

Working To Improve Mental-Health Management

In June of this year, an independent policy and funding authority called the Pierce County Regional Support Network (RSN) Governing Board converged to oversee and reform Pierce County's approach to managing mental health services. The nine member committee is comprised of three representatives from the Pierce County Council, three from the Pierce County Executive's Office, and also three at-large community participants. I have the pleasure of serving as Chair.

This board's objective is to determine policy and provide financial oversight for mental-health providers from both the private sector and Pierce County Human Services. With this in mind, this group began work immediately to review and re-align core services. Historic funding and administrative challenges were considered and a temporary funding structure was put into place to sustain core services while the Board completed its full evaluation.

Since that time, important steps have been taken to re-align service provisions, locate new funding sources, renegotiate long-range contracts with direct service providers, and recruit a qualified/able administrator to carry the new RSN model forward. After many years of state funding reductions, it will

be critical for the RSN to obtain a fair share of state and federal dollars to deliver the services required at the level of quality we demand for our patients. Our board and our provider network have been meeting with legislators and the governor's office to make sure that our patients, their families, and our providers and staff are not left behind in the state budget.

In addition, the Board has been active in working with Pierce County Human Services for positive changes at the Old Puget Sound Hospital. I personally believe that we have turned a corner in managing this facility, and I am looking forward to continuing these efforts to provide quality service for our patients in a safe working environment for our employees. None of this could have been possible without the efforts of our staff at Human Services, our service providers, and an outstanding board that I am honored to serve as chair.

This is the first time a public board has been charged with making decisions on mental health resources in this county and I fully support this approach. Through these efforts, greater patient and employee safety will be ensured and we will make strides in rebuilding critical relationships with key providers and Western State Hospital.

Uniting Around Snake Lake

Residents of our district prove time and again how they can work together to solve problems and the Snake Lake land preservation project is just the latest example. It was a privilege to work with members of the community to forge an agreement worth celebrating. I care deeply about sustaining our natural beauty in Tacoma and ensuring citizens will always be able to enjoy it, which is why I became involved with this project and worked to bring the parties together to forge a positive compromise.

More than 13 acres of land in the heart of Tacoma directly adjacent to the Nature Center, was purchased by a developer. The prospect of this land potentially turning into a commercial real estate site greatly concerned the local residents and friends of Snake Lake. These community members banded together to save the 13 acre parcel from development and helped to convince the developer to sell the land to a public funding consortium that would preserve it as a wildlife sanctuary. The purchase was facilitated through joint funding from a Conservation Futures bond, Metro Parks Tacoma and the City of Tacoma.

Thanks go to Dee Margeson for acting as the community's point person and seeing this matter through, and also to the developer, Joe Mayer, for his wisdom and willingness to understand the community's position. It was refreshing to be involved in a process where the priority for both parties was to find a collective vision. Through the determined teamwork of all involved a rare win-win outcome was achieved.

Snake Lake is a beautiful green space in the center of Tacoma and functions as a natural preserve for people and wildlife. We are now working with Metro Parks Tacoma to update the Tacoma Nature Center to include those 13 acres of preserved land.



CELEBRATE Tacoma!

Our district is made up of many community-minded companies and individuals who have been rooted in Tacoma for many decades. The rich diversity they represent in our community is cause for us to celebrate. I firmly believe in the sense of community camaraderie that these events inspire. It has been my pleasure to partner and provide funding on events such as Tall Ships Tacoma; the Taste of Tacoma; Ethnic Fest; and the Point Defiance Business District Music Festival. We want to help ensure these exciting events are well funded, safe and entertaining for every participant.



New Crosswalk for Wilson Students

Wilson High School students will not only have a brand new building to attend, but they'll also have a much safer commute. A new lighted crosswalk with traffic signals has been approved and is expected to be put into place on Orchard Street in 2007. This is one more example of how I've been able to team with district neighborhoods and the City of Tacoma to bring about changes that positively impact community safety and well being.



