

COMMUNITY BENEFITS ADVISORY GROUP (CBAG)

MEETING SUMMARY #8

Date and Time: Thursday, April 25, 2024 / 9:30 – 11:30am

Location: Hybrid (In-person and Zoom Meeting) and [YouTube livestream](#)

Number of concurrent YouTube viewers: 10

OUTCOMES

- CBAG members learned about Tribal government consultation and Section 106.
- CBAG members brainstormed and discussed potential community benefits recommendations related to Mobility and Accessibility.

WELCOME

Bree Nicoletto, IBR Equity team and co-facilitator, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the April 2024 CBAG meeting. She reviewed instructions to access closed captioning, meeting participation tips, ASL interpretation reminders, public input instructions, IBR emergency procedures and CBAG agreements.

Greg Johnson, Program Administrator, greeted and thanked everyone for their participation.

City of Vancouver Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle and City of Portland Commissioner Mingus Mapps, CBAG co-conveners, extended a warm welcome to attendees and provided opening remarks.

Nicoletto provided an overview of the meeting agenda before handing it over to Emilee Thomas-Peralta, IBR Equity team and co-facilitator, to lead the virtual introductions. Members were asked to share their name, organizational affiliation or at-large status, preferred pronouns, and respond to the check-in question: “Is there a story behind your name?” After her introduction, Thomas-Peralta passed the floor to Johnell Bell, Principal Equity Officer and co-facilitator, to continue with introductions. Nicoletto then facilitated the in-person introductions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nicoletto transitioned the meeting to the public comment segment. She noted that members had received three public comments in their meeting package.

There was one member of the public who joined virtually to provide a public comment during the meeting. Bob Ortblad, a civil engineer from Washington, criticized the Interstate Bridge Replacement program for errors in its environmental impact assessments. He noted that discrepancies in the program's design and

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execution led to delays and accused the program and its consultants of either fraud or incompetence. He emphasized the need for an independent evaluation of an immersed tunnel alternative.

Nicolello then outlined the options for submitting comments post-meeting.

PROGRAM UPDATE

Greg Johnson, Program Administrator, provided updates on the program's status and ongoing initiatives. He provided information about the delay in releasing the Draft Supplement Impact Environmental Statement (SEIS) as the program works to ensure accurate traffic modeling in collaboration with federal partners. The bi-state tolling subcommittee, comprised of representatives from both the Washington State and Oregon Transportation Commissions, is actively working on tolling policies for the Interstate Bridge. The subcommittee recently met on April 19 and is scheduled for another public session on May 17.

In terms of community engagement, the program team is going to local neighborhood associations, including recent visits to Rose Village and Hayden Island, to ensure the community remains well-informed about the program's progress. Additionally, the team attended the Port of Vancouver's spring tenant event to engage with the Port's tenants. Johnson shared that upcoming events include an Industry Day on May 6, aimed at discussing program delivery with contractors and consultants. Additionally, Chis Coes, the Acting Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation, is scheduled to visit during the American Public Transit Association Mobility Conference, hosted by TriMet, to discuss the program's impact on the local economy and community.

During the Q&A session, members inquired about the construction start date. Johnson clarified that groundbreaking is anticipated for late 2025, pending federal approvals. Further details will be outlined in an upcoming revised schedule. Discussions also included initial plans for a new round of microgrants aimed at workforce and community. Additionally, Johnson provided an update on the Bridge Investment Program (BIP) grant application for \$1.5 billion, with a decision expected in June 2024.

PRESENTATION ON TRIBAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION AND SECTION 106

Kassie Rippee, IBR Tribal Liaison, and Hayli Reff, IBR Cultural Resources Program Manager, discussed the involvement of tribal governments and the management of cultural resources. Rippee emphasized that the consultation with ten federally recognized tribes and one non-federally recognized tribe is conducted as a government-to-government process, separate from public engagement. This ensures a respectful and legal approach to tribal consultations, focusing on direct interactions with tribal councils and designated representatives.

Reff provided an overview of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which mandates federal agencies to evaluate the impact of their projects on historic properties. The process involves four main steps: initiating the review, identifying historic properties, assessing effects on these properties, and resolving any adverse effects. The aim is to avoid, minimize, or mitigate harmful impacts on historic sites. She also

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discussed the development of a programmatic agreement to manage potential effects on historic properties, which is currently being drafted and will be made available to the public for informational purposes.

During the Q&A session, a member inquired about the consulting parties involved in the Section 106 process. Reff clarified that the list includes local governments, historical museums, commissions, and the ten federally recognized tribes, among others. Another question addressed the interaction between Section 106 and Section 4F, particularly concerning unique historic assets east of the corridor. Reff explained that Section 106 identifies historic properties, which are then considered under Section 4F, with the National Park Service noted as an important consulting party. Additionally, discussions touched on the development of a draft programmatic agreement, which is being created in consultation with interested parties and will be refined based on their feedback before finalization.

CBAG WORKPLAN OVERVIEW

Thomas-Peralta outlined a workplan for integrating community benefits, beginning with brainstorming sessions for members to propose and envision outcomes, followed by review and refinement sessions where recommendations are analyzed and discussed in detail. These stages culminate in the "Fist to Five" modified consensus to finalize recommendations for potential community benefits for each category. The plan includes intentional gaps between stages for in-depth analysis and adjustments, ensuring proposals are effective and feasible. This month's focus is on mobility and accessibility, with plans to revisit and refine these topics in August and finalize them in December. Similar cycles will address other categories like avoiding further harm and physical design.

The process also involves asset mapping and discussions with program partners to identify potential resources and opportunities to leverage other investments in the program area. IBR staff will conduct analysis to differentiate between benefits that are typically included in the normal course of business or within the program scope, those that might conflict with Section 106 requirements or require new processes, those that will be the responsibility of the program, and those that would be the responsibility of other parties/partners/agencies. This strategic approach ensures thorough vetting of each recommended community benefit for practicality and cost, alignment with the community's interests, and the program's goals throughout the development.

During the Q&A session, discussions focused on the importance of going beyond minimum ADA requirements to ensure true facility usability for those with disabilities. Thomas-Peralta emphasized the need for ongoing dialogue to explore how recommendations can exceed these baseline standards, ensuring facilities are truly accessible and functional. The conversation also touched on the timeline for asset mapping, with a focus on the adaptive nature of community benefits throughout the construction process. It was highlighted that community benefits would continuously evolve, incorporating changes and enhancements that respond to local jurisdictional needs and environmental conditions. This dynamic approach aims to ensure that the implementation is sustainable and reflective of community values, avoiding rigid adherence to bare minimum standards that may not suit the specific context or long-term sustainability of the program.

PRESENTATION ON POTENTIAL COMMUNITY BENEFITS IN MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Thomas-Peralta transitioned to a discussion on community benefits related to mobility and accessibility, reminding the group of previous work where some time-sensitive recommendations were made for the program's consideration. She referred to the handout members received that included potential benefits raised in their prior meetings. Potential recommendations included optimizing traffic and design aesthetics, enhancing wayfinding signage, integrating multilingual signage at key cultural sites, and incorporating a bus rapid transit system, among others.

Thomas-Peralta encouraged participants to focus on generating new ideas and conduct a true brainstorm. She assured members that details would be refined in subsequent stages.

LARGE GROUP REPORT

Nicolello welcomed members back to the meeting and asked for volunteers from each group to report key takeaways from their discussions. She requested Emilee to lead the report out in the virtual setting before returning to the in-person groups.

The key takeaways from the group discussions included:

- The critical need for inclusivity and expert involvement in the design of cycling infrastructure. Members collectively highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of various cyclist types, including commuters, recreational cyclists, and e-cyclists, ensuring that all elements of the infrastructure, from trails to traffic flow, are accessible and practical.
- The design and implementation of consistent, clear signage to aid navigation for all users across different regions.
- The necessity for periodic reviews was stressed to ensure that infrastructure remains responsive to user needs and safety standards.
- Enhancing physical and resource accessibility along trails by ensuring the availability of essential amenities such as restrooms, food services, and water facilities, tailored to be accessible for users with different abilities.
- The importance of creating direct, well-marked pathways that minimize unnecessary turns and complications, which could hinder mobility for users with disabilities or those unfamiliar with the area.
- The need for safety, particularly in less monitored areas, suggesting improved lighting and community surveillance to enhance user confidence and security.

Notes from small group discussions:

Transit:

- Improve mobility and accessibility for all users at transit stations and the shared use path by connecting spiral ramps, elevators, and stairs with resting areas.

