



City Manager's Update

December 1, 2023

To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: December 1, 2023
Subject: City Manager's Weekly Update

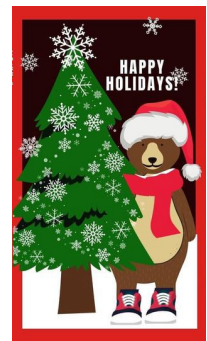


Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

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. Holiday Tree Lighting & Holiday Market

Join us for a fun-filled celebration to kick off the holiday season at the inaugural Holiday Market this Sunday, December 3rd. We have a full day of Fircrest FUN planned for the community! The Names Family Foundation Gymnasium will be packed with fantastic artists and makers, fresh wreaths, and more to help you finish your holiday shopping early. Thirty-two vendors, including 13 Fircrest-based businesses, are lined up to participate in the Holiday Market, which runs from noon to 8:00 PM. We'll have a yummy selection of food items available for purchase from five food truck vendors who will be right outside the Community Center on Electron Way from 12:00 – 6:00 PM. And we have fun entertainment planned all day long!



Our talented local school choirs and bands will be performing throughout the day in the gymnasium, and saxophonist Christopher Diedrick will provide entertainment throughout the afternoon. And don't miss out on your opportunity to meet Murphy at the grand introduction in the gymnasium at 3:00 PM! The Holiday Market runs from Noon – to 8:00 PM at the Fircrest Community Center.



- 1:00 PM – Wainwright Middle School Band
- 2:00 PM – Whittier Elementary School Choir
- 4:30 PM – Silas High School Show Choir

As the evening approaches, the festive Tree Lighting ceremony takes place at 6:00 PM at Alice Peers Park, along with the much-anticipated arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus. Photos with Santa will be in the Multipurpose Room from 6:30 – 8:00 PM, while the gymnasium will be bustling with festive refreshments, entertainment courtesy of the Dickens Carolers, a meet & greet with **FROZEN'S** Elsa and Anna, and Holiday Market vendors. This magical event concludes at 8:00 PM.

Additional information can be found on our website at [Fircrest Holiday Market and Tree Lighting](#). Many thanks to our generous sponsor Floss & Fido Family Dentistry!

2. Whittier Park Master Plan

The second public engagement meeting for the Whittier Park Master Plan is scheduled for Thursday, December 14th. The community's input will be invaluable in shaping the future of Whittier Park. This is a crucial moment when significant decisions about the park's design and features are being made, and we highly encourage the community's active participation. More information is available on the City [website](#) and the [Whittier Park Master Plan project page](#).

3. Judge Miller Retirement

Fircrest Municipal Court Judge John Miller is retiring on December 31, 2023, after over 28 years of exemplary service to the City. Judge Miller has presided over the Fircrest Municipal Court since 1995 and has also presided over the Ruston Municipal Court since 2019 when the City of Ruston contracted with Fircrest for municipal court services. Judge Miller leaves behind a legacy of fairness, compassion, integrity, and dedication, and he will be greatly missed at City Hall. He is a long-time City resident whose contributions to Fircrest have been invaluable.

Join us in celebrating Judge Miller's distinguished career at a retirement reception prior to the December 12th City Council meeting. More details will be announced soon.

4. November 28th, 2023 - Council Meeting Recap

The Fircrest City Council met for a regular meeting on Tuesday, November 28th. Action items included:

- Approved a Motion authorizing the closure of City Buildings on December 24th and December 31st in observance of holidays and from 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM on December 15th for City Wellness Lunch.
 - Approved a Resolution changing the time of the December 26th Regular Council meeting from 7:00 PM to 4:00 PM.
 - Held a Public Hearing on a proposed water rate adjustment.
 - Adopted an Ordinance approving the 2024 Annual Budget.
 - Approved a Resolution extending the professional services agreement with the City of Tacoma for Hearing Examiner services for dangerous and potentially dangerous dog appeal hearings.
 - Approved a Resolution authorizing an Extended Technical Support Services Agreement with South Sound 911 for Police Department computers and related software.
 - Approved a Resolution authorizing a Law Enforcement Support Services Agreement with South Sound 911 for records management, firearm licensing, and fingerprinting services.
 - Approved a Resolution extending the Pierce County System Access and Use Agreement for continued access to the Single Countywide Communications System for public safety communications.
 - Approved a Resolution extending the contract with KPG Psomas for on-call engineering services through December 31, 2024, and amended the fee schedule.
 - Approved a Resolution extending the contract with Apex Engineering for on-call engineering services through December 31, 2024, and amended the fee schedule.
 - Finance Director Colleen Corcoran reviewed the 3rd Quarter 2023 Financial Report.
 - First Reading of an Ordinance amending the 2023 Annual Budget.
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5. Upcoming Meetings – Week of December 4th – December 8th

