



City of
Portland



Metro



Multnomah
County

December 12, 2019

Honorable Kate Brown, Governor
State of Oregon
900 Court Street NE, Suite 160
Salem, OR 97301

Bob Van Brocklin, Chair
Oregon Transportation Commission
355 Capitol St NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project

Dear Governor Brown, Chair Van Brocklin and Members of the Oregon Transportation Commission:

Thank you for engaging local and regional partners in on-going conversations about the future of the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project (Project). We have been actively engaged in planning and development for nearly a decade and are committed to ensuring broad public benefits are realized with this Project.

Since the inception of the Project, we've worked closely with ODOT and other partners to advance a meaningful concept, offer constructive feedback and raise concerns. Over the past six months, our agencies have participated in an informal process with the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) with the sincere desire to collaboratively pursue a path forward.

The OTC has yet to articulate how our input would be addressed or how our recommendations would be incorporated. We continue to have concerns about the stewardship and outcomes of the Project. Specific elements that have been proposed and not advanced as part of this six-month process include:

- **Leadership policy:** Adopt a leadership policy that reflects values of transparency, inclusivity, and transportation justice.
- **Project structure:** Charter a Project decision-making structure with community representation on an oversight committee as well as involuntarily displaced community participation on a community advisory committee. This structure and process must be inclusive and accessible to all and feature robust and meaningful public engagement that identifies the opportunities and concerns of communities.
- **Highway cover study:** Commission a third-party independent study of development alternatives for the planned highway covers.

Understanding what is at stake, we continue to believe that there are several important components missing and respectfully request that the OTC work closely with ODOT to address the above.

Additionally, as an alternative process has not been defined, ODOT should deliver a full Environmental Impact Statement to address the outcomes stated below. We are eager to work with you and other stakeholders to identify and develop strategies to achieve these critical outcomes:

- **Equity:** The Project should honor the past and account for the negative impacts that I-5 and urban renewal had on the African-American community in Albina. The Project must acknowledge and take meaningful steps to repair the historical and lasting damage. The project cannot cause further displacement in North/Northeast Portland and should intentionally create job opportunities for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises.
- **Meet climate goals:** We collectively, at the state, regional and local levels, face a more urgent call to address climate change and the project should be designed in a way that reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Improve air quality:** The Project must advance improvements in air quality in North/Northeast Portland. The current population in this area is disproportionately impacted by air toxins.
- **Relieve congestion by designing for all modes:** The Project must continue to contain significant investments in all modes of transportation including benefits to people walking, riding transit, and biking. Reducing the number of vehicles on the road cuts vehicle emissions, decreases congestion and promotes a healthier community. The surface improvements currently proposed in the base Project are vital to the mobility of the entire region and are critical to ensure that the proposed highway improvements operate as efficiently as has been planned.

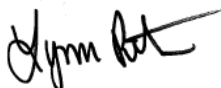
Last year, the Portland City Council adopted the Central City 2035 Plan and Transportation System Plan amendments that include the Project as conceptualized in the N/NE Quadrant and Facility Plan. This was a successful outcome of a State and City partnership that started in 2010 and defined the Project to include major local streets elements, improvements for people walking, riding transit and biking, the development of equity strategies, and other efforts that will create benefit for the community originally impacted by freeway construction.

Additionally, Metro’s record as a strong proponent for this multi-modal Project has been clear. Metro championed the funding of the Project during the 2017 legislative session and provided the “first dollar in” for initial project development with Regional Flex Fund dollars.

We are supportive partners of a recalibrated, inclusive, community-led Project that realizes our original intent, joint interests and helps improve a vital area of our community that has too often been excluded from the decision-making table. We hope to change that history and start to construct a new one with this Project and others.

We look forward to hearing from you on next steps for advancing this Project.

Sincerely,



Lynn Peterson
President, Metro
Council



Chloe Eudaly
Commissioner,
City of Portland



Ted Wheeler
Mayor, City of
Portland



Jessica Vega Pederson
Commissioner,
Multnomah County