



# City Manager's Update

## September 15, 2023

**To:** Fircrest City Council  
**From:** Dawn Masko, City Manager  
**Date:** September 15, 2023  
**Subject:** City Manager's Weekly Update

### Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

Below is 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. Special Council Meeting – Community Workshop

The Comprehensive Plan is a 10-year vision and roadmap for Fircrest's future. It guides City decisions about land use, transportation, housing, parks, and capital facilities. A comprehensive plan takes a long-range perspective and provides broad direction without prescribing specific implementation measures or regulatory actions. The plan is also a living document, adaptable to evolving conditions and offering a framework for considering policy changes.

The community is invited to a Special Council Meeting on Monday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, from 7:00 – 9:00 PM to learn more about the Comprehensive Plan and share your ideas about the future of Fircrest. The meeting will be held in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Light refreshments will be served.

**CITY OF FIRCREST**  
**COMMUNITY WORKSHOP**

Interested in helping shape the City's future?  
Join us to learn more about  
the City's Comprehensive Plan Update. Your feedback is important!

Monday, September 18, 2023  
7:00 - 9:00 PM  
City Hall - Council Chambers  
115 Ramsdell Street, Fircrest, WA 98466

**SAVE THE DATE!**

Everyone is welcome!  
Doors open at 6:30 PM and refreshments are provided.

Can't make it? Visit the City's website to learn more.  
[www.cityoffircrest.net](http://www.cityoffircrest.net)

Welcome To FIRCREST  
INCORPORATED 1925  
we|city

## 2. Council Agenda Items – September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023

- Introduction & Swearing In – Police Chief Ron Schaub
- 2024 Preliminary Budget Presentation

\*Council Agenda Packets are available on the City's [website](#).

## 3. Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month – a time to educate ourselves and others on the signs, resources, and recovery methods for those dealing with severe mental health concerns. Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, or background. Suicide is the leading cause of death nationally for people aged 10-34 years. There are over 48,000 recorded deaths by suicide – or one suicide every 11 minutes - in the United States every year. While suicide prevention is important to address year-round, Suicide Prevention Awareness Month is a time to help raise awareness and ensure that individuals, friends, and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention and to seek help. Let's face it: we all have been impacted by suicide or know someone who has, and we can all benefit from honest conversations about mental health and suicide, because just one conversation can change a life.

Suicide is a critical topic impacting the youth in our communities. In Pierce County, 42% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders said they felt sad or hopeless for more than two weeks at a time, 23% reported they considered attempting suicide, and 10% said they had attempted suicide, according to the 2021 Healthy Youth Survey for Pierce County. As a parent, these are shocking statistics for me to read. Fortunately, many resources are available, including Kids' Mental Health Pierce County, a community coalition that is a part of Mary Bridge Children's Health Network. Working with local school districts this year, including Tacoma, students can access in-person events and free webinars and trainings on various topics from home, including how to respond to a crisis and suicide prevention.

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a national hotline that provides confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For a non-life-threatening but urgent behavioral health crisis, call or text 988 anytime to connect with a trained crisis counselor. Anyone can call the Crisis Line – for themselves, a family member, or a friend. Add the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988) number to your phone now – it could save a life later.



The Pierce County Crisis Line at 1-800-576-7764 or text 741-741 is also a free service available 24/7 and provides immediate help.

## 4. Comprehensive Plan Visioning Survey

Time is running out to submit your Comp Plan Survey to the City. The [Comp Plan Survey](#) was mailed to all City residents to receive community input for the update of our Comprehensive Plan Update. We have received around 800 survey responses to date! The survey is anonymous; therefore, all answers are confidential and not identifiable to any person. Copies of the survey are available at City Hall and the Community Center. Additional information is also available on the City's Comprehensive Plan [webpage](#).

