



The Interstate Bridge Replacement Program: Advancing Equity and Climate

A presentation to the American
Society of Adaptation Professionals

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ENGINEERING . PLANNING . ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Project Partners

Project Sponsors

- Washington Department of Transportation
- Oregon Department of Transportation

Consultant team led by WSP with Parametrix and over 20 other subconsultants

- 14 subconsultants are DBEs

Regional Partners

- Oregon Metro
- SW Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)
- C-TRAN
- TriMet
- City of Vancouver
- City of Portland
- Port of Vancouver
- Port of Portland

I-5 Connection between Vancouver and Portland

- Bridge Replacement
 - Seismic resilience
 - Adding shoulders and auxiliary lanes
 - Improving multiple interchanges
- High Capacity Transit
 - Extending Light Rail from Portland to Vancouver
 - Adding three stations to existing light rail network
 - Connecting to Vancouver's Bus Rapid Transit system
- Active Transportation
- Demand Management (e.g., tolling)



Reinitiating a Regionally-Significant Project



- Questions to Consider:
 - How can we build trust and understanding?
 - How can we lead on equity and climate?
 - How does this project fit in with local, regional and state goals?

Centering Climate and Equity: Overview

Why we are centering equity

- Transportation projects have excluded and directly harmed Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, low-income neighborhoods, people with disabilities, and other communities
 - For example, construction of I-5 through N/NE Portland decimated a thriving African American community
 - These communities also more vulnerable to the effects of climate change
- Disparities in access to quality transportation options impacts household costs, available job opportunities, access to health care, etc.
- The IBR program provides opportunities for economic benefits for individuals and businesses at a historic disadvantage

Why we are centering climate

- Transportation is a significant contributor to greenhouse gases
 - EVs and decarbonization of the grid are coming, but still several decades away
 - Oregon and Washington, and our local and regional governments with laws, guidance and goals for climate action
 - Federal administration prioritizing climate
- Regional cooperation requires action on climate
 - Program provides opportunity to build regional partnerships to address climate
- Program provides a timely opportunity to add multimodal options to an interstate bridge.

Why we talking about equity and climate together

- Equity in exposure to risk and vulnerability to effects
- People highly exposed to climate risks
 - because of the places they live and
 - because they have fewer resources, capacity, safety nets, or political power to respond to those risks
 - because of widespread discrimination and exploitation
- Worker safety and neighborhood impacts during construction

Setting the Context

Grounding the project in area history



Indigenous peoples have lived in and traveled to the Portland-Vancouver region since time immemorial, including in the immediate vicinity of the current Interstate Bridge. White settlement disrupted tribal communities in the early 19th Century, and the U.S. government removed most Indigenous peoples to reservations in the 1850s. This area along the Columbia river remains significant to indigenous communities today.



Adjacent to the Interstate Bridge lies **Vanport**, the site of a WWII housing development that flooded in 1948, forcing residents – about a third of whom were Black – to evacuate and killing at least 15.



The **construction of I-5** in the 1950's destroyed more than 1,100 homes in the Albina neighborhood of North Portland, just a few miles south of the Interstate Bridge.

2010-2020 Population Changes

- The region* added over 274,000 residents from 2010-2020, a 13% increase.
- Most of the growth in the region was among people of color, increasing 49% over the past decade
- The region went from 20% to 32% of the population comprised of people of color

