



City Manager's Update

November 4, 2023



To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: November 4, 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. City Hall Offices Closed for Veterans Day

City Hall will be closed on Friday, November 10th, in observance of the Veterans Day holiday. Happy Veterans Day to all those who have served and those who continue to serve. Thank you for your service and sacrifice. Those who live in freedom will always be grateful to those who helped preserve it.

2. Daylight Saving Time Ends

Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday, November 5th, at 2:00 AM. Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour and take advantage of an extra hour of sleep. Be aware that fewer hours of daylight lead to more hazards on the road in the morning and evening, so make sure to pay extra attention!



3. October 30th, 2023 – Special Council Meeting – Budget Workshop Recap

The Fircrest City Council met for a special meeting on Monday, October 30th, to continue discussions about the 2024 Annual Budget. Previous budget workshops were held on October 9th, 16th, and 23rd to review department budgets, revenue assumptions, and additions to the budget. Topics of discussion at the October 30th meeting included the water meter exchange project and the utilization of ARPA funds in 2024 for an electronic timesheet program, City Hall alarm system and entry columns, network equipment, rifle noise suppression canisters, and ballistic shields. The Council also discussed a potential water rate increase and requested that staff provide additional information. This topic will be discussed further at the November 14th City Council meeting.

4. Upcoming Meetings – Week of November 6th – 10th

- Civil Service Commission Meeting Monday, November 6th at 4:00 PM
- Planning Commission Meeting Monday, November 7th at 6:00 PM

5. November 7th General Election

The November 7th General Election is only a few days away. Don't forget to turn in your ballot to let your vote count. 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 Center at 2501 S. 35th Street in Tacoma.

There is still time to register to vote in the General Election on November 7th. 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).

6. 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 materials for the proposed water rate discussion. She also prepared contract documents and worked with South Sound 911 on interlocal agreements.
 - City Manager Masko met with the Maintenance Worker I candidate who was interviewed on October 26th, and the part-time Court Clerk candidate who was interviewed on October 26th, and extended employment offers to both candidates. Congratulations to new Maintenance Worker I, Riley West, and part-time Court Clerk I, Daisy Correa!
 - The Civil Service held a lateral police officer oral board on November 1st and interviewed two candidates. The eligibility list was released on 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 submitted the final information for the CIAW 2024 renewal process.
 - The annual Safety Committee and Wellness Committee joint meeting was held on 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.
 - Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart is working with the Public Works Department and Safety Committee to update the City's emergency management policies and procedures.
 - The 2023 City Council group photo will be taken before the Council meeting on Tuesday, November 14th, at 6:30 PM. Acting City Clerk Burkhart will notice this as a special meeting.
 - The City Clerk's office responded to 7 public records requests this week. The City has received 222 public records requests to date in 2023. This time last year, the City had received 192 public records requests.
 - City Manager Masko continued reviewing contracts and interlocal agreements that need to be renewed and/or renegotiated for 2024.
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- City Manager Masko, along with Mayor Brett Wittner, attended the Pierce County Mayor’s and Managers Public Safety Discussion with local State Legislators on November 1st. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss legislative requests from Pierce County cities regarding several public safety issues. Legislative requests included 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. I will continue to provide updates regarding this process as we move forward.
- City Manager Masko and Mayor Wittner also attended the Pierce County Cities & Towns meeting via Zoom on November 2nd, where they heard a presentation on local public transit.
- The City Clerk’s office continues to work through record management and contract indexing. This past week, Acting Clerk Burkhart identified thirteen expired contracts for destruction. This does not mean that the contracts will be destroyed immediately, but they will be moved to the “expired contracts” files pending destruction at a future date per retention schedules. Notification to the appropriate City parties occurs prior to destruction.

7. Police Department Update

- Four Fircrest officers worked on Halloween night, handing out candy to families as part of their routine patrols. Police Chief Ron Schaub was on hand at the Police Station and worked with Tacoma Fire to hand out candy all night. There was a fantastic turnout!
 - Fircrest officers received or generated 174 calls for service this past week, including 36 traffic safety-related contacts (stops, collisions, parking violations). Officers wrote 16 reports, including an assault, a neighbor dispute, verbal domestic violence, fraud, a luring attempt, noise complaints, three motor vehicle thefts, a vehicle recovery, motor vehicle theft attempts, a juvenile issue, unwanted persons, informational reports, two hit and runs, and motor vehicle collisions. Officers had 60 community policing events (foot patrols, citizen assists, security checks, COP activities, sex offender checks, and suspicious people and vehicles).
 - A Civil Service oral board was conducted on November 1st for the eligibility list for our 10th officer position. The board was impressed with both lateral candidates, who were added to the list following the interviews. The City is beginning backgrounds on at least two candidates from the list, which will be certified by the Civil Service in November.
 - Police Chief Schaub met with Heidi Traverso from Novoaglobal, Inc. this past Thursday. She was on-site to assess the city and begin the data collection process. The traffic data she collects will be used to assess the viability of photo enforcement traffic calming options. She will present her findings to the City Council during a study session in February 2024.
 - The updated weekly and monthly patrol activity reports will be ready to go live in November.
 - Police Chief Schaub is working diligently to update the Police policy manual and fully transition to Lexipol over the next few weeks.
 - A “Coffee with the Chief” event has been scheduled for November 14th from 5:30 – 6:30 PM at the Community Center.
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8. Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation highlights include:

