

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #18

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SUMMARY

Subject: Community Advisory Group Meeting #18 Summary

Date and Time: May 12, 2022 4:00-6:00 pm

Location: Zoom Webinar and YouTube Livestream

WELCOME AND OUTCOMES

Lynn Valenter, CAG co-chair, welcomed the group to the meeting. Lisa Keokokalole Schauer, CAG Co-Facilitator, reviewed the technical instructions for the meeting and Lynn reviewed the agenda.

RECOMMENDED MODIFIED LPA

John Willis, IBR Program Manager, shared the details of the recommended Modified LPA that was approved to move to agency boards and councils for review last week by the Executive Steering Group (ESG). The Modified LPA includes recommendations for transit investments, Hayden Island/Marine Drive interchanges, and auxiliary lanes along with other elements. The Modified LPA is only at about 2% of the design.

CAG Member: Bridgeton really appreciates the separation between Vancouver Way and direct access to I-5 because we feel that's a pinch point with traffic. I have a concern with freight movement from the marine drive onto Hayden Island and how they are expected to make deliveries there. Have there been or will there be conversations about how to simplify freight access without replicating current congestion issues?

John: I think we can also make a note to make sure the feedback from the three freight working groups gets back to you. You bring up some very good points and we will bring information back to this group.

CAG Member: this roundabout is not ideal for freight. What considerations and elements are conducive to freight movement on that interchange?

John: the team did consider freight, and I personally have worked on two roundabouts designed for high freight volume, so they can be designed to work but if they're not designed well, they won't work. This partial interchange is the result of the technical team doing a lot of iterations. This is the design

that met all the needs we have been hearing and I know the team was asked if freight can use the roundabout and the answer was yes, but I don't have the technical expertise to explain further.

CAG Member: lumping all Oregon residents into the same box creates a misconception as residents downtown have certain feelings about Hayden Island, while local Hayden Island residents or those in close community's care tremendously.

John: thank you for bringing that up. That's part of why we had the Hayden Island working groups so we could be sure we had that perspective.

CAG Member: has there been any sort of polling of the businesses on Hayden Island on where their customers are coming from by zip code or even by state, so we know what the facts are as opposed to people's opinions?

John: the reason for the community opinion polling was to look at a broad variety of topics and it's one of the many tools we used but I don't think we have done any surveying of businesses. I think that would be a good strategy for us to use for the future. Are you wondering if a different interchange scenario would be preferred for NEPA if we knew that information?

CAG Member: it sure seems possible. Opinion polling is great but is very limited because it's only the people who choose to participate. I just think basing the bridge on opinion polls may not be the best measure.

John: yes, I want to point out that it is one of many tools we use. We also use 2045 modeling and origin and destination data, that are both very data driven tools. It's a combination of feedback and information.

Lisa: I want to let everyone know that, considered in the Modified LPA, was the fall community engagement efforts which included both business stakeholder outreach and a community working group made up of businesses owners from the Hayden Island/Marine Drive area. So, to get at your point, they would have those data points and would have shared them during those community working groups.

CAG Member: I'm wondering how tolling will impact folks?

John: "will people drive to the Island for a trip to Target if they're being tolled?" - that's the question I've been asking myself. Freight dollars will pay the toll to get where they are going. Our model assumes traffic flows with a toll in place on the bridge, and we still show a good amount of traffic coming from both the north and south.

CAG Member: is there any data that supports the idea that light rail could lead to a reduction in general purpose traffic in combination with tolling?

John: the model assumes a toll on I-5. We also did a sensitivity analysis and found that tolling I-205 sends some more traffic to I-5. I wouldn't call it diversion, but it pushes some people to I-5. We also looked at the regional congestion management plan south of the river and impacts that would have to the needs of the project. We learned that the need is for 3 general purpose lanes, regardless of where the tolls are. We also got feedback on auxiliary lanes which I will talk about later. Tolls do some work and do cause some uptick in transit usage, but not enough to decrease the overall scale of the lanes crossing the river.

CAG Member: will there be a side lane to pull off to if you breakdown on the side of the freeway?

John: we assume shoulders are a part of all options moving forward, so in addition to the general purpose and auxiliary lanes, we will also have shoulders.

CAG Member: It feels like on the preferred alternative we are looking at a 40-year bridge, not a 100-year bridge. And it feels like we are building auxiliary lanes for the near term, not the longer term.

