



**Seattle Center Advisory Commission Meeting**

**March 5, 2026 | 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.**

**Armory Loft 3 / WebEx**

**Adopted**

**ATTENDEES**

**Commissioners:** Michael George, John Olensky, Sally Bagshaw, Adriane Musuneggi, Mark Dederer, Lara Mae Chollette, Sarah Rich, Holly Golden, Lauren Campbell, Will Ludlam, Matthew Mead, Gloria Connors

**Absent Commissioners:** Stacey Hutchison, Eric Pettigrew, Eric Berlinberg, Matt Roewe

**Seattle Center Staff:** *Diamatris Winston*, David Kunselman, Rose Ann Lopez, Chelsea Riddick-Most, Kaori "Kiyoko" Kiyono, Janet Chapman, Shelly Bradshaw, JulieAnn Clifton

**Guest:** Will Daugherty

**Welcome/Review & Approve February Minutes** – Mark Dederer, *Chair*

- Vote to approve February meeting minutes: approved

**Public Comment** – Mark Dederer, *Chair*

No public comment

**Director's Report** – *Diamatris Winston, Acting Director*

- Shelly Bradshaw joined Seattle Center as the new McCaw Hall General Manager in February.
- The City has issued budget guidance directing departments to consider 5% to 10 % reductions to the General Fund. These potential reductions would affect both programming and campus maintenance.
- Seattle Center generates about 70 % of its revenue, and this significant contribution should be considered in budget discussions.
- We will continue working with the City and Mayor's Office partners to identify a financially sustainable path forward.
- A supplemental budget request of \$563,000 was submitted and pre-approved to support production and promotion of the FIFA World Cup Fan Fest at Seattle Center. Early funding confirmation will support timely payment for artists, screen rentals, and other event-related expenses.
- We have been preparing to have Seattle Center's strategic plan presented to Council Committee in April or May, with a potential ballot date of November 26.
- State legislative budget update includes \$2 million for Fisher Pavilion decarbonization, with no state funding for the Seattle/King County Clinic.
- In response to Mayor Katie B. Wilson's Executive Order 2026 – 03 "prohibiting civil federal immigration authorities from using property that is both City-owned and City controlled for civil immigration enforcement activities," Seattle Center will be posting signage artwork at campus entrances or potential staging areas surrounding our grounds.

**Spring 2026 Program Highlights** – *JulieAnn Clifton, Production Manager*

- The Spring Festál lineup includes the Irish Festival, French Fest, Cherry Blossom Festival, and various cultural festivals leading up to Folklife in June.



- The Seattle/King County Clinic (SCKCC), taking place April 23–26, is a four-day free medical, dental, and vision event, held in partnership with McCaw Hall and Seattle Opera. We are still accepting volunteers, especially medical professionals.
- Spring commercial events include the St. Patrick’s Day Dash, Seattle Color Festival, March for Science, protected speech activities, and various trade fairs.
- McCaw Hall events include performances by Pacific Northwest Ballet and Seattle Opera, Shen Yun (Chinese dance performance), comedy shows, and graduation ceremonies.

#### **Economic Impact Study** – *Karin Butler, Strategic Advisor*

- The upcoming Seattle Center economic impact study, funded by the Seattle Center Foundation and conducted by Community Attributes Inc., is the first update since 2016 and will provide fresh insights into Seattle Center’s economic impact. The final report will be distributed soon.
- Key findings for 2024 include nearly 12 million visitors, \$3.3 billion in economic activity, and 19,400 jobs. This represents a significant increase from the \$2.4 billion reported in 2016, adjusted for inflation. Visitor numbers remain similar, suggesting a combination of factors such as longer stays and higher costs in Seattle.
- Seattle Center visitors spent nearly \$1.5 billion on campus and in surrounding neighborhoods in 2024.
- The campus generated more than \$37 million in local tax revenue, with a detailed breakdown across various tax categories.
- The study also acknowledges the public benefits provided by Seattle Center’s partner organizations beyond economic impacts.
- Use the 2024 economic impact report and highlights to prepare and drive advocacy materials for continued support of Seattle Center and its partner organizations.

#### **Conversation with Will Daugherty, CEO & President, Pacific Science Center** – *Will Ludlam, Vice Chair*

- The Pacific Science Center is dedicated to igniting curiosity in every child and serving the community through innovative science education.
- The Science Center was built for the 1962 World’s Fair and has undergone significant changes over the years, including efforts to address accessibility and sustainability issues.
- There is a need for substantial infrastructure upgrades, including courtyard remediation, estimated at \$30 million to \$50 million, as well as a \$40 million project for essential systems such as wiring, electricity, fuses, HVAC, and plumbing.

#### **Sale of Northwest Corner to Space Needle**

- The Science Center’s Board of Directors conducted a three-year assessment, which led to the decision to sell a portion of its campus.
- The sale includes the northeast corner of the property (less than 25% of the campus), including the Boeing IMAX Theater.
- The Space Needle–affiliated buyer will invest significantly in immersive and interactive experiences and enhanced programming.



- The transaction is intended to unlock capital from underutilized real estate, allowing Pacific Science Center to invest in critical infrastructure upgrades, courtyard improvements, and long-term financial sustainability.

#### Economic Impact and Funding Challenges

- Pacific Science Center offers financial assistance programs to expand access, including free or reduced admission and subsidized field trips for low-income schools.
- The economic benefit of cultural institutions is significant, and public funding can help keep money local and support the community.
- Challenges of funding include an operating deficit and the need for capital investments to improve the facility and attract more visitors.
- The Science Center receives limited public funding and relies heavily on earned revenue, philanthropy, and partnerships.
- The community's support for paying for experience remains a challenge, with a need for a combination of public funding, philanthropy, and community support.

#### Leadership Transition

- Will Daugherty will conclude his role at the end of June, with a new CEO expected to begin in May.
- Daugherty and the Board remain committed to ensuring a smooth transition and to fostering a sustainable, collaborative future for the Science Center.

#### **Good of the Order** – All

N/A

1:27 p.m. – Meeting adjourned