

City of Fircrest

Town Topics

December 2019

CITY COUNCIL

Hunter T. George, *Mayor*
Denny Waltier, *Mayor Pro Tempore*
David M. Viafore
Shannon Reynolds
Brett L. Wittner
Blake L. Surina
Jamie Nixon



Mayor's Message



Park Bonds To Cost Less Than Expected

I have great news about the financing plan for the new Fircrest Pool and Community Center. The project will cost property owners significantly less than originally expected thanks to the City's excellent credit rating, plus some fortunate timing in the bond market.

In summer 2018, the City conducted a survey of residents to get feedback on design options for a new facility. It also asked if residents were willing to finance the project by paying up to \$300 a year in additional property taxes.

For the owner of a home valued at \$400,000 (roughly the current median price in Fircrest), \$300 a year amounts to 0.75 cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation (0.75 x 400). Sixty-three % of respondents supported that amount in the 2018 survey.

By April 2019, when residents were asked to vote on a \$13.5 million park bond, the costs of financing in the bond market had dipped to the point that the City's financial advisers estimated it would cost 0.68 cents per thousand. That amounts to \$272 a year for the owner of a \$400,000 home. As stewards of your tax dollars, we were feeling really good about that. And many of you agreed, as the park bond was overwhelmingly approved by 79 % of voters. Now, fast-forward to October 2019 when we took our first bond issuance to market. Here's where the news keeps getting better.

With solid guidance from a bond underwriter at D.A. Davidson & Co., we met with two analysts from S&P Global to review the City of Fircrest's financial position and establish a credit rating. The analysts were impressed and gave the City S&P's AA+ rating. I'm told that level is hard to get the first time, and that some of our neighboring cities had to make adjustments over time to earn AA+.

Here are some of the factors that helped the City achieve its outstanding credit rating:

- Consistently strong management of the City's General Fund.
- Conservative fiscal practices, including maintaining healthy reserves for equipment needs, emergencies, and one-time or unanticipated contingencies.
- A formal financial management policy.
- No other General Fund debt.

Thanks to market forces that continued to go in a favorable direction in 2019, the City locked in an interest rate that calculates to 0.59 cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation. That's \$236 a year on the median \$400,000 home.

On behalf of the Fircrest City Council and staff, we work hard to earn and maintain your trust. If you have any questions about the financing of this project or other fiscal matters, please contact me directly or come talk to us during a City Council meeting on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month.

Hunter T. George, Mayor
hgeorge@cityoffircrest.net

Public Works

Fall and winter have arrived and at Public Works that means keeping the roads and storm systems clear and clean. It would be most helpful if the residents assisted us in keeping the leaves off of the storm grates and not blowing or throwing debris into the streets as this tends to be the biggest cause of flooding. Our street sweeper will be out to try to keep up with the fall debris. As it gets colder, we may get some ice and snow and we will then be deicing the streets and following our snow removal schedule as we have done in the past years.

As always, if you have questions or need to report any problem areas, please give us a call at 253-564-8900. If you call after hours this will go to an answering service and it will report the problem.

Holiday Closures

December 13th	Closed 11:30-1:30
December 24th	Closed at noon
December 25th	Closed



December 31st	Closed at noon
January 1st	Closed
January 20th	Closed

Serving the Community Since 1925

City Manager's Corner



Hello Fircrest Residents,

Fircrest isn't the only jurisdiction with a stake in the future of the area around the intersection of Mildred and 19th streets.

The boundaries of University Place, Tacoma, and Fircrest all come together at that intersection. Plus, Tacoma Community College is the size of a small city, which is why local urban planners have taken to calling that intersection "the Four Corners."

And yet the interest doesn't stop with those four. TCC is home to one of Pierce Transit's key hubs. The Tacoma Housing Authority is planning a significant development in the James Center development. And Pierce County and the Governor's Office are paying close attention to the area's potential for future growth.

That's why University Place Mayor Kent Keel convened a meeting of all those stakeholders earlier this fall.

The catalyst for the meeting was to learn more about Sound Transit's plans to bring light rail up 19th Street from St. Joseph Medical Center to TCC. That project is currently in the queue for the 2030s. And while that's a long time from now, decisions we collectively make in the next few years could

affect it, or be affected by it. For example, we wouldn't want to spend public money on infrastructure improvements that will later be torn out by the streetcar project.

In fact, Fircrest is hard at work on a plan to rezone its portion of that area, so Mayor George and I appreciated the opportunity that Mayor Keel offered to get all of these players in one room to contemplate the future. Only one decision was made — that we will collaborate as a group.

We also learned a bit more about Sound Transit's plans for the light rail extension. Sound Transit has concepts in mind, and we have linked to them at www.cityoffircrest.net/current_info. Sound Transit says the more detailed planning will get underway in 2026. Construction is estimated to start in 2034 and be complete in 2039.

While we are a few years away from Sound Transit really getting out to the community, please let me know if you have questions or concerns about this project. In the meantime, we will continue collaborating with other "Four Corners" stakeholders and work towards a consistent approach to development.

Scott Pingel

19th and Mildred

At the direction of the City Council, the Planning Commission and planning staff are reviewing the development codes for the northwest corner of Fircrest (zoned Commercial Mixed Use and R-30). The City Council recognizes the importance of this area to meet the growing residential and commercial needs of the community and felt the current zoning and land use regulations are outdated.

Proposal The City is proposing to establish a "form-based code," along with increasing the building height and reviewing other development standards. The draft amendments would allow mixed use development similar to Proctor Station and University Place Town Center.

Moratorium During the review process, the City has instituted a moratorium on new development, including additions and alterations. The moratorium does **not** apply to tenant improvements, permits for general repairs or for properties outside of the area identified on the map. Staff estimates that the moratorium will be in place for 6 – 9 months as we complete this work.

Public Involvement There will be many opportunities for public participation. The Planning Commission meets the first Tuesday of each month. An informational meeting(s) is tentatively scheduled for late January/early February.

For specific dates and more information visit the website: www.cityoffircrest.net/development-moratorium/



Check out our **Up To Date Information** webpage www.cityoffircrest.net/updates for the latest information, including current meeting agendas, minutes, resolutions, ordinances, and project updates.

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Fircrest Police



DON'T LET PORCH PIRATES RUIN YOUR HOLIDAYS

It's that time of year again. Everyone is gearing up for the holidays, which means online shopping and packages being mailed to your home. However, when the delivery trucks start rolling so do the porch pirates. In fact, according to theft statistics, each year more than 23 million (shocking!) people report packages stolen from their doorsteps. Sadly, Fircrest is not immune to this problem. So let's make sure it's a happy holiday by using these tips to stop thieves from walking away with your packages.

Use a Smart Package Locker. If you are ordering from Amazon, you have the option of having your package sent to a secure locker near you. You can choose a locker located near you, have your package delivered there and Amazon will send you a secure code to open your locker. There are lots of locations including most Safeway Stores.

Have it Delivered to Your Work. If you work during typical delivery times, having your packages delivered to your work may be a great option. Of course, you should check with your boss first. This guarantees that the package will be brought inside to an employee instead of sitting on your porch for hours unattended.

Install a Door Camera. While this won't stop anyone from taking things from your porch it may deter them. Install a smart security camera at your front door and post signs stating that the area is under surveillance. Even if it fails to deter thieves you will have them on video, which may enable officers to track them down.

Require Signature on Delivery. This means the driver cannot just drop the package off at your door and walk away. Someone must be home to sign for and accept the package. If you miss the driver they generally will leave a note on your door letting you know when they will attempt redelivery OR the location of the facility you can pick up your package from. This is not the most convenient option, but better than losing that hard won Cyber Monday find.

Reroute or Reschedule. Both FedEx and UPS have the option to sign up for a package tracking service. If you notice you won't be home for the delivery you can reroute or reschedule it from your computer or smart phone. Be aware that they typically charge you for this service.

Let's work together to make this a bright and happy holiday season for our entire community. If you see something, say something! Call 911 to report any suspicious activity.

Happy Holidays from your Fircrest Police Department.

Who Do You Call?

Do you have a question, but are not sure which department to call? From street sweepers to pool hours, fence permits to alarm permits, there is a City staff person who would be happy to speak with you. To help point you in the right direction, we have listed each department, with some of their most frequently asked about topics.

City Hall: 253-564-8901

City Manager, City Council dates, Finance, agenda items, public disclosures

Municipal Court: 253-564-8922

Tickets, court dates, impounds

Public Works: 253-564-8900

Water, sewer, streets, utility billing, sidewalks

Planning and Building: 253-564-8902

Remodels, additions, repair, fences, nuisances, trees, land use, passports

Police Department Emergency: 911

Active crime, suspicious activity, any other emergency

To report a crime NOT in progress: 253 798-4722

Police Department Non-Emergency: 253-565-1198

Alarm permits, parking concerns, follow-up

Parks and Recreation: 253-564-8177

Hours, activities, sign-up, park concerns

Don't see your issue?

Call **City Hall** at **253-564-8901** and we will be happy to direct you to the right person.

Other Agencies:

Westside Disposal

253-564-3212

Animal Care & Control

253-627-PETS

Humane Society

253-383-2733

Puget Sound Energy

888-225-5773

Tacoma Power

253-502-8600

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Pool and Community Center Project Update

Construction of the new pool continues to progress. Below is a rendering of the new pool facilities by ARC Architects along with a few progress pictures of project construction.

The City and ARC Architects have begun reviewing the Design Development phase of the Community Center design as we prepare to get into the Construction Documents phase of the Community Center portion of the project. We anticipate having a community meeting in the coming month or two, and we encourage you to participate as we set a date and time for the community meeting.

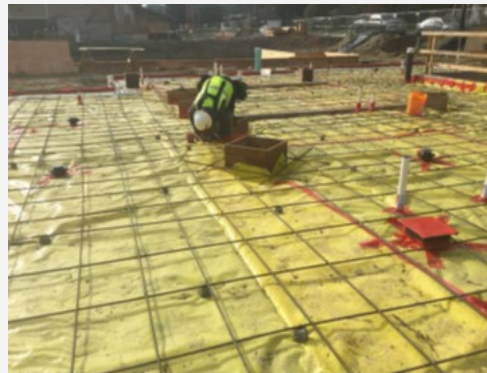


ARC Architects Pool Rendering

Completed by November



Aerial photo of the pool and bathhouse site taken 11/3/19 by Joe Barrentine.



Contractor sealing bathhouse vapor barrier.



Rebar and forms for the lap side deep end of the pool.



Forms for the new wading pool looking west.