



City Manager's Update

April 27, 2024



To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: April 27, 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. April 23rd Council Meeting Recap

Action items at the April 23rd regular City Council meeting included:

- Approved Liquor License renewals for Royal Thai Bistro and Nari Sushi & Steak.
- Approved an Interagency Agreement with the State of WA for surplus operations.
- Approved the 2024 Stormwater Management Program Plan Update.
- Approved the 2023-2025 Stormwater Capacity Grant Agreement.
- Awarded the Wellhouse #7 Construction Contract.
- Awarded the Electron Way/Contra Costa Avenue Project Design Contract.
- Approved a Memorandum of Understanding with the Fircrest Police Guild regarding a schedule change trial period.
- Approved a Lease Agreement with Copiers Northwest for a Police copier.

2. Administration Update

Administration highlights include:

- The Centennial Committee met on Thursday, April 18th, to review logo options, discuss timelines, and receive status updates from subcommittees. Historical Research subcommittee chair Brett Wittner shared that former Councilmember Blake Surina and Civil Service Commissioner John Bechtholt have joined their subcommittee.
- City Manager Dawn Masko received notice on April 25th regarding Congresswoman Marilyn Strickland's 2025 Community Project Funding process, with a deadline for submissions of May 29th. It's been an all-hands-on-deck exercise to meet this tight timeline. Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart and Public Works Director Tyler Bemis have been hard at work on a submittal for the Alameda Avenue – Emerson Street to Rosewood Lane Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Improvement Project, while City Manager Masko is working on securing the required letters of support for the project. Police Chief Ron Schaub and Community Development Director Mark Newman are also compiling data needed for the application.

- Acting Clerk Arlette Burkhart, Community Development Director Mark Newman, and IT Coordinator Chris Bunger are initiating discussions on City record management platforms.
- City Manager Dawn Masko, Kendra Rosenberg, and Hillary Evans, attorneys with Kenyon Disend, met to discuss the transition of City Attorney services.
- Acting Clerk Burkhart and Public Works Director Tyler Bemis interviewed three candidates on April 16th for the Public Works Office Coordinator position. The top candidate is undergoing a background check with the intention of scheduling a final interview this coming week.
- Acting Clerk Burkhart attended a records management training webinar for Human Resources and Personnel records hosted by Washington State Archives. This training satisfies the management and records retention portion of the Open Government Training Act for Public Records Officers. She also attended a records management training webinar hosted by WA State Archives to prepare for the Citywide records management project kickoff next month.
- City Manager Masko met with the proprietors of the new indoor golf training facility slated to occupy the old skating rink. The facility will be the largest indoor golf facility in the country.
- Police Community Service Officer John Truong attended the Public Records Act Basics and More webinar hosted by the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington (MRSC). This training helps the City stay in compliance with the Public Records Act. The webinar was funded by a training scholarship from the City's insurer, CIAW.
- Acting Clerk Burkhart and Community Service Officer John Truong are continuing to inventory records and organize them per the retention schedule prescribed by the WA State Archives.
- 2024 Council photos are being scheduled for September.
- Progress was made with the consolidation of the City's social media pages under one Business Meta Suite; however, staff were unable to associate it with the City's Instagram account.
- In the last 30 days, the City's website has had 20,114 page views from 6,749 users. Sessions are down 8%, and users are up 2% from the previous 30 days.

3. Finance Department Update

- Finance Director Colleen Corcoran is continuing to work on the Annual Report, which must be submitted to the WA State Auditor's Office by May 29th.
 - Finance Director Corcoran is continuing her work on updating 2023 grant files. This information will be used for the Annual Report and to ensure that all grant revenue is billed and received.
 - Finance is working on getting quotes to replace our current postage meter, which must be replaced by June 30th to meet new federal requirements.
 - Finance is ordering new gas cards for each City vehicle. PINs will be assigned to each employee, and the odometer reading will also be required to refuel vehicles.
 - The City's network and phone system will be down on Thursday, May 9th, for planned upgrades. We will work to ensure that adequate notice is provided via our website, social media, and signage. There will also be a recorded message on City phone lines on May 9th informing the public that the City is undergoing planned maintenance on its phone system and network, that all City buildings will be open during regular business hours, and that some services may be unavailable due to the maintenance. All systems are scheduled to resume on May 10th.
 - IT is researching the cost of upgrading the fiber that runs between buildings. As the research continues, more information will follow.
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4. Police Department Update

