



City of Tacoma  
WASHINGTON

## Fall update from Council Member Sarah Rumbaugh

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Fall is finally here. I love this time of year, as I have mentioned before, because there are falling leaves, pumpkins, puddles, sweaters, and boots. Even on a rainy day, I find this time of year so special. Of course, it is probably because I spent several years outside running in it and I am used to it. I hope that you find something enjoyable about this time of year.

I have been busy on a lot of fronts. I have included some of the highlights. Just a reminder that I spend many hours a week meeting with constituents, so if you have something you want to meet and discuss, please reach out to my assistant Chantra Real at [creal@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:creal@cityoftacoma.org) so she can find a time for us to meet virtually or in-person.



Sincerely,

Sarah Rumbaugh  
District 2 Council Member  
City of Tacoma

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## Crystal Judson Family Justice Center

Part of my service as a Council Member includes service on boards and commissions that serve essential public functions. I am honored to chair the board of the Crystal Judson Family Justice Center.

Established in 2005 through an agreement between Pierce County and the City of Tacoma, the Crystal Judson Family Justice Center (FJC) serves the needs of domestic violence victims and their children by providing comprehensive services to all residents of Pierce County in one, central, safe location in downtown Tacoma. The board of FJC includes two members of the Pierce County Council and Tacoma City Council, as well as one member of the community. As chair of the board of FJC, I have been working with Vice Chair Jani Hitchen to find the next community member to serve on the board. We are currently reviewing applications and hope to have a process for conducting interviews in the next few weeks. The work of the board is important for maintaining the fiscal integrity of the FJC, and providing input on how they move forward as an organization in supporting survivors of domestic violence.

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## Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge Closure Information

On Friday, October 20, 2023, the City of Tacoma was notified by the Federal Highway Administration of their recommendation that the Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge be closed immediately. This is the bridge located on Pacific Highway 99 and extends over the Puyallup River to the city of Fife. The bridge will be closed to all vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic until all non-redundant steel tension members and connections are cleaned of dirt and debris, a complete inspection is conducted, the inspection results are analyzed, the load rating is updated if required, and the Federal Highway Administration recommends the bridge to be reopened. Staff have contacted our partners at the Puyallup Tribe, City of Fife, and Port of Tacoma to notify them of the closure. Please plan accordingly as you travel to and from Tacoma and the area around the Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge.

This is a long-term issue with no immediate fixes. It is estimated that it may take up to two to three years to complete the cleaning and inspection necessary to determine if the bridge may be reopened to traffic. For the City to pursue the required cleaning and inspecting of the bridge, it is estimated to cost \$6 million to \$7 million. Currently, the City does not have the resources to fund the bridge cleaning. The City is able to allocate \$300,000 towards this effort and will be working to obtain the additional funding needed to complete the cleaning of the bridge necessary to allow for the inspection. The City will work with our state and federal partners to find resources to complete this work.

Updates on this work will be [provided here](#) as they become available, and will also be shared across the City's official platforms.

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## Puyallup Avenue Corridor Project

Exciting news! For businesses and residents in and around the Dome District, staff has provided an update to the Puyallup Avenue Corridor design addressing multi-modal challenges in this area. Since joining the council, I have been listening to the concerns of those in the Dome District and making it easier for pedestrians to get around has been a number one concern. I appreciate everyone who has

reached out to me regarding this project, and I also know it has been a long time coming. Thank you for your patience as this project is realized. You can view the preliminary designs and track this project on the City's [Puyallup Avenue Corridor Improvement website](#).

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## Response to Israel

As someone who is Jewish and a leader in our community, I felt that I needed to say something about the events in Israel and the Middle East. Here is a link to the statement I read during our October 17, 2023 city council meeting: [Council Member Sarah Rumbaugh on Rise of Antisemitic Incidents During Israel-Hamas Conflict](#).

While this issue continues to be escalating, I ask our community to show kindness to all who are struggling with what is going on. This is a complicated issue and rooted in much history and hatred. I hope you understand that I care about every life lost.

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## Community First! Village visit in Austin, TX

I was invited to participate in a Tacoma Pierce County Chamber trip to the 2023 Aspire Austin Conference to visit the Community First! Village in Austin, Texas. It was inspiring to see those who have experienced chronic homelessness feeling they deserve to have a good life. The people who live there are called our neighbors and there are job opportunities onsite. Everyone pays something in rent and has a part in what takes place at the Village. My question was where is all the garbage? The director says it is in the trashcan. Everything was so clean! It is a well taken care of neighborhood where everyone that lives there wants to keep the sidewalks clean and their homes well-kept. I think the reason they see success is that everyone is treated with respect and there is community embedded in the Village and they're provided friendship and support.

My hope is that we will be able to build our own Community First! Village in Pierce County. On March 21, 2023, the Pierce County Council authorized the release of federal American Rescue Plan Act funds for a Pierce County microhome village. Please feel free to reach out to me with your questions. You can learn more about the [Community First! Village on their website](#).



Tiny homes in the Community First! Village in Austin, TX.



A memorial to those who have died at the Community First! Village.



Here is another example of another style of tiny home. The individuals moving to the Community First! Village are offered many choices of types and styles of tiny homes.

