



City Manager's Update July 26, 2024

To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: July 26, 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. July 23rd, 2024 – Council Meeting Recap

Action items at the Tuesday, July 23rd regular City Council meeting included:

- Appointed Andreas Schonger to the Planning Commission
- Issued a National Night Out Proclamation.
- Approved an Applicant Resolution/Authorization for the Fircrest Park Backstop Restoration Project RCO Grant Application.
- Approved Change Order #1 to the South Orchard Grind & Overlay Construction Contract.
- Approved an Interlocal Agreement with the City of Tacoma for the South Orchard Grind & Overlay Project.

2. Election Reminder

Ballots for the August 6, 2024, Primary Election have been sent to registered voters. To be counted, ballots must be mailed or dropped off in postage-free drop boxes by Election Day. Ballot drop boxes are open 24 hours a day during elections and will continue to accept ballots until 8:00 PM on Election Day. For your convenience, there is a ballot drop box in front of Fircrest City Hall.

3. Voter Registration

There is still time to register to vote in the Primary Election on August 6th. There are three ways to register to vote: online, by mail, and in person. The deadline to register online and by mail is July 29, 2024. The deadline to register in person is August 6th. Learn more about registering by visiting [Register to Vote | Pierce County, WA - Official Website \(piercecountywa.gov\)](https://www.piercecountywa.gov/register-to-vote).

4. Administration Update

Administration highlights include:

- The Employee Safety Committee met on Monday, July 22nd, to discuss lockdown and active shooter training and review quarterly department inspection reports.

- City Clerk Arlette Burkhart received her Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) certificate. The CMC designation requires completing extensive educational programs and having pertinent government experience. Clerk Burkhart plans to continue her professional development by pursuing her Master Municipal Clerk (MMC) designation in the coming years.
- City Manager Dawn Masko is reviewing the proposed amendments to the Fircrest Civil Service Rules. Following her review, the amendments will be sent to legal counsel for further review.
- City Council photographs have now been updated in the City Hall lobby.
- Clerk Burkhart submitted invoices for the Wellhouse #6/7 repairs to the City's insurance carrier, CIAW, for reimbursement. The total repair and restoration costs amounted to \$115,580.33.
- The Civil Service Lateral Police Officer Eligibility List has been updated and is available on the City's website and is posted on the City Hall bulletin board. To view the current eligibility list, please visit the Civil Service Commission page on the City website at [Civil Service Commission](#).
- City Manager Masko continued evaluating year-to-date and historical revenues and expenditures, met with attorneys on various issues, and continued reviewing the Teamsters Collective Bargaining Agreement in advance of negotiations.
- Clerk Burkhart is working with Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover to establish a formal volunteer program. They have contacted the City's insurer to schedule a training course on "Developing and Managing a Volunteer Program."
- Clerk Burkhart created an internal procedure for processing public records to provide requestors with the fullest assistance and the timeliest possible action on requests for information per [RCW 42.56.100](#). City Manager Masko is currently reviewing the procedure before it "goes live."
- Clerk Burkhart recently joined the Pierce County Clerk's & Finance Officer's Association. The organization provides resources and networking for clerks in Pierce County.
- The City received six public records requests this week, bringing the 2024 total to 185 requests. At this time last year, the City had received 160 public records requests.
- In the last 30 days, the City's website has had 59,355 page views from 20,444 users. Sessions are up 28%, and users are up 19% from the previous 30 days.

5. Finance Department Update

- Interim Finance Director Julie Dunbar continued working on bank reconciliations and month-end reports and reviewed daily cash, utility billing transactions, accounts payable, and payroll.
 - Interim Director Dunbar and IT Systems Coordinator Chris Bunger met with Locke Systems, the City's IT Managed Service Provider (MSP), this week. This quarterly business review (QBR) meeting is required per our contract. Discussion items included developing a network diagram with physical and logical network maps, patch panel cabling, documenting data backups and schedules, and enabling remote device management. Apple Business Manager/Apple Business Essentials, which relates to setting up Apple configuration to facilitate troubleshooting of city-issued cell phones, was also discussed. Suggested future project proposals include SCADA modernization and VM BIOS upgrades (Virtual Machine Basic Input/Output System).
 - Accountant II Megan Ryan has done a phenomenal job managing the implementation of the electronic timesheet program and continues to be a resource for all staff. The vendor's configuration is nearly complete, and we are slated to "Go Live" on August 5th. Over 90% of staff are already utilizing the program.
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- Interim Director Dunbar and Accountant Wanda Wells are working together to prepare budget worksheets for department directors.

