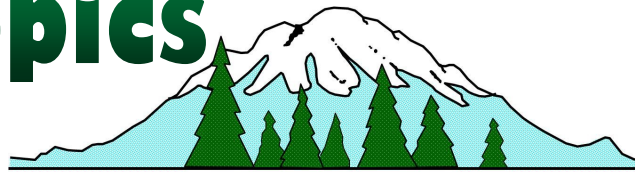


Hunter T. George, Mayor
Brett Wittner, Mayor Pro Tempore
David M. Viafore
Shannon Reynolds
Joe Barrentine
Denny Waltier
Jamie Nixon

Town Topics



Mayor's Message



Since it's spring, let's talk about how things are growing — like the City's revenue from sales tax.

(OK, that was an awkward transition, and I will just blame it on working from home for a year.)

The sales tax is the City's second-largest source of revenue, behind the property tax. Both generate the bulk of the funding that pays for police, parks, streets and general government services.

At the beginning of 2020, the City of Fircrest projected it would collect \$530,000 in retail sales taxes. It actually collected \$624,203. Other local governments saw similar increases in 2020, which helped offset losses in user fees and other revenues from the economic shutdowns and restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Why the large increase? Presumably because so many of us worked from home most of the year, and we all did a LOT of online shopping. My home office looks out on the street in front of our house, and it seems like trucks from Amazon, UPS, FedEx and the Post Office are driving by every hour of every day. I'm guessing you've noticed the same thing.

The State of Washington keeps more than half of the sales tax. The local portion of the tax is "destination-based," which means retailers collect sales tax based on the rate in place at the location where the buyer receives the merchandise. In other words, if you buy a riding lawn mower from the Home Depot across Orchard Street, the City of Tacoma collects the local portion of the sales tax. If you order that mower online and have it delivered to your house, the City of Fircrest receives the local sales tax.

Obviously, we will all continue to do some shopping in person. And that is a good thing because it supports local jobs. I just want you to know that when you do make purchases online, you're making sure that a few pennies or dollars from that purchase will be used to support the services that make Fircrest such a great place to live. And that's a good thing, too!

Be well, be safe, and have a great spring.

Hunter T. George, Mayor

2021 Election

The City of Fircrest has four City Council positions up for election in 2021. Positions 1, 2, 6 and 7 are the positions up for election.

The term for Fircrest City Councilmembers is four years. To learn more about the role of the Fircrest City Council, please visit <https://www.cityoffircrest.net/government/city-council/>.

There are also Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) and University Place School District Board of

Directors positions up for election that may be of interest to Fircrest residents. TPS Board positions 2, 3, 4, and 5 are up for election in 2021. U.P. School District Board positions 1 and 2 are also up for election in 2021.

Pierce County administers all elections throughout the County. Information for candidates can be found here: <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/329/Candidates>. Candidate filing week is May 17-21.

Fircrest Police - Preventing Theft From Your Vehicle

As the Governor begins his phased in re-opening of the stay-at-home order and as the weather gets warmer and the days get longer, more and more people are out moving around and enjoying this time of year. Unfortunately, our law abiding citizens are not the only ones out moving about more. The criminal element is as well. This time of year we see a rise in vehicle prowls in Fircrest. In 2020 we responded to 102 thefts in our city and many of them were from vehicles. In several recent cases, the victim vehicles were left unlocked, and valuables were not only left in the victim's vehicle but also were left in plain sight.

Do not make it easy for thieves. Following these simple guidelines will make it difficult and less inviting for would be thieves to come into our community. We are encouraging our residents to employ some basic preventative measures:

Never leave keys inside the vehicle.

Ensure that the windows are all the way up before locking your vehicle.

Lock your vehicle even if you are going to be away for a short time.

Be sure to activate your vehicle alarm whenever you exit/lock your vehicle.

Remember to remove portable G.P.S. devices.

Lock your vehicle even if it is parked in your driveway, inside your garage or on the street in front of your residence.

Do not leave valuables inside your vehicle even if it is locked. (i.e. purses, wallets, cell phones, computers, cameras, shopping bags, backpacks, etc.)

Even if your vehicle is locked and alarmed do not leave items in your vehicle.

If you have a removable faceplate on your stereo, always remove it and take it with you.

If you see anyone acting suspiciously in the area of your vehicle or in your neighborhood, please report it immediately by calling 911.

Do not keep a "Hide-a-Key" in the wheel well. Vehicle prowlers will often look for this. When they find one not only will they be able to steal your property inside your vehicle, but you have now made it easy for them to steal your vehicle.

These simple steps will deter most would-be thieves. Do not hesitate to call 911 immediately if you see ANYTHING or ANYONE that seems out of place or suspicious. We cannot do our jobs effectively without the help and assistance of those we serve. Do not become a victim and as always, let's watch out for each other.

John Cheesman, Fircrest Police Chief



Serving the Community Since 1925

City Manager's Corner



Hello Fircrest Residents,

For this edition of Town Topics, I want to first introduce our new Public Works Director, Tyler Bemis, and then I will talk about playgrounds a bit.

Tyler Bemis started as our new Public Works Director on March 1. We are excited to have Tyler on board! He comes to us with 22 years of experience with the Pierce County Planning and Public Works Department. We are excited about the background, approach, and leadership that Tyler brings to the table. For more about Tyler's familiarity with our community see below.

Switching gears to playgrounds, the City of Fircrest has two wonderful playgrounds — one at Fircrest Park and the other is the Tot Lot at the corner of Ramsdell and Contra Costa. The Tot Lot is fenced and during normal operations the gate is locked in the evening and unlocked each morning. The playground at Fircrest Park is not fenced.

Last year, as the pandemic worsened, the City closed the playgrounds. The City's timeline for reopening the playgrounds has not followed some of our surrounding areas in large part due

to the fact that we only have two of them. Two playgrounds are much easier to monitor, manage and keep closed than the larger park and playground systems of some of our neighboring jurisdictions.

In mid-February, as COVID-19 information seemed to begin sustaining a drop in case numbers and associated statistics, the City Council gave the go-ahead to reopen the Fircrest Park playground first since it is not fenced.

The City Council continues to have discussions about re-opening the Tot Lot. In general, concern remains about opening the Tot Lot due to the fact that it is an enclosed area with only one way in and out. As of this writing in March, several City Councilmembers have expressed optimism that the City can open the Tot Lot in April as long as vaccines continue to roll out as planned, and that infection and hospitalization numbers continue to improve.

The Council and I know how much the Tot Lot is loved, and we sincerely appreciate your patience and continued precautions as we collectively work to keep our community safe.

Scott Pingel, *City Manager*

New Public Works Director Tyler Bemis

I am pleased to join the City of Fircrest as the new Public Works Director. The introductions at my first Council Meeting and genuine well wishes have made this transition into the next chapter of my career extremely smooth. I look forward to having a positive impact on my coworkers and this community that I hold so near and dear to me. I love what this City of Fircrest means to its residents. Community involvement is one of the many things that makes Fircrest a great place to live, work, and play!

Having grown up in the surrounding area, I have many close friends and family members that live within the City. My early education and high school years were split between Gig Harbor and University Place, where I graduated from Curtis Senior High School. Currently, I am a resident in University Place with my wife Katie of 16 years (raised in Fircrest), 14-year-old son Trenton and daughters Kourtney 12, Kiersten 9, and Tenley 6.

All children actively participate in swimming lessons at the Fircrest Community Pool in addition to Tee-ball, Coach Pitch and Basketball – the toughest 2nd and 3rd grade girls' hoop team Fircrest Rec has ever seen!

I'm excited to bring nearly 22 years of Public Works (PW) experience to the city. Though it has been bittersweet leaving Pierce County Planning and Public Works, I look forward to sharing my knowledge and experience with the very skilled Public Works staff here in Fircrest. My extensive knowledge in asset management, pavement preservation, water conveyance and emergency operations will allow me to bring new ideas to the table. I pride myself in being team-oriented and find joy in taking on challenging tasks with a positive customer service-based approach.

Tyler Bemis, *Public Works Director*

Reporting a Problem

Emergency

Call 911

Non-Emergency

Call 253-287-4455

Animal Control

Contact Tacoma Animal Control
253-624-7387

- Stray animals
- Dead animal in the street

Nuisance and Code Compliance

Contact Planning and Building
253-564-8902

- Overgrown weeds or garbage on private property
- Illegal construction
- Sign violations

Public Works

Contact Public Works
253-564-8900

- Vegetation blocking sidewalks
- Intersection visibility
- Issues in the right-of-way
- Roadway or utility concerns
- Streetlight not working

Serving the Community Since 1925

Planning & Building -Home Improvement Projects

If you plan on doing any repairs or improvements to your home, there is a good chance a permit is required. What does the permit get you? With each permit, the City:

- Reviews the project to see if it meets the applicable rules and codes
- Verifies that your contractor is licensed, bonded and in good standing with the Washington State labor and industries
- Conducts inspections to ensure the minimum standards were met
- Provides proof of what and when work was done

When it comes to who can do the actual work, State law allows two options: Property owners and registered contractors

Property owners are allowed to work on their own property without being a licensed contractor. Construction permits would still be required in most cases to ensure all work meets the minimum standards in the International Residential Code.

Registered contractors may be hired to complete the work. They are required to maintain a surety bond, have liability insurance, have a Washington business license, and a City of Fircrest business license, which helps protect the property owner.

Hiring someone who is not a registered contractor brings risk and liability. Besides the fact that they are not licensed and bonded, you could be considered their employer and could be held liable for any medical expenses, missing wages, and overtime. Find out more information about hiring a contractor at ProtectMyHome.net.

Discussions with City staff are free :
Email permits@cityoffircrest.net,
Call 253-564-8902
Stop by for a visit.

Spring Reminders

Dandelion puffs pay no mind to property lines. Please weed, feed, and cut your grass. Overgrown yards can be considered a nuisance under the City's code.

Be a dear and keep the sidewalk clear. Pruning your bushes and keeping the sidewalks free from obstacles helps keep pedestrians safe.

Natural feed prevents rodent greed. While bird feeders are not prohibited in the City, a plethora of feed can attract rodents and wildlife at such a level to negatively impact neighbors. We suggest you consider planting flowers and plants that naturally attract birds and butterflies.

Thank you for collecting your doggie-doo. We love our pets, but no one loves what our pets leave behind.. Whether it is in the parks, along the street, or on private property, cleaning up after our pets is part of the gig and imperative to the health of a community.

When Do I Call 911?

The Fircrest Police Department is staffed with officers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Calling 911 is the most effective and quickest way for an officer(s) to be dispatched and updated with developing information while we are on our way to investigate the problem.

Emergencies Call 911!

The Fircrest Police Department asks that you call 911 if you see a CRIME IN PROGRESS or any suspicious activity occurring.

When you dial 911, keep in mind the person you will be talking to is attempting to help you right from the start. Please remain calm and answer any and all questions asked by your dispatcher.

- Most important, **LOCATION!** Verify that the dispatcher has the correct location before hanging up. Examples: House number and street, business, intersection, landmarks.
- What is going on or what is the problem?
- When did this happen or is it happening now?
- Who is involved and where are they at now?
- Are there any weapons involved?
- Is there anyone hurt or need an ambulance?
- Stay on the phone, if safe, until the dispatcher tells you to hang up.

Non-Emergencies Call 253-287-4455

The Fircrest Police asks that you call South Sound Non-Emergency at 253- 287-4455 to report a CRIME NOT IN PROGRESS.

We cannot stress enough that you as the citizens are the eyes and ears for us at the Police Department. Please call if you see or hear anything that seems suspicious or odd to you.

Other Concerns Call 253-565-1198

Contact the Fircrest Police office at 253-565-1198 with questions or concerns that do not require an officer to take a report.

The office staff can generally answer any question or direct you to someone that can. The office staff is also available to assist you with vacation checks, Telephone Reassurance program, and other community related resources. The office is open Monday – Friday 8:00 am until 5:00 pm. After office hours, the calls to our office number are transferred to South Sound 911.

By working together and looking out for ourselves and our neighbors we can make this a better and safer place for all of us.

**If you see something, say something!
Report suspicious activity.**

Serving the Community Since 1925

Community Center Update

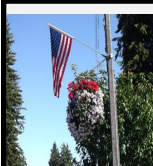
The Community Center Project is moving forward on schedule and construction is now out of the ground. The site has been excavated, the foundation poured and the utility access has been completed. The contractor will continue to install the steel posts, glue-lam beams and framing within the next couple of months. Follow our website at <https://www.cityoffircrest.net/>



Pool Information



The Edwards Family Aquatic Center was completed last fall. We are excited to open the new pool and pool house this spring and are currently planning grand opening festivities. The Parks and Recreation Department is currently planning programs for the Edwards Family Aquatic Center. We plan to offer activities and programs for all ages, including but not limited to swim lessons, adult lap swim and aerobic classes, open swim hours, and swim team. We have also been working on a new online registration system. This system will allow the community to register for activities like Fircrest Swim Lessons on-line. You can find more information about the programs, rentals, and admission rates on our website at <https://www.cityoffircrest.net/government/parks-and-recreation/>. We look forward to seeing you this summer.



Thanks to your donations, the flags, and hanging flower baskets will be going up in May. If you wish to help keep this tradition going, please consider a donation no matter how small (or large). We will list your name as a donor in a future edition of the Town Topics. You may also memorialize a loved one or celebrate a joyous event. Flyers are included with your utility bill or visit our website at cityoffircrest.net for a copy.

Event Information

Due to COVID-19 our annual event lineup will once again look a little different. We are currently working through the COVID-19 guidance to provide a great line up of virtual and in-person events that are safe and fun for everyone in our community. We will continue to post information on our website and Facebook page as we plan and schedule events.