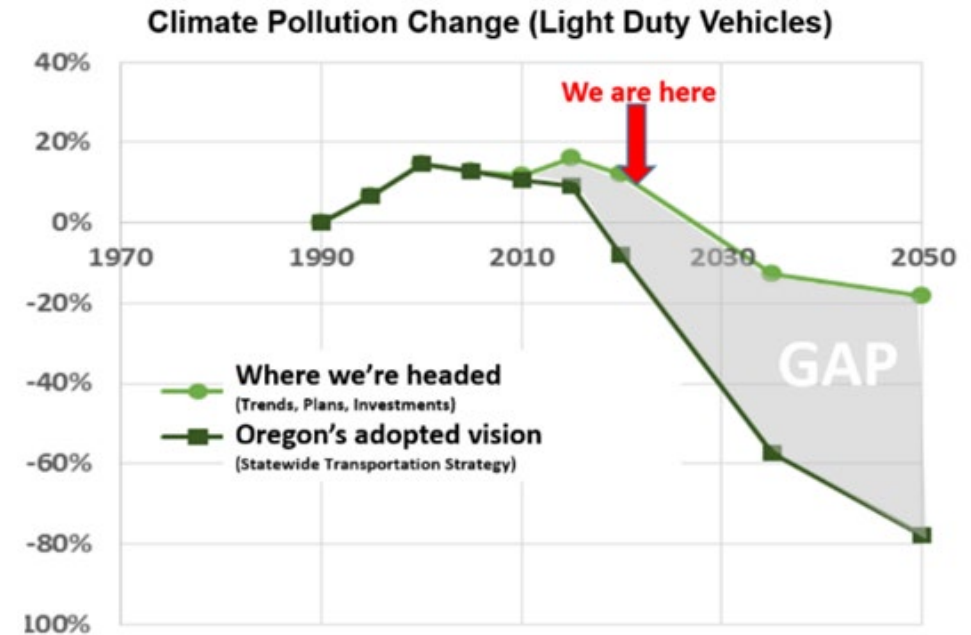
Sources: 2010 and 2020 US Census

**Region is defined as Clark, Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties*



Climate Goals and Progress

- Oregon to reduce to 80% of 1990 emissions by 2050
- Washington to be net zero by 2050
- Cities of Vancouver and Portland carbon reduction by 2050
- Programs addressing transportation emissions:
 - States have goals for decarbonizing the grid and advancing share of EVs
 - Transit agencies buying electric vehicles
 - Construction standards in development



Oregon is dramatically off-track. If current trends continue, Oregon will release more than 4 times more transportation pollution than our goal by 2050.

Operationalizing Equity

Equity Definition

- The Interstate Bridge Replacement program defines equity in terms of both process and outcomes.
- **Process Equity** means that the program prioritizes access, influence, and decision-making power for historically and presently disenfranchised communities throughout the program in establishing objectives, design, implementation, and evaluation of success.
- **Outcome Equity** is the result of successful Process Equity and is demonstrated by tangible transportation and economic benefits for equity priority communities.

Equity Definition

- Equity priority communities are defined as those who experience and/or have experienced discrimination and exclusion based on identity or status, such as:
 - BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)
 - People with disabilities
 - Communities with limited English proficiency (LEP)
 - Persons with lower income
 - Houseless individuals and families
 - Immigrants and refugees
 - Young people
 - Older adults
- Together, Process Equity and Outcome Equity contribute to addressing the impacts of and removing long standing injustices experienced by these communities.

Equity Advisory Group

- Comprised of 3 types of members:
 - Representatives of partner agencies
 - Representatives of community-based organizations
 - At-large community members
- Provide recommendations directly to the Program Administrator
 - Ex. Equity Definition, Equity-focused Screening Criteria
- Engaging on all the elements of the Modified LPA to provide their input on equity implications
- Will be integral to development of a Community Benefits Agreement/Community Workforce Agreement that advances our Equity Framework

