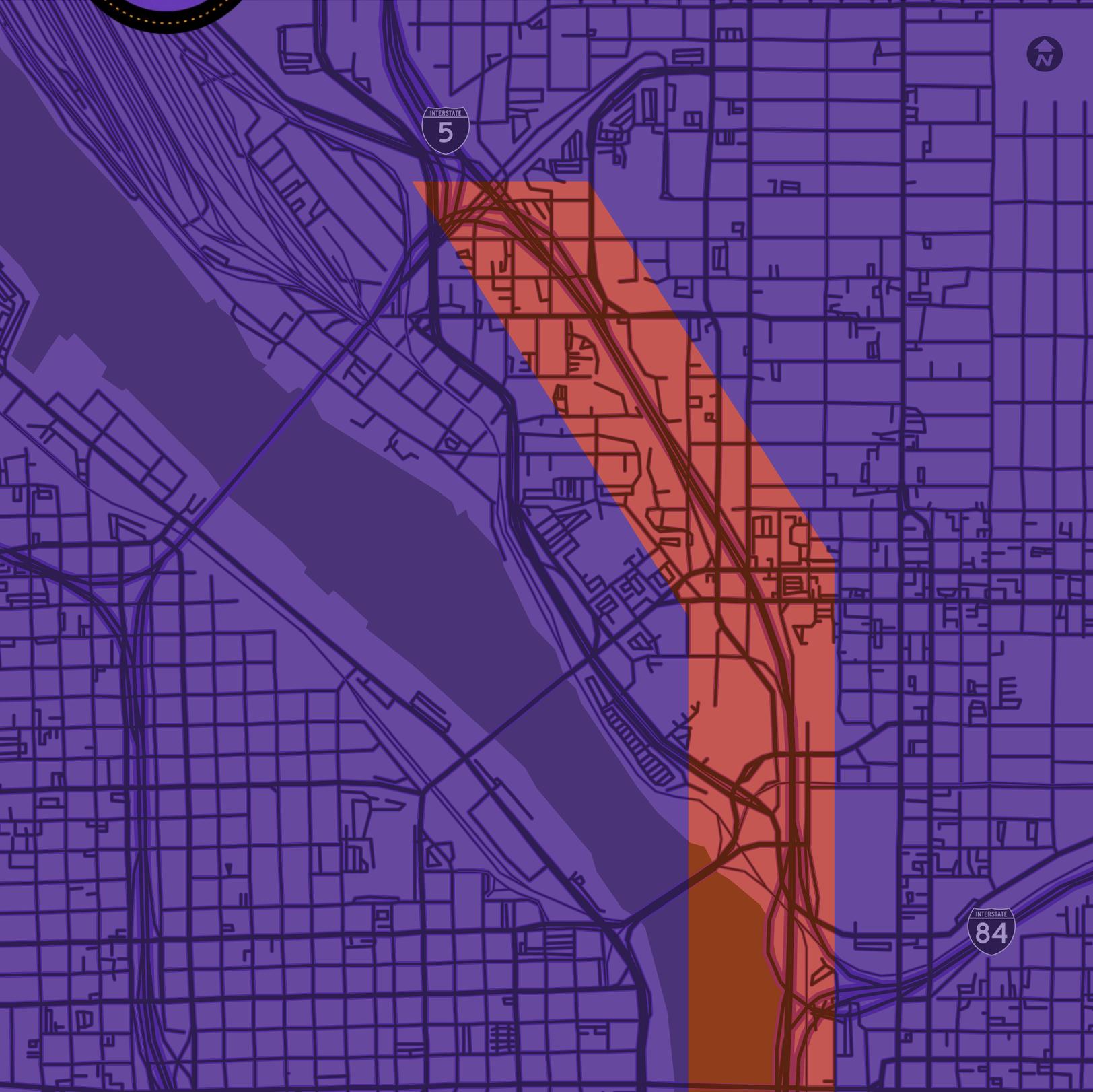


INFRASTRUCTURE FOR REBUILDING AMERICA (INFRA) GRANT APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION





I-5 ROSE QUARTER

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Fiscal Year 2025-2026
Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA)
Large Project Grant Application

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Submitted by:
Oregon Department of Transportation (Applicant/Recipient)

Submission Date: May 6, 2024

This project is designated as
Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program Extra
for having received a Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Award
Click here: [Neighborhood Access and Equity Capital Construction Grant](#)

***Note:** Adobe Acrobat is the recommended application
to use when accessing hyperlinks within this document.*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APP	Area of Persistent Poverty
City	City of Portland
EWP	Early Work Package
FY	Fiscal Year
HDC	Historically Disadvantaged Community
INFRA	Infrastructure for Rebuilding America
I-5	Interstate 5
I-84	Interstate 84
I-405	Interstate 405
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems
MCP	Main Construction Package
MP	Milepost
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
RCN	Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is applying for an Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Large project grant for the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project (project), which is located in an underserved community designated as both historically disadvantaged and an area of persistent poverty as identified in the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT's) List of Areas of Persistent Poverty (APP) and Historically Disadvantaged Communities (HDC).¹

