



City Manager's Update October 27, 2023



To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: October 27, 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. National First Responder Day

National First Responders Day on October 28th recognizes the heroic men and women who make it their business to take immediate action when disaster strikes. Congress designated October 28th as National First Responders Day in 2017 with the aim of raising awareness about the invaluable contributions of first responders to our nation. Not sure what a first responder does? Just think about 9/11 for a moment.



First responders are trained professionals who arrive first at the scene of an emergency, including firefighters, police officers, paramedics, and EMTs. These individuals leap into action, often putting their own lives at risk to save others. Whether or not you've experienced an emergency first-hand, it's not hard to understand and appreciate the dangerous and difficult work they do. On National First Responders Day, take a minute to honor the memory of those first responders who have lost their lives serving our communities and thank those still serving or who have served for all they do.

2. October 23rd, 2023 – Special Council Meeting – Budget Workshop Recap

The Fircrest City Council met for a special meeting on Monday, October 23rd, to continue discussions about the 2024 Annual Budget. Previous budget workshops were held on October 9th and 16th to review department budgets and revenue assumptions. Budget requests tentatively scheduled to move forward include the addition of a Recreation Specialist position and part-time Accountant position, City Hall alarm system, City Hall entry columns, network equipment, Police patrol rifle noise-suppression devices, Police rifle-rated ballistic shields, electronic timesheet program, and replacement of the HVAC system for the Municipal Court.

Additional discussion included potential revenue from the Alliance/Prose Project, dash-cams for Police vehicles, Police body-worn camera policy, potential water rate increase, and status of the water meter replacement program. The next budget workshop is on October 30th at 6:00 PM.

3. Upcoming Meetings – Week of October 30th – November 3rd

- City Council Special Meeting - Budget Monday, October 30th at 6:00 PM

4. October 24th, 2023 - Council Meeting Recap

The Fircrest City Council met for a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 24th. Action items included:

- Public Hearing on the 2024 Preliminary Budget.
- Public Hearing on the 2024 Preliminary Budget Revenue Sources.
- Approved a Resolution extending the contract with Kenyon Disend, PLLC, for City Attorney services through December 31, 2024.
- Approved a Resolution approving the Alliance/Prose Project Memorandum of Understanding.
- Approved a Resolution approving a Memorandum of Understanding with Teamsters Local Union 117 to reclassify the Utility Billing Clerk into a newly created Public Works Office Coordinator position.
- Discussed the fence repair at the Claremont Street Wellhouse property and community outreach needed prior to any discussion to change the use of the property.

5. November 7th General Election

Ballots for the November 7th General Election were recently mailed to registered voters. You can vote and return your ballot as soon as you receive it.

You can return your ballot in three ways:

- Ballot drop boxes: Return your ballot to a ballot drop box; no stamp is required. Your ballot must be returned to a ballot drop box by 8:00 PM on Election Day, November 7th. There is a ballot box located at City Hall, 115 Ramsdell Street in Fircrest.
- By mail: No stamp is needed to return your ballot. Your ballot must be postmarked by Election Day, November 7th.
- At the Pierce County Elections Vote Center at 2501 S. 35th Street in Tacoma.

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 \(piercecountywa.gov\)](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, reviewed code compliance issues, worked on public records requests, and prepared a PowerPoint presentation for the revenue public hearing. She also reviewed internal policies and procedures, prepared contract documents, reviewed interview questions, and continued research on a property issue.
 - An internal Maintenance Worker I candidate was interviewed on October 26th, and two candidates were interviewed on October 26th for the part-time Court Clerk position.
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- The Civil Service is scheduled to conduct a lateral police officer oral board on Wednesday, November 1st. As of now, there is one candidate slated for interview. Following the interviews, the eligibility list will be released on Thursday, November 2nd. There is a mandatory five-business-day waiting period for inspection and a seven-day protest period per Fircrest Civil Service rules. The earliest date for the Civil Service to certify the list is Friday, November 17th.
 - City Manager Masko continued compiling information for the CIAW 2024 renewal process.
 - Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart attended the Washington Association of Public Records Officers (WAPRO) training last week. Break-out sessions included Public Records Act (PRA) case law updates and litigation and public record resources. This training also helps meet Clerk Burkhart's requirements towards achieving her Certified Public Records Officer certification.
 - City Manager Masko attended the Association of Washington Cities Member Expo last week. Educational sessions covered new laws and legal opinions, trends and opportunities regarding workers' compensation, workplace safety, drug and alcohol testing requirements, cybersecurity, fraud prevention, staff retention, and emergency preparation. The Expo is also an opportunity to learn how to maximize AWC member benefits, programs, and services.
 - The annual Safety Committee and Wellness Committee joint meeting is scheduled for November 3rd. The annual joint meeting is intended to encourage collaborative group discussions regarding employee well-being and how to work together to meet Well City requirements.
 - Pierce County City Managers finalized the joint city public safety letter being sent to Pierce County State Legislators. 14 Pierce County cities have signed off on this letter, and it is anticipated that several others will as well. Highlights of the letter include requesting refinements to allow for the pursuit of stolen vehicles, amendments allowing for a parent or guardian to provide consent for a juvenile to be interviewed by law enforcement to include consent to search property, ongoing stable funding for both co-responder programs and therapeutic courts to prevent unnecessary engagement with the criminal justice system, increased state funding to provide support for regional enforcement and prosecution efforts to address auto theft and property crimes, and funding to provide additional capacity for the basic law enforcement academy. The language of the request does allow local jurisdictions to individually continue with their current policy against all pursuits if they consider that to be the best choice for their community, but they still do not support it. The next steps of the process include an in-person meeting with local Mayors and City Managers with our State legislative delegation. I will continue to provide updates regarding this process as we move forward.
 - 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 continues to work through record management and contract indexing. Clerk Burkhart is making commendable progress on this venture. She is hopeful that by mid-2024, the City will have the majority of all of our records indexed and on a retention schedule.
 - The City Clerk's office responded to 6 public records requests this week.
 - City Manager Masko continued reviewing contracts and interlocal agreements that need to be renewed and/or renegotiated for 2024.
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6. Police Department Update

- Fircrest officers responded to a variety of calls this past week, including a disorderly neighbor dispute, child custody issue, motor vehicle thefts, vehicle prowls, a violation order, motor vehicle collisions, and multiple traffic stops. Officers also worked on community policing events (foot patrols, citizen assists, security checks, COP activities, and suspicious people and vehicles).
- Our 9th police officer, Miguel Bugarin, was sworn in at the October 24th City Council meeting. Miguel is a lateral officer who comes to us from the Camas Police Department.
- A Civil Service oral board will be conducted on November 1st for the eligibility list for our 10th officer position. Another potential candidate is riding along with our officers this weekend.
- The South Sound 911 MPS (CAD system) Anti-Bias Module will go live on December 20th. At every traffic stop, officers will be required to complete an entry in the Anti-Bias module, which includes the reason for the stop, as well as specific information about the person(s) stopped (sex, race, and age). The entry also includes the results of the stop (no action, warning, citation, or arrest). Once the result of the stop has been selected, additional information has to be entered if any search was undertaken of the person(s) stopped. The officer must complete the Anti-Bias data entry to close out each and every traffic stop.
- Two detectives from the Pierce County Sheriff's Department briefed our two sergeants and multiple officers about an incident they responded to last week. There was positive feedback from the lessons learned.
- Police Chief Ron Schaub attended the Pierce County Chief's Association meeting this week. There was a detailed discussion regarding the current revenue dispute between Pierce County and South Sound 911 regarding the E-911 tax.
- A "Coffee with the Chief" event has been scheduled for November 14th from 5:30 – 6:30 PM at the Community Center.
- Police Chief Schaub attended the virtual training event: *How To Use Extreme Ownership Leadership Principles To Build A Culture Of Wellness In Your Agency*.

