



City Manager's Update September 23, 2023



To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: September 23, 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. Fircrest Park Athletic Field Improvements

The Fircrest Park Athletic Field Improvements project is getting ready to begin. The south end of Fircrest Park, stretching from between the baseball fields to the Community Center Plaza, will be fenced off for up to six months, starting as early as next week. The project will include improvements related to field lighting, grading, relocation, field orientation, turf establishment, and other miscellaneous amenities. The project also includes improving electrical, irrigation, and drainage systems. This timeline encompasses the construction phase and allows sufficient time for the natural sod to establish itself properly into early spring. We appreciate your patience as we strive to enhance the amenities at Fircrest Park, providing improved opportunities for play, recreation, and sports. If you have any questions regarding this project, please get in touch with Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover at 253-564-8177.

2. Comprehensive Plan Workshop

Following our initial June workshop on the Comprehensive Plan Update, where only 5 citizens were involved, our September 18th Special City Council Meeting/Community Workshop had over 30 citizens actively involved! Staff and consultants presented information on the new State laws regarding "Middle Housing" options between apartments and single-family homes. Community discussion roundtables then explored options for meeting the new State mandates and how we can preserve the essential character of Fircrest as we continue to grow and change.

The next steps for the Comprehensive Plan Update will include reviewing the Community Survey feedback and further engagement with the City Council and Planning Commission as we work through proposed updates.

3. Council Agenda Items – September 26th, 2023

- Introduction & Swearing In – Police Chief Ron Schaub
- Resolution – Pierce County Department of Assigned Counsel Agreement
- Resolution – Memorandum of Understanding with Fircrest Parks & Recreation Foundation
- Resolution – Insurance Broker Contract Amendment
- 2024 Preliminary Budget Presentation

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

4. Whittier Park Master Plan

The Whittier Park Master Plan project is currently underway. It presents an opportunity for the Parks and Recreation team to lead a community project that aligns with Fircrest's mission of enhancing the quality of life for our citizens. The master planning process offers a unique chance to bring together City staff, the community, and stakeholders to unite the project under a common set of goals. Our landscape architect consultants at AHBL have initiated the planning process by identifying critical features and components that will drive the design, schedule, and budget. AHBL's team combines expertise in master planning and multidisciplinary design work, enabling them to facilitate well-informed decisions early in the project to ensure that the master planning documents not only meet but exceed the project goals and are constructible.

The Whittier Park master planning process will incorporate an inclusive outreach strategy that fosters shared ownership of ideas among stakeholders and community members, including one or more community surveys. The planning team members have collectively participated in and led numerous charrettes and outreach processes over the past two decades.

The AHBL team will host two public engagement sessions. The first outreach event will gather public input for the future of Whittier Park. We will review site opportunities and constraints, document general needs and desires, and create the initial site plan options. This meeting will take place at the Roy H. Murphy Community Center. Stay tuned for meeting dates and times.

Following the first public engagement session and completion of initial research tasks, AHBL will develop at least three conceptual site plan concepts to encompass a diverse range of possibilities and opportunities. Additionally, we will prepare character image boards, conceptual site models, and a rough order of magnitude cost estimate for each concept.

After updating the concepts, the second outreach event will feature presentations of the refined conceptual plans based on community survey feedback and the first public engagement session. This engagement session will be in an open house format at the Community Center. The meeting date and time will be announced at a later date.

The final phase of the process is the culmination of the master planning process, where the final plan will emerge, either as a preferred design or a combination of several site options. AHBL will build on decisions, outcomes, and feedback from surveys, meetings, and initial concepts to prepare a draft Master Plan for review and comments by City staff and the Fircrest City Council. The draft plan will include a conceptual cost estimate of Master Plan elements, indicating anticipated cost ranges. AHBL will collaborate with City staff to develop a phasing plan, providing recommendations on how to phase future projects for Whittier Park. AHBL will incorporate review comments into a final Master Plan and present it to the City Council at a Council meeting.

5. Administration Update

Administration highlights of the past week include:

- City Manager Masko continued working with Finance Director Colleen Corcoran on the 2024 budget, worked on labor relations issues, and facilitated legal counsel information requests. She also began transitioning projects and information to the new Community Development Director, responded to citizen emails and worked on the Municipal Court Judge transition plans.
- City Manager Masko finalized the Police Chief background process. New Police Chief Ron Schaub will start work on Monday, September 25th.
- Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart prepared materials for and participated in interviews of four candidates for the part-time Court Clerk position.
- Acting City Clerk Burkhart submitted a grant application to replace picnic tables and refuse bins throughout the park system. Award notifications will be announced on October 31st.
- The City Clerk's office responded to 5 public records requests this week. To date, the City has received 192 public records requests.
- City Manager Masko continued reviewing contracts and interlocal agreements that need to be renewed and/or renegotiated for 2024. Two of these contracts are on the 9/26 Council agenda.

