

Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board Special Meeting – 2023 Planning Retreat

Friday, February 17, 2023

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Centilia Cultural Center

1660 S Roberto Maestas Festival ST, Seattle, WA 98144

NOTES

CAB members present: Bilan Aden, Barbara Baquero, Rebecca Finkle, Jen Moss, Kristen Sukys, Tanika Thompson Bird, Dan Torres, Munira Mohamed, Barbara Rockey, Christina Wong

CAB members absent: Jaimée Marsh

City staff: Gurdeep Gill, Bridget Igoe (Office of Sustainability & Environment)

This document contains summary notes from the CAB's 2023 planning retreat. The goals of the retreat were to:

1. Build relationships within the CAB
2. Discuss and start to plan strategies for key topics based on CAB interest:
 - a. Foundational elements (vision, values, meeting agreements, bylaws)
 - b. Revenue stabilization
 - c. Scenario budget planning
 - d. Community engagement
 - e. Fifth-year anniversary of SBT

Welcome & Opening

The CAB co-chairs (T. Thompson Bird, J. Moss) opened the retreat by reviewing the goals, agenda, retreat agreements, and the [ecocycle planning framework](#) from Liberating Structures.

The CAB did a light "coffee chat" activity to connect and learn new and interesting things about each other. This meeting was the CAB's first meeting since COVID, so relationship building in an in-person setting was a primary goal of the day.

Foundation Strengthening

The CAB did an activity focused on reviewing its foundational vision, values, meeting agreements, and bylaws (these materials are all publicly available on the [CAB webpage](#)). CAB members first reviewed the materials on their own, then discussed them in small groups, and then discussed them in the full group.

All feedback was captured on flip charts and a notetaker captured the discussion related to the following prompts:

- *What did you notice?*
- *What needs improvement or strengthening, and how/why?*

Discussion notes are provided below. These are topics the CAB will consider addressing in its future work. Notes in **bold** and marked with an asterisk (*) are priorities.

Priority topics for future CAB discussion and potential action:

- **CAB member compensation**
 - The CAB discussed how other City boards and commission members receive compensation for their service, whereas CAB members do not per the SBT ordinance ([Ord. 125324](#), Section 4.E.).
 - CAB would like to see compensation to support community member participation. It's not about hardship, it's about valuing a human being and their efforts.
 - Changing CAB member compensation will require a legislative change.
- **Budget Principals**
 - Is there a way to track how we are aligning with these in our decisions?
 - Are we being transparent to community?
 - Re: *Balance prevention and intervention* principle
 - Not sure what the actual ratio is for this? Where are we currently at in striking this balance?
 - Can we get rid of the word "intervention"? Change to "strategy"?
 - The word "intervention" seems invasive, like WE are going to impose something on the community in a space that isn't necessarily wanted, needed, or consulted about. It's a very nuanced perception of that word.
 - Want to move towards co-creation of a strategy, instead of a sentiment that we are intervening.
 - The term "Intervention" is not relevant to the programs CAB funds.
 - Prevention *is* intervention.
 - Is the point here really more around addressing systemic, root cause issues and structural changes instead of "intervention"
- **CAB meetings (bylaws description and in practice)**
 - Let's discuss our collective availability for 2023 and make sure it aligns with our annual workplan.
 - The bylaws and ordinance specify the CAB must meet at least 4x/year. Currently, we meet about 9-10x/year. We want language that is more reflective of our work.
 - Four times/year is probably too infrequent and there is too much to catch up on. What is the sweet spot? 6-9x/year? Should we measure meetings in hours/year instead of occurrences?
 - Political and administrative changes impact meeting cadence as well. When City leadership shifts, we must build relationships again and again.

- Bylaws indicate quorum is half of the CAB in attendance. If only half are present, this isn't enough of us doing the discussion.
- Hard for CAB members who have other commitments and can't be present the whole meeting.