## 5. Free Pierce County ADRC Presentations

The Pierce County Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC) is inviting the public to attend the following free presentations:

- **Planning for Long-Term Care:** Learn about the importance of planning, how long-term care is defined, the different levels of long-term care, and strategies available to pay for the cost. This presentation is on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, from 2:00 – 3:00 PM.
- **Understanding Social Security:** Learn about the origins of the program, how it is funded, how retiree benefits are determined, and how the program provides support to the disabled and widows/widowers. This session is Tuesday, September 26, 2023, from 6:00 – 7:00 PM.

Presenter Matt Santelli has worked as a Case Manager and Education/Outreach Specialist at the Pierce County ADRC for over 20 years. He will be available one hour before and one hour after the presentations to answer questions and provide information about programs and services available to support senior and disabled residents to remain healthy, safe, and financially stable in their homes. He can be reached at 253-348-1065 or [matthew.santelli@piercecountywa.gov](mailto:matthew.santelli@piercecountywa.gov).

Both presentations will be held at the University Place Library at 3609 Market Place West in University Place. There is no cost to attend, and no RSVP is required.

## 6. Administration Update

Administration highlights of the past week include:

- City Manager Masko met with Finance Director Colleen Corcoran on the 2024 budget, worked on labor relations issues, and assisted with code compliance issues. She also finalized the draft MOU with the Fircrest Parks & Recreation Foundation, prepared Special Council meeting agenda packet, researched zoning questions, worked on desk audit follow-up, and worked on the Municipal Court Judge replacement process.
- City Manager Masko continued working on the Police Chief background process.
- Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart reviewed applications for the part-time Court Clerk position. Interviews are scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup>.
- City Manager Masko and Acting Clerk Burkhart updated new hire employee forms.
- Acting City Clerk Burkhart is working on several grants, including a Recreation & Conservation Local Parks Maintenance grant for deferred maintenance purposes, a Department of Ecology Stormwater Capacity grant, and a legislative appropriation for the Electron Way/Contra Costa Ave. intersection improvement project.
- The City Clerk's office responded to 5 public records requests this week. To date, the City has received 187 public records requests.
- Acting City Clerk Burkhart met with Desco, the audio-visual contractor regarding the installation of the Council Chambers cameras, operations, and meeting set-up. She and City Manager Masko discussed support agreement options with Desco and will review options once received.
- City Manager Masko began a review of contracts and interlocal agreements that need to be renewed and/or renegotiated for 2024.

## 7. Police Department Update

It was a busy week for the Fircrest Police Department, with our officers hard at work investigating assaults, burglaries, vandalism, and stolen vehicle recoveries.

- Fircrest officers received or generated 145 calls for service this past week, including 48 traffic safety-related contacts (stops, collisions, parking violations). There were 20 reports, including a DV assault arrest, a burglary, vandalism, a hit-and-run collision, and 7 driving with a suspended license. Officers had 54 community policing events (foot patrols, citizen assists, security checks, COP activities, suspicious people and vehicle contacts, and sex offender house checks).
- Officers investigated what was initially dispatched as a robbery, but ultimately, it was thwarted by the shop owner, who sprayed the suspect with pepper spray, and he ran off. After coordinating with TCC Transit Center security and using their state-of-the-art system, we have suspect and vehicle information.
- Café Elite employees were being harassed by a subject who demonstrated deviant tendencies, with mental health likely a contributing factor. When contacted to be trespassed from the business, he fled on foot. Our officers chased him down, used minimal force to detain him, trespassed him, and booked him into jail for running when contacted. The employees were overjoyed and grateful to feel safer in their place of business with him being trespassed and arrested.
- Our Investigator partnered with Q13 Tips and was able to get suspect information on the ATM burglary that occurred a few weeks ago at the 76<sup>th</sup> Station at 19<sup>th</sup> and Mildred. We obtained and executed a search warrant; unfortunately, no evidence was seized. However, other suspected stolen property was viewed, and we are sharing our discovery with local jurisdictions to potentially get victims identified.
- Officers responded to a 3:00 AM alarm at Cost Less Pharmacy, arriving within 6 minutes of South Sound 911 (SS911) receiving a call from the alarm company (which is a fast response), and discovered a large front window that a passerby had likely vandalized. It appeared the damage was from a blunt object and was not the result of a drive-by shooting.
- Officers are monitoring, educating, and enforcing parking violations along Contra Costa and Elm Tree Lane, which becomes a chokepoint during fall youth soccer season – limiting thoroughfare traffic and emergency vehicles (police/fire) in the unfortunate event of an emergency.
- Our Investigator completed a tour and capabilities briefing from Pierce Transit Police at their Tacoma Dome Station. We are now aware of the massive number of cameras at the TCC Transit Center and will be able to leverage their capabilities in future Fircrest investigations.
- Our Community Resource Officer was able to coordinate with SS911 to obtain LinxNW access for all of our officers, enabling them to view reports, physicals, Modius Operandi (MO), and link analysis on a regional scale (Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties). This access and capability will enable our officers to digitally reach farther and obtain more information about suspects who may be victimizing our residents.
- Officer Garcia is signed up for a Field Training Officer Academy course to be hosted by Federal Way Police in late October. This course will be beneficial in developing his leadership skills and empower him with the tools to objectively and effectively train a new hire police officer.

