



# SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

## Housing, Arts, and Civil Rights Committee

### Agenda

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, City Hall  
600 4th Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dionne Foster, Chair  
Eddie Lin, Vice-Chair  
Joy Hollingsworth, Member  
Debora Juarez, Member  
Alexis Mercedes Rinck, Member

Chair Info: 206-684-8809; [Dionne.Foster@seattle.gov](mailto:Dionne.Foster@seattle.gov)

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**SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL**  
**Housing, Arts, and Civil Rights Committee**  
**Agenda**  
**May 13, 2026 - 2:00 PM**

**Meeting Location:**

Council Chamber, City Hall, 600 4th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104

**Committee Website:**

<https://seattle.gov/council/housing-arts-and-civil-rights>

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*This meeting also constitutes a meeting of the City Council, provided that the meeting shall be conducted as a committee meeting under the Council Rules and Procedures, and Council action shall be limited to committee business.*

Members of the public may register for remote or in-person Public Comment to address the Council. Please register in advance in order to be recognized by the Chair. Details on how to register for Public Comment are listed below:

Remote Public Comment - Register online to speak during the Public Comment period at the meeting at <https://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/public-comment>. Online registration to speak will begin one hour before the meeting start time, and registration will end at the conclusion of the Public Comment period during the meeting.

In-Person Public Comment - Register to speak on the public comment sign-up sheet located inside Council Chambers at least 15 minutes prior to the meeting start time. Registration will end at the conclusion of the Public Comment period during the meeting.

Please submit written comments no later than four business hours prior to the start of the meeting to ensure that they are distributed to Councilmembers prior to the meeting. Comments may be submitted at [Council@seattle.gov](mailto:Council@seattle.gov) or at Seattle City Hall, Attn: Council Public Comment, 600 4th Ave., Floor 2, Seattle, WA 98104. Business hours are considered 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Comments received after that time will be distributed after the meeting to Councilmembers and included as part of the public record.

Please Note: Times listed are estimated

**A. Call To Order**

**B. Approval of the Agenda**

**C. Public Comment**

*Members of the public may address items on the agenda and matters within the purview of the committee. Please register in advance to be recognized by the Chair.*

**D. Items of Business**

1. [Res 32201](#) **A resolution creating an Arts and Cultural District in the Georgetown neighborhood of Seattle.**

*Supporting Documents:*

[Summary and Fiscal Note](#)  
[Summary Att A - Georgetown Arts District Application Presentation](#)

**Briefing, Discussion, and Possible Vote**

**Presenters:** Kelly Davidson and Pinky Estell, Seattle Office of Arts and Culture

2. [Res 32200](#) **A resolution creating an Arts and Cultural District in the Columbia Hillman City neighborhood of Seattle.**

*Supporting Documents:*

[Summary and Fiscal Note](#)  
[Summary Att A - Columbia Hillman Arts and Cultural District Application](#)

**Briefing, Discussion, and Possible Vote**

**Presenters:** Kelly Davidson and Pinky Estell, Seattle Office of Arts and Culture

3. **Social Housing Developer Charter Changes**

*Supporting  
Documents:*

[Presentation](#)

[Draft Resolution](#)

**Briefing and Discussion**

**Presenter:** Jennifer LaBrecque, Council Central Staff

**E. Adjournment**



Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 32201, **Version:** 1

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Screen Reader Users: Make sure settings include reading strikethrough and underline font attributes.

## The City of Seattle

### Resolution

**A resolution** creating an Arts and Cultural District in the Georgetown neighborhood of Seattle.

#### Recitals:

Resolution 31555 created a citywide program of Arts and Cultural Districts, to be managed by the Office of Arts and Culture.

The Seattle Comprehensive Plan at the time calls for the support of Arts and Cultural Districts as a means to “support arts and cultural uses and the economic benefits they provide,” and encourages the City to “allow regulations and incentives to be adopted specifically for designated cultural districts,” and to “allow adopted guidelines or regulations to modify, exempt, or supersede the standards of the underlying zone to encourage arts and cultural uses.”

According to the 2025 budget report issued by ArtsFund, the creative sector within the ZIP codes encompassing Georgetown generated more than \$6 million in earned revenue and received just over \$13 million in contributed revenue, underscoring the substantial economic and community impact of arts and cultural activity in the district.

Arts and entertainment-related businesses and organizations add cultural economic diversity to a city, enhance the lives of the city’s residents and visitors, and positively impact the city’s economy by generating jobs and revenue.

Georgetown is a vibrant and diverse creative district, home to six neighborhood associations, seven artist collectives, 11 design studios and centers, seven creative fabrication companies, seven galleries, two museums, eight creative schools, five performance and event venues, and 13 annual neighborhood festivals, collectively contributing to the cultural, economic, and community vitality of the neighborhood.

The Georgetown Association of Arts & Culture (GTAAC) has been highly successful in bringing the community together by uniting a wide range of multidisciplinary artists, organizations, and creative practices, fostering collaboration, shared identity, and inclusive cultural engagement across the neighborhood.

The GTAAC has demonstrated sustained success in raising funds and securing investments that support neighborhood activation, strengthen cultural identity, and amplify Georgetown's role as a thriving arts and culture district.

The GTAAC employs a variety of strategies to support the neighborhood, including coalition building; annual educational and creative skill-sharing workshops; networking opportunities for residents, artists, and creative businesses; and ongoing advocacy on behalf of the Georgetown community.

Georgetown has served as an unofficial last-chance safety net for artists and arts organizations, providing space and opportunity that has helped prevent displacement beyond the city limits and allowing creative communities to remain rooted within the city.

The arts and cultural community of Georgetown has played a vital role in the neighborhood's evolution from a primarily commercial manufacturing area into a dynamic district that blends industrial work with creative practice, cultivating DIY character that reflects and embraces Seattle's cultural identity. Therefore,

**Be it resolved by the City Council of The City of Seattle, the Mayor concurring:**

Section 1. The City of Seattle establishes an Arts and Culture District in the Georgetown neighborhood of Seattle, to be known as the Georgetown Arts and Cultural District.

Section 2. The City of Seattle directs appropriate members of the City's departmental staff to actively support and work with staff in the Office of Arts and Culture to develop and maintain the District, and to support the health and vitality of the artists, creative businesses, and artists residing in the District.

Section 3. The City of Seattle encourages all residents of Georgetown, and especially those who own property or businesses within the District, to support, promote, and help maintain artists, arts organizations, and arts events in Georgetown.

Adopted by the City Council and signed in open session in authentication of its adoption on

President of the City Council  
Signed in concurrence on .

Katie B. Wilson, Mayor  
Attested on .

Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

*Seal*

## Summary and Fiscal Note

### 1. Legislation Summary

**Department:** Office of Arts and Culture

**Title:** A resolution creating and Arts and Cultural District in the Georgetown neighborhood of Seattle.

**Background:** The Arts and Cultural District designation program is intended to highlight the importance of the creative sector within neighborhoods and to empower communities to preserve and grow their cultural assets. The program was originally developed in 2014 at the recommendation of the Seattle Arts Commission in response to displacement pressures affecting arts organizations, cultural workers, and residents in Seattle's urban core.

Each designated district is led by an **independent nonprofit organization** responsible for:

- Neighborhood programming and events
- Advocacy efforts
- Placemaking initiatives
- Serving as a resource hub for the local creative community

This legislation designates Georgetown as the City's fifth Arts and Cultural District.

Between 2014 and 2018, four districts were formally established, Uptown, Columbia City and Hillman City, the Central Area, and Capitol Hill, creating a citywide network of place-based cultural districts that support arts-led community development.

Arts and Cultural District designation provides structured support, visibility, and coordination for neighborhoods with established creative ecosystems. Currently, the Office of Arts and Culture allocated \$110,000 annually to support the Arts and Cultural Districts, with each district receiving \$25,000 to advance local activation, capacity building, and collaboration. As Georgetown joins the network, the Office of Arts and Culture will evaluate what additional funds are needed as part of the 2027-2028 budget process.

These districts meet in person every other month, rotating among neighborhoods, to collaborate on shared resources, coordinate cultural activation, and exchange knowledge and best practices.

This structure strengthens connections between districts while allowing each to retain its unique identity and priorities.

At its core, Arts and Cultural District designation is designed to empower residents, artists, and organizations within the district by providing tools, recognition, and a direct connection to the City. The designation supports community-driven cultural development and serves as an important conduit for informing citywide policy, planning, and investment decisions that impact arts, cultural, and neighborhood vitality.

The Georgetown application represents a comprehensive report demonstrating the community's capacity to organize, articulate its cultural identity, and explain why the neighborhood represents a strong and sustainable center for arts and culture.

Representatives from the Office of Economic Development (OED), Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), and Department of Neighborhoods (DON) were asked to review the application. Reviewers were requested to identify any concerns relevant to their department and to share feedback that could strengthen the designation process. The review also served as an opportunity for interdepartmental learning about the Cultural District program and the work of district leadership. All departments reported full support for Georgetown's designation to be the fifth Arts and Cultural District.

**Summary Attachments:**

Summary Attachment A – Georgetown Cultural District Application

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**2. Capital Improvement Program (CIP)**

**Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project?**

- Yes
  - No
- 

**3. Summary of Financial Implications**

**Does this legislation have financial impacts to the City?**

- Yes
  - No
-

#### 4. Other Impacts

**a. Does this legislation require a public hearing?**

Yes

No

**b. Does this legislation require a notice to be published in The Daily Journal of Commerce and/or The Seattle Times?**

Yes

No

**c. Does this legislation affect a piece of property?**

Yes

No

**d. Race and Social Justice Initiative impacts:**

**1. How does this legislation affect vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? How did you come to this conclusion? Please consider both impacts within City government (like employees and internal programs) and in the broader community.**

The program was originally developed at the recommendation of the Seattle Arts Commission in response to displacement pressures affecting arts organizations, cultural workers, and residents in Seattle's urban core.

**2. Please attach any Racial Equity Toolkits or other racial equity analyses used to develop or assess this legislation.**

N/A

**3. What is the Language Access Plan for communicating with the public about this legislation?**

OAC is working with its public information leads to evaluate the language access needs of this program.

e. Climate change impacts:

**1. Emissions: Will this legislation significantly increase or decrease carbon emissions? Attach any studies or materials that inform your answer.**

N/A

**2. Resiliency: Will this legislation make Seattle more or less able to adapt to climate change? If it reduces resiliency, explain what can be done to lessen the impact.**

N/A

**f. If this legislation creates a new program or expands an existing one, what are the long-term, measurable goals? How will this legislation help achieve those goals? What methods will be used to track progress?**

N/A

**g. Does this legislation create a non-utility CIP that involves shared funding with a non-City partner or organization?**

No



**Arts and Cultural District Application**  
December 2024

## **Introduction to Georgetown**

Abuzz with industrial and fine art collectives, independent artists, creative schools, design firms, and showroom galleries, Georgetown is one of the most arts-driven neighborhoods in Seattle. We are a unique district with a culture that melds industrial work with creativity into a gritty, DIY vibe that's immediately obvious when you enter the neighborhood. From the iconic brick façade of our retail core on Airport Way to the giant steel hat and boots sculpture in our residential Oxbow Park to the ever-present sound of planes landing at Boeing Field, industry, history, and the creative entrepreneurial spirit are infused into the look and feel of Georgetown.

## **Georgetown Demographics and History**

With a small population of around 1500 people, 37% of which are persons of color, Georgetown is one of King County's recognized Communities of Opportunity. According to the King County Public Health website, Georgetown ranks in the 2nd highest COO composite quintile and is in the highest category for poor housing conditions and low life expectancy. The Racial and Social Equity Index ranks the neighborhood as a Second Highest Equity Priority.

