

# RAINIER VALLEY COMMUNITY OF OPPORTUNITY COALITION RETREAT



FACILITATION PROVIDED BY: **MARYA GINGREY**  
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## Overview

On May 9, 2016, a retreat was facilitated for twenty (20) members of the Rainier Valley Communities of Opportunity (RV COO) Coalition for the purpose of:

- Reviewing and prioritizing strategies developed in year-one of the Coalition’s planning process.
- Begin developing an implementation plan for strategies identified during Rainier Valley COO year-one planning phase.
- Designing a recommended Coalition structure to implement strategies.
- Developing a methodology and approach for the allocation of Coalition resources.

Retreat attendees included:

HomeSight: Tony To, Rachel Eagan, Sarah Valenta, Aileen Balahadia

MCC: Asmeret Habte, James Hong, Ethiopia Alemneh

OBO: Cynda Rochester, Susanna Tran, Mona Lee, Maia Segura

RBAC: Gregory Davis, Nate Thomas

SCORE: Ubax Gardheere, Myani Gilbert

Other partners: Habitat for Humanity (Patricia Julio, Ryan Lum, Corbin Cato

Funders/Partners: King County (Cheryl Markham, Dan Bernard, Roxana Chen) and City of Seattle (Heidi Hall)

To achieve the Retreat goals, the following process and approach was utilized:

***Utilize a strength-based approach to identify the strengths and contributions of each member group within the Coalition:*** Participants will have an opportunity to reflect on their unique strengths and abilities and identify how those strengths and abilities will advance the collective work.

***Build momentum for this next phase of the work based on the Coalition’s success and accomplishments from year-one efforts:*** Participants will highlight the work that has been done thus far in an effort to capture the success of the collective work, identify what contributed to that success, and use that momentum to advance the work during the implementation phase of the work.

***Enhance relationship capital and communication by incorporating team building activities throughout the day as a natural part of the facilitation process:*** Participants will engage in small and large group activities to maximize opportunities for communication, team building and having fun in the process – all focused on achieving the desired goals and outcomes of the retreat.

Contained within this report are the raw qualitative data gathered throughout the retreat as well as Facilitator observations, recommendations, and general impressions to assist in the establishment of next steps to advance the thoughtful, intentional, community-led work that has occurred throughout year-one of the RV COO Coalition's investment.

### **Retreat Goals**

- Celebrate accomplishments
- Review strategies
- Develop implementation plan
- Design RV COO Coalition structure
- Develop resource methodology
- Have fun and get the work done
- Understand how the RV COO works
- Establish a great marker for the next phase of RV COO work
- Listen
- Identify partnership opportunities
- Identify ways in which the RV COO partners can support one another
- Wellness
- Data
- Get clarity around the allocation of resources within the RV COO Coalition

### **Outline for the Day**

- Morning:
  - Strengths
  - Reflection
  - Strategies
- Lunch
- Afternoon:
  - Structure
  - Resources
  - Commitments

## Community Agreements

***Facilitator Observation/Recommendation:*** *The group established the group norms/community agreements below as part of the Retreat process. The agreements established a framework for interaction between, and among, the Retreat attendees that seemed to work well for the group. The agreements created an atmosphere that was conducive to relationship building, creativity and open-dialogue. Consequently, adding the agreements to the RV COO Coalition’s operating norms at the beginning of meetings might serve to maintain the collegiality and creativity that promoted discussion and dialogue during the Retreat.*

- Participate
- Create/Innovate
- Be Specific
- Ask Questions
- Seek Understanding
- Honor Contributions
- Speak Up
- Step Up and Step Back
- Have Fun

## Successes and Lessons Learned from 1<sup>st</sup> year of RV COO Coalition work + Strengths of the RV COO Partners that contributed to that success

