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**Frequently Asked Questions: Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities**

Seattle City Council has confirmed the first fourteen people who will serve as commissioners on the new Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities.

Here are answers to the most frequently asked questions concerning this new City of Seattle Commission:

***Whose idea was it to create a new City commission focusing on disability / access issues?***

A group of Seattle residents with disabilities approached the Mayor’s Office and City Council in the fall of 2009 about creating a Commission that would focus on issues affecting people with disabilities, as well as help to foster understanding between people with disabilities and City government. City Council passed [Council Bill 116763](http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~scripts/nph-brs.exe?s1=&s3=116763&s4=&s2=&s5=&Sect4=and&l=20&Sect2=THESON&Sect3=PLURON&Sect5=CBOR1&Sect6=HITOFF&d=CBOR&p=1&u=%2F%7Epublic%2Fcbor1.htm&r=1&f=G) on January 11, 2010, and included funding in the 2010-11 budget for staff support to be provided by the Seattle Office for Civil Rights.

***What are the mission and purpose of the new Commission?***

SCPWD’s mission is to promote the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of economic, political, and community life in the City of Seattle. The duties of the Commission include:

* Advising the Mayor, City Council, and City departments about issues of importance to people with disabilities;
* Assuring access to City services and facilities;
* Recommending policies, practices, and legislation to the City in matters affecting the concerns of people with disabilities; and
* Encouraging understanding among people with various disabilities as well as between people with disabilities and the larger Seattle community.

The Commission will analyze issues that are already under consideration by the City; it also will bring forward other topics as they emerge. One of the first issues that the Commission is likely to consider is the proposal by the Seattle Department of Transportation to reduce the number of hours of free parking available downtown to people with valid disabled parking placards.

***How many people will serve on the Commission?***

[Council Bill 116763](http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~scripts/nph-brs.exe?s1=&s3=116763&s4=&s2=&s5=&Sect4=and&l=20&Sect2=THESON&Sect3=PLURON&Sect5=CBOR1&Sect6=HITOFF&d=CBOR&p=1&u=%2F%7Epublic%2Fcbor1.htm&r=1&f=G) calls for a total of sixteen members to serve staggered one or two-year terms. Seven commissioners have been appointed by the Mayor and seven by Seattle City Council. Commissioners themselves will nominate two additional members, including one person age 18-29 to be appointed in September 2010 through the YMCA’s Get Engaged Program. All appointments are subject to City Council confirmation.

Nearly forty individuals submitted applications to serve on the Commission. Applications and resumes were reviewed by the Human Rights Commission Disability Task Force and the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR), which will provide ongoing administrative support to the Commission. SOCR staff conducted interviews with a total of twenty-five candidates.

One of the first orders of business for commissioners will be to determine the Commission’s operating structure, including a meeting schedule, committee structure and leadership.

***Are commissioners required to live within Seattle City limits to serve?***

No. [Council Bill 116763](http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~scripts/nph-brs.exe?s1=&s3=116763&s4=&s2=&s5=&Sect4=and&l=20&Sect2=THESON&Sect3=PLURON&Sect5=CBOR1&Sect6=HITOFF&d=CBOR&p=1&u=%2F%7Epublic%2Fcbor1.htm&r=1&f=G) requires the Commission to be composed of people who are “conscious of the discrimination against, and oppression and neglect of people with disabilities, and who are working to eliminate these injustices.”

***Does Mayor McGinn support the new Commission?***

Yes! Mayor McGinn welcomes the charter members of SCPWD, and looks forward to working with them to help ensure that the perspectives of people with disabilities will be included in all City of Seattle policies and programs.

***How can the public get involved with the work of the Commission for People with Disabilities?***

Visit the [Commission’s web site](http://www.seattle.gov/disability/) for an announcement of the Commission’s next meeting. All Commission meetings are open to the public, and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities will be provided on request. If you have issues or concerns that you would like the Commission to consider, contact staff liaison Felicia Yearwood at 684-4537 or by e-mail to felicia.yearwood@seattle.gov.

SCPWD does not handle individual complaints about accommodation and access for people with disabilities. People who believe they may have been discriminated against on the basis of disability should continue to contact the Seattle Office for Civil Rights to discuss their situations. For more information call 206-684-4500 or visit [www.seattle.gov/civilrights](http://www.seattle.gov/civilrights).

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