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## Prosper

cont'd from pg 3

time it was intended to take some pressure – from the increased cost to deliver programs – off of future general fund increases," he said. "SIF allowed us to fare better."

"Many councils in the past have asked agencies and bureaus to consider diversifying revenue models to be less reliant on the general fund," Vickers said. "So Prosper put together a financial sustainability plan that really looked at our investment opportunities and that's what (SIF) is built from."

Prosper Portland reported that SIF has allowed them to fund \$12 million in loans since 2023. Those 22 loans have largely been to small businesses that struggled to find financing, and include McTavish Shortbread,

women's sports-focused venue The Sports Bra, Pan's Mushroom Jerky, Vitalidad Movement Arts Center and Javelina Restaurant, an indigenous cuisine restaurant.

Prosper Portland also reported that 64% of loans supported BIPOC business owners.

### Eyeing An Overhaul?

Alongside concerns about balancing the budget, Dunphy and Green criticized Prosper Portland's somewhat unique structure: the former development commission is run by an executive director who reports not directly to the city but to a volunteer board of five local citizens who are appointed by the mayor and who must be approved by city council.

"Prosper Portland is not our government," Dunphy said. "That is a

separate legal government with their own volunteer, appointed board and their own governance structure, and they have told us they do not listen to us. It's the same as if we were trying to prioritize a \$13 million grant for Portland Public Schools, or to Multnomah County."

Vickers would disagree.

"I grew up in inner Northeast Portland; my family too was impacted by what the former (Portland Development Commission) and the processes that used to occur," Vickers said. "One thing I think is really great about our model and our board is they are in fact volunteer community members. Across the state TIF is (often) administered behind the elected mayor and/or city council. And we've seen, time and again, community members mention

that feels incredibly opaque. And so we have, right now, a board filled with diverse folks – with regard to expertise, experience, perspective, lived experience – who are involved in economic development or small business, who are sitting on our board. They're Portlanders who care about our city and they help make decisions, alongside council and many different efforts."

She added, "TIF districts action plans get vetted and approved by city council. We see it as working alongside council."

Green explained his frustration with Prosper Portland, citing Dunphy's assessment that the agency maintained an "arm's length relationship" with the city.

"I tend to refer to it as a 'lack of democratic oversight' relationship," Green said. "The only

touchpoint I have as an elected leader to bring forth questions of accountability and oversight that my constituents raise, is through the budget-setting process, so I think that's a problem."

### Programs At Risk

During a May 8 city council session, the council heard from a number of Prosper Portland supporters who had benefited from their range of programming or their support of partner organizations' programs. Elena Dubrovsk, a Ukrainian refugee, talked about resettling in Portland and trying to re-establish her career in ophthalmology. Through Prosper Portland-supported programs she was able to study English, obtain textbooks and study materials for a licensing exam, pay for the exam and obtain references from her native country, she said, then quickly landed a job in her field.

Ernesto Fonseca, CEO of Hacienda Community Development Corp., told *The Skanner* that the proposed cuts to Prosper

Portland would mean the end of one of his organization's successful small business programs.

"For communities of color, many of us don't choose the path of college. So either you can be a blue collar worker, or you can start your own business," he said. "Right now, we are serving at maximum capacity, about 53 small business owners that are graduating this year. They have been incorporated, they are doing business, they are just pulling through. (What the cut would mean to us) is that we won't be able to welcome anybody else within the community. What it means to those individuals is that about 53 families at least, in only that one program, won't have a chance to get that kind of help."

He added, "I would rather see a couple of pot holes here and there than not see investment in economic development. It is one of the biggest things that we need to double down on supporting."

## Nike to Start Selling Its Products Directly on Amazon's US Website Again



A man walks with his purchased goods as he shops at a Nike store outside a shopping mall in Beijing, Sunday, May 11, 2025. (AP Photo/Andy Wong)

By **MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer**

Nike is going to start selling its products directly on Amazon's U.S. website for the first time since 2019 as the company looks for more ways to bring goods to customers and boost sales.

Nike, which sells footwear, clothing and other items, cut ties with Amazon at a time when the online retailer was trying to lure big brands to its website. While Nike stopped selling its sneakers and athletic gear directly to Amazon in 2019, Nike's goods were still available on Amazon.com, sold by independent sellers that list their merchandise directly on Amazon's marketplace.

Now Nike is resuming its direct relationship with Amazon.

"Nike is investing in our marketplace to ensure we're offering the right products, best services, and tailored experiences to consum-

ers wherever and however they choose to shop," the company said in a statement. "This includes expanding to new digital accounts, including Amazon in the U.S., new physical partners like Printemps (a French luxury department store chain), elevating retail experiences across the marketplace, and launching Nike's AI powered conversational search to improve our online services."

Amazon is navigating its way through bringing Nike back on board.

"While independent sellers have listed some Nike inventory in our store for many years, Amazon will soon begin sourcing a much wider range of Nike products directly to expand our selection for U.S. customers," an Amazon spokesperson said in a statement. "We value independent sellers, and we're providing an extended period of time for the small number of sellers affected to sell through their inventory of overlapping items."

When Nike announced the pilot program with Amazon.com in 2017, it hoped that it would have more control over the brand. Amazon acknowledged at the time that there were problematic sales of counterfeit goods on its site and implemented some tools to try to stop them.

Nike is reestablishing a more direct relationship with Amazon at a time when its sales are weakening.

In March the Beaverton, Oregon, company reported that its third-quarter sales fell 9% to \$11.27 billion as revenue declined for the Nike brand and Converse.

Jefferies' Randal Konik is supportive of Nike reconnecting with Amazon.

"We like this move by Nike plain and simple," he wrote in a note to clients. "Amazon is the largest e-commerce platform and the move further cements Nike's brand ubiquity."

Shares of Nike rose more than 2% in Thursday afternoon trading.

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