

## **[STAFF REPORT FOR USE FOR WORK SESSIONS AND COUNCIL MEETINGS]**

### **I-5 ROSE QUARTER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: VALUES AND OUTCOMES UPDATE**

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Date: December 29, 2021  
Department: Planning and Development  
Meeting Date: January 12, 2021

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Length: 30 minutes

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### **ISSUE STATEMENT**

In April 2020, Metro Council adopted a values, outcomes, and actions document for the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, which will add auxiliary lanes to Interstate 5 as it runs through the Rose Quarter and make improvements to the surrounding streets and community. Staff will provide an update on progress to date in implementing these values.

### **ACTION REQUESTED**

No action requested. Staff will seek Metro Council guidance on project-related milestones and deliverables as they relate to Council's adopted values, outcomes, and actions. The next major project milestone is in July 2021, when the project considers recommendations from an independent analysis that could significantly alter the project process and design.

### **IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES**

See attached Metro Council I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Values, Outcomes, and Actions.

### **POLICY QUESTION(S)**

- Does Council consider the progress made to date in achieving the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Values, Outcomes, and Actions adequate?
- Which outcomes and actions should staff prioritize advancing in 2021?

### **STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

As the Metropolitan planning organization for the greater Portland region, Metro is responsible for allocating state and federal funding for the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project (referred to as "Rose Quarter" or "RQ") for short and ensuring that the project is coordinated with other transportation plans and projects in the region. The Rose Quarter

project was initially funded through \$10 million of Regional Flex Funds by a vote of Metro Council in 2017. After Metro Council funded the initial project development, the Oregon Legislature passed Oregon House Bill 2017, which allocated additional funding to the project. The project is included in the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan and will receive funding through the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program.

The Rose Quarter project presents a significant opportunity to advance Metro's goals related to racial equity and climate action. Interstate 5 was built through the center of Portland's historic Black community, displacing residents and businesses and physically dividing the neighborhood. This project, particularly the included highway covers and improvements to surface streets around I-5, presents an opportunity to restore justice for the Black community by transforming Albina into a vibrant and diverse community, consistent with the vision that has been developed by community members. The Rose Quarter Improvement Project also presents a key opportunity to implement congestion pricing to manage traffic more efficiently and safely on one of Portland's busiest and most dangerous corridors and demonstrate the potential of pricing to reduce emissions.

The Oregon Department of Transportation ("ODOT") is the owner and operator of the Rose Quarter project. Metro was engaged in the project from the outset. In 2019, Metro President Peterson, with representatives from other organizations – including City of Portland, Multnomah County, Albina Vision Trust and Portland Public School – submitted oral and written testimony to the Oregon Transportation Committee regarding the partners' exceptions to the project as they relate to equity, public engagement and review of the highway cover design. Today Metro Council and Metro staff continue to actively engage in the project at all levels, including participation in the Executive, Steering Committee and technical committees.

In 2020, ODOT completed the planning process pursuant to NEPA, and the Federal Highway Administration gave the final approval through the Final Federal Agency Action in November 2020. Now the project is in the early design phases. A key part of that technical work is working to determine the scope and scale of the cover, also referred to as the lid, as it relates to the Albina Vision and the surface streets owned by City of Portland.

The purpose of this strategic discussion is for Metro Council to provide further guidance on the design of the Rose Quarter project. In particular, there are several key milestones coming up in spring and summer of 2021 that will shape the final design of the project before it goes to construction.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Rose Quarter project adds auxiliary lanes and shoulders on Interstate 5 between Interstate 84 and Interstate 405 as well as highway covers, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and improved intersections on surface streets in the Rose Quarter to improve safety and mobility for all travelers and support the revitalization of Historic Albina, which was once the center of Black community life in Portland.

