



# INTUCKER

AUGUST 2024 | VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 3



## SPECIAL OLYMPICS IN TUCKER TUCKER PARKS FILLED WITH OLYMPIC ATHLETES

# ELECTED OFFICIALS

**Frank Auman**  
Mayor

**Roger W. Orlando**  
District 1 - Post 1

**Cara Schroeder**  
District 2 - Post 1

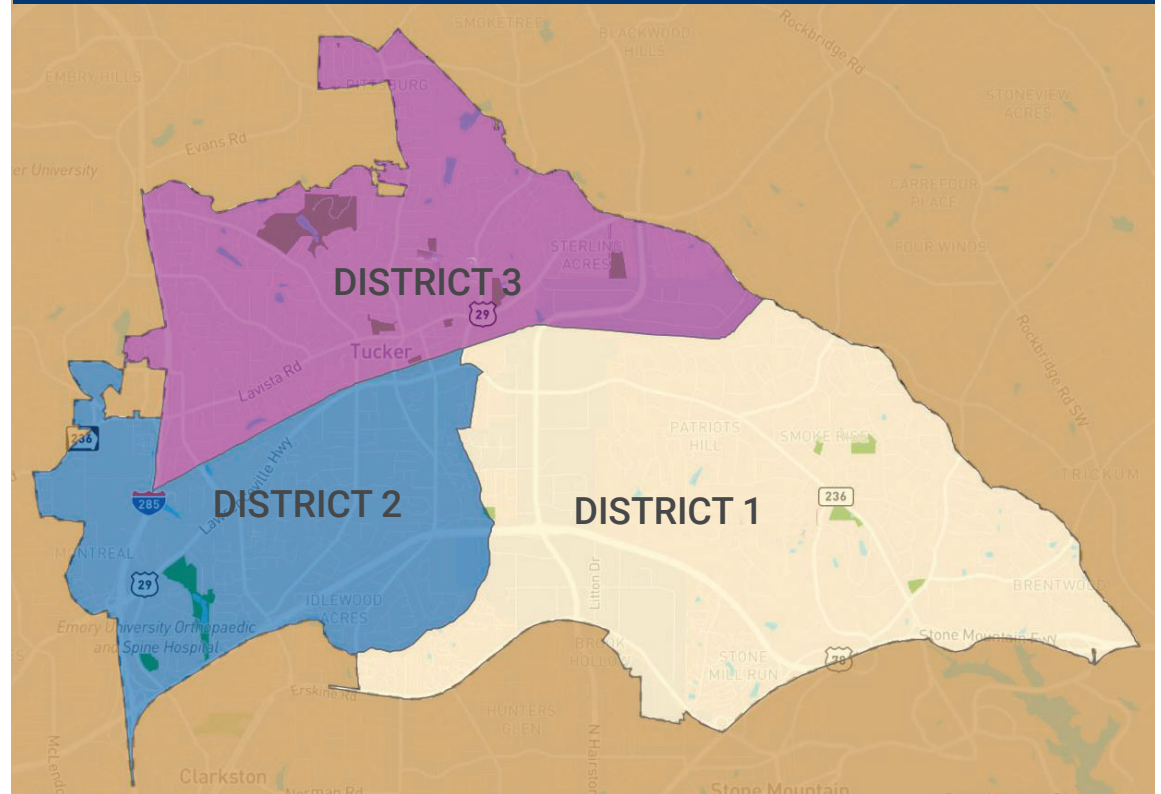
**Alexis Weaver**  
District 3 - Post 1

**Virginia Rece**  
District 1 - Post 2

**Vinh Nguyen**  
District 2 - Post 2

**Amy Trocchi**  
District 3 - Post 2

# DISTRICT MAP



# EDITOR'S NOTE

**SONJA SZUBSKI - COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR**

## CITY SOCIALS



**nextdoor**

## INTUCKER STAFF

Editor-in-Chief  
Sonja Szubski  
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Marcus Etienne &  
Robin Stevens



Welcome new readers! This is an exciting endeavor for the City of Tucker and especially the Communications Department. Back

in January of 2017 the City launched its first newsletter. Just four pages long, it was the precursor to what we have today. Over the years the page numbers and digital readership have grown but the reach via print was stagnating. As people moved into Tucker and signed up to receive InTucker in the mail, there was almost equal attrition and the mailing list hung around 600 for several years.