- Civil Service Commission Meeting Monday, December 4th at 4:00 PM
- Planning Commission Meeting Tuesday, December 5th at 6:00 PM

6. Council Agenda Items – December 12th, 2023 - Tentative

- Ordinance – Adoption of 2023 Budget Amendment #3
- Councilmember Appointment to Pierce County Regional Council
- Councilmember Appointment to South Sound Affordability Partners
- Resolution – Landscape Maintenance Contract Amendment
- Resolution – Sound Publishing/Tacoma Daily Index Contract
- Municipal Court Judge Appointment
- Resolution – Humane Society Contract Amendment
- Resolution – Ruston Court Contract Amendment
- Resolution – Memorandum of Understanding with Teamsters
- Resolution – 44th Street West/67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade Contract
- Resolution – Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension Design Contract

7. Santa's Sleigh Ride



Santa and his friends and helpers will be spreading joy throughout the streets of Fircrest on Wednesday, December 13th, and Thursday, December 14th. They will be leaving the North Pole (aka Public Safety Building) at 5:30 PM on both nights. Santa will be traveling through North-End neighborhoods on December 13th and South-End neighborhoods on December 14th. Thank you to the Fircrest Police Department, the Fircrest Public Works crew, and Tacoma Fire for making this annual event possible. A map of Santa's route will be posted on the City website soon. So listen for those sleigh bells and step outside to wave hello, join the fun, and receive some sweet treats!

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

- Help the environment while building community at Habitat Restoration work parties. The next work party is at Whittier Park on Saturday, December 2nd, from 9:00 AM to 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.
 - The next Habitat Stewardship Work Party at Thelma Gilmur Park is Monday, December 4th, from 9:00 AM to 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@piercecd.org for additional information.
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9. Administration

Administration highlights of the past week include:

- City Manager Dawn Masko continued working with Finance Director Colleen Corcoran on the 2024 budget and worked on personnel and labor relations issues.
- City Manager Masko continued reviewing contracts and professional agreements that need to be renewed and/or renegotiated for 2024, with several on the December 12th meeting for approval.
- Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart is continuing to work on record management, as well as diligently working on catching up on emails and work that accumulated during her vacation.
- The Centennial Celebration Steering Committee met for their inaugural meeting today. The focus of the meeting was brainstorming ideas for how to celebrate our 100th anniversary. The committee will meet again in mid-January.
- The Civil Service Commission will be recertifying the Lateral Police Eligibility List during their meeting on December 4th. In accordance with Fircrest Civil Service Rule 10.05 Duration of Eligibility Lists, the recertification process ensures that the eligibility list remains valid for one year from the date of promulgation. Interested parties can view the current eligibility list on the City's website under [Lateral Police Officer Eligibility List](#).
- The City provided the Sewer Availability Letter for the Prose Project to the Alliance Residential Company on November 30th.
- The City continued deliberating with Pierce County regarding the Draft Sewer Transfer Agreement, with multiple meetings occurring this week.
- To date, the City has received 238 public records requests. At the same time last year, the City had processed 206 public records requests. The City continues to emphasize the importance of government transparency and public records accessibility.

