

# City of Seattle



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CITY CLERK

## Director Office of Planning and Community Development

Confirmation Packet  
March 11, 2016

Samuel Assefa



**CITY OF SEATTLE - STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OATH OF OFFICE**

**STATE OF WASHINGTON**

**COUNTY OF KING**

**I, Samuel Assefa, swear or affirm that I possess all the qualifications prescribed in the Seattle City Charter and the Seattle Municipal Code for the position of Director of the Office of Planning and Community Development; that I will support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Washington, and the Charter and Ordinances of the City of Seattle; and that I will faithfully conduct myself as *Director of the Office of Planning and Community Development*.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Samuel Assefa**

**Subscribed and sworn to before me  
this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016**

(affix seal)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk**



**City of Seattle**  
Edward B. Murray  
Mayor

March 11, 2016

The Honorable Bruce A. Harrell  
President, Seattle City Council  
Seattle City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Council President Harrell:

I am pleased to transmit to the City Council the following confirmation packet for my appointment of Samuel Assefa as Director of the Office of Planning and Community Development.

The materials in this packet are divided into two sections:

**A. Samuel Assefa**

This section contains Mr. Assefa's appointment and oath of office forms, his resume, and the press release announcing his appointment.

**B. Background Checks**

This section contains the report to the Mayor's Office on Mr. Assefa's background check.

Sam Assefa is a proven leader and urban planning innovator. Sam is currently a senior urban planner for the City of Boulder, Colorado, where he was responsible for urban and building design policies and directed the City's Sustainable Streets and Centers Program. Prior to Boulder, he served as Director of Land Use and Public Policy for the City of Chicago and as deputy chief of staff to former Mayor Richard M. Daley. He also worked in San Francisco as the Director of Special Projects for the Department of Planning and Development.

As part of the 2016 budget process, I proposed, and the Council accepted, a plan to create the Office of Planning and Community Development. It was created to better integrate strategic planning across departments, while coordinating public investments in transportation, parks, housing and other areas.

Sam Assefa brings leadership and a holistic approach to urban planning that integrates land use, transportation, design and sustainability. Throughout his career, Sam has shown a passion for

Office of the Mayor  
Seattle City Hall, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
600 Fourth Avenue  
PO Box 94749  
Seattle, Washington 98124-4749

Tel (206) 684-4000  
Fax: (206) 684-5360  
Hearing Impaired use the Washington Relay Service (7-1-1)  
[www.seattle.gov/mayor](http://www.seattle.gov/mayor)

The Honorable Bruce A. Harrell

March 11, 2016

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place-making and a commitment to working with all communities to solve the challenges of growth. His experience will be invaluable to implementing our shared vision for building neighborhoods that are affordable, livable, and equitable. I strongly urge you to confirm him as the Director of the Office of Planning and Community Development.

If you have any questions about the attached materials or need additional information, please contact Deputy Mayor Kate Joncas at 206-684-3790, or via e-mail, at [kate.joncas@seattle.gov](mailto:kate.joncas@seattle.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Murray", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Edward B. Murray  
Mayor, City of Seattle

**SECTION**

**A**



**City of Seattle**  
Edward B. Murray  
Mayor

March 11, 2016

Samuel Assefa  
Boulder, CO 80302  
Transmitted via e-mail

Dear Samuel,

It gives me great pleasure to appoint you to the position of Director of the Office of Planning and Community Development (Executive 3), effective June 1, 2016 at an annual salary of \$167,067.

Your term of office is four years and you serve at the pleasure of the Mayor. Your appointment as Director is subject to City Council confirmation; therefore, you will need to attend the Council's confirmation hearings.

Your contingent offer letter provided employment information related to the terms of your employment, benefits, vacation, holiday and sick leave. If you have questions about your employment with the City of Seattle please contact Susan Coskey, Human Resources Director, at 206-615-1622.

I look forward to working with you in your role as Director and wish you success. We have much work ahead of us, and I am confident that the Office of Planning and Community Development will thrive beyond expectation under your leadership.

Sincerely,

Edward B. Murray  
Mayor, City of Seattle

cc: Seattle Department of Human Resources


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# City of Seattle Department Head Notice of Appointment