As announced last month, Rough Draft decided to bring the Reporter to Tucker and the City saw an opportunity to expand our reach by ten times.

This is a true win-win-win for our community. The Tucker Reporter is a complete and separate entity from the City and they are responsible for their content. As you flip through the pages, you will see coverage from across the Metro Atlanta Area and that they have expanded their coverage to include Tucker. Our *InTucker* will be inserted only into the Tucker Reporter but it will be increasing our distribution to 6,000 copies! Five thousand will be mailed with an additional 1,000 distributed throughout our retail community for pick up.

Our City is growing and maturing in leaps and bounds. As a resident and staff member I am excited and proud of what we have accomplished and what we have in store.

Thank you for coming along for the ride. We hope you are proud of your community!

# FROM THE MAYOR

FRANK AUMAN



Measure twice, cut once. This saying is an old saying not only because it's sound advice, but because it applies literally to carpentry and metaphorically to so many other aspects of life, including, and maybe especially, municipal governments. It cautions

against being in too much of a hurry, or reacting with rash decisions instead of responding thoughtfully to the issues we face, or the community we want to build. It reminds us that being thoughtful in the beginning saves time, money and hardship in the end. It also drives home the truth that when the planning is done, we also have to act.

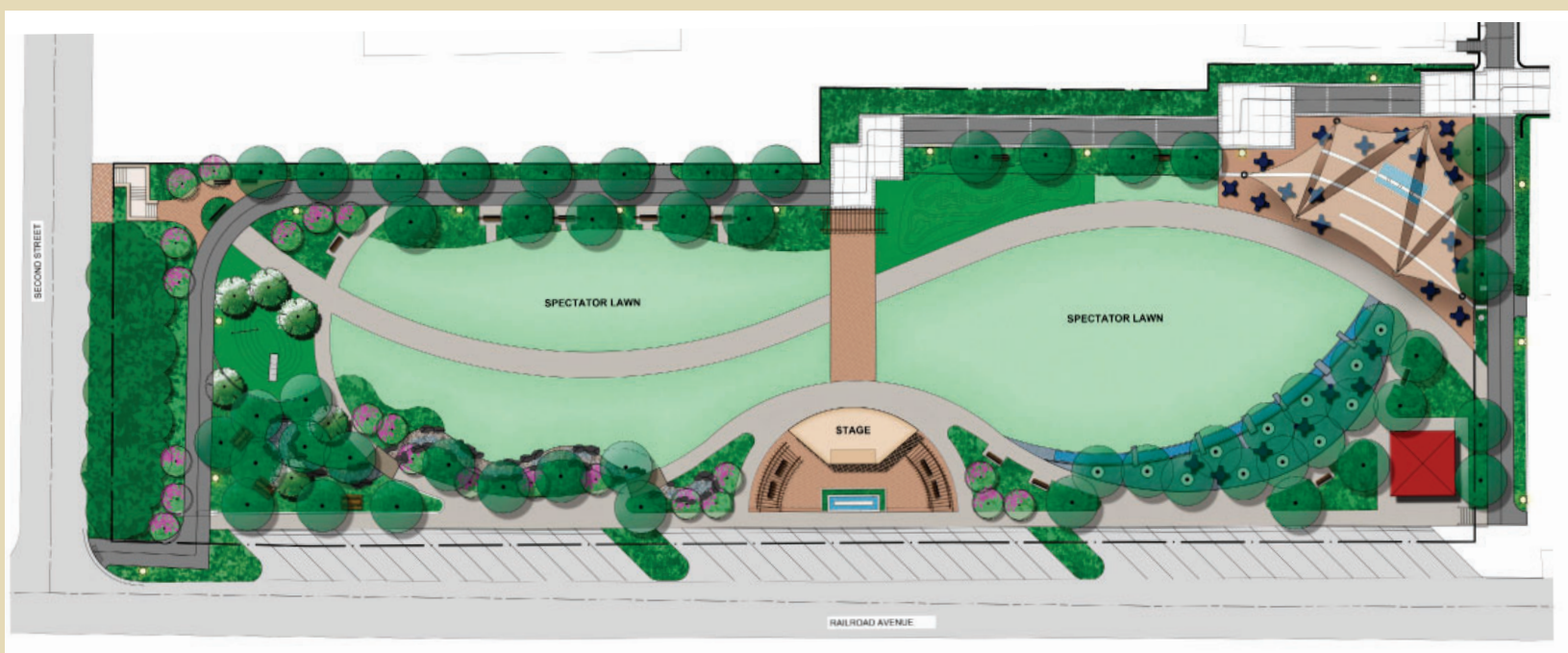
Our management of city business begins with planning. I have discussed before and at length all the plans and studies we have conducted over the past eight years. Most of these involve hiring a third party to provide professional advice, and to conduct public input activities like polls, surveys, public meetings, charettes, and so on. Then your elected officials add their knowledge and judgment about timing and priorities and urgency and importance. The resulting plans guide our decisions over a long period of time, freeing us from starting from scratch with each subsequent

