

High waters near the
Tukwila Community Center
during 2025 flood event



The Hazelnut

A City of Tukwila publication for our residential and business communities

FEBRUARY 2026
VOLUME 46, NUMBER 2



City offices will be closed
on Monday, February 16
in observance of the
Presidents' Day holiday

Foster Golf Links will be open
Tukwila Community Center
special hours: 8:00AM to 12:00PM

Volunteer with the Green Tukwila Partnership

Since 2017, the City of Tukwila has been part of the Green Cities Partnership—working with local organizations and community members to care for natural open spaces. Tukwila's own effort, the Green Tukwila Partnership, is supported by Forterra, EarthCorps, Duwamish Alive Coalition, Partner in Employment, the Service Board, Dirt Corps, King County Parks, and dedicated volunteers.

Together, we're restoring 138 acres of urban forest over the next 20 years — creating healthier parks for all.

What to expect: Work parties are fun, hands-on events for all ages. Activities include removing invasive plants, planting natives, and mulching. No experience needed—training and tools are provided.



February 2026 Restoration Work Parties

- 02/10 Restoration at Riverton – Riverton Park
- 02/11 Restoration at Riverton – Strander ROW
- 02/12 Planting at Cottonwood Corner – Riverton Creek
- 02/20 Fabulous Forterra Friday – Duwamish Hill Preserve
- 02/21 We Love the DH Preserve – Duwamish Hill Preserve

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER!
LEARN MORE! Go to
TukwilaWA.gov/GreenTukwila



Mayor's Message

Flooding and Partnerships

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”
- Helen Keller

Last month, the region experienced significant flooding that impacted communities throughout Western Washington. In Tukwila, the Green River surpassed water levels not seen since the mid-1990s. Fortunately, the impacts in Tukwila were limited, and the City did not experience significant damage.

In past Hazelnut editions, you may have heard me talk about the importance of partnerships and relationships. I am a strong believer that we can accomplish more by working together and collaborating. Few situations demonstrate the power of partnership and collaboration more clearly than severe weather events like last month's flooding.

For more than a decade, King County, the King County Flood Control District, US Army Corps of Engineers, and the cities of Tukwila, Kent, Auburn and Renton have worked together to improve flood resiliency along the Green River. Levees have been rebuilt and strengthened, and contingency plans were in place as river levels rose. Agencies were prepared to respond quickly in the event of a levee breach or failure.



*Valley Mayors
(left to right):
Thomas McLeod,
Tukwila
Armondo Pavone,
Renton
Nancy Backus,
Auburn
Dana Ralph,
Kent*

On December 15, despite the best efforts of government agencies at all levels, a portion of the Desimone levee breached, allowing water to flow into Tukwila. It is important to note that a breach at this location also affects the cities of Renton and Kent. As soon as the breach occurred, public agency partners initiated a coordinated response. King County crews began repairing the breach, Kent provided materials, and

On December 12, Governor Bob Ferguson held a briefing and press conference in Tukwila regarding current regional flooding. Participants included Governor Bob Ferguson, Senator Maria Cantwell, Mayor Thomas McLeod, King County Executive Girmay Zahilay, County Councilmembers Steffanie Fain and Sarah Perry, and State representatives Steve Berquist and David Hackney.



the US Army Corps of Engineers provided technical assistance, and Tukwila provided logistical support.

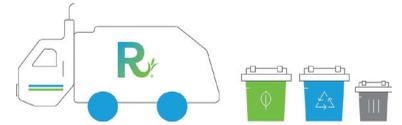
Collaboration extended beyond public agencies. Property owners in the area offered space to store response materials, businesses provided equipment, and community members volunteered to assist anyone who might need to evacuate. After the breach was secured, King County and the State of Washington began assessing the damage and making resources available to support cleanup and recovery.

Responding to a crisis like this flood event truly requires a collaborative effort. I am deeply grateful to all the partners who stepped up to support not only Tukwila, but our entire region during this storm.

