

Governance Group Retreat Minutes

Friday, March 1, 2024 (9am-4:15pm)

Communities of Opportunity Governance Group Annual Retreat Notes

Cedarbrook Lodge, 18525 36th Avenue South, Seattle, 98188

Attendees -- In person:

- **Governance Group members:** Bilan Aden, Lydia Assefa-Dawson, Elsa Batres-Boni, Michael Brown, Aaron Garcia, Cilia Jurdy, Sandhya Nakhasi, Gloria Ramirez-Santiago, Sili Savusa, Joy Sebe, Michael Seiwerath, Dae Shogren, Yordanos Teferi, Jackie Vaughn, Matias Valenzuela, Joon-Ho Yu
- **Staff:** Dan Bernard, José Camacho Martinez, Sandy Centeno, Julia Barrera Sanchez, Sally Gillis, Robin Haguewood, Roxana Chen, Catherine Hinrichsen, Whitney Johnson, Shannon Small
- **Additional Attendees:** Spanish language interpreters Catherine Bedeski and Martha Guerrero; facilitator Matt Echohawk-Hayashi; and Resource Media consultants Marcela Gara and Sian Wu

1. Meeting begins ~ 9 :00 a.m.

Welcome – Sandhya Nakhasi and Dae Shogren, co-chairs; Matt Echohawk-Hayashi, facilitator

Dae, Sandhya, and Elsa welcomed participants. Matt led a getting-to-know each other activity.

2. Agreements for the Day – Dae Shogren (9:30 a.m.)

Dae shared seven Community Agreements for the day, such as “put relationships first” and “keep focused on our common goal.” Participants agreed to observe these throughout the day.

Put Relationships First Work to build community, trust, and joyful collaboration.

Keep Focused on Our Common Goal Advance racial equity and eliminate disparities in our neighborhoods and communities.

Listen/Create a Space for Multiple Truths & Norms Respect others when they are speaking. Speak from your own experiences and seek understanding. No fixing, no saving.

Notice Power Dynamics Be aware of how you use your privilege: From taking up too much emotional and airtime space or disengaging.

Be Kind and Brave (Lean Into Discomfort) Be explicit with your language about race, class, gender, immigration, etc. Expect messiness and non-closure.

Care/Self-Love Recognize that conversations on race impacts us in physical ways. Be present with your thoughts and body, pay attention to your breathing.

Confidentiality What’s shared here, stays here. What’s learned here, leaves here.

*Safety is not guaranteed, a safer space is something we create together.

3. Roles and Responsibilities – Elsa Batres-Boni (9:45 a.m.)

Elsa shared a four-page Roles and Responsibilities document for Governance Group and staff. She developed it. Participants broke into groups of 5-7 people to discuss. When the groups came back together, each group shared comments and suggested how to clarify the Roles and Responsibilities. Elsa will take this back and add revisions and bring it back for review in upcoming meetings. (See Next Steps for details)

Elsa asked everyone to look at the Implementation Plan and think how to transmit meaning and purpose, and always think about collective power. (See COO implementation plan excerpt)

4. COO Mapping Tool – Matt Echohawk-Hayashi (10:45 a.m.)

Matt shared slides he developed with Roxana Chen that geographically visualize COO's impact. This included impact in the four COO result areas: Community Connections, Economic Opportunity, Health, and Safe and Affordable Housing.

Some of the comments/needs:

- How to further demonstrate impact statewide. The work as mapped may seem Seattle-centric. But many of the organizations are based in Seattle and do statewide work. It's hard to map that using this tool.
- Maybe clarify the slide called Environment – it's about the Community Connections result area.
- Remember to convey not just the result but how we got there, how the work gets done. It comes from meaningful community engagement and building trusting relationships. It includes a strong legacy of anti-racist work over decades.
- Question raised -- Do we need to double down on systems & policy work because of the high impact we're seeing? Or, if we continue place-based strategy, focus outside Seattle? Responses included, doesn't need to be either/or. Developing relationships through the place-based strategy is what led to systems change. What's been most effective is building up community partners.
- How to cement the work especially for organizations that have been using funding that is going away, such as federal COVID funds, or funding for racial justice work.
 - If we agree on this, we can work on this for the next couple years – what to not stop funding, and also bring more people in. If we're about to see results, we can't stop funding before the results come in.
 - We need to solidify the work so progress can't be taken back.
- As we move fully into Phase 2, consider a balance between strategy and momentum vs. results. Should we follow the momentum of great progress, or spread funding across the results areas? Guidance on this from GG will be valuable to staff.
- We need to prepare for the next Best Starts Implementation Plan -- it's not too far away -- because that's where the language about where to focus will go.
- This is a great time for a power analysis with COO. We have power, but we should consider who really holds the power; how to strategize, where to put pressure.
- This is a great opportunity to celebrate 10 years of COO. This will help put us in front of a lot of people. We can talk about our impact, including how many people have benefited. We can go to King County Council and show them the impact.

