

## EQUITY ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING #41

Date and Time: Monday, November 18, 2024, 5:30pm to 7:00pm

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

Number of concurrent YouTube viewers: p

### 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

Greg Johnson, Program Administrator, provided Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program updates. Greg shared that the Bi-State Tolling Subcommittee met on November 15<sup>th</sup>, where they discussed options for potential tribal discounts and exemptions that could be part of the Level 3 Toll Analysis. Greg shared that studying low-income tolling was also a main topic of conversation. Greg encouraged EAG members to participate in upcoming Subcommittee meetings.

Greg shared that today is the last day for public comment for the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). Greg shared that over 2,300 comments have already been received during the 60-day comment period and that the team will be responding to each one. Greg explained that answers to the comments will appear in the Final SEIS, which is expected to be published next fall. Greg shared that there have been virtual and in-person hearings to help the public participate in sharing their comments. Greg shared that the Section 106 public comment period is also ending tonight. This public comment period lasted 30 days. Section 106 examines cultural and archaeological resources in the region.

Greg stated that the program is still engaging in community events, including tabling at the Vancouver Farmers Market. There have also been numerous presentations provided to organizations and neighborhood associations throughout the area to educate the community about the program.

Greg thanked the EAG for their continued service to the program, saying it has been four years since the program began assembling advisory groups and that some EAG members have been involved since that inception. He shared his appreciation for their participation and input, then asked for any questions.

*EAG member: How does 2,300 approximate comments compare to other similar projects?*

Greg replied that the program was anticipating a lot more. Similar projects have received between 5,000 and 10,000 comments. Greg shared that this indicates that the IBR program has done a great job at getting out

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into the community and answering questions early. Greg stated that he believes the program will receive over 3,000 comments before the comment period closes.

## EQUITY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Fabiola Casas, Equity Team, discussed Equity Performance Measures, which the EAG had initially developed as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Fabiola reminded the group that the KPIs were developed within EAG last year. Fabiola explained that Performance Measures will track progress towards the program's Equity Objectives from the Equity Framework, support program accountability, help determine where the program can make a difference in advancing equity, and identify where there may be gaps.

Fabiola provided a recap of the development process for the Performance Measures. This process began with EAG brainstorming, then conducting research of peer projects and engaging in two rounds of refinement within EAG, before being submitted to IBR leadership. IBR leadership provided feedback, which was workshopped by IBR staff, and those refinements are being presented this evening.

Fabiola highlighted the key changes that occurred from IBR leadership's input and subsequent staff workshopping. This included the transitions from KPIs to Performance Measures, explaining that performance measures are best suited for the evaluation of a program and its outcomes, which is better aligned with the goal of this work. Fabiola also shared that a "Timeline" column was adjusted to more accurately align with the program, that some measures that were connected to work developing in other areas of the program were removed, and potential data sources for tracking were added.

Fabiola provided questions for EAG to consider as the updates are presented, including:

- What are your initial reactions to the updates?
- From your perspective, would the data sources yield meaningful measures?
- What additional data sources do you recommend the program team consider?

Fabiola proceeded to go section by section, highlighting where any changes have been made.

*EAG member: I have a question about "Increase in number of jobs accessible by driving for equity-priority communities (# and %)." Does that mean there is less congestion so it's easier to drive your car to work?*

Fabiola replied that they believe it's referring to the flow of traffic so that people can access jobs. Emilee Thomas Peralta, Equity Team, shared that there was an equity analysis conducted in the earlier stages of planning that demonstrated that job access was a way to measure for broader access to areas and services. Emilee explained that job access was studied in the Draft SEIS. Emilee also highlighted that this analysis includes studying communities who live within a half-mile walk to transit, thereby increasing their access to the area.

*EAG member: It's a little confusing to me. Maybe it should be "accessible by vehicle or transit."*

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Emilee replied that she believes it is meant to capture the cumulative effects of the different improvements of the project, so driving as well as transit. Fabiola asked the EAG member to share what the spirit of the measure that feels right would be.

*EAG member: To me, driving is a single person driving a car and doesn't include transit.*

Fabiola thanked the member for their reflections.

*EAG member: I want to thank my fellow EAG member for raising this. I was also confused.*

Fabiola asked if there are suggestions to make the language more clear.

*EAG member: No. When I read this, I thought you were looking at what's the accessibility for people to drive there and how much are we making it accessible for other people who live in other neighborhoods to get there from further away and do not have the ability to drive, for example people with lower incomes.*

Greg replied that he recalled the early conversation about these items: for transit, looking at how many more jobs are accessible. For driving, looking at how many more people who do not take transit or cannot bike, walk, or roll to work will be able to access drives because there will be less congestion.

