

## The Oregonian

# Portland Wraps '20 is Plenty' Effort, Eyes More Speed Limit Reductions

*By Andrew Theen  
April 9, 2019*

Crews installed the final 20 mile per hour speed zone sign on a neighborhood street in Southeast Portland on Tuesday, wrapping up a campaign to slow down cars and change the city's driving culture dating back several years.

Last April, Portland formally lowered the speed limit by 5 miles per hour on all of its estimated 3,000 miles of residential streets. Crews removed 25 mile per hour signs citywide on those roads and installed more than 2,100 new signs across town in the past year.

City officials say it's too soon to say what all this work has accomplished, but they hope it's just the beginning in setting a new standard where cities and local governments are in control of setting the majority of local speed limits, not the Oregon Department of Transportation.

"It's really our view, unfortunate, that it requires an act of state government, at the request of the city, to make those smart safety adjustments to our speed limits," Portland Bureau of Transportation Spokesman Dylan Rivera said after crews installed the final sign in a Mill Park neighborhood.

The Legislature in 2017 gave Portland alone the authority to lower its residential speed limits from 25 to 20 miles per hour. Senate Bill 558, currently under consideration in the Legislature, would give all Oregon cities that power.

Portland handed out an estimated 7,000 orange "20 is plenty signs" to residents the past year, an effect Rivera said is hard to measure.

"We certainly have seen more awareness on the part of the public that everyone needs to slow down," Rivera said. The effort is part of the broader Vision Zero campaign, which seeks to eliminate traffic fatalities in the city by 2025.

But enforcing those speed limits remains a challenge. The Portland Police Bureau continues to struggle to fill vacancies and recruit new cadets, and traffic enforcement is conducted on a triaged approach, Rivera said.

Cops are focusing on high-crash corridors, those major streets like 122nd Avenue that see the greatest number of serious injuries or fatalities. Enforcing speed limits on neighborhood streets is "a challenge," Rivera conceded, but Portland does have expanded authority from the Legislature to install speed cameras in town, he noted. A separate bill, Senate Bill 560, would give other Oregon cities authority to install speed radar cameras.

In a letter to the Joint Transportation Committee, Sherwood Mayor Keith Mays said speeding through residential neighborhoods is the most common complaint received by local law enforcement officers.

"Many of these residential streets are near our schools with significant pedestrian traffic during rush hour in the mornings," he wrote in testimony to the committee. "Recent trends to narrow residential streets to reduce long term street maintenance costs and increase density have made it more difficult to see and avoid pedestrians."

Matt Rodrigues, city engineer for Eugene, said nearly one in three fatal or serious crashes in that city occurred on streets with speed limits of either 25 or 30 miles per hour.

“We know that speed is the most critical factor,” he wrote to lawmakers, “in whether a crash occurs and how severe the outcomes of a crash are.”

According to a University of Chicago research institute’s poll of 2,000 U.S. residents released Monday, 60 percent of respondents supportive using speed and red-light cameras as an automated enforcement tool. Sixty-nine percent of those polled said they would support lowering a speed limit by 5 miles per hour if it was justified with crash data.

A separate bill, House Bill 3702, would give Portland the ability to designate certain speed limits on arterials and other major roads. The state transportation department said it is not taking a position on the legislation, but it is comfortable with the proposal.

The transportation department is already planning to revisit its rules for how and when it approves speed limit changes, part of a national effort to give greater consideration to issues like housing or commercial business density, the presence of pedestrians and bicyclists and other factors when setting speed limits. Current regulations larger center on measuring existing travel speeds and giving weight to how fast travelers go in free-flow conditions, which city officials say can favor speeding and higher speed limits.

ODOT has indicated that approach may not work in cities like Portland or Eugene.

In a November letter to state officials, Portland and Eugene leaders said Oregon should be looking at what countries like the Netherlands and Sweden are doing. “We believe that a more context-sensitive approach that emphasizes safety for vulnerable road users will lead to safer outcomes on streets in urban areas,” they wrote.

Thirty-four people died on Portland streets in 2018, down from 45 the previous year.

## **TriMet Gets \$87.4 Million Federal Blessing for Division Street Transit Project**

*By Andrew Theen  
May 9, 2019*

TriMet’s plan to overhaul and expand bus service between Portland and Gresham along a 15-mile stretch of Division Street is one step closer to reality Tuesday after the agency was recommended to receive a \$87.4 million federal grant.

The Federal Transit Administration announced its expected Capital Investment Grant recipients in a news release on Tuesday. The Division project is one of five new projects recommended to receive federal money. Another 11 existing developments also were recommended to receive government support. All told, the FTA is expected to distribute \$1.36 billion in federal funds this year.

