

EXECUTIVE STEERING GROUP (ESG) MEETING

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

May 25, 2023 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

ESG Members in Attendance: Director Kris Strickler (ODOT), Secretary Roger Millar (WSDOT), General Manager Sam Desue (TriMet), President Lynn Peterson (Metro), PBOT Director of Policy Planning and Projects Art Pearce (City of Portland)(alternate), State Affairs Manager Carmen Merlo (Port of Portland)(alternate), Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle (City of Vancouver), Commissioner Jack Burkman (Port of Vancouver)(alternate), Executive Director Matt Ransom (RTC), CEO Shawn Donaghy (C-TRAN), CAG Co-Chair Lynn Valenter

ESG Members not in Attendance: CEO Julianna Marler (Port of Vancouver), Executive Director Curtis Robinhold (Port of Portland), Commissioner Mingus Mapps (City of Portland), CAG Co-Chair Ed Washington

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), Chris Reagan (Environmental 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, Assistant Project Administrators Ray Mabey (OR) and Frank Green (WA), and CAG Co-Chair Lynn Valenter provided the program updates. Administrator Johnson highlighted the program's accomplishments since the last ESG meeting. He noted that the program has added cost and funding information to the program webpage. The information is available as a result of the latest finance plan the project team has been working on. Other items that were covered on Slide 9 were IBR Tolling, Federal Grant updates, permitting updates, and presentations that the program has been giving.

Administrator Johnson noted that they are anticipating the notice of funding opportunity for the Mega and Bridge Improvement grant programs to be announced in June. The program will have applications for the grants prepared for submittal in August. He added that they are going to be asking for letters of support from several different partners to include with the submittal for federal funding. If the timeframe for the grant submittals is comparable to the previous year, the program anticipates a decision on the funding by late January 2024.

The third large federal grant opportunity mentioned was the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Improvement Grant program. The application process for this grant differs from the other two major federal grants. The program is planning to begin the process later in the year and are currently preparing for the submittal.

Assistant Project Administrator Ray Mabey provided an update on permitting. He touched on the coordination efforts with the US Army Corps of Engineer (USACE) and the collaborative work efforts on Section 408, urban navigation channel work. He noted that the program met with the colonel and his team members to work on the various permitting processes.

The program is also working on obtaining a Coast Guard permit for the bridge height and type. The Coast Guard has identified users who are impacted by the proposed bridge height.

Mabey stated that the program is in negotiations with these users and the Columbia Business Center. The discussions are ongoing, and information regarding the sessions is limited by a non-disclosure agreement.

However, Mabey was able to report that parties affiliated with the business center have expressed support for the bridge replacement. Overall, the program and the different parties mentioned are engaged in a healthy and productive dialogue.

In an effort to alleviate the project's impact on these parties, the program will ask the Coast Guard to consider an update to their navigation clearance determination to allow the program to permit a bridge at 116 feet as being studied in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).

Assistant Project Administrator Ray Mabey added that the Admiral had written a letter to the federal partners requesting the consideration of a moveable span in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) work. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Coast Guard have been made aware of this design option being included in the study. This option does not change the Modified Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).

Assistant Project Administrator Ray Mabey stated that the program hears the region's desire to remove a "stop sign" on the interstate, but to continue moving forward the program needs to assess both paths. The Supplemental DEIS is scheduled to be published late this fall.

Administrator Greg Johnson noted the ongoing robust meeting with the transit partners, C-Tran and TriMet. He thanked them for progressing the design and supporting the conversation with the program's Federal Partners. By showing how the transit is an integrated part of the overall project, the project can enter the development phase. This will allow them to design to a 30% level to secure funding.

Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) Co-Chair Lynn Valenter provided an update on the ongoing CAG efforts. She provided an overview of the information the CAG has shared regarding safety needs based on equity in urban design (slide 10). She explained that through the urban design process, the CAG members can explore the

issues that are important to each of them. She added that the CAG and Equity Advisory Group (EAG) will be joining the IBR staff members at upcoming summer events.