7. 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 be 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 – 57 Fircrest homeowners and businesses have signed up to participate in the 4th Annual Scarecrows and Skeletons of Fircrest display contest. Yard signs were delivered to participating households this past week. For the first time, Fircrest residents can vote on their favorite display! Information on how to vote for the People’s Choice award is located on the [voting page](#) or at the QR code below. A map of the display route is available [online](#) or by scanning the QR code below. Paper copies are available at the Fircrest Community Center. Judging occurs October 25th – 26th, with winners announced on October 30th.

Many thanks to our generous title sponsor Paper Luxe!



- Haunted Trails – Last Thursday, we had a remarkable turnout at Haunted Trails, with over 800 people visiting between 6:30 – 9:30 PM. What’s even more impressive is that we gathered over \$2,000 in donations during the event! Our internal recap is complete, and we’ll be scheduling a meeting with event volunteers to conduct a thorough review. Throughout the event, staff and Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover made notes about potential improvements for next year, particularly concerning overflow parking in the neighborhoods. It goes without saying that the unexpected crowd size this year caught us off guard, but staff worked diligently to make the best possible on-the-spot adjustments. Many thanks to our volunteers – including over 40 high school students – who made this an amazing experience for all who dared to venture through.

Projects

- The Whittier Park Master Plan public engagement meetings are scheduled for Thursday, November 16th, and Thursday, December 14th. Promotional materials are being posted on the website and social media, and direct mailers will be sent out soon.
- The contractor made significant progress on the Fircrest Park Athletic Field Improvements project over the past week. As previously mentioned, there is a need for an additional change order for the project. This is due to the need for more sand than initially estimated because we had to switch from Fraise mowing to excavation of the entire site. Director Grover has asked Bob Droll, the City’s landscape architect, to provide a more detailed explanation to accompany the change order when it is presented to the City Council.

Recreation Programs

- Youth basketball registration kicked off on October 6th. Fircrest residents got priority registration for ten days, and during that time, we received registrations from 76 Fircrest residents. The K/1st and 2nd/3rd divisions hit full capacity within just one day of general registration opening, with 239 non-resident registrations. Practice sessions are set to begin in December, and games will get going in January. Exciting news – this year, we introduced a 4th - 6th grade girls division, and we’ve already received 20 registrations. Additional information can be found at [Youth Basketball: 4-6th Grade Girls](#) and [Youth Basketball: 4/5th Grade Boys](#).
 - The Senior Mornings program, which began last year, has grown into a cherished time for our community members to gather, socialize, strengthen bonds, and enjoy time with their neighbors.
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We owe it all to the Edwards Family Foundation, which has made it possible for us to provide coffee, donuts, and newspapers in the Community Center Gathering Room on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. However, the funds from this generous donation will be exhausted by year-end. As a result, we are shifting gears towards cost-saving measures and actively exploring alternative funding sources to sustain this vital and beloved initiative for our aging community.

- Thank you to the City Council for tentatively including a Recreation Specialist in the 2024 budget to assist with enhancing and expanding our recreation programs. The Parks & Recreation team is excited to see what we can do with this additional staffing support!
- Director Grover is coordinating a planning meeting with the Chair of the Fircrest Parks and Recreation Foundation to engage in a comprehensive discussion about future programs and potential funding strategies for next year. The addition of the Recreation Specialist is critical in expanding our programs, but we still require enhanced financial support. This meeting will serve as a critical forum to assess the evolving needs of our community and to explore innovative avenues for securing the necessary resources to enhance our parks and recreation programs. It is a proactive step towards ensuring that we continue to provide the best possible experiences for the residents of Fircrest in the coming year.
- 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

