



# City Manager's Update

## February 9, 2024



**To:** Fircrest City Council  
**From:** Dawn Masko, City Manager  
**Date:** February 9, 2024  
**Subject:** City Manager's Weekly Update

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### Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

Below is the weekly 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 12<sup>th</sup> – February 16<sup>th</sup>

- Civil Service Commission Meeting Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM
- City Council Meeting Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM

#### 2. Council Agenda Items – February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024

- Centennial Committee Appointments
- Setting a Public Hearing on February 27, 2024, to receive comments on a 6-year Transportation Improvement Plan Amendment
- Ordinance – Solid Waste Rate Adjustment
- Ordinance – Water General Facility Charge and Connection Fees
- Ordinance – Sewer General Facility Charge and Connection Fees
- Resolution – Department of Commerce Periodic Update Grant Agreement
- Resolution – City Council Rules of Procedure Amendment

#### 3. Administration

Administration highlights include:

- Over 75% of City employees met with the City's Aflac representative this past week to learn more about supplemental insurance offered through their employee benefits. All full- and part-time employees will now receive health advocacy and wellness, as well as financial/legal fitness Aflac services, at no cost.
  - A Civil Service Lateral Police Officer oral board was held on February 5<sup>th</sup>, with one applicant interviewed. Another oral board will be scheduled in the coming weeks to interview additional candidates who have recently submitted application materials.
  - City Manager Masko, Public Works Director Bemis, and Project Coordinator Bob Jean continued to meet to discuss the sewer interlocal agreement.
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- The rescheduled February Civil Service Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, at 4:30 PM at City Hall. The Lateral Police Officer eligibility list will be certified at this meeting. The [eligibility list](#) is posted on the Civil Service Commission [webpage](#).
- The City received three public records requests this week for a total of 27 requests in 2024.
- City Manager Masko continued to spend a significant amount of time on personnel issues.
- The first review of applications for the Recreation Specialist position was on February 6<sup>th</sup>. The City received a total of five applicants for the position.
- City Manager Masko continues to follow 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, as well as a [Bill Tracker](#) webpage, which covers legislative bills for a wide array of topics.
- Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart continues to review educational webinars regarding employee benefits and best practices and has also created a tracking log for Council proclamations passed since 2018.
- 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 City departments on the Community Center close-out, public records requests, utility rate increases, and the 2024 Budget Document. She also began working on the development of a comprehensive taxes, rates, and fees schedule.
- In the last 30 days, the City’s website has had 22,336 page views with a total of 6,135 users.

**4. Police Department Update**

Fircrest officers responded to 185 calls for service for the period of 1/28/2024 – 2/4/2024, including 107 traffic stops, which generated 68 notices of infraction. Additional information is provided in the chart below.

| <b>Police Officer Activity for 1/28/2024 – 2/4/2024</b> |                        |                               |                        |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Call Activity</b>                                    | <b>Number of Calls</b> | <b>Call Activity</b>          | <b>Number of Calls</b> |
| Traffic Stops   | 107                    | Motor Vehicle Collisions      | 1                      |
| Notice of Infraction                                    | 68                     | Outside Jurisdiction Response | 4                      |
| Citations Issued  | 10                     | Parking Tickets               | 2                      |
| Misdemeanor Arrests                                     | 9                      | Reports Written               | 20                     |
| Alarms  | 4                      | Security Checks               | 8                      |
| Community Oriented Policing                             | 4                      | Subject Stops                 | 2                      |
| Domestic Violence                                       | 3                      | Suspicious Vehicles           | 3                      |
| Follow-Ups  | 8                      | Vehicle Prowl Complaints      | 4                      |
| Foot Patrol   | 7                      | Welfare Checks                | 4                      |
| Found Property  | 2                      | 911 Calls – Trouble Unknown   | 2                      |

- Officers Roberts and Bugarin arrested a male with an outstanding felony warrant at a residence in the City.
- Sergeant Gollinger attended the Wainwright Intermediate School lockdown drill on February 7<sup>th</sup>.
- The Civil Service Oral Board interviewed one lateral candidate on February 5<sup>th</sup>. The Civil Service list will be certified by the Civil Service Board on February 13<sup>th</sup>. We have received two additional applicants and will schedule oral board interviews for them in the next few weeks.
- Chief Ron Schaub attended the Public Safety Communications Operations Committee meeting at South Sound 911 on February 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Chief Schaub's interview by former Councilmember Joe Barrentine for his Fircrest-specific podcast 7 Trees is now [online](#).

## 5. Finance Department Update

Finance Director Colleen Corcoran and City Manager Masko are working to schedule interviews with the top candidate(s) for the part-time Accountant position next week.

## 6. Parks & Recreation

- Unfortunately, the City recently became aware of an attempted scam targeting one of our event vendors. Prospective vendors typically apply to participate in our City events via Jotform. Recreation staff review all applications and assign vendors to specific events based on their applications. Several weeks before each event, vendors are invoiced through RecDesk. In this particular case, a vendor received a social media direct message requesting payment through Venmo. Thankfully, the vendor alerted City staff before proceeding with payment. In response, we have drafted and distributed a statement to all of our vendors, urging them to exercise caution when receiving communications that deviate from our standard procedures. We emphasize the importance of using caution and encourage vendors to reach out to us for clarification if they encounter any suspicious activity.
- Pierce Conservation District recently hosted their monthly work party at Whittier Park, where they successfully planted a variety of native plants and ground cover.

### *Projects*

- Whittier Park Master Plan – Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover met with AHBL last Friday and got a sneak peek at two promising concepts for Whittier Park that they have developed. They will continue to deliberate and refine the information as they move towards selecting one final concept. Once Director Grover receives the draft concepts, he can initiate discussions on potential next steps and logistics for scheduling an additional meeting.
- Community Center Close-out - Director Grover is moving forward with final project close-out.

### *Recreation Programs*

- Councilmember Nikki Bufford served as our guest reader during Tot Story Time this week. She captivated a capacity crowd of toddlers and their adults on Tuesday morning by reading *Max and the Tag-Along Moon*.
  - Recreation staff are currently working to develop a more comprehensive volunteer program for after-school activities, including chess, video games, and gym activities.
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## *Senior Programs*

- 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 14<sup>th</sup>. No registration is required.
- Bonus February Senior Trip – There are still seven spots remaining for the bonus February Senior Trip to the [Tacoma Glass Museum](#) on Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 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 lunch. Register online at [Senior Trip - Tacoma Glass Museum \(recdesk.com\)](#).
- March Senior Trip – Seniors won't want to miss the March trip to Imagine Monet - The Immersive Exhibition. Tacoma Arts Live is hosting this unique immersive experience on the art of French painter Claude Monet at the Tacoma Armory. This exhibit promises to transport you into Monet's vibrant and dreamlike world by immersing visitors in a journey of more than 200 paintings utilizing state-of-the-art 360° projections on walls and floors. Imagine Monet is the exhibition produced and created by the French directors Annabelle Mauger and Julien Baron, the world's first directors of a digital immersive exhibition.

Registration for this unique experience begins on Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. The registration fee of \$45 includes transportation and museum admission. Participants are responsible for their lunch, which will be at the Old Spaghetti Factory. Departure time is 10:45 AM from the Community Center, with an expected return time of 3:00 PM. More information is available online at [Senior Trip - Imagine Monet The Immersive Exhibit \(recdesk.com\)](#).

## *Events*

- The sold-out Daddy-Daughter Dance is tonight in the Names Family Foundation Gymnasium. Volunteers have been hard at work to ensure an exceptional time for both kids and adults alike.
- Events Coordinator Judy Schmidtke and the Easter Eggstravaganza volunteer team are in the midst of planning and preparing for this year's annual Easter Egg Hunt, scheduled for Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 AM.

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 one mechanical permit this past week for the installation of a new heat pump.
  - The City received six new code enforcement requests this week:
    - Two requests regarding an abandoned vehicle in the right-of-way (ROW) on the 1500 block of Cherry Avenue. Code Enforcement Officer Kristin Singh forwarded the requests to the Fircrest Police Department Community Service Officer for review.
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- Potholes and uneven pavement at the intersection of Center Street and South Orchard Street in the City of Tacoma's ROW. The request was forwarded to Public Works for review.
- An uncovered communications pedestal in the Claremont Street ROW at 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The request was forwarded to Public Works. The pedestal has since been fixed.
- Two requests regarding an eroding rockery wall obstructing the sidewalk on Claremont Street between Claremont Court and Panorama Drive. The requests were forwarded to Public Works, which is working with the adjacent property owner to have the wall fixed.
- Staff continues to monitor code enforcement issues at the 500 block of Golden Gate Avenue to create a plan to address the situation.
- An architectural firm is under contract to design a proposal for the Orchard Street Properties (commonly referred to as the Bourgaize Property). The firm has indicated an interest in submitting a docket request for an amendment to the upcoming 2024 Comprehensive Plan for a map change (land use) amendment. This type of map amendment adjusts the Comprehensive Plan land use map to allow a different use and prepares an area for future rezoning. Once the applicant formally submits an application and shares plans, Community Development (CD) Director Mark Newman will pass this information on to the City Council, the Planning Commission, and the public, as well as open up the annual docket request application.
- CD Director Newman helped facilitate a discussion on the 2024 Comprehensive Plan during the February 6<sup>th</sup> Joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting. Discussion focused on the review process, budget, and public outreach strategy for review of the draft.
- CD Director Newman will be attending the Four Corners/Thriving Communities meeting focusing on the South 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Mildred Street West area on February 21<sup>st</sup>.
- The Department of Commerce has alerted the City that the grant amount of \$22,500 awarded to install four Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging stations as part of the WAEVCP grant was incorrectly calculated. A revised grant award amount will be released by Commerce next week.

