

# Young Activist Runs for Metro Council

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den History of Albina,” and talked about the Albina neighborhood that was first divided by Interstate 5 and further replaced by Veteran’s Memorial Coliseum, the Moda Center, the Portland Convention Center and expansion of Legacy Emanuel Hospital.

“The reason why, sadly, we called it “The Hidden History of Albina” tour is because when we walk down these historic streets, everything is gone, it’s hidden, everything’s been destroyed,” he said. “We have to have programs like these walking tours, because once it’s out of sight, it’s out of mind.”

These days, Whitten is more concerned with the future of the Albina neighborhood than its past, given current discussions about how proposed new construction to Interstate 5, built in 1947, might be used to bring the neighborhood back together.

The latest Rose Center project, as it’s called, was proposed by the Oregon Department of Transportation to add shoulders and auxiliary lanes to I-5 in the Rose Quarter area in order to smooth traffic flow between I-5 and two other interstate highways.

ODOT has stated that the project will “improve community connections by redesigning overpasses and reconnecting neighborhood streets, enhancing public spaces and promoting economic development opportunities.”

But just how that will play out is still up in the air. The nonprofit Albina Vision wants to rebuild a diverse neighborhood by seeing caps built over I-5 that will support a connection to the Willamette River with a

waterfront park, a public plaza with local markets and events, public park blocks with neighborhood emphasis, residential and commercial development and more.

The project as proposed by ODOT — without caps — is estimated at \$795 million, and with caps the cost could run as high as \$1 billion.

Whitten said he supports Albina Vision’s position to create caps over the highway.

“With a seismically sound cap, you could rebuild this community, bring it back together,” he said. We could have parks, streets, multi-use buildings, but they have to be done right. I believe the black communities deserve nothing less than a full, safe and seismically strong capping that allows us to recreate what was lost. I fully support Albina Vision and I will do what I can so they are successful.”

He further spelled his platform in the race for Metro Council.

“I will commit to working with a broad coalition in the fight to ensure that Portland has an economy that works for all, that we have affordable housing and that we take action on the climate in a way what does not leave our diverse communities behind,” Whitten said. “When it comes to the economy, we know that even as there have been new jobs in the region, the benefits have not been equitable. And for our black community there are huge disparities in access to living wage jobs and the ability to get advanced degrees and to secure positions of management and leadership.”

He said management should also pay attention to the way it treats employees.

“We need to increase the support that we have around anti-harassment in the workplace, we need to ensure that people have living wage jobs, and we need to make sure that we see the diversity within our own management and leadership,” he said.

Whitten is also closely watching developments for the massive Broadway Corridor project that will entail development of the 14-acre site of the downtown U.S. Post Office distribution center, which the city bought for \$88 million in 2016, that will eventually include “4 million square feet of new commercial, employment and residential development.”

Whitten said he plans to make sure that the city lives up to the goal listed on the project’s website at [broadwaycorridorpx.com](http://broadwaycorridorpx.com), “to connect the Old Town/Chinatown and Pearl District neighborhoods, with the goal to maximize community benefits, particularly to those groups that haven’t benefitted from other urban projects.”

“We need to have living wage jobs, project agreements, meet diversity goals for recruitment, implement strategies for retention, find resources for people to get drivers licenses and child care, monitoring and accountability, stop wage theft and create safe working conditions,” he said.

Other candidates running in the May 19 vote-by-mail election include Karen Spencer, a patent lawyer and business consultant; Chris Smith, a member of the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission; Mary Peveto, executive director Neighbors for Clean Air; and Mary Nolan, former Oregon House Majority Leader.



Robert Lewis IV, 34, died in a shooting on April 24, 2019.

## Unsolved Homicide Hits One Year Mark Reward offered in cold case

The Portland Police Bureau, in partnership with Crime Stoppers of Oregon, is asking for the public’s help to solve a homicide that occurred one year ago.

On April 24, 2019, at 7:07 p.m., Portland Police and medical personnel responded to the report of a person injured in a shooting near Southeast 93rd Avenue and Henry Street. The victim, Robert Lewis IV, 34, was found dead. An autopsy determined that he died from a gunshot wound.

Officers located evidence of gunfire at the scene but did not locate any suspects in the area.

Crime Stoppers of Oregon offers cash rewards of up to \$2,500 cash for information, reported to Crime Stoppers, that leads to an arrest in any unsolved felony crime and tipsters can remain anonymous. Visit the App Store and download P3 Tips to submit secure and anonymous tips; online at [p3tips.com/823](http://p3tips.com/823) or call 503-823-HELP (4357).

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