



## City Manager's Update September 1, 2023

**To:** Fircrest City Council  
**From:** Dawn Masko, City Manager  
**Date:** September 1, 2023  
**Subject:** City Manager's Weekly Update



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### 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. City Offices Closed on Labor Day

City Hall will be closed on Monday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, in observance of the Labor Day holiday.

#### 2. Back-to-School Safety Reminders

With the University Place School District welcoming students back to class this past week and Tacoma students returning on September 7<sup>th</sup>, now is a good time for a reminder about traffic safety and situational awareness. It's never more important for drivers to slow down and pay attention than when kids are present – especially before and after school. Please remember to be patient and drive safely!

- Slow down in school zones and neighborhoods and adhere to posted speed limits. Your cautious driving can save lives.
- Always yield to pedestrians at crosswalks and intersections. Give them ample time to cross before proceeding.
- Avoid using your phone or engaging in other distracting activities while driving. A moment's inattention can lead to severe consequences.
- Traffic must stop if the yellow or red lights are flashing on a school bus and the stop arm is extended. Children may be crossing the road to board or disembark from the bus. Stop far enough away to allow space for children to enter and exit safely.
- Never pass a school bus from behind if it is stopped to load or unload children.
- Maintain a safe following distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you, allowing for sudden stops or unexpected pedestrian crossings.
- Pay attention to school zone signs and reduced speed limits. Slow down immediately when entering a school zone. Always stop and yield to pedestrians crossing the road.

- Make sure not to block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light or stop sign or waiting to make a turn, forcing pedestrians to go around you and putting them in the traffic path.
- Follow the directions of school crossing guards.
- Watch for children on bicycles and be extra vigilant in school zones and residential neighborhoods. Watch for bikes coming from driveways or behind parked cars.
- Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians.
- When dropping off your child at school, don't double park. It blocks visibility for other children and vehicles.
- Don't load or unload children across the street from the school.
- Be Alert! Children are often unpredictable and tend to ignore hazards and take risks. Please don't assume they are paying attention to your vehicle.

### 3. 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, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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, September 4<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. Tahoma Audubon partners with the City of Fircrest, Chamber Bay Women's Club, and Pierce County Conservation District to restore this urban island of green. 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 Lead Steward Sally at [larsonsw@hotmail.com](mailto:larsonsw@hotmail.com) for additional information.

### 4. 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](#).

### 5. Upcoming Meetings – Week of September 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>

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|-------------------------------|---|
| • Civil Service Meeting       | Tuesday, September 5 <sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM |
| • Planning Commission Meeting | Tuesday, September 5 <sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM |

## 6. 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. City Manager Dawn Masko continued exploring criteria for Middle Housing and Climate Planning grants from the Department of Commerce.
- The City's new Instagram page is now up and running. The page is located under "City of Fircrest, Wa". Thank you to Administrative Assistant Sierra Lee for her efforts with this.
- City Manager Masko spent significant time in budget review meetings, working on labor relations issues, and assisting with code compliance issues. She also facilitated a cross-departmental discussion to develop grant processing procedures. Additionally, she attended an AWC Employee Benefits Advisory Committee orientation.
- One of the customer service windows for the Fircrest Court mysteriously broke this past week. Public Works is working on securing a bid to replace the window. Meanwhile, we are blaming it on the Super Blue Moon and debating whether to decorate the eerily shattered window with Halloween decorations while waiting for it to be repaired.
- Acting City Clerk Burkhart attended the WA State Archives Records Management training this week. This training provides recommendations for leading, best practices, and processes for records management and retention in accordance with RCW 40.14.026(5)(a).

Last summer, the City used the Local Records grant funds to hire a temporary employee to assist with record management and organization. Staff accomplished a large volume of organization in the Public Works attic (aka storage facility). The Administrative Service's 2023 work plan includes finishing the Public Works attic layout, indexing the records, and implementing a records management program. The staff's goal is to begin identifying and creating an up-to-date inventory of all City records starting in September. There are still 50 boxes ready to be sent to the Archives.

- City Manager Masko met with the Program Administrator for Clear Risk Solutions regarding the City's insurance pool CIAW. Topics included training resources, insurance broker services, rate calculations, and 2024 insurance premium estimates.
- Human Resources is gearing up to onboard our new Community Development Director Mark Newman, and new Police Chief Ron Schaub, who are starting later in the month.
- The Employee Safety Committee meets every third Monday of the month to discuss upcoming training, any safety incidents, and hazard identification. With the wet season around the corner, the City will place "Caution, slippery floors when wet" signs at City Hall entrances.
- Civil Service Examiner Arlette Burkhart coordinated the Lateral Police Officer oral boards this week and prepared for the next Civil Service meeting on September 5<sup>th</sup>.
- The City Clerk's office responded to 9 public records requests this week. To date, the City has received 182 public records requests.

## 7. Police Department Update

- Fircrest officers received 119 calls for service this past week, including a burglary, parking problems, animal complaints, two domestic violence (verbal), suspicious persons, suspicious vehicles, sexual molestation, vandalism, and harassment.
- Our department completed our firearm rifle and handgun training on August 30<sup>th</sup>. We utilized the Pierce County Sheriff's Department range in Roy. Officers qualified with their duty firearms. We practiced using the nonlethal rifle and lethal force involving de-escalation tactics first. Firearms Instructor Chris Roberts did a great job instructing.
- City Manager Masko will be meeting with the 9<sup>th</sup> officer candidate next week. It is anticipated that a formal employment offer, contingent upon the successful completion of a polygraph and psychological screening, will be extended following this meeting.
- Oral boards were conducted today to fill our 10<sup>th</sup> officer position, with four applicants interviewed. The eligibility list will be posted on September 5<sup>th</sup>, pending certification by the Civil Service Commission. All commissioned police officer positions will be filled once the 10<sup>th</sup> officer is hired, with a contingent of one Police Chief, two Sergeants, and seven Police Officers.

## 8. Parks & Recreation

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

- *Fircrest Park Court Resurfacing Project*  
The tennis court resurfacing project started on Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>. Project details and closure information were posted on the court premises and communicated promptly on the City website and social media. Weather permitting, we anticipate completion today. We are continuing to work with Public Works on noise mitigation options.
- *Sports Field Improvement Project at Fircrest Park*  
The construction bid opening for the Fircrest Park Sports Field Improvement Project occurred on August 24<sup>th</sup>, with four qualified bids received. We are currently in the process of preparing contract documents to bring to Council for approval on September 12<sup>th</sup>.
- *Community Center*  
Our ongoing collaboration with Kassel Construction involves addressing warranty matters pertaining to the Community Center. We are working on a timeline for addressing the outstanding issues.

Other Parks & Recreation highlights include:

### *Community Events*

- Planning for Fall and Winter events, including Haunted Trails and the Holiday Tree Lighting, is beginning. 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@cityoffirecrest.net](mailto:jschmidtke@cityoffirecrest.net).

## Recreation Programs

- Summer programs have concluded, but never fear - regular activities have resumed at the Community Center! 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.
- Youth Cross Country for ages 5-11 is kicking off next week. This program runs from September 8<sup>th</sup> – October 27<sup>th</sup> on Fridays from 4:00 – 5:00 PM and is a fantastic opportunity for all levels of runners to engage in fitness and fun.
- 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 13<sup>th</sup>. 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](mailto:rlapointe@cityoffircrest.net).

## Aquatic Center

Take advantage of the final weekend of activities at the Edwards Family Aquatic Center.

- Mark your calendars for the **Barbie** movie-themed evening swim event happening tonight! 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.
- This is the last weekend of our regular pool schedule. The aquatic season will conclude with our final open swim session on Labor Day, September 4<sup>th</sup>. Pool hours on Labor Day, September 4<sup>th</sup>, are the same as the weekend. The swim schedule is listed below.

		CLOSING WEEKEND SCHEDULE SEPT 2ND- SEPT 4TH		
		SAT	SUN	MON
11AM	<b>OPEN SWIM</b>	<b>OPEN SWIM</b>	<b>OPEN SWIM</b>	<b>OPEN SWIM</b>
12PM				
1PM	<b>MID-DAY SESSION</b>	<b>MID-DAY SESSION</b>	<b>MID-DAY SESSION</b>	<b>MID-DAY SESSION</b>
2PM	<b>11AM-2PM</b>	<b>11AM-2PM</b>	<b>11AM-2PM</b>	<b>11AM-2PM</b>
3PM	<b>OPEN SWIM</b>	<b>OPEN SWIM</b>	<b>OPEN SWIM</b>	<b>OPEN SWIM</b>
4PM	<b>AFTERNOON SESSION</b>	<b>AFTERNOON SESSION</b>	<b>AFTERNOON SESSION</b>	<b>AFTERNOON SESSION</b>
5PM	<b>2:30-5:30PM</b>	<b>2:30-5:30PM</b>	<b>2:30-5:30PM</b>	<b>2:30-5:30PM</b>
6PM	<b>EVENING SWIM</b>	<b>EVENING SWIM</b>	<b>EVENING SWIM</b>	<b>EVENING SWIM</b>
7PM	<b>6-8PM</b>	<b>6-8PM</b>	<b>6-8PM</b>	<b>6-8PM</b>
8PM				

  

<b>OPEN SWIM</b>	<b>EVENING SWIM</b>	<b>10 ENTRIES PUNCH PASS</b>	<b>FIRCREST RESIDENT SEASON PASS</b>
RESIDENT \$5	RESIDENT \$4	RESIDENT \$45	1ST PASS \$70
NON-RES \$10	NON-RES \$8	NON-RES \$90	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) 327-1213 | CITYOFFIRCREST.NET

- As the conclusion of the season is approaching, Parks & Recreation Director Grover has conducted several exit interviews with lifeguards and pool staff. These discussions aim to retain valuable personnel for next season and gather insights into their experiences this past summer.

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."

## 9. Planning & Building Update

- The Community Survey results have been overwhelming! We have received close to 800 responses to date. Community interest in the Comp Plan is significant. The survey result comments and data points are being tabulated for public presentation in October.
- The September 5<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup>. Project Coordinator Jean finalized the executive summary regarding key RCW changes and Code "tools" for the meeting.
- Project Coordinator Jean met with Alliance representatives regarding the Prose project MOU. The City Attorney is now working with the Alliance attorney to finalize the MOU. He also met with Public Works Director Bemis regarding the City's I&I reduction efforts.
- Code compliance continues to be busy. Code enforcement complaints this past week included hedges impacting street visibility, potential sign code violations, and noxious and invasive weeds in a private easement.

## 10. Finance/Information Technology Update

### *Finance*

- Budget meetings with Department Heads have concluded. Finance Director Corcoran is now working with City Manager Masko to prepare the budget for Council workshops.

### *Information Technology*

- The audio-visual vendor (Desco) resolved the static issue we have been encountering with our new audio system. They will be providing a quote to replace microphone cables. These were not replaced during the audio installation and were not included as part of the original project. They will pull the video cable during the next portion of the installation. They could pull the microphone cabling simultaneously if we choose to do so.

Desco could not replicate the issue with the Core-Sys device that caused a previous recording failure. If the device fails again, it would likely need to be replaced. They did provide additional troubleshooting tips for staff to utilize.

- Installation of the video portion of the new AV system is occurring on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup>. 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: (in addition to routine daily tasks)

### ***Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater***

- The Well #7 soft start was replaced. Unfortunately, this did not resolve the tripping breaker issue. Upon further investigation, we are now scheduling to pull the pump and motor from the bottom of the 157-foot deep well. The new pump and motor are still under warranty.
- Well #7 (Claremont) sustained significant damage in a vehicle vs. structure collision early Tuesday morning. Following an inspection by the City’s contracted building official, we received verbal confirmation that it is safe to enter the building. All labor hours, communications, and recent maintenance activities are being tracked. Replacement of the perimeter fence is on hold pending further discussions.
- Utility staff previously responded to an after-hours vehicle vs. landscaping tree accident at the island on Emerson and Edwards. Utility Foreman Jeff Davis is tracking labor hours and materials and recently received an estimate from the City’s landscaping contractor for replacing the affected tree.
- The utility crew repaired a water service leak on the city side of a meter on Coral Drive.
- The flower baskets are approaching the season's end and are coming down today.
- Stripe Rite completed citywide roadway striping this week.
- The crew replaced twelve (12) stop signs due to faded reflectivity.

### ***Maintenance – Parks & Facilities***

- The Fircrest Park Tennis Courts resurfacing project started on Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>. The contractor hopes to complete the project by the end of this week, “weather dependent.” Sound mitigation materials are still being researched.
- The public outreach sign on Electron at the Public Safety Building has received a much-needed facelift, and updated maps are on order.
- The Alice Peers Park sign was delivered last 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 generously paid for the sign – thank you!) and the parties that maintain the rose bushes.
- Staff are prioritizing needs for the upcoming closing and winterizing of the pool.

### ***Project Updates***

- 44<sup>th</sup> Street West & 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
  - Preparing to post for construction bid.
  - We identified supply chain constraints for the SCADA control cabinet, which, once approved and ordered, could result in upwards of a 52-week delivery delay.

- Staff coordinated with Tacoma Power to install a new power meter on August 30<sup>th</sup> with proper placement for future construction.
- 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. Progress continues to be made, with 29 meters exchanged this past week.
- 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 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West
  - We are awaiting the selected consultant’s Scope of Work and Fee Schedule. The consultant contract will come before the Council on September 12<sup>th</sup> for approval.
- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West
  - The consultant contract will be brought to Council on September 26<sup>th</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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) – The truck has been delivered to the vendor and is undergoing fabrication. Delivery is tentatively scheduled for delivery by the end of September 2023.



## 12. “Ready, Set, Go!” Regional Evacuation Campaign

With smoke recently inundating our region and the evacuations for the Spokane area wildfires on people’s minds, the four Western Washington counties of King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston are joining forces, along with partners, to launch a regional “Ready, Set, Go!” evacuation campaign. This initiative aims to simplify evacuation messages to the public. These clear, straightforward messages are intended to save lives as people prepare to evacuate. More information is available at [www.piercecountywa.org/emergency](http://www.piercecountywa.org/emergency).



The risk of wildfires has spread to the west side of the Cascades, an area that historically has not seen widespread wildfires. Once a rare occurrence, wildfires have now become an annual threat, requiring public outreach and preparation. The “Ready, Set, Go!” evacuation campaign provides clear instructions on how to respond to the three levels of evacuations (traditionally Levels 1, 2, and 3) and prepares the public on the actions they should take at each level when alerted by authorities. This evacuation program will be used in our area for all hazards: fires, floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, and storms.



**Level 1 – Be Ready** – Be aware of your area's danger and prepare for possible evacuation.

- ❖ Monitor local media and check on neighbors.
- ❖ If you don’t already have an evacuation plan or Go! Kit, assemble these now.
- ❖ Prepare both inside and outside of your home for fire.
- ❖ Leave if you feel unsafe – do not wait for an official evacuation order.



**Level 2 – Be Set** – Short-notice evacuation is likely in your area.

- ❖ Be prepared for sudden evacuation.
- ❖ People who need more time to evacuate should leave.
- ❖ Ensure your evacuation plan checklist is complete & and that your Go! Kit is in your vehicle.
- ❖ Always remember to leave if you feel unsafe – do not wait for an official evacuation order.



**Level 3 – Go Now** – Evacuate immediately from your area.

- ❖ Danger in your area is current or imminent. Follow directions from law enforcement or fire departments and do not return home until officials determine it is safe. Notification that it is safe to return home will be provided as soon as possible.