

Police Chief Search

**WHAT WE HEARD: Feedback from the
Community Regarding the Permanent
Police Chief**

City of Tukwila



City staff conducted a community engagement effort to hear directly from the community as to what they are looking for in a permanent police chief:

Staff asked the following questions at each meeting:

- What are the three most important qualities or skills you would like to see in the permanent Tukwila Chief of Police?
- What would you like to see the next Chief accomplish immediately? What would you like that individual to accomplish in two to three years?
- What are the most important public safety needs in your neighborhood?
- What suggestions do you have for improving police services?



Staff facilitated the following meetings. While many other organizations and individuals were invited to participate, below are the actual participants:

- Faith leaders – representatives of Abu Bakr, Riverton Park United Methodist Church, Beit Hashofar Synagogue
- Nonprofit leaders – representatives of Global 2 Local, International Rescue Committee, Tukwila Children’s Foundation
- Lodging Tax Advisory Committee – Seattle Chocolates, Sunrise Garden Suites, Doubletree, Starfire Sports, Odin Brewery
- Business leaders – Sabey Corporation, Xalwo Coffee, Wig Properties, Westfield Southcenter, Homewood Suites, Continental Mills, Spice Bridge/Food Innovation Network
- Seattle Southside Chamber – Pure Vida Coffee, Tukwila Children’s Foundation, Segale Properties, Embry-Riddle
- Two Police Department listening sessions
- Community listening event – Saturday, November 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m



Staff facilitated the following meetings. While many other organizations and individuals were invited to participate, below are the actual participants:

- Teens for Tukwila
- Five Foster High School Civics Classes + 2 all-school listening session
- 1 all-school listening session with Showalter Middle School
- Equity and Social Justice Commission
- Community Oriented Policing Advisory Board

In addition, an online community survey was deployed for more than one month and made available in Spanish, Vietnamese and Somali. The City received 50 responses. The survey asked the same questions as listed above. The following are the characteristics of who filled out the survey; respondents were encouraged to click all that apply:

- Resident – 34
- Attends school in Tukwila – 5
- Business owner in Tukwila – 7
- Work in Tukwila – 20
- Frequent visitor – 15



While staff wishes to acknowledge the significant variety of feedback received during this effort, below are the common themes voiced during the process:

- **Community engagement is critical to the success** of the permanent police chief; they must be engaged, visible and invested in the community. The next chief must lead by example and set expectations that officers will be visible in neighborhoods and accessible to the community.
- **The next chief must know, value, and advocate for the diverse community;** they should be interested in the many cultures that make up Tukwila and work to both ensure that officers have some knowledge of the different cultures as well as develop the department to better reflect the community it serves.
- **Commitment to communication** with the community, all levels of the department and the broader City organization, focused articulating the mission and values of the police department, ensuring that the feedback loop is closed with the community and clear on why decisions are made.
- Key qualities needed in the permanent chief include **honesty, integrity, transparency, empathy, and fairness;** build trust in the community and department.



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- Know that many people of color, undocumented residents, and immigrants in the community are afraid of police, afraid of calling the police, concerned about personal safety and unjustified arrests; commit listening to voices from all levels of the community and to a culture shift that builds bridges and mitigates bias.
- Understand how under-resourced communities have limited opportunities; identify and prevent how over policing can have a negative affect and work to increase opportunities for residents where possible.
- A forward-thinking individual is needed, who is focused on implementing best practices from around the country, who understands that policing must change, and will embrace a culture shift that will achieve just and equitable outcomes for all in Tukwila.
- Someone who is committed to officers' mental and emotional health, as well as willing to hold themselves and officers accountable to high standards.



While staff wishes to acknowledge the significant variety of feedback received during this effort, below are the common themes voiced during the process:

- **Focus on training**, ensuring all officers are well-versed in de-escalation tools, anti-bias, cultural competency, and the complexities around I-940; provide officers with tools to handle behavioral and mental health issues, including social workers to respond to people in crisis.
- **Property crimes are affecting all neighborhoods and communities in Tukwila.** The next chief must work with the community to address these crimes, and increase the perception of personal safety in Tukwila, as well as educate residents and businesses on how such crimes can be prevented, as well as how policies and practices outside of Tukwila limit how they can sometimes be addressed.
- **Utilize infrastructure investments**, including cutting edge technology, as well as proven methods such as cameras and additional street lightings to reduce crime and make the Tukwila community more safe.
- **Bring the department back to full staffing** when revenues return to pre-pandemic levels and create a pipeline system to anticipate vacancies, both commissioned and non-commissioned.



Next Steps

Staff will use the information above to finalize the posting for the Chief of Police, as well as the recruiting documents.

Once qualified candidates are determined, interviews will be scheduled with two panels that consist of representatives of the communities involved in the engagement process (i.e. a non-profit representative, faith leader, business representative, etc.) as well as City staff.

Final candidates will be invited to participate in a community open house, likely virtual due to the pandemic, with a moderated Q&A to allow the community to better get to know the final candidates.

Final interviews will be held by the Mayor, Council President and City Administrator.

The Mayor will appoint, for the Council's confirmation, in March of 2021.



Questions?

Thank you

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