

HISTORIC ALBINA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING #16 SUMMARY

Date: February 15, 2022
Time: 4:00–6:30 pm
Location: Online Zoom meeting

This document is a summary of the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Historic Albina Advisory Board meeting. The [meeting presentation](#) and [recording](#) provide additional documentation of this meeting.

Historic Albina Advisory Board Members in Attendance

- Dr. Ebony Amato–Blackmon
- Keith Edwards
- Leslie Goodlow
- Sharon Gary–Smith
- Andrew Campbell
- Estelle Love Lavespere
- Kevin Modica
- Dr. Carlos Richard
- John Washington
- Sprinavasa Brown
- Bryson Davis

Historic Albina Advisory Board Members Not in Attendance

- Carl Talton

Staff Members and Presenters

- Ericka Warren, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Historic Albina Advisory Board Facilitator
- Dr. Steven Holt, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Advisor
- Megan Channell, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Director
- Monica Blanchard, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Deputy Director
- Tia Williams, Urban Mobility Office Communications Director
- Rose Gerber, I-5 Rose Quarter Public Outreach and Media Manager
- Steve Drahota, Presenter, Owner’s Representative Team
- James McGrath, Presenter, Owner’s Representative Team
- Bill Hart, Presenter, Owner’s Representative Team
- Marianne Zarkin, Presenter, Owner’s Representative Team
- Meera Bowman–Johnson, Owner’s Representative Team
- Natalie Warner, Technical Support, Owner’s Representative Team
- Logan Cullums, Notetaker, Owner’s Representative Team

Agenda

- Welcome, Introduction, Agenda Review
- Public Comment
- Project Updates
 - Director's Update
- Design Updates
- Next Steps / Adjourn

Welcome, Introduction, Agenda Review

Ericka Warren, Historic Albina Advisory Board Facilitator, welcomed board members and participants, provided an overview of the meeting and reminded everyone of the phone numbers for public comment and technical assistance.

Meera Bowman-Johnson introduced the new project logo and branding elements and acknowledged the work of both Jessica Stanton and PDX Black Excellence in developing the new brand.

Ericka reminded committee members of the seven principles of agreement to guide their participation in today's meeting.

Public Comment

No public comments were received.

Project Updates

Megan Channell, Rose Quarter Project Director, provided an update on the project's environmental review process, the Governor's signed letter of agreement with regional and local agencies and the project finance plan.

DISCUSSION

Kevin Modica asked how the project connects to the Interstate Bridge Replacement Project and if the need for collaboration would lead to delays on the project.

- Megan responded the Rose Quarter efforts would continue as separate and distinct from IBR. The two projects remain coordinated, but the actions separate. Based on available information, delays to the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project were not anticipated.

Kevin asked if the IBR project would have a new community committee set up and if contractors from Rose Quarter would be automatically qualified for the IBR project also.

- Megan said the IBR does have its own community advisory process and committees, and she would ask about Rose Quarter contractors' ability to work on the IBR project.
- Ericka added that Johnell Bell has been key for community engagement on the IBR project and was discussing how best to ensure seamless collaboration.

Sharon Gary-Smith said she hopes the Board will influence and inform recommendations on this. She hopes the collaboration between the projects moves forward quickly and added many of the issues Kevin brought up have been discussed at IBR community meetings.

Megan said moving forward, a way the Historic Albina Advisory Board and Community Oversight Advisory Committee could get involved was by providing letters of support or letters outlining priorities.

Design Updates – Environmental Review and Work Packages

Steve Drahota first reviewed the overall project limits and design differences between the prior design and the Proposed Hybrid 3 Concept. The updated Environmental Assessment would include a full sweep of the technical reports to incorporate all of the design changes. The project team anticipates the updated NEPA decision document in late 2022.

Steve reiterated there would be an opportunity to build multi-story buildings on the highway cover. The buildings themselves wouldn't be built by ODOT, but the cover would be.

Sharon Gary-Smith said that in many ways, it appears the Hybrid 3 updated concept makes on/off movement through the Rose Quarter area better and ensures a larger highway cover for redevelopment and business opportunities, as the community desired. Sharon asked what kind of things might draw the attention of federal reviewers and what might draw this process out beyond the assumed timeline.

- Megan responded that our federal partners are supportive of our pivot, and that from a policy standpoint, we're in good shape. She said she's confident about the path forward.

Sharon asked if the wall at Harriet Tubman was significant only if Tubman remains, or necessary in the design to hold up the land above the freeway.

- Steve responded that the wall is needed to support the land above it, both for the current "flat" soil topography behind the school and for a large earthquake loading of the soil. The wall design also assumes the existing building would remain at its current location.

Steve then provided an overview of the different work packages for the project. Some work packages have been separated and advanced from the larger work packages, allowing for earlier DBE and community participation.

Design Updates – Russell Bridge

James McGrath indicated there were two key topics to talk about: the bridge over Russell and the wall by Harriet Tubman Middle School. James used the Miro board to show the different design elements under consideration for the Russell bridge. Bill Hart added this was a key opportunity to create a cohesive design in the Albina area.

DISCUSSION

Bryson Davis asked if the new project logo could be incorporated onto the medallions on the support column of the bridge.

- Bill responded the medallions were possible on bridge support columns and was something they could continue to discuss.

Sprinavasa Brown asked if it was possible to project imagery onto the side panels of the bridge.

- James responded it was not possible on the bridge itself, but there were some locations under the bridge where it could be an option.

