



HISTORIC ALBINA ADVISORY BOARD (HAAB)

WORK SESSION SUMMARY

Date: December 12, 2023

Time: 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Location: In-person and online Zoom meeting

This document is a summary of the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Historic Albina Advisory Board work session held in December 2023.

Historic Albina Advisory Board Members in Attendance

- Dr. Ebony Amato-Blackmon
- Sprinavasa Brown
- Bryson Davis
- Leslie Goodlow
- James Posey
- Dr. Carlos Richard
- John Washington III
- JT Flowers

Historic Albina Advisory Board Members Not in Attendance

- Keith Edwards
- Andrew Campbell
- Cleo Davis
- Tamara Kennedy
- Cobi Lewis
- Estelle Love-Lavespere
- Kevin Modica

Staff and Presenters

- Ericka Warren, Try Excellence, HAAB Facilitator
- Megan Channell, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Director
- John Wolf, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, Design Team
- James McGrath, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, Design Team
- Natalie Warner, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Team, Technical Support
- Kassie McKnight, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Team, Notetaker

Discussion Topics

- Office of Social Equity staffing update
- Work session overview and objectives
- Overview of Rose Quarter district projects
- Technical due diligence
- Next steps

Office of Social Equity Staffing Update

Assistant Director of the ODOT Office of Social Equity Erika McCalpine has departed from ODOT to a new role at Espousal Strategies. Recruitment is currently under way to fill the Assistant Director of Social Equity position. At a future meeting, ODOT leadership will speak to the HAAB about Assistant Director Erika McCalpine's departure and next steps for the Office of Social Equity.

Discussion

This will have implications for the HAAB's work. HAAB members would like to ensure ODOT reflects on its role in retaining top talent.

Work Session Overview and Objectives

This work session is a preview of information that will be reviewed in the coming months. The goal is productive dialogue around what technical engineering can do for the community.

Schedule:

- January: The conversation around technical considerations will continue and the project team will respond to HAAB questions.
- February and March: HAAB members will have an opportunity to bring their invited guests into the conversation.
- April: The group will have more discussion and seek alignment with the design team.
- May: The project team will be looking for a formal recommendation from the HAAB regarding alignment of cover design and the Draft Historic Albina Community Priorities and outcomes.

The project is heading toward initiating the 30% design milestone in June. The 30% design milestone will be reached in 2025. The 30% design milestone establishes the footprint of the project and sets the table for the community's vision. Right now, the project team is not seeking to make decisions about what ends up on the highway cover but needs to ensure the project design is moving in the right direction to support the community's vision.

- The group will lean into cover engineering and technical assumptions.

At the January meeting, ODOT will provide HAAB members with a print and digital binder containing all the materials discussed, which will be regularly updated over the coming months.

Overview of Rose Quarter District Projects

There are number of Rose Quarter district projects we know about, including:

- Williams-Russell Project (housing and commercial space)

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- Harriet Tubman Middle School (potential relocation)
 - The Analog (market and affordable housing)
 - Albina One (affordable housing and community space)
 - Dr. Matthew Prophet Jr./PPS Headquarters Site (potential future housing and community space)
 - Prosper Portland site near the Crowne Plaza Hotel

These projects show that redevelopment opportunities exist beyond the cover itself. We're working toward cohesive alignment with other district projects.

The "Draft Historic Albina Community Priorities" or "priorities" were identified during the Independent Cover Assessment (ICA) process and are being refined through ongoing community engagement. In addition to understanding the other projects taking place in the district, the draft priorities may help inform some of our decisions. Some of the draft priorities may influence specific design elements.

Discussion

- No order of importance/ranking was identified among the Draft Historic Albina Community Priorities.
- There was interest in the group to consider whether these priorities can be refined or enhanced. This will be discussed in future meetings.

Technical Due Diligence

Design Topic: Cover Capacity

The group reviewed a color-coded Cover Capacity map:

- Lavender "off-cover Parcels" are parcels owned or to be acquired by ODOT for construction. Not all areas of these parcels will be needed after the project is over. They have flexibility for a variety of development scales and uses.
- Orange and Turquoise are "on-cover"/on-bridge parcels. Turquoise parcels will be areas of longer-span girders and therefore can only support lighter-weight development uses and possibilities (up to 1-story). These areas are toward the edges of the cover. Orange parcels are in locations with shorter-span girders which allow for larger developments (up to 3-stories) in the middle areas of the cover.

At this point there are known variables and unknown (assumed variables) on the cover. The design team considered different building types, girder supports, and other capacities to understand what possibilities exist.

An important design consideration is reconnecting the local street grid in a seamless and direct way. The design team's work is showing that the new spaces within the project footprint will be developable parcels. This project is different than other national examples

of highway covers given the types of complexities within the project area, but development on-cover and adjacent to the cover is possible and there are some precedents that will be explored in a future HAAB meeting.

