

Portland City Council Agenda Written Testimony
Document Number 2025-209

	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
1	Heather Heatlie	Oppose	At a time when the budget is considering cutting parks, jobs and other essential services, funding small businesses is irresponsible. Small businesses do not provide good or stable employment. Prosper Portland should not receive funding as a private and undemocratic institution while the city cuts services	No	05/18/25 8:42 AM
2	Erica Baldwin Jackson, Microenterprise Services of Oregon		I am strongly concerned and opposed to the proposed budget cuts that would severely impact Prosper Portland's funding and its ability to support vital community services. During a time where people often struggle for months at a time to find stable employment through conventional means, the availability of small business and employment support is absolutely crucial. The proposed funding cuts will severely limit the scope of all assistance that Prosper Portland provides, including and specifically targeting the Office of Small Business, the Inclusive Business Resource Network, as well as the management of affordable housing developments and workforce training programs. It will dismantle essential provider networks, and eliminate already scarce grant opportunities. This reduction demonstrates a disconnect from the realities of our local economy and the needs of the diverse communities served through this vital organization. I encourage you to witness the tangible impact of Prosper Portland's work firsthand by engaging with their partners and clients; is imperative that decisions regarding Prosper Portland's budget are rooted in a thorough understanding of their actual work and its benefits to our community. Without this understanding, proposed reductions risk undermining vital support systems for local businesses and hindering our city's equitable development goals. I urge you to retain Prosper Portland's funding through a General Fund allocation to ensure the continuation of these valuable programs, which are essential for achieving our city's equitable development goals.	No	05/18/25 10:36 PM
3	Oregon Media Lab	Support with changes	Prosper Portland has been a pivotal funder for Doc Camp, https://www.oregonmedialab.com/doc-camp , an event that has provided training and support for hundreds of documentary filmmakers in Oregon and beyond. Without Prosper Portland's support, our program will not be able to continue.	Yes	05/19/25 9:38 AM
4	Dwayne Johnson	Support with changes	I support moving forward with the FY 2025-26 Prosper Portland budget because it preserves core citywide economic development programs and reflects extensive community input. However, with a \$3.7M (26%) General Fund reduction only partially backfilled for one year, there is significant risk to workforce and small business support after FY 2025-26. The Strategic Investment Fund is a financial engine designed for long-term returns and should not be used for short-term backfill. I urge a phased, community-driven approach to further changes, with a clear plan for a new structure and measurable reforms for the next budget cycle. This will help maintain critical services while addressing the need for greater transparency, accountability, and sustainability.	Yes	05/19/25 8:12 PM

DOC CAMP



April 11 - 12 Portland, OR

Join us for our 2-day gathering of documentary filmmakers to learn, share and build community



ILYA CHAIKEN

REGISTER NOW



MARIA MORENO



COURTNEY HERMANN

**Pretty Ugly:
The Story of the Lunachicks**
A Screening & Case Study

**Get Feedback on Your
Work-in-Progress**
Only 6 Spots Open



JAMIE DOBIE

REAL TALK
**Funding in the Current
Documentary
Landscape**
A Panel via Zoom



KELSEY KOENIG



LAILANIE GADIA

**In-depth, practical
knowledge on fundraising
from grass roots to
contacting foundations.**



SARAH WAINIO

QUESTIONS? CHECK WITH JEN@OREGONMEDIALAB.COM

Page intentionally blank to separate written testimony attachments

Prosper Portland FY 2025-26 Budget Testimony
Written Testimony for the Prosper Portland Budget Committee
May 21, 2025

From: Dwayne Johnson, NE Portland

Affiliations: Oregon Innovation Foundation, InfraCenters, Greater Portland Economic Development District Board

Expertise: Innovation, social impact, economic development, community engagement, ecosystem building

Mayor Wilson, Chair, Commissioners, and Staff:

Thank you for your work on this year's Prosper Portland budget. I want to support the Committee in moving this budget forward while ensuring critical changes are made thoughtfully and strategically.

Key Points & Recommendations:

- **The FY 2025-26 budget reflects broad community input and strategic alignment with Advance Portland.** The Community Budget Committee met four times, and the budget prioritizes inclusive economic growth, BIPOC entrepreneurship, workforce, and neighborhood business support.
- **General Fund support is already being reduced by \$3.7M (26%), with \$2M of that only backfilled for one year.** If not renewed, this will force deep cuts to the workforce and small business support in FY 2026-27, threatening core programs.
- **The Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) is a financial engine, not just a reserve.** It provides working capital to businesses that banks won't support, makes loans to traded-sector companies, and fills capital gaps for workforce housing. SIF is designed to generate returns and reduce future dependence on the general fund. Using it for short-term operational backfill will worsen the structural deficit and undermine the Financial Sustainability Plan.
- **Prosper Portland's General Fund programs are not peripheral.** They are the city's primary tools for inclusive economic growth: small business grants, job training, youth employment, industry retention, international trade, and community-led development. Removing them would undermine the economic mobility and climate-aligned industry expansion that Portland needs.
- **Change is necessary, but it must be phased and community-driven.** The agency must continue to improve transparency, accountability, and alignment with community priorities. However, abrupt funding elimination would destabilize critical programs and partnerships.
- **Set a clear goal:** By the next full budget session, Prosper Portland should have a new structure and approach in place, shaped by community input, with district-level advisory groups, and focused on measurable results.

Action Requested:

- Approve the proposed budget as a necessary step to maintain core programs and citywide economic development capacity.
- Direct Prosper Portland to work with community partners, the CBC, and district advisory groups over the next year to design and implement reforms, with measurable milestones and a new structure ready for the next budget cycle.

Thank you for your service and commitment to a stronger, more inclusive Portland.

Dwayne Johnson
NE Portland (District 2)

Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
Anonymous	Oppose	<p>I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed amendment by Councilors Dunphy and Green to eliminate \$11 million in General Fund support for Prosper Portland in the 2025–2026 fiscal year. This cut threatens the very foundation of Portland’s economic development efforts and would severely hinder the progress we’ve made in supporting local businesses.</p> <p>In my work, I regularly speak with businesses across Portland—small businesses, traded-sector companies, and startups alike—and I’ve seen the significant impact Prosper Portland has had in helping them grow, stay competitive, and remain rooted in our city. Through technical assistance, access to financial resources, marketing support, and workforce development, Prosper Portland has provided a vital lifeline to hundreds of companies navigating a challenging economic environment.</p> <p>These aren’t just abstract programs; they have helped real companies—like Daimler, Jaguar Land Rover’s Engineering Hub, Hot Mama Salsa, and McTavish Shortbread—expand their operations and create good-paying jobs for Portlanders. Many of these businesses have said clearly that without Prosper Portland’s support, they would have considered relocating to other states that aggressively recruit employers. Portland cannot afford to lose these businesses—not just for the jobs they provide, but for the stability they bring to our tax base and our community.</p> <p>I understand that budget cuts may be necessary, but targeting economic development at a time when Portland is already struggling to retain and attract businesses is short-sighted. Cutting this funding risks setting off a domino effect of job losses, business closures, and shrinking revenues—a doom loop that becomes harder to reverse the longer it continues.</p> <p>Now is the time to double down on supporting our business community, not pull the rug out from under them. I urge you to reject this amendment and continue to invest in Prosper Portland’s essential work.</p>	No	05/19/25 11:46 PM

Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
<div>6</div> Mike Vanier, President at OMEP	Support	<p>Dear City of Portland Councilors, May 20, 2025</p> <p>On behalf of the Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP), I am writing to express our strong support for Prosper Portland and urge the preservation of its funding through the General Fund. Recent proposals to reduce or eliminate this funding pose a direct threat to the stability and growth of Portland's manufacturing sector—an economic cornerstone that supports hundreds of businesses and thousands of jobs across the city.</p> <p>OMEP has partnered with Prosper Portland for many years to support small and medium-sized manufacturers—companies that are often too small to access traditional forms of business assistance yet play an outsized role in the health of our local economy. Today, there are 12 active OMEP-led consulting projects with Portland-based manufacturers that are directly supported through Prosper Portland's funding. These are not abstract engagements. These are real businesses—family-owned machine shops, food producers, fabricators, and precision manufacturers—working every day to overcome supply chain disruptions, workforce shortages, operational inefficiencies, and competitive market pressures. Without continued access to Prosper Portland's support, these companies would likely be unable to afford the strategic and operational consulting services that are currently helping them stabilize, grow, and remain rooted in Portland. The consequences would be immediate and far-reaching: fewer local jobs, reduced industrial output, and a weakening of the economic diversity that makes Portland resilient.</p> <p>In just the last four years, Prosper Portland's investment in OMEP-supported manufacturers has delivered measurable and meaningful returns. Nearly 70 manufacturing companies—most employing fewer than 25 people—have received targeted support. Collectively, these businesses have reported more than \$100 million in economic impact, including over \$70 million in retained or increased sales and more than 600 jobs created or retained. These results are not projections—they are based on direct client-reported data. Each dollar invested in these partnerships translates into stronger businesses, higher wages, and a more durable economy.</p> <p>Portland's manufacturing sector is not a relic of the past—it is a vital engine of the city's present and future. These businesses make essential goods, contribute to regional supply chains, invest in innovation, and provide stable, meaningful employment across a wide variety of industries. They are deeply embedded in their communities and form a critical part of the city's identity and economic fabric.</p> <p>Prosper Portland has been instrumental in nurturing this sector. It connects businesses with capital, training, market access, and expert guidance. It supports manufacturers through transitions, expansions, and unforeseen challenges. Without its ongoing involvement, we risk losing momentum, competitiveness, and the trust of companies choosing whether to stay and grow in Portland.</p> <p>OMEP fully supports Prosper Portland and its initiatives. With their partnership, we have been able to make a lasting difference in the lives of business owners, employees, and communities throughout the city. We remain committed to this collaborative work and look forward to continuing to serve Portland's manufacturers together. We strongly urge you to retain Prosper Portland's funding so that it can continue this critical work and ensure a strong and thriving Portland for years to come.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>Mike Vanier OMEP President</p>	Yes	05/20/25 7:35 AM
<div>7</div> Dr. Andrew Mendenhall, Central City Concern			Yes	05/20/25 9:15 AM



Dear City of Portland Councilors,

May 20, 2025

On behalf of the Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP), I am writing to express our strong support for Prosper Portland and urge the preservation of its funding through the General Fund. Recent proposals to reduce or eliminate this funding pose a direct threat to the stability and growth of Portland's manufacturing sector—an economic cornerstone that supports hundreds of businesses and thousands of jobs across the city.

OMEP has partnered with Prosper Portland for many years to support small and medium-sized manufacturers—companies that are often too small to access traditional forms of business assistance yet play an outsized role in the health of our local economy. Today, there are 12 active OMEP-led consulting projects with Portland-based manufacturers that are directly supported through Prosper Portland's funding. These are not abstract engagements. These are real businesses—family-owned machine shops, food producers, fabricators, and precision manufacturers—working every day to overcome supply chain disruptions, workforce shortages, operational inefficiencies, and competitive market pressures.

Without continued access to Prosper Portland's support, these companies would likely be unable to afford the strategic and operational consulting services that are currently helping them stabilize, grow, and remain rooted in Portland. The consequences would be immediate and far-reaching: fewer local jobs, reduced industrial output, and a weakening of the economic diversity that makes Portland resilient.

In just the last four years, Prosper Portland's investment in OMEP-supported manufacturers has delivered measurable and meaningful returns. Nearly 70 manufacturing companies—most employing fewer than 25 people—have received targeted support. Collectively, these businesses have reported more than \$100 million in economic impact, including over \$70 million in retained or increased sales and more than 600 jobs created or retained. These results are not projections—they are based on direct client-reported data. Each dollar invested in these partnerships translates into stronger businesses, higher wages, and a more durable economy.

Portland's manufacturing sector is not a relic of the past—it is a vital engine of the city's present and future. These businesses make essential goods, contribute to regional supply chains, invest in innovation, and provide stable, meaningful employment across a wide variety of industries. They are deeply embedded in their communities and form a critical part of the city's identity and economic fabric.



Prosper Portland has been instrumental in nurturing this sector. It connects businesses with capital, training, market access, and expert guidance. It supports manufacturers through transitions, expansions, and unforeseen challenges. Without its ongoing involvement, we risk losing momentum, competitiveness, and the trust of companies choosing whether to stay and grow in Portland.

OMEP fully supports Prosper Portland and its initiatives. With their partnership, we have been able to make a lasting difference in the lives of business owners, employees, and communities throughout the city. We remain committed to this collaborative work and look forward to continuing to serve Portland's manufacturers together. We strongly urge you to retain Prosper Portland's funding so that it can continue this critical work and ensure a strong and thriving Portland for years to come.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mike Vanier", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Vanier

OMEP President

Page intentionally blank to separate written testimony attachments



May 21, 2025

To: Portland City Council

From: Andy Mendenhall M.D., President and CEO, Central City Concern

RE: Support for Mayor's Proposed Budget and Prosper Portland

Dear Council President Pirtle-Guiney and Members of the Portland City Council,

On behalf of Central City Concern (CCC), thank you for your leadership during this critical budget season. We write in support of Mayor Wilson's proposed budget and respectfully urge the Council to preserve **ongoing funding for Prosper Portland's workforce development programs** as you consider final amendments. These investments are essential to Portland's recovery—and directly support our shared goals of housing stability, economic opportunity, and public safety.

Portland is at a pivotal moment. According to the Oregon Employment Department, Multnomah County is one of only two counties in the state to experience job loss over the past year. In this context, programs that connect Portlanders to living-wage careers are not only vital—they are foundational to long-term recovery and economic resilience.

With support from Prosper Portland—and in partnership with Worksystems—CCC delivers high-impact workforce services through programs such as the Economic Opportunity Program (EOP) and the Community Opportunities and Enhancements Program (COEP). These programs provide individualized coaching, skills training, and direct pipelines into high-demand fields like construction and healthcare. They support Portlanders facing barriers to employment in securing the tools and opportunities they need to thrive.

We are concerned that some proposed amendments could unintentionally destabilize these essential services. One-time funding may provide short-term relief but cannot support the long-term infrastructure needed to sustain and grow these impactful programs. At CCC, we see every day how workforce, housing, and health are interconnected—and why coordinated investments across these areas are essential to lasting solutions.

As you move toward final budget adoption, we respectfully ask that you:

- **Maintain Prosper Portland's ongoing workforce development funding**
- **Avoid shifts from ongoing to one-time resources for Prosper Portland**
- **Protect funding for homelessness services, which are foundational to housing and workforce stability**
- **Support economic development strategies that support job creation and affordable housing production**



CENTRAL CITY CONCERN

HOMES HEALTH JOBS

Workforce development and homelessness services are not isolated expenditures—they are critical components of Portland’s economic and social infrastructure. Portland cannot afford to scale back on these services at such a crucial time.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and your continued partnership in building a stronger, more equitable Portland. CCC stands ready to work with you to advance solutions that create opportunity, reduce homelessness, and support recovery for all Portlanders.

