



I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Meeting #2 Summary

MEETING DATE: June 23, 2020

MEETING TIME: 5:30-8PM

LOCATION: Zoom online meeting

This document is a summary of the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting on June 23, 2020 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. via Zoom. The [meeting presentation](#) and [recording](#) provide additional documentation of this meeting.

CAC Members in Attendance

Bianca Montás

Brad Baker - Eliot Neighborhood Assoc.

Brett Morgan - 1000 Friends of Oregon

Carolyn Stoudamire

Christopher John O'Connor

Claire Vlach - Oregon Walks

Clint Culpepper - Portland State University

David Anchel

Diane Williams

Jasmine Gadie

Jenny Taylor - Go Lloyd

John Washington, Soul District Business Association

Jon Isaacs - Portland Business Alliance

Robert S. Carroll - Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council

Saumya Kini

Steve Cackley

Tristan Isaac - Bus Riders Unite

CAC Members Not in Attendance

Andrew Campbell - REACH

Cleo Davis

Liv Lufkin – Portland Public Schools-
Student Seat

Liz Foucher-Branch

Natasha Coleman

Pastor Craig Brown - St. Paul Missionary
Baptist Church

Shawn Penney

Shannon Olive - WomenFirst Transition and
Referral Center

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Staff Members

Christine Moses, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project CAC Facilitator

Megan Channell, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Director

April deLeon-Galloway, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Public Involvement and Communications Lead

Dr. Steven Holt, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Executive Steering Committee Facilitator

Steve Drahota, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Design Manager

Susan Hayman, facilitation team support, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Owner's Representative Team

Natalie Warner, facilitation team support/notetaking, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Owner's Representative Team

Sarah Omlor, technical support, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Owner's Representative Team

Guest Presenters

William Miller, Native American Youth and Family Center Community Advocacy Manager, and Native American Discussion Group facilitator

Johnell Bell, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Community Oversight Advisory Committee Facilitator, and African American Discussion Groups facilitator

Meeting Objectives

To share information and findings from the African American and Native American Discussion Groups; for ODOT and partners to listen to perspective, suggestions and requests from the CAC.

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was hosted as a Zoom Webinar format that enabled CAC 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 functions.

Welcome

Christine Moses welcomed CAC members to the second formal CAC meeting.

Land Acknowledgement

Christine acknowledged the native inhabitants of the land including the Chinook, Kalapuya, and Clatskanie, Siletz, and Tillamook tribal nations.

Agreements

Christine spoke to the meeting agreements:

- Listen, believe, and reflect
- Accept non-closure for the moment
- Speak your own truth with compassion
- Listen to understand; don't listen to respond
- Value and celebrate each other's experiences
- Open hearts + open minds → Exploration of Possibilities
- Make space, then take space; be concise
- Bring your best thinking into the room
- Attack the problem, not the person
- Disagreement, frustration, and differences of opinion are acknowledged, explored, and addressed

Discussion Group Engagement (Information)

April provided an overview of the Project's discussion group process to engage the Black and Native American communities and elevate their voices to inform the design and construction process. The Project hosted four discussion group sessions in 2019 with individuals of the Black community and one discussion group session in 2020 with individuals of the Native American community.

Native American Discussion Group

William Miller provided a summary of the Native American discussion group's issues and recommendations. The group's concerns or issues included:

- Project intent and who would benefit the most from the Project
- Displacement of businesses
- Transparency
- Carbon emissions

The group's recommendations included:

- Integrate green spaces and community gathering spaces
- Help uplift people who experience homelessness, provide public restrooms
- Commission art installations from artists with ties to the Project area

William added that participants expressed a desire to reconnect Native American tribes to the land who have ancestral ties to it. William also stated that some participants were skeptical about whether their input would influence project outcomes.

A CAC member stated that many of the CAC members share the Native American discussion group's concerns.

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African American Discussion Groups

Johnell Bell provided a summary of the of the African American discussion groups' issues, concerns and recommendations. The group's issues or concerns included:

- Congestion is a problem in the Rose Quarter area, and it should be addressed. However, most participants did not believe that the current Project design concept would adequately address the congestion without addressing the interstate bridge crossing.
- There was limited support for the Project elements. Most participants did not believe that the Project as designed addressed the needs of African Americans in Portland. The significant investment in bike lanes would primarily benefit white people in Portland.
- Historic systemic racism that has limited the economic mobility of African Americans in Portland should be addressed by such initiatives as housing affordability and education. This should be prioritized over bike and pedestrian accessibility.
- Distrust in ODOT and other agencies such as the City of Portland due to past displacement from the area.
- Government agencies and the Project partners are not doing enough to address gentrification. They felt like this Project would lead to further displacement of remaining African American individuals and businesses in the area.
- The goal of the Project seems to be less about addressing congestion and more about spurring development within the inner Northeast area for the benefit of wealthy corporations.
- Participants were grateful for the opportunity to offer feedback, but many found it painful to discuss the community which no longer exists within the Project area.
- Participants were interested in discussing programs that would benefit remaining African Americans in the Rose Quarter area.
- The Project should not lead to any further displacement of African Americans who are still in the Rose Quarter area.