10. Police Department Update

- Fircrest officers received or generated 174 calls for service this past week, including 87 traffic stops, which generated 73 notices of infraction. Officers also wrote ten parking tickets, issued one criminal citation, and conducted 33 security checks. Officers responded to various calls, including vehicle prowls, four suspicious person calls, three domestic violence-related calls, and a motor vehicle collision. Officers had 58 community policing events (foot patrols, citizen assists, security checks, COP activities, welfare checks, and suspicious people and vehicles), worked on two follow-up investigations, and assisted with five outside jurisdiction responses.
 - Our background investigator is continuing to work on the files of three lateral applicants. We are still a few weeks away from making any decisions.
 - Multiple officers will be working to provide traffic control, security, and to interact with attendees at the Holiday Tree Lighting on Sunday evening.
 - Sergeants Villamor and Gollinger have been working with retired Police Chief John Cheesman on coordinating Santa's Sleigh Ride. Fircrest Police sponsors this annual holiday tradition with the help of Public Works and the Tacoma Fire Department.
 - The Police Department will be sponsoring a few needy families during the holiday season to provide food baskets. We are looking forward to helping out some of our community families.
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- Over the last few weeks, Police Chief Ron Schaub has been polling officers regarding the department’s core values. After compiling a complete list, the following core values were identified as best representing our Fircrest Police Department:
 - Integrity
 - Service
 - Accountability
 - Compassion
 - Community
- The Pierce County Radio shop recertified all our police radars, and they are good for the next two years.
- The City is waiting to receive our 2024 assessment fees for the Pierce County Combined Communication Network (CCN). The assessment fees rose dramatically in 2023, and we are anticipating another large increase in 2024. Depending on the assessment amount, the City may look at the option of switching to the 800 MHZ system managed by the City of Tacoma.
- Our officers are currently reviewing several alternate work schedules for possible future use and bidding for work shifts and vacations for 2024.
- NovoaGlobal will be evaluating Fircrest traffic data beginning in mid-December for a presentation to the Council in February on potential photo-enforcement traffic calming solutions.

11. Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover has been working with his team on the refinement and documentation of job duties and internal processes for every position within the Community Center. This effort includes cross-training as well as evaluating staffing hours to optimize meeting the needs of the Fircrest community. Methods to streamline the rental approval process, both for our customer and internally, are also being explored.

Other Parks & Recreation highlights include:

Projects

- Community Center Close-out – The general contractor, Kassel and Associates, has made recent efforts to accomplish some of our warranty requests. The flooring subcontractor arrived on Wednesday to rectify two small flooring areas in the gym and fitness room. The contractor was also able to secure the exterior fire suppression bezels to the building successfully.
- Fircrest Park Athletic Field Improvement Project – RWD Landscape Architects conducted an end-of-project walk-through on Wednesday. Together with Public Works Director Tyler Bemis and PW Maintenance Lead Bryce Wakefield, we created a punch list for the project.

Community Events

- “Where’s Murphy?” – On December 3rd, our cherished town bear, Murphy, will come to life! The “Where’s Murphy?” game ends this Sunday morning. Once you locate all the Murphys around town, turn in your game card to claim your 2023 collector’s Murphy ornament. You don’t want to miss out on this coveted ornament! Prizes will be available on Sunday, December 3rd, at the Fircrest Community Center (one ornament per person while supplies last.) Scan the QR code for additional information or visit the City’s [website](#). If you prefer to skip the hunt and simply meet Murphy, his grand introduction is happening on December 3rd at 3:00 PM at the Roy H. Murphy Community Center.



- [Lights of Fircrest](#) – The Lights of Fircrest Display Contest is back! Let’s make Fircrest **Merrier** and **Brighter** than ever! 2023 contest categories are best decorated outdoor tree, best use of holiday characters, best use of animation, the North Pole Award for the brightest & merriest street or cul-de-sac, and the coveted Griswold Award because you can never have too many lights!! Over 30 participants have already signed up. Registration closes on Tuesday, December 5th. Scan the QR code to register or visit the City of Fircrest’s [website](#) for more information. You can also sign up at the Holiday Market this Sunday.



- [Join our Volunteer Team](#) – As you can see, there are lots of fun events coming up! There are a whole range of opportunities for enthusiastic volunteers to help with, and your level of involvement is up to you! Scan the QR code now to sign up and join Team Fircrest Fun. For more information, contact Judy at jschmidtke@cityoffircrest.net.



Recreation Programs

- [Youth Basketball](#) – Our youth basketball program is now full. We have 377 kids registered to participate this season! Practices will begin the week of December 11th.
- 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.”

12. Planning & Building Update

- The City will begin its Missing Middle Housing public participation outreach by late January/early February 2024 (tentative). This will include a City Council Study Session on various 2023 housing laws passed by the State legislature and their applicability to Fircrest. Please stay tuned for updates in the City Manager’s Weekly Update or [subscribe to our mailing list](#). Additionally, the City will post information at the kiosk at the Public Safety Building, City Hall, and the Community Center as a non-digital way of keeping the public informed.
- Code Enforcement received one new concern this past week regarding a boat parked in the right-of-way on the 500 block of Golden Gate for more than three weeks. The request was forwarded to the Police Department for review.
- The City is a partner in the Four Corners/Thriving Communities partnership. A public participation plan will tentatively be published in the first quarter of 2024 and will be available for public comment. The goal of the Four Corners partnership is to have the cities of Tacoma, University Place, and Fircrest, along with partners Pierce County, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, Metro Parks, and the Tacoma Housing Authority, plan for transit-oriented development in the area as a future [T Link light rail station](#) is planned for 2041.

