



## Seattle Disability Commission 2025 Annual Retreat Minutes

**Date:** November 20, 2025

**Time:** 4:00 PM

**Location:** Hosted in person at Seattle City Hall and online on Zoom.

**Quorum:** Met (4 Commissioners present)

- **Commissioners Present:** Scot Nelson, Charlie Nguyen, Bianca Gallegos, JJ Jensen
- **Nominated Commissioners Present:** Dan Ramier, Balvina Cortez, Zachary Dar, Linda Finkle, Julia Thomposn
- **OCR staff:** Janet, Sebastian, Meredith

### Welcome, Grounding & Orientation

- Opening welcome from CDR and OCR
- Review retreat purpose
- Interaction Agreements & accessibility expectations
- Spoon Theory grounding
- Connection Icebreaker: “On a day when your spoons are low, what helps you feel connected or supported?”

### Collective Visioning: The 2026 Commission

- Reflect on hopes, values, and aspirations for the Commission’s future
- What is the most important issue you hope to help move forward in 2026? What barrier would you most want the SDC to help remove to make Seattle more inclusive?
  - Reflects on community needs
  - Aligns with the Commission's North Star
  - Include intersectionality considerations
  - Match Commission capacity

### Break

## Orientation to the Work Plan Structure

- Revisit the Commission's North Star goals (WHY we exist)
- Introduction to the Strategic Goals
  - (HOW we organize the work)
- Overview of the preliminary Areas of Interest (WHAT we may focus on)
- Committees become who carries out each Strategic 2026 priorities

## Identifying 2026 Priorities in Breakout Groups:

1. **Security & Access** - Housing, Transportation, Job/Health Access, Mental Health
2. **Community & Belonging** - Recreation, Connection, Inclusion
3. **Advocacy & Representation**- Public Policy, Education, Representation

## Name What Matters Identify the issues that feel most urgent or meaningful.

- Approach things with an equity lens, intentionally reaching out to communities and representatives who have been marginalized AKA those who have been left out of the system.
- Intentionally listening and seeking out the voices that exist.
- Language capabilities, immigration status, transportation access, workplace accommodations.
- Transportation (employment accessibility), lack of curb cuts.
- Seattle is surrounded by water, creating independent access. Once in a Kayak, many disabilities no longer impact mobility.
- Need to show the opportunity and more people will join.
- Expand community who know about the commission and advocacy.

## Prioritizing Together Assess potential priorities using: Impact, Intersectionality, Capacity, Feasibility, and Who. Validate the Priority Check for alignment with: The Commission's North Star, Clarity and specificity, Inclusion, Realistic scope for 2026

- Don't reinvent the wheel.
- Listen to the people who are already doing the work.
- Attend key events.

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- Job coaching - helping folks integrate into their new workplaces.
- Legislative advocacy - advocating for making "lived experience" a more prominent factor in employment.
- Evergreen Services (Advocacy Group) - Spoon capacity for people dealing with disabilities in their job. Workers fear losing their job.
- Outreach Panels.
- Connections to organizations or companies.
- Parks: Greenlake Boathouse planned for an adaptive launch.
- Camp Korey & Outdoors for all.
- Swim Seattle.
- Connect with political elected officials.
- Advocate for partners, audience, stakeholders, sponsors, community, cultural groups, make Greenlake the first place accessible.
- Establish/Maintain communicative relationships with the community, legislators, organizations, and companies to build solidarity for the disabled community.

## **Break + Actionable Strategy Development + Report Back + Meaning-Making**

- Host a round table, events.
- Drop action plan + list of accomplishments to elected officials in their inbox.
- Add a call to action / something that solicits a response.
- Maybe a virtual suggestion box.
- Establish some level of connection/establish relationships with community managers/outreach liaison.
- In meetings, being able to communicate.
- Build solidarity in employment security by connecting with "X" organizations and companies to establish a relationship
  - Holding at least 1 listening session to learn about the employment security needs of the disabled community and presenting the information gathered to legislators.
  - Creating and awarding 1 company to publicly recognize efforts in employment security for the disabled community.

## Who do we need to partner with?

- Newly elected city officials, do we have any connections with them?
- Different orgs (prioritize ones that already have solid accessible disability services for their employment.
- Dept. of Vocational Rehabilitation (federal agency with good expertise).

## What's happening outside meetings?

- Scheduling and meeting with organizations, companies, elected officials.

## What's happening inside meeting?

- Reporting lessons learned to fellow commissioners.
- Join Advocacy group as a specific pilot project that can be successful /make headway in one year.
- Targeted advocacy takes time and find support in community.
- "What actions bring this priority to life?"
- Specific actions related to creating relationships, staying on tasks to make this happen (time, money, connections, advocacy groups, people with disabilities, other cultures want access).
- Universal design
- "What can we do inside monthly meetings?" guest speakers, etc.
- Adaptive sports, outdoors for all, Snohomish community experience, manufactures, community groups and getting into the water.

## "What can we do outside meetings?"

Most of the work outside meetings, relationship building with specific groups, elected officials, other disabilities related organizations related to sports.

## "Who do we need to partner with?"

- Seattle Parks and Recs plus other COS depts
- Other organizations in sports disability world, funding organizations (grants) Christofer Reeves, T-Mobile, Walmart, special Olympics.
- Advice from other places or orgs

## **Closing & Appreciations**

- Appreciation round
- Preview of December 4 meeting (committee structure, ADA coordinators, next steps)
- Invitation to the Boards & Commissions Celebration on December 6