



City Manager's Update

December 10, 2023

To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: December 10, 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

Wow – what a spectacular event! Over 2,000 people attended the Holiday Market and Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 3rd!! Visitors enjoyed the entertainment, food, and vendor booths throughout the day. We received numerous compliments on the new Holiday Market and the entertainers. Seeing so many outside enjoying the Tree Lighting and welcoming Santa was a great reminder of what a great community Fircrest is. Our gratitude to Public Works, the Fircrest Police Department, and all of the dedicated volunteers whose contributions made December 3rd a memorable experience for so many. A special thank you goes out to Whittier Elementary, Wainwright Intermediate, and Silas High School for showcasing their musical talents throughout the day. Many thanks also to our generous sponsor Floss & Fido Family Dentistry! Kudos to our Parks and Recreation staff, especially our Events Coordinator Judy Schmidtke and Director Jeff Grover, for such a wonderful event to kick-off the holiday season.



2. Whittier Park Master Plan

The second public engagement meeting for the Whittier Park Master Plan is scheduled for this Thursday, December 14th. Our consultant AHBL will present outcomes derived from the initial community open house, review the three design concepts developed to date, and offer attendees the opportunity to interact with the designs, select preferred concepts, and offer further comments or concerns. The meeting starts at 6:30 PM at the Community Center, with the presentation segment scheduled to commence at 7:00 PM.

The community's input is 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. Scan the QR code to take the survey. More information is available on the City [website](#) and the [Whittier Park Master Plan project page](#).



3. Judge Miller Retirement

Join us at a reception on Tuesday, December 12th, honoring Fircrest Municipal Court Judge John Miller. The reception is being held at 6:00 PM at City Hall just prior to the City Council meeting. Judge 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.

4. Upcoming Meetings – Week of December 11th – December 15th

- City Council Meeting Tuesday, December 12th at 7:00 PM
- Whittier Park Master Plan Meeting Thursday, December 14th at 6:30 PM

5. Council Agenda Items – December 12th, 2023

- Resolution – Honoring Fircrest Municipal Court Judge John Miller
- Councilmember Appointments to Pierce County Regional Council
- Councilmember Appointments to South Sound Affordability Partners
- Motion – Confirmation of Municipal Court Judge Appointment
- Ordinance – Adoption of 2023 Budget Amendment #3
- Ordinance – Water Rate Adjustment
- Resolution – Landscape Maintenance Contract Amendment
- Resolution – Tacoma Daily Index Contract
- Resolution – Humane Society Contract Amendment
- Resolution – Memorandum of Understanding with Teamsters
- Resolution – RWJ Consultant Contract Amendment
- Resolution – Audio-Visual System Change Order
- Resolution – Robert Droll Contract Amendment
- Resolution – KBH Contract Amendment
- Resolution – 44th Street West/67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade Contract
- Resolution – Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension Design Contract
- Resolution – TIB Grant Agreement - Claremont Ave. Overlay

6. Santa's Sleigh Ride



Santa and his helpers will be spreading joy throughout the streets of Fircrest this coming week! Santa will be leaving the North Pole (aka Public Safety Building) at 5:30 PM on both nights and will be traveling through North-End neighborhoods on Wednesday, December 13th, and South-End neighborhoods on Thursday, 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 is posted on the City website at [Fircrest Police Department Presents: SANTA'S SLEIGH RIDE](#). So listen for those sleigh bells and step outside to wave hello, join the fun, and receive some sweet treats!

7. Administration

Administration highlights of the past week include:

- Reminder – City buildings will be closed from 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM on Friday, December 15th for the Annual City Employee Wellness Luncheon.
- City Manager Dawn Masko continued working with City attorneys on various personnel 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.
- The Civil Service Commission recertified 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 recertified 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 continued deliberating with Pierce County regarding the Draft Sewer Transfer Agreement, with multiple meetings occurring this week.
- Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart attended a webinar sponsored by the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) on the latest trends and best practices in customer service. The webinar’s aim is to enhance governmental relations with community members at the front counter seeking assistance and fostering a culture that prioritizes the delivery of exceptional customer service.
- Staff continues to research, identify, and locate City records to create an up-to-date inventory of all City records.
- To date, the City has received 245 public records requests. At the same time last year, the City had processed 212 public records requests. The City continues to emphasize the importance of government transparency and public records accessibility.
- In the last 30 days, the City’s website has had 17,365 page views from a total of 5,498 users.

