

I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project: Findings of Compatibility with Acknowledged Comprehensive Plans per Oregon Administrative Rule 731-015-0075

These findings address compliance with the applicable provision of the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) State Agency Coordination Program, which is Division 15 of Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) Chapter 731. The purpose of ODOT's State Agency Coordination Program (SAC) is to ensure that ODOT plans and projects "are carried out in compliance with the statewide planning goals and in a manner compatible with acknowledged comprehensive plans."¹ An accompanying staff report provides additional context.²

Background

The I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project (Project) has been developed through a coordinated planning and project development process between ODOT and the City of Portland (City), considering potential solutions to Interstate 5 (I-5) and local street concerns in the Broadway/Weidler interchange area.

Between 2010 and 2012, ODOT and the City initiated a partnership to co-develop land use and transportation concepts for the N/NE Quadrant of the Central City through an iterative process involving public agencies, community interest groups and other interested parties. Over time, the planning process evaluated over 70 design concepts to improve I-5 between I-84 and I-405 and the I-5 Broadway/Weidler interchange area.

This joint effort combined the planning of local strategies for land use, urban design, and local transportation improvements, typically a city responsibility, with the planning of interstate highway improvements, which is an ODOT responsibility. This approach for highway improvements was to address long-demonstrated safety and operational issues that would contribute to the continued vitality of the central city and the mobility needs of the region and state.

That planning process culminated with the issuance of the North/Northeast Quadrant Plan³, which was incorporated into the City's Central City 2035 Plan⁴ in 2018, and the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) adoption of the I-5: Broadway/Weidler Interchange Facility Plan⁵ (Facility Plan) in 2012.

After the adoption of the Facility Plan, ODOT and the City collaboratively developed a project to implement a component of the Facility Plan called the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project

¹ Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 731-015-0005.

² Staff report

³ Exhibit A Central City 2035 N/NE Quadrant Plan Ord. 18731

⁴ Central City Plan 2035 <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/central-city/central-city-2035-documents>

⁵ Exhibit B Facility Plan 2012

("Project"). The Project is included in the City's adopted 2035 Transportation System Plan⁶ (TSP) consistent with the adopted N/NE Quadrant Plan and the Facility Plan.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and ODOT, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), issued an Environmental Assessment (EA)⁷ for the Project in February 2019. Following Project design refinement in response to public comments received on the 2019 EA, FHWA issued a Revised Environmental Assessment (REA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)⁸ in October of 2020.

In July 2020, Portland City Council issued a Suspend Work directive to all City Bureaus (July 6, 2020) related to Project work. The suspend work directive was issued due to the City's concerns about the project's alignment with its values, particularly regarding racial equity, climate action, and community engagement.

Metro, Multnomah County, City of Portland, Portland Public Schools and the Albina Vision Trust helped shape the formation of an independent highway cover scope of work and selection of the Independent Cover Assessment (ICA) consultant team to address the City's concerns. Beginning in 2020 and extending through 2021, the ICA engaged the Project's advisory committees and community partners to explore design opportunities for the highway cover that supported restorative justice outcomes. The purpose of the ICA was to better understand partner goals and objectives within the Project Area, generate potential highway cover scenarios, and assess the impacts and benefits of those scenarios. In July 2021, as directed by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC), the ICA team submitted to the OTC a Final Report with highway cover design options that would promote the redevelopment of the Albina neighborhood in a manner that creates economic opportunities for area residents and minority-owned businesses. The ICA resulted in recommendations for modification to the design concept approved by FHWA (the Build Alternative approved in the 2020 REA and FONSI).

In July 2021, Oregon Governor Brown convened a series of meetings with Project stakeholders and community organizations, including the City of Portland, to discuss the design concepts developed in the ICA. In August 2021, the Project's Historic Albina Advisory Board (HAAB)—as supported by the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) and the Community Oversight Advisory Committee (COAC)—recommended "Hybrid 3" as the preferred highway cover design concept for the Project. Following the community and stakeholder recommendations, in September 2021, the OTC directed ODOT to advance further evaluation of the Hybrid 3 highway cover design concept, with conditions related to the Project's funding process and other technical analyses.

⁶ City of Portland 2035 Transportation System Plan <https://www.portland.gov/transportation/planning/tsp-document-downloads>

⁷ Exhibit C 2019 Environmental Assessment <https://www.i5rosequarter.org/library/>

⁸ Exhibit D 2020 FONSI and REA <https://www.i5rosequarter.org/library/>

In January 2022, Oregon Governor Brown and local government parties, which include the City, Multnomah County and Metro elected official representatives, signed a Letter of Agreement⁹ to demonstrate their shared understanding and support for the proposed Hybrid 3 highway cover design concept as part of the Project. The proposed Hybrid 3 design concept was intended to address a collective desire to reconnect the neighborhood, create buildable space, and enhance wealth-generating opportunities for the community, while simultaneously addressing the area's multimodal transportation needs.

