



City Manager's Update July 21, 2023



To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: July 21, 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. Fircrest Fun Days

It's finally here! [Fircrest Fun Days](#) starts **today** at 5:00 PM at Fircrest Park. Stop by the park to visit the Kidz Kraft Maker Booths, grab a bite to eat from the many food trucks on site, and enjoy the Aerial Acrobatics Show and Dance Party by Wings Aerial Acrobatics. Saturday's festivities kick off at 8:00 AM with Yoga in the Park and continue all day, culminating with a spectacular firework show at 10:00 PM. Fun activities include live entertainment with bands, a magic show, aerial acrobats, and roving performers; vendor booths; over 20 food trucks; a beer garden; games; a Circus Dance Party; pie bake-off and watermelon eating contests; kids baking competition; and the 'FUR'crest Pet Parade and Furry 4K Pet Walk. Stroll through the many vendor booths while enjoying roving entertainment and listening to live music. The event runs from 5:00 – 7:00 PM on Friday, July 21st and 8:00 AM – 11:00 PM on Saturday, July 22nd. Plan your day by checking out a [full schedule of events](#) on the City's website. You won't want to miss this annual Fircrest tradition!

Fun Fact: Fircrest residents have been enjoying this annual event since 1957. It was originally called Street-O-Rama to celebrate the streets being paved.

2. Police Chief Recruitment

Oral board interviews were held this week with four Police Chief candidates to establish an eligibility list to be certified by the Civil Service Commission on July 25th. Two candidates will move forward to final interviews to be held July 27th – 28th. The final interview process will involve panel interviews on Thursday, July 27th followed by a Community Meet & Greet to be held that evening from 5:30 – 7:00 PM at the Community Center. Council is strongly encouraged to attend the Meet & Greet to engage with the candidates. City Manager interviews will be held on Friday, July 28th. Any offer of employment following the interview process will be contingent upon successful completion of a rigorous background check.

3. Comprehensive Plan Visioning Survey

The City is still seeking community input for the update of the Comprehensive Plan Update. A survey is being mailed to all City residents 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 available at City Hall and the Community Center and will also be available at the City booth at Fircrest Fun Days. Additional information is available on the City's Comprehensive Plan [webpage](#).

4. Political Campaign Signs

Election season often prompts questions and concerns about placement of political signs. Signs for the purpose of endorsing political candidates or ballot propositions fall under the Temporary Signs section of the Fircrest Municipal Code ([FMC 22.26.021](#)). These regulations are designed to ensure pedestrian and vehicular safety are not hindered due to improper sign placement. A sign permit is not required for temporary signs. Regulations include but are not limited to the following:

- **General Guidelines.**
 - A sign permit is not required for temporary signs.
 - Signs are not allowed on public streets (other than noted below), public parks, roundabouts, traffic islands, and other City properties.
 - Signs are only permitted with the property owner's approval.
 - Additional information is located in Fircrest Municipal Code 22.26.021 [Temporary Signs](#).
- **Signs on City Right of Way.** The right of way is typically the area that includes the sidewalk, planter strip, and street. Temporary signs are prohibited in the roadway. Temporary signs on city right-of-way are allowed only between the property line and the back of the nearest curb, or where no curb exists, between the property line and the nearest edge of roadway pavement.
 - Signs may not be placed on traffic islands, or on sidewalks, driveways or other paved areas designed for pedestrian or vehicular use.
 - Signs must be on stakes that can be manually pushed or hammered into the ground.
 - Signs are limited to a maximum of four-square feet, and three feet in height.
 - Signs are only permitted with the abutting property owner's approval.
- **Signs in Residential Zones.** Temporary signs may be placed on residential property as follows:
 - Only one temporary window sign per residential unit, not to exceed four square feet.
 - Freestanding signs shall not exceed six square feet in size and four feet in height. Spacing shall be no closer than 100 feet apart on a property frontage.
 - Surface mounted signs shall not exceed two square feet in area. Only one sign is allowed per property. The sign must be flatly affixed to walls or on-site fences. Signs shall not be attached or tethered to other site improvements.
 - Signs may not be placed on private property without the permission of the property owner.
- **Signs in Non-Residential Zones.** Signs are allowed on non-residentially zoned property as follows:
 - Window signs are limited to a maximum of four-square feet or ten percent of the window area in which they are placed.
 - Freestanding signs (including pole-mounted, stake-mounted, and portable) are limited to eight square feet in size and four feet in height. Spacing shall be no closer than 100 feet apart on a property frontage.
 - Surface mounted signs shall not exceed thirty-two square feet in size. The sign must be flatly affixed to walls or on-site fences. Signs shall not be attached or tethered to other site improvements.

