



City Manager's Update March 22, 2024



To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: March 22, 2024
Subject: City Manager's Weekly Update

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 March 25th – March 29th

- City Council Meeting Tuesday, March 26th at 7:00 PM

2. Council Meeting Agenda Items – March 26th, 2024

- Setting a Public Hearing on the Stormwater Management Program Plan
- Ordinance – 2024 Budget Amendment #1 – 1st Reading
- Resolution – Middle Housing Consultant Professional Services Agreement
- Resolution – Whittier Park Master Plan Contract Amendment
- Resolution – Community Center Close-out
- Resolution – RWJ Consultants Contract Amendment #2
- BHC Consultants Contract Budget Discussion

3. Administration

Administration highlights include:

- City Manager Dawn Masko and Community Development Director Mark Newman discussed the status of building permits and vesting with Alliance/Prose representatives as they continue to move forward with the project.
 - Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart coordinated with Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover and Public Works Director Tyler Bemis regarding upcoming pool staff and seasonal maintenance worker hiring processes and how to expedite application review.
 - The City received six public records requests this week for a total of 71 requests in 2024.
 - City Manager Masko and CD Director Newman met with BHC Consultants to discuss cost overruns in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan Update and were able to reach a mutually acceptable resolution.
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- The [Assistant Planner/Permit Coordinator](#) and [Public Works Office Coordinator](#) positions are now posted on the City [Employment Opportunities webpage](#) and the AWC [JobNet](#), as well as other applicable job boards. The first review of applications for both positions is April 1st.
- Clerk Burkhart received her Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) – Security and Privacy Training certificate. This annual certification maintains compliance with the FBI CJIS Security Division requirements and allows the City Clerk to continue to handle and process privileged information responsibly and adequately respond to police-related public records requests.
- City Manager Masko reviewed Town Topics, researched the franchise non-compete agreement with TPU, reviewed background materials for several code compliance issues, worked with the City Attorney to update hold harmless/indemnification language for professional services agreements, and updated outdated sections of the City website in response to citizen concerns.
- City Manager Masko was contacted by the owners of a new indoor golf facility that is coming to Fircrest. They have submitted a tenant improvement permit application to convert the former skating rink into the largest indoor golf facility in the United States, featuring putting/chipping greens and trackman simulators. Stay tuned for more details on this exciting new business.
- Clerk Burkhart provided onboarding materials to temporary Court Clerk I, Gina Costanti-Eacrett, who worked for the Court several years ago. Ms. Eacrett will start next week in a temporary, limited-term position to provide coverage during Court Clerk Monica Castilla-Mendoza’s leave of absence, which is expected to last until August 2024.
- In the last 30 days, the City’s website has had 21,197 page views from a total of 6,474 users. Sessions are down 2%, and users are up 1% from the previous 30 days.
- Congratulations to Mayor Pro Tempore Nikki Bufford, who was recognized this past week by Congresswoman Marilyn Strickland for being the first African American woman to serve on the Fircrest City Council. The recognition is part of Congresswoman Strickland’s Women’s History Month spotlights throughout March. [#WomensHistoryMonth](#)



4. Municipal Court Update

The Fircrest-Ruston Municipal Court’s new case management system is officially live! On March 18th, our court successfully launched the new electronic filing (eFile & Serve), the case management system (Enterprise Justice), and probation case management (Enterprise Supervision). We can also begin accepting payments through the online payment portal, Defendant Access.

The Courts of Limited Jurisdiction—Case Management System (CLJ-CMS) Project is the result of years of work to deliver a modern case management system utilizing updated technology to replace the almost 40-year-old system. The new software system will allow courts to manage their cases entirely electronically online, freeing up time and resources that were at capacity utilizing the old intensive and paper-heavy process.

This project was successfully implemented by Fircrest’s small but mighty team of four with the assistance of the CLJ-CMS project team. Fircrest-Ruston became the 2nd municipal court in the state to go live on the new system. Tacoma Municipal Court is the only other court using the new system. The remaining 300+ courts will start rolling out the new system in phases over the next few years.