- We received an unofficial quote from Axon to outfit nine patrol cars with Dash Cameras. This capital expense would work in conjunction with our body-worn cameras and Tasers. Dash cameras in patrol cars are invaluable when drivers complain about why they were stopped, driving behavior during DUI investigations, and during internal reviews of officer driving incidents (complaints of too fast or when involved in collisions).
- Our department is preparing for Halloween emphasis patrols, and retired Chief Cheesman has started coordination with Steilacoom Police for the Santa Sleigh ride event in December.
- Police are working with Public Works to protect the City's tennis court rehabilitation investment by ensuring the gates are locked up nightly.

## 8. Parks & Recreation

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

- *Fircrest Park Court Resurfacing Project*

The newly surfaced Fircrest Park courts are getting a lot of use by both tennis and pickleball players. Parks and Recreation Director Grover is currently researching sound mitigation strategies. One manufacturer, Acoustiblok has an Acousti-Fence product that is proven to reduce pickleball noise by up to 28db.

Additionally, staff reviewed project documents in response to a comment at the September 12<sup>th</sup> Council meeting that the project scope had changed. When the City applied for the RCO grant in 2020 and the City Council approved the grant application with Resolution No. 1670, the intent had always been to resurface the courts with both tennis and pickleball lines.

- *Athletic Field Improvement Project at Fircrest Park*

The City Council approved the construction contract at the September 12<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. Community outreach information will be posted in the coming week, utilizing flyers, the readerboard, the City website, and social media. Construction is anticipated to begin soon.

- *Whittier Park Master Plan*

The Whittier Park Master Plan process is moving forward. The AHBL consultant team had a site visit last Friday, and Parks and Recreation Director Grover met with them yesterday. The community outreach portion will begin once meeting dates and times have been set.

Other Parks & Recreation highlights include:

### *Community Events*

- Scarecrows & Skeletons of Fircrest – Parks & Recreation sent all employees the department challenge information. Let the competition begin!
- Rod Run – Fircrest Towing is confirmed as our 2024 Rod Run Title Sponsor, and the 2024 promo poster has been finalized.
- 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@cityoffircrest.net](mailto:jschmidtke@cityoffircrest.net).



### ***Aquatic Center***

- Staff are preparing a close-out report that includes memberships sold, revenue, lifeguarding hours, etc.

