



Date: August 30, 2021

To: Oregon Transportation Commission

Cc: Rose Quarter Project Executive Steering Committee

From: Historic Albina Advisory Board

Subject: Historic Albina Advisory Board Highway Cover Recommendation

Purpose

At our August 23 meeting, we, the Historic Albina Advisory Board, voted on and approved a consensus recommendation to advance the “Hybrid 3” cover concept scenario to the Oregon Transportation Commission. Hybrid 3 maximizes both the amount of developable land available and sustains existing momentum around workforce and contracting opportunities, while also ensuring the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project stays on schedule for construction beginning in 2023. We have also provided additional considerations that would maximize project benefits to historic Albina and Black Portlanders.

This memo outlines our cover recommendation and additional considerations to the Oregon Transportation Commission.

Background

The purpose of the Historic Albina Advisory Board is to center voices of the Black community to ensure that project outcomes reflect community interests and values and that historic Albina directly benefits from the investments of this project. ODOT’s Urban Mobility Office formed our Board in December 2020 based on the [project’s values](#) and feedback from the community. It is our role to bring community perspectives into the project’s decision-making process concerning elements that most directly support community connections, urban design and wealth generation in the Black and historic Albina community—including a recommended highway cover design responsive to community economic development needs, public health and aesthetic desires.

Last year, in response to direction from the Governor and requests from project stakeholders, the Oregon Transportation Commission directed ODOT to retain a consultant team to conduct an independent assessment of the highway cover designs included in the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project. The requests from Metro, Multnomah County, City of Portland, Portland Public Schools and Albina Vision Trust shaped the creation of the independent assessment process. The goal for this independent team was to understand the vision and goals of stakeholders in the project area, generate potential highway cover scenarios, and assess the impacts and benefits of these scenarios. The work of the independent cover assessment team informed both the Governor’s meetings toward a consensus plan, and the Board’s recommendation. Attachment A includes more information about this work.

Oregon Governor Kate Brown convened a series of meetings with stakeholders to find a consensus plan for the path forward. The Hybrid 3 highway cover option emerged and was presented to board members as the “win-win” solution. The highway covers in the proposed Hybrid 3 option would be able to hold two to three story buildings. The project would also include a reconnected street grid above the highway, as well as new multimodal infrastructure. On the highway, new auxiliary lanes and reconfigured traffic flow will help improve safety in the corridor and reduce congestion.

Preliminary estimates for the entire I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project with the Hybrid 3 highway cover design concept that could hold two to three story structures are estimated to cost between \$1.18 and \$1.25 billion. ODOT will own the highway cover structure. The uses on top of the cover would be owned and programmed by another local entity with land use authority with oversight by a governance commission.

Historic Albina Advisory Board Recommendation

The Historic Albina Advisory Board recommends the following priorities for further development of the Hybrid 3 highway cover scenario. These priorities have also been reflected in previous Board meetings, board members’ written comments, the joint committee meeting on August 17 with unanimous support from the Community Oversight Advisory Committee and formally by consensus at the special Board meeting on August 23. Attachment B includes additional information provided by board members regarding these priorities. All comments provided are equal in value and hold the same weight – they are not presented in order of priority.

- **Maximize developable land on and off the highway cover for long lasting Black community benefit**, providing space with the opportunity for ownership opportunities for homes, businesses, and culturally-reflective community places by, for, and supportive of historic Albina (e.g., cultural wellness center, youth and career center).
 - The community should have continued input and influence on what is developed on the cover and land adjacent to the covers to ensure it reflects the history of Albina, will provide future generations with inspiration and education and create enduring financial wealth throughout the community.
 - The project budget should provide for artwork and interactive educational elements along the streetscape and other community spaces, so that the environment can reflect Portland’s Black history.
- **Create a governance commission represented by and accountable to the Black community that has decision-making power for the future programmed uses on top of the highway cover, with a majority community-led membership.** The governance process should include drafting a plan outlining how the development on top of the highway cover be consistent with other Albina area investment plans, what the process looks like, and what community benefits should be achieved. The commission should represent a broad base of Black community leaders and community members, individuals with deep ties to or displacement from Historic Albina. The process must be collaborative and include members of existing community stakeholder groups with projects focused on reinvestment efforts in the Albina Corridor. Community membership seats should include but not be limited to:

