



City Manager's Update

August 25, 2023

To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: August 25, 2023
Subject: City Manager's Weekly Update

Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

I'm happy to utilize the City Manager's update to provide an overview of upcoming events, meetings, and other items of interest for the City. The update includes reports from City departments on various programs, projects, and achievements.

1. Comprehensive Plan Visioning Survey

There is still time to submit your Comp Plan Survey to the City. The [Comp Plan Survey](#) was recently mailed to all City residents to receive community input for the update of our Comprehensive Plan Update. We have received an overwhelming response to this mailing, with surveys continuing to pour into City Hall. The survey is anonymous; 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 also available on the City's Comprehensive Plan [webpage](#).

2. Transient Merchants Registration

The City has recently been experiencing an uptick in transient merchant activities. A transient merchant is a person or business who conducts temporary business in the City. Transient merchants are also called canvassers, peddlers, or street sellers, who most commonly sell goods or services on a temporary basis. They may go door-to-door or operate out of a pop-up booth but are certainly not limited to these venues.

All transient merchants doing business in Fircrest are required to obtain a City business license and apply for a transient merchant registration. Certain business activities are exempt, including newspaper vendors, nonprofit organizations, political candidates, campaign workers for ballot issues, persons soliciting signatures of registered voters on petitions, and vendors at city-sponsored events. A list of approved transient merchants is on the City website at [Active Transient Merchant List](#). Remember, if someone comes to your door soliciting business or selling items, you have the right to ask to see their approved registration. Additional information about the City's requirements for transient merchants is in the Fircrest Municipal Code, [Chapter 5.08 - Transient Merchant Registration](#).

3. August 21st, 2023 - Study Session Recap

The Fircrest City Council met for a Study Session on Monday, August 21st. Agenda items were:

- Insurance Pool Discussion – City Manager Masko reported that there would not be a presentation from AWC-RMSA and that the City would need to rescind the notice of withdrawal to CIAW to remain with them as our insurer for the coming year.
- “Murphy” Costume – Usage Restrictions – Parks & Rec Director Grover and Events Coordinator Judy Schmidtke, accompanied by a cardboard “Murphy,” provided an update on the Murphy costume, stating that we hope to receive it in time for the Holiday Tree Lighting. They noted that donations have raised all but \$750 of the \$7,500 costume expense. An ordinance to prohibit unauthorized or improper use of the Murphy image (instead of applying for a registered trademark as previously discussed) will be coming forward to the Council soon.
- Comprehensive Plan Draft Vision Statement – Project Coordinator Jean provided an update on the overwhelming response to the community survey mailing and said further discussion on the draft Vision Statement would occur at future meetings.
- Fircrest Park Maintenance Facility Discussion – Public Works Director Bemis reviewed the proposed options for the maintenance facility. Staff will also look at prefabricated building options as suggested by several Council members.
- Prose Project Update – Project Coordinator Jean stated that we are still waiting for the MOU from the developer. We are also still awaiting the sewer interlocal agreement from Pierce County. The delays have been due to vacation schedules, according to those entities.
- Centennial Committee Formation – City Manager Masko provided a draft Steering Committee Charter and invited Council comments. Mayor Wittner asked Councilmember Viafore if he would be interested in chairing the committee. Councilmembers Reynolds and Bufford volunteered to serve on the committee. A resolution forming the Centennial Committee will be on the Council agenda soon.
- Holiday Tree Committee Discussion – This item will be discussed at a future meeting, pending additional research and internal discussions with Public Works and Parks staff.

4. August 22nd, 2023 - Council Meeting Recap

The Fircrest City Council met on Tuesday, August 22nd, for a regular meeting. Action items included:

- Approving liquor license renewals for Sammy’s Pizza, Pint Defiance, and OMG Food Mart.
- Setting public hearings on October 24th, 2023, at 7:00 PM or shortly thereafter to receive comments on the 2024 preliminary budget and 2024 revenue sources. The hearings will be held in Council Chambers at Fircrest City Hall, with the option to participate electronically via Zoom.
- Setting a public hearing on November 14th, 2023, at 7:00 PM or shortly thereafter to receive comments on the 2024 preliminary budget. The hearing will be held in Council Chambers at Fircrest City Hall, with the option to participate electronically via Zoom.

- Approving a Resolution authorizing the execution of a Letter of Understanding to the Stormwater Agreements for the Fircrest Greens Homeowners Association and 11th Tee Homeowners Association.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 12th, at 7:00 PM. Tentative agenda items include:

- Fircrest Park Sports Field Improvement Project Contract
- Ordinance Prohibiting Unauthorized Use of Murphy Image
- Regents Blvd. Grind & Overlay – Engineering Design Contract
- Centennial Committee Formation

5. Administration Update

Administration highlights of the past week include:

- Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart is working on several grants, including a Recreation & Conservation Local Parks Maintenance grant for deferred maintenance purposes and the second half of the Department of Commerce grant for the Comprehensive Plan Update. She also researched an Office of Public Defense grant for public defense improvement services, but it was determined that we do not have a qualifying program in place that would meet the grant criteria at this time.
- City Manager Masko spent a significant amount of time in department budget review meetings, working on labor relations issues, and assisting with code compliance issues.
- Acting City Clerk Burkhart attended a public records legal update to stay current with the Public Records Act and to understand issues other cities have faced.
- City Manager Masko spoke at this morning's Chamber of Commerce West Side Wake Up quarterly meeting. She provided an overview of recent staffing hires, the hard work of current staff, development projects, the successful summer recreation & events season, the Fircrest Park athletic fields improvement project, the Whittier Park Master Plan, and communication outreach efforts.
- We have been working with Public Works and Police on several recent claims, including the damage at Well #7.
- To date, the City has received 177 public records requests. At the same time last year, the City had received 157 public records requests.

6. Police Department Update

- Fircrest officers received over 140 calls for service this past week, including 34 traffic safety-related contacts (stops, collisions, parking violations) and eight reports, including a burglary, 3 DWLS (driving while license suspended), a DUI, an anti-harassment order service, and a natural death investigation. Officers had 52 community policing events (foot patrols, citizen assistance, security checks, community policing activities, vehicle contacts, and suspicious people). Police also responded to a vehicle vs. structure collision at Well #7.
- Our Sergeants are working on the traffic safety plan for the first week of school, using patrol emphasis funds to target enforcement and education.

- Fircrest Police assisted the Tacoma Police Department following an officer shooting this past week. Interim Chief LaTour and Sergeant Gollinger worked the perimeter at the scene until the suspects were located and arrested. In an incident such as this, surrounding law enforcement agencies step up to help secure the scene and provide other mutual aid assistance and support. Thankfully, the Tacoma detective is in stable condition.
- A verbal offer of employment was made for our 9th officer. It is anticipated that a formal employment offer, contingent upon the successful completion of a polygraph and psychological screening, will be extended following an upcoming meeting with the City Manager.
- Oral boards to fill our 10th officer position are scheduled for September 1st. There are four confirmed applicants for this position. The eligibility list will be posted on September 5th. All commissioned police officer positions will be filled once the 10th officer is hired, with a contingent of one Police Chief, two Sergeants, and seven Police Officers.
- All officers completed the LETS (Police Scenario Simulator) training last week. All officers are now scheduled for the Range next Wednesday, August 30th.

7. Parks & Recreation

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

- *Fircrest Park Court Resurfacing Project*

We are waiting for a set date for the tennis court resurfacing to occur and are hopeful the project will begin within the first two weeks of September. We continue working with Public Works to identify options to help address noise mitigation issues.

- *Sports Field Improvement Project at Fircrest Park*

The construction bid opening for the Fircrest Park Sports Field Improvement Project occurred on August 24th with four qualified bids received. The apparent low bid is lower than the engineer's estimated cost. The contract will come before Council for approval on September 12th.

Managed by RWD Landscape Architects, the project includes improving the planarity and draining of the field by removing several layers of compacted sod and soil and enhancing the field with fresh soil and sod. A temporary fence will remain around the site until January to facilitate root development. The project's kickoff is set for the third week of September.

Other Parks & Recreation highlights include:

Community Events

- The Market in the Park and Concert was a fantastic success again this week. What a great way to end the summer events season. We are looking forward to another amazing summer season next year!
- A huge thank you to our summer event volunteers – we couldn't have done it without you! If you are interested in participating on planning committees for fall and winter events, please get in touch with Events Coordinator Judy Schmidtke at 253-238-4166 or jschmidtke@cityoffircrest.net.

- Fall and Winter event planning is in full swing. We are diving into the details, so stay tuned for upcoming announcements and promotions.
- Haunted Trails and Holiday Tree Lighting event planning is beginning, and volunteer planning teams are being formed. We are eager to welcome new volunteers for our fall and winter events, so contact us if you want to help!
- We've taken steps forward with sponsorship proposals, engaging Paper Luxe for Scarecrows of Fircrest and Veliz Financial Management for Lights of Fircrest.
- Staff met with Floss & Fido, a new local business, and discussed potential collaborations for events and sponsorships.

Recreation Programs

- Summer camp was a hit last week, with 34 campers enjoying various activities, including cupcake making, pizza crafting, and slime creation. The week concluded with a lively water balloon fight at the park.
- We're in the last week of regular season games for the Women's Pickleball League. The grand champion will be determined next Wednesday night, beginning at 6:00 PM.
- Youth Cross Country for ages 5-11 is happening from September 8th – October 27th on Fridays from 4:00 – 5:00 PM. It's a fantastic opportunity for all levels of runners to engage in fitness and fun. There are 12 participants registered so far, and we're on track to surpass last year's enrollment.
- The popularity of drop-in volleyball continues to rise. Last week, we had an impressive turnout of 40 participants. Drop-in volleyball is on Thursdays from 5:00 – 7:00 PM. Sunday open gym volleyball will resume in September.
- Don't miss your chance to register for the September Senior Trip to the Washington State Fair. This trip, sponsored by the Edwards Family Foundation, is on Wednesday, September 13th. It's your chance to enjoy this year's exhibits, including agriculture and horticulture, art and photography, the Hobby Hall, the Expo Hall, animals, and all your favorite fair food. Transportation and admission are included. For more information and registration details, please get in touch with Raquel at rlapointe@cityoffircrest.net.
- Our Weekly Schedules [webpage](#) includes a comprehensive list of activities and programs for all age groups. Information about our adult programming can be found at [Adult Classes & Sports](#), and youth programs can be found on our [Youth Programs](#) webpage.

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](#).

- Mark your calendars for the **Barbie** movie-themed evening swim event next Friday, September 1st. Celebrate the end of a fantastic summer at our **Barbieland Pool Party** from 6:30 – 8:30 PM, and enjoy music, games, prizes, and FUN! The pool and our staff will be all decked out in **pink**, and we hope you will be too! Regular night session rates will apply. Please email pool@cityoffircrest.net or call 253-564-8188 for more info.

- This coming week is the last week of our regular pool schedule. The aquatic season will conclude with our final open swim session on Labor Day, September 4th. Friday, September 1st, is the last day for Lap Swim. Pool hours on Labor Day, September 4th, are the same as the weekend. The swim schedule is listed below.

		PUBLIC SWIM SESSION SCHEDULE AUG 19TH - SEPT 1ST						
		MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
6:30AM		LAP SWIM 6:30-9:30AM	LAP SWIM 6:30-9:30AM	LAP SWIM 6:30-9:30AM	LAP SWIM 6:30-9:30AM	LAP SWIM 6:30-9:30AM		
7AM								
8AM								
9AM							RENTALS SEE ONLINE CALENDAR 8:30-10:30AM	RENTALS SEE ONLINE CALENDAR 8:30-10:30AM
10AM								
11AM								
12PM							OPEN SWIM MID-DAY SESSION 11AM-2PM	OPEN SWIM MID-DAY SESSION 11AM-2PM
1PM		OPEN SWIM 12:30-4:30PM	OPEN SWIM 12:30-4:30PM	OPEN SWIM 12:30-4:30PM	OPEN SWIM 12:30-4:30PM	OPEN SWIM 12:30-4:30PM		
2PM								
3PM							OPEN SWIM AFTERNOON SESSION 2:30-5:30PM	OPEN SWIM AFTERNOON SESSION 2:30-5:30PM
4PM								
5PM								
6PM								
7PM		EVENING SWIM 6:30-8:30PM	FAMILY SWIM 6:30-8:30PM	EVENING SWIM 6:30-8:30PM	FAMILY SWIM 6:30-8:30PM	EVENING SWIM 6:30-8:30PM	EVENING SWIM 6-8PM	EVENING SWIM 6-8PM
8PM								
8:30PM								
		LAP SWIM RESIDENT \$4 NON-RES \$8	OPEN SWIM RESIDENT \$5 NON-RES \$10	EVENING/FAMILY SWIM RESIDENT \$4 NON-RES \$8	10 ENTRIES PUNCH PASS RESIDENT \$45 NON-RES \$90		FIRCREST RESIDENT SEASON PASS 1ST PASS \$70 ADDITIONAL \$40	

THIS SCHEDULE IS A REFERENCE. SCHEDULE AND PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.
FOR THE MOST UP TO DATE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE: 253-564-8188 | CITYOFFIRCREST.NET

- Due to the air quality index (AQI) surpassing 151 on Sunday, August 20th, we implemented our smoke policy at the pool. An AQI of 151 or more is considered unhealthy air quality for sensitive groups, such as people with asthma or other lung conditions. While we kept the afternoon session operational, we made the responsible call to close the Sunday evening session. Thankfully, all returned to normal on Monday with the arrival of some summer showers.

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

8. Planning & Building Update

- The Community Survey results have been overwhelming! While we’ve received almost 100 electronic results, we’ve received over 500 mailed survey results and still counting. Community interest in the Comp Plan is significant. The survey result comments and data points are being tabulated for public presentation in October.

- Project Coordinator Bob Jean reviewed City Attorney Bob Zeineman’s RCW update and Contract Planner Jeff Boers's planning “tools” materials and prepared an Executive Summary for community consumption.
- The September 5th Planning Commission meeting will be an update and workshop with our consultant BHC and Project Coordinator Jean to prepare for the Special Council Meeting/Community Open House on September 18th.
- Project Coordinator Jean coordinated with BHC on the Comp Plan Update work and the Fall 2024 work plan.
- Project Coordinator Jean updated the City of Tacoma on the Prose project sewer availability letter and ongoing I&I reduction efforts. He continued efforts to receive the sewer basin amendment ILA from Pierce County and the Prose project final plan and MOU from Alliance. He also alerted Contract Planner Boes about a comment from Pierce County regarding ground residential units needing a raised platform.
- The City reached out to the Tacoma School District regarding their need to significantly emphasize watering the newly planted trees at Wainwright to ensure they don’t need to be replaced again this fall, especially since they were planted during the hottest time of the year. The School District said they have now repaired the irrigation system that waters the trees.
- City staff continued troubleshooting issues associated with the Golden Gate property this week. Staff visited the job site to determine whether their work complied with City codes and their current permits, reviewed the next steps in their plans, and assisted them in obtaining an additional required permit. The driveway, sidewalk, and driveway approach work completed to date comply with their permits and City codes.

We continue to receive complaints regarding vehicles from their residence parked on the street for more extended periods than allowed under City street parking regulations and will continue to monitor the situation.

- Code compliance continues to be busy. Code enforcement complaints this past week involved tent caterpillars and rodent complaints.
- Permit Coordinator Rosario sent a code compliance letter to a property owner on Harvard Ave., where a house burned down in December. A building permit was approved, but the site is in deplorable condition. Upon receipt of the letter, the owner paid for his permit, and City staff discussed the issue with him.

9. Finance/Information Technology Update

Finance

- This past week has been a whirlwind of budget review meetings with Finance Director Corcoran, City Manager Masko, and department heads. Additional review meetings are occurring next week as well.

Information Technology

- The audio-visual vendor (Desco) is sending a technician on Tuesday, August 29th, to look into the static, recording, and Zoom feedback issues the City has been experiencing.

- Installation of the video portion of the new AV system is occurring on 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.
- While inventorying our network and equipment, IT Coordinator Chris Bunger found several old computers that need recycling. He has removed the hard drives, which will go to Lemay Mobile Shredding for destruction.
- We received notice from our website hosting company that our monthly fees are increasing from \$99/month to \$299/month. The increase is due to increased site visits and more content on our website. We have researched other web hosting services to find a more economical option, but our current vendor, Sitecrafting, is our best alternative. On a positive note, this increase can be construed as a reflection of our enhanced communication efforts.

10. Public Works Update

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

Highlights include: (in addition to routine daily tasks)

Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater

- Well #7 (Claremont) sustained significant damage in a vehicle vs. structure collision early Tuesday morning. We are awaiting a condition report from the City's contracted building official. All labor hours are being tracked along with communications and recent maintenance activities. Replacement of the perimeter fence is on hold pending further discussions.
- Well #7 issues have been narrowed down to the soft start. We are awaiting delivery of the soft start and the needed parts for installation, pending the outcome of the well-house building structural assessment.

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.
- The crew continued work on the public information sign at the Public Safety Building.
- The Alice Peers Park sign was delivered this past week. The sign will be installed following the relocation of two identified rose bushes next spring. Public Works will communicate this to Tapco Credit Union (who is generously paying for the sign – thank you!) and the parties that maintain the rose bushes.
- Staff eradicated a large hornet nest at Thelma Gilmur Park and tent caterpillars from a tree on City property.
- Maintenance staff provided set-up support for the Concert in the Park on August 24th.

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
 - Water meter replacement is ongoing. Director Bemis is developing a plan for City Manager Masko regarding speeding up the meter replacement process. This project is now 42% complete.
- 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
 - Director Bemis met with WSDOT on August 23rd to discuss the project status.
 - We are awaiting the selected consultant’s Scope of Work and Fee Schedule. The consultant contract will come before the Council on September 12th for approval.
- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67th Ave West
 - Director Bemis met with WSDOT on August 23rd to discuss consultant selection.
 - Interviews were held, with WSDOT oversight, on August 21st.
 - The consultant contract will be brought to Council on September 26th for approval.
- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - Design is in process for construction in 2024.
 - Pavement coring results showed that the HMA (hot mix asphalt) pavement thickness varies from 2-4”. We are exploring options with TIB to increase the pavement’s structural integrity and potential longevity.
 - Continuing communications with Tacoma staff to coordinate the paving of the entire intersection.
- Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
 - We received a \$153,000 appropriation of funds from the State Legislature.
 - We received communication from the Department of Commerce on August 21st outlining steps and documents moving forward.
- Claremont Street TIB Grant Application
 - The grant application certification identified total TIB funds of \$677,409 and total Local Funds of \$124,543.

Equipment

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