## Pictures of Hope

I was asked to co-sponsor this program with Council Member John Hines and our council agreed to support bringing Pictures of Hope to Tacoma. [Pictures of Hope](#) is an award-winning non-profit created in 2005 by photojournalist and author Linda Solomon. The program pairs young children experiencing homelessness with volunteer mentors who help the children express their hopes and dreams through

the lens of a camera, with the intent of showing each child that their hopes and dreams matter. The program has received local and national acclaim, and more than 50 cities have participated. The City Council [voted to sponsor this program for Tacoma](#), and we will be working with children at the Tacoma Rescue Mission to help them bring their dreams to life through photography.

This is a wonderful opportunity to have children share their dreams with a mentor and then celebrate their chosen photo with their family and community at a special event. I hope to share some of these photos with you in my next newsletter. I believe art is a powerful way for children to share their aspirations and see a positive way forward.

## 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 Public Utility Board continues to review and is expected to vote on a course of action, followed by review and a vote by the Tacoma City Council. 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](#).

## Follow up on the Broadway Clock



This “Your Voice” op-ed was originally published in The News Tribune.

Tacoma has grown and evolved over the years, constantly redefining its role in the region and the world. As we continue to shape and define Tacoma’s cultural identity, there are many things across Tacoma that connect our present to our past. The street clock on Broadway Avenue that stood outside LeRoy Jewelers in Downtown Tacoma, steps away from our Theater District on Broadway Avenue, is one example. Created by Joseph Mayer, Seattle’s only maker of street clocks, the clock was first brought to Tacoma in 1920. It was well cared for over the years, with much of its original inner workings intact. However, after decades of constant wear, it needed to be restored to prevent catastrophic mechanical failure that would destroy it entirely.

Anecdotally, the clock was donated to the City of Tacoma by Flo Rose’s family who, at the time, had a pawn shop on Pacific Avenue. Flo Rose belonged to my temple, Temple Beth El. She was a feisty old woman who would tell you how it is. I can just hear her telling me, “It is the right thing for you to do. Fix this clock.”

Last December, I sponsored a Council Contingency Fund request for \$35,000 to cover repairs to the clock. We were able to find a talented conservator who spent painstaking hours on its intricate inner workings, making it work again. We thought we had set aside enough funds to fix it but, recently, I learned we were going to need extra funds to paint its exterior. The clock was very worn, and had been subject to extreme weather conditions, with saltwater from Commencement Bay corroding it. Marine paint, which is used to preserve the hulls on boats and ships, is required to keep the clock in good condition in its Downtown Tacoma location. To cover the cost of this more heavy-duty paint, we will need \$20,000 more than what we initially budgeted. I know a lot of people would think, “It’s just a clock. Why does it matter?” It matters because it’s not just about the clock itself. The clock represents what Broadway has meant to our community for years. Broadway was a place where U.S. presidents held rallies, and where people heard the baseball scores before there was television.



Today, it brings together our community with public events and the Downtown Farmers Market. It is the beating heart of our Theatre District, where the Pantages, Rialto, and Theatre on the Square sit.

The Broadway clock represents Downtown Tacoma in a myriad of ways. While it represents the past, it also symbolizes how we envision the present and approach the future.

These are just some of the reasons why a community-led fundraising effort was recently launched online.

What happens now?

Does time stop as we allow the Broadway clock to succumb to the ravages of wear? Or does it keep pace with Tacoma as it continues to grow and evolve? What would Flo Rose do?

As Tacomans, let's come together and preserve our history and heritage.

## The Months Ahead

Please look for more information regarding our budget discussions. Since we have a biennial budget, we review our budget halfway through the two-year period. We are continuing to support homeless funding, public safety, and our new [HOPE Team](#), the program intended to support community members through behavioral health crisis, as well as the first responders, courts, jails, community providers, and hospitals connected to those same people. The HOPE program is part of the City of Tacoma's broader alternative response initiative. Additionally, we will be heading to the National League of Cities (NLC) Conference in Atlanta, GA in November to honor our Mayor Victoria Woodards, who has been the president of NLC for the past year. We appreciate our mayor's leadership and the work she has done to elevate Tacoma on the national stage.

## Community Highlights



I was honored to speak at the grand opening for the University of Washington Tacoma bookstore. I am standing with Chancellor Sheila Edwards Lange, sporting my new University of Washington Tacoma shirt and hat.



Rabbi Bruce Kadden, Rabbi Emeritus Temple Beth and I spoke at Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace at University of Puget Sound's Kilworth Memorial Chapel, sponsored by Associated Ministries.



I joined the Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation for the 2023 Walk for Reconciliation Against Racism. This picture at the Chinese Reconciliation Park highlights the Lion Dance Troup from the Mak Fai Kung Fu Dragon & Lion Dance Association that led the walk.



The Walk for Reconciliation Against Racism was sunny but cold. I enjoyed the walk from Union Station to the Chinese Reconciliation Park because there were a lot of people to visit with, including former Tacoma Housing Authority Executive Director Michael Mirra.



Council Member Olgy Diaz and I attended Celebrando Comunidad, celebrating the contributions of those in the South Puget Sound who identify as members of Latinx communities or organizations who directly and positively impact South Sound Latinx communities. This is the University of Washington Tacoma's third year hosting this amazing event.



I attended the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber Annual Meeting. Here I am with staff from Rebuilding Hope! Sexual Assault Center For Pierce County. They were chosen as the Non-Profit of the Year.



Rebuilding Hope! Executive Director Carlyn Sampson accepting the Non-profit of the Year award from Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce CEO Andrea Ray.

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