decision, and from making those decisions without understanding how they fit into a larger effort.

One of the biggest projects in our short history is the downtown green, and it's about to break ground. It has been a topic in this space before, but it truly is exciting and will have a huge impact on our Tucker community. From the first notion of acquiring the property, through arranging the finances, creating the plan for the space, issuing construction and bid documents, and final approval, this has been a multi-year process. With final adoption last week, we will soon see shovels in the ground, and roughly a year from now, it will be in full use! This will not be your average park. Every detail from the flora to the building materials has been discussed, changed, adapted and now approved to achieve maximum joy in its use. This will be a signature space designed to accommodate a variety of events, and will be a game-changer in the way we use downtown.

To return to our metaphor, we've measured twice and then some. Now the cutting has begun, and we'll do it carefully and confidently, with the certainty of a beautiful finished product that will serve us all for many, many years.

Can't wait to see you on the Green, Tucker!



## FEATURE STORY

# TUCKER'S OLYMPIC PAST AND PRESENT

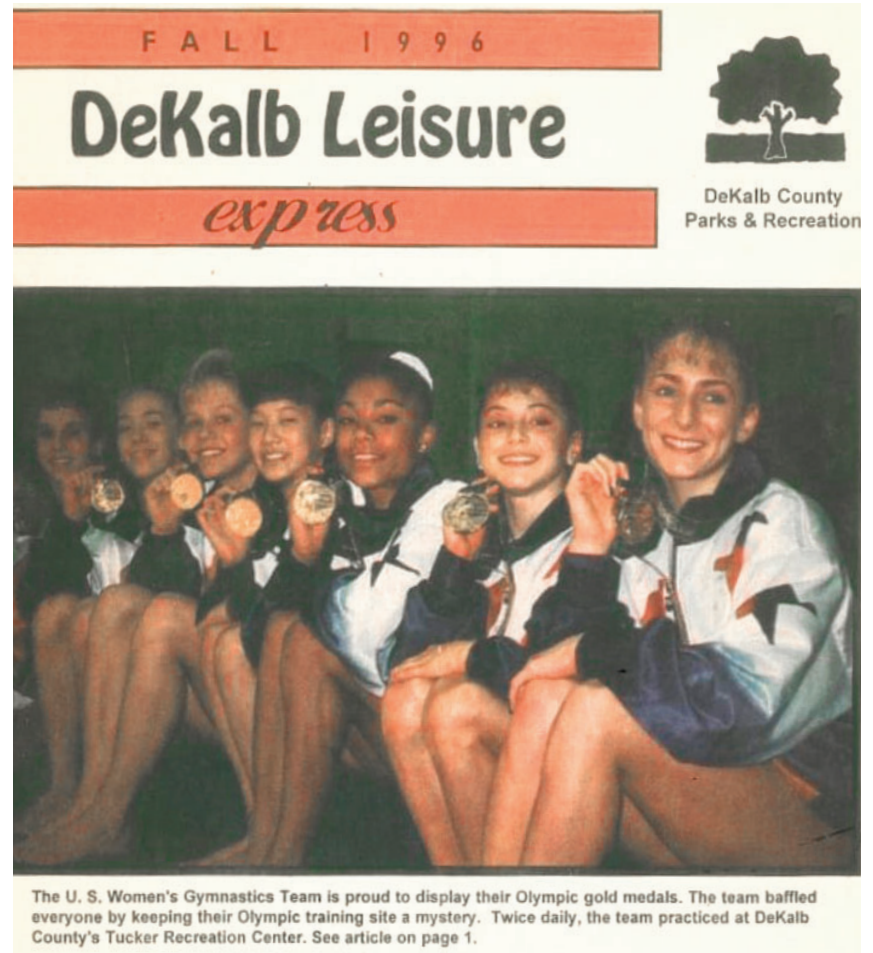
Olympic fever has struck the world as Paris hosts the 2024 games this month. Elite athletes from across the globe compete for the highest decoration in their specialty sports while the regular populace watch with baited breath as Olympic and world records are chased.

