



City of Seattle
Seattle Renters' Commission

Kim McGillivray & Daniel Godfrey, Co-Chairs

October 13, 2023

RE: Seattle Renters' Commission Support & Budget

Dear Seattle City Council & Office of the Mayor,

The Seattle Renters' Commission (SRC) is in need of your support. Without a budget, we are struggling to live up to a critical element of our mandate: engaging with Seattle renters. It has become evident that our 15-minute public comment and email has not made us accessible enough to those we represent, and that our understanding of their needs is not as comprehensive as necessary. Additionally, we lack ongoing capacity to hear from vulnerable renters who do not speak English. We are thusly requesting a 2024 budget of \$10,000 for community engagement, operations, language interpretation, outreach, and development.

Additionally, we are stuck at approximately half of our authorized capacity for commissioners because we are waiting for the City Council and the Mayor to approve appointments. Earlier this year, a commissioner who had been vetted and approved by the SRC, had gone through the interview process with the City Council, and had waited for the final signoff by the Mayor declined to join us. Between their application and the final signature naming them as a commissioner, a year had passed. When notified that they were approved, too much time had passed and they seized another opportunity. We are currently re-appointing a commissioner for her second term, and have been waiting three months to hear back from the relevant Councilmember.

The SRC interviews applicants within two weeks of receiving their application, votes on their membership and then sends their name and paperwork along to the Council for the next step, within another two weeks.

These staffing delays are significantly reducing the efficacy of the SRC, and we need your support in staffing the SRC completely. Our current commission is so small that if two members have life events, vacations, finals, or are traveling, we cannot muster a quorum. Even with a quorum, the vote must be virtually unanimous in order for a proposal to pass. This is unacceptable.

We need your help speeding up the onboarding process. We propose that:

- The City Council steps (committee and full Council vote) take no more than six weeks after an SRC candidate is sent for approval, and



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- Final review and sign-off by the Mayor's office take no more than three weeks after an SRC candidate is forwarded by the City Council.

We need our commissioners to become voting members of the SRC as soon as is practicable. It's only fair to these public service volunteers, and to the renters whom they serve.

Sincerely,

The Seattle Renters' Commission

Cc: Jennifer Chao, Director, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods