



Historic Albina Advisory Board

SUMMARY MATERIAL

Meeting 34
October 8, 2024

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HISTORIC ALBINA ADVISORY BOARD (HAAB)

MEETING #34 SUMMARY

Date: October 8, 2024

Time: 4:00 PM – 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](#) are available on the project website.

Historic Albina Advisory Board Members in Attendance

- Dr. Ebony Amato-Blackmon
- Sprinavasa Brown
- Andrew Campbell
- Bryson Davis
- Keith Edwards
- JT Flowers
- Leslie Goodlow
- Kevin Modica
- James Posey
- Dr. Carlos Richard
- John Washington III

Historic Albina Advisory Board Members Not in Attendance

- Cobi Lewis
- Joy Alise Davis

Presenters

- Ericka Warren, Try Excellence, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, Strategic Advisor & HAAB Facilitator
- Dr. Steven Holt, Try Excellence, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, Strategic Advisor
- Megan Channell, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Director
- Mike Wilkerson, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, Design Team
- Cadence Petros, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, Design Team
- Nicholas Starin, City of Portland, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
- Patricia Diefenderfer, City of Portland

Staff and Partners

- Shawnea Posey, City of Portland
- Sharon Daleo, City of Portland
- Shannon Singleton, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, Strategic Advisor
- Aaron Deas, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Team

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- Kerry Werner, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, Team Lead
 - Natalie Warner, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Team, Technical Support
 - Maren Brantner, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Team, Technical Support
 - Isabelle Kennedy, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Team, Technical Support
 - Angela Nguyen, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Team, Technical Support
 - Benjamin Fleming, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Team, Notetaker

Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review

Ericka Warren welcomed HAAB members and attendees to the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda. She reminded attendees of the 7 Principles of Agreement to guide participation in the meeting.

Public Comment

No public comments were made during the meeting.

Project Updates

ODOT Project Director Megan Channell acknowledged recent conversations and press coverage about the project and thanked the HAAB for their engagement and support. Megan also acknowledged the project team and, specifically Try Excellence, for their instrumental role in facilitating HAAB meetings and pushing ODOT to engage the community in different ways. She invited attendees to connect with her offline if they wish to continue the conversation.

- **Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant:** ODOT signed the RCN grant agreement to secure the \$450 million award. Once the agreement is signed by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), the project can advance design and construction of the first portion of the highway cover, including the process to acquire property needed to begin construction. Construction of the highway cover is expected to begin by 2027.
- **INFRA Grant:** ODOT is awaiting USDOT's decision on the INFRA grant request for an additional \$750 million in federal funding to complete construction of the highway cover, build I-5 mainline improvements in the central project area and support multiple multimodal connections across I-5.
- **Early Work Package (EWP) Funding:** At their August meeting, the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) approved an allocation of annual Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) redistribution funding, up to \$60 million, to support EWP construction. Funds would be used to begin construction in summer 2025 on smaller packages of work including bridge preservation, seismic retrofit, concrete repair, structural deck overlay and stormwater improvements.

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- **Local Street Design:** ODOT signed a letter of agreement with the City of Portland and Rip City Management focused on a collaborative workplan for local street design relating to the relocation of the I-5 southbound off-ramp. This builds on input from the HAAB, ensuring cover development is maximized and traffic from the I-5 off-ramp is consolidated south of the cover. Over the coming months, the technical evaluation of local streets will continue.
 - **ODOT/Albina Vision Trust (AVT) Work Plan:** We are continuing to collaborate with AVT to identify a strategy to address regulatory challenges concerning highway cover governance and land ownership. More information is available in the [handout](#) shared with HAAB as part of the meeting packet.
 - **Community Oversight Advisory Committee (COAC):** The COAC will resume meeting in early 2025 as we progress toward early construction options and kickoff RCN work. There will also be opportunities for HAAB and COAC collaboration in 2025.
 - **HAAB 2025 Workplan:** ODOT and project partners have been working with Ericka Warren to develop the HAAB's 2025 Workplan. More details will be shared with HAAB members in November. City partners will continue engaging the HAAB and the community on the Reconnecting Albina Planning Project (RAPP).