Sincerely,

Andrew Mendenhall MD
President and CEO
Central City Concern

Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
<div>8</div> Rick Turoczy		<p>(This is an abbreviated version of https://siliconflorist.com/2025/05/18/an-opportunity-to-support-an-organization-that-provides-crucial-support-the-portland-startup-community/)</p> <p>Portland City Council members Councilor Mitch Green (District 4) and Councilor Jamie Dunphy (District 1) have brought forward a proposed budget amendment that is designed to eliminate the City of Portland's allocation of General Fund dollars to Prosper Portland, an organization that has provided a significant amount of support for our startup community, our community startup support organizations, and the entrepreneurs building both startups and small businesses in our midst.</p> <p>As I understand it, the crux of the problem is this: The proposed amendment strives to eliminate funding that Prosper Portland receives from the Portland General Fund with direction that Prosper should make up for that shortfall with money from their Strategic Investment Fund (SIF), an instrument designed to help Prosper fund projects — like the Sports Bra — that fall outside of the purview of its function as an Urban Renewal Agency. The issue with that strategy is that the General Fund is an ongoing funding mechanism and the SIF is a one-time fund. And in the world of government financing, when you lose budget from an instrument like the General Fund, it's difficult — if not impossible — to get that money back in future budgets. It's gone.</p> <p>Done beats perfect. Let's continue to iterate.</p> <p>I'm the first to admit that Prosper Portland is far from perfect. I've had the opportunity to work with them in a variety of ways over the past decade or so. It hasn't always been rainbows and unicorns. But we've always managed to find common ground, to work together, to collaborate, to iterate, and to improve on the ways that they're showing up for entrepreneurs and startups in Portland, day in and day out.</p> <p>Many will reference that the move is couched in a call for increased "transparency" and "oversight." And while I agree that additional oversight — by the government and the community as a whole — is welcome and needed, taking this tact to achieve that level of oversight is as hamfisted as it is disingenuous.</p> <p>There is no doubt that we must make difficult decisions to get Portland on track. And those decisions will not be without proposed sacrifice. But these types of changes must be measured and exact. DOGE inspired, all or nothing, hacks at successful and needed programs get us further from the Portland we all want and deserve. Not closer.</p> <p>The Portland I know and love — and at times struggle to tolerate — has been built on a culture of craft, creativity, and curiosity. But most of all, it has been built on collaboration.</p> <p>Our government should be no different.</p> <p>Any "yes" vote on this amendment is a tacit declaration by a city councilor that they do not actually care. It's a vote that demonstrates that they don't care about local entrepreneurs. They don't care about the plight of small business. They don't care about BIPOC business. And they most definitely do not care whether Portland is a city where startups have the support they need to succeed.</p> <p>We can do better. As a community. And I'm ready to do that work. But this is not the way.</p> <p>To close, I'll agree with something that Green and Dunphy shared. "Portland cannot afford another generation of exclusionary policies. The time for transformative change is now." I couldn't agree more. Unfortunately, this amendment ain't it.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and your service to our community.</p>	No	05/20/25 11:32 AM
<div>9</div> Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber	Oppose		Yes	05/20/25 12:14 PM



May 20th, 2025

Portland City Council

Mayor Keith Wilson
Council President Elana Pirtle-Guiney
Council Vice President Tiffany Koyama Lane
Councilor Candace Avalos
Councilor Loretta Smith
Councilor Jamie Dunphy
Councilor Sameer Kanal
Councilor Dan Ryan
Councilor Steve Novick
Councilor Angelita Morillo
Councilor Olivia Clark
Councilor Mitch Green
Councilor Eric Zimmerman

Dear Council President Elana Pirtle-Guiney, Vice President Tiffany Koyama Lane, Mayor Wilson, and Members of the Portland City Council:

The Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber (HMC) joins many community organizations in strong opposition to the proposed amendment by Councilors Mitch Green and Jamie Dunphy to eliminate General Fund support for Prosper Portland. This amendment, introduced by Councilors Mitch Green and Jamie Dunphy, would have devastating consequences for Portland's small business ecosystem particularly for Latino, immigrant, and under-resourced entrepreneurs.

HMC fully understand the difficult budget decisions facing the city. But this proposed cut is not just about dollars, it is about value. Prosper Portland's General Fund support has been the City's most consistent tool for advancing inclusive economic development. Programs like the Inclusive Business Resource Network (IBRN) have helped thousands of Portlanders start and grow businesses, build generational wealth, and access meaningful economic opportunities. It allows organizations like ours to provide culturally specific, bilingual technical assistance to hundreds of small businesses each year—helping them launch, grow, stabilize, and recover in the face of economic uncertainty.

To eliminate this funding is to dismantle over a decade of community-centered work focused on racial equity, economic mobility, and long-term prosperity. It would turn our backs on the very communities Portland has promised to uplift and at a time when they need support the most.

Replacing this core support with the Strategic Investment Fund is simply not viable. The SIF was never meant to sustain foundational programming. It is a temporary fix—not a long-term solution.



Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. They are the people creating jobs, paying taxes, and keeping our neighborhoods vibrant. As a city, we must recognize that investing in entrepreneurs is not separate from addressing our housing crisis or our budget challenges, it is central to solving them.

HMC urges you to vote against this amendment. Let's continue building a Portland that invests in its people, its businesses, and its future.

Sincerely,

Nicole D Leon

Nicole Davison Leon

Executive Director

Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber (HMC)

Co-Signed by the Following Portland Businesses:

Diane Leon – Retorica LLC

Roxana Mandujano - NW Cardinals GC LLC.

Santos Samuel Chan Ortegon - El Yucateco Auto Repair & Tire LLC

Yemayá Hall - AHO Wellness Tech LLC

Gustavo Rosas- Vera Mexican food LLC

Cruz Iberra - Castelli Craftmanship innovation

Claudia Trujillo – Angel's Kitchen LLC

Olga Hernadez -Sabor Casero LLC

	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
10	TiE Oregon / TiE Oregon Foundation	Oppose	<p>I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed amendment to eliminate funding for Prosper Portland and the critical early-stage entrepreneurship programs it supports.</p> <p>These programs are essential to the success of Portland's startup ecosystem, particularly for traded-sector companies with high growth and job-creation potential. Early-stage support often determines whether these ventures survive the critical first few years. Without it, many promising companies will struggle or fail—taking with them the opportunity to build a stronger, more resilient local economy.</p> <p>At a time when layoffs are increasing and economic uncertainty is on the rise, entrepreneurship is not a luxury—it is a necessity. It offers a powerful pathway to retain highly educated, skilled workers in our region and create high-wage, future-facing jobs that will benefit Portland for generations.</p> <p>I urge you to maintain General Fund support for Prosper Portland and the programs that fuel innovation, equity, and long-term economic growth in our city.</p> <p>Thank you for your time. Kari Naone Executive Director TiE Oregon / TiE Oregon Foundation</p>	No	05/20/25 12:28 PM
11	Portland Community College		Letter from PCC President Bennings supporting Prosper Portland	Yes	05/20/25 12:54 PM
12	Rosewood Initiative		<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>I am very concerned with the cuts that are being proposed for the Prosper General Fund. I have been blessed with the opportunity to work as a Workforce Navigator under the Prosper Portland General Fund at The Rosewood Initiative on 141st and Stark. In my position, I have served 168 individuals during this fiscal year alone and helped 49 individuals attain employment. While I feel happy with these numbers, I also feel that they do not communicate the full story of our Workforce Navigation program at Rosewood.</p> <p>The truth is that our program appears to be one of the very few Workforce Navigation services for Spanish speakers in Portland. In fact, we currently have around 20 people on a waitlist to access our services, and we don't have many referral options for these community members due to the limited availability of Spanish-speaking Workforce Navigation programs in the area. Of the 168 clients that we have served this year, 151 speak Spanish as their native language. The community members who access our services are already managing increased stress due to the political situation at the federal level. Eliminating a service designed to provide financial stability for the community would just exacerbate the difficulties already faced by our Spanish-speaking Portlanders at this time.</p> <p>I understand that the City of Portland has to make difficult decisions. However, I find it deeply concerning that the City would put a program like ours at risk during the current political situation at the national level. Cutting the Prosper General Fund would completely eliminate our program. Just a couple of weeks ago, I had a community member verbally express to me, "What would we do without you guys?". I would like to ask that you take this into consideration as you deliberate on the Prosper Portland budget this Wednesday.</p> <p>Thank you very much, Joshua Schneider</p>	No	05/20/25 2:53 PM
13	Julian Quist	Oppose	I suggest that the council reconsider these cuts. Fostering business development is next to educational as an actual investment in the community that can actually create dividends in the future.	No	05/20/25 3:05 PM
14	Anonymous	Oppose	I oppose cutting Prosper Portland's budget. Reducing funds for small businesses in the Portland Metro area will harm our community instead of helping it. When small businesses close, fewer community members succeed.	No	05/20/25 5:03 PM



