

EXECUTIVE STEERING GROUP (ESG) MEETING

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

Date and Time: March 5, 2024 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: Zoom and YouTube Livestream

Executive Steering Group Members in Attendance: General Manager Sam Desue, Jr. (TriMet), Urban Mobility & Major Projects Director Brendan Finn (Oregon Department of Transportation) (alternate), Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle (City of Vancouver), Art Pearce (City of Portland), Secretary Roger Millar (Washington State Department of Transportation), President Lynn Peterson (Oregon Metro), Executive Director Matt Ransom (Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council), Executive Director Curtis Robinhold (Port of Portland), Lynn Valenter (Community Advisory Group co-chair (WA)), Ed Washington (Community Advisory Co-chair Group (OR))

IBR Program Staff in Attendance: Katy Belokonny (Public Affairs Lead), Frank Green (Assistant Program Administrator), Aidan Gronauer (Assistant Director of Civil Rights & Equity), Kelly Haines (Worksystems), Greg Johnson (Program Administrator), Lisa Keohokalole Schauer (Facilitator), Ray Mabey (Assistant Program Administrator)

WELCOME, INTRODUCTION, PROPOSED AGENDA AND UPDATES

Facilitator Lisa Keohokalole Schauer opened the meeting addressing standard protocols, shared public comment instructions and acknowledged comments received and distributed prior to the meeting to ESG members, went over ground rules and reviewed the agenda.

ESG members provided relevant updates from their departments that have taken place since the last ESG meeting.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Program Administrator Greg Johnson reviewed the program timeline with key milestones and dates. Johnson shared that the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program team is continuing to have community conversations and taking heed of the advisory groups. Johnson shared grant updates regarding the program's recently submitted Bridge Investment Program federal grant application.

Johnson shared that United States Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg visited recently to tour the bridge, and participate in an equity roundtable with the program and advisory group members. The IBR program also had a visit from Federal Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt, who toured the bridge to gain a better understanding of the IBR program. Administrator Johnson provided an update about the equity roundtable the IBR program recently hosted highlighting the importance of reaching out to equity priority

March 5, 2024

communities and involving them in program processes. Johnson also shared about the industries the program has engaged with recently, such as CREDC and Apex and shared of a recent program area tour attended by the Association of General Contractors. Johnson updated the group on recent community outreach including a meeting with the Vancouver Innovation, Technology, and Art (VITA) School and a youth press conference and program area tour.

Johnson provided advisory group updates noting that the Equity Advisory Group (EAG) has continued to meet monthly. Additionally, the Community Benefits Advisory Group (CBAG) continues to meet every month since last September, co-convened by Mayor Anne and Commissioner Mapps, and is currently performing asset mapping with local jurisdictions and businesses to find resources that can help shape the IBR program.

Assistant Program Administrator Frank Green provided an update on funding and the program's finance plan. Green reiterated that the IBR program was awarded \$600 million in a Mega grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Green went over the Bridge Investment Program grant, to which the IBR program applied for \$1.5 billion late last year to maximize the possibility of bringing federal funds to the region. The IBR program anticipates hearing back on that grant's timeline in June 2024. Lastly, Green went over the FTA Capital Investment Grant, which the IBR program will be seeking about \$1 billion to help fund the capital transit investment.

Assistant Program Administrator Ray Mabey provided an update on tolling. Mabey reminded the group that the Department of Transportation do not set tolling rates as those fall under the purview of the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) and the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC). In working together, the two commissions have formed the bi-state tolling subcommittee to set rates for the program. The committee will take recommendations of tolling rates to their respective commissions for a majority vote to approve the rates. Mabey reminded the group that these toll subcommittee meetings are public meetings and the information is publically accessible. Currently, the focus is to get the net revenue needed to fund the program, though Mabey did go over the topics that will be discussed and determined in this committee, such as toll rates and times and potential discounts and exemptions.

VIDEOS AND VISUALIZATIONS

Program Administrator Johnson shared that the program has developed videos to give ideas on how travel could look based on its current preliminary design. Also, Johnson shared that the program is planning on additional active transportation videos to show how people who walk, bike and roll will be able to navigate the corridor.

Administrator Johnson shared new bridge visualizations to provide context and viewpoints of the three configurations being studied (single-level, double-level and movable span). Johnson explained that the new visualizations are conceptual and not meant for actual decision-making. The visualizations serve as a technical analysis that compares trade-offs between the three configurations.

The new visualizations showed various possibilities of the bridge with varying options for bicyclists and pedestrians in addition to vehicle traffic.

PREPARING FOR THE DRAFT SEIS PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Public Affairs Lead Katy Belokonny shared the contents outline for the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. Belokonny explained that there will be a Draft SEIS summary that is about 60 pages long that will cover all information in the SEIS and is highly navigable as a searchable document and an index. Belokonny explained that the program is planning for a 60-day comment period instead of the common 30- or 45-day public comment period.

In recognizing the complexity of the document, the IBR program is working with community members to help them feel prepared to review the document and provide comment upon its release. The IBR program is doing this by providing information to our community groups about what the document is, how to provide public comment and by remaining accessible to the community through IBR's office hour program. The office hours program allows community members to schedule time with IBR program staff to ask questions. Belokonny explained the IBR program's inbox, where members of the public can send their questions to be addressed. The IBR program also disseminates information through social media networks and monthly newsletters.

Belokonny shared that once the Draft SEIS is released and the IBR program is in the public comment period there will not only be formal hearings, but a variety of other ways in which the IBR program plans to engage the community and to also ensure the public knows that it has been released.

