



City Manager's Update February 2, 2024



To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: February 2, 2024
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. Upcoming Meetings – Week of February 5th – February 9th

- Joint City Council/Planning Commission Meeting Tuesday, February 6th at 6:00 PM

2. Council Agenda Items – February 6th, 2024

- 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update
- Whittier Elementary School Project Update
- Washington Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Grant

3. Administration

Administration highlights include:

- City Manager Dawn Masko, Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart, and Public Works Director Tyler Bemis collaborated on a Local Community Project request for submittal last week for the Alameda Avenue Sidewalk Extension Project. The Legislative Capital Request, sponsored by Representative Mari Leavitt, is for a \$400,000 appropriation to design and construct a sidewalk on the west side of Alameda Avenue between Cypress Point Avenue and Emerson Street. The anticipated project cost is \$590,519. 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 February 5th Civil Service Commission meeting was rescheduled for Tuesday, February 13th at 4:30 PM at City Hall. The rescheduled meeting will be publicly noticed as required by the Open Public Meetings Act.
- A Civil Service Lateral Police Officer oral board is scheduled for February 5th with one applicant currently slated to be interviewed.
- The City received one public records request this week. A total of 23 requests were received in January.

- City Manager Masko continued to spend a significant amount of time on personnel issues.
- The City is currently recruiting a [Recreation Specialist](#). Additional information and application materials can be found on the City’s [Employment Opportunities](#) webpage.
- Clerk Burkhart is working with department directors on updating the City’s contract index.
- The Fircrest Employee Safety Committee met and discussed adopting the 2024 work plan, updating the City-owned vehicle accident form, and posting City evacuation routes for emergency readiness. Next month the committee will be conducting quarterly inspections.
- City Manager Masko has been following legislative session activities. The Association of Washington Cities (AWC) releases an [AWC Hot Sheet](#) every week, which is intended to serve as an easy reference guide for certain bills of interest to cities. AWC also updates a [Bill Tracker](#) webpage, which covers legislative bills from a wide array of topics, including public safety, finance, human services, and land use and planning.
- The City Clerk’s Office scheduled an educational meet and greet for employees to meet with the City’s Aflac representatives. The City continues to maintain its commitment to providing employees with valuable benefits.
- City Manager Masko, Public Works Director Bemis, and Project Coordinator Bob Jean continued to meet to discuss the sewer interlocal agreement.
- City Manager Masko worked with other City departments on the Community Center close-out, public records requests, an RFP for a Missing Middle Housing consultant, job descriptions, the 2024 Budget Document, and Town Topics, among other items.

4. Police Department Update

Fircrest officers responded to 690 calls for service in January, including 411 traffic stops, which generated 264 notices of infraction. Additional information is provided in the chart below.

Call Activity	Number of Calls	Call Activity	Number of Calls
Traffic Stops	411	Follow-Ups	16
Notice of Infraction	264	Foot Patrol	31
Parking Tickets	5	Motor Vehicle Thefts	4
Citations Issued	32	Outside Jurisdiction Responses	11
Motor Vehicle Collisions	7	Security Checks	30
Reports Written	62	Subject Stops	7
Misdemeanor Arrests	29	Suspicious Vehicles	8
Alarms	7	Vandalism	4
Community Oriented Policing	37	Vehicle Prowl Complaints	11
Disabled Vehicles	6	Welfare Checks	10
Domestic Violence	5	911 Calls – Trouble Unknown	7

