



# City of Seattle Boards & Commissions Notice of Appointment

<b>Appointee Name:</b> Samara Wijesekera		
<b>Board/Commission Name:</b> Seattle Youth Commission		<b>Position Title:</b> Commissioner
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Appointment</b> OR <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Reappointment</b>	<b>City Council Confirmation required?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Appointing Authority:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Council <input type="checkbox"/> Mayor <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<b>Term of Position: *</b> 9/1/2019 <b>to</b> 8/31/2021  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Serving remaining term of a vacant position</i>	
<b>Residential Neighborhood:</b> Victory Heights	<b>Zip Code:</b> 98125	<b>Contact Phone No.:</b> [REDACTED]
<b>Background:</b> Instead of me writing about them, I have chosen to let their words speak for themselves:  "I want to become a member of the Seattle Youth Commission because I want to play an active role in influencing policies, public decisions, and programs that impact the youth of Seattle. I want to promote and ensure a greater equity for youth from all walks of life, especially those from underserved communities and homeless shelters. I want to help create solutions for the issues that the youth of Seattle cares about, such as education equity, environmental conservation, racial equity, youth poverty, and homelessness. As part of the Seattle Youth Commissioners, I would seek ways for Seattle's youth to express their concerns about the issues they care about, ensuring that our city leaders hear our concerns. I will work strenuously to advocate for meaningful policies for Seattle's youth, create more outreach programs, and promote youth-led community service projects."		
<b>Authorizing Signature (original signature):</b>   <b>Date Signed (appointed):</b> 3/5/21	<b>Appointing Signatory:</b> Dan Strauss Councilmember, District 6	

\*Term begin and end date is fixed and tied to the position and not the appointment date.

#7

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 21, 2020 5:16:52 PM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 21, 2020 6:31:34 PM  
**Time Spent:** 01:14:42

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Page 2: 2020-21 Application

**Q1**

Name

Samara Wijesekera

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**Q2**

Please provide your contact information.

Street Address

[REDACTED]

City, State

Seattle, WA

Zip Code

[REDACTED]

Phone Number

[REDACTED]

Email Address

[REDACTED]

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**Q3**

What is your age?

14

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**Q4**

Tell us where you go to school.

School Name

Holy Names Academy

Grade Level

9

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**Q5**

Why do you want to become a member of the Seattle Youth Commission?

I want to become a member of the Seattle Youth Commission because I want to play an active role in influencing policies, public decisions, and programs that impact the youth of Seattle. I want to promote and ensure a greater equity for youth from all walks of life, especially those from underserved communities and homeless shelters. I want to help create solutions for the issues that the youth of Seattle cares about, such as education equity, environmental conservation, racial equity, youth poverty, and homelessness. As part of the Seattle Youth Commissioners, I would seek ways for Seattle's youth to express their concerns about the issues they care about, ensuring that our city leaders hear our concerns. I will work strenuously to advocate for meaningful policies for Seattle's youth, create more outreach programs, and promote youth-led community service projects.

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**Q6**

What are the issues in your community that you are passionate about and why?

The issues I am passionate about are racial equity, acceptance/equity among all sexual orientations and gender identities, youth homelessness, and the environmental crisis. Different ethnicities, gender identities, and sexual orientations and constantly being stigmatized. I want to advocate for a more equitable environment for the youth in all races, ethnicities, and LGBTQ+ communities. The youth in our city should feel like they have fair opportunities. Regarding Seattle's increasing homeless population, more residents are on the streets without basic necessities, daily meals, and proper shelter. When I volunteered in Tent City Projects, I talked to two homeless college students. I was moved by the struggles they faced daily. Seattle is a very wealthy city, it is a shame that we have youth living on the streets. I want to play a role in finding solutions to help the homeless youth off the streets. Protecting the environment should be one of our top priorities. By focusing on the conservation of our environment, we can minimize the contamination of waterways, preserve ecosystems, improve our air quality, and lower our carbon footprint.

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**Q7**

What do you hope to gain from this experience?

From this experience, I hope to gain a deeper knowledge of civic engagement, learn from city leaders about what it truly means to lead your community, gain valuable skills in community organizing, and leave a meaningful impact on my community. To add on, I hope to establish strong relationships with other young aspiring leaders.

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**Q8**

What do you think makes your perspective unique to others?

