



April 8, 2026 Ratepayer Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting Minutes - Taken by Wren

Date: April 8, 2026

Location: In-Person Meeting

Present (in person):

Tom Malone, CKM Associates
John Marasco, Security Properties
Legh Burns, re-soul
Gretchen Swanson, Chase Bank
Paul Osher, Rachel's Bagels & Burritos
Michelle Rosenthal, Veris Law Group
Mark Craig, Henbart
Brian Trickle, Providence Swedish
Barry Blanton, Greenfire Campus, Commons at Ballard

Absent:

Stephanie Carrillo, Equity Residential
Randy Brinker, Sweet Mickey's, Resident
Max Genereaux, Hattie's Hat
Mike Kahrs, Resident
Scott Koppelman, AMLI Mark24

Present (on Zoom):

Kaitlin Huffman, Seattle CFO
Kurt Utterback, Regency Centers - Ballard Blocks

Observers/Presenters:

Mike Stewart, Ballard Alliance
Wren Wilson, Ballard Alliance
Sophie Iannone, Ballard Alliance
Jamie Smith, Ballard Alliance
Will Cadra, Ballard Alliance

1. Welcome and Introductions (Tom Malone)

A meeting of the Ratepayer Advisory Board was called to order at 3:09 pm on April 8, 2026.

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

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

Michelle Rosenthal motioned to approve the January meeting minutes.
Barry Blanton seconded.
All in favor, motion passes.

Kaitlin Huffman provided the finance report sharing that we are 17% through the year with 14% spent. The expenses in Marketing and Promotions is running slightly high. Mike Stewart added,

expenses in the Advocacy and Urban Design category were just below 16%. In Fall, this category starts to catch up due to increase in cleaning for fallen leaves. Blanton asked if we are expecting to go into any reserves. Mike answered, no, the BIA revenue is approximately half the total revenue of the Ballard Alliance, and cash flow is fine for the overall organization.

4. Alliance Team Updates

Clean and Safe

Mike Stewart presented the initial Clean and Safe programmatic updates and introduced the New Clean and Safe Director, Jamie Smith, to the Board. Smith and Stewart are evaluating the programs in depth and are planning some improvements. Smith will be stepping up the service levels and ensuring that private security is functioning properly. Additionally, Stewart applied for funding for beautification and clean services and is focusing on building relationships with key city stakeholders, to support the Clean and Safe programs.

Smith conducted face-to-face meetings with one third of the BIA business owners thus far. Through these discussions, he found that many businesses are not calling 911. Smith instructed businesses to call 911 and to call him afterwards, so he can package the reports to police departments for a more effective approach.

Smith is enhancing coordination around key safety issues, namely retail and copper theft. This involves coordinating with the police department and obtaining video footage of crimes. Many construction companies are experiencing ongoing theft issues.

Smith redirected the Ambassadors to add a focus on early morning doorway issues and to improve reporting. Additionally, he will be implementing more system changes such as requiring better training for safety providers and more.

Events

Will Cadra presented the Event updates. The March Wine Walk was a success and the event sold out. Wineries experienced a 50% increase in bottle sales from this last event. The Alliance made a additional revenue on the sale of wine glasses and tasting tickets during the day of the event.

Cadra spoke about June 6 Summer Cocktail Trail. All 10 businesses are confirmed for the event. The Cocktail Trail directly benefits our residents, small businesses and is also a fundraiser for the Alliance.

The Ballard FIFA Watch Party Event is still in the planning phase and will occur on June 26. The event will utilize the Holidayfest footprint and be located on the 5400 block of Ballard Ave. The viewing stage will be in the same area as the Ballard Music & Seafoodfest stage. There will be community activations for this event and it will be an engaging experience for eventgoers.

Ballard Hullabaloo, the large winter discount sale that occurred in February was a success. This event is an opportunity for businesses to sell their remaining winter stock.

Wren Wilson spoke about the Ballard ArtWalk. This is an ongoing, free event that takes place every second Saturday of the month, except in July. An average of 15 businesses participated in the

Artwalk each month in Q1. There are 18 businesses signed up for April ArtWalk. Wilson continues to put effort into improving this event through marketing, business communication, and more. The Ballard Artwalk Instagram following continues to grow, and the event continues to be gaining more attention.

Advocacy and Engagement

Stewart presented the Advocacy and Engagement updates. Relevant safety issues include RVs, encampments, property damage, copper theft, street disorder, and retail theft. The Alliance secured city funding from city council last year to address Homeless outreach, cleaning and beautification, and ambassador safety programs. Nicole Donovan, human services department, has purview over Ambassador programs in a few neighborhoods. There may be funding available to step up our Ambassador program.

Emerging issues include the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Levy Projects. For the Comprehensive Plan, there is some movement in that the city has hired their firm. The Alliance will continue to monitor and be engaged in this process and more planning ensues.

The Alliance continues to build and maintain relationships with Seattle elected officials and senior staff, county officials, Sound Transit Board Members, and WA State Legislators to advocate for the critical issues that impact our neighborhood. For Transportation concerns, Stewart has been speaking with Angela Brady and Alex Hudson. BIAs from around Washington State came together for a lobby day in Olympia and met with 30+ legislators and/or staff, which is integral for future advocacy work.

Public Realm

Wilson presented the Public Realm programmatic updates beginning with Flower Planters. 26 flower planters will be added to Ballard in May. Wilson has selected the flower arrangement that prioritizes longevity and resiliency. Additionally, the team is building an electric watercart that will support the consistent watering of these planters.