5. Core Values – Marcela Gara & Sian Wu, Resource Media (1 p.m.)

Consultants Marcela and Sian led us through an exercise to identify what COO values are most important to us and discussed how to express unique COO values. This was based on COO's existing values and on results of a survey they had sent to GG members and staff before the retreat.

- The values participants felt to be the most important were:

- Community Power
- Transformative
- Justice
- Equity
- Collaboration
- Centering racial history
- Transparency



(a page from the exercise)

- The values GG members suggested adding were Belonging and Community Leadership.

6. COO's Theory of Change Messaging – Resource Media (1:20 p.m.)

Marcela and Sian led us through an exercise to explain and explore the Theory of Change.

The group was asked to think about the stories of impact, values and benefits heard throughout the day in order to practice and create meaningful messages. Participants were instructed to use the following steps to practice crafting messages that feel natural and tangible to say and use on a regular basis.

Step 1: Revisit COO's core result categories: Housing, Health, Economic Opportunity, and Community Connection

Step 2: Identify the central strategies for impact: Community partnerships, Systems and policy changes, Learning Community

Step 3: Jot down 1-2 benefits or a story you heard earlier today about COO that resonated. Establish what category and strategy those benefits or stories are associated with.

Step 4: Practice writing a **Belief + Problem + Solution = Message statement**

7. Work Plan Review – Co Chairs Sandhya Nakhasi & Dae Shogren (2:30 p.m.)

Dae and Sandhya outlined four goal areas they had identified in talks with GG members. They asked groups to review four the goals and ensure they're aligned with responsibilities. Groups discussed the goal areas, then shared takeaways. Some comments and action steps from the report-outs:

- **Goal #1, Present COO's model with other funders and decision makers and bring them on board:** Seems like we need a strategic plan just for this goal. Need to clarify roles -- as new folks come on board, the responsibility of funder, and so on. Identify who has power and influence. Clarify roles and

responsibilities between GG and staff. Develop examples of how the model relates to the work. -- With loss of available resources, leverage current funding and diversify for longer funding. The more we bring on partners, not just funding, the more people are bought into community partners, and everyone benefits.

- **Goal #2, Facilitate strategic partnerships with institutions and funded partner organizations:** Would be helpful to map partners and personal relationships. Would this strategy live within GG or staff? It's part of the role for all of us to facilitate, nurture, initiate partnerships.
- **Goal #3, Provide feedback and advice to general King County and Public Health community engagement programs** – Consider that as GG members and community leaders, a role is to be critical of government while also uplifting COO's model, provide feedback in a way that's constructive. – More information is needed.
- **Goal #4, General support for COO and GG's work** – Who does this goal apply to? Is it like a parking lot if people don't want to work on the first 3.

Overall feedback on the goals:

- We need a landscape to clarify relationships (funders, partners of partners, interpersonal connections and more)
- We should incorporate cultural aspects. We've gotten really into the implementation phase, and so many community members don't know we exist – how to access that, change culture? Match our cadence to the community.
- How to move from these goals to long-term goal of Theory of Change? Activities are not necessarily neutral and there's risk. What is the ask we'd be making of other funders?

Dae and Sandhya assigned everyone to a workgroup. Each group will address one of these goals. Co-chairs will follow up with a template for a proposal. Groups should plan to meet, work together, and report back at the next GG meeting March 29.

8. Closing/Conclusion – Matt Echohawk-Hayashi and Elsa Batres-Boni (3:30 p.m.)

Matt asked the group about what we didn't address today. Responses/remaining questions:

- It's still not resolved what the GG role is regarding "ensuring funding."
- We need a timeline for the Governance Group so everyone understands where we are.
- What the external pressures are, such as the timing of the next Best Starts levy and other things out of our control.
- 2025 funding extensions for the Place-Based partnerships, how to position and message for the next two years.
- How to move through conflict and disagreement. How to respectfully disagree and still make progress.
- How to uplift community challenges without seeming punitive.
- What we need to do right away. Example – Get in front of new County Councilmembers.
- Do capacity checks with GG members throughout the year and recognize the times that are busiest. Create a good exit if we can't get alignment.
- Consider what we'll do if we don't get far enough on our clarity of vision one month from now after the workgroup presentations.

- Do King County or Seattle Foundation staff hold information that needs to be confidential but could be critical to guide the work ahead.
- Do an “altitude check” – right information at the right time.
- What info does GG need about staff capacity levels? How frequently?

Elsa repeated a theme from the day of “I got your back,” and talked about the importance of everyone feeling trust. She gave special thanks to two of the staff members, Sandy Centeno and Julia Barrera.

Matt led the group in a closing exercise about how to personally carry forward the work from the day.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 PM

Draft notes compiled by: Julia Barrera and Catherine Hinrichsen

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