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- Representatives from the Rose Quarter Project Historic Albina Advisory Board and Community Oversight Advisory Committee,
- Representatives from Albina Vision Trust
- Representatives from the Russel Williams Project, N/NE Housing Strategies, N/NE Action Plan Leadership Committee (formerly N/NE CDI)
- Any future governance structure must provide for and prioritize community land ownership where possible.
- **Deliver tangible results and benefits to the historic Albina community that was irreparably harmed by the original construction of I-5.**
 - The project should be leveraged to support the broader community vision for a restorative neighborhood.
- **Create a financing plan that capitalizes on local, regional, state and federal funding sources;** incorporates input from the community; and includes the resources to deliver the community's priorities.
- **Maximize economic opportunities for Black people** through Disadvantaged Business Enterprise contracting and workforce opportunities for Black and Brown Community members and those with deep ties to historic Albina, as well as build capacity of these firms.
 - The process must avoid significant impacts to the contract awarded to and future work of Raimore Construction in association with the current Project's Construction Manager/General Contractor Joint Venture.
 - The process must continue to prioritize the Diversity Goals, including creating opportunities to get young members of the Black community to work and extending these goals to future work.
 - The project's workforce program should consider how economic opportunities for the houseless community could be supported as part of this work.
- **Minimize impacts to Harriet Tubman school, neighborhood businesses, local streets, and the environment.**
 - The project should avoid further impacts to the school community where possible. Harriet Tubman Middle School should also be relocated through a separate process beyond just the Rose Quarter Project.
 - The project should strive to avoid adverse environmental impacts to the new places and spaces created on the highway cover.
- **Maximize access ease of travel, safety, and comfortability for people traveling to, from, and within the project area** (particularly for historic Albina community members displaced to east and north Portland and outside of the city).
 - The project process must bring Tri-met into the design conversation to collaboratively develop easier ways to access the Rose Quarter Transit station for all people traveling in the area.

Board Member Written Comment

This memo represents the overall recommendation of the Historic Albina Advisory Board. To the greatest extent, it seeks to accurately and fairly represent our views expressed during this process. As noted in our Charter, there is not a requirement for our committee to achieve

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consensus. That said, many areas of shared values and priorities were identified through this process. This document seeks to identify our shared views as well as our range of perspectives.

In order to ensure each of us has the opportunity to clearly express our individual views and priorities, we have provided written comment for inclusion in this report (see Attachment B).

Sincerely,

The Historic Albina Advisory Board

Sprinavasa Brown

Andrew Campbell

Andrew Clarke

Keith Edwards

Sharon Gary-Smith

Leslie Goodlow

Estelle Love Lavespere

Kevin Modica

Pastor Richard Probasco

Dr. Carlos Richard

Carl Talton

John Washington

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Attachment A: Independent Cover Assessment Resource Library

View the resource library documents here: <http://www.albinahighwaycovers.com/resources/>.

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Attachment B: Additional Written Comment from the Board

Comments made by board members during the meeting may be viewed here:
https://youtu.be/D3PQB8_iTs

Sprinavasa Brown

1. Develop a plan for bond measure or other funding strategy for relocating Tubman MS and supporting families for transition of their school.
2. Governance structure similar to CDC with majority Black leadership including # of seats for current HAAB members, # of seats for Black youth/young adults ages 15-21, paid stipends and meals and transportation support for members.
3. Creation of Center for Black Legacy and Futures to be housed on the new cover/caps as a cultural heritage, education and training center for Black community of Oregon.
4. Education Hub specific for Black, Indigenous and PoC youth/young adults ages k-25 to include designated funds through government stream of revenue/tax dollars for youth resources, paid leadership development and career training pathways for careers in the built environment, design and construction with partnerships with BIPoC led community based organizations.
5. Propose a policy change to change to the current 99 year lease of government owned land to be a New land ownership model that allows descendants of historic Albina to outright own the land in perpetuity after 99 years specifically for building generational wealth for the displaced descendants of Albina.
6. Design and placement of Air quality monitors that are placed upon the caps and publicly viewable and available for any citizen to see; and monitored regularly by EPA representatives in Oregon with an action plan to address air pollution levels if rises above current advisable levels.
7. Approval of 5-6 story tall buildings.

Andrew Campbell

Since ODOT will have more right-of-way land, they need to guarantee that the land will benefit the Black community in a sustainable way, so future generations can learn about the Black migration to Portland, and current generations can heal by having a safe space/district.

Budget should include artwork, so the environment can reflect Black history that exists in Portland.

If private sectors invest, they should have some restrictions so private donors do not over take the values and are held accountable to restore justice for the Black population.

Preference for the covers to be able to uphold 5-6 story buildings. Great opportunity for rooftops views of Mt.Hood/St. Helens and a as a way to maximize the developable land on the highway covers.

Bring Tri-met into the design conversation. There can be an easier way to access the Rose Quarter Transit station for all modes of transportation.

Andrew Clarke

Preference for the caps to have capacity to Build to 5 - 6 stories versus 3 - 5 etc.

Leslie Goodlow

Recommend that the HAAB is the group to guide development of the caps and that conversations begin immediately with prosper and PHB about potential funding.

Estelle Love Lavespere

Provision preventing armed security from being on the land on the caps or to make it a "gun free" area specifically mentioned out of concerns for violence TOWARDS the returning population.

Recommend the newly formed Albina CDC would determine security and enforcement policies With Community policing principles.

Kevin Modica

Recommend additional conversations relating this project with the Columbia River crossing.

Also recommend conversations around additional Public safety/Community safety enhancements.