ODOT is requesting \$750 million in INFRA funding for the project and will provide \$500 million in matching funds as a combination of state funds (\$250 million) and a portion of funds from the project's Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Capital Construction grant award (\$250 million). The combined \$750 million in INFRA funding and \$250 million in state matching funds will allow ODOT to deliver the following scope of work:

In 2023, ODOT submitted an RCN Capital Construction grant application for \$850 million. **As an FY23 RCN award recipient, ODOT was partially awarded \$450 million** of its \$850 million funding request. Because ODOT received less than the full RCN funding request, the USDOT has designated the project as "**RCN Program Extra**" per the FY23 RCN Program Notice of Funding Opportunity and the **March 2024 Award Letter** from USDOT. This means that the project is automatically designated as "**Highly Recommended**" by USDOT when applying for additional federal funding, such as INFRA funding.

- With \$460 million, construct the remaining two-thirds (north and south portions) of the project's central reconnecting feature—the highway cover that will support new community space and future development. **This funding would be the last dollar in for completing the highway cover construction.** This cost also includes the required fire, life and safety elements of the highway cover structure. *(Note: The central portion of the highway cover is funded with \$450 million in awarded 2024 RCN funding from USDOT).*
- With \$300 million, construct Interstate 5 (I-5) safety and operational improvements that support the related north and south highway cover construction and relocate the southbound I-5 off-ramp.
- With \$170 million, construct the southbound off-ramp flyover, install Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) signage and reconstruct local City of Portland (City) streets.
- With \$70 million, construct a separated bicycle and pedestrian bridge to the south of the highway cover for an additional multimodal connection across I-5. The bicycle and pedestrian bridge would also directly connect to the southern edge of the highway cover and the adjacent Moda Center (multi-purpose arena and home to NBA's Portland Trailblazers).

The project is broadly supported by the community, with key support from the City, the Historic Albina Advisory Board (the project committee consisting of Black community leaders and those with ties to the historic Albina community that was divided by construction of I-5 through the project area) and Albina Vision Trust (a nonprofit organization that links private interests and public priorities with community values for the Albina community). The project's investments will make walking, biking, rolling and accessing transit safer, creating a more pedestrian-friendly and community-oriented area.

STATEMENT OF WORK

TECHNICAL AND ENGINEERING ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

The project includes upgrades to I-5 between Interstate 84 (I-84) and Interstate 405 (I-405) in central Portland to improve safety and operations at Oregon's top traffic bottleneck. The project's highway features include one new auxiliary lane in each direction on I-5 through the project area and improved full shoulders to smooth traffic flow by providing vehicles additional space to accelerate or decelerate safely when merging

¹ USDOT **List of Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities**, June 6, 2023

on or off I-5, and space for emergency responders and disabled vehicles to move out of the way of traffic. The project also includes construction of a highway cover—the project’s central reconnecting feature—which **reflects the unified vision of ODOT, the community, project partners and community organizations** to reconnect the Albina community, which is the historic heart of Portland’s Black community. The highway cover provides the

foundation to reconnect the street grid through Albina making walking, biking and driving safer and more accessible for all modes of travel. Street grid improvements include upgrades to sidewalks and street crossings. The project’s technical and engineering features include the following elements related to both the highway and the local street system (see Figure 1).

Project Values (Adopted in 2020)

- **Restorative Justice for the Albina community** to accelerate social, racial and economic equity sustaining positive tangible change specifically for Portland’s Black community.
- **Community Input and Transparent Decision-Making** to have community-informed and involved decision-making through a community-connected, transparent and inclusionary process.
- **Mobility Focus** to increase connectivity for the traveling public and local community.
- **Climate Action and Improved Public Health** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet local, regional and statewide climate action goals.

Figure 1: Project features



- 1 A new seismically resilient highway cover over I-5 that replaces multiple individual bridges, reconnects local streets and creates new spaces for future community development and economic opportunities.
- 2 A new multimodal east-west roadway crossing over I-5 that reconnects Hancock Street across the highway.
- 3 Multimodal improvements that make walking, rolling and biking safer and more accessible through the project area.

- 4 A car-free bridge that will create a new path over I-5 to connect with the walking and biking network.
- 5 Ramp-to-ramp connections on I-5 between I-84 and I-405, paired with wider shoulders, that will improve safety and reduce congestion at the state’s top traffic bottleneck.
- 6 A relocated southbound off-ramp that reduces interactions between vehicles and pedestrians along local streets on the highway cover.

