

The Oregonian

Portland Building renovation costs in line with contract, but city should start routine reviews now, audit says

*By Everton Bailey Jr.
October 3, 2019*

An outside audit of the Portland Building's renovation contract found the main contractor has complied with contract terms but said the city should review costs now rather than wait to pore through all the documentation at the end of the years-long project.

The report, released Thursday, said the contract with construction firm Howard S. Wright does not specify when and how to determine whether the actual project price is in line with budget projections and estimations.

City officials and project team members informally agreed to figure out the final cost when the renovation was complete, according to the audit. But auditors said city officials should routinely inspect the books and audit the contractor's records to determine actual expenses subject to review. The audit estimated that city officials can review \$78 million of the \$158 million in contract costs.

Waiting until the end "may be problematic" because the large volume of documents that need to be gone through would place a heavy administrative burden on the city, the report said.

"Given that onerous effort needed, the risk that detailed reviews of all costs will not be diligently performed and potential issues inadvertently overlooked is heightened," according to the report.

The renovation of the Portland Building, a 15-story high rise next to City Hall that housed about 1,400 workers from city bureaus and Multnomah County offices, was initially scheduled to be completed by the end of 2020. But the latest projections said the building could be occupied again by the end of this year or early next year.

The planned improvements to the building, built in 1982, include seismic upgrades, stopping water from leaking inside and heating, cooling and other system replacements. The city council in 2015 authorized a \$195 million total budget for the project, which tasked Howard S. Wright with overseeing design work, performing reconstruction and relocating workers. The renovation work began the next year.

The contract also includes requirements for how the firm will be paid, submit contract changes and select subcontractors.

Despite raising concern for more routine cost reviews, the audit was largely positive and credited the city and the main contractor for following contract requirements that auditors were able to review. This included reviewed billed costs being accurate, verified and in contract compliance, contract changes supported, and the selection of subcontractors — 140 of them with contracts totaling \$122 million — done prudently.

Tom Rinehart, the city's chief administrative officer, said the reconstruction project team was encouraged by the audit's findings and that the plan is to maintain its processes.

He said he agrees that final payment calculations should be "started sooner rather than later," and that lessons learned from the building reconstruction should be passed on to other city bureaus.

“We will make sure the learning from this project informs and strengthens future city projects,” Rinehart said in a statement.

The audit comes four months after a city auditor’s office review of the project said the Portland Building renovation’s planned total \$195 million budget had grown to \$214 million. That report called for more transparency and said that the city missed the opportunity to spend nearly \$1 million in equity grants.

Rinehart and Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler disagreed with the June report, saying the project was still on budget, that additional costs factored into the office’s review such as furniture and technology equipment were never part of the renovation project scope and that the equity grants were meant to be released at the end of the project.

The new audit was done by Sacramento-based firm Sjoberg Evashenk Consulting on behalf of the Portland City Auditor’s Office. The firm was hired in March.

The report found the contractor billed almost \$94 million of its \$158 million contract as of March and that nearly all costs were accurate.

[Read the report here.](#)

Portland police sergeant who lied about law to get protester to stop filming him suspended for one day

By Maxine Bernstein

October 2, 2019

A Portland police sergeant who lied about the law to get a protester to stop filming him and other officers was suspended without pay for one day, according to recently released police records.

The bureau’s Police Review Board found Sgt. Erin Smith didn’t knowingly violate the police directive on truthfulness. The board is made up of officers, a representative from the city’s Independent Police Review and a citizen member.

Two months later, the Citizen Review Committee voted 7-0 that Smith had violated the truthfulness policy in a case involving protester Benjamin Kerensa. The committee is made up of members of the public who hear appeals of police investigative findings.

Police Chief Danielle Outlaw concluded the matter was a performance issue rather than a violation of the truthfulness directive, and that Smith deserved a one day suspension.

She found Smith had inappropriately used deception, which is allowed in limited circumstances for legitimate law enforcement purposes, according to a summary released of findings by the chief and the review board.

"Chief Outlaw determined the employee was not untruthful in their accounting of the events that occurred, and found the employee inappropriately applied the exception in the Truthfulness Directive," the summary said.

The sergeant acknowledged he misrepresented the law to get Kerensa to stop videotaping him during a Nov. 30, 2016, demonstration in front of fuel storage facilities in Northwest Portland over the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Smith admitted to falsely telling Kerensa that he didn't have the right to film officers and threatened Kerensa that he could be arrested if he didn't stop.