5. National Night Out

Come join the Fircrest Police Department and City of Fircrest at our annual National Night Out event on Tuesday, August 1, 2023 from 6:00 – 9:00 PM at Fircrest Park & Community Center. There will be lots of displays and interactive activities, K-9 demonstrations, music, food vendors, and fireworks to finish off the event. National Night Out is an opportunity to build neighborhood unity and strengthen the police community partnership that is so important to the success of our community policing efforts. We are grateful for our sponsors who have contributed or committed contributions to help make this event possible. A list of participants and sponsors is posted on the City's [website](#). Don't miss this award-winning event that has been recognized as one of the best in the nation for communities with populations of 15,000 or less!

6. July 17, 2023 Study Session Recap

The Fircrest City Council met Monday, July 17th for a study session. Agenda items were:

- Council Goals Discussion – to be discussed further as part of the 2024 Budget process.
- Pavement Management Report – options for pavement preservation techniques and a potential “Pilot Preservation Program” were highlighted by Public Works Director Bemis. The City's PCI (Pavement Condition Index) map is being updated, and an annual plan to address residential roads will be brought forward during the budget process.
- Comprehensive Plan Update – Project Coordinator Jean provided an update on the community survey mailing and holding a community open house as part of a September 18th Special Council meeting.
- ARPA Funds Update – Finance Director Corcoran reported that over \$1.6 million of the \$1.9 million American Rescue Plan Act funds received by the City have been expended or encumbered, with a remaining balance of \$273,700.
- Park Bond Capital Funds Update – Finance Director Corcoran reported that there is a remaining budget of \$1.4 million of the \$20.2 million revenue received for parks capital projects. Revenue included just under \$10 million from Park Bond proceeds, donations of \$5.1 million, grants of \$1.7 million, and a \$2.3 million short-term loan. A \$1 million donation from the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation is expected later this year.
- Replacement Fund for Pool & Recreation Building – this item will be discussed further pending additional research.

7. Upcoming Meetings – Week of July 24th – 28th

- Special Civil Service Meeting Tuesday, July 25th at 4:30 PM
- City Council Meeting Tuesday, July 25th at 7:00 PM

8. Council Agenda Items – July 25th, 2023

- Representative Leavitt Legislative Update
- National Night Out Proclamation
- Motion – September 18th Special City Council Meeting
- Resolution – Umpqua Bank Time & Temperature Sign Agreement
- Ordinance – Salary Plan Amendment
- Ordinance – 2nd Budget Amendment – 1st Reading

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

9. Administration Update

We received 9 applications for the vacant Planning Commissioner position. I was very pleased with the quality candidates who applied. Interviews for those selected to move forward are scheduled for July 31st. Following the interviews, the Mayor will bring forward his recommended appointment for Council confirmation at the August 8th Council meeting.

I am continuing to meet with City staff, and review operations and organizational needs.

Highlights of the past week include:

- Oral boards were held for the Police Chief and lateral Police Officer positions. Eligibility lists will be certified by Civil Service on July 25th. Finalized logistics for final interviews and Community Meet & Greet, including schedule, candidate notifications, interview panels, and interview questions.
- Finalized job description for a Community Development position being brought forward to Council at the July 25th meeting.
- Approved direct mailing flyer for the Comp Plan Visioning Survey.
- Provided remaining documentation for quote for services for alternative insurance pool(s) for risk management, loss control, and insurance services.

Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover will be out of the office on vacation from July 24th – 28th. Recreation Coordinator Ryan Brown will be acting Parks & Recreation Director.

Interim Police Chief LaTour will also be on vacation beginning the July 23rd – July 30th. Sergeant Villamor will be acting Police Chief in his absence.

10. Police Department Update

Fircrest officers completed just over 125 calls for service this past week, including 20 traffic safety related contacts (stops, collisions, suspicious vehicles), and 12 reports, including 2 vandalisms at Chick-fil-A with suspect information that we are following up on. Officers also had 37 community policing or caretaking events including foot patrols, citizen assists and welfare checks. Patrols at the Community Center are continuing. A report was received via Facebook about a drone being flown over the pool during swim lessons. Officers are keeping an eye out for the “pilot”.

A quarterly officer meeting was held on July 17th. Topics of discussion and training included legislative changes to State drug laws, HB 1227 – “Keeping families together”, new anti-bias CAD entry requirements (State v. Arreola), and enforcer reporting requirements to ensure accuracy and thoroughness.

Interim Chief LaTour attended a regional meeting with representatives from Volunteers of America, Fire Districts, Fife and Lakewood Police Chiefs, and South Sound 911 on the “988” resource. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is staffed by Volunteers of America with crisis counselors trained in de-escalation techniques, aimed to provide support to those with mental health crises to ultimately reduce EMS and Police responses.

Other items include a 2023 budget review and 2024 budget planning and providing information to the City Clerk regarding a patrol car damaged in a parking lot collision.

11. Parks & Recreation

We are excited & looking forward to the many community events and recreational opportunities happening this summer!

Community Events

- *Fircrest Fun Days* – Staff has been hard at work planning for and setting up for Fircrest Fun Days being held on July 21st & 22nd. The Park & Recreation Department's preparations encompass logistics, safety, entertainment, and community involvement. Working together with the Public Works and Police Departments, staff has thoughtfully prepared and planned for a successful two-day festival.

Parks & Recreation staff will be available throughout the park and at the Community Center front counter to answer questions, direct pedestrian flow, and keep up with routine event maintenance in our parks and facilities.

Electron Way will be closed to vehicle traffic between Pasadena Street and Contra Costa Avenue starting at Noon on July 21st through 11:00 PM on July 22nd to accommodate the 20+ food trucks that will be lined on both sides of Electron Way.

- *August Concert, Market and Picnic in the Park* – Staff continues to prepare for the two events that will take place on August 10th and August 24th from 5:00 – 8:00 PM. These events will include a free concert, food trucks, and market vendors.

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](#).

- The Fircrest Swim Team will be competing in their third swim meet of the South Sound Summer Swim League this Saturday, July 22nd at Canterwood.
- Swim Lessons Session 3 begins on Monday, July 24th.
- The pool continues to attract a large number of swimmers daily. 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, existence of visual obstructions, and the capability of swimmers using the pool.

Please call (253) 564-8177 or visit the City's website at [Parks and Recreation Department - City of Fircrest](#) 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".

12. Department Updates

Planning/Building Activities

- The Planning Commission met on July 5th. Topics discussed were the 2023 Community Vision outreach, the Thriving Communities Local Partner workshop, and a SSHAP (South Sound Housing Affordability Partners) update.

- Staff continued to process a growing number of incoming permit applications and is working on some code violation items, including political signs, tall grass, and abandoned cars.

Finance

- Finance is busy working on a 2023 Budget Amendment, the 2024 Budget preparation, and the 2nd quarter financial report. We are also testing software to be used for accounts payable processing, updating city asset lists, and working on a successor banking contract with Umpqua Bank (current contract expires October 2023).

Information Technology

- The AV system installation has started! The audio portion is anticipated to be completed today. Project completion is expected by July 26th.

Wellness Program

- The Annual Resident Poker Walk sponsored by the Wellness Program was held on July 14th. Participation was down this year from 100 walkers last year to only 26 this year. We believe that high temperatures contributed to this decrease. The committee will evaluate this event and decide if it will be offered again next year.

Public Works

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

- Public Works administration is working on a Letter of Understanding attachment for Stormwater Agreements, local parks grant submittals, and updating the Time and Temperature Agreement with Umpqua Bank for the City of Fircrest sign located on the traffic island at the intersection of Regents Blvd. and Alameda. Public Works Director Bemis presented information about pavement management techniques and options to Council at the July 17th Study Session.

Utilities

- Prepared for Public Works outreach booth at Fircrest Fun Days.
- Past due door notices went out on July 18th.

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- Fircrest Park Tennis Courts resurfacing prep work is now completed.
- Continued coordinating with Tapco Credit Union and the sign company to replace the Alice Peers park sign.
- Preparations for Fircrest Fun Days including meetings to discuss road closures and field prep, and scheduling maintenance staff for weekend cleanup and response.

Project Updates

- 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - Preparing to post construction bid.

- Water System Plan Update
 - Received final approval from Department of Ecology, Pierce County, and Tacoma Water. Still waiting on final approval from Department of Health (DOH). Updated historic Wellhead Protection Area maps.
- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
 - Meters continue to be swapped out.
- Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension (south side) – Woodside Drive to 67th Ave West
 - Consultant interviews with WSDOT are scheduled for Monday, July 24th.
- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67th Ave West
 - RFQ for design has been posted with responses due by August 4th.
- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - Design process for construction in 2024. Will continue communications with Tacoma to coordinate paving of the entire intersection.