CURRENT PROJECT DESIGN STATUS

The project is currently in the preliminary design phase and is advancing design of three early work packages (EWPs) and the main construction package (MCP)(see Figure 2). The project received federal environmental approval for the project design on March 6, 2024 with the publication of the Finding of No Significant Impact and Revised Supplemental Environmental Assessment. The project is currently advancing the early work packages to final design and the design for the MCP, which includes the highway cover—the project’s central reconnecting feature—will be determined through a public process in partnership with the City, ODOT and the community.

Figure 2: EWP and MCP map



TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES AND PROJECT SOLUTIONS

Challenge No. 1: Divided communities due to public infrastructure projects

Beginning in the late 1940s and continuing into the early 1970s, a series of public infrastructure projects destroyed or displaced more than 1,000 residences² in the project area, many of which were the homes of Black and low-income residents. In 1956, just before the construction of I-5 created a barrier in Albina, Portlanders voted to approve construction of a new city arena—Veterans Memorial Coliseum. In the 1960s, I-5 opened through the center of the historic neighborhoods of Lower Albina and the western third of Central Albina, and Legacy Emanuel Hospital expanded its campus. These projects created substantial physical separations between historically connected Black neighborhoods in the project area that continue to pose challenges for neighborhood restoration and redevelopment.

Figure 3: Conceptual rendering of the project’s highway cover



Solution No. 1: A highway cover that reconnects the community

Building the highway cover (see Figure 3) presents the opportunity to address damage to the historic Albina community that resulted from displacement due to the original construction of the highway and other public projects. Constructing the highway cover provides the foundation for space to be developed in the future—by the community and for the community—in a way that supports economic opportunities and improved connections to the waterfront and surrounding neighborhoods.

²Portland State University in Association with Emanuel Displaced Persons Association 2 (EDPA2), 2021, Reclamation Towards the Futurity of Central Albina: Dreamworld Urbanism, p. 30, 32, 37, 38.

Challenge No. 2: Limited access to multimodal options through the project area

Multimodal transportation options that included walking, biking and public transit through the project area before the 1950s became limited by the 1970s due to a series of public infrastructure projects. What was a connected and multimodal community that provided access to community services and recreation, became less suited to interconnected community living.

Solution No. 2: Improving multimodal transportation within the project area

The design for the project’s **new seismically resilient highway cover** is consistent with the Central City 2035 Plan—the City’s envisioned framework to strengthen connectivity, specifically by reconnecting neighborhoods across infrastructure and lessening the impact of highways. Located in the central city, 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.” The project will enhance access to high-frequency bus and light rail transit and the Portland Streetcar in the project area. Further, a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge that is part of the project’s design refinements will allow users of all ages and abilities to safely cross over I-5 to daily destinations.

Challenge No. 3: Safety risks and freight bottlenecks through the project area

The project area segment of I-5 is the **single worst traffic bottleneck in Oregon**.³ I-5’s complex interchange with Broadway and Weidler streets is difficult to navigate for all users, contributing to modal conflicts and safety issues. I-5 is the main north-south route moving people and goods and connecting population centers on the West Coast of the United States from Mexico to Canada and, as the West Coast’s major north-south corridor for long-haul freight, carries the highest freight volume on the West Coast, ranging from 11,700 to 20,800 trucks per day. The project area through the Rose Quarter area carries some of the highest numbers of vehicles in the

state and is critical for moving commuters traveling to and from Portland regionally, and nationally and internationally through Portland. These impacts contribute to degraded travel reliability on I-5 through the Portland metro region and degraded statewide and regional commodity flow.

Solution No. 3: Improving safety and freight efficiency along the I-5 mainline in the project area

The project is expected to:

- Reduce frequent crashes on I-5 by up to 50%
- Save travelers on I-5 nearly 2.5 million hours of travel time each year, getting people, goods and freight through this section of I-5 more quickly
- Allow transitions without merging into traffic to improve safety and reduce bottlenecks
- Support improved traffic flow to result in a safer experience with potentially less crashes
- Provide improved access for emergency vehicles and reduce the potential for additional crashes

HISTORY OF THE ALBINA COMMUNITY

The project area is located in the historic Lower Albina neighborhood (Albina). During World War II, a temporary wartime housing development called Vanport was built on a floodplain, just north of the current project area between Vancouver, Washington, and Portland, Oregon. Vanport was home to thousands of workers—about a third of whom were Black—who moved to the region to work in the shipyards. Toward the end of the war, most Vanport residents began to move into Portland. Because of race-based housing discrimination (redlining and other harmful public policies) prevalent in the city at that time, a large percentage of those who remained in Vanport were Black. In 1948, the Columbia River flooded Vanport, destroying the cheaply built housing, forcing residents to evacuate and killing many. Those who survived were left homeless and sought refuge in Portland.