<b>Appointee Name:</b> <i>Samuel Assefa</i>		
<b>City Department Name:</b> <i>Office of Planning and Community Development</i>		<b>Position Title:</b> <i>Director</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Appointment</b> <i>OR</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Reappointment</b>		<b>Council Confirmation required?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Appointing Authority:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mayor <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <i>Specify appointing authority</i>		<b>Term of Office:</b> <i>06/1/16 to 05/31/2020</i>
<b>Legislated Authority:</b> <i>SMC 3.14.991</i>		
<b>Background:</b> Sam Assefa is a proven leader and urban planning innovator. Sam is currently a senior urban planner for the City of Boulder, Colorado, where he was responsible for urban and building design policies and directed the City's Sustainable Streets and Centers Program. Prior to Boulder, he served as Director of Land Use and Public Policy for the City of Chicago and as deputy chief of staff to former Mayor Richard M. Daley. He also worked in San Francisco as the Director of Special Projects for the Department of Planning and Development.  As part of the 2016 budget process, the Mayor proposed, and the Council accepted, a plan to create the Office of Planning and Community Development. It was created to better integrate strategic planning across departments, while coordinating public investments in transportation, parks, housing and other areas.  Sam Assefa brings leadership and a holistic approach to urban planning that integrates land use, transportation, design and sustainability. Throughout his career, Sam has shown a passion for place-making and a commitment to working with all communities to solve the challenges of growth. His experience will be invaluable to implementing our shared vision for building neighborhoods that are affordable, livable, and equitable.		
<b>Date of Appointment:</b> <i>3/11/2016</i>	<b>Authorizing Signature (original signature):</b> 	<b>Appointing Signatory:</b> <i>Edward B. Murray</i> <i>Mayor</i>

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**SAMUEL ASSEFA**

Associate AIA, LEED AP

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**BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY**

Sam is the senior urban designer for the City of Boulder responsible for design policies for current developments and long-term plans. He is in charge of the City's Sustainable Streets & Centers Program focused on implementing sustainable urban form policies for streets and urban centers, and co-coordinator of the Boulder Civic Area Project. Prior to joining the City of Boulder in 2010, he was the Director of Land Use and Planning Policy at the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, and Deputy Chief of Staff to Mayor Richard M. Daley. Between 1991 and 2002, Sam worked as the senior urban designer for the San Francisco architecture firm of SMWM as well as the City of San Francisco Planning Department. While in San Francisco, he was responsible for the implementation of various urban design policies and redevelopment plans including the Hunters Point Shipyard, the Trans Bay Center, Rincon Hill, and the Better Neighborhoods Program.

Sam was elected and inducted into Lambda Alpha International in 2006 and has served on several boards including the Graham Foundation, the AIA Regional Urban Design Committee, the Chicago Public Art Group, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, and as a founding member of the Center for Art and Public Life at California College of the Arts (CCA). He was also an Adjunct Professor of Architecture at CCA and frequently serves on architecture and urban design juries. He has been a speaker at various conferences including the AIA, APA, RailVolution, and at universities such as Harvard, Cornell, Notre Dame, and MIT. Sam has also represented the City of Chicago and Mayor Daley as a speaker worldwide including the Dutch Green Building Conference in the Netherlands, OECD in Montreal, the Mega Cities Development Forum in Nantong, China, and the National Urban Planning Institute in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Sam is a graduate of MIT with a Master's in City Planning, and the University of Illinois, Chicago, with a B.A. in Architecture.



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## **SAMUEL ASSEFA**

Associate AIA, LEED AP

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### EDUCATION

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

Master of City Planning

**University of Illinois at Chicago**

Bachelor of Architecture

**Carnegie Mellon**

**University** Coursework in Management and Economics

**Harvard University**

Coursework in Housing

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### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**CITY OF BOULDER, CO 2010–Present**

**Senior Urban Designer Department of Community Planning & Sustainability**

Responsible for urban design and building design policy both for current and long-range planning projects.

- Direct the City's Sustainable Streets & Centers Project, a component of the City's major update to the Boulder Comprehensive Plan.
- Make recommendations to department heads, Planning Board, and City Council on building and urban design policies.
- Manage the Boulder Downtown Design Advisory Board's design review process and procedures.
- Develop urban design plans and guidelines for special projects, including redevelopment projects.

**CITY OF CHICAGO, IL 2004–2010**

**Director of Land Use & Planning Policy Department of Planning & Development**

Director of the department's divisions responsible for setting the City's planning, land use, design, and sustainable development policies.

- Made recommendations to the Chicago Plan Commission, aldermen and the Mayor on issues regarding sustainable development and land use policies.
- Managed staff charged with the review and approval of planned developments, project designs, and zoning change requests.
- Directed the implementation of the 2004 Chicago Zoning Ordinance.
- Developed and established the department's design review procedures.

**Deputy Chief of Staff for Economic & Physical Development Office of the Mayor**

Coordinated city departments responsible for implementing Mayor Richard M. Daley's economic and land development policies.

- Served as liaison between the Mayor and department heads, elected officials, and community and business leaders.
- Advised the Mayor on architecture and design policies.
- Represented the Mayor at local, national and international forums and conferences regarding sustainable development, architecture and urban planning.