“These significant investments will strengthen our country’s transit infrastructure and improve mobility for those who depend upon public transit every day,” U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao said in a statement. TriMet must still submit a formal application, but the recommendations are a key blessing from federal officials.

Roberta Altstadt, TriMet’s spokeswoman, said the agency was “thrilled” by the announcement. The estimated \$175 million Division project was contingent on the \$87.4 million in federal

grants as it represented the biggest slice of the funding pie. TriMet will contribute \$40.5 million, and another \$26.5 million in federal dollars directed to the region will go toward the project. Portland in 2018 committed to spending \$17.7 million on the route. Gresham, Metro, Multnomah County and the state also contributed.

“The funding provides a tremendous step in the regional efforts to bring faster and more reliable transit service to the east Portland/Gresham area,” Altstadt said in a statement. “We thank the Federal Transit Administration and our congressional delegates for their continued support of transit as we work to connect people to opportunities the region.”

TriMet plans to break ground on its Division Transit Project late this year and open the line by 2022.

The bus route will include expanded bus stations and covered areas to accommodate the longer buses and additional riders, and signal priority for buses to speed up routes and ideally get passengers where they want to go more quickly.

Planners expect the route may slash travel times by as much as 20 percent, but the buses won't operate in bus only lanes. The bus will run along the transit mall downtown, over the Tilikum Crossing and through southeast neighborhoods in Portland and Gresham until terminating at the Cleveland Park and Ride facility.

The project has changed considerably through the planning years. It doesn't include service along Powell Boulevard, where it was originally discussed and would have served a poorer and more diverse community. TriMet said that route would actually slow travel times for many riders compared with existing bus service.

And it does not extend to Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham due to the extra project cost, which planners said in 2016 might have made the project less competitive for federal funding.

The 60-foot-long articulated buses are common in the Seattle area and in Vancouver, where C-Tran has one rapid bus line and a second set for completion by 2023.

The buses are expected to run every 15 minutes, or more frequently during rush hours.

The bulk of project costs come from the new buses and specially designed passenger platforms along the 15-mile-route.

The transit changes will occur as Portland also works on its own safety projects on Division Street, such as 13 new signalized pedestrian crossings, nearly five miles of protected bike lanes and 57 new street lights.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **Sources: Fritz Announcement Sparks Speculation**

*By Jim Redden  
April 10, 2019*

**Plus, Peterson seems more supportive of I-5 project than Metro staff and another URM building bites the dust.**

Commissioner Amanda Fritz announced she will not seek reelection in 2020 last week, setting off immediate speculation about who will run for one of the rare open seats on the City Council.

Oregon House Representative Diego Hernandez (D-East Portland) has already expressed interest in serving on the council. Others mentioned in local media accounts include Latino Network Executive Director Carmen Rubio, and Sarah Iannarone, who ran for mayor in 2016 and who has stayed politically active.

Although Fritz will not be on the ballot, she will still play a role in the 2020 election. The public campaign financing program she championed is now taking effect and is currently assigned to her office. It would have been reassigned if she ran for reelection.

Also up for reelection in 2020 is Mayor Ted Wheeler. Although he has not yet announced his plans, he has almost \$70,000 in his campaign account.

Is Metro for or against the Rose Quarter freeway project?

Although Metro staff was critical of the Oregon Department of Transportation's plan for easing the bottleneck caused by the intersections of I-5 and I-84 in the Rose Quarter area, President Lynn Peterson struck a much more conciliatory tone in a joint letter with Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler to the Oregon Transportation Commission.

The lengthy staff analysis of the project criticized many aspects of the project and all but accused ODOT of lying when it said the additional on and off ramps were not a "freeway expansion." But in their April 4 letter, Peterson and Wheeler said, "Interstate 5 is a critical economic artery for the Portland region and the entire West Coast" that needs improvements in the Rose Quarter area.

The estimated \$500 million project is intended to reduce congestion and improve safety in the Rose Quarter area, and to encourage redevelopment by capping the freeways and creating bike and pedestrian connections over them. Peterson and Wheeler urge ODOT to provide stronger connections over the freeway that can accommodate redevelopment projects. They cite the truss-hung retail space on the Interstate 80 cap in Reno and Margaret Hance Park above Interstate 10 in Phoenix as two examples.

URM standards claim a building

The high cost of bringing unreinforced masonry buildings up to current earthquake standards is a factor a controversial redevelopment project in Southeast Portland.

As reported by our sister publication the Business Tribune, the owner of the building that houses The Joinery furniture manufacturing business has sold it to a private developer for a five story, 178-unit apartment building. Neighbors call the project "insane." But Jon Blumenauer said the owner of The Joinery had previously declined to buy the building from him.

"He pointed out that the current Joinery building is unreinforced masonry and likely would be very expensive to remodel to the city's new earthquake preparedness standards," the Business Tribune reported Blumenauer as saying.