Thomas McLeod
Mayor, City of Tukwila



PROJECT RECYCLE-RIGHT: 2026 Earth Day Art / Photo / Video Contest



Presented by the
City of Tukwila and Recology



ABOUT THE CONTEST

Share your message on how you reduce waste, reuse items, and/or recycle correctly with a drawing, photo of an art piece, photograph, or short video (60 seconds or less).

Winning entries will be presented to City Council and shared on City of Tukwila and Recology websites, social media, and an Earth Day news release. Winning art pieces may also be displayed at Southcenter Mall.

WHO CAN ENTER? All students K-12 who live or go to school in Tukwila.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

1. For complete rules and to download an entry form, visit tinyurl.com/2026-Art, Recology.com/Tukwila, or email RKCArtContest@recology.com. Paper forms are available.
2. Submit your completed entry form at tinyurl.com/2026-Art by noon on Sunday, March 8.
3. Finalists will be announced on Monday, April 13 by noon.

Questions? Email us at RKCArtContest@recology.com.

Please note: All submissions or incomplete forms may result in disqualification of entry.



WHAT ARE THE PRIZES?

Each winner in the categories below will receive a gift from the Recology Store, in addition to an option between a select choice of gift cards corresponding to the prize amount.

Elementary School

1st place: \$150 gift card
2nd place: \$100 gift card
3rd place: \$50 gift card

Middle School

1st place: \$200 gift card
2nd place: \$150 gift card
3rd place: \$100 gift card

High School

1st place: \$300 gift card
2nd place: \$200 gift card
3rd place: \$100 gift card

Best Group Project

(Two or more students)

\$150 gift card

Teacher having the most submissions from one class *

\$400 for class supplies

* Teachers must teach in the Tukwila School District to qualify.

If there is a tie, the \$400 will be split evenly between the winning teachers.

Improving access to City laws – new online Tukwila Municipal Code

The City of Tukwila’s Municipal Code (TMC) is the official compilation of City laws and regulations. Adopted ordinances and their amending updates are consolidated into this large reference document.

To improve public access and ease of use, an interactive and user-friendly resource has replaced a previous online PDF version. Some highlights of the functionality:

Navigation:

- Dynamic **Table of Contents** - no getting “lost in the code”
- Quick **search bar** at the top of the screen
- New alphabetical **Index** for subject-focused searches

Accessibility:

- Google **translation** enabled for over 200 languages
- Greater **ADA compliance** with accessibility standards

- **Easily shared** code text by email or printing

Real time status

You can sign up for automatic **notifications** by email when the TMC or specific portions of the code are updated.

A **gavel icon** shown next to a Title indicates a new law has been passed but not yet incorporated into the Code. Click the icon to view the pending law.

Find the new interactive code at ecode360.com/TU6948

For additional information regarding the new online platform or code updates, please contact the City Clerk’s Office at TukwilaCityClerk@TukwilaWA.gov or by phone at 206-433-1800.

2026 Duwamish Watershed Symposium:



Duwamish Habitat Restoration in Industrial and Urban Environments

Our objective: To share knowledge and lessons learned – from the first initial Duwamish River habitat restoration projects to new ones– through the 20-year evolution of challenging river restoration understanding and experience.

Date: February 24, 2026
Time: 9:00AM – 4:30PM
**Location: Tukwila Community Center
12424 - 42nd Avenue S, Tukwila**

Register now at give.seattleparksfoundation.org/event/duwamish-river-symposium/e755561

Join us as we focus on one of the river’s most industrialized and urbanized segments, which has faced significant environmental challenges over the past century, especially in the restoration of native habitat. These challenges are not only from increasing industrialization/urbanization but also from the impacts of climate change throughout the whole watershed. As we gain a deeper understanding of these impacts, how we address them and find opportunities, we will shape our region’s future.

Convene with restoration practitioners, planners, youth, and other interested groups to share lessons learned, successes, and technical knowledge from large restoration efforts in a welcoming and inclusive environment to promote sharing and new perspectives.

Co-hosted by Duwamish Alive Coalition Partners: Port of Seattle, King County, City of Seattle, and City of Tukwila

Affected employers have new way to certify minimum wage compliance

The *Minimum Wage & Fair Access to Additional Work Hours Ordinance* is the result of a citizen-led effort that voters approved in 2022 and became law July 1, 2023.