OFFICE OF
THE
PRESIDENT

Dr. Adrien L. Bennings, President

- ◆ PCC Sylvania Campus
- ◆ e: adrien.bennings@pcc.edu
- ◆ p: 971-722-4635

May 20, 2025

Dear Councilors,

On behalf of Portland Community College (PCC), I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed changes to Prosper Portland's budget and funding brought forward by Councilors Green and Dunphy. This amendment would severely impact Prosper Portland's capacity to deliver essential services that our community urgently needs.

Portland Community College has partnered with Prosper Portland through the Workforce Navigator program since 2016. With this vital support and in collaboration with district managers of the Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative, our workforce navigator annually works with over 40 businesses to identify and connect them with local workforce talent across north and northeast Portland. We also provide essential coaching and guidance to over 200 community members needing assistance with employment or training opportunities that help them achieve economic stability.

Separately, PCC receives funding from Prosper Portland as a subrecipient to Worksystems in support of the NextGen youth program. This allows us to provide career coaching and support to low income youth, and serves a large number of youth from outer southeast and northeast Portland. Many young people face significant challenges when seeking employment. In collaboration with Worksystems and Prosper Portland, PCC helps break down barriers, empowering youth to explore careers and build the skills necessary to succeed in education and careers.

A reduction in this funding would have significant negative impacts on the hundreds of youth and community members we assist annually and our local businesses that contribute to the local economy and vibrancy of our neighborhoods.

We strongly urge you to reject this amendment and retain Prosper Portland's funding through a General Fund allocation so they can continue this valuable work that directly benefits our community. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Adrien L. Bennings, President
Portland Community College

	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
15	Livelihood NW		<p>I urge you to retain Prosper Portland's funding through a General Fund allocation, ensuring that these vital programs continue to serve our community.</p> <p>As the Executive Director of Livelihood NW, an entrepreneur, and a Portland community member for over 20 years, I have witnessed firsthand the positive economic impact facilitated by Prosper Portland's Inclusive Business Resource Network (IBRN). Without these critical resources, our most vulnerable businesses will lose access to the education, training, and support they need to sustain and grow.</p> <p>For nearly 30 years, we have partnered with the City of Portland to provide equitable access to business support services. These services have proven essential in equipping entrepreneurs, particularly from marginalized communities, to create wealth for themselves, their employees, and our community.</p> <p>For every dollar invested in business development services, we see a return of \$7 to \$22 in economic impact. Job creation, wealth generation, and business retention are core responsibilities of the City to ensure a vibrant and equitable community.</p> <p>Without a collective effort from local governments, nonprofit organizations, and small business champions, many businesses will close, and economically disadvantaged and historically marginalized communities will suffer the most.</p>	Yes	05/20/25 5:43 PM
16	Montserrat Andeys, Hey Doc Clinic	Oppose	<p>As a small business owner of Hey Doc Clinic and as someone that loves the community support for small businesses in Portland, I am writing against the proposal to change funding for Prosper Portland until meaningful engagement can occur with small businesses and small business support organizations to have input on the changes and adequate time to make changes to their own organization strategic plans to minimize destabilization of those organizations and small businesses in Portland.</p> <p>At a time when the nation is feeling destabilized by economic and employment uncertainty due to the work of the federal government through the DOGE agency, and the unknown effects of tariffs, jostling the strong small business community that sustains so many local jobs doesn't seem wise.</p> <p>They're already so many new variables, a freshman city council building it's ship as it is sailing, closing down TIF districts as others become established, and as mentioned above an uncertain federal landscape. However, Prosper Portland and the programs that operate under it while not perfect, have created a thriving small business culture supporting small businesses directly and indirectly through highly effective business support organizations. This does not seem like a good time to make such drastic changes in this landscape.</p> <p>I recognize that there are topics worth discussion regarding Prosper Portland such as an elected board and others, and I think they are worth discussing. I am in support of The city council, Prosper Portland and business support organizations having discussions with a goal of reshaping Prosper Portland. This would allow input from all affected entities and the people and organizations they support. It would also allow City Council to have a deeper understanding of the small business ecosystem they steward in Portland before making changes. This would allow the City Council to not only make informed decisions regarding Prosper Portland, but perhaps other initiatives as well. In addition, if after those discussions funding cuts still seem like the best solution to reach the Council's goals, this would give service organizations time to understand how their funding and programs might be effected, offering time to create responsive strategic plans and time to implement them creating a smooth transition instead of a massive destabilizing wave of change if the current proposal is approved.</p> <p>I think it is worth slowing down and making this a broader conversation with all interested parties at the table in the interest of a stronger economic landscape in Portland.</p> <p>with love for Portland, Montserrat</p>	No	05/20/25 9:57 PM
17	Debora Leopold Hutchins, North Portland Community Member	Oppose	<p>I oppose the Green and Dunphy amendment to eliminate the City's \$11M general fund grant to Prosper Portland per my attached comments</p>	Yes	05/20/25 10:06 PM

Testimony of Lara Damon, Executive Director

In support of General Fund Allocation to Prosper Portland FY25-26 Budget

Dear Councilor(s),

I am writing to express my strong concerns regarding the proposed changes to Prosper Portland's budget and funding, introduced by Councilors Green and Dunphy. **This amendment would significantly undermine Prosper Portland's ability to deliver essential services to our community, with particularly harmful consequences for small businesses and historically marginalized entrepreneurs.**

Livelihood NW's mission is to foster business sustainability and growth for historically marginalized entrepreneurs to build thriving local communities. We provide high-quality business development support services to promote lifelong learning, empowerment, and positive economic impact. **For nearly 30 years, we have partnered with the City of Portland to provide equitable access to business support services.** These services have proven essential in equipping entrepreneurs, particularly from marginalized communities, to create wealth for themselves, their employees, and our community.

In the past year alone, through our partnership with Prosper Portland, Livelihood NW has supported 250 entrepreneurs, with 83% identifying as economically disadvantaged, 74% as women-owned, and 60% as BIPOC-owned, the majority of whom are located within the City's Neighborhood Prosperity Initiatives (NPI). We are committed to continuing our partnership with the City through programs such as the Inclusive Business Resource Network (IBRN) and the Community Enhancement Opportunity Program (COEP) to support small businesses, the backbone of our economy. **If these programs no longer exist with the support of the City of Portland thousands of small businesses supported across the IBRN will lose services.**

As the Executive Director of Livelihood NW, an entrepreneur, and a Portland community member for over 20 years, I have witnessed firsthand the positive economic impact facilitated by Prosper Portland's IBRN. **Without these critical resources, our most vulnerable businesses will lose access to the education, training, and support they need to sustain and grow.**

History has shown, from the 2008 recession to the 2020 global pandemic and the current economic challenges, that without a collective effort from local governments, nonprofit organizations, and small business champions, many businesses will close, and economically disadvantaged and historically marginalized communities will suffer the most. However, when these resources are supported, we see significantly higher business retention rates than the national average. Small businesses create jobs, generate wealth, and cannot thrive in isolation.

For every dollar invested in business development services, we see a return of \$7 to \$22 in economic impact. Job creation, wealth generation, and business retention are core responsibilities of the City to ensure a vibrant and equitable community. Reducing or eliminating the general fund allocation to Prosper Portland would have severe, unintended consequences for the small business community. **Without a continued partnership with the City, Livelihood NW and other community organizations will shift resources to its statewide services, leaving a significant gap in the Portland area for small business success.**

I urge you to retain Prosper Portland's funding through a General Fund allocation, ensuring that these vital programs continue to serve our community. It is essential that these programs are funded consistently and not allowed to quietly end through short-term, unsustainable political decisions. This is critical to achieving our city's equitable development goals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lara Damon, MBA
Executive Director
lara@livelihoodnw.org
503-990-8255

Page intentionally blank to separate written testimony attachments

Response to Councilors Green and Dunphy Propose Budget Amendment to Zero Out General Fund Grant to Prosper Portland

May 20, 2025

This is in response to Councilors Green and Dunphy's May 14, 2025 immediate release budget amendment announcement regarding eliminating the City's \$11M general fund grant to Prosper Portland and directing the agency instead to fund its operations through its \$50M Strategic Investment Fund.

A lot to unravel starting on page 2 where Mr. Green suggests that Prosper Portland is a quasi-public entity. For the record the predecessor Portland Development Commission was created by a vote of the citizens of Portland in 1958. It was approved by the Oregon Legislature shortly thereafter as a "special district" as defined under ORS 457. A "Special District" as defined is a public entity (not quasi) and receives the same statutory benefits as any other special government district like OHSU, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue, Clean Water Services, Tualatin Hills Park & Rec., etc. To suggest that Prosper Portland is a quasi-public entity would leave the public to believe in the context of Green and Dunphy's budget amendment release that the \$11M was not going to a public entity which is misleading.

Page 2 you're suggesting to redirect the \$11M back to the general fund to address additional critical priorities,

Keeping Portland Parks fully operational, it is no secret that this Bureau has consistently been over budget year after year for at least the last 5 years if not more. Directing funds from Prosper Portland to this bureau would only allow the bureau to continue to mismanage its budget with no apparent city council oversight.

Restoring and expanding broken window grants for small businesses while may be a community need to address; Prosper Portland has funded these small businesses in the past. So, you suggest taking funds from Prosper Portland so the city can do the same, which makes no sense. The city has limited resources (staff) and now a budget cut (likely staff) to function. So, you eliminate funds from one arm of the city give it to another arm of the city who has no processes and procedures in place to perform the work?

Providing direct support for small businesses and economic recovery for BIPOC, we find it disingenuous to lump BIPOC with other small business as a means to gain support for eliminating funds from Prosper's budget. BIPOC was created to address the needs of the black community has found itself being lumped in with a wide variety of entities and always scraping the bottom of the barrel for equitable funding. My understanding is that Prosper Portland programs have begun to address disparities in neighborhoods and among communities that in the past did not reap the benefits of

Response to Councilors Green and Dunphey Propose Budget Amendment to Zero Out General Fund Grant to Prosper Portland

economic growth. Is there more work to be done, yes. Can the city do it better that's questionable.

Investing in James Beard Public Market, I'm struggling to understand how investing in the public market would benefit all of Portland's communities. There is the James Beard Foundation based in New York that has its means to generate funding through its Foundation.

The \$50M Strategic Investment Fund has specific uses and likely cannot be used for any other purpose (s). Have you had discussions with Prosper if they can use any of the \$50M fund for the purposes that the \$11M has previously gone to? Rather than eliminate the \$11M from Prosper do what you're doing with all city bureau's, request a budget cut.

On the first page you clearly state "We're asking every bureau to tighten their belts as we focus on addressing livability and homelessness". Are you suggesting that Prosper Portland is not focusing on livability and homelessness?

I will end with this; it's stated in your release that "Prosper Portland has long faced criticism for its lack of transparency and questionable effectiveness". But in May 2007, Portland voters approved a measure proposed by former Mayor Tom Potter giving the council more control over the agency. Among other things, it made the council the PDC's budget committee. Perhaps it's time for the City Council to step up and do its oversight of Prosper Portland as the voters voted. That does not necessarily mean eliminate funding from the city but work with them to make their budget work more effectively.

Respectively submitted to City Council
Debora Leopold Hutchins
North Portland Community Member

Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
Latino Founders	Oppose	<p>May 20th, 2025</p> <p>Dear Councilor(s),</p> <p>I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed amendment to Mayor Wilson's FY 2025-26 budget, the amendment would eliminate the \$11 million in ongoing city General Fund dollars currently allocated to Prosper Portland.</p> <p>This amendment would have an immediate and devastating impact on Portland's economic development infrastructure—especially for Latino-owned businesses and other historically underserved communities.</p> <p>Latino Founders is dedicated to fostering the growth and success of Latino entrepreneurs. Our programs—including the Founders Hub, our Accelerator Program, and year-round mentorship and educational support—have been made possible in large part thanks to partnerships and support from Prosper Portland.</p> <p>Without this support, our ability to provide essential programs and services to Latino entrepreneurs in Portland will be severely diminished, at a time when our community is just beginning to regain its economic footing.</p> <p>The proposed reallocation of limited Strategic Investment Funds (SIF) to backfill the General Fund shortfall would not only jeopardize our work but would decimate long-term programs citywide. This amendment would effectively eliminate:</p> <p>The Inclusive Business Resource Network (IBRN), which has been critical for Latino, Black, and other POC-owned businesses.</p> <p>City-wide small business lending and grants.</p> <p>All workforce development programming, which supports both entrepreneurs and job seekers.</p> <p>Efforts to retain, expand, and attract traded-sector employers that are vital for Portland's competitiveness.</p> <p>Essential staff capacity at Prosper Portland that small businesses rely on every day.</p> <p>This proposal represents a sharp reversal of progress toward centering racial equity and balancing urban development with inclusive economic partnerships. The harm will be disproportionately felt by communities that have historically been excluded from Portland's economic systems.</p> <p>We understand the difficult budget environment our city faces. However, eliminating all General Fund support for Prosper Portland is not a responsible or equitable solution. Instead, it undermines the city's own Advance Portland objectives and puts our fragile recovery at risk.</p> <p>We urge you to retain Prosper Portland's General Fund allocation to ensure programs like ours—and the many other partners who serve diverse entrepreneurs—can continue this vital work. Doing so is not only an investment in small businesses but an investment in Portland's economic resilience, inclusivity, and long-term prosperity.</p> <p>Please do not allow these programs to be quietly dismantled through a short-term solution.</p> <p>Keep Prosper Portland with the funding needed to support the Entrepreneurs fueling our economic growth.</p> <p>Juan Barraza Executive Director Latino Founders</p>	Yes	05/20/25 11:20 PM



May 20th, 2025

Dear Councilor(s),

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed amendment to Mayor Wilson's FY 2025-26 budget, the amendment would eliminate the \$11 million in ongoing city General Fund dollars currently allocated to Prosper Portland.

