WASHINGTON STATE
Ballpark
PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT

December 8, 2025
2:30 P.M.

T-Mobile Park
PFD Conference Room
110 Edgar Martinez Drive S
Seattle, WA 98134

The PFD will be holding this Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors in-person and in a manner consistent with guidance from the Attorney General's office. Virtual access via Teams is available upon request. Members of the public desiring to leave a comment but not able to attend the meeting in person should submit them to ***curtisj@ballpark.org*** *at least 24 hours prior to the meeting start time.*

BOARD MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA

A. Call to Order / Welcome (Board Chair, Christopher Marr)

B. Public Comment (any written public comment received prior to the meeting will be summarized and read aloud)

C. Approval of the Minutes

1. October 27, 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes

D. Board Briefings and Potential Actions:

1. Mariners Update (Dave Wilke) – *Verbal Report Only*
2. 2025 Operations and Maintenance Review (Mike Wooley, John Christenson) – *Materials Included*
3. Post-Election Analysis (Sandeep Kaushik) – *Verbal Report Only*
4. Current Initiatives Update (Joshua Curtis) – *Materials Presented at Meeting*

a. WOSCA

b. Pedestrian Improvement Project

c. Light Rail

d. South Holgate Street Crossing Study

5. 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Schedule (Chris Marr) – *Materials Included and Board Action Anticipated*

6. Treasurer's Report (Omar Riojas, Joshua Curtis) – *Materials Included and Board Action Anticipated*

   a. Draft 2026 Operations Budget Review and Approval

   b. Balance Sheet/Profit and Loss Review

   c. Proposed Resolution 25-008: Voucher Approval

E. Reports

1. Chair's Report (Board Chair, Christopher Marr)

2. Executive Director's Report (Joshua Curtis)

F. **Executive Session:** The Board may meet in Executive Session to "review contract performance of publicly bid contracts" RCW 42.30.110 (1)(d); and/or to "review the performance of a public employee" RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g), and/or to discuss with legal counsel real estate lease matters and/or "potential litigation to which the agency . . . is, or is likely to become, a party, where public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency" RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i). Formal Board action is not anticipated following the Executive Session.

G. Adjournment

WASHINGTON STATE MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL STADIUM PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT

Monday, October 27, 2:30 P.M.
Public Facilities District, Conference Room
110 Edgar Martinez Drive South, Seattle, Washington 98134

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The PFD held a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors in-person and in a manner consistent with guidance from the Attorney General's office. Virtual access was provided via a Microsoft Teams conference system (video or phone) upon request. Members of the public desiring to leave a comment but not able to attend the meeting in person were asked to submit comments to curtisj@ballpark.org at least 24 hours prior to the meeting start time.

CALL TO ORDER / WELCOME

Board Chair Marr called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm pursuant to notice. Interim Vice-Chair Stacy Graven was absent but excused. Board Members Omar Riojas, Andrea Sato, Brian Surratt and Donny Stevenson joined the meeting in person. Staff and consultants present: Joshua Curtis (Executive Director), Annie Thenell (Business Operations Manager), Tom Backer (Legal Counsel) and Sandeep Kaushik (Legislative). Also joining in person were Trevor Gooby (Mariners Executive Vice President & COO), Adam Gresch (Mariners Senior Manager of Communications), Carmela Ennis (King County), Marc Bloom (Consultant), Maria De Lourdes Alanis (Consultant), Beth Purcell (Seattle Parks Foundation), Rebecca Bear (Seattle Parks Foundation), Anahi Bendeck (Alliance for Pioneer Square), Nathan Polanski (MIG), Sasha Cousineau (public), and Rachel Ramseur (public). Joining virtually via Teams were Bryan Slater (CAA-ICON), Jamie Sullivan (CAA-ICON), and Ryan Blake (public).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rachel Ramseur and Sasha Cousineau each offered public comment for the Board. Rachel described an incident at a game at the ballpark earlier in the month and the injuries she said she suffered as a result. Sasha also described the incident and expressed her concerns regarding how it was handled by Mariners staff and by law enforcement. Both asked the PFD for assistance in reaching out to the Mariners to provide answers to questions that they raised. Rachel and Sasha also provided written comments of their remarks, which were shared with the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Chair Marr asked for a motion to approve minutes from the Sept 8, 2025, Board Meeting. Member Riojas moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Surratt. Motion carried 5-0.

BOARD BRIEFINGS AND POTENTIAL ACTIONS

1. Mariners Update (Trevor Gooby)
   Mr. Gooby reported that the successful 2025 season was great for the team, for T-Mobile Park, and the community. There was a vibrant and exciting atmosphere at the ballpark during the post-season with six sold out games plus sold-out watch parties. Off-season capital projects start next week including replacing four elevators and

installing the new scoreboard. Chair Marr asked if there will be a scheduled double-header next season. Mr. Gooby replied yes, due to the World Cup schedule, MLB has scheduled a double-header at the ballpark one day during the 2026 season. Additionally, Mr. Gooby reported that the 2026 season will be challenging for non-baseball events, as the World Cup has led to fewer concerts being scheduled for the year. The Savannah Bananas, which was a hugely successful non-baseball event this season, will likely return every other year or every third year.

2. 2026 Ballpark Management Plan Approval (Bryan Slater, Joshua Curtis)

    a. CAA ICON Review (Bryan Slater)
    Mr. Slater reviewed the materials included in the Board packet, commending the Mariners for their continued outstanding management of the ballpark. Mr. Slater noted that the projected $2.1 million increase in capital spending since the May submission is largely in the vertical transportation and the LED scoreboard categories.

    b. PFD Board Letter of Approval
    Mr. Curtis introduced the letter included in the Board packet. Member Sato moved approval, seconded by Member Stevenson. Motion carried 5-0.

3. Occidental Design Update (Seattle Parks Foundation, MIG)

    Ms. Purcell presented the materials appended to the Board packet.

4. Pedestrian Improvement Project Design Consultant Selection (Omar Riojas, Joshua Curtis, Marc Bloom, Maria de Lourdes Alanis)

    Mr. Curtis reviewed the presentation included in the Board packet.

    a. Proposed Resolution 25-006: NIF Design Contract Approval
    Member Riojas moved approval, seconded by Member Surratt. Motion carried 5-0.

5. Treasurer's Report (Omar Riojas, Joshua Curtis)

    a. <u>2026 Draft Operations Budget Review</u>
    Mr. Curtis reviewed the materials included in the Board packet, noting that the final budget will be presented at the December 8th Board meeting, at which time the Board will be asked to vote on it.

    b. <u>Balance Sheet/Profit and Loss Review</u>
    Mr. Curtis reviewed the materials included in the Board packet.

    c. <u>Proposed Resolution 25-007: Voucher Approval</u>
    Member Riojas introduced Proposed Resolution 25-007 to approve the regular voucher payments, noting that he had reviewed all the financials with

Mr. Curtis and did not have any concerns. Member Surratt moved approval, seconded by Member Sato. Motion carried 5-0.

REPORTS

Chair's Report

Chair Marr reported that he attended every home post-season game and commended the Club on the continued investment in the ballpark over the years, which he noticed is paying off especially in areas of congestion-reduction and concessions improvement.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Curtis summarized the Executive Director's report included in the Board packet.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, Chair Marr declared the meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

Annie Thenell, Recording Clerk	Christopher Marr, Board Chair Board of Directors, Public Facilities District

WASHINGTON STATE
Ballpark
PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT

2026 Board Meeting Schedule

The PFD will hold Regular Meetings of the Board of Directors in-person and in a manner consistent with guidance from the Attorney General's office. Virtual access via Teams is available upon request. Members of the public desiring to leave a comment but not able to attend the meeting in person should submit them to ***curtisj@ballpark.org*** *at least 24 hours prior to the meeting start time.*

