



City of Seattle
Seattle City Council

NEWS RELEASE

Councilmember Kshama Sawant

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Councilmember Sawant Celebrates Central District Community Organizing to Win \$500,000 for Garfield Super Block

“Garfield community members came together and worked with our Council office and we won. Now we must build our 2022 People’s Budget movement to continue to win funds for affordable housing and social services.”

SEATTLE - [Councilmember Kshama Sawant](#) (District 3, Central Seattle), chair of the Council’s Sustainability and Renters Rights Committee, celebrated City Council’s approval today of \$500,000 in funding for the Garfield Super Block, a 15-year, grassroots-led project.

“Thanks to the efforts of grassroots organizers, working alongside my Council office, we have won critical funding that will help us fulfill the vision of the Garfield Super Block,” Sawant said.

The Garfield Super Block will create a vital civic space that honors and tells the story – through art and cultural presentations - of the people who have lived here over the millenia, from the Duwamish people to Black Americans today. The Garfield Super Block will enhance the area around the Garfield Community Center,

Medgar Evers Pool, and Garfield High School with art that celebrates the area's history, new trees and walkways to ensure access for all, new safe bathroom facilities, and other urgently needed community amenities.

"The Garfield Super Block will be a community gem. It will enhance community safety and create good union jobs," Sawant noted.

Over the last three months, Councilmember Sawant worked closely alongside the Garfield Super Block activists to organize working people's support for this budget demand. More than 600 community members signed Sawant's petition. Hundreds wrote letters to Councilmembers, and dozens of people spoke up in public testimony. The Garfield Super Block organizers worked with Sawant's office to organize a public event at Garfield Community Center, where community members learned much more about the project.

"I started advocating for this project more than 15 years ago. I'm grateful to finally see the city fulfilling a promise to make the Legacy and Promise Promenade a reality. The heart of the Garfield Super Block project is to tell the story of the 7 ethnic cultures that have made the CD what it is. This funding will allow us to create a space that will tell their story and celebrate their legacy. Thank you to the full council for supporting this important project and especially to Councilmember Sawant for lifting this project up," said longtime **Central District community activist Robert Stephens Jr.**, a member of the Garfield Super Block Core Team.

"We are so grateful to the full council for finding a way to fund the Garfield Super Block Project. Over the past weeks we have had some wonderful conversations with council staff and it was clear that they could see how important this project is for the Central Area and all of Seattle. Kshama Sawant and her team responded to our community's needs quickly and thoughtfully. This funding would not have been possible without her initial efforts. We look forward to working closely with her team to see this project to the end," said **Sharon Khosla, another member of the Garfield Super Block Core Team.**

The newly approved funding will support permitting, construction drawings, project management costs, and stipends for community advisory board members, all in order to get the project shovel-ready for 2022.

“Let’s be clear: Today’s funding victory didn’t just happen because the Garfield Super Block is a good idea - which it is,” Sawant said. “We won because community members, working alongside our Council office, mobilized working people, especially in the Central District, to stand up and fight for funding. In recent years this project, along with countless other valuable community projects, have struggled with inadequate City funding and an indifferent Democratic majority on City Council. The difference today is that Garfield community members came together and worked with us to demand change. And we won.

“We will take this momentum forward into our People’s Budget this fall, as we fight for a 2022 City budget that funds community needs, not the bloated police department,” Sawant said. “And we’ll also fight to increase the Amazon tax to fund urgently-needed affordable housing and services for working people struggling under the twin blows of the capitalist recession and the COVID crisis.”

Sawant concluded, “I want to thank Robert Stephens, Jr., of the Central Area Cultural Arts Commission, a community leader who has been working doggedly on this project for 15 years, along with the other Garfield Super Block core team members - **Sharon Khosla, Karen Estevenin, Ann Suter, Esther Ervin, Nikki Watanabe, Stephanie Ingram, TraeAnna Holiday, and Valentina Montecinos.** They all worked alongside our Council office to achieve today’s win.”

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