

2019 CITY TO THE CENTRAL PROPERTY TRANSFER UPDATE #2



(01/15/19) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. What is at stake? *Answer:* Right now, the City of Seattle owns the Central's properties and building. The Central pays rent in two ways: with cash and with all the public services and benefits to members it offers. This arrangement is called a Mutually Offsetting Benefit (MOB) lease.

As the "landlord," the City of Seattle is responsible for maintaining and upgrading the building and grounds. The City has not been doing this. The Central, as a registered 501(c)3 organization, can raise funds itself. Right now, because the current leasing agreement is on a month-to-month basis, funders will not release funds until they are certain the Central will be here.

The Central has been here 51 years and looks forward to being here 50 more. Along with two other community organizations in the same situation, Central petitioned the City Council to transfer the property to us. The two other organizations are Byrd Barr Place (Formerly Centerstone and Central Area Motivational Program) and the Greenwood Senior Center operated by Phinney Neighborhood Association.

Q2. Will Central close if this transfer doesn't happen? *Answer:* No.

Q3. What have the Mayor and Council done so far? *Answer:* According to law and custom, the Mayor must faithfully execute work approved by the City Council in the Budget. The Mayor first proposed her budget to the Council in late September. *Her 2019 Budget Book did not mention the MOB properties.*

The City Council—through the hard work of Councilmembers Lisa Herbold and Mike O'Brien and their staff—voted 9 - 0 for the City to transfer or sale the properties. They put a deadline of June 30th, 2019.

Q4. After the Council voted the Mayor said that she is reviewing other uses for these properties. Can she do that? *Answer:* To understand how an ideal Mayor *should* act it is important to look at the rule for how our city *should* work. *First, The Council is the Legislative branch of local government and the Mayor heads the Executive branch.* According to Article V, Section 2 (Duties and Power of the Mayor) of the Charter of the City of Seattle (<http://clerk.seattle.gov/~public/charter/charter.htm>)

"The Mayor shall see that the laws of the City are enforced, and shall direct and control all subordinate officers of the City, ..."

The branches hold equal but different powers, meaning this vote is binding on the Council and the Mayor, together, to see that it happens in the 2019 Budget Year.

Second, the City used state funds to buy Central and Greenwood Senior Center using money approved by a statewide referendum. The State Legislature has passed a law authorizing the transfer of properties bought with those funds "without further considerations." This means the city can transfer the property without cost to Central.

Third, these properties are not vacant lots. They are anchor institutions for entire communities, vital civic centers with long histories, and places with real value and symbolic meaning to all of Seattle.

Q5. Why do you write transfer or sale? *Answer:* Due to how The City acquired the MOB properties, some properties can be transferred, the others can be sold for any price (such as \$1). On October 9, three of these agencies met and agreed to join forces and present the City Council and Mayor with a common ask: transfer or sell these properties to us in 2019. This table summarizes the MOB agencies.

Agency	Date Acquired	Our Ask
Byrd Barr Place (Formerly Centerstone and CAMP)	1967	Sell
Central Area Senior Center	1975	Transfer
Phinney Neighborhood Association's Greenwood Senior Center	1978	Transfer

Q6. What happens next? *Answer:* If the Mayor fails to act by March 31, the Council provided a clause that it will step in to complete the work.

Q7. What can I do to help? *Answer: 1) Be informed! Read the information that has been provided to you. Know the Facts. We are advocating for the ownership of the building we reside in. 2) Maintain on going communication with the Mayor and the City Council. Transmit the message, "We want to own the building." We have been good stewards sharing our culture, programs, activities, knowledge and space with the entire Central Area District, neighbors and African American community of the North West.*

Q8. What if I have other questions? *Answer:* John Perkins of Keep the Change Consulting has been assisting Dian and the other MOB agencies in this process. Email him with your questions at johnp@ktchange.com.