

TPAC February 7, 2025 Meeting Summary:

Metro staff presented an overview of the I-5 Rose Quarter MTIP Formal Amendment in advance of an approval recommendation that will be presented to TPAC during their March 7, 2025, meeting.

Prior to overview, Chris Smith, representing No More Freeways, provided testimony raising concerns from the No More Freeways group. First, he reiterated a request he made to Ken Lobeck, Metro Funding Programs Lead, concerning needed clarification in the staff report concerning known opposition to the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project. (Note: The requested clarification has been incorporated into the JPACT staff report, Section 1 Known Opposition in the Analysis/Legislation section.)

Second, Mr. Smith raised concerns about the balance and phasing of the project as well as the expected burdens and benefits that will result. He stated areas of the project the No More Freeway group supports such as the freeway covers, bicycles, and pedestrian improvements. However, he also identified that the burdens from other proposed improvements such as the new auxiliary lanes would not provide an adequate benefit in relation to their implementation cost. He also questioned the delivery phasing approach which focused on system capacity improvements without similar improvements for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. He questioned if the partial delivery schedule reflected a balanced approach of capacity and non-motorized improvements.

Third, Mr. Smith identified a concern about the overall project's cost estimate in relation to the package delivery approach over time as funding is secured. He asked whether the full project proposed build-out will be delivered if the project cost increases and which scope elements would be sacrificed if down-scoping is required due to limited funding. He asked if the bicycle and pedestrian improvements would be the first to be cut. Overall, Chris requested TPAC to be cognizant of the fiscal constraint aspects and the impact of scoping changes that could occur if full funding is not secured.

Ken Lobeck provided a short overview of the proposed MTIP Amendment. He explained how the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) approved \$250 million will be applied to each of the three projects. He also explained the various required amendment reviews that include a project level modeling review and fiscal constraint verification. He concluded stating that the submitted proposed project changes had met fiscal constraint verification and the consistency review against the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan.

Blake Perez, Metro Associate Transportation Planner continued the amendment overview by discussing the completed Performance Evaluation Assessment (PAE). Blake explained the purpose of the PAE is for capacity enhancing projects that exceed \$100 million in total costs. The PAE provides an evaluation of the 2024-2027 MTIP investment package with proposed project on the five RTP policy priorities – safety, equity, climate, and mobility, and economic prosperity. He

explained that three main tools are used to evaluate the 2024-2027 MTIP investment package and the PAE and include:

- Travel Demand Model.
- Motor Vehicle Emissions Simulator (MOVES) Model.
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis of the 2023 RTP Network Map.

Key takeaways from the analysis included the following:

- In general, impacts of Phase 1a & 1 were neutral on the package of MTIP investments against RTP goals.
- Negligible effects on emissions, VMT, access to jobs/community places.
- A positive impact on economic and safety goals.
- The project may have additional community and regional benefits outside of the RTP performance measures.

Megan Channell, I-5 Rose Quarter Project Director presented a detailed summary of the proposed upgrades the project will provide. Megan outlined where and how the new \$250 million will be applied among the three existing I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Projects. She covered the six improvement areas the project will focus upon that include:

- The highway cover.
- The Hancock crossing.
- Multi-modal street upgrades.
- New pedestrian and bicycle bridge.
- New auxiliary lanes and shoulders.
- I-5 SB ramp relocation.

Ms. Channell also explained the planned construction delivery aspects and schedule for the I-5 Phase IA segment to begin in 2025, plus the Phase 1 - Initial Highway Cover and I-5 improvements to begin in 2027. Finally, she concluded the project overview by summarizing the ongoing momentum that reflects:

- Strong partnerships and commitments to completing full project letter of Agreement.
- A restorative redevelopment vision support for Lower Albina.
- Support for workforce development through investing in Disadvantaged Business Enterprises and building capacity for a diverse workforce.

TPAC members then began a discussion of the proposed formal MTIP amendment. Several TPAC members raised questions and asked for additional information about aspects of the PAE and the project. Topics included:

- Whether the PAE analysis for two measures—access to jobs and transit access to community places—account for changes to travel times on transit routes. Specifically, TriMet's project analysis shows that Line 4 commute times through the Rose Quarter would worsen.

- Whether coordination with the I-5 Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) project has occurred.
- Whether the project is in alignment with Metro's Climate Smart Strategy.
- The importance of making safety investments in the transportation system to prevent deaths and serious injuries where they occur.
- The inclusion of the bicycle and pedestrian bridge in the project scope and how to ensure it is funded and built.
- Effects of the project on congestion on I-5 that result in changes to crash rates on nearby arterials

JPACT 2-20-2025 Meeting Summary:

JPACT met on February 20, 2025, and received their I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project amendment notification and overview. Prior to the item discussion, Chris Smith, No More Freeways provided formal testimony raising concerns about the project funding and delivery certainty. He outlined the agency composition of the No More Freeways group and why they are opposed to portions of the I-5 Rose Improvement Project. He explained his concerns about the project delivery phasing, balancing, and delivery components when full funding was not yet secured. He raised various questions about the delivery guarantees and what scope elements might be cut if full funding is not secured, or if cost overruns occur.

Sarah Iannarone, TPAC Community Member and Executive Director of The Street Trust, also provided testimony raising concerns about possible scope element cuts if full project funding is not secured. She raised various questions about the nonmotorized scope elements (e.g. bicycle/pedestrian bridge) and what guarantees were in place to ensure the nonmotorized scope elements remain as part of the project. She also inquired about the impact upon the approved NEPA document if later scope elements occur especially to the nonmotorized project elements.

Ted Leybold, Metro Transportation Policy Director, provide a brief summary of the project changes that are occurring through the formal amendment. Megan Channell, I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Director then provided a short overview of the main proposed project upgrades and how the new \$250 million OTC approved award will be applied to the three projects.

Ms. Channell's overview includes additional involved I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project representatives. These included, JT Flowers, Director of Community Affairs and Comms, Albina Vision Trust, Jeff Moreland, President, Raimore Construction, and Caitlin Reff, Manager, Major Projects & Partnerships, city of Portland. Each added their opinion and reasons why the project was important to their agencies and communities.

JPACT members joined the discussion raising various project delivery questions and offering their perspectives about the project. The overall JPACT discussion consensus appeared to stress the need for the government and the community to go forward and get the project delivered correctly.

TPAC March 7, 2025, Approval Recommendation:

The I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project MTIP Formal Amendment returned to TPAC seeking an approval recommendation to JPACT.

During the Public Communications agenda item, Chris Smith, representing the No More Freeways campaign, provided verbal and written testimony in opposition to the MTIP amendment citing project phasing inconsistencies, project delivery phasing, the existing funding shortfall plus long term funding strategy for the project.

Ken Lobeck, Metro Funding Programs Lead provide a very short overview of the amendment and how the proposed funding changes involving the new \$250 million OTC approved award will be applied to the three projects.

TPAC members raised questions about the Project Assessment Evaluation and data needed to assess the level of investment to address fatal and serious injury crashes, and when/how this will be obtained. The approval recommendation was not unanimous. There was one objection and one abstention.