

## EQUITY ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING #33

Date and Time: Monday, February 26, 2024, 5:30pm to 7:30pm

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

Number of concurrent YouTube viewers: 14

### 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.

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Ray Mabey, Assistant Program Administrator, provided IBR program updates and shared some recent milestones. He described several important recent visits to the program, including that of Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg. Ray described the Secretary's visit as welcoming and full of curiosity, including attending a roundtable event and bridge tour. Secretary Buttigieg described the IBR program as a phenomenal effort that aligns with the current administration's transportation goals. Ray shared that he hopes the Secretary's visit indicates potential positive outcomes for other pending federal grant applications.

Ray shared that Federal Highway Administrator, Shailen Bhatt, also recently visited the program. During Administrator Bhatt's visit, he toured the bridge, attended a presentation, and discussed the value of the environmental process prior to beginning construction. Ray reported that Administrator Bhatt had great interest in the program's approach to climate and equity.

Ray additionally shared that Senators Murray and Cantwell also requested a visit to the bridge. He stated that the Senators were provided a short tour of the mechanical room, as well as a roundtable event with local partners. The roundtable event was well-attended by media and partners, and it served to celebrate the \$600 million grant award. Senator Murray stated during her visit that she was ecstatic about the grant to the bridge, but that she strongly supported seeking funding for public transit components so that the bridge is accessible to everyone.

In addition to these visits, Ray stated that an Equity Roundtable was recently hosted on February 7<sup>th</sup>, which focused on equitable community engagement. The event was livestreamed and is available online at the IBR website. Panelists included representatives from the recent CBO mini-grant program cohort.

Ray also described industry engagement efforts, including a Small Business Roundtable, to discuss the program status. IBR representatives also met with APEX and Columbia River Economic Development Council to present initial thoughts on packaging for construction, workforce capacity, and DBE contracting.

He also stated that the program hosted the Association of General Contractors, including a program area tour and presentation. This helped the group understand the size and magnitude of the project, as they will be the ones responsible for building it.

Other community presentations include the Vancouver Innovation Technology and Art School to engage with some fifth-grade classes to get them excited about infrastructure. Ray also discussed the Bi-State Tolling Subcommittee, which is comprised of representatives from the Washington State Transportation Commission and Oregon Transportation Commission. The Subcommittee is tasked with studying and recommending toll rates and policies, to then bring them back to their respective Commissions for approval. The Subcommittee will meet monthly for the next 6 to 8 months, and the meetings are available to watch online. The links to attend the meetings will be on the IBR website.

Finally, Ray previewed the new Draft SEIS Webpage. He shared that the 60-day public comment period is important to the process and the website will inform people about how to access and provide comments for the document. He stated that the IBR program is trying to prepare the community and partners to provide feedback on the Draft SEIS, as public input is needed.

EAG Member question: *“Can you tell me more about engaging with the youth? What was the intention behind that? Was it just to get them excited or do we have ideas and game plans moving forward to how to incorporate them in this work?”*

Ray responded that it was to get them engaged and excited. He stated that the youth are too young to participate in the program as part of the workforce, but that the trades and STEM are fields that need young people to stay interested in.

EAG Member comment: *“It was an honor to meet Secretary Buttigieg. He was so genuine, knowledgeable, and approachable.”*

EAG Member comment: *“I agree. It was a really well put together Roundtable. I especially liked the comments made by our tribal leaders that were there. It was important for them to be there, front and center, and for the Secretary to hear directly from them.”*

Salomé Chimuku, Community Engagement Lead, shared additional information about youth outreach. She stated that many of the youth that have been engaged with were journalism students, so the event was treated as a press conference for them to practice. She shared that many students had questions about climate and equity, and we allowed students to come up with their own questions like a true media event. The event was attended by high school students from both sides of the river. Feedback from this event will be used in the planning for future multilingual events.

## EQUITY UPDATES

Erika McCalpine, Equity Team, provided equity updates. Erika thanked the EAG members for dedicating their time to the program and attending these events. Erika shared a recap from the December Visioning Exercise. This included items relating to avoiding further harm, incorporating community benefits into the program, workforce equity and economic opportunity, and mobility and accessibility.

In discussing avoiding further harm, Erika recapped the identified priorities as: emphasize reducing the program's environmental footprint, address concerns about tolling's impact on low-income individuals, focus on rectifying past mistakes such as I-5's impact on the landscape, facilitate accessible public comment for diverse communities, address food deserts and foster community connections through grassroots initiatives, emphasize the importance of diverse property purchasers and historical awareness, and aspire to eliminate environmental challenges and create iconic connections.

In discussing community benefits, Erika recapped the identified priorities as: align specific elements with CAG values and priorities, ensure sustainability both in cost and inclusiveness for a 100-year lifespan, explore solutions to eliminate the burden for vulnerable communities, clarify service area impacts and distances, explore equity-centered progress and include historically marginalized communities, connect the program vision to rewilding and nature, and again to address food deserts and foster community connections through grassroots initiatives.

