

Seattle Youth Commission Bylaws

Amended: December 13, 2024

Article 1: Introduction

Section 1.01 Authorizing Statute

1. Section 3.67 of the Seattle Municipal Code establishes the Seattle Youth Commission and authorizes it to adopt bylaws to carry out the purpose and duties described in Ordinance 125029.
2. Pursuant to the Seattle Municipal Code, this council shall be known as the “Seattle Youth Commission”, hereinafter referred as the “SYC”.

Article II: Roles

Section 2.01 Purpose

1. The SYC is established to serve in an advisory capacity and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on policies of importance to the City, including but not limited to policies directly affecting youth.
2. The duties of the SYC include but are not limited to:
 - a. Organizing forums of Seattle youth to better educate the City about the opinions of youth on civic issues affecting both their specific communities and the city at large and to inform youth about the City’s policies, programs, and processes for public engagement;
 - b. Participating in events with the Mayor and members of the City Council to discuss issues affecting the city and the perspective of youth on these issues;
 - c. Drafting policy proposals on topics of its choosing and presenting these proposals to the Mayor and City Council;
 - d. Testifying at City Council meetings and public hearings; and
 - e. Providing an annual report to the relevant Council Committee about SYC activities.

Section 2.02 Purview

1. The SYC acts in accordance with the rules and policies outlined in:
 - a. Enabling legislation – Ordinance 125029;
 - b. SYC bylaws;

- c. Seattle Municipal Code 3.67 – Seattle Youth Commission and 4.16 Code of Ethics; and
- d. Federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to appointed advisory bodies of public agencies.

Article III: Commissioners

Section 3.01 Membership

1. The SYC consists of 15 members:
 - a. Positions 1-7 appointed by the Seattle City Council for District representation; and
 - b. Positions 8-15 appointed by the Mayor's Office for At-Large representation.
2. All appointments are subject to confirmation by a majority vote of the Seattle City Council.

Section 3.02 Member Expectations

1. Commissioners are expected to, at minimum, participate in the following:
 - a. Attended regular and special SYC meetings;
 - b. Attend and participate in community meetings, forums, and other events as a commissioner;
 - c. Serve on at least one standing committee;
 - d. Serve on ad hoc committees as needed;
 - e. Respond in a timely manner to communications that require a response; and
 - f. Represent the SYC by providing testimony and attending meetings with Seattle City Council, Mayor, City departments, etc. when authorized by the SYC.
 - g. SYC commissioners may also speak in public testimony as individuals, clearly specifying that they are articulating their own point of view and concerns.

Section 3.03 Terms of Membership

1. The expectation for the term of membership is two years.
2. Commissioners can serve no more than three terms (consecutive or non-consecutive).

Section 3.04 Member Resignation

1. A commissioner who wishes to resign from the SYC share notify the Co-Chairs and SYC staff liaison in writing prior to the commissioner's resignation.

Section 3.05 Vacancies

1. Vacancies shall be advertised in official City channels and in accordance with City public information standards so that any interested and qualified person may submit an application.
2. The Department of Neighborhoods shall conduct additional outreach and advertising to ensure vacancy information is shared with young people 13-19 years of age that live or attend school in Seattle.

Section 3.06 Absences

1. To request an excused absence, commissioners shall notify the SYC staff liaison prior to the SYC meeting, stating the specific reason for the request. If the circumstances prevent a commissioner from notifying staff prior to the meeting, the commissioner will notify staff as soon as possible.
2. An excused absence shall be defined as an absence due to one or more of the following:
 - a. Illness;
 - b. Family leave emergency;
 - c. One personal day;
 - d. Pre-planned family trip;
 - e. School events and holidays;
 - f. Religious holidays;
 - g. Emergency; or
 - h. SYC related business.
3. When any commissioner has three unexcused absences from regularly scheduled meetings within the calendar year, the commissioner shall be notified in writing by the SYC staff liaison before the next scheduled meeting that they may be removed from the SYC.
4. The SYC may vote to remove any member who has accrued three unexcused absences in a calendar year. Removal of a member requires a majority vote of the SYC.
5. If a commissioner anticipates an extended absence from their commission activities, or at any time before a commissioner accrues three unexcused absences with a calendar year, they shall immediately submit a written request for a leave of absence of not more than three months to the SYC staff liaison. The written request shall state the reason for the request and the expected date of return to active participation on the SYC.

