

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY CHARACTER



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INTRODUCTION

Thirty years after the establishment of the Northern Pacific transcontinental railroad terminus in Tacoma in 1873, and following the depression associated with the Panic of 1893, optimism for future development within the Tacoma area was revived. A land speculator named Major Edward J. Bowes (of Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour fame) and his partner W.A. Irwin of California saw tremendous opportunities for growth in Tacoma. After buying property, then called Regents Park, Bowes and Irwin hired Civil Engineer M.R. (Roy) Thompson to design a subdivision layout and plat the land.

Many of the ideas credited to Thompson in the design of what are now the original plats for Fircrest, Regents Park I and II, were likely fostered by Fredrick Law Olmsted. The similarities between Thompson's plan for Regents Park and the Olmsted plan of 1873 for downtown Tacoma were striking. The concept of open space and abundant park lands was Olmsted's, as were his ideas for taking full advantage of topography in designing streets and other improvements. According to James Osness in his book "Of Lions and Dreams, of Men and Realities", Regents Park was declared to be one of the earliest developments in the United States to eschew straight streets and rectangular blocks, in favor of curved streets and correspondingly aesthetically designed blocks.

The community has since grown well beyond its roots, and today, Fircrest is planning for additional growth in the future that will continue to shape the character of the community. As growth occurs, there are characteristics that residents would like to retain, such as Fircrest's green character; a safe, friendly and sustainable community; and some physical remnants of the past as reminders of its early history.

The Community Character Element provides a design framework for new development and redevelopment and addresses natural features and historic character preservation. The Element is meant to address the goals of retaining Fircrest's distinct character and creating gathering places and cultural opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds. It addresses Fircrest's desire to maintain and enhance a successful business climate and to foster innovative thinking. It addresses the vision of respect for the natural environment. It is also intended to help carry out the vision of keeping Fircrest a safe, healthy, friendly and attractive city in the future.

This Element is complementary to other elements of the Comprehensive Plan where specific aspects of community character are addressed. For example, Fircrest's locations for various uses are addressed primarily in the Land Use Element. The Community Character Element focuses more closely on design goals and historic resource opportunities and challenges for the community over a 20-year planning horizon. It considers the following aspects of Community Character:

- People and Public Places
- Events and Community Building
- View Corridors, Entrances and Landmarks
- Buildings and Site Design
- Street and Pathway Linkages
- Urban Forest Management
- Streetscape Landscaping
- Residential Character
- Historic Resources
- Community Life

COMMUNITY CHARACTER VISION

Looking ahead 20 years...

Fircrest has maintained its distinctive character.

The quality design of new development is a reflection of the value Fircrest's community members place on the community's appearance. Care has been taken to create distinctive streets and pathways and to enhance the comfort, safety and usability of public places. Public view corridors and entryways have been preserved and enhanced. The city's historic roots are still apparent through preservation of special sites, structures and buildings. Interpretive signage has also been used to enhance the community's sense of its heritage.

Community gathering places are found throughout the city.

Spaces for parks have been acquired and improved by the City, and plazas have been incorporated into new developments. Both public and private investment into place-making creates and maintains spaces where informal social gatherings and community building occur. The City and private partners continue to sponsor a wide variety of community events in an array of public places. Fircrest Park provides an especially unique venue for such events and is recognized for its historical significance to the community. Community members also enjoy community gardens, other parks and plazas with walkable and bikeable neighborhoods that support healthy lifestyles and a sustainable future.

Care has been given to preserve elements of the natural environment.

Landscaping regulations have ensured preservation of special natural areas and significant trees that help define the character of the city. New landscaping has incorporated native plants and low-impact development design elements. Areas of open space and forested groves adjoining Leach Creek, the Tacoma Holding Basin, Wainwright and Whittier schools, and in other locations have been preserved where possible through public/private collaboration. Through creative design, such as in combination with neighborhood entryways, public and private projects have incorporated natural features and enhanced natural systems. Fircrest continues to promote the value of the natural environment by inventorying and monitoring the elements that define its green character, including forested parks and open space.

GOALS AND POLICIES

This Element contains the community character goals and policies for the City of Fircrest. The following goals represent the general direction of the City related to community character, while the policies provide more detail about the steps needed to meet the intent of each goal. Discussions provide background information, may offer typical examples, and clarify intent.

PEOPLE AND PUBLIC PLACES

Community cohesiveness develops in many ways. It can come from a shared vision for the community. It can be developed through the use of public places for interaction. Successful public places have the following qualities: accessibility, comfort or image, activity, a welcoming feeling and sociability. Accessibility means having good links from surrounding areas, by foot, bike, transit or other means. It also means visual accessibility. The comfort and image come from several characteristics, including a perception of safety, cleanliness and availability of seating, both formal and informal. Identifying features, such as a fountain, artwork or a unique building, may also enhance image. Activity may be a natural outcome from a collection of uses or may be programmed through music presentations, performing arts or other endeavors.

People typically feel welcome at public places that provide basic features, such as lighting, shelter and play areas for children, along with spaces for meetings or other gatherings. Sociability is when a space becomes a place sensitive to diverse cultural context for people to go or to meet, usually because it has elements of the first four qualities.

GOAL CC1

Facilitate the success of public places that foster community cohesiveness by ensuring well-designed spaces that support activity and community interaction.

Policy CC1.1

Continue to provide community gathering places in recreation facilities and park sites throughout the city and encourage development of new community gathering places, especially in underserved areas of the community.

Discussion: Fircrest Park, Whittier Park, the Gene Goodwin Tot Lot and other city parks represent examples of publicly-owned and managed community gathering places. Future redevelopment of Fircrest's neighborhood commercial and commercial mixed use areas, especially those located on Regents Boulevard or within the 19th Street and Mildred Street corridors, should explore opportunities for establishing new gathering places.

Policy CC1.2

Preserve, develop and enhance informal community gathering places, such as plazas, mixed use centers that include local cafes and coffee shops with comfortable outdoor seating, and spaces within parks. This can be accomplished by:

- Requiring/providing seating opportunities with multi-seasonal amenities, such as canopies or other cover from the elements and heating during periods of cooler temperatures;
- Encouraging installation of art or water features;
- Installing outdoor plantings and other landscape features
- Providing visual access to sites;
- Providing for active uses in the space; and
- Promoting partnerships and implementing incentives where appropriate to create public places, such as plazas in combination with outdoor cafes.

Discussion: Future planning, especially for areas located on Regents Boulevard or within the 19th Street and Mildred Street corridors, should explore opportunities for establishing new informal gathering places. Adoption of development standards and incentives in support of such gathering places should be considered.

Policy CC1.3

Ensure that public places are designed and managed to encourage high levels of activity by including:

- Multiple entrances;
- Flexible spaces;
- Linear urban parks;
- Focal points that create activity throughout the space;
- A signature attraction that provides a compelling identity;
- Multi-seasonal attractions; and
- Active management of space and activities.

Policy CC1.4

Design and build Fircrest's public buildings and indoor/outdoor facilities to enhance their function as community gathering places.

Discussion: The Recreation Center at Fircrest Park is an example of a public facility designed to be a community gathering place. Redevelopment or replacement of this structure in the future should ensure its continuing function for this purpose.

Policy CC1.5

Incorporate and provide opportunities for art in and around public buildings and facilities. Encourage additional opportunities throughout the city for art as design elements or features of new development, as well as placement of significant art.

Discussion: The Pacific Northwest has an international reputation for displaying works of art in public settings. The City can contribute to this regional legacy by incorporating art in public projects and encouraging developers to incorporate art into their projects. Many items in the public environment – lighting, railings, walls, benches, etc. can be made more visually interesting through the participation of artists.

EVENTS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Community cohesiveness can also be nurtured by community events. Community events provide an opportunity to help foster people's interest in getting to know the diverse cultures of the community and their neighbors and form friendships and collaborative networks. These events can also enhance awareness of diversity, cultural traditions, and Fircrest's heritage throughout the community. By providing or supporting community events, such as Fircrest Fun Days, the community Tree Lighting Ceremony, Derby Days and Car Show, as well as a variety of other public activities, the City serves as a conduit supporting these interactions and possible community building outcomes that can support a myriad of other objectives from disaster preparedness to economic vitality.

GOAL CC2

Promote activities and events that enliven public spaces, build community, and enrich the lives of Fircrest citizens.

Policy CC2.1

Provide links to public places to encourage their use through such means as:

- Providing safe and convenient pedestrian walkways;
- Providing bikeways;
- Developing nearby transit stops and other transit-supportive facilities; and
- Designing for visual access to and from the site.

Discussion: The redevelopment of arterials into complete streets will support access to public spaces.

Policy CC2.2

Encourage and support a wide variety of community festivals or events, such as Fircrest Fun Days, the community Tree Lighting Ceremony, and Derby Days, reflecting the diversity, heritage and cultural traditions of the Fircrest community.

Policy CC2.3

Facilitate the continued development and support of a diverse set of inter-generational recreational and cultural programs and organizations that celebrate Fircrest's heritage and cultural diversity, such as visual and performing arts, and an active parks and recreation program.

Policy CC2.4

Facilitate the development of a farmers' market, community gardens and school gardens that increase residents' access to fresh produce and other healthy food, support local and regional agriculture, and increase community interaction.

ENTRANCES AND LANDMARKS

People orient themselves by remembering certain features that include unique public views, defined entries and landmarks. These features also can set apart one community

from another and are part of what defines the unique character of a place. Preserving key features and creating new ones can help define Fircrest and its neighborhoods.

GOAL CC3

Preserve and enhance key features and create new ones that can help define Fircrest and its neighborhoods.

Policy CC3.1

Identify and establish distinctive gateways or entryways into the city, support neighborhood efforts to identify and maintain unique neighborhood entryways, and emphasize these locations with design elements, such as landscaping, signage, art or monuments.

Discussion: Key entry points to the community are the intersections of Regents Boulevard and Orchard Street, Regents Boulevard and Mildred Street, Emerson Street and Orchard Street, Emerson Street and 67th Avenue West, 19th Street and Mildred Street, 19th Street and Alameda Avenue, and 19th Street and Orchard. Continued development and enhancement of gateway features at these locations will help to define the sense of arrival for those entering Fircrest.

Policy CC3.2

Encourage schools, religious facilities and other public or semi-public buildings to locate and design unique facilities to serve as community landmarks and to foster a sense of place.

Policy CC3.3

Prohibit new billboards and other large signs, and use design review for new signage to avoid visual clutter and ensure design standards are met.

Policy CC3.4

Encourage and require, when practicable, underground installation of utility distribution lines.

Discussion: Numerous above-ground utility lines and cables lining streets produce a cluttered effect and detract from territorial views of the community -- as well as more focused views of buildings, landscaping and open space areas. Use of underground lines should be required, when practicable, in accordance with rate, tariffs, and franchise agreements and/or regulations applicable to the serving utility. The City should work with utility providers, citizens and developers to find ways of funding the undergrounding of existing utilities.

BUILDINGS AND SITE DESIGN

There is a high expectation for quality design in Fircrest, and design standards and guidelines provide local guidance. Commercial, multifamily, mixed use, civic, and traditional residential design projects receive a higher level of scrutiny than detached single-family homes. Generally, these projects are reviewed at an administrative level using the City's adopted design standards and guidelines, which may apply to specific locations or to types of uses.

GOAL CC4

Adopt and implement design standards and guidelines that will achieve design excellence, desired urban form, and community character goals consistent with citizens' preferred design parameters.

Policy CC4.1

Adopt new design standards and guidelines that will guide new development and redevelopment within Neighborhood Commercial areas on Regents Boulevard, Commercial Mixed Use areas within the Mildred and 19th Street corridors, and the City's multifamily areas in order to achieve unique, high quality built environments in each area. Consider the introduction of additional form-based zoning within the Neighborhood Commercial and Commercial Mixed Use areas.

Discussion: The City has previously adopted generalized design standards and guidelines that apply to commercial and other types of development. These design standards and guidelines are not fully consistent with the community's community character goals nor will they achieve design excellence or the preferred urban form. The City anticipates modifying these provisions to achieve planning and design goals and objectives for future neighborhood commercial, commercial mixed use, and multifamily development.

Policy CC4.2

Apply design standards and guidelines through an administrative design review process to help achieve or accomplish the following:

- A human-scale character that creates a pleasant walking environment for all ages and abilities. Buildings should provide "eyes-on-the-street";
- Elements of design, proportion, rhythm and massing that are desirable and appropriate for proposed structures and the site;
- Places and structures in the city that reflect the uniqueness of the community and provide meanings to its residents;
- Building scale and orientation that are appropriate to the site;
- The use of high-quality and durable materials, as well as innovative building techniques and designs;
- The use of environmentally friendly design and building techniques, such as LEED, for the construction or rehabilitation of structures;
- Minimization of negative impacts, such as glare or unsightly views of parking;
- Incorporation of historic features whenever possible; and
- A design that fits with the context of the site, one that is sensitive to its surroundings and reflective of natural features and existing character.

Policy CC4.3

Design and build Fircrest's civic buildings in a superior way and with high-quality materials to serve as innovative and sustainable models to the community.

Policy CC4.4

Ensure safe environments by strongly encouraging the use of building and site design techniques consistent with CPTED guidelines to:

- Distinguish between publicly accessible open space and private open space;
- Provide vandal-resistant construction;
- Provide opportunities for residents and workers to view spaces and observe activities nearby; and
- Reduce or eliminate “unclaimed” areas, such as unmaintained easements between fence lines and street or trail right-of-way.

Discussion: The National Crime Prevention Institute endorses a set of guidelines called Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). These guidelines illustrate how design can affect the safety of a site or building. Clearly distinguishing between public and private spaces makes it easier to identify intruders. The ability to easily observe activities helps parents and caregivers keep sight of children and helps neighbors or workers identify activities that should not be occurring. Areas with little or no use are typically not cared for and can offer areas for unwanted activities.

Policy CC4.5

Foster the natural environment and maintain and enhance the green character of the city, while integrating healthy built environments through techniques such as:

- Encouraging design that minimizes impact on natural systems;
- Using innovations in public projects that improve natural systems;
- Preserving key areas of open space; and
- Requiring the preservation, maintenance and installation of new street trees and other vegetation in accordance with the City’s design standards and guidelines, and landscaping requirements.

Discussion: Members of the Fircrest community have expressed that stewardship of the natural environment is important to them. Although Fircrest continues to urbanize, many features of the natural environment can be preserved, enhanced and restored. Design of landscaping and the built environment can reduce the impacts to natural systems. At the same time, well-thought-out landscape design can enhance a site and create unique character.

Policy CC4.6

Encourage design and installation of landscaping that:

- Creates character and a sense of place;
- Retains and enhances existing green character;
- Preserves and utilizes native trees and plants;
- Enhances water and air quality;
- Minimizes water consumption;
- Provides aesthetic value;
- Creates spaces for recreation;
- Unifies site design;
- Softens or disguises less aesthetically pleasing features of a site; and
- Provides buffers for transitions between uses or helps protect natural features.

STREET AND PATHWAY LINKAGES

Streets can be more than just a means of getting from one point to another. They can define how the city is viewed as one passes through it and create a sense of unique character. Elements of street design, such as width, provisions for transit or bikes, pavement treatments, and street-side vegetation, affect the quality of a traveler's trip and the sense of place. These design elements also can affect the behavior of motorists, such as their speed, their decisions to yield or take the right-of-way, and the degree of attention that is paid to pedestrians, bicycles and other vehicles.

Linear urban parks that incorporate pathways and complement the street system can create a park-like setting for the community.

GOAL CC5

Pay special attention to street design in order to create a sense of unique character that distinguishes Fircrest from neighboring communities.

Policy CC5.1

Promote the conversion of arterial streets originally designed primarily to move motor vehicles quickly to *complete streets* that support safe and convenient access for all users within uniquely designed corridors that are visually differentiated from arterial streets in adjacent cities. Coordinate with Tacoma and University Place in redesigning arterials shared with Fircrest when opportunities arise for *complete street* conversions.

Discussion: The City's arterials should be redeveloped to enable pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities to safely move along and across these *complete streets*. The design for these streets should be unique and respond to its community context. *Complete streets* in Fircrest may include a mix of design elements including sidewalks, bike lanes, special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, and other traffic calming elements.

Policy CC5.2

Ensure that *complete street* designs result in active urban streets, accessible public spaces, and safe and convenient linkages for all users, especially within the Mildred Street and 19th Street corridors and along Regents Boulevard.

Discussion: *Complete streets* will help create a more walkable community leading to increased street life, community vibrancy, and the development and preservation of a unique community character.

Policy CC5.3

Use distinctive design elements to create unique identities for Neighborhood Commercial and Commercial Mixed Use areas, such as:

- Specially designed landscape;
- Unique crosswalk treatments and frequent crosswalks;
- Sidewalk design that allows and encourages activities such as outdoor café service;
- Character-defining materials and accessories, such as seating and wayfinding elements;
- Art elements; and
- Pedestrian-scale lighting.

Discussion: The Mildred Street and 19th Street corridors and Regents Boulevard are unique geographic areas. The introduction of distinctive design elements to each area can be used to foster unique neighborhood character.

Policy CC5.4

Design and create trails, urban linear parks, sidewalks, bikeways and paths to increase physical activity and connectivity for people by providing safe, direct or convenient links between the following:

- Residential neighborhoods;
- Schools;
- Parks, open spaces, greenbelts and recreation facilities;
- Employment centers;
- Shopping and service destinations; and
- Civic buildings and spaces.

URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT

An urban forest refers to the natural and planted vegetation in an urban area -- both public and private. A community's urban forest is comprised not just of trees and other vegetation in parks but also trees and other landscaping that line the roadways and vegetation on private property. A well-managed, healthy urban forest:

- Provides opportunities to develop neighborhood and community partnerships that benefit the participants physically, sociologically and psychologically;
- Can lessen the impacts of drought, tree diseases, insect pests, construction, storm damage and stormwater runoff;
- Benefits the entire community economically, aesthetically, and ecologically;
- Supports the conservation, protection and enhancement of Fircrest's watershed and the Puget Sound, and promotes the health of fish habitat; and
- Has a positive effect on surrounding businesses and residences and people's sense of well-being.

Trees and other vegetation within the urban forest provide a unique green infrastructure that if maintained and cared for will continue to give back to the community. Trees also have great potential to shape the character of a community. A worthwhile challenge is to find ways to increase the tree canopy and enhance the health, properly maintain and diversify the urban forest while achieving, over time, the community character desired by Fircrest citizens.

GOAL CC6

Promote the planning, management and preservation of a safe and healthy urban forest that reflects community character goals by establishing effective programs, practices, landscaping standards, and guidelines.

Policy CC6.1

Require landscaping with a drought-tolerant native plant component (trees, shrubs and groundcovers) to be installed when significant development activities take place.

Discussion: Generally, landscaping requirements should apply to new construction and substantial alterations of existing structures, parking areas, streets and sidewalks. The use of native, drought-tolerant plants within landscaping can provide for an attractive urban setting; support the urban citywide tree canopy and wildlife; buffer the visual impacts of development; help reduce storm water runoff; and, contribute to the planting, maintenance, and preservation of a stable and sustainable urban forest.

Policy CC6.2

Landscaping should comply with applicable City standards and guidelines for plant retention, selection, installation and maintenance. These standards are intended to maintain existing trees when practicable, better ensure that plants survive and thrive, minimize conflicts with infrastructure, and in some cases provide a substantial visual screen or buffer.

Discussion: The City should periodically review the effectiveness of its landscaping and tree retention requirements and amend them as necessary to ensure they will achieve desired urban forest goals and objectives.

STREETSCAPE LANDSCAPING

Street trees and other landscaping treatments are essential for creating beauty and improving the quality of life within neighborhood commercial and commercial mixed use centers, residential neighborhood settings and other areas of a community. Benefits include: providing shade and cooling effects; providing a sense of enclosure; providing definition and scale to the street; protection from wind; separation from vehicular traffic; and reducing airborne dust and pollutants.

Many opportunities exist for street tree planting and other landscaping treatments in existing neighborhoods and areas undergoing redevelopment in Fircrest. The most favorable locations in terms of making a positive visual and functional impact are within sidewalks and planting strips to enhance the streetscape environment -- and within traffic medians to reinforce traffic calming measures.

GOAL CC7

Achieve community character and urban design goals through the preservation, installation and maintenance of street trees and other landscaping in accordance with the City's adopted street tree list, landscape regulations, and applicable design standards and guidelines.

Policy CC7.1

Periodically review and update, as needed, the City's adopted street tree list and associated landscape design standards and guidelines to ensure that they reflect current science as to tree selection, installation and maintenance.

Discussion: Proper management of the urban forest requires attention be paid to diversity of plantings, the arrival of insect pests and disease to an area that may affect existing trees and future selections, and the long-term performance of trees previously identified as being suitable for specific applications. As new selections are identified as being good candidates for street tree plantings in Fircrest, or as other trees on the current list are identified as being ones to avoid in the future, the list of approved street trees should be updated to reflect this new information.

RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

Much of the City's projected housing unit and population growth over the next couple of decades may be accommodated through construction of higher density housing in commercial mixed use areas and redevelopment of existing multifamily neighborhoods. Additional growth will occur in the form of infill development in established single-family residential neighborhoods.

Today, factors such as an aging population, changes in family size and composition, and shifting generational preferences for different housing types and neighborhood designs and functions are contributing to changes in the social and economic factors relating to housing choices. These factors have the potential to influence greatly the character of the community. As such, it is important that the City guide future residential development in a manner that will be compatible with surrounding areas and build upon the positive aspects and character of the neighborhood.

GOAL CC8

Support residential infill development and redevelopment that responds to local preference and demand for innovative, high quality housing, that is sensitive to surrounding residential areas, and that supports community character goals and objectives.

Policy CC8.1

Periodically review and update design standards and guidelines and other zoning provisions that apply to commercial-residential mixed use development, multifamily redevelopment, and single-family infill housing to assess their effectiveness in

accomplishing design objectives and community character goals, and to assess the extent to which they successfully respond to neighborhood compatibility issues and concerns.

Discussion: In response to changing needs and preferences for housing in the community and the likely increase in the type and number of housing units being constructed within existing neighborhoods, the City should adopt design standards and guidelines that apply to new cottage housing, small lot and multi-family development to better ensure design excellence and neighborhood compatibility. In addition, the City should refine existing design standards and guidelines to provide more beneficial and effective design direction for commercial mixed use development that may be constructed along the Mildred Street and 19th Street corridors.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic resources offer a way to connect with the city's past and provide a sense of continuity and permanence. Those resources represent development patterns and places associated with Fircrest's notable persons and community events. The historic fabric, together with unique qualities of new development patterns, defines the character of a community. It is essential to preserve some historic resources to maintain the character of Fircrest and to continue to honor its past. Adaptive reuse of historic structures also helps reduce the need to obtain additional resources for new building construction.

Fircrest has a rich history but very few "surviving" historic structures and identified cultural and archaeological sites. Nonetheless, the community takes pride in its shared heritage and history. The City of Fircrest has maintained photographs and other historic records that date back to the beginnings of the community in 1907, well before its incorporation in 1925. Public projects can help foster this connection and build community awareness by incorporating elements of Fircrest's history into design features.

GOAL CC9

Support the preservation and active use of cultural and historic resources to enhance Fircrest's quality of life, economic vibrancy and environmental stewardship.

Policy CC9.1

Encourage preservation, restoration, and appropriate adaptive reuse of historic properties to serve as tangible reminders of the area's history and cultural roots.

Policy CC9.2

Incorporate features, such as interpretive signage and other elements reflecting original historic designs into park projects, transportation projects and buildings on historic sites, when feasible, as a means of commemorating past events, persons of note and city history.

Policy CC9.3

Establish an ongoing process of identification, documentation, and evaluation of historic properties. Maintain and update the historic property inventory as new information arises to guide planning and decision making, as well as to provide reference and research material for use by the community.

Discussion: Identification of historic properties and archaeological sites is an essential step towards preservation. This includes evaluation of the historic and cultural significance of a property and the extent to which it has maintained its integrity. Property evaluation forms, deed documents, news articles and other information may all be used to evaluate a property. Knowing the history and significance of properties can foster stewardship by owners and the public.

Policy CC9.4

Encourage nomination of historic resources that appear to meet Historic Landmark criteria by individuals, community groups and public officials.

Discussion: A Historic Landmark designation is the most common method to identify which historic and cultural resources to protect. Designation of a property can occur at four levels: local, county, state or national. Pierce County, the State of Washington and the United States -- through the United States National Park Service (Secretary of the Interior) -- all maintain registers of Historic Landmarks. The City of Fircrest has not established a local historic landmark register.

Policy CC9.5

Emphasize the preservation of historic properties through methods such as adaptive reuse for promoting economic development and /or public use.

Discussion: Without special code provisions for historic or cultural sites, adaptive reuse (placing new uses in a building once intended for another use) or even modification of a building to make it more functional or economically competitive may trigger a requirement to bring the structure up to existing codes. The economics of bringing older construction types up to modern ones can be prohibitive to the point that the owners often choose not to make alterations. The resulting effect may be that owners allow the building to deteriorate because of its inability to draw sufficient income to cover adequate maintenance. Alternatively, the property owner may be inclined to tear down and replace the structure.

Policy CC9.6

Encourage restoration and maintenance of historic properties through code flexibility, fee reductions, and other regulatory and financial incentives.

Discussion: Historic resources reflect a use of certain materials, an architectural style, or an attention to detail. Improper alterations or additions can eliminate the very reason that the structure gave character to the area. Incentives actively encourage both preservation of existing structures and restoration of structures to more closely resemble the original style and setting.

Policy CC9.7

Protect Historic Landmarks from demolition or inappropriate modification.

Policy CC9.8

Protect Historic Landmarks and significant archaeological resources from the adverse impacts of development.

Policy CC9.9

Mitigate adverse impacts to the following by methods such as documentation of the original site or structure, interpretive signage, or other appropriate techniques:

- Landmark or archaeological sites; and
- Properties proposed to be demolished or significantly altered that are eligible for landmark designation, or are of sufficient age and meet a portion of the other criteria for landmark designation.

Discussion: There may be instances where alteration or demolition of a Historic Landmark is reasonable or necessary. In these cases it is valuable for later researchers to have records of the modifications or past use. New land uses and development can have adverse effects on historic resources. Sensitive design of new development can allow new growth, while retaining community character.

Policy CC9.10

Share survey and inventory information with Pierce County, the State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, federal agencies, the public, historical societies, museums and other appropriate entities. Use technical assistance from other agencies as appropriate.

Policy CC9.11

Support efforts by residents, property owners, cultural organizations, public agencies and school districts to support the development of a more active historic preservation program, including:

- Brochures and plaques;
- Online information; and
- Educational efforts to foster public awareness of Fircrest's history.

Discussion: Survey and evaluation work is time intensive. It is not efficient to duplicate such efforts, and opportunities such as grants to foster preservation should be explored. There are financial or other limits to maintaining or contracting personnel with technical knowledge of preservation. It is important to maintain some resources to preserve the historic character of Fircrest and, through cooperation knowledge can be preserved and shared.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Community character can be influenced over time by how well a community supports its residents – in terms of supporting educational opportunities, the provision of care facilities, public participation, and sensitive pricing of fees and charges for services offered to those who may have limited physical, mental, or financial abilities.

Goal CC10

Fircrest shall encourage programs and practices that foster a sense of community and enrich citizens' lives.

Policy CC10.1

The City should cooperate with Tacoma and University Place School Districts and Tacoma Community College to ensure that Fircrest residents are provided high quality, diverse, and satisfying educational opportunities. Continuing education programs for adults should be encouraged as well as educational programs for college students and children.

Policy CC10.2

To ensure locally focused essential services are available for working householders, Fircrest should encourage the establishment of high quality child and adult care facilities. To increase safety of children attending after school care, childcare facilities offering after school care shall be most encouraged in the vicinity of schools.

Policy CC10.3

City programs should encourage and facilitate the sharing of the talents, skills, and abilities of Fircrest's citizens with other members of the Fircrest community.

Policy CC10.4

The City should encourage new residents to participate in Fircrest's community life and to fully integrate with the community.

Policy CC10.5

The special requirements of small children, the elderly, disabled persons, and other potentially disadvantaged persons should be considered when making decisions concerning utility fees and rates, licensing fees, park and recreation programs and fees, facility projects, City programs, development projects, and other matters that may affect the quality of life in Fircrest for those who may have limited physical, mental, or financial ability.