

Town Topics



Fircrest Considers Land for Park/Open Space

The City of Fircrest is exploring the feasibility of acquiring up to 32 acres of wooded property west of Orchard Street for use as a park. The intent is to fund the project via grants from land conservation organizations.

On February 22, 2022, the Fircrest City Council voted 4-3 to authorize a contract with the nonprofit group Forterra for grant writing and sales negotiation services.

Next steps:

- Negotiate a sales contract with the property owner *pending the acquisition of a sufficient amount of grants that make the project financially viable.*
- Apply for conservation grants.
- Conduct community engagement on the potential property acquisition and eventual use(s). Tentatively, the City plans to discuss grants and potential uses at the April 18th City Council Study Session, which will begin at 6:00 pm.

A final decision on whether to purchase the property would be made by the City Council – likely in 2023 – based on the outcomes of the grant applications and community feedback.

Property details:

The private owners of wooded lands along the west side of Orchard Street (north of Emerson) have been trying to sell the property for development for many years. However, the steep slopes and large wetlands have made development prohibitively expensive.

An agent for the owner of the property approached Forterra in 2021 to inquire about the possibility of helping the City of Fircrest acquire the property for conservation and use as a public park. Forterra (formerly known as Cascade Land

Conservancy) has many years of experience in partnering with others to conserve natural areas.

As it researches the possibilities, the City sees great potential to manage all or most of this property as a “passive” park similar to Thelma Gilmur Park and China Lake Park, which have popular trail systems and offer the ability to enjoy nature in an urban area. Repurposing this land as a public park will also deter illegal trespassing and encampment on the property.

In addition, much of the property is within a wetland that’s protected by a City of Tacoma stormwater treatment facility. That wetland marks the beginning of Leach Creek, which connects to Puget Sound via Chambers Creek. If the City acquires the property, Forterra believes the City would be eligible for additional grants to replace the culvert under Emerson Street, which is the last barrier on Leach Creek that keeps salmon from returning all the way to the wetland.

As it considers its options, the City is holding open the possibility that a small portion of the land – a relatively flat area of roughly 4-5 acres at the north end of the property (adjacent to Holly Court) – could be sold by the City for development, the proceeds of which could be used to support the overall project.

This process is just beginning, and there are many questions to consider. The City plans to engage the community for input during this deliberative process. Please contact City Manager Scott Pingel at 253.564.8901 or spingel@cityoffircrest.net if you have any questions.

To view associated maps, please visit https://www.cityoffircrest.net/current_info/fircrest-considers-land-for-park-open-space/.

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.



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.

Serving the Community Since 1925

Fircrest Police



Crimes are frequently solved because of our strong partnership with the community. We realize that this partnership is vital to keeping our community safe from criminals who look to take advantage of our

citizens. Without this vital link between citizens and the police department, crimes may go unreported and unsolved.

The Fircrest Police Department relies on the community to report suspicious activity, crimes in progress or crimes that have just occurred. There are times when a resident will observe suspicious activity but fail to report it to the police department. This is often because they don't want to bother the police department or fear they may be embarrassed if the activity turns out to be "nothing." The Fircrest Police Department encourages citizens to call at the first sign of suspicious activity. You never bother us!!

Being a good witness means not placing yourself or others in danger. Remain calm enough to call the police and provide critical information. Some people's instincts are to scare suspects away, chase after them or confront the suspects after seeing a crime occur. It's better not to confront or get involved in a conflict with the suspect.

Being a good witness will give us the opportunity to apprehend the suspect(s) as quickly as possible. If the crime involves property such as a larceny from auto or a petty theft, ask yourself "should I risk my safety and well-being for a property crime?" The answer is "NO!" You may not see the suspect carrying a weapon, but keep in mind that handguns and other weapons are easily concealed and are often located when our well-trained officers make an arrest.

The type of crime committed won't tell you what type of suspect you are dealing with. If you see a crime in progress, call 911. WHERE is the emergency and WHAT is the emergency?

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION is the most important information when calling 911. A 911 dispatcher will answer your call and will ask a series of questions relating to the activity you're witnessing. The questioning will not delay the officer's response time, a police dispatcher is already sending the appropriate units to the location, so it's important for you to remain calm and listen. Some of the questions may not seem pertinent to you, but dispatchers are trained to know exactly what information the officers need which will allow them to respond quickly and safely. This means that a dispatcher may need to interrupt you while you're relaying information. It is important that during emergencies, your answers are direct and brief.

Keep in mind during emergencies, officers are dispatched by a second police dispatcher as the information is obtained by the 911 dispatcher taking your call. The faster the dispatcher can obtain the necessary information from you, the faster it is relayed to the officers responding. If the suspect(s) leave before you see police officers, tell the dispatcher, and let them know the direction and method of travel. It is important to remember that the stress and urgency you are feeling during this emergency is also felt on the other end of the phone by the dispatcher as well, so calm cooperation is vital.

When you call to report a crime in progress, the type of information that the dispatcher will likely ask you to supply will include the following:

Suspects:

Sex (male, female)

Race - Ethnicity

Height - Sometimes it may be hard to give a height on a subject. If possible, use a vertical object to compare the subject's height with. Officers can later look at this object and determine a height.

Weight/Build - Slim, Heavy, Muscular, etc.

Hair - Color and style of hair (Blond, brown etc. and short, long, curly etc.)

Facial Features - clean shaven, mustache, beard, etc.

Clothing description - type and color of shirt (short sleeve, long sleeve, striped solid, etc.)

Any other unusual characteristics or distinguishing features of the subject (tattoos, scars, glasses, etc.).

Suspects' Vehicle:

Vehicle Color

Vehicle Year

Vehicle Make - Ford, Chevy, etc.

Vehicle Model - Mustang, Impala, etc.

Vehicle Style - 2 door, 4 doors, wagon, hatchback, SUV

Vehicle Accessories-Tinted Windows, Rims, Damage, Stickers

Vehicle License Plate/State

Remember your safety comes first! Don't be afraid to call the police department. "Crime Prevention is everyone's responsibility!" Please 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. As always, let's watch out for each other and by working together we will keep Fircrest a wonderful place to live, work and play.

Chief John Cheesman

Serving the Community Since 1925

Public Works

Wipes Linger in Pipes

Although single-use wet wipes are frequently marketed as “flushable,” they are often incompatible with sewer systems. They may leave the toilet bowl, but they can stay in your pipes. Wipes can catch on tree roots and accumulate with fats, oils, and grease to become large obstructions in pipes. They can weave together and create giant rags that get stuck in collection systems, pumps, and motors to cause backups and equipment failures. Wipes can also be a worker safety issue when hazardous objects such as sharps get tangled into the rags that must be removed from equipment.

Flushing wipes can clog home plumbing systems as well and lead to expensive repairs. In addition, microfibers can shed off wipes during wastewater treatment and make their way into the environment.

Avoid Drain Pain – Don’t Flush These Things

- Diapers – cloth, disposable, flushable
- Facial tissues
- Baby wipes, disinfectant wipes, moist wipes, etc.
- Toilet bowl scrub pads
- Swiffer’s

- Napkins – paper or cloth, paper towels
- Dental floss
- Egg shells, nutshells, and coffee grounds
- Fats, oil, and greases**
- Food items containing seeds and peelings
- Hair
- Sanitary napkins, tampons, condoms, or any non-organic material
- Vitamins, medicines, or other pharmaceuticals
- Wash cloths, towels, rags (any cloth item)
- Clothing
- Sheet plastic or plastic of any kind

When Should I Call the City of Fircrest?

Call Fircrest Public Works immediately if sewage is coming up inside your home and you are not using water. PW Staff will investigate the City sewer system serving your area and send a maintenance crew if needed. The crew will notify you of the results as soon as possible. City crews are responsible for maintaining the main sewer lines, but not the side sewers themselves. Homeowners are responsible for side sewer maintenance and replacement. City maintenance crews are available 24 hours a day at **(253) 564-8900**

Fircrest Volunteer Spotlight—James Moore

James Moore has lived in Fircrest for 28 years, and one of his favorite places to experience nature is Whittier Park. That’s why he and other volunteers keep showing up once a month to remove invasive species or to plant native species.

James started working in Whittier Park as part of the AmeriCorps program under the Pierce Conservation District a few years ago. “I really enjoy the outdoors, but it’s been harder to get out into my usual stomping grounds down in Lewis County,” he says. “We have that kind of solitude and nature here, just in a different form. I realized I can help conserve what we have by becoming a Habitat Steward. It’s even more personal because it’s my own back yard.”

James works as an environmental health technician at the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, so this volunteer opportunity is close to his personal sense of mission. The work itself isn’t complicated, though the follow-through can be tough.

“For instance, you have to remove a blackberry bramble by the root ball, which can take a lot of effort to untangle and dig out,” he says. “But then you need to come back for 3 to 5 years to keep taking out the same plant because of how hardy they are. The same goes for planting native species. Two of the 3 trees you

plant might not make it. But as the proverb goes, we plant trees in whose shade we will never sit.”

James and the Whittier Park volunteers typically meet by the bocce courts on the first Saturday of the month, plus some special events like MLK Day of Service and Earth Day. The designated time is 9 am to noon, but he says volunteers can stay as long or as short as they want. The average turnout is around 7 people, and that can swell to 20-plus during special events.

They would welcome more volunteers, including individuals and groups of all ages and abilities. Helping to maintain Whittier Park’s natural experience is a great way to give back to your community.

“The more time I invested in it, the more enjoyable the work became,” he says. “There’s a saying that many hands make short work. I like to add that many hands means my back and knees won’t hurt as much come Monday!”

The City of Fircrest appreciates the work of James Moore and his band of volunteers. Those who are interested in joining a work party are asked to sign up at the Pierce Conservation District website: <https://pierced.org/497/Volunteer-Opportunities>.

Serving the Community Since 1925

Fircrest Parks and Recreation

Fircrest Parks & Recreation Has a New Look Online

Have you seen the Parks & Recreation website makeover? We have made it easier to navigate, added graphics, and included more information to help you enjoy all we have to offer. On our new home page, it's easier than ever to find what you are looking for. The Community Events page now displays announcements and upcoming events that are an easy one-click away. The Youth Programs and Active Adult Programs pages have our online registration site linked at the top, along with information on our programs. The Parks & Facilities Page features infographics, links for rental information, and a map link to each. Our Facility Rentals Page breaks down everything you need to know to plan your next event with us. Last but not least you can view past events on our Past Events page that features how much fun Fircrest was in 2021!

New Online Registration System

Our online registration program, RecDesk, is growing! Thank you to those who have signed up and are currently using the system. If you haven't tried it yet, we recommend setting up an account for you and your household. Parks & Recreation events, programming, and facility rentals will all be accessible through fircrest.recdesk.com. Each account does require approval and verification of your residency. You can find links on the Parks & Recreation website where you see a "Register Here" Button or "Online Registration for Programs & Rentals". The Head of Household can create an account, enter in basic information, your 4 digit Fircrest utility number, and set a password. You then can add other members of your household. Once your account is set up it can take 2-5 days to verify and approve the account. After the process is complete, you will be able to fully utilize the site.

Facility Rentals Just Got Easier

Our Rental Reservation process is now streamlined on our RecDesk site. If you are interested in renting a Parks & Recreation facility, you can either log in directly to your RecDesk account or find the link on the Facility Rentals Page on the City Website. We recommend checking the Calendar to see if your date is available at your preferred facility before submitting an application.

Log In to fircrest.recdesk.com to apply for a Facility Rental:

1. Under the Facilities tab, click "Facility Rental Requests"
2. Click the green "Reserve" Button
3. Select a date on the Reserve Calendar
4. Complete the application & "Checkout"
5. We will review your application
6. If approved, we will send you the appropriate facility reservation including:
 - a. Facility Rental, Use & Conditions Agreement
 - b. Facility Rental Fees & Deposit Invoice

Roy H. Murphy Community Center Programming

We are eagerly awaiting to begin offering programs in the new community center. We are planning to bring back some past programming along with the addition of a variety of new programs. New programming will include an afterschool program for 3-5th grade and 6-9th graders. The program will offer activities that strengthen interest in a variety of areas including sports & fitness, the arts, STEM and more.

We've partnered with a variety of sports camp contractors like Skyhawks and Triple Impact Basketball to host summer camps and clinics. Camps will include Soccer, Tennis, Basketball, Flag Football, Volleyball, Cheerleading, and Baseball throughout the spring and summer. These camps will be available for youth ages 5-11, with some options offering a chance for campers to enjoy the pool for part of the day!

We will have more details on other upcoming programs as the center opens and community interest becomes clearer.

Planning is underway for adult activities that will utilize all the different recreational facilities and spaces the City of Fircrest has to offer. We are working on everything from adult sports like softball, basketball, and pickleball, to art, fitness, and cooking classes. We are excited to utilize the new Community Center and offer programs that deepen connections to the community and each other. Any ideas and recommendations are always welcome. Please stay tuned to the website for updates!

Whittier Parks & Pierce Conservation District

The Pierce Conservation District continues to work with the City of Fircrest and the Whittier Park Habitat Stewardship volunteers to improve the wetland area trails at Whittier Park. Typically occurring on the first Saturday of each month, volunteers spend up to 3 hours at Whittier Park installing mulch, grubbing out invasive species, and planting native plants. This work supports water quality, our local wildlife, and pollinators.

Community Events - Save the Date!

- Mother & Son Dance, May 6th
- Daddy Daughter Dance, June 3rd
- Community Garage Sale, June 18th
- Strawberry Feed, June 26th
- Classic Car Show, July 3rd
- Fircrest Fun Days, July 15th & 16th



ROY H. MURPHY COMMUNITY CENTER

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE

GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION & RIBBON CUTTING

APRIL 26, 2022 | 5:00 PM

GATHER ON THE COMMUNITY CENTER PLAZA FACING THE PARK

555 CONTRA COSTA AVENUE
FIRCREST, WASHINGTON

For more information please visit our website at www.cityoffircrest.net

Join us! City Council Meetings are held the 2nd & 4th Tuesday's of the month at 7:00 pm, Council Study Sessions are the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:00 pm, & Planning Commission Meetings are the 1st Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm.