



City Manager's Update

October 13, 2023



To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: October 13, 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. Haunted Trails

The highly anticipated Haunted Trails event is Thursday, October 19th, from 6:30 – 8:30 PM.

This year's Haunted Trails theme is "HAUNTED CIRCUS," and promises an eerie and thrilling experience.

The event occurs at Thelma Gilmur Park, located at Emerson Street & Evergreen Drive. Parking is located at Fircrest Presbyterian Church. There is a \$3 suggested donation for attendees. This event is NOT recommended for children under seven years old.

We are still looking for additional **vietims** volunteers to round out our creepy menagerie for this spooky adventure. Brave souls can sign up on the City's website at [2023 Haunted Trails Volunteer Application \(jotform.com\)](https://www.cityoffircrest.com/2023-Haunted-Trails-Volunteer-Application).



Join us on October 19th ... **IF YOU DARE!!!**



2. City Social Media Accounts

Make sure to check out the City's new Parks & Recreation Facebook 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 – Weeks of October 16th – 20th and October 23rd – 27th

- City Council Special Meeting Monday, October 16th at 6:00 PM
- City Council Budget Workshop Monday, October 23rd at 6:00 PM
- City Council Meeting Tuesday, October 24th at 7:00 PM

4. October 10th, 2023 - Council Meeting Recap

The Fircrest City Council met for a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 10th. Action items included:

- Appointed Councilmember Nikki Bufford as the Council liaison to Streets, Facilities & Equipment.
- Approved liquor license for Rollin' 253.
- Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover provided an end-of-pool season summary.
- Discussed Prose Project/Alliance Memorandum of Understanding.
- Approved a Resolution authoring a change order to the construction services contract with KBH Construction for the Fircrest Park Athletic Fields Improvement Project.

5. Fall Cleanup Day

Westside Disposal Fall Cleanup Day for Fircrest residents **only** is this 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!

6. Voter Registration

There is still time to register to vote in the General Election on November 7th. There are three ways to register to vote: online, by mail, and in person. The deadline to register online and by mail is October 30th. The deadline to register in person is November 7th. Learn more about registering by visiting [Register to Vote | Pierce County, WA - Official Website \(piercecountywa.gov\)](https://www.piercecountywa.gov/register-to-vote).

Administration Update

Administration highlights of the past week include:

- City Manager Dawn Masko continued working with Finance Director Colleen Corcoran on the 2024 budget, worked on personnel and labor relations issues, researched property records, reviewed code compliance issues, worked on public records requests, and compared the City's ad valorem adoption process to legislative requirements. She also completed a Section 179D energy efficient commercial building deduction allocation form for a Community Center subcontractor.
 - The Civil Service Commission certified the Lateral Police Officer Eligibility list on October 2nd. Fircrest Civil Service Rule 10.05 Duration of Eligibility Lists states that the eligibility list shall be in effect for one year from the date of promulgation.
 - City Manager Masko began updating information required for the CIAW 2024 renewal process.
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- The Maintenance Worker I position was posted internally and will remain open until 9:00 AM on Monday, October 16, 2023.
- Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart attended the Washington State Archives Electronic Records training this week. This training provided best and innovative practices on electronic filing organization systems and discussed retention schedules and categories. The City Clerk's work plan includes implementing a records management program. Staff continues to research, identify, and locate City records to create an up-to-date inventory of all City records.
- City Manager Masko completed a Section 179D energy-efficient commercial building deduction allocation form for a Community Center subcontractor. Section 179D is a Federal tax incentive promoting energy-efficient buildings. Government entities can't take advantage of tax deductions for their municipal buildings. Still, to incentivize the inclusion of energy-efficient components in these buildings, Congress expanded the traditional 179D program to allow the building owner (government entity) to allocate their deduction to the taxpaying designer of the energy-efficient properties of the buildings. Following a third-party certification by a licensed professional engineer or contractor, the City will receive a summary analysis detailing the energy-saving improvements and the final Section 179D deduction amount granted to the subcontractor.
- Acting City Clerk Burkhart also attended a training refresher on the Public Records Act. The refresher course addressed retention, production, and disclosure of records and helped maintain compliance with RCW 42.56.152 Training – Public Records Officers.
- The 2023 City Council group photo is scheduled before the Council meeting on Tuesday, November 14th. Acting City Clerk Burkhart will provide additional information as available.
- The City Clerk's office responded to 10 public records requests this week. The City has received 206 public records requests, compared to 180 public records requests at this same time last year.
- City Manager Masko continued reviewing contracts and interlocal agreements that need to be renewed and/or renegotiated for 2024.
- Congratulations to Maintenance Worker Matthew Zych and his family on their new baby boy!