This amendment would have an immediate and devastating impact on Portland's economic development infrastructure—especially for Latino-owned businesses and other historically underserved communities.

Latino Founders is dedicated to fostering the growth and success of Latino entrepreneurs. Our programs—including the Founders Hub, our Accelerator Program, and year-round mentorship and educational support—have been made possible in large part thanks to partnerships and support from Prosper Portland.

Without this support, our ability to provide essential programs and services to Latino entrepreneurs in Portland will be severely diminished, at a time when our community is just beginning to regain its economic footing.

The proposed reallocation of limited Strategic Investment Funds (SIF) to backfill the General Fund shortfall would not only jeopardize our work but would decimate long-term programs citywide. This amendment would effectively eliminate:

- The Inclusive Business Resource Network (IBRN), which has been critical for Latino, Black, and other POC-owned businesses.
- City-wide small business lending and grants.
- All workforce development programming, which supports both entrepreneurs and job seekers.
- Efforts to retain, expand, and attract traded-sector employers that are vital for Portland's competitiveness.
- Essential staff capacity at Prosper Portland that small businesses rely on every day.

This proposal represents a sharp reversal of progress toward centering racial equity and balancing urban development with inclusive economic partnerships. The harm will be disproportionately felt by communities that have historically been excluded from Portland's economic systems.

We understand the difficult budget environment our city faces. However, eliminating all General Fund support for Prosper Portland is not a responsible or equitable solution. Instead, it undermines the city's own Advance Portland objectives and puts our fragile recovery at risk.

We urge you to retain Prosper Portland's General Fund allocation to ensure programs like ours—and the many other partners who serve diverse entrepreneurs—can continue this vital work. Doing so is not only an investment in small businesses but an investment in Portland's economic resilience, inclusivity, and long-term prosperity.

Please do not allow these programs to be quietly dismantled through a short-term solution.

Keep Prosper Portland with the funding needed to support the Entrepreneurs fueling our economic growth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Barraza', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Juan Barraza
Executive Director
Latino Founders

19

Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
Celeste Noche	Oppose	<p>I am writing to express my concerns to the proposed changes to Prosper Portland's budget and funding brought forward by Councilors Green and Dunphy. This amendment would severely impact Prosper Portland's capacity to deliver the services that our small business community urgently needs.</p> <p>I am a freelance photographer and a Portland resident since 2014. In this time, I have felt unsupported and uncertain about how to sustain my business especially given the economic climate over the past few years. I participated in Livelihood NW's Increase Project from 2023-2024 and having the access to this community's tools and resources has changed both my business, and how I feel like I can survive as a small business owner. In particular, having funding to see my business advisor, Tracy Puhl, has made me feel less alone and more equipped to navigate the challenges of small business ownership.</p> <p>As a small business owner and direct recipient of Livelihood NW's high quality business development support services, provided through a partnership with Prosper Portland's Inclusive Business Resource Network, I would urge you to retain Prosper Portland's funding through a General Fund allocation so that they can continue to do this valuable work that benefits our community.</p> <p>This funding has directly impacted me personally as I navigate the challenges as an independent creative, and countless folks in my community who similarly have not historically had access to these kinds of resources. And losing funding would be detrimental both to my own business and many others in our community.</p> <p>Ensuring that these programs are funded on an ongoing basis, and not quietly sunset via a short-term, unsustainable political maneuver, is paramount to delivering on our city's equitable development goals.</p> <p>Our city is navigating so many challenges in the face of our political and economic climate, but defunding programs that actively support independent small businesses is not the solution.</p> <p>Sincerely, Celeste Noche</p>	No	05/21/25 7:55 AM
Oregon Media Lab	Oppose	<p>Please disregard my last testimony as my position was incorrect. Oregon Media Lab opposes the 2025-26 budget. Prosper Portland has been a pivotal funder for Doc Camp, https://www.oregonmedialab.com/doc-camp, an event that has provided training and support for hundreds of documentary filmmakers in Oregon and beyond. Without Prosper Portland's financial support, our program will not be able to continue.</p>	No	05/21/25 8:20 AM

20

21

Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
Terence Brasch	Oppose	<p>Council Members,</p> <p>I share your urgency to balance a \$93 million deficit and protect frontline services. But eliminating Prosper's entire General-Fund allocation could unintentionally stall momentum of the very job growth and storefront activation our city needs.</p> <p>A constructive balanced path forward:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cut the line-item in half for FY 25-26 (saves about \$5.5 M). 2. Direct Prosper to cover an additional \$2–3 M with SIF interest earnings, preserving loan principal. 3. Adopt a two-year "Transparency & ROI Compact" with quarterly dashboards, external audit, and a KPI trigger for Fall BMP review. 4. Require Prosper to match \$1 M toward the parks/storefront program you've outlined in the amendment. <p>While I don't support a cut to Prosper Portland, this plan meets your fiscal goal and preserves the Inclusive Business Resource Network, low-interest loan pool, and 30 staff who keep entrepreneurs like Goodies Snack Shop in downtown storefronts instead of vacancy listings.</p> <p>I am finalizing a Prosper-managed lease and loan that will add jobs, activate a dark retail corner, and generate city taxes. A full cut would jeopardize that project and others like it.</p> <p>I respectfully urge you to adopt this compromise rather than the full Green-Dunphy reduction. If deeper reform is needed, I am ready to serve on the proposed oversight task-force so small-business voices stay at the table.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>	No	05/21/25 8:52 AM
Jen Tate - Oregon Media Lab	Oppose	<p>I'm writing to share my strong concerns about the proposed changes to Prosper Portland's budget. If this amendment moves forward, effectively shutting down the Events & Film Office, I fear Portland will suffer a huge blow to our media production industry, including the loss of VITAL grant programs supporting Portland's storytelling and creative community.</p> <p>As a local producer, I've worked directly with the EFO for years and collaborated with hundreds of artists they've supported. I've also been a recipient of grant funding through the EFO to produce Doc Camp, now in its 12th year. This bi-annual gathering of documentary filmmakers from around the country is now a well known event on a national level, with several past attendees going on to win Academy Awards. This would not have been possible without Prosper Portland's reliable support.</p> <p>I've also served on panels for the grant-giving side of the EFO's work. In this role, I've seen firsthand how EFO support can change the trajectory of a project...and more importantly, the lives and careers of the storytellers behind it. Many of these individuals juggle multiple jobs in pursuit of their craft, and the grants offered by the EFO are not just helpful, they're game changers.</p> <p>The Events & Film Office (and especially Elyse Taylor) has been a collaborator, a partner, a benefactor, and a trusted friend to Portland's creative community. To lose it, or her, would be devastating, not just to filmmakers and event producers, but to the cultural vitality and economic health of Portland as a whole.</p> <p>I urge you to vote NO on the proposed amendment and instead protect the EFO as part an infrastructure that supports equitable development, creative expression, and economic opportunity in our city.</p> <p>Sincerely, Jen Tate</p>	No	05/21/25 8:57 AM
Anonymous	Oppose	We should abolish Prosper Portland which hands of taxpayer money to the already wealthy	No	05/21/25 9:10 AM

