

**Westside TIF Action Plan
Working Group Meeting #3
PNCA, 511 NW Broadway, Hammer Conference Room
August 7, 2025, 2:00 – 3:30 pm**

MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Review and confirm SWOT analysis from last meeting
- Discuss and Brainstorm:
 - District Investment Goals & Actions
 - Budget Priorities

MEETING MATERIALS

- Meeting slides

INPUT SOUGHT

- SWOT Analysis
- District Investment Goals & Actions
- Budget Priorities

DECISIONS or RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE VOTED ON

- None

UPCOMING MILESTONES

- Next Working Group Meeting:

Meeting Summary

(See also meeting presentation)

Welcome, Introductions

- Sarah King (Prosper Portland) welcomed people to the meeting and reviewed the agenda.

Public Comment

- None

SWOT Analysis

The Working Group reviewed revisions to the SWOT analysis based on the prior meeting (shown in blue on the slides) and provided the following final feedback:

- Strengths:
 - Add Pacific Northwest College of Art to the list of destinations and cultural assets
- Weaknesses:
 - Public safety is real, perceived and constantly changing, noting that it is fluid dynamic, and evolving.
 - Activations and tree lighting throughout the city contribute to safety.
- Opportunities:

- Enhancements to the public realm as listed does not include cultural infrastructure.
- Threats:
 - Job loss and unemployment challenges feed all of the other points, the lack of workers and residents downtown weaken all the other points
 - Subset of the threat is that many cultural intuitions in the district are reliant on public funding, there is an external threat to name that there are pressures on those assets. It may not be solved by TIF, but it is an issue to note.
 - Lack of projects downtown shows that things are stagnating or going backwards, and safety issues with ongoing projects.
 - Lack of cranes.
 - Lack of incentives for business retention and attraction and lack of outside investment.
 - Perception of threat and reinforced negative narrative.

Budget

The Working Group received the budget projections for fiscal years 2025-2026 through 2030-2031.

- *Question* – what is the working group’s authority to change the budget?
 - *Response* - There is flexibility for this group to decide this is just the initial moment to reflect on the budget, next meeting staff will provide three different budget scenarios for consideration and feedback, and the meeting after that staff will provide revised scenarios based on input from the working group and the community survey.
- *Question* – Is there an opportunity to front load certain investments knowing that over the life of the TIF district 45% of the total funds go toward affordable housing?
 - *Response* - Correct, the funds do not need to be spent 45% for affordable housing year over year as long as over the life of the district it is reconciled.
- *Question* – Can you explain the bonding mechanism?
 - *Response* – typically bonding does not occur before year 5-6 once growth has been demonstrated. This forecast has a very conservative projection for growth to get resources that the City is comfortable bonding against.
- *Comment* - If the issues are budgets and time, it may make sense to adjust the 45/55 split in the early years to fund pilot projects focusing on big areas of retail that were lost and then catch up on the affordable housing pieces. Downtown is the commercial district of the city and needs commercial facing wins.

District Goals & Actions Discussion

The Working Group reviewed the draft investment priorities and investment actions based on last month’s meeting. Additional input included:

- Housing & Livability
 - Infrastructure for families like parks and play structures is missing to make it more family friendly.
 - Construction loans and grants could give priority to proposals with family sized units or if they are located near a park or school.
 - Live/work is a housing and small business strategy, this could be a strategy to explore.

- There seems like a lot of focus on families, there are lots of types of different people who would love to live in our downtown cultural center. Maybe keep it to one point for families, downtown should not be only for families.
- In 5-years, the threats identified in the SWOT is enough to prohibit families from wanting to live downtown.
- Seniors, artists and creatives, entrepreneurs, retired people, businesspeople, employees who work at stores downtown are the kinds of people who are interested in living downtown.
- Need for student housing around PNCA – many live in Hillsboro or Clackamas because they can't afford rent in Portland.
- Not in a baby boom right now – look at population growth.
- Is conversion out of the question? What to do with empty vertical space?
- Schools and infrastructure lacking for families downtown.
- Building transition spaces for people looking to downsize and move back to the city.
- Limited resources to preserve affordable housing, are there any properties in the district on the verge of being lost or have needs for rehabilitation?
 - The Portland Housing Bureau heard loud and clear that preservation for existing affordable housing buildings in the district is a priority. Tracking regulatory agreements for buildings in the district, will provide more detail to the next meeting.
- Business & Economic Recovery
 - Problem with the 55/45 split, the emphasis of this groups thinking is clearly on economic recovery and supporting business. There is not trouble getting resources to build new affordable housing as an affordable housing developer, rehabbing existing affordable housing does make sense but it seems that there is a greater need for economic development projects.
 - Downtown Portland Clean and Safe had excess reserves to do retail and tenant improvement grants, it was fabulous. Many of the retailers that were rewarded a grant are still in the district, it was a real gamechanger. Also successful with pop ups to graduate people into long term leases. These are not large grants.
 - Specific targeting strategy to deploy toward certain geographies in a large district.
 - Calling out restaurants more specifically – the downtown core needs more restaurants especially for being such a foodie town.
 - Not enough other amenities like activity amenities that are not just on weekends and evenings.
 - Shopping, eating, visiting parks.
 - Distinction between support for small businesses and large retail businesses – the Prosperity Improvement Program grants are limited to small local businesses. Hearing interest in supporting large retail, what is the priority for that type of investment with Pioneer Place and the Central City as a shopping destination?

