



March 17, 2021

To: Ms. Kimberly Branam Prosper Portland

Attn: Amy Nagy & Berk Nelson

Re: Central Eastside TIF funds

Dear Ms. Kimberly Branam,

The Central Eastside is at a major turning point. After a major period of growth (6100 new jobs in the past 7 years prior to COVID), the Central Eastside, like many other districts around the area, came to a screeching halt with the outset of COVID. There was a 12% job loss in the Central Eastside between 2019 and 3rd quarter of 2020. Very few development projects are slated for the next couple of years, and major employers have voiced concern over perceived safety issues. Because of the diversity of land uses and industries, we are poised to come out of the COVID crisis quicker than other areas, but we need to make sure that the Central Eastside feels like a safe and welcoming place to live, visit and do business.

The Central Eastside Industrial Council recommends to Prosper Portland that priority for uncommitted TIF funds be placed in the activation of the district. By diversifying the use of TIF funds through several activation strategies, the URA funds can be leveraged to maximize community benefit to both existing businesses/residents and visitors alike. These activations further support major City initiatives in the area such as the Earl Blumenauer Bike Bridge opening this Fall and the Green Loop. Project list for activation : Mural corridor, better lighting in the area (could be public art) especially at the entrances to our district, wayfinding, and greening opportunities.

A major obstacle that lies ahead for the Central Eastside is childcare. With only one childcare in the district and major restrictions size and layout, current spaces aren't accessible to daycare providers. Not only is this an issue for employers in the district wanting to attract young talent, this is also a major transportation issue as we endeavor to improve transit to the area. We ask that you encourage the development of affordable daycare in all TIF supported developments. We also know that there will be a rise in vacancies in the area, and that Portland has a major talent pool, but less venture capital especially now. We also know that Portland's racist past has hindered people of color from getting access to affordable workspace in the Central City.

We would like to propose the use of URA funds to support the activation of underutilized space through:

1. an aggressive landlord/tenant matchmaking program that encourages below market short term leases as the better alternative to vacant space
2. tenant improvements to subdivide space and allow several users to efficiently share leases

3. the creation of affordable (below market) work spaces for makers and start-ups
4. the prioritization of BIPOC business growth and a mentorship program in place to support businesses in these incubator/start up spaces

We thank you for your consideration of these recommendations to ensure that the Central Eastside comes out of this crisis stronger than before it began.

Sincerely,



Kate Merrill  
CEIC Executive Director



Deane Funk  
CEIC Board President