

SPCA FAQ

Why was this organization created?

The spark that led to the creation of the Student-Provo City Alliance was the student response to the possibility of a permit parking program in the neighborhood south of campus. Several students organized to attend the city council meeting and share their thoughts of the program. Shortly thereafter the students realized that student involvement in local Provo government had been sorely lack for years and that they had an opportunity to change that. The vision of the organization has grown quickly to encompass service to the community, voter education, and searching for long-term solutions that balance the interests of all groups within the community.

What issues does this organization deal with?

Since Provo City elections will be held this fall the organization is focusing its efforts on voter registration and voter education, including the creation of video interviews with candidates, hosting debates, and facilitating citizen access to city council minutes and video. After the election the organization will likely apply more resources to studying long-term solutions to parking and zoning regulations that affect students and more permanent residents, and encouraging service to the community. The SPCA also hopes to encourage students and professors to apply their knowledge and time to local issues.

Why is the alliance important?

The SPCA will help students become more involved in the community through education about local laws and opportunities to serve. With the help of the SPCA, instead of uninformed student response to city regulation, students can provide input as regulations are crafted. By seeking the viewpoint of long-term residents, the SPCA will facilitate comprise solutions with broad appeal. Additionally, the SPCA will help students begin a pattern of active citizenship and community involvement, values and practices which are necessary for a healthy democracy, and rewarding for those involved.

I only live in Provo for a few years during college, why should I become involved?

Even though you only live in Provo a few years, it is still your adopted community and you are affected by policies and laws the city enforces. Becoming an aware citizen is rewarding knowing that you can make a difference in your community.

The benefits of your efforts depend on your level of involvement. If you play a regular role in the SPCA you will learn how local government functions and how to make changes in your community, as well as gain first-hand experience in a non-profit organization. This opportunity may not be as readily available later in life.

If, instead, you choose to volunteer from time to time, you will likely enjoy a warm fuzzy feeling for your efforts, while being able to meet other people engaged in a good cause.

I'm from another state and I don't want to through my vote away here in Utah where it doesn't matter.

Your ability to influence an election is inversely proportional to the size of the election. No matter which state you come from, your ability to affect national and state races pales in comparison to your ability to affect a city election, especially if you do not live in that state in the months preceding the election. Since you spend the majority of the year at school, policies

in Provo will affect more of your time than policies at home. Additionally, your greatest ability to affect an election is likely not your vote, but your influence on other voters, which is difficult to do when you are in a different state. Hence, if you are looking to affect the outcome of an election, your best bet is right here in Provo. Finally, after you leave Provo, students will still make up a significant portion of the city (approximately one fourth), and perhaps some of those students will be your extended family members, friends, or children. Life for those students will be better if previous students have developed and maintained a tradition of local civic involvement.

Which city laws most affect me?

The Provo Municipal Council is the legislative body for Provo, and can create laws about countless topics. It creates zoning ordinances that determine, to a certain extent, where renters can live, and how many renters can live in a dwelling, which in turn affects the cost of renting. The council also decides where and how to implement parking permit programs that may impact on-street parking in your neighborhood. These programs can be helpful or hurtful, depending on how they are designed. As such, making Provo a great place for everyone to live requires thoughtful input from all citizens, including you. Other topics the council can consider, including business regulation, bike lanes, city parks, and community centers, might be of interest to you.

What is the issue over parking?

The municipal council created the North Joaquin Permit Parking Area as it approved the development of a large apartment complex near 500 N and 600 E. The complex would house about 900 single renters (mostly students) and provide fewer parking spaces than beds. To prevent residents of the complex from taking all nearby street parking spaces, the city planned a permit system. The program would have restricted on-street night parking (from 1am to 6am) in a region south of campus to those cars with parking permits. Initially, the parking restrictions would have begun September 2009, but construction of the complex has been delayed, and the municipal council decided to postpone the parking restrictions for two years. Student reaction to the parking permit was the impetus for the creation of the SPCA, but the vision of the organization has since expanded to include the creation of voter and citizen resources, community service, and searching for long-term solutions to current problems. For more information about the North Joaquin Parking Permit Area, please see that section of our FAQ.

How can I get involved?

The SPCA needs all the enthusiasm, skill, and time you can offer. We have several councils, each led by a vice-president. These include research, student-involvement, community and university relations, and public relations. Contact a member of the SCPA or visit our website and review the task list to find specific projects that need your help.

What are the major issues for this election?

Please see our website for candidate responses to our questionnaire and video interviews, as well as the websites of the candidates, to decide what is most important to you.

Does the alliance back political candidates?

At this time the SPCA has not endorsed any candidates.