The Holiday Lighting project wrapped up in February. It seemed that despite the outages this year, the lighting program quality improved from Holidays until February. Wilson and Stewart have been looking at ways to improve the lighting program such as obtaining quotes from another lighting vendor and setting up a meeting to speak to existing vendors.

Wilson spoke about Public Art Project opportunities. She applied for a grant with the Department of Neighborhoods to bring two murals to Ballard. This would involve 450 square feet of new artwork, a community event with a guided public art tour and activity, plus the printing of a public art brochure that would be a free resource for community members to engage in a self-guided walking tour.

Some of the Utility Box artwork needs rewrapping, and an additional box is added. The Alliance has a total of 10 utility boxes within its boundary. Lastly, there are two opportunities for community painted murals or panels through best day ever and FIFA/Ballard pride event in which artists could lead community members in a paint-by-numbers activity.

Residential Engagement Meetings

The Alliance held a Residential Engagement Meeting in February in which SPD Officer Mike Cruzan and Crime Prevention Coordinator Katelyn Yep spoke to community managers and other residential

representatives within the BIA. Wilson is reworking the program to recruit more people to come with a focus on inviting actual residents rather than just community managers

Sophie Iannone spoke about Breakfast in Ballard. There are 2 events coming up - one on April 14th with City Attorney Erika Evans, and another later in May with CM Dan Strauss. About 40 people attend these Breakfast in Ballard and they are open to the public. Additionally, Iannone spoke about the Alliance After Hours events, which bring people within our neighborhood to a local bar and restaurant for networking. These events improve relationships with restaurants and create networking opportunities for local businesses. 30-35 people typically attend the After-Hours Events. There was an event at Hattie's Hat and there will be one at Skal in future.

Economic Development

Iannone spoke about the Ballard Merchant and Restaurant Group (BMRG) Meetings. These meetings typically include guest speakers that present on naloxone training, funding opportunities, and other resources for local brick and mortar businesses. Iannone has been programming these all the way out through October. The next meeting occurring in May will feature the US Small business Administration. Future opportunities exist with the Seattle Public Library, Metro Chamber, GSBA, and other organizations.

Stewart spoke about the Business Health Plan and the switch to Business Health Trust, which provides a better rate and plan. According to the Chamber, the Alliance can offer this plan to member businesses which we will work on in the Fall. Stewart will reach out to Sarah Childs to see if businesses can enroll in the health plan earlier.

Iannone spoke about the OED retail study program in which the Alliance was partnered with a private consultant for corridor improvement recommendations. She is participating in retail advocacy workshops as well.

Iannone continues to engage in Commercial Space Tracking. There were 7 businesses openings and 3 closures in Q1. According to Placer AI, there were 1.4 million visits to the Ballard BIA boundary YTD.

Iannone presented Små Market updates. We are offering lease extensions for many of the existing vendors who would like to extend their lease for another 6 months. We are conducting outreach for two commercial spaces. We have hired a new store manager. Små vendors have accomplished over \$60k in sales this year. Our initial intent is to do this program for 3 years with the congressional directed funding administered by Small Business Administration. Iannone is working on a new gallery concept that will display artwork for Ballard ArtWalk. That takes up some space.

Marketing and Promotions

Mike Stewart presented Marketing and Promotions updates. Marketing Director, Anndrea Dohring, has been focusing on Ballard Blocks Marketing Campaigns that including an outreach message that encourages tenants to utilize Alliance benefits, and social media campaign that highlights businesses and amenities at the properties, and more.

The Visit Ballard website's performance shows that there were 32k users this Q1, which is an 18.5% increase in users this quarter. Social media continues to build with 9.9k Instagram followers and 3.7 Facebook followers.

The Alliance was awarded \$20k from the Port of Seattle's tourism marketing support program again. We will use Datafy to attract passenger cruise ships to Ballard. This program drove 3100 visits to Ballard last year with a significant positive impact on the Ballard economy. We are doubling our investment this year and, in addition to attracting cruisers, we will also target FIFA visitors during June and July.

5. Transportation Update: Sound Transit and BGT

Stewart spoke about the Burke Gilman Trail, and the concept to propose a route on the North side of Shilshole. While parking concerns associated with this route have been a concern, there are several opportunities to mitigate parking loss and, potentially, expand parking access.

Tom Malone talks about the fact that there is no plan for the franchise agreement with Ballard Terminal Railroad, which is worthy of city discussion. Malone asks if they could utilize the Freedom of Information act to gain this information. Mike Kahrs would be able to help with this.

Stewart continued Transportation updates regarding Sound Transit and the Ballard Link Extension. As of now, we are lacking proper numbers for ridership and cost data and analysis. We are working on writing an Op-ed to get in the Seattle Times.

6. BIA Ordinance: Technical Amendment and Expansion Concept

Stewart spoke about the flaw in the escalator clause of the ordinance passed on 2024. If it is not amended, it will result in a year-over-year 6% increase for ratepayers, which was not the intent of the clause. The solution is that we engage the city council to make a minor text amendment to the ordinance that will correct the issue. We need to make an amendment with the ordinance. The Office of Economic Development is helping to craft the language. The process begins in May with the goal of adopting in September 2026. We will approve in the future when we have the language. Since we are opening an ordinance, we might as well consider expansion. We are considering expansion to the Ballard Locks to include businesses who would like to be within the boundary. It is noted that Barry Blanton knows a contact at Freestone.

7. New Business

No new business.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:05 pm.