



I-5 Rose Quarter Project Governance

A History of Stakeholder Input

Community input and stakeholder advisory committees have played a critical role in the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project since its inception. As the project has evolved from vision to planning to environmental study to its current design phase, project values and the makeup of the committees have similarly evolved to better reflect today's focus on restorative justice for the Black historic Albina community.

Over a decade ago, ODOT and the City of Portland partnered to convene a 30-member Stakeholder Advisory Committee. Within the framework of both the Central City 2035 N/NE Quadrant Plan and the I-5 Broadway/Weidler Facility Plan, the committee evaluated over 70 design concepts to narrow the scope of the freeway improvements. This resulted in the current project design concept evaluated as part of the [Environmental Assessment](#).

Community input for these prior phases included:

- 23 stakeholder advisory meetings,
- 14 subcommittee meetings,
- Door-to-door outreach to 60+ businesses,
- 6 open houses, 2 public hearings and
- Nearly 200 community briefings and events

Community Liaisons Group

Early in the environmental study phase, ODOT and the City of Portland formed the Community Liaisons Group to meaningfully engage and involve those with current and historical ties to the project area. The purpose was to understand the communities' perspectives early in the process and incorporate their input into the public involvement process for the environmental review phase. The group was made up of 14 members representing various organizations and interests. Members were asked to provide feedback on outreach materials and strategies and offer ideas about how to best reach interested communities. They were also encouraged to share project information and

opportunities with their affiliates. The group met four times over the course of the environmental phase from 2017 to 2018 and concluded with the publication of the Environmental Assessment.

A New Governance Structure

To ensure the project remains grounded in the community during design, the City of Portland, Albina Vision Trust, Metro, Multnomah County and Portland Public Schools requested a governance structure that is inclusive and transparent. OTC and ODOT listened – in January 2020 OTC directed ODOT to form such a structure. A new governance structure with three committees was established in to intentionally engage stakeholders and community to shape and provide project direction.

Executive Steering Committee

The [Executive Steering Committee](#) acts upon community input to provide high-level guidance to the Oregon Transportation Commission and ODOT on decisions related to project design, construction, and community partnerships. They first met in May 2020 and adopted the project's [Values](#) in fall 2020.

Community Oversight Advisory Committee

The [Community Oversight Advisory Committee](#) advises ODOT and the Executive Steering Committee on decisions about minority-owned and disadvantaged business enterprise contracting requirements and on-the-job training opportunities. They also oversee development and implementation of the diversity plan and progress toward program goals. They first met in March 2019, before the full governance structure was developed. In March 2021, they shifted from advising the development of the Construction Manager/General Contractor contract specifications to providing oversight to the disadvantaged business enterprise and workforce program.

Community Advisory Committee

A 25-member Community Advisory Committee was formed to advise ODOT and the Executive Steering Committee on design aspects of the project most directly affecting the community. They represented many local and regional interests, including some from historic Albina. The first meeting was in March 2020. In September 2020, after hearing from the project and community partners – including committee members – that a better job was needed to center the voices of those who were originally harmed by the construction of I-5, ODOT again listened and replaced the committee with a new board composed entirely of Black community leaders and those with ties to historic Albina. The change is consistent with State leadership direction and the shared values of current and former partners around restorative justice and elevating Black voices to advise the project’s design.

Historic Albina Advisory Board

The [Historic Albina Advisory Board](#) was created to elevate Black voices, particularly those connected to the Albina neighborhood’s historically displaced individuals and businesses. The 13-member board, composed entirely of Black and Brown community leaders, represents a wide array of civic and community interests. They provide recommendations to the Executive Steering Committee on highway cover design, community connections, and partnership opportunities supporting redevelopment and wealth creation.

The board includes appointed and at-large members selected through a public application process. In standing up this new committee, ODOT tried a new approach. ODOT empowered its

consultants of color with identifying and appointing Black community leaders and volunteers with ties to historic Albina. The members at-large were chosen and interviewed by the strategic engagement team through a collaborative process with ODOT and Metro as a project partner. Members of the former Community Advisory Committee were invited to apply, which resulted in two members continuing their volunteer service.

The board brings community perspectives into the project’s decision-making process concerning elements that most directly support community connections, urban design, and wealth generation. This ensures that project outcomes reflect community interests and values, and that historic Albina directly benefits from the project.

The board is led by Ericka Warren of Try Excellence, LLC. A third-generation Portlander whose family legacy has deep roots in the Albina neighborhood, Ericka facilitates the meetings and maintains neutrality and integrity of the process.

“I want the community to know how many people of color have been brought to the table on this project and are fighting for them, leveraging their professional experience and relationships to speak truth to power to bring sustainable change.” - Ericka Warren

The board’s first meeting was in January 2021 and they hit the ground running, meeting every three weeks through June 2021. Joint meetings with the other advisory committees have been held and several more will occur later this year (2021) to reach a consensus recommendation on the design of the I-5 highway covers.

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