***Facilitator Observation/Recommendation:*** *Retreat participants identified multiple successes and lessons learned from their work as a Coalition thus far. There was a lot of good energy and “aha’s” shared during the small group work and then during the large group report back. Consistent themes included an appreciation for a consistent, established meeting time; flexibility; and, the value of a community-driven bottom-up approach. It was also consistently expressed that there was a need to maintain communication throughout the RV COO Coalition’s efforts. Common strengths that were identified across groups included flexibility; ensuring that the RV COO Coalition’s efforts are community-driven; and the ability to leverage other work to advance the RV COO Implementation Strategies.*

*A possible consideration in advancing the RV COO would be to conduct a strengths assessment for each of the RV COO Coalition partners to identify how to best leverage existing resources and supports to implement the identified strategies.*

*The RV COO Coalition may also consider maintaining a record of progress as the Strategies are implemented to measure small steps that lead to progressive change. Often those moments are overlooked, yet they contribute to the collective momentum and progress of the group.*

| Success and Lessons Learned   | Strengths Contributing to that Success  |
|---|---|
| Keep the commitments  | Flexibility   |
| Follow through with organizations   | Equal weight – Most equitable   |
| Influence on City and County political climate via inclusion of COO projects in the Comprehensive Plan and bringing City Council along on the Best Starts for Kids Levy | Connection to grassroots community level  |
| Successful focus on mission and clarity, engaging in the COO co-design process  | Multi-ethnic, Multi-cultural composition of RV COO  |
| Racial justice shared analysis could use improvement across organizations in order to operate equitably   | Collective Power  |
| Increased ability to bring stakeholders along on the COO mission  |   |
| Narrowed down strategies for implementation   | Collaboration and good communication  |
| Learn from other COO efforts  | Listen to others and research   |
| Came together in a way that the community decided   | Leverage collective relationship to gain additional resources – Wells Fargo /Opportunity Center |
| Bottom-up approach  | Willingness to try something different  |
| Used existing community coalitions and assets to build COO work (Super-coalition)   | Strong relationships and communication, but also needs work                                     |
| Need to recognize capacity of the RV COO Partners   |   |
| Need to ensure communication throughout the RV COO and membership of Coalition partners   |   |

**Update/Context Setting on COO Resourcing**

Prior to discussing implementation strategies, Cheryl Markham from King County shared a few updates with the group, especially given that some folks are new to the table. There are several pots of funding that will be available for COO implementation:

- Seattle Foundation and private dollars
- Living Cities
- Other private dollars
- Best Starts for Kids Levy (BSK) beginning Fall 2016

The BSK levy was discussed further. 10% of the funding annually is dedicated to COO and it amounts to about \$6m per year. King County Council and the COO Governance committee are responsible for moving this fund forward. Recently the governance committee added a few more

community members (including Ubox) to balance out representation. There are not yet final specifics on how to access the BSK funds. What Cheryl shared is that

- 50% of the funding available will be used to support the 3 place based sites (RV, White Center, SeaTac/Tukwila). This is about \$3m and can likely be counted on for the next 4 years. After that, the funds will likely be expanded to include other areas of need and to the learning communities in South KC, etc.
- Other funds to support Policy/Systems change grants and King County staffing

There will likely be other funding from KC to support community informed data needs and evaluation, as well as support of infrastructure for data in the community coalitions.

### Implementation Strategies Discussion

***Facilitator Observation/Recommendation:*** *The majority of the time spent during the Retreat was devoted to discussing the RV COO Coalition’s Implementation Strategies. This appeared to be of greatest value during the Retreat. Participants worked in small groups to delve deeper into the strategies for one specific area and assess those strategies utilizing the rubric below.*

*Participants seemed to value having time to better understand each of the Strategies and discuss possible approaches to implementing the Strategies. There is still a need to complete some of the provisions of the Implementation Plan and develop priorities for implementation. Prior to developing clear priorities, it is suggested that the RV COO Coalition develop a one-pager that has a shared vision for each of the strategies and a road-map for how you are going to get there. This might help with identifying the urgency between each of the strategies and the energy to move the strategy forward. It will also help to refine the issue, how the strategy will impact the issue, what the RV COO Coalition will be measuring along the way as markers of progress and how the RV COO Coalition will measure progress.*

