



TO: Hyun Kim, Interim City Manager
FROM: City Council Member Sarah Rumbaugh and Lynda Foster, Senior Council Policy Analyst
COPY: Community, Vitality, and Safety Committee; City Clerk's Office; Vicky McLaurin, Executive Liaison
PRESENTER: City Council Member Sarah Rumbaugh and Lynda Foster, Senior Council Policy Analyst
SUBJECT: Policy Proposal for Committee, Board and Commission Emerging Leader Seats
DATE: July 24, 2025

PRESENTATION TYPE:

Request for Ordinance

SUMMARY:

There are eight Committees, Boards, and Commissions (CBCs) with specified youth seats or past legislative direction to create a youth seat. Specifications and appointment processes for these positions vary. This proposal aligns appointment processes and requirements for all CBC youth to reduce confusion in the application process, increase recruitment and retention for youth seat positions, and streamline work.

CM Rumbaugh's policy proposal is as follows:

- Rename "Youth Seats" to "Emerging Leader" seats
- Align recruitment of Emerging Leader seats to the regular recruitment timeline for each CBC
 - Human Services Commission – term of October 1 - September 30
 - Tacoma Arts Commission – term of January 1 - December 31
 - Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities – term of September 1 - August 31
 - Community's Police Advisory Committee - term of January 1 - December 31
 - Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs – term of April 1 - March 31
 - Tacoma Creates Advisory Board - term of September 1 - August 31
 - Human Rights Commission – term of March 1 - February 28/29
 - Climate and Sustainability Commission – term of May 1 - April 30
- Use standard appointment process for Emerging Leader applications – including interview by a Council Committee, which recommends appointment to full Council
- Emerging Leaders are appointed to a one-year term, with the option to automatically renew for a second one-year term without reapplying, as long as the volunteer regularly attends CBC meetings and meets the age requirements at the start of the term. This policy does not set term limits
- 16 – 24 age range. Volunteers may complete a one-year term if they age out during the term.
- Add a purpose statement for Emerging Leader Positions that incorporates:
 - The value of engaging youth early in life to encourage lifelong service
 - How these positions are opportunities for youth to lead in community and access professional development
 - The value of youth voice in shaping recommendations to the City Council
- Direct the City Manager to explore:
 - Mayor's Youth Commission arranging Emerging Leader Cohort events and activities
 - CBC Chairs or Leadership teams acting as mentors to Emerging Leader Volunteers
 - Youth-focused recruitment tools and strategies to reach 16 – 24-year-olds
 - Review onboarding process to welcome Emerging Leaders to the role
- Defer to the Tacoma Art Commission on whether to repurpose an existing at-large seat into an Emerging Leader seat. CM Rumbaugh has requested this be considered at their Aug 11 meeting



BACKGROUND:

A policy overview of the 8 CBC youth seats is outlined in Handout A. This review shows differences in appointment processes, recruitment timelines, age lengths, and term lengths. While this proposal does not seek to codify CBCs that are not currently in the Code, some CBCs are codified already and accomplishing this policy change would require updates to multiple chapters of the TMC.

Outreach: On May 5, CM Rumbaugh attended a Mayor's Youth Commission leadership team meeting. In May and June of 2025, CM Rumbaugh contacted CBC staff liaisons to request feedback on alignment of CBC youth seat processes. In June, CM Rumbaugh revised her proposal to incorporate feedback received from stakeholders. It was re-shared with CBC liaisons and CBC members. Two listening sessions for CBC members to discuss the proposal directly with CM Rumbaugh occurred on Monday 6/23 over the lunch hour and Wednesday 6/25 in the evening. Collected feedback can be reviewed in Handout B.

ISSUE:

We have long heard concerns about recruitment and retainment for youth positions on CBCs. A 2023 review of CBC Youth Seats by former Management Fellow Cathy Satava identified this as a structural challenge for all CBCs. CVS is responsible for interviewing and recommending appointments to five of the eight committees with youth seat positions and has not always had candidates to interview for these seats. CM Rumbaugh researched each CBC's guidelines and process for recruitment and found several problems the proposal seeks to respond to:

- Inconsistencies between youth seat recruitment processes and requirements, which may create confusion during recruitment efforts.
- Some CBC youth seats are limited to narrow ages, not including the broad voice of youth and too quickly aging young people out of participation.
- CBCs youth seats don't maximize opportunities to appeal to youth as professional development and leadership opportunities.
- CBC recruitment and retention has a high administrative cost.

ALTERNATIVES:

A full list of feedback gathered and discussed can be viewed in Handout B. Key issues raised by stakeholders included:

- Recruitment timeline: Considered options were aligning youth seat recruitment with recruitment of all seats for that CBC or recruiting all youth seats at one time aligned with the school year. The school year timeline could potentially make recruitment easier. It also could create a "cohort" of youth seat participants, who could be onboarded together and support each other and improve retention. However, staff identified additional staffing need to recruit and train a "cohort" like this. Additionally, there was a concern that the youth position would feel "othered" and the off cycle start date would disrupt their participation in committee work.
- Age range: Two main options were discussed: 16 – 18, or 16 – 24 years old. The Mayor's Youth Commission raised the concern that Council Members interviewing youth might select older youth because they have more experience, while 16-18 year olds might have more to gain from involvement professionally and by creating civic habits early in life that could lead to more civic engagement in the future. The Youth Commission also expressed that the 16-18 age range had a different lived experience that would offer different insights. They asked if 16-18 could have prioritization in interviews for the positions.



- Emerging Leader Name: Initial feedback on the proposal included changing the name from “youth seat” to “emerging leader” or “youth seat leader”. There were concerns that people within the defined “youth” age range might not view themselves as youth. There were also concerns that “youth seat” might not sound like a leadership role, and might not be appealing to people seeking professional or leadership experience. CM Rumbaugh received very positive feedback in the second and third rounds of outreach that included the proposed name change to “emerging leader”, no one recommended retaining the original name.
- Resources for emerging leader seats: The listening session feedback highlighted the value of investing further in Emerging Leader volunteers and professionalizing these volunteer roles. Recommendations included enhancing outreach to all youth, creating a mentorship program, and forming cohort experiences that help emerging leaders network and support each other. This proposal does not include additional resources to accomplish these goals, but does clarify intent in the purpose statement of the emerging leader seats and directs exploration of how existing resources can better support this goal.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This policy would require staff support and coordination from various City staff who are responsible for supporting Commissions, Boards and Commissions. Impacts associated with the policy will be incorporated into ongoing workload. For some CBCs, this new process will streamline volunteer recruitment and reduce costs to administer CBC recruitment.

RECOMMENDATION:

Council Member Rumbaugh recommends CVS moves to support this Ordinance and send it to study session in August 2025 for full Council review.