

EQUITY ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING #17

Date and Time: Monday, April 18th, 2022 5:30pm to 7:30pm

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

Number of concurrent YouTube viewers: 18

WELCOME

Dr. Roberta Hunte, EAG Facilitator, welcomed EAG members to the meeting, explained how to view closed captions, gave instructions for public input, and previewed the meeting agenda.

HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT OPTIONS: WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOU

Emilee Thomas Peralta, IBR equity team member, reviewed what feedback the program received from the EAG in response to the high-capacity transit (HCT) investment options shared in the previous meeting.

EAG Member: Other than the universal design I am not seeing many of the priorities or concerns related to the feedback received by communities with disabilities and I wonder if that information could be bolstered to reflect the diverse needs of not just those communities but the specific needs of the disability communities. I think one that specifically stuck out from the Communities with Disabilities Feedback Session was that the decision for HCT must reflect the need to connect Portland to east of I-5 in Vancouver as there is already enough infrastructure to get from downtown Vancouver to downtown Portland but there isn't really the infrastructure to get to Clark College per se. I don't feel like that was reflected enough as that was a very important piece of feedback that was received.

Jake Warr, IBR Equity Lead: That is certainly something that we will add to list when we package this feedback for Greg Johnson, program staff, and the Executive Steering Group (ESG).

EAG Member: If we're going back and looking at the feedback that was given on HCT going all the way to Clark College we should make sure we also include any points not just about it is going all the way to Clark College but also any concerns about stops along the way and any concerns about Hayden Island. Really just taking a look at the communities with disabilities' feedback overall.

Jake: Just to confirm you are referring to the listening session that was done with communities with disabilities last year?

EAG Member: That is correct. It would also be great to incorporate some of the direct testimony from folks who attended that session as I think that would speak strongly to our peers in other advisory groups.

EAG Member: I think the summary reflects the feedback that this group has provided. Two things I don't quite see reflected: 1) previously we've talked about paying attention to the overlap between the climate and equity objectives and ensuring they speak to each other. That was higher level feedback, but I believe it relates back to the transit investments. 2) I believe in the group that I was in we talked about affordability.

EAG Member: One of the things we talk about in community groups is what is accessible what is affordable, what would it look like to go fareless, what would it look to subsidize fares, what would it look like to make this truly accessible for various communities. We've talked about this in the context of going fareless regionally and I know that is something folks are very excited about, in a lot of different spaces it's something that could also work for something like this.

Jake: So basically, making sure as we are looking at making the HCT decision, we explore opportunities to improve affordability for riders?

EAG Member: Yeah, whether that's through some sort of pilot program or a phased in approach. Or exploring it as more funding becomes available, I think community members would be open to various options.

HAYDEN ISLAND/MARINE DRIVE DISCUSSION REDUX

Jake presented to the group on Hayden Island/Marine Drive improvements and interchange options.

EAG Member: Regarding the partial interchange, you talked about the possibility of a loss of floating homes?

Jake: Both options would displace some floating homes.

EAG Member: What would the compensation be to residents or owners with the increasing cost of living in this area?

Jake: My understanding is that residents would be compensated at market value and John who just popped on camera may be able to elaborate further.

John Willis, IBR Deputy Program Manager: As we decide what we are going to study we will take that into the NEPA process and look at impacts and Jake's point about market value is correct. There is a

negotiating process for anyone being displaced by the project. All that work will happen much further down the line, so it is hard for us to get into that now before NEPA.

EAG Member: First, Jake thank you for making the physical 3D model available. That was very helpful for trying to understand this complex presentation. I was able to share some of my observations with some mobility instructors from the School for the Blind and they would definitely like some more time to study the impacts, particularly in the wayfinding part, making sure there are very linear wayfinding paths. When talking about mixed use path are we being specific enough to say whether active transport and pedestrians would be using that same path in either scenario?

Jake: Yes, it would be open to both bicyclists and pedestrians. I know we haven't gotten into this level of detail of design, but I feel pretty confident that there would be a grade separation.

EAG Member: Will the mixed-use path be the same design that will go over the primary I-5 bridge and if not is there a plan to have it be a cohesive similar structure?

Jake: Yes, the standard of it would be the same and one of the highest standards of what a shared use path can look like and that would be consistent for the entire design.

John: That's right. We will have dedicated space for folks who are walking and rolling across the bridge. We will look for opportunities to give those paths space to be separate. At some points on the project there will be places where they mix due to spacing, say at an intersection or a crossing, but we have created in all of our options a lot of space for active transportation.

