

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Sam Assefa is the Director of Seattle's Executive Office of Planning & Community Development (OPCD), an office responsible for developing and implementing planning policies and programs to support Seattle's current and future growth as envisioned in the City's Comprehensive Plan. OPCD is also the City's lead planning agency that is charged with coordinating cross departmental functions in order to comprehensively and systematically address growth, prioritize and direct investments, and assess how existing policies and practices encourage or discourage equity and future development. Sam reports directly to the Mayor who is the City's chief executive. In addition to leading four key divisions within OPCD, Sam is the co-chair of the Capital Cabinet, a multi-departmental body comprised of directors whose departments are responsible for major capital projects and capital investments. Prior to his appointment in Seattle by former Mayor Ed Murray, Sam served as the Senior Urban Designer for the City of Boulder, Colorado from 2010 to 2016.

From 2002 to 2010, he was with the City of Chicago where he served as Deputy Chief of Staff to Mayor Richard M. Daley and was in charge of coordinating departments that implemented planning and economic development policies and programs. He also served as the Deputy Commissioner and the Director of Land Use and Planning Policy for Chicago's Department of Planning and Development.

Between 1991 and 2002, he worked in both the private and public sectors in San Francisco. He was with the private firms of KMD and SMWM where he worked as an architect and urban designer before joining the City of San Francisco's Planning Department as its Senior Urban Designer. While in San Francisco, Sam was responsible for developing and implementing a number of community plans, design guidelines, and redevelopment projects.

Sam was elected and inducted into Lambda Alpha International in 2006 and has served on various civic and design organizations including the AIA Seattle Strategic Advisory Council, the Graham Foundation, the AIA Regional Urban Design Committee, the Chicago Public Art Group, and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. He is a founding member of the Center for Art and Public Life at California College of the Arts, where he also taught architecture as an Adjunct Professor. Sam is also a member of the Mayors Institute on City Design Resource Team, a team of distinguished professionals from across the country with expertise in architecture, urban design, city planning, and related fields.

Sam frequently participates as a speaker at planning and design conferences organized by institutions such as CityAge, the American Planning Association, the American Institute of Architects, Big City Planning Directors Institute, as well as international symposiums such as the 2006 Toronto Tall Buildings Symposium, the Dutch Green Building Conference, OECD, the Mega Cities Development Forum in China, the National Urban Planning Institute in Ethiopia, and the Public Infrastructure Summit in Australia. He has also lectured at various universities including Harvard Graduate School of Design, MIT Department of Urban Studies, and Cornell Department of City and Regional Planning, among others.

Sam is a graduate of MIT with a Master's in City Planning, and the University of Illinois at Chicago with a B.A. in Architecture.