



Transportation Committee Presentation

GRAND STREET COMMONS ALLEY VACATION

July 15, 2025

Mt Baker Housing Association



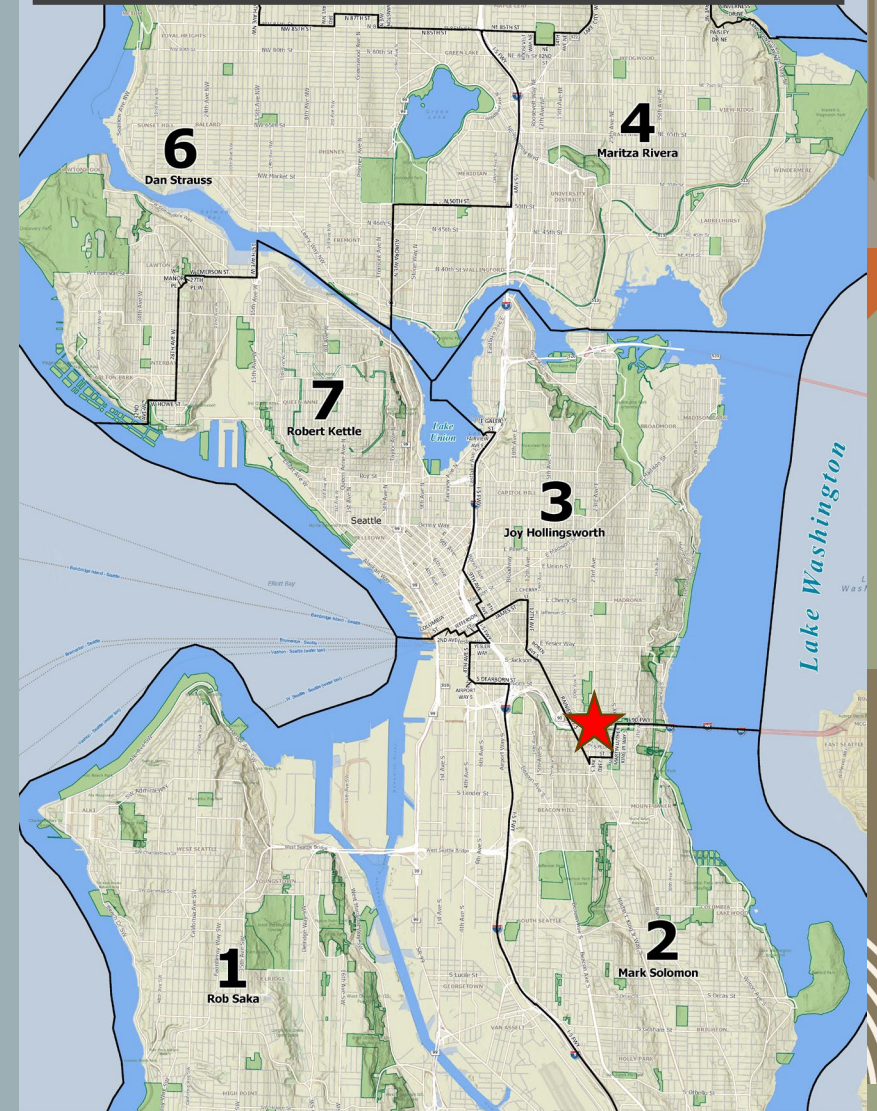
GRAND STREET COMMONS ALLEY VACATION

- Location
- Massing Model – Master Plan
- Alley Position and Previous Condition
- Public Benefit Summary
- Affordable Housing
- Plaza Design
- Plaza Event Layout
- Public Art by Gabrielle Tesfaye
- Finished Plaza
- Completed Project
- Thank you