- Officers Bugarin, Lease, and Garcia attended a two-day ARIDE (Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement) training class at JBLM.
- While working the graveyard shift, Sergeant Gollinger caught a vehicle prowler in the act.
- Sergeant Villamor identified the vandalism suspect who tagged multiple businesses.
- We are working on scheduling our yearly firearms and defensive tactics training. Other upcoming training includes Detective Roberts attending Evidence Room Management training, Community Service Officers Selena Byrd and John Truong attending Records training, and Sergeant Gollinger attending the Supervisory Leadership Institute.
- Police Chief Schaub is continuing to review Lexipol policies and procedures.
- On April 15th, prior to the Council Study Session, Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs (WASPC) Executive Director David Doll conducted a brief assessment of the Fircrest Police Department.
- The single-system radio system continues to be a topic of discussion at the Pierce County Chief's Association meetings.
- Fircrest officers responded to 387 calls for service from 4/7/2024 to 4/21/2024, including 257 traffic stops, which generated 154 notices of infraction. The chart below provides additional information. Please note that this information is for two weeks.

Police Officer Activity for 4/07/24 – 4/21/24			
Call Activity	Number of Calls	Call Activity	Number of Calls
Traffic Stops	257	Outside Jurisdiction Response	11
Notice of Infraction	154	Parking Tickets	6
Citations Issued	9	Reports Written	41
Misdemeanor Arrests	11	Security Checks	17
Warrant Arrests	1	Subject Stops	2
Alarms	8	Suspicious Persons	5
Community Oriented Policing	19	Suspicious Vehicles	10
Follow-Ups	10	Trouble – Unknown	9
Foot Patrols	12	Unwanted/Unwelcome Person	4
Information Contact	3	Vandalism	1
Miscellaneous	7	Vehicle Prowls	11
Motor Vehicle Collisions	4	Welfare Checks	20
Motor Vehicle Theft	6	911 Calls – Unknown	7

5. Planning & Building Update

- The Planning & Building Department is currently short-staffed as it searches for a new Permit Coordinator/Assistant Planner/Code Enforcement Officer. We appreciate your patience during this transition.
 - Please note that our permitting system and phone system will be unavailable on Thursday, May 9th, for scheduled network maintenance.
 - CD Director Newman continues to work with Acting City Clerk Burkhart to schedule additional Assistant Planner/Permit Coordinator interviews.
 - We continue to be busy issuing over-the-counter (OTC) building, mechanical, plumbing, and reroofing permits. Applicants are receiving same-day or one-business-day turnaround time for OTC permits.
 - CD Director Newman worked with a permit applicant to review planning comments related to a new single-family residential home and ADU.
 - **FINAL NOTICE:** There is still time to submit feedback for the [2024 Comprehensive Plan Update](#). Please submit your feedback either [online](#) or in person at City Hall or the Community Center no later than April 30th, 2024.
 - The City received seven new code enforcement requests in the past two weeks:
 - Two requests regarding concern over excessive trash and junk associated with a homeless encampment accumulated along the west side of Orchard Street from the end of Holly Drive to Emerson Street, City Manager Masko, Police Chief Schaub, Public Works Director Tyler Bemis, and Community Development Director Mark Newman worked collaboratively with the City of Tacoma and the private property owner to clean up the site. City staff will proactively monitor the situation for long-term upkeep. Additionally, the City has requested to be notified by the WA Department of Transportation when they are conducting encampment cleanups in areas surrounding Fircrest, as we tend to see an uptick in activity when these camps are ousted from Tacoma.
 - Concern over a residential property along the 200 block of Contra Costa Avenue that is accumulating trash and does not have an active Westside Disposal account. City staff sent a notice of violation to the property owner to activate a solid waste disposal account and keep the property clean. CD Director Newman has also requested a list of all properties in the City that do not currently have active accounts with Westside Disposal and will send them a letter stating that it is a code requirement to have trash service.
 - Concern over landscaping advertising in the City without proper permits. Staff contacted the business to let them know the business and transient merchant license requirements.
 - Concern over a possibly unpermitted structure built in the backyard of a residential property along the 1200 block of Palm Drive. City staff is working with the property owner to determine whether a building permit and inspection are required based on the building code.
 - Concern regarding an Xpress Bill Pay issue. The issue was forwarded to the Utility Billing and Finance Department for resolution.
 - Another concern regarding possible over-excavation of foundation walls along the 400 block of Harvard Avenue. City staff has reached out to the complainant regarding a recent building inspection report that addresses this issue.
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- The City continues to monitor existing complaints and requests:
 - Concern over multiple inoperable vehicles, garbage accumulation, and burning of trash along the 200 block of Regents Blvd. Staff sent out a notice of violation letter, but due to short staffing, we have not been able to follow up on this request yet.
 - 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. The City has not yet received a response from the property owner. Due to short-staffing, we have been unable to follow up on this request.
- Staff work has paused on the WAEVCP Grant (Level-2 Charging Grant) due to the considerable time and paperwork needed to obtain this federal money.
- CD Director Newman is working with the Department of Commerce on a contract amendment in order to receive our Year 2 grant reimbursement for the Comprehensive Plan Update grant.
- The Fircrest Planning Commission will meet for its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, May 7th at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers. As always, members of the public are invited to attend and provide public comment. Discussion topics will include the Land Use and Housing Elements, Draft Comprehensive Plan public review survey results, PSRC and PSE review comments, and an update on the Middle Housing kick-off meeting.

