

# The Hazelnut

A City of Tukwila publication for our residential and business communities



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 1

*Tukwila: The City of Opportunity, the Community of Choice*

## Mayor's Message



### In appreciation of all those who have stepped up to assist others during this pandemic

As we have come to know, 2020 was a year that brought unprecedented hardship and grief to so many across the world and here in Tukwila. However, it was also an opportunity to see the best in people and organizations. Many rose to assist neighbors, innovate new ways to deliver key services, and identify new resources for people in need.

The first edition of each year's Hazelnut serves as an annual look back. For the City government, the pandemic significantly impacted the budget (10% reduction) and the fundamental delivery of City services. Yet, in this newsletter you will see many ways that the City and its staff continued to provide a high level of service during the pandemic. I especially want to take this opportunity to highlight just a few examples of the amazing way the Tukwila community stepped up to help during these difficult times.

**Still Waters: Services for Families in Transition** – Of service to the community since 2014, Still Waters' Snack Pack Program has provided weekend meals for Tukwila students struggling with housing and food insecurity during the pandemic. Many volunteers help to assemble meals, distribute the packs, organize food drives, and provide public donations.

**Tukwila Children's Foundation** – A long-standing organization in our community, the Tukwila Children's Foundation (TCF) once again stepped up to meet the needs of Tukwila families with children. TCF both made foundation funds available to families in need of rental assistance, and also leveraged additional grant funding from King County in order to support more families.

**Tukwila Pantry** – The Tukwila Pantry has been a lifeline in our community for years, but in 2020, they were a lifeline for many more families. In fact, they served 58% more food to their clients than in the previous year. In 2020, the Tukwila Pantry distributed an unprecedented 2,790,655 pounds of food. Of that, 82% – or 2,301,783 pounds of food – went to families in Tukwila.

**Katrina Dohn** – Long a force in the Tukwila community, Katrina once again jumped up to assist Tukwila neighbors – and some in Skyway as well. In response to building fires both in Tukwila and Skyway that displaced residents, Katrina rallied additional volunteers to provide these people with donated furniture, household goods and other necessities. Providing significant aid to our neighbors, these examples of Katrina's work reflect only a few of the ways she has assisted individuals and families in Tukwila and beyond this past year.

I know these are just some examples of the many, many activities as Tukwila neighbors and other community members helped residents struggling during the pandemic. I would like to hear from you about others in Tukwila reaching out to their neighbors. I am in admiration and appreciation for all of the small and large deeds that have occurred, and I look forward to witnessing more greatness this year as the community, City and others work together to assist our neighbors impacted by this difficult pandemic. I know you've heard this before, but in the meantime, please remember to keep masking up, maintaining social distancing and continue frequent hand washing. And, thank you to all our communities' great volunteers.

*Allan Ekberg*  
Mayor, City of Tukwila

## Getting Vaccinated for COVID-19



**Both vaccines are provided at no cost.**

The federal government will cover the cost of your vaccine. You should not be charged or billed. Your provider should also not charge you for an office visit if you only go in to get the vaccine.

**You will need to get two doses.** You will get two doses of vaccine, three to four weeks apart.

**Both vaccines are safe and effective.** The vaccines are 94 to 95 percent effective. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the vaccines for emergency use and found no serious safety concerns. Independent experts confirmed it met high safety and efficacy standards.

## Vacunarse contra la COVID-19



**Ambas vacunas se proporcionan sin costo.**

El Gobierno federal cubrirá el costo de su vacuna. No le deben cobrar ni facturar ningún costo. Además, su proveedor tampoco le debe cobrar la visita al consultorio si solamente va a vacunarse.

**Necesitará colocarse dos dosis.** Se colocará dos dosis de la vacuna con un intervalo de tres a cuatro semanas.

**Ambas vacunas son seguras y efectivas.** Las vacunas tienen una efectividad de entre un 94% y un 95%. La Administración de Alimentos y Medicamentos de los Estados Unidos (FDA, por su sigla en inglés) autorizó el uso de emergencia de las vacunas y no encontró ningún problema grave de seguridad. Expertos independientes confirmaron que cumplían con altos estándares de seguridad y eficacia.