Erika reviewed workforce equity and economic opportunity priorities as: create an aspirational program addressing Equity and Climate Framework guidance, discuss ranking current elements in terms of priority and impact, explore the future of communities in the program area after constructions, and simplify building code requirements for flexibility and development.

Erika recapped goals in mobility and accessibility as: connect transportation and communities with the bridge, make the bridge accessible to all modes of transportation, prioritize access to goods, services, and opportunities not just for cars, consider the broader impact beyond I-5 including local streets and Delta Park, improve biking and walking connections on the bridge, and prioritize accessible parks and facilities for the disability community.

Erika then shifted to the next item on the agenda and shared that there have been updates made to the Equity Framework and presented a chart that reflects the most accurate information. One change she highlighted was that language has been added to reflect CBAG and their contributions to the program. Additional updates to the Framework include language added after consultation with the tribes in addressing historical harms. Erika opened the forum to ask questions about this change or about tribal consultation to Kassie Rippee, IBR Tribal Liaison.

EAG member question: *"Is there a place Kassie's information is available? I have referred people with questions to the Community Engagement Office."*

Erika responded that she can provide Kassie's information in the chat for direct access for questions.

EAG member question: *"Is there a reference added related to the sovereignty of the tribes?"*

Kassie replied that the Equity Framework specifically highlights that tribes are sovereign nations, and that tribal consultation is not the same as community engagement with indigenous members of the public.

Erika thanked the EAG members for their participation and those who agreed to meet 1:1 with her and Yemaya last month. Erika thanked all EAG members for their service.

## VANCOUVER WATERFRONT STATION

Mahlon Clements and Nolan Lienhart, IBR Design Team, presented potential designs for the Vancouver waterfront transit station.

Nolan shared that this meeting would focus on the Vancouver waterfront station, but that future meetings would include the Hayden Island Station, Evergreen Station, and Expo Station. He stated that the Design Team keeps in mind the Equity Objectives during their work and reminded the group of those objectives.

Nolan presented an overview of the Urban Design Focus Areas, which considers what is distinct about a particular area within the program area so that the proposed built environment ties into the aspirations of the program. He then presented an overview of the Vancouver waterfront to contextualize the location of the proposed station.

Mahlon presented 3 different concepts for a transit station at the location. Mahlon highlighted that each concept has its own advantages and disadvantages and showed a table with a comparison chart to illustrate them. Mahlon stated that the proposed stations are accounting for the bridge itself to be the single-level option because it is wider than the stacked option, so this station could accommodate either option moving forward.

Concept A is a two-platform station that straddles the existing Burlington Northern railway, necessitating the station being at a high elevation. This design has two entrances, opening at Columbia Street and Phil Arnold Way/West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, respectively. This design accommodates two elevators, not only for accessibility, but also for common use because the station would be 70ft high. The design also features dedicated street sections for bus service, paratransit, and car drop-off/pick-up. An additional consideration is creating a station that is safe in terms of crime prevention. Using environmental design to deter crime includes good sight lines, having adequate lighting, and minimizing hidden corners.

EAG Member question: *"I'm curious about where parking is located on these maps."*

Mahlon responded that one of the ultimate goals is to get everyone to ride transit to and from the station, lowering the need for parking. He said that, even with that goal in mind, parking is accounted for on the map.

Mahlon stated that there are a few options for parking, represented by the orange lines on the map. He shared that they were still evaluating options for park and rides as part of the program.

Ray stated that the City of Vancouver would be happy to not have a park-and-ride at all, as it is a large traffic generator. He shared that it is a growing trend among cities to no longer want large parking lots with transit stations because they compound traffic issues.

Concept B is in the same location as Concept A but features a single center platform instead of two. Mahlon stated that this creates less flexibility in where the stairs and elevators can be placed, but that it creates convenience because the single platform eliminates the need to cross tracks. Mahlon described this design as a preferred option.

Concept C is a somewhat different location, shifting south to no longer straddle the Burlington Northern railway. Mahlon stated this shifted location presents new constraints because it conflicts with plans for development in the area and the necessary clearances make it a much more challenging fit. Mahlon explained that this means that there could only be one entrance, the platforms would be narrower, and access by elevators and stairs would be more limited to one side. The concept still satisfies regulations for safety, but it would not be ideal.

Mahlon presented a sideview of the proposed station areas to illustrate the constraints created by the existing railway and the height required to clear it. Mahlon then displayed 3D diagrams of the concepts to show the entrances to each proposed station. Mahlon also highlighted the proposed shared use path that is reflected in the diagram. Mahlon concluded the presentation and asked for questions.

EAG member question: *“I want to call out a trigger warning here. Have we considered safety measures for those who may wish to cause harm to themselves or others at the station?”*

Mahlon responded that this is a component of design known as “means prevention.” It is considered best practice for any elevated station to consider those needs.