Georgetown is located directly East and North of the Duwamish River in South Seattle. For millennia, indigenous people lived along this area of the Duwamish, using the waters and wildlife to support more than 90 longhouses and at least 17 villages. In the 1800s, white settlers displaced the indigenous population and built an initial settlement focused on the railroad, manufacturing, and brewing industries. The growing city was annexed into Seattle in 1910, the Duwamish Estuary was dredged, and the area became Seattle's manufacturing and commercial core. This attracted large companies like Boeing and also a significant number of specialty supply and tool companies. This in turn makes the neighborhood not only a prime place for creative makers to work but a destination for craftsmen from all over the region.

The business of art, from fabrication to installation to gallery and design firm sales, contributes significantly to Georgetown's economy. The large industrial warehouses and relatively inexpensive rents are ideal for artists and artistic businesses like collective studios, galleries, and design firms.

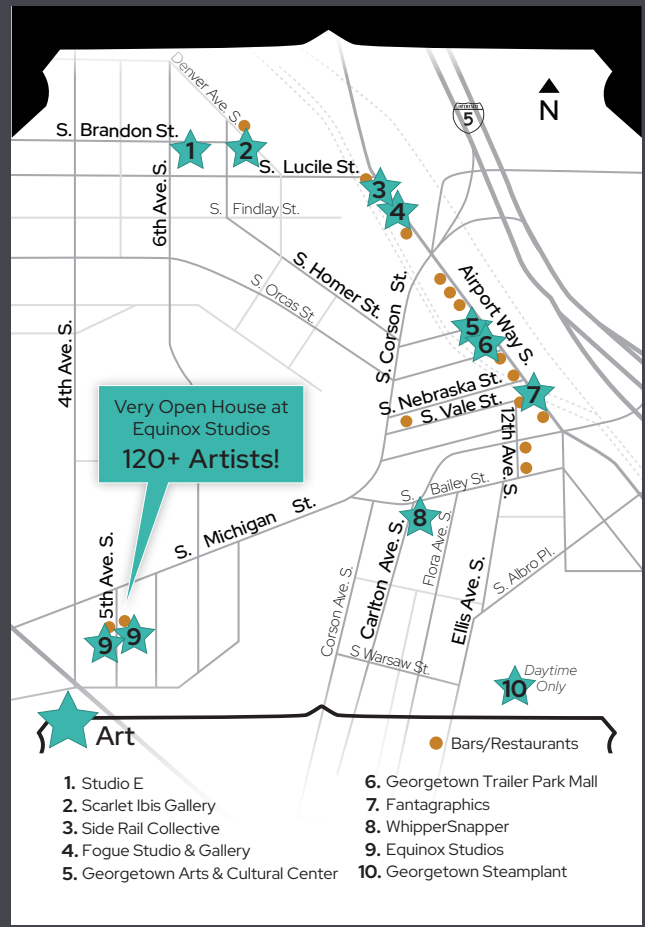
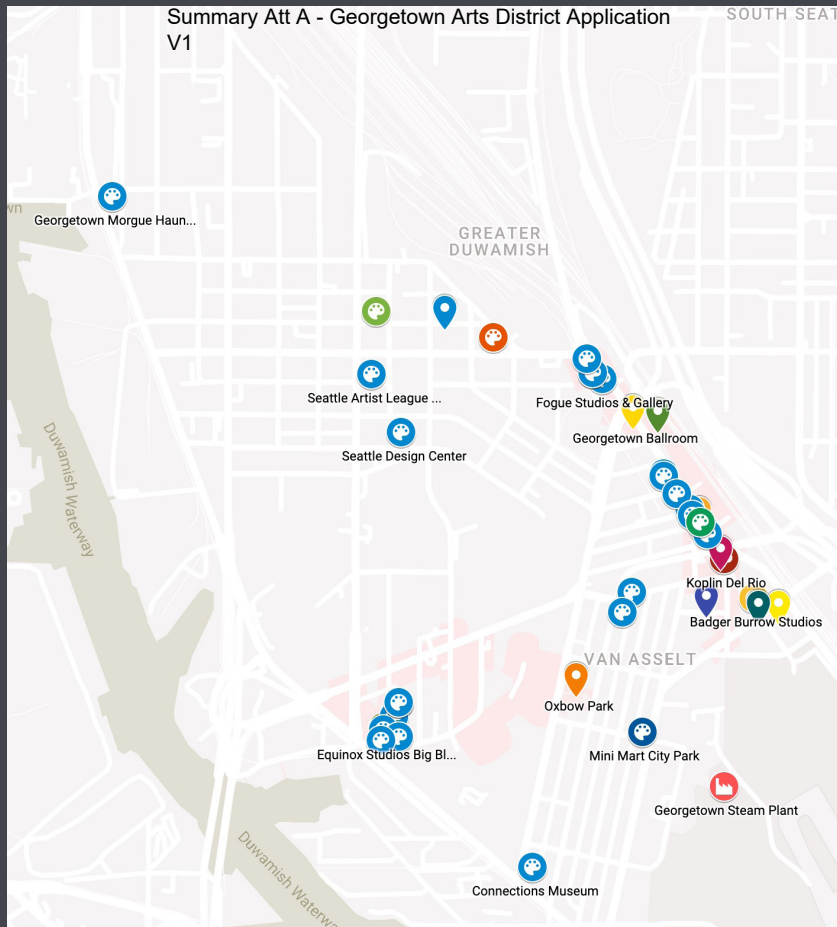
The neighborhood is a destination for arts and cultural enthusiasts year round; our second Saturday Art Attacks are some of the most attended artwalks in the city, as they offer attendees the option of visiting both traditional galleries and working artists' studios. Georgetown is home to a number of large cultural festivals that draw visitors in from around the city to patronize our retail establishments and buy from local vendors. These include the Georgetown Carnival, HonkFest West, the San Genaro festival, and Rainier Days. Neighborhood-centric events also draw visitors and celebrate Georgetown's unique DIY culture. These include the Georgetown Haunted History Tour, the Super 8 Film Festival, the Spooky Walk, and the new Georgetown Halloween Parade.

# **Georgetown**

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## **Association of Arts & Culture**

Summary Att A - Georgetown Arts District Application V1



**Race, ELL & Origins**

(shares of population who are)

- Persons of color
- English language learners
- Foreign born

**Socioeconomic Disadvantage**

(shares of population with)

- Income below 200 percent of poverty level
- Educational attainment less than a bachelor's degree

**Health Disadvantage**

- Adults with no leisure-time physical activity
- Adults with diagnosed diabetes
- Adults with obesity
- Adults who reported mental health not good
- Adults with asthma
- Adults with one or more disability
- Low life expectancy

**Legend**

- Highest Equity Priority
- Second Highest Equity Priority
- Middle
- Second Lowest
- Lowest

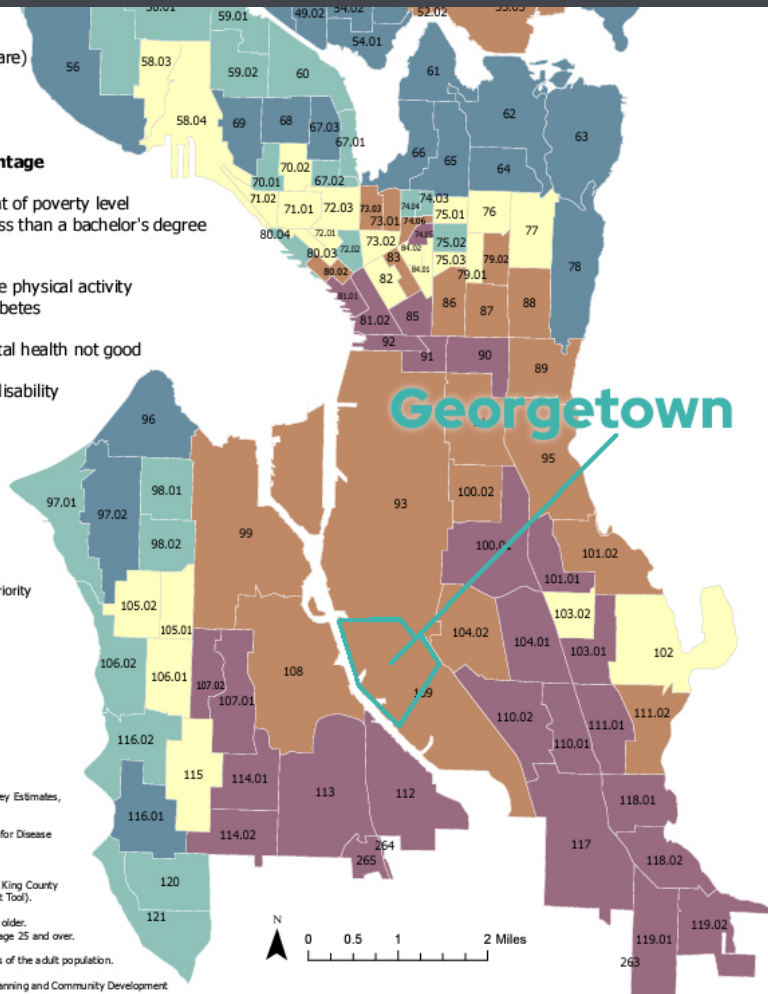
(labels are tract numbers)

Sources:  
 2017-2021 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau;  
 2020 Decennial Census, U.S. Census Bureau;  
 modeled estimates published by the Centers for Disease Control in the PLACES project;  
 Washington State Department of Health's Washington Tracking Network (WTN);  
 and estimates from Public Health - Seattle & King County (based on the Community Health Assessment Tool).

Notes: Language is for population age 5 and older.  
 Educational attainment is for the population age 25 and over.  
 Life expectancy is life expectancy at birth.  
 Other health measures based on percentages of the adult population.

Map produced by: City of Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development

For more information on the index, including guidance for use, contact Diana Canzoneri, Demographer & Strategic Advisor, [diana.canzoneri@seattle.gov](mailto:diana.canzoneri@seattle.gov)



**Maps**

top left: screenshot of interactive web map of cultural assets from the GTAAC website ([link](https://georgetown-arts-culture.org/map))

top right: Art Attack map from GTAAC sponsored postcard December 2023

bottom left: Racial and Social Equity Index map 2023





## Arts District Organization

Efforts to organize an arts association that could represent Georgetown on a city-wide platform and work to create a stronger network within our neighborhood began in 2018, led by a steering committee of cultural stakeholders. Members of that committee include Sam Farrazaino (Equinox Studios, Georgetown Steamplant), Dawna Holloway (studio e), Laura Wright (2024 City Artist, Georgetown Super 8 Film Festival), and John Sutton (SuttonBearsCullor, Mini Mark City Park). The committee undertook the Challenge Grant in 2019 as the Georgetown Arts & Design District Coalition with an original expiration date of Dec 31, 2020.

Due to the unforeseen challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, this initial grant fulfillment was put on hold until the end of 2023. During that time, Farrazaino remained active with the Arts & Cultural District Program. The GADD Coalition also contracted with the Office of Arts & Culture for the Cultural District Economic Recovery Fund. Both of these contracts were fulfilled, reported on, and subsequently approved by the O A&C. (see pages 5-6)

As part of the initiative for the Economic Recovery Fund grant, the Georgetown Association of Arts & Culture (GTAAC) was formed to both fill the need for a neighborhood-wide coalition for Georgetown's creative entities and to represent the district as part of O A&C's Arts and Cultural District program. GTAAC is governed by a working Board of Directors who meet monthly, lead various committees, and actively participate in a wide range of community events and organizations. The BoD members represent various facets of Georgetown's creative culture; they are artists, gallerists, curators, event producers, residents, and creative business owners.

