Grant Program Guidelines

Westside TIF District Public Realm Activation

Program Overview

The Westside TIF District Public Realm Activation Grant is a new, one-time program developed to provide near-term funding before the Westside Tax Increment Financing ("TIF") District (the "District") begins generating tax increment revenue, in order to support projects and initiatives that will increase foot traffic and economic activity within the District ("the PRA Grant").

The District was approved by Prosper Portland and the Portland City Council in October 2024. The TIF Plan goals include revitalizing the District over 30 years by attracting large employers, supporting small businesses, improving the public realm, and growing an active, affordable, and inclusive neighborhood. Upon approval, Prosper Portland convened a working group (the "Working Group") comprised of a broad cross section of leaders from the District and commenced a process to create an action plan to guide the first five years of investment in the District (the "Action Plan").

Prior to completion of the Action Plan, a revised financial forecast revealed zero tax increment generation for the first year of the District. In response, Prosper Portland identified non-TIF resources sufficient to meet the initial projected economic development portion of the Action Plan budget for FY2026-27. Considering the revised financial model and limited resources available, Prosper Portland, at the request of the Working Group, elected to pool the funds for a competitive district activation grant program to stimulate economic activity.

Source of Funding

The PRA Grant is funded with a one-time use of program income. The funds were generated from previously owned assets and a loan portfolio specific to the prior River District TIF District and are not allocated to existing commitments in the Broadway Corridor or the Old Town Action Plan. All awards are subject to budget availability.

Eligible Projects

Prosper Portland's goal is to fund a portfolio of public realm activations that will maximize the potential impact of the PRA Grant funding through a diverse mix of inventive projects. As a one-time program, the PRA Grant is purposely casting a wide net and relying on the District's constituents to provide creative solutions for activation.

Public realm activation projects may include, among other things, physical improvements, program or operational support, and lighting or art installations. Projects must be executed within the District and be publicly accessible. Projects should demonstrate a sustained public realm or economic impact beyond the grant-funded activity period, including a plan for continuation, maintenance, repeat visitation, business engagement, or measurable economic benefit.

Grant Awards

The total funding available is $500,000, which will be distributed through a competitive application process. Individual grant awards will range from $25,000 to $150,000. Requested amounts should align

with the project's scope, location, duration, and potential economic impact. Partial awards may be made depending on the overall balance of selected projects.

A grant agreement will define the terms and conditions of the funding and will serve as the legal commitment of both parties regarding the scope, terms, and the amount of funds committed. Funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis according to the disbursement schedule set forth in the executed grant agreement.

Selection Process

Applicants may apply through Prosper Portland's website during the application window and will be asked to address the evaluation criteria through specific questions regarding the proposed project. An evaluation committee made up Prosper Portland staff, members of the Working Group, and/or other community representatives (the "PRA Grant Evaluation Committee") will score applications. The highest-scoring applications will advance to a second round, where the committee will identify a portfolio of projects that collectively will generate the most activation and investment in the District. The PRA Grant Evaluation Committee will then forward a recommended project list to Prosper Portland's Executive Director, who will make final award decisions. The PRA Grant Evaluation Committee will strive to recommend a slate of projects that represent a diverse and high impact portfolio.

Evaluation Criteria

Projects that show the strongest potential to generate foot traffic, attract additional funding or partner investment, and support retailers within the District will receive the highest scores. Reviewers will also consider organizational readiness, the completeness of the project plan, and the applicant's capacity to successfully carry out the work. Applications should clearly demonstrate how the project meets or exceeds the following evaluation criteria:

1. **Generate Foot Traffic**
   - Encourage daily visitors to the District.
   - Create community benefit and more reasons to linger in the area.
   - Amplify existing attractions.
   - Offer free or low barriers to participation.

2. **Leverage Additional Investment**
   - Create meaningful engagement with businesses, residents, nonprofits in planning and implementation.
   - Build innovative partnerships, opportunities for volunteers and collaborative efforts.
   - Identify matching funds, co-sponsorships, professional in-kind services and materials, and/or other creative ways to build on the PRA Grant funds.

3. **Stimulate Economic Activity**
   - Link existing or new attractions to businesses to increase patronage.
   - Engage local (District) contractors, subcontractors, vendors, artists.
   - Extend the project impact throughout the District and/or over a longer program/campaign.

4. **Organization and Capacity**
   - Demonstrate organizational capacity to complete the project.

- Standing within the District and/or partnerships with existing organizations in the District.