As a reminder, I will be out of the office next week (October 17th – 20th) attending training. Finance Director Colleen Corcoran will be the Acting City Manager in my absence. There will not be a weekly update next week.

7. Police Department Update

- Fircrest officers received or generated 135 calls for service this past week, including 23 traffic safety-related contacts (stops, collisions, parking violations). Officers wrote 8 reports, including an assault, motor vehicle theft and attempts, informational reports, and motor vehicle collisions. Officers had 60 community policing events (foot patrols, citizen assists, security checks, COP activities, and suspicious people and vehicles).
 - Axon, the City's body camera vendor, will be available via Zoom at the October 16th budget workshop to answer any Council questions regarding the Fleet dashboard camera system (dash cams), both with and without ALPR (automatic license plate reader) technology. Police are requesting to equip police vehicles with dash cams as part of the 2024 budget.
 - Our 9th police officer will be starting on Monday, October 16th. Miguel Bugarin is an Exceptional Entry-Level (lateral) officer who comes to us from the Camas Police Department.
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- Detective John Roberts worked a “fake” Apple watch case this last week where the suspect was contacted and identified, and we recovered the victim’s \$450.
- Police Chief Ron Schaub is continuing to analyze the duties of each office staff member and the administrative needs of the Police Department to ensure the best organizational design.
- Sergeant John Villamor assisted the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department (PCSD) with locating a bank robbery suspect this past week. The suspect robbed a bank in University Place on Thursday and shut employees in the safe. PCSD deputies pursued the suspect vehicle, who fled the University Place bank at a high rate of speed. The suspect’s vehicle, traveling westbound on Emerson, crashed into the rear of a BMW in front of it. The BMW lost control, smashed through several trees, and nearly went over the embankment on the south side of Emerson. The suspect vehicle went through the Emerson and Orchard Street intersection and crashed into the embankment on the east side of the roadway. The suspect exited the vehicle and ran west across Orchard and down the hill towards the wood line on the north side of Emerson.

Sergeant Villamor was responding down Orchard Street towards the intersection with Emerson when the suspect fled the vehicle. He and the PCSD deputy ran after the suspect and caught him hiding in the wood line. Sgt. Villamor’s rim struck the curb when he quickly stopped to run after the fleeing bank robber, resulting in a damaged tire that must be replaced. Thank you to Sgt. Villamor for his quick response to help catch the bank robber suspect!

- The “alpha” draft rewrite of our Civil Service Rules is complete. Police Chief Ron Schaub will begin working on the next iteration to refine the rules further to align with our desired civil service practices.
- We are continuing to work with South Sound 911’s Lariat Coordinator to build an automated “Patrol Activity” report to replace our handwritten activity sheets.
- A Fircrest police vehicle was rear-ended on 19th Street last week. Our officer was not at fault, and the damage was minor. Neither driver sustained significant injuries.
- Chief Schaub attended the South Sound 911 Law Enforcement Operations Committee meeting this week.

8. Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation highlights include:

Projects

- Whittier Park Master Plan – The Whittier Park Master Plan public engagement meeting dates have been set. Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover is working with consultant AHBL, Inc. to wrap up meeting particulars and solidify the communication strategy. The first meeting is set for Thursday, November 16th, and the second is scheduled for Thursday, December 14th. Both meetings will held at the Community Center. Additional information will be available soon and distributed to the Fircrest community through our website, readerboard, flyers, and social media.
 - Fircrest Park Athletic Field Improvement Project – The project experienced some temporary delays due to inclement weather conditions this week, although contractors completed a large amount of work last week. Our contractor is eagerly awaiting more favorable weather conditions to resume the project.
 - Community Center – Parks & Rec Director Grover is pleased to report that they successfully installed wireless microphones in both the Multipurpose Room and the Gymnasium last week.
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Community Events

- Scarecrows & Skeletons of Fircrest – Halloween season is officially here, and we are excited to see all the creative and unique scarecrow and skeleton displays cropping up around town! Preparations are underway for judging and event promotion, cookie images for prize baskets have been designed, cookies for judges have been ordered, and sponsor information has been updated. 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.