In accordance with NEPA, ODOT evaluated the October 2020 NEPA decision and prepared a draft Supplemental EA which considered the differences of a Project that included the Hybrid 3 highway cover design compared to the design that was analyzed in the 2020 REA/FONSI. At the conclusion of the reevaluation, FHWA and ODOT agreed that the design changes required additional analyses beyond what was presented in the 2020 REA, and FHWA rescinded the FONSI on January 18, 2022. ODOT rescinded its April 2021 SAC Findings on May 10, 2022.

In July 2022, the Portland City Council unanimously approved an ordinance to re-engage as a Project partner and approve an Intergovernmental Agreement¹⁰ with ODOT to support further analysis of the Hybrid 3 concept. The City Council reaffirmed their Project support, specifically of the Hybrid 3 highway cover design, in a letter¹¹ dated April 2023 and again in September 2023¹² in support of ODOT's application for a Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant for the Project. The City also provided a letter of support¹³ for ODOT's 2022 Reconnecting Communities grant application.

To satisfy NEPA requirements, ODOT and FHWA prepared a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) analyzing Hybrid 3 as the revised Build Alternative. The SEA was released for a 50-day public comment period on November 15, 2022. Many comments on the SEA focused on the relocation of the I-5 southbound off-ramp, a component of the Hybrid 3 design concept, and its effects on pedestrian and bicycle safety, freight movement, and traffic management during events in the Rose Quarter. In response to these comments and in collaboration with the City, the HAAB, Project partners, and key community partners, ODOT refined the design of the Revised Build Alternative. As compared to the Revised Build Alternative design considered in the 2022 SEA, the design refinements would improve safety for people walking, biking, and rolling; reduce car and transit delays; support redevelopment opportunities for the Albina community; and create safer access to Moda Center events. This refined Revised Build Alternative is analyzed in a Revised Supplemental Environmental Assessment (RSEA)¹⁴.

⁹ Exhibit E Gov Letter of Agreement

¹⁰ Exhibit F Rose Quarter IGA 2022

¹¹ Exhibit G City I5RQ Letter to ODOT 04_2023.pdf

¹² Exhibit H CitySupportLetter 09_2023.pdf

¹³ Exhibit I City I5RQ RCP Support Ltr 2022.pdf

¹⁴ Revised Supplemental Environmental Assessment (RSEA) <https://www.i5rosequarter.org/library/t>

FHWA issued a FONSI¹⁵ for the Project concurrently with the publication of the RSEA on March 12, 2024. The term “Project” used in the following findings refers to the Revised Build Alternative, as approved in the RSEA and FONSI, unless otherwise indicated, including both Hybrid 3 and the design from the 2022 SEA, as well as design refinements incorporated in response to public comments on the 2022 SEA.

The Project is subject to ODOT’s SAC, OAR 731-015-0075, which addresses coordination in project development for Class 1 and Class 3 projects, as defined by NEPA implementing regulations. The NEPA class of action for the Project is Class 3, preparation of an Environmental Assessment.

In accordance with its SAC, ODOT sets forth the following findings demonstrating satisfaction of OAR 731-015-0075. These findings rely upon the Staff Report¹⁶ dated August 1, 2025 submitted to the Director in support of these Findings and all documents and reports cited to and referenced in these findings.

OAR 731-015-0075: Coordination Procedures for Adopting Plans for Class I and Class III Projects

- (1) The Department shall involve affected cities, counties, metropolitan planning organizations, state and federal agencies, special districts and other interested parties in the development of project plans. The Department shall include planning officials of the affected cities, counties and metropolitan planning organization on the project technical advisory committee.**

Findings: ODOT has involved and engaged with planning staff and elected officials from the City, Multnomah County, Metro, FHWA, special districts and other interested parties since the inception of the Facility Plan (2010) and continuing through the development of the Revised Build Alternative (2023). Other interested parties, as well as the general public, were also proactively engaged. That engagement is described in more detail in the background section above. The RSEA includes Appendix F. Public Involvement Summary. In addition, a list of public outreach events from 2016 through 2023 was compiled as I-5 Rose Quarter Improvements Project Outreach Events, December 2016 to December 2023.¹⁷

