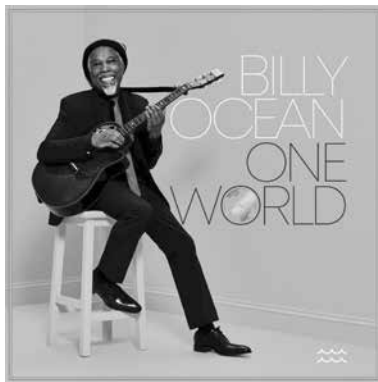


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METRO

LOCAL NEWS



The Oregon Department of Transportation is moving to elevate Black voices to shape the controversial I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project.

Feedback Starts Over on I-5 Project

New board with black ties to consider past harms

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON
PORTLAND OBSERVER EDITOR

Officials say the priorities of Portland's African American community will be elevated under a new public outreach the Oregon Department of Transportation is taking to get past obstacles in the controversial I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project.

ODOT recently announced it is recruiting people with historic ties to the Black community in north and northeast Portland to form a new Historic Albina Advisory

Board to oversee decisions that must be made on designs for the project, replacing a prior committee of residents advising ODOT, some who grew disgruntled with the planning process.

The new 17-member panel will replace a 25-member community advisory panel and will be responsible for sending its recommendations to an executive steering committee of government officials overseeing the project, ODOT said.

The original construction of the I-5 freeway and other urban renewal projects over the past five decades historically contributed to Black residential displacement in the inner city neighborhoods of north and northeast Portland. Several advocates pushing for construction of a new diverse community in the Rose Quarter area are

opposed to the I-5 project as currently outlined.

This summer, Metro government, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly and Albina Vision Trust, a nonprofit focusing on revitalizing the Albina area, all withdrew support for the project saying the plans ODOT was approving did not address historic wrongs to the black community. It happened after ODOT rejected the added expense to make the freeway caps adaptable to building structures, estimated to increase the cost to \$1 billion.

According to Bike Portland Publisher Jonathan Maus, several citizen members of the former Community Advisory Committee were also concerned their advisory

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Vancouver Fire Chief Introduced

Brennan Blue brings 32 years of experience

After a nationwide search, the City of Vancouver has hired Brennan Blue to serve as the city's new fire chief starting Sept. 24. He is replacing Joe Molina, who is retiring.

Blue brings more than 32 years of experience and leadership in the fire profession, including 13 years as a chief officer. He served in Southern California's Riverside and San Diego counties for more than 25 years. Most recently, he was the fire chief for Cal Fire's San Benito-Monterey Unit, overseeing 21 stations and more than 400 career staff.



Vancouver's new Fire Chief Brennan Blue.

"It is a distinct honor and a privilege to be selected to lead the dedicated men and women of the Vancouver Fire Department," said Chief

Blue. "I look forward to building on the great work of the department staff in collaboration with the community. Together, we will continue to provide the highest level of fire and emergency response to the residents and visitors of our vibrant and growing community."

Chief Blue also has extensive experience in incident command for a wide range of emergency responses and has led the development of prevention, rescue, and hazmat programs for the communities he has served.

In addition to his ongoing professional development and training, Chief Blue has been working towards earning a bachelor's degree in organizational leadership from Bellevue College, which he will complete in 2021. He currently lives in Clark County with his family.

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