During its formation, a number of public meetings were held during which we gathered ideas, opinions, and other information from interested parties. Stakeholders from all creative facets of the district convened to discuss the major issues facing Georgetown and how we could leverage the arts to work for us and mend the fabric of our neighborhood. GTAAC was directly founded on the results and strategies that arose during these meetings.

# Georgetown

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## Association of Arts & Culture

*top left: Holly Mistur teaches metal patinas during Education Week 2023, an initiative funded through the Economic Recovery Fund grant and the first event organized by GTAAC based on feedback from the public convening*

*top right: Artist Dave Clay and his son learn stone carving during Education Week 2023 in the Georgetown Steamplant Classroom*

# THE IMPACT OF ARTS & CULTURE FUNDING IN GEORGETOWN

**Challenge Grant** \$2500



## Artists

Mary Gioia, blacksmith  
Drew Welliver, metal artist  
Melissa Knowles, acrobatics and watercolors  
Dave Clay, oil painter  
Essa Baird, ceramics  
JP Anderson, painter  
Brittany Otto, digital artist  
Dan Mahon, acrylic cat painter  
M. Anne Sweet, digital artist and ceramicist  
Jordan Lee, painter  
Lily Hotchkiss, multi-media artist  
Francesca Rosati, painter

## Locations

Full Throttle Bottles  
Boxes of Glass  
studio e  
Deep Sea Sugar and Salt  
All City Coffee  
Harlow Collective  
Fantagraphics  
Jules Maes  
Seattle Drum School  
Seattle ReCreative  
Dolcetta Artisan Sweets  
Georgetown Pizza Arcade

The scavenger hunt encouraged exploration of the neighborhood and collaborative, fun experiences for the residents while promoting the work of local artists and patronage of our cultural businesses.

The scavenger hunt concluded with a public Party and Prize Pick-Up. The gathering brought even more neighborhood participation as it was held at the Mini Mart City Park and multiple local businesses donated food and beverages including Georgetown Pizza and Arcade, Seattle Cider, Georgetown Brewing, House of Smith, and Tinte Cellars.

We had multiple activities set up for attendees in addition to swag. We shared information about our programs from 2023, had a performance of a crankies shadow puppet show, and showed art from a number of our grantees. Through this process, the artists, residents, and cultural businesses of Georgetown showed up to support and embrace the new Association of Arts & Culture and our efforts in the neighborhood.

# THE IMPACT OF ARTS & CULTURE FUNDING IN GEORGETOWN

**Economic Recovery Fund** \$100,000



- **255 hours of free Arts Education classes**
- **1506 hours of Arts Activations**
- **79 creative workers paid (+23 others)**
- **1219 attendees to classes and events**
- **20 wayfinding signs commissioned**
- **One Arts Association founded**

The Georgetown Arts & Culture Association distributed funds for four categorical purposes approved by Seattle's Office of Arts & Culture: the establishment of the GTACA as a sustainable, community-driven non-profit organization; the design and development of neighborhood wayfinding; funding of Education Week art classes; and a selection of Creative Community Recovery project grants.

## Education Week Classes

Sumi on Clayboard, Carol Ross  
Repousse', Louie Raffloer  
Jewelry Wiring, Mary Gioia  
Crochet a Round Rug, Elizabeth Reisner  
Brass Etching, Holly Mistur  
Stone Carving, Cyra Jane  
Metal Patinas, Holly Mistur  
Foraging & Local Plant Dyes, Laura Wright  
Ceramic Luminaries, Carolyn Autenrieth  
Intuitive Collage, Colleen Monette

## Project Grants

MOVIE STAR, film project  
Whippersnapper's Last show, gallery support  
Show 6, dance  
Duwamish Bend Housing Project, fabric arts  
Haunted History Tour, event support  
Mystic Screening, film project  
GT Graphic History Novel, comic arts  
Crankies, performance

**Georgetown**  

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**Association of  
Arts & Culture**

## District Governance, Mission, and Strategies

GTAAC is pursuing 501(c)3 status, has adopted bylaws and policies, and is working under the following mission statement: The Georgetown Association of Arts & Culture drives engagement by facilitating community opportunities, advocating for our creative economy and cultural infrastructure, and strengthening important networks for the residents, arts professionals, and cultural organizations of the Georgetown neighborhood.

We employ a variety of strategies in order to support our mission and neighborhood:

- **Coalition Building** – Members of the GTAAC board are actively involved with creating a collaborative organization with the other primary stakeholder associations in the neighborhood. This initiative is called the Georgetown Coalition and includes representatives from the Georgetown Business Association, the Georgetown Community Council, The Georgetown Steamplant, Friends of Georgetown History, Watershed Community Development Authority, and other community groups. The Coalition’s focus is to facilitate communication and resource sharing among these organizations.
- **Accessible Arts Education** – GTAAC is dedicated to sponsoring an annual Education Week that offers Creative Skill Share workshops for free to residents of the neighborhood. This is in direct response to the public convening meetings held in 2023; our first Education Week was funded through the Creative Recovery Grant. We paid 9 artists to teach workshops on a variety of artistic disciplines from stone carving to metal etching to crochet, to which 80 attendees were able to learn for free. In 2024, Education Week centered around Halloween creative skillsets like Special FX make-up, Giant Creature Building, and Float Building. Artist instructors donated their time and 23 residents attended the workshops. In the next few years we will be continuing Education Week and are also partnering with the Equinox Studios collective tenant group, The Stitch, to facilitate a series of free lectures and panel discussions on topics in Public Art.
- **Hands-on Opportunities for Expression and Play** - In 2023, GTAAC organized the first annual Georgetown Halloween Parade, and event specifically designed to meet multiple directives from our mission statement. The parade engaged residents in the South neighborhood, created relationships between us and local businesses, and brought in ensembles and participants from all over the city. We worked with multiple city departments (including the Dept. of Neighborhoods Small Sparks program), engaged a stellar team of volunteers, and held a very successful event that we plan to continue. We expect to see a significant growth in neighborhood participation in coming years, as residents and businesses work together to activate spaces on Halloween Night. GTAAC also hosts an Art Chopped booth during the Georgetown Carnival, which is a full day of art-making competitions that challenge artists to create a multi-media work from grab bags of media and invites the public to watch and cheer the artists on.



*left: Actors from the Georgetown Morgue Haunted House march through the rain as part of the first annual Georgetown Halloween Parade. 19 different groups walked in the parade, which was attended by hundreds of people. Despite, or perhaps because of, the weather, neighborhood response to the parade has been overwhelmingly positive.*



## District Governance, Mission, and Strategies (cont.)

- **Networking Opportunities** – GTAAC is especially dedicated to facilitating networking opportunities for residents, artists, and creative businesses in the neighborhood. Inspired by the work of the Columbia-Hillman District and the Burien Creative District, we have begun a series of quarterly Creative Network Happy Hours. We would be interested to explore whether working with the Office of Economic Development MXR events would be a good fit for Georgetown. Additionally, we are actively building an online Artist Roster to connect artists with patrons and discussing specific kinds of salons and networking events where creatives can form connections with potential project partners and patrons.

- **Wayfinding** – Directly inspired by the Creative Placemaking Toolkit, GTAAC has implemented a wayfinding campaign that included hiring a graphic designer to create a branding initiative for the neighborhood that included the creation of 20 large steel signs (see pg. 6) we are gifting to businesses at key locations around the neighborhood. We have also offered this branding, which includes logos and a full style guide, to the Georgetown Coalition and as open source to the community at large. We additionally maintain a map on our website of cultural spaces and are creating an event calendar with the Coalition that tracks all the neighborhood’s annual events in a single, easy to find location.

- **Advocacy** – One of the concerns we heard the most while conducting public meetings is that Georgetown is on the verge of gentrifying – maintaining our culture, preserving existing infrastructure, and keeping the neighborhood affordable for the residents and businesses who are established here is of the upmost importance. GTAAC is currently fiscally sponsored by Watershed Community Development Authority, a non-profit that manages Equinox Studios and is currently developing a 700+ unit affordable housing project, much of the space designated for artists. This project will essentially double Georgetown’s population in the next decade and is slated to house over a million dollars in public art commissioned from local artists. GTAAC’s President is a tenant at Equinox Studios and is active with The Stitch, their tenant organization which is highly involved in Watershed’s planning and operations. GTAAC is maintaining a presence at meetings and is actively discussing housing models, public art, and the impact this project will have on the neighborhood.



## **Georgetown**

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## **Association of Arts & Culture**

*above: Artists from across Georgetown mingle with tenants from Equinox Fine & Industrial Arts Collective, Watershed Community Development administrators, and owners of local businesses at the first Creative Network Happy Hour outdoor BBQ and firepit held in 2024. GTAAC partnered with Equinox to launch the series of events.*



### **The Future of the Georgetown Arts & Cultural District**

Georgetown's culture and grounding in the arts is not only solidified but growing at a rapid pace. Multiple large scale projects in the arts are underway in the neighborhood that are going to have widespread effects on our community - this includes the 2000+ affordable artists housing project, the initiative to transform the Georgetown Steam Plant into an educational museum and event venue, the current pursuit to develop a community center, and efforts to bring vital food resources into the district.

GTAAC is confident that our continued efforts will benefit our unique creative culture and that we can represent the needs of Georgetown as an Arts & Cultural District of the City of Seattle. The future efforts of GTAAC include continued implementation of the strategies above with a focus on strengthening our neighborhood's cultural fabric. As part of our 501(c)3 pursuit, we are creating a five year plan and budget that will set our programming plan until 2029. We have and will continue to build strong relationships with the cultural stakeholders in Georgetown and work to strengthen the networks of individual artists and bolster our creative economy.

