



MEMORANDUM

TO: Sara Belz, City Council Central Staff

FROM: Ned Dunn, Seattle Center

DATE: December 14, 2010

RE: **The Vera Project Agreement for Youth Programming**

The legislation before the Parks and Seattle Center Committee authorizes a two-year renewal agreement with The Vera Project, a Washington non-profit corporation, for the continued development and presentation of youth music and arts programming in 2011 and 2012. The Vera Project will present a minimum of 50 annual music shows and other arts events for persons less than 21 years of age, with people of all ages welcome. In return for these free or affordable youth programming services, the City will provide \$50,000 in funding support to The Vera Project each year. The Vera Project will try to leverage City funding with outside resources to increase the number of events each year from 50 to 80.

The City has provided funding support for Vera's programming since Vera's founding in 2001. The funding level was \$70,000 in 2001, \$75,000 in 2002, and \$50,000 from 2003 to the present 2011-12 Agreement. This is the fifth two-year agreement between The Vera Project and the City. The funding is included in Seattle Center's 2011 Adopted and 2012 Endorsed Budget. Seattle Center manages the agreement with The Vera Project.

Vera's budget has risen from \$105,000 in 2001 to \$778,000 in 2011, making City funds a progressively smaller percentage of Vera's funding. At the same time, Vera has increased the number of people served from 4,500 in 2001 to 54,000 in 2009, and vastly expanded the quality and breadth of programming. The Vera Project relocated its facilities to the Seattle Center campus in 2007. In 2006, the City Council approved a 10-year lease agreement with The Vera Project for use of the former Snoqualmie Room at Seattle Center. The annual lease payment is currently \$39,530. The City provided \$450,000 in City capital funds for renovation of the Snoqualmie Room to house The Vera Project's offices, studios and performance venue. The balance of the \$1.8 million renovation was raised by The Vera Project. Vera's relocation to Seattle Center made Vera more sustainable and gave Vera new capacity to serve the community. Through strong programming and efficient use of City resources, earned revenue, and private support, Vera has become a leading model of youth-driven, volunteer-based arts programming that provides youth training and mentoring opportunities while supporting young and emerging artists.