



PROSPER
PORTLAND
Building an Equitable Economy

DATE: June 12, 2019
TO: Board of Commissioners
FROM: Kimberly Branam, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Report Number 19-25

Approving the Thirteenth Amendment to the South Park Blocks Urban Renewal Plan and Forwarding to City Council with a Recommendation for Approval

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Adopt Resolution No. 7316

This action by the Prosper Portland Board of Commissioners (Board) would adopt the Thirteenth Amendment (Amendment) to the South Park Blocks Urban Renewal Plan (SPB Plan). If approved, the SPB Plan will be amended to contain two projects that include a public building that benefit the urban renewal area (URA). Specifically, the amendment will allow for potential financial investment in the Multnomah County Central Library (Central Library) located at 801 SW 10th Avenue and the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall (Schnitzer) located at 1037 SW Broadway (see a map in Attachment A).

If approved, this action will supersede Resolution No. 7310 that the Prosper Portland Board approved on May 8, 2019 as that action did not contemplate including the Schnitzer in the SPB Plan.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT AND OUTCOMES

This Amendment and future investment in the Central Library and the Schnitzer align with Prosper Portland goals by forming 21st century civic networks, institutions, and partnerships.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The SPB Plan was adopted by the Prosper Portland Board July 9, 1985 through Resolution No. 3362 and by Portland City Council on July 24, 1985 through Ordinance No. 157635. Purposes of the SPB Plan include “providing improvements necessary to promote downtown as the entertainment and cultural center of the metropolitan area, ... [and to] establish the South Park Blocks as an art and cultural center in the City and region.” While work to improve the Central Library and the Schnitzer is consistent with goals of the SPB Plan, the original plan did not contemplate these projects as a potential public building. In order to comply with Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 457.085 (2)(j), which requires that an urban renewal plan that contains a project that includes a public building to also contain an explanation of how that public building will serve or benefit the plan area, staff are asking the Prosper Portland Board approve an amendment to the SPB Plan that would acknowledge potential investment in the Central Library and the Schnitzer, both public buildings (owned by Multnomah County and the City of Portland, respectively).

Since the SPB Plan stipulates that amendments that identify a project that includes a public building are considered Council-Approved Amendments, staff will be seeking that Portland City Council approves this Amendment to the SPB Plan later in spring 2019.

The Central Library has served the community since 1913, providing a historic public space for all to gather, learn, create, and access the community's collective knowledge and resources. The Central Library receives approximately 665,000 visits per year for a variety of purposes including access to books and periodicals, job search assistance, and public gathering space. The building was renovated in 1997 and Multnomah County staff has more recently identified a series of infrastructure improvements necessary to continue to provide quality services and experience for the community. The proposed improvements span three areas of the library—replace a failing electrical transformer and remedy associated heating, ventilation, and air conditioning issues; increase the safety of the emergency exit path and address longstanding landscaping issues; and create additional quiet meeting and work spaces for small groups. The estimated project cost for these improvements is \$2,000,000 and work is expected to be completed by 2021. Central Library staff, which is currently refining the scopes and collecting bids for the projects, has committed to meeting the terms of the South Park Block Urban Renewal Area funds including the using the money in a way that is consistent with tax increment fund requirements and spending timelines.

The Schnitzer has served the Portland community since 1928. It originally opened as the Portland Publix Theater and then operated as the Paramount Theater. In 1972, the Portland City Council voted to grant exterior of the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall Landmark Status; the building was subsequently placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. The Schnitzer concert hall marquees require critical seismic, electrical, and cosmetic upgrades, including replacing rusting sheet metal; upgrading electrical wiring; updating structural elements to meet current seismic code; restoring the sign cabinet to its original appearance; and replacing the letter boards with electronic LED graphical displays. The estimated project cost for these improvements is \$1,800,000 and work is expected to be completed by late 2020. City of Portland staff, in coordination with Metro, which manages the Schnitzer, is currently working through the permitting process for marquee upgrades, has committed to meeting the terms of the South Park Block Urban Renewal Area funds including the using the money in a way that is consistent with tax increment fund requirements and spending timelines.

EQUITY IMPACT

Amending the SPB Plan to include the Central Library and the Schnitzer has a number of equity impacts and benefits, most notably by providing the opportunity for Prosper Portland to invest in facilities that serves broad members of the Portland community.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK

Prosper Portland staff attended the Downtown Neighborhood Association's Land Use and Transportation Committee meeting on May 21, 2019 and the Portland Business Alliance's Central City Committee meeting on May 30, 2019. At both meetings, staff shared project updates including current affordable commercial projects in the neighborhood (10th & Yamhill and the Joyce Hotel) as well as to inform about the opportunity for Prosper Portland to partner with both Multnomah County and City of Portland to invest remaining public purpose bond funds into two of downtown's cultural anchors—the Central Library and the Schnitzer. Both entities are supportive of the retail projects as well as the investments in these two buildings and of the plan amendment requirement for the investments.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION.

There are no direct financial impacts from this proposed action. However, should this action be approved by the Prosper Portland Board and City Council, staff will likely return to the Prosper Portland Board seeking approvals of intergovernmental agreements with the Multnomah County and the City of Portland.

RISK ASSESSMENT

There are no material risks associated with the proposed Amendment.

ATTACHMENTS

None.