

Peoples Community Center Redevelopment Study

Hybrid meeting minutes from February 4, 2026 from 5:30-7pm at Peoples CC

Bond Updates

- Terry provided updates regarding the status of the bond program and emphasized that the Peoples redevelopment is the flagship, iconic project. Hilltop and Central Tacoma will receive the largest investment.
 - Peoples Redevelopment would receive \$15 M in the bond, the most money any community center has been awarded in a previous bond package.
- The long-term intention would be that City of Tacoma (COT) invest heavily in the new building, and Parks Tacoma would eventually take permanent ownership.
- General election : Tuesday, April 28, 2026.

Commerce Funding and City of Tacoma (COT) Agreement

- COT has agreed to the funding transfer of 50k and Parks Tacoma will seek approval from the board on 2/9/26.
- Terry emphasized that as we move forward with solicitation, Parks cannot do this alone. Community involvement is vital and necessary. Parks needs to move in “lock step” with the community, as Trevor previously stated.
- COT will be involved in the solicitation process.
- No questions.

Request for Qualification (RFQ)

Purpose is to signal to the design community that this is an active project seeking expertise.

- Scope of work includes:
 - Site analysis
 - Programming needs
 - Identifying gaps and opportunities
- Submissions will be required to demonstrate:
 - Relevant experience
 - Similar past projects
 - Alignment with community-centered work
- Exhibits and attachments will be open-ended, allowing teams to share narratives, historical context, and why this project matters to them.

History Draft Overview and Discussion

Parks Tacoma's history and archive expert created a one-page draft document recounting the history of Peoples Community Center to be submitted with the solicitation. Terry and Erin highlight this unique approach as a reflection of Peoples' sacred space in Tacoma, requiring the highest level of care and respect from the design team. Rather than a standard checklist, this history document is intended to set expectations and invite deeper, more meaningful responses from potential consultants.

Attendee reflections:

- **Trevor Kagochi** provided comments via Teams chat.
 - o “I really want to emphasize the power and the role of our Hilltop Community in driving for change. The community has been a driving advocate and organizer in bringing resources to the Hilltop. It's important to recognize that the Mother's Day riots in 1969 was community protesting the under resourcing of this community. This led to the development of the Malcolm X center and the pool. When the pool was shut down in 2008 community leaders like Fletcher Jenkins and Ms. Mae and community members organized and advocated and went to city of Tacoma council meetings pushing for the reopening of a new pool instead of new basketball courts. Prior to COVID the People Center steering committee and the Hilltop Equity and Action Coalition organized and pushed for youth to be free because of the inequity of having to pay \$5 a day to access community centers which was a barrier for many of our youth. And with the proposal for the development of a new People Center the steering committee and the HEAC committee have been behind the scenes since 2008. Touring representatives, speaking with park commissioners, partnering with staff to ensure this center is a priority. My goal is that the planning for this center will happen lock step with community to ensure the needs, especially of our most underserved are met.”
- **Dr. Robin** shared personal history growing up in Hilltop.
 - o She reflected on the truth that Hilltop was approximately 70% Black in the 1970s and how Hilltop residents have the legacy of this past, but that it is no longer the same. “This space was meant to be ours”
 - o Hilltop was previously filled with Black-owned businesses, churches, and was a deeply interconnected communal neighborhood.
 - o Raised questions about what changed, why it changed, and the impacts of redlining and gentrification.

- Dr. Robin emphasized the historical and communal importance of the church, stating that if Parks Tacoma expands onto the property, they should have a dedicated space in the center to hold service with no charge.
- **Tiffani Reyes** reiterated Dr. Robin's theme that the history draft should not just state what has happened to Hilltop, but rather why.
 - o Stressed the importance of consultant integrity and cultural respect.
 - o Asked for demographic context: Hilltop was once 85% Black and families, including hers, moved there for cultural community.
 - o Concerned about how consultants perceive and treat neighborhoods of color.
- **Antonio McLemore** spoke about the historical significance and symbolism of the "Malcom X" name.
 - o The name choice represented establishing a space for the black community to thrive, not just merely be accepted or permitted.
 - o Urged sustaining the original promise of the original intention of Peoples and honoring its cultural perspective.
 - o Warned that organizational partnerships can create barriers and rob community of agency. He advocated priority of handing the community center back to the neighborhood.
- **Robert Doss** shared his experience of watching Hilltop change after his family moved there in 1969.
 - o Expressed concern about loss of youth engagement and safety.
 - o Called for creating safe spaces for teens to prevent violence and shootings.
 - o Emphasized restoring the sense of community and belonging.
- **Keysha-Rae Cooper** echoed Antonio's statements about the Malcom X name.
 - o She questioned how Parks Tacoma would respond to strong and bold cultural identity being prioritized in the design process.
- **Katt Merilo** brought forth the idea of creating a visual media representation of People's history that centers lived experience told by Hilltop locals.
 - o Erin shared that while this idea should be explored in the future, that kind of attachment would be difficult with the solicitation timeline.
- **Hayes Alexander** suggested expanding focus from building to focus on a full site development perspective.
 - o Close 16th St, acquire adjacent properties (church, police station).
 - People's Center does not currently have an outdoor space or park attached that allows for outdoor youth programming or events.

- o Noted potential alignment with future city facility planning (police stations may be up for replacement in near future).

Next Steps

- Review and provide comments about the Project Background by 2/25/26
- Email Erin if interested in serving as part of the RFQ solicitation panel by 2/25/26