



City Manager's Update August 11, 2023

To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: August 11, 2023
Subject: City Manager's Weekly Update

Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

The City Manager's update is intended to provide an overview of upcoming events, meetings, and other items of interest for the City. Included with the update are reports from City departments on various programs, projects, and achievements.

1. Concert, Market & Picnic in the Park

The last Concert, Market & Picnic in the Park event of the season is happening on Thursday, August 24th at Fircrest Park. Join your friends and community for a summer evening of food, music, and family-friendly fun. Local market vendors will be open for business starting at 5:00 PM and live music will start at 6:00 PM. Food trucks will be on-site with a variety of food and beverages for purchase. Hook Me Up will entertain with jazz, swing, blues, and dance grooves. Grab your blankets, lawn chairs, and picnic baskets, and join in on the fun!

2. Comprehensive Plan Visioning Survey

The [Comp Plan Survey](#) was recently mailed to all City residents to receive community input for the update of our Comprehensive Plan Update. We are pleased with the number of completed surveys that have been received this past week. We understand that there have been questions regarding the red asterisks that appear beside several questions. These are questions that are required to submit the online survey. However, while the City would like your input on all survey questions, you can submit the paper survey without answering all questions. All survey responses received by the City, whether submitted online or in paper form, will be included. This is an anonymous survey and therefore all answers are confidential and not identifiable to any person. Copies of the survey are also available at City Hall and the Community Center. Additional information is available on the City's Comprehensive Plan [webpage](#).

3. Upcoming Meetings – Week of August 14th – 18th

- Planning Commission Meeting Tuesday, August 15th at 6:00 PM

4. August 8, 2023 Council Meeting Recap

The Fircrest City Council met Tuesday, August 8th for a regular meeting. Action items included:

- Appointing Eric Lane to the Fircrest Planning Commission.
- Setting special budget meetings for October 9th, 23rd, and 30th, 2023 at 6:00 PM for the sole purpose of reviewing the 2024 preliminary budget.
- Approving a Resolution amending the Pierce County Cooperation Agreement for Urban Community Development Program Funds.
- Approving Budget Amendment No. 2 to the 2023 Budget.

Other agenda items included a presentation by South Sound Housing Affordability Partners on their 2023 and 2024 work plans, and Finance Director Corcoran provided a review of the 2nd Quarter 2023 Financial Report.

The next Council study session is scheduled for Monday, August 21st at 6:00 PM. Tentative agenda items include:

- Draft Vision Statement (Comprehensive Plan)
- Trademark & Use Agreement for Murphy
- Fircrest Maintenance Facility
- Insurance Pool Presentation
- Holiday Tree Committee
- Centennial Committee

5. Pierce Transit Transportation Priorities Survey

Pierce Transit wants to hear from people about their transportation priorities as it looks to plan the future of public transit. Many things have changed since the onset of COVID, including travel patterns and transportation needs. To ensure services match what current and future riders most need, Pierce Transit is launching a Recovery Plan to strategically increase transit service.

Take its survey at piercetransitsurvey.com by August 31st and share which improvements matter most to you. Do you want better frequency on the routes with high ridership? More evening service, enhanced weekend service, or expanded Runner on-demand service? What is most important for Pierce Transit to restore first?

Your feedback will help improve Pierce Transit's service and recommend service scenarios that address the needs of the community.

6. Administration Update

Administration highlights of the past week include:

- Extended job offer to Community Development Director candidate.
- Met with Fircrest Parks & Recreation Foundation regarding an MOU to formalize the framework for accepting, expending, and reporting on endowment funds managed by the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation. The MOU should be coming forward to Council in September.

- Thank you to Administrative Assistant Sierra Lee for getting the City Manager Weekly Update posted to the City Manager's [page](#) on the City website.
- Held an internal City Communications meeting to discuss current communication methods (website, Town Talk, Facebook) and how we can best utilize these tools. This first meeting focused primarily on social media. We will be creating separate Facebook pages for City/Police and Recreation/Events as well as creating Instagram pages. Look for more information on this soon. This will be the first of several meetings.
- Attended the Pierce County Mayor's Public Safety Roundtable Discussion. The roundtable was attended by mayors, city managers, and city administrators from Pierce County to discuss public safety concerns across the region. The purpose was to identify ways to work together to advocate for strong public safety measures at the state level. Topics discussed included police pursuits, officer recruitment and retention, technical fixes to the Blake bill, the dramatic increase in juvenile crime, auto theft and property crimes, and behavioral health issues. Lakewood will organize future meetings.
- Updated Planning Commission Agenda Packet to add page numbers and links for ease of online use.
- Continued research on the formation of Centennial and Holiday Tree Committees.
- The next edition of Town Topics will go out with utility bills in mid-August.
- Attended the AWC Trust Benefit Forum.
- Ongoing review of City operations and organizational needs.

7. Police Department Update

Fircrest officers received over 145 calls for service this past week, including 58 traffic safety-related contacts (stops, collisions, parking violations), 1 burglary, 1 motor vehicle theft, 9 reports, 1 supplemental report, and 26 community policing events (foot patrols, citizen assistance, and community policing activities). Police identified a juvenile arson suspect and forwarded the case to Remann Hall for review. Officers continue to conduct a high number of security checks and foot patrols throughout the city.

The new Lateral Officer Civil Service list was certified this past week. Planning has begun to schedule oral boards for qualified applicants to fill our 10th officer position. The background on our 9th officer is scheduled to be completed by August 14th.

The Department is continuing to plan for Coffee with a Cop, Shop with a Cop, Pizza with the Police, and Lunch Buddies (in coordination with the new principal at Wainwright).

8. Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Director Grover has been working on several projects including:

- *Sports Field Improvement Project at Fircrest Park*

Director Grover has been diligently collaborating with our contracted landscape architect Bob Droll on the Sports Field Improvement Project at Fircrest Park. The primary objective of this project is the restoration of the natural grass athletic field to achieve a consistent field topography and uniform density of natural grass coverage. The project will encompass the area within Fircrest Park extending from the grass fields south of the softball field to the community center's outdoor plaza.

The estimated project cost is approximately \$350,000. The City successfully secured a Youth Athletic Facilities Grant award of \$158,515 from the WA State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) with the remaining funds to be drawn from the Park Bond Capital fund. Grant funds will support expenses related to architectural and engineering services, general site preparation, the development of a multi-purpose field, and the necessary permitting processes.

The project will be advertised on August 11th and August 18th with public bid opening taking place at 2:00 PM on Thursday, August 24th at City Hall. It is anticipated that the contract award will be on the September 12th Council meeting agenda for approval, with construction starting on September 18th, 2023.

- *Parks Maintenance Facility*

Director Grover has also provided support to Public Works in acquiring a roster of architects and obtaining preliminary cost estimates from reputable sources for the Parks Maintenance Facility. This project will be on the August 21st Study Session for discussion.

- *Fircrest Park Court Resurfacing*

We are still awaiting confirmation from the contractor on a start date for the tennis court resurfacing project. We are continuing to work with Public Works on identifying options to help address noise mitigation issues.

- *Whittier Master Plan*

Contract documents have been signed for the Whittier Master Plan project. Director Grover plans to meet with AHBL next week to discuss the project kick-off and begin community outreach efforts. We will begin to craft surveys and set dates for community open houses.

- *Future Parks & Recreation Fee Study*

As part of the 2024 Budget preparation process, we are beginning to take a look at our fees for Facility Rentals and Programs. We are researching the cost and benefit of working with a consultant for a fee study versus conducting a study utilizing City staff. The primary goal of the study is to evaluate our current fee structure and assess its alignment with the needs of our community as well as with industry standards. By analyzing the fees associated with various programs, classes, and facility usage, we aim to ensure that our fees accurately reflect the value provided to our residents and visitors, while remaining competitive within the market.

- *2024 Staffing Levels*

We are also looking at staffing levels as we move forward with 2024 budget preparations. We are identifying potential areas for improvement within our department's workforce structure. As a result of this effort, we hope to create the opportunity for an additional staff position(s) that will have the potential to streamline processes, increase productivity, and contribute to the overall growth and development of our Parks & Recreation programs to continue to meet the needs of our community.

Other Parks & Recreation highlights include:

Community Events

- The Concert, Picnic & Market at Fircrest Park was enjoyed by all this past Thursday night. There is another chance to join in on the fun on Thursday, August 24th at the final event of the summer season.

Recreation Programs

- The Senior Mornings program continues to attract new and returning community members ages 65+. Senior Mornings are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 – 11:00 AM at the Gathering Space at the Community Center. Stop by to socialize with other Fircrest seniors and to enjoy freshly brewed coffee and local donuts, courtesy of a generous donation from the Edwards Family Foundation.
- Planning is underway for future Senior trips for the fall and winter months. These trips will be advertised on the city website, social media, City buildings, and the reader board.
- Information about all of our adult programming can be found at [Adult Classes & Sports](#).

Aquatic Center

Take advantage of the sunny weather to check out the Edwards Family Aquatic Center. Lap swim, open swim, and evening swim schedules are posted on the City website at [Swimming Pool - City of Fircrest](#).

- We encourage the community to join us for an invigorating morning session of Lap Swim and Water Walking programs. Admission fees are \$4 for residents and \$8 for non-residents and can conveniently be paid at the pool office upon your arrival.

Lap Swim is designed for swimmers of all levels and runs from 6:30 AM – 9:00 AM on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Beginning August 21st the schedule expands to 5 days a week through September 1st.

Water Walking is a low-impact exercise program that takes advantage of water's natural resistance to tone muscles, improve flexibility, and promote cardiovascular health. Water walking is an excellent option for individuals of all fitness levels, including those who might have joint concerns or need rehabilitation. This program runs from 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through September 1st.

- Due to staffing constraints, we need to make a slight adjustment to our open swim sessions next weekend. The pool will NOT be available for open swim sessions from 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM on Saturday, August 19th and Sunday, August 20th. But don't worry – the pool will be back in action with pool hours starting at 2:30 PM on both days. Thank you for your understanding and stay tuned for some splash-tastic fun!
- The last session of swim lessons began this past Monday and runs through Friday, August 18th.
- The FAST swim team had their last swim meet on Saturday, August 5th. Kudos to the pool staff, coaches, and participants on a great season!

Please call (253) 564-8177 or visit the City’s website at [Parks and Recreation Department](#) for events and program information, class registration, facility rentals, questions on Parks & Recreation activities, or for volunteer opportunities. Want to know more? Like us on Facebook at “City of Fircrest, Washington”.

9. Planning & Building Update

Planning and Building have been busy working on expired permit letters, fence reviews, and answering questions about zoning, shed requirements, and garage codes. This week has been busy at the front counter as well with permit applications, comprehensive plan survey questions, and assisting with passport customers.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission has a packed agenda for their Tuesday, August 15th meeting at 6:00 PM at City Hall. Agenda items include:

- Introduction of new Planning Commissioner Eric Lane
- Comprehensive Plan Update
- Community Outreach and Survey
- 2023 Legislative Updates on Housing and Zoning issues
- Prose Project Update
- Thriving Communities – Four Corners Update
- SSHA3P Update
- Item of Interest: Sign Code – Temporary Signs
- Community Development Director

The September 5th Planning Commission meeting will be an update and workshop with our consultant BHC and Project Coordinator Bob Jean to prepare for the Special Council Meeting/Community Open House on September 18th.

Code Compliance

- Our Code Compliance Officer has been coordinating with Police this past week on code compliance complaints involving loud music after dark, revving engines, and a suspicious person. Other code enforcement complaints involved sign code violations and a residence with lots of cars and a dusty gravel parking lot.

Project Updates

- Alliance/Prose Project
 - Prose Project final plans have been sent to planning consultant Jeff Boers for final review and approval. The MOU has also been agreed upon, subject to Council approval, with Alliance/Prose deferring their \$30,000 payment to a reimbursement schedule with \$15,000 due in January 2024 and the remaining balance due upon permit issuance in approximately May 2024. The I&I contributions remain the same with payments due in 2025 and 2026. Alliance is in final negotiations with its equity partners and expects to have their financing in place by December 2023, with site work commencing in early 2024 and building construction at the end of 2024. The Prose Project, located on the edge of town, will help the City meet its’ state-mandated population growth while keeping the core of the City with its single-family residential character.

- Recent State law changes targeted at more affordable housing options are being reviewed by the City Attorney and will be summarized in memo form for the upcoming Planning Commission and Council/Community meetings. A similar code review is being done by our planning consultant Jeff Boers, as the tools to shape future development as we strive to “keep Fircrest Fircrest”.
- Comprehensive Plan Update
 - Council discussion and direction on the Comp Plan Vision Statement is scheduled for the August 21st Study Session.
 - The RCW updates overview by the City Attorney and the Development Code updates from the City’s planning consultant are in process and will be summarized in memo form for the September 5th Planning Commission meeting. This will then move forward for presentation and discussion at the September 18th Special Council meeting. These reviews are focused on recent state law changes targeted at more affordable housing options with the goal being to provide the city with tools to shape future development while remaining in compliance with state laws as we strive to “keep Fircrest Fircrest”.

10. Finance/Information Technology Update

Finance

- 2024 Budget preparation continues with department heads working on revenue and expenditure projections and budget narratives. Department Director review meetings are scheduled for mid to late August.
- 2023 Budget Amendment #2 Ordinance was adopted on August 8th.
- The 2nd Quarter Financial Report was presented to Council on August 8th.

Information Technology

- The video portion of the new AV system is tentatively scheduled for September 7th, 8th, and 11th. The rechargeable batteries and docking station for the wireless microphone are on order with an estimated delivery date of 2-3 weeks.

11. Public Works Update

Public Works is operating under summer hours from 7:00 AM – 3:30 PM.

Highlights include:

- Well #7 and #8 investigative work:
 - The perceived bad check valve for Well #8 has cleared itself and is currently functioning properly. We will continue to closely monitor this.
 - Well #7 has been experiencing an issue with the main breaker. Holt Drilling performed the latest work at this site, including pump and motor replacement which are both under warranty. The motor tested out okay and continued investigation on the source of the breaker problem is underway.

- Summer hire Luke Rehberger's last day was Wednesday. This was Luke's first year as a summer hire and he didn't hesitate to jump in and learn new things. We hope he will return to our summer crew next year!

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- The Fircrest Park Tennis Courts resurfacing preparation is completed. Resurfacing is scheduled for August. Drainage concerns have been addressed and we are looking into sound mitigation materials. Staff met yesterday with a bordering property owner to discuss concerns.
- Supported the setup and breakdown for the Concert in the Park on August 10th.
- The Alice Peers Park sign has been ordered and is in production. The tentative delivery date is August 22nd. Thank you to Tapco Credit Union who is paying for the sign.
- Photocell lights were installed at the Whittier Park Pavilion.
- Soccer field paint striping has been laid out by the Fircrest Soccer Club and maintenance has been taken over by our staff.

Utilities

- Summer hires are working to wrap up the painting of yellow curbing.
- Water meter reads were completed on August 8th and utility billing was completed on August 9th.

Project Updates

- 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - Preparing to post for construction bid.
 - Supply chain constraints were identified for the SCADA control cabinet. Once approved and ordered, there is upwards of a 52-week delay for delivery.
- Water System Plan Update
 - All necessary agencies have now signed off on the plan. Final approval from the Department of Health (DOH) is anticipated soon.
- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
 - Meters continue to be swapped out. Director Bemis is developing a plan for City Manager Masko regarding speeding up the meter replacement process.
- Storm Water Pre-Treatment Outfall Grant Project – Emerson Street & Estate Place
 - Final close-out Progress Reports and Payment Requests are in progress.
- Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension (south side) – Woodside Drive to 67th Ave West
 - Consultant selection approval will come before Council on August 22nd.
- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67th Ave West
 - We received four submittals in response to our RFQ for design. Interviews are scheduled for August 21st.
- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded

- Design process and ongoing communication with KPG PSOMAS for construction in 2024.
- Continuing communications with Tacoma staff to coordinate the paving of the entire intersection.
- Electron and Contra Costa Crosswalk
 - “Contract Readiness Survey” has been completed and we have reached out to the Department of Commerce Project Manager.
- Claremont Street TIB Grant Application
 - We are preparing the Conceptual Construction Cost Estimate.
 - The grant application is due today for a \$153,000 appropriation of funds. Thank you to City Clerk Arlette Burkhart for her diligent efforts with this!

Equipment

- Bucket Truck (utilities) – tentatively scheduled for delivery by the end of August 2023.