The council has postponed requiring URM building owner to post earthquake warning signs while it researches financial incentives to help them pay to upgrade them.

## **20 is Plenty: 2,000 New Speed Signs Installed in Portland**

*By Zane Sparling  
April 09, 2019*

Bills before state legislature would allow every city to lower residential speeds, not just Portland  
Safe and slow is the way to go.

That's the message from the Portland Bureau of Transportation as it passed another milestone: Installation of the final marker in a series of 2,000 new 20 MPH speed limit signs now blanketing roughly 70 percent of city roadways.

It's a finish line for the slow-down project approved by Portland City Hall in January, 2018 — and the beginning of a new legislative push to allow other municipalities to shift residential street speeds into lower gear.

"Everyone knows this is not a state highway," said PBOT's Dylan Rivera, pointing to the new sign on Southeast Salmon Street near 122nd Avenue on Tuesday, April 9. "Yet historically, we've had to request state permission to adjust the speed limit on these city streets."

A 2017 law sponsored by state Rep. Rob Nosse, D-Portland, gave solely the Rose City the power to bump residential speed limits down 5 mph without making a request to the Oregon Department of Transportation.

In all other cases, local officials must make a formal plea to the Oregon Department of Transportation, whose managers and traffic engineers decide to grant or reject the request.

Rivera said the city has a few requests currently before ODOT, which takes anywhere between several months to several years to issue a decision. A city proposal to lower the speed limit on West Burnside Road where it crosses the Wildwood Trail was denied, for instance, due to concerns regarding the number of lanes and volume of traffic.

A bill being mulled by the state Senate this session would allow any city in Oregon to lower residential speed limits by 5 mph. Rep. Nosse has introduced a related bill that would allow Portland to set the speed limit on any street, not just those in leafy neighborhoods.

"Roads were not designed for the density of people now living in east Portland — they are too wide and vehicles move too fast," said Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson, in written testimony to lawmaker's joint transportation committee.

"Residents have told us that high speeds on residential streets are a top barrier to walking," added Chris Warner, PBOT's interim director.

Previously, Portland only had less than 1,000 speed limit signs posted in residential areas. PBOT also distributed about 7,000 orange "20 is plenty" yard signs.

# Your City Hall: Feedback Invited on Rental Reforms

*By Jim Redden  
April 09, 2019*

**There is still time to let the City Council know how you feel about the proposed renter reforms before the scheduled April 25 vote.**

What is happening? Portlanders can still tell the City Council what they think of the rental reforms proposed by Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, which were first heard last week. Although the council received about six hours of invited and public testimony over two days, the vote is not scheduled until April 25. The vote could be delayed if amendments are offered.

What will the proposed reforms do? New requirements range from the treatment of applicants with criminal histories to identification and income requirements, to restrictions on charging and refunding security deposits.

Few other cities have gone so far. They follow previous reforms requiring landlords to pay moving expenses for some tenants.

Major changes include requiring landlords to accept rental applications from people with criminal records and justify not renting to them in some circumstances. Landlords also would be required to accept nongovernmental identification from applicants. Changes also would set rules for how much can be charged for security deposits and how much can be withheld.

Why are the proposed reforms controversial? Supporters say they are needed to allow more people to have access to housing, especially those with low incomes and people of color who have been historically discriminated against. Backers who testified in favor included renters, tenant advocacy organizations, affordable housing advocates, and two landlords.

"We must do the best we can to address the damages of racisms, other-isms, and socioeconomic inequality today as people are barred from housing access today, in a crisis," said Katrina Holland, the executive director of the Community Alliance of Tenants.

Opponents say the proposed reforms are unnecessary, too restrictive, overly complicated, and will have unintended consequences, including increasing rents to pay for complying with them and discouraging the construction of more rental housing. Opponents who testified included landlords, landlord organizations, and housing developers.

"We support the goal of increasing access to rental housing for all Oregonians. However, complicated policies will result in disinvestment of rental properties rather than finding ways to increase supply. ... If we do not have investment in the city to put more units on the market, regulation of housing providers won't solve those issues," said Deborah Imse, executive director of Multifamily NW, which represents market rate multifamily housing providers.

What can I do? The proposed reforms are lengthy and complex. You can find them and supporting documents here,

To connect with reform supporters, contact the Community Alliance of Tenants at [www.oregoncat.org](http://www.oregoncat.org). To connect with opponents, contact Mulyfamily NW at [www.multifamilynw.org](http://www.multifamilynw.org).

# Hardesty Offers Support for Residential Infill Project

*By Bill Gallagher  
April 09, 2019*

'Agrees to disagree' on a variety of issues as she meets with local residents for two hours.