John: thinking about the infrastructure in general, we are building a 100-year bridge. The 2045 modeling work is a typical planning horizon, and we can only model that far out.

CAG Member: the perception is one auxiliary lane isn't enough capacity, even the 2045 future.

Greg Johnson, IBR Program Administrator: we are talking about taking the one auxiliary lane in each direction in our primary study. Then we're going to look and see if the one auxiliary lane meets the purpose and need. We will dig deeper with more modeling and details to see if it does or doesn't, then we'll adjust.

John: I will add that our technical team has showed that one auxiliary lane does work.

CAG Member: under climate I see VMT reduction, is that the result of the auxiliary lanes, from improved transit and tolling or what?

John: that's in comparison to the no build. When we put a transit link in we get to divert some vehicles. Others have pointed out that over time VMT increases as the region grows, again in comparison to the no build. Most of that reduction is coming from transit. When we reduce congestion with auxiliary lanes, we have smoother flow, reducing greenhouse gasses independently from VMT.

CAG Member: under large safety improvements, the full shoulders and no bridge lifts don't really have anything to do with the auxiliary lane, that's juts in comparison to the no build?

John: yes, and if I had the chance to edit this slide, I would adjust it to be "program benefits" rather than "benefits of one auxiliary lane".

CAG Member: is a stacked bridge still on the table?

John: we are still looking at different bridge configurations, those configurations didn't need to be in the LPA. We will look at those options more explicitly later.

CAG Member: on the last line of slide 33, "projected demographic changes". What does the EAG plan to do with the projected changes? How will they weave that into what comes next?

John: at this phase of the program, we have been using them in the equity work related to transit. We have looked at the demographics on Hayden Island, for example, and that's a level of granularity we will look at more in the future.

CAG Member: I just wanted to understand what they were referring to when "weaving in demographic changes."

John: a question in one of the EAG meetings was how we use equity data to determine if one or two auxiliary lanes is better and preliminary data gave them essentially the same "equity score." But I think that's something they will be digging into more in coming months.

CAG member: on slide 36, the percentages given for "Equity - Jobs Accessible via Transit" is for mid-day transit rates within 45 minutes, but normally when I think of congestion, I think of the morning times and the drive times, does that matter? Or what is that measure vs anything else?

Jason: The evidence supports that people with lower income, who do not own cars and work a staggered work schedule are more likely to use transit during the middle of the day and not during standard rush hour times.

John: In addition to taking this recommendation through the NEPA process, the program will also take it to the boards and councils of the partner agencies and understand what commitments they will ask the program for.

PROGRAM UPDATE

Greg began by explaining that the Program will soon be taking the recommendation to boards and councils. The Program took the recommendation to Portland City Council and Metro Council for initial feedback and plans to go to others. The program hopes the boards and councils will endorse the recommendation in late June/July and expects to have conditions before giving approval. The program will bring these conditions back to the EAG, CAG, ESG and the Bi-State Legislative Committee as a final wrap up of this stage of the project. A big thank you to this group for your help in getting the Program to this point. CAG will continue to be involved and will get to the fun parts of decision making. Aesthetics, urban design elements, what the bridge will look like, bike and pedestrian connections and lanes. All these things are coming up in the next portion of Program planning. More meetings with freight groups will happen to make sure their needs are met and this same presentation has been shown to the Bi-State Legislative Committee and ESG and was met with positive remarks.

CAG member question: Greg mentioned that there were questions from the Bi-State Legislative Committee on advocacy around auxiliary Lanes - was that comment in favor of more or less lanes?

Greg: The questions and comments were for more lanes. The Program has heard the critics and is doing more investigation into the claim that the program is creating more induced demand. If the purpose and need can be met with a smaller footprint of bridge, then that is what we will do. If not, then will investigate another solution.

CAG member question: Will the Program present this information to the Clark County Commission?

Greg: Clark County is not one of the official program partners, but we plan on going back to them and other individual communities. We will share this with a broad set of groups over the next two months and will share invites with the CAG if this happens.

CAG member comment: I would like to add support for one auxiliary lane as this is the least amount of footprint over Hayden Island.

CAG member question: A trip to Washington D.C. just happened and the Interstate bridge was a priority for the Oregon congressional delegation. One of the biggest questions was about bridge height and the conversation that the program will have with the Coast Guard. I wanted to let the group know that is an issue.

