



City Manager's Update

August 4, 2023

To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: August 4, 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. Police Chief Recruitment

I am pleased to announce that Chief Ron Schaub will be joining our team as the City's new Police Chief. While nobody can replace retired Chief John Cheesman, I am confident that Chief Schaub's experience and his dedication to the law enforcement profession and the communities that he serves will benefit the Fircrest Police Department and City residents.

This decision was made after a recruitment process conducted by the Prothman Company which included a community meet and greet, and interviews by panels including City department directors, Fircrest police representatives, law enforcement professionals, local business owners, community leaders, and citizens.

Chief Schaub has over 28 years of law enforcement experience. He has served as the Police Chief for the City of Pacific, and the Public Safety Director for the Town of Steilacoom and Pierce Transit Police. As a Lieutenant with the Pierce County Sheriff's Department, he has led the traffic, school resource officers, crime suppression, community liaison, animal control, crime analysis, community outreach, and mental health co-responder units. He is also a graduate of the FBI National Academy, has a master's degree in public administration, and is an Army veteran.

Chief Schaub's first day will be September 25th. Interim Chief Rob LaTour will remain with the City until September 26th.

2. Concert, Market & Picnic in the Park

Join your friends and community to finish off our summer event season with two summer evenings of food, music, and family-friendly fun. The Concert, Market & Picnic in the Park events are happening on Thursdays, August 10th and August 24th at Fircrest Park. 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.

The Jimmy Vegas Band will rock the park on August 10th with top dance hits and anthems from multiple decades. On August 24th, Hook Me Up will entertain with jazz, swing, blues, and dance grooves. Grab your blankets, lawn chairs, and picnic baskets, and join us for fun-filled summer evenings in August!

3. National Night Out

A huge thank you to our Fircrest Police Department for hosting a great National Night Out this past Tuesday evening. The weather was beautiful, the vendors and food trucks kept busy all night, and the fireworks display was truly spectacular. Those in attendance were able to interact with local law enforcement agencies, Tacoma Fire Department, the National Guard, and our very own Fircrest police officers. While there may not have been skydivers, helicopters, or as many vendors this year, kids of all ages enjoyed K-9 demonstrations, face painting, impairment goggles safety lessons, spraying fire hoses, and yes – even giant human hamster ball races! National Night Out events are designed to build police and community partnerships and our event provided the opportunity to do just that.

Special thanks to Interim Chief Rob LaTour who stepped up to the City Manager’s direction that “the show must go on” when it appeared that the event might take a year’s hiatus. He and his team coordinated this event in just over a month! Without his efforts, this event may not have been possible. Many thanks also to the Fircrest Police Department, Parks & Recreation, and Public Works who worked tirelessly before, during, and after the event. Finally, we are grateful for our generous sponsors who funded National Night Out and retired Chief Cheesman for his fundraising efforts.

4. Comprehensive Plan Visioning Survey

The City is still seeking community input for the update of the Comprehensive Plan Update. City residents will be receiving a survey in the mail next week with the option to mail a hard copy back to the City or to respond with the QR code link to the [Comp Plan Survey](#). 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](#).

5. Upcoming Meetings – Week of August 7th – 11th

- Civil Service Meeting Monday, August 7th at 4:00 PM
- City Council Meeting Tuesday, August 8th at 7:00 PM

6. Council Agenda Items – August 8th, 2023

- Planning Commission Appointment
- South Sound Housing Affordability Partners Presentation
- Resolution – Pierce County Urban Consortium Agreement – Amendment No. 2
- Second Quarter Financial Report
- Ordinance – 2nd Budget Amendment

*Council Agenda Packet is available on the City’s [website](#).

7. Volunteer Opportunities

Are you looking to make a difference in our community? The City offers plenty of opportunities to volunteer your time and talents to support City programs, projects, and events, as well as other agencies that support our City. Upcoming events needing volunteers include the following:

- Help the environment while building community at Habitat Restoration work parties. The next work party is at Whittier Park on Saturday, August 5th from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. Work party activities include caring for existing plants and removing invasive species. This work supports water quality, our local wildlife, and pollinators. Sign up at <https://Piercecd.org> or visit the City [Events Calendar](#) for additional information.
- The next Habitat Stewardship Work Party at Thelma Gilmur Park is Monday, August 7th from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. Volunteers will be removing invasive plants (ivy and blackberries) near the trail system to prep the site for planting native species. Please wear sturdy shoes, clothes to get dirty in, long sleeves, and gloves, and make sure to bring water. Bring sturdy rakes, pointed shovels, loppers, and saws if you have them. Contact belindap@piercecd.org for additional information.
- The Conservation Futures & Open Space Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) is looking for an at-large board member to serve a four-year term. The [Advisory Board](#) evaluates properties that are eligible for acquisition through the [Conservation Futures](#) fund and makes an advisory recommendation to the Pierce County Council. Pierce County residents interested in helping preserve open space, wetlands, wildlife habitat, timberland, and agricultural lands are encouraged to apply using the [online application form](#).

8. Administration Update

Administration highlights of the past week include:

- Extended job offer to new [Police Chief](#) candidate.
- Interviewed Planning Commission candidates. Mayor's recommended appointment is on the August 8th Council Agenda.
- Finalized and posted job announcement for Community Development Director.
- Met with Compensation Consultants regarding a desk audit for a Public Works employee.
- Met with Alliance/Prose Project representative.
- Met with PW Director regarding recommended revisions to stormwater LOU materials.
- Updated Council Agenda Packet to add page numbers and links for ease of online use.
- Began preparation of formation materials for Centennial and Holiday Tree Committees.
- The next edition of Town Topics will go out with utility bills in mid-August.
- Researched information related to citizens' inquiries on traffic enforcement, sign code violations, and noise issues.
- Ongoing review of City operations and organizational needs.

9. Police Department Update

Fircrest officers completed just over 120 calls for service this past week, including 32 traffic safety-related contacts (stops, collisions, parking violations), a juvenile arson investigation at a City apartment complex, 12 reports, and 18 community policing events (foot patrols, citizen assistance, and community policing activities). Police also partnered with Public Works to block roadways so a contractor could pull road core samples safely.

National Night Out (NNO) was a success with vendors reporting high sales numbers, partners (public and private) reported positive engagements with citizens, and no injuries or damage to property. NNO donations exceeded expectations thanks to our generous donors.

Officer Lease is now fully qualified on all Force Response tools, enabling de-escalation and protection of self and citizens. We have also received application materials from a recruited lateral officer candidate and are awaiting the scheduling of an oral board to interview him. 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).

10. Parks & Recreation

We are now more than halfway through summer and are beginning to turn our focus to our fall programming. We are looking forward to offering increased youth and teen programming along with increased adult programming this fall. While those preparations are underway, we still have many community events and recreational opportunities happening this summer!

Parks & Recreation Director Grover is working on updating our volunteer procedures for all Parks & Recreation volunteers. We could not do what we do without our wonderful youth sports coaches and community events volunteers.

It is great to see so many community members using the courts for tennis and pickleball! According to the contractor, the tennis court resurfacing project should be on schedule for the middle of next week. New signs highlighting the tennis court hours are now posted and we are working with Public Works on noise mitigation issues.

Other Parks & Recreation highlights include:

Community Events

- There is great video footage of Fircrest Fun Days, Fircrest Picnic & Rod Run, Strawberry Festival, and the Let's Glow Mother-Son Dance on the Parks & Recreation [webpage](#).

Recreation Programs

- The Skyhawks day camps continue to operate at full capacity. Next week the popular Skyhawks soccer camp will be offered at Fircrest Park.
- 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.
- We received a generous donation this past week of lightly used tricycles and scooters for the Toddler Gym. Following safety inspections of the donated items, they were quickly put into use by our Toddler Gym visitors.
- 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](#).

- Resident registration for Session 4 lessons opened on Thursday, August 3rd. Non-resident registration starts tonight, August 4th at 7:00 PM. Registration closes when full or on August 6th at 6:00 PM. The resident fee is \$50 and the non-resident fee is \$75. Must have valid Fircrest.recdesk.com accounts for child and guardian to register.
- Open swim sessions have continued to attract large numbers of swimmers daily, with some entry lines on days when temperatures are over 80°. Pool capacity differs between sessions and is set by pool management with an emphasis on swimmer and patron safety. Factors impacting pool capacity include the swimmer-to-lifeguard ratio, the existence of visual obstructions, and the capability of swimmers using the pool.
- The Fircrest Amateur Swim Team (FAST) had a “Color Wars” Relay Only swim meet this past week at Tacoma Lawn and Tennis Club. What makes this particular meet special is that it is based on team spirit, sportsmanship, and cheering your respective team on. Fircrest did an exceptional job swimming and cheering and took home the 2023 South Sound Swim League Spirit Award. The swim team’s last meet of the season is Saturday, August 5th at 9:00 AM at Tacoma Lawn and Tennis Club.
- The Fircrest Pool was named one of the ten best public pools in Washington State by American Towns Media. Check out the link at [bestthingswa.com](#). Thank you Councilmember Reynolds for sharing this information with us.



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”.

11. Planning & Building Update

Code Compliance

- Our Code Compliance Officer has been busy fielding code compliance complaints including overgrown vegetation, sign code violations, a truck blocking a sidewalk for several weeks, speeding on Alameda, a dog owner not scooping poop off sidewalks, a group of homeless people behind Lowes, and a work van leaving a large appliance box full of trash on the street. Several of these complaints were forwarded to the Police for follow-up.
- We are continuing to work with the property owner of 509 Golden Gate to get a timeline from them for the approved work to their driveway and to stress the importance of getting this work completed.

Project Updates

- Alliance/Prose Project
 - Project Coordinator Jean and City Manager Masko met with a representative from Alliance on August 3rd to discuss the site plan as well as the MOU. They are still working to secure an equity partner for the project. Final plan revisions are done and are being sent to planning consultant Jeff Boers for final review and approval. The MOU is complete except for the payment provision related to sewer availability, sewer basin revisions, and I&I mitigation. We are hoping to bring the MOU forward to Council in late August.
 - Pierce County has the final draft of the Sewer Basin amendment to the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) ready for our review. This will hopefully be brought to Council at the last meeting in August.
 - Once the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with Pierce County is approved, the City is ready to issue a Sewer Availability Letter and follow-up letter to the City of Tacoma regarding an I&I commitment.
- 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 for review at the September 5th Planning Commission meeting. They will then move forward for presentation and discussion at the September 18th Special Council meeting.
 - The direct mail community survey results should be ready for the September 5th Planning Commission meeting and the September 18th Special Council meeting. BHC will then outline the next steps going forward into 2024 for the Comp Plan update.

12. 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 – second reading of the ordinance is on August 8th.
- The 2nd Quarter Financial Report will be presented to Council on August 8th.
- Payroll cross-training continued to ensure coverage during vacations.
- Finance staff attended training on cooperative purchasing to learn how we can “piggyback” on other public agency contracts to provide savings to the City. They also attended Governmental Accounting, BARS, and Intermediate Excel webinar training.

Information Technology

- Our IT Coordinator has continued to work with the AV system vendor to address comments received on the audio portion of the system from the last Council meeting and Court usage. We will be purchasing rechargeable batteries for the wireless microphone, are looking at placement options, and are researching options for a different wireless microphone stand. Other discussions involved the placement of the touchscreen system controller, cords/cables management, and allowing microphones to remain on during Council meetings instead of turning them on and off. At the next Council meeting we will have Councilmembers keep their microphones on during the meeting and will evaluate for any feedback or noise interference.

We are still awaiting completion dates from our vendor for the video portion of the AV system. This had been delayed to accommodate Council meetings and Court proceedings.

- We are performing a physical audit of IT-related assets (workstations, laptops, printers, networking equipment, etc.).

Wellness Program

- We appreciate everyone who has helped plan and/or participate in wellness activities so far this year. Employee participation in the wellness program allows the City to save 2% on our medical premiums.
- The 3rd Quarter 2023 Wellness Newsletter was issued to employees on August 1st.

13. Public Works Update

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

Highlights include:

- Met with the City’s GIS consultant to discuss future upgrades to the system and data. The priority will have an emphasis on Sewer data and capturing historic maintenance.
- Public Works Director Bemis met with the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) to apply for potential early funding of the Regents “West” Grind and Overlay project. This

project has yet to be funded for construction through Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC).

- The Drake St. drainage issues were resolved by our Utility staff. Foreman Jeff Davis coordinated with the adjacent property owner to formulate a plan to protect the City's infrastructure while the property owner installed drainage containment and conveyance off Right-of-Way (ROW). This has been an ongoing issue for many years and has now been resolved. Kudos to Jeff Davis and the rest of the utility team!
- Summer hire Ronin Chick's last day is today. It has been a pleasure to have Ronin on the team!

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- Our crew did setup, breakdown, and cleanup for National Night Out. Great job Matthew & Martin!
- The Fircrest Park Tennis Courts resurfacing preparation is completed. Resurfacing is scheduled for early August. Drainage concerns have been addressed and we are looking into sound mitigation materials.

Utilities

- The Public Works outreach booth at National Night Out was a great success. Our Public Works outreach program will be revamped for 2024 events with new merchandise.
- Painting of the Weathervane Booster Pump Station and Claremont Well Houses is complete.
- A new production meter was installed at Well #8. Communications to replace the failed check valve are in process.
- Water meter reads started on August 1st.

Project Updates

- 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - Temporary and permanent utility easements have been filed with Pierce County.
 - Preparing to post for construction bid.
- Water System Plan Update
 - Received final approval from the Department of Ecology, Pierce County, and Tacoma Water. Still waiting on final approval from the Department of Health (DOH) on Water Rights.
 - Letter was submitted and approved by the Department of Health regarding updated Wellhead Protection Area maps.
- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
 - Meters continue to be swapped out.
- 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
 - RFQ for design has been posted with responses due today.
- 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 paving of the entire intersection.
- Electron and Contra Costa Crosswalk
 - Starting internal collaboration work for the project.

Equipment

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