The wage rate is adjusted annually. As of January 1, the 2026 minimum wage is \$21.65.

Employers covered by Tukwila’s Minimum Wage Ordinance are required to certify their compliance with the law each year by January 31.

After listening to customer feedback, Tukwila has modernized its compliance certification process. The City now offers a new online portal for employers to complete their annual certification. Paper forms, which had to be physically mailed or emailed to our office, are no longer required – streamlining staff time and records management.

This is free and quick for employers to use. You can access the Portal For Employer-Required Certifications on the Minimum Wage page at TukwilaWA.gov/MinimumWage. For questions or assistance, you can contact the Labor Standards Office by email at MinimumWage@TukwilaWA.gov.

Fort Dent levee tree removal

King County plans to repair and set back the slope for the Fort Dent Levee. Pending receipt of all the necessary environmental permits, the project is scheduled for this summer.

Essential for the levee repair, several large trees along the trail will be cut down in the next month (to comply with nesting season restrictions).



Potential temporary trail closures are anticipated during the removal work.



A new year for a busy City Council

by Armen Papyan,
2026 Council President

Hello, Tukwila Community! I am honored to have been elected by my colleagues to serve as this year’s Council President, and I thank them for entrusting me with this duty. I’m excited to be working with new and returning Councilmembers this year – we have a great group of dedicated leaders. I would also like to thank Tosh Sharp and Mohamed Abdi upon their departure for their four years of hard work. I know they will stay involved in our community.

Last year was challenging and busy – we had some unexpected transitions on the Council which required us to run two separate appointment processes. We adopted a new Development Agreement for the Prato District, amended cannabis retail zoning, and completed a long-awaited update to zoning standards in our Tukwila International Boulevard district, which will help us get to the walkable, transit-oriented, and culturally vibrant neighborhood first envisioned many years ago. Further, I am proud to say that 65 Foster High students have taken advantage of our Tukwila Promise program.

You will read more about the response and preparation for the historic December flooding elsewhere in this issue, but I would like to say how thankful I am to City

COUNCIL CORNER

staff and our regional partners for their quick response and coordination. The City has been investing in flood risk reduction for decades – most recently transferring the George Long Property on Interurban to the Flood Control District for preservation of three acres of critical shoreline. As flood events grow more frequent and more serious, I am grateful for the foresight of our City’s leaders over time.

Looking ahead, the City Council will work with the community, the Mayor and staff on a variety of important issues this year. We stay vigilant for impacts of federal policies on vulnerable members of our diverse community, as we simultaneously support that community through our budget and affirmations of welcoming. We are continuing the conversation around Flock license plate readers in response to concerns we have heard from our community. We have every intention of ensuring safeguards and policies around privacy and data security. We have already restricted data access to certain jurisdictions.

I will continue to use this space to share important City Council updates with you. In return, I ask you to be involved – reach out to us to share your views. Subscribe to City Council meeting agendas to see what’s coming. This year is one in which we will develop and adopt a budget for the next two years, and like all cities we are in a position of declining revenues requiring us to do more with less. We need your help, so please stay engaged.

If you'd like to contact the City Council, please email CityCouncil@TukwilaWA.gov, or find our phone numbers on the last page.

COUNCIL ACTIONS

- Authorized new criminal justice sales tax per House Bill 2015 (Ord. 2777)
- Accepted Flood Control District grant funding for Gilliam Creek Fish Barrier removal project
- Accepted King County grant funding for the Chinook Wind Extension project
- Conducted work session on Flock Safety Automatic License Plate Readers
- Accepted King County grant funding for the Tukwila Community Center Riverside Campus & Canoe Launch project
- Expressed appreciation to outgoing Councilmembers Tosh Sharp and Mohamed Abdi (Res. 2129 & 2130)
- Awarded lodging tax funding for the Tukwila Pac NW Tournament
- Adopted a legislative agenda for use in the 2026 Washington State Legislative Session (Res. 2133)
- Oaths of Office taken by Verna Seal, Kate Kruller, Hannah Hedrick and Jane Ho
- Elected Armen Papyan as 2026 Council President
- Established the 2026 schedule for standing committees and work sessions (Res. 2134)
- Updated Business and Occupation Tax Regulations in accordance with state requirements (Ord. 2781)

Crisis response to historic levels of rain and river flows

On Monday, December 15 at 11:31AM, Tukwila's Emergency Management Office received an urgent notification from King County Emergency Management that the Desimone levee in Tukwila had breached.