Hours after the Portland Planning Commission had narrowly approved a controversial zoning overhaul, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty told a mostly disappointed audience of 70 Multnomah residents she supports it.

The Residential Infill Program, or RIP as it's known, would allow up to four units on a lot currently zoned for one single-family home and limit the size of new homes, among other major changes in Portland's zoning regulations meant to increase density citywide.

The Multnomah Neighborhood Association, which hosted Hardesty on Wednesday, March 12, has been a consistent and persistent critic of RIP. Hardesty has been a supporter.

This was her first appearance at any neighborhood association meeting since being sworn in on Jan. 2. There are 95 such associations in Portland.

Hardesty spent most of the nearly two-hour session with the association defending RIP. More than once she said, "I respectfully disagree," and, "We'll have to agree to disagree."

"Let's talk about the elephant in the room. Our population grew by 45,000 last year and by 45,000 the year before that and it's going to grow by 45,000 this year," she said. "We will have to change. Every single neighborhood will change. More infrastructure will be built and that's good. More people will be living closer together and some people think that's bad . . . People will continue to move here, so how does the city change? It changes so people at every income level can live wherever they want to."

Addressing new concerns about the number of low-income residents who could lose their homes as a result of RIP, Hardesty said, "There are questions, for sure. But the Council won't consider this until July, or, more likely, September or October. So we have time to do it right."

Portland's Planning and Sustainability Commission voted 5-4 earlier the same day to approve RIP and send it to the City Council for a final vote. Hardesty assured audience members concerned about the impact of RIP on Multnomah that there would, "probably be a couple of Council work sessions before we have a public hearing."

"I support the infill project but not a cookie cutter approach. We need housing at every income level in the West Hills, in East Portland and North Portland and in every corner of the city," she said. Later, she added, "Southwest will have to have more housing. The devil's in the details."

[Click here](#) to read the rest of the story in the Southwest Community Connection.

## Willamette Week

# The Portland Police Bureau Needs Officers. It Squandered Two Dozen of Them.

*By Katie Shepherd  
April 10, 2019*

**Reserve officers performed work that helped free up full-time cops to respond to high-priority calls faster.**

The Portland Police Bureau quietly lost 24 reserve officers after disbanding the Reserve Unit last summer. That dissolution, which was never reported until now, means two-dozen fewer officers who can assist the nearly 1,000 sworn officers of the Police Bureau, which faces a staffing crisis.

Most reserve officers are sworn police who can respond to calls, but they volunteer their time. Some are retired officers, while others are community members who have an interest in police work.

"We thought we were the pinnacle of community policing," says Tim Bailey, a former reserve officer. "Here we are, community members volunteering our time. If you're talking about an organization that touts itself as a community policing organization, which obviously Portland does, it seemed disingenuous to me."

Like many of the reserve officers, Bailey now volunteers with the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office. The Police Bureau has pledged that new community service officers will replace some of the services the reserves provided, but those hires have hit multiple roadblocks and delays.

Reserve officers performed work that helped free up full-time cops to respond to high-priority calls faster. Many had full police authority. That allowed reserve officers to step in and assist in many scenarios. Reserve officers helped provide support in January 2017, during the Inauguration Day protests and the Women's March.

The unit also served as a pathway to full-time employment, because reserve officers complete the same background check process as full-time cops. A reserve officer could work 500 hours to qualify for full-time employment even if he did not meet the four-year college degree requirement, which broadened bureau's recruitment pool.

"They [were] down 120 positions," says Bailey. "And here's this body of individuals who are backgrounded, qualified, on the ground carrying guns, responding to calls, acting as police officers. It made zero sense that an organization like that would not pay attention to that resource."

Assistant Chief Chris Davis says he understands the disappointment former reserve officers feel, but the task of training the unit to the level required by the U.S. Department of Justice settlement agreement proved too difficult for the bureau's training division. The training division determined it would take months to bring the unit into compliance, and coordinating that training for volunteer officers would be a challenge.

"They feel like we didn't really value their contribution," he says. "Nothing is further from the truth. I have a lot of respect for someone willing to make the commitment to do this work."

## **What Went Wrong**

The Police Bureau lost its reserve officers because it failed to implement a training program to bring the Reserve Unit into compliance with the U.S. Department of Justice settlement agreement requirements.

"We gave them multiple solutions," says former Reserve Unit Commander Robert Ball. "It was a failure of leadership from not only the chief's office but also the mayor's office."

Here's how the opportunity was lost—along with the reserves.

### **December 2017**

Chief Danielle Outlaw assured the Reserve Unit that it had the bureau's support at its annual banquet. One week later, the Police Bureau removed all reserve officers from performing official police duties.