February 9

Board action on annual CapEx Contribution and Updated 2025 Operations Plan

March 19

PFD Board Retreat

May 11

Review of initial 2027 CapEx Workplan

June 29

Board action on initial 2027 CapEx Workplan

Q2/Q3: Ballpark Reference Trips, Dates TBD

September 14

Review of 2027 Ballpark Operations and Management Plans

October 26

Board action on 2027 Ballpark Operations and Management Plans

December 7

Board action on 2026 PFD Operations Budget

PFD 2026 Operating Budget - DRAFT

Presented at the December 8, 2025 Board Meeting for Approval

CPI Assumption **3.0%** * 2.8% in August 2025

Operating Budget	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2026 Budget	2025 Budget	Delta	%
Income																
Rent	-	-	1,004,076	-	-	-	-	1,004,076	-	-	-	-	2,008,152	1,949,662	58,490	3%
Reimbursement Revenue	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	1,350	1,350	-	0%
Total Income	**113**	**113**	**1,004,188**	**113**	**113**	**113**	**113**	**1,004,188**	**113**	**113**	**113**	**113**	**2,009,502**	**1,951,012**	**58,490**	**3%**
Expense																
Salaries/Benefits																
Salaries	21,736	21,736	23,549	23,549	27,243	27,243	27,243	27,243	27,243	27,243	27,243	27,243	308,513	302,684	5,829	2%
Employee Benefits - Health	4,992	11,992	4,992	4,992	4,992	4,992	4,992	4,992	4,992	4,992	4,992	4,992	66,904	53,407	13,497	20%
Employee Benefits - Retirement	652	652	706	706	817	817	817	817	817	817	817	817	9,255	9,081	174	2%
Payroll Taxes	1,796	1,796	1,949	1,949	2,224	2,224	2,224	2,224	2,224	2,224	2,224	2,224	25,286	24,795	491	2%
Subtotal	**29,176**	**36,176**	**31,196**	**31,196**	**35,277**	**35,277**	**35,277**	**35,277**	**35,277**	**35,277**	**35,277**	**35,277**	**409,958**	**389,967**	**19,991**	**5%**
Professional Services																
Accounting/Auditing	2,208	2,208	2,208	2,208	2,208	20,748	2,208	2,208	2,208	2,208	3,712	16,628	60,964	59,464	1,500	2%
Consulting Services	26,271	31,771	21,608	21,271	25,271	44,358	31,271	21,271	21,608	40,021	22,051	21,608	328,381	473,318	(144,938)	-44%
Legal Fees	9,667	8,667	8,667	9,667	8,667	8,667	9,667	8,667	8,667	9,667	8,667	8,667	108,000	108,000	-	0%
Website & IT Support	4,455	1,190	1,190	1,190	1,190	1,190	1,190	1,190	1,190	1,190	1,190	1,190	17,539	8,059	9,480	54%
Subtotal	**42,601**	**43,835**	**33,673**	**34,335**	**37,335**	**74,963**	**44,335**	**33,335**	**33,673**	**53,085**	**35,619**	**48,093**	**514,883**	**648,841**	**(133,958)**	**-26%**
General & Administrative																
Payroll & Investment Fees	958	958	958	958	958	958	958	958	958	958	958	958	11,495	11,495	0	0%
Board Support	703	703	703	703	3,703	703	703	703	703	703	1,417	703	12,147	12,147	(1)	0%
Dues & Subscriptions	3,145	20	20	20	20	210	20	1,520	20	3,020	20	20	8,055	6,555	1,500	19%
Insurance Expense	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,300	10,300	10,300	-	0%
Office Equipment Rental	758	758	758	758	758	758	758	758	758	758	758	758	9,090	8,610	480	5%
Office Supplies	2,687	187	187	187	187	687	187	187	567	187	187	187	5,620	4,120	1,500	27%
Professional Development	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	2,000	2,000	-	0%
Repairs and Maintenance	5,600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	12,200	17,200	(5,000)	-41%
Software Expense	322	322	322	322	322	322	322	322	322	322	322	601	4,138	4,138	0	0%
Telephone Expense	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	3,240	3,240	-	0%
Travel	125	125	125	125	125	125	30,125	125	125	125	125	125	31,500	26,500	5,000	16%
Utilities	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	2,400	2,400	-	0%
Subtotal	**14,933**	**4,308**	**4,308**	**4,308**	**7,308**	**4,998**	**34,308**	**5,808**	**4,688**	**7,308**	**5,022**	**14,887**	**112,184**	**108,704**	**3,480**	**3%**
Total Expense	**86,710**	**84,320**	**69,177**	**69,840**	**79,920**	**115,237**	**113,920**	**74,420**	**73,637**	**95,670**	**75,918**	**98,257**	**1,037,026**	**1,147,512**	**(110,486)**	**-11%**

Consulting Services Break Out

Government Affairs	69,000	22%
Ballpark CapEx Support	66,000	21%
Neighborhood Improvement: Policy	33,000	10%
Neighborhood Improvement: Design	115,000	36%
General Office	35,381	11%
Total	318,381	100%

Balance Sheet

31-Oct-25

		Total
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts		
Cash - Capital Projects Fund		6,604,199.66
Cash - County Tax Revenues Fund		8,045.66
Cash - Impaired Investments		18,656.76
Cash - Neighborhood Improvement Fund		3,637,778.53
Cash - PFD Operations Fund		3,335,433.24
Cash - PFD Reserve		3,726,857.58
Cash Equivalents		2,728.70
Total Bank Accounts	**$**	**17,333,700.13**
Total Accounts Receivable	**$**	**31,357,829.25**
Total Current Assets	**$**	**48,691,529.38**
Total Fixed Assets	**$**	**397,052,440.54**
Total Other Assets	**$**	**0.00**
TOTAL ASSETS	**$**	**445,743,969.92**
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Total Liabilities	**$**	**75,283,442.55**
Total Equity	**$**	**370,460,527.37**
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	**$**	**445,743,969.92**

Profit and Loss

October

	Oct-25	YTD	2025 Amended Budget	Delta	% Spent
Expenses					
Salaries / Benefits					
Salaries & Wages	26,662	250,549	302,684	52,135	83%
Employee Benefits - Health	3,908	49,673	53,407	3,734	93%
Retirement Benefits	800	7,516	9,081	1,564	83%
Payroll Taxes	1,084	18,489	24,795	6,306	75%
Total Salaries / Benefits	**$ 32,454**	**$ 326,228**	**$ 389,967**	**$ 63,739**	**84%**
Professional Services					
Accounting/Auditing	4,455	34,819	59,464	24,645	59%
Consulting Fees - Admin	79,754	331,924	473,318	141,394	70%
Legal & Professional Services	2,871	46,570	108,000	61,431	43%
Website & IT Support	3,790	11,027	8,059	-2,969	137%
Total Professional Services	**$ 90,871**	**$ 424,340**	**$ 648,841**	**$ 224,501**	**65%**
General & Administrative					
Bank, Payroll, & Investment Fees	1,352	10,873	11,495	622	95%
Board Support	450	7,798	12,147	4,348	64%
Dues & Subscriptions	16	6,242	6,555	313	95%
Insurance Expense	0	7,394	10,300	2,906	72%
Office Equipment Rental	791	8,645	8,610	-35	100%
Office Supplies	11	1,469	4,120	2,650	36%
Professional Development	800	855	2,000	1,145	43%
Repairs & Maintenance	0	12,015	17,200	5,185	70%
Software Expense	607	3,746	4,138	392	91%
Telephone Expense	210	1,950	3,240	1,290	60%
Travel	-196	26,434	26,500	66	100%
Utilities	215	2,147	2,400	253	89%
Total General & Administrative	**$ 4,256**	**$ 89,571**	**$ 108,704**	**$ 19,134**	**82%**
Total Expenses	**$ 127,581**	**$ 840,138**	**$ 1,012,274**	**$ 172,136**	**83%**

November 9, 2025 Proposed No.: 25-008

RESOLUTION NO. ___

A RESOLUTION to approve payments made by the District.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 36.100 RCW, as amended, the Washington State Major League Baseball Stadium Public Facilities District ("District") has been created and possesses all the powers of a public facilities district; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 478 [Proposed No. 20-002] appointed the District Executive Director, Joshua Curtis, as Auditing Officer; and

WHEREAS, the Board Chair or the Chair's designee has been designated to review and approve payments, subject to final review and approval by the Board; and

WHEREAS, Board member R. Omar Riojas has been designated by the Board Chair to review and approve payments; and

WHEREAS, the Auditing Officer has reviewed and approved ballpark vouchers #20251003130328, # 20251017123910, and # 20251023141801 as produced by King County (the District's treasurer); credit card statements covering October 2025; and the October payroll expense reports as produced by Gusto (the District's payroll administrator); as summarized as follows:

October 2025

Classification	Amount
1. Capital Projects Fund	
2. County Tax Fund	
3. Operating Reserve Fund	
4. Neighborhood Improvement Fund	
5. Operating Fund	
• Salaries/Benefits	
o Salaries	$26,662
o Employee Benefits - Health	$3,908
o Employee Benefits – Retirement	$800
o Payroll Taxes	$1,084
• Professional Services	
o Accounting/Auditing	$4,455
o Consulting Services	$79,754
o Legal Fees	$2,871
o Website & IT Support	$3,790
• General & Administrative	
o Bank, Payroll & Inv. Fees	$1,352
o Board Support	$450

DRAFT

o Dues & Subscriptions	$16
o Insurance Expense	$0
o Office Equipment Rental	$11
o Office Supplies	$526
o Professional Development	$800
o Repairs and Maintenance	$0
o Software Expense	$607
o Telephone Expense	$210
o Travel	-$196
o Utilities	$215
TOTAL FOR THE PERIOD	$127,581

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE WASHINGTON STATE MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL STADIUM PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT AS FOLLOWS:

Vouchers #20251003130328, # 20251017123910, and # 20251023141801 as produced by King County (the District's treasurer); credit card statements covering October 2025; and the October payroll expense reports as produced by Gusto (the District's payroll administrator); are hereby approved.