## **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***

- Two utility staff members and one facilities staff member attended the Evergreen Rural Water Conference this week as part of maintaining their required Continuing Education Units (CEUs).
- Permanent asphalt repairs at various locations, including South Orchard Street, were performed on February 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.
- 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.

### ***Maintenance – Parks & Facilities***

- The new security system installation is now completed at City Hall, and the fire monitoring equipment installation is in process.
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**Project Updates**

- Well #7 (Claremont)
  - We are seeking multiple bids utilizing the MRSC Small Works Roster.
- Fircrest Park Maintenance Facility Structure Upgrade
  - We are seeking multiple bids utilizing the MRSC Small Works Roster.
- 44<sup>th</sup> Street West & 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
  - Notice to Proceed has been provided, and we are identifying dates for preconstruction meetings and preordering of materials.
- Storm Water Pre-Treatment Outfall Grant Project – Emerson Street & Estate Place
  - Final close-out Progress Reports and Payment Requests are in progress.
- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
  - Program completion is at 49%. Exchanges have been on hold due to reduced staffing and inclement weather response efforts.

| <b>TOTAL BY YEAR</b> |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| <b>2019</b>          | 11  |
| <b>2020</b>          | 143 |
| <b>2021</b>          | 444 |
| <b>2022</b>          | 283 |
| <b>2023 YTD</b>      | 295 |

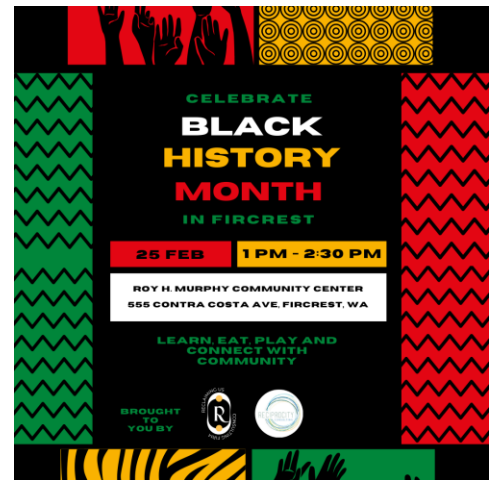
| <b>PROJECT UPDATE</b>            |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Total City Meter Connections     | 2,402      |
| New Meters Installed             | 1,176      |
| Remaining Meters to be Installed | 1,226      |
| <b>Percentage of Completion</b>  | <b>49%</b> |

- Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension (south side) – Woodside Drive to 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West
  - Engineering design is in process. We are requesting a funding extension from PSRC.
- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West
  - The Council approved the engineering design contract on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
  - We are preparing a Notice to Proceed with WSDOT.
- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
  - Design is in process for construction in 2024.
  - Fircrest staff and engineering consultants are continuing communications and coordination efforts with City of Tacoma staff.
- 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.
- 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.
  - An amendment to the 6-year TIP will be presented to the Council on February 27<sup>th</sup>, following a public hearing on February 13<sup>th</sup>.

## 9. Black History Month Celebration

At its meeting on Monday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Fircrest City Council issued a proclamation celebrating February as Black History Month. As part of its proclamation, the City Council invites Fircrest residents to join in this special observance through educational programs, celebrations, and activities highlighting Black and African American history.

A group of Fircrest neighbors have collaborated to bring a community-sponsored public event to the City of Fircrest. Hear from local leaders, network with neighbors, participate in a community art project, and meet some fantastic local Black-owned businesses. The event takes place on Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM at the Community Center.



A list of other local events in Pierce County can be found at [Celebrate Black History Month](#).

## 10. 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%. The City Council will take action on this item at the February 13<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

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              |

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.

