

## **2nd SEOC Community Meeting**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SEOC community meeting was held on Saturday, November 12 at the New Holly Gathering Hall and 140 people were in attendance. The meeting discussions build on topics from the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting and highlighted new ones. There were five discussion groups: commercial space, education & early learning, housing, small business administration, and MCC & government services.

Here is a summary of the discussion at each table:

### **Commercial Space (Retail Space)**

The commercial space table discussed the need for a large community gathering space and office space for small community oriented grass-root organizations the opportunity to co-locate. The idea of bazaar-like pop-up shops that offer shared services seemed to resonate, especially when it lowers the overhead cost of small businesses. There is an opportunity to host businesses that are open into the evening which offer a much needed night life activity for the Othello and surrounding neighborhoods. Businesses have the potential to take advantage of a daytime customer base and given the light rail station, retail spaces can experience more foot traffic. Priority should be given to those businesses that maintain and enhance diversity in the community.

### **Education**

At the education table, the discussion revolved around hosting programs that help local schools improve retention rates and increase parent participation by allocating more time and resources where needed. Right now, the population in Southeast Seattle is changing and the average household wealth is increasing. There is a stigma that north Seattle public schools are well-off than south Seattle schools in relation to student demographics and funding. To get more parents involved, immigrant parents must have access to resources in their home language and materials that are culturally competent. The community should have access to alternative forms to education such as a charter school and more funding should be provided to youth programs that support current public school students in the neighborhood. Attention should be granted to strengthening existing programs before wasting resources on implementing new ones. On top of after-school programs, SE Seattle has a need for college prep and mentoring programs for youth transitioning to college. In order to support the needs of students and parents in this community, programs that promote equity and serve under-represented groups through enrichment oriented services should be given precedence.

### **Housing**

At the housing discussion table, safe open space and facilities for community interaction were brought up. Given the accessibility to the transit station, there is an opportunity to create a gathering space for neighbors to organize, share cultures, access resources and affordable childcare. The gathering space should support facilities for youth, seniors, and the homeless. The property management team should be trained to be culturally competent and how to support diverse communities. The housing portion should optimize affordability, promote a feeling of economic equitability and justice, offer 2-3 bedrooms, financing opportunities, and features that

promote cultural manifestations that encourage usage types. The community is need of affordable rental units as well as ones available for ownership. To build equity, this community needs to be trained on how to become homeowners.

### **Small Business**

The Small Business Administration portion of the SEOC should aim to harness and support business activity. Businesses need support in how to serve drivers and light rail customers and technical assistance around formal improvements on signage and structure. More importantly, businesses need access to capital, ways to market their services, and how to create and implement a business plan. SBA should provide technical assistance training on how to drive growth and on-sight services to those business owners who don't have employees and can't afford to close down for a day. SBA should also attract and support businesses that are missing in the neighborhood; businesses that offer night life activity.

### **Multi-Cultural Community Center & Government Services**

MCC & government services table discussion emphasized on the need for a safe clean environment where cultural organizations can share and provide culturally appropriate programs. Access to good services, enrichment opportunities, spaces that integrate the community, and support neighbor to neighbor power sharing projects. Space for after school youth programs, worship, sports, and childcare should be prioritized. MCC services should provide easy and fluid transition into government services. Small organizations should have space that is affordable and growth oriented.