



**PROSPER  
PORTLAND**

Building an Equitable Economy

## Alberta Commons Tenant Affordability

As the construction of Alberta Commons nears completion, Prosper Portland is beginning a first review of applications for its affordable commercial tenancing program at the site. The program will follow a rolling, first-come first-serve review process until all spaces are filled in the Natural Grocers-anchored project on the corner of NE Martin Luther King Boulevard and NE Alberta Street.

Prosper Portland is committed to the success of Alberta Commons to provide needed goods and services to the neighborhood and create lasting, beneficial relationships with the Northeast community.

The agency launched the affordable tenancing program to address a recent dramatic increase in retail rents and decrease in vacancy rates in the city of Portland which have resulted in the displacement of small businesses from Portland's urban neighborhoods. The program offers small, diverse businesses access to affordable commercial space to grow and succeed, advancing Prosper Portland's commitment to generating equitable outcomes from its investments that contribute to shared prosperity throughout Portland.

As an agency, Prosper Portland has embarked on a strategic direction that focuses on building an equitable economy. We work very intentionally on projects and initiatives that realize benefits for all Portlanders – especially Portlanders of color and Portlanders with low incomes – by focusing on four cornerstones: creating vibrant neighborhoods and communities, job creation, advancing opportunities for prosperity and collaborating with partners for an equitable city.

As the city's economic development agency, Prosper Portland continues to support small business and maintains its commitment to support development opportunities to meet community needs. In addition, every project, program or investment now begins with the question: Who will benefit, and how will the agency ensure that equity and inclusion are central considerations in both the process and the outcome?

That is the thinking behind Prosper Portland's investment in affordable commercial space, not only at Alberta Commons but also at two sites in the Lents Town Center and other locations in the future.

Alberta Commons presents a unique opportunity for small businesses, including those owned by people of color, women, and those from low-income neighborhoods, to gain a foothold in the retail mix of the area. The new tenancing program offers affordable commercial space; lease priority to existing local businesses, particularly those owned by people of color; tenant improvement allowance and/or reduced rates; opportunity to build community among tenants; and connections to business-building resources, all designed to lower the barriers to entry for small and emerging businesses.

Available space in the affordable tenancing program at Alberta Commons totals 5,125 square feet and can be divided into smaller units.

For more information visit [prosperportland.us](http://prosperportland.us) or contact program manager Alison Wicks, 503-823-3949 or [wicksa@prosperportland.us](mailto:wicksa@prosperportland.us). Prospective tenants may also reach out to the project broker, Jessie Burke, Workspace, 503-862-3416 or [jessie@urbannestpdx.com](mailto:jessie@urbannestpdx.com) for more information.

# Tubman in Limbo

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

diesel emissions and other air pollutants. School officials said they also want to gather information on Tubman's foundational integrity as it is located next to a hillside—which could take until summer of 2019 to complete.

While outdoor air quality testing has been done at Tubman in the past, no comprehensive indoor air quality study has been completed, Portland Public Schools Chief Operating Officer Jerry Vincent said at last week's school board meeting. The air quality standards have also changed since the most recent air quality test was completed in 2009, Vincent said, so they want to have a third party look over the needs and requirements.

"We don't know what we don't know" said Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero at the School Board meeting.

Tubman Middle holds special significance in the African American community, as its initial opening in 1983 at the former Eliot Elementary School represented a changing in the tides for displacement of black children. Before Tubman, there was not a dedicated middle school in inner North/Northeast. Most black kids before 1983 got dispersed by the school district, through busing, to middle schools outside their communities.

Ron Herndon, director of Albina Head Start, one of the civil

rights activists who helped advocate for opening Tubman as a middle school back then, told the Portland Observer that the health concerns raised are not new. Most recently, Tubman provided temporary space for students from Faubion Elementary, the northeast Portland school which was rebuilt and reopened this fall; and from 2007 to 2012, Tubman served as the girls-only Harriet Tubman Young Women's Leadership Academy.

"I'm just very angry," Herndon said. "It seems as if the closer we get to the opening of Tub-

man, these, these, uh, concerns

are raised. There were children in Tubman, the Tubman site, from the Faubion School all last year. Why weren't health concerns raised then?" Herndon asked.

Herndon said he met with school board members routinely, about twice a month, for over a year regarding the opening of Tubman and not once did they

bring up health concerns. He added that if the school board was concerned for pollution due to Tubman's proximity to Interstate 5, then they should have tested other schools near freeways, like Lincoln High School which sits above I-405 in southwest Portland.

Danise Elijah, a substitute teacher at Open School North, and mother of two Martin Luther King School students, expressed similar outrage over the school board's change in direction.

"This whole situation is ridiculous," Elijah told the Portland

*There were children in Tubman, the Tubman site, from the Faubion School all last year. Why weren't health concerns raised then?*

— Ron Herndon, director of Albina Head Start

Observer. Elijah is worried that Martin Luther King School, which currently serves K-8, may become the backup school for Tubman. Elijah said Martin Luther King School needs to continue its place in the community and not get shorted by drawing attendance boundaries that fail to sustain its students.

She said it was both frustrating and tiring to see the two schools in Portland named for historical black leaders, Martin Luther King and Harriet Tubman, to face such obstacles.

Last year, a plan to open Tubman was postponed a year by then Superintendent Bob McKean. Now the board and Guerrero acknowledge that the challenges they face could force the district to defer opening Tubman and the proposed Roseway Heights Middle School until 2019-20.

The school board last week also deferred action on setting the future school boundaries for Tubman and Roseway Heights, and the eight schools that would be turned into kindergarten-to-fifth grade elementary schools that would send students to them.

A district proposal had called for Boise-Eliot/Humboldt, Irvington, Martin Luther King Jr., and Sabin to convert from K-8 to K-5 schools and sending their students to Harriet Tubman, and for Vestal, Scott, Lee and Rose City Park to become K-5 schools that feed Roseway Heights. A proposal of splitting up the gifted program Access Academy into eight difference locations was taken off the table in order to give more time to find a single site for the school.



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