

South End Community Center Redevelopment Study

Meeting minutes from March 20, 2026 from 5:30am-7pm at STAR Community Center/Teams

Attendees: Meagan Clarke, Amanda Ellis, Evelyn James, Malachi Cabera, Thai, Debbie Ranniger, Mac Capwell, Sarneshea Evans, Courtney Chandler, Judy Ly, April Smith, Andrea Hough.

Parks Tacoma Staff Attendees: Delia Flores, Erin Irby, Manni Valenzuela, Alisa O'Hanlon Regala

Introductions: Around the Room

Meagan Clarke

- Connected through SUN Alliance, Birney Elementary, and active in community work.
- Deep love for the South End and the people who live here.
- Believe the South End is a “hidden gem” that deserves more support.

Amanda Ellis (she/her)

- Grew up in the South End and has children at Stafford.
- Serves as PTA Secretary and is a founding member of SUN Alliance.
- Very involved in local community building.

Evelyn James (she/her)

- Started in a small Tacoma apartment and is now a homeowner in the South End.
- Paraeducator at Stafford with children attending local schools.
- Feels deeply connected to the community through many meaningful experiences.

Malachi Cabera (he/him)

- Long-time South End resident with multiple community roles.
- Serves on the SENCO Board and the Parks Foundation Board.
- Advocates for more love, care, and investment in the South End.

Thai (he/him)

- Lives in the South End and wants to learn how to better support the neighborhood.
- Interested in connecting community with government agencies.
- Motivated to help build stronger bridges and communication.

Debbie Ranniger (she/her)

Moved to the South End in 2019 and purchased her first home here.

- Appreciates the cultural vibrancy and active community engagement.
- Excited to help strengthen what is already happening in the neighborhood.

Mac Capwell (they/them)

- Newer Tacoma resident who has always lived in the South End.
- Volunteer park steward at Charlotte's Blueberry Park and the food forest.
- Passionate about community investment, land stewardship, and youth involvement.

Sarneshea Evans (she/her)

- Works with Trust for Public Land on parks and schoolyard projects.
- Has ongoing collaboration with TPS.
- Excited to partner on this effort.

Courtney Chandler (she/her)

- Born and raised in Tacoma and involved with SUN Alliance.
- South End resident since 2018 and recent homeowner on the Eastside.
- Advocates for safe youth spaces and addressing service gaps in the South End.

Judy Ly

- South End resident for 29 years with children who attended Stafford.
- Has seen many community groups come and go but values ongoing engagement.
- Excited about the possibility of a community center and honors the area's history.

April Smith (she/her)

- South End resident for 7 years and SENCO board member.
- Recently explored local parks more through Monkey Shines.
- Has spent more time in Blueberry Park in the last month than in previous years.

Andrea Hough (she/her/they)

- Chair of SENCO and long-time Tacoma resident.
- Has lived in nearly every neighborhood and in current home for 11 years.
- Loves the community and is looking forward to participating in this process.

Ground Rules and Guiding Values

Parks staff facilitated a group brainstorming activity to establish ground rules and guiding values to set the tone for future meetings. This is a living document that can be changed, amended, and added to as we continue this work together.

Ground Rules

1. We will respect one another's time.
2. We prioritize prompt and intentional communication.
3. Every voice matters in this space.
4. We agree that impact outweighs the intention of our actions.
5. We will approach one another with curiosity and an open mind.
6. We will use "I" statements when sharing.

Guiding Values

1. This work will center the inclusion of all living in the South End.
2. Adopt a solution-oriented posture.
3. Transparency
4. Accountability
5. We will engage in courageous conversations.

South End Feasibility Study

Background

- Community advocacy was heard.
- The Board responded, and staff applied for funding.
- \$194,000 secured for the feasibility study.
- Parks Tacoma is managing the study.
- Community Advisory Group will help guide the selection process for the design team. Selection process will take ~3-4 months.
- Study will take approximately one year.
- Parks Tacoma is simultaneously conducting a similar process with Peoples Community Center (focused on redevelopment of an existing site).

Approach

- This study will build on the years of advocacy from the community.
- Early CAG involvement to shape the consultant solicitation before hiring.
- Emphasis on early and frequent community input.
- Goal: create a collective community-based vision.
- Internal Outreach and Engagement Staff will lead the community engagement later in the process. Parks will not contract out engagement to a consultant. Hope for CAG to be in a support role.

Study Components

- Location analysis: parks, schools, trails, transportation access. Refined with CAG input.
- Sizing analysis: Based on community desired programming (gym, small rooms, multiuse spaces).
- Partnership development: Identifying potential partners. (TPS, Boys & Girls Clubs, libraries, etc.)
- Pro-forma / business plan: How the center sustains itself financially (rentals, programs, events, memberships).
- Funding plan & timeline: Identify total cost, duration, philanthropic partners, and funding structure.

Closing

- Logistics for future meetings still needs to be addressed. A follow-up email with meeting minutes, document library, and a “next steps” survey will be sent out to all attendees.