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## An update from District 4 Council Member Catherine Ushka

City of Tacoma Washington sent this bulletin at 06/03/2020 02:57 PM PDT



Greetings,

I hope this message finds you and your family well during these difficult times. Although I may not see you in person as often as I would like, I have worked hard to address the needs of our District 4 community.

I have advocated for our most vulnerable populations to have proper access to medical care and advocated for a rental assistance program to be swiftly put in place. I have worked to get information and resources to our small businesses struggling in the wake of the current public health and economic crisis, and partnered with the City's Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs to ensure language access for virtual town halls. I have continued to be responsive to community concerns and expressed how important I believe it is that the City to continue to be responsive to calls for service throughout our community

I know many of you have lost jobs, and are struggling with homeschooling, food access, and challenges with the state unemployment system. As your Council Member, I and my City Council colleagues can and do advocate at the state and federal levels of government, and we are committed to continue our work to alleviate the challenges we face across our city.

Many of you are also likely paying attention to the death of George Floyd and subsequent actions around the country and in Tacoma. These events, like the disparate effects of COVID-19, underscored the persistent effects of racism in our country, and the long lasting negative effects particularly focused on black people in this country. As a white person I will be working towards policy change that acknowledge and reverse the systemic effects of racism in our city. Every single resident deserves to live feeling safe from harm from authorities, and safe from the aggressions of neighbors. I encourage

you to work with your peers to learn what you can do to help transform our culture to one where Justice truly does exist for all.

Please continue to reach out to me at [catherine.ushka@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:catherine.ushka@cityoftacoma.org), or reply to this email with any concerns that you have, and I will continue to do everything in my power to help you maintain your health, safety and wellbeing during this stressful time.

I also urge you to give yourself grace.

That can be as simple as taking a quiet moment to breath, or calling a friend to break the sense of isolation you may be feeling. I am encouraged to see that many of our neighbors are looking out for one another. The compassion that powers District 4 during this time is inspiring!

At home, I have cultivated a garden, gone on walks, runs and bike rides, and I have been doing more – actually a lot of – baking! When we are able to share meals again, I will have much better contributions to potlucks!

Please be well, and contact me if I can help in any way.

Sincerely,

Catherine Ushka  
Tacoma City Council Member, District 4

**Topics in this e-newsletter:**

- [Tacoma Emergency Micro-Shelter Site Relocation](#)
- [Serving as Chair of the Board of Health](#)
- [Digital equity](#)
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- [COVID-19 Resources](#)

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**TEMS Relocation  
Virtual T-Town Hall**  
**June 4 from 6-7:30 PM**



# Tacoma Emergency Micro-Shelter Site Relocation

The City of Tacoma is planning to relocate the Tacoma Emergency Micro-Shelter (TEMS) Site from the Hilltop Neighborhood to 60<sup>th</sup> and McKinley. This temporary shelter location is a partnership between the City and Tacoma Housing Authority (THA), which owns the property and proactively offered its use as a temporary shelter site, free of charge. The site would be at this new location only through December 2021.

While the City is still finalizing the site plan, the site would include no more than 50 units and provide shelter for up to 65 individuals at a time. The site will provide restrooms, water, garbage services and social services and will be fenced with 24-hour security and on-site management. Information about the City authorized encampments is available at [cityoftacoma.org/authorizedencampments](http://cityoftacoma.org/authorizedencampments).

I have heard concerns from many neighbors about this plan. I want you to know we hear your concerns and the concerns of the surrounding area. I am working with staff to provide answers and will continue to seek your input throughout the project. You can read my joint letter from Mayor Woodards, myself, and Council Member Beale to the community [here](#).

I also invite and encourage you to connect with the City about the TEMS Site at a virtual town hall.

## Event Details

Virtual T-Town Hall Community Meeting via Zoom

Thursday, June 4, 2020

6-7:30 PM

Participation Information via Zoom:

To join, please go to <https://bit.ly/2AKb0xD>

Password: 768156

Or join by phone: +1 253 215 8782

Webinar ID: 832 6811 2678

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kqEN5kF0Q>

Please contact [shelters@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:shelters@cityoftacoma.org) or call (253) 591-5119 for more information, questions, or to receive Tacoma Emergency Micro-Shelters Site updates by email. Or you can visit [cityoftacoma.org/authorizedencampments](http://cityoftacoma.org/authorizedencampments).