BRIDGE VISUALIZATIONS

Administrator Greg Johnson opened the conversation by stating that through the visualizations that are presented, the program is trying to show the potential for possible design options to allow members of the public and the programs advisory boards to begin thinking about what they want this bridge to look like. He also noted that the first visualization is the existing bridge just to provide some context as they begin looking at other design options and views.

The program noted that there are four views per bridge design option from the vantage points of:

- Vancouver East of Bridge
- Vancouver West of Bridge
- Hayden Island East of Bridge
- Hayden Island West of the Bridge.

The bridge design options presented:

- Extradosed: This style of bridge has towers with cables that support the bridge. These towers are not protruding into the airspace for either PDX or Pearson Airfields. This design option is only for a single level configuration.
- Finback: The cables that are shown in the extradosed bridge are replaced with fins that are encased within a concrete housing. This style will not protrude into the airspace where a cable stay or suspension style bridge would.
- Concrete: This option is a concrete beam structure similar to the I-205 bridge over the Columbia River. This is a single level structure that will utilize concrete with haunches to structurally support the wider spaces between piers. This design has fewer piers in the water than the existing bridge. This is necessary to reduce environmental impacts to the river and endangered species.
- Steel Girder: This has a similar visual appearance as the concrete design, with a wider profile and a similar shape to the concrete design. Steel is lighter which allows for smaller pier configurations. There are some lifecycle costs that will need to be taken into consideration. Initially there could be cost savings with this option, but over the lifecycle they equal out.
- Truss: This design option is what was presented during the Columbia River Crossing project. It is a two-level structure with a highway on the top and transit and bike/ped underneath. There

is no intrusion into the airspace. This design is narrower than a single span bridge. This option does limit the view corridors as you cross the bridge.

- **Movable Span:** This is a lift bridge where the mechanical parts are housed within large towers. A drawbridge type was considered, but the leaf spans for this style were getting too large to manage. The goal is to keep the number of the piers the same as the other presented design options to make sure they are not impacting previous agreements with the EPA and other cooperating agencies who focus on endangered species.

Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle asked if the program is planning on changing the channel as she noticed the bridge lift is not in the deepest part of the channel. Administrator Greg Johnson responded yes and stated that this was part of the conversation with the USACE regarding moving the channel towards the center of the river. The existing channel will become a secondary channel for boating traffic. Assistant Project Administrator Ray Mabey added that the river naturally scours out to 17' so dredging may not be needed to maintain the 17' depth. By shifting the channel in the river, the barge traffic would not have to make an "S" curve maneuver to go under the bridge.

Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle asked if dredging would be needed with any of the designs. Assistant Project Administrator Ray Mabey stated that they are not anticipating dredging unless things change with the river bottom. Assistant Project Administrator Frank Green clarified that the program is proposing moving the primary channel in all bridge designs. This proposed move has consensus from the Coast Guard and will be in the bridge permit. The location of the new primary channel will be where it is currently being shown in the movable span design.

Assistant Project Administrator Frank Green responded that there will most likely be some dredging during construction to align the new channels that are being proposed. The dredging will be needed for the removal of some of the existing piers to avoid hazard to navigation. The program does not anticipate channel dredging other than what was explained for construction.

RTC Executive Director Matt Ransom appreciated the choices that were presented and asked if every design shown is a buildable option. Administrator Greg Johnson responded yes; all options are buildable.

Executive Director Matt Ransom asked if the program would share some insights on the decision-making process for the style of the bridge moving forward i.e., community vote, staging, constructability, maintenance.

Administrator Greg Johnson stated that the program is aware that there will be different tradeoffs between a stacked alignment and a single level. The program has received feedback from bike/pedestrian users that they are not comfortable being within the truss sections, but at the same time some do not want to be at the same level as traffic due to noise levels. The program plans to share the pros and cons of each configuration including key drivers such as cost, constructability, community concerns, and partner's insight to ensure the program reflects the core values of the community.