Questions

- HAAB member asked if there are limitations to how the \$60 million FHWA redistribution funding could be used.
 - » OTC is directing the funds to be used on early construction work opportunities.
- HAAB member is concerned about compliance and civil rights personnel at ODOT bringing contractors to the front of the line on EWP's who have been historically left out of marketplace opportunities.
 - » We are carrying forward the [Diversity and Subcontracting Plan](#) developed with the COAC. It is intended to break down barriers for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation. As we look towards construction, we are pulling in our ODOT compliance team to make sure that we're in alignment with the Diversity and Subcontracting Plan.
- HAAB member said we need to bring other small business and alliances into the project on these contracts to help the project move forward in addition to getting people of color work on construction contracts.

Preliminary Economic Analysis for Cover Development: The Findings

Megan Channell introduced ECONorthwest's (ECO) presentation on initial financial feasibility of development on top of the highway cover. ECO's analysis builds on scenario discussions with the HAAB and informs upcoming RAPP work with the City of Portland.

Cadence Petros reviewed ECO's scope of work, including developing land use inputs for cost analysis based on HAAB feedback, creating a proforma to test how land uses might perform over time, and estimating costs of construction and operation.

Mike Wilkerson discussed the results of ECO's analysis. ECO studied five land use cases for potential sites on the cover: programmed open space, basic open space, a food market, youth recreation center, and a wellness center. The five uses fall into three categories of financial analysis: uses that can support their own construction and operating costs, uses have some revenue generation but likely cannot cover operating costs and basic open space that generates no revenue and does not cover operating cost. Land use cases were compared for development feasibility with financial proforma that analyzes cost and revenue to help understand how much debt might be supported, how much financial equity is needed and how much private or public philanthropy is required to augment both equity and debt.

Mike reviewed how the analysis was conducted, unknown factors that would impact the results, results of the analysis, key takeaways and next steps. Conclusions include:

- Market revenue generating uses are generally feasible or very close to feasible and may only require a small amount of equity or philanthropic support.
- Community-serving programming could nearly double the upfront need for equity and philanthropic support.
- The structure of ground leases and governance framework at the time of development will have a significant impact on equity and philanthropy needed.
- Partnership opportunities should be explored to navigate these complexities at the time of development.

Patricia Diefenderfer and Megan Channell reviewed next steps in partnership with the City, ODOT, and the HAAB. The team will explore how to connect proposed land uses on the cover to the broader district through the RAAP; continue to work on local street design with the Broadway Main Street project; continue work with ODOT to explore partnership opportunities related to financing structures and governance models; reconcile proposed land use scenarios with technical considerations like utility connections and pedestrian access; and consider interim use strategies and opening day scenarios that support long term development on the cover.

Discussion

- HAAB member asked what would happen if we excluded the equity and philanthropy category from this project and how that would compare to other projects.
 - » The range of selected program uses are mostly market feasible and don't have abnormal amounts of equity or philanthropy needed once we consider governance structure and uses provided by public dollars. A committed partner is needed to help execute that vision for development.