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## Serving as Chair of the Board of Health

I have the honor and grave responsibility of serving as the chair of the local Board of Health during this pandemic. The Board of Health is the governing body of the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD). TPCHD is on the front lines of responding to the COVID-19 emergency in our region. They protect and improve the health of all people and places in Pierce County and your family's health is their top priority as they work to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Pierce County.

The TPCHD has assembled resources and answers to frequently asked questions on their COVID-19 resource webpage: <https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-people/human-coronavirus>

The TPCHD also tracks the data on how this pandemic is affecting our community. Through their work, we can track the spread of the disease and how it impacts each community differently. You can view their case number webpage here: <https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-people/diseases/covid-19-pierce-county-cases>

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## Digital equity

We knew even before the pandemic that access to the Internet is essential for education and employment opportunities, business development, healthcare, government services, and community involvement. Now internet connectivity is a lifeline for families during the Governor's Stay home/stay safe order.

Our students are the most impacted by this new reality. I lead my colleagues in sending a letter to Governor Inslee to encourage the state to marshal all the resources at its disposal to bring meaningful connectivity through both broadband services and access to computers for all students.

The City of Tacoma also tracks and shares resources available to residents in our City. Learn more about the City's work towards digital equity on our [digital equity website](#).

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## Food access for all students

We can't let anyone go hungry during this pandemic. I am proud of all the schools in Pierce County that have coordinated to offer free meals to the community and especially thankful to the hard work of Tacoma Public Schools.

Tacoma Public Schools Nutrition Services currently offers free Grab 'n' Go bags with a lunch and breakfast for Tacoma youth ages 0 to 18.

Meals are served out of 10 middle school sites and more than 100 bus stops throughout Tacoma neighborhoods, including all elementary sites. Middle school sites are open for curbside pickup from 10 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday. In addition to meals being available at our 10 middle schools, our buses make scheduled stops throughout Tacoma neighborhoods and at all elementary schools to get free breakfasts and lunches to kids ages 0 to 18. Bus stop locations and times vary. [Check out the map to find a route near you.](#)

Any child can visit any designated location in the County to get access to free meals. You can view a GIS map of meal pick up locations [on this website](#). I have been volunteering regularly in the Franklin Pierce School district to deliver weekend backpack meals. These are distributed in collaboration with Our Savior Lutheran Church by volunteer drivers through out area. However you contribute to your community, please be sure to wear a mask and other protective gear as recommended by the Health Department and CDC.



## Virtual Programs with the Tacoma Public Library

The Tacoma Public Library is following the recommendations of local, state, and national health officials in making the decision to close all library locations to the public in order to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. All Tacoma Public Library locations are closed until further notice, but our library is still providing critical digital services!

Valuable online resources are available to all card holders. Check out the Online Library of [A to Z eResources](#) for the full list including:

- Professional tutorials via [Lynda](#), from LinkedIn Learning

- eBooks and Audiobooks via [OverDrive](#)/Libby app and [Hoopla](#)
- Streaming movies, TV, and the Great Courses with [Kanopy](#) and [Hoopla](#)
- Streaming music on [Hoopla](#)
- Digital Magazines on [RB Digital](#)

More online resources can be found on the [Tacoma Public Library Facebook page](#). This includes their lunchtime story series I contributed to. Check out my reading of [Swatch the Girl Who Loved Color](#).

## COVID-19 Resources

City of Tacoma – [cityoftacoma.org/coronavirus](http://cityoftacoma.org/coronavirus)

Make It Tacoma – [makeittacoma.com](http://makeittacoma.com)

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department - [tpchd.org](http://tpchd.org)

TPU Bill Assistance - [mytpu.org/payment-billing/payment-information/payment-assistance](http://mytpu.org/payment-billing/payment-information/payment-assistance)

Washington State Governor Jay Inslee COVID-19 Response - [coronavirus.wa.gov](http://coronavirus.wa.gov)



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