Sprinavasa recommended looking into how lighted elements could be powered by sustainable sources. She also recommended prioritizing options that would look the best over time. She said she likes the lighted panel option, as long as it mimics natural light.

- Bill responded the project team has been looking at those two things.

Keith Edwards said he wants the Board to consider incorporating the 7 Principles of Kwanzaa into the design.

Sharon said she wants the design to be aligned, purposeful and complementary across the project and in coordination with IBR.

Bryson said he likes Sprinavasa's vision. He added he wants to see consistency between bridges with distinct elements in each. Regardless of what goes on the medallions, he said he likes the idea of incorporating color and would give up a bit of permanence for that. He added that tile may be a good material to consider.

Estelle Lavespere stated her preference to incorporate historic elements wherever possible.

John Washington said he's struggling with damage to the pieces through tagging. He asked who would take care of the artwork.

- Megan responded that John was asking all the right questions - ODOT welcomes partnership with the City or other agencies and organizations for maintenance, but ODOT was committed to maintaining it if needed.

Design Updates – Harriet Tubman Middle School Wall

James began a discussion about the wall by Harriet Tubman Middle School, which faces the highway with a segment facing the school.

Bill provided an overview of different schemes for sequencing vertical panels along the wall.

Marianne Zarkin said many trees would be planted between the school and freeway, partly obscuring the wall. One option was to paint a historical mural facing the school. The wall could also serve as a temporary art gallery for students to showcase their art.

DISCUSSION

John said it's important to have stencils that are culturally significant for Black Americans and would be interested in helping select patterns. He noted that concrete could be dyed and would like to incorporate color into the wall.

Keith reiterated he would like to incorporate the principles of Kwanzaa wherever possible.

Sharon said she likes the idea of paying tribute to the school and the students and loves the opportunity for community acknowledgement and cultural reference in this effort. She asked if there's a way for the artwork to represent the values that students hold. She also wondered if there was or should be consideration for what Albina Vision Trust was designing and developing. She wants to ensure alignment, complementary design and consistency in entry to and exit from Albina.

- Sprinavasa said she loves the way Sharon framed that - complimentary and consistent - and also likes Keith's idea of integrating Kwanzaa principles into the design elements.
- Sharon added she's thinking about all the work and time it took to get here and loves that we stuck together long enough to get to this point of excitement.

John said he wants to make sure the pieces have longevity. He wants whatever is there to be both enriching and inspirational.

- James responded that an artist collaboration could be a good idea here.
- Sharon added she is looking forward to getting closer to focusing on the interests and concerns about who vets artists, what are the opportunities for selecting commissioned works and individual and group artistic applications. She is also interested in who would be selected to oversee and manage artistic contributions and maintaining the artwork.
- Ericka responded there is an important dialogue to be had around all of these topics, and there is the potential for commissioned artwork in several areas.
- Sharon said she also wants to ensure the selected group (i.e., RACC, City of Portland, other arts group) has demonstrated interest, intention and proven results in embedding equity into their organization, as an important and necessary condition of engagement with ODOT for this critical work in Albina.

Bill said this is a perfect opportunity to pay tribute to the school's legacy as an important site for the Black community.

- Sharon added she has found this community, though not often represented in these conversations, has much more thought and awareness of the importance of beacons that announce where you are when visiting and being guided into and through our reclaimed community.

Keith said he would like to see the wall not only pay honor to Harriet Tubman but to other Black women who have been significant in the nation's history.

- Sharon suggested we go local with permanently naming and recognizing those in our own community who have guided us. She suggested Mercedes Diaz, Kathryn Bogle, Beatrice Canady and Avel Gordly. She added this could be a "Roll Call Wall."

Leslie Goodlow said that before the school was named after Harriet Tubman, it was the Elliot Elementary School. She said there is lots of history that predates Tubman.

- Sharon thanked Leslie for speaking up because Eliot was her elementary school.
- Leslie added she attended Eliot as well.

Bryson said he is thinking about how Mount Rushmore has carvings of faces – he wonders if we could commission something similar.

- James responded if we decide to move toward a commissioned piece, all we have to do now is prep the wall for it. He added that even if the school does move, the site would most likely still be a civic institution.

John said he wants to make sure the team is thinking about consistency in wayfinding signage.

Keith said he understands that ODOT doesn't have total control over what comes after the project, but he expects ODOT to advocate for the Historic Albina Advisory Board's recommendations.

- Megan responded that was why they were there today – so ODOT could stand with everyone and support their recommendations.
- James added the project team has been documenting all of the locations where something better could be done. Locations have been identified where we can direct energy including Russell, Harriet Tubman Middle School, the highway cover and the Rose Quarter Transit Center. He also acknowledged the potential need for an art program.
- Megan said the project team is taking the Board's feedback to heart and making sure to incorporate it. She said that part of ODOT's responsibility is to identify the design elements that would require additional community partnerships. She added that she is excited to see where we can take some of these elements.

Ericka thanked Bill and Marianne for their work and invited Historic Albina Advisory Board members to participate in the Design Collaboration Forum coming up on March 8 at 2:00 p.m.

Next Steps / Adjourn

Ericka thanked meeting attendees for their time and participation and adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Note: This meeting was hosted in an online format that enabled Historic Albina Advisory Board members to unmute their microphones and use web-cameras to participate in the meeting. Attendees, or public observers, remained in "listen-only" mode and without access to video-sharing functions (attendees were able to view the presentation slides).