## Iska tallaalida COVID-19



**Labada tallaalba waxaa lagu bixiyaa**

**lacag la'aan/bilaash.** Dawlada federaalka ayaa bixinaysa kharashka tallaaliga. Waa inaan lacag laga qaadin ama laga codsan. Dhakhtarkaagu waa inuusan lacag kaaga qaadin booqashada xafiiska haddii aad u aado qaadashada tallaaliga.

**Waxaad u baahan doontaa inaad qaadata laba qiyaasood oo tallaal ah.** Waxaad qaadan doontaa laba qiyaasood oo tallaal ah, oo ay u dhexeyso saddex illaa afar toddobaad.

**Labada tallaalba waa kuwo badbaado iyo waxtar leh.** Tallaalada waa kuwo waxtar leh boqolkiiba 94 illaa 95. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA, Maamulka Cuntada iyo Daawooyinka ee Mareykanka) ayaa oggolaaday tallaalada in loo isticmaalo xaaladaha degdegga ah mana ka helin wax walaac ah oo xagga badbaadada ah. Khubaro madaxbanaan ayaa xaqiijiyay inay tallaaladu buuxiyeen heerarka sare ee badbaada iyo tayada.

## Tiêm Vắc-xin Ngừa COVID-19



**Cả hai loại vắc-xin đều được cung cấp**

**miễn phí.** Chính quyền liên bang sẽ bao trả chi phí tiêm vắc-xin của quý vị. Quý vị sẽ không bị tính phí hay bị gửi hóa đơn. Nhà cung cấp dịch vụ của quý vị cũng không nên tính phí thăm khám nếu quý vị đến chỉ để tiêm vắc-xin.

**Quý vị sẽ cần tiêm hai liều.** Quý vị sẽ tiêm hai liều vắc-xin, cách nhau ba đến bốn tuần.

**Cả hai loại vắc-xin đều an toàn và hiệu quả.** Các vắc-xin này hiệu quả 94 đến 95 phần trăm. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA, Cơ Quan Quản Lý Thực Phẩm và Dược Phẩm Hoa Kỳ) cho phép sử dụng vắc-xin trong trường hợp khẩn cấp và không có quan ngại nghiêm trọng nào về an toàn được phát hiện. Các chuyên gia độc lập xác nhận rằng vắc-xin đáp ứng các tiêu chuẩn về an toàn và hiệu quả cao.

### VACCINATION LOCATIONS

**Kent:**

accesso ShoWare Center  
625 West James Street

**Auburn:**

General Services Administration Complex  
2701 C Street SW

### PHONE ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

If you need language interpretation or can't use the online Phase Finder tool, the following hotlines are available:

WA State COVID-19 Assistance: 1-800-525-0127 or 1-888-856-5816 (then press #)  
Monday-Friday: 6:00AM-10:00PM Saturday & Sunday: 8:00AM-6:00PM

King County COVID-19 Call Center: 206-477-3977 8:00AM-7:00PM

**For language interpretation, say your preferred language when connected.**

# Council Corner



## City Council advances efficiency and transparency for the community it serves

*by Kate Kruller,  
2021 Council President*

We begin the new year with many changes all around us – yet so much the same – as we continue under conditions of a global pandemic and the additional burdens placed upon each of us.

I appreciate our resilience as a community, and am in awe of how we work together in so many ways. It's in our neighborhoods as we look after each other. It's in our homes where working parents become teachers' aides and students work to learn online. It's in our faith community providing food, clothing and supplies, and in community organizations and City staff who help with rental assistance and other critical resources. It's at our food bank feeding five and tenfold the previous number of families in need. It is at the COVID test site, where our Fire Department coordinates to keep us tested and to eventually receive vaccines. It's there when we help struggling businesses by being loyal patrons when we can afford it. It's there when we uplift and encourage one another online. The spirit in Tukwila is unique in how it comes together and I want to recognize it here. The good in our community is exponential – and it far exceeds any challenge we will encounter. Thank you to everyone for that.