*EAG member: I can see where the first one is transit and the second is vehicle, but I wasn't sure what driving for equity meant. Does that mean a vehicle?*

Greg responded that yes, it means driving in a vehicle, but that it measures equity-priority communities and where they live, where they commute, and the time it takes them to access job centers. Greg stated they will work on clarifying that language.

*EAG member: I have a question about the "Timeline" section. I don't understand why we are measuring transit access during the construction phase.*

Greg replied that the EAG has repeatedly highlighted the importance of job access to equity-priority communities who want to work on the program. One of the repeated barriers mentioned is childcare, while the other is transportation access. Greg stated that the program is exploring creating specialized bus routes to pick up the workforce and deliver them to the project site. Greg stated he believes this will attract a diverse workforce and make jobs accessible to more people. Greg recommended clarifying the timeline for both construction and post-construction.

*EAG member: Yes, because I think a component of this is how people are accessing jobs elsewhere once construction is complete. Also, for equity priority communities, are we talking about within the program area or the region?*

Greg replied that the main focus is the program area, but that access to jobs across the region is also being considered.

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*EAG member: Then I think my recommendation is to reexamine these two performance measures to ensure we're speaking clearly on both of those concepts.*

Greg replied that the team will revisit the language for clarification and bring it back at the next meeting.

Fabiola then discussed Community Benefits performance measures. Some of the recommendations in this area were removed because the work is being developed in the Community Benefits Advisory Group (CBAG). Fabiola proceeded to review the Workforce Equity and Economic Opportunity measures. Fabiola highlighted that the measure pertaining to tribal employment coordinated through the Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) was removed because that work is specialized and is being developed in another area of the program.

*EAG member: On "Retention rates for equity-priority communities and women," I'd like to see also advancement and progression into business ownership. I think there are some entry-level jobs that may not be the career destination, but people jump into those jobs in order to gain experience to enter a skilled trade that would be more financially beneficial. I don't know if there's a way about being intentional about how people of color end up being in the entry-level but do not progress.*

*EAG member: I agree. Given the length of the project, people can become foremen and superintendent in that time. If the project is 10 to 15 years, people can move into leadership positions in that time.*

Fabiola thanked the EAG members for those insights and stated that the feedback will be reconsidered by IBR staff, who will return next month to update the group on edits.

Fabiola continued to review other Workforce Equity and Economic Opportunity measures, highlighting that some changes were made to better illustrate services or resources that may be used to promote equity and opportunity that are not captured by only dollar value.

*EAG member: For "Percentage of apprentices that journey out," I would ask that we disaggregate that data by community and gender.*

Fabiola thanked the EAG member for the suggestion. Fabiola then reviewed the Decision-making Processes measures, including highlighting which were removed due to being included in the CBAG work.

*EAG member: In occupations where women and BIPOC people are seriously underrepresented, for example construction, discrimination or harassment can become an issue. I think some labor unions have taken some powerful positions nationally, but an indicator of how quickly a complaint is resolved or not filed can be an indicator of success in some way.*

Fabiola replied that they will have a conversation with IBR staff to explore how to incorporate that as a measure. Fabiola then presented on the Avoid Further Harm measures.

*EAG member: I know there are a lot of individual people and small community groups doing air tracking because there are blank spots in the map, especially in Clark County and Fourth Plain Corridor. I wonder if we can add that tracking, so not limiting that to local agencies. Smaller communities are lost in the local agencies that don't*

*map their sections of towns, so I wonder how we can speak to that in some way because their data is just as meaningful as any local agency would gather.*

Fabiola appreciated the comment and encouraged EAG members to propose data sources or resources for the IBR team to explore.

*EAG member: The racial disparity of prior projects like I-5, the displacement issues that they're dealing with now, is that being tracked somewhere else? I see you removed the number of residents and businesses displaced by the project.*

Fabiola replied that the work in Right-of-Way (ROW) is carefully underway to address that, and that the program has acknowledged the harm caused by transportation agencies have historically caused.

*EAG member: I would hate to see displacement not included somewhere.*

Fabiola replied that the team will connect on this. Fabiola then presented the Physical Design measures, explaining that the two measures were re-written for clarity and greater specificity. Fabiola explained that there is some overlap with CBAG's work in these areas, but they are distinct enough that they were not removed entirely.

*EAG member: Looking at the replaced language, would it be important to include the percentage or number of artists who come from the community?*

Fabiola replied that the new language helps expand the idea to be more inclusive to organizations that represent or advocate for equity priority communities, and not limit it to the individual level.

*EAG member: I'm still trying to get my head around the construction phase timeline for opportunities, then the post-construction phase for tribal and community history incorporated into the program design. How will we be able to differentiate between what needs to happen during and post construction as those elements come along.*

Fabiola stated they will make note of that and make a point of revisiting it after some internal conversation to adjust them.