PASSED by a vote of _____to ____ this 9th day of December, 2025.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
WASHINGTON STATE MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL STADIUM
PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT

_____
Christopher Marr, Chair

ATTEST:

_____
Annie Thenell, Clerk

DRAFT

WASHINGTON STATE
Ballpark
PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT

Executive Director Report
November 2025

Note: I will be providing an "end-of-year" report out on our major initiatives. As such, the Executive Director report is shorter than normal.

Office Administration

- Security Updates – The PFD's IT provider, Teal Group, will be updating the PFD's remote access and back up systems to reflect new security protocols. This work will be completed by the end of the year.
- Insurance Evaluation – We have decided to hire a Risk Manager to evaluate the PFD's current insurance policies. While we are not concerned about any specific risk, the PFD has evolved over the years – as have risks, such as cyber-attacks – and so we would like to make sure we are up to date with everything.

Financial and Lease Management

- 2024 Audit – The State Auditor's Office has completed their 2024 audit of the PFD with no findings. Chris and Omar will be joining us for the exit conference on Friday, December 4. We will relay any relevant feedback from the call and, per our usual practice, post the completed audit to our website by Friday, December 12.

Communications

- State Legislative Briefings – Jennifer Ziegler and I have been briefing key State legislators on the PFD over the last two weeks. To date, with have met with Representatives Jake Fey, Andrew Barkis, Joe Fitzgibbon, Julia Reed, and Senator Curtis King and will be meeting with Senator Emily Alvarado and Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos. These briefings have been introductory in nature and designed to ensure that legislators are familiar with the PFD and its mission should issues – such as admissions tax or Stadium District land use – come up in future sessions. The briefings have all been very cordial and legislators seem to have appreciated learning about the organization (most were not aware of us).
- Board Transition – As many of you likely already know, Brian Surratt will be joining the incoming administration as Deputy Mayor. This is a great opportunity for him and good news for the city. Unfortunately, it also means that he will be stepping down from the board and so will be joining us on Monday to say his farewells. With his departure, we will have two King County-appointed vacancies. Sandeep is reaching out to the new Executive's office in an attempt to elevate this issue. If you have any candidates to recommend, please let me know.

WASHINGTON STATE
Ballpark
PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT

Media Report
November 2025

Attachments & Summary

- "Seattle's Pioneer Square is having a moment, thanks to social media buzz" Megan Ulu-Lani Boyanton, Seattle Times, October 28, 2025

    - For the first time since COVID, Pioneer Square is seeing a really meaningful jump in ground floor occupancy and also in foot traffic. There are several factors at play for this upswing, including high-profile events, city construction improving walkability, the new Waterfront Park, and social media-especially social media influencers.

- "Seattle Unpermitted Food Vendors are Rampant" Jackie Varriano, Seattle Times, November 8, 2025

    - A coalition of more than 200 Washington restaurant owners is imploring state and county officials to crack down on the growing issue of unpermitted hot food vendors. Citing such vendors as a growing public-health and business-compliance crisis, the coalition hopes to bring more awareness to this situation which it says is not equitable.

- "Things We'd Like to See at T-Mobile Park in 2026 (Besides Josh Naylor)" Editorial Staff, Lookout Landing, November 10, 2025

    - The Lookout Landing staff present a wish-list of things they would like to see at the ballpark – including ushers enforcing the "wait to return to your seats" signs, making the 6:40 game start time a universal standard, more ballpark-wide theme nights, mystery bags sold at the team store, smaller and less expensive alcoholic beverages, and more gluten-free food items.

- "Coast Guard to Build Polar Security Base along Seattle Waterfront" Conrad Swanson, Seattle Times, November 14, 2025

    - The U.S. Coast Guard announced plans to grow its footprint along the waterfront just west of T-Mobile Park, to make room for a type of polar security base. The multi-phase work will include dredging the waters around Pier 36, building two modernized berths where additional polar security cutters could dock.

- “Seattle’s Sodo Housing Rezoning Bill Thrown Out by State Board” Nick Pasion, Puget Sound Business Journal, November 17, 2025

    - The Washington State Growth Management Hearings Board threw out a bill passed by the city of Seattle that would rezone an industrial district in Sodo to allow housing. The board ruled that the city incorrectly relied on a 2022 environmental assessment in determining the impacts of housing in the area, instead of conducting a new review. The board also ruled that the city did not allow for sufficient public participation, did not properly notify state officials, and violated the State Environmental Policy Act.

- “RFQ Out for Lumen Field Condition Assessment” Journal Staff, Daily Journal of Commerce, November 6, 2025

    - First & Goal is looking for a consultant to provide a full-stadium and event center assessment and report for Lumen Field. The stadium is also set to get a $19 million makeover, and a temporary name change to Seattle Stadium, in preparation for the start of FIFA Men’s World Cup events in Seattle next summer.

- “Develop Fulton Oks $224M incentive for grandiose downtown proposal” Staff, Urbanize Atlanta, October 29, 2025

    - Fulton County’s economic development authority approved an initiative package for Forge Atlanta, a towering mixed-use megaproject worth hundreds of millions of dollars, that could reshape downtown Atlanta.

- “B&D in the News: $800M Vision Emerges for American Family Field” Staff, BDConnects.com, November 10, 2025

    - B&D has shared preliminary findings that reimagine the extensive parking lots surrounding Milwaukee’s American Family Field as a vibrant mixed-use district, one that could bring $750 million to $820 million in new investment and create a dynamic, year-round destination for the community. Commissioned by the Wisconsin Professional Baseball District, B&D’s concept framework envisions a more connecte3d, accessible district supported by new structured parking, housing, retail, and public spaces.

- “Katie Wilson Picks Key Advisors for Seattle Mayor’s Office” David Kroman, Seattle Times, December 2, 2025

    - Seattle Mayor-elect Katie Wilson will name Brian Surratt, CEO of the economics development firm General Seattle Partners, as her deputy mayor. Surratt will be the only deputy mayor in Wilson’s office. His job will center on community relations and outreach and he is likely to be a forward-facing figure when Wilson is unavailable. Surratt is currently a co-chair of Wilson’s transition team and serves on the board of directors for Seattle Colleges, the Downtown Seattle Association and the Downtown Emergency Services Center.

Business

The Seattle Times

Seattle's Pioneer Square is having a moment, thanks to social media buzz

Oct. 28, 2025 at 6:00 am

1 of 2 | Laila Sanderson is a social media influencer @lailahofie who features Pioneer Square businesses in her TikTok videos Monday, October 6, 2025. (Ellen M. Banner / The Seattle Times)

By Megan Ulu-Lani Boyanton

Seattle Times business reporter

Laila Sanderson sees the storied streets of Seattle's Pioneer Square neighborhood as an ideal backdrop for her online videos, and its businesses are often the stars.

She is committed to sharing hole-in-the-wall spots and local institutions with thousands of her TikTok followers. In turn, businesses are basking in the social media attention and adopting new marketing tactics for themselves.

"There's a lot of hidden gems out here, especially in Pioneer Square," said Sanderson, who's lived in the neighborhood since September 2023 after moving from Manila, the capital of the Philippines.

In Pioneer Square — arguably Seattle's oldest neighborhood — local businesses are leaning on social media to market to new clientele and boost their margins. For some, that means pushing their brands on platforms like Instagram and YouTube, while others can unwittingly "go viral" when a social media influencer, like Sanderson, spotlights their storefront.

The strategy is helping Pioneer Square, an area that was ravaged by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic: Businesses shuttered, events were postponed or canceled, and tourists and workers stayed home, with only the unhoused community left living on its streets.

Despite some lingering problems in Pioneer Square, new businesses are setting up shop, and fresh clientele, especially from younger generations, are spending cash in the rebranded, trendy neighborhood.

"For the first time since COVID, we're seeing a really meaningful jump in ground floor occupancy but also foot traffic," said Lisa Howard, executive director of nonprofit Alliance for Pioneer Square.

First Thursday Art Walk brings more visitors to Pioneer Square

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the First Thursday Art Walk and other neighborhood events have succeeded in bringing more foot traffic to Pioneer Square each year.

Downtown Seattle Association, Alliance for Pioneer Square (Shaun Martin / The Seattle Times)

The neighborhood has hosted over 9 million visitors this year through Oct. 11, according to daily foot traffic counts provided by the Downtown Seattle Association. That number is inching toward last year's total of more than 9.7 million visitors.

Daily foot traffic still has yet to hit the pre-COVID numbers, with almost 14 million visitors recorded in 2019, but it's a long way from the low of around 5 million visitors in 2020. Each year since has seen steady growth.