The City activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) – a central hub where people come together to provide support and coordination for the first responders (Police, Fire, Public Works) who are doing the work out in the field.

In a dedicated space located in Tukwila's Justice Center, staff from multiple City departments worked together in the EOC for the next two days to coordinate the City's response to the levee breach, as well as coordinating multiple issues with our local partners.



The areas of departmental involvement were diverse.

City Communications provided timely public information and messaging.

Public Works provided EOC staff with technical expertise on flood plain management, staff to support the operations at the levy, and conducted additional patrols along the levees.

The **Tukwila Police Department** coordinated road closures and provided traffic control, as well as providing additional public information support, staff to support planning and logistics efforts, and drone operators for river and landslide risk assessments

Parks & Recreation ensured public safety through trail closures, and prepared for potential sheltering operations.



The **Finance Department** implemented financial practices to ensure accurate documentation of all related emergency costs, which is essential to be eligible for Federal reimbursement to the City.

The **Special Emphasis Unit (SEU)** conducted homeless outreach and flood evacuation.



The EOC activation concluded at 5:00PM on December 16, but remains ready to reactivate if needed, ensuring the safety of our community.

Do you have any questions about preparedness for you and your family? Want to know more about Emergency Management?

Please write us with your questions – EmergencyManagement@TukwilaWA.gov – we are happy to answer. And we'll publish the Q&A in the next edition of the Hazelnut.

Photos from December 2025 flood event



Desimone Levee breach near Riverside Drive



Green River Trail under Tukwila International Blvd.



Fort Dent Park Playground



Looking across river towards Interurban from Fort Dent Park



Green River Trail near Holiday Inn



Foster Golf Course off Hole 15

THE HAZELNUT

City of Tukwila
6200 Southcenter Blvd.
Tukwila, WA 98188

PRESORT STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 12698

Your opportunity to get involved

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.

If you are interested in serving on one of the following advisory bodies, please submit a completed Boards, Commissions and Committees Application for Appointment to the Mayor's Office by **5:00PM on February 15, 2026**.

The following advisory bodies have vacant positions or positions with terms ending March 31, 2026:

ADVISORY BODY	VACANCIES
Arts Commission	3 resident positions
Civil Service Commission	1 resident position
Community-Oriented Policing Citizens Advisory Board	1 business position & 3 resident positions
Equity and Social Justice Commission	2 community positions & 2 education positions
Human Services Advisory Board	1 resident position, 1 school district position & 1 medical/health position
Library Advisory Board	3 resident positions
Park Commission	2 community positions
Planning Commission	1 business position & 1 resident position

Information about all of the City's boards, commissions and committees can be found on the City's website at TukwilaWA.gov/boards. Want more information? Please call 206-433-1850.

TUKWILA CITY HALL

6200 Southcenter Boulevard
City Hall campus in-person hours:
Monday—Thursday, 8:30AM–4:00PM
Phone: 206-433-1800 Fax: 206-433-1833
Email: Tukwila@TukwilaWA.gov
Website: 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, *Director, Strategic Initiatives/ Government Relations* 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

Pete Mayer, *Director and Deputy City Administrator* 206-767-2342

Police Department

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

Public Works Department

Jen Tetatzin, *Director* 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

2026 TUKWILA CITY COUNCIL

Armen Papyan, *Council Pres.* 206-888-3380
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Hannah.Hedrick@TukwilaWA.gov
Joe Camacho 206-351-3378
Joe.Camacho@TukwilaWA.gov
Jane Ho..... 206-640-8837
Jane.Ho@TukwilaWA.gov
To email the entire Council at once:
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