

## Broadway Corridor negotiations stumble

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### Body

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A coalition of local advocates and the development adviser for the massive Broadway Corridor redevelopment have reached an impasse on negotiations for a community benefits agreement, and the coalition has asked Mayor Ted Wheeler to step in.

Negotiations have stretched on for months with development adviser Continuum Partners of Denver. Several disagreements remain, including whether construction workers on the project should have health care benefits.

"We want to be able to define what a responsible contractor is," said Vivian Satterfield, spokeswoman for the Healthy Communities Coalition, a group that has been designated to represent local interests for labor and social justice. "Part of that is offering health care, and Continuum disagrees. "

Wheeler took part in negotiations early on. Now he's being asked to return to the table as the massive redevelopment project hangs in the balance.

"Ultimately, I believe the responsibility is in the mayor's office for this," Satterfield said. "We are signaling that we may be at an impasse in this process. We want City Council to take notice and hear us that we will not participate in this process unless it is racially just. "

The impasse was first reported by the Northwest Labor Press. Prosper Portland has been working to facilitate the negotiations between the Healthy Communities Coalition and Continuum Partners.

The coalition's membership is comprised of multiple community advocacy organizations and labor groups, including the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters, IBEW Local 48, Operating Engineers Local 701 and SEIU locals 49 and 503.

In addition to the community benefits agreement, which would set targets for minority participation, wage standards and benefits, Prosper Portland and Continuum Partners are also negotiating a disposition and development agreement and a master plan for the 32-acre property.

"We're committed to getting it all done, and for us that means what does a win look like for each of the parties and how can we negotiate an agreement that works," said Prosper Portland Executive Director Kimberly Branam.

Wheeler has not indicated whether he would intervene in the negotiations, although those involved said they believe Wheeler will come to the table. Asked directly whether Wheeler would re-engage in the process, spokesman Tim Becker issued a statement saying that Wheeler "is committed to the Broadway Corridor Project, and is working to find ways to see it through to completion. "

Wheeler has weighed in on large development projects before, including Zidell Yards. The South Waterfront mixed-use plan fell apart in 2018 after the city and the Zidell family could not agree on how much each side would pay for public infrastructure.

The COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the Broadway Corridor negotiations. On March 3, shortly before public shutdowns began, the two parties held a marathon negotiation at Prosper Portland's office in Old Town Chinatown.

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"We literally had breakfast, lunch and dinner there," Satterfield said. "We were able to reach tentative agreement on so many provisions on the (CBA) term sheet. "

The pandemic "really shifted a lot of things at every level," Satterfield said. "As a result of that we all extended each other a lot of understanding and little bit of empathy. "

For the Healthy Communities Coalition, the CBA is an opportunity to help right past wrongs. In past large-scale redevelopments, Prosper Portland (under its former moniker of Portland Development Commission) displaced historical neighborhoods of color.

"This project has to be racially just because of the history of this site," Satterfield said.

Old Town Chinatown has historically had significant Chinese-American, Japanese-American and Black populations. In negotiating the CBA, the coalition is looking toward precedents set by other large redevelopments that had CBAs, including the Oakland, California, Army Base redevelopment and the Staples Center in Los Angeles. The coalition and Prosper Portland are working with a number of consultants, including Cecilia Estolano of California-based Estolano Advisors.

"CBAs are a thing," Satterfield said. "There are some sideboards to what defines what a CBA is and what it's not. "

Satterfield acknowledged the coalition has a "contentious relationship" with Continuum. The development adviser was selected in April 2018, in large part due to its commitment to inclusion.

Satterfield participated on the community committee that led to Continuum's selection. "I specifically remember (Continuum CEO) Mark Falcone saying, "We are comfortable executing a community benefits agreement, of course,"" Satterfield said. "We were confident we had a partner who was there. "

Continuum has balked at some provisions demanded by the coalition, including health care coverage for construction workers. In a written statement, Falcone stated that the developer has "struck an appropriate balance. "

"Our unwavering commitment to have all construction jobs on the project pay at prevailing wage and the additional agreements we have reached with the (Service Employees International Union) for wages on janitorial and security are a substantial shift in the private development market for Portland," Falcone stated.

Continuum is receiving a monthly retainer from Prosper Portland as the negotiations drag on. "They continue to be active in all of the negotiations," Branam said.

Meanwhile, all sides acknowledge the economic downturn spurred by COVID-19 has changed the development calculus. Still, the opportunity to redevelop a large swath of close-in Portland is seen as an enticing job for any developer.

"The opportunity to build an entire new neighborhood on prime real estate in downtown Portland is still going to be attractive to the development industry," Satterfield said. "It would be a shame if they walked away. But regardless of who the developer is, this is the way that massive development happens in the future. There will be a community benefits agreement. There will be community outreach. We're not going back to where we were. "

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