



Testimony in Support of Williams & Russell Business Hub
Lisa Abuaf – Prosper Portland
Ways & Means Capital Construction Subcommittee
February 13, 2026

Senator Girod, Representative Nosse, and Committee Members—My name is Lisa Abuaf and I'm Director of Development and Investment at Prosper Portland.

I urge your support for \$15.96 million for the Williams & Russell Business Hub to leverage millions of dollars invested by the City of Portland and create jobs, economic prosperity, and wealth in Portland's Albina neighborhood.

In the early 1970s the City of Portland condemned the Hill Block and surrounding area for expansion of Emanuel Hospital, displacing 36 businesses and 171 families, 74% of whom were Black. Expansion to the Hill Block was cancelled in 1973 and the land sat vacant for over 50 years.

In 2017, the Williams & Russell Project Working Group was launched with support from the City of Portland and Legacy Health. The Working Group engaged hundreds of community members who prioritized housing, entrepreneurial support, and gathering space for redevelopment of the block, and in 2025 the land was transferred to Williams & Russell CDC.

The 30,000 square foot Williams & Russell Business Hub is not just a building, it is part of a broader community driven redevelopment of the historic Hill Block that also includes a community plaza, homeownership developments, and 85 affordable rental apartments with onsite childcare.

The Williams & Russell Business Hub will provide an economic foundation necessary to restore prosperity to a community. The Business Hub will provide affordable office, retail, and community spaces, along with business technical assistance and support services.

In addition to other business organizations, Micro Enterprise Services of Oregon (MESO) will lease office space and relocate its Makers Market to the Business Hub providing 70+ small businesses ground floor retail space to sell their products.

According to a [January 2026 ECONorthwest report](#), the Business Hub during construction will create 205 jobs, \$19 million in labor income, and \$46 million in economic output, and during annual operations will create 145 permanent jobs, \$14 million in labor income, and \$27 million in economic output.

The State's \$15.9 million investment matches \$23 million of City of Portland and Prosper Portland funding and leverages a total investment of \$120 million in reparative development at the site.

Your investment ensures that we can begin construction and fulfill a long-promised commitment to the families and businesses of historic Albina. Without full funding during this 2026 short session, construction could be delayed at least a full year, and costs could increase by \$1.5 million per year or more.

Thank you for making this critical investment for economic prosperity, small businesses, and jobs in Portland and Oregon.