6. Planning & Building Update

The City's middle housing consultant, Kimley-Horn, will host an Open House on Tuesday, July 30th, at the Roy H. Murphy Community Center from 6:00 to 9:00 PM. Kimley-Horn will be available to share middle housing strategies, answer questions, obtain community feedback, and engage in small discussion groups. Can't make it? Presentation materials will be made available on the City's website for review after the event at <https://www.cityoffircrest.net/middle-housing>, and hard copies will be available at City Hall and the Community Center. Stay tuned to the Middle Housing [webpage](#) for more information.

Permitting & Current Planning

- Assistant Planner Natasha Kolostyak attended the South Sound Housing Affordability Partners staff work group meeting this week.
- Community Development Director Mark Newman and Assistant Planner Kolostyak attended MRSC's Summer 2024 Land Use Case Law Update webinar, which reviewed regulatory developments impacting planning and land use. The City obtained a grant from its insurance carrier for Assistant Planner Kolostyak's registration fee.
- CD Director Newman spent time reviewing a Tacoma Public School's request to remove several dead, diseased, and dying trees from Wainwright Elementary School.
- 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. For larger projects and remodel permits, the City's building reviewer is running 2-3 weeks behind schedule. Please check in with our team so that your project stays on schedule.
- We know that summertime can be busy with vacations, holidays, and also home renovation projects. Just a friendly reminder to check with the Planning & Building Department ahead of time before you start construction on your new deck, covered patio, or accessory structure to first verify whether a permit is required. For new plumbing and mechanical work, a good rule of thumb is that a remodel permit will be required when any drywall is removed. Exposed framing, pipes, and insulation, all indicate that a remodel permit is required, along with floor plans showing where the work is located. You can contact Assistant Planner Natasha Kolostyak at 253-238-4125 or email at nkolostyak@cityoffircrest.net with any questions.

Long Range Planning

- Our consultant, Kimley-Horn, braved the heat to meet with the public during Fircrest FUN Days on Saturday, July 20th. They will be compiling comments received, presentation materials, and survey responses, which we will share at a later date.
 - CD Director Newman is reviewing pre-application meeting materials for the Hanover Fircrest project (formerly known as the Prose Project), a proposed mixed-use development. The developer will give a high-level overview of their proposal at the August 19th City Council Study Session.
 - Share input on the updated draft middle housing model ordinance and user guide [here](#). This update reflects changes based on [HB 2321](#), passed in 2024 to revise [HB 1110](#) (2023), and comments received to date. Commerce requests feedback by August 7th.
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Code Enforcement

- The City received five new code enforcement requests this week:
 - Concern regarding discarded items left in the City right-of-way (ROW)/planting strip along the 300 block of Eldorado Avenue. City staff sent a notice of violation letter to the property owner.
 - Concern regarding a collapsed deck along the 300 block of Eldorado Avenue. City staff sent a notice of violation letter to the property owner.
 - Concern regarding a food pantry encroaching into the City ROW along the 700 block of Regents Blvd. City staff sent a notice of violation letter to the property owner.
 - Concern regarding accumulated trash and graffiti along the 2100 block of Mildred Street W. City staff are reviewing the case.
- The City is also following up on several cases already under review:
 - Concern regarding exposed home wrap and insulation along the 1300 block of Aloha Lane. A building inspector will complete an inspection on the property this week.
 - Concern regarding an unpermitted accessory structure along the 400 block of Alameda Avenue. A building inspector will complete an inspection on this property this week.
 - Additionally, the City is aware of transient merchants soliciting residents without a permit and is contacting all known businesses in violation of [FMC 5.08](#).

7. Police Department Update

- Fircrest officers responded to 151 calls for service from 7/14/2024 to 7/21/2024, including 98 traffic stops, which generated 71 notices of infraction. The chart below provides additional information on call activity.

Police Officer Activity for 7/14/24 – 7/21/24			
Call Activity	Number of Calls	Call Activity	Number of Calls
Traffic Stops	68	Miscellaneous	8
Notice of Infraction	48	Motor Vehicle Collisions	1
Citations Issued	4	Outside Jurisdiction Response	3
Misdemeanor Arrests	5	Parking Tickets	1
Alarms	4	Reports Written	9
Burglary	2	Security Checks	5
Community Oriented Policing	6	Special Emphasis	2
Fireworks	2	Subject Stops	6
Follow-Ups	1	Suspicious Persons	2
Foot Patrols	7	Suspicious Vehicle	2
Found Property	2	Welfare Checks	3
Juvenile Problem	2	911 Calls – Unknown	3

8. Parks & Recreation Update

Administration

- The final submission for the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant to replace the backstops at Fircrest Park is due on August 15th. Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover is working on refining the grant wording, site plan, potential products, and other final details. Additionally, he is working on a few small components required for the Fircrest Park RCO Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) Athletic Field Grant.
- As previously mentioned by the City Manager, the City of University Place (UP) has reached out to explore a partnership for the 2024 and 2025 youth sports seasons. Director Grover and Recreation Coordinator Ryan Brown will be meeting with University Place staff next week to tour potential sites for youth basketball and youth baseball. This is in preparation for the possibility of partnering with them and incorporating newly created UP teams into our program.
- Director Grover is comparing pool usage numbers at the halfway point of the season and working on a revenue comparison between 2023 and 2024. This will be included in next week's City Manager Update.
- Director Grover would like to personally welcome Dorothy Cottrill to her new position as Community Center Office Assistant. This is a permanent, part-time role, and Dorothy will be the face of the Community Center front counter from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Having lived in Fircrest since childhood, Dorothy is familiar with many of our residents and has a deep knowledge of the City. All of us in the Parks & Recreation Department are excited to have her on our team in this new role.

Community Events

- Fircrest Fun Days was once again a spectacular success! Attendees, vendors, volunteers, and staff all enjoyed a wonderful experience. A special thank you to our incredible Events Coordinator, Judy Schmidtke, and her fantastic team of wonderful, hardworking, and generous volunteers for dedicating countless hours to planning and executing this memorable event. We also extend our gratitude to the Public Works and Police Departments for their invaluable assistance, ensuring everything ran smoothly. Lastly, a heartfelt thank you to our generous sponsors. Without your support, an event of this magnitude would not be possible.

For more details about our Fircrest Fun community events, visit the Parks & Recreation Community Events page at [Community Events - City of Fircrest](#).

Senior Programs

- Senior Mornings Program – As we recently celebrated the second anniversary of the Community Center in April, we also marked the second anniversary of our Senior Mornings Program last Wednesday with our Recreation Leader, Amber Kropelnicki. This program was launched in 2022 thanks to a generous donation from the Edwards Family Foundation and has continued to grow ever since. We now have a variety of sponsors who support our program in numerous ways. Thank you to all our sponsors and community members who keep attending and help make the Community Center a welcoming space for everyone!
 - July Senior Trip – There are still a few tickets available to the [Tacoma Rainiers](#) baseball game on Tuesday, July 30th. 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 Tacoma Rainier's hat. The day starts at 11:00 AM, and attendees should be finished around 4:00 PM. Visit [Senior Trip – Tacoma Rainiers Baseball Game](#) for more information and to register.
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Recreation Programs

- **Gym Closed** – The Gymnasium will be closed from July 29th – August 2nd from 8:00 AM – 12:30 PM for Skyhawks Camp. We apologize for any inconvenience.
- **Pickleball** – Recreation Coordinator Brown recently launched our new pickleball league. Six teams registered and are playing in the Names Family Gymnasium on Tuesday evenings.
- **Summer Day Camp** – We are now at the halfway point of our extended Summer Day Camp program, wrapping up week 3, and continue to hear rave reviews from the kids. Registration numbers have been steadily increasing as the summer progresses, with 17 kids registered for this week alone. We hope to see this trend continue.

Spots are still available for the second half of our Day Camp program for kids ages 7 – 12. The weekly price is \$165 for residents and \$195 for non-residents. Register at <https://fircrest.recdesk.com> or the Community Center. Don't miss out on this opportunity for your child to enjoy a summer filled with laughter and memories!

Initially, we aimed to have Recreation Specialist Cindell Stacy on board by January 2024 and begin promotions for our Summer Day Camp in March. Although Cindell started in April, she quickly and efficiently developed the camp plans, allowing us to open registration on May 15th. While we're excited to see continued growth in registration this summer, we are even more enthusiastic about the potential for early advertising and promotion for next year. Cindell has done an excellent job laying the groundwork for a sustainable summer camp program.

Aquatic Center

Pool season is in full swing! Below are some highlights:

- The evening session on Tuesday, July 30th, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. is canceled due to staff training. Thank you for your understanding.
- Registration for Session 4 swim lessons opens on Thursday, August 1st at 7:00 PM for residents and Friday, August 2nd for non-residents. Classes are Monday through Friday, August 5th - August 16th. For more information, visit [Programs \(recdesk.com\)](https://fircrest.recdesk.com).
- Weekend open swim times are 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 2:30 – 5:30 PM, and 6:00 – 8:00 PM. Weekday open swim times are 12:30 – 4:30 PM and 6:30 – 8:30 PM. Lap swim is Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 6:30 – 7:30 AM. Water Aerobics is on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:00 – 9:00 AM.

Visit the Edwards Family Aquatic Center [webpage](#) for additional information on pool [admission](#), [schedules](#), [programs](#), and [rentals](#).

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' current summer operating hours are 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM.

This week's highlights include:

Utilities – Water, Sewer, Streets, and Stormwater

- Summer hires have completed repainting white markings on City streets, including stop bars. They will now transition to yellow curb painting.
- On July 22nd, water shutoffs due to delinquent utility bills took place. Twelve of the 17 properties shut off have been turned on. The five remaining properties are either vacant or for sale.
- On July 25th, SPM (formed by the merger of Stripe Rite and Apply-a-Line) completed roadway striping.
- We are preparing documents and bids for the sewer main pipe bursting at the 500 block of Buena Vista Avenue.
- We have been communicating with the City of Tacoma regarding the Leach Creek Holding Basin mitigation project. The contractor has begun mobilizing equipment and still needs to apply for permits with Tacoma. A construction start date has not yet been identified.

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- The Facilities staff is currently operating down one Maintenance Worker.
- The Facilities crew participated in Fircrest Fun Days setup, breakdown, and clean up.
- Collapsible safety bollards were installed on the north side of the Community Center to restrict unapproved vehicle access.
- Parks irrigation timing has been increased due to the impacts of dry weather.

Project Updates

- Wellhouse #7 (Claremont)
 - Construction has been completed, and staff are reviewing the final invoice for payment.
 - Fircrest Park Maintenance Facility Structure Upgrade
 - We are waiting on one final document from the contractor, Creative Custom Construction, LLC, and we will then issue a notice to proceed.
 - 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.
 - South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - Miles Resources is scheduled to begin construction on Monday, August 5th, with a 42-day working schedule. This includes all ADA curb ramp upgrades and roadway marking installation.
 - An Interlocal Agreement between the City of Tacoma and the City of Fircrest was approved at the July 23rd City Council meeting.
 - Change Order #1, adding a 15% contingency for City of Tacoma construction expenses, was approved at the July 23rd City Council meeting.
 - Mass communication notifications will be posted on Monday, July 29th.
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- Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension (south side) – Woodside Drive to 67th Ave West
 - The 100% design was submitted for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review.
- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67th Ave West
 - Documents were submitted to WSDOT on June 12th.
- Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
 - Design is in process.
- South Orchard Street Water Main Upgrade – Ramsdell Street to Holly Drive
 - Construction began on Wednesday, July 24th, by exposing the existing water main and obtaining measurements for a new tap.
 - The new hot tap was completed on Thursday, July 25th. The road closure remains in place during working hours, and a steel plate has been installed for overnight safety.
 - The trench excavation and installation of the new main should be completed by Tuesday, July 30th. Water purification sampling will follow, and then the final connection to the existing water system will be done by Friday, August 6th, pending purification results.
 - Public Works has received zero questions, comments, or concerns since construction commenced. We will provide more notification and clarity next week as needed
- Claremont Street Grind & Overlay TIB Grant
 - Design is in process.
- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
 - Meter exchanges are in progress, with program completion currently at 65%.
 - Public Works staff and the contractor are working together to expedite the project.
 - Summer hires continued meter box prep for exchanges.