Smith's supervisor, Traffic Capt. Stephanie Lourenco, found Smith's deception was permitted under an exception in the policy that says deception is permitted when "necessary to protect the physical safety" of an officer.

Four members of the Police Review Board voted not to sustain the untruthful allegation and one member said Smith should be exonerated. They argued that Smith didn't knowingly violate the directive and that "deception" is an acceptable de-escalation tactic.

The board recommended a debriefing with the sergeant to discuss proper use of deception.

Kerensa, who had filed the complaint, said he was disappointed by the review board's findings.

The ACLU has worked to ensure that police officers know that the public has the right to record them. Agency lawyers helped represent a woman who was detained by transit police in 2013 for video-recording them arresting a stranger on a public sidewalk just outside downtown Portland. The woman, Carrie Medina, took police to court in 2015, and as part of a settlement reached, the city of Gresham agreed to pay \$85,000 to Medina, and police in Gresham and Portland enacted new policies about the rights of bystanders to record their actions in public. The Portland police adopted a new policy in October 2016.

Kerensa is OK with the one day suspension but said he's upset that the review board didn't recognize the officer violated policy and law. It shows "their continued disregard for citizens rights to film officers as protected under state law and the Oregon and U.S. Constitution," he said.

"It was pretty clear based on the memorandum remarks that the Chief of Police and (Police Review Board) still don't understand their legal obligation to allow citizens to film," he added.

Smith's case was among a number of police investigations examined by the Police Review Board between Nov. 17, 2018, and July 29. The bureau's website recently published a summary of those cases. The summary doesn't identify the officers involved and often redacts key facts.

Other cases included:

- An officer who was fired after writing a false report about his police car crash in 2016 and gave an account of the crash that didn't fit evidence from the scene. Police declined to identify the officer who was fired. A public records request is pending.
- An officer retired instead of facing a proposed one-week suspension without pay after inappropriately recommending a recent retiree for the police retire/rehire program even though that retiree didn't pass a firearms qualification test.
- An officer was suspended without pay for two weeks after "spark-testing" a Taser stun gun on himself or herself in a public place where civilians were present in violation of police training. The same officer was found to have been unprofessional by hugging and kissing a fellow officer while on duty.
- A police supervisor was suspended for one week for singing the lyrics of an undisclosed song in front of members of other agencies, using poor judgment and acting unprofessionally. The majority of the board also found the song constituted a violation of the city rule against workplace harassment and discrimination. The board summary redacted the name of the song, where it was sung and the supervisor's name.
- One-day unpaid suspensions were given to an officer who used OC chemical spray on two unidentified bystanders when trying to stop a suspect trying to take an officer's bike during a protest and an officer who contacted juveniles on social media late at night.

Officers actions in three police shootings and one death in custody were found by the board and chief to have followed bureau policy:

- A police exchange of gunfire with a burglary suspect, Sarah Michelle Brown, on March 8, 2018 at 806 S.W. King Ave. The board found officers' firing at the suspect after issuing commands to drop her gun were reasonable considering the severity of the threat. Brown, now 28, was wounded. She's facing allegations of attempted murder, burglary and other charges in connection with the shooting.
- The police fatal shooting of John A. Elifritz, 48, who had a knife inside the CityTeam Ministries homeless shelter at 526 S.E. Grand Ave. on April 8, 2018. The board found the officers' actions were "reasonable and justified given the threat of death or injury." Some board members said a police supervisor "should have taken a more assertive role as a scene supervisor" and detailed roles for each officer as the encounter unfolded, and remained in a supervisory role after the shooting to make sure all necessary notifications were made. The board also recommended further training for police on active threats when the suspect isn't armed with a gun but a knife. The board further urged the bureau to consider when it's appropriate to release video footage of a shooting to the public. Elifritz's family is suing the city, contending excessive force was used and police failed to take steps to de-escalate the confrontation.
- The board found the Sept. 30, 2018 police fatal shooting of Patrick Kimmons, 27, in downtown Portland was within bureau policy, noting that Kimmons posed a threat to the two officers who arrived on scene first and a threat to the community. Kimmons had shot two other men and ran toward the officers holding a gun in a downtown parking lot when he was fatally shot by two officers, police said. Kimmons turned to run between two parked cars and collapsed from the gunshots. The board found police stopped firing once Kimmons fell to the ground. The two officers fired a total of 12 shots. Kimmons was hit nine times and pronounced dead a short time later at OHSU Hospital, police said. Again, the board recommended that the police training division re-emphasize for sergeants the need to supervise a scene and not "directly engage in operations" except in unusual circumstances.
The board also unanimously agreed that the bureau should reviews its policy and consider releasing video evidence of a police shooting to the public much quicker to "resolve any misconceived notions of misconduct" and to "strengthen transparency."
- The board found that officers assisting Portland State University officers in restraining a man who was reported to have been running in the streets and yelling in November 2018, and later died at a hospital, acted according to bureau policy. Officers restrained the man, Richard A. Barry, 52, near Southwest 6th Avenue and Mill Street, and had him taken by ambulance to a hospital, where he died on Thanksgiving. The board advised officers receive more training on excited delirium.

An autopsy found Barry died of acute methamphetamine and cocaine toxicity and the manner of death was ruled an accident resulting from Barry's ingestion of a large amount of controlled substances, according to police.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Portland zoning plan undergoes scrutiny

By Chuck Slothower

October 3, 2019

The Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability's Better Housing by Design proposal to encourage development of more densely built apartments in certain areas encountered a somewhat mixed reception by the City Council on Wednesday.

Commissioners received about two hours of public testimony from residents, nonprofit advocates and development professionals on the proposal, which is essentially the multifamily companion to the Residential Infill Project that is meant to create more small dwellings in single-family zones.

Better Housing by Design applies to only 8 percent of the city by land area. Areas zoned for multi-dwelling residential (designated by the city as R1, R2, R3 and RH) are concentrated in East Portland, but also include the Alphabet and King's Hill historic districts in Northwest Portland and sections along Southwest Barbur Boulevard.

The rezoning project would allow many more apartments on some parcels, which would benefit nonprofit affordable-housing developers.

"Better Housing by Design is a game changer for affordable housing developers," said Julie Livingston, senior project manager for Home Forward. (Livingston also serves as the Portland Design Commission's chairwoman, but said she was representing Home Forward in her testimony).

Livingston gave the example of a 5-acre parcel Home Forward owns in East Portland. Under current R2 zoning, with inclusionary housing, the parcel could host up to 144 units. The proposed zoning would raise the development potential to 330 units, she said.

Better Housing by Design allows for more low-rise housing options, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability project manager Bill Cunningham said.

"The basic message is houses are out of reach for the majority of Portlanders now," he said. "And knowing that we have a broad range of household types, we know we need a broader range of housing opportunities for people."

He added, "Housing production hasn't kept up with the growth in the number of households in Portland. So more people vying for not enough housing does drive prices up."

Commissioners pushed back on some aspects of the proposal. Amanda Fritz said the city should encourage larger units.

"I want to make sure that we're going to have family housing in Portland as well as affordable housing," she said. "I don't think the two should be mutually exclusive."

Cunningham noted the program includes bonuses for three-bedroom homes at moderate income levels.

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty said the city should first release a report, expected later this year, on the racist history of Portland zoning.

“I’m very concerned that we are just solidifying the racially segregating housing policy first, and then we go talking about how we’re not going to displace people after we’ve already confirmed that the racist policy is fine and that we’re going to keep it status quo,” she said.

Representatives of numerous organizations testified in favor of the project, including a Portland Public Schools staffer who said stable housing contributes to learning.

Mayor Ted Wheeler continued the hearing until Nov. 6, when he said the City Council will hear more testimony on Better Housing by Design. Written testimony will be accepted until then.

The Portland Business Journal

Can Prosper Portland Deliver on the Redevelopment of the U.S. Post Office Site?

By Jon Bell

October 3, 2019

As the city agency guides development of the massive Broadway Corridor project, questions linger about its ability to pull it off

The vision was ambitious: 1.5 million square feet of Class A office space, 2,200 housing units, 200,000 square feet of retail, 200 hotel rooms and more than 10 acres of public parks and green space, all of it spread across 33 acres of riverfront property in Portland’s South Waterfront owned by the Zidell family.

It would have been one of the biggest transformations to the cityscape since the Pearl District or the first phase of South Waterfront, one that would have fully turned the neighborhood away from its industrial past and positioned it for a more urban future.

It was a prospect so promising that the Zidell family, who had been building barges on that 33-acre property for more than five decades, decided in 2016 that it was time to beach the barge business and shift to developing the site.

An initial agreement with the city’s economic development agency, Prosper Portland — then known as the Portland Development Commission — was set to pump nearly \$24 million into the area to help kickstart development. ZRZ Realty, the real estate arm of the Zidell family, hired a top development consultant, commissioned renderings and chose the site for its first building, a 19-story office tower south of the Ross Island Bridge.

Then the deal with Prosper Portland fell apart.

Unable to come to agreement on how to bridge a \$37 million chasm between public and private funding for an expanded development plan, ZRZ and Prosper Portland killed the deal in the summer of 2018. Secret — and reportedly stormy — negotiations to salvage the deal led nowhere, all but grounding the Zidells’ plans indefinitely.

“At this point, we’re looking at all options,” Jay Zidell, president of ZRZ, said earlier this year, “but today we have no path forward.”

Though there were many factors at play on both the public and private side, the end of negotiations marked the latest collapse of a prominent deal that involved Prosper Portland.

Amidst and despite the seeming setbacks, Prosper Portland has now embarked on one of the most ambitious development projects of its entire 61-year existence. Known as the Broadway Corridor, the development is anchored by the 13.5-acre U.S. Post Office property at Northwest 9th and Hoyt. A master plan calls for more than 4 million square feet of new development.

There is excitement about the opportunity to bring life to a tired pocket of downtown Portland, but there are doubts as well about Prosper Portland's ability to pull it off. There is the track record of big deals coming up short, and Prosper Portland is a very different agency than the one responsible for some of Portland's most-heralded city-backed developments like the Pearl District and the first phase of South Waterfront. The agency is much smaller, has relatively new leadership, and its mission has expanded to include social equity and inclusion. Not everyone agrees that large-scale real estate developments are the best way to fulfill that new mission.

"I think Prosper Portland should just sell it and let the private sector take over," said one prominent Portland commercial real estate broker who wished to remain anonymous because of potential deals nearby. "With the way they do business? It's a long shot they'll ever be able to make it happen."

An agency evolves

Portland voters created the Portland Development Commission in 1958 as the city's economic development and urban renewal agency. Over the years, it has managed 25 Urban Renewal Areas and programs that have helped foster new development across Portland. Notable projects have included Pioneer Courthouse Square, the Pearl District and the MAX line to Portland International Airport.

Before the Portland Housing Bureau was spun out of PDC, the agency also made thousands of loans to Portlanders for home repairs. It also has played key roles in attracting and retaining companies in Portland, including wind energy companies Vestas and Avangrid Renewables.

Up until the Great Recession, the agency had been focused much more narrowly on urban renewal through real estate development. But the downturn sapped those sails, and when the agency emerged after the recession it was much leaner than it had been. At its peak, Prosper Portland had more than 200 employees and a roughly \$350 million budget. Today it employs 80-some people and has a budget of \$210 million. The agency's focus has also expanded to a broader mission of spurring economic development.

At the same time, the PDC has been contemplating its financial future. The agency has long relied on tax increment financing — a funding mechanism that borrows future property tax revenues to pay for new development — in the URAs, but those districts are all set to expire within the next decade or so.

A leadership change in 2016 also heralded in a new era when Kimberly Branam took over as executive director from Patrick Quinton. A graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School and former staffer for U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer, Branam spearheaded the name change from PDC to Prosper Portland to better reflect what she called the agency's "ongoing transformation and commitment to spurring inclusive economic growth."

"Our name worked really well when our primary focus was to guide urban renewal for the city," Branam said in 2017, "but we've been doing a lot more than that."

A Vision on Broadway

Though the larger Broadway Corridor project encompasses some 34 total acres and wraps in several other Prosper Portland properties, the crown jewel of the plan is the 13.5-acre property at

Northwest 9th and Hoyt. For years it was home to a giant U.S. Post Office facility, but in recent decades it's been viewed as an impediment to the development potential of the neighborhood. As the Pearl District evolved to the west of the site and Old Town Chinatown saw renewed development, the presence of a commercial postal operation in the neighborhood made less and less sense.

As far back as 2000, the agency had been eyeballing the property. Don Mazziotti, head of PDC between 2000 and 2005, said he talked to the postmaster in 2001 about what it would take to acquire the site. A deal didn't come together then, but the property stayed on Prosper Portland's radar.

In 2016, while Prosper Portland was under the watch Quinton, a deal finally came together and the agency acquired the property for \$88 million.

Since then, Prosper Portland has been working on a master plan for the post office site and the entire Broadway Corridor. It has convened focus groups and a stakeholder steering committee, which selected Denver's Continuum Partners as a development advisor.

"There are very few opportunities in downtown Portland, or in any major urban city across the country, where you have an aggregated amount of land in a central location where you have an opportunity to create a major employment center," said Frank Cannon, development director for Continuum, which will likely see the master planning process through its completion and then become the vertical developer of several of the post office parcels.

Sarah Harpole, project manager for Prosper Portland, said the preferred concept is an "office heavy" one that will focus development on the portion of the site north of Northwest Johnson Street, where buildings can hit 400 feet tall. About two-thirds of the development is envisioned as office, with about a third dedicated to housing.

The Portland Housing Bureau acquired about 16 percent of the site along with Prosper Portland and will likely develop affordable housing on its portion; Harpole said any market rate housing projects will also have to comply with the city's Inclusionary Housing policy that requires 10 percent of units to be set aside for people who make 60 percent of the median family income.

The preferred concept also incorporates a central open space and a portion of the Green Loop, a linear park that will connect downtown with other areas of the city.

Cost-wise, it's too early to know just how much investment will be required to realize the full Broadway Corridor development. Harpole said an initial estimate of early stage infrastructure projects landed at around \$50 million. She also said that Prosper Portland has about \$35 million in tax increment financing in the River District URA budget earmarked for site preparation. Additional revenue could eventually come from long-term leases on, or the sale of, parcels within the post office site.

As for a timeline, Prosper Portland hopes to have its plan submitted to the Portland Design Commission this fall, with hearings later this year and approval in early 2020. Construction of a new retail post office operation on the site — a condition of the 2016 sale — could wrap up by the end of 2020; some minor environmental remediation work and then demolition of the existing post office facility could begin by early 2021. Development would occur in phases over the ensuing 15 years or more.

"This project represents the single biggest opportunity to add mixed-income housing, diversity of employment, the extension of the North Park blocks, all in a place where the city and region have invested in transit infrastructure," said Nolan Lienhart, director of planning and urban

design for ZGF Architects, which has been working on the Broadway Corridor project since 2015. “I really feel we’ve got a great opportunity ahead of us.”

Doubts linger

There is broad agreement about the transformative potential of the Broadway Corridor project. There's less consensus on whether having Prosper Portland lead a large-scale development is the best approach. Skeptics point to the breakdown in negotiations between ZRZ Realty and Prosper Portland for the next phase of South Waterfront development as a stumble that could happen again.

To be fair, there are some notable differences between the two projects. Prosper Portland didn't own the South Waterfront property. It was investing to provide the infrastructure that would make ZRZ's vision a reality. The agency did agree to up its investment in South Waterfront to accommodate ZRZ's expanded plans for the development. But the city's resources are finite, and it wasn't able to bridge the funding gap.

BROADWAY CORRIDOR, BY THE NUMBERS

Broadway Corridor is an ambitious development opportunity centered on the former U.S. Post Office site in the Pearl District. Prosper Portland is spearheading the effort.

- 4 million: Estimated total square footage that could be developed, including office, retail and commercial
- 15: Minimum number of years over which Prosper Portland envisions the development to unfold

As the owner of the Broadway Corridor parcels, Prosper Portland will have more control of what unfolds. As with South Waterfront, the availability of public funding could again become an issue, though Prosper Portland's ability to sell or lease parcels will provide the agency with some revenue options.

Owning the property is also no guarantee a deal will materialize. Prosper Portland has so far failed to deliver a deal to leverage another high-profile property it owns: Centennial Mills.

The agency acquired the 4.4-acre riverfront property in 2000 for \$7.7 million. A 2010 deal with LAB Holding to build a food-centric mixed-use project there fell apart, leading the city to settle a lawsuit for \$200,000. Prosper Portland also bailed on Jordan Schnitzer's \$115 million proposal for Centennial Mills in 2015 — again because of a public funding gap — in a move that peeved the Portland real estate investor.

“I was aghast as a citizen at how callous and irresponsible I believe (Prosper Portland) was in listening to who they work for — and that is the citizens,” Schnitzer said at the time.

A third prospect, Lynd Company, pulled out of negotiations on Centennial Mills earlier this year.

Homer Williams, a well-known Portland developer who helped bring both the Pearl District and the South Waterfront to life — in part by working closely with the Portland Development Commission — said the drastically downsized agency is a shell of its former self.

“When PDC was the old PDC, it had a checkbook and you could make a deal with them,” Williams said. “They were heavily staffed with real estate savvy people. That’s not the case today.”

Prosper Portland's focus on equity and job creation has also changed the equation on projects. The shift is in part a response to rising affordability issues in Portland and to make amends for

past mistakes, including PDC's role in condemning areas in North and Northeast Portland that displaced entire African American neighborhoods with little or no restitution.

Cannon, of Continuum, said the agency's approach on Broadway Corridor, putting equity and community benefits first, is a unique and admirable one.

"This project is trying to address not only the successful redevelopment of the site . . . but to also bring different voices to the table that have not been a part of this before," he said. "That is a very valuable perspective to have."

Prosper Portland's Highs and Lows

1958 — Created as the Portland Development Commission

1959 — PDC and the city begin urban renewal in the South Auditorium Renewal Project in downtown

1963 — PDC starts urban renewal work that would eventually displace the African American community near Legacy Emanuel hospital

1978 — PDC is funding 24 neighborhood conservation projects and had rehabbed more homes than any other U.S. city

1984 — Pioneer Courthouse Square, a project supported by urban renewal and PDC, opens.

1998 — River District URA created, leads to booming development in the Pearl District

2000 — PDC acquires Centennial Mills for \$7.7M

2009 — Great Recession leads to a scaled-down PDC

2015 — PDC walks away from Jordan Schnitzer's proposal to develop Centennial Mills

2016 — PDC acquires the U.S. Post Office site; Kimberly Branam becomes executive director

2017 — PDC becomes Prosper Portland

2018 — Prosper Portland selects Continuum Partners as Broadway Corridor advisor

2019 — Prosper Portland works to complete master plan for Broadway Corridor, setting the stage for future development

It's perspective that has added to the project's timeline and complexity. The community engagement process for the Broadway Corridor project to date has included 10 focus groups, 19 steering committee meetings and more than a dozen stakeholder presentations.

"It took them a year or more to go through the public process," said one local executive who asked to remain anonymous due to prior involvement with the agency. "The amount of time and money spent on that was really absurd."

Jean-Pierre Veillet, founder of Portland-based Siteworks Design Build, received a loan from Prosper Portland for his firm's first multifamily development more than a decade ago. He's a fan of the agency's equity focus and has incorporated those same values into some of his own projects, including the family-friendly Sunshine Portland apartments and the headquarters for the nonprofit Youth Music Project.

As a developer, though, he's quick to add that projects need to pencil out.

"I'm totally for an ambitious move and social justice, and everybody's got to have the opportunity to participate," he said. "But it's also got to make financial sense."

Broadway Corridor has huge potential, but Veillet said there might have been better ways for Prosper Portland to leverage its initial \$88 million investment or other monies it ends up investing.

“We need to look at smaller investments in more people rather than a gargantuan investment,” Veillet said. “We should take that money and spread it across 500 projects instead of one big one.”

Big Picture

Despite the enormity of the Broadway Corridor project and the investment it will take to pull it off, it is central to Prosper Portland’s strategic plan. Branam has called it “a project of regional importance that will have national interest.”

Though it’s come up short on some real estate projects, Prosper Portland has had some big wins. The agency played a huge role in paving the way for the Pearl District and the first phase of development in South Waterfront. It’s fueled projects in Old Town Chinatown, and its development work has helped transform the Lents Neighborhood in Southeast Portland.

When asked about the collapse of the Centennial Mills and the ZRZ Realty deals, Prosper Portland’s Harpole pointed to the environmental issues at Centennial Mills and the lack of ownership of the South Waterfront property.

“This is different than some of those,” Harpole said of the post office site. “There isn’t a site that’s more primed for development right now.”

It helps, too, that Prosper Portland selected a development advisor with a strong track record. Continuum Partners has earned wide praise for its role as master developer on the \$500 million Denver Union Station Transit Center redevelopment, a 14-year project that’s spurred an estimated \$2 billion in new investment.

“They could not have a better partner than Continuum,” Williams said. “These guys are what I call enlightened developers. They really get it.”

There’s one other factor that Prosper Portland’s got on its side, too: time.

Quinton, the agency’s former executive director, said Prosper Portland acquired the post office property knowing that it was a long-term play, not for this development cycle, but for the future. Broadway Corridor may not materialize in just a few years, but then again, neither did the Pearl District or South Waterfront.

“These are long-term, district-scale projects that happen over multiple generations,” he said. “People’s impressions of this will flip-flop many times over the years, but in 15 or 20 years, we’ll be able to take an objective look at what’s really gone on. It’s hard to be patient and justify the public expenditure on something that seems to take so long, but this is why you have an agency like this. Parts of the city that people take for granted today are the result of long-term projects like this.”