5. Police Department Update

- Police Chief Ron Schaub attended the South Sound 911 Board of Directors meeting and provided public comment about the single radio system and cost structure situation. He also participated in the Regional Radio Steering Group meeting this week.
- We are sending officers to various training programs to ensure we are up-to-date and working on professional development.
 - Officer C. Roberts will attend Spokane’s EVOC (Emergency Vehicle Operation Course). Officer Roberts will then transition out as our Chief Firearms Instructor.
 - Officer J. Roberts will attend the Tacoma Firearms Instructor Level 1 Course later this summer. Officer Roberts will then transition into the role of Chief Firearms Instructor.
 - Officer Bugarin attended the Metro EVOC training.
 - Sergeant Gollinger will be attending the Supervisor Leadership Institute later this year.
 - Officer Lease desires to take the NRA Firearms Instructor Court to assist Officer J. Roberts with instruction.
 - Chief Schaub is scheduled to attend the Spring WASPC (WA Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs) conference in May.
 - We are working on securing Defensive Tactics instructors to design an ongoing program.
 - Community Service Officer Byrd attended the regional Records Management LERN (Law Enforcement Records Network) meeting in Marysville.
- Fircrest officers responded to 269 calls for service from 3/10/2024 to 3/17/2024, including 194 traffic stops, which generated 122 notices of infraction. The chart below provides additional information.

Police Officer Activity for 3/10/2024 – 3/17/2024			
Call Activity	Number of Calls	Call Activity	Number of Calls
Traffic Stops	194	Outside Jurisdiction Response	7
Notice of Infraction	122	Parking Tickets	3
Citations Issued	10	Reports Written	16
Misdemeanor Arrests	10	Security Checks	1
Alarms	2	Subject Stops	6
Community Oriented Policing	13	Suspicious Vehicles	4
Disabled Vehicles	2	Unwelcome Person	2
Domestic Violence	2	Vehicle Prowls	5
Follow-Ups	2	Welfare Checks	2
Foot Patrol	8	911 Calls – Trouble Unknown	3
Motor Vehicle Collisions	2		

- Chief Schaub, City Manager Masko, and Civil Service Secretary Burkhart are circulating a working draft of the Civil Service Rules incorporating language about entry-level and exceptional entry-level applicants, probation periods, and subscription testing services.
- Our supervisors are working on five annual employee performance evaluations.

6. Finance Department Update

- Finance Director Colleen Corcoran and Accountant Megan Ryan met with Andrews Technology for three days this week for the discovery phase of the electronic timesheet program.
- Administrative Assistant Sierra Lee completed the current issue of Town Topics and worked on the wellness program.
- Accountant Ryan and Accountant Julie Dunbar have been busy training part-time Accountant Wanda Wells on the front desk process and parts of accounts payable and payroll processing.
- Accountant Dunbar is working on February month-end and bank reconciliations and pulling together information for public records requests.

7. Planning & Building Update

- The Planning & Building Department is currently short-staffed as it searches for a new Permit Coordinator/Assistant Planner. We appreciate your patience during this transition.
- The City received three new code enforcement requests this week and continues to monitor existing complaints and requests. The City understands that it is not always possible to keep up with long-term property maintenance such as lawn upkeep and painting. City staff works to address these issues in a community-minded, compassionate spirit where possible.

Code enforcement concerns received this week were:

