



City Manager's Update May 4, 2024



To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: May 4, 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. Network and Phone Service Planned Outage

The City's network and phone system will be down on Thursday, May 9th, for planned upgrades. Information regarding the outage is on the City's website, social media, readerboard, and posted signs. 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 anticipated to be restored by the end of the day, but it is expected that troubleshooting will continue into May 10th. We appreciate your patience during this critical maintenance.

2. Planning Commission Opening

The City is seeking interested residents for appointment to the [Planning Commission](#). This 6-year voluntary position is an opportunity for citizens to get more involved in the development and future vision of Fircrest. Eligible applicants must be residents of Fircrest and registered voters. Letters of interest together with a resume (optional) are due to the City Clerk no later than 5:00 PM on Thursday, May 23, 2024. Appointments are made by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. For more information on how to apply, visit [Planning Commission Opening](#).

3. Council Meeting Agenda Items – May 14th, 2024 – Tentative

- Fircrest Parks & Recreation Foundation Year-End Report
- Police 2023 Year-End Report
- Resolution – Postage Machine Lease Agreement
- Resolution – WA Dept. of Enterprise Service Master Contract Usage Agreement
- Ordinance – Salary Plan Amendment
- Designating AWC Annual Business Meeting Voting Delegates

4. Administration Update

Administration highlights include:

- City employees attended CPR/First Aid training on April 30th. The City provides annual training for all employees to obtain their CPR/First Aid certification. Thank you to Tacoma Fire for leading the training and to Community Service Officer John Truong for coordinating the class.
- City Manager Dawn Masko, Acting City Clerk Arlette Burkhart, and Public Works Director Tyler Bemis submitted three state and federal grants totaling \$4,889,265 this week. The grant submittals were for the Alameda Avenue – Emerson Street to Rosewood Lane sidewalk and bike lane safety improvements, Electron Way/Contra Costa Avenue ADA improvements, and 44th Street sidewalk and bike lane safety improvements. Thank you to the Fircrest Police Department for providing relevant traffic data and to Community Development Director Mark Newman for providing economic data to assist with these grant applications that seek to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Thank you also to Senator T’wina Nobles, Representative Mari Leavitt, Representative Dan Bronoske, University Place City Manager Steve Sugg, Tacoma Public Schools Executive Director of Planning & Construction Morris Aldridge, and Jim Dugan, Division Manager with Parametrix - for providing letters of support on such short notice.
- Acting Clerk Arlette Burkhart and Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover have been busy processing applications for seasonal pool hires. They have worked to streamline the application process and welcome packet distribution procedures.
- The City received a request for interpreter services for the recent Whittier Park Master Plan community meeting. As a reminder, interpreters, signers, or other auxiliary aids will be provided upon five days advance notice. Community members requiring accommodation should complete the City’s [ADA Accommodation Request Form](#) and submit it to the City Clerk’s Office.
- Acting Clerk Burkhart reapplied for the City’s Minor Work Permit endorsement, which will be posted at the Community Center and Aquatic Center.
- City Manager Masko met with Ruston Police Chief Nestor Bautista and received positive feedback on Municipal Court Judge Meagan Foley.
- Acting Clerk Burkhart and City Manager Masko ensured all City facilities had the latest Washington and Federal Labor Law notices posted.
- The Safety Committee met on April 29th and discussed the upcoming employee fire drill. This exercise will help employees familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and designated rally points.
- Acting Clerk Burkhart and Accountant Megan Ryan continue to prepare for the City Employee Benefits Fair and are reaching out to potential vendors.
- City Manager Masko is preparing materials for the upcoming Finance Director recruitment.
- City Manager Masko is working on a market compensation study for non-represented positions.
- The City received eight public records requests this week for a total of 106 requests in 2024.
- In the last 30 days, the City’s website has had 19,993 page views from 6,535 users. Sessions are up 3%, and users are down 5% from the previous 30 days.

5. Finance Department Update

6. Finance staff continue to work on the Annual Report, on updating grant files, and on the electronic timesheet program.
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7. Police Department Update

- Chief Ron Schaub and Officer Bugarin attended a First Aid/CPR training class.
- Sergeant Gollinger will be attending the FBI-LEEDA Supervisory Leadership Institute Training next week.
- The Police Department is working with other City departments and the property management company to address a homeless encampment and dumping on an unimproved property on Orchard Street.
- The Pierce County Police Chief's Association submitted a letter to the three radio system owners in support of a single system and allowing agencies that can switch between systems to do so.
- Fircrest officers responded to 225 calls for service from 4/21/2024 to 4/28/2024, including 197 traffic stops, which generated 124 notices of infraction. The chart below provides additional information.

Police Officer Activity for 4/21/24 – 4/28/24			
Call Activity	Number of Calls	Call Activity	Number of Calls
Traffic Stops	197	Outside Jurisdiction Response	6
Notice of Infraction	124	Parking Tickets	4
Citations Issued	11	Reports Written	24
Misdemeanor Arrests	10	Security Checks	5
Warrant Arrests		Subject Stops	3
Alarms	2	Suspicious Persons	2
Citizen Assists	3	Suspicious Vehicles	6
Community Oriented Policing	12	Vehicle Prowls	4
Follow-Ups	16	Welfare Checks	4
Foot Patrols	7	911 Calls – Unknown	3
Motor Vehicle Collisions	1		

8. 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.
 - CD Director Newman continues to work with a permit applicant to review planning and stormwater comments related to a new single-family residential home and ADU.
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- 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.
 - Thank you to everyone who took the time to submit comments on the [2024 Comprehensive Plan](#). The City received 26 online submissions. The feedback, data, and responses to questions will be provided as an update later in May and posted on the City website.
 - Passport Specialist Laura Thompson processed 186 passport service requests in April!
 - The City received three new code enforcement requests in the past two weeks:
 - Concern over a property zoned as a single-family residential home being used as a commercial business along the 100 block of Regents Boulevard. Staff reached out to the property owner and confirmed that no commercial business would be operating at the home.
 - Concern over damage to a fence between properties along the 200 block of Berkeley Avenue. Staff confirmed that this is a private property dispute and cannot be classified as a public nuisance under code enforcement.
 - Concern over water accumulation on a property along the 1200 block of El Dorado Avenue. Staff inspected adjacent catch basins and determined no issue with blockages. The property owner was advised on how to prevent water from accumulating around the foundation.
 - 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.
 - 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 is proactively monitoring the situation for long-term upkeep and reported a new issue this week regarding the illegal dumping of trash and a sofa. 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 from Public Works 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 an unpermitted structure built in the backyard of a residential property along the 1200 block of Palm Drive. City staff reviewed the structure and confirmed that a building permit is indeed required. They have reached out to the property owner to begin the permitting process.
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- 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. The agenda packet is now available on the [Planning Commission webpage](#).
- On April 30, 2024, the Department of Commerce released a draft of the 2024-2029 State Homeless Housing Strategic Plan. The draft is available on Box at [Plan Update Materials](#) or [Draft Plan \(PDF\)](#). Commerce is inviting interested parties to provide public comment. Comments can be submitted by attending an online listening session, filling out an [online web form](#), or by [email](#). Per [Chapter 42.56 RCW](#), all comments submitted are public records and may be subject to public disclosure.

Pursuant to [RCW 43.185c](#), Commerce will prepare and publish its final local homeless housing plan guidance by September 2024. Local governments must submit their adopted local homeless housing plan to Commerce no later than December 2025. More information can be found on the [Commerce website](#).

9. Parks & Recreation Update

Park Projects

- [Whittier Park Master Plan](#) – 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, held on Friday, May 3rd, was a sold-out success. Thank you to our staff and volunteers, who enthusiastically got everything ready to ensure an amazing event. Thank you also to our generous sponsors: Maggie Magee's, BLISS, and the Waffle Stop. Your support is truly invaluable to us!
- [Teen Late Night Event](#) – We are busy collaborating with TeamWrk for the next Teen Late Night event, which is scheduled for Friday, May 10th.



Recreation Programs

- Day Camp planning is in full swing, and we're excited to announce that we're gearing up for six weeks of day camp fun this summer! Sessions start on July 8th and will run Monday through Friday at the Pool Party Room. Stay tuned for more details and registration information, which will be available next week. We can't wait to share all the exciting plans with you!

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!
- **June Senior Trip** – Registration is now open for the June Senior Trip to a [Tacoma Rainiers](#) baseball game on Tuesday, June 4th. The \$40 registration fee includes transportation to the game, a reserved seat, a ballpark meal of a hot dog, chips & water, as well as a signature Rainier’s hat. The day starts at 10:30 AM, and attendees should be finished around 3:00 PM. Visit [Senior Trip - Tacoma Rainiers Baseball Game](#) for more information and to register.

Aquatic Center

- We’ve been busy interviewing potential new pool employees, and I’m excited to share that our first training session is set for this Sunday, May 5th.
- A big shoutout to our Public Works Maintenance staff for their outstanding work in getting the pool ready for the 2024 season. They have done a fantastic job!

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.”

10. 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

We appreciate your continued patience as Public Works is operating short-staffed. The Office Coordinator position is vacant, and a Maintenance Worker and Utility Worker are off work.

Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater

- We are coordinating to have the pump pulled at Wellhouse #9 to inspect and repair or replace as needed.
- The replacement pump for The Commons Lift Station will not arrive for at least 10-12 weeks.
- 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. Once the last remaining section is reduced in height, the barricades will be removed.

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- Staff finished pool preparations. As of May 1st, the pool is ready for the upcoming 2024 season.
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Project Updates

- Wellhouse #7 (Claremont)
 - The notice to proceed to commence construction is being prepared.
- Fircrest Park Maintenance Facility Structure Upgrade
 - Staff are 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 56%.

TOTAL BY YEAR	
	Total
2019	11
2020	143
2021	444
2022	283
2023	296
2024	157

PROJECT UPDATE	
Total City Meter Connections	2,402
New Meters Installed	1,334
Remaining Meters to be Installed	1,068
Percentage of Completion	56%

- Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
 - City Council approved the design contract on April 23rd.
 - We applied for additional funds from TIB on April 26th.
- Claremont Street Grind & Overlay TIB Grant
 - Design is in process.
- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - Design is in process for construction in 2024.
 - We are preparing to go out for the construction bid the week of May 6th.

11. Free Community Resource Fair

A free Community Resource Fair will be held on Saturday, May 11th, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM at the TACID Center, 6315 South 19th Street in Tacoma. This event is intended to promote the vast array of support, services, and community groups in Tacoma/Pierce County that are available for people with disabilities of all kinds, including behavioral health needs and challenges. For additional information, email Matt Santelli at matthew.santelli@piercecountywa.gov.

12. Summer Planning Academy

The Puget Sound Regional Council is accepting applications for its Summer Planning Academy (SPA), which will be held in August 2024. SPA is a free leadership development opportunity for students interested in learning about city planning. SPA can also help young people map out the required steps toward a career in the planning field. Upon successful completion of the academy, students are eligible to receive a \$500 scholarship. Local high school students must live in King, Kitsap, Pierce, or Snohomish County and be able to attend in-person sessions in Seattle. Applications are due on May 15th. For more information, visit [Summer Planning Academy \(SPA\) | Puget Sound Regional Council](#). Additional information is also available by downloading the [2023 Summer Planning Academy Handbook](#).

13. Habitat Stewardship Training

The Pierce Conservation District is holding its first Habitat Stewardship training in 3 years. The Habitat Stewardship Program works with volunteers to maintain open space sites in Fircrest and Puyallup. As a Habitat Steward, you can take ownership of a site, develop an annual work plan and goals, and lead monthly volunteer work parties. During the training, you will learn about the Habitat Stewardship Program, ecology, volunteer management, and site planning. There is a field portion to learn about common invasive species, removal techniques, and tool safety.

This three-part series, with two online portions and one field training, will be held on May 15th and 22nd online from 5:30 – 7:00 PM and on May 18th with field training from 9:00 AM—12:00 PM. There are limited spots available, so sign up soon. If the May training fills up, you will be put on a waitlist for future training. Visit [Habitat Stewardship Training](#) for more information and to sign up.

14. West Pierce Fire Youth Academy

Applications are now open for the [West Pierce Fire & Rescue Youth Academy](#). The two-day academy is an excellent way for students ages 14-18 to experience what it's like to be a firefighter. The academy is being held on June 22-23 from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM each day at West Pierce Fire & Rescue Station 21, located at 5000 Steilacoom Blvd SW in Lakewood. Applications are being accepted until 4:30 PM on May 15th and must be completed [online](#). There is no cost to attend. All equipment, gear, and meals will be provided. Attendees **must live or attend school** in Lakewood, University Place, or Steilacoom, must be able to participate in both days of the academy, and must be able to attend orientation on June 20th. Additional information can be found at [Youth Academy](#).

15. Reduced Pet Adoption Fees

The Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County is partnering with [BISSELL Pet Foundation](#), a national animal welfare organization dedicated to ending pet homelessness, for its spring Empty the Shelters adoption promotion. From May 1-15, the shelter will be offering reduced adoption fees sponsored by BISSELL Pet Foundation: \$50 for dogs, \$25 for cats, and \$5 for critters (puppies and kittens excluded). To view adoptable pets, visit [Adopt Now - The Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County](#).

16. National Fallen Firefighter Memorial Weekend

This weekend is National Fallen Firefighter Memorial Weekend. This year's national tribute will honor 89 firefighters who died in the line of duty in 2023 and 137 firefighters who died in previous years. The honorees include six firefighters from Washington State. Let's take a moment this weekend to recognize these brave individuals who put our communities' safety above all else.