### ***Recreation Programs***

- The Skyhawks basketball program started this Monday. This program occurs every Monday in the Names Family Foundation Gymnasium from 6:00 – 6:45 PM from September 11<sup>th</sup> – October 2<sup>nd</sup>. This fun, skill-intensive program is designed for beginning to intermediate players. Participants will learn the fundamentals of passing, shooting, ball handling, rebounding, and defense through skills-based instruction and small-sided scrimmages. Registration is still open at [Skyhawks.com](http://Skyhawks.com).
- Our Triple Impact Wednesday Workouts program with Coach Arvin Mosley Jr. started last week. This program is designed to introduce the game of basketball and help young players develop fundamental basketball skills and movements. This program is ideal for new or young players still learning the game. We focus on teaching basic motor skills, introducing basic rules, and teaching beginning basketball skills and strategies.
- 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.

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**

- Project Coordinator Jean and Public Works Director Bemis have been working on an I&I program for Council discussion in October. This is in coordination with Pierce County regarding a Sewer Basin Map Amendment ILA to take to the Boundary Review Board.
- Staff continued to tabulate the data and text comments from the Community questionnaire.
- At the last Planning Commission meeting, a question was raised about ground-level residential units being either set back or elevated in the Prose project. Contract planner Jeff Boers is reviewing the conditions and final plan before the City approves them.

## **10. Finance/Information Technology Update**

### ***Finance***

- Finance Director Corcoran is continuing to prepare for Council budget workshops.
- Staff received a cost estimate for an online time recording software program and would like to use ARPA funding for the installation costs and first-year maintenance fees.
- Office Assistant Sierra Lee will be trained as the backup passport processor.

## ***Information Technology***

- Installation of the video portion of the new AV system was completed this past week, except for a few outstanding items. The system was utilized during the City Council meeting and municipal court this past week, with everything running smoothly.

## **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 utility crew repaired a water service line on the city side of a meter on Rosewood. The incident was initially reported as a potential water main break.
- The flags on Regents Blvd. have been taken down.
- Public Works responded to a water meter tamper incident. Documentation, notification, and follow-up are in process.
- Public Works Director Tyler Bemis began working on the required Notice of Intent to the Department of Ecology for the renewal of the City’s NPDES permit which expires in 2024.
- The Well #7 pump and motor were pulled from the bottom of the 157-foot deep well. The motor was replaced, and Public Works staff replaced the wiring to the motor. The well will be up and running after we receive purification results.
- Repair planning is in process for the damage sustained to Well #7 (Claremont) due to a vehicle vs. structure collision. All labor hours, communications, and recent maintenance activities continue to be tracked. Replacement of the perimeter fence is on hold pending further discussions with City Council.

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

- The Whittier Park Tennis Courts were closed on Thursday to conduct a temporary fix that should keep them in working order through the fall. These courts sit over a very wet portion of Whittier Park and have “floated” over time, causing gaps between the three concrete pads. A permanent fix will be identified during the upcoming Whittier Master Plan process.
- Winterization of the Fircrest Pool continued this past week.
- Donated benches were received this week for Masko Park.
- Maintenance Worker Martin Chick’s last day with the City was September 11<sup>th</sup>. Martin started his employment with Fircrest in April 2022 and made an immediate impact on the Parks & Facilities team. He leaves behind his trademark smile and positive outlook on life. We wish Martin the best of luck as he ventures to Eastern Washington in the pursuit of supporting and being present for his family. He will be greatly missed!

### ***Project Updates***

- Water System Plan Update
  - We received the final Water System Plan with all appendices. Final approval from the Department of Health (DOH) is anticipated by the end of September.

- 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 a 52-week or longer delivery delay.
- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
  - Water meter replacement is ongoing.
- 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 preparing the consultant contract to come forward to the Council on September 26<sup>th</sup> for approval.
- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West
  - We are preparing the consultant contract to 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.
  - Continuing communications with Tacoma staff to coordinate the paving of the entire intersection at South Orchard and Regents Blvd/Center St.
- Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
  - We received a \$153,000 appropriation of funds from the State Legislature.
- 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) – At long last, we finally received the bucket truck on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and our crew utilized it for flag removals on Regents Blvd.

