



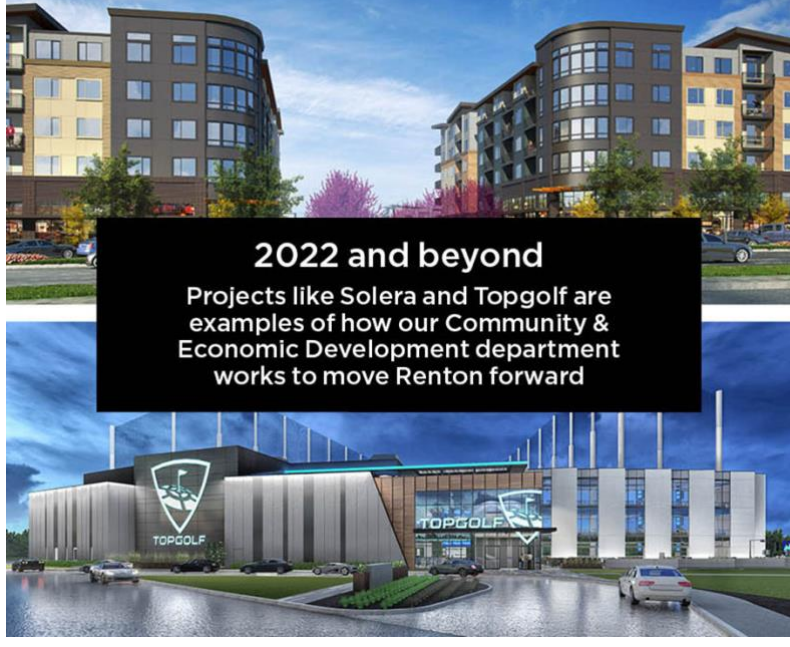
THIS WEEK IN RENTON

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

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The city's Community & Economic Development Department (CED), with support from the mayor, city council, and planning commission, had a busy and productive 2021.

Construction started on the first full-service Topgolf in Washington state and on Solera, one of the city's most significant residential projects. In addition, department staff completed almost 14,000 inspections and issued 565 code compliance citations.

"We believe that change is good when done correctly," department administrator Chip Vincent [told the city council at their Committee of the Whole](#) meeting on Monday. "We take a lot of pride in our work and how it benefits our residents and businesses."

Just south of The Landing, you'll see the impressive progress made at the [Topgolf Renton](#) site since the Aug. 3, 2021 groundbreaking. It will be Topgolf's first traditional multi-level entertainment venue in Washington when finished. The complex will feature a skylit central atrium, 102 outdoor hitting bays on three levels, a full-service restaurant and bar, private event rooms, and more. It is expected to add 500 jobs.

Take a drive through the Sunset area and you'll see how this award-winning neighborhood is evolving as originally envisioned by the Highlands Task Force. Sunset Neighborhood Park anchors the neighborhood. Nearby, two housing projects, Willowcrest Townhomes and Sunset Oaks, opened last year. Willowcrest won a Governor's Smart Communities Award for Smart Partnerships. This affordable home ownership project has been designed and constructed emphasizing sustainability and energy efficiency.

[Solera, Sunset's most influential project](#), has moved from the drawing board to site preparation. It's not just the cornerstone of the neighborhood; it's one of the city's most significant residential projects. Solera, which is being built on the site of the old Hi-Lands Shopping Center, will feature 686 residential units, 39,000 square feet of commercial space, 1,000 on-site parking spots, and pedestrian-oriented streetscape with on-street parking, street trees, sidewalks, plazas, and seating areas.

Inspections and permitting both increased in 2021. The department's inspectors completed 13,926 building, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing inspections. Staff issued 4,459 permits (out of 4,661 applications), thanks mainly to a new online permitting center that allows applicants to take just minutes to get their permit, eliminating a trip to city hall. Total revenues for those projects topped \$5.7 million. In addition, code compliance staff investigated 566 cases and 656 business licenses were approved.