Belokonny shared the new Draft SEIS webpage on the program's website that will host the document once it's released, provide instructions on how to provide comment and provide information on how to understand the document.

Community members are welcome to stop by the program's office to read a physical copy of the document and the IBR program is committed to accessibility and ADA through the comment process. Belokonny explained the many ways in which people can make a public comment. She also shared that comments made in any language will be recorded in the comment summary following the end of the public comment period. The summary will include a comment response that indicates if any changes were made as a result of the comment being provided.

The Draft SEIS is still anticipated to be released in 2024. The program will analyze all comments received and plans to select the alternative that will be included in the Final SEIS by late 2024. The Final SEIS with that selected alternative is set to be published in 2025 with receipt of a Record of Decision shortly after.

WORKFORCE STUDY

The IBR program Assistant Director of Civil Rights & Equity Aidan Gronauer explained the workforce study recently completed in partnership with the program. Gronauer recognized the need for workforce readiness and acknowledged a workforce shortage among the increasing number of large infrastructure projects in the region. Gronauer shared that the IBR program commissioned the regional area Workforce Development Boards to conduct a regional workforce market study. The study helps to better understand current workforce

March 5, 2024

market availability and helps the IBR program consider, as well as play a role in increasing the number of women and people of color in the construction industry. The study was done by Workforce SW Washington, Clackamas Workforce Partnership and Worksystems. The study will help the IBR program understand gaps in the workforce and projected needs.

Kelly Haines of Workforce Systems shared the findings and recommendations of this study and participants. Overall, the study will help share equity needs of infrastructure work and pulled data from a variety of existing studies, market data, focus groups, and interviews. Haines shared limitations and assumptions made in the study. Haines shared the findings: there are about 43,000 people working in nonresidential construction occupations in the greater Portland metropolitan area, five percent of which are women, 26 percent of which are workers of color. Additionally, there were findings that employment for workers of color is predominantly from people who identify as Hispanic/Latino, while Black and Asian workers are underrepresented. Finally, that women and people of color are more likely to work in lower paying trades.

Findings around demand showed the amount of construction workers needed for large projects over the next five years, the shortcomings in representation and the future needs around diversification.

Haines acknowledged that the overall construction worker need is larger than what this study represents. Haines shared a broader chart around projected demand in the region, beyond the study's focus, which is regional public capital projects with anticipated spending of over \$15 million over the next five years.

Findings in focus groups and interviews show some common barriers that inhibit diversifying the workforce, such as harassment, training, opportunities for advancement and childcare.

Given those findings, Haines presented recommendations for the IBR program to consider. Haines suggested growing a diverse workforce through coordination and targeted investment, improving retention through a variety of means, knocking down barriers that women and people of color face, implementing effective project administration and procurement strategies, increasing communication and education for managers and contractors and continuing to explore equity opportunities.

Gronauer closed their presentation out by sharing the next steps the program plans to take following this study. These included things like publishing it on the IBR program's website, providing a presentation to advisory groups to receive input and recommendations and analyze recommendations with leadership to create action plans.

Kohokalole Schauer invited questions from the group. Vancouver Mayor McEnery-Ogle also asked when the group will hear about project labor agreements. Administrator Johnson shared that the IBR program is currently in discussion with the Oregon and Washington State Departments of Transportation about a project labor agreement and is determining what such agreements could look like. The program expects more public-facing discussion this summer. Mayor McEnery-Ogle asked if the project labor agreements specifically come after the Draft SEIS and Johnson explains they do not have to, but it is a matter of developing the details with the DOT's first.

Art Pearce of the City of Portland pointed out that he did not notice a comment on physical barriers to accessing the work such as transit users or cyclists and encourages Haines to consider that in the study.

March 5, 2024

Lynn Peterson of Metro asked about the work being done with the community benefits discussion and asked when we will see a full matrix on when these things will be funded. Peterson expressed it doesn't have to be a discussion now, but is eager to see funding strategies. Johnson responded by sharing that the IBR program has an agenda of meeting topics for the Community Benefits Advisory Group and will have a presentation and more information ready on where these topics are for the next ESG meeting this summer. Peterson clarified she does not just want a presentation, she wants the materials with potential funding so she can review and understand it before there's a formal presentation.

Secretary Roger Millar of Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) shared that with his insight to other workforce development, this study and presentation showed that the IBR program is far ahead of other projects. Secretary Millar applauded that the program is working to diversify the workforce.

Johnson shared that a key next step of the IBR program is a program construction delivery document. The document will serve as a roadmap for how the program is packaging program area improvements, how it is looking at sizes of contracts and the delivery methods. Johnson hopes to share that document with ESG at the next meeting. Johnson shared that this spring the IBR program plans to meet with designers and contractors to have those discussions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were three public comments.

Bob Ortblad commented on the desire and feasibility of a tunnel option.

Lance Killian commented on the potential impact to the Columbia Business Center.

John Ley commented on the cost of the program and tolling.

CLOSING

Keohokalole Schauer closed the meeting, expressing gratitude to the group for the partnership and work that is being done. Keohokalole Schauer also reminded the public of the resources and engagement options available to them. Administrator Johnson also expressed gratitude for the group's input and support in moving the IBR program forward.

The meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m. and has 405 views public views.

A record of the meeting is available here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEx9oox8ekQ>

The meeting materials are available here:
<https://www.interstatebridge.org/get-involved-folder/calendar/esg-march-5-2024-meeting/>