22

23

	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
24	Bon Coeur Home + Wellness	Oppose	As a fairly new small business owner, it is imperative that we not lose any funds for support, resources or funding available to such entities. To continue to support Portland, it is vital that we continue to have help for those trying to add to the economic growth and overall support of our special city. Thank you.	No	05/21/25 9:20 AM
25	Unite Oregon		<p>Portland is suffering. Rapidly rising inflation is causing families to choose between medical needs and groceries. Parks are in disrepair. Houselessness surges. In this time of crisis we all had to make some really hard choices. And yet Prosper Portland seems to think that they shouldn't have to adapt. But Prosper's threat to slash BIPOC and equity programs rather than use their enormous Strategic Investment Fund is giving up the game: their commitment to marginalized communities is hollow. If they do choose to cut this programming rather than tap into their huge \$50 million fund, they are revealing their true priorities.</p> <p>And for decades, Prosper Portland—formerly the Portland Development Commission—has operated as a machine of displacement. Its legacy is etched into the ruins of Albina and into the stories of Black families forced from their homes. Today, they repeat the same playbook: retaliating against critics, stoking fear, and weaponizing business owners of color as shields against accountability.</p> <p>While city services bleed, Prosper Portland threatens to gut the very programs they are using to habilitate their foul legacy. This is a textbook example of manipulating public outrage. But the premise is false. Prosper's binary framing- cut programs or protect Black & brown wealth- is a fabrication. They have the funds. They refuse to spend them justly.</p> <p>Prosper Portland's model- a quasi-private agency hoarding public dollars- is a relic of racist planning. Their Strategic Investment Fund is theft. \$50 million stolen from schools, housing, and climate resilience efforts, all to enrich real estate interests, like the ones that sit unelected on their board.</p> <p>Prosper Portland—the same institution that displaced generations, while branding it “urban renewal”—now dangles minority entrepreneurs as bargaining chips. To those business owners: You are being manipulated. You are being tokenized. They parade your survival as proof of their “equity” while hoarding resources that could fund housing, schools, parks and other necessary city services. You are being weaponized as a mouthpiece to support an agency that from its inception until today, has disproportionately harmed Black people. Do not let them trade your dignity for the promise of a few shekels.</p> <p>Councilors Green and Dunphy see the truth: Portland's future cannot be outsourced to an agency that fueled this crisis. Prosper is claiming we're trying to defund them. Defund was a Black-led movement that sought to redirect resources toward care, not punishment. The co-opting of the term by Prosper in their attempt to hoard public resources is absolutely grotesque. Moving past that, this amendment is not defunding anything. It's investing in democratic, community control solutions.</p> <p>To every council member: Vote yes on this amendment. Stop letting Prosper Portland hold our city hostage. That \$13 million is belongs to the people, not Prosper and the city desperately needs it. Take it back.</p>	No	05/21/25 9:28 AM
26	Sabrina Gogol	Oppose	I am writing to ask you to support Councilors Green and Dunphy's \$13 million amendment which is crucial to supporting City programs that do not have the luxury of Prosper Portland's budget reserves and/or are providing direct services to our most in-need Portlanders, such as housing services. Asking Prosper Portland to tap into its own resources for one year is a reasonable administrative exercise when City budgets are having a short year. Isn't that what reserves are for?	No	05/21/25 10:10 AM

	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
27	Anonymous		<p>I am writing today in support of the amendment to eliminate Prosper Portland's general fund allocation for the coming fiscal year, as well as the council direction that Prosper Portland fund programs and operations out of their strategic investment fund.</p> <p>At a time when Portland is facing a budget crisis, this is more than reasonable to direct a ONE TIME reallocation of funds from an organization that can lean on their cash reserves to programs and services that are not as fortunate.</p> <p>Furthermore, the barrage of misinformation perpetrated by members of Prosper Portland and the broader business community since this amendment was introduced is deeply concerning. This misinformation campaign is exactly the reason why we should be examining whether or not having a quasi-public agency like Prosper lead the city's economic development is actually beneficial to the broader community.</p> <p>Time and time again, the business and economic development community seems to feel they are exempt from budget cuts that routinely plague schools, arts, parks, and infrastructure. This is not unique to Portland, this is a national and societal problem. If we as a city want to move forward and do things differently, we need to let go of the notion that economic development is exempt from any level of cuts. Prosper Portland is more than equipped to weather this storm, yet they continue to spew tired rhetoric as to why they should continue to receive public dollars when there are not enough to go around. Their existence should absolutely come under review, but in the meantime, this amendment is the right thing to do.</p>	No	05/21/25 11:36 AM
28	Anonymous	Oppose	<p>As a small business owner who has turned to Prosper Portland for much needed support and guidance, I strongly urge you to vote against this proposed amendment.</p> <p>Approving this proposed amendment would adversely and irreversibly impact the Portland entrepreneurial community at a tenuous time when Portland entrepreneurs need all of the help they can get. We recognize the broader budget concerns. There are no easy decisions to be made. But this amendment is a public statement against prioritizing economic development at a time when it absolutely should be a priority. Our founders throughout the city are the ones generating revenue, paying taxes, and helping to close the budget gap through their efforts. Proposing to reduce the capacity of Prosper Portland and its ability to deliver the services that our community urgently needs is both ill-informed and reprehensible.</p>	No	05/21/25 11:58 AM
29	Tony Jones - Rubitone Development Services/Chair of Economic Development Coalition of Black Men	Oppose	<p>My name Tony Jones. I am 30 year Portland Resident, a small business owner(I own Rubitone Development Services, a construction management consultant company), and a long-time construction and community development professional. I oppose the reduction of \$3.7 from the Prosper Portland budget from the general fund. We discuss that we want to Reimagine Oregon, reinvision Portland to address the economic disparities faced by Black and other BIPOC businesses. The programs that are most vulnerable and most impacted by the reduction in funds are the program that serve Black and BIPOC businesses. Using one-time funds to fill part of the gap is not sustainable. Black and BIPOC businesses need consistent and multi-year assistance to grow their businesses. By removing the general fund dollars, increases the chance of Black and BIPOC businesses not being successful. Consistent support for Black and BIPOC business support is crucial.</p>	No	05/21/25 12:36 PM
30	Jason Lewis		<p>I am writing to call on the council to retain Prosper Portland's funding through the general fund allocation. I recognize the city is in a difficult situation and I support having targeted cuts across all areas of the city to help balance the budget. However, the idea that we can reinvigorate the city without a healthy business community doesn't make sense. If there are areas of Prosper Portland's spending that aren't generating a good ROI, let's make those cuts. For the city to thrive, though we need to be a place that can attract and retain businesses of the future and a robust economic development program is a key piece of the puzzle.</p>	No	05/21/25 12:38 PM

	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
31	Ashleigh Atwood	Oppose	<p>I am writing today in opposition to the proposed amendment designed to eliminate funding to Prosper Portland, brought forward by Councilor Mitch Green and Councilor Jamie Dunphy.</p> <p>“What is Portland to you?”</p> <p>What was it about this city—its people, its neighborhoods, its spirit—that inspired you to run for office, to serve on this Council, and to be entrusted with the future of our community?</p> <p>I ask this sincerely, because your answer to that question should guide the decision you are being asked to make today.</p> <p>City Council's mission is to make Portland a thriving place to live, work, and visit. That vision comes to life every day through the small businesses that line our streets, anchor our communities, and reflect the creativity and resilience that define our city. These are not just storefronts—they are gathering places, cultural hubs, and vital sources of employment. They are what make Portland feel like Portland.</p> <p>Portland is a small business city. It's one of the things that sets us apart from other cities—our neighborhoods are made vibrant and memorable by the unique, independently owned businesses that give each district its own character. When people talk about loving Portland, they're often talking about the cafés, shops, studios, restaurants, and services run by their neighbors. These businesses aren't just part of our economy—they are part of our identity.</p> <p>I speak not just as a resident, but as a Native American, women small business owner for 18 years. Like many others, I've benefited directly from Prosper Portland's resources—receiving technical assistance, guidance, and support at times when it made all the difference in keeping my doors open.</p> <p>Prosper Portland plays a vital role in supporting entrepreneurs who are often left out of traditional systems—women, people of color, veterans, historically marginalized communities and others working hard to build something of their own. Without that support, many businesses could face increased challenges, and some may not be able to continue. That would mean fewer jobs, fewer local services, and a loss of the unique character that makes Portland what it is.</p> <p>As you consider your decision, I encourage you to reflect on the values that brought you into public service. The choices made today will shape how small businesses experience the future—whether they continue to feel supported or increasingly on their own.</p> <p>Please do not cut funding from the Prosper Portland fund.</p> <p>Stand with the communities and businesses that make Portland a place worth living in, working in, and visiting.</p> <p>Thank you for your support on this issue.</p>	No	05/21/25 12:48 PM
32	Je Amaechi, Unite Oregon			Yes	05/21/25 1:33 PM
33	Melina Romero, Hacienda CDC			Yes	05/21/25 2:36 PM
34	Anonymous	Oppose		Yes	05/21/25 3:03 PM