Get Connected... Stay Connected

In 2006, we expanded our office hours by holding evening meetings, each Monday at various locations throughout the district. Let me first thank all of you who attended. I hope you found them helpful. My goal was to share important information about county government and provide you with an outlet for input and ideas. We know how important it is to be aware and part of what is going on in your community and your neighborhood.

In 2007, we plan to host quarterly meetings at pre-designated times and locations (still to be determined) on subjects you want to hear about. To keep these meetings interactive and discussion oriented, we need your input on topics of interest. **Please complete the questionnaire on the reverse side and mail it back to us by January 15, 2007.** If you don't have a topic in mind, feel free to send only your contact information and we'll add you to our distribution list for meeting notices and important news.

These community meetings will be just one way you can contact me. Please know that I'm available whenever you need me. Feel free to approach me in the grocery store, call me at home (253-431-8081) or at my office (253-798-7590), or email me anytime at tfarrel@co.pierce.wa.us.

Thanks to everyone for staying involved in your community. We look forward to seeing you in 2007.

Your Opinion COUNTS!

Your Opinion COUNTS!

I'm making plans to host district-based discussions during 2007. In order to make these discussions relevant, I need to gather input from you on the topic areas that you feel are important. Final dates, locations and topics will be announced prior to each session.

Please take a moment to complete the information below and return it to the following address:

Pierce County Council Office
Councilmember Tim Farrell, District 4
930 Tacoma Avenue South, Room 1046
Tacoma, WA 98402

Thank you for sharing your input and valuable time.

What topic areas would you like to see discussed at these meetings (i.e. Medicaid, Safety, Education, etc.)?

Your Name _____
Address _____
Phone Number _____
Email Address _____

Thank You!

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What's Inside?

2006 News From Councilmember Tim Farrell

- Snake Lake News
- Mental Health update
- Regional transportation plans
- Celebrating Tacoma
- New Wilson High crosswalk

Winter 2007



FROM THE DESK OF Councilmember

Tim Farrell

District #4

Representing your interests on these and other important committees:

- Pierce County Community Development Committee
- Pierce County Public Safety and Human Services Committee
- Broadway Center for the Performing Arts
- Joint Municipal Action Committee
- Pierce County Regional Council
- Safe Streets
- Washington State Association of Counties
- Employment & Training Consortium
- Regional Support Network Governing Board
- Regional Transportation Investment District

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Thank you for allowing me to serve and contribute to the success of our district in 2006. We've worked together to enhance the health, safety and environment for the well being of Pierce County residents.

As in previous years, we were involved in many diverse projects. We've participated in everything from the overhaul of Pierce County's mental health system to forging an agreement to protect the 13 acres bordering the Snake Lake reserve. We've laid the groundwork for greater constituent safety through our plans to add a new student crosswalk on Orchard Street and the construction of the 37th street roundabout, which is scheduled for completion in early 2007.

We've remained focused on the special needs of our community by continuing to support the farmer's market nutrition program for seniors. We've also been instrumental in targeting county funding for disaster preparedness training and almost doubled our support of local senior centers.

In addition, some very exciting work has gone on to preserve architectural history here in Pierce County. I'm participating on a committee to evaluate the county's archive of historical plans and documents to establish the best way to preserve these valuable items.

Our office continues to enthusiastically support the many exciting community events hosted in our district, such as the Taste of Tacoma and Tall Ships. In addition to providing funding for security during these events, we're also working with the various presenters to ensure these important community celebrations will live on for future generations.

Through your interest and support, great things are being accomplished in our community. Our continued teamwork and efforts will no doubt bear additional fruit here in Pierce County for many years to come.

Working with you,

Tim Farrell, District 4
Pierce County Council

P.S. Do you recognize the location of the background photo on the masthead above? I'll buy lunch for the first person who can correctly identify it in an email. Send your guess to: tfarrel@co.pierce.wa.us