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Accept Public and Private Space Activations Update

Report

The city's neighborhoods, commercial districts, and downtown were significantly impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of stay-at-home orders and other public health measures implemented to protect the overall community. While data shows that these measures were critical to saving the lives of Portlanders, our office buildings and storefronts, streets and public spaces were left vacant. Small businesses and neighborhoods have struggled to remain solvent and community members have lacked options to gather and connect.

In response, the City of Portland (City) bureaus including Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), Prosper Portland, Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) in partnership with City Council are making ongoing focused efforts to ease permitting restrictions, temporarily waive fees, provide planning and activation technical assistance, and provide programming and materials to activate public and private spaces with the goal of bringing people back into our neighborhoods and commercial districts. Staff will present an overview of our coordinated efforts, including a schedule of upcoming summer events underway in partnership with small business and community partners, as well as longer term policy considerations for City Council if similar programming and public realm use is of more permanent interest.

Programs and initiatives include the Healthy Business Permit and Play Streets; cultural plaza, small business and community based events and programming; and the PDX Recovery & Events Action Tables. These pilot efforts have demonstrated near and longer term interest from small businesses and community organizations to utilize public space and right-of-way. It has also revealed there is a significant amount of coordination required to navigate individual bureaus' policies and permitting procedures, as well as the need to provide technical assistance for plaza set-up (including materials for placemaking) and resources for ongoing operations and management of the space. Any of these items can create barriers for communities and small businesses to access and program public space. In response to community interest, Bureaus are proving that we can work collaboratively to undertake this work, but it comes at staff opportunity costs and trade offs, including forgone revenue generation from parking and permitting fees.

PBOT's Healthy Business program allows local businesses to creatively use street space to safely serve their customers. Since the program started in May 2020, PBOT issued over 1,000 Healthy Businesses permits and 181

Introduced by

[Mayor Ted Wheeler](#)

Bureau

[Prosper Portland](#)

Prepared by

Amy Nagy

Date Prepared

June 14, 2021

Requested Council Date

June 23, 2021 12:00 pm

Requested Agenda Type

Time Certain

Confirmed Time Certain

Requested Start Time

09:45 am

Time Requested

30 minutes

pickup/drop-off zones in 2020 free of charge to permittees. Approximately 20% of permits were issued to businesses owned by Black, Indigenous and other people of color. In September 2020, PBOT launched a public survey as part of its evaluation of the program. The survey's 3,000 plus respondents overwhelmingly supported the program.

- 92% of all survey respondents reported visiting a Portland establishment that was doing business this summer in the public right-of-way, such as on the sidewalk or in the street.
- 78% of respondents felt safe visiting businesses outdoors, given concerns about COVID-19.
- 94% of survey respondents felt that, as COVID-19 continues to impact businesses, street space should continue to remain open for business use.

Prosper Portland has partnered with community based business and neighborhood organizations to sponsor a sequence of pop up small business events and activations that provide community “catch-up” spaces and showcase businesses. Some of these efforts have included:

- Launching the #BeTheChangePDX social media campaign and Shop Local website, focused on supporting and promoting BIPOC-owned businesses in the city.
- Supporting the Old Town Community Association collaboration with adjacent businesses to sponsor “The Market” featuring local vendors on NW Davis throughout the summer months.
- Sponsored the sixth-annual My People’s Market, at the corner of NW 5th Ave. and Davis Street, featured nearly 100 BIPOC-owned businesses. This sold-out event was held in late September.
- Winter Wonderland with Mike Bennet—a partnership with BIPOC artists and youth, each making their own character that were placed within small businesses around the Central City as part of a scavenger hunt to encourage people to find the characters while visiting small local businesses.
- Working with BikeTown to create a video encouraging residents to explore and support the central city.
- Storefront activation at 10Y (10th & Yamhill SmartPark Garage) featuring the Winter Lights Festival – highlighting BIPOC artists as well as a spring-summer activation with Mercatus businesses, live music, and adjacent food truck in partnership with Portland Made.
- Community Plaza at the North Park Blocks along Flanders Street and Park and 8th Avenues featuring window and storefront installations along with community event activation with street murals and performances with support from the Destination Ready Grant sponsored by Travel Oregon.
- Community Plaza at the Portland Opera dedicated to highlighting the arts and locally-made products and partnering with community based organizations and feature BIPOC artists with support from the Destination Ready Grant sponsored by Travel Oregon.

The Bureaus wish to pursue a more permanent and comprehensive public space activation program that builds on these prior efforts. The goal is to make a greater amount of the city's public realm more accessible, safe, and inclusive to inspire small businesses and communities to come together as stewards of these spaces for play, socializing, physical activity, and commerce. Over the next year, we will partner to create a scope for program development and a businesses plan that will encompass planning and programming, materials, and ongoing operations and maintenance.

Impact Statement

 [Public and Private Space Activations Update](#) (34.05 Kb)

Agenda Items

477 Time Certain in [June 23-24, 2021 Council Agenda](#)

General information

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 [711](#) Oregon Relay Service

City of Portland, Oregon



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IMPACT STATEMENT

Legislation title: Accept Public and Private Space Activations Update (Report)

Contact name: Amy Nagy

Contact phone: 503-823-3351

Presenter name: Lisa Abuaf (Prosper Portland), Art Pearce (Portland Bureau of Transportation)

Project Summary:

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Financial and budgetary impacts:

- There are no financial or budgetary impacts as this is an informational update and does not require any action.
- PBOT, Prosper Portland, and PP&R with some support from the Office of Management & Finance have covered costs through existing individual Bureau budgets together with certain American Rescue Plan (ARP) and outside grants to date.
- The Bureaus in partnership with commissioner offices are submitting a proposal for funding through the first round of American Rescue Plan Local Relief Funds to support the continued approach as described above over the next fiscal year together with supporting an analysis of ongoing program development and business funding needs.
- For any longer term funding, the Bureaus would need to identify an ongoing business plan together with joint funding to be requested via the City’s Fall Budget Management Process.

Community impacts and community involvement:

- Staff used this as an opportunity to work with public and private property owners and cultural-based community organizations to program spaces particularly within the Central City that feel welcoming to all community members, including those who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and People of Color. The following are key partners that have been engaged through these early efforts: the Economic Recovery Task Force; Events and Activation Action Table; Old Town Community Association; Portland Business Alliance, Bricks Need Mortar, Central Eastside Industrial Council; Old Town Community Association, Mike Bennet and BIPOC artists through Winter Wonderland; the Latino Network; Portland Opera and All Classical Portland; Vanport Mosaic; Friends of the Green Loop and others.
- The Healthy Business Permits provided a strategy for the small business community (particularly restaurants) to continue to remain open and serve customers throughout the pandemic.

Budgetary Impact Worksheet

Does this action change appropriations?

- YES:** Please complete the information below.
- NO:** Skip this section

Fund	Fund Center	Commitment Item	Functional Area	Funded Program	Grant	Sponsored Program	Amount