- There are several long-term infrastructure projects planned in the neighboring City of University Place that will affect the residents of Fircrest's commute. To view a map of these projects, please look at the City of University Place's [Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan \(TIP\)](#). The map on page 17 of 21 identifies the projects' locations.

13. Finance/Information Technology Update

- Now that the 2024 budget has been adopted by the City Council, Finance Director Corcoran is working on the 2024 budget document.
- The 2022 State Audit is officially underway, and Finance is busy compiling requested information. Finance Director Corcoran, City Manager Masko, Councilmember David Viafore, and Accountant Julie Dunbar attended the Entrance Conference on Wednesday.

14. 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)

- Holiday décor has been put up, beautifying City light poles and the island with holiday cheer.
- The Tree City USA application was submitted and fully approved.

Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater

- Wind and rain response, including catch basin cleaning and additional sweeping throughout the City due to excess windfall. More wind and rain is expected this weekend, ensuring our crews will be busy again next week with cleanup efforts.
- Water shutoffs for delinquent accounts occurred on November 27th. At the time of shutoffs, there were eight delinquent accounts. As of today, three properties remain shut off – two of which are vacant homes.

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- Windfall cleanup around all City facilities.
- The ADA (American Disabilities Act) compliant sidewalk for access to the Fircrest Park Courts was prepped by staff and poured by the contractor.

Project Updates

- Well #7 (Claremont)
 - We received the structural assessment report and recommendation for repairs. We are working on securing repair and replacement bids to compare costs and determine the most viable next steps.
 - 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - Contract documents will be brought to the Council for approval on December 12th.
 - 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
 - The design contract will be brought forward to Council for approval on December 12th.
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- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
 - 51 meters have been exchanged in November, with program completion now at 49%. No meters were exchanged this past week as the crew was working on holiday decorations and weather response.

TOTAL BY YEAR	
2019	11
2020	143
2021	444
2022	283
2023 YTD	295

PROJECT UPDATE	
Total City Meter Connections	2,402
New Meters Installed	1,176
Remaining Meters to be Installed	1,226
Percentage of Completion	49%

- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67th Ave West
 - We are communicating with PSRC and WSDOT regarding the funding shortfall.
- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - Design is in process for construction in 2024.
 - City of Tacoma staff are identifying funds for this project.
 - Fircrest engineering consultants are coordinating with Tacoma engineering staff.
- 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 City was notified today that our 2024 Overlay Project for Claremont Street was awarded a Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) grant in the amount of \$677,409. The City’s local grant match requirement is \$124,543.

15. 28th Legislative District Community Meetings

Representative Mari Leavitt from the 28th Legislative District is hosting two pre-legislative session community meetings in Pierce County.

- Community Conversation – Tuesday, December 12th, 2023, from 2:00 – 3:00 PM at the Parkland/Spanaway Library meeting room, located at 13718 Pacific Avenue South in Tacoma.
- Pre-Session Town Hall – Thursday, January 4th, 2024, from 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM at the Roy H. Murphy Community Center, located at 555 Contra Costa Avenue in Fircrest.

Town Hall questions can be sent in advance at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MHFVJLJ>.

16. Veterans Stand Down Event

The 2023 Veterans Stand Down Event is a coordinated community effort to provide much-needed resources to veterans experiencing the housing crisis firsthand in Pierce County, which is home to the state’s largest veteran population. All veterans in Pierce County looking to connect with services are invited to attend. The event will provide two days of connections to services, including pathways to housing, career services, nutritional meals, and mental health counseling. The event, hosted by the [American Military Families Action Network](#), will be held at the American Legion, located at 11204 Park Avenue S. in Tacoma, on December 7th & 8th from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

17. Homeowner Resources Available

For current homeowners who meet the income requirements, Pierce County Human Services offers several programs to assist households with health and safety repairs of their home and to help folks like seniors stay in their homes long-term.

- The [Home Repair Program](#) provides grants for no-cost emergency health and safety repairs.
- The [Home Rehabilitation Loan Program](#) provides 20-year low-interest loans for rehabilitation.
- The [Home Weatherization Assistance Program](#) enables low-income families to reduce their energy costs by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes while ensuring their health and safety. For families with members with asthma, COPD, or other respiratory issues, Weatherization has partnered with the Pierce County Health Department to assist households in a joint project called Weatherization Plus Health.

