



SVI Strategic Asset Management Plan

Focus Group Meetings

Common Themes

Introduction

Seattle Vocational Institute (SVI) provides important educational and workforce development opportunities to a high need population. However, SVI faces significant challenges related to its physical building, enrollment, and finances. Seattle Colleges is conducting a planning study to engage with stakeholders and partners to make a decision regarding the future of the SVI building and education programs. This study will define the outcome that will best serve the SVI neighborhood and mission.

To begin the process of listening to and incorporating the perspectives of stakeholders, a series of focus group meetings were held in January and February 2018. Focus groups were convened based on the following areas of interest:

- Current students
- Staff and faculty
- Central Area-based community organizations
- Non-profit and service organizations
- Workforce development
- Affordable housing
- Local governments

Common Themes

Participants in the group discussions provided a range of perspectives and ideas. The following list represents themes that were commonly repeated among the different groups.

- SVI provides a unique education and training environment where people of color and economically disadvantaged people feel welcome, are supported, and succeed.
- SVI has played an important role in the Central Area community and is considered to be a legacy institution by many.
- SVI has been in decline for years. This is reflected in declining enrollment, deteriorating building condition, loss of community interaction, and decreased programs.
- Education programs at SVI need to become more responsive to the changing needs of students and the economy. This includes providing more flexibility in class schedules, offering on-line learning options, and emphasizing pathways to career development, not just placement into an entry level job.
- There are mixed feelings about future of the building itself. Some people consider it a legacy and also see that there are fundamental design problems and that the condition of the building has declined to the point where it is likely more cost effective to replace it rather than renovate it.

- There are many opportunities and potential support and enthusiasm for establishing a vibrant new use on the property. There are many ideas about what that future use could be. Commonly stated principles stated around that future use include:
 - Any future use needs to provide community benefit and accept community input
 - Vibrant, with a mix of activities to serve different groups of people throughout the day
 - Culturally relevant, that recognizes and enlivens the African American heritage of SVI and the Central Area and is welcoming to multiple ethnic groups
 - Economically energized, providing training and resources to support entrepreneurship, local businesses, and career development
 - Educational, providing opportunities for short-term job training and ladders to further learning and training
 - Accessible, providing community meeting and gathering spaces
- Several concepts for future use of the property were identified, including the following
 - Vocational Training: especially a Skills Center in partnership with the Seattle School District. The skill center in Kent was mentioned as a model.
 - Support for At-Risk Youth: related to implementing the zero juvenile detention policy in King County, the property could provide education, training, and support services for at-risk youth
 - Mixed Use Concept: A multi-story building with
 - First and Second Floor: commercial retail, education classrooms, office space with a focus on non-profit organizations, and community gathering and meeting spaces
 - Upper Floors: affordable housingAfricatown Plaza and 12th Avenue Arts projects were identified as potential models for how this kind of mixed use development can be implemented
- Extensive community engagement is needed to expand on these and more ideas for future use and develop support for a new vision.
 - There is skepticism, based on a long history of unfair treatment, of plans and promises from public agencies to the Central Area community.
 - Local community organizations and leaders are willing to advise and support a collaborative planning process
- Transition of ownership and governance of the property from Seattle Colleges to another public organization may be needed to allow these broader range of uses to be implemented.

**Seattle Vocational Institute - Strategic Asset Management Plan
List of Focus Group Participants**

Local Governments

January 26, 2018; 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

- Theresa Barreras, Business Districts Manager, Office of Economic Development, City of Seattle
- Marie Kurose, Port of Seattle, Workforce Development Manager
- Steve Leahy, Director Government Relations, Seattle Colleges
- Denise Rothleutner, Deputy Director, Department of Community and Human Services, King County

Workforce Development

February 13, 2018; 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

- Catie Chaplan, Wood Technology Center
- Dwane Chappelle, Director, Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning
- Susan Crane, Executive Director, SkillUp Washington and on board of Pacific Hospital Public Development Authority
- Veronique Facchinelli, Casa Latina
- Malcolm Grothe, Vice Chancellor for Workforce Development, Seattle Colleges
- Min Song, CEO, Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council
- Chris Sullivan, Executive Dean of Workforce Development, Seattle Central College
- Nancy Yamamoto, Workforce Development Manager, City of Seattle

Central Area Community

February 13, 2018; 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

- Curtiss Calhoun, Africatown
- Dennis Comer, Central Area Collaborative
- Felicia Cross, African American Community Advisory Council
- Minister Chipso S. Johnson, Pastor of Students, Damascus Missionary Baptist Church
- Reverend Blake Johnson, Damascus Missionary Baptist Church
- Walter Jones, CEO, WJJ Consulting
- Pastor Lawrence Willis, United Black Christian Clergy of Washington

Housing Authorities

February 13, 2018; 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

- Ron Jenkins, Seattle Housing Authority
- M.A. Leonard, Vice President and Market Leader, PNW Region, Enterprise Community Partners
- Chris Persons, Capitol Hill Housing Authority

Non-profit and Service Organizations

February 14, 2018; 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

- LaNesha DeBardelaben, Northwest African American Museum
- Colleen Echohawk, Executive Director, Chief Seattle Club
- Enrique Gonzalez, Public Defender Association
- Tim Lennon, Langston
- Michelle Merriweather, Urban League
- Vivian Phillips, Chair, Seattle Arts Commission

Seattle Colleges Staff and Consultants

(Participated in All Focus Groups)

- Lincoln Ferris, Consultant to the President, Seattle Central College
- Maureen Shadair, Interim Executive Dean, Seattle Vocational Institute
- Michael Stringer, Maul Foster & Alongi, Inc.
- Rabia Ahmed, Maul Foster & Alongi, Inc.