*A one-pager for each of the Strategies will also help with on-boarding new members to the RV COO Coalition and maintaining the vision throughout the life of the partnership. Onboarding was identified at various points during the Retreat when participants discussed things that needed to be incorporated into the RV COO Coalition. A mark of success for a one-pager occurs when a RV COO Coalition member, who is not the subject-matter expert in that area, can clearly articulate each strategy to others outside of the RV COO.*

*While the group was not able to prioritize Strategies during the Retreat, there were certain natural priorities that emerged during discussion – Housing policy considerations that will be included on the November ballot; anything requiring the acquisition of land (the value of land is increasing exponentially); anything requiring planning and/or feasibility studies; and anything related to gentrification and displacement.*

Questions that were used by each group to discuss the Strategies in greater detail -

1. Energy - What is the level of energy for this strategy?
2. Champion - Which COO members are interested in being the “Champion” of the strategy?
3. Capacity - Which COO members have capacity to make real progress in regards to this strategy?
4. Leverage - Where are opportunities to leverage other work to advance the strategy?
5. Timing - Are there timing considerations that warrant moving this strategy up in priority?
6. Resources - What resources will be necessary to move the strategy forward?

***Community Strategies - James, Myani, Ryan, Nate, Mona***

The Group did not discuss the built environment. In fact, there was a question about why it is included within 2 of the strategies. It was explained that this was included intentionally to show the interconnection.

- Did not discuss Community Sub-strategy 1 Graham street already in another area
- Did not discuss Community Sub-strategy 2- moving forward already MCC
- Community Sub-strategy 3 Leadership and Capacity
  - The strategy should focus on increasing community power through resources – this should also be considered when developing the structure for the RV COO
  - Need to bring Rainier Valley Corps the conversation about leadership development. Tony provided some history as a RVC board member about their prior COO involvement.
  - The community has leaders, but lacks access to leadership places
  - As a goal, RV COO should cultivate leaders and place them where they can have the greatest level of impact
  - RV COO should identify what the coalition can learn from others about leadership development processes
  - RV COO should focus on power building to include –
    - Resourcing Rainier Valley Corps
    - Find ways to do ADVOCACY in a way that is strategic and tactical and does not violate an organization’s 501(c)3 status
    - Build off of work to place people on decision making bodies- Like Sage’s Community Leadership Institute.

***Housing Strategies - Cheryl, Patty, Ethiopia, Ubox, Tony***

- Housing Sub-strategy 1
  - Identify what additional conversation needs to happen regarding this sub-strategy
  - Things are moving now and on the November 2016 Ballot as Initiatives
    - Co-operative housing conversion and preservation
  - RV COO should attribute more resources to preservation of affordable housing
  - There is a desire to ensure that people who currently live in the Rainier Valley can remain in Rainier Valley
  
- Housing Sub-strategy 2
  - Commercial partnerships and silo-busting
  - RV COO should continue to do cross-sector work
  - RV COO should follow “movement moments” and establish a shared calendar to highlight those moments

Summary notes taken by Tony To:

Level of Energy

1. Affordable housing trending high energy and increasing focus on preservation of existing stock such as co-opt conversion, adding accessory units, emergency home repair, loan assistance for seniors to address higher property taxes, or helping homeowners of color to transfer homes to next generation or within their cultural community. Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and workforce housing production on policy radar at City and County level
2. The housing champions on city council are O’Brien, Herbold, Gonzalez, and Sawant.
3. Habitat looking at organizing Homeowners Associations in their existing communities.
4. COO need to focus on assisting existing residents, their families and communities to be able to remain in Seattle.
5. Emphasis on ownership as an anti-displacement and preservation tool and strategy- long term or permanent structure like Land Trust or Habitat Legacy of Land.

