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Williams Avenue Plan

City adjusts public input process around concerns on racism

Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

Weeks-long dust up over the process of deciding the future of traffic on North Williams Avenue has brought a widened citizens' advisory committee and a public forum on the issue.

The North Williams Traffic Operations and Safety Project Stakeholder Advisory Committee last month became a lightning rod for debate over bicycling safety and gentrification when a group of local residents brought the issue of race to the table.

Now Portland Department of Transportation officials are planning a public forum in September on what the traffic on North Williams Avenue is expected to look like in the future and how the road should be developed to prepare for it.

The bureau is accepting public input on "topics, speakers, format and/or desirable outcomes," according to the project website. Send your input to project manager Ellen Vanderslice at ellen.vanderslice@portlandoregon.gov or call her at 503-823-4638.

"It's in progress and it's reacting to how things shape up as far as community involvement," Dan Anderson.

State Rep. Lew Frederick, D-Portland, attended one of the meetings in which a group of local residents – mostly women – advocated for tackling the thorny local history of racism in North Williams Avenue development projects, ultimately changing the path of the project's public input process.

"What was great was the stories that were brought forth about the history, the cultural issues, about the way that the city had presented the concerns – you had the biking community and other experts that were there, but now they were hearing from people who had real knowledge of the community," said Frederick.

"When you see Donna Maxey and Avel Gordley and Faye Burch and Michelle

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CELEBRATE LIFE



PHOTO BY JULIE KEEFFE

Hundreds of people came to City Bible church on Rocky Butte to celebrate the life of Yashanee Vaughn. Family and friends said she was an exceptional girl, with a strong will and an expressive personality. They say she will always remain in their hearts.

Hundreds Attend Yashanee's Funeral

Family requests bright colors at the murdered teen's service

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

Friends and family of Yashanee Vaughn gathered Saturday July 30 at City Bible Church on Rocky Butte. Hundreds came to celebrate the teen's short life and to lay her remains to rest, packing the church with supporters. Her mother, Shaquita Louis had requested that instead of black, mourners should wear bright colors. The family wore bright red along with black and white to honor her love of color.

Pastor J.W. Friday of Bright Star

Ministries hosted the service in City Bible church. His upbeat presentation fit the personality of a girl, described by family and friends as loving, expressive, outgoing and strong-willed.

"I have seen God move on behalf of this family in such a great way," Pastor Friday said. "It is in the midst of the pain that God works it all out."

Friday praised the family for their tenacity, hard work and compassion.

And he said that the loss of Yashanee had affected people across the city, propelling them to help other teens. To Yashanee's mother he said, "God didn't

bring you this far to leave you now."

Community members, friends and family spoke at the three-hour celebration. Elishua Goldsby, just one of many dancers, singers and poets who paid tribute to the teen, sang "You were always on my mind."

Elizabeth Jensen, principal of Open Meadow school, where Yashanee spent her 7th Grade year, said Yashanee had a powerful spirit.

"She burst into our building with that enormous smile and her joy and presence – and she rattled our staff," she said. "She

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Educator Gives Away Math Books

Thousands of dollars of her own money went into local project

Bruce Poinsette
Of The Skanner News

Carolyn Leonard has spent over \$2400 on a book giveaway for families in the Portland area but she sees it as a necessary expense.

"Compared to what can happen to our kids it's worth it," she says.

On Saturday, July 30, Leonard, who is a Compliance Officer and has worked in Portland Public Schools (PPS) for 41 years, held the first giveaway of 26 pallets of K-5 math curriculum books. The event was held on Jessup Street between MLK and Garfield. Neighbors pitched in with lemonade and donuts while

children danced to classic soul music as their parents combed through textbooks.

Last year Leonard reached an agreement with PPS to take all the materials that would be recycled under a new book adoption cycle. The only requirement was that she give them away for free.

Leonard spent hours going

through the PPS warehouse collecting texts and shrink wrapping them to give away. It cost her \$400 a month for storage, not including the cost of trucks to move them.

The collection of texts included student and teacher's editions, which she says help par-

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