



January 4, 2023

Megan Channell  
Project Director, Rose Quarter  
Oregon Department of Transportation  
355 Capitol Street, NE, MS 11  
Salem, OR, 97301-3871

RE: I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Supplemental EA Public Comment

Dear Ms. Channell,

On behalf of the Albina Vision Trust (AVT), thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) regarding the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project (RQIP).

Throughout the country, many cities are grappling with the devastating impact of urban freeways that have torn through predominantly Black neighborhoods. AVT was created to counter the intentional displacement of Black people from the historic Albina neighborhood due to urban renewal, freeway siting and long-term gentrification. AVT's business and charitable purpose is to counteract anti-Black racism in the urban form and to build a diverse, multigenerational and affordable community. The RQIP is a critical element of AVT's overall community redevelopment vision to reconnect inner east Portland neighborhoods to the Willamette River and rebuild community wealth.

We appreciate the years of substantive discussions and meaningful work that have led to the proposed Hybrid 3 cover concept reflected in the SEA. The consensus reflected in this preliminary design concept, as outlined in Governor Brown's January 2022 Letter of Agreement, meets broad community aspirations for this transportation project to be a catalyzing force for reconnecting Albina and restoring its vibrancy through thoughtful and intentional development.

At this stage, however, it is clear additional technical work is necessary to meet the conditions of the agreement. It is our perspective that the promise of social justice through urban design cannot be met without adherence to the following principles in the next stage of design:

- The project must continue to design for the optimal street-level experience for pedestrians and bicyclists and prioritize designing for the grid of the city at the street level instead of the freeway below
- The design and construction of the highway covers must result in high-quality, economically feasible parcels consistent with the design, development, land use and programming vision articulated in the Independent Cover Assessment

- The decision-making framework for considering tradeoffs as the design progresses needs to be transparent and aligned with the recommendations of the Independent Cover Analysis
- A clear funding plan for delivering a complete project as defined by the Governor's Letter of Agreement needs to be articulated by the Oregon Department of Transportation
- The RQIP's long-term role in rebuilding stolen wealth long after the construction of the project is complete needs to be further defined, in partnership with the City of Portland, which should include community ownership of newly created land.

While much work remains, we look forward to continued collaboration to ensure we meet this generational opportunity to transform Albina. Thank you for your full consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Winta Yohannes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Winta Yohannes  
Executive Director, Albina Vision Trust