

Testimony of Anneliese Koehler, Legislative Affairs Manager
In Support of Senate Bill 1182
Joint Committee on Transportation
May 13, 2025



Metro is the elected regional government that serves nearly 1.7 million people in the 24 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area. We provide a broad range of public services that includes land use and transportation planning, solid waste and recycling operations, housing and homeless services, management of parks and natural areas, and operation of major visitor facilities like the Oregon Convention Center and the Oregon Zoo.

The I-5 Rose Quarter project is an innovative effort to deliver economic benefits not only throughout the I-5 corridor, but also to the communities that were divided when I-5 was built. The covers created by the I-5 Rose Quarter project, which reconnect the neighborhoods on either side of I-5 in the project area, are priorities for Metro Council and for the people of the Portland region. These covers lay the groundwork for a vibrant community in an area that is less than a mile from downtown Portland but has struggled to reach its full potential because it is isolated and divided by I-5 and other major roads.

Community outreach on the Rose Quarter have emphasized that, in order to unlock the full economic potential of the I-5 Rose Quarter projects, the new parcels of land created by the project need to be owned and developed by people who are invested in revitalizing Albina and well-connected to parallel efforts in the community. SB 1182 supports these efforts by streamlining the process of transferring ownership of new parcels created through the Rose Quarter project. This will help ensure that work to revitalize Albina moves forward quickly and delivers benefits to the neighborhood and to the broader region as soon as possible.

The bill also prioritizes Albina Vision Trust as a potential owner and developer of these new parcels. This recognizes the Trust as a critical partner in revitalizing the Rose Quarter, both through their contributions the I-5 Rose Quarter Project and their broader planning and development work in the community.

The Albina Vision Community Investment Plan, supported through a grant from Metro, outlines a community-supported vision for a thriving Albina anchored by new businesses and community centers, safe and well-designed streets, and new homes, parks and public spaces. Albina Vision Trust recently broke ground on a 94-unit housing that is less than a mile from the project area, and is planning larger development with 1,000 units of housing at the former Portland Public Schools headquarters.

SB 1182 gives ODOT the opportunity to deepen its work with a partner that is trusted by the community and has a proven track record of success in revitalizing Albina. It's a simple

change that enables I-5 Rose Quarter to continue with an innovative, community-led approach to delivering highway projects, and Metro fully supports it.