### **January 2018**

Leaders in the Reserve Unit say they offered the bureau potential solutions to get reserve officers up to date on DOJ-required training. The nonprofit foundation that supports reserve officers offered to provide \$100,000 for training.

The bureau's training division began working, slowly, on a separate plan. Assistant Chief Chris Davis says he remembers the Reserve Unit asking for training, but the training division struggled to develop a plan while simultaneously working on other priorities in the bureau.

### **March 2018**

After several months, the bureau still had no plan in place to bring reserve officers back on duty. The reserve commander, Robert Ball, wrote a letter appealing directly to Outlaw to save the program and resigned his position. In June, Multnomah County Sheriff Mike Reese said the county would happily take reserve officers.

### **July 2018**

The last officers in the Reserve Unit quit. One officer was hired as a full-time cop at the bureau. About 18 others joined the newly developed Reserve Unit at the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, where they were given patrol cars and a boat to do much of the same work as deputies.

## **What Now?**

The Police Bureau is severely understaffed, with 120 sworn positions unfilled and retirements outpacing new hires. Many factors are complicating hiring new officers. Police union president Daryl Turner says the heart of the staffing shortage is "intense anti-police sentiment in our city that City Council seems to share." But there are other problems, such as time-consuming background checks and training that can make the hiring process last nearly a year. Here are two other factors keeping the bureau understaffed.

### **Delays in Hiring Public Safety Support Specialists**

In 2017, Mayor Ted Wheeler allocated more than \$1 million to a new program for community service officers, later rechristened public safety support specialists, or PS3s. They are unarmed support staff who can augment the duties of sworn officers, freeing up cops to respond to high-priority calls faster. Nearly two years passed before the city and union negotiated an agreement on what those new hires would do, wear and carry. Assistant Chief Chris Davis says only three applicants have successfully passed a background check, but one of those applicants accepted a

job at another police agency. Davis says he expects the first PS3 class to be hired by late summer.

### **Neighboring Counties Have Pulled Support**

Washington County Sheriff Patrick Garrett wrote a memo in February saying his deputies would no longer respond to Portland Police Bureau calls for assistance. The memo, first reported by KPTV FOX 12, blamed the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office for taking all officer-involved shootings to grand juries for review. The Clackamas County sheriff is considering a similar stance because if deputies are involved in a use-of-force incident in Portland, they could be personally liable for financial damages. The controversial move to restrict assistance on calls leaves Portland police with less support on the streets.

## **Portland's Infrastructure Has Fallen Behind its Reputation as a Bike Town. Here's How the City Is Attempting to Change That.**

*By Rachel Monahan  
April 10, 2019*

**Two places that there's a priority on getting around by bike and on foot ahead of cars.**

### **Sullivan's Crossing**

In August, the city begins construction of a bike bridge that transportation leaders say will become a new symbolic entrance to Portland.

The \$13 million project, for both biking and walking, will connect the Lloyd District to Southeast and knit together the inner eastside.

But the project will be more than that.

"It's going to really be a postcard-worthy bridge that marks a key entrance to Portland," says Portland Bureau of Transportation spokesman Dylan Rivera. "As people arrive in the city and either drive or take light rail, one of the first times they'll see the downtown skyline, that view will be framed by the new, modern Sullivan's Crossing bridge over Interstate 84. We think it will have the potential to be an additional beloved bridge."

It's a sizable investment for the city, and one of two that place a priority on getting around by bike and on foot ahead of cars.

The hope for Sullivan's Crossing is that the bridge will make enjoyable what is currently a harrowing journey for cyclists. And it will depend on the city's plans for connecting Northeast and Southeast that are already underway.

In the event of an earthquake, the bridge will also have an added benefit—it can handle emergency vehicles. The other overpasses were built before the current seismic standards, says PBOT.

### **The Network**

Portland is in the process of transforming its bike paths.

As of last year, there were just 5 miles of bike lanes where cyclists could ride along Portland streets physically protected from cars. By the end of the next five years, the city expects to have more than six times that number, with 29 new miles planned.

As the map shows, the most dramatic changes are happening in East Portland and the central city. The projects funded include not just protected bike lanes but greenways and other bike lanes as well as projects to help buses move more quickly and keep people walking through Portland safe.

While Portland has catching up to do to maintain its reputation as a bike town, one key statistic shows the city is willing to build for bikes—the central city will lose 1,000 parking spaces to make way for bike and bus improvements.

### **Flanders Crossing**

In Northwest, Flanders Crossing is designed to ensure that cyclists have a straight path from the river to Northwest Portland.

The \$6 million Flanders Crossing over Interstate 405 will be the "linchpin," says PBOT's Rivera.

"That will mean there's a direct route through the heart of downtown," he says. "The Pearl and Northwest Portland have the highest housing density in all of Oregon and possibly the Northwest. That community is built for biking."