Several business owners attribute the neighborhood's recent upswings to myriad factors at play, including high-profile events, city construction that's improved walkability and the new Waterfront Park bringing visitors into Pioneer Square.

Then, there's social media to thank.

The employees of bar Cowgirls regularly post TikTok videos that make lighthearted fun of interactions with patrons and co-workers, which brings more attention to the Pioneer Square joint.

"The younger crowd, that's where their eyeballs are," said James Zachodni, director of operations at Cowgirls. "That's their Yelp, right?"

"Embracing the times"

Longstanding businesses like Cowgirls are reaping the benefits of the growing online interest in Pioneer Square. In addition to the social media buzz, Zachodni of Cowgirls said, beautification efforts in the area, nearby events and new businesses cropping up have helped.

It's paying off: Cowgirls' gross sales are up 15%, Zachodni said. "Year over year, we're up right now, for sure."

For saloons like his, the biggest hurdle is getting patrons' backsides onto bar stools. So Cowgirls has frequently tried to keep up with the trends, said Zachodni, 47.

When the bar first opened two decades ago, Cowgirls advertised on Seattle's radio stations. Then, it was an early adopter of Facebook and Instagram, he said, though social media marketing wasn't taken seriously in its nascent phases.

Today, with almost 6,000 Instagram followers and over 6,000 likes from TikTok users on the bar's videos, the strategy is working.

"It's kind of embracing the times," Zachodni said.

Trevor Boone, owner of Emerald City Guitars, was somewhat ahead of the times. He's built his own social media presence as the owner of Emerald City Guitars. With close to 62,000 YouTube subscribers and around 57,000 followers on Instagram, the family business is a viral sensation of its own volition.

"These people come in to visit the mighty Emerald City Guitars that they see online," Boone said.

His father, Jay Boone, first opened the shop in 1996. The younger Boone, born and raised in the Greater Seattle area, took over around 2020 after singing as the frontman of The Hollers, an alternative pop-rock band that played locally.

Like his dad, Boone, 36, still burns nag champa incense and welcomes music legends — Chris Stapleton, John Mayer, Oasis, Keith Urban and Taylor Swift's band among them — into the store.

But some things have changed. Outside the walls of his shop, "it's a little different," Boone said.

When a young Boone was running around his father's store, he said the surrounding area felt mellow and bohemian. At 7 years old, "I never felt like it was dangerous down here," Boone said. "I hear myself going, 'Oh, I miss how it used to be.' "

Through the neighborhood's growth, he's noticed more boarded-up windows and higher security.

Crime in Pioneer Square has remained steady, with 476 violent crimes and property crimes recorded so far this year, according to data by the Seattle Police Department. The area saw a total of 493 offenses last year and 497 offenses in 2023.

"While we embrace all visitors to Pioneer Square, we do not accept violent attacks that threaten the well-being of our vibrant neighborhood," Howard at Alliance for Pioneer

Square said in a statement. "Our goal is to ensure that everyone, residents and guests, can safely enjoy the unique arts, dining, music, and community atmosphere that Pioneer Square offers."

She noted that, this year, the neighborhood deployed enhanced neighborhood police patrols, particularly between midnight and 3 a.m., on top of security requirements and policies for public and private spaces that see late-night activities.

As new businesses have opened, Boone depicted a slow return to the neighborhood's community feel.

"We're coming back. You're able to wave to your neighbor across the street a little more often," he said. "I'd still take my girls down here for lunch and Molly Moon's."

Boone has also entwined technology into his business model.

During the COVID pandemic, he took the time to develop the shop's social media footprint, with he and his videographer documenting excursions to find guitars.

"We were able to expand this audience — not only locally but globally," Boone said. "It was a proved concept for us."

Has it helped his business? "Absolutely," Boone answered.

"Those are so many eyes on our store," he said. "That translates into sales, which is ultimately what we need to do to stay in business."

Social media influencers are also giving local businesses a boost.

On her TikTok page, Emma Cortes Ellendt — a local content creator, or social media influencer who creates content online — has featured several Pioneer Square businesses, including cafe Mirabelle by Orphée, vintage clothing store Friend Museum and Smith Tower Observatory Bar.

"For the business owners, it seems like it's been pretty positive," Ellendt, 33, said. "And they're receptive to it."

Art walks

The neighborhood's monthly art walk — and its popularity with social media influencers — has proved to be a major factor in bringing visitors to Pioneer Square.

"We're really noticing that increase in foot traffic, largely due to the amount of organic posts and interest on First Thursday from local creators," said Angela Nguyen, marketing and communications director at Alliance for Pioneer Square. "It's creating a sense of a 'missing out if you're not here' feel."

This year's First Thursday Art Walk has driven more monthly foot traffic through the neighborhood. The event takes place year round on the first Thursday of each month.

The latest art walk, on Oct. 2, saw almost 19,000 visitors on Pioneer Square's streets — the most populous October art walk since 2021, according to data from Alliance for Pioneer Square and the Downtown Seattle Association.

The increased foot traffic leads to more people exploring local businesses, visiting neighborhood bars and staying for dinner at restaurants, Nguyen said. "Social media, especially this past summer, has been huge for us."

In the opinion of content creator Shanee Arder, small businesses feel like the art walk's focus.

"It was so cool to see all of the local businesses — from art shops, from wineries to clothing vendors," said Arder, 23, who lives in Shoreline.

Amina Aden, owner of Mina's Matcha, a pop-up matcha cafe, is one small business reaping the benefits of social media attention.

Aden usually participates in events around the city, including Studio Rüm's art exhibition, "I JUST HAVE TO SHOW YOU," last month in Pioneer Square.

An artist reached out to her to say he was hosting an art show and wanted her there as a vendor after seeing Mina's Matcha online, Aden said.

"Social media has been a key component in helping Mina's Matcha grow and to bring people to pop-ups like the one in Pioneer Square," Aden said in a phone interview.

The event not only met her financial expectations, but it also allowed her to meet new people that have invited her to work other events. As a result, Aden will set up shop at Studio 7117 during next month's First Thursday Art Walk in Pioneer Square.

"Comes very naturally"

The neighborhood's up-and-coming businesses are building excitement through social media.

The opening of TOASTED. Bagels & Coffee's newest location in Pioneer Square hasn't gone according to plan. Construction and city permitting caused delays, but co-founder Murat Akyuz said he's hoping the shop will open in November.

Akyuz has openly shared the journey — challenges included — online.

He and his business partner, Jaafar Altameemi, have turned to social media to provide the public with an honest look at running a chain of cafes: from business milestones to pitfalls, such as broken espresso machines and break-ins across their three other locations.

Akyuz, 24, is a Gen Z business owner. He referred to social media as "one of the biggest, if not most crucial, things that are embedded into our business at TOASTED."

The online hype has had real world impacts, with Akyuz fielding questions from others on when the Pioneer Square cafe will start slinging bagels.

"Our age demographic that we serve also just lives on social media, and, luckily, to me and Jaafar and our team, social media comes very naturally," Akyuz said. "It is also one of the cheapest forms of marketing if you're doing it in house."

Akyuz said he's been making videos since he was 10 years old. Born in Turkey, he lived in California before moving to Seattle about four years ago to study at the University of Washington.

He and Altameemi, who is from Iraq, share an affinity for entrepreneurship. Leaning on their Mediterranean and Middle Eastern roots, the pair launched a business that reflects those influences, with bagel options like the labneh and honey, the "taste of Istanbul" and the "sultan's roast beef."

After opening their first location in the U District in July 2024, the business has rapidly expanded to include a second cafe in Bellevue and a third location in South Lake Union.

Akyuz said he was drawn to Pioneer Square because of its deep history, beautiful architecture, proximity to the waterfront and steadily rising foot traffic.

"Our goal when we signed that space was to also help bring it to life," Akyuz said, "create a lot of videos, highlight it on our account, get the word out there."

Food & Drink
The Seattle Times

Seattle unpermitted food vendors are rampant, restaurateurs complain

Nov. 8, 2025 at 6:00 am | *Updated Nov. 8, 2025 at 6:00 am*

(Jennifer Luxton / The Seattle Times, 2024)

By Jackie Varriano

Seattle Times food writer

A coalition of more than 200 Washington restaurant owners is imploring state and county officials to crack down on unpermitted food vendors, which have proliferated in record numbers around King County in the last two years.

Washington State Restaurant Fair Play Coalition is petitioning various county health departments, city council members and the governor's office to address the issue. On Oct. 16, the coalition called on King County Executive Shannon Braddock, the King County sheriff and other agencies in a news release, listing 28 locations where allegedly unpermitted taco vendors regularly operate.

It's the most formal action to date taken by permitted restaurateurs against unpermitted mobile food vendors, but tensions between these two groups have been bubbling since last year.

