
Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

Executive Steering Group Kick-off Meeting, Part 2: Meeting Summary

November 30, 2020, 1:00-3:00 PM via Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

Welcome, Introduction, Proposed Agenda, and Updates

Deb Nudelman, Facilitator, welcomed the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program Executive Steering Group (ESG) members, agency staff, IBR team, and audience.

Greg Johnson, the IBR Program Administrator, provided a brief overview of the IBR Joint Oregon-Washington Legislative Action Committee on Nov. 24. He described the Committee's appreciation and support of the IBR Decision Making Graphic. He reminded the ESG that the Draft Conceptual Finance Plan and a Legislative Progress Report will be submitted to the Washington and Oregon Legislatures on December 1, 2020.

Deb Nudelman invited the ESG members to introduce themselves and share any updates. In their opening remarks, the ESG members expressed:

- Excitement for the recruitment phase of the CAG and EAG;
- Eagerness to move the IBR program forward;
- Appreciation for the IBR team and their work moving the program forward.

Shawn Donaghy, C-TRAN CEO, noted that although the Draft Conceptual Finance Plan identified two transportation mode alternatives in the pricing model (based on prior planning efforts), additional options would be explored and assessed throughout the IBR program process moving forward.

Julianna Marler, Port of Vancouver CEO, shared that she was able to provide an update at the Public Board of Commissioners meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 24. She highlighted IBR program progress related to the ESG Charter, Community Advisory Group (CAG) and Equity Advisory Group (EAG).

Deb Nudelman provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

IBR ESG Draft Charter

Deb Nudelman began by explaining that the objective for this agenda item is to receive concurrence on the IBR ESG Draft Charter. She asked the ESG members to consider whether their interest, as well as the interest of their fellow ESG members could be met by the IBR ESG Draft Charter. All the ESG Members responded in favor of finalizing the IBR ESG Draft Charter. Some ESG members also shared comments.

An ESG member expressed concern regarding equal state representation on the CAG. This concern was shared by others. Some members additionally shared a similar concern regarding the EAG.

Deb Nudelman reviewed language in the ESG Charter stating that the CAG and EAG member selection process would stress balanced representation. She explained that ESG members had previously supported the approach of identifying equitable interests, rather than establishing an equal number of seats.

Greg Johnson restated his commitment to ensuring equitable Oregon and Washington representation in the IBR program.

Update: Equity Considerations and Standing Up a Community Forum

Johnell Bell, IBR Chief Equity Officer and CAG co-facilitator, described the purpose of the EAG to “provide laser-focus on the program’s potential impacts and benefits for communities of concern, communities of color, and Environmental Justice.” He outlined the three key roles of the EAG: 1) help to fulfill IBR Leadership’s commitment to prioritize equity throughout the course of the program, 2) monitor and provide oversight of equity throughout program in all elements, and 3) make recommendations to IBR Leadership regarding the program’s processes, policies, and decisions that have the potential to impact communities of concern (either positively or negatively). Johnell outlined upcoming near-term tasks for the EAG : 1) define equity for the IBR program, 2) support development of desired outcomes and metrics to achieving equity, 3) frame the historical context, 4) support implementation of the Community Engagement Plan, 5) support Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)/On-the-Job Training plans, and 6) coordination with the CAG. He also outlined upcoming longer-term objectives such as advising on mitigation strategies and design elements.

Johnell Bell described the IBR program team’s focus when approaching EAG membership. He identified a need for equity practitioners with the expertise critical to making informed recommendations. He cited a specific need for representatives from community-based organizations with a focus on racial equity, social/climate justice, and culturally specific concerns, as well as community members, including those experiencing transportation barriers firsthand.

Lisa Keohokalole Schauer, IBR CAG co-facilitator, next reviewed the purpose of the CAG and the CAG Member Eligibility Criteria. She also reviewed the Two Pathways to Involvement graphic, which provided a visual for the CAG and EAG recruitment process. She announced that applications will go live on Dec. 1, 2020 and remain open through Dec. 18, 2020. Next, she shared a flyer advertising a series of four information sessions regarding the CAG and EAG. Lisa Keohokalole Schauer informed the ESG that the CAG and EAG selection committee will include Greg Johnson, and the two CAG Co-Chairs, with involvement from the CAG co-facilitators. She also noted that the selection committee will apply the eligibility criteria to form a recommended list of members, with the goal of establishing the committee by the end of January 2021.

Johnell Bell described a robust community engagement effort, notifying the ESG that information sessions will be offered in seven languages. He shared the following questions for consideration by the ESG:

- What strategies would you recommend we employ to increase awareness of these opportunities with our communities?
- Are there items you feel strongly the CAG and EAG should consider/provide feedback on?

Deb Nudelman asked that the ESG members keep these questions for consideration throughout the process to stand up the CAG and EAG and reminded them that the Staff Level Group was a strong resource for them to communicate with the IBR program Team. ESG members shared the following comments:

- Appreciation for inclusion of language in the Draft CAG Framework highlighting the inclusion of a regional network and request to specifically include I-205 users and economic interests in recognition of its importance to the regional network and close proximity to the I-5 Bridge.
- Support for addressing regional network of users, but expressed concern that other economically significant corridors would be omitted by the inclusion of the I-205 corridor.

In response to ESG member comments, ESG members agreed to update the member eligibility criteria in the Draft CAG Framework on page 2 with the following underlined portion:

“A representative cross-section of the community with users of the regional network (business or industry) including representation of economic considerations along parallel routes including or such as the I-205 corridor, regionally impacting travel patterns (commuter), and diverse ages (youth perspective).”

Deb Nudelman reminded the group that all documents are available on the IBR program website and that this document will be updated as agreed upon by the ESG and posted online.

Greg Johnson informed the ESG that the CAG and EAG are bodies seated by the IBR program, and that they operate independently of the team in order to give advice and provide review, ideally via consensus. He announced that a recommended roster for the CAG and EAG would be forthcoming for acknowledgment by the ESG.

Information: High-level Recommendations Development

Greg Johnson reviewed the IBR Program Decision Development Graphic. Greg reiterated that the goal was for the ESG, CAG, and EAG to reach consensus. In his role as IBR Program Administrator Greg would bring forward consensus recommendations to the Bi-State Committee.

ESG comments included:

- Interest and encouragement for the ESG to hear directly from the EAG members.
- Emphasis that the CAG and EAG should include opportunities for traditionally underserved communities.
- Suggestion to create a document listing communication best practices to ensure communication expectations between the groups, and the program administrator, are established early.

Greg Johnson explained the key functions of the EAG. He stated that the group will define what equity means for the IBR program, look at issues of equity that come out of the various groups, and make decisions as to whether decisions made throughout the program are equitable for all interest groups on the project.

Information: Building Familiarity with the IBR NEPA Process

Chris Regan, IBR Program Team, presented a high-level overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Chris highlighted the previous technical analysis completed for the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project and outlined the next steps for the IBR program including updating the Purpose and Need Statement, as well as establishing the community Vision and Values Statement.

Deb Nudelman opened the topic for discussion and questions. There were no questions or comments from the ESG members. Deb thanked Chris for his presentation and reminded all those in attendance, as well as those listening in online, that this served as an early introduction to the NEPA topic and that the presentation will be posted online.

Deb Nudelman thanked the ESG members and presenters for their time. She then invited the public to provide comment.

Opportunity for Public Input

Tom Dana, a Hayden Island resident, noted their previous engagement with the Columbia River Crossing project and shared their concern that the IBR program will be overly influenced by an interest group and that the number of lanes considered in the CRC project that crossed Hayden Island was too high.

Karen Gibson, a community member in the Arnada neighborhood group in Vancouver, WA shared their opinion that the CAG membership should include members who have directly experienced the impacts of bridge failure that serves regional interests. They shared their interest in being considered for CAG membership.

Kimberly Kinchen, a resident of Seattle and previous resident of the Portland-Vancouver metro area, shared their experience as a resident without a driver's license. Kimberly highlighted the limitations of not carrying a driver's license and noted that their story is not unique. Kimberly requested more time in future meetings for public comment.

Joseph Cortright, an economist from Portland, requested that ODOT and WSDOT be transparent with how the IBR program estimated costs and funding. His perspective was that there is no need to repay the federal government if a no-build scenario is chosen. He shared a concern with the figures provided in the conceptual finance plan to the Bi-State Legislative Committee and suggested the IBR program Team apply a different set of assumptions and approach to develop a cost estimate.

Jackson Hurst, an Atlanta, GA resident inquired whether people who do not live in the IBR program area would be considered for CAG membership.

Alex Koval called in for public comment but was unable to provide their statement due to technical issues. In a follow-up email, Alex shared that transit is needed to support the developmentally disabled community.