## **Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler Criticized for a Racist Double Standard in Scolding City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty**

*By Rachel Monahan  
April 9, 2019*

**"Mayor Wheeler acted out the age-old custom of powerful men making an example of black people who are deemed to have stepped out of line, particularly when white female sensibilities are the perceived victim."**

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler called for civility last week in a City Council hearing—but this time his remarks were aimed at a colleague and not at unruly protesters who sometimes disrupt hearings.

"I want to put a marker down. When people come here and testify, they deserve to be treated with respect," Wheeler said on April 3. "I said that right upfront. I don't care if people are for this or if they are against it."

Though he did not mention City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, she had just finished challenging a real-estate management company representative on proposed tenant protections. The woman later left the Council chambers in tears, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported.

Hardesty at that moment asked if her question was disrespectful, receiving no answer. The next day after testimony from the public, Hardesty defended herself.

"I'll take this opportunity to address the perception that asking direct questions is somehow bullying people," said Hardesty. "I asked very specific questions and I expect people to be very specific in their answers, and I have been a policymaker and activist long enough to know when people are evading my question. And I do not appreciate being called a bully. I do not like

bullies. And I do not tolerate bullying behavior. However, I am an African American woman who speaks directly, and I will continue to do so. And I will not be silenced. "

On April 8, the Urban League of Portland issued a statement saying Hardesty "conducted herself with all due propriety and consideration for her duties as a public official."

The statement questioned why the mayor had singled out Hardesty, when Commissioner Chloe Eudaly had challenged a panelist earlier in the day, and why Wheeler did not step in the next day when members of the public "repeatedly disrespected and denigrated" Hardesty.

"Some have tried to sweep the racial subtext of this exchange to the side," the statement reads. "Mayor Wheeler acted out the age-old custom of powerful men making an example of black people who are deemed to have stepped out of line, particularly when white female sensibilities are the perceived victim."

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Portland) took to Facebook to agree with the Urban League's support for Hardesty.

"Having served on the Portland City Council, I know that part of the job is asking questions and engaging in discourse with Portlanders. From my vantage point, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty was doing her job and doing it well," he posted.

The mayor's office issued a statement that did not express regret or apologize.

"The Mayor acknowledges the criticism from the Urban League and will continue to consider race and gender dynamics as he manages council meetings," says Wheeler spokeswoman Eileen Park. "He will also continue to enforce the rules of order and decorum so that the public, city staff, and council members will all feel welcome, safe, and heard."

## **The Only Way to Save Interstate 5 in the Rose Quarter May Be to Bury It**

*By Rachel Monahan  
April 10, 2019*

**Local officials have quietly thrown their weight behind a plan to build a new neighborhood above the highway.**

For the past month, a debate has raged over whether to widen Interstate 5 at the Rose Quarter.

In the past week, another idea has taken hold: Bury it.

It's an old idea, resurrected. For more than two decades, a succession of Portland politicians has pledged to build residential and shopping districts above the interstate highways that cut through downtown and remain monuments to a car-loving era.

But those promises ran head-on into the huge public expenditure needed to fulfill them.

This time may be different, because capping the highway could provide a route around the gridlock that has stalled the I-5 Rose Quarter project after criticism from a broad coalition of Portland leaders and activists

Concerns about widening I-5 in the Rose Quarter—which would add a continuous third lane in each direction from I-405 to I-84—have mounted as a comment period on the project ended April 1.

So last week, local elected officials quietly threw their weight behind a alternative: making the highway literally disappear when it reaches the Rose Quarter.

"Whatever happens in the Rose Quarter, it must account for the history of the construction of Interstate 5, take meaningful steps to repair the damage that construction caused and offer environmental, social and economic justice to Portland's Black community," Mayor Ted Wheeler and Metro President Lynn Peterson wrote in an April 4 letter to the chairwoman of the Oregon Transportation Commission, which guides state policy on highways.

That letter, first reported April 5 by WW, is carefully worded. But it lends the support of elected officials to a project called Albina Vision—which would cap Interstate 5, then build a new neighborhood on top of the highway.

Early last month, Raihana Ansary, the governor's representative to the Portland Freight Committee, identified Albina Vision as a way to move the project forward. "ODOT's work with Albina Vision presents opportunity to counter opposition from groups like 'No Freeways,'" the minutes for the March 7 meeting record Ansary as asserting. (The governor's office says the remarks were misconstrued.)

Here's how the pieces fit together.

### **The History**

The dream of burying Portland's highways dates back decades.

In 1998, Mayor Vera Katz announced a vision for capping Interstate 405 as it cuts through the westside of the city.

In 2012, Mayor Sam Adams floated a study to tunnel Interstate 5 under the eastside along the Willamette River.