*EAG member: I like artists having a public art budget from equity priority communities and I liked the original paying tribute language.*

Fabiola thanked the member for the feedback and opened the meeting up to broadly discuss their reactions to the changes.

*EAG member: It seems like we've gotten away from the discussion of money and moving towards opportunities. Is that intentional?*

Greg replied that it was intentional, explaining that dollars are used as targets, but concepts can be achieved without the anticipated dollar cost. Greg explained that people will still focus on the dollar amount if that is a set goal, so the program does not want to lose sight of the actual concepts it is endeavoring to achieve.

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Fabiola thanked the group, and committed to returning to the next meeting to update them after IBR staff discusses their feedback.

## INFORM/CONSULT SESSION ON IBR COMMUNITY BENEFITS: MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Emilee Thomas-Peralta, Equity Team, led the discussion. Emilee reminded the group that she presented on the first batch of tranche 2 recommendations created by the CBAG last month. These recommendations will be presented to the IBR leadership team with the goal of being featured in the Final SEIS.

Emilee stated that CBAG met before EAG this month, so these recommendations have already been workshopped from that group but EAG's feedback will be presented to them. The recommendations from CBAG are:

- Conduct a comparative analysis of program areas to optimize traffic flow and accessibility.
- Design Team to consider providing adequate shelter for all weather conditions at transit stations, including rain, wind, and heat. Special considerations should be made for the unique needs of the elevated transit station.
- Consider safety when determining locations for public restrooms near transit stations.
- Design Team to consider incorporation of drought-resistant, naturalized landscaping at public transit locations.

Emilee stated that she recalled from the previous meeting that EAG members expressed a desire for target outcomes for these benefits. Emilee stated that the outcomes they anticipate will be the incorporation of these ideas into the Design Team's work.

*EAG member: Can we have some language about permeable services for most modes of transit to get around? The less standing water we have is safer for everybody. The current benefit only speaks to draught resistance, but excess water is also a problem.*

Emilee thanked the member and replied that this a piece they can add to help with that distinction. Emilee then continued with the next group of proposed benefits:

- Consider maintenance, safety, active management, and futureproofing in the design aspects of the multi-use paths throughout the program area.
- Develop robust trail systems that surpass federal requirements, leveraging creative solutions to increase functionality and community value, and responsive to the community's needs and input.
- Incorporate innovative solutions to exceed ADA requirements, enhancing accessibility and mobility thoughtfully.

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- Expand the bridge's bike and pedestrian paths and install barrier to separate them from vehicular traffic, enhancing both safety and noise reduction.

Emilee asked the EAG whether these recommendations align with the EAG Equity Framework Principles.

*EAG member: Clearly it's important that CBAG and EAG work together, as their discussions and expertise are very different. CBAG includes a number of organizations and jurisdictions that have great responsibility for transit and highway improvement infrastructure. It's been an interesting process from my standpoint to hear the perspectives coming from both of these spaces. Connecting this work has been so helpful in understanding this work.*

Emilee thanked the member for their insight, and shared that she agrees that some of the context can get lost between the groups. Emilee highlighted that a number of the items on the list are already part of the program as part of the modified LPA or what is being studied in the SEIS. Emilee also highlighted that some items are standard practice, and some are items where the program is trying to exceed standard practice.

*EAG member: I think where we are talking about additional artwork once the bridge is completed is an amazing piece. I think we can leave people out from the very beginning. I learned a lot about all of the different groups in this area. There's so much rich history in this area. And the fact that we're going to go all out to make sure people who are disabled can actually access this, that's going to be huge.*

*EAG member: I have a list. I appreciate that we have an EAG member also serving on CBAG. That is a tremendous amount of work, so thank you. There has been so much thought that's gone into this that is evident. I want to revisit what Emilee said about focusing on outcomes. Thinking about how we want the community to experience the benefit and thinking about strategies that will help us get there. That's one over-arching piece. I was also thinking about optimizing traffic flow and accessibility, and I'm curious how the CBAG was thinking about that. Putting traffic flow and accessibility together – are we leading with accessibility or are we prioritizing traffic flow? Which one are we leading with? I don't fully understand what the analysis will bring forward on this, but thinking about the Equity Framework and leading with the accessibility component seems important. Also, I wanted to talk about the innovative solutions for exceeding ADA requirements. Has CBAG considered how they would like to achieve identifying those innovative strategies or are there structures built into the process for this?*

Greg responded that freight movement and congestion on the freeway have been identified as key purpose and need elements of this project, but that the program also knows that there will be impacts to local streets, bike paths, and facilities. Greg stated that the program is trying to accomplish both elements; keeping traffic moving, but not in a manner that prioritizes cars on local roadways. The program is trying to strike the balance between freeway and non-freeway portions that will make the area accessible but still achieve the goals of facilitating traffic movement. Emilee stated she appreciated the comment, as well, and that the CBAG approached it not as prioritizing which level of access was more important, but that it was important to distinctly note and analyze each piece. Emilee also shared that much of this analysis is in the Draft SEIS.

