



City of Portland

April 5, 2023

Kris Stricker, ODOT Director
c/o I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project
888 SW 5th Ave
Suite 600
Portland, OR 97204

RE: Update on City I5RQ Supplemental Environmental Assessment Letter (dated 1/4/2023)

The City of Portland is a participating agency and partner on ODOT's I5 Rose Quarter project. In January 2023, the City submitted comments on the NEPA Supplemental Environmental Assessment that underscored the need for more work to be done to address the city's concerns and conditions of agreement. At this point, we are encouraged by ODOT's responsiveness by facilitating an inclusive and values-based process, as well as the outcome of that process that demonstrates how the Hybrid 3 concept must evolve to support the future of a reconnected Albina neighborhood and world-class major event venue.

The recent collaborative design workshops held with all major stakeholders have demonstrated a deep commitment to honor community values and the interests of the historic Albina neighborhood – as represented by Historic Albina Advisory Board (HAAB) and the Albina Vision Trust (AVT) – to advance principles of restorative justice. When agreed upon in January 2022, the Hybrid 3 concept provided an invaluable rescoping of what was once a failed project. Now, through deeper engagement with key stakeholders, technical design refinements have been identified and are needed to advance the project.

Some of the outcomes of the workshops include revisions to Hybrid 3 to gain alignment with City policy as it relates to prioritizing people walking, rolling, bicycling, and taking transit both on the newly reconnected local streets and on critical pathways to access the Rose Quarter event venues. Moreover, the City recognizes that the project must result in improved safety and accessibility for all modes by modifying or relocating the Southbound off ramp terminal proposed for Ramsay/Williams/Wheeler. We believe this can be done in a way that will advance the community vision to maximize community-led development opportunity and developable space on and adjacent to the highway cover, while accommodating event district traffic management requirements.

As evidenced by USDOT's recent award of Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) program planning funds, this project has the potential to remedy past harms, create an environment that supports community redevelopment, and provide mobility benefits for people within the reconnected neighborhood and accessing our state's largest event district. Our ongoing collaboration with ODOT as well as the HAAB, AVT, and Rip City Management as part of this planning effort will seek to advance this partnership and critical place-making and wealth-building opportunities.

Furthermore, ISRQ is already on track to provide significant economic benefits and new workforce opportunities for local communities of color even as the project breaks ground. Thanks in part to advocacy from ODOT's Community Opportunity Advisory Committee, this project will utilize an alternative contracting method in which minority-owned firms are represented in the joint venture Construction Manager/General Contractor, as well as Diverse Business Enterprise subcontractor participation requirements. This contracting structure will help build the capacity for minority-owned construction firms to support future regional megaprojects such as the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program and the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge.

As evidenced by the City's cross-bureau team from the Portland Bureau of Transportation, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, and Prosper Portland dedicated to advancing this project, **it is an utmost priority for the City of Portland that ISRQ project moves forward**. Furthermore, we view completion of this project as fundamentally tied to implementation of the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program and the Regional Mobility Pricing Program. If the bottleneck of congestion at the Rose Quarter is not addressed in tandem with construction of the Interstate Bridge, the opportunity for that strategic investment to better manage the system and move goods and services along this critical corridor will be muted at best. Coordinated implementation of these major corridor improvements with maximized community benefit is critical to delivering the value Oregonians deserve.

The City of Portland intends to build on this momentum to ensure the success of this catalytic project. We are confident that ODOT's Rose Quarter project will not only relieve congestion, improve safety, and enhance developability of the district – but that it will do so in a way that recognizes, addresses, and prevents the repetition of the injustices suffered by communities of color throughout Portland's history. We are optimistic that by continuing to work closely alongside other project stakeholders, we will advance this once-in-a-generation project to enhance our state's largest event district and reconnect the Albina neighborhood.

Sincerely,



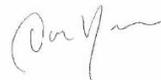
Mayor Ted Wheeler



Commissioner Mingus Mapps



Commissioner Carmen Rubio



Commissioner Dan Ryan



Commissioner Rene Gonzalez