- Officers C. Roberts and M. Bugarin arrested a male on Wednesday morning with an outstanding felony arrest warrant. They also recovered narcotics in a search of the subject incident to the arrest.
- Police Chief Ron Schaub participated in a conference video call with T-Mobile representatives to discuss what T-Mobile can provide the city in case of a natural or man-made disaster.
- Unfortunately, we were unable to complete the hiring process with the lateral police candidates who were undergoing the background process. Chief Schaub and Sergeant Gollinger interviewed the third and final lateral candidate on the Civil Service list yesterday. A hiring decision will be made within the next week.
- Chief Schaub participated in an accreditation webinar sponsored by Lexipol. Accreditation is a goal of the Police for 2025-26. The ramping-up process takes approximately 18 months.
- Police officers made a plethora of misdemeanor arrests for Driving on a Suspended License this past week.
- Chief Schaub spoke with the Pierce County Chiefs Association President regarding potentially switching from the 700 MHz radio system to the 800 MHz system owned by the City of Tacoma. Thus far, we are being told that we are stuck with the 700 MHz service due to a policy decision made by the two system owners. This is an ongoing issue, and more information will be forthcoming.
- The Police Department successfully passed our technical security audit with the Washington State Patrol.
- The Domestic Violence pamphlet that is handed out to every victim has been updated.
- Two replacement Ford Patrol SUVs included in the 2024 budget were ordered this past week, as well as the two budgeted rifle-rated patrol shields.
- Chief Schaub participated in a WA Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs (WASPC) legislative update today. This weekly briefing from WASPC staff discusses where various police-related legislation is at in the legislative process.
- Chief Schaub was interviewed this week by former Councilmember Joe Barrentine for his Fircrest-specific podcast 7 Trees.

5. Finance Department Update

Interviews for the part-time Accountant I position took place yesterday and today. We received 25 applications and interviewed six applicants. Finance Director Colleen Corcoran and City Manager Masko will interview the top candidate(s) next week and will make a contingent job offer based on the successful completion of a background check.

A new computer will need to be ordered for this position which will be funded from accumulated interest in the Finance division's Equipment Replacement & Reserves (ERR). This will be included in the first budget amendment of the year.

6. Parks & Recreation

- Parks & Recreation is currently seeking interested applicants for our [Recreation Specialist](#) position, which is currently being advertised. Three applications have been received to date. Additional information is available on the [Employment Opportunities](#) webpage.
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- The Edwards Family Aquatic Center [website](#) has been updated for the upcoming 2024 pool season. Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover has been actively progressing through the pool preparation process, including tasks such as staffing, programming, and maintenance. The Parks & Recreation team is committed to ensuring a smooth and enjoyable experience for everyone as they dive into the 2024 summer pool activities.

Projects

- Whittier Park Master Plan – AHBL is currently pulling together all the data into a unified master plan concept and is gearing up for a presentation to the City Council. A third public outreach meeting is in the works, either facilitated by AHBL or by City staff. A third AHBL-facilitated meeting would require a contract change order to be approved by the Council. Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover is receiving a sneak peek at preliminary sketches from the consultants today. The AHBL team is focused on moving the project forward and is committed to keeping things transparent and fostering collaboration throughout the planning process.
- Community Center Close-out - Director Grover has been working with Chris Burke, the project manager overseeing the Community Center and Pool projects for Kassel and Associates, the general contractor. Over the past few months, we've addressed various warranty items with the project contractors, and the final item on the checklist pertains to the deceased trees on the property. It has been determined that too much water was placed near the roots of the trees, leading to root decay. Pinpointing fault – whether it is related to design, installation, or programming – for the three deceased trees has proven challenging, and the cost to pursue remedies from the contractor or a subcontractor will cost the City more than the estimated \$1,500 cost to replace the trees. At this point, the City will be moving forward with the final close-out of the project.

Senior Programs

- Bonus February Senior Trip – There are still seven spots remaining for the bonus February Senior Trip to the [Tacoma Glass Museum](#) on Thursday, February 15th, 2024. This special Senior's Tea & Tour, led by a docent through the galleries and Hot Shop, will culminate with tea and cookies in the Education Studio, along with an art-making project. Additionally, in honor of Black History Month, attendees will visit the special exhibit called A Two-Way Mirror, Double Consciousness in Contemporary Glass by Black Artists. Lunch will be at the café La Finestra within the museum. Departure time is 9:15 AM from the Community Center, with an expected return time of 3:00 PM. The registration fee of \$45 includes transportation and museum admission. Participants are responsible for their own lunch. Register online at [Program: Senior Trip - Tacoma Glass Museum \(recdesk.com\)](#).