Emilee further explained that the CBAG has been in detailed discussions on design elements, such as ramp styles and elevator configurations, to address their goal of incorporating innovative strategies to exceed ADA



requirements. The group also discusses building materials that may impact noise, which may in turn affect people with limited vision who are navigating the spaces.

*EAG member: I was looking at these recommendations, will the tolling program impact them at all? I wonder if there's some sort of interaction between the recommendations and the tolling program that's being used on the bridge.*

Greg responded that the priority of the tolling on the bridge is to pay for the bridge itself. He stated there are secondary benefits, like lessen congestion by incentivizing trips of choice to outside peak hours, which positively impacts air quality, safety, and congestion. Emilee added that the CBAG will have a deeper discussion on tolling as the benefits move into tranche 3 of development. Emilee thanked the group for their feedback and committed to uplifting it during CBAG's discussions. Emilee encouraged the group to reach out with any other thoughts or feedback.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris Smith with the Just Crossing Alliance: I want to alert the group to an issue with the health analysis being conducted for the project. The health analysis was a condition of approval imposed by Metro Council when they signed off on the modified LPA. IBR commissioned the Washington State Health Department to lead a team to conduct the health analysis and the intent was that it would be filed as a public comment on the EIS. We have about four hours left in the public comment period and the Washington State Health Department team has told us they won't publish the health analysis until later this week. So the public has not had an opportunity to be informed by the health analysis in making their comments on the EIS. We think that's a process failure. The suggestion we have made to the project in our own comment is that once the health analysis is released, there should be a 14-day supplemental comment period to allow the public to comment on what they learn in the health analysis and how that impacts the project. I would hope that in the name of equity, your group would join us in recommending that solution to this process failure. Thank you.



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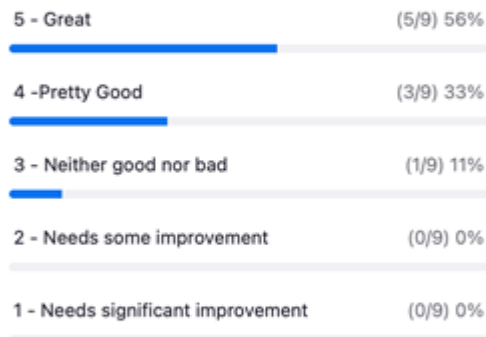
## MEETING EVALUATION POLL

### EAG Survey

Poll ended | 1 question | 9 of 10 (90%) participated

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

9/9 (100%) answered



... [Share results](#)

## ADJOURN

- Next EAG meeting: December 16, 2024, 5:30pm-7:30pm
- Following EAG meeting: January 20, 2025, 5:30pm-7:30pm

## ATTENDEES

| Attendees          | Organization/Affiliation |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>EAG Members</b> |                          |
| Aidan Gronauer     | WSDOT                    |
| Chandra Washington | C-TRAN                   |
| John Gardner       | TriMet                   |

| Attendees                 | Organization/Affiliation            |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| June Reyes                | Port of Portland                    |
| Meg Johnson               | Community Member                    |
| Nicole Chen               | City of Vancouver                   |
| Pat Daniels               | Constructing Hope                   |
| Sebrina Owens-Wilson      | Metro DEI Team                      |
| Shona Carter              | Washington State Black Future Co-op |
| Sokho Eath                | IRCO                                |
| Vicki Nakashima           | Community Member                    |
| <b>IBR Staff</b>          |                                     |
| Greg Johnson              | Program Administrator               |
| Emilee Thomas-Peralta     | Equity Team                         |
| Shannon Singleton         | Equity Team                         |
| Lucy Hamer                | Equity Team                         |
| Fabiola Casas             | Equity Team                         |
| Dr. Roberta Suzette Hunte | Facilitator                         |
| Daniel and Jai            | ASL Interpreters                    |
| Lauren                    | Captioner                           |
| Amanda Hart               | Tech Support                        |

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## MEETING RECORDING AND MATERIALS

### Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here: [Equity Advisory Group \(EAG\) November 18, 2024 5:30PM PST \(youtube.com\)](#)

### Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available here: [EAG November 18, 2024 Meeting | Interstate Bridge Replacement Program](#)