Involvement with affected cities, counties, metropolitan planning organizations, state and federal agencies, special districts and other interested parties has included but is not limited to:

- City of Portland (staff and elected officials)
- Metro (staff and elected officials)
- Multnomah County (staff and elected officials)

¹⁵ https://www.i5rosequarter.org/media/xureybji/i5rq_fonsi_508.pdf

¹⁶ Staff Report dated August 1, 2025

¹⁷ Exhibit J RQ_List_of_Community_Events_2023 and https://www.i5rosequarter.org/media/0g3be3ve/i5rq_rsea_appendixf_508.pdf

- TriMet (staff)
- Portland Public Schools (staff and elected board)
- Historic Albina Advisory Board (HAAB) (ODOT appointed advisory board, with the purpose of elevating voices in 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)
- Community Oversight Advisory Committee (ODOT appointed advisory board, with the purpose of reviewing and providing feedback on the Project's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and workforce programs and practices)
- Executive Steering Committee¹⁸ (Elected and appointed officials from affected agencies and community representatives)

ODOT, the City, Metro, and TriMet planning officials have worked and continue to work together and to engage other interested parties.

(2) Goal compliance and plan compatibility shall be analyzed in conjunction with the development of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment. The environmental analysis shall identify and address relevant land use requirements in sufficient detail to support subsequent land use decisions necessary to authorize the project.

Findings:

Goal compliance and plan compatibility has been analyzed in conjunction with the development of NEPA documents including the EA and through each iteration of the Project as shown in the EA, the REA, the SEA, the RSEA, and further documented in the Land Use Technical Report, Supplemental Land Use Technical Report, and Revised Supplemental Land Use Technical Report.¹⁹ ODOT's analysis is documented in Section 6.4 of the Revised Land Use Supplemental Technical Report (2023), located in Appendix A of the RSEA, which demonstrates that the Revised Build Alternative is compatible with the City's Comprehensive Plan and applicable state land use laws, plans, and policies.

The City Council adopted the N/NE Quadrant Plan and Facility Plan on Oct 25, 2012 (Resolution No. 36972). The City Council adopted the Central City 2035 Plan and Transportation System Plan amendments on June 6, 2018, which included the Project as conceptualized within the N/NE Quadrant and Facility plan. The Project appears in the Transportation System Plan on the constrained project list as project numbers 20119, 20120, 20121 as well as an Action Item (Ordinance No. 189000 and Resolution No. 37360).

¹⁸ I-5 Rose Quarter Improvements Project Executive Steering Committee Charter (October 26, 2020). https://www.i5rosequarter.org/pdfs/committee_documents/RQ_ESC_Charter_102620_remediated.pdf

¹⁹ The Land Use Technical Report, Supplemental Land Use Technical Report, and Revised Supplemental Land Use Technical Report as well as all NEPA documents can be found in the Project Library <https://www.i5rosequarter.org/library/>

(3) Except as otherwise set forth in section (4) of this rule, the Department shall rely on affected cities and counties to make all plan amendments and zone changes necessary to achieve compliance with the statewide planning goals and compatibility with local comprehensive plans after completion of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment and before completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement or Supplemental Environmental Assessment. These shall include the adoption of general and specific plan provisions necessary to address applicable statewide planning goals.

Findings: The terms “affected city or county” is defined in OAR 731-015-0015(2) as “a city or county that has comprehensive planning authority over a site or area which is directly impacted by a proposed Commission or Department action.” As the Project is located within the City’s planning jurisdiction, the City will be directly impacted by the Project and is therefore the “affected city” for purposes of the SAC. The Project is identified as a major transportation improvement project in the City’s Comprehensive Plan, as TSP project numbers 20119, 20120, and 20121, demonstrating that the Project is compatible with the City’s acknowledged Comprehensive Plan. No plan amendments or zone changes are necessary as a result. However, the City has also expressly committed to making any changes that may become necessary in its Central City 2035 Plan.²⁰

(4) The Department may complete a Final Environmental Impact Statement or Supplemental Environmental Assessment before the affected cities and counties make necessary plan amendments and zone changes in the following case:

(a) The Final Environmental Impact Statement or Supplemental Environmental Assessment identifies that the project be constructed in phases; and

(b) The Department finds:

(A) There is an immediate need to construct one or more phases of the project. Immediate need may include, but is not limited to, the facility to be improved or replaced currently exceeds or is expected to exceed within five years the level of service identified in the Oregon Highway Plan; and

(B) The project phase to be constructed meets a transportation need independent of the overall project, is consistent with the purpose and need of the overall project as identified in the FEIS, and will benefit the surrounding transportation system even if no further phases of the project are granted land use approval.

