



City of Tacoma
WASHINGTON

Fall update from Council Member Joe Bushnell

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Dear District 5 residents,

Can you believe it's the end of the year already? Time has gone by quick but I'm excited to share about some of the work we've been doing together here in Tacoma and around the world! I hope everyone has an amazing time with family and friends through the holidays and new year.

Thank you,
Council Member Joe Bushnell
City of Tacoma, District 5

Topics in this newsletter include:

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Building Community in Hosmer District

My priority since joining the Tacoma City Council is improving the quality of life around the Hosmer corridor! I have endless appreciation for the Hosmer Business Association, the South End Neighborhood Council, and all other neighborhood groups coming together to care for our community.

The City is a partner in these efforts. As part of our [Violent Crime Reduction Plan](#), the Tacoma Police Department is investing in Problem-Oriented, Place-Based Policing (POPBP). POPBP strategies are carefully tailored to address underlying conditions that contribute to recurring problems in crime-prone

locations and can be more effective at reducing crime than merely increasing or intensifying traditional police activities. The City made the data-driven decision to select 8810/8820 Hosmer Street as the first location for this treatment. The City has assembled a POPBP Working Group to develop an operations plan for the area. The working group has begun implementation, and data collection is underway. The Tacoma Police Department will be reporting out data on these efforts in their January Violent Crime Plan quarterly update to Council.



What does this work look like for people living in the Hosmer Neighborhood? One huge success was community coming together to celebrate outdoors where they did not feel safe in the past. At this October's Inaugural Hosmer Trunk or Treat, I interviewed the South End Neighborhood Council Co-Chair Andrea Haug to discuss the event and future work going on in Hosmer. [Check out the interview here!](#)

Tacoma Water Proposed Rate Increase from WestRock Closure

On Aug. 1, 2023, Atlanta-based packaging manufacturer WestRock Company announced they would close their Tacoma paper mill effective Sept. 30, 2023. WestRock has been among Tacoma Public Utilities' largest industrial customers for nearly a century, using around \$25 million worth of power and water each year. The financial impact to Tacoma Water is greater than to Tacoma Power. Westrock's usage accounted for approximately 1/3 of overall daily use of our water, equal to the water use of more than 100,000 homes and represents a significant revenue loss for the water utility.

Tacoma Water has a robust source of water, a best-in-class distribution system and is using reserves in the short term to fund operations. To maintain that strength, our public utility board is considering immediate action to mitigate impacts to our water utility from the unprecedented loss of this significant customer.

As a municipal utility, owned by the residents of Tacoma, the utility only charges what it costs to maintain and operate the system. Tacoma Water is reviewing ways to increase revenue from other sources and reduce costs by potentially delaying capital projects that will ease, but not eliminate, immediate cost pressures. To maintain the system and ensure the utility can continue providing some

of the best drinking water in the nation, Tacoma Water will need to compensate for the loss of expected revenue by proposing drinking water rate increases.

For income-constrained customers, the utility also plans to proactively increase the amount available in our [Bill Credit Assistance Program](#) to mitigate the impact of any proposed WestRock-related water rate increase.

The Tacoma City Council will be considering Tacoma Water's proposal for an annual system average rate adjustment of 5.0% effective January 1, 2024 in order to make up for part of the cash reserves and revenue loss from the WestRock closure. First reading of [this ordinance](#) is tonight, November 21, and second reading on November 28. I am committed to providing our residents with clean, reliable drinking water while keeping rates affordable. Here is more information on the [Tacoma Water Proposed Rate Increase from WestRock Closure](#).

2023 Fuzhou International Friendship Cities Cultural Festival

Tacoma has had a long relationship with our Sister Cities, and through the years have had economic and cultural exchanges that have been beneficial to us both. Fuzhou and Tacoma have had our Sister City relationship since 1994.

The Sister Cities program motto is "peace through people". The idea that the more people know about peoples around the world, the more they understand that we are all more alike than different. Cultural exchanges are the start to this understanding. These cultural exchanges can also open the eyes of young people to opportunities and experiences they otherwise would not have had.



I had the amazing opportunity to attend the 2023 Fuzhou International Friendship Cities Cultural Festival and participated on the Mayors' Roundtable for International Friendship Cities, focusing on the topic of "Inclusiveness and Mutual Learning Driving the Development of City Culture." I want to thank the city of Fuzhou for inviting me to attend this event.