As a first-generation Sri-Lankan American, I view my perspective as unique to others. I was born in Arkansas and I moved to Seattle with my parents when I was seven years old. During the last few years, I have traveled to Sri Lanka, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Singapore, and London with my family. I have been fortunate to explore some parts of these countries, learn about their cultures, and see how these urban cities are melting pots. From a first-hand perspective, I have recognized how wealthy, poor, and homeless citizens struggle to coexist in bustling metropolises. I am raised in a mixed religious household. I learned at a very young age to listen to competing views, opinions, and to respect all parties. With the country being divided and people losing patience for opposing views, I believe I can be a uniting voice.

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**Q9**

The City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative advances racial equity in city government and the community. What are your ideas about applying race and social justice principles as a Seattle Youth Commissioner?

As a Seattle Youth Commissioner, I would look for ways to develop a system where schools and workplaces can effectively teach others about not only how to avoid using microaggressions, but what it truly means to be an anti-racist. I think that we must teach residents about racism, how to resent it, and how to advocate for a more equitable future. It's very important to create no judgment zones where citizens can ask questions without being judged or sidelined and get substantive answers without getting talked down to. I think citizens are genuine and caring at their core but sometimes they can be led in different directions by media and hate groups. It's important to show them why we should care about each other and how we can collectively improve when we have a just society. As President John F. Kennedy said, "A rising tide raises all boats."

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Page 3: Interviews

**Q10**

**Tuesday, October 13th**

SYC interviews will be scheduled for October 12th and 13th. Which of these days are you available? \*Interviews will be held on the phone or another virtual platform.

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Page 4: References

**Q11**

Reference #1

Name	Mary Clara Horrigan
Phone	[REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]

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**Q12**

Reference #2

Name	Ian Turner
Phone	[REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]

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**Q13**

Reference #3

Name	Sam Chacko
Phone	[REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]

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# Seattle Youth Commission

15 Members: Pursuant to Ordinance 125029, 15 members subject to City Council confirmation, 2-year terms:

- 7 City Council- Appointed
- 8 Mayoral- Appointed

*D	**G	RD	Position No.	Position Title	Name	Term Begin Date	Term End Date	Term #	Appointed By
2	M	2	1.	Member At-Large	Abdiweli Abdi	9/01/2019	8/31/2021	2	Mayor
	F	5	2.	Member At-Large	Ahana Roy	9/01/2019	8/31/2021	1	Mayor
			3.	District #2	Vacant	9/01/2019	8/31/2021		City Council
	F	NA	4.	Member At-Large	Angelica Valenzuela	9/01/2019	8/31/2021	1	Mayor
	F	5	5.	District #4	Katherine Kang	9/01/2020	8/31/2022	2	City Council
	F	2	6.	Member At-Large	Edhil Haid	9/01/2020	8/31/2022	1	Mayor
	F	5	7.	District #6	Eleanor Cename	9/01/2020	8/31/2022	1	Mayor
	F	5	8.	Member At-Large	Elsa Assefa	9/01/2020	8/31/2022	1	Mayor
			9.	Member At-Large	Vacant	9/01/2019	8/31/2021		City Council
	M	1	10.	Member At-Large	Kevin Jackson Hu	9/01/2019	8/31/2021	1	City Council
	F	5	11.	District #5	Samara Wijesekera	9/01/2019	8/31/2021	1	City Council
			12.	District #7	Vacant	9/01/2019	8/31/2021		City Council
	M	2	13.	District #1	Diego Escame-Hedger	9/01/2020	8/31/2022	1	City Council
	F	6	14.	Member At-Large	Leah Scott	9/01/2020	8/31/2022	1	Mayor
	M	2	15.	District #3	Lincoln Hilliard Wilmore	9/01/2020	8/31/2022	1	Mayor

## SELF-IDENTIFIED DIVERSITY CHART

	SELF-IDENTIFIED DIVERSITY CHART		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)		
	Male	Female	Transgender	NB/ O/ U	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Other	Caucasian/ Non-Hispanic	Pacific Islander	Middle Eastern	Multiracial
Mayor	2	6											
Council	2	2											
Other													
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>											

### Key:

\*D List the corresponding Diversity Chart number (1 through 9)

\*\*G List gender, M= Male, F= Female, T= Transgender, NB= Non-Binary O= Other U= Unknown

RD Residential Council District number 1 through 7 or N/A

Diversity information is self-identified and is voluntary.