

**FIRCREST CITY COUNCIL  
STUDY SESSION AGENDA**

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022  
6:00 P.M.**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
FIRCREST CITY HALL, 115 RAMSDELL STREET**

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1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Agenda Modifications
5. Attorney Evans Council Best Practices Discussion
6. [City Council/ Planning Commission Joint Meeting Agenda Discussion](#)
7. [Claremont Traffic Discussion](#)

Below is the call-in information for the public to listen via Zoom.

**Zoom Meeting Details:**

*Dial-in Information: 1-253-215-8782 Webinar ID: 857 7769 7009 Password: 312044*

## FIRCREST CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

**AGENDA ITEM:** City Council/ Planning Commission Joint Meeting Agenda Discussion

**DATE:** January 18, 2022

**FROM:** Jayne Westman, Administrative Services Director

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The first Tuesday of February each year is the date for an annual meeting between the City Council and the Planning Commission. The meeting is intended to discuss items of common interest and review community visioning.

### **SUMMARY OF DRAFT AGENDA:**

Based on the 2022 Planning Commission work plan and items of interest, the draft agenda for the joint meeting focuses on three topics:

- Ø Through Lots Discussion
- Ø Community Outreach Ideas
- Ø Housing Affordability

**Through Lots Discussion:** The Planning Commission and the City Council have indicated that they would like to close the loop on the Through-Lots discussion regarding Accessory Buildings constructed in rear yards. Accessory Buildings are garages, sheds, structures over 200 square feet, which include ADUs.

**Community Outreach Ideas:** The Planning Commission would like to engage the community to better understand the concerns our community members have and how they envision Fircrest to be in the future. They envision regular informal meetings with a specific topic to start the conversation.

**Housing Affordability:** The Planning Commission recognizes that this topic is so large and complicated that nothing can be solved in a yearly meeting. The Planning Commission would like to ask some basic questions of the Council to understand where the Council stands on topics such as:

- Ø Streamlined permitting process with "pre-approved" plans for ADUs
- Ø Allow density bonuses for affordable units
- Ø Owner-occupant requirement for ADUs
- Ø Allowing some duplexes with high design standards to fit with the characteristics of the neighborhood

This is a City Council meeting so the Agenda is set by the Council. Any feedback or different ideas for the Joint Meeting are welcomed. By setting an agenda this evening, Planning Staff can then start gathering information and creating slides for that meeting to facilitate conversations.

**ATTACHMENT:** [Draft Schedule](#)  
[2021 Joint Meeting Agenda](#)  
[2021 Joint Meeting Minutes](#)

## Joint Meeting – *draft agenda*

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|--|--------|
| 1. Intro                                 | 10 min |
| a. Introductions                         |        |
| b. Planning Commission/City Council role |        |
| 2. Through-Lots Discussion               | 30 min |
| 3. Community Outreach Ideas              | 30 min |
| 4. Housing Affordability                 | 45 min |

**FIRCREST CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021  
6:00 P.M.**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
FIRCREST CITY HALL, 115 RAMSDELL STREET**

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- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Roll Call**
- 4. Introductions**
- 5. Planning Commission 2021 Work Plan**
- 6. Housing Affordability Discussion**
- 7. Department of Commerce Item #2 Grant Options**
- 8. Climate Change Discussion**
- 9. Adjournment**

**Join the Zoom:**

**Dial: 1 253 215 8782**

**Webinar ID: 836 9354 1500**

**Passcode: 312044**

**CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND ROLL CALL**

Mayor Pro Tem Wittner called the special meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and led the pledge of allegiance. Councilmembers David M. Viafore, Shannon Reynolds, Brett Wittner, and Jamie Nixon were present. Mayor Hunter T. George and Councilmember Waltier were absent and excused. Planning Commissioners Sarah Hamel, Kathy L. McVay, Andrew Imholt, Ben Ferguson, and Shirley Schultz were present.

**PLANNING COMMISSION 2021 WORK PLAN**

Planning & Building Administrator Stahlnecker presented the draft 2021 work plan and provided a brief overview of each item. Wittner invited public comment and the following individual provided comment:

- Yolonda Brooks, 6464 19<sup>th</sup> St W #C, commented on her concerns about the disproportionate treatment between renters and owners and feels that the staff has not been responsive to her concerns.

**HOUSING AFFORDABILITY DISCUSSION**

Stahlnecker provided an overview of housing affordability issues that impact Fircrest and presented multi-family dwellings that have the character features of single-family dwellings. There was discussion about allowing duplexes on corner lots and the concern that it could impact the streets on the north end of the City. Wittner invited public comments and the following individuals provided comment:

- Brian Rybolt, 1036 Daniels Drive, commented that the Council should not move forward with additional changes due to the recent zoning changes in the Mixed-Use Zone and his concern for thorough public engagement during COVID-19.
- Ashley, 109 Eldorado Ave, commented on her support of increasing density to add more housing units and diversify the neighborhoods.
- Yolonda Brooks, 6464 19<sup>th</sup> Street W # C, commented that she would like to see lots of public engagement and she does not want to see lots under 45' wide.

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE ITEM NO. 2 GRANT OPTIONS**

Stahlnecker briefly updated the Commission and Council on the history of the Department of Commerce grant and the requirement to explore additional options for grant funding. There was consensus to have the topic moved to a future study session.

**CLIMATE CHANGE DISCUSSION**

Stahlnecker provided a brief overview of the climate change discussion that took place at the 2019 joint meeting and the efforts by staff to educate the public. There are a few bills in the legislature that could impact our comprehensive plan.

Councilmember Viafore left the meeting at 6:59 P.M. and returned at 7:01 P.M.

Mayor George joined the meeting at 7:04 P.M.

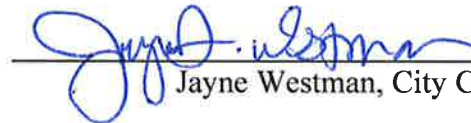
There was a brief discussion on community outreach and that the GMCC is seeking input from PCRC regarding requiring a climate change element in the Comprehensive Plans. Lastly, there was a brief discussion on businesses being large contributors to emissions and incentivizing them to reduce emissions or offset the impacts. Wittner invited public comment and the following individual provided comment:

- Yolonda Brooks, 6464 19<sup>th</sup> Street W # C, commented that staff could invite knowledgeable professionals to set up a booth at Fircrest Fun Days or National Night Out.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Reynolds MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 P.M., seconded by Barrentine. The Motion Carried (6-0).**

  
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Hunter T. George, Mayor

  
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Jayne Westman, City Clerk

**AGENDA ITEM: Claremont Traffic Discussion**

**FROM: Scott Pingel, City Manager**

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**BACKGROUND:** At the December 14, 2021, City Council meeting, there was significant discussion and comments regarding a horrific accident that came through the Claremont and Alameda intersection on Claremont down through the Claremont and Buena Vista intersection. Discussion and comments covered potential improvements to make to Claremont Street, the intersection at Claremont and Alameda, and Claremont Street east of Alameda where Claremont Street eventually dead-ends at a home. City staff were tasked with determining potential costs and process for a traffic study along with consideration of additional traffic calming options.

City staff reached out to our on-call engineering firm, KPG. A traffic study is a service KPG can provide. KPG estimated that a traffic study to evaluate safety and operations at the Claremont and Alameda intersection would cost approximately \$16,000, and it would include the following tasks:

- Analyze the five most recent years of crash data at the intersection to evaluate crash types, frequencies, and locations.
- The traffic control at the intersection is 2-way stop control. Evaluate if the intersection meets MUTCD warrants to change the stop control to all-way stop control or a traffic signal. Collect new traffic counts and speed data, including vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
- Field work to evaluate intersection safety and operations, including sight distance, illumination, non-motorized facilities and crossings, and signage.
- Coordinate with City staff to identify recommended improvements.
- Document findings and recommendations in a short technical memorandum.
- Identify possible grant funding sources for recommended improvements.

Based on conversations with civil engineers at Pierce County, KPG, and others in the area with experience with traffic studies, City staff are confident that a traffic study at this intersection is unlikely to yield helpful answers as to effective safety solutions. City staff believe, however, that due to some of the unique characteristics of Claremont Street and the lay of the land as Claremont Street approaches Alameda Avenue and moves down into the neighborhood east of Alameda Avenue, there are some options that would increase awareness and safety on Claremont Street.

Some of the unique characteristics of Claremont Street that contributed to the horrific accident a few months ago include the following:

- Claremont Street from 67<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Alameda Avenue constitutes a long stretch of uninterrupted road, which, without some mechanism to catch your attention, can result in naturally faster speeds.
- This long stretch creates a particular challenge moving eastbound as you approach a steep downgrade to the stop sign at Alameda.
- As you continue east through the Alameda intersection, the steep grade continues down to Buena Vista before leveling off some, although Claremont continues to be on a downgrade through the Buena Vista and Berkeley intersections until it dead-ends at a home.

City staff suggest that there are traffic adjustments that can help with these unique characteristics. We need a mechanism to break up the long Claremont stretch that catches your attention. Additional warning can be signed approaching the stop sign at Alameda and we can enhance the stop sign at Alameda.

The bigger challenge is the steep slope moving into the neighborhood east of Alameda. A possible option City staff suggest we give some consideration is a mini roundabout or neighborhood traffic calming circle at the intersection of Claremont and Buena Vista. Neighborhood traffic calming circles are much smaller than modern roundabouts and often replace stop signs at four way intersections. They are typically used in residential neighborhoods to slow traffic speeds and reduce accidents, but generally are not designed to accommodate larger vehicles. Included in the packet are a few pictures depicting neighborhood traffic calming circles along with an aerial of the Claremont and Buena Vista intersection with a circle depicting how a 20-foot diameter traffic calming circle might fit. We would be able to design the traffic calming circle to both fit that intersection and function as some kind of barrier depending on additional discussion.

From an emergency vehicle point of view, City staff have reached out to the Tacoma Fire Department (TFD). The feedback we received was that TFD is familiar with these circles as there are several in Tacoma. We also received feedback that these circles do slow traffic and reduce accidents, and they have not been an impediment to emergency vehicles.