TOTAL BY YEAR	
	Total
2019	11
2020	143
2021	444
2022	283
2023	296
2024	419

PROJECT UPDATE	
Total City Meter Connections	2,402
New Meters Installed	1,596
Remaining Meters to be Installed	806
Percentage of Completion	66%

10. Passing of Roger Schlosstein

It is with a heavy heart that the City shares the passing of Roger Schlosstein on July 20th. Roger worked for 20 years as a Utility Worker for the Public Works Department until his retirement in 2022. His superior skills and plumbing expertise, along with his electrical knowledge and guidance, were a tremendous help to Public Works. His jubilant demeanor, servant’s heart, and attitude that “anything can be done” when it came to serving the community made the department a better place. He was a great friend to many, a person you could trust, someone who would help you at any time, and a person who will never be replaced and will be dearly missed by all who knew him.

In the words of Utility Foreman Jeff Davis, “From now on, as the streetlights in Fircrest turn on, they will remind me of Roger and that his spirit lives on in the light shining down on us.”

The City sends its sincere condolences to Roger’s wife, family, and friends.

11. Whittier Park Work Party

Help the environment while volunteering at a Habitat Restoration work party. The next work party is at Whittier Park on Saturday, August 5th, from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. Work party activities include caring for existing plants and removing invasive species. This work supports water quality, our local wildlife, and pollinators. Sign up at <https://Piercecd.org> or visit the City [Events Calendar](#) for additional information.

12. Summer Reading Challenge 2024

There is still time to complete Tacoma Public Library's [Summer Reading Challenge 2024](#). This year's theme is "Adventure Begins at Your Library!" and readers of all ages are welcome to participate. Sign up by visiting the [Beanstack](#) website or by [downloading the mobile app](#). Beanstack makes it easy to sign up your whole family for the program. If you don't have access to Beanstack or the mobile app, stop by one of the eight Tacoma Public Library branches to sign up. The last day to complete the Summer Reading Challenge and pick up your completion prize is Saturday, August 17th. For additional information, please visit the [2024 Summer Reading Challenge](#).

13. Pierce Transit Long Range Plan

Over the next 20 years, Pierce County's population will grow, new technologies will change how and why people travel, and the funding to deliver robust transit service will continue to be a challenge. To address and prepare for all of these changes, Pierce Transit is drafting its Long-Range Plan called *Destination 2045*. The public is encouraged to provide input at various stages of the Plan's development. The first phase of this public involvement in the Plan is a [survey](#) seeking input on Pierce Transit's 20-year vision for transit in Pierce County. Please fill out the [survey](#) to contribute your feedback. To learn more about *Destination 2045* and Pierce Transit's Long Range Plan process, please visit [Pierce Transit's Long Range Plans](#).

14. Summer Lunch Program

Metro Parks Tacoma is offering a lunch program for youth 18 and younger. Meals are served at various Tacoma parks on a first-come, first-served basis from 12:30 – 1:30 PM and must be eaten on-site. Additional information is available at the [Free Summer Playground & Lunch Program](#).

15. Sustainable Solutions Weekly Classes

Pierce County offers a free class series – Sustainable Solutions – designed to equip you with the knowledge and tools to create a more livable community for everyone. Weekly environmental education topics include gardening, composting, and energy conservation. The classes are led by experts from Pierce County Planning & Public Works, with each session offering practical insights and valuable tips for reducing your eco-footprint. Whether you're new to sustainability or a seasoned enthusiast, these classes will empower you with the resources to contribute to a healthier, more vibrant Pierce County.

[Cooking with Scraps](#) – Wednesday, July 31st, from Noon – 1:00 PM; Virtual on Zoom. Learn several ways to save money and reduce food waste through meal planning, cooking with scraps, utilizing leftovers in creative ways, and preserving. To register, visit [Sustainable Solutions Series: Cooking with Scraps](#).

To view more upcoming classes, visit [Sustainable Solutions | Pierce County, WA - Official Website \(piercecountywa.gov\)](#).