Capacity

1. There is sufficient core capacity in the RV site with Habitat, HomeSight, Sage and South CORE (Tenants Union), SEED, Rebuilding Together.
2. May have to look at partnership with for-profits for TOD because of mixed use and scale of projects.

## Leverage

There are strong leads in the RV-

1. For Co-opt conversion- HomeSight and Tenants Union, RVCDF, King County DCDP, Seattle Office of Housing
2. Policy Advocacy- Sage and South CORE at center of Equity Analysis and Comp Plan, HomeSight and Tenant's Union on homeownership preservation, need to work on Multi-family Property Tax Exemption, other recommendations from HALA and Seattle Comp Plan Equity Analysis and Implementation Plan.
3. Seattle Housing Levy- "Yes for Homes".

## Timing

1. HALA recommendations like mandatory inclusionary zoning will be in process this summer. Seattle Housing Levy in August primary. Co-opt issue- 3 year horizon, need to do calendar of legislative processes.
2. Southeast Economic Opportunity Center has housing component for new production. Filipino Village and Ethiopia Community Center look to redevelop their properties with housing- 3 to 5 years.

## Resources

Yes for Homes, HALA funding pools, Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Community Lending in Banks, National Intermediaries like LISC, Enterprise, etc., Land Credits for Sound Transit, PSRC REDI Fund, Sound Transit TOD Fund, LIHTC and New Markets Tax Credits.

## ***Economic Strategies - Dan, Heidi, Sarah, Susanna, Gregory, Maia***

- Economic Strategy common themes –
  - Zoning – bring in jobs piece for the Food Innovation District
  - Use RSJI Toolkit to frame the conversation
  - Advocate for early equity wins in the Comprehensive Plan projects
  - The three sub-strategies are integrated – the partners depend on the specific sectors
  - There is a question around which community-based organizations have the greatest amount of capacity to do the work

- Economic Sub-strategy 1 (a)
  - A lot of energy around this sub-strategy
  - Champions – RBAC. Add partner with RB Merchants
  - Capacity – RBAC has advocacy and convening capacity
  - Leveraging – Opportunity Center and best practices from how they are working through that process. Bring in youth and leverage other COOs working on Food Innovation Districts
  - Timing – Urgent because the price of land keeps going up. Timing issue with Seattle City council and approval of RB neighborhood plan/zoning
  - Resources – A lot of resources for land acquisition. Need a feasibility plan and need to resource the development of that plan. Need resources for community staffing
  
- Economic Sub-strategy 1 (b)- See discussion in other section on Opp Center/Housing
  - There needs to be a clear champion
  
- Economic Sub-strategy 1 (c)
  - Added – Onboard Othello, City of Seattle (technical assistance), Rainier Beach Merchants. RV Chamber
  - Leverage - Small business technical assistance provides an opportunity to gather some research around gaps
  - Timing - A lot is happening so this is critical to prevent/minimize displacement
  - Resources – Also connecting small businesses
  
- Economic Strategy 2 common themes –
  - Leverage the local food initiatives
  - Partners – Legacy of Equality, Urban League, REWA
  - Problem is that the CBO’s who traditionally did workforce development are no longer there
  - A lot of entities are doing workforce development, but there is not a lot of coordination
  - The City of Seattle is a point of leverage and resource
  - There is not a group that has figured out a way to source local hires – need a single source
  - The problem with not having a single source is that it gives potential employers an excuse to not support local hiring – i.e., they can’t find the supply of employees. Who is that group for us?
  - What is the latest status of the Local Hire ordinance?
  - There is a good opportunity to link the Food Innovation District and the Opportunity Center together as they are complimentary. Perhaps one could inform the other.