There are also other resources available to assist qualifying households.

- [Rebuilding Together South Sound](#) provides free home repairs for low-income homeowners who are seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, or families with children in the home.
- Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity's [Aging in Place Critical Home Repair Program](#) works with homeowners age 60+ and disabled veterans of the US military to create a safe and livable environment where they can age independently in the comfort and stability of their own home by providing both environmental modifications and critical home repairs.

Hard copies of applications and handouts are available at City Hall and the Community Center. Community Development Director Mark Newman is happy to assist homeowners with the application process or to answer any questions. He can be reached at mnewman@cityoffircrest.net.

18. Community Resource Fair

On The Road with PartnerCafe, a direct service mobile team is hosting an "Under the Big Top" Community Resource Fair on Saturday, December 2nd. The event will be held at the STAR Center, located at 3873 S. 66th Street in Tacoma, from 12:00 – 4:00 PM. This free, family-friendly event will feature information and resources about aging and disability services, youth and family services, education and career services, veteran services, and more! If you bring the questions, they will provide the answers. There will also be raffle prizes and vendor giveaways. Pierce County Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC) will have a resource table at this Fair as well.

There is no cost to attend, but please register at this [link](#) to receive an extra free raffle ticket. Contact Matt Santelli at 253-348-1065 or matthew.santelli@piercecountywa.gov for more information.

19. Empty the Shelters – Holiday Hope

The Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County is partnering with BISSELL Pet Foundation, a national animal welfare organization dedicated to ending pet homelessness, for its Empty the Shelters – Holiday Hope adoption promotion. From December 1-10, the shelter will be offering reduced adoption fees: \$50 for dogs, \$25 for cats, and \$5 for critters. The adoption event will take place at the shelter located at 2608 Center Street in Tacoma during the shelter's business hours, 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM. To allow the shelter's team adequate time to assist each potential adopter, it is recommended that adoption applications be submitted by 3:00 PM during the event.

The shelter has over 100 adoptable pets, with more becoming available each day. To view all pets available for adoption at the Humane Society, please visit www.thehumanesociety.org/adopt.

20. Families Unlimited Network – Community Christmas

The holiday season is a time for family and friends to get together and celebrate togetherness. It can also be a time of stress and struggle for families who try to find ways to enjoy the holidays on a tight budget. Community Christmas 2023 exists to help relieve stress for families by connecting organizations and groups to families looking to have a little boost during the holiday season. Community Christmas is a program offered through [Families Unlimited Network](#), a service located in University Place that provides access to food and resources for local families.

If you are a family with a child in the University Place School District, contact your school counselor to register your family for this program. If your children are too young to be in school, please contact the Families Unlimited Network office directly at 253-460-3134 for eligibility verification. After you are registered, you will be contacted by your sponsors and will be able to receive gifts for your children and Christmas meal boxes.

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor or sponsor group/organization, contact Families Unlimited Network at 253-460-3134 or admin@familiesunlimitednetwork.org and let them know you are interested in supporting one or more families. They will provide you with a brief orientation and expectations for providing for your families.

21. How to Prevent Your Pipes from Freezing

Frozen pipes are a common cause of leaks. Since frozen water expands, improperly insulated pipes can crack and leak. Even worse, freezing can cause pipes to burst, which could lead to a significant water leak inside your home or crawlspace.

If you have a water leak emergency or suspect a water leak, call us at (253) 564-8900.

Protect your plumbing and prevent frozen pipes by doing the following:

- Insulate exposed pipes, valves, and hose bibs (the outdoor water faucet where you attach your hose) located outdoors, in attics, crawl spaces, basements, and garages. Pipe insulation and insulating material for hose bibs are available at most hardware stores.
- Shut off and drain outside faucets. If your hose bibs have individual shutoff valves, turn off the water supply and drain the faucets.
- Winterize your outdoor irrigation system and other water fixtures.
- Disconnect your garden hoses from hose bibs during the winter months.
- Keep the heat on and set your thermostat to no lower than 55° Fahrenheit while you are away from home.
- If you are leaving your house for an extended time, ask someone to check your home daily to ensure the heat is turning on and your pipes are not frozen.
- Locate your emergency shutoff and learn how to turn off your water supply. Note that not all homes have a shutoff valve. If you do, it may be in the garage, the basement, a hall closet, or buried beneath your outside hose faucet.
- To prepare for an extended freeze, you may want to open cabinet doors inside your house to allow warm air to circulate.