- National brands are what drive people to stay overnight to shop tax free, these are key to bring people downtown.
- Pioneer Place does have a development plan that they proposed to council three years ago that included housing, those are the kind of partners needed at the table.
- Big retail is also fundamentally shifting.
- Suburban malls are thriving.
- Large and small businesses support each other, and need more of both.
- Culture is also presented through food.
- Prefer to have locally owned businesses.
- Thoughtful curation of retailers is important – tap into a couple of key anchors.
- Anything to learn from the Saks 5th Avenue? Perception is that a big fancy brand is needed but it fails, be careful to pick brands that appeal to tourists and locals. What is the right balance?
- Opportunity to cluster based on what the state and region are trying to attract. Need a retail strategy.
- Retail and nightlife plan necessary.
- Public Realm, Arts & Culture
 - Add cultural institutions specifically.
 - City of Possibility information would be helpful for this group to review.
 - Incentive program for street improvements and pocket parks
 - Grant to allow people to improve customer experience for cultural institutions like infrastructure, lighting, expanded sidewalks, etc.
 - Portland doesn't have true cultural district strategy. Design of cultural district strategy like museums, arts, festivals, feed, etc.
 - Waterfront access is an eastside thing, why mimic that on the westside?
 - There were many points talking about waterfront park in the last meetings, a Westside TIF perspective could focus on a retail and activation around the waterfront.
 - The water is another access point to downtown and it is more fun than driving, people should enjoy downtown and that is another way to attract people.
 - 2,000 dragon boat riders using the same docks and it gets very crowded, they want a dedicated dock. That is not even including outriggers and crew boats.
 - Many large-scale cultural projects in the district like Keller, James Beard, Lan Su, Waterfront Park, Portland Art Museum, etc. Any one of those projects could use all of the available resources in the first five years. What is the need and priority for these?
 - District is large and there are not clear nodes defined for action, could name the subareas of the district to define the strategy for different areas and prioritize areas with the most need. Lost identity downtown.
 - Want to have a catalytic impact with these investments but one project also doesn't feel right.

- Need for better anchored identity in downtown other than Old Town and Pearl District.
- Wayfinding initiative to name identity. PBOT wayfinding project underway.
- Most cities in crisis have a mantra of lighter, quicker, cheaper. An idea to work into the strategy. People want to see progress and that will help the larger market.
- COVID sent a lot of people working from home, it had a greater impact on the whole area. That has not changed. Business and economic recover is the thing that needs to be fixed.
- Economic growth and catalytic projects, small grant programs for tenant improvements. Wayfinding is hard when there are few places to go.
- Conversion housing – scenario to consider.
- Need list of projects to know what is ongoing and upcoming in the district.

Attendance**Westside Working Group****Present**

Sydney Mead, Downtown Clean & Safe	X
Vanessa Sturgeon, TMT Development / PMC	X
Diana Stuart, DNA	
Matthew Claudel, OTCA	
Peter Andrews, Melvin Mark	
Randall Friesen, Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council	X
Elizabeth Nye, Lan Su	X
Cody McNeal, Unico	
Giovanni Bautista, resident / Metro housing policy analyst	X
Beth Burns, p:ear	
Jessica Elkan, James Beard	
Angel Medina, Republica / Todos Media	
Jennifer Cole, PNCA	X
Alisha Sullivan, Winter Lights Festival	X
Jennifer Polver, Pioneer Courthouse Square	X
Alan Jones, Jones Architecture	
Guests & Staff	
Brian Moore	X
Sarah King	X
Kiana Ballo	X
Jessica Conner	X
Josh Roper	
Gwen Thompson	
Wendy Smith	

Mariam Rahali	X
Thuan Duong	X
Sarah Harpole	X