

### WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Biennial Budget for 2025-26
  - Utility rate changes
- 2025 Minimum Wage rates
- Opportunities to serve your community
- ...and more!



**NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024**

**VOLUME 44, NUMBER 6**

## EMERGENCY!

This unique storm is a good reminder to evaluate YOUR preparedness. In a future event, Tukwila may experience more significant impacts. As a result, City crews and first responders may not be able to immediately respond or provide assistance.

Tukwila Emergency Management encourages all households and community members to prepare their homes and families. Build an emergency kit, have a family plan, and be informed about hazards in our community and where to go for reliable information. Above all, get involved by attending a free emergency planning and preparedness class provided by the Emergency Management team.

For information about preparedness, please visit [TukwilaWA.gov/departments/emergency-management](https://TukwilaWA.gov/departments/emergency-management).

**TukwilaWA.gov**



# The Hazelnut

*A City of Tukwila publication for our residential and business communities*

## “Bomb cyclone” kept residents and Tukwila’s Public Works crews busy

On November 19, the Puget Sound region was severely impacted by a highly unusual, rapidly intensifying low-pressure storm system (“bomb cyclone”).

These strong winds brought regional impacts that included the loss of power to 500,000 people throughout the Puget Sound region, downed trees, downed power lines and poles, as well as damage to critical power substations

Overall, Tukwila experienced relatively few storm impacts. Impacts were



limited to power outages in Tukwila, specifically in the Allentown (including the Tukwila Community Center), Duwamish, and Ryan Hill neighborhoods. Additionally, several fences around City pump stations were damaged.

Our Public Works crews worked closely with Police and Fire to cut and clear trees from roadways during the storm, and then return in the daylight to clean up the debris. Following the storm, Parks Maintenance crews assessed damages across the city and began working to clear debris and downed trees from the parks and trails. Once power was restored to the Community Center, staff quickly adjusted operations to accommodate people, serving as a warming shelter, providing a hot shower and a place to charge devices.







## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

# Adopted 2025–26 budget: collaboration, new initiatives, and financial sustainability

On November 25 the Tukwila City Council adopted the 2025–2026 budget for the City. Washington State law requires the City Council to pass a balanced budget by the end of the year. While I have had significant experience working on budgets as a Councilmember, this represents the first budget I prepared and presented to the City Council and our community as your mayor.

The two-year City budget for all funds totals \$176M in planned spending to provide all of your City services: streets, police, parks and recreation, community development, utilities, technology, courts, emergency management, finance, communications and human services. Most of the funding we receive is dedicated to a specific use or service.

True to our previous estimates – with the City's full annexation to Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority in 2025 – we were able to return \$6 million in property taxes to Tukwila voters. In addition, the upcoming budget makes modest investments in public safety and City maintenance.

I am proud of the collaborative, inclusive process and public engagement we accomplished as part of the budget development process. Through conversations at community events and working with community advocates, we collected input about community priorities and values, a crucial part of shaping our work. Through this outreach we heard that basic needs and affordable housing are community concerns.

I also want to extend my appreciation to the City Councilmembers for the thoughtful questions they asked throughout budget deliberations. This collaboration and partnership helped to deliver a budget that serves the needs of our community.

Cities in Washington State have been struggling with a systematic imbalance between revenues growing more slowly than our costs grow. This needs to be fixed in the long term.

Last year, the City convened a Financial Sustainability Committee, made up of community members who gave suggestions for the City's long-term financial policies. The Committee had three broad recommendations with specific ideas for finding efficiencies:

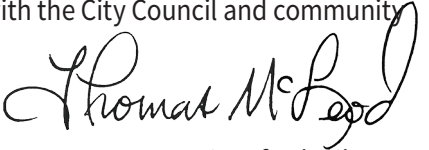
1. Be good stewards of public resources.
2. Invest in the Tukwila community's highest priorities.
3. Invest in Tukwila's future.

The adopted budget reflects these recommendations. I'd like to share with you some of the highlights.

- Investing in public safety. Two new police officers will focus on Southcenter Mall to create a safe experience for the nearly 16 million people who visit the mall each year. Also, we will fund a park ranger to increase safety in the City's parks and trails.
- Funding to prepare Tukwila to welcome the world for the FIFA World Cup in 2026.
- In partnership with Highline College and the Tukwila School District, the creation of the Tukwila Promise, a program that will provide up to two years at Highline College for eligible Foster High School graduating seniors.
- Providing additional technology and security resources to protect the City from cyber-attacks like those recently experienced at the Port of Seattle, Highline Schools, and other institutions.

