



# City Manager's Update

## January 5, 2024

**To:** Fircrest City Council  
**From:** Dawn Masko, City Manager  
**Date:** January 5, 2024  
**Subject:** City Manager's Weekly Update



January 9, 2024

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### 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. Upcoming Meetings – Week of January 8<sup>th</sup> – January 12<sup>th</sup>

- Civil Service Meeting Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM
- City Council Meeting Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM

#### 2. Council Agenda Items – January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

- Selection of Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore
- Setting 2024 City Council Study Session dates
- Setting Joint Meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Setting a Public Hearing on Proposed Solid Waste Rate Adjustment
- Resolution – TIB Grant Agreement - Claremont Street Overlay Project
- Resolution – Regents West Overlay Project Design Contract Award
- Resolution – Department of Commerce Housing Grant Agreement

#### 3. Administration

Administration highlights of the past week include:

- City Manager Dawn Masko continued efforts to coordinate meetings with Pierce County and Alliance Residential to discuss sewer issues and options.
- City Manager Masko is working with the Leadership Team on the City's 2024 Local and Community Projects budget request form for the 28<sup>th</sup> Legislative District. In previous years, the City has been awarded funding for the Electron Way/Contra Costa Ave Intersection Improvement Project, Water Meter Replacement Program, and the Fircrest Pool.
- The January 2<sup>nd</sup> Civil Service Commission meeting was canceled. The Civil Service Commission will hold a special meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM to recertify the lateral police officer eligibility list.

- City Manager Masko finished the new Councilmember Orientation Handbook and held an orientation meeting with Councilmember-Elect Karen Mauer-Smith.
- Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart is working on updating the City website with the 2024 agenda and meeting minute links for the Planning Commission, Civil Service Commission, and the City Council.
- City Manager Masko continued to spend a significant amount of time on personnel issues.
- The City received approved Annual Title VI Compliance reports for 2021 and 2022 from the Washington State Department of Transportation. The City is required to report on Title VI accomplishments and goals and provide Nondiscrimination Assurances each year. The City of Fircrest strives for equity and inclusion throughout all processes and procedures and is committed to the pursuit of equality and nondiscrimination. By completing the Title VI reporting, the City is eligible to continue to receive federal funding and aid.
- City Manager Masko attended the pre-legislative session Town Hall meeting held yesterday at the Fircrest Community Center. State Representatives Dan Bronoske and Mari Leavitt answered questions from constituents during the forum, which was moderated by Fircrest Councilmember Hunter George and University Place Councilmember Steve Worthington.
- City Manager Masko updated the Fircrest City Council Rules of Procedures into a searchable PDF format to allow for easier reference by Councilmembers and staff. The updated version includes a table of contents and links to internal and external references.
- The City received a total of 271 public records requests in 2023. In 2022, the City received 227 public records requests. These requests continue to require a considerable amount of staff time, especially for Clerk Burkhart.

#### **4. Police Department Update**

- Fircrest officers responded to 112 calls for service this past week, including 76 traffic stops, which generated 47 notices of infraction. Officers also wrote one parking ticket, issued eight criminal citations, and conducted six security checks. Officers also responded to various calls, including two motor vehicle collisions, two alarms, and four subject stops. Officers had several community policing events (foot patrols, citizen assists, security checks, COP activities, welfare checks, and suspicious people and vehicles), wrote nineteen reports, worked on one follow-up investigation, and assisted with five outside jurisdiction responses. There were ten misdemeanor arrests and one warrant served.
- For the month of December, officers had 301 traffic stops, resulting in 193 notices of infraction.
- We are continuing to work on background checks for our lateral police candidates. We expect to make a decision about who to move to the final stage following certification of the Civil Service list next week.
- Police Chief Schaub continued exploring the 800 MHz radio option and spoke with a representative from Tacoma this week. More information will be forthcoming over the next month.
- The rough draft of a model Civil Service Rules update was completed this week and is being reviewed by staff. The Civil Service Rules and Regulations have not been updated since 1989.
- Preliminary data shows that Fircrest officers responded to 7,784 calls for service in 2023. Of those, a little over 2,400 were traffic-related.

## 5. Finance Department Update

The 2022 Financial Statements Audit and Accountability Audit were completed this past week by the Washington State Auditor's Office. We are happy to report that there were no findings or management letter items. Thank you to Finance Director Colleen Corcoran and Accountant Julie Dunbar for all of their hard work that culminated in this outcome!

## 6. Parks & Recreation

### *Projects*

- Whittier Park Master Plan – The [Whittier Park Master Plan webpage](#) was updated two weeks ago with the current AHBL Master Plan documents. We are looking at options for holding an additional open house or community engagement session.
- Community Center Close-out - Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover is working with Kassel and Associates, the general contractor, to warranty three dead trees. After inspection by Greenleaf Landscaping, they discovered that the watering system installed by the contractor was placing too much water near the roots of the trees, leading to root decay. Many of the trees bounced back, but there are three that still need to be replaced. Kassel disagrees with this assessment and believes the trees died due to improper care and/or a design flaw. Staff is exploring options to move forward to resolve this issue.

