



September 10, 2025 Ratepayer Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting Minutes - Taken by Wren

Date: September 10, 2025

Location: In-Person Meeting

Present (in person):

Tom Malone, CKM Associates
John Marasco, Security Properties
Mike Kahrs, Resident
Christine Ackerman, Hjarta Condominium
Paul Osher, Rachel's Bagels & Burritos
Max Genereaux, Hattie's Hat
Brian Trickel, Providence Swedish

Absent:

Scott Koppelman, AMLI Mark24
Stephanie Carrillo, Equity Residential
Barry Blanton, Greenfire Campus, Commons at Ballard
Mark Craig, Henbart
Randy Brinker, Sweet Mickey's, Resident
Legh Burns, re-soul
Michelle Rosenthal, Veris Law Group

Present (on Zoom):

Philip Lloyd
Gretchen Swanson, Chase Bank
Kurt Utterback, Regency Centers - Ballard Blocks

Observers/Presenters:

Mike Stewart, Ballard Alliance
Wren Wilson, Ballard Alliance
Sophie Iannone, Ballard Alliance
Wyatt Hoffman, Ballard Alliance
Will Cadra, Ballard Alliance
Jesse London, City of Seattle Office of Planning & Community Development
Kaitlin Huffman, Seattle CFO
Cody Reiter, Sound Transit

1. Welcome and Introductions (Tom Malone)

A meeting of the Ratepayer Advisory Board was called to order at 3:05 pm on September 10, 2025.

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Finance Report and Minutes Approval (Phil Lloyd, Kaitlin Huffman, Mike Stewart)

Phil Lloyd presented the Finance report through August 2025. We have spent 64.1% at this point in the year, and are spending a little under the 66% projection. The holiday lighting expense will hit soon and push the total spend number up, but that is anticipated.

Mike Kahrs asked about the expenses in the Clean Environment section. Stewart answered that a large portion of those expenses include our clean streets vendor and also that a portion of the the holiday lighting expense is included in this budget category.

4. Approve Meeting Minutes

Gretchen Swanson moved to approve the March 2025 meeting minutes.

Chris Ackerman seconded.

All in favor, motion passed.

5. Comprehensive Plan Update – Guest Speaker: Jesse London (OPCD) Regional Planner

Guest Speaker, Jesse London, provided a presentation about the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, with a focus on Ballard. Ballard will be designated as a Regional Center due to the increase in population and job growth. This designation will open Ballard up to federal transportation funding and more project priority from SDOT. London emphasized the importance of community involvement and provided a summary on the phases and processes – scoping, planning, adoption, and certification.

Mike Stewart reminded the Board that we previously sent a letter to the city to advocate for Ballard’s needs in the subarea plan.

Sophie Iannone asks when the zoning changes will be proposed. London answers that the future land use map will be created first. The zoning is an immediate step that follows the creation of the land use map.

London shared that the focused areas for development will be a topic of conversation for the community. Ballard has many low-rise buildings, which is unusual for a regional center. Mike Stewart added that the Landmark historic district will be protected. Additionally, we will be advocating for transit-oriented development to build higher density around Light Rail.

Mike Kahrs shared his concerns about “canyonization” and reminded the board that this was studied extensively with the Ballard Urban Design Framework initiative led by the Office of Planning and Development. Mike indicated this should be revisited when it is time to consider development and design.

6. Sound Transit Update – Guest Speaker: Cody Reiter (Sound Transit)

Guest Speaker, Cody Reiter, provided a presentation on the Ballard Link Extension, beginning with a recap of the process. There was a new draft environmental impact statement following

board decisions in 2023 to include new alternatives. Working with federal partners for a new draft EIS.

Reiter emphasized Sound Transit's importance on completing the spine for both West Seattle and Ballard. Before the pandemic, Sound Transit conducted an analysis that shared that for the 7.7 miles from CID to Ballard, the estimated total ridership was 127k daily riders on that alignment - the highest amongst ST3 expansion projects.

Reiter discussed the current Sound Transit Budget issues. The Enterprise Initiative is an agency-wide approach to look at a long-range financial plan that attempts to complete as many projects as possible within the Sound Transit programmatic plan despite a budget deficit. Reiter shared that the downtown tunnel is an immense endeavor. One of the cost-saving measures is to reduce the complexity of this tunnel.

Mike Kahrs asked if the money is dependent on the federal government. Reiter answers that the financial plan does rely on federal funding but Sound Transit anticipates receiving federal funding for the project. Additionally, much of the necessary funding will be needed/requested after 2028

7. Alliance Team Updates

Clean & Safe

Wyatt Hoffman provided Clean and Safe programmatic updates. He shared a graphic that compares the daily averages of cleaning stats of Q3 2024 and Q3 2025. The graph indicated lower totals for 2025, including bags of trash, illegally dumped items, sharps, and others. Hoffman noted that there were 4 days of service that are included in these stats, but where the crew wasn't performing typical work. SCL tasked us with clearing posters off their numbered poles on Ballard Ave NW (for Holiday Lighting), which entailed re-tasking the crew for this period of time. This could be lowering the daily averages.

Hoffman shared that the clean team brings about 336 pounds daily to the station, which is pretty high. The crew is picking up heavier illegally dumped items such as water heaters, tires, etc.

Hoffman noted that we are experimenting with dumpster-only service in September 2025. We will not have weight data increases in September, and we have a more limited ability to address bulky items. This is a 1-month experiment focused on budget efficiency, and we will return to prior operations in October as we transition the crew to focus on leaf abatement.

Tom Malone asked about sharps, because the number isn't as high as expected. Wyatt shared that the Ambassadors have also been picking up sharps, and that number isn't reflected.

Hoffman is still participating in Case Conferencing work, working with REACH, host, lead, etc.

Advocacy and Engagement

Mike Stewart shared information about recent harassment incidents with staff. The specified individual is in jail, and we received a quick response from SPD. The condition of his release is that he will not be allowed within the BIA boundary.

Stewart shared that we are staying updated on the Ballard Link Extension. He provided construction updates, sharing that the Seattle pipeline conveyance project has construction occurring on the 24th and Market area throughout 2026.

Mike Kahrs talked about the Waterfront Park, which is in an early stage of the planning project. We are working with Ballard Alliance and UW studio. There has been ongoing outreach and has been an open process so far.

Public Realm

Wren Wilson provided the Public Realm Update, beginning with Planters. The 26 planters will be out until October at the earliest. We faced more challenges this year, such as a hot summer, and staff turnover at Uplift NW. We have a new watering team and have experienced some vandalism on our planters. However, we replanted and added more volunteer shifts to increase watering.

Wilson talked about holiday lighting. This year, we are wrapping lights on 273 trees, including the trees Marvin's Garden Park. We are adding spheres on Ballard Ave trees. Additionally, we are adding snowflakes to the poles at Bergen Place, are adding lights to the Bell tower, and are creating a lit archway at the National Nordic Museum. We have been working with Seattle City Light and the lighting vendor to fix the GFCI outlets on the light poles in order to increase reliability. The lights should all be installed by the October Wine Walk.

Community Engagement

Wren Wilson provided an update on the Residential Engagement Meeting program in which we meet with our residential building representatives. We are planning another meeting in October about multi-family building insurance, mainly general liability insurance, and packages. Expressed concerns by condo building owners are drops in insurance coverage and an increase in expenses.

Sophie Iannone provided an update about the Breakfast in Ballard program. We will have a few more Breakfast in Ballard Events this year – one featuring mission-focused businesses and organizations such as Spir Candle and Co, Simple & Just, and Smal Market. Another will feature Lath Carlson from the National Nordic Museum. These events are going well and routinely attract up to 50 attendees each time.

Economic Development

Sophie Iannone shared Economic Development programmatic updates. BMRG meetings are still occurring each month.

Iannone is still conducting Commercial space tracking. There has been some business turnover. 11 new businesses are coming in for Q3, which is comparable to this time last year. 4 businesses closed.

Small market has been open for 3 months now and has been very successful. 6 businesses are in the space. Iannone has been streamlining operations and there is full-time staffing in the space and work continues to improve the POS system and continue to develop the marketing plan.

Marketing & Promotions

Mike Stewart presented the Marketing and Promotions updates. Anndrea has been working on an updated Visit Ballard website. The updated brand is in place, and we have created some merchandise that is now for sale that features the updated brand.

Stewart discussed the Port of Seattle grant. We have been using Datafy to send out ads to folks who come to the Port. The early results show that 3,600 people travelled from the cruise ship terminal to Ballard, with an \$327k estimated impact. This is a significant benefit for our small businesses. The campaign will conclude on September 30.

The Visit Ballard Instagram has attracted 9,100 followers and the Facebook has 3,393 followers. Anndrea continues to successfully engage these platforms.

Events & Programs

Will Cadra provided an update on Events beginning with Movies in the Park, with 3 movies total. 150 people attended Top Gun. Galaxy Quest got rained out and was cancelled.

33 businesses participated in the Sidewalk Sale. This event helps bring more visitors to the neighborhood and improves sales for our small businesses.

Ballard Wine Walk is occurring on October 18. 15 Pacific NW wineries are paired with 15 businesses, and we anticipate a sell out crowd again this fall. We have recruited a few new businesses that have not yet participated and to be involved. Cadra is encouraging businesses to add their own flair to the event to make it more interesting, fun, and successful.

Upcoming Fall and Winter events include Harvest Food Drive, Small Business Saturday, Ballard Trick or Treat, Tomte Trail, Cocktail Trail, and HolidayFest. Cadra is working on planning for these upcoming events. Stay tuned.

8. New Business

Meeting Adjourned at 5:01 pm.