Greg: The Program has a meeting with the Coast Guard coming up and will have a conversation regarding bridge height. That conversation is on-going and robust.

Johnell Bell: I would like to publicly thank Robin Richardson and Andrew Hoan for their advocacy in Washington D.C. and ensuring the IBR Program is a priority for the Oregon Business Summit agenda.

CAG member question: Are the materials sent to the CAG for this meeting okay for general consumption?

Greg: Yes, all the materials are publicly available and ready for sharing.

WHAT'S NEXT, PUBLIC COMMENT

Johnell Bell reminded CAG about upcoming meetings and that CAG will not meet in August. There will be an advisory group program area tour.

CAG will continue to meet in 2023 and is in the midst of generating meeting topics and discussions. **If you have ideas or desired topics, please send those to Jason (Jason.Hagan@interstatebridge.org).**

Johnell presented the dates and times of other upcoming Program meetings, including EAG, Bi-State Legislative Committee and the next CAG meeting in June.

Public Comment

Before public commenting, Jason took a moment to provide an answer to the earlier question on why the Program used mid-day travel time vs. peak travel time in its equity analysis. The evidence supports that people with lower income, who do not own cars and work a staggered work schedules, are more likely to use transit during the middle of the day and not during standard rush hour times.

Johnell presented the public comment instructions.

Public commenter: I had a question about how the new bridge will be built? Will they close the old bridge down first? There is confusion about tearing down the old bridge before the new bridge is built. What are the plans around building the new bridge? Also, will people who travel across the bridge multiple times a day have to pay a toll every time they cross the bridge?

Greg Johnson: the Program is looking at building the new bridge beside the existing bridge and keeping it in use as long as possible before switching traffic over at the appropriate time. Yes, people will pay a toll every time they cross the bridge.

Public Commenter: Currently there is no exit on Evergreen Street. Is there plans to make an exit on Evergreen for mass transit?

Greg: At this point there are no plans to add a new interchange at Evergreen for vehicle traffic. Right now the plan is to have light rail run in the I-5 right of way on the west side of I-5 and connect to Evergreen.

WRAP UP AND THANK YOU

Lynn Valenter ended the meeting by acknowledging that the Program has achieved a milestone and to congratulate yourselves on a job well done. Everyone is working hard, digging in and the important thing is that we are doing our best to deliver a new bridge for the community. It’s important to recognize that CAG will continue into 2023. This is longer than the original commitment, but we are wanting to continue the momentum this group has achieved. The Program team has been extraordinary, and I want to thank Greg for all his leadership, clarity, honesty, and being candid. He has taken some criticism publicly and taken it well and stood up in leadership and we appreciate it.

Greg thanked Lynn and added you are all very welcome and this Program has been an excellent challenge. I am an infrastructure junky, and I like working in a community where I see the commitment from all you folks. It is energizing. We have a great team, great professionals, an inspiring CAG and have done tremendous work.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

CAG Members or Alternatives

Attendees	Organization
Ashton Simpson	Oregon Walks
Dena Horton	Pacific Northwest Waterways Association
Irina Phillips	At-Large Community Member
Javier Navarro	At-Large Community Member
Julie Doumbia	At-Large Community Member
Lynn Valenter	Co-Chair
Marcus Mundy	Coalition for Communities of Color
Martha Wiley	WA Transit Representative
Michael Kelly	Human Services Council
Mikaela Williams	At-Large Community Member
Robin Richardson	At-Large Community Member
Sam Kim	At-Large Community Member
Sarah Hall	At-Large Community Member
Sheri Call	WA Trucking Association

Tom Hickey	Bridgeton Neighborhood Association
Whitney Mosback	Cowlitz Indian Tribe
Miriam Halliday	Workforce Southwest Washington
Tom Sandhawr	Clark College Delegate

Facilitators and Presenters

Attendees	Organization
Greg Johnson	IBR Program Administrator
Ryan LeProwse	IBR Transportation Planning Manager
Audri Bomar	IBR Communications Lead
Jake Warr	IBR Equity Lead
Jason Hagen	IBR Community Advisory Group Administrator
Lisa Keokokalole Schauer	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator
Johnell Bell	IBR CAG Co-Facilitator

Additional Participants

54 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](#).

Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available [here](#).