Other topics and comments:

- In general, the foundational materials have held up well.
- Vision
 - Adjust the phrasing “*lifting the burden of disease and stress*”—that’s the bare minimum, flip the order so “*creating collective wellbeing*” is the end (for a strong, uplifting ending).
 - Vision only mentions food. What about early learning?
- Meeting Agreements
 - Re: *Pay attention to power dynamics* (agreement #5)
 - How does this work in relation to power dynamics and calling in?
 - “*Call in when someone is being pushed out, neglected or ignored*” – we don’t want to put anyone on the spot to correct the power dynamic when it is the group who should correct that to make it inclusive
 - Shouldn’t place burden on the person.
- Core Values
 - *Accountability and Transparency*
 - Include accountability and transparency to the community. How are we being accessible to communities?
 - When we open ourselves up in a positive way, that can produce positive outcomes.
 - We need to engage with community in a healthy way
 - *Racial Justice and Social Equity*
 - Use of term “historic racism”—why are not addressing “current racism”, makes it sound like racism is not happening right now.
- CAB’s voting process (fist-to-five)
 - Can we simplify?
 - Too many rules and jargon. Can we have a “red, yellow, green” system that follows in line of testing for agreement and consensus voting.

Roundtable Discussions

The CAB did a roundtable activity focused on the following four topics:

1. Revenue stabilization
2. Scenario budget planning
3. Community outreach and engagement
4. Fifth-year anniversary of SBT

B. Igoe presented some brief background information on each topic. Then, CAB members took 15 minutes on their own to consider and write down ideas and responses to some discussion prompts for each topic. After individual reflection, the CAB split into four small groups. Each small group went to a

different station in the meeting room association with one of the four topics. The small groups discussed their individual reflections and posted responses on flip charts. Small groups rotated to a new station until each group had discussed all four topics. Finally, the full CAB discussed results on the flip charts for each topic and noted key themes.

Notes from the activity and discussions are provided below.

Topic 1: Revenue Stabilization

Background:

- In 2020-2021, the SBT Fund declined due to COVID. In 2022-2024, revenue is expected to remain down due to sluggish recovery from COVID.
- Due to these revenue downturns, funds from other sources were used to avoid cuts to direct services.
- In 2025, SBT Fund could face a \$2 million shortfall.
- The City has launched a new [revenue stabilization task force](#) to look into issues like declines in revenue sources. It includes representatives from the Mayor’s office and City Council.
- Earlier this month, CAB co-chairs raised the need for revenue stabilization for SBT-funded programs in a [presentation they gave to the Finance and Housing Committee](#) about SBT. The following recommendations were conveyed (see slide 22):
 - *(1) Identify alternative revenue resources to plug anticipated 2025 SBT shortfall. Further cuts to food security and prenatal-to-three services should not be an option.*
 - *(2) City’s new Revenue Stabilization Work Group needs to consider structural issues with SBT.*
 - *(3) Food security and prenatal-to-three programs/services need diverse and progressive revenue streams to meet urgent needs in communities.*

Discussion Prompts:

- Revenue stabilization power mapping:
 - Who has the decision-making power?
 - Who has advocacy power or can support?
 - Who would be most impacted by cuts to programs/services?
- What are some pathways for the CAB to address this issue?
- How would the CAB ensure any action on this topic is true to its values?

Notes from CAB discussion:

Power Map	
Decision making power: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor and City Council**** • Mayor’s office • City Budget Office • Finance & Housing Committee • Revenue Stabilization committee • City staff • State/Governor 	
Advocacy power: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBOs/organizations** • City Council • City Council candidates • City depts funded by SBT • Community** • Community-based organizations • Early Learning Action Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors • Labor • Legislators • Low-income housing alliance • Media • Revenue Stabilization Task Force • Seattle Human Services Coalition • Seattle/King Co Coalition for homelessness
<p>Most impacted by cuts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BIPOC communities*** • Babies, children, and families*** • Low-income communities • Low-income families • Older adults • Unhoused people • Nonprofits 	

Pathways for CAB to address revenue stabilization:

- Grasstops – meetings, letters, testimony
- Grassroots – sign-ons, spotlight on need
- Public spotlights – op-eds, website
- Stronger advocacy – interfacing publicly with the community about the budget shortfall
- Mayor’s Office/City Council
- Food Action Plan
- Meetings with Revenue Stabilization Task Force
- Inquire about underspend
- Meetings with City Budget Office Director
- Make public comment at Council meetings