In the coming months I will be highlighting these investments in more detail.

We still have work to do to implement all the recommendations of the Financial Sustainability Committee. In 2025 the City will be embarking on an effort to examine ways to be more efficient and to find ways to do more with less. Controlling costs is essential as we chart our path forward to financial sustainability. I look forward to working with the City Council and community in this effort.

  
Mayor, City of Tukwila



## Yes, Tukwila crews are ready for winter weather

Tukwila's Emergency Management offers a fun and informative YouTube video report. It highlights work done by the City to prepare for winter weather and – more importantly – provides you with some winter weather preparedness tips and City contact information. Please take a look!



## Christmas Tree recycling/pick-up

For customers already subscribed to food & yard waste collection, Recology will collect your unflocked, undecorated natural holiday tree on your regular food & yard waste service day. For customers not subscribed to food & yard waste services, please call Recology's customer service team at 206-944-3900 to schedule a free pickup of your holiday tree.

Please be sure that:

- ▶ All decorations are removed from your tree.
- ▶ Your tree is no longer than 6 feet in length.
- ▶ Your tree is out on your scheduled day of service.



## Utility rate changes for 2025 and 2026

Starting January 1, 2025, utility rates for water, sewer and surface water services will increase as part of the City's commitment to maintaining reliable infrastructure and meeting service demands.

### What's changing?

**Water Rates:** A 9% increase in 2025 and 2026.

**Average additional cost:** \$5.55/month.

**Sewer Rates:** A \$1.00/month increase for the City portion of sewer rates in 2025.

*Note: King County will also increase its wastewater treatment charge by \$3.17/month in 2025.*

**Surface Water Rates:** Increase from \$226 to \$234 in 2025, transitioning to a new ERU-based rate of \$278.53 in 2026.

**Average additional cost:** \$0.66/month in 2025 and \$3.71/month in 2026.

### Why are rates increasing?

These adjustments ensure the City can:

- Maintain and upgrade essential infrastructure.
- Address rising costs for materials, services, and regulatory compliance.
- Support long-term sustainability and green initiatives.

### How does Tukwila compare?

Even with these changes, Tukwila's rates remain competitive with neighboring cities, offering some of the most affordable services in the region.

## Emerging leaders learn how City government works

The second year of the Tukwila Community Leadership Initiative is underway. The seven-week program brings community members and City leadership together to exchange information. Through an application process, a cohort was selected based on their connection to Tukwila and interest in making positive changes. Participants learn how local government works, share their experiences, and develop skills for community involvement. This is the first year the program is bilingual – offered in English with Spanish interpretation. "I have so much fun hearing the concerns of everyone here. I like that its inclusive."

Program workshops have included basic civics lessons, a meeting with the Mayor, and discussions about housing and public safety. One participant stated, "I like the opportunity to be able to raise our voice and be heard, as well as meet very important people." Another added, "It shows that authorities are humans like us, available and working for the community." The program is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), a federal grant.



## COUNCIL CORNER

### Council of 2024 has worked together to address important City issues



*by Mohamed Abdi,  
2024 Council President*

The end of 2024 is approaching and with that, my term as Council President is concluding. This has been a year of growth, learning and opportunity, and I appreciate my fellow Councilmembers for electing me to serve in this role this year. The Council President does not have any more voting rights over the other members, but I did have a few additional duties: presiding over Committee of the Whole meetings and work sessions, signing legislation, approving agendas, assigning committee members, chairing the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee, and creating a productive Council Retreat to set the tone for the year.

It has also been a privilege to have the use of this Council Corner space to communicate about our activities and concerns. This has been an incredibly busy year that kicked off with a Council vacancy process and continued on with review of the Comprehensive Plan, updating the Rules of Procedure, various policy proposals, budget appropriations, and – an issue very important to me – helping our asylum-seeking neighbors arriving at the Riverton Park United Methodist Church. I am proud to live in a community that has stepped up to help the most vulnerable and I will continue to advocate for more funding and resources at all levels of government.

One of the most important responsibilities of the City Council is to pass a balanced budget, and as I write this we are working hard to accomplish it, often meeting late into the night. Like all Washington cities, Tukwila has an ongoing challenge with

declining revenues and increased costs for services. Our community consistently expresses a desire not to cut services, so we work closely with the Mayor on how to adequately fund them.

