

Perkins Coie Supports Albina Vision Trust to Restore Portland's Historic Black Cultural Hub

PORTLAND (July 6, 2021) – Perkins Coie is proud to announce that it is working with Albina Vision Trust (AVT) in Portland to help restore the historic cultural hub of the city's Black community within the former Lower Albina neighborhood.

The Albina neighborhood was the leading center of Black life and culture in northeast Portland for decades, but in the late 1950s and 1960s, the neighborhood was razed in the name of urban renewal and replaced by what is now the Rose Quarter.

"We are committed to partnering with the Albina Vision Trust and to providing legal counsel to support its mission of redeveloping the Lower Albina neighborhood and business district into a diverse and welcoming hub," said Chris Rich, Perkins Coie's Portland office managing partner. "The Albina Vision Trust's development plan seeks to reconnect the community to the neighborhood and to be a socially and economically inclusive community."

As part of the firm's pro bono support, Chris and Devin McComb, a Perkins Coie real estate partner, have helped negotiate an agreement for AVT to gain the "Right of First Offer" for purchase of the current Portland Public School headquarters building in the former Lower Albina neighborhood. Chris and Devin will represent AVT throughout the transaction. Significantly, the Portland Public School Board recently voted unanimously to approve AVT's "Right of First Offer" for the district headquarters building during a recent meeting where Black community leaders voiced the profound need for restorative economic and social justice in the neighborhood that was once central to Black life in Portland. Multnomah

County, which was in first position to purchase to district headquarters building, provided critical support to allow AVT to step into “Right of First Offer” position.

Chris and Devin, along with other Perkins Coie team members, will work with AVT on the next phases of the transaction, including advising AVT on general real estate, land use and other aspects of its mission as it moves forward with its broader redevelopment plans for the Albina neighborhood.

Perkins Coie is committed to advancing racial equality and to doing its part to end racism and to help create a more just and equal society. The firm has announced a number of actions and pledges as part of its ongoing commitment, including new pro bono initiatives focused on addressing racial inequality and economic justice. In 2020, Perkins Coie attorneys dedicated their most hours ever—nearly 80,000—to pro bono representation. Other members of the firm’s pro bono team supporting AVT include partner Chris Hall, associate Nikesh Patel, and senior attorney John Halski.