Findings: The Project is wholly within the City’s planning jurisdiction, therefore the City is the only affected city or county. The City was not required to make any plan amendments or zone

²⁰ <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/comp-plan-2035/about-comprehensive-plan/2035-comprehensive-plan-and-supportingnts> | [Portland.gov](https://www.portland.gov). The action charts are adopted by City Council Resolution *with the understanding that they are starting places and that some actions will need to be refined, amended or replaced over time.*

changes because the Project is compatible with the City's Comprehensive Plan as set forth in these findings. Accordingly, OAR 731-015-0075(4) does not apply.

(5) If a Final Environmental Impact Statement or Supplemental Environmental Assessment is completed pursuant to section (4) of this rule, all necessary plan amendments and zone changes associated with the particular phase of the project to be constructed shall be made by the city or county prior to constructing that phase of the project.

Findings: OAR 731-015-0075(5) does not apply because there were no necessary plan amendments or zone changes, as noted in findings 3 and 4 above.

(6) If compatibility with a city or county comprehensive plan cannot be achieved, the Department may modify one or more project alternatives to achieve compatibility or discontinue the project.

Findings: OAR 731-015-0075(6) does not apply because there were no necessary plan amendments or zone changes, as noted in findings 3, 4 and 5 above.

(7) The Commission or its designee shall adopt findings of compatibility with the acknowledged comprehensive plans of affected cities and counties when it grants design approval for the project. Notice of the decision shall be mailed out to all interested parties.

Findings: The Project is compatible with the City's acknowledged comprehensive plans.

As stated in findings for subsection (3), the City of Portland is the affected City. The Project is identified in the City's 2035 Transportation System Plan, which is the long-range plan guiding transportation investments in the City and is both an implementation tool and a supporting document to the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Transportation System Plan includes the Project as project numbers 20119, 20120, and 20121, all located on I-5 between I-84 and I-405 in the N/NE Quadrant. The description of project 20119 reads, "Conduct planning, preliminary engineering and environmental work to improve safety and operations on I-5, connection between I-84 and I-5, and access to the Lloyd District and Rose Quarter." The description of project 20120 reads, "Acquire right-of-way to improve safety and operations on I-5, connection between I-84 and I-5, and access to the Lloyd District and Rose Quarter." The description of project 20121 reads, "Construct improvements to enhance safety and operations on I-5, connection between I-84 and I-5, and access to the Lloyd District and Rose Quarter."

The City's inclusion of the Project within its City's 2035 Transportation System Plan shows that the Project is compatible with the City's Comprehensive Plan and supports the City's existing and planned land use. The Project is identified as a listed project because, in part, with its central city location, the project will redesign local streets to meet current City standards and support City Policy 9.5 to increase the share of trips made using active and low-carbon transportation modes. It will strengthen connectivity, specifically in reconnecting

neighborhoods across infrastructure and lessening the impact of highways. Additional detail can be found in the Land Use Technical Report.

The Director of ODOT has been delegated the authority to adopt these Findings of State Agency Compatibility on behalf of the OTC. Following adoption, the Director shall direct staff to mail notice to interested parties.

(8) The Department shall obtain all other land use approvals and planning permits prior to construction of the project.

Findings: ODOT commits, that for any project improvements that require future City design review and permits, it will obtain such approvals prior to construction.

Abbreviations

City – City of Portland

FONSI – Finding of No Significant Impact

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act

OAR – Oregon Administrative Rule

ODOT – Oregon Department of Transportation

OTC – Oregon Transportation Commission

REA – Revised Environmental Assessment

RSEA – Revised Supplemental Environmental Assessment

SAC – State Agency Coordination

SEA - Supplemental Environmental Assessment

TSP – Transportation System Plan

Referenced Documents

Exhibit A Central City N/NE Quadrant Plan
Exhibit B 2012 Facility Plan
Exhibit C 2019 I-5 Rose Quarter Environmental Assessment
Exhibit D 2020 FONSI and Revised Environmental Assessment
Exhibit E Gov Letter of Agreement
Exhibit F Rose Quarter IGA 2022
Exhibit H CitySupportLetter 09_2023
Exhibit I City I5RQ RCP Support Ltr 2022
Exhibit J RQ_List of Community_Events_2023
City of Portland 2035 Comprehensive Plan
City of Portland 2035 Transportation System Plan
I-5 Rose Quarter Improvements Project Executive Steering Committee Charter
Land Use Technical Report
Supplemental Land Use Technical Report
Revised Supplemental Land Use Technical Report