The project is funded by \$30 million in bonds allocated by House Bill 2017, the comprehensive transportation funding measure passed by the Oregon legislature in 2017, as well as other state, federal, and local sources. As the metropolitan planning organization for the Portland region, Metro is responsible for administering the state and federal funds that are partially supporting the project and for ensuring that the project supports regional goals and is coordinated with other plans and projects, including:

- The City of Portland's 2012 [North/Northeast Quadrant Plan](#), which establishes land use, design, and transportation strategies for the surface streets in the Rose Quarter that are focused on creating a diverse, healthy, livable, and vibrant community and safe, equitable access to opportunities for all travelers.
- The Albina Vision Community Investment Plan, which will identify land uses, infrastructure investments, affordable housing needs, and governance strategies that support the re-creation of a community that honors Albina's history as the historic center of Black cultural life in Portland by transforming the Rose Quarter and the surrounding neighborhoods into a socially and economically inclusive community. The plan is led by the [Albina Vision Trust](#), a non-profit organization established to steward community's vision, and is supported by a \$375,000 grant from Metro's 2040 Planning and Development program.
- Congestion pricing studies currently underway in the region, including [Metro's Regional Congestion Pricing Study](#), the [City of Portland's Pricing Options for Equitable Mobility project](#), and the [Oregon Department of Transportation's I-5 Toll Project](#).

The Regional Transportation Plan update adopted by Council in December 2018 allocated a total \$375 million in state and federal funding for the RQIP through 2040. In a [June 2020 amendment to the 2018-21 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program](#) (p. 23), Metro programmed \$130 million in federal, state, and local funding for the Rose Quarter Improvement Project, available over the next two years. This funding was in addition to the \$10 million allocated to the project by Metro Council in 2017. These documents describe how the project will include both the changes to the highway called for through HB 2017 and the improvements to the surrounding surface streets and community that are the focus of other partner organizations' efforts.

In April 2020, the Metro Council adopted a set of values, outcomes, and actions for the RQIP (attached), stating that "Council's support for the Rose Quarter project is contingent on a clear commitment from the Oregon Transportation Commission to the outcomes listed below." The RQ Executive Steering Committee (ESC), which includes representatives of Metro and other agency partners as well as community members and is responsible for overseeing the project and making recommendations to the ESC, also adopted its own set of values and outcomes in October 2020. The two documents are organized around a shared set of values (restorative justice, multimodal mobility, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants, and transparent and inclusionary decision-making). However, Metro Council's values and outcomes provide greater detail about the actions that need to be undertaken to achieve these values, especially with respect to advancing the

community's vision for the Rose Quarter, implementing congestion pricing, and creating a sound and transparent governance structure for the project.

At the January 12 work session, staff will provide Council with an update on progress made so far in achieving Council's adopted values, outcomes, and actions for the RQIP and seek direction on how to best advance Council's priorities for the project moving forward. Metro's advocacy for Council's values has become increasingly important since both the [City of Portland](#) and [Albina Vision Trust](#) withdrew their support from the project in June 2020 over concerns that ODOT was not being responsive to stakeholder input and was not placing adequate emphasis on restorative justice, making Metro a key advocate for the alignment of the RQ project with the City and the Albina Vision Trust's efforts that Council's statement calls for. This progress update will also provide background information for Council to consider as it develops similar values statements for other transportation projects. These projects include the [I-5 Interstate Bridge Replacement Program](#), for which Council is also discussing a draft values and outcomes statement during this work session.

The table below summarizes progress with respect to the actions included in the I-5 Rose Quarter Project: Values, Outcomes, and Actions statement since Council adopted that statement in April 2020.

<b><i>Value (in italics)/action</i></b>	<b>Progress since April 2020</b>
<i>Advancing racial equity and committing to restorative justice</i>	
Coordinate with the Albina Vision Community Investment plan (funded by a Metro grant) to take into account the land value created by this project and the urban design features described in the Albina Vision.	Metro Council funded a 2040 grant to Albina Vision and that work continues to move forward. Because Albina Vision withdrew from the RQ project in June 2020, coordination between the two parties is at a stalemate.
Appoint a landscape design team to inform a community-led decision-making process on highway cover design.	Underway. ODOT selected a consultant team for the Independent Cover Analysis, which began work in 2020. Metro and other project partners are advancing a motion to ensure that this work represents the community's vision and is independent from ODOT's work on the project.
Establish a committee to oversee implementation of the DBE contracting process.	Completed. ODOT launched the <a href="#">Community Oversight Advisory Committee (COAC)</a> in March 2019, and the committee continues to meet.
Set a new standard for State design and contracting practices for local minority-owned contractors and small businesses that incorporates prime-contractor development programs, workforce development opportunities, anti-displacement and restorative community building investment, and wealth creation and land ownership opportunities.	<a href="#">Underway. ODOT selected a Construction Manager/General Contractor for the project in July 2020.</a> The COAC was actively involved in the selection process. ODOT is also changing some of its DBE standards to increase opportunities for minority-owned contractors.
<i>Increase multi-modal mobility and implement congestion pricing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions</i>	