We support our residents with parks and street maintenance, youth, adult and senior activities, building and fire safety, police and mental health response, and so much more. It is by far the biggest responsibility and the biggest challenge of being on Council. State law requires passage of a final budget by December 31 so that the City can operate on January 1 of the new year.

To close, I'd like to thank my Council colleagues for your hard work and collaboration – De'Sean Quinn, Tosh Sharp, Armen Papyan, Jovita McConnell, Dennis Martinez, and Hannah Hedrick. I'd like to thank Mayor McLeod; the first year of your term has been very productive. I'd also like to thank the hardworking City staff, those visible to the community and those behind the scenes. Your dedication to our community is noticed and appreciated. To all the members of the community, I wish you peace and joy for the new year.



### State law dictates zoning change

On November 21, 2024, the City Council adopted an ordinance rezoning property at 6250 South 151st Street from Low-Density Residential to Medium-Density Residential. This action was taken following public hearing testimony from neighbors concerned about community impacts and asking the Council to not approve the change.

As clarification, in November 2023 the Council denied the rezone application. However, a King County Superior Court order declared that “substantial evidence... does not support denial of the rezone” per our Municipal Code, and that the denial was therefore not compliant with State law. The order also required the Tukwila City Council to hold another hearing and issue a new decision based on the evidence in the record. Ordinance 2744 was subsequently adopted by the City Council.

In 2025 Tukwila will be consolidating the low and medium density residential zones into a new middle housing zone to comply with new statewide requirements.



## RECENT COUNCIL ACTIONS

- Confirmed appointment of Aaron BeMiller as Finance Director
- Amended Fire and Parks Impact Fee Schedules (Ords. 2734 & 2735)
- Awarded bid to Iron Horse, LLC for 2023 Central Business District Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Phase 4B Project
- Accepted grant funding from Washington State Recreation & Conservation Office for Crystal Springs Park Lighting Replacement Project
- Amended purpose of Library Advisory Board (Ord. 2737)
- Accepted grant funding from Washington State Department of Ecology for Stormwater Quality Retrofit Program Part 2
- Implemented provisions of Washington State Senate Bill 5290 (Ords. 2738 thru 2743)
- Rezoned property on South 151st Street to Medium Density Residential (Ord. 2744)
- Updated Land Use Fee Schedule (Res. 2103)
- Authorized Memorandum of Understanding expressing support to establish Kent Valley Air and Space Manufacturing Roundtable
- Established health and safety standards for temporary encampments at religious institutions (Ord. 2745)
- Accepted WSDOT grant funding for final design and construction of 42nd Avenue South Bridge replacement
- Approved lodging tax funding for the 2025-2026 Seawolves Partnership

## CONFIRMATIONS

Congratulations to following community members who were confirmed to a City Commission and Board. Tukwila thanks you for your volunteer service to our community!

### Arts Commission:

Kamla Kakaria, Angeline Peralta

### Human Services Advisory Board:

Marilyn Westman, Crystal Lyons

## In 2025, minimum wage rates go up!

On January 1, 2025, increased minimum wage hourly rates will go into effect. Certain employers are required to pay certain employees the 2025 minimum hourly rate of \$21.10 (large employers) or \$20.10 (mid-size employers). Updated rates were published on the City's Labor Standards web page in October [[TukwilaWA.gov/MinimumWage](https://TukwilaWA.gov/MinimumWage)].

Tukwila employers, employees and community groups need to be aware of the change. Employers with even one hourly employee in Tukwila may actually be considered a Large or Mid-Size Employer. "Covered" employers are required to pay Tukwila minimum wage rates, and also must offer qualified part-time employees additional hours of work before hiring new employees, subcontractors or staffing agencies.

The City's web page [TukwilaWA.gov/MinimumWage](https://TukwilaWA.gov/MinimumWage) outlines the law's requirements.

You'll find downloadable resources to determine if an employer is "covered". Required Notice to Employee forms, Labor Standards FAQs, and employee Complaint Forms are there as well.



To get the word out, Minimum Wage Program Manager Julie Hatley hosts an informational table at community events. She can also be invited to host a Q&A, explaining the program and providing handouts for the attendees.



Questions? Please contact Julie directly at 206-552-6873, or email [MinimumWage@TukwilaWA.gov](mailto:MinimumWage@TukwilaWA.gov).