As the program continues to move forward, more details graphics will be developed and shared to support these robust conversations.

Assistant Project Administrator Ray Mabey added that the bridge design comes down to three configurations: single, stacked, and moveable, and all three will be carried into the Draft SEIS later this year. He added that with the Draft SEIS, the public comment period, and by working closely with the CAG, EAG, and community workshops, the program hopes all stakeholders can narrow down the options to one configuration moving into the FEIS.

DRAFT SEIS PROCESS AND NEXT STEPS

Chris Reagan (Environmental Manager) led the discussion on the NEPA update. Slide 13 outlines the Supplemental EIS Timeline. The program is working hard on the technical reports that provide the foundation of the analysis that drive the EIS document. This will be an ongoing effort through late fall 2023, which will allow the program to issue a notice of availability and distribute the Draft SEIS for public review by late 2023.

Once the notice of availability is issued the public comment period will begin. The program is working to ensure that the public and other reviewers have ample time to review and comment during the SEIS comment period as the 60-day comment period falls around the holidays. Once the public comment period ends the program will move into drafting the Final SEIS in 2024.

Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle stated that the 60-day public comment period will be inadequate for the City of Vancouver and is holding strong requesting a 90-day comment period unless the document comes out in early October. She added that she would expect a significant amount of community engagement activities to support the review of this document.

Chris Reagan (Environmental Manager) noted that he appreciates the feedback and will be sure to have this discussion with FHWA and FTA to ensure the adequate comment period.

Administrator Greg Johnson added that the program has no desire to shorten anyone's opportunity to comment. There will be extensive public meetings to ensure everyone is heard. Administrator Johnson stated that the minimum comment period is 45 days, and the program has a schedule to adhere to as directed by the Federal partners. If this slips into 2025 there will be significant repercussions to the program.

Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle requested two to three community engagement activities throughout the months of June through October. She then requested the IBR team join her and her staff at neighborhood picnic meetings, farmers markets, and concerts in the park.

CEO Shawn Donaghy seconded the mayor's comments and stated he felt the timing of comment period may not allow for a robust comment period. He requested that the program check on the comment period requirements, he seems to recollect a 90-day comment period.

Administrator Greg Johnson stated that the importance of staying on schedule was heard from both the program partners and the federal partners. Johnson stated that he will work with each partner to ensure they feel their constituents are getting ample opportunity to comment. He added that he agrees that this is not an ideal time for public comment, but this is how the schedule is laid out to ensure construction can start by late 2025 to early 2026.

Chris Reagan (Environmental Manager) supported Administrator Greg Johnson and stated that purpose of NEPA is to ensure a robust public comment period.

Chris moved onto slide 14 which provided information on the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and highlighted the tribal consultation and public involvement that has occurred to date. Currently the program is in the process of identifying any historic properties which will be moved into the next phase of assessing any adverse effects.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Lead Facilitator Millicent Williams opened the floor for public comment.

[1:29:30] Joe Courtright: I am with No More Freeways. I would like to make four points. First of all, contrary to what your staff told you this morning the US Coast Guard did not ask for a moveable span option they asked for an option that complied with navigation clearance that they agreed with, so your staff did not look at a tunnel option which is also something the complies. Second, when it comes to your renderings, it is great that you are presenting renderings but you have had the capability to provide rendering now for a couple of years, you have gotten a million and a half grant from the federal government to create a digital twin, what you need to do is not release the renderings but to release the underlying model so that anybody can look at this project from any perspective. The renderings that you have provided carefully are selected. The viewpoints are almost a mile away, the diminish the size of the bridge, they don't show what the impacts are on different parts of the community, particularly on downtown Vancouver and Hayden Island.

Moreover, you have clearly indicated, the representative Ms. Williams said, when you first presented renderings a year and a half ago that it is important to manage the narrative from these and that's clearly what you are doing here and what you need to do is open that up. In addition, you have two very different bridge types – the single level and double level bridge and they have very different impacts of those renderings that you chosen conceal what those impacts are.