### *Recreation Programs*

- Youth basketball team practices resumed this week following a hiatus during the last week of December. Teams are now preparing for their first week of games that will begin next week. We have 380 kids between kindergarten and 6<sup>th</sup> grade participating this year.
- Table Tennis continues to grow in popularity. We have a dedicated group of people who play table tennis on Tuesday mornings, Wednesday afternoons, and Thursday mornings. Mary McCarthy, one of our regular players, recently purchased and donated some very nice table tennis court barriers. These barriers are placed between and behind the tables and keep the balls from interfering with other games and underfoot. These barriers are both a convenience and a safety measure to ensure our players stay safe while recreating in the Community Center.



### *Senior Programs*

- January Senior Trip – There are still five spots remaining for the January Senior Trip happening on Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The [Tour of the State Capitol](#) is a guided tour spanning approximately 50 minutes and will explore notable areas such as the North Foyer, Rotunda, State Reception Room, and Legislative Galleries. Following the tour, enjoy a delightful lunch at Meconi's Italian Subs, with an extra treat from Wagner's European Bakery across the street. Departure time is 9:45 AM from the Community Center, with an expected return time of 3:30 PM. The registration fee is \$35.
- Recreation staff is working with a local business as a potential sponsor for Senior Mornings. Although the level of sponsorship will be significantly less than the amount of support the Edwards Family Foundation provided in 2022, this will help offset the cost of doughnuts and coffee. Senior mornings are on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at the Community Center.

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.

## ***Events***

- Dad & Daughter Sock Hop – Staff is busy preparing for the Dad & Daughter Dance. Evergreen Home Loans – The Roffe Team has graciously provided an \$800 sponsorship donation this year and is thrilled to be part of the excitement. Tickets for the dance are limited due to facility capacity and go on sale to Fircrest residents on Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup>. In the occurrence that tickets don't see out in the first three weeks, they will go on sale to non-residents starting on January 29<sup>th</sup>. Additional information is available on the City [website](#).
- 2024 Vendor Application – The 2024 Fircrest Community Events Vendor Application is now open. Applications for our summer events are being accepted for artists and makers with handmade or highly curated, quality boutique goods, locally owned food trucks or vendors, and locally sourced sweet treats or prepackaged food items. Submitting an application does not guarantee a spot at an event. Additional information and the vendor application are available at [2024 Fircrest Vendor Application \(jotform.com\)](#).

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."

## **7. Planning & Building Update**

- The City received two new code enforcement requests this past week. The first was for receptacles left in the right-of-way after garbage pick-up day that were blocking parking near the intersection of Alameda Avenue and Dartmouth Street. The second request is regarding remodeling work and an abandoned appliance along the right-of-way along the 400 block of Buena Vista Avenue. Code Enforcement Officer Kristin Singh is investigating both requests.
- Community Development (CD) Director Mark Newman is preparing a 2024 Legislative Bill Tracker for the City Council and the Planning Commission related to new housing laws expected to be voted on during the upcoming legislative session. The legislative session commences on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and ends on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- In partnership with South Sound Housing Affordability Partners, the City has launched a new [Developer Portal](#), which is a one-stop shop containing links to the City's development codes, regulations, long-range adopted plans, and contact information. Links to the portal have been posted on the [Planning and Building Department webpage](#).
- CD Director Newman updated staff on a new internal mapping application to better assist with finding water and sewer infrastructure, property information, and recorded documents.
- Permit Coordinator Kristin Singh continues to lead the effort in fulfilling public records requests for the department. If you are a property owner or resident in search of site plans, permit records or floor plans, you can submit a [Public Records Request Form](#) to locate them. Staff will research the request and send you the relevant records if they are available.
- The [2024 Pierce County Point-in-Time \(PIT\) Count](#) of people experiencing homelessness will take place on the evening of January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Per Pierce County Human Services, "The count is an unduplicated count on a single night of people in our community experiencing homelessness. These counts help us plan services and programs to address local needs, measure progress in reducing homelessness, and more."

## 8. Public Works Update

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

Highlights include: (in addition to routine daily tasks)

### *Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater*

- Removal and stowing of all Holiday décor.
- The old bucket truck passed the dielectric boom test and is now ready to post for sale. Staff is coordinating with Terex, as they sell this equipment nationwide.

### *Maintenance – Parks & Facilities*

- Staff continued the office painting project.
- Removal and stowing of all Holiday décor.

### *Project Updates*

- Well #7 (Claremont)
  - We anticipate receiving repair estimates to present to the insurance company by early next week.
- Fircrest Park Maintenance Facility Structure Upgrade
  - We anticipate receiving construction estimates to present to the City Manager by the end of next week.
- 44<sup>th</sup> Street West & 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
  - The Council approved the Pape & Sons construction contract on December 12<sup>th</sup>.
  - We are providing a Notice to Proceed and identifying dates for preconstruction meetings.
- 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 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West
  - Engineering design is in process, and we are anticipating going out for construction bid by June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.
- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
  - Program completion is at 49%. Exchanges are on hold due to reduced staffing over the holidays and 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%

- 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.

- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West
  - The engineering design contract is going to Council on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- Claremont Street Grind & Overlay TIB Grant
  - 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.
  - Grant agreement documents are being brought forward to the Council for acceptance on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
  - We received a \$153,000 appropriation of funds from the State Legislature.
  - We received notification from the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) that this project is clear to move forward without any further action by DAHP.
  - We are preparing to present this to the Council on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024.

**9. Westside Disposal Rate Increase**

Westside Disposal has submitted a request for an annual rate adjustment as allowed by their contract with the City of Fircrest. If granted, the proposed rates would become effective March 1, 2024. This rate adjustment is made up of two parts: (1) A disposal fee adjustment at the LRI landfill, effective March 1, 2024. The disposal tip fee charged to Westside Disposal will change from the current \$171.23 per ton to \$174.84 per ton, an increase of 2.1%. (2) A CPI-based annual adjustment of 4.6%. The recycling commodity surcharge will also adjust from 0.83% to 0.94%.

Sample rate adjustments for the most common services are:

Garbage Service Level	Pick-up Frequency	Current Rate 3-1-2023	Proposed Rate 3-1-2024	Increase	Percentage	Recycling Surcharge
12-gallon garbage cart	1x per week	\$20.94	\$21.79	\$0.85	4.1%	\$0.20
24-gallon garbage cart	Every other week	\$19.44	\$20.23	\$0.79	4.1%	\$0.19
64-gallon garbage cart	Every other week	\$35.00	\$36.37	\$1.37	3.9%	\$0.34

A public hearing will be held at Fircrest City Hall, 115 Ramsdell Street, on January 23, 2024, at 7:15 PM or shortly thereafter to receive comments on the proposed rate increase.

For questions regarding the rate adjustment, please contact Westside Disposal, Inc. at 253-564-3212. Complete copies of the proposed rates are available at the office of Westside Disposal, located at 2815 Rochester St. W. in University Place.

**10. Tacoma Public Residential Incentives**

Windows – Installing energy-efficient windows can lower your utility bills and make your home more comfortable year-round. If your house has electric heat and either single-pane or double-pane metal windows, upgrading will help conserve energy and save you a significant amount of money each year. Tacoma Public Utilities is offering two incentives to help pay for new windows for your home or multi-family property (up to four units), ranging from \$50 to \$100 per window and \$200 to \$400 per sliding door. There is also a deferred loan program available for qualifying households based on monthly pre-tax income. Terms and conditions can be found at [Windows - Tacoma Public Utilities \(mytpu.org\)](http://mytpu.org).

## 11. Power Outage Readiness

Before a power outage occurs, it is time to plan ahead. Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) offers these helpful tips as we approach winter storm season:

- ❄️ If you have Life Sustaining Equipment, call 253-502-8600. TPU will notify you before planned outages and tag your meter with a medical seal if your doctor completes and sends them a Healthcare Provider form.
- ❄️ [Register](#) for the Tacoma Power outage platform. TPU's outage portal, website, and outage map are mobile responsive, so you can access them via your smartphone when your power is out.
- ❄️ Update your notification preferences so you can report outages online and via text and receive updates by email.
- ❄️ Keep the TPU outage number handy: 253-502-8602.
- ❄️ Prepare an emergency kit. These kits could include batteries, flashlights, non-perishable food, and water. A checklist can be found at [Make A Plan | Ready.gov](#).
- ❄️ Have a list of contacts available and keep your cell phone(s) charged.
- ❄️ Ask TPU to trim or remove hazardous trees away from power lines by calling 253-502-8729. TPU will remove trees and related debris that are unlawful for a qualified contractor to remove.

During a power outage, follow these tips to learn more and stay safe:

- ❄️ Visit TPU's [Power Outage Map](#) to report your outage and view information about outages in progress.
- ❄️ Turn off and unplug electronics such as computers, TVs, and security systems.
- ❄️ Turn off all appliances, water heater, air conditioning and heating units, and lights.
- ❄️ Keep your refrigerator closed to keep food cold. Remove ice cream from the freezer; it is one of the first things to melt and is messy. For tips on food safety, see the Centers for Disease Control's [website](#).
- ❄️ Turn on a porch light and one inside light so you and TPU's crews will know when your service is restored.
- ❄️ Stay inside. If outside, stay away from any damaged or downed power lines – always assume they are energized. Move away and call 911.
- ❄️ Do not use a natural gas range to heat your home. Don't burn charcoal for heat or cooking indoors. Both fuels give off dangerous fumes.
- ❄️ Use flashlights, not candles. Candles may start a fire.
- ❄️ Use generators properly. Never plug portable or auxiliary generators into a wall outlet. Learn more about generator safety at [Safety Information - Tacoma Public Utilities](#).

What to do once your power is restored:

- ❄️ Turn lights and appliances back on one at a time to avoid overloading circuit breakers.
- ❄️ If you see downed power lines, do not go near them. Call 911

To learn more about how TPU restores power, visit [How We Restore Power - \(mytpu.org\)](#).