline as everyone else?

- Findley: IBR will work on getting information out about the Modified LPA, so people can view maps and design options, but the actual impact analysis will be available when the Draft SEIS is released for public review. We encourage people to come to meetings, public presentations, attend outreach events, and get information on the IBR website to help everyone understand what is being evaluated so they may be better prepared to provide comment.
- CAG member comment: I appreciate that, and my request is that IBR consider how to best equip CAG members and other members of the public during the 60-day period to process and prepare thoughtful comments. Thank you.

CAG member: Thank you, great presentation. Is it possible to have a map that shows what changes will be happening from the river perspective? For example, how and when the channel will be realigned and the different options so folks from our constituency understand what it looks like from below the bridge.

- Findley: Yes, we will have graphics from that perspective available. The navigation community is also interested in those resources.

CAG member: In addressing the comment about giving CAG members extra time, is it possible to look at the technical reports in the Draft SEIS before they are open to the public?

- Findley: While the technical reports are near completion now, they will not be finalized until the Draft SEIS is released to the public. Unfortunately, we are not able to release that information before the entire document is available for public review. However, we will take time at upcoming meetings to help prepare you for the release.

CAG member: I'm interested in how you will be addressing climate change. There was a section titled "Climate Change" so I'm assuming that is part of your analysis.

- Findley: Yes, the analysis is looking at climate exchange, resiliency, greenhouse gas emissions, materials during construction, and construction techniques to look at a full range of climate-related issues. This is a new section and was not included in the previous work. Equity is another set of analysis that will be included, which was not included previously.

CAG member: When you say resiliency does that mean how the project will be affected by climate change? You mentioned how the project may impact climate change, but I'm interested in the opposite – how climate change might affect the project.

- Findley: Yes, for example if there are larger storms that happen during the winter with higher flows of water. How do we design and build a bridge that will withstand higher loads of current and potentially increased water levels.

CAG member: I have a question about visual impacts. We talked about possible simulations and when those might be available. Will those be available prior to the release of the Draft SEIS?

- Angela: Greg mentioned the virtual reality work which would be available prior to the release. We also have fixed-point simulations which will be included in our visual impact analysis in the Draft SEIS.
- CAG member: will you have something on the ground — for example, a balloon that visually demonstrates the height of the proposed bridge — or are you planning to have everything on paper or on the screen?
 - Findley: We haven't gotten quite that far. We will have resources available on paper and on screen. Other types of markers can be considered by our team. That's a great suggestion, thank you.

Johnson responded to the point related to climate resiliency. He explained that roadside plantings are also being considered, potentially native species that can survive in a freeway environment. The team is also looking to plant trees so we can create shade around the bridge and interchanges. Lastly, an enclosed drainage system for the roadway is also being considered to address adverse environmental and wildlife impacts from the current design.

CAG member: My concern is the massive data dump that is going to happen at the release of the Draft SEIS and the rush to analyze the information in the first month or so. This will leave about 30 days to have discussions. Have you identified or will you identify and preschedule conversations with key interested parties so it's no delay with moving the conversation? I'm concerned that by the time we move through the data, we spent half the period before there's a chance to have a conversation.

- Kimberly Webb, IBR Communications Lead: Thank you for the question, this is something the communications team has been pondering over the last several months. We have developed a plan that will help educate and inform people on what is being studied such as the types of data that individuals will get to see once the Draft SEIS is released. However, we will not be revealing details of the Draft SEIS.
- CAG member: My recommendation is that you get ahead of the curve and preschedule meetings with these interested parties so that there's not a long delay between the release of the data and the beginning of conversations.
- Webb: Noted. Thank you.

CAG member: I want to circle back to resilience. I thought the main reason for considering resilience is dealing with the seismic issues and the potential for the Cascadia earthquake and trying to make our infrastructure more resilient to national disasters, climate change, storm surges or other future natural disasters.

- Findley: Absolutely, that is one of the six needs identified in our problem statement. We are currently taking soil samples to understand geotechnical information to feed into the design of the structures. Seismic resiliency is a must have.

DRAFT SEIS PUBLIC COMMENT

Salomé Chimuku, Community Engagement Lead, and Kimberly Webb, Communications Lead provided an overview of the public comment process following the release of the Draft SEIS.

Chimuku explained that work is happening now to prepare the public for the information that will be released. She emphasized that submitting a comment during the formal public comment period is only way to provide input. Other methods for engaging will be available before and after the formal comment period. During the 60-day public comment period the program will record comments received and will provide a response to the comment in the Final SEIS, which is anticipated to be available in late 2024/early 2025. To submit a comment, members of the public can use the web comment form, email, mail, calling the IBR office and leaving a message, and/or submit comments at public meetings or briefings. Public comments can be left in multiple languages or non-verbal languages.

Webb detailed multiple approaches to informing the public about the upcoming Draft SEIS. This includes a diversity of advertising platforms, multimedia approaches, written tools, in person events, and through a variety of media outlets. Engagement leading up to the release of the Draft SEIS will focus on information related to core components of the Draft SEIS and create opportunities for community to provide input to help IBR understand information needs as people anticipate the report's release.

Chimuku presented upcoming engagement opportunities aimed at fostering public participation during the Draft SEIS public comment period. These initiatives include holding regular office hours, providing informative briefings and presentations, working closely with community-based organizations (CBOs), conducting literature drops and direct mail campaigns, participating in tabling at local events and gatherings, responding to web inquiries, and hosting an Equity Roundtable. Further, Chimuku explained that key audiences during this phase of engagement are equity priority communities, residents in the program area, property and business owners, neighborhood associations and current/future travelers over the bridge.

Chimuku shared the following names of CBOs currently participating in an IBR Mini-Grant Program: Cada Casa, Independent Living Resources, NAMI Southwest Washington, Odyssey World International Education Services, Partners in Careers, Sakura 39ers Youth Association, Slavic Community Center of NW, and the Soul District Business Association.

Discussion Notes:

CAG member: What is the Infobox?

- Chimuku: Infobox is short for information inbox. It is currently open for the public to submit questions or comments through the IBR webpage. The Infobox will stay open during the Draft SEIS public comment period.

CAG member: Are you planning to schedule a presentation to the public at a community center or library soon after the release of the Draft SEIS so we can receive a summary of the impact?

- Chimuku: Yes, we are actively emailing organizations to schedule presentations. We are also asking that groups email us directly to get presentations scheduled. We will continue to do outreach during the public comment period to help guide community members or groups to find the information they are looking for.

CAG member: This is a great plan, thank you. I just want to highlight that there will be a high volume of information coming and I suggest there is more of a marketing campaign so we can get a sense as to the number of people that are viewing or interacting with the information being provided.

- Chimuku: We will be hosting listening sessions, in collaboration with CBOs, so we can hear how to make the information that is coming feel relevant to what is important to them.
- Webb: Our communications plan does consider measurable objectives and we look forward to sharing those with you following the public comment period.

Johnson reminded the group that all the work that has been done recently is all part of IBR's effort to prepare the community for what is coming.

CAG member: Will the questions and comments that will be submitted by the public be compiled and reported out in real time?

- Findley: We are expecting thousands of comments. We will work quickly to summarize comment themes. Ultimately, the Final SEIS will include a summary of comment themes and responses to them. In the meantime, you will be provided periodic reports summarizing what is being heard.
- CAG member: I'm hoping some of that can happen during the comment period itself.
- Angela: Normally, the bulk of comments come in towards the end of the comment period. Reporting out early in the period might not be representative. But thank you for the suggestion.
- Johnson: This is a federally-owned process, and we are not able to change the fundamentals of it. We will see what flexibility we must address the need for information during this public comment period.

NEXT PROGRAM MEETINGS:

- Equity Advisory Group (EAG) on November 20, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- Bi-state Legislative Committee (BSLC) on November 28, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- Community Benefits Advisory Group (CBAG) on December 14, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Community Group (CAG) on December 14, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

- Community Advisory Group (CAG) on January 11, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

ATTENDEES

CAG Members

Attendees	Organization
Bill Prows	OAME
Darcy Hoffman	Workforce SW WA
Dena Horton	PNWA
Ed Washington	CAG Co-Chair
Gerina Hatch	Community in Motion
Irina Phillips	At-large Community Member
Jana Jarvis	Oregon Trucking Association
Jay Clark	Portland Metro Chamber
Julie Doumbia	At-large Community Member
Lynn Valenter	CAG Co-Chair
Martha Wiley	Public Transit Representative - WA
Mikaela Williams	At-large Community Member
Sam Kim	At-large Community Member
Sheri Call	Washington Trucking Association
Tom Hickey	Bridgeton Neighborhood Association

November 9, 2023

Attendees	Organization
Tom Sandhwar	At large Community Member
Ryan Webb	The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

Facilitators and Presenters

Attendees	Organization
Greg Johnson	IBR Program Administrator
Salomé Chimuku	IBR Community Engagement Lead
Lisa Keohokalole Schauer	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator
Johnell Bell	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator
Kimberly Webb	IBR Communications Lead
Angela Findley	IBR Environmental Lead

Additional Participants

- Fabian Hidalgo Guerrero, IBR CAG Lead

MEETING RECORDING AND MATERIALS

Meeting Recording

<https://youtu.be/-sIVQ3U6VzQ>

Meeting Materials

<https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/cag-november-9-2023-meeting/>