Risks:

- Straining relationships with City Council and Mayor’s Office
- Erosion of community trust if nothing is done

How to ensure any action on this topic is true to our values:

- Community engagement
- Review values (compare)
- Don’t support advocacy that isn’t aligned with CAB values

Topic 2: Scenario budget planning

Background:

- The last few years were volatile budget processes for SBT and the CAB. Revenue projections were up and then down, and the CAB had to pivot quickly with its recommendations.
- While City budget analysts do not think the SBT Fund will be as volatile in future years, they have recommended the CAB think ahead and prepare for different budget scenarios.

- Examples of budget scenarios:
 - Revenue is **DOWN**: cuts are needed or revenue from other sources is needed. This is the current forecast for 2025.
 - Revenue is **FLAT**: no surplus, no deficit.
 - Revenue is **UP**: new investments *may* be possible. This is the least likely scenario. Even if revenue exceeds expectations, SBT Fund is already stretched thin.
- Here are some examples of **past approaches** the CAB has used when faced with these budget scenarios.
 - Revenue is **DOWN**: **(1)** CAB prioritized specific programs/services, or program supports, to cut vs. keep. **(2)** CAB developed a list of budget principles to direct the City when it considers cuts. **(3)** CAB held the line and recommended “no cuts - find other revenue to fill the gap.”
 - Revenue is **FLAT**: CAB has never had this situation! Ideas to get thinking started: **(1)** Stay the course - make no changes to spending plan. Meanwhile, gather information such where there are needs/gaps/opportunities and where is there chronic year-over-year underspend.
 - Revenue is **UP**: CAB prioritized specific programs/services, or program supports, based on identified needs/gaps/opportunities.

Discussion Prompts:

For each revenue scenario (**DOWNSIDE**, **FLAT**, and **UPSIDE**):

- What approaches would you want the CAB to consider and develop further?
- What are the **PROs/CONS** of these approaches?
- What information would the CAB need?

Notes from CAB discussion:

<p>Scenario: Revenue is Flat</p>	<p>Potential Approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramp up utility of budget priorities to identify strengths and gaps • Maintain support • Make a line • Boundaries for budget and planning community engagement • Engage in future planning and community engagement <p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflation – reduced purchasing power • Keeping up with demand • Food credits • No money to support program development <p>Info needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program evaluation info—can then think about how to maintain/increase/or taper different investments • How do other cities deal with this? • We need clear criteria for what success looks like for budget principles • City Mayor find \$\$ • Community engagement to faithfully advocate the level of need
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<p>Scenario: Revenue is Down</p>	<p>Potential Approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the line (i.e. recommend no cuts) • Ensure downside approaches are clearly connected to values and budget priorities • Develop permanent list of programs/services/supports to cut vs. keep • Build bigger reserve; with one-time boost? • Leverage BSK, PSTAA, FEPP funding • Continue model of prioritizing <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No money • Worried about creating funding sources for organizations that aren't guaranteed in the future. Fewer programs = more stability? <p>Info needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly updates • Ideas from budget office • Ideas from depts that use SBT funds • List of other revenue options • Underspend
<p>Scenario: Revenue is Up</p>	<p>Potential Approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund one-time investments (including supports for CAB) <p>Info needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserves? (what is status of reserves)

Topic 3: Community outreach and engagement

Background:

- The CAB often expresses a desire for “community engagement”, but this can mean a lot of things and needs to be carefully planned and considered.
- In past years (2018-2019), the CAB was allocated one-time funds to support its community engagement efforts. At the time, SBT was new, and the spending plan was not fully solidified, so the CAB focused engagement efforts on gathering input from food access, food justice, and early learning CBOs to inform its SBT budget recommendations. The CAB also worked with community consultants to collect feedback from residents and program participants on their personal food security and child development priorities.
- Currently, the CAB does not have any budget to support community engagement, but it continues to be a priority.
- The CAB is also sensitive to “transactional” engagement that is under-resourced or duplicative to past or current engagement happening in the community.