Projects

- Tennis Courts – Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover and Public Works Director Tyler Bemis have been making substantial headway in their research on sound mitigation materials for the tennis court fence. Given the recent surge in pickleball's popularity, we've encountered challenges in finding nearby installations that would allow us to validate the effectiveness of the sound-deadening materials as advertised. However, we're making strides, with samples on the way and a business on the peninsula that has this material in place, which we intend to visit for a thorough investigation. We are working towards striking a balance that addresses the needs of both park guests and the concerns of our park neighbors.
- Whittier Park Master Plan – The first of two public engagement meetings for the Whittier Park Master Plan, scheduled for Thursday, November 16th, is now advertised on the City [website](#), readerboard, and social media. Staff are working with consultant AHBL, Inc. and DataBar to ensure the direct mail will be delivered to households by November 13th. In addition, a [Whittier Park Master Plan project page](#) has been created. Staff are also looking into mass email options with RecDesk. The second public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 14th.
- Fircrest Park Athletic Field Improvement Project – Director Grover will be presenting the second and final change order at the November 14th Council meeting for the purpose of addressing the field planarity and the turf component of the Fircrest Park Athletic Field Improvement Project. After removing the grass from the project area, it became evident that Fircrest Park's surface was more uneven and irregular than what the site survey provided. Another factor, though relatively minor, is the impact of Change Order #1 compared to the initially scoped fraise mowing method, given the more significant disruption caused by machine surface scraping. The originally planned 1" of sand would not have rectified this issue, so additional sand is required to create a uniform and smooth surface. The contractor emphasized that this approach aligns with common sports field planarity techniques.

Community Events

- Scarecrows & Skeletons of Fircrest – 57 Fircrest homeowners and businesses participated in the 4th Annual Scarecrows and Skeletons of Fircrest display contest. Be sure to drive (or walk) around and check out the impressive displays of creativity in our community. The judges had a difficult time choosing the winners! Pictures of the 2023 winners are posted on the City's [website](#). There is also a video [link](#) posted as well.



Many thanks to our generous title sponsor Paper Luxe, and to our volunteers!

- Haunted Trails – The event volunteer team will meet with Event Coordinator Judy Schmidtke next week for the final event review. We've gathered a wealth of feedback, including comments from participants, neighbors, and volunteers. This input will be integrated with the additional feedback we received from the City Council. These comments will be considered in the development of the P-1 planning document, which is an essential resource for the Parks & Recreation Department when reviewing and evaluating community events. These documents also play a pivotal role in planning future events.

If you haven't had a chance to check out the Haunted Trails video, it can be viewed on the City's website or at this [link](#).

Recreation Programs

- Youth Basketball – Recreation Coordinator Ryan Brown is currently in the process of assembling teams and coordinating leagues for the Youth Basketball Program. Practices are scheduled to commence in December. The City of Fircrest’s basketball league is tailored to introduce the essential skills of youth basketball in a fun and welcoming setting. Typically, each team consists of 10-12 players, ensuring that all team members have the opportunity to play.
- Tot Story Time and Tot Gym – Tot Story Time remains a bustling and engaging event, consistently drawing a crowd to our building every Tuesday morning. Our Tot Gym sessions on both Tuesday and Thursday also continue to be a major success, consistently attracting a significant turnout of 40 to 60 participants.
 - Tot Story Time is held on Tuesdays at 10:30 AM in the Multipurpose Room.
 - Tot Gym is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:00 AM in the Gym.
- December Senior Trip – Registration is underway for the next Senior Trip on Thursday, December 7th. Join us for a nostalgic evening of watching the Christmas classic “It’s a Wonderful Life” at the Blue Mouse Theater located nearby in Tacoma’s Proctor District. We will have dinner at Knapp’s Restaurant, right next door to the theater. There are 12 spots available for this holiday trip. Registration is \$10. These trips sell out quickly, so sign up soon! Register online at [Program: Senior Trip - Dinner & A Movie \(recdesk.com\)](http://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

