



City of Tacoma
W A S H I N G T O N

District 2 June Update

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Dear District 2 residents,

I appreciate hearing from everyone who has taken the time to reach out to me. I may not have been able to get back to all of you individually, but please know that I do want to and I am trying. Although my position as a Council Member may technically be one that is part-time, addressing the issues and concerns of our community in District 2 has been a full-time endeavor for me, and I am here *every day* working for you.

While international headlines continue to cover the horrors of the war in Ukraine, the world is struggling with an uncertain economy, supply chain issues, climate change, and a range of other weighty challenges that have impacted us here in Tacoma as well. We're also not immune to some of the pressures that other cities across the United States have been experiencing, and continue to see high rates of homelessness and a lack of affordable housing. We have a lot of litter to pick up too.

Today, I'd like to provide some updates on issues I have been working on. Email me at srumbaugh@cityoftacoma.org if you have others you would like me to dive into as well in future newsletters.

Sincerely,

Council Member Sarah Rumbaugh

City of Tacoma | District 2

Topics in this newsletter:

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Where does your poop go?

I have been fascinated, since joining the Tacoma City Council, with the city's infrastructure. This is probably because of my background in planning and having worked at the City of Kent. I have learned a lot about Tacoma's streets, parking system, stormwater system, electrical and water system, and sewer system. I have been most interested in our sewer system because, hey, who doesn't wonder where everything goes? If you have a dog, you pick up their poop and it gets picked up by the City's Environmental Services Department's Solid Waste division through your garbage service. But, when you flush the toilet, what happens next? I took a tour recently of our Central Wastewater Treatment Plant with Environmental Services Director Mike Slevin. The first thing you should know is this is a very well thought out system with the most competent team operating it behind the scenes. Here is a [video](#) that describes the process.

As the video linked above will show you, our wastewater system is a secondary treatment facility plant, where solids are screened and settled out of the wastewater. In this process, they flow through a screen and then typically flow to a grit chamber and sedimentation tank. Then, secondary treatment is when bacterial and other small organisms consume the waste and help clean the water. From the secondary treatment process we get TAGRO and energy (renewable natural gas).



Many of us in Tacoma use TAGRO products on our yards. They have several products, even potting soil! I just used some to repot my houseplants.

The sewage, once cleaned to a certain level, is released a mile out and 450 feet down in Commencement Bay.

As I mentioned above, our facility not only creates TAGRO from the solid part of our wastewater, it also creates energy from the methane gas that is released from the process of creating TAGRO. That

energy is used to run the plant. Whatever energy we can't use in the plant is sent to the PSE pipeline to be sold to other users. This reduces greenhouse gases by replacing diesel or other fossil fuels.

As our city grows, we will need to think about the impact of this growth on our wastewater system. Additionally, we need to be thinking about the elements flowing into Commencement Bay and how we can raise our standards for what is acceptable. We are a city that cares about our environment and we are paying close attention to this issue. There may be a time when we need to use the sewage cleaned to a higher level (99.9% clean), to water our lawns and wash our laundry. As climate change affects our environment, we may see less rain and need to think about how we preserve our drinking water supply. These are all things our city is looking at and I appreciate that those who work in Environmental Services are listening to the City Council's concerns on this issue.

Homelessness in Tacoma

Our city, like many others across the country, is struggling with how to help people who are experiencing homelessness.

It is important to understand root causes. According to the National Center of Homelessness and Poverty, the leading cause of homelessness is insufficient income exacerbated by a lack of affordable housing. This same finding is reflected in Pierce County's own

Organizations like Associated Ministries also provide programs that assist with some move-in costs and short-term rental assistance.

At the City, we continue to collaborate with many non-profit partners and our top priorities to address homelessness in Tacoma include:

- 1) Ensuring affordable housing is available and accessible to Tacoma residents.
- 2) Everyone experiencing homelessness in Tacoma, or impacted by homelessness, can access services and support.
- 3) The shelter system in Tacoma offers all people a safe and dignified experience that is easy to access.
- 4) Provide individuals and families with access to a continuum of tailored supports to prevent and end homelessness.
- 5) Provide individuals and families with access to permanent, stable housing to end the cycle of homelessness.

I continue to hear from many of you who have shared your perspectives with me about this complex issue. I want you to know that the City Council is working with partners locally, regionally and nationally to find long-term sustainable solutions.

Repair of NE Tacoma Sign



I worked with City staff to have the way sign that was damaged in late December 2021 replaced. I am proud to have been able to work on replacing something that is so distinctly representative of Northeast Tacoma. I am now working to have the way sign at the corner of 45th Avenue and Northshore Parkway replaced.

Fun Things

I have been to many events and met with many wonderful people in our district. I am also working on other issues, like remembering those who have lived here and how we honor their history, growing our downtown, and supporting Dome District businesses.

As always, please continue to share your perspectives and any concerns you may have with me at srumbaugh@cityoftacoma.org. I also invite you to follow me virtually as I work with my City Council colleagues during Study Session, on the Government Performance and Finance Committee (GPFC) and on the Community Vitality and Safety Committee (CVS). You are always welcome to attend a City Council meeting in person or virtually. Meeting dates, agendas, archived recordings are available here: [City of Tacoma - Calendar \(legistar.com\)](#)

Enjoy your summer! Here is a list of some of the events happening in Tacoma during the summer months.

Calendar of Events for June, July, and August

City of Tacoma Juneteenth Celebration – June 15, 2022 from 10:30 AM to 2:30 PM, Tollefson Plaza

City of Destiny Awards – June 15 from 5:00 – 7:00 PM, Pantages Theater, 901 Broadway

Taste of Tacoma – July 1-3 from 12:00 – 9:00 PM, Washington State Fairgrounds

Summer Blast – July 4, Dune Peninsula at Point Defiance Park

Downtown on the Go! Walk Series – Youth Symphony Tour - July 6 from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM, South 11th and Broadway

Mosaic – July 23-24, Wright Park

Brew Five Three – August 6 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM and 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM, 9th and Broadway