EAG Member: Have the HCT options already received equity scores? Are we giving equity scores on all these options? I also just assumed from the beginning we would be making a recommendation as an equity group and that's something I would like to understand better so I can best understand what is being asked of me.

Jake: The transit evaluation was slightly different as it went through a different screening process than Hayden Island/Marine Drive. But it went through a process of looking at 16, 17 different metrics and then an equity analysis was conducted looking at the residents that live within potential stations and access to jobs within certain time frames and looking at that for communities of color, low income, and people with disabilities and compared those across options. That was meant to be the equity analysis portion. On the recommendation piece, what we have been driving toward a compilation of EAG feedback that we will provide to the program across these various elements as opposed to a formal recommendation.

EAG Member: Just to make sure I am following along correctly, we are now collecting the feedback from these different parts, is that already happening? And will we get to look at the summary of this feedback before you submit it?

John: As we head into having the ESG make a recommendation we are looking for input from all our community groups, the EAG and CAG. Where we are today is still putting out the data for the components of the project. We will continue to have additional EAG meetings as we package up the draft recommendation that we are hoping to have done by May 5th. This will then work its way through the boards and councils of our partner agencies and by the time we get to June and July we will have a recommendation endorsed by those board and councils. Johnell and I can talk about what the EAG's role will be from June to July as we work on the LPA.

Johnell: I think additionally there will opportunities for us to hear from you whether we've gotten it right based on the feedback and equity framework we've developed with you. So as the program develops a preliminary recommendation, we will want to hear whether or not you concur and if there are areas that need additional stiffening.

John: Most importantly looking at the screening criteria we have developed we want to make sure the LPA checks the screening criteria you helped us develop.

EAG Member: I will say I get a little worried when I hear a date like May 5th. Coming from the perspective of someone on this committee I see a lot of stuff in the media on decisions that have already been honed in on. A lot of decisions that it felt like we would have time to sort through seem to be exponentially piling up and it getting to a point where decisions are expected. So, I just want to make sure the EAG process is being respected and if we are expected to have complete feedback in hand by May 5th I wonder if we are going too fast and need more time to sort through this. I just had a chance to put my hands on the Hayden Island interchanges aspect last week and I am still digesting it.

John: I think where we are headed to in July is the start of the process to give the team something to study in NEPA. This LPA can be thought of as a high-level decision throughout the region of what will be taken into NEPA to study. The LPA is not the end but the beginning of defining this program. It feels fast to the folks on the team as well. The draft LPA will be tweaked from May to July as well before we enter into the very public and structured federal NEPA process.

EAG Member: Is the CAG making a recommendation? How is their feedback being incorporated or summed up at this juncture?

Johnell: Their feedback is being synthesized in a similar fashion. The CAG has a list of values and we have been going through each of the elements and measuring them against their values.

John: They do have a little bit of a formal role with their two chairs being on the ESG as well.

EAG Member: I would like to then echo what was previously said about having the EAG affirm what ever is sent up into the process. We have done some of that but an opportunity to look at that synthesis would be appreciated.

Johnell: The modified LPA is that what you are referring to?

EAG Member: No, it is the synthesis of EAG's feedback, and I guess I am still not understanding the form of how that will be pulled together. As we get to whatever decision, being able to concisely say how it aligns with the feedback from the EAG is important.

Johnell: So, a Word document?

EAG Member: yes, something that we can use to affirm that our thoughts are captured correctly and review so that we know how our point of view was incorporated.

Jake: The intention is to have all of that presented in one place so yes.

Consensus was then given for the idea for a document that summarizes the thoughts of the EAG by the use of thumbs up or down reactions feature of Zoom or by group members turning on their cameras and giving a thumbs up or down. Everyone agreed that this sort of document would be appreciated.

AUXILIARY LANES PRESENTATION

Ryan LeProwse, IBR Transportation Planning lead, gave a presentation on ramp-to-ramp connections, also known as auxiliary lanes.

EAG Member: How are the number of crashes and the length that they congest the roadway in comparison to national averages? Are we above average for how many are occurring?

Ryan: I don't have national averages, but WSDOT and ODOT have comparisons though WSDOT no longer compares between facilities while ODOT still does. So according to ODOT we are three times higher than similar facilities. We have more interchanges and higher volumes.

EAG member: With the changes being proposed, how much do we think that crash data will shift, or be decreased?

Ryan: We are looking into that information. There are a lot of substandard features out there, such as substandard shoulders, so we will get back to you.

Jake: Where did the desired outcomes come from?