## 11. Water/Sewer Assistance Program

Do you need assistance paying your water or sewer bill? The Low-Income Water Assistance Program (LIWAP) is designed to help qualified Pierce County residents pay off debts on water and sewer bills up to \$2,500. The Water/Sewer Assistance Program is currently accepting applications for assistance. Please note that this assistance program did not receive additional funding, so the program will end no later than March 31, 2024, or when funds have been exhausted.

To be eligible for assistance, applicants must meet specific income guidelines and live outside of the Tacoma city limits. For additional information, call 253-798-4328, visit [Water Assistance Program | Pierce County, WA](#), or view the [LIHWAP program flyer](#).

## 12. Tree Coupon Program

Well-placed and well-tended trees can enhance energy savings, stormwater management, air pollutant filtration, ambient air-cooling, and, of course, beauty in the landscape. In an effort to increase the tree canopy cover in Pierce County, the City of Tacoma and Tacoma Public Utilities have partnered together on the [Tree Coupon Program](#).

Tree Coupons are for one-time use per residential property. Coupons are valid at participating tree retailers during the program season for \$30 off each five-gallon or larger tree for up to three trees per coupon/property. For purposes of the program, trees are woody plants whose height is greater than 15 feet at maturity. The last day to request a coupon for the 2023-2024 season is March 15<sup>th</sup>. Coupons must be redeemed by March 31<sup>st</sup>. Tree coupons can be requested online at [2023-2024 Tree Coupon Program](#) or by contacting [trees@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:trees@cityoftacoma.org). Additional information and a list of participating tree retailers can be found at [Tree Coupon Program - City of Tacoma](#).

## 13. Connections & Conversations Series

Tacoma Public Schools is hosting Connections & Conversations: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM. Families are invited to join this virtual event with featured guest Jahmad Canley, diversity, equity, and inclusion expert and author. The event will focus on the power of the village and discuss how parents and the community play a critical role in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Register online at [Connections & Conversations Registration](#).

## 14. After-School Activities – Tacoma Public Schools

Tacoma Public School and community partners have come together to offer fun, meaningful after-school activities to elementary and middle school students. Enrichment activities include sports, arts, and academic support. Registration closes on Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, for Session 3, which runs from February 21<sup>st</sup> to April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

- **Beyond the Bell** activities take place at all of Tacoma’s elementary schools from 3:30 to 6:00 PM, Monday – Friday. Program costs are \$96 per club/activity per session, with flexible pricing available for families who need financial assistance. Session 3 will feature Art Club, Bricks 4 Kidz, and Intramural Flag Football at Whittier Elementary, as well as Friday Fun Days. Students participating in Art Club will explore and share creativity through drawing, sculpting, painting, collaging, and crafting projects. Students will learn the fundamentals of S.T.E.M. education while participating in Bricks 4 Kidz by using Legos and model plans created by engineers and architects. Additional information can be found at [Beyond the Bell - Whittier Schedule](#).
- **Club B** activities take place at all of Tacoma’s middle schools from 2:45 – 5:00 PM, Monday – Thursday. Club B is free for all middle school students! Session 3 programs at Wainwright Middle School include golf at Meadow Park Golf Course, Filmmaking, Art Exploration, Craft Club, Graphic Novel Club, Junior Creator Academy, and Flag Football. Additional information can be found at [Club B - Wainwright Schedule](#).

Free and reduced registration fees are made possible thanks to a host of community funding partners, including Tacoma Creates, the City of Tacoma, Pierce County, Greentrike, Metro Parks Tacoma, Tacoma Public Schools, and private philanthropy. Additional information is available at [Beyond the Bell & Club B - Tacoma Public Schools \(tacomaschools.org\)](#).

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## 15. Community CPR Classes

February is [American Heart Month](#), and this year, the [American Heart Association](#) is focusing on CPR. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is an emergency lifesaving procedure performed when the heart stops beating. The American Heart Association offers several free resources to learn CPR, including [Learn Hands-Only CPR videos](#) and related printable [Hands-Only CPR Resources](#).

Additionally, the Tacoma Fire Department offers free community CPR classes to Fircrest residents. There is no age limit, but participants must be able to physically perform CPR for two minutes to receive a CPR card after completion of the course. The next class being offered is on Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, from 8:30 – 11:30 AM at Fire Station 16 located at 7217 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Pre-registration is required by using the online [CPR Pre-Registration form](#).

## 16. Kids ‘N’ Critters Weekends

Two kids ages 12 and under are FREE, with each paid adult general admission to [Northwest Trek Wildlife Park](#) each weekend in February, plus Presidents’ Day. The discount is available only on tickets purchased at the onsite ticket window and does not apply to Wild Drives or Keeper Adventure Tours. For more information, visit [Kids 'n' Critters Weekends](#).