And two years ago, in his first state of the city address, Wheeler championed a plan to bury I-5 all along the eastside.

Meanwhile, other cities jumped ahead of Portland by burying their interstates.

Seattle just completed a decadelong, \$3.3 billion replacement of an elevated highway. That same route is now a tunnel underneath downtown Seattle.

Peterson and Wheeler's letter cites the examples of "truss-hung retail space on the Interstate 80 cap in Reno, or more robust engineering like Margaret Hance Park above Interstate 10 in Phoenix."

In Portland, a 2005 analysis by a committee led by Nohad Toulon, then dean emeritus of Portland State University's College of Urban Affairs, suggested burying the whole I-5/I-405 loop in a tunnel, at a cost of between \$3.5 billion and \$5.8 billion.

"With land pretty expensive, the caps become pretty interesting," says Patricia Gardner, a former neighborhood association leader in Goose Hollow and the Pearl District who sat on a succession of city committees starting in the '90s to study the idea. "There's no reason why we shouldn't be building over freeway. It bifurcates our city on both sides. It's been done a lot and successfully and around the world."

### **The Opportunity**

The idea of freeway caps is gaining new traction because it could rectify a long-standing racial injustice.

In the 1960s, the construction of I-5 demolished Lower Albina, a black neighborhood that stood in the way.

As the Oregon Department of Transportation weighs how to address community concerns about widening the highway, there's a growing consensus that the project needs to take greater care to undo what the construction of the highway wrought in the first place.

That push is led by local nonprofit Albina Vision Trust, whose chairwoman, Rukaiyah Adams, has become a force behind the scenes in the city's politics and a champion for African American neighborhood restoration.

Albina Vision Trust is looking to create a new, diverse neighborhood over the next half-century that would include housing and a park along the waterfront alongside existing entertainment venues like Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

Adams is championing a cap over the highway as it goes through the Rose Quarter from Northeast Multnomah Street to North Flint Avenue—a nine-block stretch that would link the Lloyd District to Moda Center in one unbroken neighborhood.

The current ODOT plan is much less ambitious. It calls for two smaller highway lids along the same stretch. (It adds a new overpass for bicyclists and pedestrians.)

For a couple of years, Albina Vision has been asking ODOT how much it would cost to build caps over the highway, with no real response. "ODOT has not carried out any significant studies," says spokesman Don Hamilton.

Albina Vision is encouraged by the new support from Wheeler and Peterson, Adams tells WW.

"Portland is special," she says. "What starts out as a discussion about a transportation issue quickly expands into an exchange of ideas about how a modern transportation system can help us realize a better, more sustainable community—that's why we love this place."

### The Cost

The current proposal to add a lane to I-5 and build modest caps over the highway was given roughly \$450 million in funding in the Legislature's 2017 transportation package.

That would pay for a patchwork of highway lids that could support two-story buildings. Albina Vision wants caps that would support six-story buildings, which Adams says are necessary to knit the neighborhood back together.

ODOT says it has not analyzed the cost of such caps. And Gov. Kate Brown's office declines to say whether she supports increased funding for highway lids.

"The governor expects [ODOT] to continue to focus on listening to and understanding Oregonians' views on this project," says Brown spokeswoman Kate Kondayen.

But Peterson, the Metro Council president, expects to go to voters with a multibillion-dollar transportation measure in 2020. That provides an opening for another pot of money.

The Rose Quarter project is included on a preliminary list of projects by a committee advising Metro on the ballot measure.

Peterson tells WW that Metro doesn't typically spend money on interstate highways. "But connections to the interstates are definitely part of the regional conversation," she says. "I'm interested in conversations about using regional resources to help support the health of communities around the Portland region, particularly in areas that have faced historic injustice."

Including highway lids in a ballot measure will require persuading the public. Not everyone will be convinced, even those who support Albina Vision and burying I-5.

"Capping the freeway is never a bad idea because they're unsightly," says architect George Crandall, who has successfully opposed ODOT projects before—but adds it wouldn't win his support for the Rose Quarter project, given climate change. "Expanding freeways is not a good idea. It is counter to everything we should be doing and thinking about."

## **The Portland Mercury**

### **Officer Says He Didn't "Intend" to Break Protester's Nose**

*By Alex Zielinski  
April 9, 2019*

A police use-of-force case stemming from one of the first Portland protests of the Trump era has finally landed before a jury—and its result could set the tone for inevitable police clashes with protesters to come.

Tuesday was the first full day of trial for Margaret Zebroski's case against the City of Portland. Zebroski, a 67-year-old retiree, left a protest on February 20, 2017 in handcuffs after a police officer suspected she was trying to interfere with another protester's arrest. Zebroski says she was only trying to help an elderly friend, who fell down while trying to follow officers' orders. In the process of arresting Zebroski, Portland Police Bureau (PPB) Officer Adi Ramic pressed her head against the street with his knee, breaking her nose in the process.