Your City Council continues to work under mandates that have us meeting online from our homes. In our first meetings this year, we started by considering our own processes. Are we serving you in the best way possible? Are we able to remove institutionalized barriers? Are we as efficient or effective as we can be? This is a work in progress, but we are making some changes already:

- ▶ New titles, scopes and memberships have been established for the four 2021 Council Committees:
  - Finance & Governance
  - Planning & Community Development
  - Community Services & Safety
  - Transportation & Infrastructure ServicesTo learn more about them, visit [TukwilaWA.gov/council](https://tukwilaWA.gov/council).
- ▶ Council Committee meetings are more accessible. In addition to the phone call-in line, the Microsoft Teams meeting link is now available on each agenda so that you can join and watch in real time. Meetings will also be recorded and posted on TukTV for viewing at your convenience.
- ▶ Public comment at Regular Council and Committee of the Whole meetings can now be delivered directly to the Council, rather than being read by City staff. We wanted to make it possible to open the microphone and camera on anyone who wants to speak – just as we did when we met in person at Council Chambers.
- ▶ Your Council greatly pared down the biennial budget to balance what we spend according to what is coming in during these economic times. As we move through the year, we will monitor, review and adjust as the actual conditions of the economy become known.

We appreciate and are listening to your suggestions and ideas as we navigate 2021. We will continue to make our processes more adaptable and inclusive. We hope to meet with you in the community – using whatever methods we can – with the goal of working to build up our community together.

I wish you and your family every blessing, hope, safety and good health as we journey forward into 2021.

## Finance Department takes steps forward, while preparing for the unknown

With COVID-19 in full swing for much of 2020, predicting its consequences was a challenge for everyone. The Finance Department spent a significant amount of time forecasting the financial impacts of the pandemic. This provided the City Council with a detailed analysis, enabling them to make informed financial decisions.

Centralizing the costs associated with various City regulations, the Finance Department created a City-wide fee schedule which includes a listing of almost all of the

City's fees and charges, along with applicable references to the Tukwila Municipal Code. Currently in draft form, the schedule is anticipated to be published later this year.

Provider support for the City's current financial software system – in use for decades – is anticipated to expire in the next few years. The Finance Department issued a Request for Proposals for a new Enterprise Resource Planning software system to replace it. The new system, once fully implemented, will provide new and better ways for residents and businesses to receive financial information and pay utility bills and business taxes. The new system will also allow the City to achieve long-term savings by allowing the City to streamline processes and go virtually paperless.



## Enhanced efforts for safe City facilities

Facilities Maintenance and Operations is responsible for the normal regular maintenance of all City-owned facilities. They also perform the preventive maintenance that keeps the buildings safe and operational. In 2020 the scope of the crew's duties expanded as they were introduced to the complex building systems in the City's newest facilities, the Justice Center and new Fire Stations 51 and 52.

At the onset of COVID, our Facilities Maintenance staff quickly responded with sanitation and disinfectant supplies; they fabricated necessary plexiglass barriers to protect the City's staff and the visiting public; and they fabricated a payment drop box at City Hall allowing residents easy access to deliver utility payments.

When a fire raged through one of our community's apartment complexes, Facilities Maintenance staff jumped in to help by providing a space and access for donated furniture and furnishings to be staged, allowing for quick distribution to those who desperately needed them.

Like sanitizing superheroes, Facilities Maintenance and Operations staff zoom around the City facilities, in and out of all staff and public areas. Day and night, they swiftly clean and disinfect surfaces, change light bulbs in a flash, and make graffiti, trash and recycling disappear. With this team, no area is safe for germs, leaks, fingerprints or dust mites!



## “Green the Green” restores shorelines

One of 2020's project milestones here in Tukwila was the completion of a pilot effort to work with riverfront landowners restoring privately-owned shorelines. One of the limiting factors for recovering threatened Chinook salmon – and other endangered fish that live in the river – are high water temperatures. Restoring shorelines with native trees and shrubs will provide much-needed shade in the long term, while also providing a food source (insects).

In 2017, the City established this capital improvement project and began outreach to identify property owners who would be interested in shoreline restoration.

