



WA-CELI training

TRACY FURUTANI, AUGUST 13, 2026

Washington Collaborative Elected Leaders Institute (WA-CELI)

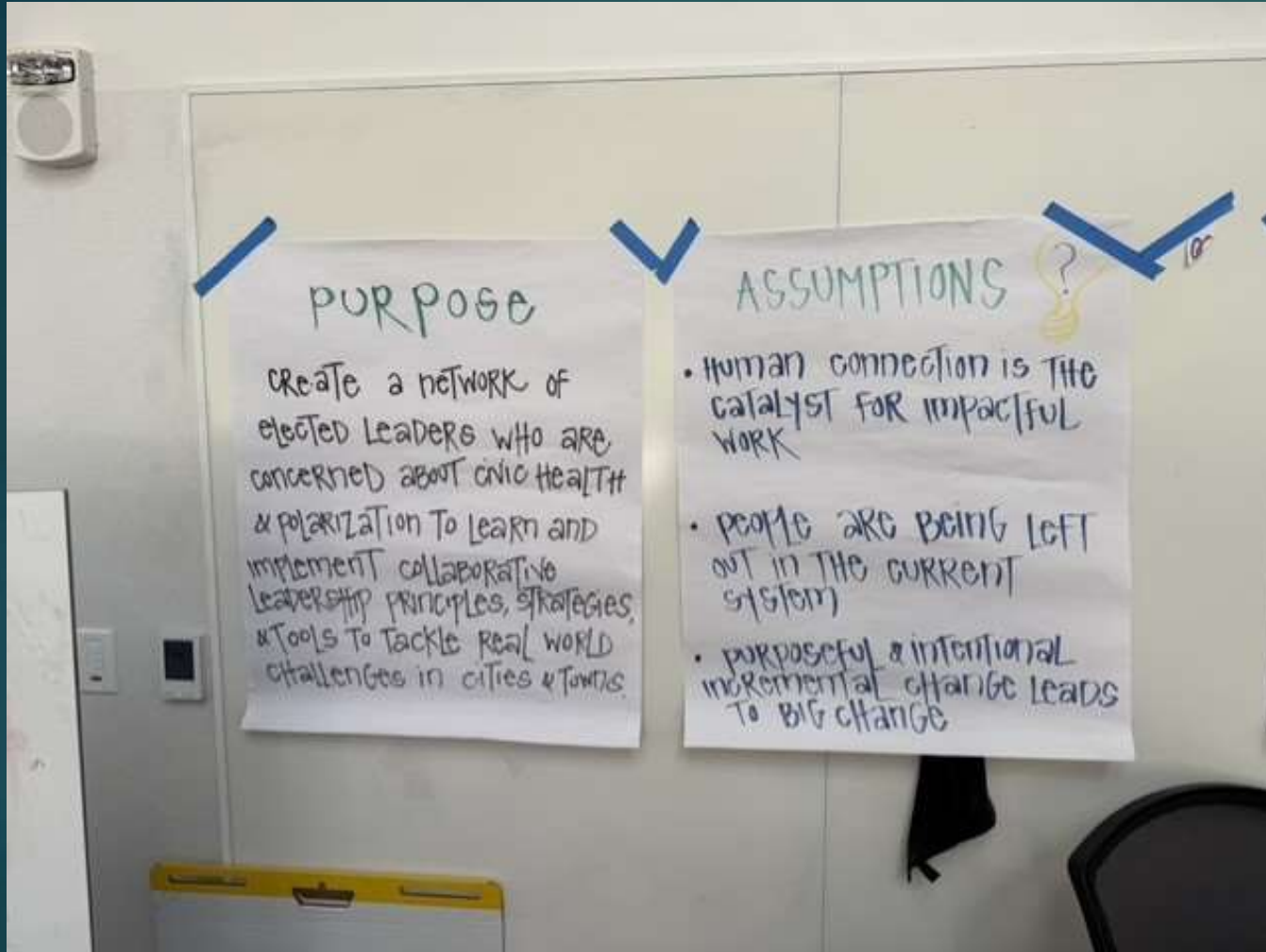


I had the honor of attending the WA-CELI training during June and July 2026, as part of a team including Councilmembers Ted Weinberg of Mercer Island, Laura Mork of Shoreline and Sun Burford of Newcastle. We were among the 27 councilmembers and mayors from around the state who participated in this cohort of the program.



The mission of the training is for elected municipal leaders to address issues of community concern in collaboration with the community and other elected leaders. It is run by Julia Carboni, AK Sterling and **Becky Corriell**.

The training is offered by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center and the University of Washington's Evans School of Public Policy & Governance, in partnership with the Association of Washington Cities' Center for Quality Communities.



My team developed several topics on which our suburban Seattle cities might be able to collaborate. We ultimately narrowed it down to two, both related to transportation:

- getting and supporting the infrastructure for electric vehicle charging
- the “last mile” problem – getting residents from their homes to existing public transportation and back.



The team's next steps are to meet monthly to develop a set of steps that will lead to progress on resident mobility. This may not necessarily be legislation; it may be jointly lobbying county and state leaders or jointly pursuing grants and other opportunities. We will be checking in periodically with the WA-CELI trainers, and report outcomes at the next AWC meeting in June 2027 in Tacoma.

Take-aways



I met and got to know councilmembers from all over the state: Liberty Lake, Spokane Valley, Tekoa, Starbuck. We all realized that good management of sewers, roads and solid waste are not partisan, and that all our communities have much in common. I am impressed by the amount of cooperation and collaboration exhibited by the attendees at the training on real problems in their communities.