

SODO Business Association 2011 Work Plan

Our mission

By combining our energies to support vital economic growth in an ever-changing business climate, the SODO Business Association promotes the progressive improvement of Seattle's manufacturing, industrial, commercial and retail center. In addition we welcome and embrace creative uses of our resources to develop and sustain a vibrant SODO community.

As we head into the New Year, it is time to set goals for 2011 and develop a work plan that achieves those goals. The recent economic recession has taken a toll on the association and its members. As we participate in the recovery, we are focusing on completing a few, basic projects that are intended to strengthen the association for the benefit of its membership and identify the association's geographic location to the greater Seattle community. This year, we propose focusing our work in two major areas:

- create an engaged and effective business association
- compete for funding to complete select community-benefiting projects

Creation of a more engaged and effective business association

The SODO Business Association aspires to increase its strength and visibility by improving communications and through developing a larger and more active membership. The successful completion of these projects will allow the association to have greater influence to effect positive change in our area.

The SODO Business Association can be more effective in promoting our mission of supporting the businesses in our community by providing a platform for better communication – both between the association and its membership and between the association and government. By using timely, easily identified, generally available and uniformly distributed communications, the association can create a stronger connection among members and with government agencies, and through those strengthened connections can be more effective in carrying out projects benefiting the SODO district and its businesses.

The SODO Business Association's 2011 goal to achieve greater influence in the community can be broken into three elements:

Better communication and visibility

Strong and effective communication between the association, its members in SODO, government, and the community at large is essential. The internet is now our primary tool for communication as it is cost effective, meets the needs of members and provides the ability to communicate quickly and interactively. To be meaningful, communication must be two-way so our goal is to maintain an exciting and informative website which will include the ability of members to blog on issues of mutual interest. Through the use of two-way communication we can provide a valuable tool to our membership while respecting member's needs to efficiently use their time. Information shared via a blog can be effectively assembled and used to further the goals of the association.

Members will gain exclusive access to information in a password protected forum as a benefit of their membership. This will be a major incentive for businesses to become part of the organization.

Increase membership

Membership development is key to strengthening the organization, not only financially by acquiring more membership dues, but through the ability of a larger group to develop a greater voice and influence in the community and with government. In 2011, the SODO Business Association Board will examine the current fee structure, meeting and communication structure, and membership benefits, to provide effective and meaningful service to retain current members and attract new ones.

There are several ways to develop a larger membership. An outreach campaign to engage more businesses can be completed via a number of routes. First would be through personal contacts with potential members where a one-on-one presentation of membership benefits can be portrayed. Second would be via providing membership information on the blog. Once the website blog is available a survey will be sent to the members and potential members to gather information on potential members. Current members will be encouraged to invite new businesses in SODO to participate in the association.

By combining increased membership with improved methods of communication the SODO Business Association will gather strength and

the benefit of speaking with one voice. By providing both increased service through better communication opportunities and building membership the potential is there for a snowball effect: more members, better service: better service, more members.

Strong leadership within the Board

Strong leadership is essential for organizational stability. A well functioning board will be able to accomplish more projects and goals, and serve its membership more effectively. In 2011, the SODO Business Association Board will assess the board structure and by-laws, terms, and divisions of participation. The Association will seek funding for board member training in 2011. By providing them training Board members will have a better understanding of not only their responsibilities but will enhance their abilities and opportunities to engage membership in an effective advocacy group. Strong leadership from the Board can unite the association members to fulfill the mission of improving the SODO district.

Select community-benefiting projects

The SODO Business Association's mission is to make the community a better place for people and businesses. Completing current improvements and having a well developed plan for future projects will ensure that the SODO district continues to develop for the benefit of its members well into the future. In 2011, the Association will be looking for funding sources to complete identified projects. Potential projects are in the areas of Arts & Culture and Transportation.

Arts & Culture:

SODO Identification Banners

For 2011, conditioned upon funding, we will continue the street beautification project with banners identifying the SODO district at sixteen locations, with the intent of adding 30 to 40 banners over the next few years. We will develop a long term plan for banner management and replacement to ensure this program continues for several years.

The banners will establish the boundaries of SODO and with other projects will improve the appearance of the district, help visitors identify that they have arrived in SODO, and help to market the businesses within the district to the public.

The banners will meet City standards and will be manufactured locally using artwork by a local graphic designer.

Connection Box Artwork

In 2011, we will continue the SODO beautification program by painting the control boxes located throughout SODO. The boxes add color and help define the neighborhood while reducing graffiti.

The control box painting will coincide with the banner locations and highlight key areas. In 2010, ten boxes were painted between Royal Brougham and S. Lander Street on: First Ave. S, Fourth Ave. S Sixth Ave. S and S. Holgate St. between Fourth Ave. S. and Sixth Ave. S. The SODO Business Association has received grant support from the City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods to paint five more control boxes. The project goal is to complete the painting of all of the control boxes in the SODO district and we will continue to apply for funding until the painting is complete.

Duwamish Heritage Project Planning

This is a long-term project that was started a number of years ago through a Department of Neighborhoods planning grant. The project includes a large, accessible stone sculpture with historic information displayed on the stonework. Participants will be able to walk around and through pieces of the sculpture, and various textures and elements will be used to illuminate aspects of the history and culture of the Greater Duwamish.

We do not envision completing this project in 2011 and do not consider it a top priority. However, if applicable funding becomes available, we may continue the project planning and fundraising.

Transportation:

Circulation Shuttle Planning

Improving the environment in SODO is part of our mission to create a better work place. In 2011, The SODO Business Association is interested in planning for a circulation shuttle to serve the employees of SODO businesses. The shuttle service will operate primarily at lunch time and bring employees to downtown Seattle and other SODO locations.

An estimated 50,000 employees work in SODO area and the shuttle will not only encourage people to take transit to work that may have errands to do at lunch, but helps other business areas (primarily Pioneer Square), and could help local businesses as well. With less people driving to work

and driving from work to downtown at lunchtime, the shuttle will improve the air quality and carbon footprint of the SODO and Greater Seattle area.

Funding for SODO 2011 Work Plan

In order to complete the items on the 2011 Work Plan, The SODO Business Association will seek grants from the city and private foundations. We will prioritize projects and will partner with City agencies as appropriate. Potential grant sources include the City of Seattle Office of Economic Development, a funding source that we have successfully accessed in the past. Other possible grant resources might include The Seattle Foundation, US Bank, City of Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, Weyerhaeuser, and Boeing, among others. The Association will also seek grant funding to support the basic operational needs of the Association during this time of expanding and strengthening of the Association.