The group's recommendations included:

- Identify opportunities to build generational wealth — Many participants expressed the feeling that the loss of properties has severely hindered the ability of African American families to pass assets down to future generations, thereby exacerbating the racial wealth gap. Proposed recommendations included encouraging property ownership and business opportunities, and land banking programs.
- Prioritize and invest in African American owned businesses.
- Prioritize the health and education of young people, including the students of Harriet Tubman Middle School. Improve the HVAC system or relocate the school to a safer location nearby.
- Increase African American involvement in the Project.

Recommendations from the African American discussion group facilitators, Mr. Bell and Dr. Roberta Hunte include:

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- ODOT should use the recommendations from the discussion group to change the way it engages the community and uses community recommendations.
- ODOT should convene a group of African American community stakeholders and government agencies to review and prioritize the list of recommendations and incorporate them into the Project work plan to address the issues raised holistically.
- ODOT should involve the African American community earlier in the decision-making process for this and future projects.

The group asked what measures have come out of the discussion groups. The group was interested in ways that ODOT may be able to convene partners to influence items that are outside of ODOT's purview. They were also interested in how the Project will continue to engage with the outcomes of this report.

The concept of land banking was discussed and Mr. Bell explained that if property is purchased for ODOT's temporary use on the Project, then there may be opportunities to set aside these properties for African American-owned businesses or housing opportunities. Potentially give priority to businesses that were displaced from the area in the past.

A committee member was interested in which specific community organizations had been involved in recruiting for those involved in the discussion groups and whether certain groups had been overlooked.

Listening Session (Discussion)

Christine led the group through a centering exercise. She then asked the group a series of questions, each followed by individual reflection and a group discussion.

1. Given where we are in the world, at this moment, how do the recent social justice demonstrations relate to the work of this committee?

Key discussion points included:

- The message of the demonstrations is that black and brown voices have been and continue to be minimized. The construction of the freeway and other historic development in the area have displaced these communities and led to air quality problems at Harriet Tubman Middle School. The work of this committee is to acknowledge that black and brown people matter and make sure that their voices are heard.
- Some CAC members expressed concern that historically marginalized communities have not been engaged soon enough in development of this Project and that they have not been given opportunities to be involved in determining certain Project elements.
- A CAC member expressed concern that ODOT has not considered creative or unconventional ways to solve congestion on I-5.

2. What does restorative justice in and for Albina look like to you?

Ideas from CAC members included:

- Finding ways to ensure that those who have been negatively affected have some sense that past wrongs have been righted by listening to what they are asking for.

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- Reinvesting in the neighborhood by using the money committed to the Project to give the community what it wants.
- Providing access to mental health care services to help the community heal from the trauma of racism and displacement.
- Multiple CAC members suggested providing land reparations, opportunities to build businesses, and other opportunities to build generational wealth for people who have been affected by displacement. The displacement of households and businesses in the community hindered the ability of many Black families to build generational wealth. For instance, property values in Portland have risen substantially over time and the homes that were demolished for the construction of I-5 would be worth much more today.
- Providing education and mentorship along with reparations so that the community has a better chance at good long-term outcomes.
- A CAC member suggested establishing community policing to help correct racial discrimination against people of color in the community by law enforcement.
- A CAC member expressed optimism that there are solutions to addressing past displacement and that the community should work together, speak up about what the community wants, and ODOT may listen and help work toward solutions.
- A CAC member suggested demolishing the freeway and giving the land back to the people who were displaced, acknowledging that the idea is radical, but stating that this situation calls for radical thinking.
- Providing space where people who were displaced can return, remember their history, and rebuild a sense of community.

3. If you were the architect of this work, what would you do to achieve the goals we just talked about?

Ideas from CAC members included:

- Build the Project under a community benefits agreement to ensure all jobs are prevailing wage, there are opportunities for apprenticeships and careers, and a percentage of Project costs go to technical assistance for the community
- Blend the highway covers into the rest of the community
- Engage the community earlier in the Project planning process to find out what the community wants and provide the resources for it to happen; reframe the Project from the beginning with the goals of the community in mind, whether restorative justice, job development, wealth generation, housing, mental healthcare, reparations, reduction of CO₂ emissions, environmental justice, education, or others
- Within the context of African Americans historically having to face many hurdles to own land in Oregon, acknowledge the fact that the community has experienced trauma due to displacement from the Project area and ensure the Project does not cause additional damage to the community
- Consider alternatives to highway improvements

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4. What would demonstrate to you that the Project has achieved the goals we just discussed (e.g., wealth generation)?

Ideas from the CAC members included:

- Cancel the Project in its current form to demonstrate that ODOT has taken community input seriously
- Choose the Project option that shows the greatest reduction in CO₂, considering congestion pricing and potential light rail improvements but not the future Columbia River crossing project
- Implement congestion pricing before building the Project
- Construct a buildable highway cover to restore wealth to the community
- Improve safety for bikes and pedestrians within the Project area
- Survey community members over time to measure Project support or how safe people feel within the area
- Do more community engagement

Next Steps (Information)

Christine reviewed next steps and advised the next meeting would be held July 23.

Public Comment

The following public comment was provided orally by S. Renee Mitchell:

- S. Renee Mitchell expressed concern that nothing substantive would come out of ODOT's conversations with historically marginalized communities. See [I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project - CAC Meeting \(June 23, 2020\)](#) [video], 2:14:28.

Adjourn

Christine thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting.