

# NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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# ...Broadway Corridor

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Prosper Portland agreed to designate the Healthy Communities Coalition as its negotiating partner to hash out the terms of the CBA. Since formal talks started last summer, coalition representatives have met more than 18 times with Prosper Portland officials and representatives of the developer, Continuum Partners. Continuum, based in Denver, was selected by Prosper Portland's board in a unanimous April 2018 vote to serve as the agency's "master development partner" for the Broadway Corridor project. The exact details of Prosper Portland's relationship with Continuum are a little murky, but basically Continuum gets the exclusive right to buy and develop the massive USPS site at fair market value in exchange for committing to the CBA and serving as an uncompensated master plan adviser to Prosper Portland before the work begins. Prosper Portland will cover the costs of demolition of the existing buildings and installation of roads, water and sewer connections. In January, Prosper Portland also hired Continuum at \$70,000 a month to serve as an owner's agent overseeing demolition and site prep.

The Healthy Communities Coalition wants the CBA to result in good union jobs for local residents — both during the building phase and when the development is complete. The coalition also wants enforceable targets for the participation of women and minorities in construction, both as apprentice and journey-level workers and as contractors. And it wants the work to be done by "responsible contractors," which the coalition defines as companies that provide full family health benefits, that are enrolled in state-certified apprenticeship programs, and that don't have a record of violating labor and workplace safety laws.

Prosper Portland initially aimed to complete the CBA negotiations by April 2019, then June, then December, then February 2020. It's now June 2020, and the first site prep work is set to begin in July. At its June 10 meeting, Prosper Portland approved a \$1.3 million contract with McDonald Excavating, Inc. for demolition and soil remediation of a vehicle maintenance facility on the north side of the property, and a \$4.4 million contract with O'Neill Walsh to build a temporary post office on the ground floor of an existing park-

ing structure so that demolition can begin on the main structure. Both firms are union-signatory.

But there's still no CBA.

For months, Coalition members have been reluctant to go public about their difficulty getting an acceptable CBA, not wanting to alienate their negotiating partners while there's some hope of a deal.

"It appears that we really have reached a stuck place," says Healthy Communities Coalition spokesperson Lisa Hubbard. "We're pretty frustrated, to say the least, with where things are."

Coalition leaders are drafting a letter to Mayor Ted Wheeler and City Council, which they'll send in the coming weeks, asking them to intervene in negotiations.

Continuum did not respond by press time to messages left by the *Labor Press*. But individuals with direct or indirect knowledge of the talks describe several sticking points. Continuum is balking at requiring construction contractors to provide full family health benefits. There's also been resistance to having community groups oversee compliance with the targets for women minority and apprentice participation. That community oversight has been part of every other CBA on other recent City projects, says Operating Engineers Local 701 Field Representative Nate Stokes.

"We need to have oversight to make sure contractors are doing what they say they're going to do," Stokes said. "To make sure we're getting the numbers for women, minority and apprentices, we need to have some sort of accountability."

Coalition members also want Continuum to sign a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) committing to use union labor. They say Continuum doesn't want to do that until it selects a general contractor, but Continuum did pledge to negotiate a PLA at that point.

Continuum is also reportedly raising objections to paying the prevailing wage for construction work. That took coalition negotiators by surprise given that Prosper Portland's November 2017 description of the project — which Continuum based its bid on — said "construction work on the site is subject to Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industry (BOLI) prevailing wage rates."

Prosper Portland Executive Director Kimberly Branam says that wording was potentially confusing, because only some parts of the project are actually subject to a legal requirement to pay prevailing wage. Oregon's prevailing wage law applies to public construction projects and to public-private partnerships

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## CORRECTIONS

**DCU Machinists are in Lodge 1005.** In an article about negotiated furloughs at the City of Portland in our June 5 issue, when listing the unions that make up the District Council of Trade Unions at the City of Portland, we wrongly said city Machinists were in Lodge 63. They're in Lodge 1005.

**Those Local 701 members were at Legacy Good Sam, not OHSU!** In a photo spread on union-branded face masks, a caption incorrectly identified a crew of Operating Engineers, saying they worked at OHSU, when in fact they work at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital. We'd like to apologize to the entire crew for that embarrassing screw-up.

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