



City Manager's Update

September 29, 2023

To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: September 29, 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 almost underway. You may have noticed that the south end of Fircrest Park, stretching from between the baseball fields to the Community Center Plaza, has been fenced off. Unfortunately, the soil conditions are currently unworkable due to this week's hard, persistent rain. More favorable weather is forecasted for next week, allowing our contractors to begin work restoring the natural grass athletic field. While seasonal weather conditions may continue to slow work progress, there is ample time in the contract performance period to complete the work on time.

This project has three primary goals: achieving a uniform field surface, establishing an even stand of natural grass, and addressing the field lighting at Fircrest Park. The fencing is anticipated to remain in place for up to six months, allowing the natural sod sufficient time to establish itself before use. We appreciate your patience as we strive to provide improved play, recreation, and sports opportunities at Fircrest Park. If you have any questions regarding this project, don't hesitate to contact Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover at 253-564-8177. Your feedback and inquiries are always welcome!

2. City Social Media Accounts

The City's current Facebook page transitioned TODAY to the new Parks & Recreation page. The Parks & Recreation page is also connected to the new Parks & Recreation Instagram page. A new City of Fircrest Facebook page has been created and is connected to the City of Fircrest Instagram page. The City's page encompasses City Hall, Public Works, and the Police Department). These changes will enable users to track City business and recreation activities and events more easily.

- City of Fircrest Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CityofFircrest/>
- City of Fircrest Instagram page: [@cityoffircrest](https://www.instagram.com/cityoffircrest)
- Fircrest Parks & Recreation Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/FircrestParksandRec/>
- Fircrest Parks & Recreation Instagram page: [@fircrestparksandrec](https://www.instagram.com/fircrestparksandrec)

3. Upcoming Meetings – Week of October 2nd – 6th

- Civil Service Meeting Monday, October 2nd at 4:00 PM
- Planning Commission Meeting Tuesday, October 3rd at 6:00 PM

4. August 22nd, 2023 - Council Meeting Recap

The Fircrest City Council met on Tuesday, September 26th, for a regular meeting. Action items included:

- Mayor Brett Wittner swore in Police Chief Ron Schaub.
- Approving a Resolution authorizing the execution of an agreement with Pierce County for public defense services from the Department of Assigned Counsel through December 2024. The existing agreement expires at the end of December 2023.
- Approving a Resolution authorizing the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Fircrest Parks & Recreation Foundation to formalize the framework for receiving grant funds. The Foundation has created a donor-advised endowment fund to help support parks and recreation needs for Fircrest residents. The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation manages the endowment fund. Tax-deductible donations can be made at www.fircrestforever.com/donate or at [Fircrest Parks and Recreation Foundation Fund](#).
- Approving a Resolution executing an amendment to the insurance broker services agreement with Leavitt Group NW. The City's insurance pool – Cities Insurance Association of Washington (CIAW) – requires the designation of a service representative to act as the liaison for the needs of Fircrest.
- Finance Director Colleen Corcoran provided an overview of the 2024 Preliminary Budget.

5. 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, events, and other agencies that support our City. Upcoming events needing volunteers include the following:

- The next Habitat Stewardship Work Party at Thelma Gilmur Park is Monday, October 2nd, 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 remove 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 for additional information.
- Help the environment while building community at Habitat Restoration work parties. The next work party is at Whittier Park on Saturday, October 7th, 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.

6. CPR Classes

The Tacoma Fire Department offers free CPR classes for Tacoma, Fife, and Fircrest residents interested in learning the basic life-saving skills of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The EMS levy funds these community classes. Upcoming classes are being held on Sunday, October 8th, at

Henry Foss High School located at 2112 S. Tyler St. in Tacoma. Class length is three hours, with classes beginning at 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 12:00 PM, and 2:00 PM. There is no age limit, but participants must be able to physically perform CPR for two minutes to receive a CPR card after completion of the course. Registration is required for the CPR Sunday classes. [Registration](#) is required for the CPR Sunday classes. Visit <https://cprsunday.net> or the Tacoma Fire Department [website](#) for additional information and to register.

7. Fall Cleanup Day

Westside Disposal Fall Cleanup Days for Fircrest residents **only** are Saturday, October 7th, and Saturday, October 14th. Westside Disposal is located at 2815 Rochester St. West in University Place (1/2 block south of Cheers). Residents may bring in the following items for disposal and recycling: Miscellaneous junk, yard waste, wood, metal, concrete, tires, car batteries, etc. No liquids, paint, or hazardous materials will be accepted. There is a limit of one load per household for all items except yard waste. There is no limit for yard waste loads only. Trucks and trailers larger than a standard pickup bed are not allowed. Please make sure to secure all loads!

8. Medicare & Social Security Community Workshop

TAPCO Credit Union is sponsoring a free community workshop covering everything you need to know about enrolling in Medicare and Social Security. If you are age 62+ or are a family member or caregiver of someone who is, this workshop is for you. Learn about Social Security enrollment, benefits, and claiming dates, and Medicare enrollment options, Medicare Parts A, B, C & D, Medicare Supplement, Medicare Advantage, prescription drug plans, benefits & costs, and Medicare & employer coverage.

Presenter Jeffrey B. Johnson is a principal at JBJ Insurance Group LLC and is a specialist in Medicare legislation, regulation, and coverage. With over forty years of experience in health insurance brokerage and consulting, he is a Registered Health Underwriter (RHU) and Certified Employee Benefits Specialist (CEBS). This is an educational event. A licensed sales representative will be present with information only; there will be no sales activity.

The presentation will be held from 4:30 – 5:30 PM at Tacoma Community College – 6501 S. 19th Street, Information Technology Building #15, Room #106. There is no cost to attend. Register to participate at [TAPCO Medicare & Social Security Community Workshop](#). Parking is in Lot A accessed off 19th Street.

9. Contractor Business Licenses

The City requires a general business license for all contractors conducting business in the City of Fircrest. It is against the Fircrest Municipal Code [Chapter 5.04 Business Licenses](#) to operate and engage in any business without the proper license. Contractors should be aware of the need to have city endorsements where they conduct business. There is an option to add city endorsements on the [Washington Department of Revenue business license portal](#). The City is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of our residents.

10. 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, facilitated legal counsel information requests, responded to citizen emails, and researched code compliance issues.
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- City Manager Masko attended a Pierce County City Manager’s meeting regarding public safety legislative concerns. This was a follow-up meeting to the Pierce County Mayor’s Public Safety Roundtable Discussion, which met to discuss public safety concerns across the region. This week’s meeting topic was drafting a letter to Pierce County legislators identifying our public safety priorities for the 2024 legislative season. Topics discussed included additional funding for the Criminal Justice Training Commission, police pursuits, behavioral health issues, alternative courts funding, officer recruitment and retention, technical fixes to the Blake bill, the dramatic increase in juvenile crime, and auto theft and property crimes.
- City Manager Masko continued working with Finance Director Colleen Corcoran on the 2024 budget, worked on labor relations issues, facilitated legal counsel information requests, responded to citizen emails, and researched code compliance issues.
- The employee safety committee discussed wet weather signage and changing external building entry codes. The old entry code has been deactivated, and all employees now have their own codes.
- The City continues to take necessary precautions with the resurgence of COVID-19 at City facilities. The administration sent all staff an updated protocol memo this past week.
- Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart prepared for the October 2nd Civil Service meeting. The Commission is meeting at 4:00 PM at City Hall and will formally meet Police Chief Ron Schaub and to certify the Lateral Police Officer eligibility list.
- The City is hosting the first in-person South Sound Affordable Housing (SSHAP) Executive Board Meeting meeting next Friday, October 6th, at 8:30 AM. The meeting will be held at the Roy H. Murphy Community Center. The Executive Board will be joined by Senator Yasmin Trudeau (Tacoma) for a discussion on the 2024 legislative session. Fircrest Councilmember Hunter George is the Executive Board Chairperson. The public is welcome to attend. Thank you to Acting City Clerk Burkhart for her efforts in coordinating this meeting.
- Acting City Clerk Burkhart continues to try to coordinate a date for the City Council group photo. She is working with the City’s photographer on available dates in November.
- The City Clerk’s office responded to 4 public records requests this week. To date, the City has received 196 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.