- The Planning & Building Department is currently updating its SEPA distribution list. This is an email list sent to agencies, cities, and tribes on SEPA determinations. The purpose of the list is to disclose any environmental impacts and mitigation requirements and give the opportunity for public comment on a project. If you would like to be included on this list to receive notifications, please contact Community Development Director Mark Newman at mnewman@cityoffircrest.net or stop by the Permit Counter at City Hall.
 - Code Enforcement Officer Kristin Rosario is working on a winter sign sweep plan to purge the City of prohibited temporary signs posted on utility poles and City rights-of-way or landscaping strips. The sweep does not apply to signs on private property. If you would like to report a sign for the City to investigate, please submit a [code enforcement concern](#) on our website or fill out a paper form at the Permit Counter at City Hall.
 - CD Director Newman is actively reviewing a demolition permit and final design review for the Alliance Prose mixed-use project at 2119 Mildred Street W.
 - Code Enforcement worked on public records requests, followed up on sign code violations, and processed new code enforcement requests, including overgrown hedges, flyers on utility poles, and a homeless encampment that is located on State property and a livability inspection.
 - The City was recently awarded a \$50,000 Missing Middle Housing grant from the Department of Commerce. The purpose of the grant is to implement the state law HB 1110. The law requires cities across the State to review their development codes and Comprehensive Plan to provide increased opportunities for adding duplexes, townhomes, and Accessory Dwelling Units.
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- The City recently applied for a Climate Change grant from the Department of Commerce, hoping to receive funds for an Urban Tree Canopy study to better capture data on tree canopy coverage in the City and how to increase, protect, and monitor it.
- Project Coordinator Jean continued coordinating with Pierce County on the Sewer Basin IIA, 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 a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to sign the MOU was approved by the Council at the October 24th Council meeting.

9. Finance/Information Technology Update

Finance

- Finance Director Colleen Corcoran is continuing to prepare for Council budget workshops.
- The 2022 State Audit is beginning, and Finance is busy compiling requested information. The City has requested to have in-person entrance and exit conferences. We will keep the Council posted as the audit progresses.
- Finance Director Corcoran expresses her gratitude to the Council for the tentative approval of the part-time Accountant I position and the electronic timesheet program. Both items will be very beneficial to Finance Department operations.

Information Technology

- Staff received the quote to finish 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.

10. Public Works Update

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

Highlights include: (in addition to routine daily tasks)

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- Supported the setup and takedown of the Haunted Trails event.
- Began office painting project at Public Works.
- Provided assistance for the Fircrest Park field resurfacing project.

Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater

- Monthly water samples for state reporting were collected.
 - Wind and rain response, including catch basin cleaning and additional sweeping in the south end of the City due to excess windfall.
 - Investigated five high water usage locations and determined issues to be on the property owner's side of meters.
 - Met with a structural engineer on October 17th to inspect the Claremont Well #7 building and are awaiting the structural assessment report and recommendation. The purchase order has been approved for the repair of the damaged fence, and we are waiting for the contractor to notify us of the scheduled date for the repair.
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- Winter weather preparation, including vehicles, equipment, and materials.

Project Updates

- 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
 - Meter boxes were cleaned out and prepped for the exchange of meters for the 1000 and 1100 blocks of Princeton Street. The project is now 46% completed.
 - Storm Water Pre-Treatment Outfall Grant Project – Emerson Street & Estate Place
 - Final close-out Progress Reports and Payment Requests are in progress. We are awaiting the final review of the Quarter 2 submittal and then will submit Quarter 3.
 - Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
 - We received a \$153,000 appropriation of funds from the State Legislature.
 - Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension (south side) – Woodside Drive to 67th Ave West
 - Received formal communication outlining potential next steps for additional funding from PSRC. The Public Works Director will be reviewing documents with the Public Works Council liaison and the City Manager.
 - 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.
 - Received formal communication outlining potential next steps for additional funding from PSRC. The Public Works Director will be reviewing documents with the Public Works Council liaison and the City Manager.
 - 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 project was completed on October 20th.
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11. Collaboration for a Cause Job & Resource Fair

The largest job and resource fair in Pierce County is being held on Wednesday, November 1st at the Tacoma Dome, 2727 East D Street. Collaboration for a Cause features more than 100 employers and resources to connect you to finding quality employment and stability. On-site resume prep and guidance will be available to ensure your resume is ready for distribution to employers. Some employers will conduct on-the-spot interviews at the event. This event is open to the public and is free to attend. Pre-registration is encouraged but not required. For more information and to register, visit [Collaboration for a Cause - \(pcctcf.org\)](http://pcctcf.org).

