



City Manager's Update

August 16, 2024

To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: August 16, 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. Concert, Market & Picnic in the Park

The last big summer event of the season is next week. Join us at the Fircrest Concert, Market & Picnic in the Park next Thursday, August 22nd, from 5:00 – 8:30 PM at Fircrest Park. Join your friends and community for a summer evening of food, music, and family-friendly fun. Over 30 market vendors will be open for business, and nine food trucks will be on-site with a variety of food and beverages for purchase. The Harmonious Funk Band will keep you dancing with music from the '80s, '90s, early 2000s, and current Top 40. Thank you to Umpqua Bank for their generous sponsorship. Grab your blankets, lawn chairs, and picnic baskets, and join in on the fun!

2. Traffic Impacts on South Orchard Street

Work on the South Orchard Street asphalt grind and overlay project begins on Monday, August 5th, spanning from just south of Holly Drive through the intersection at Regents Boulevard/Center Street. Work is expected to take approximately two months (42 working days). During this work, there will be times when lanes are reduced or closed. The grinding and paving portion of the project will occur at night during off-peak commute times to mitigate traffic impacts. Drivers can expect delays when this occurs. More information on exact dates for paving will be shared once available.

3. Volunteer Opportunity

The Centennial Historical Research Subcommittee is looking for volunteers! If you are interested in volunteering, please email City Clerk Arlette Burkhart at aburkhart@cityoffircrest.net.

4. Council Study Session Agenda Items – August 19th, 2024

- Hanover Group Project Overview
- Sign Code Discussion
- Police Pursuit Policy Discussion

5. Council Meeting Agenda Items – August 27th, 2024 - Tentative

- Setting Public Hearings for the 2025 Preliminary Budget & Revenue Sources
- Ordinance – Budget Amendment #2 - Adoption
- Resolution – Cultural Shift to Active Transportation Grant MOU Agreement
- Resolution – Vehicle Pursuit Policy
- Resolution – Pipe Bursting Contract
- Resolution – Purchase of Surplus Police Vehicle
- Motion – Letter of Understanding – City Manager Employment Agreement

6. August 13th, 2024 – Council Meeting Recap

Action items at the Tuesday, August 13th regular City Council meeting included:

- Issued a Proclamation in Recognition of Utility Worker Jim Marzano
- Set Special Budget Meetings for September 30th, October 7th, October 14th & October 29th.
- Approved Contract Amendment for KPG Psomas for the South Orchard Grind & Overlay Project.
- Approved Professional Service Agreement for Finance Consulting Services.

7. Administration Update

Administration highlights include:

- The Civil Service Commission is scheduled to have a special meeting on August 19th to adopt the Fircrest Civil Service Rules. The regularly scheduled meeting for September 3rd has been canceled. Please visit the Civil Service Commission [webpage](#) on the City of Fircrest [website](#) for up-to-date information.
 - City Manager Masko worked with the City Attorney on the temporary sign code materials for the August 19th Study Session and with Police Chief Ron Schaub on the Vehicle Pursuit Policy.
 - City Clerk Arlette Burkhart is coordinating with Police Chief Schaub on next week's lateral and exceptional-entry level oral board interviews. Four applicants will be interviewed.
 - City Manager Masko began reviewing the Interlocal Agreement with Pierce County for specialized law enforcement services and a subscriber agreement with Public Safety Testing for pre-employment testing services for the Police Department. She also began reviewing the City Attorney's comments and proposed edits to the Civil Service Rules.
 - City Clerk Burkhart, Public Works Director Tyler Bemis, and Interim Finance Director Julie Dunbar met on August 15th to continue discussions regarding the pre-award, award phase, and post-award grant process. The City currently has 13 active grants in various stages, totaling \$2,713,507. Nine of these grants are related to Public Works, one to Parks and Recreation, one to Police, and two to Planning and Building.
 - Kudos to the Wellness Committee for a fun employee BBQ held on Wednesday night! The turnout was great, the weather cooperated, and all participants enjoyed the annual water balloon toss (aka water balloon fight).
 - City Manager Masko continued working on the 2025 budget, worked on the 2024 budget amendment for second reading and adoption, worked on the 2025 salary and benefit projections, continued working on the salary survey, and met with attorneys on various issues.
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- City Manager Masko and Ruston Police Chief Bautista met today to begin discussions on the municipal court contract and each jurisdiction's proposed traffic photo enforcement programs.
- City Manager Masko and City Clerk Burkhart provided support this week to the Building and Planning Department during the absence of the Community Development Director.
- The City received three public records requests this week, bringing the total for 2024 to 200 requests. At this time last year, the City had received 169 public records requests.
- In the last 30 days, the City's website has had 42,724 page views from 16,696 users. Sessions are down 11%, and users are down 22% from the previous 30 days.

8. Finance Department Update

- Electronic timesheets are in full swing as the City is now in "Go Live" mode. Paper timesheets will continue to be used for at least one more payroll. Configuration is expected to be complete in early September, at which time weekly meetings with the vendor will cease. The vendor will continue to provide support on an as-needed basis.
- City servers were down for maintenance from Thursday evening, August 15th, until Friday morning, August 16th.
- Locke Systems, the City's Managed Server Provider (MSP), is continuing work on a diagram of the City's network. This is expected to be complete by the end of August.
- IT Systems Coordinator Chris Bunger is working with Human Resources to roll out cybersecurity training for all employees.
- Department Directors are working on their expenditure budgets. Finance is preparing revenue budget worksheets that will be distributed to departments today.
- Finance is working with Public Works to improve the efficiency of the City's public works grant billings, reporting, and accounting.

9. Police Department Update

- Police Chief Ron Schaub attended the Law Enforcement Operations Policy Committee (LEOPC) meeting at South Sound 911 (SS 911) on August 13th and the SS 911 Public Information Officers (PIO) meeting on August 15th.
 - Chief Schaub also attended the Pierce County Police Chiefs Association meeting on August 15th.
 - The Department attended Law Enforcement Training Simulator (LETS) training on August 14th and 15th. LETS offers valuable training in proper firearms technique and use-of-force situations. The simulator provides an immersive experience that allows our officers to practice their skills and gauge their reactions to challenging conditions in a realistic, risk-free scenario. The City's insurer, CIAW, provides this training simulator.
 - Police Department defensive tactics training is scheduled for October 24th.
 - On August 20th, the Civil Service Oral Board will interview four lateral and exceptional entry-level candidates. The City currently has one vacant Police Officer position.
 - Chief Schaub prepared materials for the vehicle pursuit policy discussion at the August 19th Study Session.
 - We are working with the City of Tumwater on potentially purchasing two used patrol vehicles.
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- Fircrest officers responded to 189 calls for service from 8/4/24 to 8/11/24, including 99 traffic stops, which generated 59 notices of infraction. The chart below provides additional information on call activity.

Police Officer Activity for 8/4/24 – 8/11/24			
Call Activity	Number of Calls	Call Activity	Number of Calls
Traffic Stops	99	Miscellaneous	15
Notice of Infraction	59	Motor Vehicle Collisions	2
Citations Issued	8	Outside Jurisdiction Responses	1
Misdemeanor Arrests	10	Parking Tickets	4
Alarms	4	Party Complaint	1
Animal Complaints	2	Reports Written	22
Citizen Assists	3	Security Checks	9
Community Oriented Policing	2	Sex Offender Verification	1
Disorderly Conduct	1	Subject Stops	9
Follow-Ups	2	Suspicious Persons	2
Foot Patrols	9	Suspicious Vehicle	3
Follow-Ups	2	Theft	2
Foot Patrols	9	Unknown Trouble	1
Juvenile Problem	1	Welfare Checks	2
Medical	3	911 Calls – Unknown	3

10. Planning & Building Update

There is no Planning & Building Update report this week as Community Development Director Mark Newman is out of the office.

11. Parks & Recreation Update

Recreation Programs

- Day Camp – Our 20 Day Campers had a blast all week! While we’re sad to see it come to an end, we’re already planning more camp-like experiences throughout the year. Stay tuned as we finalize details for winter/holiday break camps and no-school-day camps.

Community Events

- Back in the day, Fircrest was known for our [Bear & Rhodie Tour](#) around town. With our Centennial Celebration just around the corner, we’ve decided to bring back this fun tradition. A [registration form](#) is now available on our [website](#) and Facebook page to encourage participation and register existing bear sculptures in Fircrest. The most exciting news is we’ve found a skilled bear carver, so we can add more unique and beautiful sculptures to the tour, making this event even more special for the community.

- We are excited to announce that [FIRfest](#) is confirmed for November 23rd at Whittier Park! This year, we're thrilled to have the [Tacoma Tree Foundation](#), [Pierce County Parks](#), and the [Pierce Conservation District](#) as our co-hosts. Their collaboration will bring an array of activities and resources, making it a truly enriching experience for the community. [FIRfest](#) also plays a crucial role in retaining our Tree City USA annual designation, emphasizing our commitment to environmental stewardship. Mark your calendars for what promises to be a fantastic day of fun, education, and community spirit!

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

Senior Programs

- Our next senior trip is a fantastic one that sold out in just two days! On Thursday, September 5th, we're headed to Seattle for the [Titanic Exhibition](#). Trip participants will experience a narrative journey through the lives of those aboard history's most legendary ship on its maiden and final voyage. The exhibition features photographs, handwritten letters, keepsakes, and other personal belongings, bringing the Titanic's story to life.

This week's trip to Lakewold Gardens on August 16th was also sold out. Stay tuned to our [website](#) to be sure not to miss out on upcoming senior trips.

Aquatic Center

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

- The pool's hours will change beginning this Monday, August 19th. We're excited to announce that the new schedule includes extended hours for lap swimming in the mornings, giving swimmers more time to get their laps in. Additionally, we're increasing our water aerobics sessions to three days a week, up from the current two sessions. Check hours [online](#) for additional updates as we swim into the last few weeks of summer.
- The last Themed Pool Night of the season takes place tonight, Friday, August 16th, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Join us at the pool for the 2024 Fircrest Olympic Games! Enjoy the music, compete for the gold, and help us celebrate another summer of fun! Night session rates apply.
- Weekend open swim times are 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 2:30 – 5:30 PM, and 6:00 – 8:00 PM.

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."

12. 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

- Due to vacation schedules, the utilities crew is operating down two Utility Workers.
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- The Seasonal Maintenance Workers have transitioned to repainting all yellow curb and street markings in the City.
- Chlorine and fluoride injection system repairs at all Well sites were done.
- Documents and bids for the sewer main pipe bursting at the 500 block of Buena Vista are being prepared.

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- The Facilities staff is currently operating down one Maintenance Worker. Additionally, the Lead Maintenance Worker was on vacation this past week.
- A traffic bollard was installed at Whittier Park to limit unpermitted access to the park.
- New wood play chips were applied to both the Tot Lot and Fircrest Park Playground on 8/14.
- The hot water tank at City Hall was repaired. The timely response eliminated potential costly damages.

Project Updates

- Fircrest Park Maintenance Facility Structure Upgrade
 - All necessary documents have been received, and the notice to proceed has been issued.
 - The first review of architectural drawings is in process.
 - Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension (south side) – Woodside Drive to 67th Ave West
 - Final WSDOT review is in process.
 - We are preparing to post for construction bids.
 - Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67th Ave West
 - A meeting with the design consultant was held on August 14th.
 - South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - The pouring of ADA curb ramps is underway.
 - Night shift work is scheduled for Tuesday, August 20th through Friday, August 23rd.
 - Days and hours of work will be posted on the City's [webpage](#) and social media, along with the readerboard at Alice Peers Park.
 - Stormwater Pre-Treatment Outfall Grant Project – Emerson Street & Estate Place
 - All final close-out documents and reports have been submitted to the Department of Ecology.
 - Leach Creek Holding Basin Mitigation Project (Tacoma Holding Basin)
 - PW staff will continue to attend Wednesday pre-construction meetings to stay informed on project status and outreach needs.
 - The contractor has begun mobilizing equipment and still needs to submit and/or resubmit for permits with Tacoma.
 - A construction start date has yet to be identified.
 - 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - The contractor is procuring equipment and materials in preparation to start construction.
 - Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
 - Design is in process.
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- 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 72%.
 - 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	614

PROJECT UPDATE	
Total City Meter Connections	2,402
New Meters Installed	1,791
Remaining Meters to be Installed	611
Percentage of Completion	75%

13. Mineral Spill Update

At approximately 12:30 AM on June 4th, 2024, a mineral oil spill occurred at the Orchard Street substation on 52nd Street. Tacoma Power initiated a spill response within one hour, and the impacted area was fully contained by 3:00 PM that day. On July 3rd, absorbent materials at the downstream terminus of the site were removed per direction from the Department of Ecology. On July 8th and 9th, absorbent pads at the Leach Creek site were removed. Hard booms at the outfall and the discharge point have been left in place as a precautionary measure. The entire stormwater line between the Orchard Substation and the Leach Creek outfall has been cleaned, and soil remediation was completed on August 1st. Tacoma’s Environmental Services Department has also commenced a previously scheduled stormwater channel construction project. Tacoma Public Utilities will monitor soil samples during construction.

14. Free Sports Physicals for Tacoma Public School Students

Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) students can get free sports physicals this summer provided by Madigan Army Hospital on Wednesday, August 21st, from 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM at Silas High School, located at 1202 N. Orchard Street in Tacoma. Services are first-come, first-served for all TPS middle and high school students. Parents/guardians are recommended but not required to attend with their child. Students can receive a physical without a parent/guardian present by filling out and bringing a signed copy of the [consent form](#) with them. Attendees should complete this [online form](#) beforehand. Paper copies will be available at the event. If your child normally wears any corrective lenses, they should wear or bring them.

