



Black History Month



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Committed to Cultural Diversity

I-5 Scar of Displacement Revisited

ODOT takes another look at Rose Quarter project

BY BEVERLY CORBELL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

In June of last year, the nonprofit Albina Vision Trust sent an email to the Oregon Department of Transportation withdrawing support for its proposed I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, which would reconfigure a 1.8-mile stretch of I-5 between the Interstate 84 and Interstate 405 interchanges.

According to Winta Yohannes, Albina Vision's managing director, the proposal didn't go far enough to mitigate the harm done to the Black community in the Albina neighborhood when hundreds, maybe thousands, of homes and businesses were bulldozed and the land was sold to make way for I-5, Legacy Emanuel Medical Center, Veterans Memorial Coliseum and other urban renewal projects.

"Despite our good faith efforts, we do not see our engagement resulting in meaningful changes to the project of its anticipated outcomes," Yohannes wrote.

At particular issue was the potential, encouraged by Albina Vision, for buildable caps, or covers, to be placed over certain portions of I-5 that would allow construction of apartments and businesses. At the time ODOT was projecting a cost of \$795 million, but said the cost would be significantly higher if the covers allowed buildable construction.

Pushback was swift, not only from Albina Vision Trust,



A swath Portland centered at Broadway and Weidler is cleared for construction of the I-5 freeway in this 1962 photo from the Eliot Neighborhood Association. Even many of the homes still standing were later lost to demolition as the historic African American neighborhood was decimated over the 1960s and early 1970s, not only for I-5, but to make room for the Memorial Coliseum, its parking lots, the Portland Public School's Blanchard Building, I-405 ramps, and Emanuel Hospital's expansion.

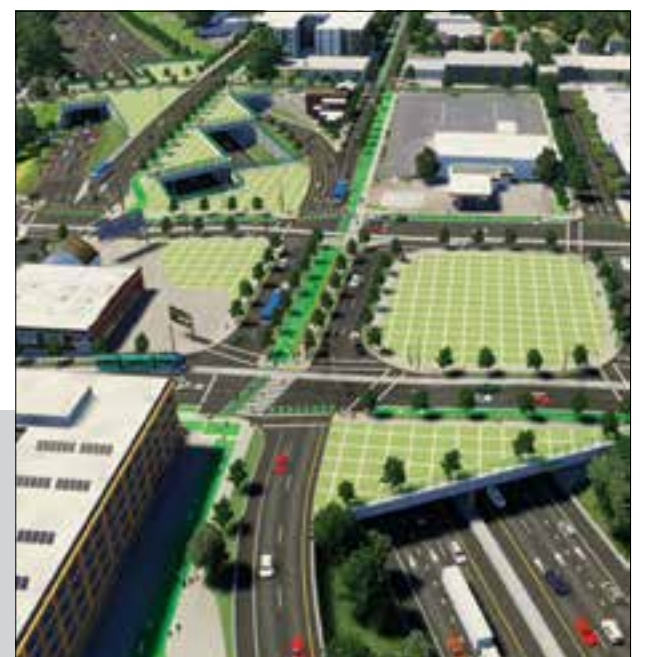
the grassroots effort that began in 2017 to remake the Rose Quarter district into a fully functioning neighborhood, embracing its diverse past and re-creating a landscape that can accommodate much more than its two sports and entertainment venues, but with several officials, including Mayor Ted Wheeler, also dropping support for the project.

The state transportation agency, however, listened, said ODOT project manager Megan Channell, and now is doing things very differently.

"This was a direct response to the community input we

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When ODOT offered the possibility of open outdoor plazas as caps over I-5 at the Rose Quarter in a new plan to increase the lanes of travel on the freeway, the proposal drew wide opposition for not addressing the economic development needs of the historic African American community which was first displaced by the freeway nearly 50 years ago.



Decorated Trimet Bus Honors Black History



TriMet honors Black History Month with a newly painted bus featuring local and national leaders who have helped lead the march toward racial justice. The individuals include Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, the late Portland pastor Rev. T. Allen Bethel, Oregon's first Black woman legislator, Margaret Carter, and Portland's first Black woman City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty. The bus will be rolling throughout the Portland metro area for the next nine months.