Discussion Prompts:

- Thinking about the role and mission of the CAB, how might “community engagement” help you to be successful in your role?

- What would be the purpose of CAB community engagement? (Looking at this [spectrum of community engagement continuum](#), slide 2, may be helpful)
- Who are the other actors you can engage to achieve your role and mission?
- How would the CAB ensure community engagement is equitable and inclusive?

Notes from CAB discussion:

How community engagement contributes to CAB's role and success:

- Making space to understand needs and wants of community
- We need to have the voice of community
- Make decisions based on findings from community (needs, issues, etc.)
- Expands the information on direct experience vs. CAB members' individual and professional experiences in budget decisions
- Community engagement informs the direction of our work—identify successes and misses
- Strengthen and expand relationships for advocacy and support

Intended purpose of CAB's community engagement:

- How many folks know about SSB tax?
- Evaluation + community engagement embedded in programs to inform the CAB**
- Foundation for decisions/recommendations
- Ability to answer all questions (accountability)
- Ability to ask clarifying questions
- Stay connected to community beyond organizations
- Check-in
- Advocate
- Fill in knowledge gaps
- Determine where to hold the “cut” line (in budget recommendations)
- Inform
- Brainstorm solutions
- Community-driven approaches
- Sharing the ongoing (rising) needs in the areas of food access and 0-3

Other actors the CAB could engage to achieve its role:

- Community organizations/CBOs***– invite CBOs to CAB meeting
- Coalitions that represent community + CBOs – thinking about how to engage community without creating a burden
- Food Action Plan
- Go outside food and early learning to broader but related issues: immigration, housing, behavioral health, criminal justice groups
- Safeway Foundation
- Group Health Foundation
- Program participant experiences
- Advocacy groups
- Food retailers
- Early child care providers

Ideas to ensure engagement is inclusive:

- Refer to lists of CBO partners
- Make sure we have community members at the table
- CAB nominate who to talk
- Town hall sessions – Zoom/online meetings to invite testimonials
- Make sure there is a related outcome
- Piggyback on existing meetings; ask for time on agendas
- Go to where the community is

Topic 4: Fifth-year anniversary of SBT

Background:

2023 is the fifth year of SBT implementation and a lot has happened, e.g.:

- New policy initiative and tax launched.
- Lots of community engagement (in earlier years) to protect and restrict use of SBT revenue.
- New revenue stream dedicated to food access and prenatal-to-three programs/services and grant programs.
- Fairly solid spending plan with strategic, equity-driven investments.
- Mature Community Advisory Board monitoring and advising investments.
- End of the SBT evaluation of the tax (with mixed results).
- Etc.

Discussion Prompts:

- What would be the main goal of any CAB efforts to commemorate the 5th year of SBT?
- What would be the key messages?
- What would be the key ways to share these messages?

Notes from CAB discussion:

Goals of commemorating 5 years of SBT

- Bring awareness to programs being funded
- Awareness
- Awareness + advocacy
- Advocacy
- Messaging about SBTs that can influence public opinion → helps with SBT expansion efforts
- Demonstrate value
- Lunch + learn
- The community should be the goal for how the CAB has benefited BIPOC communities and program

Key messages

- The public health goal is working
- Sustain it
- Not the same as a regressive tax
- Revenues makes/has made a difference for program investments helping with basic needs
- Celebrate SBT successes and also that SBT isn't enough to fill gaps
- Revenue going down is a win, BUT these essential programs need to be sustained and grow

- Allow community + CBOs to share the impact

Ways to share these messages

- Community forums
- More op-eds (x4) – from CAB/community perspective
- Events
- KUOW radio
- Host convening; panel discussion – policy, grantees, youth
- Water filling stations with plaques
- Public signs/posting about SSB tax in some stores
- Sharing youth marketing campaign
- Public media campaign
- Storytelling (community members, organizations, CAB members)
- Make video with CBOs highlighting the successes of SBT
- Allow the public administration or the UW or Seattle U for PhD research – CAB present to the public