Decrying unpermitted vendors as "a growing public-health and business-compliance crisis," the coalition called on King County leadership to enforce "codes to halt illegal hot-food vending"; to establish an interagency task force to "monitor compliance and prevent recurrence"; and to coordinate with local law enforcement agencies and the state departments of Health, Revenue and Labor & Industries to tamp down on unlicensed operators.

"These unregulated operations represent an organized, large-scale public-health and business-integrity threat," Chairperson Josiah Gaytán wrote in the release.

Asked about the coalition's demands and the issue of unpermitted vendors more broadly, a spokesperson for Gov. Bob Ferguson said Monday that his office "has been contacted and is working to set up a meeting with local authorities. Additionally, multiple cabinet agencies have been working with local jurisdictions to provide support and assistance."

How did we get here?

Unpermitted food vendors have vexed local health departments in the last two years. Through Oct. 31, more than 180 unpermitted vendors were cited this year in King County, smashing last year's record tally of 119 violations. (Public Health — Seattle & King County publishes a public database of permit-related closures and other food safety violations at kingcounty.gov.)

In March, county health department officials attributed this spike to an uptick in tips from the public as well as an uptick in illicit vendors themselves — a growing "phenomenon that many other West Coast cities have observed" in recent years, a health department representative told The Seattle Times.

Two archetypes of unpermitted vendors have emerged after the pandemic in King County, said Dr. Eyob Mazengia, head of the food safety program at the county health department.

In the past, most unpermitted vendors were individual, mom-and-pop-type operators who did not understand what was needed to legally run a business. The health department provided educational and additional services in multiple languages, helping vendors gain access to commercial kitchen space in some cases. Public Health has long prioritized education over punishment, as most people quickly came into compliance with county health regulations.

But "what we've learned over the last two or three years," Mazengia said, "is that the types of vendors that are coming up now are not necessarily willing to come into compliance. They seem to also be centrally organized. We're not dealing with independent, one-off operators."

What has changed?

A Seattle Times analysis of county data showed 18.5% of violations last year represented people who were repeatedly caught vending without a permit. The true figure is likely much higher: The health department says it's hard to track violations (and levy fines or citations) due to a lack of names for business owners. Health department data from 2025 mirrors a 2024 trend: anonymous, unpermitted vendors getting warned by the county repeatedly at the same location.

While the health department has always coordinated with law enforcement and other public agencies to deter unpermitted vendors, the emergence of this second bucket of

permit-resistant operators has led to an increase in interagency collaboration, Mazengia said.

This translates to joint enforcement assignments with "Seattle Department of Transportation, zoning, fire, street use, Seattle Police and King County sheriff," Mazengia said. "We're also having conversations across county lines."

In the past, the King County health department has almost never issued fines — for one, because "it is a lengthy and complex process," a spokesperson said last fall — and it does not shut unpermitted vendors down permanently. Since last year, though, the department has repeatedly claimed that it will reconsider its education-first approach for egregious repeat offenders.

This fall, the health department formally coordinated with law enforcement for the first time, per a department representative, resulting in charges.

Fraydel Gell-Mann Mendoza Ortega, co-owner of Tacos La Cuadra, faces three charges this fall in Des Moines Municipal Court related to the brand's food truck: operating without a business license; unpermitted use of land; and the use of a recreational, utility or commercial vehicle in a residential area.

Famous to foodies for its tacos al pastor, La Cuadra became notorious to the health department last year. Before receiving a permit for its roving food truck in October 2024, La Cuadra was shut down five times for operating without one. (La Cuadra, which opened permitted, brick-and-mortar locations this year in Ballard and Kent, was named specifically in the Fair Play Coalition release.)

The business has at least one permitted food truck, the health department said last month. County data shows the business is not fully aboveboard: On Aug. 22, La Cuadra was flagged in Bothell for operating without a valid permit and several other violations: insufficient refrigeration; operating without hand-washing facilities; and operating without hot water available.

The food truck got a nearly identical notice at the same location in October 2024.

A health department representative said the county is "pleased that La Cuadra owners worked with us to come into food safety compliance for their food truck and brick-and-mortar restaurant last year," but the department is "closely monitoring their operations" following the Des Moines incident and also received a complaint this year that La Cuadra was again "operating unpermitted street food operations."

The health department spokesperson said “future violations may result in us suspending their existing food business permits.”

Ortega, the co-owner of La Cuadra, told The Seattle Times in March that “we have always wanted to do things right.” He did not respond to multiple requests for comment on this story about the charges in Des Moines; La Cuadra’s mobile food operations; the business’s permit status; and its stance on permitting.

The public’s perspective

The King County health department intends to “establish and firm up all of our collaborating work with other agencies to deal with it,” Mazengia said. He also stressed the role of the public in tamping down on unpermitted vendors.

“If there are customers, people will always be there to sell food. If it’s not lucrative, then they will not be there,” Mazengia said. “I think it’s important that the public gets fully involved in the solution for the long-term outcome.”

The health department issued a public service announcement last fall, including tips for spotting unpermitted vendors. Lack of hand-washing stations is a visible giveaway. And as of Jan. 1, King County requires all mobile vendors post their food safety health rating score visibly, just like a brick-and-mortar restaurant.

The department’s chief goal remains to “improve food safety,” Mazengia said. It often issues “imminent health hazard” warnings when scolding unpermitted vendors for skirting other food safety rules related to refrigeration, hand-washing stations and bathroom access.

The health department also publicly posts about foodborne illness outbreaks, when “two or more people get the same illness from the same contaminated food or drink.” Two such cases have been reported in 2025 — neither at unpermitted establishments — compared with 180 permit violations and counting.

Case in point: Through Oct. 31, 16 total food vendors have been shut down this year in Auburn by the county health department. Every instance has been for lack of a permit. Fifteen out of 16 violations had additional demerits related to food preparation and/or storage; none generated foodborne illness outbreaks reported by the county.

Gaytán, the coalition chair, knows many consumers are unconcerned about permits.

“People don’t care,” he said. “They’ll take their chances.”

Some Seattleites have argued that unpermitted business owners are simply trying to earn a living — and circumventing the county's cumbersome red tape. "The tacos are better and cheaper" is a common argument in the comments sections when local media outlets cover the topic.

What happens now?

A representative for the King County sheriff's office said the department "is working with Public Health to try and mitigate this (issue) and will take action if any criminal acts were committed."

Asked to comment on the coalition's plea and the issue more broadly, a representative for the King County executive office said the "growing problem" of unpermitted food vendors "is a complex issue."

"Consistent oversight requires collaboration across agencies and jurisdictions, including with Public Health — Seattle & King County," Braddock's office said in a statement last month. "Improved coordination also prevents bad actors from circumventing enforcement and compliance actions." The county "has brought together partners so we can better clarify compliance requirements, improve coordination and bolster enforcement across our region."

A representative for Washington state Attorney General Nick Brown's office said "permitting of food vendors, and enforcement of permitting requirements, is the legal responsibility of the relevant local health department. The state Board of Health adopts food service regulations, but local governments enforce the regulations. There's not a role in statute for the AG's office in enforcing these requirements locally."

Gaytán, who has been a restaurant consultant in the Greater Seattle area for more than 20 years, is tired of responsibility being passed like a hot potato.

He said his coalition represents hundreds of restaurant owners across Washington, with the majority being one-owner small businesses. The coalition has members with food trucks, with "30 restaurants and everything in between."

Gaytán's not aware of any legal precedent for suing a health department, but his coalition is considering doing so if action isn't taken. He realizes it's an uphill battle. And he knows the court of public opinion (at least on social media) is not backing permitted food vendors.

Still, “it’s not equitable,” he argued, “that you have a taco truck that’s following all the laws, and you have one that shows up, trespasses property, they don’t have a food permit posted, they don’t have proper refrigeration, they don’t have running water and they don’t have sufficient tools.”

Despite the coalition’s campaign, “it’s all crickets outside of a few exceptions,” Gaytán said. Still, he hopes “to bring awareness (to the issue) so politicians cannot cry ‘we didn’t know.’

“We actively have reached out to all city council members of the cities that have stands,” he said. “We’re sending (information) to every city council member, mayor, chief of police, fire department.”

