



**PROSPER**  
**PORTLAND**  
Building an Equitable Economy

**DATE:** May 8, 2019  
**TO:** Board of Commissioners  
**FROM:** Kimberly Branam, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Report Number 19-15  
Update on the Community Engagement Process for the Lents Town Center Phase 2  
Redevelopment Project

#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION ITEM**

At the May 8, 2019 Prosper Portland Board of Commissioners (Board) meeting, staff will provide a holistic update on the community engagement process for the Lents Town Center Phase 2 redevelopment project, which includes a 4.4-acre property owned by Prosper Portland located at SE 92<sup>nd</sup> Avenue between SE Harold Street and SE Ramona Street in the Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area (URA) (see Attachment A for a site map). The purpose of the engagement process for Lents Town Center Phase 2 has been to seek feedback (with a specific focus on East Portland communities of color) about community priorities and community benefits for the project.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT AND OUTCOMES**

Redevelopment of Lents Town Center Phase 2 advances multiple goals of Prosper Portland's Strategic Plan, including creating vibrant communities and corridors; advancing affordability and neighborhood solutions; and connecting through communication, engagement, and community partnership.

#### **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

**Lents Town Center Five-Year Action Plan.** In May 2014, the Prosper Portland Board and Portland City Council approved the Lents Town Center Five-Year Action Plan (Action Plan), articulating a set of investment priorities and actions for Prosper Portland and its bureau partners at the City of Portland (Environmental Services, Housing, Planning & Sustainability, Parks & Recreation). Among other priorities, the Action Plan called for "game changing" redevelopment along SE 92<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and for the activation of Prosper Portland-owned properties in Lents Town Center. Over a two-year community engagement process to inform the Action Plan, the Lents community provided extensive input through four open houses with more than 300 attendees and staff targeted outreach to communities of colors and renters.

**Lents Town Center Phase 1.** In October 2014, Prosper Portland released a Request for Interest (RFI) to solicit proposals from development partners for seven acres of Prosper Portland-owned and privately-owned properties in the Lents Town Center. As a result of the RFI, Prosper Portland moved forward with the following four redevelopment projects (and development partner) collectively known as Lents Town Center Phase 1:

1. Oliver Station (Palindrome Communities)
2. Lents Commons (9101 Foster LLC)

3. Woody Guthrie Place (ROSE Community Development)
4. Asian Health & Service Center (same)

These four projects have added 263 apartments more than 30,000 square feet of commercial space (both affordable and market rate) to the Lents Town Center, the vast majority of which are affordable units as indicated in this table:

<b>Lents Town Center Phase 1 – Housing Summary</b>		
	Units	% of Phase 1
Affordable Housing Units at 30% Median Family Income (MFI)	22	8%
Affordable Housing Units at 60% MFI	135	51%
Workforce Housing Units at 80% - 100% MFI	47	18%
Market Rate Housing	57	22%
Manager’s Units	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>100%</b>

In total, the City Portland Housing Bureau (PHB) has supported 616 rental housing units since the establishment of the Lents Town Center URA in 1998.

**Lents Town Center Phase 2 Public Engagement.** In May 2017, Prosper Portland entered into a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Palindrome Communities to develop Lents Town Center Phase 2. In fall 2018, Prosper Portland contracted with public engagement consultants Jeanne Lawson and Associates and the City of Portland (City) Office of Community & Civic Life’s Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs) to implement a robust community engagement process that would inform the Lents Town Center Phase 2 development. Prosper Portland’s goal for the engagement process was to hear from community members, with a specific focus on East Portland communities of color, about their priorities for housing, open space, commercial space, and equitable development. The feedback gathered from the community is informing Prosper Portland’s and Palindrome Communities’ decisions about the development program and public benefits.