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- HAAB member asked if a lens was applied to the analysis for the discrimination that has occurred to the African American community. We need to understand why we are in this position to have to rely on equity and philanthropy to achieve anything.
 - » This specific project did not contemplate that, however AVT's Capital Improvement Program explored that comprehensively.
 - HAAB member said this might be seen as unfair favoring of minority communities because it would seem that we are in the position to receive equity and philanthropy because of who we are opposed to the discriminatory circumstances that put us in this position.
 - » Any proforma for any project would have equity as part of it and if community benefits were part of the project there would also be components of philanthropy even if the project was located in the Pearl District.
 - HAAB member said the delta for the project between what African Americans experienced versus the Pearl District, even if you apply the equity lens to it in the same way, would be nowhere near what we're talking about today.
 - HAAB member noted that nonprofit organizations need to fundraise or find investors to get a building built. Williams and Russell and AVT are doing amazing jobs of finding money to build. If we want affordable housing, we must find additional subsidy to have rents at 40% rather than 60%. That comes from equity, philanthropy and fundraising, not rents or money given to operate the building. If we want to provide opportunities for affordable rents for small businesses, it's going to require raising money. The HAAB member is glad there are finally numbers to operate from.
 - HAAB member asked ECO how they determined some buildings wouldn't be revenue generating and if they also looked at the models through a lens where those buildings did generate revenue.
 - » Those were modeled as generating revenue but just not enough to cover the debt service. It falls into the category of some revenue generation but likely cannot cover operating costs.
 - » HAAB member asked if there was an assumption that they couldn't generate money?
 - » No – the rents that would be charged are comparable with community-facing organizations below the market rate. Ideally those businesses are profitable because of that below market rent.
 - HAAB member asked what the presenters mean when they talk about equity. Are they talking about equity that comes after the construction occurs or equity beforehand? What about upon completion?
 - » It's both pre-construction equity and funding the cost of construction. The debt and equity together are covering the cost of pre-development and construction. Upon

completion, the subsidy would be only needed in programmed uses. For the food hall, operating revenues cover that cost. For the wellness center, you would need some ongoing revenue stream, philanthropic or otherwise. The equity is a one-time cost of construction contribution.

- HAAB member asked ECO to provide the final numbers for construction cost of all the structures discussed.
 - » ECO did not provide final numbers because this was a selection of only five uses out of many possibilities. They didn't want to provide a final number when it does not reflect the entirety of the program.
- HAAB member asked if they assumed the cost would be less than \$400 million to build all the projects mentioned. Mike agreed. HAAB member thanked ECO for breaking down the cost and showing what the possibilities are.
- HAAB member said that equity and philanthropy is not equating to racial or restorative justice. How are we now defining restorative justice as it relates to the project?
 - » Megan Channell said the definition of restorative justice has not changed. There are several entities that play a different role in how we achieve restorative justice.
 - » HAAB member asked if these different roles that our partners play are now becoming barriers to restorative justice.
 - » Ericka Warren said that they could become barriers and that it's our charge to hold them accountable.
 - » HAAB member said they are having issues with asking the same community that was harmed to help raise money to restore something that was stolen from them. Had they known this from the beginning, it would have given them a different understanding of how they participated.
 - » HAAB member spoke to the importance of wealth building and subsidized rents as an economic development tool giving businesses an opportunity to turn a profit and that it is well worth the effort to raise money to make it possible. Second, when talking about upholding the principles of restorative justice, the HAAB is meant to amplify and elevate those principles of restorative justice through the construction of the cover. The way that we lay the foundation for what can be built on top of the cover will shape the long-term longevity and wealth building tools that we have at our disposal. The cover itself and the things that get built on top of it won't be built by ODOT. Third, per the Independent Cover Assessment, it was clear that the eventual development of the cover should be stewarded by a community-led development corporation that could center the generational well-being of the folks pushed out of the district. AVT has been fighting for this from the beginning of the process and are continuing to advance through work and partnership with the community. Finally, philanthropy is common in order to make projects like this work. This highway cover has gained a national reputation for being at the cutting edge

of what restorative redevelopment can look like. We will be better able to raise capital because we are showing what's possible when we pull multiple partners into the same conversation and get folks mutually invested in the generational well-being of our people. The HAAB member thanked the ECO team for pulling together the presented information.