***Jackie Varriano**: Jackie Varriano is a food writer at The Seattle Times who covers neighborhood restaurants around Western Washington, reporting on the ways food and communities intersect.*

View 310 Comments / 310 New

the Ticket CONTENT STUDIO

Explore More Events

Sign Up Login

A Seattle Mariners Community
LOOKOUT LANDING
November 14, 2025

LOOKOUT LANDING

THE FEED SECTIONS BETTING NEWSLETTERS SHOP

EDITORIAL

Things We'd Like to See at T-Mobile Park in 2026 (Besides Josh Naylor)

The Lookout Landing staff takes to the field with ideas on how to improve the T-Mobile Park experience

by **Kate Preusser**, **Grant Bronsdon**, **Max Ellingsen**, **Isabelle Minasian**, **Zach Mason**, **Eric Sanford**, **John Trupin**, **Jacob Parr**, and **Bee Everfolly**
Nov 10, 2025, 8:05 AM PST

106 Comments (4 New)

John Froschauer-Imagn Images

It's officially the off-season, meaning it's time for T-Mobile Park to take a well-deserved nap before another year of hosting millions of eager footsteps, thousands of chair creaks, and innumerable elbows leaning on every stable surface. This is also the time when the Mariners can do some annual housekeeping, preparing the park and the park's staff for another year of baseball. Here are some things the LL staff would love to see either added or enhanced in the gameday experience for the upcoming year (and the presumed attendance increase after a history-making season). Add in your ideas in the comments!

[NB: We all want Josh Naylor, obviously that goes without saying. This exercise is more about the ballpark experience than the team on the field, which we have no control over, as much as we'd like to.]

Grant:

Picture this: You've splurged on a 100-level ticket behind the first base dugout. Two on, two out, and Cal Raleigh coming to the plate. But right as the 1–1 pitch comes in, instead of the action, all you see is your seat neighbor crossing in front of you with newly-acquired popcorn and soda. Not even anything fancy! In the last few years, however, the ushers that line every section have stopped enforcing the "wait to return to your seats" signs. Back in the day (read: 2021?), sure, you might have been frustrated to watch that batter from the concourse. But I'd rather have that annoyance than see people streaming up and down the aisles. [Ed. note: this was one of the most common requests when we were discussing these as a staff!]

Max:

At risk of sounding like a geezer that can't stay up too late past his bedtime, we need to make the 6:40 start time a universal standard. Not only is it a perfectly reasonable time to start a baseball game for the local crowd, but fans further east having to wait for a 10:08 pm start time is a new reality I've been living and now empathize with emphatically. It's not a massive change, but it's hard to see why those extra few minutes would be critical for vested parties like stadium vendors or TV broadcasts and gives the East Coast crowd just a glimmer of hope to be wrapping up before midnight. It makes commuting home more convenient, helps out national viewership, and maintains the feasibility of a direct workplace-to-ballpark pipeline for midweek games at TMob. Where's the downside?

ADVERTISEMENT

Kate:

Even as someone who follows the team on a daily basis, I find myself losing track of which theme nights are going on in what little sections when. Without going full Angels and their endless, soulless "Christmas in July" promos, I'd like to see more ballpark-wide theme nights, which can really perk up a sleepy, chilly Tuesday night game in May. Emo Night was a huge success this year, with on-theme music and people dressed up, even outside of the special section; keep that trend rolling and encourage people to come to the park in costume, with themed activities and music. Everyone, even those not ponying up 70 bucks for a theme ticket, likes a little party, as a treat.

Isabelle:

Okay, so I'm a demanding person and I have two wishes - one that's a rerun and one that's new.

1. Mystery bags at the Team Store. You pay a set price (maybe there are different bags for different price points) and you get surprise items from the store. Maybe it's a trident keychain? Maybe it's a Daniel Vogelbach shirsey? Maybe it's an inexplicably

argyle-patterned Mariners baseball hat? You won't know until you open it up! What a great way to get rid of old/irrelevant merch, right?

2. Please, please, please bring back the small cans of Topo Chico Ranch Water and the marshmallow rice crispy treats. Both were part of the Value Menu, and it was particularly convenient to be able to enjoy a tastefully-sized alcoholic beverage. One of the most beautiful, simple pleasures of my life in 2024 was sippin' and snackin' on that combo on a warm August evening, watching the sun set from 318. [Ed. note: Isabelle is also our gluten-free staff member and, in an annual plea, we request more gluten-free happy hour or value items, specifically GF-beers, seltzers, or things of that nature!]

Zach:

I would like to see T-Mobile Park itself translate better to the TV watching experience. You know those interstitials where the ROOT crew (or whoever now, I guess) follows around two fans wearing Ichiro jerseys walking the concourse while Aaron opens the broadcast or does a read for Washington Lotto or whatever? The other main default is of people preparing food of some kind. BORING! I would love to see more of those from spots around the stadium to help create more of a sense of place. More of these should be shots of that 3D mural of the pig pile on Griffey that's next to the big escalator, the bat sculpture at the home plate entrance, the sculpture of Dave. Things of that nature. Make me feel like I'm at T-Mobile Park specifically!

Eric:

1. One ticket for double-headers, planned or unplanned.

2. No beer costs more than $8.

3. No food item costs more than $15.

4. Humpy can never, ever win again unless it's an elimination game and they are tied or behind.

John:

Climate Lab

The Seattle Times

Coast Guard to build polar security base along Seattle waterfront

Nov. 14, 2025 at 10:34 am

1 of 5 | The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star sits docked at the Coast Guard's Base Seattle on Thursday. (Nick Wagner / The Seattle Times)

By Conrad Swanson

Seattle Times climate reporter

CLIMATE LAB

Climate Lab is a Seattle Times initiative that explores the effects of climate change in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. The project is funded in part by The Bullitt Foundation, CO2 Foundation, Jim and Birte Falconer, Mike and Becky Hughes, Henry M. Jackson Foundation, Martin-Fabert Foundation, Craig McKibben and Sarah Merner, University of Washington and Walker Family Foundation, and its fiscal sponsor is the Seattle Foundation.

The U.S. Coast Guard plans to grow its footprint along the Seattle waterfront, just west of T-Mobile Park and Lumen Field, to make room for a type of polar security base.

As the Northern Hemisphere warms, clearing ice sheets that previously blocked passage through many of the frigid waters, countries across the world are eyeing the region with increasing interest for scientific research, resource extraction and even a potential food supply.

These shifting geopolitics leave many concerned about America's waning influence in Arctic waters. Seattle has long been home to the Coast Guard's major expeditions into the region, serving as the main port for the military branch's largest icebreaker. But that ship, the cutter Healy, is aging and holds a long and complicated list of responsibilities.

The expansion along the waterfront will enable the Coast Guard to dock many more Arctic ships here, growing the country's "maritime dominance," the branch said in a release.

The first phase of work, awarded in an August contract to the Bellevue-based Whiting-Turner Contracting Company, is worth some $137 million. The company will dredge the waters around Pier 36 and build two modernized berths, where additional polar security cutters could dock, the release said.

Dredging such a heavily polluted area will mean that crews must handle and dispose of the sediment with care and under strict guidelines. This will be the largest such removal of hazardous materials in the Coast Guard's history, the release said.

The first phase will include widening the area between Piers 36 and 37, the release said. The crews will also demolish one existing building and stabilize waterfront areas.

The idea is to not only modernize the base but also to allow more ships to dock along the waterfront. First, they'd have to be built, though.

The Coast Guard has three polar icebreakers. They're important for scientific research in these frozen and far-flung regions. And the Healy is just returning from a monthslong expedition into Arctic waters, for which several local scientists joined to conduct experiments on the ice and by dropping research buoys into the northern waters. But these ships are also important for emergency rescue operations, law enforcement on the ocean and patrolling American borders.

Scientific research in the Arctic is increasingly important. It's one of the areas hardest hit by climate change, and understanding the warming environment up north can offer researchers clues to what we might expect in Seattle and across much of the rest of the country.

Law enforcement and border patrol are moving center stage, too, while countries like China and Russia expand their influence in the region. China has at least four icebreakers in its fleet, which pales in comparison to the dozens operated by Russia.

Early in his second term, President Donald Trump promised to add as many as 40 icebreakers to the United States fleet. Last month he sealed a deal with the Finnish government to acquire 11 new icebreakers, Reuters reported. Finland will build four of the ships there and help the U.S. build seven more domestically.

With that news and the local base expansion, Trump is making headway toward his promise. Later phases of the work in Seattle will continue to grow the local base and add four new berths to house even more ships here.

Funding for all the work comes from Trump's massive and controversial tax plan — also dubbed the "One Big Beautiful Bill" — which Congress approved this past summer.

***Conrad Swanson**: 206-464-3805 or cswanson@seattletimes.com. Conrad Swanson is a climate reporter at The Seattle Times whose work focuses on climate change and its*

FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF CURTISJ@BALLPARK.ORG

From the Puget Sound Business Journal:
https://www.bizjournals.com/seattle/news/2025/11/17/sodo-housing-ruling.html?cx_testId=40&cx_testVariant=cx_42&cx_artPos=5#cxrecs_s

SUBSCRIBER CONTENT:

Government & Regulations

Seattle's Sodo rezoning bill thrown out by state land-use board

A new option.
Level funded
A no deductible, copay-only hea

The three-block area at the center of the dispute sits south of T-Mobile Park, among properties largely owned by hedge-fund billionaire Chis Hansen.
ANTHONY BOLANTE | PSBJ

By Nick Pasion – Reporter, Puget Sound Business Journal
Nov 17, 2025

Listen to this article 4 min

Story Highlights

- Washington state board invalidated Seattle's Sodo housing rezoning bill.
- The board cited improper environmental review and insufficient public participation.
- Port of Seattle opposed the measure citing maritime disruption concerns.

