

PRESS RELEASE

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IMPROVING A MASTERPIECE: KING COUNTY AND SAM CELEBRATE FUNDING FOR GREEN UPGRADES

Low-interest loan supports museum renovations to save energy and water



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SEATTLE, WA - Thanks to a new low-interest financing partnership, the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) is becoming more energy efficient and getting greener.

The museum's main building in downtown Seattle will significantly improve its energy and water systems using \$2.8 million in financing made possible by the King County Green Community Initiative and the Washington State Housing Finance Commission.

"Doing our part for the environment is important in our role as a leading Northwest civic institution," said SAM Chief Operating Officer, Richard Beckerman. "This financing has enabled SAM to replace and upgrade systems that will not only help us save energy and water, but also provide optimal climate controls for our world-class collection and for the comfort of our patrons."

SAM turned to the initiative when contemplating upgrades to its main museum location in downtown Seattle, which opened in 1991. Twenty-five years and a major expansion later, the original Venturi building needs upgrades to conserve water and efficiently maintain climate controls that safeguard art and keep visitors comfortable.

The Green Community Initiative provides community groups, nonprofit organizations, and businesses the ability to apply for low-interest financing for projects that conserve energy, water, and promote environmental sustainability.



“One of the finest museums in the country is getting greener,” said King County Executive Dow Constantine, who proposed the legislation establishing the King County Green Community Initiative. “This partnership is an excellent example of how King County is catalyzing investments that save energy, lower operating costs and improve the customer experience.”

Thanks to the issuance of the Qualified Energy Conservation Bond by the Housing Finance Commission, SAM is financing the improvements with a \$2.8 million low-interest loan from banking partner US Bank.

“It’s a privilege for us to enable this Seattle cultural icon to become more energy- and water-efficient,” said Karen Miller, chair of the Housing Finance Commission.

A self-supporting state agency focused on affordable housing, the Commission also supports energy conservation and renewable energy, as well as other community needs.

The improvements at SAM will reduce the museum’s carbon footprint and save the museum money, freeing up funds that would ordinarily be spent on energy and water bills for activities ranging from exhibitions to educational outreach and visitor services. The improvements include:

- Heating plant optimization
- High efficiency chiller installation, with optimization controls to maximize efficiency
- Replacement of select low-efficiency lighting with high-efficiency LED internal/external lighting systems
- Installation of lighting control systems
- Water conservation upgrades

SAM’s contractor, Seattle-based engineering firm McKinstry, will work with museum staff to install all identified elements over the next six months.

Photo credit: Benjamin Benschneider

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Robert Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum. SAM’s desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM’s collection of more than 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures and time periods. For more information, please visit www.seattleartmuseum.org.

ABOUT KING COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND PARKS

The [King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks](http://www.kingcounty.gov/departments/natural-resources-and-parks) works in support of sustainable and livable communities and a clean and healthy natural environment. Our mission is to foster environmental stewardship and strengthen communities by providing regional parks, protecting the region’s water, air, land and natural habitats, and reducing, safely disposing of and creating resources from wastewater and solid waste.

ABOUT WASHINGTON STATE HOUSING FINANCE COMMISSION

The [Washington State Housing Finance Commission](http://www.wshfc.com) is a publicly accountable, self-supporting team that brings private investment dollars to create affordable housing, enhance communities, and achieve public goals throughout Washington. Over 32 years, the Commission has created and preserved affordable homes for more than 334,000 people across the state, while contributing more than \$42.5 billion and 240,000 jobs to the economy.