As Black residents fled Vanport to Albina, a thriving Black community and business district emerged in the area, with many Black-owned businesses and restaurants. Albina became a commercial, institutional and social spine for the community, characterized by

³ American Transportation Research Institute, [Top 100 Truck Bottleneck—2024—TruckingResearch.org](https://www.truckingresearch.org/).

small-scale streets, walkable community services, places of work and spaces to live, recreational facilities like parks and community centers, and a lively jazz scene. Figure 4 shows a scene from the famed Dude Ranch, the premier “Black and Tan” jazz club in the Albina community during the 1940s.

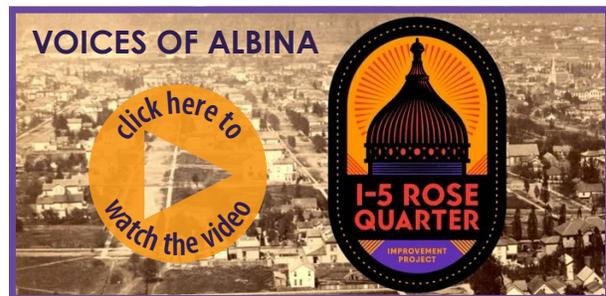
CENTERING THE VOICES OF THE ALBINA COMMUNITY

The original construction of I-5 continues to have a negative impact on generations of Black Portlanders. The placement of I-5 caused lasting harm when members of the historic Albina community lost their homes, businesses and community places to make way for the highway. As an agency, ODOT acknowledges this painful history and has put a renewed focus on historic Albina through the project. Despite the damage the highway caused, the Black community remains resilient and focused on the future. The accompanying video on this page features well-known Black Portlanders reflecting on the Albina neighborhood of yesterday, as well as people who are working to invest in and build the Albina of tomorrow.

Figure 4: Nightlife at the famed Dude Ranch in the 1940s



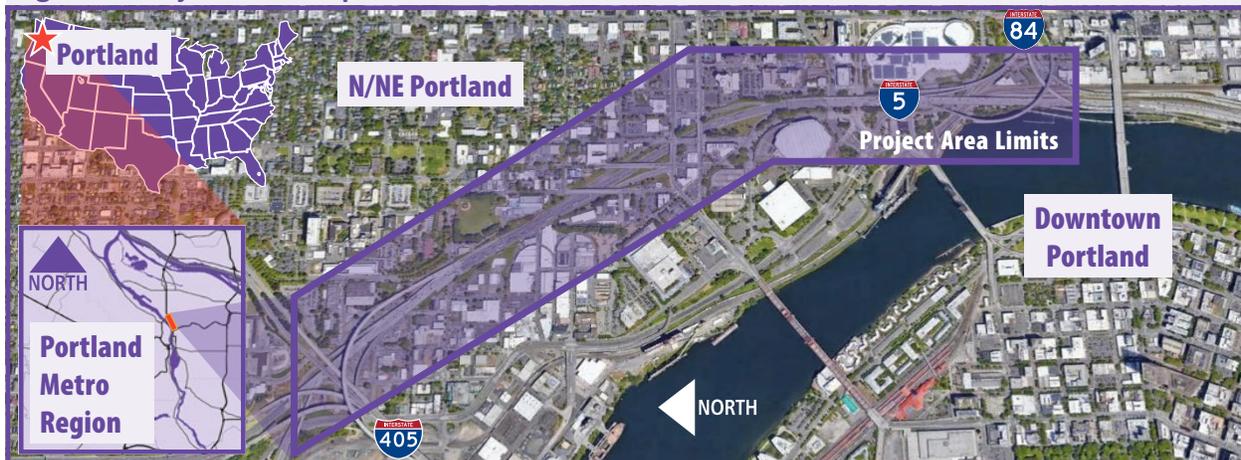
“This area was a thriving jazz district. There was a social club on Williams near Emanuel. There was an area along Williams with clubs (near where the Urban League is now) called Jumptown. **Black folks lived here and businesses thrived.** This area was all African American.” – Community Member



PROJECT LOCATION AND MAP

The project is located in Portland, Oregon, along the 1.8-mile segment of I-5 between I-405 to the north (at milepost [MP] 303.2), inclusive of the Greeley exit ramp connection, and the Morrison Bridge exit (US 26 and OR 99E) to the south (MP 301.4). The project’s coordinates are NW 45°32'42.30"N, 122°40'44.39"W, NE 45°32'42.30"N, 122°40'19.13"W, SW 45°31'10.62"N, 122°40'0.62"W, SE 45°31'10.62"N, 122°39'41.44"W. See Figure 5 for the project area limits.

Figure 5: Project area map



This grant application has been developed in accordance with the plans, policies, and programs identified in the FY 2025-26 MPDG NOFO.