**SMITHGROUP JJR Chicago, IL 2002-2004**

**Senior Urban Designer**

Directed the firm's planning and urban design practice, providing guidance for implementation of public and private investments aimed at improving quality of life for communities large and small. Examples include:

- **Rockwell Gardens Chicago**, A redevelopment plan to transform an aging and outmoded public housing site into a vibrant mixed-income community, where connections to the surrounding city and its street grid are restored.
- **West Side Neighborhood Plan Kalamazoo**, A strategic plan for the residential neighborhood bordering the Western Michigan University Campus.
- **Cleveland Lakefront Master Plan** A long-term conceptual framework for redeveloping Cleveland's 8-mile lakefront to create an accessible waterfront that enhances the City as a great urban center.

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**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (continued)****CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, CA 1999–2002****Director of Special Projects Department of Planning & Development**

Directed implementation of sustainable land use policies for transit oriented developments, industrial area design guidelines, and high-density downtown mixed-use developments. Examples include:

- **Rincon Hill** Established new zoning and building design controls to encourage a sustainable, high density mixed-use neighborhood on the edge of San Francisco's downtown business district.
- **Better Neighborhoods 2002** Directed planning and urban design for transit oriented development plans for three San Francisco neighborhoods. These plans are the most ambitious work the City has undertaken to link transit served areas with new high-density residential and commercial uses.
- **Industrial Area Design Guidelines** Developed new design guidelines for the City's industrial zoned districts. The guidelines, adopted by the City in 2001, direct the harmonious integration of new uses in old industrial areas.

**SMWM ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING San Francisco, CA 1993–1999****Senior Urban Designer**

Directed implementation of urban design, neighborhood planning, and community participation for various large scale development projects. Examples include:

- **Hunters Point Shipyard Reuse Plan** Conversion of a 500 acre navy shipyard into a residential, commercial and industrial mixed-use development.
- **Berkeley Civic Center Plan** A plan to transform an under utilized civic center park and adjacent sites into a cohesive and vibrant public place. The plan was adopted by the City in 1997 with a \$75 million dollar bond.
- **Long Beach and Anaheim** A transit oriented retail and housing development plan to revitalize an economically depressed neighborhood.
- **University of San Francisco** Campus master plan and building design for several university facilities.
- **Notre Dame High School** Design for a 28,000 sq. ft. building to house a gymnasium and classrooms.

**KAPLAN/MCLAUGHLIN/DIAZ San Francisco, CA 1991–1993****Associate Designer**

Project architect and designer for various building types including multi-family housing, commercial buildings, federal court houses and schools. Examples include:

- **New Reno Federal Courthouse** Design and construction of a 200,000 sq. ft. courthouse building.
- **Kanon Kip Housing** Design and construction of a single room occupancy residence to house San Francisco's homeless.
- **Warner Mycal Theatres** Design for a multiplex theater and mixed-use development in Ebina, Japan.

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## **SAMUEL ASSEFA**

Associate AIA, LEED AP

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### **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & AFFILIATIONS**

- Advisory Board, AIA Regional & Urban Design Committee, 2006-present
- Board of Directors, Chicago Public Art Group, 2005-present
- Board of Directors, the Graham Foundation, 2006-present
- Member, Land Use Committee, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2006-present
- Member, Lambda Alpha International, inducted 2006
- Juror, AIA Regional & Urban Design National Honor Awards, 2008
- Juror, the Dreihaus Foundation's annual design awards, 2006-present
- Board of Directors, Architectural Foundation of San Francisco, 2002-2003
- Commissioner, Immigrants Rights Commission, San Francisco, 1998-2001
- Advisory Board Member, The Pathfinder Foundation for Education and Development, San Francisco, 1998-2000
- Founding Member, The Center for Art in Public Life, California College of Arts and Crafts, 1997-2002
- Member, Architecture and Natural Light Committee, San Francisco Planning and Urban Research, 2000-2002
- Adjunct Professor of Architecture, California College of the Arts, San Francisco 1994-2002

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### **SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS**

- Speaker on urban design, sustainable development and environmental policies at various universities including Cornell, Harvard, MIT, Notre Dame, University of Detroit, and IIT
- Presenter and panelist at conferences for professional organizations including the AIA, APA, RailVolution, The Counselors of Real Estate, Chicago Architecture Foundation, and Archeworks
- Panelist with former French Prime Minister Alain Juppé and Mayor David Miller of Toronto at the 2005 OECD Montreal Conference
- Speaker at the Nantong, China World Mega Cities Development Forum, 2006
- Speaker on sustainable development at the National Urban Planning Institute of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2005
- Panelist at the Landscape Architecture Magazine Forum on reuse plan for Lowery Air Force Base Reuse, Denver, CO. 1996
- Participant at the Kaziemerze Forum on the development of public housing design and financing policy, City of Lublin, Poland, 1991