**Georgetown Association of Arts & Culture**  
[www.georgetown-arts-culture.org](http://www.georgetown-arts-culture.org)

#### **Board of Directors**

Cyra Jane Hobson, President  
*Equinox Studios, Stoneyard Sculpture Studio,  
Northwest Stone Sculptors Association*

Virginia Wright, Treasurer  
*Scarlet Ibis Gallery, Burien Creative District,  
Pacific Northwest Railroad Archive*

Kerry Gates, Secretary  
*Fogue Studios and Gallery,  
Georgetown Business Association*

Sam Furnas, Director  
*Georgetown Gazette*



## Cultural Assets in Georgetown

*\*denotes active participation with GTAAC*

### Neighborhood Associations:

*Currently active organizations serving the residents and businesses of Georgetown.*

Georgetown Business Association\*  
Georgetown Community Council\*  
Friends of Georgetown History\*  
Duwamish River Community Coalition  
Duwamish Valley Youth Corps  
Georgetown Healthy Food Initiative

### Artist Collectives:

*Artist studio complexes with multiple tenants*

Totally Blown Glassworks  
Electric Coffin + House of Sorcery  
Equinox Studios\*  
Fogge Studios\*  
Side Rail Collective\*  
Georgetown Trailer Park Mall\*  
Georgetown Arts & Cultural Center

### Design Studios and Centers:

*Retail design studios and showrooms*

Seattle Design Center  
Hinge Studio  
Hoedemaker Pfeiffer  
Analog Floral  
Hampton Hill  
Prairie Underground  
Mutuus Studio  
Illuminata Art Glass Design  
Jonathan Pauls  
Village Interiors  
Susan Wheeler Home

### Creative Fabrication Companies:

*Business employing craftsmen and artists*

Misty Mountain Manufacturing  
Georgetown Morgue  
Unique Art Glass  
Hardmill Industries  
Signs of Seattle  
Haskett Works  
Prairie Underground

### Galleries:

*Fine art galleries*

Badger Burrow Studios  
Fogge Studios & Gallery\*  
Koplin Del Rio  
Scarlet Ibis Gallery\*  
studio e\*  
Seattle Art Source  
Mini Mart City Park\*

### Museums:

*Free Museums open to the public*

Connections Telephone Museum  
Georgetown Steam Plant\*

### Creative Schools:

*Centers of art education*

Gage South Campus and Sculpture Atelier  
Seattle Artist League  
Seattle Drum School of Music\*  
Dash of Soy Culinary School  
Ebanista School of Fine Woodworking  
School of Acrobatics and New Circus Arts  
Unexpected Productions School of Improv

### Venues:

*Cultural spaces*

Jules Maes Saloon\*  
The Stables  
Georgetown Ball Room  
Mini Mart City Park\*  
Yaw Theatre

### Cultural Events:

*Annual neighborhood festivals and events*

San Genarro Festival  
Honk Fest West  
Georgetown Carnival\*  
Georgetown Pride  
Haunted History Tour  
Georgetown Super 8 Film Festival  
Garden Tour  
Spooky Stroll  
Halloween Parade\*  
Dead Baby Downhill  
Very Out in the Open House (biannual)\*  
Georgetown Steam Plant Science Fair

# Seattle Office of Arts & Culture

Housing, Arts, & Civil Rights Committee

May 13, 2026

Presented by

Deputy Director Kelly Davidson and Cultural  
Space Project Manager Pinky Estell

# Agenda

- Seattle's Arts & Cultural Districts Program
- Georgetown's Application
- Columbia Hillman Arts & Culture District
- Next Steps

# Seattle's Arts & Cultural Districts

These are geographic areas where the City recognizes and supports the concentration of arts organizations, artists, cultural spaces, and creative businesses

## Existing Districts

Capitol Hill (2014)  
Historic Central Area (2015)  
Uptown (2017)  
Columbia Hillman (2018)

- **Preserve** and strengthen neighborhoods
- **Support** local artists, arts organizations, and cultural communities
- **Encourage** cultural space development and protection
- **Promote** equitable access to arts and cultural participation
- **Build** partnerships between community organizations and City agencies

# Neighborhood Vitality

These districts create a citywide network supporting Seattle's creative economy and cultural diversity

## Community and Cultural Benefits

- **Strengthen** neighborhood identity
- **Support** creative workers and foster collaboration
- **Increase access** to arts programming

## Economic and Place-Based Benefits

- **Encourage** cultural tourism and local visitation
- **Support** small businesses
- **Activate** public spaces
- **Help retain cultural spaces**



# Case Study: San Francisco's Cultural Districts

Districts are strongest when paired with funding and cross-department support

## Cultural Districts

Japantown  
Calle 24 Latino  
SoMa Pilipinas  
Transgender District  
Leather and LGBTQ  
African American  
Castro LGBTQ  
American Indian  
Sunset Chinese  
Pacific Islander

- **10** City-recognized districts
- **Backed by dedicated funding**
- **\$3M** annual support for Cultural District
- Each district creates a **unique plan**

# Georgetown Association of Arts & Culture



# Seattle's Industrial Arts Neighborhood

Georgetown is known for its blend of industrial history, creative production, and DIY culture.

- **Home** to artist collectives, independent artists, design firms, galleries, museums, venues, annual festivals and creative schools
- **Industry and art coexist**
- **Distinctive landmarks**
- **Ideal spaces** for fabrication, studios, and creative entrepreneurship



# Community, History & Cultural Activity

Georgetown is a diverse, historic neighborhood with strong and active arts & cultural scene

## Arts & Culture

Studios

Fabrication Shops

Galleries

Museums

Second Saturday Art Attack

Georgetown Carnival

HonkFest West

San Gennaro Festival

Rainier Days

- Annexed into Seattle in **1910**
- Small residential population, with **37% people of color**
- King County **Community of Opportunity**
- Second Highest Equity Priority area

# Georgetown Arts District Organization

A vibrant, united community ready to elevate

- Organizing **began in 2018**
- Georgetown Association of Arts & Culture (GTAAC) was **formed in 2023** to:
  - Serve as a neighborhood-wide coalition
  - Represent Georgetown
- GTAAC is governed by a working Board of Directors, artists, gallerists, curators, event producers, residents, and creative business owners



# Why Designation Matters Now

Georgetown's arts-driven culture is growing rapidly, with major projects underway:

- **2000+** affordable housing units
- Educational museum and event venue
- Community center development
- Expanding food access

## GTAAC's Role:

- **Advocates** for the needs of the neighborhood
- **Provides** creative opportunities
- **Bolsters** Georgetown's creative economy and **preserves** the neighborhood's cultural identity



# Columbia-Hillman Arts & Cultural District

Rectifying the record

## Council Reconfirmation

- OAC audited City records in preparation for GTAAC
- City Department panel **February 2018**
- Mayor Proclamation **August 2018**

## Origins

- Planning **began in 2016** with partners including the Columbia City Business Association, Hillman City Business Association, and SEEDArts
- A public meeting at The Royal Room drew over 120 artists and supporters



# Columbia-Hillman Arts & Cultural District

Fostering an inclusive creative hub where artists thrive and community connects

- Southeast Seattle is highly diverse with a strong creative workforce.
- 2017 Arts Hackathon & Salon developed protoypes

## Arts & Cultural District Vision

- **Support** artists and arts spaces, encourage new creative enterprises
- **Strengthen** connections between Columbia City and Hillman City
- **Development** of a Creative hub



COLUMBIA HILLMAN  
ARTS & CULTURAL  
D I S T R I C T

# Citywide Vision for Cultural Districts

## Preserve space

Help protect and retain cultural spaces in high-pressure areas with decreasing affordability and place-stability

## Support Coalitions

Provide operating and technical support for district leadership

## Increase Visibility

Strengthen branding, wayfinding, and public-facing activation

## Tie to Planning

Connect districts to equitable development and neighborhood planning

# Next Steps for Cultural Districts

1. Review Georgetown's application
2. Use this process to clarify how the City can better resource district implementation
3. Bring lessons from Georgetown and Columbia-Hillman into the Cultural Action Plan
4. Work with Council and community partners on the funding and policy tools needed for long-term district success

*Greatness Starts Here*  
by Ulises Mariscal



# Thank you

## Questions & Discussion





Legislation Text

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## The City of Seattle

### Resolution

**A resolution** creating an Arts and Cultural District in the Columbia Hillman City neighborhood of Seattle.

#### Recitals:

Resolution 31555 created a city-wide program of Arts and Cultural Districts, to be managed by the Office of Arts and Culture.

The Seattle Comprehensive Plan calls for the support of Arts and Cultural Districts as a means to “support arts and cultural uses and the economic benefits they provide,” and encourages the City to “allow regulations and incentives to be adopted specifically for designated cultural districts,” and to “allow adopted guidelines or regulations to modify, exempt, or supersede the standards of the underlying zone to encourage arts and cultural uses.”

According to the 2025 budget report issued by ArtsFund, the creative sector within the ZIP code encompassing Columbia City and Hillman Cirt generated more than \$7 million in earned revenue and received just over \$8.5 million in contributed revenue, underscoring the substantial economic and community impact of arts and cultural activity in the district.

Arts and entertainment related businesses and organizations add cultural and economic diversity to a city, enhancing the lives of the city’s residents and visitors, and positively impact the city’s economy by generating jobs and revenue.

The City wishes to recognize and protect its culturally rich and arts areas from the displacement that the twin successes of growth and new development often bring.

Columbia and Hillman Cities are home to a wide array of cultural and arts organizations, including SouthEast Effective Development (SEED) and SEEDArts, which organized and hosted the initial District designation conversations, as well as Columbia City Theater, Ark Lodge Cinema, Royal Room, Rainier Arts Center, Igimo Art Station, Southside Commons, Rainier Valley Historical Society, Jazz Night School, Vietnamese Friendship Association, Columbia City Gallery, Royal Esquire Club, Horn of Africa Services, SEEDArts Studios, Collaborator, Black and Tan Hall, and more.

The arts and individuals working for and with the cultural institutions in Columbia and Hillman Cities fear being priced out of the neighborhood. As the two neighborhoods continue to grow, and continue to fill in the gap between them, the neighborhoods believe, and the City concurs, that a program supporting equitable, cultural, affordable development can preserve a sense of place and lessen the displacement that new development often brings.

A group of stakeholders has self-organized and requested formal recognition as an Arts and Cultural District, organized around the following mission: “The mission of the Columbia Hillman Arts and Cultural District is the celebrate and enhance the authentic and culturally diverse soul of the Columbia City and Hillman City neighborhoods through identification with, and the advancement of, arts and culture.” In furtherance of this mission, the Columbia Hillman Arts and Cultural District stakeholders are committed to:

- Activation of the Southeast Seattle creative economy;
- Retention and preservation of existing cultural spaces;
- Inclusion of new arts and cultural space in future development;

- Ensuring the availability of affordable commercial space for arts/cultural businesses and affordable live/work space for artists;
- Arts program and projects with racial and social equity as a primary driver;
- Sustain and protect the cultural landscape that makes our neighborhoods unique; and
- Development of increased youth engagement in the arts.

Therefore,

**Be it resolved by the City Council of The City of Seattle, the Mayor concurring:**

Section 1. The City of Seattle establishes an Arts and Cultural District in the Columbia and Hillman Cities neighborhoods of Seattle, to be known as The Columbia Hillman Arts and Cultural District.

Section 2. The City of Seattle directs appropriate members of the City's departmental staff to actively support and work with staff in the Office of Arts and Culture to develop and maintain the District, and to support the health and vitality of the artists, creative businesses, and artists residing in the District.

Section 3. The City of Seattle encourages all residents of Columbia and Hillman Cities, and especially those who own property or businesses within the District, to support, promote, and help maintain artists, arts organizations, and arts events in the District.

Adopted by the City Council and signed in open session in authentication of its adoption on

President of the City Council  
Signed in concurrence on .

Katie B. Wilson, Mayor  
Attested on .

Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

*Seal*

## Summary and Fiscal Note

### 1. Legislation Summary

**Department:** Office of Arts and Culture

**Title:** A resolution creating and Arts and Cultural District in the Columbia Hillman City neighborhood of Seattle.

**Background:** The Arts and Cultural District designation program is intended to highlight the importance of the creative sector within neighborhoods and to empower communities to preserve and grow their cultural assets. The program was originally developed in 2014 at the recommendation of the Seattle Arts Commission in response to displacement pressures affecting arts organizations, cultural workers, and residents in Seattle's urban core.

Each designated district is led by an **independent nonprofit organization** responsible for:

- Neighborhood programming and events
- Advocacy efforts
- Placemaking initiatives
- Serving as a resource hub for the local creative community

This legislation designates Columbia Hillman City as the City's fourth Arts and Cultural District. Between 2014 and 2018, districts were formally established, creating a citywide network of place-based cultural districts that support arts-led community development.

Arts and Cultural District designation provides structured support, visibility, and coordination for neighborhoods with established creative ecosystems. Currently, the Office of Arts and Culture allocated \$110,000 annually to support the Arts and Cultural Districts, with each district receiving \$25,000 to advance local activation, capacity building, and collaboration. As the network grows, the Office of Arts and Culture will evaluate what additional funds are needed as part of the 2027-2028 budget process.

These districts meet in person every other month, rotating among neighborhoods, to collaborate on shared resources, coordinate cultural activation, and exchange knowledge and best practices.

This structure strengthens connections between districts while allowing each to retain its unique identity and priorities.

At its core, Arts and Cultural District designation is designed to empower residents, artists, and organizations within the district by providing tools, recognition, and a direct connection to the City. The designation supports community-driven cultural development and serves as an important conduit for informing citywide policy, planning, and investment decisions that impact arts, cultural, and neighborhood vitality.

The mission of the stakeholders who make up the Columbia Hillman City Arts and Cultural District is to celebrate and enhance the authentic and culturally diverse soul of the Columbia City and Hillman City neighborhoods through identification with and the advancement of arts and culture.

In furtherance of this mission, the Columbia Hillman Art and Cultural District stakeholders are committed to:

- Activation of the Southeast Seattle creative economy;
- Retention and preservation of existing cultural spaces;
- Inclusion of new arts and cultural spaces in future development;
- Ensuring the availability of affordable commercial space for arts/cultural businesses and affordable live/work space for artists;
- Arts programs and projects with racial and social equity as a primary driver;
- Sustain and protect the cultural landscape that makes our neighborhoods unique;
- Development of increased youth engagement in the arts

Stakeholders in Columbia and Hillman Cities, including artists, arts organization leaders, and community activists have been meeting for more that 18 months in an effort to organize an application for designation as an Arts and Cultural District.

### **Summary Attachments:**

Summary Attachment A – Columbia Cultural District Application

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## **2. Capital Improvement Program (CIP)**

**Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project?**

Yes

No

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### 3. Summary of Financial Implications

**Does this legislation have financial impacts to the City?**

Yes

No

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### 4. Other Impacts

**a. Does this legislation require a public hearing?**

Yes

No

**b. Does this legislation require a notice to be published in The Daily Journal of Commerce and/or The Seattle Times?**

Yes

No

**c. Does this legislation affect a piece of property?**

Yes

No

**d. Race and Social Justice Initiative impacts:**

**1. How does this legislation affect vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? How did you come to this conclusion? Please consider both impacts within City government (like employees and internal programs) and in the broader community.**

The program was originally developed at the recommendation of the Seattle Arts Commission in response to displacement pressures affecting arts organizations, cultural workers, and residents in Seattle's urban core.

**2. Please attach any Racial Equity Toolkits or other racial equity analyses used to develop or assess this legislation.**

N/A

**3. What is the Language Access Plan for communicating with the public about this legislation?**

OAC is working with its public information leads to evaluate the language access needs of this program.

e. Climate change impacts:

**1. Emissions: Will this legislation significantly increase or decrease carbon emissions? Attach any studies or materials that inform your answer.**

N/A

**2. Resiliency: Will this legislation make Seattle more or less able to adapt to climate change? If it reduces resiliency, explain what can be done to lessen the impact.**

N/A

**f. If this legislation creates a new program or expands an existing one, what are the long-term, measurable goals? How will this legislation help achieve those goals? What methods will be used to track progress?**

N/A

**g. Does this legislation create a non-utility CIP that involves shared funding with a non-City partner or organization?**

No

## Columbia Hillman Arts & Cultural District

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October 2, 2017

Seattle Office of Arts and Culture  
700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1766  
PO Box 94748  
Seattle, WA 98104

To the Review Panel,

We write to formally request that the Columbia Hillman Arts and Cultural District be designated as an Arts and Cultural District of Seattle. Southeast Seattle enjoys a cultural richness unlike any other part of the city. The numerous artists who live and work in our neighborhoods have activated them, making them more interesting places in which to reside, work, and visit. Designation as an Arts & Cultural District will provide positive exposure for our cultural spaces and organizations, and it will provide access to a “toolbox” of city programs for marketing, for cultural preservation, and for incentivizing the addition of new arts and cultural spaces in our communities. The tools will support artists, art and cultural heritage organizations and businesses, and our neighborhoods. The arts have been, and will continue to be, a driving force in the economic development and social fabric of our community. Additionally, our wealth of cultural activities have a multiplier effect on our local economies -- folks going to see a play, performance, or attend an art opening also spend money at restaurants, and on babysitters, dry cleaning, parking, etc. As Southeast Seattle is undergoing rapid development, we understand that we must act now to ensure that the arts, cultural activities, and our creative economy are both preserved and advanced.

### **Background**

Planning for the Columbia Hillman Arts and Cultural District began in February, 2016, when a group of individuals from the Columbia City Business Association, the Hillman City Business Association, SEEDArts, Community Arts Create, and arts activists met to discuss the need to promote and preserve the arts and cultural vibrancy of our neighborhoods. This core group met monthly, and held six meetings for community stakeholders; attendance averaged 20 people. Stakeholders encouraged neighborhood arts spaces and individual artists to sign up on the City's Cultural Space Inventory. On October 18, 2016, we held a public meeting at the Royal Room; 120 artists and supporters of our effort to become a designated Arts and Cultural District were in attendance.

We then set our sights on coordinating an event to satisfy the requirements of the City's Challenge Grant and to demonstrate our ability to work together. After designation, we envision

## Columbia Hillman Arts & Cultural District

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the creation of an *Arts Walking Tour* – an interactive arts & culture themed audio tour for residents and newcomers that will highlight our cultural assets and link the two neighborhoods. To that end, we coordinated an Arts Hackathon and Salon on April 29, 2017, at the Columbia City Theater. The goal of the Arts Hackathon and Salon was to create a prototype of the Arts Walking Tour in a single day with as much community input as possible. 24 participants broke into five teams and had three hours to accomplish their goals. The teams were: Website/App Development, Audio & Narration, Design, Marketing, and Logistics. By the end of the day, we had a sample website, 3 prototype apps for an arts walking tour, a professionally recorded introduction and sample audio clips for 3 cultural spaces: the Columbia City Theater, the Columbia City Gallery, and the Black and Tan Hall. At the Salon, which was held simultaneously and was open to the public, we captured 74 artists in a photo booth (manned by Youth in Focus), collected recordings of 18 residents sharing their stories about local arts and culture highlights, and filled in a large map of our community with sticky notes containing locations and stories from participants.

We have created a short video that shows highlights of the Arts Hackathon and Salon event and demonstrates the prototype Arts Walking Tour app. Click on this link to view the video: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bz89CC9aYzX7Uk5Cb2UzSDFtNTQ/view?usp=sharing>.

### Our Neighborhood

About 94,000 people live in Southeast Seattle, home to Columbia and Hillman Cities. For decades, this mosaic of communities has been among the most ethnically diverse region in the State. Seventy-one percent of our residents are nonwhite, and 40-53% are immigrants. Forty ethnic groups live in Southeast Seattle, and 59 different languages are spoken. Thirty percent of the population is under age 18. Southeast Seattle has the highest poverty rates and the greatest percentage of low-income residents within the City of Seattle. In certain parts of Southeast Seattle, the unemployment rate hovers at 16-20% -- about triple the current Seattle unemployment rate of 3.9%. One out of 5 residents live in poverty, and 1 in 3 children are poor. Sadly, because the demographics couldn't support arts spaces, Southeast Seattle has been largely ignored by the mainstream arts organizations. Yet lower property values and rents have attracted artists, artisans and creative entrepreneurs for decades. Our community enjoys one of the highest densities of artists in the city. The Creative Vitality Index for Southeast Seattle is 1.83, well above the national average of 1.0. (from "*Snapshot of the Arts in SE Seattle*," WESTAF © Creative Vitality™ Suite 2017). In 2014, there were 2,756 creative jobs in Southeast Seattle, including photographers, graphic designers, musicians, and writers (*ibid*). We hope that designation as an Arts & Cultural District will formally recognize and reward the creative contributions from this previously marginalized community.

## Columbia Hillman Arts & Cultural District

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Columbia City has experienced rapid development and growth in the past decade. Columbia City is well known as a music destination, and is home to several longstanding arts venues. The Rainier Arts Center, formerly the Rainier Valley Cultural Center, sits at the northern entrance to Columbia City at the intersection of Alaska St and Rainier Ave S. A stately civic building, the Center has brought diverse performing arts to the community for 20 years. A few blocks south, the Columbia City Theater is celebrating its 97th birthday – it is one of the oldest vaudeville style theaters in the nation and played a major role in the Seattle Jazz boom in the 40's. The Royal Esquire Club and the Royal Room also host live music. The Columbia City Gallery shows and sells the work of its 30 member artists, as well as 65 guest artists and 85 artisans each year.

To the south, Hillman City has emerged as a hotbed of innovation and creativity. Rents in this neighborhood are still relatively low, so the community has seen an influx of artists and creative entrepreneurs. New cultural spaces like the Hillman City Collaboratory and the SEEDArts Studios have opened and become a resource for the creative community. The Black and Tan Hall, a music venue, is opening soon with a bold business model – it is cooperatively owned and operated as a for-profit business. Currently Hillman City only has a handful of arts spaces, with a disproportionately large number of resident artists. We envision a proliferation of arts spaces, artist services, and creative enterprises to serve them as the neighborhood continues to develop.

In the past, Columbia City and Hillman City have worked independently to market their distinct characteristics. Columbia City is a designated Historic District with a well-established business core; Hillman City prides itself as a quirky, funky, and innovative entrepreneurial strip. We anticipate that the physical gap between the two neighborhoods, referred to as the Rainier Avenue s-curves, will be completely redeveloped in the near future. In anticipation (and celebration) of this linkage, the neighborhoods wish to work together as an Arts & Cultural District. This district is the first step in bridging the gap between the two communities. We want to be proactive, and work towards the formation of new arts and cultural spaces to serve our many artists and cultural activists. The existing tools for Arts Districts and from the City's **CAP Report** will be critical. We, in partnership with the City, are committed to seeing that new development will incorporate the arts into their design, and will also provide new spaces for performances, exhibits, and resources for artists.

### District Mission and Goals

The mission of the Columbia Hillman Arts & Cultural District is to celebrate and enhance the authentic and culturally diverse soul of the Columbia City and Hillman City neighborhoods through identification with, and the advancement of, arts and culture. We want to celebrate the

## Columbia Hillman Arts & Cultural District

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historic contributions the arts have played in these communities, preserve and promote our current art spaces, and most importantly, proactively guide our future by ensuring that new art spaces are included in future developments. We recognize that designation can bring opportunity to artists & cultural spaces, but also to the myriad of cultures that allow Southeast Seattle to be such a great producer of arts & cultural experiences; this diversity must be maintained.

In furtherance of this mission, the Columbia Hillman Arts and Cultural District stakeholders are committed to:

- Activation of the Southeast Seattle creative economy;
- Retention and preservation of existing cultural spaces;
- Inclusion of new arts and cultural spaces in future development;
- Ensuring the availability of affordable commercial space for arts/cultural businesses and affordable live/work space for artists;
- Arts programs and projects with racial and social equity as a primary driver;
- Sustain and protect the cultural landscape that makes our neighborhoods unique;
- Development of increased youth engagement in the arts.

### The Creative Placemaking Toolkit

We have identified the following components of the Creative Placemaking Toolkit as priorities:

**District Identification:** The district will be clearly identified through the use of public art, sidewalk kiosks, or pole banners. We would like to collaborate with local artists to design and fabricate small works of public art (signs, banners, kiosks) that will be placed throughout the neighborhoods to identify the district, with an emphasis on the north and south borders along Rainer Avenue (Alaska and Orcas respectively) and in the s-curves between the two neighborhoods.