Cover Capacity Discussion

The size of the girders impacts the cover's load capacity (i.e. building size).

- One of the project's goals is to seamlessly integrate the cover with the existing streetscape and neighborhood context and make the highway disappear below. There is a limited window of space between the highway and clearances below and the surface streets above into which the design team will need to fit the girders. There are existing slopes and grades across the freeway that need to be matched by the new highway cover, therefore limiting how much space there is for deeper bridge girders without disrupting the existing urban environment.
- If there is a broad community desire to add capacity for larger buildings, it would have implications on how the cover would integrate into the surrounding community and would extend the construction footprint. Increasing the girder size to add capacity also has financial implications. There are tradeoffs, but these discussions can help us determine if we're on the right track.
- Other projects have used different cover styles where the building foundation acts as the cover instead of the cover supporting the buildings. This approach requires the development to occur simultaneously with the highway cover construction. A building supported on the cover allows for more flexibility in the timing of development. Developments spanning from "dirt to dirt" across the highway would be extremely expensive and aren't possible due to the roadway geometry of this project. Buildings that sit both on dirt and the bridge aren't recommended due to differential vibration and settlement. Therefore, building directly on the cover is the option that remains.
- Getting into a lot of development detail at this stage is difficult. The first priority is to reach 30% design, but we need better clarity on use intentions to do that.
- HAAB members would like to see the cost and tradeoffs for different load bearing capacities on the cover.

Design Topic: Cover Offsets

There are on-cover and off-cover offsets that will influence building placements. The design team is trying to identify locations where offsets will be required, the approximate size of those offsets, and understand how they may affect possible development options. These offsets are:

- Offsets to separate the edge of the cover and traffic below, to accommodate maintenance access and screening.

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- Bridge joints allow the bridge to expand and contract and will be situated in a place that does not unnecessarily constrain development.
 - Geotechnical offsets are areas where future off-cover building foundations and loads will have to take the cover into consideration since the cover will rely on adjacent soil for support. Setback requirements will vary based on adjacent building foundation types.
 - Utilities offsets: The design team is considering a corridor along the west edge for gravity-based utilities (i.e. sewer, and stormwater). The utilities needed will depend on cover uses. There may be some tradeoffs to consider, like combining parcels to maximize utility efficiency.

There is a lot of time to refine offset assumptions between 30%-100% design.

Additional Discussion

Affordability:

- HAAB members emphasized the need that cover construction remains affordable and accessible to the Black community.
- HAAB members and the project team discussed reasons for not having residential properties and home ownership on the cover, which include:
 - » By federal law, ODOT must retain ownership of the cover. Cover uses can be allowed through long-term leases and government agreements.
 - » There are other parcels near the project area that can support housing.

Right-of-Way:

- A HAAB member asked how ODOT has engaged with owners of the parcels that will need to be purchased for the project. They emphasized the project must avoid repeating history and impacting property and business owners again, especially Black property and business owners.
- The project team hasn't had robust discussions about acquisitions, but a mix of public and private property owners have been notified, none of which are residences or Black- or minority-owned. The project team is waiting until the NEPA process is over to move forward. Eminent domain would only be used as a last resort. Impacted businesses include the Shell station, Sherwin Williams paint store, a law office, and some billboards. Properties would be purchased out of the project budget at fair market value.
 - » HAAB members would like an update on the tenor of those conversations.
- Some properties are not needed for acquisition but may see impacts during construction. The group will continue to discuss remediation.

Innovative Funding:

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- Members of the HAAB asked if cover uses could support clean energy and therefore be eligible for federal energy funding. A HAAB member suggested that the project team consider how Rose Quarter could become the first climate-positive district in the nation.
 - » ODOT will look into this. Green Roads is a part of this project, which is similar to a LEED certification for transportation projects.

Center Black Project and Development Involvement:

- Prosper Portland has the infrastructure to centralize all capital projects and provide technical and workforce business assistance.

Air Quality:

- Some HAAB members asked about how venting systems work below the cover and whether there could be human health hazards as a result of emissions.
- A HAAB member asked about the emergency evacuation plan for the cover.

Next Steps

Topics to be addressed in future meetings:

- Standing agenda item to discuss connections of the work to the value of restorative justice.
- Update on ODOT Office of Social Equity.
- How and why technical conclusions were made about cover capacity. What are the constraints, tradeoffs, and costs associated?
- Further discussion about whether the draft Historic Albina Community Priorities identified through the ICA process are in line with the current Black Community priorities and opportunities to refine the list.
- Project climate impacts and impacts of construction and emissions on air quality and health of community members.
- Update on notifications to property owners.

Next HAAB work session:

- The next meeting will be held on January 23, 2024. Discussion will continue to dive deeper into the technical work.
- ODOT to provide HAAB members with supplemental information in a binder to review and reference over the coming months.
- Additional HAAB guests will be invited to the February and March meetings. The project team will reach out to confirm dates and attendees.