John Ley, a Camas community member, shared their hope that the program will result in less time spent in traffic by residents. He posed whether a simple seismic upgrade would be a sufficient solution for the Interstate Bridge and wondered whether the Glen Jackson Bridge could withstand a seismic event.

Dave Rowe, a resident from Battle Ground, WA was involved in the Clark County High-Capacity Transit study in 2008 and shared that they are interested in whether the Burlington Northern Santa Fe bridge would be considered. Dave suggested considering commuter rail crossings on I-5 and I-205 and cited an ongoing commuter rail project in Denver, CO.

Confirm Upcoming Meeting Topics, Next Steps, and Summary

Greg Johnson described upcoming next steps for the IBR program, including standing up the CAG and EAG and beginning work on the Purpose and Need statement. He noted that the IBR Conceptual Finance Plan will be further refined on a continual basis and brought back to the ESG. Greg closed by thanking the participants for their time and efforts.

Deb Nudelman shared ESG members would meet next in January 2021 and would soon receive a confirmation of the 2021 ESG meeting schedule.

Director Strickler thanked the participants for their involvement and investment in the IBR program process.

Secretary Millar shared his appreciation for the team, ESG members and staff and his dedication to making great things happen over the Columbia River.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Meeting Participants

ESG Members or Alternates

Name	Organization
Director Kris Strickler Brendan Finn (alternate for the first portion of the meeting)	Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Secretary Roger Millar	Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
CEO Shawn Donaghy	C-TRAN
CEO Doug Kelsey	TriMet
Council President Lynn Peterson	Metro
Board Chair Scott Hughes	Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)
Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle	City of Vancouver
Deputy Chief of Staff Sonia Schmanski, Office of Mayor Ted Wheeler	City of Portland
Chief Public Affairs Officer Kristen Leonard	Port of Portland
CEO Julianna Marler	Port of Vancouver
Interim Co-Chair Lynn Valenter	IBR Community Advisory Group
Interim Co-Chair Ed Washington	IBR Community Advisory Group

Facilitators and Presenters

Name	Organization
Greg Johnson	IBR Program Administrator
Chris Regan	Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Johnell Bell	IBR Team
Lisa Keohokalole Schauer	IBR Team
Deb Nudelman	IBR Team
Kirsten Hauge	IBR Team

Additional Participants

122 members of the public, partner agency staff, and the IBR Team viewed the meeting via the Zoom webinar and the YouTube livestream during the meeting.

Meeting Recording and Materials

Meeting Recording

A recording of the meeting is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=beod1AqAOc8&t=2541s>

Meeting Recording

The meeting materials are available here:

<https://wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i5/interstate-bridge/executive-steering-group>

<https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Get-Involved/Pages/IBR-ESG.aspx>

Appendices

Public Comment Received Before and After the Meeting

Below are public comments received between Nov. 30, 2020 and Dec. 9, 2020.

Public Comment by phone from Alex Koval: December 8, 2020

He wanted to be sure to communicate his concerns that transit is needed to support the developmentally disabled community.

Public Comment from Kimberly Kinchen: November 30, 2020

“Hello,

My name is Kimberly Kinchen. I live in Seattle, but have in the past lived in the Portland-Vancouver metro area, and, as I-5 is a pillar of the entire Pacific Northwest region’s transportation system, I think it is important you hear from me.

Note that I was unable to provide my full comment at today’s meeting of the Executive Steering Group. It is really frustrating to spend 100 minutes listening to the meeting and have only a single minute to provide my comment at what I believe will be the most impactful place. Here is the full story I tried to tell, which would have taken only 2 minutes:

I have never had a driver's license because I’ve never been able to afford a car. About 20 years ago, I took a pile of paperwork and a photograph of myself to a neighborhood service center in Seattle’s University District to apply for a passport. I brought paperwork FAR beyond what the U.S. Dept. of State requires for a passport. It included my Washington State I.D. card, which — I must emphasize — *is issued by the same department that issues drivers licenses: the Dept. of Licensing*. At the service window I was told that because I didn’t have a driver’s license, I would need someone with a drivers license to *vouch for my identity*.

As a non-driver, I was literally no one in the eyes of my city.

I had to walk home, wake up my stoner boyfriend who was still sleeping at 11 a.m., and bring him back to vouch for my identity. It was 1999 or 2000, but harkens back to stories I have heard of when women couldn't get bank accounts without their husbands or male relatives co-signing.

