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Congressman Earl Blumenauer hosted Secretary Pete Buttigieg of the US Department of Transportation with a meeting with the Albina Vision Trust

Determination to Create New Community

Recovery Efforts in Lower Albina Attract National Attention

On Friday, July 7th, Congressman Earl Blumenauer hosted Secretary Pete Buttigieg of the US Department of Transportation (DOT) for a meeting with the Albina Vision Trust (AVT) to discuss the organization's large-scale restorative redevelopment efforts in Lower Albina. Secretary Buttigieg

was impressed by the amount of progress made towards the long-term objective of systematically rebuilding the fabric of the once vibrant Black community intentionally displaced by the construction of Interstate 5, noting that the Albina Vision project was significantly further along than most comparable holistic recovery efforts nationwide.

The presence of key public stakeholders further reinforced the cohesive, unified front of local, regional and federal partners pushing to realize a common goal: acquiring and intentionally redeveloping

roughly 94 acres of prime central city property along the Willamette River. The Secretary described the project as an ideal candidate for federal infrastructure funding and encouraged the coalition to continue engagement with key federal allies to continue building on the established wave of widespread support and momentum.

The meeting, which constituted the first step of Secretary Buttigieg's visit to the region, was attended by Metro Councilor Ashton Simpson, State Senator Lew Frederick, the Portland Bureau of Transportation

(PBOT), and representatives from the office of Senator Ron Wyden. Also present were AVT board members Sharon Gary-Smith and Rukaiyah Adams, CEO of the newly minted 1803 Fund, Nolan Lienhart, Principal and Director of Planning and Urban Design at ZGF and Donna Maxey, community elder.

The conversation was led by Winta Yohannes, the Executive Director of the Albina Vision Trust, and the organization's board chair, Michael Alexander, who formerly served as CEO of the Urban League of Portland.

"The work of the Albina Vision Trust," says Alexander, "is centered around several critical elements: Our determination to create new community, our resolve to have it reflect our belief in the decency of those who share our dream, and our belief and hope that we can accomplish greatness." As expressed by Yohannes, "Secretary Buttigieg's visit affirmed the longstanding sentiment broadly shared by those close to the work: Not only is the Albina Vision achievable, it is inevitable. Most importantly, we are not alone in this work. All eyes are on Albina."