Tucker has an interesting history with the Olympics, namely back in 1996 when Atlanta hosted the Summer Olympics. The USA Women's Gymnastics team, also known as the Magnificent Seven, used the Tucker Recreation Center as their training gym leading up to the competition. A closely guarded secret at the time, it is now a point of pride for the Tucker community and the recreation center.

## THE OLYMPICS AND TUCKER TODAY...

Hosting the Olympics requires years of preparation and an amount of money that does not allow for multiple opportunities for hosting. But Tucker does see its fair share of Olympians via the Special Olympics. The DeKalb County School District partners with the Special Olympics to train and host local skills training and competitions and the City of Tucker plays host at the pickleball courts and tennis courts at Henderson Park, as well as the baseball diamonds at Kelley Cofer Park.

The Dekalb County School District has around 2,000 intellectually disabled students enrolled. As part of the curriculum, Physical Education is taught by travelling adaptive PE teachers. Three of these specialized teachers coordinate the training and local Special Olympic



competitions in DeKalb. With decades of combined experience, Kimberly Skalku, Ava Moore and Tucker native, Carey Allison, serve DeKalb's students through adaptive PE classes and leading the students in various events for the Special Olympics.



The DeKalb County Special Olympics team leaders and volunteers.

The three teachers teach skills clinics in preparation for an upcoming event. Students first compete in local events, then in area events and state level competitions. Each class gets to pick which sport they would like to learn in clinic: pickleball, softball, gymnastics, bowling, swimming or basketball, with bowling being the current top choice. Participation in the competitions is free for the students.

## HOW TUCKER GIVES BACK...

In early May, Kelley Cofer Park was the site of the DeKalb Special Olympic softball skills competition. Athletes were scored on batting, throwing, catching and running bases and received cheers from spectators in the stands, accolades from their peers and ribbons to award their tenacity and spirit. These events are also an opportunity for local teens to volunteer. For the skills competition at Cofer Park, the Tucker High School tennis team was on hand to guide the athletes to each skill, hand out award ribbons and have fun.

When the students compete in the state events, they can opt to have a unified competition. Each athlete is paired with a general education student, the two each perform the skill and their scores are combined. Pictured below are three Tucker Middle School students with their Special Olympic partners at the Special Olympic State Gymnastics competition. Together they won.

While the world focuses on the elite athletes in Paris, Tucker is focusing on our own special Olympians.

To learn more about the Special Olympics and how to support our local athletes visit [specialolympics.org](https://specialolympics.org).



# CITY HALL UPDATE

# CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

The first meeting of the Mayor and Council in July celebrated Park and Recreation Month, the City's youth baseball team being ranked seventh in the state in the GRPA league and the introduction of Derrick Turner, Assistant City Manager.

The Mayor and Council then heard a second read and public hearing on an ordinance to consider a 12-month time extension or a termination of a SLUP previously approved in May of 2022 for 2059 Northlake Parkway. The approval to extend the SLUP by 12 months passed the Council with a unanimous vote.

In new business three ordinances had their first hearing and public hearing for a SLUP to allow a drive-thru for a proposed bank at 3925 Lavista Road, an amendment to the Tucker Code to align the ordinance with the new business location approval process changing the name to Zoning Use Approval, and an update to various chapters of the city code to update references and identify the appropriate

manner of appeal. Four contracts finished off the evening pertaining to sidewalk design and a memorandum of agreement with the Tucker Summit Community Improvement District for design of sidewalk on Mountain Industrial Blvd. All four contracts were approved unanimously.

There was a special called meeting on July 15 for a first read to amend the Tucker code, Chapter 14, Environment, enacting regulations relating to on-site sewage management systems. The Council approved the amendment at the July 22 meeting.

The July 22 meeting held many informational updates to ongoing plans and studies, and approval of an amended fee schedule for Fiscal Year 2025.

Tucker's Mayor and Council meet every second and fourth Monday of each month at Tucker City Hall, 1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350B, Tucker, GA 30084. All meetings are streamed and recorded on the website, [tuckerga.gov/documents](http://tuckerga.gov/documents)



## DATES TO KNOW

### AUGUST 2

First Friday Concert Series  
The Ultimate Eagles Tribute Band - On the Border

### AUGUST 5

Downtown Development Authority

### AUGUST 6

Zoning Board of Appeals

### AUGUST 6

Meetup on Main  
Business Networking  
Tucker City Hall Annex

### AUGUST 7

Traffic Court

### AUGUST 12

City Council Meeting

### AUGUST 14

Traffic Court

### AUGUST 15

Planning Commission

### AUGUST 15

Small Business Resources Expo  
Tucker City Hall Annex  
4228 1st Avenue

### AUGUST 15

Movie on the Green  
Trolls Band Together

### AUGUST 21

Environmental Court

### AUGUST 26

City Council Work Session

### AUGUST 28

Municipal Court

### AUGUST 31

Tucker Rec Center Closed for  
Labor Day Weekend

## CITY HALL UPDATE

# NEWS FROM INSIDE CITY HALL

*In response to the recent commercial burglaries, we are re-running Sgt. Obester's article from September of 2023.*

Gone are the days of video recording to VHS videotapes and CDs. Today, most video cameras digitally record their data and indeed many are "IP" cameras that can stream directly to the internet. With this advancement, video evidence showing crimes and footage of potential suspects are of higher quality and more easily processed by our detectives. The problem with video evidence is knowing where a camera is located and if it captured a criminal act. Fortunately, our Department has partnered with a company called FUSUS to help us integrate and monitor cameras throughout DeKalb County.

Recently, our Department began asking individuals and business owners to voluntarily register their privately owned surveillance cameras into a system called FUSUS. Registering your cameras does not give anyone outside of law enforcement access to them. It just means that an investigator with our Department can quickly identify where cameras are located in case of a crime related incident. The

detective or investigator can then request copies of digital recordings via a digital drop box link sent directly to the camera owner.

A second – and entirely voluntary - registration level does offer the option of allowing DKPD direct and real-time access to a particular camera feed. While there is a cost to this option (for equipment and a subscription fee), again this is a voluntary program. All camera settings and camera access is controlled entirely by the camera owner and not the Department.

In the end, the goal of this initiative is to make our community safer by obtaining better evidence, solving more crimes, and ultimately reducing criminal behavior. For more information on this new initiative, the two levels of connectivity, a FAQ section, and a link to easily register your camera system please go to: [connectdekalbcounty.org](http://connectdekalbcounty.org)

## CITY STANDARDS GUIDEBOOK PLEASE SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK!

### VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY



OPEN UNTIL  
AUGUST 22

The City of Tucker is working with TSW on the creation of a City Standard Guidebook. The guidebook will identify a set of required products and design standards for city projects, including city signage (gateway, monument, wayfinding, etc), landscaping (trees, shrubs, ground cover, etc), retaining walls and fences, benches, trash cans, bollards, lighting, etc. By designing and creating a set of standards unique to Tucker, public projects across the city will have consistency that will create a unique sense of place and add character to the city as a whole.

## FINAL CONCEPTS OPEN HOUSE SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 6 P.M. @ CITY HALL

1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350B

## BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

# SUGAR MEX

Sugar, spice, and everything nice greet customers when they walk into Sugar Mex of Tucker. Maria Salazar, the owner of Sugar Mex, takes pride in serving customers bursts of flavors of Mexican desserts and snacks.

“Serving the customers and hearing their opinions of my flavors makes me feel proud,” Salazar said.

Salazar was born and raised in Mexico. She made her way to the states and worked in the restaurant industry for over 13 years. During her time there, she developed her skills and learned a lot in the restaurant field. After some time, she decided she wanted to start up her own ice cream store and share flavors from foods from back home. In October 2021 she turned her dream to a reality. She has been satisfying customers’ taste buds ever since.

“It was not easy at first,” Salazar said. “My dream was to start my own business, and after working over 13 years at local restaurants that allowed me to make connections with people in the area, my dream has become reality.”

Salazar feels like Tucker is a friendly, peaceful community and a well-liked area. She thinks Sugar Mex’s location is an excellent, and she is happy to be in the community of Tucker. Salazar is thankful for the people in the community

of Tucker too. She enjoys the warmth and the small town feeling that she gets working here.

“The customers are really friendly and support small businesses like my own,” Salazar said. “I am very thankful to Tucker for introducing me to new people. I am also grateful to all the community that has supported me since my opening and given me excellent ratings.”

Salazar is a proud Latina woman. She is proud of where she is today. She is proud that she can be an example to her daughter and her grandchildren and show them they can make their dreams come true. She is glad to be a role model to young girls who aspire to be business owners and show them that they can accomplish their dreams.

“I am very proud to be Latina,” Salazar said. “Even though English is not my native language, I feel like my hard work helps me to overcome any obstacles. I feel happy to be able to demonstrate to young girls that it is possible to achieve your objectives and to be able to tell each one ‘sí, se puede’ or ‘yes, you can.’”

*The interview for the story was translated by Felix Figueroa*





## CITIZEN OF THE MONTH

# STEPHANIE WILSON



I met Stephanie Wilson when our children were in first grade at Livsey Elementary School. Right away, her commitment to the school, teachers and staff in support of the community of children was apparent. She was a very active parent in the classroom and a leader in the school's PTO. Stephanie also served on the board of the Tucker Middle School PTA and was a co-chair for the Tucker Cluster Council.

Stephanie's level of volunteerism at her children's schools is enough for a nomination but she goes far above and beyond in her service to Tucker's youth and has greatly earned a nomination for *InTucker's* Citizen of the Month.

Over the years I have gotten to know her better and our friendship has grown. When my daughter entered Tucker Middle School, she joined the Wyldlife club that Stephanie sponsors at the school through the East Atlanta YoungLife organization. Stephanie has a gift for working with people and especially with young teens. She connects with them in

such an amazing way, they respond to her with respect and deference, they accept her, her support and her guidance. She pours into the children with weekly breakfasts, monthly get togethers, holiday shopping trips, chaperoning camps and even opening her home for dinners and fellowship.

As my daughter heads to Tucker High School in the fall, I am thrilled that the influence of Ms. Stephanie will continue through her service with Young Life.

Stephanie is a wife, a biological mother to three and a spiritual mother to many of Tucker's children. I know I speak for MANY parents in Tucker when I say Stephanie is a great friend, an amazing citizen and an inspired community leader.

Thank you, Stephanie, on behalf of your Wyldlife and YoungLife crew. Congratulations on Citizen of the Month!

*Nomination by Tivoli Roberson*



# CHECK-IN WITH ALLYSON GEVERTZ



The 2023-24 school year was a successful one for Tucker and for the entire school district. Our new Superintendent, Dr. Devon Horton (who is also a Tucker resident!), brought innovation, passion, and the disruption of systems that fail students. Major initiatives, such as a district reorganization, a new accountability framework, a teacher residency, and the transition to a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system all happened during the last school year. Other school-based advances, such as elementary sports, Academic Skills Centers, Evolv weapons detection, post-secondary push plans, and School Attendance Teams, also launched last year. All of these programs will continue during the 2024-25 school year.

With the help of DeKalb stakeholders, the District created a new strategic plan for 2024-2029. Tucker parents, students, business leaders, and community members participated in a steering committee and gave input through focus groups and surveys. According to parent feedback, the top issues were equitable/healthy learning environments and redistricting for fairness and access. Student priorities

were mental health and real-world skill acquisition. The new strategic plan encompasses student success, community engagement, talent retention, culture/climate, mental health, and organizational excellence.

New to Tucker this fall will be Yondr cellphone pouches. Tucker Middle and Tucker High are two of ten DCSD schools piloting this method of increasing time on task in classrooms. Research consistently shows that phones harm our kids' academic engagement, social skills, and mental health. Educators report leaving the field of teaching because so much energy is spent managing cell phone use rather than providing instruction. School districts across the country are banning phones in classrooms and the results have been positive. The pilot year will give the District a chance to see how students, teachers, and parents handle the shift to Yondr pouches and what logistical concerns arise. The information will be used to see whether pouches, cellphone lockers (also being piloted at three schools), or another method is best for improved teaching and learning.

Also new this fall will be student assignment planning. Citizens from Tucker and across DeKalb will apply and be selected for a committee that will make recommendations regarding redrawn attendance boundaries, which specialty programs should be offered, which schools should close, where new schools should be built, and how students are transported to programs. This is a "reimagining" of DeKalb Schools; based on strategic plan stakeholder input, our community is ready to reimagine.

As always, if you'd like to discuss any of these initiatives, or any other school-related topic, with me, I host monthly listening sessions at various locations across Board of Education district 4. My public Facebook page, Allyson Gevertz for DeKalb Schools, is a great place to find timely information and announcements. I also regularly attend events in Tucker, so look for me around town. My email address is [Allyson\\_Gevertz@dekalbschoolsga.org](mailto:Allyson_Gevertz@dekalbschoolsga.org) and I welcome your input that way as well. Working together, we can make the 2024-25 school year the best one yet!

The City of Tucker reminds you to  
**WATCH OUT FOR STUDENTS**

Metro Atlanta Students Return August 5



AROUND TOWN

# UPCOMING CITY EVENTS



**ON THE BORDER**  
The Ultimate Eagles Tribute

**FIRST FRIDAY CONCERT SERIES**

**AUGUST 2 - CHURCH STREET GREENSPACE**



**TROLLS BAND TOGETHER**

**LET'S ALL GO TO THE MOVIE!**

**AUG. 15 - CHURCH STREET GREENSPACE**

## PUBLIC INFORMATION OPEN HOUSE

### NORTHLAKE-TUCKER TRAIL

Tuesday August 13, 2024  
6-7:30 p.m.

The City of Tucker proposes to construct a 10' wide, concrete shared-use path 2.8 miles in length. The proposed path begins at Northlake Mall on Northlake Parkway and ends in Downtown Tucker at the existing shared-use path.

Please attend and provide feedback on the proposed design as well as any additional information relevant to the project.

Tucker City Hall  
1975 Lakeside Parkway, Tucker, GA 30084

## CREATING CONNECTIONS

City of Tucker

### Small Business Resources Expo

**THURSDAY**  
**AUG. 15**  
**2024**  
1:30-4 p.m.



Tucker City Hall Annex - 4228 First Avenue  
Registration: [TuckerSBRE2024.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tucker-small-business-resources-expo-2024)



# TUCKER Community Corner



## **Every Thursday through October** **– Tucker Farmers Market**

**4-7 p.m.**

**4885 Lavista Rd**

The Tucker Farmers Market is back! Come to St. Andrews Presbyterian Church for fresh veggies, local curations, food trucks and live music.

## **8/7 – Tucker Lifelong Community** **Committee Meeting**

**7 p.m.**

The TLC Committee is committed to fostering a lifelong livable community in Tucker. This meeting is virtual and the Zoom link can be found at [tuckercivic.org](http://tuckercivic.org).

## **8/10 – Tucker Cruise-In**

**10 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**Main Street**

Tucker Cruise-In is a old-fashioned town meet and greet car show with a wide variety of cars, ranging from antiques to street rods, motorcycles to imports. Vehicle entry is \$5.