*City Council meeting minutes and the complete text of all legislative items are available online in the Digital Records Center at [TukwilaWA.gov](https://TukwilaWA.gov).*

*For additional information about the work of the City Council, please call 206-433-8993.*

# COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTORS

## Safety in Tukwila School District

Safety remains a top priority across the Tukwila School District. We are proud to share how we've partnered with the City of Tukwila to strengthen safety in our schools and community.

**School Safety** – Last year, the School Board approved the return of School Resource Officers (SROs) to our district. We extend our thanks to Chief Drever and the City of Tukwila for their collaboration and support in securing funding for this initiative. This fall, our two officers Marc Schutt at Showalter Middle School and Joe Tran at Foster High School began working in our schools, contributing to a positive start to the school year. In addition, we continue to closely monitor national and local security concerns. We follow our safety protocols to assess when lockdowns or shelter-in-place actions are necessary, working hand-in-hand with City emergency responders, school staff, and district administrators to ensure our procedures are up-to-date, well-communicated, and regularly reviewed.

**Cyber Safety** – In light of recent cyber security incidents in nearby districts, Tukwila School District has been proactive in safeguarding our digital systems. For the past several years, we have partnered with a third-party cybersecurity team to conduct monthly system analytics. We are committed to maintaining the highest level of cyber protection, and are continuously learning from other districts and experts to improve our security measures.

**Student Safety** – Our Superintendent's Student Advisory Board has been instrumental in guiding district priorities, including student safety. This dedicated group of students meets regularly to discuss critical issues, with safety being a key focus. They have identified three priority areas: physical safety, social-emotional safety, and social media safety. Together, we are developing strategies and action plans to address these concerns. It's incredibly powerful to hear from our students and implement changes that reflect their experiences and insights.

We are grateful for the continued partnership with the City of Tukwila as we work together to ensure the safety and well-being of our students and community. If you have any questions, please contact the Tukwila School District at [communications@tukwila.wednet.edu](mailto:communications@tukwila.wednet.edu) or 206-901-8006.



*Dr. Concie Pedroza  
Superintendent,  
Tukwila School District*

## Are you eligible for a property tax reduction?

Washington state has a program to help seniors remain in the homes they love by easing their property tax burden. Even better, the King County Assessor and others worked with the legislature to update that program by raising the income limit. The annual income limit for this program is now \$84,000.

This new income limit keeps up with inflation and provides tax relief for tens of thousands more King County residents. The exemption can reduce property tax by 30% to 90%, depending on income level, property value and taxing district. And on top of that, our office has worked to dramatically reduce the time it takes to process applications.

This relief is available to applicants who meet the following criteria:

### Age/Disability

- Born in 1962 or earlier, or
- Disabled and unable to work in 2023 or earlier, or
- Veteran of United States armed forces, with service-connected evaluation of 80%, or entitled to and receiving compensation from U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs at the 100% rate because you are unemployable due to service-connected disability.

### Income (earned in 2022)

- Annual household income under the threshold of \$84,000, including Social Security and other sources (RCW 84.36.383(5))

### Ownership/Occupancy

- Own your residence as of 12/31/2023, and
- Occupy as a primary residence during six months of 2024

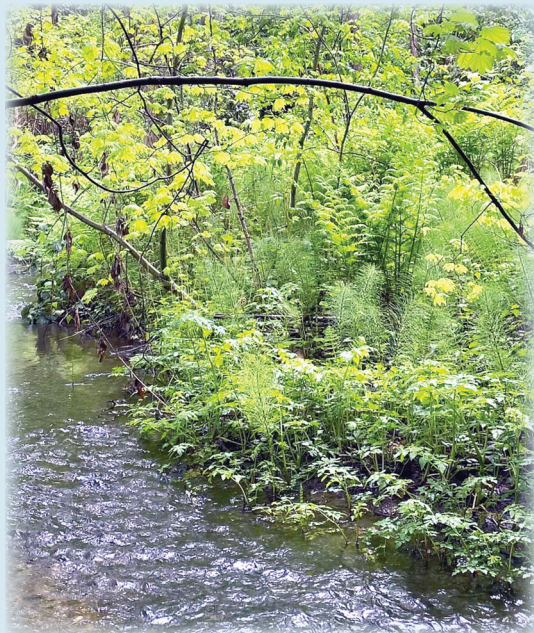
With information from your 2024 tax documents, you can apply online at [TaxRelief.KingCounty.gov](https://taxrelief.kingcounty.gov). To get more information, or assistance with the online application, please call 206-296-3920, or email [Exemptions.Assessments@KingCounty.gov](mailto:Exemptions.Assessments@KingCounty.gov).