<b><i>Value (in italics)/action</i></b>	<b>Progress since April 2020</b>
Synchronize the project timeline with the I-5 tolling program, so that any analysis of traffic and greenhouse gas emission benefits of the project also incorporates pricing strategies for managing traffic.	No progress. The project Executive Steering Committee (ESC) has not discussed pricing at all, and the latest design documents do not mention pricing. Staff are requesting that ODOT update the ESC on the I-5 tolling program and discuss options for alignment as soon as possible.
Implement congestion pricing on this segment of I-5 as soon as possible and prior to completing the project.	See above.
Link the project with larger I-5 corridor planning efforts by taking into account the transportation needs of the entire corridor, as well as the potential impacts to people living along the entire I-5 corridor.	The RQIP project continues to focus narrowly on the Rose Quarter. The Independent Cover Analysis team is considering the project's broader impacts to people living along the I-5 corridor, particularly Black residents who were displaced from Albina. The ESC may recommend that ODOT conduct a broader analysis of impacts based on the results of the Independent Cover Analysis, which are expected in June 2021.
<i>Engaging stakeholders through a transparent and inclusionary decision-making process</i>	
Provide more detail about the roles and expected deliverables of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Executive Steering Committee (ESC), as well as how committee feedback will be incorporated into project timelines and milestones.	<a href="#">ODOT disbanded the CAC in September 2020</a> after committee members expressed frustration that the committee was not empowered to shape key project decisions. However, ODOT is now forming a new committee, <a href="#">the Historic Albina Advisory Board (HAAB)</a> , consisting of Black people with ties to Historic Albina, which will begin meeting in January 2021. The HAAB consists of three at-large members and 10 members appointed by ODOT. At Metro's request, ODOT involved Metro staff in the selection of at-large members. ODOT has yet to share information on the HAAB's charter or deliverables. The ESC has adopted a charter detailing its role, and ODOT has developed a timeline showing how HAAB and ESC feedback will be incorporated into project milestones.
Clearly define how feedback mechanisms will function between the CAC, ESC, participating agencies, ODOT staff, and the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC).	See above.
Clearly describe to agency partners how the <a href="#">OTC's 11 actions</a> will be incorporated into the project and have timelines synchronized in a way that ensures transparency and accountability.	Staff consider most of the 11 actions to have been adequately addressed by the project, with the exception of two items discussed above: coordination with regional partners (including those that have withdrawn from the project) and establishing congestion pricing on the project.
Develop a partner agency agreement (e.g., IGA, MOU) that outlines how collaboration will continue as part of a process that incorporates these outcomes, completes these identified actions, and commits to project principles and values.	No progress yet.

The RQ project will be in design through 2024, with construction anticipated to take place from 2025-27. ODOT recently released 20% design documents for review by Metro and other project partners. This will be followed by 30% design documents in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2020 with initial design concepts for the RQ project. These concepts will be refined through the 60% design, due in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2022, and updated for final feedback through the 90% design, due in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2023, before the final 100% design is completed in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2024.

Lastly, during the first half of 2021, there will be several opportunities for Metro to advance Council's values and outcomes.

- January-June 2021: The Historical Albina Advisory Board begins to meet and provides recommendations on community priorities for the project.
- April 2021: The Independent Cover Analysis shares draft design scenarios that describe how the RQ project relates to the surrounding streets and community with the ESC for feedback.
- June 2021: The Independent Cover Analysis submits final scenarios to the ESC.
- July 2021: The ESC selects its preferred cover scenario and makes a recommendation to the Oregon Transportation Commission in 2021 about how the RQ project should be aligned with this scenario.
- July-August 2021: The Commission acts on the ESC's recommendation potentially including directing ODOT to make changes to the 30% design.
- October-December 2021: ODOT submits the 30% design package.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Metro Council I-5 Rose Quarter Project Values, Outcomes, and Actions

[For work session:]

- Is legislation required for Council action? ☐ Yes    ☒ No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? ☐ Yes    ☒ No
- What other materials are you presenting today? Powerpoint presentation