Third point that I want to make is with regard to NEPA. What you have chosen to do is treat the moveable span and the other designs not as an alternative under NEPA but a quote unquote design option and whether you choose a movable span, a tunnel, a single or double level bridge has very different environmental impacts and you need to treat those, not as design options but as full alternatives.

[1:31:35] Jordan Lewis: I second what Joe Courtright said, I think we need more information about the bridge. I would like to see a more detailed model of what it looks like because so far, we've only seen renderings from

certain perspectives from a distance. I'm really concerned about the cross section of the bridge, how is space on the bridge going to be allocated to different modes. I remember at the meeting in front of the Joint Transportation Committee about a month ago and someone asked the project how wide the bridge was going to be and how many lanes there were going to be, and I don't think we ever got a straight answer. I had to do arithmetic and kind of calculate that the old bridge was this wide and new bridge is going to be so wide and there were two bridges now, and I think I'd like to get a straight answer of how wide the bridge is going to be and how lanes are allocated for what modes of transport. I would like to see a clearer view of what it will do to downtown Vancouver because that is a big concern for me and a lot of Vancouver residents which is this giant bridge going to be towering above the city of Vancouver and have a lot of negative impacts on downtown and a waterfront that is currently being renovated.

My biggest request right now is just more information. I don't think the public can provide adequate comment if they're not decently informed about impacts of this project. And while I am glad to finally see what possible bridge designs, I think this information is adequate and I'd like to see more, and I'd like to see the public comment period a full 90 days. This is a mega project that I think deserves an exhaustive public input and not just the minimum is 45 days, 60 is not that much. I think 90 especially if it is going to be at the end of the year, we need to have robust, large period with no holiday's that could impact the ability for people to provide comment. Thank you.

[1:24:07] Bob Ortblatt: Washington State resident. I agree with the two prior testifiers. The drawings are very inadequate, almost amateurish. I think one of the issues with the IBR is that they have not addressed the safety. Any design that this bridge is going to be the steepest one of the interstate bridges in the country with approximately a four percent grade with curvature, with north facing potential for black ice on the northern slope on your Vancouver side. There is a requirement for a data driven safety analysis the FHWA process that's touted also by Washington State; I have not seen any safety analysis, data driven safety analysis should estimate it's supposed to be done during the design process and is supposed to estimate the number of injuries and fatalities this bridge would cause. You already have one of the most dangerous bridges in the country, I-205. It has an accident almost every other day and its grade and curves are less moderate or less extreme than the proposed IBR bridge.

Again, I am tunnel advocate that would be weather protected, less grade, no curvatures, and probably a billion dollars cheaper. Thank you.

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

Lead Facilitator Millicent Williams thanked the commentors. She then introduced Shannon Singleton, Community Engagement Lead, who shared information about the upcoming community engagement activities, slides 21 and 22. This slide noted the upcoming in-person neighborhood forums which will allow community members and businesses to speak with the IBR staff. The slides also highlighted attendance at upcoming fairs, festivals, and an equity roundtable.

Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle asked about the program's attendance at the Vancouver Farmers Market or the 12 summer concerts. Shannon noted that there are some already on the list and are currently being coordinated for the Farmers Market, and she will look into the summer concert events. Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle assured the program that they would have a booth at every event, as needed.

Before handing the floor over to Program Administrator Johnson, Millicent noted that the next ESG meeting will likely be at the end of the summer or the early fall. Administrator Greg emphasized what Millicent had stated regarding the program working for the partners (ESG) and the community members to make sure that voices are heard. He added that the one strong message that has been carried throughout the process is staying on schedule and the program is doing their best to maintain this agreement.

The meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

MEETING RECORD AND MATERIALS

Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here:

https://youtu.be/G5NZMZ5bZ_k

The meeting materials are available here:

<https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/esg-may-25-2023-meeting/>