6. Police Department Update

- Fircrest officers received or generated 173 calls for service this past week, including 40 traffic safety-related contacts (stops, collisions, parking violations). There were 13 reports, including a motor vehicle collision into a City sign, thefts, DV violation of court order, and motor vehicle thefts and prowls. Officers had 42 community policing events (foot patrols, citizen assists, security checks, COP activities, suspicious people, and sex offender registration checks).
 - Officers responded to a felony 2nd-degree domestic violence call this week. The adult son was arrested after violently assaulting his mother.
 - 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.
 - Our Investigator partnered with Q13 Tips to ask for the public's help to identify two burglary suspects who broke into the Taco Time on South 19th Street on September 15th. The suspects, a male and a female broke a glass door near the back of the restaurant, then returned a few hours later and stole several items. They fled the scene in a white pickup truck. There is a \$1,000 cash reward from Crime Stoppers for information that leads to an arrest. Pictures of the suspects can be found at [fox13seattle.com](https://www.fox13seattle.com).
 - Officers responded to an armed robbery Thursday evening at the OMG Food Mart at Emerson & Orchard. Thankfully nobody was hurt and no shots were fired. Unfortunately, this is the same local business that was broken into on August 16th, with the burglars stealing the ATM.
 - At the suggestion of the Municipal Court, Sergeant Gollinger is working on creating standard operating procedures and a training plan for the Bailiff's duties.
 - Preparations are complete for Chief Ron Schaub's first day of work on Monday, September 25th.
 - Officers are continuing to monitor, educate, and enforce parking violations along Contra Costa and Elm Tree Lane, which becomes a chokepoint during fall youth soccer season – limiting
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thoroughfare traffic and emergency vehicles (police/fire) in the unfortunate event of an emergency.

- A final pre-hire screening for the 10th police officer has been rescheduled to the first week of October.

7. Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation highlights include:

Parks

The lights at Whittier Park were repaired this past week. The staff has added additional theft deterrent measures including motion lights and other deterrents. Maintenance has also coordinated with the Police Department for added security checks at the park.

Community Events

- Murphy Introduction - We can't wait for everyone to meet our mascot, Murphy! We are working on a small event to introduce Murphy to the community. More details coming soon.
- Scarecrows & Skeletons of Fircrest – The event banner has been installed on the tennis court fence, additional signs have arrived and are ready to be strategically placed to increase visibility, and registrations are steadily flowing in, indicating a strong interest from our community. We have distributed posters to local businesses, further promoting the event. Prizes have been purchased and meticulously assembled, ensuring that we're well-prepared for a successful and engaging event.
- Haunted Trails – This year's Haunted Trails theme is "Haunted Circus," promising an eerie and thrilling experience for all. We are coordinating with Pastor Taeler at Fircrest Presbyterian Church for parking logistics, ensuring smooth access for attendees. We've conducted a comprehensive trail walk-through with our leadership team to ensure everything goes off without a hitch. We are pleased to see volunteer applications steadily coming in, demonstrating the community's eagerness to get involved in this spooky adventure. Join us on October 19th ...



... **IF YOU DARE...**

Fircrest Parks & Rec present the 2023
UPCOMING EVENTS

SCARECROWS OF FIRCREST	OCTOBER 2023
HAUNTED TRAILS	OCTOBER 19
TREE LIGHTING	DECEMBER 3
LIGHTS OF FIRCREST	DECEMBER 2023

For more information visit
www.cityoffircrest.net/parksandrecreation

FIRCREST
PARKS & RECREATION

Recreation Programs

- The Fircrest Adult Basketball fall league begins on Monday, September 25th. We have eight teams registered.
- Indoor pickleball continues to take place in the Names Family Foundation Gymnasium on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The average age of our participants is 69 years young!
- Our senior trip to the Washington State Fair this past week was at capacity. The next trip is to the Keyport Undersea Museum on October 13th. Registration is underway, so don't miss out on the fun, and sign up soon! Register online at [Program: Senior Trip - US Naval Undersea Museum \(recdesk.com\)](http://Program: Senior Trip - US Naval Undersea Museum (recdesk.com)).
- 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."

8. Planning & Building Update

- Project Coordinator Jean continued coordinating with Pierce County on the Sewer Basin ILA, with the City of Tacoma on the I&I program, and with representatives from Alliance regarding the MOU. The MOU is tentatively scheduled for Council consideration on October 24th.
- Community Development Director Mark Newman and City Manager Masko met with BHC to discuss the Comprehensive Plan Update calendar and review progress to date.
- Community Development Director Newman responded to potential developer questions, code compliance concerns, and realtor inquiries regarding property zoning.
- Contract planner Jeff Boers reviewed the conditions and final Prose Project plan and provided comments for City consideration.

9. Finance/Information Technology Update

Finance

- Finance Director Colleen Corcoran is continuing to prepare for Council budget workshops.

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)

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- New field lighting wire was installed at Whittier Park, along with security motion lights and other deterrents. Police patrols will also be enhanced to help deter theft.
 - Winterization of the Fircrest Pool continued this past week.
 - The Whittier tennis court repairs have been completed.
 - Electrical repairs to the Russo Pavilion were also completed this week.
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Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater

- Asphalt patch repairs on South Orchard Street and various locations throughout the City.
- Utility billing late payment notifications went out on Monday, September 18th.
- The City continues to work on Well #7 (Claremont) issues related to damages sustained due to a vehicle vs. structure collision. The water purification results on Well #7 came back as acceptable. The City's building official cleared the structure for temporary access and maintenance activities. We are contacting a structural engineer to inspect the building before going out to bid for repairs or replacement. Replacement of the perimeter fence is on hold pending further discussions with City Council, however, no trespassing signage was reinstalled this week.

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.
 - 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - Preparing to post for construction bid on September 25th.
 - 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 67th Ave West
 - We met with WSDOT on September 20th to discuss design and construction estimate overages. We also reached out to PSRC to identify potential additional funding.
 - The consultant contract is on hold while the City explores options to address the higher-than-anticipated bid estimate.
 - Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67th Ave West
 - We are awaiting the scope of work and fee schedule from the selected engineering firm. Once received, the contract will be brought forward to Council;
 - 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.
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- Backyard Sewer Main Pipe Bursting Project – 100 block between El Dorado and Farallone
 - Door notifications went out on September 18th to the 11 homes within the project.
 - Camera located side sewer connections on September 19th.
 - The contractor is tentatively scheduled to start work on Monday, October 2nd. We will notify homeowners once the construction start date is verified.
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