I want every senior to get the property tax relief they are entitled to. Please contact us if you think you might be eligible.

*John Wilson,  
King County Assessor*







## Wetlands, trees, shoreline, streams & slopes – so much environment!

**INFORMATION SESSION**  
**Wednesday, January 8**  
**6:30 to 8:00PM**  
 at the  
**Tukwila Community Center**

Tukwila is home to many wetlands, streams, shorelines, springs and steep slopes. If you have any questions or need help, specialized Community Development staff will be on hand with answers.

Learn about critical area regulations, resources available and stewardship techniques. Please drop in to find out more!

## Seniors: Start 2025 with some free drop-in Fitness classes!

### Functional Strength Training

**Wednesdays**, 8:05 a.m. – 9 a.m.

Learn how to move your muscles to improve posture, balance, core strength, coordination, and range of motion. This class aims to increase energy and strength to perform daily activities with minimal pain and injury. Participants can expect standing and floor exercises. Instructor: Jocelyn Shelby.

### Silver Sneakers Program for Muscle Strength and Range of Movement

**Tuesdays**, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

**Thursdays**, 8:05 a.m. – 9 a.m.

Designed to increase muscle strength, range of movement, and improve activities for daily living. Low-impact training suitable for all fitness levels, a chair may be used for seated exercises and standing support. Class can be modified depending on fitness levels. Instructor: Suzanne Simmons.

### Fitness Drumming

**Mondays**, 11 a.m. – Noon

March to the beat of your own drum with one of the latest and most fun fitness trends! Drum Fitness can be done sitting or standing and takes a simple movement – drumming – and turns it into a full-body workout that will leave you smiling, sweating, and feeling great. It brings together drumsticks, an exercise ball, and a stand to create one of the most fun workouts you'll ever do. Using the exercise ball as your drum, and mixing in fun moves, drum fitness turns keeping a rhythm into a workout you won't want to stop. All fitness levels are welcome! Instructor: Suzanne Simmons.



**Stay connected! Subscribe to the Senior Scoop newsletter**

### Beginning Line Dancing

**Tuesdays**, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

This is a great form of low impact exercise where participants will learn repeated dance steps that follow a pattern to fun music. Line dancing will increase balance and flexibility as well as improve strength, muscle function, and cardiovascular heart health. Dances may include the Electric Slide, Cupid Shuffle, Macarena and more! Instructor: Suzanne Simmons.

### Soul Line Dance Party

**Friday, March 7**, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

You will have a chance to showcase all of your favorite dances and show off all you have learned. Even if you don't know the dances, come and enjoy an afternoon of fun and friendship. Newbies are welcome to join the party! Line dancing is a great form of low impact exercise where participants will learn repeated dance steps that follow a pattern to fun music. Line Dancing will increase balance and flexibility as well as improve strength, muscle function, and cardiovascular heart health. Dances may include the Electric Slide, Cupid Shuffle, Macarena and more!

### SAIL (Staying Active and Independent for Life)

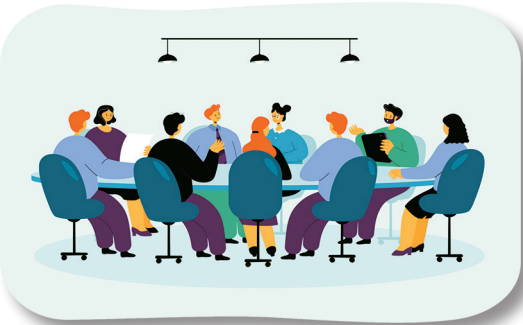
**Mondays & Wednesdays**, 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

SAIL is an evidence-based fall prevention fitness program for adults 65 and older. Performing exercises that improve strength, balance and flexibility is the single most important activity adults can do to stay active and reduce their chances of falling. The entire class curriculum of activities and education in the Stay Active and Independent for Life program has proven to help improve strength and balance, if done regularly. Instructors: Trish Jones, Madison Sivonen.

Postmaster: If named addressee has moved, deliver to current resident.