Portland is at a crossroads. While millions are funneled into expanding the Police Bureau's budget, our parks crumble from neglect, traffic fatalities rise due to outdated infrastructure, and thousands of neighbors remain unhoused or housing-insecure. ~~These are not isolated issues but symptoms of systemic choices that prioritize punishment over prevention, reaction over healing.~~ True safety cannot exist when we underfund the very programs that create thriving, resilient communities.

Councilor Morillo's amendment #1 could offer a transformative path forward. By redirecting police resources toward restoring park maintenance, we invest in green spaces that unite neighbors, provide respite, and reduce violence through community connection. And by exploring evidence-based interventions, we can redesign public spaces to deter violence through accessibility, and communal care—not surveillance.

I also support Avalos's Amendment #3 which would reduce overtime funding for police. A city audit found that Portland police have continually failed to manage overtime effectively. They continually lack effective data collection and reporting on overtime, making it near impossible to effectively manage costs and identify areas for improvement. And this is just one of many ways that PPB continues to fail to be held accountable to the community. Given the budget crisis we're can't afford to be this fast and loose with millions of dollars.

Lastly, I endorse Novick's Amendment #2, which calls for redirecting welfare checks from armed police to trained, unarmed crisis response teams. During such calls, the presence of law enforcement—who often lack specialized training in de-escalation, mental health, or social services—can heighten tensions and endanger lives. Unarmed responders, equipped to address crises with empathy and expertise, are far more likely to resolve these sensitive situations safely and effectively. We must prioritize care over coercion.

And for the record I also support the Pirtle-Guiney's amendment to Restore funding to the Diversity & Civic Leadership Program and Reassign it to the Office of City Operations.

Cities across the nation have demonstrated that investments in housing, mental health services, youth programming, and infrastructure reduce crime more sustainably than policing alone. When we starve these initiatives of funding, we perpetuate cycles of crisis and displacement. We cannot arrest our way out of poverty, addiction, or despair.

Portlanders deserve a budget that reflects our values: one that nurtures life, dignity, and opportunity. Every dollar spent on expanding police resources is a dollar withheld from programs that prevent harm by addressing its origins. It is a dollar denied to unhoused neighbors seeking shelter, to families navigating unsafe streets, to communities working tirelessly to heal from violence.

Today, I urge you to support Councilor Morillo's amendment #1 & Avalos's Amendment 3 & Novick's Amendment #2 to reallocate proposed increases in the police budget toward proven, community-driven solutions that address the root causes of harm and foster lasting safety. Our collective safety depends on it.

Page intentionally blank to separate written testimony attachments



May 21, 2025

Subject: Testimony Regarding Prosper Portland FY25-26 Proposed Budget

Dear Members of the Portland City Council,

I am writing to provide my opposition to the budget cuts proposed by Mayor Wilson, and the amendment proposed by Councilors Green and Dunphy.

The proposed budget cut and amendment would severely impact Prosper Portland's capacity to deliver the services that our local community urgently needs. As the Empresarios Program Manager at Hacienda CDC, our program would be directly impacted if these budget cuts pass. Hacienda CDC has partnered with Prosper Portland for over 10 years in which it has invested in the launch, stabilization, and growth of hundreds of local, small food businesses, and our beloved, community food hall, the Portland Mercado. Without Prosper Portland's support, the Empresarios Program would no longer be able to make the impact and progress made thus far – providing one-on-one small business advising, hosting dozens of small business-focused workshops, and connect entrepreneurs to the various resources throughout our IBRN network. These small businesses are at the epicenter of what our city needs to support as they provide jobs, and fund progress and infrastructure. Entrepreneurship and innovation are core values in the makeup of our city and need continued support. Eliminating budget for our programming would be a critical loss to the current 53 small businesses we're serving and the future entrepreneurs and local community seeking support as they take those steps towards launching and stabilizing their own business. **I strongly urge you to retain Prosper Portland's funding through a General Fund allocation so that they can continue to do this valuable work that benefits our community.**

Ensuring that these programs are funded on an ongoing basis, and not quietly sunset via a short-term, unsustainable political maneuver, is paramount to delivering on our city's equitable development goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melina Romero". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Melina Romero
Hacienda CDC

Page intentionally blank to separate written testimony attachments

Dear Portland Mayor and City Council:

As supporters of Portland's enviable entrepreneurial community, we are writing to express our staunch opposition to the proposed amendment designed to eliminate funding for Prosper Portland, which has been brought forward by Councilor Mitch Green and Councilor Jamie Dunphy.

Approving this proposed amendment would adversely and irreversibly impact the Portland entrepreneurial community at a tenuous time when Portland entrepreneurs need all of the help they can get. We recognize the broader budget concerns. There are no easy decisions to be made. But this amendment is a public statement against prioritizing economic development at a time when it absolutely should be a priority. Our founders throughout the city are the ones generating revenue, paying taxes, and helping to close the budget gap through their efforts. Proposing to reduce the capacity of Prosper Portland and its ability to deliver the services that our community urgently needs is both ill-informed and reprehensible.

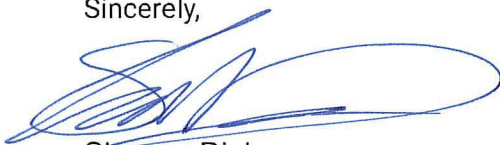
Respectfully, we, the undersigned, urge you to vote against this proposed amendment.

We must ensure that Prosper Portland retains its funding for entrepreneur-focused efforts. We are confident that Prosper Portland will continue to use this crucial funding to support the organizations and activities that benefit our entrepreneurial community. We are equally confident that we can find other means of alleviating the concerns raised by the proposed amendment without putting Portland entrepreneurs at risk.

We are a community who advocates, supports, and celebrates Portland citizens and the communities that tie this city together — the entrepreneurs, the startup founders, and the organizations helping those citizens in bringing their visions to reality. This proposed amendment does not reflect our stance, nor does it align with the views of your constituents listed below.

Thank you for your support on this issue.

Sincerely,



Shamsa Diahn

Portland City Council
Wednesday, May 21, 2025 - 9:00 a.m.
Testimony List

	Name	Document Number
1	Yume Delegato	2025-209
2	mark sherman	2025-209
3	Benjamin Gilbert	2025-209
4	Santiago Vazquez	2025-209
5	Je Amaechi	2025-209
6	Holly Ong	2025-209
7	Shelly Haack	2025-209
8	Janna Tessman	2025-209
9	Jordan Lewis	2025-209
10	TRALICE LEWIS	2025-209