



SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES: THE BOARD'S PLANNING MEETING

Thursday, March 20, 2025, 9:00 a.m. – 1:50 p.m.
T-Mobile Park: Club 1 Conference Room, 5th Floor

SUMMARY

OF THE MEETING'S KEY DISCUSSIONS AND AGREEMENTS

Edition #1, 03.24.25

CALL TO ORDER / WELCOME

Board Chair Chris Marr called the special meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. pursuant to notice. Joining the meeting in person were Mr. Marr, Board Vice Chair Stacy Graven, Board Treasurer Omar Riojas, and Board Members Andrea Sato, Donny Stevenson, and Brian Surratt; Executive Director Joshua Curtis; Legal Counsel Tom Backer; Office Manager Annie Thenell; and Facilitator Jim Reid. Also present from the Seattle Mariners (12:00-1:00) were: Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Trevor Gooby, Chief Legal Counsel Melissa Robertson, and Deputy General Counsel Christian Haliburton.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No written public comment was received.

THE CONTEXT FOR TODAY'S MEETING

Because of turnover, the Board of Directors did not hold its annual planning meeting in November 2024. Thus, today's meeting is the Board's first strategic planning retreat since November 13, 2023. Joshua Curtis opened the meeting by reporting on the accomplishments of the PFD since that day. During the past sixteen months the PFD has accomplished the three major Board priorities that were agreed on at the 2023 meeting:

- Built a broad coalition of stakeholders that culminated in the Seattle City Council adopting the Makers’ District (a portion of the Stadium District that has been on the PFD’s agenda since 2012);
- Developed criteria by which to evaluate projects that might be funded by the Neighborhood Improvement Fund (NIF), hired Mark Bloom as a consultant/project manager to identify pedestrian safety enhancements between T-Mobile Park and the light rail station, and presented to the board a list of projects and ROM budget/timelines; and
- Updated the Ballpark Reference List following the Board’s visits to three stadia in 2024.

FACILITATED BOARD DISCUSSION

These are the consensus agreements from this year’s planning retreat:

1. BOARD REITERATED ITS SUPPORT FOR THE MISSION STATEMENT

The Board reiterated its support for the purpose of the Public Facilities District (PFD) as expressed in the current mission statement, which the Board adopted in 2016. The Board agreed that the PFD’s investments in the communities that surround the ballpark have improved it and the fans’ experiences. They share the vision of Seattle Mariners’ executives that the ballpark should be viable fifty and one hundred years from now. For that vision to be achieved, the PFD is partnering with the Mariners to maintain and enhance the iconic baseball park and ensure the fans’ enjoyment by strengthening the economic, social, and cultural fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Board members also agreed with Chris Marr that the Board is fulfilling its fiduciary role.

2. BOARD IDENTIFIED ACTIONS TO ADVANCE THE PFD’S MISSION

The Board suggested these actions to advance the PFD’s mission in 2025:

- Expand the discussion of the economic impact of T-Mobile Park.
- Conduct a five-year status update of the Long-Term Capital Needs Assessment (LTCNA). It was suggested that CAA ICON could help in producing the review.

Now that the Makers District legislation has passed, partner with the Mariners to identify future scenarios for the district. As part of this discussion, understand if the Mariners have altered their own development plans for the corner lot and/or the properties they have leased.

3. BOARD DISCUSSED GENERATIONAL ISSUES AND THE PFD’S POTENTIAL ROLES

Board members discussed these generational issues and potential roles for the PFD in addressing them.

- a. *Revitalization of Seattle’s urban core.* What should be done to draw people downtown again? How do we ensure that the surrounding neighborhoods are active on nights when the Mariners, Seahawks, or Sounders are not playing, and concerts and other special events are not occurring?