**Wayfinding:** Our primary wayfinding project will be the development of the Arts Walking Tour, a digital app that identify arts spaces and entertainment options in our neighborhoods, and serve as a link between the two neighborhoods. Each cultural space in our district will have a sticker in the window that identifies it as a “member” of the Arts & Cultural District. Users of the app will be able to engage with content featuring locations in the District when they come upon markers, either by manually launching the app or by allowing their device's GPS feature to

## Columbia Hillman Arts & Cultural District

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trigger the content. The app will also have the flexibility for the producers to easily add or remove content as necessary.

**Pop-up Space Activation:** We will work with Storefronts Seattle to activate vacant storefronts with art installations. This will provide opportunities for the numerous working artists in our community, and enhance our streetscape.

**Implement ideas from the City's CAP Report to preserve and promote current assets:** We will work with the city to implement ideas from the **CAP Report**. To promote and preserve our current assets, we would like to utilize concepts from the "Cultural Space Certification" list. We hope to maintain the character of the two neighborhoods, and hope the section titled, "Incentivize Cultural Uses in Older Buildings" will be of assistance.

**Implement ideas for the City's CAP Report to incentivize future cultural space development:** The **CAP Report** contains excellent suggestions in areas related to the creation of new cultural space. As the Rainier Ave S-curves continue to develop, many of the CAP Report tools will be useful, including Bonuses for Cultural Space (#4), Create Height Additions for Cultural Space Projects (#5), and all of the tools to facilitate the permitting process for cultural spaces.

### Governance Structure

Stakeholders for the Columbia Hillman Arts & Cultural District have been meeting since February 2016. This process has been an incredible opportunity for us, as we have already increased the amount of collaboration between our arts spaces and artists, and established an equitable approach to planning.

The stakeholders include (1) owners, operators and representatives of arts/cultural spaces and organizations, (2) individual neighborhood artists of all types, and (3) other community members enthusiastic about and interested in supporting the arts and cultural district. Once we receive designation, our stakeholders will identify members to serve as an advisory council. Policies and procedures will be developed to guide the operations of the advisory council, which will oversee the direction and programs of the district. SEEDArts will provide administrative and fiscal agency support. SEEDArts is a 30 year-old program of SouthEast Effective Development; its stability, its commitment to the Arts & Cultural District, and its well established connections in the community will ensure proper administration and financial oversight.

## **Columbia Hillman Arts & Cultural District**

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The Columbia Hillman Arts & Cultural District will celebrate the historic contribution of the arts in our community, preserve and promote current arts and cultural spaces, and work towards ensuring the future development of new arts and cultural spaces. We thank you for your consideration.

Signed,

Tarik Abdullah, Chef, Black & Tan Hall

Haimi Ayele, Community Arts Activist

Jennifer Bennett, Artist, Teacher, Black & Tan Hall

Debra Bouchegnies, dbCreative Services Group, LLC

Sally Brucker, Igimo Arts Station

Heather Curran, Theater artist, Community Activist

Guy Davis, Musician, Columbia City Business Association

Chris Digangi, Media Artist

Julie Dillon, Community Arts Activist

Lori Duckstein, Artist

Betsy Fetherston, Columbia City Gallery

Kathy Fowells, SEEDArts

Francisca Garcia, Rainier Arts Center

Erik Hanson, Jazz Night School

Kate Harkins, Artist

Beau Hebert, Lotties Lounge

John Helmiere, The Collaboratory

Rodney Herold, Black and Tan Hall

James Hong, Vietnamese Friendship Association

Ben Hunter, Community Arts Create, Collaboratory, Black & Tan Hall, Musician

Lara Lavi, Columbia City Theater

Frank Martinez, SouthEast Effective Development

Tia Mathies, Royal Room

David McRae, Ark Lodge Cinema

Rob Mohn, Columbia City Business Improvement Area

Connie Ostrowski, The Makery

Ethan Pollack, Illustrator

Joan Robbins, Artist

Joe Seamons, Musician, Black and Tan Hall

Talia Silveri Wright, Community Arts Activist

Mia Stephenson, SEEDArts Studios

Matthew Stubbs, Hillman City Business Association

Barbara Earl Thomas, Artist

Mary Melinda Wellsandt, Artist

## **Columbia Hillman Arts & Cultural District**

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The following is an additional list of people that have expressed support for the Columbia Hillman Arts & Cultural District and have participated in one or more of our meetings or events:

Sonia Lynn Abenojar	Gibran Hashimi	Emily Naftalin
Scott Amick	Whitney Hazzard	Brian Nichols
Sam Anderson	Beau Hebert	Amy Novo
Tonia Arehart	Heather Hitt	Miya Nqobile
Megan Arnaud	Jimmy James	Jeannie O'Brien
Laurie Becker	Rob Jaull	Karen O'Brien
Pat Bennett	Karin Kallander	Deeann Partlow
Douglas Berger	Wynona Karbo	DL Powers
Manole Bogdana	Shari Kaufman	Deedric Prince
Beliz Brother	Laureen Kelly	Melissa Purcell
Liz Brown	Pat Kelly	Kathy Quenzer
Sally Brucker Brucker	Julie Kerby	Janelle Quibuyen
Pat Burnett	Chrys Kim Kim	Aurelia Rael
Joan Cihar	Eliaichi Kimaro	Riz Rollins
Sara Colling	Bennett Kling	Crista Schneider
Caitlin Cotter	Tom Koontz	Beth Scott
Randy Cross	John Kramer	Jessica Scruggs
Charlie Cunniff	Genessa Krasnow	Ken Selander
Heather Curran	Jennifer Lapensee	Sincere Shiota
Andrea Davis	Annie Lewis	Mike Solvestig
Lauren Davis	Molly Magai	Art Stone
Liz Davis	Daniel James Maguire	Victor Straube
Carolynn Daye	Julie Maher	Sergio Talamoni
Carina Del Rosario	Danny Manier	Amanda Teicher
Stephanie Dickie	Bogdana Manole	Senait Tilahcen
Rick Duque	Lance Matteson	Justoh Wells
Kerri Eden	Ann McBurney	Warren Wilson
Dave Egan	Kim McCormick	Revel Wolf
Osa Elaiho	David McGraw	Virginia Wright
Karla Esquivel	Andrea Misiano	Charlie Yaris
Sandra Fleming	Sultan Mohamed	Linda Zahava
Katie Funderburk	Dave Montoure	Ali & Emily Zuberi
Rob Green	Annie Moorehouse	
Becca Hall	Monica Munro	



Legislation Text

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**File #:** Inf 2893, **Version:** 1

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Social Housing Developer Charter Changes



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL  
CENTRAL STAFF

# Proposed Changes to the Seattle Social Housing Developer Charter

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JENNIFER LABRECQUE, ANALYST

HOUSING, ARTS & CIVIL RIGHTS

5/13/26

REVISED 5/12/26

# Background

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- Initiative Measure Number 135 (I-135), creating the Seattle Social Housing Developer (SSHHD), was approved by voters during the February 14, 2023 special election.
- I-135 included a charter for the SSHHD as Exhibit A. Under Article XI of that charter, City Council approval is needed to revise the charter.
- The SSHHD Board voted on May 5, 2026 to recommend all the proposed changes, with one small exception related to the definitions section.

# Proposed Changes to SSHD Charter (1/2)

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- Allow SSHD to form a single purpose entity (such as a limited liability corporation) which can be used to purchase or develop properties and protect SSHD's other assets against unforeseen setbacks. SSHD would retain control over housing by owning and controlling this single purpose entity.
- Allow rental rates to be based on more than just the cost of building operations, in order to allow for cross-subsidization of buildings or the use of building revenue to support bond payments.
- Facilitate SSHD properties to be used as collateral for debt and allow SSHD to execute regulatory agreements, such as a Mandatory Housing Affordability performance regulatory agreement.
- Allow SSHD to create a condominium structure for property it develops, where SSHD retains the housing portion of the building but sells the commercial portion.
- For any commercial portion of a condominium that is sold, add a requirement for SSHD to have right of first refusal and limit the profit that the commercial condominium owner can make off any sale.

## Proposed Changes to SSHD Charter (2/2)

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- Establishes the process by which the seven SSHD board positions currently appointed by the Renter's Commission will be appointed by the Constituency once SSHD begins operations of social housing; the Constituency is comprised of residents living within SSHD developments
- Eliminates the requirement that the Constituency selects an independent auditor; however the SSHD is still required provide audited financial statements to the City Clerk annually.
- Adds a new section related to definitions
- Other changes for purposes of clarity

# Timeline

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- May 13 - Discussion of proposed SSHD charter changes at Housing, Arts & Civils Rights Committee; resolution and proposed charter changes are on the Committee agenda as information items
- June 2– Resolution and attached charter on the Introduction and Referral Committee
- June 10 – Discussion and potential vote at Housing, Arts & Civil Rights Committee
- June 16 – First available full Council vote

Note: Because the proposed charter changes are the same as those being recommended by the board, the charter changes are being adopted via resolution. If Council wanted to make futher charter changes via amendments, an ordinance would be necessary instead.

Questions?

## The City of Seattle

### Resolution \_\_\_\_\_

..title

**A resolution** approving the proposed charter amendments recommended by the board of the Seattle Social Housing Developer.

..body

**Recitals:**

Initiative Measure Number 135 (I-135), creating the Seattle Social Housing Developer, was approved by voters during the February 14, 2023 special election.

I-135 included a charter for the Seattle Social Housing Developer as Exhibit A. Under Article XI of that charter, City Council approval is needed to revise the charter.

The Seattle Social Housing Developer Board voted on May 5, 2026 and May 21, 2026 to recommend the proposed changes as found in Attachment A of this resolution.

Therefore,

**Be it resolved by the City Council of The City of Seattle:**

Section 1. The City Council adopts the amended Seattle Social Housing Charter, attached to this resolution as Attachment A, superseding the charter adopted by Initiative 135.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Restated Seattle Social Housing Developer Charter