- The Opportunity Center will address early learning, training, and STEM & Tech jobs
- Economic Sub Strategy 2A, 2B, 2C Comments
  - Economic 2A – Add “IT, construction” after “green jobs, healthcare” when talking about employers. Some stuff to leverage there. Add RV Chamber to new partners. Other potential partners would depend on sectors.
  - Economic 2B – New potential partners: LELO, Urban League
  - Economic 2C – question about who is the lead unresolved, although many organizations are touching this issue. Small group had question about CBO capacity currently related to this strategy. Other potential partners – Year Up, Workforce Development Council, Seattle HSD (mayor’s youth employment initiative), TechHire (OED)
- Economic Sub-strategy 3 – did not address

***Health Strategies - Asmeret, Natalie, Corbin, Rachel***

Common themes across sub-strategies –

- Energy – Many strategies across results impact this strategy. Health strategies identified have high energy. Safety perception restricts activity. Compare to highlight assets.
- Champion – RBAC, OBO, MCC, SCORE
- Capacity – OBO/SCORE have financial resources and people; RBAC/MCC have knowledge, youth programs, experts, community, location; RV COO should explore what can be done to bolster their capacity
- Leverage – Many of the other strategies contribute to identified health goals; build capacity for those who are currently leading in community and support people who are on the ground now (Seattle Tilth good food bags, community centers); RV COO can ensure that the existing programs provide culturally relevant food
- Timing – The timing for the Food Innovation District in NOW to do planning and advocacy; youth crime/violence prevention continuation – RBAC, MCC, OBO
- Resources – Share out data re: safety so community perceptions can match reality – SCIDPA and Seattle University released a valuable study about safety; Capital – RVCDF; small business loans and technical assistance

## Structure

***Facilitator Observation/Recommendation:*** *Retreat Participants were satisfied, overall, with the way that the RV COO Coalition has operated thus far. A number of things were highlighted as working well for the group and the current structure. That said, the group realizes that there will be a need to develop more structure to implement the Strategies that were developed in Phase 1 of the Coalition's work. Whatever structure is developed should build on the existing structure, as that structure is working well.*

*Additional considerations in developing a structure to implement the Strategies should include the following considerations –*

*(1) Structure should support the overall approach of COO –*

- Cross Sector*
- Collective Impact*
- Would like to strengthen coalitions*
- Want ideas and work to stay within the coalitions;*

*(2) Communication throughout the RV COO Coalition and the membership of Coalition Partners regarding RV COO work, strategies and priorities; and,*

*(3) Onboarding process for new RV COO Coalition partners.*

### What we should continue to do –

- Maintain consistent Steering Committee meeting times/days so people know when the meetings are held (2 comments)
- Decision-making is working
- Flexibility
- Leverage additional resources
- Sharing of coalition information – open dialogue (2 comments)
- Resourcing Coalition participants at the Steering Committee
- Energy
- Everyone is involved and participating – although it may not be equitable – trying to get everyone involved
- Equal representation for the 4 Coalitions
- Time to meet with Funders and time to meet without Funders
- Monthly meetings, but could meet less frequently as work progresses
- Use of consensus ++ decision making - although not tested
- Intend to coalesce Rainier Valley Stakeholders
- Meeting with other Organizations and Representatives to share successful solutions to common problems

- We are the people doing the work
- Tracking what people are working on
- Collaborative, inviting and welcome
- Sharing solutions, problems, experiences, knowledge and wisdom
- Open dialogue

**What we will need to start to do –**

- Add project specific implementation oriented work groups with representatives from each coalition working on the project
  - Develop action oriented teams to implement strategies
- Onboard new people to this coalition so they feel that they have a place and a voice within the RV COO Coalition
- Share more information
  - Have a formal place on partner coalition meeting agendas for COO to share specific information with the partner coalition members
  - Provide resources to representatives to share information with members of the partner coalitions
- COO should be more specific about what it is about –
  - Place-based
  - Community-driven decisions
- Work with existing groups already in place- COO support them!