While the criminal charges against Zebroski were eventually dropped, the physical and emotional suffering incurred by the incident drove her to file a lawsuit against the city for the officer's abuse, asking for \$200,000 in damages.

"Two years later, her nose has healed and her bruises have healed. What hasn't healed is her emotional trauma," said Frank Weiss, Zebroski's lead attorney, during his opening remarks in Multnomah County Circuit Judge Judith Matarazzo's courtroom. "She still participates in protests, but she's very wary about police. Her ability to speak out for what she believes in has been compromised."

This week's trial will determine whether or not Ramic's actions were excessively violent.

Weiss said Ramic's actions go directly against PPB training. Attorneys representing the city, however, defended Ramic's actions in court, saying that Portland's atmosphere of frequent protests following the 2016 Presidential election put extra stress on police.

"Police had a difficult balancing act," said J Scott Moede, the city's attorney, "they were balancing civil rights with public order."

Moede said Zebroski was only injured because she wasn't following police officer instructions. Ramic's recollection of the incident, which seemed to change after viewing videos of the protest, reflected more remorse.

"There was a lot going on that day, it was an unnerving situation," Ramic said in court. "I truly feel bad, I did not intend to hurt her."

Much of the trial has been informed by cell phone videos and photos taken the day of the demonstration, which was held to protest the fatal February 9 shooting of Quanice Hayes, a

Black teenager, by a Portland cop. The clips, taken by police, activists, and journalists (like former Mercury reporter Doug Brown), help jurors piece together the actions leading up to Zebroski's arrest.

Several videos show Zebroski standing in the middle of SW 3rd Ave, holding a "Don't Shoot Portland" banner alongside fellow protesters. Few cars pass the group—the February 20 event aligned with Presidents' Day, accounting for minimal traffic in downtown Portland. Zebroski was part of a bigger group of fifty to sixty protesters that day, some on the sidewalk, others in the street, chanting, "Say his name, Quanicé Hayes" and holding signs.

Not long after, PPB officers made an announcement over a loudspeaker, ordering protesters to clear the road—or face arrest. As defense attorney Moede pointed out Tuesday, Zebroski did not leave.

Asked why, she explained, "I wanted people in our community to know about this," referring to Hayes' death. Zebroski said she "certainly" knew she was at risk of being arrested.

According to Zebroski's testimony, she decided to leave the street when a van of armored police was called to the scene. Zebroski says she was familiar enough with Portland protests to know that when "riot cops" show up, it could get dangerous. In videos, Zebroski's seen stepping back onto the sidewalk.

Zebroski said that's when she saw her 75-year-old friend Beverly Swan topple over while trying to leave the street. "I don't know if they were trying to arrest her or what," Zebroski said during Tuesday's court questioning. "All I know is that my frail friend had been knocked down."

Zebroski then leapt off the sidewalk and rushed to help Swan up. As she reached out to grab Swan, Zebroski said Ramic dragged her away and pinned her lying facedown on the street. In videos, Ramic is seen clearly placing his knee on Zebroski's head.

"I kept saying, 'You're hurting me, you're hurting me,'" Zebroski said in court. She said Ramic forcefully pushed her face into the wet cement, causing her skewed glasses to press up against her nose, fracturing it in the process.

Ramic, however, has a different story. Responding to questions pitched by Michael Willes, another attorney representing Zebroski, Ramic said he believed Zebroski was trying to keep PPB officers from arresting fellow protester David Carlson. He saw her arms reaching out at officers, as if to pull them away from Carlson.

(Zebroski said she was reaching out to pluck Swan from the chaotic crowd, and wasn't aware that Carlson was being arrested nearby.)

That suspicion was enough to convince Ramic that Zebroski needed to be pinned on the ground.

"If it was up to me, I would not use any force against a suspect," said Ramic. "Unfortunately, it's up to the other person how much resistance they give me."

Yet, Ramic said Zebroski did not resist arrest.

Ramic said he intended to place his knee on Zebroski's shoulder, not her head. But, he told Willes, when he turned his body to look over his shoulder—believing there were protesters tapping him on the head and back—he unintentionally put all his weight onto Zebroski's head. Videos show there were no protesters standing behind Ramic at the time.

After seeing videos taken from the protest, Ramic said he sees the incident a bit differently.

“It was a high-stress, chaotic situation,” Ramic said. He said he felt threatened by protesters who were cursing at him and flipping him off.

“Did you see any acts of violence being committed?” Willes asked.

Ramic said he didn’t.

“I believe the worst thing [the protesters] did was stand in the middle of the street and block traffic,” Ramic said.

The trial continues Wednesday morning at 9 am.