As a reminder, I will be out of the office next week (October 2nd – 6th) attending training. Finance Director Colleen Corcoran will be the Acting City Manager in my absence. There will not be a weekly update next week.

11. Police Department Update

- Fircrest officers received or generated 137 calls for service this past week, including 32 traffic safety-related contacts (stops, collisions, parking violations). There were a total of 8 reports, consisting of motor vehicle thefts and attempts, informational reports, theft of services, and traffic violations. Officers had 57 community policing events (foot patrols, citizen assists, security checks, COP activities, suspicious people, and sex offender registration checks).
 - A final pre-hire screening for the 9th police officer has been rescheduled to next week. Chief Schaub will also meet with another lateral applicant who has applied but has not been interviewed yet.
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- Police assisted Wainwright Middle School with traffic control for a field trip to Foss High School.
- Chief Ron Schaub’s first day of work was Monday, September 25th. He held his first team meeting this week and will attend his first Civil Service meeting next week.

12. Municipal Court

Court Administrator Samantha Olivarez, and Court Clerks Shannen Clothier and Monica Castilla, began formal training this past week on the new case management system that will go live on October 23rd. This is a very labor-intensive process requires 19 training sessions between now and the go-live date. Our Municipal Court is one of three pilot courts in Washington State for this project that is replacing a judicial information system that is from the 1980’s. The new system will allow courts to manage their cases electronically, freeing up valuable time and resources. The other pilot courts are Pierce County District Court and Tacoma Municipal Court. The goal of the pilot courts is to verify that all functions and processes are working properly without any additional or unexpected adjustments. Other courts in the state will be phased into the new system in about 9-12 months following the pilot court implementation.

13. Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation highlights include:

Parks

- Whittier Park Master Plan - The project is currently underway. It presents an opportunity for the Parks & Recreation team to lead a community project that aligns with Fircrest’s mission of enhancing the quality of life for our citizens. The planning process will incorporate an inclusive outreach strategy that includes public outreach sessions and one or more community surveys. Open House dates will be set soon, and information will be distributed to the Fircrest community through our website, readerboard, flyers, and social media. We are tentatively planning these events for mid-November and mid-December and should have dates set by next week.
- Tennis/Pickleball Courts Sound Mitigation – Parks & Recreation Director Grover has been in frequent contact with concerned residents who live near the Fircrest Park Courts. City staff continue to research sound mitigation strategies and the latest technology for mitigation. A typical pickleball hit produces a sound of about 70 decibels from 100 feet away, compared to the sound of a tennis ball being hit, which is closer to 40 decibels. It also has a pitch about the same as a backup beep from a truck in reverse, which many describe as “annoying.”

Community Events

- Haunted Trails – This year’s Haunted Trails theme is “**HAUNTED CIRCUS.**” An eerie and thrilling experience awaits our guests. We’ve coordinated parking logistics to ensure smooth access for attendees and walked through the trail to ensure everything goes off without a hitch. We are still looking for additional **vietims** volunteers to round out our creepy menagerie for this spooky adventure. Join us on October 19th ...



IF YOU DARE!!!



- Scarecrows & Skeletons of Fircrest – Registration for the 2023 Scarecrows and Skeletons of Fircrest display contest is now open. It's time to build the scarecrows and decorate them for the fall. This year, we've added a fun new twist to our contest – Skeletons! Creative skeleton displays are now eligible to join in the contest. Your display can be whimsical, happy, and/or SCARY! It can include a single creative scarecrow or skeleton or create a huge display with both. This is not your ordinary scarecrow-building competition. Your goal is to make the most creative and unique scarecrow or skeleton in Fircrest. However, there are a few simple rules to adhere to:



- Keep it clean (PG-rated for our young community members).
- Your display must be visible from the street.
- The display must be made by you (not purchased, rented, or borrowed). Of course, the basic skeleton can be purchased!
- Homes must be decorated and ready for viewing by October 18th.
- You must be a Fircrest resident to enter the contest.

There is no entry fee, but you must register to participate. Space is limited, so register now before all spots are filled. A list of registered homes for self-guided tours will be available on October 19th. Judging occurs October 25th – 26th, with winners announced on October 30th.

REGISTER TODAY!

SCAN THE QR

Deadline: October 11
or until space is filled

A Huge Thank You to the Paper Luxe for their generous sponsorship of this event!

Recreation Programs

- The Fircrest Adult Basketball fall league started on Monday, September 25th.
- Registration for youth basketball begins October 6th for Fircrest residents and October 16th for non-residents.

- The next Senior 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 \(recdesk.com\)](https://www.recdesk.com/Program:Senior-Trip-US-Naval-Undersea-Museum).
- 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."

14. Planning & Building Update

- Community Development (CD) Director Mark Newman and South Sound Housing Affordability Partners (SSHAP) are coordinating together on several grant opportunities to benefit the City of Fircrest. The Climate Change Resiliency/Urban Tree Canopy Report and Missing Middle Housing Implementation Plan grants will be used to comply with state-mandated laws passed during the 2023 legislative session.
- Permit Coordinator Kristin Singh has been working with Office Assistant Sierra Lee to process the 705 community engagement survey results we received. Kudos to the community for being so engaged!
- CD Director Newman and Permit Coordinator Singh prepared for the October 3rd Planning Commission meeting, which will focus on reviewing the new state housing laws. The public is welcome to attend this meeting and provide comments. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 3rd, at 6:00 PM at City Hall.
- CD Director Newman and Permit Coordinator Singh discussed project intake standard operating procedures and the development of a pre-application meeting form.
- CD Director Newman responded to several inquiries about a legal non-conforming use at 340 Berkeley for a potential physician's office as a new tenant.
- Code compliance concerns this past week included a neighbor with abandoned vehicles and trash in their backyard, and temporary sign violations. The City also received complaints regarding rowdy minors hitting golf balls, driving a motorized bike, and causing a disturbance near the Claremont well house.
- CD Director Newman met with the Council Planning Liaison, Councilmember Hunter George, this past week and discussed tree canopy model ordinances.
- 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 discussion on October 10th and Council consideration and approval on October 24th.

15. Finance/Information Technology Update

Finance

- Finance Director Colleen Corcoran is continuing to prepare for Council budget workshops.
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16. Public Works Update

Public Works returns to winter hours (8:00 AM – 4:30 PM) on Monday, October 2nd.

Highlights include: (in addition to routine daily tasks)

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- Winterization of the Fircrest Pool continued this past week. The last punch list item is installing the winter cover next week.
- Coordinating with the Fircrest Park resurfacing contractor to locate sprinkler heads and control boxes.
- Masko Park dedication benches were installed this past week.

Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater

- Monitoring Estate PI stormwater and Contra Costa sanitary sewer flows due to the first heavy rainfall of the year.
- Island and entryway flowers removed, and beds prepped for winter plantings.
- All Public Works irrigation systems have been shut down for the winter.
- The City's building official cleared Claremont Well #7 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. The City Council will discuss replacement of the fence at an upcoming meeting.

Project Updates

- Water System Plan Update
 - We received the final Water System Plan with all appendices. Final approval from the Department of Health (DOH) should take place on Monday, October 2nd, upon the return of the City's DOH plan reviewer.
 - 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - Posted for construction bid on September 28th.
 - 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 contacted PSRC to set up a meeting to identify additional design 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
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- We are awaiting the scope of work and fee schedule from the selected engineering firm. Once received, the contract will be brought forward to the 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.
- Backyard Sewer Main Pipe Bursting Project – 100 block between El Dorado and Farallone
 - The contractor is tentatively scheduled to start work on Monday, October 2nd. Notification will be posted on the City webpage and social media channels.

17. Stormwater Management Tips for Fall

With the fall season also comes the inevitable need for yard cleanup. The City would like to offer the following ways to prep your property to ensure you're ready for fall.

- 🍁 Sweep up grass clippings from driveways, sidewalks, and streets. Don't forget to sweep along the curb. Yard debris can clog ditches, storm drains, and pipes, causing flooding. Do not blow leaves or grass clippings off your property into streets, streams, ponds, or drainage swales.
 - 🍁 Remove leaves from your gutters, ditches, driveways, sidewalks, streets, and storm drains. You can avoid stormwater backups and drainage issues by keeping these clear.
 - 🍁 Fall is the best season to fertilize your lawn. Still, we must use fertilizers and pesticides responsibly by only using them as needed and always reading and following product instructions carefully.
 - 🍁 Recycle grass clippings on your lawn. Mulch your leaves into your yard or pile them in your garden areas. If your lawn is covered with more than 50% of decaying leaves, consider bagging or composting leaves rather than mulching.
 - 🍁 Fall is a great time to clean out your gutters. Leaves can build up in your gutters and decay, causing them to be ineffective. This can cause water to fall improperly along your home's foundation, which can be very damaging to your home over time. Plus, decaying leaves can add excess nitrogen and phosphorus to stormwater, which can also harm our waterways.
 - 🍁 No matter what time of year it is, if you are working on a landscaping project in your yard, bare soil can run off during a storm, causing sediment pollution and clogged storm drains. It's a great idea to keep piles of dirt from your project covered with a tarp if rain is in the forecast.
 - 🍁 Fall is a great time to start composting for Spring planting.
 - 🍁 Clean up that pet waste. Pet waste contains nitrogen, phosphorus, and harmful bacteria.
 - 🍁 Do a fall tune-up on your car, lawnmower, and other power equipment, looking for and fixing leaks.
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18. Fort Nisqually Candlelight Tour

Peek into the past during Fort Nisqually Living History Museum's annual Candlelight Tours. This glimpse into 1859, which is held after dark on Friday, October 6th, and Saturday, October 7th, features a guided walking tour of the Fort with only stars, campfires, and candles to light the way. While on tour, visitors will encounter more than one hundred historical interpreters portraying the laborers, servants, gentlemen, and ladies of the venerable Hudson's Bay Company and eavesdrop on life as it was in 1859. Be entertained by songs, dances, and games. These people from the past won't be aware of their 21st-century visitors. To them, tour groups are merely spirits from the future!

Tours begin every 15 minutes and last approximately one hour. Ticket holders park their vehicles in the Point Defiance Zoo parking lot and take a quick shuttle ride to the Fort. This helps set the time-traveling mood while minimizing vehicle noise and lights near the event. Please arrive at the parking lot 15 minutes before your scheduled time. The time on the ticket is when your bus leaves to go to the Fort. The event takes place rain or shine, so dress for the weather. No umbrellas, no flashlights, no photography, and no strollers.

Advance ticket purchase is required for these popular tours, which frequently sell out. Tour times are every 15 minutes from 6:15 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. on both nights. Tickets are \$18 for ages 18 and up; and \$13 for ages 4-17. Tickets are available online through [Eventbrite](#). There is a small service fee. Will call tickets will be at the Zoo parking lot. For additional information, please contact Fort Nisqually at 253-404-3970 or fortnisqually@tacomaparks.com.