12. First Responder Career & Networking Event

Fire departments, ambulance companies and other Emergency Medical Services (EMS) employers from around the state will attend the First Responder Career & Networking Event at Tacoma Community College on Wednesday, November 1st from 4:00 – 7:00 PM. Featuring EMS demonstrations, a helicopter list (3:30 PM at the soccer field next to Building 20), and a job fair, the event has something to offer everyone interested in emergency medicine, from high school and middle school students thinking of entering the field to professionals currently working in EMS. Everyone is welcome to attend this free event. Tacoma Community College is located at 6501 S. 19th Street. The event will be held in Building 20. Contact Emily Portune at eportune@tacomacc.edu with questions. Register at [EMS Career Fair Interest Form](#) or scan the QR code.



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.

[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 \(mytpu.org\)](#).

[Pruning Landscape Trees](#) – Saturday, November 4th, from 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM. Discover the key principles of pruning for aesthetics, longevity, and avoiding costly errors. Delve into the common mistakes to avoid, the importance of structural pruning on young trees, and the relationship between pruning, plant health, and visual appeal. To register and for additional information, visit [Pruning Landscape Trees - Tacoma Public Utilities \(mytpu.org\)](#).

14. Pet Vaccine and Wellness Clinic

The Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County is supporting pet owners by providing free (courtesy of Petco Love) and low-cost vaccines, microchips, and parasite prevention during a Pet Vaccine and Wellness Clinic being held on Saturday, October 28th from 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM. The clinic is for low-income pet owners and is first come, first serve. The Humane Society is located at 2608 Center Street in Tacoma.

15. Rebate on Smart Thermostats

The Tacoma Power retail team will be at the Tacoma Costco, 2219 S. 37th Street, on Tuesday, November 7th, from 3:00 – 6:00 PM answering questions about smart thermostats. Tacoma Power customers are eligible to receive a \$75 rebate when they purchase a new smart thermostat. Additional information on smart thermostats and requirements for the rebate can be found at [Thermostats - Tacoma Public Utilities \(mytpu.org\)](https://mytpu.org).

16. After School Activities – Tacoma Public Schools

Tacoma Public School and community partners have come together to offer fun, meaningful after school activities to elementary and middle school students. Enrichment activities include sports, arts, and academic support. Registration opens Monday, October 30th and closes on November 21st for Session 2 which runs from December 4th, 2023 – February 9th, 2024.

- **Beyond the Bell** activities take place at all of Tacoma’s elementary schools from 3:30 – 6:00 PM, Monday – Friday. Program costs are \$96 per club/activity per session, with flexible pricing available for families who need financial assistance. Session 2 will feature Art Club and Bricks 4 Kidz at Whittier Elementary, as well as Friday Fun Days. Students participating in Art Club will explore and share creativity through drawing, sculpting, painting, collaging, and crafting projects. Students will learn the fundamentals of S.T.E.M. education while participating in Bricks 4 Kidz by using Legos and model plans created by engineers and architects. Additional information can be found at [Beyond the Bell - Whittier Schedule](#).
- **Club B** activities take place at all of Tacoma’s middle schools from 2:45 – 5:00 PM, Monday – Thursday. Club B is free for all middle school students! Session 2 programs at Wainwright Middle School include golf at Meadow Park Golf Course, Art Club, Acting & Improv, Game Club, Screenwriting, 3D Virtual Realm (VR) Adventures, and Sporty Spot, where sports, games, and fitness are combined to keep students moving and having fun. Additional information can be found at [Club B - Wainwright Schedule](#).

Free and reduced registration fees are made possible thanks to a host of community funding partners, including Tacoma Creates, the City of Tacoma, Pierce County, Greentrike, Metro Parks Tacoma, Tacoma Public Schools, and private philanthropy.