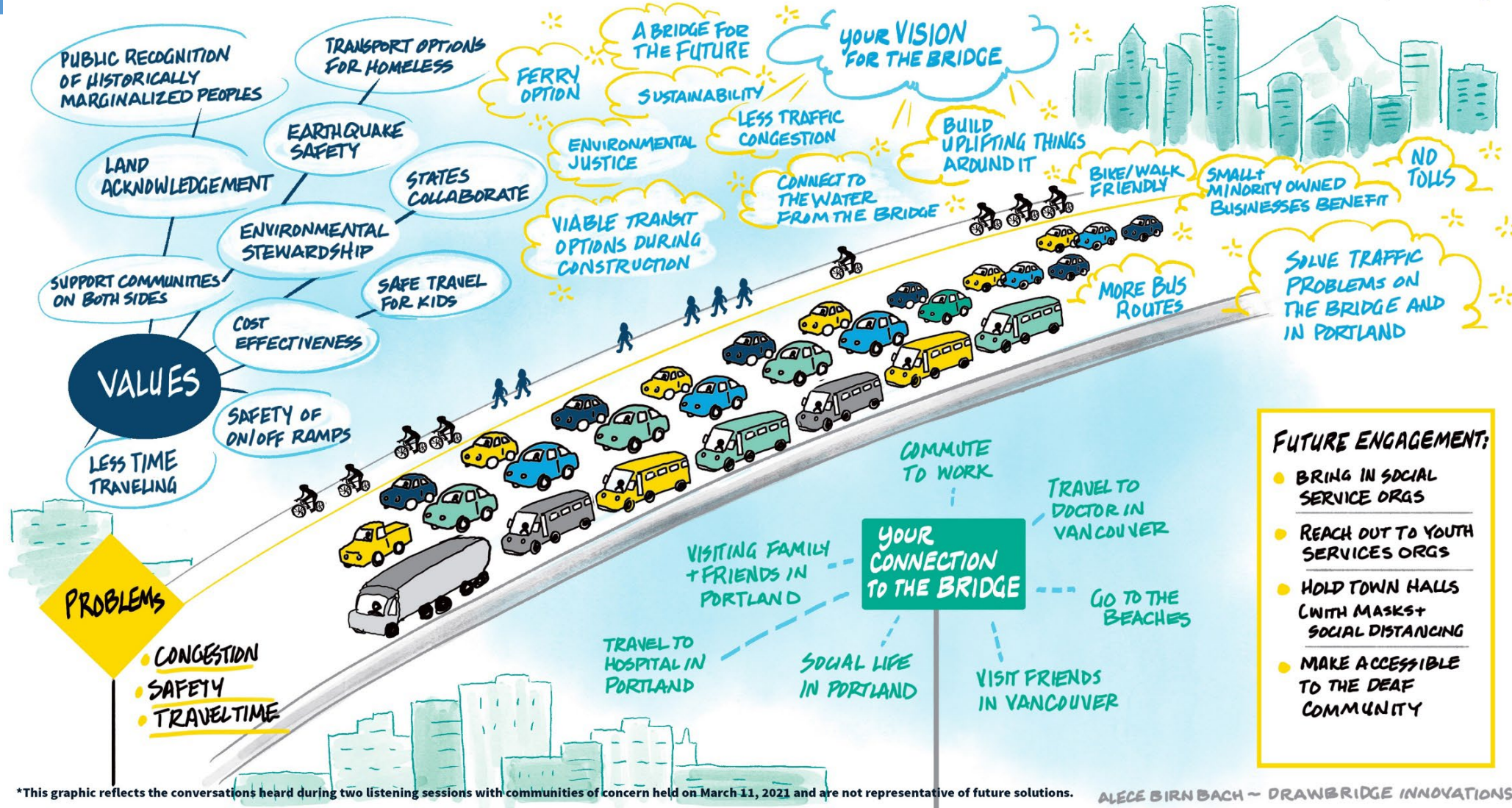


Interstate
BRIDGE
Replacement Program

Join Us

Parametrix

ELEVATING THE VOICES OF EQUITY

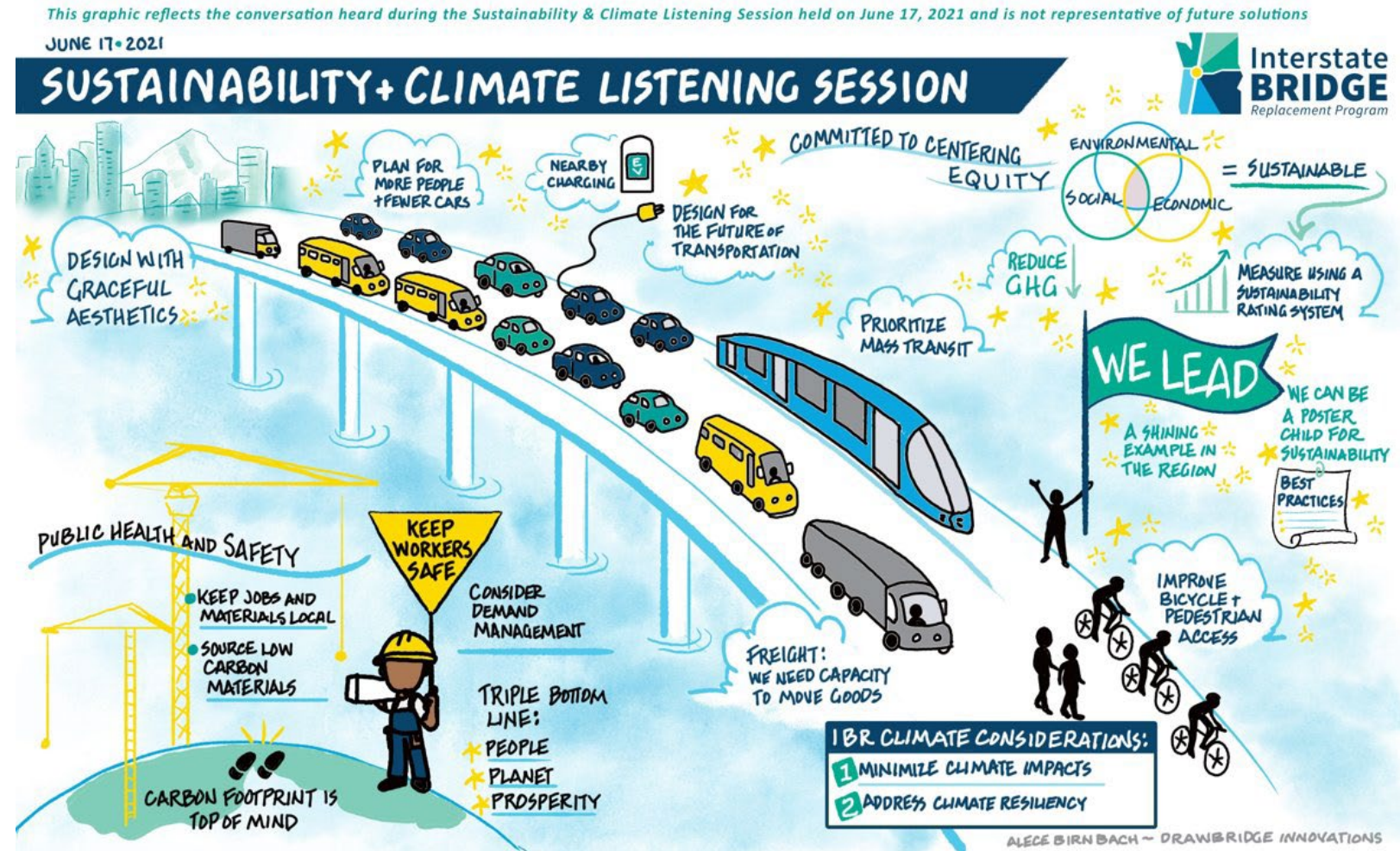


*This graphic reflects the conversations heard during two listening sessions with communities of concern held on March 11, 2021 and are not representative of future solutions.

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Engaging the Community on Climate

- Climate Listening Sessions
- Climate Technical Work Group
- Target setting with local partners
- Equity Advisory Group



Setting Goals and Designing the Program

Equity Objectives

Mobility & Accessibility

Improve mobility, accessibility, and connectivity, especially for lower income travelers, people with disabilities, and historically underserved communities who experience transportation barriers.

Physical Design

Integrate equity, area history, and culture into the physical design elements of the program, including bridge aesthetics, artwork, amenities, and impacts on adjacent land uses.

Community Benefits

Find opportunities for and implement local community improvements, in addition to required mitigations.

Economic opportunity

Ensure that economic opportunities generated by the program benefit minority and women owned firms, BIPOC workers, workers with disabilities, and young people.

Decision-making processes

Prioritize access, influence, and decision-making power for underserved communities throughout the program in establishing objectives, design, implementation, and evaluation of success