Ryan: They came from our project partners and are related to the over all purpose and need of the program.

Dr. Hunte then led the group in a discussion on two questions:

1. What connections do you see between the aux lane decision and equity?
2. What kinds of analysis would you recommend we conduct to evaluate these options from an equity perspective?

EAG Member: The first thing I think of when I see all these additional aux lanes, especially in Vancouver is where are they going to be built? A lot of that space, especially on the west side is all homes. So, are those homes going to be taken down? Are we building over them? How are those aux lanes going to be constructed and will they push those homes out of the spaces they currently reside in?

Ryan: For the most part, the northern section between Mill Plain and SR 500 is very similar. There may be some impacts, but we are keeping it within the right of way in order to minimize impacts given they already exist within that location. Obviously further design needs to occur in order to confirm that, but the goal is to remain within the right of way.

EAG Member: Could you describe what neighborhoods you're talking about in the Vancouver area?

EAG member: The first thing I think of for these specific auxiliary lanes is between Fourth Plain and Mill Plain on the west and east side. That section on both models is asking for more expansion on the east and west side. Fourth Plain is by the VA heading east. On the other side, it is heading into downtown, near the new fire station.

Jake pulled up google maps to home in on the area being discussed as well.

EAG Member: There are a lot of assumptions baked into this analysis, and there are going to be a lot of changes in our area in the next 20-25 years. I wonder if population of 1 in 5 people with disabilities going to 1 in 3 was taking into account when assessing? I understand we need auxiliary lanes of some sort, but I am

wondering environmental impact, displacement, people with disabilities, transportation increases, are all those things included in what we're looking at? Particularly the people with disabilities as those changes how many people are driving.

Ryan: A lot of this information is current; I think what you're getting at are the overall desired outcomes. Maybe there's some we missed that we should highlight.

Jake: My understanding of the model is that demographics are limited to income but besides that I don't think it is able to incorporate further info like changes in race or disability. So, a limitation of modeling to be sure. And on the aux lane piece that's really where we want to know that information and we are now being asked to think about.

EAG Member: It really shifts your thinking if you begin to follow it especially as this is a project that is trying to anticipate need for a long time moving forward. Disability rates are rising, number of drivers is lowering, and freight is another question mark in this whole process. So, I was thinking as an Equity Advisory Group how many aux lanes do we need to have to have the fewest displacements but maximum mobility.

EAG Member: Echoing what has been said on displacement impacts, but also impacts on the surrounding community as it sounds like aux lanes will be a bigger footprint the more there are. I am wrestling with the relationship between wanting to encourage HCT and making it easier to get on the highway, but we want to see improvement in travel time. Or maybe looking at the travel times through an equity lens like was done for transit.

Jake: I would love to be able to replicate what was done for transit. I don't think we have the data to do it in quite the same way as I don't think it has been modeled for driving in the same way as it was for transit. But there is modeling of the travel time differences in the corridor.

Ryan: We are working on pulling transit travel times from specific locations so that comparisons can be drawn between driving vs transit.

EAG Member: When you have data around travel time can you then do an analysis around environmental impact on emissions?

Ryan: Yes, we are planning on it. Trying to get it in a qualitative discussion and it will be looked at in the NEPA process as well.

EAG Member: We've talked about displacement already, and there's already a housing shortage. If folks are being displaced that is felt not only immediately in the area but more broadly in the community depending on how many folks are displaced.

Dr. Hunte: As you do the analysis around housing, I was wondering how affordable housing is impacted? And cheaper housing?

Jake: we will definitely study that.

EAG Member: I know we have data around where different folks live, where black folks live, of who is being displaced. I'm wondering when you create multiple aux lanes it increases the number of people you displaced but I am wondering if we can get specific enough to see who is being displaced.

Jake: We will have to see if we can get into that level of detail with available data. If we are talking about specific properties though we will be having detailed conversation with those property owners.

EAG Member: What about some sort of way to understand equity impacts from a ranking scale? I know the equity index you and others developed. At some point if you try to compare, you're going to be comparing climate to access to housing to accessibility. So maybe there is a way to score or rank things recognizing that there may be tradeoffs. If you scored things from an index, it may be one way to have the committee sort of vote. Does that make sense?

Jake: I think so. What that looks like and how that differentiates between the one lane vs two lane conversation, I would need to look into it more.

