We stand in solidarity with Asian and Pacific Islander Communities #StopAsianHate

This week’s video contains Mayor Armondo Pavone’s strong statement condemning the recent incidents of violence against Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. It also shows highlights from last Monday’s anti-AAPI hate press conference, including Gov. Jay Inslee, at City Hall.

Moving towards a more representative workforce

The Human Resources Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Tactical Plan guides us towards a workforce that more accurately reflects our community’s diversity. Last Saturday at the City Council’s annual retreat, Human Resources Administrator Ellen Bradley-Mak and Senior Employee Relations Analyst Brian Sandler presented the 2021 edition, which built on the success of the first edition in 2017.

A significant change implemented four years ago was the use of anonymous applications. Hiring managers are not able to view an applicant’s name and address, thus minimizing implicit bias. Salary information is also no longer a requirement.

While it is difficult to attach a direct link to this change, we have seen marked improvement in several areas:

- Black/African American applicants saw a 133% increase in moving forward to the interview phase
- Applicants who identified as Two or More Races saw a 100% increase in moving forward to the interview phase
- Ethnically diverse hires increased by 16.5%
- The number of females hired increased by 5%

One of the cornerstones of this newest plan is Resolution No. 4414, approved by the City Council last October. The resolution “declares Renton an anti-racist city that strives to use the Renton Equity Lens to eradicate racial economic disparities.”

Vacancies filled

Following Monday’s press conference, Mayor Pavone and members of the City Council stood in solidarity with members of the city’s Asian American and Pacific Islander community.

Send story ideas or comments to communications@rentonwa.gov.

Translation of the newsletter is available on the City of Renton’s website. For additional translation services contact communications@rentonwa.gov.

If you’re not already a subscriber, please sign up and get up-to-date news and information from City Hall.

Friday, March 26, 2021 | Vol. VI | Issue 11

MARCH 26: NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION AND HEALING

We stand in solidarity with Asian and Pacific Islander Communities #StopAsianHate

“A hate crime against any one of our communities is a crime against all of us. We need to address these hateful acts, and we must hold accountable the individuals who commit these crimes.”

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This Week in Renton
inequities and institutional racism to value all residents and be a welcoming place to all people."

Our Renton Business Plan echoes the resolution as it includes "Building an inclusive, informed city with equitable outcomes for all in support of social, economic, and racial justice" as one of its key points.

This newest plan intends to build on these successes of the past four years. It also introduces strategies to further increase workforce diversity and foster a more inclusive organization. We want all staff to feel they belong and take an active role in contributing their diverse perspectives.

The 2021 Plan will focus on four strategic areas:

• Build Cultural Competence and Enhance Inclusion Skills
• Outreach and Recruitment
• Enhance Culture of Inclusion
• Inclusion and Equity Incorporated into City's Lines of Business

To help meet these strategies, the city plans to:

• Track data in exit surveys, employee engagement surveys, and other methods to gauge staff perceptions regarding the city's equity and inclusion efforts
• Provide additional information to applicants on our hiring and interviewing practices to help prepare candidates to succeed and reduce barriers to employment
• Review and enhance hiring practices in the Renton Police Department to attract a diverse applicant base
• Continue outreach to community organizations based on industry needs and have made tremendous strides as an organization over the last four years.

This new plan will continue to move us closer to our goal of creating a workforce that reflects the diversity of Renton.

FINANCE

Water and Sewer Utility Tax

Beginning January 1, 2021 water and sewer districts may begin collecting a water and sewer utility tax on behalf of the cities they serve. Customers affected by this tax may have been contacted by your water and sewer districts and have questions.

We have answers to the most common questions on our website. If you need more information, please contact our Utility Billing Department at 425-430-6852 or ub@rentonwa.gov. They are open Monday—Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Downtown Utility Improvement Project

Pre-construction work on the Downtown Utility Improvement Project has started. The project’s first phase begins later this month at two intersections: Rainier Avenue South and Third Avenue South, and Third Avenue South and Burnett Avenue South. Construction is projected to move throughout the project area in several phases over approximately the next 18 months through fall 2022.

We have a project webpage for regular project updates. You can also sign up for construction updates.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

Ready for Business Fund

Applications are now being accepted for a new Greater Seattle Business Association small business recovery grant program. Priority will be given to BIPOC, LGBQT, and women-owned businesses. The Ready for Business Fund, a partnership between GSBA and Comcast Washington, is intended to support small and micro-businesses severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. GSBA is Washington State’s LGBQT and allied business chamber and the largest LGBQT and allied chamber in North America.

Here are the eligibility requirements:

• Business must be located and licensed in Washington state
• Business must be established on or before March 2, 2020
• Priority is given to LGBQT, BIPOC, and woman-owned businesses
• Priority is given to businesses disproportionately impacted by COVID-19

If you have applied for a Ready for Business grant in 2020, you DO NOT need to reapply. They will automatically include that application in the second round.
Working Washington: Round 4

Working Washington Small Business Grants: Round 4

The Washington State Department of Commerce will begin accepting Working Washington Grant applications: Round 4 on March 29.

Round 4 includes $240 million that the state legislature approved as part of an early action bill providing additional funding for rent assistance and other COVID-19 response efforts.

These grant relief funds are designed for small for-profit businesses, especially those required to close due to public health and safety measures. Priorities for funding are:

- Businesses required to close
- Businesses with lost revenue as a result of closure
- Businesses with added expenses to maintain safe operations
- Equitable distribution of grant funds across the state and to businesses owned and operated by historically disadvantaged individuals

Our Economic Development Division has more resources for businesses.

HOUSEHOLD SAFETY

Poison Prevention Week

According to the Washington Poison Center, poisoning is the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death and the third leading cause of accidental hospitalizations, with more than 90% of all poisonings happen at home.