15. Washington Families Clean Energy Grant Program

The Washington Families Clean Energy Grant Program is a one-time, \$200 credit for eligible Tacoma Power customers. This program is funded by a grant from the [Climate Commitment Act](#) (CCA). These funds are available to customers whose annual income does not exceed 150 percent of the area median income. [Click here to see if you qualify and apply online.](#)

16. Free Immunizations for Tacoma Public School Students

Tacoma Public Schools and MultiCare are partnering to provide free back-to-school vaccines for students on Wednesday, August 28th, from 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM at Mount Tahoma High School, located at 4634 S. 74th Street in Tacoma. Students aged 5 – 18 years can get all school-aged, required vaccines at the event. A parent or guardian **must** accompany students in order for the vaccines to be given. Please bring any vaccine records you may have to the event.

Register for immunizations with this [registration form](#) before the event. Walk-ins will be seen as time allows but **MUST** have vaccine records. Doors for walk-ins will close at 5:00 PM. Vaccines for adults or younger children will not be available at this event.

If you can't attend on August 28th, you may schedule an appointment at the Mount Tahoma school-based health clinic by calling 253-459-6222.

17. Help Map the State's Transportation Future

The Washington State Transportation Commission is updating the State's 20-year transportation plan. As part of that process, the Commission is holding virtual workshops to seek public input on several key topics. The final two meetings are:

- **Connecting Communities** – Thursday, August 29th: Improving access and safety within our communities.
- **Equity in Transportation** – Thursday, September 5th: Making planning and investments be more inclusive.



To find out more about the plan and sign up to attend any of the four virtual meetings, visit: <https://wstc.wa.gov/wtp/washington-transportation-plan/>

18. 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.

Demystifying Drop-Off Recycling – Wednesday, August 21st, from Noon – 1:00 PM; Virtual on Zoom. Wondering why some items need to be dropped off to get recycled and can't go into your curbside recycling cart? Learn about statewide drop-off programs and other options for keeping items out of the landfill. To register, visit [Sustainable Solutions: Demystifying Drop-Off Recycling](#).

Edible Gardens: Harvesting and Storing Crops – Saturday, August 24th, from 10:00 AM to Noon at Colibri Farm in Tacoma. Learn best practices for harvesting and storage to get the most out of your garden. Register using the [2024 Edible Gardens Workshop Series Registration Form](#).

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

19. Drop-in Tech Help

Library branch staff will provide basic tech help at the Swasey Branch, located at 7001 Sixth Avenue in Tacoma, from 11:00 AM – Noon on August 23rd and August 30th. Staff will be available to help people learn basic computer skills like email, web searching, and MS Office programs, navigate apps and use their iOS or Android devices, get started on resumes and cover letters, and more. No registration is required, but capacity is limited. People will be assisted in the order they arrive.

Tacoma Public Library also offers always-available [online computer learning and assistance resources](#), as well as the free [DigitalLearn](#) online courses available from the Public Library Association.

20. Tacoma Public Schools Job Fair

Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) is hosting a job fair on Tuesday, August 20th, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Asia Pacific Cultural Center, 3513 East Portland Ave. in Tacoma. This event is free and open to the public. You can view and apply for open positions on-site or speak with a Human Resources representative. TPS is currently hiring education support professionals, bus drivers, bus monitors, and classified and certified substitutes. Benefits for qualifying employees include medical, dental, vision, and retirement. Visit tacomaschools.org/job for a complete list of open positions, and apply today!

21. National Backflow Prevention Day

National Backflow Prevention Day is observed on August 16th every year to recognize the crucial role of backflow preventers and the professionals who ensure our water supply remains free from toxins, waste, harmful chemicals, and other contaminants. This day also aims to raise awareness about the importance of backflow prevention technology and its role in protecting public health.

What is Backflow? Backflow refers to an unwanted water flow in the reverse direction, which can allow contaminants to enter the drinking water supply. This can occur due to cross-connections, where clean water and potential pollutants mix, posing significant health risks. To combat this, countries around the world have safety standards in place to avoid backflow. Devices known as “backflow preventers” are used to prevent contamination. These devices, installed and maintained by skilled professionals such as plumbers, are essential in safeguarding our potable water.

A Day of Remembrance. National Backflow Prevention Day was first observed on August 16, 2021, in memory of a tragic incident that occurred on the same day in 1933 during the Chicago World Fair. Nearly a century ago, the 1933 Chicago World Fair brought thousands of people to visit the city. Several of them decided to stay in two popular hotels that shared a rooftop water source, leading to a catastrophic cross-connection. Unfortunately, this resulted in dysentery contamination that caused over 2,000 individuals to fall ill and claimed the lives of approximately 98 people.

Learn More. The City’s [website](#) provides additional information about cross-connection control, including details on installing a backflow prevention device and the [backflow permit application](#).