Opportunities for you to get involved in the Tukwila community

The City of Tukwila is assisted in its operations in several areas by the volunteers who serve on our Boards, Commissions and Committees. These advisory bodies provide guidance to decision-makers and represent the diverse viewpoints of the community, bringing public participation into government. Volunteers serve a vital function by offering their time and expertise as members.



The following advisory bodies have vacant positions or positions with terms ending March 31, 2025:

ADVISORY BODY	REPRESENTATIVES NEEDED
Arts Commission	Resident positions
Equity and Social Justice Commission	Community positions
Human Services Advisory Board	Resident, business and faith-based positions
Library Advisory Board	Resident positions
Park Commission	Community positions

Are you interested in serving on one of these advisory bodies? Please submit a completed *Boards, Commissions and Committees Application for Appointment* to the Mayor’s Office by **5:00PM on February 14, 2025**. You can find the application – as well as additional information about all of the City’s the boards, commissions and committees – on the City’s website at **TukwilaWA.gov/boards**. For more information, please call 206-433-1850.

**TUKWILA CITY HALL**  
6200 Southcenter Boulevard  
City Hall campus in-person hours:  
Monday/Wednesday/Thursday, 8:30AM–4:00PM  
Phone: 206-433-1800 Fax: 206-433-1833  
Email: [Tukwila@TukwilaWA.gov](mailto:Tukwila@TukwilaWA.gov)  
Website: [TukwilaWA.gov](http://TukwilaWA.gov)

**MAYOR** Thomas McLeod ..... 206-433-1850

**Mayor’s Office**  
Administration Offices..... 206-433-1850  
Marty Wine, *City Administrator*.....206-433-1851  
Brandon Miles, *Dir, Strat Init/Gov Rel* 206-431-3684  
City Clerk’s Office..... 206-433-1800  
Community Engagement ..... 206-454-7564  
Economic Development ..... 206-433-1832  
Human Resources – Personnel ...206-433-1831  
Human Services .....206-433-7181  
Emergency Management .....206-971-8750  
Technology Services..... 206-454-7575

**Community Development Dept.**  
Nora Gierloff, *Director* .....206-431-3670  
Code Enforcement .....206-431-3682

**Finance Department**  
Aaron BeMiller, *Director* ..... 206-433-1835

**Parks/Recreation Department**  
Kris Kelly, *Interim Director* ..... 206-767-2342

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

**Public Works Department**  
Pete Mayer, *Int Dir/Dep City Adm* . 206-433-0179

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

**MUNICIPAL COURT**  
15005 Tukwila International Blvd 206-433-1840

**TUKWILA COMMUNITY CENTER**  
12424 - 42nd Avenue South  
Recreation Division.....206-768-2822  
Senior Center/Services.....206-767-2321  
Facility Rentals.....206-767-2323

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

**PUGET SOUND REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY**  
All fire-related services..... 253-856-4300  
[PugetSoundFire.org](http://PugetSoundFire.org)

**2024 TUKWILA CITY COUNCIL**  
Mohamed Abdi, *Council President*  
2023 Council President..... 206-798-4872  
[Mohamed.Abdi@TukwilaWA.gov](mailto:Mohamed.Abdi@TukwilaWA.gov)  
De’Sean Quinn.....206-331-5939  
[Desean.Quinn@TukwilaWA.gov](mailto:Desean.Quinn@TukwilaWA.gov)  
Tosh Sharp.....206 507-6440  
[Tosh.Sharp@TukwilaWA.gov](mailto:Tosh.Sharp@TukwilaWA.gov)  
Armen Papyan..... 206-888-3380  
[Armen.Papyan@TukwilaWA.gov](mailto:Armen.Papyan@TukwilaWA.gov)  
Jovita McConnell ..... 206-600-3533  
[Jovita.Mcconnell@TukwilaWA.gov](mailto:Jovita.Mcconnell@TukwilaWA.gov)  
Dennis Martinez .....206-960-1607  
[Dennis.Martinez@TukwilaWA.gov](mailto:Dennis.Martinez@TukwilaWA.gov)  
Hannah Hedrick ..... 206-580-8123  
[Hannah.Hedrick@TukwilaWA.gov](mailto:Hannah.Hedrick@TukwilaWA.gov)  
To email the entire Council at once:  
[CityCouncil@TukwilaWA.gov](mailto:CityCouncil@TukwilaWA.gov)  
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