5. Project Readiness, Feasibility, and Plan

- Feasibility of concept.
- Practicality of timeline and estimated completion date.
- Readiness of project to begin upon funding, including status of permits, vendors, and partnerships.
- Clarity of budget and identified funding gaps.
- Consideration of project life cycle, maintenance, and removal, as necessary.
- Innovative ideas to track and report increased foot traffic and economic activity.

Scoring

Each application will be evaluated across the five primary criteria, resulting in an overall numerical score. For each criterion, an application can receive a rating of Strong (20 points), Adequate (13 points), Limited (5 points), or Nonresponsive (zero points). Strategic consideration points are optional points, to be used sparingly, that an evaluator may add to an application's total to recognize a genuinely exceptional aspect of a project that none of the five evaluation criteria anticipate or capture. These points are not a way to boost a project that merely scored well on the criteria; they exist only for merit that falls outside the established categories, which merit will be explained or documented by the evaluator. The highest scoring applications will advance to a second round of evaluation where the PRA Grant Evaluation Committee will, through discussion and consensus, create a portfolio of projects to recommend for awards.

Eligible Applicants

Any person, business, or non-profit entity operating within the District or any owner of property within the District may apply.

Ineligible Applicants

Ineligible applicants are:

- Members of the evaluation committee and their businesses or organizations.
- Businesses that exclude minors during all business hours.
- Businesses that sell cannabis products containing THC.

Ineligible Funding Uses

Funds cannot be spent on the following:

- Food, alcohol, or cannabis products;
- Inventory;
- Ordinary operating expenses (wages, rent, utilities) where not directly tied to the funded project;
- Equipment unrelated to the funded project;
- Costs outside the Westside TIF District or incurred prior to grant award; or
- Installations in private space that is not publicly accessible.

Religious or political projects or events are also ineligible, as defined below.

Political events. For the purposes of these guidelines, a "political event" is an event where the primary or a significant purpose of the event is to:

- Solicit any money, influence, service or other thing of value or otherwise promote or oppose any political committee;
- Promote or oppose the appointment, nomination or election of a person to a public office;
- Promote or oppose the filing of an initiative, referendum or recall petition;
- Promote or oppose the gathering of signatures on an initiative, referendum or recall petition; or
- Promote or oppose the adoption of a measure or the recall of a public office holder.

Religious events. For the purposes of these guidelines, a "religious event" is an event where the primary or a significant purpose of the event is to promote, support or engage in explicitly religious activities including, without limitation, activities that involve:

- Overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization;
- Religious lectures, lessons and other religious education;
- Distribution of religious publications, films and audio materials; or
- Restricting participation to persons on the basis of their religious beliefs.

An event will not be considered a "religious event" on the basis that the event sponsor is a religious organization; provided that the primary or a significant purpose of the event is not to promote, support or engage in explicitly religious activities.

Award

Applicants receiving the PRA Grant will be notified by email or telephone that their project has been selected. In addition, awards may be announced through a media release and posted on Prosper Portland's website.

Awards are not final until selected recipients and Prosper Portland have entered into a grant agreement, which will define the terms and conditions of the grant and serve as the legal commitment of both parties as to the grant amount, scope, work, budget, reporting, and other requirements.

General Conditions

The following general conditions apply to all awards under the PRA Grant:

- Prosper Portland is the sole authority to determine eligibility under this program.
- Grantees must comply with City of Portland business license requirements and must be registered with the Oregon Secretary of State and in good standing prior to execution of the grant agreement.
- Grantees must complete, sign and submit a W-9 and ACH form prior to execution of the grant agreement.
- Grantees must maintain insurance as set forth in the grant agreement for the duration of the grant.
- Grantees are required to retain records and may be audited.
- Improvements funded by the grant must be maintained in good order.
- The grant will not cover retroactive reimbursements for costs incurred or completed prior to the execution of the grant agreement.

- Grantees must comply with the reporting requirements set forth in the grant agreement, including submission of supporting documentation for incurred costs.
- Grantees may be required to repay grant funds that are used for ineligible expenses, spent inconsistently with the grant agreement, or otherwise due to a material breach of the grant agreement.
- Grantees are required to obtain any required City permits or regulatory approvals for grant-funded work when applicable.
- Grantees must comply with the requirements outlined in their organizational bylaws.
- Grantees must remain in good standing with all Prosper Portland programs and contracts prior to award and throughout the grant period. When applicable, grantees must not be delinquent on loans, taxes, rent, or service delivery agreements.

The Prosper Portland Executive Director, in consultation with the Director of Capital Access and the General Counsel, may revise the PRA Grant guidelines on a going-forward basis as necessary to maintain alignment with Advance Portland, applicable TIF District Action Plans, community action plans, funding-source requirements, or Board direction.