6. Parks & Recreation Update


Park Projects

- Fircrest Park Athletic Field Improvements – KBH Construction recently completed their final fertilization and mowing of the new sod. While the project is nearing completion, there are still a couple of punch-list areas that need attention.
- Whittier Park Master Plan – The third community meeting took place on April 25th. ABHL provided an overview of the process covered in previous meetings and guided attendees through the final options to familiarize everyone with the proposed plans, highlighting their similarities and differences. The approximately 50 people in attendance were invited to take a closer look at the plans and engage in discussions with both AHBL team members and City staff. The public was encouraged to provide feedback through comment forms, sticky notes, and a dot exercise. The final part of the evening was to ensure that all attendees submitted a ballot, selecting their preferred option and providing reasons for their choice, along with any additional comments or design considerations. It was a positive and engaging event, allowing community members to actively participate and contribute their valuable input to the decision-making process.

The [Whittier Park Master Plan webpage](#) has been updated with the revised site concepts, survey, and comment form link. Fircrest citizens are invited to review the two preferred plans presented on April 25th and leave comments by clicking the [link](#). The comment period will conclude on May 17th. AHBL will then tabulate all comments for review and utilization as they develop the final plan. The final draft of the Whittier Park Master Plan will be presented to the Fircrest City Council at an upcoming regular City Council meeting or a City Council study session.

Community Events

- Community Yard Sale – Mark your calendars for the annual Community Yard Sale, which will be held on Saturday, June 15th, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM in yards all around Fircrest. Sign up to be included on the list of participating homes starting May 1st.