The City was fortunate to partner with the Harnish Group, Inc., to restore a portion of shoreline at the NC Machinery site. Other partnerships were made with Schneider & Schneider and JSH Properties, Inc., to restore the shoreline adjacent to Southcenter Plaza. The project's completion



owes its success to the cooperation and dedication of these partners, and with funding support from WRIA 9 (our local watershed), the King County Flood Control District and the Rose Foundation. The Contractor, Applied Ecology, LLC, planted more than 5,700 native trees and shrubs in 2020, restoring more than 1/3 mile of shoreline over nearly two acres. After completing the planting work by the end of March, Applied Ecology worked throughout the summer and fall watering the plants and fighting back intruding non-native species. The project was completed in December. The next steps will be to maintain the plantings and the site. The first three years will be particularly important in helping the native trees and shrubs become established. Tukwila has received a grant from WRIA 9 and the King County Flood Control District to support two years of maintenance.



## Clerk's office navigating new ways to provide public service

Responsible for public meetings in a time of physical distancing, the City Clerk's Office faced numerous challenges. Much of the business of the City switched from in-person to digital interactions, some of which resulted in improved efficiencies and preparedness. Per the Governor's proclamations, staff navigated restrictions regarding the Open Public Meetings Act, and developed a fully digital production and delivery process for weekly agenda packets.

After developing a policy for its use, an electronic signature tool was used for contracts and legislation. A no-contact bid

acceptance and remote bid opening process was implemented for multiple City projects.

Staff provided a continued City Hall presence for deliveries and switchboard coverage, allowing staff working remotely to still be reachable to callers.

Ana Le, Electronic Content Management Coordinator, worked with the Vietnamese Martyrs Parish on behalf of the Tukwila community: \$4,960 was collected for Tukwila Pantry and the SnackPack program, plus the donation of 500 masks, diapers, coats and hygiene products.



## City technology addresses the needs of staff and the community

In March of 2020, when the Governor's directive had the Mayor asking staff to work from home, the City was faced with the monumental task of immediately becoming a virtual City. The goal was to continue to provide excellent services to the residents and businesses of Tukwila while keeping everyone safe – a responsibility of the Technology & Innovation Services (TIS) Department.

The City was fortunate in that many staff members already utilized laptops and could become mobile immediately. Many services were available to the mobile workforce utilizing Office 365, Teams, SharePoint, and Cloud services, and Tukwila employees refined their skills with these online tools. They also figured out how to work at their kitchen tables, home office, or hiding from kids in the basement. Immediately virtual meetings became the accepted method of collaboration. Staff quickly learned how to use the mute button, making "You're on mute, we can't hear you" the 2020 catch phrase. The new normal included introductions to dogs, cats, babies, and virtual students walking past the camera.

However, some City systems still required staff to connect securely back to the City's network. To ensure network safety, a new virtual private network (VPN) service was implemented. Users needed instruction on how to install the VPN client on their laptop and phone, and how to use the new technology. TIS supported this roll out and education of staff in record time, and were available 24/7 for support of the new technology.

In addition to supporting the stay-at-home work force, TIS completed a host of other projects in 2020. They partnered with the Tukwila School District, deploying approximately 500 hotspots to Tukwila students in support of online learning. Having provided technology specifications for the City's new public safety facilities, TIS installed and configured technology systems at the new Justice Center for the Police and Municipal Court. They led the project that transitioned Tukwila's permitting processes to the cloud, implementing accessible online permitting.

Whether working from City offices or from a remote location, these tools and services provided by TIS enabled City staff to continue providing the same high caliber of support to the community.



## Police: Community heroes every day

On March 13, Officer Jon Thomas responded to a report of a suicidal male that had stepped over the railing on a bridge over Interstate 5. The male was in crisis and was moments away from following through with his plan. Officer Thomas spent over 20 minutes calmly gaining the male's trust and talking with him. All of this occurred while the male was standing on the freeway sign support with moving traffic below him. The officer eventually was able to talk the male into climbing back over the railing. Officer Thomas' calm demeanor and crisis intervention training prevented a very different outcome.

On July 14, Officer Kenneth Etheridge was one of the several officers responding to a single-vehicle collision where a female accidentally drove her car off a large cliff. She was unable to pinpoint her location. Several officers searched the area for about 40 minutes until they found her car down a large, steep embankment. Risking his own personal safety, Officer Etheridge climbed down to the driver to provide first aid and assurance. He remained with her until Tukwila Fire personnel could set up ropes to rappel down to his location, to stabilize and help her up the steep hillside. Officer Etheridge's dedication to provide service to a person who needed help was exemplary.

On June 30, Officer Kellie Greenhill noticed a man laying on a sidewalk. She stopped to investigate and aid as Officer Aaron Zwicky arrived to assist. They noted the man was not breathing and did not have a pulse, so Officer Zwicky started CPR. Officer Oziel Arjona arrived and deployed AED (automated external defibrillator), delivering one shock to the man. Officer Greenhill and Officer Arjona then took turns to provide chest compressions. Tukwila Fire and King County Medic One arrived after approximately six minutes of the officers' life saving efforts. They took over and eventually a pulse was found on the man, who was stabilized and transported to the hospital. The actions of all three officers directly saved the man's life.

On August 29, a vehicle was rear-ended at high speed and caught on fire. The driver was unconscious when she was pulled from the wreckage. She managed to wake up and tell a Pierce County Sheriff deputy that her 11 year-old daughter was trapped in the backseat of the car. After unsuccessfully extricating the child from the vehicle, the deputy ran back to his patrol car to get a fire extinguisher. In the meantime, Commander Todd Rossi – who happened to be off-duty in the vicinity of the burning vehicle – ran toward the burning car, smashed in one of the windows, and used a knife to cut the child's seatbelt. Moments after pulling the child out, the vehicle became completely engulfed in flames. Due to Commander Rossi's quick actions, the child's life was saved.

Ever had a bad neighbor? Now, what if that neighbor was also actively dealing drugs, leaving stolen cars in front of their apartment, bringing in stolen merchandise, and genuinely frightening and threatening you with bodily harm if you called the police? This was unfortunately the case last year for an apartment complex near Tukwila International Boulevard, which also happened to house a large portion of Tukwila's Bhutanese refugee community.

Several very brave neighbors stood up and said enough was enough. Multiple units of the Police Department coordinated their efforts to combat the illegal activity. They started by building relationships with the residents of the apartment complex, increasing trust and enabling collaboration to obtain crucial information.

The **Patrol Division** began increasing patrols in the area resulting in trespassing unwanted individuals, locating stolen vehicles, and arresting people with warrants who also didn't live at the complex.

The **Community Police Team (CPT)** worked with the residents and manager to determine the key individuals involved in the activity, where it was happening on and off property, and the times of day it was most prevalent.

The **Tukwila Anti-Crime (TAC) Team** began building and working narcotics cases based on the information provided from the Patrol Division and the Community Police Team.

During the very early hours of August 25, the Valley SWAT team – aided by the Tukwila TAC team and CPT – executed a search warrant at the apartment. They made 5 arrests for a variety of charges ranging from misdemeanor trespass to felony warrants to delivering heroin and other felony drugs. This search warrant also enabled the apartment manager to secure an eviction (extremely difficult to obtain during the pandemic).

Where once – even during a pandemic – parents living in the complex wouldn't let their kids outside to play, crime-free livability was achieved by a team effort between the residents and the Tukwila Police Department.



## Teens join City officials in Washington, D.C.

For more than 10 years, “strengthening our community” has been the mission of the Teens for Tukwila youth group. Guided by Tukwila’s Parks & Recreation Department, the program’s areas of focus include advocacy, youth empowerment, service, and leadership development.

In March of 2020, eleven Teens for Tukwila members got the amazing opportunity to attend the annual National League of Cities Conference in Washington, D.C. The group attended the three-day portion of the conference that was set up for young people, with over 300 participants from across the country.



Teens for Tukwila members had the opportunity to visit some historical sites (MLK Monument, Lincoln Memorial, White House), historical museums (African American History Museum, National Archives Museum), and historical cultural places like Ben’s Chili Bowl.

The trip culminated in an opportunity for the group’s members to meet with both Senator Maria Cantwell and Representative Adam Smith. They advocated for support for community-based issues such as affordable housing, people experiencing homelessness, criminal justice reform, and life skills classes



in schools. The group was also able to sit in on Senator Patti Murray addressing guests from the state of Washington.

Teens for Tukwila members got to spend quality time with elected officials Councilmembers DeSean Quinn and Verna Seal. Councilmember Kate Kruller and Mayor Ekberg also accompanied the teens during all of the legislative meetings.



The trip was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for Teens for Tukwila members. City staff, City leadership and multiple community members worked hard pulling this experience together for these young people – proving nothing is impossible when we all work together.



Postmaster: If named addressee has moved, deliver to current resident. To help us correct addresses or eliminate duplicates, please call 206-454-7573.

**New fire facilities reflect history of support for fire service and community**

Many hands went into the opening of replacement Fire Station 51, located on South 180th and Southcenter Parkway. Opened on September 10, 2020, this new fire station fits beautifully into the Southcenter Business District. Firefighter safety was and is at the forefront of this facility, one of the finest built to date in the nation.



The vision started many years ago, a vision shared by the community, the elected officials, past and present employees. Fire Chief Keefe is one person to be highlighted.

Tom Keefe was hired as the Fire Chief for Tukwila in April of 1987. He retired in January of 2003. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Mesquite, Nevada and opened an art gallery/flower shop. He enjoyed his new business, but he had a passion for the Fire Department. He was instrumental in obtaining Battalion Chiefs, although back then they were called Shift Commanders.

Always looking to update apparatus, he facilitated the purchase of the City’s first aerial platform ladder truck. He had part of the former headquarters station remodeled, but had a dream of building a new fire station. He would be so proud to see the two new stations; sadly, Chief Keefe passed away in May of 2020 after a long battle with Mesothelioma. He shared his past vision with the current Fire Chief shortly before he passed. His love of the community was still strong, and he was pleased to hear the good news of Fire Station 51 being replaced.

From the community who voted for the Public Safety Bond in 2016, to past fire chiefs, to current and past elected officials, to the planning and construction teams, to our dedicated employees, to the first fire crew that raised the flag over that Fire Station on Sept 10, 2020, and the many that have supported this project – staff is proud to respond from this high quality building to serve the needs of Tukwila and the region.



**TUKWILA CITY HALL**  
6200 Southcenter Boulevard  
Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30AM–5:00PM  
Telephone: 206-433-1800  
Fax number: 206-433-1833  
E-mail: [Tukwila@TukwilaWA.gov](mailto:Tukwila@TukwilaWA.gov)  
Website: [TukwilaWA.gov](http://TukwilaWA.gov)

**MAYOR** Allan Ekberg.. 206-433-1850

**Mayor’s Office**  
Administration Offices..... 206-433-1850  
David Cline, *City Administrator* ....206-433-1851  
Economic Development ..... 206-433-1832  
Municipal Court..... 206-433-1840

**Administrative Services**  
Rachel Bianchi, *Dep. City Adm.*.... 206-454-7566  
City Clerk’s Office ..... 206-433-1800  
Human Resources – Personnel ...206-433-1831  
City Job Line..... 206-433-1828  
Human Services .....206-433-7181  
Community Engagement ..... 206-454-7564  
Technology Services..... 206-454-7575

**Community Development Dept.**  
Jack Pace, *Director* .....206-431-3670  
Code Enforcement .....206-431-3682

**Finance Department**  
Vicky Carlsen, *Director*..... 206-433-1835

**Fire Department**  
Jay Wittwer, *Chief*.....206-575-4404  
*Emergency Management* .....206-971-8740

**Parks/Recreation Department**  
Rick Still, *Director* .....206-767-2342

**Police Department**  
Eric Drever, *Interim Chief* .....206-433-7175

**Public Works Department**  
Hari Ponnekanti, *Director*..... 206-433-0179

**Emergency – Fire, Police** ..... 911

**TUKWILA COMMUNITY CENTER**  
12424 - 42nd Avenue South  
Recreation Division.....206-768-2822  
Senior Center/Services.....206-767-2323

**FOSTER GOLF LINKS**  
13500 Interurban Avenue South  
Pro Shop .....206-242-4221

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To email the entire Council at once:  
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Laurel Humphrey, *Analyst* ..... 206-433-8993

**CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS**  
7:00PM in Council Chambers  
Regular Meetings ..... 1st/3rd Mondays  
Committee of the Whole.....2nd/4th Mondays