Not a lot has changed in 20 years. I have many more such stories and I guarantee you thousands of people in the Vancouver and Portland areas have similar stories of the ways in which our public transportation agencies profoundly fail us every single day. You might not know it, and I would be pleasantly but deeply surprised if the executive committee is remotely representative of this, but **there are many, many people like me.**

Some of us can't drive because it's too expensive. Some of us can't drive because disabilities or medical conditions prohibit it. Whatever the reason, in Seattle, the figure is just under 20 percent, according to the most recent American Community Survey from the US Census.

That's not limited to urban areas, by the way, and I can't confirm the exact figure, but I believe it is in double digits statewide. You wouldn't know it based on how our transportation dollars are allocated. I wonder if anyone on the committee has any idea of what it is like to navigate work and life and a little bit of leisure in a transportation system that resembles a parkour course more than a network for moving around our cities and towns. (Try going on a vacation to any remote spot if you can't drive. Luckily, I enjoy bike touring, but it takes a ton of time to plan routes that don't force my partner and I to share roads with 45 mph traffic.)

In short, your community advisory group needs to represent people our transportation system has left behind and it is long past time that transportation dollars prioritize us.

Since I have more time and space here than I did in today's meeting, I will add that I have many friends in Portland, but it is difficult to visit them because Amtrak is the only way for me to get there. Although service on Cascades has improved, it is still incredibly limiting. On one of my last trips, I thought I would check out Vancouver by getting off the train there and riding my bike into Portland. While it had its pleasant moments, it was mostly appalling on both sides of the river, whether due to poor signage, harrowing crossings, or, on the bridge itself, the ridiculously narrow path that people walking must share with people biking. (Imagine driving a car along train tracks. Fun times.) It seemed surreal and ridiculous, because the Columbia is a beautiful place, and what could be, frankly, a premium recreational experience was instead stressful, AKA A Supposedly Fun Thing I Won't Ever Do Again (with apologies to David Foster Wallace). Even in supposedly bike-friendly Portland, the gaps in the bike network were surprising and frustrating.

I've also been looking at EIS from other WSDOT projects and I want to encourage this group to conceive of economics much more broadly than simply business and freight interests. For one critical example, it should consider how the so often de facto requirement of car ownership to secure and keep employment, and the attendant costs of car ownership (insurance, maintenance, parking, lease or loan payment, gas) impacts households who might make other, considerably less costly transportation choices were they more readily available, comfortable, and reliable. Low-income households in particular.

Then, there is the climate catastrophe that creeps upon us every day. It would be unconscionable to spend billions of dollars on a project that does not robustly and profoundly prioritize transit and active transportation over the transportation of single-occupancy vehicles. These modes are overwhelmingly safer, cleaner, and more efficient than car travel, and when they are prioritized they are often as fast or even faster than travel by private car. Further, they offer low-income households

relief by not forcing them to rely on the considerable expense of owning a car to get to and from work, school and life reliably.
I also believe that any EIS should include how the project will conform to the requirements of the Washington State Agency Climate Leadership Act of 2020.

I am also concerned by Joe Cortright's comments about the ESG's cost projections for this project, which indeed look to have been significantly understated. I personally don't think it's ever the right time to spend billions to increase car traffic, but given state budget constraints that will inevitably last through this pandemic and beyond, it's especially important to get the fiscal side of things right.”

Public Comment from Richard R. Gill: November 30, 2020

“Thank you for the very well run online, on-time meeting November 30, 2020. Clearly, you have worked out a thorough public outreach program that the scope, politics and history of the project require. I have some comments and questions.

1. The stated qualifications for membership on the Community Advisory Group include: current user of the I-5 bridge and being affected by the bridge project. Non-users should be specifically included on the CAG. Everyone in the area has a vested interest in the project, and they are going to be affected, whether or not they use the bridge now or in the future.
2. I hope the advisory groups will be moderated by the present co-chairs and/or professional facilitators, to keep the meetings on point and on time. I don't think self-governance is going to work in such large volunteer groups with widely varying interests.
3. I believe the advisory groups should have single points of contact for reporting, direction, and information flows. There is ambiguity in having them report up through both the executive committee and the program director. If exceptions are at times needed, the facilitators/moderators can arrange for them.
4. For those who wish to participate but are not on the advisory groups, how will notification be made that there are openings on working groups?
5. Thank you for strictly enforcing comment time limits at the end of the meeting.”