- b. *High-capacity light rail.* The PFD wants attendees to be able to get to the stadium easily and quickly, to reduce traffic and encourage walkability, and to stimulate economic growth and opportunity in the three neighborhoods surrounding the stadium. Moving pedestrians safely between the ballpark and light rail is a key issue.
- c. *Energy district.* Could the PFD be a catalyst for addressing climate change by facilitating the sewage heat recapture from the Elliot Bay Interceptor? One role for the PFD could be creating a blueprint for the neighborhood showing the sewer pipes and where the heat would be extracted to share with future developers
- d. *Housing.* In light of the Seattle City Council’s approval of the Makers District legislation, which allows the construction of housing east of First Avenue South in the Stadium District, what role could the PFD play in creating the conditions required for a safe neighborhood? For instance, what urban design interventions could help to ensure the safety and vitality of the area for future residents and visitors?
- e. *FIFA World Cup.* In 2026 Lumen Field will be one of the hosts of the World Cup. How might the ballpark and SODO, ID/Chinatown, and Pioneer Square be affected and benefit?
- f. *Respecting the area’s heritage.* The history of the area and what was here before, going back further than the settling of Seattle, must be part of the conversation. Seattle’s identity has been shaped by the Tribal people who preceded us. How can we reclaim this heritage and bring it with us into the future?

Early in the discussion, Brian Surrat referred to Ezra Klein’s book and podcast about the policy of scarcity versus the policy of abundance. He posited what could be done in Seattle to pursue the policy of abundance. Andrea Sato picked up on this thread by asking how traffic patterns, including the placement of bus stops, might be strategically placed to make the ID/Chinatown more accessible to Mariners fans before and after games. Board members then cited the process that transformed the idea of a Stadium District in 2012 into the City Council-approved Makers District in 2025 as a role model for more “concept plans,” i.e. big picture visions for resolving the major challenges facing Seattle and the region. Andrea mentioned that a starting point is to change our perceptions and assumptions about neighborhoods and their residents and businesses. The Board asked: “How do we preserve the coalition that advocated for the Makers District and/or build new coalitions for the next big concepts?”

The Board briefly discussed the potential roles the PFD might play, from catalyst to convener to facilitator to advocate. An example of an issue in which the Board might serve as a catalyst is the Energy District. Omar Riojas asked if the PFD might be a facilitator of discussions about the future of vacant properties in the Makers District.

As a result of the discussion about generational issues and what role the PFD might play in addressing them, the Board agreed on these strategies and actions:

- Maintain a healthy relationship with the Seattle Mariners. One step the PFD could take is to engage in a district visioning process and invite the Mariners’ representatives to join in developing and evaluating scenarios.

- Meet with the Board of the Public Stadium Authority (PSA) to debrief the Makers District process and discuss issues of mutual interest, including the generational issues that the Board identified today.
- Reach out to the leadership of Starbucks, whose headquarters is nearby T-Mobile Park and the Makers District.
- At a special meeting, consult with outside experts from other cities to gain a broader perspective on what it takes to create a vital stadium district that can play a role in stimulating economic growth and development (and, perhaps, be a means of pursuing the policy of abundance). The meeting might also include local experts who could translate some of the ideas into the realities of Seattle.
 - Board members expressed interest in the ideas listed in Attachment C of the agenda, “Topics for Guest Speakers/Panel Discussions.” These suggestions and questions could be the starting point for the agenda.

4. BOARD MEMBERS IDENTIFIED INTERESTS AND STRENGTHS

One of the issues of interest to the Board as we prepared for this meeting was the Board’s sustainability—i.e., succession planning. In this session Board members articulated their interests in serving on the Board and the strengths they bring to it.

Stacy:

“I’m excited about the Board’s future work.” As the Board’s longest serving member, Stacy provides institutional memory. Having led the Meydenbauer Center for thirty years, she brings unique expertise to the Board’s role of overseeing the Mariners’ management of the ballpark.

Chris:

“Having retired at the end of 2024, I’m looking for focus and structure.” Interested in the generational decisions that the PDF will make. Enjoys public policy, operations, and building coalitions. “We can perform our role without having to be the ‘800-pound gorilla.’”

Brian:

“I’m a huge sports fan who appreciate sports’ social value and how they bring people together no matter their economic stations.” One of the strengths he brings to the Board is the ability to see issues contextually.

Andrea:

“I am very interested in the relationship between the ballpark and the neighborhood, and how elements come together to keep the stadium viable.” Her greatest contribution to the Board may be that, as a lawyer, she is an organizational/process person.

Omar:

“I am a sports fan and came to love baseball through my four kids, all of whom love it. I appreciate the Mariners’ commitment to community, as expressed in Heritage Night.” He, too, is a lawyer and that has trained him to ask questions and think strategically.

Donny:

“I’m a lifelong sports fan who played in college and appreciate the lessons that sports teaches.” As the elected Vice Chair of the Muckleshoot Tribe, Donny is interested in public policy and has a vested interest in the greater good. He also has a vested interest in T-Mobile Park because it sits on land his Tribal ancestors settled. He wants to help the PFD ensure that the ballpark serves the best interests of everyone. His strengths are in the many relationships he has cultivated and his interest in people. He also mentioned that both baseball and softball are important sports on the reservation.

From here the Board examined a May 2019 statement that the then-Board adopted to define the kind of functional team that its members sought to be. The qualities and characteristics are still relevant. Above all, this Board wants open discussion, even if it results in disagreement. All voices are heard, they disagree agreeably, and when the decision is made, everyone stands behind it. Board members said that the expertise of everyone is valuable and needs to be recognized, and no one should act out of self-interest. Today there is a shared sense of commitment to the future. In addition, Board members said they rely on Joshua and are pleased that there’s free-flowing, two-way conversations with staff.

Chris, Stacy, and Omar mentioned the things that they find satisfying in serving as the Board’s executive leadership. Chris observed that it is interesting to ask questions and discuss the possible direction before an issue comes to the Board.

Following this meeting, the executive team will engage the Board members in one-on-one conversations about the future board leadership. As the discussion ended, Stacy urged everyone to ask themselves: “Why did the politician who selected me to serve on this Board do so? What did they see in me?”

5. THE BOARD’S LUNCH WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MARINERS

For an hour the Board and staff met with three representatives of the Mariners: Trevor Gooby, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer; Melissa Robertson, Chief General Counsel; and Christian Haliburton, Deputy General Counsel. The Board and staff have worked with Trevor. Melissa succeeded Fred Rivera upon his retirement, and she hired Christian. Therefore, the Board has not worked with the two of them before.

This was a get-to-know you conversation in which everyone pledged to keep open the lines of communication, work to understand the variety of interests and positions, and coordinate actions. They also reiterated John Stanton’s vision of ensuring that T-Mobile Park is viable when it reaches its fiftieth and one hundredth anniversaries.

6. BOARD HIGHLIGHTED KEY RELATIONSHIPS

The final discussion of the day expanded the earlier discussion about generational issues and the partners that might collaborate with the Board to address them. Joshua laid out the partners that are most crucial to the PFD’s success, including the: a) Mariners; 2) PSA; 3) Alliance for Pioneer Square, and other related entities; 4) SODO (BIA) and Chinatown International District

(SCIDPDA)Chinatown/CID; 5) Seattle Chamber of Commerce/DSA ; and 6) governmental partners such as the City of Seattle and King County.

Joshua meets with these partners on a regular basis, usually in one-on-one conversations. He also participates in the community forum sponsored by First and Goal, the entity that manages Lumen Field.

As the discussion concluded, the Board expressed appreciation for Joshua’s role and once again reiterated an interest in discussing how to address the coalition that Joshua’s consultant team helped to build on behalf of the PFD to secure City Council passage of the legislation establishing the Makers’ District. The Board also reiterated its interest in meeting with the Mariners and with the PSA Board.

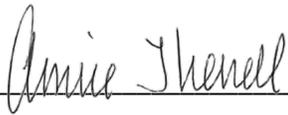
Joshua also asked for feedback about the communications from his office to the Board. Board members are welcome to provide feedback at any time. Is it too much? Too little? Is anything missing?

7. TAKEAWAYS FROM THE MEETING

What was most appreciated about the meeting was the opportunity for Board members to get to know one another better. The retreat also validated the perception that the Board is on the same page and heading in the right direction. They share commitments to the community and the PFD’s role. They are collectively interested in continually strengthening the relationship between the Mariners and PFD. Chris complimented the Board for the healthy exchange of ideas throughout the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, Chair Marr declared the meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.



Annie Thenell,
Recording Clerk



Christopher Marr, Chair
Board of Directors, Public Facilities District