The engagement process included four In-Language Focus Groups, two Community Conversations, one In-Person Open House and one Web-Based Open House; a summary of these activities is as follows:

In-Language Focus Groups

In order to broaden the engagement process to communities that may not have otherwise participated in traditional outreach activities, staff partnered with City CELs, who are experienced City-trained activists offering public involvement programs with interpretation and facilitation services. Given the demographic makeup of the Lents neighborhood, the Phase 2 community engagement effort included focus groups for Spanish-speaking, Vietnamese-speaking, Chinese-speaking, and Russian-speaking community members. The CELs recruited focus group participants, chose the meeting time and location that worked best for each community, and provided meals for participants. Participants were asked to share priorities for Lents Town Center Phase 2 including housing, public space, commercial space, and equitable development. The meetings were mostly conversational, allowing participants to ask questions and share their thoughts and ideas. Following are the dates and number of attendees at each focus group:

- Spanish-Speaking Focus Group – November 10, 2018 – Wattles Boys & Girls Club (20 participants and approximately 15 children)
- Vietnamese-Speaking Focus Group – Ngoc Chau Temple – November 11, 2018 (13 participants)
- Russian-Speaking Focus Group – Eastridge Covenant Church – November 29, 2018 (seven participants)
- Chinese-Speaking Focus Group – Huilin Si Temple – December 1, 2018 (15 participants)

### Community Conversations

In addition to the In-Language Focus Groups, in early 2019 Prosper Portland hosted two Community Conversations with Lents stakeholders and community-based organizations serving the Lents community; dates, locations, and participants are as follows:

- Community Conversation #1 – January 14, 2019 – Wattles Boys & Girls Club (31 participants)
- Community Conversation #2 – February 25, 2019 – Wattles Boys & Girls Club (42 participants)

The meeting format for Community Conversation #1, whose attendees were invited via emails and personal phone calls, consisted of welcoming remarks and an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement by Kimberly Branam, Prosper Portland Executive Director, a statement from the Lents Strong Housing Team, and presentations from Prosper Portland and PHB staff. Participants broke into small groups to share their priorities for Lents Town Center Phase 2 including housing, public space, commercial space, and equitable development.

The meeting format for Community Conversation #2, whose attendees were invited via an email to approximately 1,080 recipients, consisted of a presentation from Prosper Portland staff and small group discussions about project public benefits. Meals and childcare were provided and many of the same participants attended both events.

### Web-Based Open House

Staff hosted a Web-Based Open House using OpenGov (an online engagement tool) from January to February 2019. Prosper Portland promoted the Web-Based Open House via email, in the invitation to the In-Person Open House, and through the Prosper Portland website and social media accounts. A total of 129 participants provided their feedback on Lents Town Center Phase 2 including housing, public space, commercial space, and equitable development.

### In-Person Open House

Prosper Portland hosted an In-Person Open House at Wattles Boys & Girls Club on February 11, 2019, promoting it with postcards mailed to all residents and businesses within approximately one mile of the development site (a total of 4,560 recipients). In addition, the Lents Strong Housing Team distributed 200 postcards while Prosper Portland sent email invitations to 1,080 recipients on the Lents email list and promoted the event on social media. Staff made translation assistance, meals, and childcare services available at the open house.

The event was an informal, drop-in style format with staff hosting informational displays; 104 individuals attended the event and provided feedback. Project staff gathered community input through direct conversations at each station and attendees were asked to fill out comment forms addressing the following topics:

- Values that project staff heard to-date (see Table 1 below) related to housing, commercial space, open space, and equitable development,
- Specific ideas as provided by community input on how these values could be reflect in future development (see Table 2 below), and
- Key questions to community members: What ideas resonate with you the most? Is there anything you'd like to add?

<b>Table 1. Community Values</b>			
<b>Housing</b>	<b>Commercial Space</b>	<b>Public Space</b>	<b>Equitable Development</b>
<p>Apartments or homes that are affordable for Lents residents.</p> <p>Development that supports a mix of income levels.</p> <p>Family friendly apartments.</p> <p>Homes to support the most underserved members of our community.</p>	<p>Space for business that reflects community and are owned by communities of color (for example Vietnamese, Chinese, Latinx, immigrant and refugee community).</p> <p>A space that bring affordable food options into our neighborhood.</p> <p>Space that builds community.</p> <p>Commercial options that serve the community and bring in people from outside of Lents.</p>	<p>A public space that is active day and night, all year long.</p> <p>A safe public space.</p> <p>A public space that is welcoming to all community members particularly East Portland communities of color.</p> <p>A public space that reflects our community.</p>	<p>Put Lents residents first.</p> <p>Support disadvantaged communities, including communities of color.</p> <p>Include wealth creation opportunities for small businesses.</p> <p>Maintain healthy air for the community and support environmental justice.</p>

<b>Table 2. Ways the Values could be reflected in the Public Benefits of the Development Program</b>			
<b>Housing</b>	<b>Commercial Space</b>	<b>Public Space</b>	<b>Equitable Development</b>
<p>Development project provides Inclusionary Housing units per City of Portland Inclusionary Housing Policy.</p> <p>Affordable units in the development are family-sized units, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom units.</p> <p>Prosper Portland assigns a portion of the property to the Portland Housing Bureau for affordable housing development.</p>	<p>Renovated commercial space.</p> <p>Green Lents Tool Library remains, in smaller footprint.</p> <p>Support tenant improvements for eligible business.</p>	<p>Pavilion.</p> <p>Public bathrooms.</p> <p>Hardscaped treatment or Plaza construction.</p> <p>Permanent public easement.</p> <p>Ongoing operations and maintenance.</p>	<p>Market units through partnerships with Lents-based organizations.</p> <p>Low-diesel construction practices.</p> <p>Flexible affordable housing programming.</p> <p>Tenancing and programming that support communities of color.</p>

Next Steps

Prosper Portland staff is working closely with Palindrome Communities, City of Portland bureau partners (including the Portland Housing Bureau, Portland Parks & Recreation, and the Regional Arts & Cultural Council) and community partners (including the Green Lents Tool Library, Wattles Boys & Girls Club, and the Lents International Farmer’s Market) to define a development concept, program, and suite of public benefits guided by the results of the robust community engagement process.

Staff anticipates it will request the Prosper Portland Board approve a Term Sheet that includes terms for property transaction, development loan, and public benefits at its June 8, 2019 meeting.

### **EQUITY IMPACT**

Throughout the public engagement process staff implemented a targeted strategy to include and amplify the voices of communities of color. The groups for the In-Language Focus Groups were selected based on the race, ethnicity, and language spoken-at-home demographics for the Lents neighborhood. As mentioned earlier, the CELs recruited participants from their communities to attend the focus groups and identified a location regularly used and/or convenient for attendees. For example, the Vietnamese focus group was held at the Ngoc Chau Temple after Sunday services. The In-Language focus groups also included translated written materials and real-time translation of the focus group conversation to allow for a deeper level of participation for these communities.

Prosper Portland staff took steps to help ease the burden of participating in meetings and the community engagement process by providing staff provided meals and childcare. The CELs also re-connected with participants from the focus groups to invite them to the In-Person Open House and were on-hand to greet attendees and provide translation services. In addition, staff was responsive to individual stakeholder requests for information and clarification throughout the process.

The Community Values were developed from what was heard in the four In-Language Focus Groups and in the Community Conversations, highlighting the input from communities of color. The Community Values were the basis for directing the public benefits related to affordable housing, public space, commercial space, and equitable development that will be memorialized in the disposition agreement between Prosper Portland and Palindrome Communities.

While the public engagement process for Lents Town Center Phase 2 was more focused on lifting up voices of the communities of color, and there is still room for improvement. For example, at each public meeting participants were asked to fill out demographic surveys to capture information about who attended the meetings and which communities were participating. Moving forward staff will do more to include vulnerable voices and connect deeper with communities of color, both in the continued conversation for Lents Town Center Phase 2 and in public engagement for additional projects. Through this process it has been made clear that the Lents community is not one unique voice, but a chorus of diverse and divergent opinions about the future of their community.

Staff will continue to engage stakeholders from communities of color and to create a feedback loop of both sharing information with and gathering input from communities of color as Lents Town Center Phase 2 moves into design and construction. Possible ideas for future engagement include attending events where communities already gather, including the Lents Fair, the Lents International Farmers Market, the Portland Mercado, the Asian Health and Services Center, and local elementary schools Kelly and Lent Elementary, and by providing information in multiple languages.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Lents Town Center Phase 2 Site Map

### Lents Town Center Phase 2 Site Map