PUBLIC COMMENT

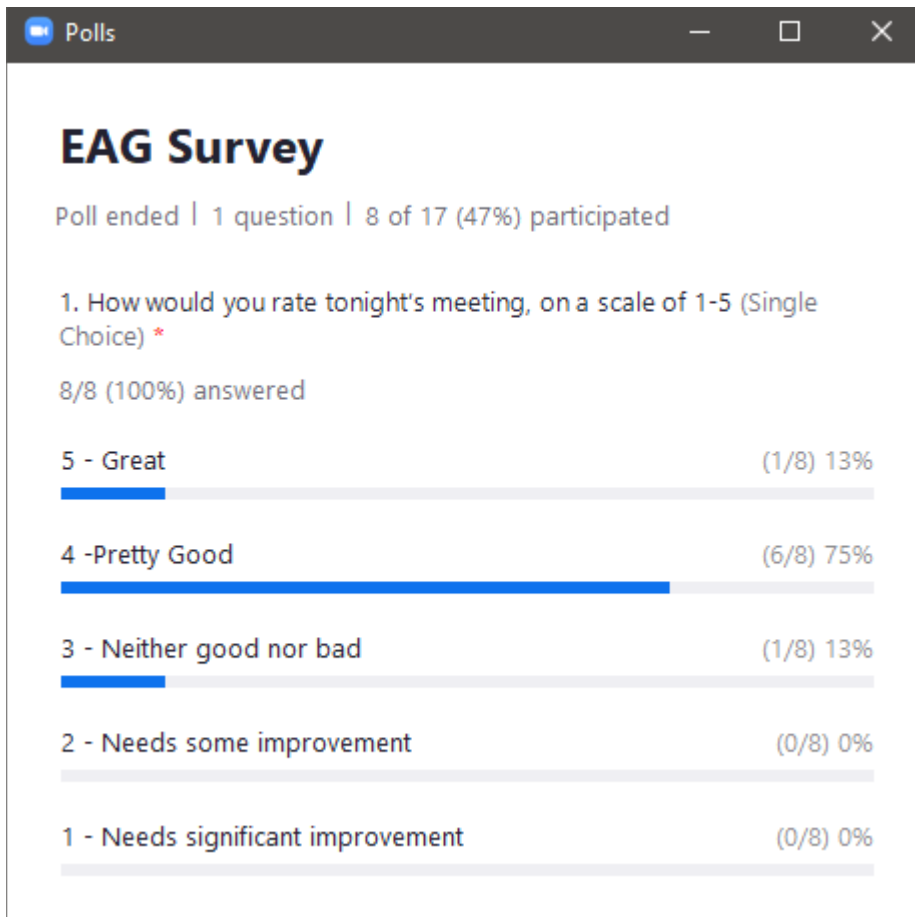
Dr. Hunte reviewed the instructions on how to make a public comment. There was no public comment.

WRAP UP

Dr. Hunte wrapped up the meeting by asking members to take the meeting evaluation poll and share two takeaways. An EAG member shared that they want to look into the auxiliary lane piece more. They felt they have heard many different points of view of how aux lanes impact communities and they want to look into

them more independently. Jake reminded the group that if there is anything they can do to make these meetings more engaging to please let him know.

MEETING EVALUATION POLL



ADJOURN

Dr. Roberta Hunte announced the next EAG meetings and what members can expect in the next session.

- Next EAG meeting: May 16th, 2022, 5:30pm-7:30pm
- Following EAG meeting: June 20th, 2022, 5:30pm-7:30pm

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

ATTENDEES

Attendees	Organization/Affiliation
EAG Members	
Hai That Ho Ton	Community member
Lee Helfend	Community member
Sharon Daleo	Portland Bureau of Transportation
Obie Ford III	WSU-Vancouver
Masha Egorenko	IRCO Slavic & Eastern European Center
Monica Tellez-Fowler	C-TRAN
Matt Serres	Disability Rights Oregon
Alicia Sojourner	City of Vancouver
Shona Carter	Community Foundation of SW Washington
Karyn Kameroff	Community member
Sebrina Owens-Wilson	Metro
Matt Hines	Community member
Meg Johnson	Community member
Mark Harrington	SW Washington RTC
Aidan Gronauer	WSDOT
IBR Staff	

Attendees	Organization/Affiliation
Jake Warr	Equity Lead
John Willis	Program Manager
Emilee Thomas Peralta	Equity Team
Johnell Bell	Principal Equity Officer
Brent Hamlin	Tech support
Dr. Roberta Hunte	Facilitator
Ryan LeProwse	Transportation/Planning Manager

MEETING RECORDING AND MATERIALS

Meeting Recording

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

Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available here: <https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/eag-april-18-meeting/>