I also had the opportunity to visit the Fuzhou Senior High School, a 100-year-old school. I met with the school administration and other school staff members and participated in fruitful discussions on broadening our international vision of our teachers and students to enhance educational exchanges that contribute to the friendship between Chinese and American youth. Thank you to Fuzhou Senior High School for having us.

A top constituent concern - addressing code compliance and nuisance properties

I hear from many of you reports of properties across the City that are not meeting the basic requirements outlined in the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) to protect the health, safety and welfare of Tacoma residents.

I always start by appreciating how many of you know and use our Tacoma First 311 program to make reports to the City. We depend on you to continue letting us know when there's a problem to address. To report a new code compliance issue, call TacomaFIRST 311 at (253) 591-5000 or [report online](#).

The most commonly reported concerns are:

- [Abandoned or neglected buildings](#)
- [Garbage or debris on private property](#)
- [Overgrown vegetation on private property](#)
- [Graffiti on private property](#)
- [Abandoned Autos](#)

When complaints are received, Code Compliance Inspectors respond by inspecting the property of concern. If the Inspector observes violations to the Tacoma Municipal Code, the property owner is

informed and code compliance works with them to correct identified violations.

You can learn more about our process for responding to complaints on our [Code Compliance and Enforcement website](#). Detailed information about the City's response to code compliance issues can be found using this [Code Compliance Response Map](#). The map includes the address of violation, case type, case open and closed dates, case status and City action, and a link to the Pierce County assessor with additional property details. Case information on the map is updated weekly.

Inclement Weather Resources

For the 2023-2024 winter weather season, the City of Tacoma has partnered with funded shelter providers to ensure that unsheltered individuals have access to indoor shelter options. These efforts have expanded the City's shelter capacity by 170 beds. For the seasonal beds, Tacoma Rescue Mission will operate a shelter at Holy Rosary Church starting November 15, 2023, until the end of March 2024, this shelter will provide 50 beds; anyone wishing to access these beds should go to the main Rescue Mission campus.

For acute inclement weather events (when the forecast is for 35 degrees with wind/rain or 32 degrees and colder) the below locations will be open to provide shelter, which is a total increase of 120 additional beds:

- Tacoma Rescue Mission will expand Holy Rosary Church an additional 20 beds
- Catholic Community Services' Nativity House (702 South 14th Street) will be providing overflow shelter beds for an additional 80 beds.
- Valeo Vocation (415 South 13th Street) will be providing 20 overflow beds for young adults 18-24 years of age at the Beacon Young Adult Shelter.

For more information and to find additional updates on the City's inclement weather response, please visit cityoftacoma.org/inclementresources.

Community highlights



Deputy Mayor Walker, Council Member Rumbaugh, and I participated in Walk for Reconciliation to acknowledge the 138th Anniversary of the Tacoma Chinese Expulsion. The Walk for Reconciliation is organized by The Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation. This event reverses the walking route of the expulsion of the Chinese community from Tacoma in 1885, reclaiming Tacoma for all peoples and cultures.



Supporting local businesses is supporting Tacoma! This October I joined Mayor Woodards and other community leaders in celebrating Brown & Haley Candy's 100th birthday at its historic factory in Tacoma.



On November 14, 1960, 6-year-old Ruby Bridges became a national civil rights icon when she walked into school. She was the first black student to attend the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans. Today, adult Ruby inspires youth to be change-makers in their communities. I participated in Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day with Manitou Park Elementary Bulldogs and School Board Director Keating. Together, we celebrated Ruby Bridges' bravery and youth being change-makers. Nationally, Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day is a day of dialogue and walking, taking steps to end racism and discrimination together.



I joined the Association of Chinese Professors of Social Sciences (SCPSS) for their 2023 International Conference at Pacific Lutheran University to participate on a panel of local government leaders discussing US-China relations.



As some of you may know, I served in the U.S. Marine Corps for more than a decade, and I am one of three on the City Council who have also served in the U.S. Armed Forces, along with Mayor Woodards and Council Member Ushka. This November, I joined my Council colleagues to recognize City employees who also served in the U.S. Armed Forces. More than 400 City of Tacoma employees – about 10 percent of our workforce – have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and continue to bring their leadership to the City. The City also proclaimed Saturday, November 11, 2023, as Veterans Appreciation Day. If you are a veteran, I want to thank you for your service to our country and thank you for now choosing to serve the City of Tacoma.

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