EAG member question: *“I want to know, between the different concepts listed, is there one that is ideal for those with disabilities? Especially for emergency situations, is there one design that is best for safety and evacuation?”*

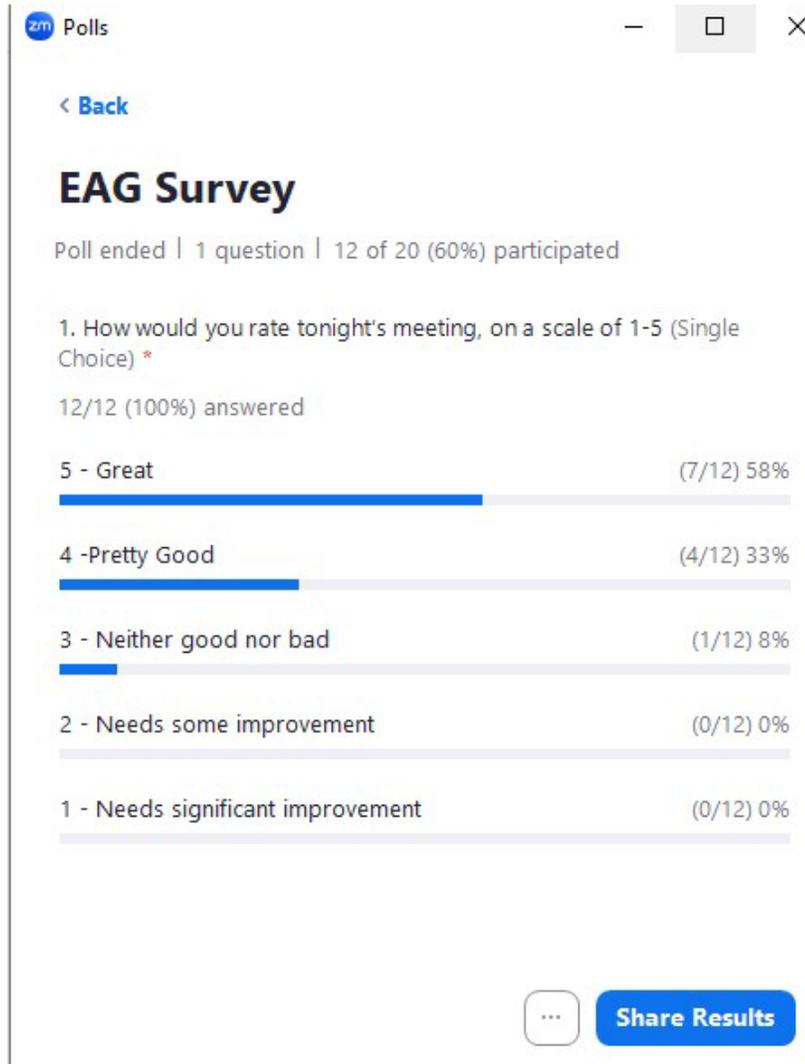
Mahlon responded that Concept B, the center platform, is best in this regard. He explained that a center platform consolidates activity in one place, making evacuation faster, and it has the clearest sight lines. He stated it is the current preferred option, but that may change as new information becomes available.

Nolan stated that this will not be the last time the Design Team will meet with the EAG and they welcome questions at future meetings.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment

## MEETING EVALUATION POLL



zm Polls

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### EAG Survey

Poll ended | 1 question | 12 of 20 (60%) participated

1. How would you rate tonight's meeting, on a scale of 1-5 (Single Choice) \*

12/12 (100%) answered

5 - Great	(7/12) 58%
4 -Pretty Good	(4/12) 33%
3 - Neither good nor bad	(1/12) 8%
2 - Needs some improvement	(0/12) 0%
1 - Needs significant improvement	(0/12) 0%

[...](#) [Share Results](#)

## ADJOURN

- Next EAG meeting: March 18, 2024, 5:30pm-7:30pm
- Following EAG meeting: April 15, 2024, 5:30pm-7:30pm

## ATTENDEES

Attendees	Organization/Affiliation
<b>EAG Members</b>	
John Gardner	TriMet
Aidan Gronauer (they/he)	WSDOT
Alicia Sojourner	City of Vancouver
Vicki Nakashima	Community member
Jennifer Campos	SW Washington Regional Transportation Council
Nicole Chen	City of Vancouver
Barbara Alexander	Port of Portland
Pat Daniels	Constructing Hope
Albert Lee	NAACP Portland
Shane Valle	City of Portland
Shona Carter	Community Member
Chandra Washington	C-TRAN
<b>IBR Staff</b>	
Ray Mabey	Assistant Program Administrator
Kassie Rippee	Tribal Liaison
Mahlon Clements	Design Team
Nolan Lienhart	Design Team
Casey Liles	Delivery Manager

Attendees	Organization/Affiliation
Dr. Roberta Suzette Hunte	Facilitator
Salomé Chimuku	Community Engagement Lead
Yemaya Hall-Ruiz	Equity Team
Erika McCalpine	Equity Team
Tracy Ukura	Captioner
Mary Herman	ASL Interpreter
Jai Wexler	ASL Interpreter
Zander Arnold	Tech Support

## MEETING RECORDING AND MATERIALS

### Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgwZkhMj1kA>

### Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available here:  
<https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/eag-february-26-2024-meeting/>