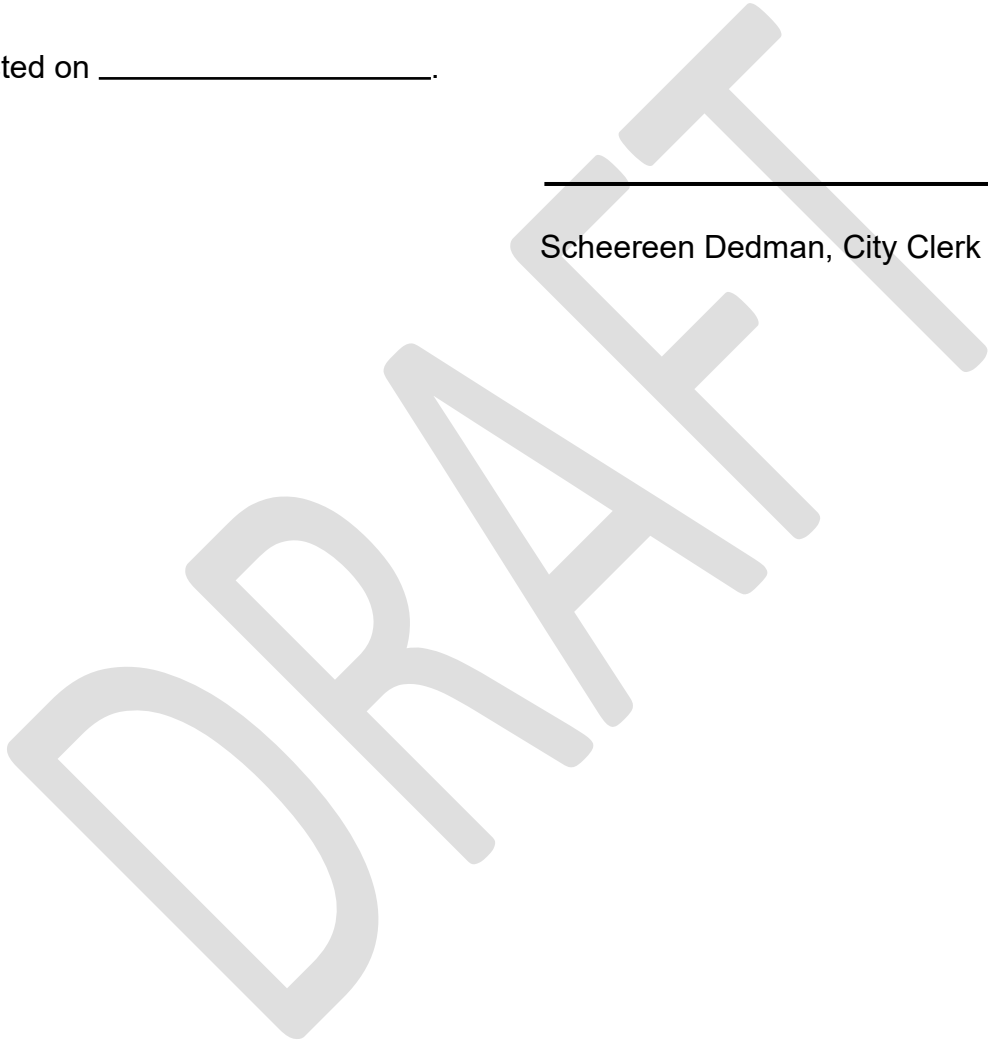
Adopted by the City Council and signed in open session in authentication of its  
adoption on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President \_\_\_\_\_ of the City Council

Attested on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

*Seal*



## Restated Seattle Social Housing Developer Charter Attachment A

### ARTICLE I. NAME.

The name of this corporation shall be the Seattle Social Housing Developer (“Public Developer”).

### ARTICLE II. PURPOSE, DIRECTIVES, AND GOALS.

(1) The core mission of the Seattle Social Housing Developer shall be to develop, own, and maintain social housing developments, as well as lease units of said developments.

(2) In carrying out its purpose, the Public Developer MUST adhere to the following:

1. The housing MUST be owned exclusively by the Public Developer or by any form of entity or interest owned and controlled by the Public Developer;
2. To the extent possible, all developments MUST contain housing units that accommodate a mix of household income ranges, including extremely low-income (0-30% Area Median Income (“AMI”)), very low-income (30-50% AMI), low-income (50-80% AMI), and moderate-income (80-120% AMI), and a mix of household sizes. If the Public Developer takes over a building, existing residential tenants will not be displaced, and these targets will be achieved as tenants turnover in the building;
3. Tenancy MUST not be revoked based on changes to household income;
4. Rental rates MUST be dedicated to permanent affordability and ~~set based on~~ consider the amount needed for operations, maintenance, and loan service on the building or development containing the unit;
5. Residents MUST be afforded opportunities for restorative justice conflict resolution prior to being subject to eviction procedures;
6. ~~Developments~~ Housing MUST be permanently protected from being sold or transferred to a private entity or public-private partnership, except that as to any property or other interest, Public Developer may mortgage, lease, assign revenues to creditors, record restrictive covenants or grant deeds of trust and consent to any transfer of such property by operation of law, by foreclosure, or in lieu of foreclosure, subject to any recorded regulatory or other covenant requirement for use of the property;
7. Residents MUST have opportunities to participate directly and meaningfully in decision-making; and

8. New developments MUST meet green building and Passive House Standards.

(3) In carrying out its purpose, and to the extent legally allowed, the Public Developer should strive to achieve the following goals:

1. The Public Developer should use a lottery-based, minimal barrier application process, free of required rental references, co-signers, background checks, and application fees, and which does not discriminate based upon citizenship or immigration status;

2. The Public Developer should provide housing to those who live or work in Seattle;

3. The Public Developer should explore ~~tenant unit resident lease~~ ownership ~~options~~ models where the property is owned by SSHD and the housing unit is leased for a specified amount of time to the resident, as modeled by international social housing models;

4. The Public Developer should retrofit acquired buildings to meet Passive House Retrofit Standards under the EnerPHit Retrofit Plan and meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards;

5. The Public Developer should limit rent to no more than 30% of income;

6. New developments should include daycare, communal kitchens, affordable co-op working spaces, and/or common areas;

7. The Public Developer should construct new developments using union labor; ~~and~~

8. The Public Developer should establish a labor harmony agreement-; and

9. The Public Developer should include in all relevant agreements: (a) a right of first refusal to purchase any commercial property held by a third party that is on, attached to, or encumbers any Public Developer owned property at an amount that does not allow the private party to benefit from market speculation; and (b) a provision that, if the Public Developer does not exercise the right of first refusal, the third party may be limited in the profit received on any sale of the property by an Index Price. The Board of Directors of the Public Developer shall adopt a policy stating how the "Index Price" will be determined and implemented.

### **ARTICLE III. AUTHORITY AND LIMIT ON LIABILITY.**

Section 1. Legal Authority. The Social Housing PDA is a public corporation organized pursuant to RCW 35.21.660, RCW 35.21.670, and RCW 35.21.730-.755. This Charter is subject to the constitutions and laws of the United States and the State of Washington and regulations adopted under those laws. Chapter 3.110 of the Seattle Municipal Code does

not apply to the Public Developer and this Charter except to the extent stated herein. As a public corporation organized under said State and local laws, it is a political subdivision of the State with an area of operation limited to the City of Seattle.

Section 2. Limit on Liability. All liabilities incurred by the Public Developer shall be satisfied exclusively from the assets and properties of the Public Developer and no creditor or other person shall have any right of action against the City of Seattle on account of any debts, obligations or liabilities of the Public Developer.

Section 3. Mandatory Disclaimer. The following disclaimer shall be posted in a prominent place where the public may readily see it in the Public Developer's principal and other offices. It shall also be printed or stamped on all contracts, bonds, and other documents that may entail any debt or liability by the Public Developer. The Public Developer is organized pursuant to RCW 35.21.660, 35.21.670, and 35.21.730-.755. RCW 35.21.750 provides as follows: "[A]ll liabilities incurred by such public corporation, commission, or authority shall be satisfied exclusively from the assets and properties of such public corporation, commission, or authority and no creditor or other person shall have any right of action against the city, town, or county creating such corporation, commission or authority on account of any debts, obligations, or liabilities of such public corporation, commission, or authority."

**ARTICLE IV. DURATION.** The duration of the Public Developer shall be perpetual.

**ARTICLE V. POWERS.** The Public Developer shall have all powers available to public corporations under state and local law [including RCW 35.21.660-.670 and 35.21.730-.755 and SMC 3.110.040-.060, 3.110.120 and 3.110.420 except as otherwise limited by this ordinance or the Charter](#). In addition, the Public Developer is empowered to perform all manner and types of community services and activities relating to the purpose of the Social Housing PDA utilizing local, state, federal, or private funds, or real property.

**ARTICLE VI. LIMITS.** The Public Developer, in all activities and transactions, shall be limited as set forth in SMC 3.110.080 at the time of enactment. In addition, the Public Developer shall not issue shares of stock, pay dividends, or make loans, and shall remain the sole owner of all of its [housing \(but not its commercial\) assets either directly or through an entity formed pursuant to Article II, \(2\) 1](#), and the Public Developer shall not merge with another corporation or organization unless the developments being transferred continue to be governed in perpetuity according to the requirements of this Charter.

**ARTICLE VII. THE SOCIAL HOUSING PDA BOARD.**

Section 1. The permanent management of the Social Housing Developer shall rest with the Board. There shall be thirteen (13) members:

1. Seven (7) members shall be initially appointed by the Seattle Renters' Commission, which is hereby given such authority. The initial seven (7) members appointed by the Seattle Renters' Commission shall include at least one (1) member who has experienced housing insecurity; at least one (1) member who has experienced financial eviction; and at least one (1) member who has been displaced. In addition, they shall represent a range of incomes, including three (3) members living at 0-50% AMI; two (2) members living at 50-80% AMI; two (2) members living at 80-100% AMI. The Seattle Renters' Commission shall appoint replacements, except that once the Public Developer has begun operation of social housing and has adopted the initial Rules and Regulations for the Constituency, the positions will be appointed by and filled with residents of social housing ("Constituency") pursuant to the Rules and Regulations for the Constituency as the term of each of the board members appointed by the Renters' Commission ends either by expiration of the term or the member resigning or otherwise ceasing to hold the position.

2. One (1) member shall be a rank-and-file union member appointed by the Martin Luther King, Jr. County Labor Council, which shall also appoint replacements.

3. One (1) member shall be a leader from a community organization that provides housing to marginalized communities. El Centro De La Raza shall appoint the first member to fill this position. The Board shall select replacements for this position after a public call for self-nominations.

4. Two (2) members shall be appointed by the City Council and one (1) member shall be appointed by the Mayor. As terms expire, the City Council and Mayor shall appoint replacements for their appointed members. Of the members appointed by the Mayor and City Council, there must be members with expertise in public housing finance, urban planning, and nonprofit housing development.

5. One (1) member with ~~expertise in green development~~ professional experience and expertise in the design or development of sustainable construction, appointed by the Green New Deal Oversight Board, which shall also appoint replacements that meet these qualifications.

Section 2. These persons and entities must appoint the first members of the Board within 60 days of the effective date of this Ordinance, and shall promptly appoint a replacement upon the expiration of members' terms or when a replacement is otherwise required. Board members must have a commitment to the goals of social housing.

Section 3. The terms of members of the Board shall be four years, except for the initial designation of Board positions to achieve staggered terms, as described below. No person shall serve more than eight (8) consecutive years on the Board. At the first meeting of the

Board, the Board positions shall be divided into three categories, by random drawing. The first three names drawn shall be in Category One. The term of office of Category One positions shall be that which most closely coincides with the second anniversary of the formation of the permanent Board. The second three names drawn shall be in Category Two. The term of office for Category Two shall be that which most closely coincides with the third anniversary of the formation of the permanent Board. The remaining members shall be in Category Three. Their term of office shall be that which most closely coincides with the fourth anniversary of the formation of the permanent Board.

Section 4. The Board may create committees by resolution with a minimum of three (3) **board** members and a maximum of six (6) **board** members.

Section 5. Board Concurrence Required. The requirement for Board concurrence shall be that established by SMC 3.110.200, except that the donation of money, property, and assets is prohibited. The Board is prohibited from gifting money, property, or assets belonging to the Public Developer.

Section 6. Board Review. The Board shall meet at least once each month. The Board shall review monthly statements of income and expenses which compare budgeted expenditures to actual expenditures. The Board shall also review balance sheets each month. The Board shall review all such information at open public meetings, the minutes of which shall specifically note such reviews, and include such information.

If possible, all Board meetings shall be broadcast and, except for executive or closed sessions authorized under RCW 42.30.110 or RCW 42.30.140, all Board meetings shall be public and transparent. All public records of the Board and the Public Developer may be requested in accordance with RCW Chapter 42.56 and may not be withheld unless exempt or confidential under state law.

Section 7. Quorum Defined. A quorum to commence a Board meeting shall be no fewer than seven (7) members of the Board.

Section 8. Officers and Division of Duties. The Board shall have at least four (4) or more officers. The initial officers shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Officers shall be elected from among the members of the Board by the Board for a term of one year, and members of the Board may serve additional terms as officers if elected by the Board.

