

- Good morning, my name is Lisa Abuaf and I am the Director of Development & Investment at Prosper Portland, the city's economic and urban development agency.
- Thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing and express support for a state contribution to the Williams & Russell project, and in particular the community business hub intended to foster economic growth through small business and workforce development in Portland's historic Albina neighborhood.
- Prosper Portland has a long history with the site; our involvement with the Williams & Russell project acknowledges that history and expresses our commitment to a community that was harmed by the city.
- In the 1970s, as the Portland Development Commission, our agency worked with the city of Portland to aid in the expansion of Emanuel Hospital (now Legacy) onto the Williams and Russell block.
- This resulted in the demolition of houses and businesses, and the displacement of residents and business owners, the majority of whom were Black.
- The hospital expansion never happened at the scale anticipated, and the property at Williams & Russell has sat vacant ever since.
- In 2017, Legacy, the City of Portland, Portland Housing Bureau and Prosper Portland came together to work with the Black community in N/NE to establish a new vision and support the transfer of the vacant property from the hospital back to the community to steward.
- Led by extensive community engagement, key priorities for the project include entrepreneurship, education, workforce training, and housing opportunities.
- The hub is one of 3 projects that will be built on the site, with the other two projects focused on accessible homeownership and affordable rental housing.

- Prosper Portland has been a partner in the work, supporting community in delivering on their vision and priorities for the future of the site.
- We have committed \$12.4M to the project for both the overall site cleanup and the development of the Business Hub.
- This investment aligns with the N/NE Community Development Initiative, a community-created plan which guides our investment of Interstate Corridor Tax Increment Finance resources and includes a vision for catalyzing business hubs that can provide opportunities for small businesses and wealth-building opportunities to grow.
- The Williams & Russell Business Hub embodies this vision and will serve as a vital place for restoration and community gathering.
- The project recently celebrated its groundbreaking on February 28<sup>th</sup> of this year. It was an incredible moment for so many that have been involved in the effort to return the property to community stewardship and a revitalized economic role.
- We are proud to be a partner with the Williams & Russell CDC on their State request for this project that is expected to have lasting community benefits for generations to come.
- Thank you.

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