A Washington state land-use board last week threw out a bill passed by the city of Seattle that would rezone an industrial district in Sodo to allow housing.

The bill, passed by the City Council 6-3 in March, would have allowed apartment development in a several-block area just south of T-Mobile park, half of which would have been affordable h

But the Growth Management
on a 2022 environmental assessment in determining the impacts of housing in the area, instead of conducting a new review.

The board also found that the city did not allow for sufficient public participation, did not notify state officials properly over the zoning changes, and violated the State Environmental Policy Act, all of which led it to invalidate the measure.

City officials have the option to appeal the decision to a Superior Court judge within 30 days or reset the process from square one, according to the

board ruling.

However, it's unclear if the city will take up the effort again. In passing the measure, city officials encountered harsh opposition from maritime groups led by the Port of Seattle, the agency that filed the complaint alongside the BNSF Railway with the Growth Management board. The port also filed a land-use petition in April with the King County Superior Court. That lawsuit is still pending.

Tim Robinson, a spokesperson for the City's Attorney's Office, said that officials are "reviewing" the decision to "determine next steps and are considering all options."

"The Board's ruling today, which invalidates Ordinance 127191 in its entirety, is the next step to righting the City's missteps in this land use process," a spokesperson for the Port of Seattle said in a prepared statement.

Related coverage

- Judge allows Sodo housing challenge to proceed
- 5 things you need to know

The fight over the Sodo stadium district this year reinvigorated a debate over where new housing should be located in Seattle, as the city continues to grapple with a housing crunch.

In Sodo, the proposed housing would have been on land that is largely owned by the hedge-fund billionaire Chris Hansen. At one point Hansen wanted to build an NBA stadium on those properties, which are largely occupied by warehouses. But those plans were halted by a prior council after heavy opposition by the port.

Proponents of the measure, including the Seattle Mariners and nearby neighborhood alliances, have argued that housing could help invigorate an area by creating a “Makers District” where small-scale industrial businesses can operate on the ground-floor of the mixed-use buildings. Seattle City Council President Sara Nelson, who sponsored the measure, had made the proposed spaces a core part of her reelection campaign, which she lost this month.

Opponents argued in court that allowing housing in Sodo would serve as a handout to Hansen. The port also argued that added foot traffic to the corridor would disrupt its operations and could lead to job losses in the maritime industry.

Members of the board, however, did not buy all of the port's arguments. They wrote in the ruling that there was not enough evidence that housing would severely disrupt port operations.

They also found that in the district where housing was proposed only about 7.5 acres could actually be developed, which would only lead to about 375 units, significantly less than the up to 990 repeated by the measure's largest proponents and detractors.

For more stories like this one
afternoon daily newsletters

DAILY JOURNAL OF COMMERCE
Helping Business do Business Since 1893

November 6, 2025

RFQ out for Lumen Field condition assessment

By JOURNAL STAFF

SEATTLE — Lumen Field owner First & Goal is looking for a consultant to provide a full stadium and event center condition assessment and report.

File image [enlarge]

A notice of Lumen Field's request for qualifications ran in Tuesday's DJC.

A notice of Lumen Field's request for qualifications ran in Tuesday's DJC. Respondents must sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to get the RFQ.

The assessment will include the building structure, substructure and envelope; mechanical, electrical and plumbing, including elevators, HVAC, electrical distribution, lighting, fire alarm and fire suppression; information technology including video and sound production; concessions and theater equipment; parking and security infrastructure; finishes such as flooring, carpet and paint; signage; field infrastructure; and grounds.

The roughly 69,000-person capacity stadium, opened in 2002 as Seahawks Stadium, is also set to get a $19 million makeover, and a temporary name change to Seattle Stadium, in preparation for the start of the FIFA Men's World Cup events in Seattle next summer.

That work includes the temporary replacement of the stadium's artificial turf with stitched natural grass, seating changes and security upgrades including new turnstiles, bollards, lighting and cameras.

Copyright 2025 Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce

URBANIZE ATLANTA
(/)

DOWNTOWN (/NEIGHBORHOOD/DOWNTOWN-0)

Develop Fulton OKs $224M incentive for grandiose downtown proposal

(/project/forge)

Forge Atlanta project by rookie developers called “forward-looking, landmark investment in the future"

(mailto:?subject=Someone has shared an article from Urbanize with you&body=I just read this on Urbanize and thought you'd find it interesting:%0D%0DDevelop Fulton OKs $224M incentive for grandiose (http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Article?u=https%3A%2F%2Fatlanta.urbanize.city%2Fpost%2Fforge-atlanta-develop-fulton-oks-224m-incentive-grandiose-downtown-proposal&via=Urbanize&hashtags=Develop+Fulton+OKs+%24224M+incentive+for+grandiose+downtown+proposal&source=LinkedIn)

OCTOBER 29, 2025, 1:50PM JOSH GREEN **23 COMMENTS**

ADVERTISEMENT

Fulton County's economic development authority has approved an incentive package worth hundreds of millions of dollars for a towering mixed-use megaproject its leaders say could help reshape not only downtown but the Atlanta region.

The Develop Fulton Board of Directors today OK'd a $223.7-million inducement for the initial phase of Forge Atlanta, a massive, multi-tower proposal with transit connections from a crypto-backed company with no verifiable development experience.

The tax break will apply to a portion of Forge Atlanta's first phase, which would be a $756 million total capital investment from an LLC called Forge Asset Management and its majority owner, tech-based Webstar Technology Group.

Webstar in July went under contract on 10 acres to develop Forge Atlanta where downtown's underutilized, industrial southernmost blocks meet Castleberry Hill—and where a previous dream of a massive life-sciences campus called Artisan Yards (and later the Forge) **went bust (https://atlanta.urbanize.city/post/downtown-project-foreclosure-forge-site-canceled)** in early 2023. The acreage is just south of Atlanta Ventures' South

Downtown district and the former Gulch property where CIM Group's Centennial Yards has **begun (https://atlanta.urbanize.city/post/centennial-yards-first-new-tower-tops-out-reveals-name-images)transforming (https://atlanta.urbanize.city/post/centennial-yards-gulch-photos-400-days-world-cup-2026)** a 50-acre section of downtown with new ground-up development.

Fresh renderings depicting the most ambitious/audacious vision for the Forge site to date accompanied Develop Fulton's tax incentive announcement today. The Forge is being designed by Nelson Worldwide, the firm behind The Battery Atlanta and Buckhead's St. Regis Hotel, among other landmarks, project leaders have said.

(https://atlanta.urbanize.city/sites/default/files/styles/1140w/public/2025-10/Forge%201.jpg?itok=bu2TPRyE)

Daytime rendering of the high-rise Forge Atlanta proposal between Interstate 20 (bottom) and Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

Renderings courtesy of Forge Asset Management

According to Develop Fulton, phase one of the Forge will include roughly 300 hotel rooms with event and meeting space, plus 60,500 square feet of retail and entertainment space.

Another section of phase one not covered by the tax incentive will see construction of for-sale condominiums totaling more than half a billion dollars ($532 million), which will be subject to standard tax assessments, per Develop Fulton.

The economic development agency says Forge's initial phase will create 900 full-time jobs downtown, plus 2,100 construction-related and temporary positions.

Kwanza Hall, Develop Fulton chairman, called the Forge project “a forward-looking, landmark investment in the future of our growing city and thriving region” that will complement “other nearby major developments” in a statement.

“This multi-phase project will further reimagine this critical corridor, [bringing] additional new life, energy, and economic activity to the area,” Hall continued.

(https://atlanta.urbanize.city/sites/default/files/styles/1140w/public/2025-10/Forge%202.jpg?itok=acikQbYn)

A revised high-rise vision for multi-phase Forge Atlanta released this week.

Renderings courtesy of Forge Asset Management

(https://atlanta.urbanize.city/sites/default/files/styles/1140w/public/2024-09/Artisan%20Yards%20Forge%20Atlanta%20site%201.png?itok=Ko5Pdkx8)

Closer look at the acreage in question, just north of Interstate 20.

Courtesy of SSG Realty Partners

The development team expects to close on the project in the second quarter of 2026, according to Develop Fulton. The agency pointed to Ernst & Young economic models that estimate Forge's impact will be $7.37 billion overall, boosting annual tax revenues from $14,585 to $1.8 million in the first year after it's finished, with $25 million in tax revenue expected over the first decade.

Future phases call for more development of transit-connected residential, office, retail, entertainment, and public spaces.