8. Police Department Update

- Fircrest officers received or generated 188 calls for service this past week, including 93 traffic stops, which generated 80 notices of infraction. Officers also wrote nine parking tickets, issued five criminal citations, and conducted 24 security checks. Officers also responded to various calls, including ten vehicle prowls, three suspicious person calls, two found property cases, two suspicious vehicle complaints, and three motor vehicle collisions. Officers had 54 community policing events (foot patrols, citizen assists, security checks, COP activities, welfare checks, and suspicious people and vehicles), worked on five follow-up investigations, conducted seven special emphasis patrols, and assisted with six outside jurisdiction responses.
 - There has been an uptick in vehicle prowls complaints in the last several weeks. We ask that people remove valuables from their vehicles and secure the locks when vehicles are unoccupied.
 - We are working with Wainwright Intermediate and Whittier Elementary schools to identify families this holiday season who may be experiencing food insecurity. We aim to work with a local food bank to provide a holiday meal basket to these families.
 - The Tree Lighting event was a great success. Officers assisted in providing traffic control, security, and community presence during the celebration.
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- Our background investigator is continuing to work on our three lateral applicants. Another Civil Service oral board is being held this coming week for three additional applicants.
- Sergeants Villamor and Gollinger have been working with retired Police Chief John Cheesman on coordinating Santa's Sleigh Ride, which will take place on December 13th and 14th.
- We have confirmed that all Fircrest Police Officers have met their 24 hours of required ongoing professional education for 2023.
- South Sound 911 is in the process of evaluating three vendors to update the county-wide police report writing software. Police Chief Ron Schaub will be attending a portion of the Motorola presentation this week.

9. Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation highlights include:

Projects

- Community Center Close-out – The general contractor, Kassel and Associates, has completed the flooring and the exterior fire suppression bezels outstanding items. While they have expressed an interest in finalizing the project, they are hesitant regarding the three trees the City has cited for warranty. To address this, Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover will be meeting with Public Works Director Tyler Bemis and Maintenance Lead Bryce Wakefield to discuss the trees and determine replacement costs. This information will enable us to approach Kassel again regarding the warranty for these trees.
- Fircrest Park Athletic Field Improvement Project – RWD Landscape Architects (RWD) has provided a preliminary punch list to assist KBH Construction (KBH) in reaching substantial completion. The list encompasses critical tasks such as drafting a comprehensive plan for sod/field grade repair, ensuring uniformly tight sod joints without overlaps, and maintaining a consistent level. Additionally, KBH is responsible for providing a schedule concerning fertilizer applications and fulfilling the contract's mandate of three scheduled mowings. These outlined actions constitute vital steps in achieving the project's substantial completion. Given the prevailing weather conditions, both City staff and RWD understand that KBH must be selective in determining when to address these preliminary punch list items. KBH has committed to keeping RWD and City staff informed about their strategy and timing to resolve these matters.

Community Events

- Lights of Fircrest – Fircrest is looking **Merrier** and **Brighter** than ever! The first round of judging will be held December 13th – 15th, with the final judging on December 18th. Winners will be announced on December 20th. An electronic list of participating homes will be available on the City website and the Fircrest Parks and Recreation Facebook page for self-guided tours. Paper copies will also be available at the Fircrest Community Center. 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!!



Recreation Programs

- [January Senior Trip](#) – Registration will open on December 14th for the January Senior Trip - [Tour of the State Capitol](#) happening on Thursday, January 11th, 2024. Discover the awe-inspiring history and architectural wonders of the Washington State Capitol on the January Senior Trip. The Capitol Building is home to the WA State Legislature and the offices of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, and State Treasurer. The tour of the Capitol includes the North Foyer, Rotunda, State Reception Room, and Legislative Galleries. Afterward, we will head to Meconi’s Italian Subs for lunch, with an additional stop across the street to go to Wagner’s European Bakery. Departure time is 9:45 AM from the Community Center, with an expected return time of 3:30 PM. Registration for this trip is \$35.

There are only 12 spots available for the senior trips. These trips sell out quickly, so sign up as soon as registration opens! 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.”

10. 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.
- Community Development Director Mark Newman is coordinating with [AHAT - Affordable Housing and Treatment](#) to see if they qualify for a WA State Commerce Grant to preserve existing housing stock at their location in Fircrest. If they do qualify, AHAT would be writing the grant, and the City would review it and provide a letter of support.
- Informational handouts, applications, and tri-folds for [Pierce County Home Repairs](#), [Habitat for Humanity](#), and [Rebuilding Together South Sound](#) have been placed at the counters at City Hall and at the Community Center. Thank you to Mary Connolly of South Sound Affordability Partners for providing these.
- Community Development Director Newman will be attending the Pierce County Climate Conversation along with Councilmember Hunter George on December 15th. The quarterly meeting will focus primarily on Electric Vehicle (EV) grants and incentives.

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)

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

Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater

- Water meter setter break repair at 322 Contra Costa and 200 block of Berkeley.
- Meter reading started on December 1st.
- There was a holiday décor theft at the Regents and Alameda island. Information was provided to the Acting City Clerk and the Police Department is working on the police report.
- Wind and rain response, including catch basin cleaning and additional sweeping throughout the City due to excess windfall. No damage has been reported.

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- Windfall cleanup around all City facilities.
- New changing table installed in the Tot Lot bathroom.
- Whittier Trail bridge repairs.
- Fircrest Park Court’s ADA sidewalk was poured, backfilled, and closed out.

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.
- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
 - 51 meters have been exchanged in November, with program completion now at 49%. Exchanges have been put on hold due to inclement weather response efforts.

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%

- Claremont Street TIB Grant Application
 - The City was awarded a Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) grant in the amount of \$677,409 for the Claremont Street Overlay project. The City’s local grant match requirement is \$124,543. The grant agreement documents are being brought forward to the Council for acceptance on December 12th.

- 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.

12. 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>.

13. 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.