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

- Haunted Trails – A productive inventory meeting and planning for a work party were held. Event posters were delivered to local businesses, confirmations were sent to volunteers, and we continue to promote the event on social media. All that remains is for brave residents to trek to Thelma Gilmur Park and experience a night of lurking clowns and other creatures. You never know what or who could be waiting around the next turn!



- Tree Lighting & Holiday Market – A new and exciting addition to this year's Tree Lighting Ceremony is the introduction of the Holiday Market, set to be held in the Gymnasium on Sunday, December 3rd. This idea harkens back to when we hosted a beloved holiday bazaar in the old community center. We've received many enthusiastic requests over the past few years from our community for the return of such an event, which was halted due to the challenges posed by the construction of the new community center and the pandemic. In response to this feedback and through the creative planning of Events Coordinator Judy Schmidtke, we proudly present the 2023 Tree Lighting and Holiday Market!

The Holiday Market, which will generate additional revenue for the City, will span the entire day, alongside captivating performances by our talented local school choirs and bands, with their concerts distributed throughout the day. As the evening approaches, we'll be graced with the Tree Lighting ceremony at 6:00 PM and the much-anticipated arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus. Santa's charming photoshoots will take place in the Multipurpose room, while the Gymnasium will be bustling with festive refreshments, entertainment courtesy of the Dickens Carolers, and the Holiday Market.

In preparation for this grand event, we've made meticulous arrangements, including acquiring décor supplies, efficient management of vendor lists and invitations, and the enthusiastic reception of numerous vendor applications. You won't want to miss this event!



- Lights of Fircrest – Preparations for judging and logistics are confirmed for this December event. More information is coming soon, so start planning for how you will make Fircrest Merry & Bright this holiday season!



Facility Rentals

- Parks & Recreation is delighted to share that we've been receiving a diverse array of facility rental requests as we head into the late fall and upcoming holiday season. Notably, the Names Family Foundation recently chose our Community Center as the venue for their annual retreat last month. Their feedback regarding their facility rental experience was exceedingly positive and expressed, "Our time at the community center on Sunday was nothing short of fabulous! Your on-site staff was exceptionally accommodating and went the extra mile to help us capture a group photo in the gym. Our family truly appreciated the picturesque view of the fields, the chance to shoot hoops, play pickleball in the gym, and even explore the pool area. Being in the center of it all truly grounded us as we spent this meaningful day together."

Head to the City's [Facility Rentals](#) webpage to book your next event or meeting at our beautiful Community Center. Spaces available for rental include the [Names Family Foundation Gymnasium](#), [Tom & Meg Names Family Foundation Multi-Purpose Room](#), the [Gathering Space](#), and the [Names Family Foundation Fitness Room](#). The [Commercial Kitchen](#) can be rented as an addition to a Multi-Purpose Room, Gathering Space, or Gym rental.

Recreation Programs

- Youth basketball registration is underway. Registration for Fircrest residents began on October 6th and will open for non-residents on October 16th. Additional information can be found at [Youth Basketball: K/1st Grade Co-Ed](#), [Youth Basketball: 2/3rd Grade Co-Ed](#), [Youth Basketball: 4-6th Grade Girls](#), and [Youth Basketball: 4/5th Grade Boys](#).
- The next Senior Trip is to Gillman Village in Issaquah on November 15th. Gillman Village has been a Washington landmark for half a century. It is a mixed-use center featuring shops, restaurants, personal services, and even a preschool - all residing in houses, buildings, and other structures preserved from Issaquah's historic past. There are 12 seats available for this trip, which will give you a chance to do a little holiday shopping or browse some unique shops. Lunch will be at Tantalus, a Greek bistro. Registration is \$10 per person and begins on October 16th! Register online at [Program: Senior Trip - Gilman Village Issaquah \(recdesk.com\)](#). Thank you to the Edwards Family Foundation for their generous sponsorship of our Senior Trips program. For more information, please get in touch with Raquel at rlapointe@cityoffircrest.net.
- 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

- Community Development (CD) Director Mark Newman and other City staff met with representatives of AHBL, Inc. to discuss the Whittier Park Master Plan and community meetings. The City is committed to ensuring the public engagement process is open, transparent, and accessible. Public participation is crucial to the success of this master plan, whether input is received in person or online.
- Code Enforcement Officer Kristin Singh processed six new code enforcement requests in the last two weeks, including sign code violations, animal control issues, and a livability inspection.
- The Planning Commission met on October 3rd. Agenda items included a short course on local planning and a Department of Commerce Middle Housing Grant Program webinar. CD Director Newman also gave a presentation on the 2023 State housing laws. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 7th, at 6:00 PM at City Hall.
- 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 was discussed with the City Council on October 10th and will be moving forward for Council consideration and approval on October 24th.
- CD Director Newman is researching an electric vehicle charging station grant from the WA State Department of Ecology. The maximum amount of funding we would qualify for is 80% of the project to install EV chargers at our public facilities. While the grant would pay for project permitting, design, construction, charging equipment, installation, electric panel upgrades, and trenching from the property line to the charger, it does not pay for new paving, landscaping, or operating and electric supply costs. He will discuss this with the Council at a future meeting.
- CD Director Newman read the 2001 book *Fircrest: The Ideal Home Place* by Alison H. Sonntag to understand more of the City's history. While Bob Whitsell's barbershop and Manley's Market are no longer around, he is excited for Fircrest to write its next chapter.
- Permit Coordinator Kristin Singh and Passport Specialist Laura Thompson flew into the Halloween spirit by decorating the Community Development office with a *Hocus Pocus* movie theme. Binx the cat also makes an appearance on our door.
- 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 was discussed with the City Council on October 10th and will be moving forward for Council consideration and approval on October 24th.

10. Finance/Information Technology Update

Finance

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

Information Technology

- Staff continue to work on coordinating the final stages of the Council Chambers audio-visual project. The next steps include mounting the second monitor above the breezeway, connecting lobby speakers to the system, updating microphone wiring, and moving a camera to show all Councilmembers on the video monitors.
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11. Public Works Update

Public Works is now operating under winter hours from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM.

Highlights include: (in addition to routine daily tasks)

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- Starting the Tree City USA reapplication process.
- Pressure washing at City Hall.
- With the installation of the winter cover last week, the winterization of the Fircrest Pool is now complete.
- Attended Whittier Park Master Plan meetings with AHBL, Inc.

Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater

- Water meter reads started on October 2nd and were completed on October 9th. Billing data was sent to DataBar for mailing and uploaded to Xpress Bill Pay on October 10th.
- Overhead lights were replaced for parks at the Whittier Trails.
- Attended training with Terex representative on the new bucket truck. The old bucket truck is being prepped for sale.
- Repaired a water leak at the 300 block of El Dorado.
- We are meeting with a structural engineer on October 17th to inspect the Claremont Well #7 building before going out to bid for repairs or replacement. We received a bid of \$1,734 to repair the damaged fence and will be moving forward with the repair soon.

Project Updates

- Water System Plan Update
 - We received final approval from the Department of Health (DOH) on October 4th. DOH has verified that the updated Water System Plan is good for 2020 through October 2030. Along with the approval, DOH provided timelines for the next WSP update. Calendar reminders have been set to start the next process in 2028.
 - 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - Posted for construction bid on September 28th in the Tacoma Daily Index and Daily Journal of Commerce. Construction bid documents are due on October 31st by 10:00 AM.
 - 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
 - Twenty-three additional water meters were exchanged, and the project is now 45% completed.
 - Storm Water Pre-Treatment Outfall Grant Project – Emerson Street & Estate Place
 - Final close-out Progress Reports and Payment Requests are in progress.
 - Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
 - We received a \$153,000 appropriation of funds from the State Legislature.
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- Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension (south side) – Woodside Drive to 67th Ave West
 - Continued conversations with WSDOT and PSRC to identify additional funds.
 - 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 received the scope of work and fee schedule from the selected engineering firm. WSDOT is currently reviewing the documents.
- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - Design is in process for construction in 2024. It has been reviewed and approved 60% design.
 - Continuing communications with Tacoma staff to coordinate the paving of the entire intersection at South Orchard and Regents Blvd/Center Street.
- 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 started preliminary work and sewer locates on October 2nd and plans to start actual pipe bursting on Tuesday, October 17th. Additional information on the pipe bursting process is posted on the City webpage under "[News and Notices.](#)"

12. Free Tutoring for Students

Tacoma Public Schools students in grades 3-12 have access to a free online tutoring service, Tutor.com. Services include live tutoring from 8:00 AM – 11:00 PM every day, paper review, math question drop off, SAT/ACT preparation, college admission essays, resume/cover letter writing, and creating healthy habits. Students can access tutors by chat or a voice call in less than a minute without an appointment. All sessions are recorded so students can review their information independently or refer to it during future tutoring sessions. More information about free online Tutor.com services can be found on the Tacoma Public Schools [website](#).

13. Tacoma Public Utilities Workshops

Tacoma Public Utilities is offering a series of workshops with the City of Tacoma EnviroHouse, which provides opportunities to learn how to live sustainably, manage energy and water resources, and be good environmental stewards. The workshops are free, but registration is required. EnviroHouse is located at 3510 S. Mullen Street in Tacoma.

Weatherize Your Home to Add Comfort & Save Money – Saturday, October 14th, from 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM. Discover how to achieve the most home energy savings with basic DIY energy audit techniques. Learn how to know what you have and need and how to make basic improvements to increase home comfort and efficiency. To register and for additional information, visit [Weatherize Your Home to Add Comfort & Save Money - Tacoma Public Utilities \(mytpu.org\)](#).

All about Trees, How to Identify, What to Choose – Saturday, October 21st, from 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM. Learn basic tree identification, growth patterns, and what to consider when selecting trees to plant in residential environments. To register and for additional information, visit [All about Trees, How to Identify, What to Choose - Tacoma Public Utilities \(mytpu.org\)](#).

Pruning and Care of Fruit Trees – Saturday, October 28th, from 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM. Discover when and why to prune fruit trees and how to choose the right tools for the job. Master the technique of making precise cuts in the correct places. Uncover the secrets of structural pruning for young trees and gain insights into assessing tree health and resolving problems. To register and for additional information, visit [Pruning and Care Fruit Trees - Tacoma Public Utilities \(mytpu.org\)](https://mytpu.org).

14. Introduction to Online Genealogy

Are you interested in tracing your family history or discovering more about your ancestors? October is Family History Month, and Tacoma Public Libraries is offering an introductory session in genealogy research using tools like Ancestry, Heritage Quest, and FamilySearch.org. A free family tree starter kit and other forms will be provided. Specialized and free resources to help explore family history from various communities and countries will also be available.

This free session is offered on Saturday, October 14th, from 3:00 – 4:15 PM at the Swasey Library Branch at 7001 Sixth Avenue in Tacoma.

15. Flu and COVID Vaccines

Tacoma Public Schools students and their families can get free flu and COVID-19 vaccinations at an upcoming clinic at Baker Middle School. This free clinic is being held on Thursday, October 19th, from 1:30 – 5:30 PM. Baker Middle School is located at 8001 S. J Street in Tacoma. Children don't need an appointment or insurance. Adults with insurance need to make an appointment. A limited amount of vaccine will be available for adults without insurance on a walk-in basis. Parents/guardians must accompany their students during vaccination. Adults should make an appointment by following this [link](#).

16. Long-Term Care Options Expo

Knowing your options is always a good idea. Knowing your options before a crisis is even more critical. Making the Link 2023 is Pierce County's annual showcase of care providers and services for older adults and individuals with disabilities. The expo features over 70 exhibitors, including in-home care, assisted and skilled nursing facilities, elder law experts, equipment providers, health care insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, caregiving, emergency assistance, social service agencies, transportation providers, funeral services, and many more.

The event is intended primarily for health care professionals, social workers, case managers, discharge planners, and volunteers who work with individuals with disabilities and seniors in Pierce County. However, attendance is open to caregivers, family members, and other interested community members.

Making the Link 2023 is scheduled for Wednesday, October 18th, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Metro Parks STAR Center, 3873 S. 66th Street in Tacoma. This information and resource expo is a free drop-in event.