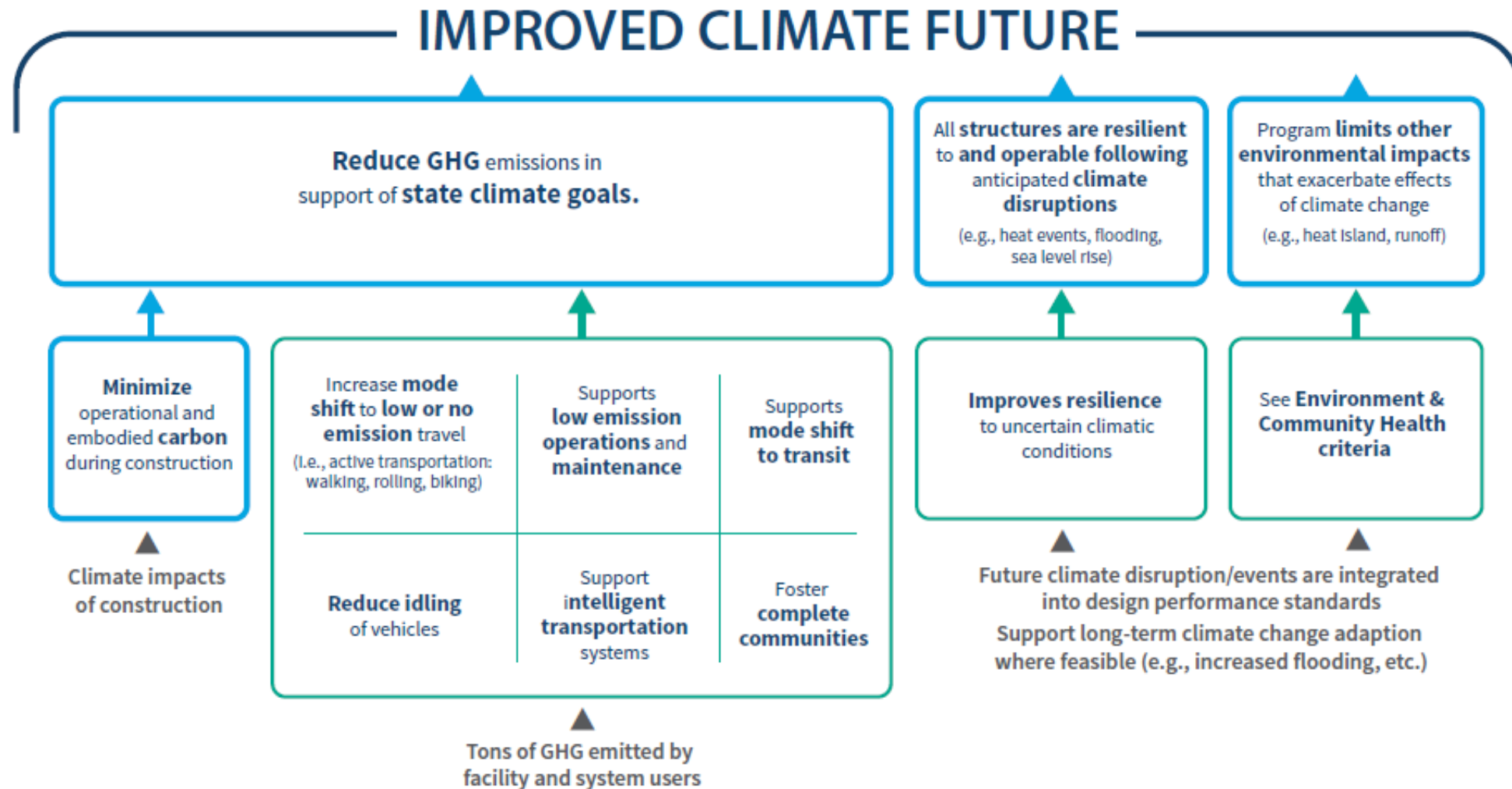
Avoiding further harm

Actively seek out options with a harm-reduction priority, rather than simply mitigate disproportionate impacts on historically impacted and underserved communities and populations.

Equity in the Screening Process

- Examples:
 - Population from equity priority communities within 0.25/0.33/0.5 mile of high-capacity transit station
 - Jobs and services accessible within 30/45/60 minutes via transit and driving for equity priority communities
 - Proximity of design option's pedestrian infrastructure to vehicle lanes (potential noise)
 - Particularly important to blind or low vision pedestrians who rely on sound to navigate
 - Approximate area of developable remnant parcels post-construction

Climate Metrics



○ Outcome statements ○ Climate objectives ► Climate screening metrics from screening blueprint

Planning for an uncertain future

- Adaptation and Preparation for Known Events
 - Levees and Navigation
 - Flood events
 - Sea level rise
 - Smoke
 - Heat
- Potential for other changes
 - Standards for multimodal facilities
 - Stormwater and floodplain regulations
 - Changes in technology and construction methods and materials
 - Policy and legal changes

Program Elements and Climate

- **Design**

- Resilient (storm, heat, smoke)
- Floodplains, levees
- Stormwater
- River navigation

- **Infrastructure and Operations**

- High-capacity transit
- Variable rate tolling
- Active transportation improvements
- Local street network connections
- Congestion reduction and safety improvements

- **Construction**

- Multiple elements under consideration, from construction equipment emissions to materials
- Evaluate and address localized air quality effects on workers and neighborhoods



Thank you!