**Outline of Proposed Structure**

**Steering Committee**

**Purpose:** Establish the vision for the RV COO Coalition  
Serve as final decision-makers  
Help orchestrate and manage between priorities and strategies

**Composition:** 8 members - 2 Representatives of each RV COO Coalition Partner

**Meeting Frequency:** Monthly until structures and priorities established  
Quarterly thereafter

**Coordinating/Project Management/Cross Sector/Implementation Teams**

- Purpose:** Take Project Team’s recommendations to Steering Committee  
Report out specific information about RV COO to the membership of each of the respective RV COO coalition partner
- Composition:** Leads of each of the Project Teams
- Meeting Frequency:** TBD – Suggest once monthly

**Project Specific Strategy Teams**

- Purpose:** Four specific strategy area teams (housing, health, economic, community)  
Work on implementing the specific steps outlined within each strategy
- Composition:** TBD – Suggest Coalition partners with subject matter expertise  
Project Managers  
Fundors
- Meeting Frequency:** TBD – Suggest bi-monthly at least at beginning to sort through and prioritize each activity within the strategy.

*Other ad-hoc groups could be set up- such as the co-design work that happened with the steering committee and funders.*

*Suggestion – Look at European Commission as an example of a structure that might work – there was some debate about this idea, but it was suggested.*

**Resources**

***Facilitator Observation/Recommendation:*** *The Retreat participants suggest that decisions or recommendations about the distribution of resources would be driven by, in part, the structure that is established to implement the Strategies. One of the things that participants appreciated about previous resourcing decisions was that it provided resources to compensate people for their time spent in conducting RV COO Coalition business.*

*Participants also recognize that resources will need to be distributed equitably rather than equally. However, a methodology for the equitable distribution of resources will need to be established. Having a better understanding of RV COO Coalition Partner existing resources and capacity might be useful in developing that methodology.*

**Discussion Comments**

- Need a dedicated person to coordinate project teams
  - Could be one person who coordinates multiple teams (Ie: RBAC’s 4 neighborhood plan action areas)
  - Action teams could join project strategy teams
- Is there a need for more financial resources to go to those coalition partners that have less access to resources elsewhere? For ex, OBO and SCORE have dedicated staff via their fiscal sponsor at HomeSight and Sage. MCC and RBAC don’t.
- COO money is for the purpose of supporting how the coalition partners work together
  - There is a value add that can be achieved through the provision of technical assistance and working on special projects
- Best Starts for Kids money is for projects
  - Each RV COO Coalition member needs to apply for those financial resources.
- Continue to offer stipends for participation in RV COO
- Idea – Seek Best Starts for Kids resources to fund a Project Manager or Feasibility Study for FID
- Idea- Fund the structure adequately
- Don’t necessarily just divide by 4 equally among Coalitions. Consider structure and group infrastructure needs focused on the strategies first.

**Next Steps**

***Facilitator Observation/Recommendation:** Throughout the course of the day, various participants had to leave. Some due to scheduling conflicts. Consequently, it was difficult to identify clear next steps and, more importantly, to establish buy-in for those next steps. Nevertheless, a few ideas that were discussed (listed below) seemed to garner support.*

- (1) Develop chart/table that shows the different funding sources/pots of money that might be available to resource the strategies and which coalition partners the funding sources might support and which implementation strategies might be supported.

| Funding Source | Funding Priority | Which RV COO Implementation Strategy Aligns with the funding priority | Which COO Partners are best positioned to seek the funds? |
|----------------|------------------|---|---|
|                |                  |   |   |
|                |                  |   |   |

- (2) Provide materials for coalitions to review up prior to the Steering Committee Meeting

- Strategies- updated Matrix

- Structure- proposal for review
  - Resources- based on governance committee decision making 6/17
- (3) Schedule follow-up meeting. Steering committee meeting now set for Wed June 29 from 3-5pm at HomeSight.