Senior Valentine's Day Party – Join your fellow seniors at a free Valentine's Day party! The party will feature Bingo, games, snacks, treats, music, and FUN at the Community Center Multi-Purpose Room from 12:30 – 2:30 PM on Wednesday, February 14th. No registration is required.

Recreation Programs

- Pee Wee Indoor Soccer – Registration is open for the Pee Wee Indoor Soccer program. This is an instructional 6-week league introducing Pre-Kindergarten kids aged 4-5 years old to indoor soccer. Games and practices will be held on Saturdays, beginning on March 18th. For additional information and to register, visit [Pee Wee Indoor Soccer \(Pre-K\) \(recdesk.com\)](#).
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- Recreation staff and Director Grover met with TeamWrk Foundation last Wednesday to explore potential partnerships for teen late nights and programming in 2024. Founded by Marcel Cunningham, a Fircrest native, TeamWrk creates safe and inclusive video game communities, including camps and clubs that promote team building and enjoyable activities. Their programs, such as NetWRK & WRK Shops, provide online and onsite workshops focusing on online safety, digital literacy, and responsible gaming. One of their initiatives, Late Night, is specifically designed for youth in grades 6 – 12, offering a secure environment with gaming, VR, tournaments, and various activities. Currently, we are in the tentative stages of scheduling our first partnership with TeamWrk for a teen late night on Friday, April 12th.

Events

- Significant progress has been made on various 2024 Community Events:
 - The Daddy-Daughter Dance hit capacity registration the first morning it was open to non-residents. Staff continue to work on sponsor inserts, thank you posters, and volunteer confirmation for the big night!
 - The [Medallion Madness](#) medallion and prize inserts were printed, volunteer leprechauns were confirmed, and branding of the medallions has started.
 - The 2024 Haunted Trails event poster has been created.
 - We have received donations of nine prize baskets each for the Easter Egg Hunt from the Curious Bear and the Fircrest Kiwanis, as well as cone card donations from BLISS.
 - Meldrop has been confirmed as the opening band, and Hook Me Up Band has been confirmed as the headliner for the 2024 [Strawberry Festival](#).
 - Planning for Fircrest Fun Days has kicked off with a planning session meeting, initial poster design, and a sponsorship team meeting.
 - Vendor applications for the 2024 events are under review, with a notable 84 applications received to date. Vendor applications are available at [2024 Fircrest Vendor Application \(jotform.com\)](#).
- [Fircrest Picnic and Rod Run](#) – Registration is currently open for the 2024 Fircrest Picnic and Rod Run. This year’s event will be held on July 7th. Registration is limited to the first 300 cars. Register online at [Fircrest Picnic and Rod Run](#).