- The community is invited to the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Year 1 Status Update. This will be a presentation by our consultant BHC on what has been accomplished thus far and what work remains in the year ahead. The presentation is on the agenda for the November 20th, 2023, City Council Study Session, which starts at 6:00 PM at City Hall.
 - 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.
 - The City has submitted a grant application for four electric vehicle chargers to be located near the Roy H. Murphy Community Center. This grant from the Department of Ecology awards up to \$10,000 to cities looking to invest in electric vehicle infrastructure to help achieve cleaner air and a healthier climate.
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- CD Director Newman met with South Sound Affordability Partners (SSHA3P) to discuss coordination efforts for 2024. Some ideas include assisting the City with identifying affordable housing partnerships in the 19th and Mildred form-based code district, reviewing Comprehensive Plan updates for housing strategies, helping write missing middle housing development regulations, and providing streamlined ADU plan sets to homeowners to help defray the costs of permitting.
- It's not too early to start thinking about next year's summer vacation plans. Passport Specialist Laura Thompson continues to provide excellent customer service to those wishing to register for or renew a passport. You can request an appointment at [Passports - City of Fircrest](#) or stop by the Permit Counter at City Hall to request more information.
- 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.
- 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.

10. 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.

11. 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)

Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater

- Wind and rain response, including catch basin cleaning and additional sweeping throughout the City due to excess wind and rain.

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- The furnace and heat pump replacement of the unit that provides heating and cooling for the Municipal Court offices was completed.
- The crew painted the conference room and lunch room at the Public Works building.
- Public Works provided assistance for the Fircrest Park field resurfacing project.

Project Updates

- Well #7 (Claremont)
 - We are awaiting the structural assessment report and recommendation.
 - The fence repair is scheduled for Monday, November 6th.
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- 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - The construction bid opening was held on October 31st. The bid tabulation is completed, and the low bidder has been identified.
 - Contract documents are being prepared to bring forward to the Council for approval.
- 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. Eighteen meters have been exchanged on this street.
- 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.
- Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension (south side) – Woodside Drive to 67th Ave West
 - We received formal communication outlining potential next steps for additional funding from PSRC. Public Works Director Tyler Bemis reviewed the documents with the City Manager, and we determined that the City will request to advance construction funds to the design portion of the project.
 - The design contract is being prepared to be brought forward to Council for approval.
- 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.
 - We received formal communication outlining potential next steps for additional funding from PSRC. Public Works Director Bemis has reviewed the documents with the City Manager, and a funding plan is under discussion.
- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - Design is in process for construction in 2024. It has been reviewed and approved 60% design.
 - We are meeting with City of Tacoma staff and the design consultant on November 9th to continue discussions to coordinate the paving of the entire intersection at South Orchard and Regents Blvd/Center Street.
- Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
 - We received a \$153,000 appropriation of funds from the State Legislature.
 - Staff are preparing the Construction Readiness form and identified a timeline for deliverables.
- Claremont Street TIB Grant Application
 - The grant application certification identified total TIB funds of \$677,409 and total Local Funds of \$124,543.

12. Habitat Stewardship Work Party

The next Habitat Stewardship Work Party at Thelma Gilmur Park is Monday, November 6th, from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. Volunteers will be removing 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 belindap@pierceed.org for additional information.

13. 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 \(mytpu.org\)](http://mytpu.org).

14. \$75 Gas Card Reward for COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters

There is a special COVID-19 vaccine bonus for Pierce County residents ages 60 and older who are eligible for the current vaccine booster. Lincoln Pharmacy, located at 821 South 38th Street in Tacoma, has partnered with Pierce County Human Services to provide bonus \$75 gas purchasing cards to attendees receiving their boosters from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Tuesday, November 7th, or until all the cards are gone. Those attending this event must bring a photo ID and health insurance information. No appointment is required; just walk in for your vaccine booster. Pierce County staff at the pharmacy will collect some information from you to verify eligibility, then will activate your gas purchasing card. Email [Matt Santelli](mailto:Matt.Santelli@pcws.org) for additional information.

15. Free Car Wash for Veterans

November is Military Appreciation Month, and Classy Chassis is honoring those who serve with extra discounts all month long – plus a Free car wash on Veterans Day, November 11th. All veterans, including retired and active military personnel and their families, will receive the discounts. The Tacoma/Fircrest location at 5002 Center Street is participating in this military recognition.

16. Week of Kindness

World Kindness Day falls on November 13th this year, and City staff are celebrating by holding a Week of Kindness from November 13th – 17th. During this week, we encourage you to go out of your way to be kind to others. Acts of kindness could range from donating to charity or simply smiling at someone just because! Kindness is contagious. If at least one person has a better day because of you, it's a win. Kindness in the workplace helps cultivate a positive culture where people want to show up and do their best.

During the Week of Kindness, sponsored by the City's Wellness Committee, if you think of a compliment, see someone working hard, or see someone who may need some extra kindness, write them a note and place it in a Kindness Envelope located at each building. On Friday, November 17th, the envelopes will be collected, and the notes will be distributed. Please make sure to place the name of who is to receive the note on the outside. A simple anonymous note can completely change someone's day for the better. We hope all of you are ready to spread some kindness!

