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PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Now retired from the public and private sectors, Zari Santner and Michael Alexander are building momentum as volunteers and advocates for a plan to return the Rose Quarter area into a fully functioning, diverse neighborhood, keeping the sports and entertainment venues that now dominate the landscape, but adding new residential and business-centered blocks on existing tracks of publicly-owned land.

## New non-profit offers plan for Rose Quarter

BY DANNY PETERSON  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Momentum is growing for a plan to re-make 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.

The Rose Quarter is home to the Moda Center, Veteran's Memorial Coliseum, Interstate 5 and parking garages. Visitors to the area are typically there for 1 or 2 hours to catch an event and then leave, but the land used to be a contiguous part of north and northeast Portland's street grid system where folks lived, worked and played. The

# Albina Visionaries

new non-profit group Albina Vision wants to make it a community again.

Former Portland Parks Bureau Director Zari Santner and former Urban League of Portland director Michael Alexander are the visionaries behind the idea. They have been friends for over 10 years and worked together when Alexander served as a Parks board member. Now retired, they helped form the Albina Vision organization as civilians. The group's aim is to have a community driven plan that determines the future development of the Rose Quarter area

for the next 50 to 60 years.

"We want the community to know about it. We want the community to, if they believe us, to join us to really be part of this happening. That's what it takes," Santner told the Portland Observer.

Albina Vision has created renderings of what the Rose Quarter development could look like. The supporters hope to bring the area back to a more neighborhood-friendly place that can house community gathering spaces, affordable housing, and local businesses.

A new waterfront park could resem-

ble Tom McCall Waterfront Park, located across the Willamette River from the Rose Quarter.

"We want this place to be truly inclusive, integrated, livable community, and affordable community," Santner said.

Though the current renderings of the area are only ideas, Santner and Alexander said they've been met with a lot of support from community members and have so far gotten the ear of Mayor Ted Wheeler and the city council.

Before urban renewal and the neighborhood razing actions of the 1960s and 1970s, the Rose Quarter was home to residences, shops, and community gathering spaces. It was the historical neighborhood for African American residents and immigrants.

Santner said the intent of Albina Vision is to resurrect a fully functioning neighborhood again so that North and Northeast Broadway Avenue once again can become

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