- The 2024 [Let's Go Wild Mom & Son Dance](#) happening on Friday, May 3rd, is sold out. All final supplies have been purchased for the event, and the finishing touches for decorations are underway, ensuring that the event ambiance will be nothing short of amazing. We extend a heartfelt thank you to Maggie Magee's for their generous cookie donation, BLISS for providing goody bags, and the Waffle Stop for sponsoring our refreshments. Your support is truly invaluable to us and greatly appreciated.
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- [Teen Late Night Event](#) – The Teen Late Night event held on April 12th was a resounding success, drawing in just over 100 sixth through eighth graders. This impressive turnout speaks to the community's enthusiasm for these types of activities. We owe this success to the invaluable partnership with TeamWrk, a local nonprofit whose collaboration made this event possible. Thank you to TeamWrk, as well as their sponsors and partners, for their dedication to providing such a fantastic opportunity to our teens!
 - [Fircrest Fun Days](#) – Planning for this fabulous event is ramping up. We collaborated with Commencement Bank to design a vibrant and eye-catching banner for Regents Blvd., which will enhance visibility and anticipation for the upcoming event. Continue communication with potential event sponsors is occurring as we seek to establish mutually beneficial partnerships. These personal outreaches continue to secure support and resources to elevate the success of Fun Days. Additionally, dedicated Facebook event pages were developed for the ["Kidz Kraft Makers Market"](#) and the ["Junior Bake-Off"](#) to establish a central hub for event information, updates, and interaction with the community, fostering excitement and engagement among participants. Through targeted promotions, we aim to attract a diverse audience of aspiring young bakers and crafters. We also implemented updates to the FirCRUST Bake-off registration form to streamline the process and enhance user experience. These enhancements aim to simplify participation logistics and encourage increased signups.
 - [Fircrest Rod Run](#) – Preparations for the highly anticipated Car Show are well underway. We've secured 400 dash plaques to be distributed to all registered cars to commemorate the occasion. To drum up excitement, we've launched a pre-sale promotion for event t-shirts and shared the details on social media and our [website](#). Additionally, we're pleased to announce that the Fircrest Kiwanis and additional food trucks have been confirmed to cater to attendees. Stay tuned for more updates as we gear up for an unforgettable Rod Run experience.

Senior Programs

- [May Senior Trip](#) – Join fellow seniors on Tuesday, May 21st, for a guided tour of the [LeMay Collections](#) at Marymount. A guide will lead the tour, which will be filled with historical and fun facts, through the Main Exhibit Building, Union Station, and the White Building, where you will see over 500 vehicles along with other exhibits. After the tour, participants will enjoy lunch at Krickitt's Bar & Grill. The \$25 fee includes transportation and admission to the LeMay Collections. Participants are responsible for their lunch. Visit [Senior Trip - The Lemay Collections @ Marymount](#) for more information and to register. Thank you to our generous anonymous donor for making the reduced cost of \$25 possible!

Recreation Programs

- [Barre Classes](#) – Exciting news for our Barre enthusiasts! We're thrilled to announce that beginning in May, Patricia will be back at the helm, guiding our Barre classes with her expertise and passion. Get ready to elevate your fitness journey and experience the transformative power of Barre under Patricia's guidance. We can't wait to see you back in the studio, ready to tone, strengthen, and rejuvenate both body and mind with us!
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- Youth Baseball League – The Fircrest Youth Baseball League is now full. The coaches’ meeting took place on April 17th, and practices began on April 22nd.
- Pee Wee T-Ball – [Registration](#) for Pee Wee T-Ball is now open for both Fircrest residents and non-residents. This six-week instructional league is for Pre-Kindergarten kids aged 4-5. Games and practices will be held on Saturday. Resident fees are \$35, and non-resident fees are \$55. Additional information and registration can be found on the Parks & Recreation [web page](#).
- Dance Movement Flow – We have a new kids' dance class beginning in May. Dance Movement Flow is a dance class geared to kids to provide a safe, positive, and therapeutic outlet that allows children to express themselves and communicate in an alternative way. This program strives to provide tools that encourage physical, emotional, and mental health. Our new instructor, Rishena, has been teaching dance for 19 years and has worked in the mental health field, primarily with children, for the last seven years. Classes are available for ages 3-4 and 5-6. Registration is now open on [RecDesk](#).



Aquatic Center

- We successfully conducted interviews with 12 prospective pool employees last week. We’re excited about the caliber of candidates who interviewed and anticipate extending offers for several upcoming pool positions. In addition, our season pass sales have already commenced, and we’re gearing up to intensify our promotion of Resident Season Passes next week.

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. Public Works Update

Public Works' current winter operating winter hours are 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. Four candidates were interviewed on April 16th, and the preferred candidate was recommended to the City Manager. A preliminary background check is underway, with a final interview with the City Manager to be held in the coming week.

Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater

- Maintenance and repairs are occurring on the fluoridation systems at all Well sites.
- On April 19th, the Alameda Lift Station underwent repairs, including the replacement of an impeller and wear rings on a pump. These repairs should improve pump efficiency.
- The replacement pump for The Commons Lift Station will not arrive for at least 10-12 weeks.
- The damaged fire hydrant at The Commons was replaced on April 22nd.
- The fire hydrant at El Dorado and Regents Blvd. was repaired on April 16th. The final asphalt patching and concrete curb repair will occur soon.

- “Sidewalk closed” barricades are in place near the Claremont rock wall failure site. The property owner is currently performing the repairs and continues to keep Public Works informed.
- The Bucket Truck sold via James G. Murphy Co.’s Auctions for \$10,250 before their commission.

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- Irrigation repairs are underway in preparation for summer watering at City parks and facilities.
- Staff continued working on pool preparations for the upcoming 2024 season. This week, the cover was removed, and staff pressure-washed the pool deck.
- Herbicides were sprayed at both Fircrest and Whittier Parks last week.

Project Updates

- Wellhouse #7 (Claremont)
 - Council awarded the construction bid at the April 23rd meeting.
 - The notice to proceed to commence construction is being prepared.
- Fircrest Park Maintenance Facility Structure Upgrade
 - No bids were received by the April 12th deadline. Staff are now preparing a Request for Proposals for posting.
- 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - The contractor is procuring equipment and materials in preparation to start construction, with Public Works staff continuing to review material submittals.
- Stormwater 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.
- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67th Ave West
 - We are working with WSDOT to prepare a Notice to Proceed.
- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
 - Meter exchanges are in progress, with program completion currently at 55%.

TOTAL BY YEAR	
	Total
2019	11
2020	143
2021	444
2022	283
2023	296
2024	146

PROJECT UPDATE	
Total City Meter Connections	2,402
New Meters Installed	1,323
Remaining Meters to be Installed	1,079
Percentage of Completion	55%

- Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
 - City Council approved the Commerce (DOC) grant agreement on April 9th.
 - We applied for additional funds from TIB on April 26th.
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- Claremont Street Grind & Overlay TIB Grant
 - Council approved the design services agreement on April 9th.
- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - Design is in process for construction in 2024.
 - Communication and coordination with City of Tacoma staff are continuing.
 - The construction bid authorization form was submitted to TIB on April 16th, and we are preparing to go out for the construction bid.

8. Community Conversations

28th Legislative District Representative Mari Leavitt is hosting a community conversation on Thursday, May 2nd, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Steilacoom Library, located at 2950 Steilacoom Blvd. This is an opportunity for citizens to tell Representative Leavitt about the issues that matter the most to them, review the 2024 legislative session, and learn about important funding coming to our community.

9. Food & Yard Waste Disposal

In accordance with Washington State HB 1799, Pierce County garbage haulers, in partnership with LRI, are now accepting residential food waste with yard waste. This program began on April 20th to coincide with Earth Day. Service providers across Pierce County offer curbside food/yard waste collection for a fee. To add this service in Fircrest, contact [Westside Disposal](#). Newly accepted items include dairy, eggs and shells, grains and bread, spoiled leftovers, and meat and poultry (including bones). Fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds and filters, and tea bags were already accepted. No bags, cups, utensils, napkins, pizza boxes, or paper items, even if they are labeled “compostable or biodegradable” are accepted. These items will not break down in our system.



These new guidelines apply across Pierce County, regardless of your service provider. Check out the new guidelines at PierceCountyWA.gov/YardWaste.

[Preventing wasted food](#) has the greatest environmental benefit. When food and yard waste end up in landfills, the nutrients never return to the soil. The organic material rots and produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas. But now, your food scraps can be composted instead of buried in a landfill. Compost reduces soil erosion, improves water quality, helps store carbon, and increases soil’s ability to retain water. Diverting this food waste will both extend the life of the landfill and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Food and yard waste must fit in the cart with the lid closed. If you have extra food or yard waste, bring it to a transfer station [transfer station](#) or contact [Westside Disposal](#) for options such as an additional cart. Check out this [flyer](#) for more information about what can and can’t go into your cart.

Pierce County will be extensively promoting this program through social media and its [Earth Matters](#) newsletter to ensure that all Pierce County residents know that “if you can eat it, we can compost it.”

