



This Week from the Mayor



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Family First Center moves a step closer to reality

It's hard to believe that it has been more than two years ago when I began discussions with Seattle Seahawks star Doug Baldwin on how we might work together to create a center in the Cascade/Benson Hill community to serve kids and families in this underserved neighborhood.

Meetings early-on with Doug in my office required allowing city employees to get through the excitement of having him at city hall.

Not surprising since this happens wherever he goes in this region. After a couple visits, we did start to focus our time exploring how we could provide the types of services and amenities for youth that Doug readily admits made a big difference in his life during his early years.

After joining the Seahawks, Doug and Richard Sherman shared a house in the Cascade/Benson Hill community and they fell in love with Pho Shizzle, in the Cascade Shopping Center, as their favorite place to eat (Pho Shizzle has since relocated to the Highlands). It was during those frequent visits to the restaurant that Doug could see the number of kids in the neighborhood that had no real place to go after school.

Working with our staff, he began exploring where a community center could be located in the Cascade neighborhood. With the enthusiastic support of the City Council, we began exploring options that primarily surrounded the possible purchase of the Cascade Shopping Center by the city. With Doug's support, we envisioned anchoring this complex with a community center that would be funded through a number of potential sources, with the remainder of the center to be developed in future years as money became available.

Unfortunately, issues came up that removed the shopping center from consideration, but the desire and need to serve the community remained strong. It led to discussions with Renton School District and its board members, and a partnership was formed to see how we could move forward. With property provided by the school district, the project came back to life.

Fast forward to Monday night and we now have a pathway to fulfilling this dream. The [City Council unanimously voted to fund up to \\$4 million towards this center](#), which is 26% of our goal of raising \$15 million for a state-of-the-art community center.

So now the real work begins. This desire to provide a much-needed facility with services that will benefit thousands of our residents requires a successful partnership including the city, school district and private sector. We will be reaching out to many local corporations for support and we have already received assurances of support from members of King County Council and several local organizations.

We're very fortunate to have someone like Doug Baldwin, who recognizes that his success was due in part to support he received from his community, dedicated to serving the families in Renton.



The idea for the Family First Center came from a series of meetings between the Seahawks Doug Baldwin and Mayor Law.

Earth Day/Arbor Day celebration this weekend

I will kick off the city's annual [Earth Day/Arbor Day celebration](#) on Friday with a tree planting at the Renton History Museum. And on Saturday, around 100 volunteers will meet at Heritage Park at 9 a.m. for a morning of maintenance and the planting of 30 new trees.

Earth Day/Arbor Day is the time our community comes together for the good of our city's environment and to act as stewards of these resources for future generations. I'm proud that Renton has earned designation as a Tree City USA for the past nine years. I'm also proud of the priority our community services and public works staffs put forth in preserving the beautiful parks and commons areas we enjoy on a daily basis, but also of their work to establish similar areas in new projects.



Renton has been named a Tree City USA for the ninth consecutive year



City honors volunteers at annual dinner

April is National Volunteers Month and last week we [recognized and honored](#) the thousands of residents who make the city better through the donation of their time and talent. They've served as trail and park rangers, cleaned parks, worked with youth athletic activities, and served on numerous boards, commissions, and committees. Volunteers also donated their time to police, emergency management, senior center, history museum and city hall, to name just a few. Their donation of time, talent and energy makes a significant contribution to our city and we owe them our gratitude.

Feedback

Comments, questions or suggestions, or just want to share all the great things that are happening in the city, please [email](#) me. Thanks for reading.