- There is a concern over the accumulation of trash, food waste, and overgrown vegetation along the 200 block of Alameda Avenue. This is in addition to an existing concern regarding an RV being lived in within a single-family zoning district. Staff sent out a notice letter and will reinspect the property for compliance.
 - There is a concern regarding over-height vegetation blocking the required clear vision triangle along the 600 block of Summit Avenue. Staff sent out a notice letter and will reinspect the property for compliance.
 - Repeat concerns regarding an over-excavated foundation along the 300 block of Harvard Avenue and the accumulation of junk and debris on the lot. Community Development Director Mark Newman has reached out to the building permit applicant, who has agreed to move the foundation forms to meet the 20' required front yard setback. Staff is working to put together a game plan to address the nuisance concerns.
 - City staff issued five new residential plumbing and mechanical permits this week for new water heaters and HVAC work and endorsed eight new business licenses.
 - CD Director Newman and City Manager Masko met with BHC Consultants to resolve budget concerns related to the Comprehensive Plan Update.
 - CD Director Newman received approval from the Department of Commerce for the revised Climate Planning Grant scope of work to include both the urban tree canopy study and a critical areas ordinance update. The City can expect to see the grant contract shortly.
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8. Parks & Recreation

Community Center

- Front Desk Coverage – Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover is coordinating with part-time staff coverage at the front desk due to a leave of absence of our Office Assistant. Several employees have been cross-trained, and schedules have been adjusted to accommodate front-desk coverage. With a mix of one full-time employee, two permanent part-time employees, and various seasonal and casual employees, scheduling can present challenges. However, the new Recreation Specialist position should provide significant relief in this area. As we prepare for the 2025 budget process, Director Grover is exploring the possibility of reducing the number of seasonal and casual employees and creating a third permanent part-time position. Currently, seasonal and casual employees are restricted in the number of hours they can work per month, and adding another permanent part-time position could help streamline scheduling and optimize efficiency for the front-facing positions at the Community Center.
- Operating Hours – As we approach the end of our second full year of operations, Director Grover is taking a closer look at the current operating hours of the Community Center to assess their effectiveness in serving our community. Currently, we are open from 8:00 AM until 9:00 PM, Monday through Friday. While most of our programming ends before or at 8:00 PM, we have observed that there are typically only one or two people in the building between 8:00 PM and 9:00 PM on many evenings. To better utilize our resources, we are considering adjusting our opening hours to start an hour earlier during the week. This adjustment could potentially allow us to accommodate more fitness and senior programming during the mornings. Over the summer months, we will closely monitor the flow of visitors through the building each evening. By gathering data and soliciting feedback from our visitors, we will be in a better position to make an informed recommendation in the fall regarding the potential modification of our operating hours.

Recreation Programs

- Senior Trips – Our seniors recently enjoyed a trip to the Tacoma Armory for an immersive experience centered on the art of the renowned French painter Claude Monet. The "[Imagine Monet](#)" exhibition pays homage to the artist's paintings and life. Participants enjoyed a delightful lunch at the Old Spaghetti Factory before the exhibit tour.

April's Senior Trip to the [Suquamish Museum](#) is already sold out. Stay tuned for information on the May Senior Trip so you don't miss your chance to attend!

- Barre Fitness Classes – The Barre fitness classes at the Community Center are temporarily canceled due to the instructor being on leave. We're eager to resume classes as soon as the instructor is able to return.
 - Youth Baseball – [Registration](#) for another exciting season of youth baseball opened last Friday for Fircrest residents and will open for non-residents on March 25th. There are leagues for Kindergarten/1st grade, 2nd/3rd grades, Girls 4th/5th grades, and Boys 4th/5th grades. Additional information and registration can be found on the Parks & Recreation [web page](#).
 - Creative Movement Ballet – Spots are filling up quickly for the spring session (4/4/24 – 6/6/24) of Creative Movement Ballet. Classes are available for ages 3-5 and 4-6 and are taught by Damaris Caughlan, the Artistic Director of the Metropolitan Ballet of Tacoma. Her approach and style help young dancers express their inner joy of movement while teaching them basic ballet fun. Additional information and registration information are available on our [web page](#).
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- Adult Drop-In Basketball – Channel your inner March Madness and play a competitive game of pick-up basketball or work on your dribbling and shooting skills in our state-of-the-art gym! Drop by the Names Family Foundation Gymnasium on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from Noon to 2:00 PM to join in the fun. Fircrest residents are \$2.00, and non-residents are \$4.00. Monthly unlimited passes are available at Fircrest.recdesk.com. Basketball equipment is available to check out at our front desk.
- Bridge for Beginners – This free weekly activity is ideal for anyone new to the game or for those who are familiar with or experienced bridge players but would like some formal instruction. Adults 18+ are welcome to stop by the Community Center on Wednesdays from 4:00 – 6:00 PM.

