



MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 5, 2019
TO: ODOT I-5 ROSE QUARTER PROJECT TEAM @
INFO@I5ROSEQUARTER.ORG
FROM: PORTLAND PARKS BOARD
RE: **I-5 ROSE QUARTER PROJECT**

Board Members

Patricia Frobes, Chair

Kendall Clawson, Vice Chair

Paul Agrimis

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Jenny Glass

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Jeff Anderson, Ex Officio

Meryl Redisch, Ex Officio

The Portland Parks Board has been following the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project and would like to take this opportunity to provide some initial feedback and recommendations to the project team.

The Parks Board Land Use and Infrastructure Committee has reviewed the documents provided. Our Subcommittee focused on the 'community space' shown on illustrations of ODOT's I-5 scheme for widening the freeway and rationalizing surface streets above. The illustrations were published prior to the environmental assessment which is due to be completed soon. Attention was drawn to extensions of some of the surface street connections above the freeway since they were colored green and looked like possible public park spaces. These raised several concerns, including:

- The fragmentation of the 'greenspaces,' with the larger pieces isolated by vehicular traffic, and thus of limited utility.
- Distance from established neighborhoods in the vicinity and lack of clarity about who the greenspaces are designed to serve.
- Possible expectations that Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) would be maintaining the spaces, which primarily appear to be remnant pieces difficult to successfully program and operate.
- How this large investment in public open space over the Freeway might detract from other nearby opportunities such as the proposed Albina waterfront open space development (as part of the Albina Vision).
- How the proposed Clackamas overcrossing would provide good connectivity to the waterfront.
- Why the proposed improvements are oriented to the freeway and not to the City grid.

Sustaining a healthy park and recreation system to make Portland a great place to live, work, and play.



- Whether the proposed Freeway caps provide enough community benefit to justify their expense.

Our Subcommittee has observed that the paramount urban function for the streets above the freeway is to connect neighborhoods to the waterfront with active sidewalks and street frontages.

In light of these observations and concerns, on January 3, 2019 the Portland Parks Board adopted the following recommendations, and directed that these be provided to PBOT, ODOT and the project team:

- Support project funding of a review by an urban design team of alternative capping scenarios. This would allow opportunity to rethink how to make this project more beneficial to the community.
- Extend the proposed 30-day public comment period for the project's environmental assessment, which is being prepared by ODOT. Longer comment periods are typical for any project with heightened community interest. Ideally, the comment period should be extended to 90 days.
- Decline any requests for PP&R to manage or maintain the Freeway caps as currently designed and configured.

The Board is happy to answer any questions or clarifications that you may have. Thank you for the opportunity to comment at this time.

Sincerely,

Pat Frobos
Chair, Portland Parks Board

cc: Caitlin Reff, PBOT
Teresa Boyle, PBOT
Nicholas Starin, BPS
Kia Selley, Interim Director, PP&R
Todd Lofgren, Commissioner Fish's Office