Section 9. Removal of Board Members. If any Board member resigns, or becomes ineligible to serve, or misses three (3) or more consecutive Board meetings or two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of scheduled Board meetings in six (6) consecutive months, they shall be replaced, unless the absences have been excused by the Board.

The replacement member shall be selected in the same manner as the departing Board member.

Section 10. The Public Developer shall, at a minimum, pay Board members representing residents, community organizations, and the labor representatives for their time conducting Board business, as well as providing them with staff support as needed for them to successfully serve. The Board may choose to pay other members for their time.

#### **ARTICLE VIII. CONSTITUENCY.**

Section 1. Composition. Once the Public Developer begins operation of social housing and after it has adopted the initial Rules and Regulations for the Constituency, the Constituency of the Social Housing PDA shall consist of residents living within its developments and shall be governed by this Article. The Rules and Regulations shall provide for meetings, including notice, quorum, and other provisions dealing with the Constituency. The Constituency must have regularly scheduled meetings and an annual meeting when it elects position(s) to the Board.

Section 2. The concurrence of the Constituency shall also be required on the following matters: (1) any proposed amendments to the Charter; (2) any proposed amendments to the Rules and Regulations of the Social Housing PDA if said amendment deals with matters which are within the power and responsibility of the Constituency as set forth in this section; (3) proposed amendments to the provisions of the Rules and Regulations governing procedures for meetings of the Constituency; and (4) annually fixing the compensation of Board members and adopting Board reimbursement policies.; and (5) selection of an independent auditor. Such concurrence shall require an affirmative vote of a majority of the constituents voting on the issue.

Section 3. The Constituency shall elect a person or persons to serve on the Board in seven (7) of the thirteen (13) positions as provided herein and any Rules and Regulations adopted by the Constituency. If no candidate receives a majority affirmative vote, a run-off election between the top two candidates shall be held not later than one month following the first election.

Section 4. Each multifamily social housing development owned by the Public Developer shall form a governance council. The Board shall establish appropriate size limitations for governance councils based on the size of the developments that they represent.

A governance council shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

- (a) Host regular meetings to gather feedback and perspective of residents.
- (b) Provide the resident perspective to property management.

- (c) Represent the interests of the development in biannual meetings with the board.
- (d) Determine how to spend the building or development's allotted annual budget for common room amenities and social events.
- (e) Participate in the approval of renovation projects.
- (f) Other responsibilities as determined by the Board.

~~A governance council and the Board may consult with a mission-driven nonprofit corporation or community land trust with appropriate experience for the purpose of establishing managerial policies and practices that align with the requirements of social housing and the need to provide suitable renter protections.~~

#### **ARTICLE IX. MEETINGS.**

Section 1. Open Public Meetings. All Board meetings shall be open to the public to the extent required by RCW 42.30.010, et seq. Efforts to open meetings above and beyond the letter of the law are to be encouraged and applauded.

Section 2. Parliamentary Authority. The Board may adopt rules of procedure to govern its meetings and the meetings of any subcommittee or committee of the Board. Such rules of procedure shall be consistent with the Charter and state and local law.

Section 3. Minutes. Meeting minutes shall be made publicly available.

#### **ARTICLE X. RULES AND REGULATIONS.**

The Board shall adopt Rules and Regulations to govern the Public Developer that are consistent with this Charter.

#### **ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS TO CHARTER.**

Amendments to the Charter shall be recommended by the Board, and take effect upon City Council approval.

#### **ARTICLE XII. RECORDS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**

Records and reporting requirements shall be governed by SMC 3.110.390, 3.110.400, and 3.110.410 as existing on the date this ordinance was enacted

#### **ARTICLE XIII. COMMENCEMENT.**

The Public Developer shall come into existence upon the certification of passage of this initiative.

#### **ARTICLE XIV. DISSOLUTION.**

Dissolution of the Public Developer shall be in the form and manner required by law, City ordinance, and the Rules and Regulations. Upon dissolution of the Public Developer and the winding up of its affairs, all of the rights, assets and property of the Public Developer shall pass to and be distributed according to the terms of binding agreements or to a qualified entity specified in SMC 3.110.490.

#### **ARTICLE XV. MISCELLANEOUS.**

Section 1. Bonding. The members of the Board and any other officers or officials with the responsibility for handling accounts and finances shall file fidelity bonds in an amount determined adequate and appropriate by the Board. The Public Developer shall pay the premium for such bonds. The Public Developer shall identify these officers and officials and the amounts of their bonds in its annual report.

Section 2. Safeguarding of Funds. The Public Developer's funds shall be deposited into a depository acceptable to the Mayor and be otherwise safeguarded pursuant to such instructions as the Mayor may from time-to-time issue.

Section 3. Insurance. The Public Developer shall maintain in full force and effect liability insurance in an amount sufficient to cover potential claims for bodily injuries, death or disability, and for property damage, which may arise from or be related to its projects and activities. The Public Developer shall also maintain appropriate insurance to protect staff, officers, and Board members.

Section 4. Code of Ethics. No official or employee of the Public Developer shall engage in conduct prohibited under state or local law. Uncompensated officials and employees designated **by the Public Developer in its rules or regulations as** compensated employees shall annually by April 15 file statements of economic interest as required under SMC 3.110.570. The Board shall enforce the provisions of SMC 3.110.580. Additionally, all final Board determinations under SMC 3.110.580 shall be provided to the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission for its information. The City Board of Ethics, in its discretion, may comment on any determinations and provide its comments to the Social Housing PDA Council.

Section 5. Discrimination Prohibited. Neither Board, Constituency, nor governance council membership may be directly or indirectly based upon or limited by age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, political ideology, or the physical handicap of a capable person. Use of City funds shall be subject to the requirements of SMC 20.46 (City Contracting—Fair Business Practices).

Section 6. Severability. If any part of this Charter is found by a court to be illegal or unconstitutional, according to either the Federal or State Constitution or laws, the remaining parts shall remain in force.

The Charter shall be interpreted in the broadest sense in order that the Social Housing PDA may carry out its mandate.

New Section 7. The definitions contained in SMC 3.110.020 and Section 3 of Initiative 135 shall apply to this Charter. Initiative 135 definitions shall control in the event of any inconsistency.

For the purposes of this Charter:

“Restorative justice” means a voluntary, community-centered process for residents grounded in relationship, respect, responsibility, repair, and reintegration. It brings together those impacted by harm to address conflict or issues by asking who has been harmed, what they need, and whose responsibility it is to meet those needs. The process supports meaningful accountability, repair of harm, and the restoration of relationships to the greatest extent possible, and, where feasible, addresses unmet needs connected to the conflict, harm, or issue.

“Social Housing Development” or “Development” means one or more housing buildings or portions of buildings that are built or acquired by the Public Developer and used specifically for social housing.

“The Public Developer” or “Social Housing Developer” means the Seattle Social Housing Developer and any entity it owns, controls or is under its common control.

## Summary and Fiscal Note

1. This resolution would amend the Seattle Social Housing Developer Charter. All proposed charter changes were recommended by the Seattle Social Housing Developer Board at their May 5, 2026 and May 21, 2026 board meetings. The changes were recommended by the SSHD board order to enhance SSHD's ability to accomplish their mission of developing, owning, and maintaining social housing developments in the City of Seattle.

The changes will:

- Allow SSHD to form a single purpose entity (such as a limited liability corporation) which can be used to purchase or develop properties and protect SSHD's other assets against unforeseen setbacks. SSHD would retain control over housing by owning and controlling this single purpose entity.
- Allow rent rates to be based on more than just the cost of building operations, in order to allow for cross-subsidization of buildings or the use of building revenue to support bond payments.
- Allow SSHD properties to be used as collateral for debt and allow SSHD to execute regulatory agreements, such as a Mandatory Housing Affordability performance regulatory agreement.
- Allow SSHD to create a condominium structure for property it develops, where SSHD retains the housing portion of the building but sells the commercial portion.
- For any commercial portion of a condominium that is sold, adds a requirement for SSHD to have right of first refusal and limit the profit that the commercial condominium owner can make off any sale.

- Establishes a process by which the seven SSHD board positions currently appointed by the Renter’s Commission will be appointed by the Constituency once SSHD begins operations of social housing; the constituency is comprised of residents living within SSHD developments
- Eliminates the requirement that the Constituency selects an independent auditor; however the SSHD is still required provide audited financial statements to the City Clerk annually.
- Adds a new definition section
- Other changes for purposes of clarity

**Department:** LEG

**Title:** A resolution approving the proposed charter amendments recommended by the board of the Seattle Social Housing Developer.

**Background:** Initiative Measure Number 135 (I-135), creating the Seattle Social Housing Developer (SSHD), was approved by voters during the February 14, 2023 special election. I-135 included a charter for the Seattle Social Housing Developer as Exhibit A. Under Article XI of that charter, City Council approval is needed to revise the charter. The SSHD Board voted on May 5, 2026 to recommend the proposed changes as found in Attachment A of the resolution.

**Summary Attachments:** None

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## 2. Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

**Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project?**

Yes

No

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### 3. Summary of Financial Implications

#### Does this legislation have financial impacts to the City?

Yes

No

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### 4. Other Impacts

#### a. Does this legislation require a public hearing?

Yes

No

#### b. Does this legislation require a notice to be published in The Daily Journal of Commerce and/or The Seattle Times?

Yes

No

#### c. Does this legislation affect a piece of property?

No

#### d. Race and Social Justice Initiative impacts:

**1. How does this legislation affect vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? How did you come to this conclusion? Please consider both impacts within City government (like employees and internal programs) and in the broader community.**

Black, indigenous and people of color are disproportionately impacted by the lack of affordable housing in Seattle. In large part that is due to disparities in income:

- Close to two-thirds of Native American households and Black households having income at or below 80% of AMI.
- Nearly half of Hispanic or Latino households have incomes this low.
- In contrast, only one third of white households have incomes at or below 80% AMI.

Black households and Native American are the most cost burdened, meaning that a household pays more than 30% of its income towards rent. The highest estimated

prevalence is found among Black households, about half of whom are cost burdened—and roughly a quarter severely so, meaning they pay more than 50% of their income towards rent.

There are also similar disparities in terms of who experiences homelessness. Based on the 2024 Point in Time analysis, 15% of people experiencing homelessness in King County identify as Black/African American, but according to 2023 U.S. Census data only 7% of King County's population identifies as Black/African American. Similarly, 6% of people experiencing homelessness identify as American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Indigenous, but that group makes up less than 1% of King County's population.

It is not yet clear how the SSHD will help address these racial disparities related to housing. The SSHD Charter has a number of provisions that could benefit low-income tenants, who as described above are disproportionately BIPOC, such as a goal to include a mix of units affordable to a range of incomes including low and very low income and a goal to have rent be set at 30% of a tenant's income. However, because these are goals – and not set requirements – it remains to be seen how well are implemented and what the end benefit is to low-income tenants, including BIPOC tenants.

**3. What is the Language Access Plan for communicating with the public about this legislation? N/A**

e. Climate change impacts:

**1. Emissions: Will this legislation significantly increase or decrease carbon emissions? Attach any studies or materials that inform your answer. N/A**

**2. Resiliency: Will this legislation make Seattle more or less able to adapt to climate change? If it reduces resiliency, explain what can be done to lessen the impact. N/A**

**f. If this legislation creates a new program or expands an existing one, what are the long-term, measurable goals? How will this legislation help achieve those goals? What methods will be used to track progress? N/A**

**g. Does this legislation create a non-utility CIP that involves shared funding with a non-City partner or organization? N/A**

DRAFT