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 issued ten permits in January 2024. These include four plumbing permits, four mechanical permits, and two single-family residence remodel building permits. There is also one commercial roofing permit currently under review.
 - The City received one code enforcement request this week regarding security floodlights and excessive glare along the 500 block of Golden Gate Avenue. Staff continues to monitor issues at this location to create a plan to address the situation.
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- Community Development (CD) Director Mark Newman met with Tacoma Public School's consultant Parametrix to discuss project management, public engagement, and design-build plans for the new Whittier Elementary School. This information will be shared at the Joint City Council/Planning Commission Special Meeting on Tuesday, February 6th at 6 PM at City Hall.
- CD Director Newman is preparing public review materials for the 2024 Draft Comprehensive Plan that will be discussed at the Joint City Council/Planning Commission Special Meeting on February 6th. Additionally, he is preparing the Year 2 Department of Commerce Comprehensive Plan grant for \$62,500 for City Council approval on February 13th. The grant will reimburse the City for consultant work completed through June to update the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Department of Commerce has awarded the City of Fircrest a \$22,500 grant to install four Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging stations as part of the WAEVCP grant, pending review and acceptance by the City Council. More details will be forthcoming at a later date.
- CD Director Newman processed six new business licenses this week.
- Permit Coordinator/Code Enforcement Officer Kristin Singh has created a tracking sheet for all active permits, code enforcement cases, expiring permits, and public records requests to better track and document what is occurring in the Planning & Building Department.
- CD Director Newman continues to track the progress of various housing bills in the 2024 legislative session.
- An architect is under contract to design a proposal for the Orchard Street Properties (commonly referred to as the Bourgaize Property). Once the applicant formally submits an application and shares plans, this information will be passed on to the City Council, the Planning Commission, and the public.
- CD Director Newman responded to an inquiry regarding cannabis dispensary regulations within the City as part of a research request on local laws in the states of Washington and Oregon.
- CD Director Newman met with the Department of Commerce to discuss updating the City's Critical Areas Ordinance. The bulk of the regulations have not been updated since 2005 and need to be updated as part of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan.
- The Chambers-Clover Creek Watershed Council will be hosting an in-person, café-style brainstorming session at Clover Park Technical College on Monday, February 5th, from 3:00 – 5:00 PM to discuss what can be done to improve conditions in our watershed for people and fish. Please contact Barbara Ann Smolko at Pierce County Surface Water Management for more information at 253-798-6156 or barbaraann.smolko@piercecountywa.gov.

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

- Cathodic protection testing for all three reservoirs was performed this week. Testing is done to ensure steel water reservoirs are protected from corrosion through a low electric current. We are waiting on the test results.
 - Public Works Coordinator Vicky Walston is preparing the annual Cross Connection and Water Use Efficiency reports.
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- The old bucket truck passed the required dielectric boom test and is now ready for sale. Plans are to post this piece of equipment for sale locally before sending it to auction.
- Multiple potholes were repaired with temporary patches. Permanent asphalt repairs at various locations are scheduled for next week.

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- The new security system and fire monitoring equipment installation is now completed at the Public Works Building. Work is underway at City Hall for the same security and fire system upgrades.
- The Whittier Trail bridge was repaired due to windfall damage.
- Staff built wooden cornhole boards for the Community Center.

Project Updates

- Well #7 (Claremont)
 - We received the first of two repair estimates and will review them with Administration to follow the proper next steps for insurance purposes.
- Fircrest Park Maintenance Facility Structure Upgrade
 - We are preparing to post this project for design/build RFP.
- 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - Notice to Proceed has been provided, and we are 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 67th Ave West
 - Engineering design is in process, and we are anticipating going out for construction bid by June 1st, 2024.
- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
 - Program completion is at 49%. Exchanges are on hold due to reduced staffing 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%

- 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.
 - We are preparing an amendment to the 6-year TIP to present to the Council prior to acceptance of the grant funds.

- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - Design is in process for construction in 2024.
 - Fircrest engineering consultants are coordinating with Tacoma engineering and ADA staff and conducted a site visit on January 24th.
- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67th Ave West
 - Council approved the engineering design contract on January 9th, 2024.
 - We are preparing a Notice to Proceed with WSDOT.
- Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
 - We received a \$153,000 appropriation of funds from the State Legislature.
 - All notifications and documentation have been provided to the Department of Commerce (DOC). We will present to the Council once the green light is received from DOC.

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 was held at Fircrest City Hall, 115 Ramsdell Street, on January 23, 2024 to receive comments on the proposed rate increase. The City Council will vote on this item at the February 13th Council meeting.

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. National Wear Red Day

City staff participated in [National Wear Red Day](#) today to raise awareness about cardiovascular disease – the leading cause of death in women. According to the American Heart Association, 45% of women over the age of 20 are living with some form of cardiovascular disease. Heart disease and stroke cause 1 in 3 deaths among women each year – more than all cancers combined. Visit www.heart.org for additional information on National Wear Red Day and American Heart Month.