Webstar Technology Group, which describes itself as a pioneer in the "tokenization of real estate assets" with a goal of redeveloping "urban and resort landscapes through smart design, community focus, and cutting-edge technology" announced in May it was pursuing the Forge project.

A recent **deep dive (https://www.bisnow.com/atlanta/news/commercial-real-estate/mysterious-developer-is-pushing-billions-in-georgia-megaprojects-an-sec-veteran-warns-buyer-beware-130125)** by Bisnow Atlanta into Webstar's practices, including the origins of The Forge and a sibling, $650-million concept north of Atlanta in Commerce called Bear Village, found a number of skeptical observers.

(https://atlanta.urbanize.city/sites/default/files/styles/1140w/public/2024-09/Artisan%20Yards%20Forge%20Atlanta%20site%202.jpg?itok=hzGZJKLb)

The 10-acre site where Ted Turner Drive meets Whitehall Street in the broader context of downtown.

Courtesy of SSG Realty Partners

...

Follow us on social media:

Twitter (https://twitter.com/UrbanizeATL) / Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/UrbanizeATL)/and now: Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/urbanizeatlanta_/)

• Poll: Downtown's huge 'Forge' site goes under contract. Will it happen? (https://atlanta.urbanize.city/post/downtown-forge-site-goes-under-contract-will-it-happen-poll) (Urbanize Atlanta)

385 WHITEHALL STREET SW (/TAGS/385-WHITEHALL-STREET-SW) 363 FAIR STREET SW (/TAGS/363-FAIR-STREET-SW)

TED TURNER DRIVE AT WHITEHALL STREET (/TAGS/TED-TURNER-DRIVE-WHITEHALL-STREET) CBRE (/TAGS/CBRE-0) FORGE ATLANTA (/TAGS/FORGE-ATLANTA)

URBANTEC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS (/TAGS/URBANTEC-DEVELOPMENT-PARTNERS) THE FORGE (/TAGS/FORGE) MARTA GARNETT STATION (/TAGS/MARTA-GARNETT-STATION)

ARTISAN YARDS (/TAGS/ARTISAN-YARDS) THE GULCH (/TAGS/GULCH) NELSON WAKEFIELD BEASLEY & ASSOCIATES (/TAGS/NELSON-WAKEFIELD-BEASLEY-ASSOCIATES)

News & Insights

(/)

Photo courtesy of: Greg Land

B&D IN THE NEWS: $800M vision emerges for American Family Field

NOVEMBER 10, 2025

Photo by Mike De Sisti, Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel

B&D IN THE NEWS

B&D outlines $800M vision for American Family Field surroundings

B&D has shared preliminary findings that reimagine the extensive parking lots surrounding Milwaukee's American Family Field as a vibrant mixed-use district, one that could bring $750 million to $820 million in new investment and create a dynamic, year-round destination for the community.

Commissioned by the Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District, B&D's analysis explores how currently underused spaces could evolve into a thriving neighborhood with 600 to 1,000 housing units, retail and office spaces, and a 150- to 200-room hotel. The concepts were presented publicly during the District's Nov. 6 board meeting as part of a broader effort to envision the next generation of development around the stadium.

Representing B&D's Venues Practice Group, **Bill Mykins** (https://www.bdconnect.com/people/bill-mykins/), Vice President, and **Aidan Lebow** (https://www.bdconnect.com/people/lebow/), Associate, delivered the presentation to the District board. As *the Milwaukee Business Journal* reported, the ideas are "hypothetical for now" but illustrate the long-term potential for 25 to 30 acres of surface parking to be converted into an active, mixed-use environment centered around the Menomonee River.

Shaping a more connected, sustainable stadium district

B&D's concept framework envisions a more connected, accessible district supported by new structured parking, housing, retail, and public spaces that invite year-round activity. According to the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, the envisioned redevelopment could contribute roughly $19 million annually to local governments through payment-in-lieu-of-taxes agreements.

"The concepts demonstrate what's possible when we think creatively about how to transform underutilized assets into year-round destinations," Mykins said. "Everyone wants to see something happen other than have parking lots sit empty."

The initiative reflects a collaboration among city leaders, the Brewers organization, and local stakeholders, all exploring ways to expand the economic and community impact of one of Milwaukee's most recognizable venues. B&D will deliver its final redevelopment report to the Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District by the end of November.

More coverage below:

- "One-quarter of AmFam Field's parking lots could be developed, study says. Here's what to know, (https://www.jsonline.com/story/money/real-estate/commercial/2025/11/06/brewers-ballpark-could-see-apartments-hotel-development-study-says/87129420007/)" *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*'s article (subscription required).
- "American Family Field parking lots eyed for multifamily housing, retail (https://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/news/2025/11/07/american-family-field-development-concepts.html)," *Milwaukee Business Journal*, Nov. 7, 2025 (subscription required).
- "Study outlines $800 million development potential for parking lots around American Family Field (https://biztimes.com/study-outlines-800-million-development-potential-for-parking-lots-around-american-family-field/)," *BizTimes*, Nov. 7, 2025
- "American Family Field parking eyed for $800M redevelopment project (https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Articles/2025/11/10/american-family-field-parking-eyed-for-800m-redevelopment-project/)," *Sports Business Journal*, Nov. 10, 2025 (subscription required).

Share Share Tweet

Local Politics

The Seattle Times

Katie Wilson picks key advisers for Seattle mayor's office

Dec. 2, 2025 at 4:53 pm | *Updated Dec. 2, 2025 at 4:53 pm*

Seattle Mayor-elect Katie Wilson announced a slew of staffing appointments on Tuesday. (Kevin Clark / The Seattle Times)

By David Kroman

Seattle Times staff reporter

Seattle Mayor-elect Katie Wilson will name Brian Surratt, Jen Chan and Kate Brunette Kreuzer to her leadership team when she takes office next month, the campaign confirmed Tuesday.

Wilson also announced a slew of other staffing appointments, including Aly Pennucci, a former city council analyst, as budget director; Seferiana Day, a staffer in the city's planning department, as communications director; Alex Gallo-Brown, who managed her campaign, as director of community relations; and Nicole Vallestero Soper as director of policy and innovation.

Surratt and Chan each has years of experience in city and local government, while Kreuzer comes from the world of advocacy, including with Wilson's Transit Riders Union nonprofit.

Surratt, CEO of the economic development firm General Seattle Partners, will be Wilson's deputy mayor. Unlike recent Seattle executives, who've retained multiple deputy mayors, each with a portfolio of departments they oversee, Surratt will be the only one in Wilson's office. His job will center on community relations and outreach and he is likely to be a forward-facing figure when Wilson is unavailable.

His hiring is evidence Wilson is not set on completely overturning the apple cart. A friend to business in Seattle, Surratt led the city's Office of Economic Development under former Mayor Ed Murray and has spoken to the importance of Amazon's presence in Seattle. Under Murray, he was key to finding compromise in the 2015 negotiations over a $15 minimum wage. He is currently a co-chair of Wilson's transition team and serves on the board of directors for Seattle Colleges, the Downtown Seattle Association and the Downtown Emergency Services Center.

Chan, currently the deputy executive director of the Seattle Housing Authority, will oversee the city's department heads. It will be a larger portfolio than is typical of recent mayor's offices, but one Wilson hopes will break down silos and allow for more collaboration.

Election 2025

- Katie Wilson picks key advisers for Seattle mayor's office
- Eddie Lin takes seat on Seattle City Council
- Trump threatens Seattle's World Cup, calls Mayor-elect Wilson 'communist'
- Katie Wilson elected Seattle's next mayor
- Mayor Bruce Harrell concedes race for second term to Katie Wilson

Like Surratt, she has years of experience in local government. She was chief of staff in Seattle City Light from 2019 to 2024 before moving to the Seattle Housing Authority a year ago.

Kreuzer, most recently the director of external relations for the land use advocacy organization Futurewise, will be Wilson's chief of staff. She will oversee the office's communications team — responsible for interacting with the news media — and a new office of policy and innovation, which Wilson hopes can focus solely on legislative and proactive policy work.

Kruezer has known Wilson for years. She was the treasurer for the Transit Riders Union, an advocacy organization founded by Wilson, from 2018 to 2022 and has been helping to oversee the postelection transition.

Though Wilson identifies as a socialist and dabbles in populist themes — including joining striking Starbucks workers on the picket line the day after winning the election — she's promised to be open to all voices in the city.

Surratt, in particular, is well known and respected among a broad swath of the city's institutional players, including business representatives who have been pleased with his prominent role in Wilson's young administration.

The structure of Wilson's office is built to reduce the number of people who directly report to her as mayor, a recommendation laid out in a post-primary memo crafted by mayor's office alumni. By consolidating department oversight under one person, the hope is to elevate the expertise contained among longtime city staff while greasing the skids for collaboration. Advisers warned Wilson against an overly factional office.