2201 S GRAND ST, SEATTLE, WA

SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 3



MASSING MODEL – MASTER PLAN



PUBLIC BENEFIT SUMMARY

	Approx Cost	Community Benefit
Right-of-Way and Pedestrian Space Improvements	\$ 1,300,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced vehicle space and doubled pedestrian area to create a large public plaza. • Extended improvements east to 23rd Ave S per Seattle Design Commission request. • Added 12,124 SF of enhancements, totaling 33,800 SF of improved ROW. • Included nine bike racks, two streetlights, and building setbacks. • Completed pre-construction work such as surveying, clearing, and erosion control.
Plaza Amenities and Cultural Features	\$ 375,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installed a 150 SF water feature and varied seating to activate the plaza. • Added 29 artistic pedestrian-level lights to improve safety and extend usability. • Commissioned artist Gabrielle Tesfaye for five culturally inspired concrete paintings. • Hired a local art consultant to manage cultural and artistic integration. • Designed sculptural overhead elements to enhance the space during the day.
Cultural Space Agency Partnership	\$ 250,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated 1,500 SF of commercial space to CSA at cost, saving them \$250,000. • Executed a long-term contract with CSA for year-round plaza programming. • Supported community-focused events and cultural opportunities. • Ensured the space remains active and inclusive for the life of the building.
Plaza, Woonerf, and Landscaping Enhancements	\$ 175,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created 11,601 SF of new plaza and 10,075 SF of woonerf. • Added 9,100 SF of extended plaza with special paving. • Planted 14 new trees and 412 groundcover plants. • Designed the space to be flexible, accessible, and community-oriented. • Enhanced the pedestrian experience through natural and thoughtful design.
	\$ 2,100,000	

AFFORDABLE HOUSING



Grand Street Commons has transformed 3 brownfield sites into a true mixed-use, mixed-income transit-oriented neighborhood center with nearly 50% affordable units, including more than 40 3-bedroom apartment homes. The alley vacation secured by Mt. Baker Housing has allowed over 200 affordable homes to be built.

	# of Residential Units	# of Affordable Units
West Building	282	78 (28%)
East Building	287	80 (28%)
South Building	206	206 (100%)
Total	775	364

PLAZA DESIGN



PLAZA EVENT LAYOUT

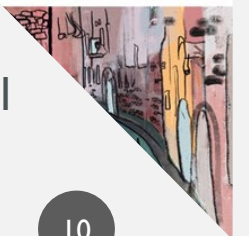


PUBLIC ART BY GABRIELLE TESFAYE



Gabrielle Tesfaye is an interdisciplinary artist whose work spans painting, animation, film, puppetry, and interactive installations, deeply rooted in the African diaspora and her Jamaican and Tigrayan heritage. She creates cultural narrative films and founded the Tigray Art Collective to respond to the Tigray genocide through art. Tesfaye studied film and fine arts in New York and Thailand, earning her BFA from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and is currently pursuing a master's degree at VCU Arts in Doha, Qatar. Her internationally exhibited work has been featured in *Vogue* and *AFROPUNK*, and her award-winning film *The Water Will Carry Us Home* has been recognized at major festivals like Black Star and Reel Sisters of the Diaspora.

Water holds profound cultural significance across global communities, symbolizing spirituality, ancestry, and migration. For African Americans and West Indians, it evokes both the trauma of the transatlantic slave trade and a spiritual link to ancestors. Cultures such as Vietnamese, Somali, Ethiopian, and Italian honor water through mythology, rituals, and sacred traditions. In Seattle's Rainier Valley, diverse communities share a common narrative of crossing water to find a new home. A proposed public art project featuring mosaic and tile designs will visually express each culture's relationship with water, celebrating heritage and memory through a shared yet distinct visual language.



FINISHED PLAZA



COMPLETED PROJECT



Street & Utility Work: Final SIP plans were approved in September 2023; construction began in October 2023 and was completed in November 2024. Utility rerouting was completed in September 2022.

Permitting & Compliance: MUP and building permits were approved in early 2022. All SEPA and regulatory requirements were met.

Public Benefit Coordination: Lake Union Partners and Mt. Baker Housing coordinated successfully throughout the project. The UMP, Art Plan, and all vacation conditions were fulfilled.

Cultural Expression & Public Art: An Art Committee selected artists, finalized designs, and completed installation of permanent public art elements (benches, tile, lighting, signage) by October 2024.

Public Access & Free Speech: Signage identifying public access and free speech rights was approved by SDOT and installed at plaza entries.

Maintenance & Legal Agreements: The Property Use and Development Agreement (PUDA) was recorded in June 2025, securing long-term public access and maintenance obligations.

Final Reviews & Approvals: All public benefit elements, signage, and design packages were reviewed and approved by SDOT and SDC, including permit revisions and cultural space agreements.

THANK YOU

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