- » HAAB member said that they are not as hopeful. When we talk about restorative justice, there's something else that gets added to the conversation that gives the appearance that we have to rely on many different parameters in order to achieve restorative justice. That's why they asked if the definition has changed. The answer they were given is unsatisfactory. They would like a concrete answer rather than an answer based on hope.
- » HAAB member responded by saying that we need to lead the work ourselves if we want to see this unfold in a way that truly benefits our most marginalized communities. In 2017, this project didn't start out with a benevolent desire to heal and reconnect the Black community, it started out with a desire to expand a highway system. It took community stepping up and saying you're not touching the highway without addressing the harm that was caused. There is a great deal of power in us taking agency of this process to not just learn but to also build the skillset to do this work in other harmed communities nationally.
- » HAAB member said that we need to be hopeful, but it matters how we get there. If we don't correct the systems, approaches and the policies that got us here in the first place, the outcome will be unsustainable.
- » HAAB member said they're hearing one person speak about the possibility for the future and another is still experiencing emotional response to the injustice. We got a sense what the cost would be to develop on the cover. Where the money is going to come from is a different conversation but at least we can see that there is potential to do something.
- Ericka Warren said that there are a lot of entities that owe restoration to the community. We are in the process of moving forward with a cover connected to benevolence that we didn't have in the past. There are many agencies and lawmakers who have responsibility to restoration of the Black community, and she trusts that the HAAB will continue to hold all those agencies accountable.

Ericka thanked ECO for their presentation and invited Nicholas Starin from the City of Portland to give an update on the RAPP.

Reconnecting Albina Planning Project Updates

Nicholas Starin reviewed the RAPP work that will occur over the next year, including outreach and HAAB engagement opportunities. In addition to this engagement, the RAPP team will update the HAAB during regular scheduled meetings.

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- **Fall:** the project is working on the existing conditions analysis and a policy review. There's a *Pint tool* to get public input on opportunities and assets in the district. Nicholas provided a link and encouraged HAAB to share it with their networks.
 - **December/January:** There will be a project orientation and kickoff event for the broader district planning effort. Nicholas encouraged HAAB members to participate.
 - **April:** There will be a special HAAB session where the City will work with the HAAB on urban design details and refinements that will help advance the cover scenario.
 - **Summer/Fall 2025:** The project will host multiple public engagement activities that could focus on city streets or key development opportunity sites.
 - The RAPP grant extends through summer of 2026. Following development of documents and reports, there will be a process with the City's planning commission and city council to adopt land use, transportation policy and code changes that might be needed.

HAAB member provided additional context for the RAPP project. They mentioned that AVT will be leading the engagement and multiple components with the City and encouraged HAAB members to reach out to them with any questions.

Next Steps and Adjourn

Ericka Warren thanked everyone for their participation and reminded attendees that this is the last meeting of 2024. The 2025 HAAB meeting schedule will be shared in early November.

Dr. Steven Holt provided closing statements and thanked the HAAB for their contribution in making the project what it is today.

CHAT TRANSCRIPT

MAIN MEETING		
Time	From	Message
16:18:34	HAAB Andrew Campbell to Everyone	Any limitation in how to use those funds (60 million) if they do come available?
17:12:05	HAAB Andrew Campbell to Everyone	It was nice to see the #s from our participation from the summer. Next steps of the "how" will continue to be interesting.
17:17:16	HAAB Andrew Campbell to Everyone	Hopefully the "equity" term included the concerns of what Mr. Posey was mentioning. Not only land equity but the reparations/racial equity lens. I agree with Mr. Posey
17:33:29	HAAB Andrew Campbell to Everyone	We would hope that restoration justice is the actions behavior of equity and philanthropist. Great question Dr.Richard
17:34:56	HAAB Leslie Goodlow to Everyone	We were told that the funds were only available to build the covers not for what goes onto the top of the covers...
17:35:11	RQ Team Ericka Warren to Everyone	Reacted to "We were told that th..." with
17:48:22	HAAB Bryson Davis to Everyone	JT and John are hitting the nail on the head.
17:50:33	HAAB Andrew Campbell to Everyone	Reacted to "JT and John are hitt..." with
17:52:33	City/BPS: Nicholas Starin to Everyone	https://www.portlandmaps.com/bps/pin-it-portland/#/home/reconnecting-albina
17:54:26	HAAB Leslie Goodlow to Everyone	how long will the pin-it tool be open?
18:02:13	HAAB Andrew Campbell to Everyone	Hope folks seen the chat lol. It's great seeing everyone, my bad for not being on camera. Multi-tasking lol. See everyone in the community and continue to have a great 2024.
18:02:25	HAAB Sprinavasa Brown, Executive Director to Everyone	Bye everyone