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Construction Comeback Revives Stalled Portland Housing Projects

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Two large-scale housing developments in Portland's Albina neighborhood are back on track after a sudden construction halt, thanks to the determination of industry veterans and a coordinated rebuilding effort led by private developers.

The closure of Seabold Construction in 2023 left the Zeal Lofts and Fargo Apartments multifamily projects totaling over 300 units, sitting unfinished for more than a year. Millions

of dollars' worth of equipment were locked in an underground garage, while the buildings were left largely unprotected behind chain-link fences in an area already grappling with high crime and homelessness.

Nathan Weide, a seasoned construction superintendent initially hired by Seabold, took it upon himself to lead a revival. Teaming up with the Seattle-based developer Vibrant Cities, Weide contacted all subcontractors involved, asking what they were owed and whether they were still willing to return. Although some declined, many came back. Over several months, Weide worked to clear liens and restore order.

To formalize the restart, Vibrant Cities established a limited liability company (LLC) named Solterra Strata to oversee construction. The company declined to comment on the project due to ongoing litigation. However, Weide was retained as general superintendent, and key members of the former team, including assistant superintendents Mark Staley and Jesse Hiellig, also returned to help finish the job. Additional roles were filled by others from the original crew, including fire-stop technician Austin Weide and bilingual foreman Judy Parish.

Daily on-site coordination meetings, led by Weide and Staley, kept the work moving forward efficiently, despite initial resistance. The effort proved instrumental in regaining lost time.

"We had a good team put together," Weide told local press, crediting collaboration for keeping the project alive. "That helped speed up the project right there."

Security remained a significant concern throughout. Construction resumed amid regular nearby shootings, and the project continued despite the sound of frequent police and ambulance sirens. Weide rehired a security contractor to help maintain order.

The Zeal Lofts will include 215 units, while the Fargo Apartments will add another 102. Designed by Jackson | Main Architecture of Seattle, both developments originally broke ground in October 2021. Now, after a year of uncertainty, these projects offer a hopeful sign of stability and housing growth in a part of the city that has faced steep challenges.