Funding for a wide range of projects came through the economic development division:

- \$108,515 to fund 68 pop-up performances and 23 public art projects.
- \$225,000 in grants to 30 small businesses to offset losses because of COVID and downtown construction.
- \$451,000 in tourism promotion grants to support 14 events in 2022.

About \$1.4 million is available to fund business grants, arts & culture projects, and work downtown in 2022.

New development projections for 2022 and beyond include the construction of 8,185 residential units, 631 affordable housing units, and almost 1.2 million square feet of commercial and office space. Permitted projects include

multiple housing subdivisions, mixed use apartment developments, a new elementary school, and small cell antenna systems discreetly built onto the City's streetlights.

The staff also spotlighted three internal projects in their presentation. All have a significant impact on Renton's future:

- [Permit Ready Accessory Dwelling Units](#): PRADUs are small (400 to 1,000 square feet) independent residential units built on the same lot as a stand-alone single-family home. The city has streamlined the process and reduce costs by providing free plans and waiving most fees associated with permitting.
- [Rainier/Grady Junction Transit-Oriented Development \(TOD\)](#): The City adopted the Rainier/Grady Junction Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Subarea Plan to help inform and guide development surrounding the new transit center and other transit investments planned at Rainier Ave South and South Grady Way. In anticipation of new investments in the area, the City applied for and received funding from the Department of Commerce to implement a streamlined environmental review process for new development within the TOD subarea area. The result will be more certainty for both applicants and the public during permitting, a reduction in developer's costs, and lower housing prices to consumers.
- [Housing Action Plan](#): The city received a \$100,000 grant from Washington State Department of Commerce to create a Housing Action Plan, which was adopted by the city council in October 2021. The plan focuses on near-term solutions to increase housing availability and affordability over the next five years.



Two-way traffic coming to Wells and Williams Avenues

Weather permitting, we plan to convert Wells Avenue S and Williams Avenue S to two-way traffic as early as Thursday, Feb. 17.



The night before the conversion, no overnight parking will be allowed to ensure parked cars are not facing the wrong way.

Permanent all-way stops along Wells Avenue S and Williams Avenue S will be at South 5th St., Houser Way S, South Riverside Dr., and North Riverside Dr.

Traffic cones will separate northbound and southbound lanes to aid drivers.

As we get closer to the conversion date, updated information will be shared through the city's [social media accounts](#) and [online](#).



Mayor Armondo Pavone met with Street Maintenance Supervisor John Kalmbach (left) and Maintenance Services Worker Shane Graves (right) to show his appreciation for their efforts in collecting litter.

Street maintenance crew helps with litter pickup

Our public works street maintenance crews performed "extra emphasis" work that helped remove excessive litter from rights-of-way around our city.

John Kalmbach, the city's street maintenance supervisor, added several members of his street maintenance crew to the dedicated two-person solid waste team in response to dozens of cleanup requests submitted through Renton Responds and phone calls.

In three days of work, the crews removed 2,785 pounds (536 bags) of litter from our city.

If you see an area of the city that needs our attention, please submit the information through [Renton Responds](#). You'll see a category for "Dumping Litter on City Property."



Black History Month Events

- **Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022:** The City of Bellevue hosts *Cultural Conversations – “Story in the Cloth” Quilting Traditions and Practices in the African American Community* at 1 p.m. [Pre-registration is required.](#)
- **Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022:** Northwest African American Museum hosts *The Past, Present and Future of Black History*. Dr. Quintard Taylor of the University of Washington will moderate. Lonnie Bunch III, secretary of The Smithsonian Institution, is the keynote speaker. This [event is virtual](#) and starts at 5 p.m.

In the news this week

A recap of news posted on the city's social media accounts. You can find us (@cityofrenton) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), & [Twitter](#). Renton residents can also find us on [Nextdoor](#).

[Arts Commission 2022 grant applications](#) – Due Feb.16

[City Council review](#)

[COVID-19 resources](#)

[In-person services at city hall](#)

[Museum Valentine's Day Fundraiser: Feb. 13](#)

[RapidRide I-Line open house](#)

[Recreation Guide: January and February](#)

[Renton History Museum](#)

[Traffic Projects](#)

[Youth Traffic Court](#)