This is National Poison Prevention Week. The Renton Regional Fire Authority reminds all of us that we can prevent an emergency by having the Poison Help number on hand: 1-800-222-1222.

Prescription medications are one of the primary causes of poisonings. Renton Police Department is hosting their Shred-a-thon, Prescription Drug Take Back and Food Drive on April 24.

They will collect:
- Prescription and over-the-counter medications in pill or liquid form.
- Solid dosage or capsules may be removed from the container and placed in a bag or brought in their original container.
- If the original container is submitted, remove any identifying information by removing the label or use a permanent marker to block out personal information.

They will not collect:
- Intravenous solutions
- Injectables
- Inhalers
- Syringes
- Chemotherapy medications
- Vaping devices with batteries that cannot be removed
- Medical waste

RECREATION ACTIVITIES

Recreation opportunities for spring and summer!

With spring weather on the way and the county in Phase 3 of the COVID-19 reopening plan, our Recreation & Neighborhoods Division is able to bring expanded activities for all ages this spring and summer! In April/May, Renton’s Get Fit/Get Outward youth sports from Skyhawks and Steel SoCcer, family outings under Renton Outdoors, league sports for adults, and a variety of new topics in the Age-Friendly Virtual Talks.
Donate blood and save a life

We all know the importance of donating blood. As a community, we need 1,000 donors every day to support patients obtaining trauma care, undergoing surgeries, having cancer treatment, and receiving organ transplants. Additionally, there are new moms and neonatal care.

Donating blood is essential and encouraged. Your one-hour donation appointment is safe as all pop-up donor centers are following social distancing guidelines.

BloodworksNW held two pop-up blood drives in Renton this week and will be back in April with four more. Appointments are being accepted.

Hyatt Regency Lake Washington at Southport Seattle
Room (150 Lake Washington Blvd, 98050)
• April 7: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
• April 8: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
• Appointments

Lindbergh High School Cafeteria (16426 128th Ave SE, 98058)
• April 15: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
• April 16: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
• Appointments

ART IN RENTON

Celebrate Erasmus’ third anniversary

To commemorate the third anniversary of the landing of Renton’s rooftop dragon Erasmus, Renton Municipal Arts Commission is hosting a “make your own dragon egg” contest. Pick up your free kit and unleash your creativity. Kits, while they last, are available at Sparkle Gifts & Whatnots (824 S 3rd St.) Monday-Saturday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. and SYM Market (824 S 3rd St, 98057) on Saturday & Sunday 12-5 p.m.

Post your photos with the hashtag #ErasmusEggContest for your chance to win. Prizes will be announced on April 13, which is also Erasmus’ official Landing Day!

425 Magazine profiles art scene

Everything from murals to sculptures to hydrant art to utility wraps, our downtown has an eclectic collection of art. A recent edition of 425 Magazine profiled the art, explaining how the city council works with Renton Municipal Arts Commission to support local and regional artists.

The VisitRenton app contains a guide to the Hydrant Art project in South Renton and the Black Live Matter art project.

Renton ranks as the 13th most diverse city in the country

Renton was recently ranked as the 13th most diverse U.S. city by WalletHub. We are the second most diverse in Washington, ranking behind Kent (2nd). WalletHub based their rankings on ethnicity and race, language, and birthplace.

In Renton, diversity is one of our core values and something that we celebrate as a community. We know we are better when we stand as one, build bridges and seek to understand one another.

COVID-19

Late last week, several modifications to the state’s response to COVID-19 affected businesses and vaccine distribution. Here are some of the changes:

DID YOU HEAR?

Renton ranks as the 13th most diverse city in the country
Phase 3 of Washington Health — Roadmap to Recovery

On Monday, King County and the rest of the State moved into Phase 3 of the

Vaccine Distribution

On March 17, vaccine eligibility was expanded to include high-risk critical workers who work in certain congregate settings, public transit, and restaurant.

On March 31, eligibility will further expand to include:

- People 16 years or older with 2 or more comorbidities or underlying conditions
- People 16 years or older who are pregnant or have a disability that puts them at high risk for severe COVID-19

Also allowed in Phase 2:

- In-person spectacles will be allowed for the first time in a year to attend events at outdoor venues with permanent seating. Capacity will be capped at 25%. This change affects professional sports and high school sports and motorists, riders, and other outdoor spectator events. Social distancing and facial covering are still required.

- Large venue events are capped at 25% occupancy, or up to 5,000 people, whichever is less and must follow spectator guidelines.

The governor also extended the statewide mask mandate through June 30 and now allows violations at long-term care facilities and nursing homes to resume.

CITY COUNCIL

March 22, 2021 Meeting

Meeting documents (approved committee reports, motion sheets, and council meeting calendar)

Proclamations

Committee of the whole, 6:30 p.m.

Approved Minutes from March 15, 2021 meeting

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Renton City Council meets via Zoom. For information on viewing or participating in a council meeting, go to rentonwa.gov/council

CALENDAR

Mon–Fri., 11:30 a.m. Senior Meals. Drive-thru sack lunch pick-up. Location: Renton Senior Activity Center

Mondays, 5–8 p.m. Sustainable Renton free drive-through grocery store at St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church

Wednesday, 6–8 p.m. 6p.m. Renton Live from the Renton Chamber of Commerce. Online connection promoting businesses, nonprofits and activities to help determine eligibility and find open appointments.

Friday, 11 a.m., visit the state Department of Health’s new Vaccine Locator to help determine eligibility and find open appointments.

Mayor Armoondo Pavone (center front) is flanked by the 2021 Renton City Council.

Kim Standing, Ruth Pérez and Council President Randy Corman