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Renewal and Repurpose



PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Victor Merced, executive director of the non-profit Latino community development corporation Hacienda, looks over a block of land at Northeast Cully Boulevard and Killingsworth Street that is slated to turn over to community use thanks to a successful drive to purchase the site from the owners of a string of adult businesses.

Strip club and plaza giving way for community use

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

What was once a rundown corner of northeast Portland's Cully Neighborhood is finally seeing a new chapter.

Earlier this summer, a coalition of local nonprofits and community organizations united to purchase the triangle block of land that for years accommodated the Sugar Shack strip club and other adult business at Northeast Cully Boulevard and Killingsworth Street.

Habitat for Humanity, Hacienda Latino Community Development Corporation, and its non-profit social advocacy arm Verde, have started the transformation of the dilapidated retail block, bringing hope to what many viewed as a blight on the culturally diverse neighborhood.

Hacienda Executive Director Victor Merced says that the coming change is an exciting opportunity.

"We can do so much with this space," he said, "I have high hopes for the families that live here to share

the experience of seeing something change, and having a hand in that."

Hacienda already owns and manages several housing units across Killingsworth Street from the Cully site and in the surrounding neighborhood, serving many low income, minority and other disadvantaged residents.

Tony DeFalco of Living Cully Plaza, the formal name for the coalition representing the new mixed ownership of the Cully property, explained that it's still unclear what exactly will

be in the space, but that it will address the needs of neighborhood.

"The community has worked really hard to make this a reality over 20 years," he said. After acquiring the property, all he could say for sure was that they wanted to let the community know they were welcome to celebrate the upcoming changes. That point was made as group of Hacienda resident children arrived at the plaza last week with paints and art supplies.

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