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- Consider accessibility in the selection of materials for transit areas, such as textured pavement.

Accessibility:

- Prioritize mobility and accessibility in the design of elevators and staircases, along with considerations for aesthetics.
- Explore creative solutions to ensure accessibility in the tight space from Terminal 1 to the trail, potentially including an elevator.
- Incorporate innovative solutions to exceed ADA requirements, enhancing accessibility and mobility thoughtfully.
- Integrate acoustic enhancements in designs to better accommodate individuals with visual impairments, ensuring path support.
- Prioritize brown signage over blue to ensure uniformity and accessibility for marking areas of interest, natural and recreational sites, and important cultural places, while adhering to existing federal signage standards.

Amenities:

- Provide adequate shelter for all weather conditions at transit stations.
- Consider safety when determining locations for public restrooms near transit stations.
- Incorporate green spaces and water stations at public transit locations to accommodate service animals, especially during hot days.
- Install bike parking facilities at public transit locations.

Community engagement/representation:

- Involve experts with lived experience and the broader community in transportation planning to ensure that designs effectively address the mobility and accessibility needs of various groups, especially individuals with disabilities.
- Implement periodic reviews and revisions to the infrastructure plans post-implementation to ensure they continuously meet community needs and adapt based on practical use and feedback.

Bike/Pedestrian/Trails/Paths:

- Consider maintenance, safety, and active management in the design aspects of the multi-use paths.
- Enhance bike trail connectivity to the 40-mile loop and existing trails at the North Portland Marine Drive interchange.
- Develop robust trail systems that surpass federal requirements, leveraging creative solutions to increase functionality and community value.
- Incorporate safety metrics such as parent comfort level for bike paths and level of traffic stress in urban design to ensure user-friendliness and safety.

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- Enhance safety for bicyclists and pedestrians crossing the bridge by incorporating protective features into the design, such as the railing or safety nets.
- Expand the bridge's bike and pedestrian paths and install barriers to separate them from vehicular traffic, enhancing both safety and noise reduction.

CLOSING REMARKS

Bell transitioned to the next segment, informing members about upcoming CBAG meetings. Administrator Johnson commended the members for their dedication to community benefits and ended the meeting.

ATTENDEES

Attendees	Organization
CBAG Members	
Greg Johnson	Program Administrator
Anne McEnery-Ogle	City of Vancouver Mayor
Mingus Mapps	City of Portland Commissioner
Eric Holmes	City Manager, City of Vancouver
Scott McCallum	WA School for the Blind
Peter Fels	Alliance for Community Engagement
Vicki Nakashima	Equity Advisory Group (EAG) Representative
Michael Strahs	Kimco Realty
Corky Collier	Columbia Corridor Association
Marcus Mundy	Coalition for Communities of Color
Carley Francis	Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Ben Jacobsen	Jane's Forum
Tom Hickey	Community Advisory Group (CAG) Representative
Walter Valenta	Community at large
Scott Sharba	Vancouver Housing Authority
Jayne Haygood	Vancouver's Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
Holly Williams	Community at large
Farleigh Winters	LSW Architects
Steve Barnett	Representative for the Cowlitz Indian Tribe
Jasmine Tolbert	Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Clark County
Darcy Hoffman	Workforce Southwest Washington
Kelly Haines	Worksystems, Inc.

Attendees	Organization
IBR Staff	
Ray Mabey	Assistant Program Administrator

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Johnell Bell	Principal Equity Officer
Shannon Singleton	Community Benefits Lead
Bree Nicoletto	Equity Team
Emilee Thomas-Peralta	Equity Team
Eric Trinh	Equity Team
Lucy Hamer	Equity Team
Yemaya Hall-Ruiz	Equity Team
Salome Chimuku	Community Engagement Lead
Fabiola Casas	Equity Team
Fabián Hidalgo Guerrero	Community Engagement Team
Brenda Siragusa	IBR Staff
Paris Moore	Coordinator
Kassie Rippee	Tribal Liaison
Hayli Reff	Cultural Resources Program Manager
Robert Arreola	Community Engagement Team

Additional Participants

10 members of the public, partner agency staff, and the IBR team viewed the meeting via the YouTube livestream during the meeting.

MEETING RECORDING AND MATERIALS

Meeting Recording

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpAJhytFDr0>

Meeting Materials

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