Section 3.07 Removal Appeal Process

1. If the commissioner desires to continue serving on the SYC, they must appeal in writing within three weeks of the date of notice by the SYC staff liaison indicating an intention to continue to serve on the SYC.
2. If a commissioner has appealed the misses another meeting, the SYC staff liaison shall notify the member and the appointing authority requesting the member's resignation or removal.

Article IV: Officers

Section 4.01 Election of Officers

1. The SYC shall operate with an Executive Committee comprised of two Co-Chairs and a Secretary.
2. The SYC shall elect two Co-Chairs from the commission membership, each of whom shall be elected for six-month terms.
3. The SYC shall elect one Secretary from the commission membership, whom shall be elected for a six-month term.
4. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the SYC.

Section 4.02 Roles of Officers

1. The Co-chairs shall presides at all meetings of the SYC.
2. If both Co-chairs are absent or unable to perform their duties, their duties will be assumed by their designee, or by a member approved by the majority of members present.
3. The Secretary shall record minutes of the meeting and share with the SYC staff liaison following the meeting.
4. The Executive Committee, with the support of the SYC staff liaison, shall be responsible for setting the commission meeting agendas.

Section 4.03 Removal of Co-Chairs

1. Any commissioner may make a motion to consider the removal of the either Co-Chair from office for due cause at a regular monthly meeting of the SYC, provided that at least seven days written notice of such intent is given to all commissioners.
2. The motion to consider removal share be make at the next regular meeting following the required notice. The motion to remove shall be voted on and requires a three-quarter majority vote of all members present.

Article V: Commission Communications

Section 5.01 Commission Communications

1. All official documents of the commission shall be signed by the SYC and list all commission member names.
2. When needed, the SYC shall identify at least one spokesperson for the SYC to the media, Mayor, City Council, or other governmental entities. Commissioners may speak on behalf of

the SYC in other circumstances, however, in all cases, commissioners shall represent the majority position of the SYC.

3. Information related to the SYC may be exchanged by electronic communications. Any and all email communications conducted by the SYC may be subject to disclosure under the Public Records Disclosure Act.

Article VI: Committees

Section 6.01 Committees

1. Committees shall be formed by a majority vote of SYC commissioners to accomplish specific tasks or work outside of regularly scheduled meetings of the SYC.
2. Chairs of committees will be appointed by each committee.
3. All SYC commissioners shall self-select to serve on a committee.
4. Ad hoc committees may be formed by a majority vote of the SYC to accomplish specific tasks or work outside of regularly scheduled meetings of the full commission.
5. All committees will meet until their designated tasks has been completed.
6. Committee chairs will be responsible for submitting minutes of meetings and keeping attendance. Copies of minutes and attendance will be sent to the designated support staff person.

Article VII: Meetings

Section 7.01 Regular Meetings

1. Regular meetings of the SYC shall be held on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month in a hybrid format. In person attendance among commissioners to strongly encouraged.
2. All regular scheduled meetings of the SYC shall be open to the public.

Section 7.02 Special Meetings

1. The SYC shall determine the need for other special meetings such as strategic planning retreats or other special work sessions and events. These special meetings shall be developed in collaboration with the SYC staff liaison.

Section 7.03 Quorum

1. A simple majority of appointed commissioners shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business of the SYC.

Section 7.04 Open Public Meetings (OPMA) Regulations

1. As a City of Seattle advisory board, the SYC is subject to the requirements outlined in the OPMA and shall conduct all business in accordance with OPMA regulations.
2. All SYC commissioners shall complete OPMA trainings provided by the City of Seattle annually.

Section 7.05 Ethics Training

1. All SYC commissioners shall complete ethics training provided by the City of Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission annually.

Article VIII: Decision Making

Section 8.01 Decision Making Process

1. Decisions shall be made by group consensus whenever possible.
2. In the event that consensus cannot be reached by establishing deadlines, a vote with a simple majority will prevail.
3. Dissenting opinions may be entered as part of the minutes at the request of any commissioner.
4. Decision-making on all resolutions, statements, and policy decision must take place in an open meeting of the SYC pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act.
5. Decision-making may not be conducted by electronic means unless commissioners are attending a hybrid meeting of the SYC.

Article IX: Staff

Section 9.01 Staff Role

1. As provided in the city budget, the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods shall provide staff and meeting facilities for the SYC.
2. While administratively responsible to the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, staff shall act in accordance with directions and positions of the SYC when staff is representing the positions or policies of the SYC.

Article X: Bylaws Amendments

Section 10.01 Bylaws Amendments

1. Amendments to the bylaws of the SYC shall be made by written amendments adopted by a vote of not less than two-thirds of the membership of the SYC.