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### **PUBLICATIONS / EXHIBITIONS**

- Assistant Editor for the *Chicago Architectural Journal*. Chicago, IL. 1988-1989
- Produced several published planning and design documents, including the *San Francisco Industrial Design Guidelines*, the *Hunters Point Shipyard Land Use and Design* document, the *University of San Francisco Physical Master Plan*, and the *San Francisco Transbay 2020 Plan*
- Drawings and work published in *Architecture*, *Landscape Architecture*, *Encontros*, and *The Chicago Architectural Journal*
- Exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, the Chicago Historical Society and museums in France and Portugal
- *Communities by Design: Income Mixing in Public Housing*, Masters Thesis



**City of Seattle**  
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Contact:** Jason Kelly, Seattle Mayor's Office, 206.684.8379

### **Mayor nominates Sam Assefa to lead Office of Planning and Community Development**

**SEATTLE** (March 9, 2016) – Today, Mayor Ed Murray announced he is nominating Sam Assefa – the senior urban designer for the City of Boulder, Colorado – as the next director of Seattle's Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD).

Prior to Boulder, Assefa served as Director of Land Use and Planning Policy for the City of Chicago, and as a deputy chief of staff to former Mayor Richard Daley.

“Sam Assefa brings leadership and a holistic approach to urban planning that integrates land use, transportation, design and sustainability,” Mayor Murray said. “Throughout his career, Sam has shown a passion for placemaking and a commitment to working with all communities to solve the challenges of growth. His experience will be invaluable to implementing our shared vision for building neighborhoods that are affordable, livable and equitable.”

OPCD was created to better integrate strategic planning across departments, while coordinating public investments in transportation, parks, housing and other areas.

“I have always admired the City of Seattle for its natural beauty, innovative spirit and strong commitment to social justice,” Assefa said. “I am thrilled at this opportunity to help implement Mayor Murray's vision for building thriving and vibrant communities through an integrated and equitable approach to city planning and community development.”

Since 2010, Assefa has worked for Boulder's Department of Community Planning and Sustainability, where he was responsible for urban and building design policies and directed the City's Sustainable Streets and Centers Program.

Prior to Chicago, he served the City of San Francisco as director of Special Projects for the Department of Planning and Development. He was responsible for the implementation of various

urban design policies and redevelopment plans, including the Hunters Point Shipyard, the Trans Bay Center, Rincon Hill, and the Better Neighborhoods Program.

Assefa has a master's degree in city planning from MIT, and a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Illinois at Chicago. He brings perspective as an immigrant to the United States, having fled Ethiopia as a teenager when his father was killed in a coup. In San Francisco, Assefa served on the city's Immigrant Rights Commission.

Assefa, if confirmed by Seattle City Council, will replace Diane Sugimura, who has served as interim OPCD director since the new integrated planning agency launched January 1. Assefa is expected to start June 1, with an annual salary of \$167,000.

"This is a very exciting time for Seattle -- to have someone of Sam's caliber, experience and talent coming to Seattle to lead the Mayor's new Office of Planning and Community Development," Sugimura said. "I look forward to seeing great things happening as we grow toward becoming a more equitable city for all."

"I am thrilled to join the Mayor in endorsing the nomination of Sam Assefa as the new Director of the Office and Planning and Community Development," said Councilmember Rob Johnson, chair of the Planning, Land Use and Zoning Committee. "Mr. Assefa's list of accomplishments achieved during his tenures in Chicago, San Francisco, and Boulder reflects his passion for urban design and transit oriented development, and but I am mostly impressed by the manner in which he so thoughtfully engages the citizens of the communities he serves. I look forward to the prospect of working side by side with such a creative, big-picture thinker with the knowledge and experience to tackle Seattle's complex housing, gentrification, and affordability challenges."

As Seattle grows, OPCD will play a role in implementing Mayor Murray's Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA). HALA provides a comprehensive strategy to creating 50,000 housing units over the next 10 years, ensuring that Seattle can remain an affordable, walkable, and equitable community for people of all incomes and backgrounds.

Seattle is currently one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation, adding 70,000 residents and 63,000 jobs in the past five years. The city is expected to be home to another 120,000 residents and 115,000 jobs by 2035.

**SECTION**

**B**



# City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Seattle Department of Human Resources

Susan L. Coskey, Director

Date: March 10, 2016

To: Adam Schaefer, City Budget Office

From: Melissa Beatty, Employee Relations Director  
Seattle Department of Human Resources

Subject: **BACKGROUND CHECK – Samuel Assefa**

The HR Department has received a copy of Samuel Assefa's criminal background check run by A-Check Global. There were no findings that would impact the employment eligibility of Mr. Assefa.

cc: Personnel File