Community Events

- Medallion Madness was another resounding success, with limited edition Fircrest medallions claimed by numerous participants. The leprechauns diligently combed through the parks and confirmed that all 150 medallions had indeed been found. While we received many positive comments, we also noted a few individuals expressing frustration on social media for not finding any medallions. It's important to clarify that Medallion Madness is inspired by the Monkeyshines Project in Tacoma and is not designed to be a traditional Easter Egg hunt where everyone collects multiple items to take home. This event operates somewhat informally, as we can't predict the exact number of participants, and there are only 150 medallions available to find. Taking note of feedback, we recognize the need to provide more precise information to the public in the future to manage expectations effectively. We are committed to enhancing participant experiences and will endeavor to offer more comprehensive details next year to ensure all participants have appropriate expectations for the event. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Optimum Physical Therapy for their continued support and sponsorship of this event. Your ongoing partnership is invaluable in making events like Medallion Madness possible.
- Easter Egg Hunt preparations are well underway! Posters have been distributed throughout the City, and we're gearing up to start promoting the event on social media next week. The Easter Egg Hunt takes place on Saturday, March 30th, beginning at 9:30 AM at Fircrest Park.

There are several locations with staggered start times for various ages for the Easter Egg Hunt:

- 10:00 AM – 4 years & under – Tot Lot
- 10:15 AM – 5 – 6 years – Fircrest Park Pavilion
- 10:15 AM – 7 – 9 years – Fircrest Park (Contra Costa beyond the Pool, next to Fir Grove)



Join us at 9:30 AM for photos with the Easter Bunny. Rumor has it that Murphy might be there for a few pictures, too! Don't miss out on the fun!

- The 2024 Let's Go Wild Mom & Son Dance is happening on Friday, May 3rd. The roaring event promises an unforgettable night filled with music, refreshments, and games, and each child will take home a goody bag. Whether it's a Mom, an Aunt, a Grandma, or another cherished loved one, all are welcome to join in on the festivities, which will be held at the Community Center from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Due to limited space, pre-registration is required. Fircrest residents can purchase their tickets starting on April 1st at 9:00 AM. Non-residents can grab their tickets beginning on April 22nd. Ticket prices are \$25 per couple for residents and \$35 per couple for non-residents. Each additional child is \$10. Tickets will be available for purchase on the Parks & Recreation website. Space is limited, and tickets will sell out quickly! A massive shoutout to Berkshire Hathaway Home Services: South Sound Properties for their generous sponsorship, making this event possible.

- Fircrest Fun Days – This week’s Fun Days planning was focused on securing equipment rentals and sound vendors, discussing plans for the Kidz Zone, and assembling the volunteer team for the Junior Bake-Off. We’re excited to bring together all these elements for a fantastic event.

Swimming Pool

- Summer Pool job openings were posted this week, and we’ve already received 12 applications from last year’s pool employees, along with several new applications. We’re off to a fantastic start! Visit the City’s [Employment Opportunities](#) for additional information.
- Director Grover is exploring the feasibility of extending operations through the months of September and October. Staff are looking into offering a select number of open swim sessions on the weekends, weather permitting. Additionally, we plan to offer a limited number of lap swim and water aerobics classes on weekdays. We have also reached out to two local swim clubs who are interested in securing pool rental times in the evenings during the week. While we don’t currently have a budget allocated for this, we are conducting a cost analysis to ensure that we can cover the expenses of extended pool operations and staffing with the additional revenue generated during this time frame.

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.”

9. 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)

Administration

Your patience is appreciated as Public Works is currently short-staffed and is working to fill the vacant position of Public Works Office Coordinator.

Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater

- Utility Billing Assistant Holly Veliz is making substantial updates and simplifying pathways on the Public Works web pages.
 - A replacement pump for one pump at The Commons lift station was ordered this week. The old pump was installed in 2002. Although worn parts have been replaced at different times over the years, the pump is now beyond repair. Upon return of the repaired pump, the opposite pump will be pulled and inspected for repair needs.
 - Materials have been ordered to repair the damaged hydrant on Aspen in The Commons and are estimated to arrive in early May. No responsible party is known for the damage.
 - Another fire hydrant was damaged this week, this one at El Dorado at Regents Blvd. Fircrest Police have provided case information and will submit a case narrative and itemized reimbursement list for our City insurer.
 - “Sidewalk closed” barricades are in place near the Claremont rock wall failure site. The property owner is currently performing the repairs and will keep Public Works informed throughout the process.
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- No bids were received by the March 11th deadline for the old bucket truck. The bucket truck was delivered to James G. Murphy Co. this week for auction, with the intention to set the minimum sale price at \$30,500.

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- Pool preparation for the upcoming 2024 season is underway. The pumps, chlorine injection, and heaters are functioning properly.
- Whittier baseball field prep is also in progress. The concrete pads and bleachers were pressure-washed this week.
- Accident response packets were finalized and placed in all City vehicles (excluding Police).

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.
- 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - Equipment submittals for the generator and SCADA cabinet have been approved.
- 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.
 - We changed from a one-year funding extension request to a 45-day extension per guidance from PSRC.
- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
 - Meter exchanges are in progress, with program completion currently at 54%.

TOTAL BY YEAR	
	Total
2019	11
2020	143
2021	444
2022	283
2023	296
2024	120

PROJECT UPDATE	
Total City Meter Connections	2,402
New Meters Installed	1,297
Remaining Meters to be Installed	1,105
Percentage of Completion	54%

- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67th Ave West
 - We are working with WSDOT to prepare a Notice to Proceed.
- Claremont Street Grind & Overlay TIB Grant
 - Grant acceptance documents, including a Fuel Tax Agreement, were submitted to the Transportation Improvement Board on March 14th.
 - We are waiting on the Scope of Work and Fee to prepare the Task Order for City Manager approval.

- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - The design is in the process of construction in 2024.
 - Communication and coordination with City of Tacoma staff is continuing.
- Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
 - We are still awaiting the Department of Commerce (DOC) paperwork.
 - We are exploring the option to apply for additional funds for this project from TIB.

10. Spring Break Day Camps

Spring Break is just around the corner, and many families are looking for daycare options for kids of all ages. Several local organizations are offering a variety of spring break day camp options.

- Metro Parks Tacoma offers a variety of day camps, both traditional day camps and several specialty camps such as Hip Hop Audio Camp, Bricks 4 Kidz LEGO Camp, Flag Football, Basketball, and Golf. Visit [Spring Break Camps - Metro Parks Tacoma](#) for more information.
- The YMCA is offering a spring break camp filled with active, enriching activities, refreshing swim sessions, and engaging craft zones. Visit [YMCA Spring Break Camp](#) for more information.
- The Mountaineers is offering a spring break camp that offers a variety of outdoor activities, including climbing, hiking, navigation, outdoor cooking, first aid, knots and rope skills, or basic wilderness skills. More information is available at [Youth Programs - The Mountaineers](#).

11. Baby on Board Drive

Did you know that many active-duty families struggle to afford basic necessities for their newborns? [STEP Washington](#) is hosting their annual [Baby on Board](#) drive to collect diapers, wipes, onesies, and other essentials for our brave active-duty military and Veteran families across Washington. From now until April 8th, your donations can make a big difference. Here's how you can help:

- Donate online easily: Visit the virtual store at www.teamstepusa.org
- Drop off donations: Bring new, unopened items to a participating drop-off location. Fircrest's nearest drop-off location is at WaFd Bank – 4221 Bridgeport Way W. in University Place.

If you have any questions or would like to arrange a donation pick-up, please email linda.disney@teamstepusa.org.

