



# City Manager's Update

## August 2, 2024

**To:** Fircrest City Council  
**From:** Dawn Masko, City Manager  
**Date:** August 2, 2024  
**Subject:** City Manager's Weekly Update



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### 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. National Night Out

Join the Fircrest Police Department and City of Fircrest at our annual National Night Out event on Tuesday, August 6, 2024, from 6:00 – 9:00 PM at Fircrest Park & Community Center. National Night Out is an opportunity to build neighborhood unity and strengthen the police-community partnership that is so important to the success of our community policing efforts. There will be over 20 partners and vendors on hand with displays and interactive activities, K-9 demonstrations, a SWAT vehicle, Tacoma Rainiers mascot Rhubarb, music, face painting, food trucks, and fireworks to finish off the event.

Electron Way will be closed to traffic between Spring St. and Contra Costa Ave. from 4:00 PM – 10:00 PM. Additionally, vehicle traffic will be limited to local access on Del Monte from Regents Blvd. just prior to the fireworks display. We may also extend the safety zone on Spring Street. These closures are necessary to allow for our safe fireworks display and to protect pedestrians on Electron Way.

We are grateful to our sponsors who have helped make this event possible. These generous donations will fully fund our fireworks display! A list of participants and sponsors is posted on the City's [website](#). Don't miss this award-winning event that has been recognized as one of the best in the nation for communities with populations of 15,000 or less!



#### 2. Traffic Impacts on South Orchard Street

Work on the South Orchard Street asphalt grind and overlay project begins on Monday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 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. Council Meeting Agenda Items – August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - Tentative**

- Motion Setting Special Budget Meetings
- Resolution – Pipe Bursting Contract
- Resolution – Finance Consulting Contract
- Ordinance – Budget Amendment #2 – 1<sup>st</sup> Reading

### **4. Council Study Session Agenda Items – August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - Tentative**

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

### **5. 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.

### **6. Voter Registration**

There is still time to register to vote in the Primary Election on August 6<sup>th</sup>. While it is too late to register online or by mail, you can still register in person by August 6<sup>th</sup>. Learn more about registering by visiting [Register to Vote | Pierce County, WA - Official Website \(piercecountywa.gov\)](https://www.piercecountywa.gov/register-to-vote).

### **7. Administration Update**

Administration highlights include:

- City Manager Dawn Masko and legal counsel are reviewing the proposed amendments to the Fircrest Civil Service Rules. Following review, the final draft will be taken back to the Civil Service Commission for approval.
  - City Manager Masko, Community Development Director Mark Newman, Councilmember David Viafore, Councilmember Hunter George, and Planning Commissioner Kathy McVay met with a group of citizens to discuss Middle Housing legislation and how to comply with the new laws while preserving the character of Fircrest.
  - Congratulations to Court Administrator Samantha Olivarez for her five dedicated years of service to the City of Fircrest. City Manager Masko and City Clerk Arlette Burkhart presented her with a certificate of appreciation at the City's Leadership Team meeting this past week.
  - The Civil Service Commission will meet on Monday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, to certify payroll, recertify the Lateral Police Officer Eligibility List, and continue discussions on the proposed amendments to the Fircrest Civil Service Rules. Please visit the Civil Service Commission page on the City website at [Civil Service Commission](#) for meeting agendas and up-to-date information.
  - City Clerk Burkhart and Public Works Director Tyler Bemis are working together on sidewalk grants through the Transportation Improvement Board's Active Transportation Program and Complete Streets Program for Alameda Avenue West from Cypress Point to Emerson Street.
  - City Manager Masko met with a furniture vendor to discuss office space planning needs for City Hall offices.
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- City Manager Masko and Community Development Director Newman met with City Attorney Joanna Eide to discuss temporary signs and code enforcement items.
- City Clerk Burkhardt is continuing to implement a formal training program for City employees and elected officials. She has created a training tracking log to ensure everyone receives the required training. City employees have completed Sexual Harassment training and are currently working on Workplace Violence/Active Shooter training. Upcoming trainings include Public Records, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Cybersecurity Awareness.
- City Manager Masko worked on the 2025 budget preparations and the upcoming budget amendment, prepared contracts and interlocal agreements, and met with attorneys on various issues.
- The City received five public records requests this week, bringing the 2024 total to 190 requests. At this time last year, the City had received 164 public records requests.
- Clerk Burkhardt and Records Technician John Truong continue to attend Public Records training, as required by the Public Records Act, to stay current with legal updates.
- In the last 30 days, the City's website has had 54,619 page views from 19,898 users. Sessions are up 16%, and users are up 9% from the previous 30 days.

## **8. 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.
- The electronic timesheet program vendor is finishing up the configuration of the system. Until that is complete, paper timesheets will be required alongside electronic submissions. We are slated to "Go Live" on August 5th.
- Interim Director Dunbar and Accountant Wanda Wells are working together to prepare budget expenditure worksheets for department directors. Once those are complete, they will begin work on the revenue worksheets.

## **9. Planning & Building Update**

The City's middle housing consultant, Kimley-Horn, will host an Open House on Tuesday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 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

- Community Development Director Mark Newman met with City Manager Masko and City Attorney Joanna Eide to discuss the sign code in preparation for the August 19<sup>th</sup> City Council Study Session discussion.
  - Passport Specialist Laura Thompson continues to be busy this summer and received 125 new requests for passport services in July.
  - We continue to be busy issuing over-the-counter (OTC) building, mechanical, plumbing, and reroofing permits. We processed 22 new permits in July 2024, compared to 17 new permits in July 2023.
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- 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. As a reminder, applications are not routed for review until payment is received.
- 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](mailto:nkolostyak@cityoffircrest.net) with any questions.

### Long Range Planning

- CD Director Newman, City Manager Masko, Councilmembers Viafore and George, and Planning Commissioner Kathy McVay met with a group of concerned citizens regarding Middle Housing and answered questions regarding existing CC&R data, Commerce's alternative option for compliance, and infrastructure concerns. The meeting focused on complying with the law in a way that least impacts the existing single-family home neighborhoods in the City.
- Our consultant, Kimley-Horn, held a Middle Housing Open House on Tuesday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, at the Community Center. The Fircrest community came out to express their opinions on the City's middle housing strategy, with many asking how to adapt state regulations to Fircrest to protect its traditional neighborhood character of single-family homes. Kimley-Horn is currently compiling the feedback shared from the Open House, along with comments received during Fircrest Fun Days, to provide to the City, who will then share it with the public. Kimley-Horn will work with City staff to draft survey questions as part of a mailer to be sent out to all Fircrest households to solicit a broader opinion on middle housing.
- CD Director Newman met with the developers of the Hanover Fircrest project (formerly known as the Prose Project) for a pre-application meeting on the proposed mixed-use development. He provided feedback on the proposal and answered design questions. The developer will be giving a high-level overview of their proposal at the August 19<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup>.

### Code Enforcement

- The City received three new code enforcement requests this week:
    - Concern regarding overgrown ivy spilling onto a neighboring property along the 400 block of Farallone Avenue. Staff completed a site visit and sent a notice of violation to the property owner.
    - Concern regarding overgrown invasive blackberry and grape vines spilling onto a neighboring property along the 400 block of Farallone Avenue. Staff completed a site visit and sent a notice of violation to the property owner.
    - Concern regarding an overheight fence in the front yard setback and an unpermitted home remodel along the 400 block of Golden Gate Avenue. Staff completed a site visit and sent a notice of violation letter to both the property owner and the current residents.
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- 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](#).
- Public Works and Planning & Building staff will have a joint meeting next week to discuss code enforcement coordination and streamlining processes when the same complaint is submitted to both departments.

**10. Police Department Update**

- Police Chief Ron Schaub is on vacation this week, so there is no department report other than the weekly Police Officer activity information.
- Fircrest officers responded to 151 calls for service from 7/21/2024 to 7/28/2024, including 64 traffic stops, which generated 42 notices of infraction. The chart below provides additional information on call activity.

<b>Police Officer Activity for 7/21/24 – 7/28/24</b>			
<b>Call Activity</b>	<b>Number of Calls</b>	<b>Call Activity</b>	<b>Number of Calls</b>
Traffic Stops	64	Follow-Ups	3
Notice of Infraction	42	Foot Patrols	4
Citations Issued	3	Juvenile Problem	1
Misdemeanor Arrests	1	Medical	8
Alarms	1	Parking Tickets	6
Animal Complaints	2	Property Found	1
Burglary	1	Reports Written	4
Citizen Assists	1	Subject Stops	1
Community Oriented Policing	5	Suspicious Vehicle	1
Domestic Violence – Physical	1	Welfare Checks	4
Domestic Violence – Verbal	1	911 Calls – Unknown	4

**11. Parks & Recreation Update**

*Administration*

- Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover will be on vacation next week. During his absence, Recreation Coordinator Ryan Brown will be Acting Director on August 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>, and Recreation Specialist Cindell Stacy will be Acting Director August 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - The final submission for the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant to replace the backstops at Fircrest Park is due on August 15<sup>th</sup>. Director Jeff Grover is working on finalizing the paperwork. Additionally, he is working on a few small components required for the Fircrest Park RCO Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) Athletic Field Grant.
  - Director Grover and Recreation Coordinator Brown met with the City of University Place and University Place School District staff on August 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss collaborating on future sports programs. 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.
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- We are continuing to work on the fee study for recreation programs and facility rentals.
- Verifying and approving over 50 timesheets in the new electronic timesheet program, alongside the continued use of paper timesheets, has been time-consuming this summer. Finance has done a fantastic job rolling out this program, and we're all looking forward to transitioning to the new paperless system.

### ***Community Events***

- Preparations are underway for the August 22<sup>nd</sup> Concert and Market in the Park event. The Harmonious Funk band will keep attendees dancing in the park with their energetic blend of greatest hits from the past to the present day. More details are coming soon!

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

### ***Senior Programs***

- Recreation Leader Amber Kroplenicki led a Senior Trip to the Tacoma Rainiers baseball game on Tuesday, July 30<sup>th</sup>. Although the Rainiers lost, everyone had a great time!

### ***Recreation Programs***

- Summer Day Camp – 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!
- Skyhawks Camps – Our partnership with Skyhawks Camps has proven to be a great one. Skyhawks have been busy this week running a volleyball camp in our gym. This is the first year we have been able to offer volleyball, and it turned out great, with registration at full capacity. Another new camp in the Skyhawks lineup is a pickleball camp that will take place at the Fircrest Park courts from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, Monday through Friday next week.

### ***Aquatic Center***

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

- The City Council is being provided with a summary report comparing the status of the 2024 pool revenues to the same period in 2023. Director Grover will give a full report on pool revenue and expenditures once the summer swim season concludes on September 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - The last Themed Pool Night of the season will take place on Friday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 – 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.
  - The Fircrest Amateur Swim Team (FAST) is currently undefeated in the South Sound Summer Swim League. Last week, the team competed against Oakbrook, Fircrest Golf Club, and King Aquatics. The team competed in the "Color Wars" team relay event on Wednesday evening and will host the end-of-season championship meet on Saturday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Our dedicated coaches have done a great job with the team this summer and have made a big impact on many swimmers. Great job, swimmers and coaches!
  - The third session of swim lessons wraps up today. The final session of the summer starts on Monday, August 5<sup>th</sup>.
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- 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."

## **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 one Utility Worker.
- Regular scheduled daily maintenance activities occurred this week.

### ***Maintenance – Parks & Facilities***

- The Facilities staff is currently operating down one Maintenance Worker. Additionally, the Lead Maintenance Worker was on vacation this past week.
- The Facilities crew is helping to prepare and support the National Night Out event.

### ***Project Updates***

- Wellhouse #7 (Claremont)
    - The final invoice has been submitted for payment, and we have submitted paperwork to insurance for reimbursement.
  - Fircrest Park Maintenance Facility Structure Upgrade
    - All necessary documents have been received, and the notice to proceed has been issued.
    - The first review of drawings is in process.
  - Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension (south side) – Woodside Drive to 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West
    - The 100% design was submitted for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review.
    - We are preparing to post for construction bids.
  - South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
    - Miles Resources is scheduled to begin construction on Monday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, with a 42-day working schedule. This includes all ADA curb ramp upgrades and roadway marking installation.
    - Information on the project has been posted on the City's [webpage](#) and social media. Additionally, variable message boards have been placed on Regents Blvd. and northbound South Orchard Street for advance notification of potential traffic impacts.
  - Stormwater Pre-Treatment Outfall Grant Project – Emerson Street & Estate Place
    - Final close-out Progress Reports and Payment Requests are in progress.
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- South Orchard Street Water Main Upgrade – Ramsdell Street to Holly Drive
  - The trench excavation and installation of the new water main have been completed.
  - Water purification sampling is occurring, and the final connection to the existing water system will be done by Monday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, pending purification results.
  - Door hanger notifications and outreach were conducted on Thursday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, to inform all potentially impacted businesses and properties of the temporary water outage while the final connection to the existing water system occurs.
- 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.
- 44<sup>th</sup> Street West & 67<sup>th</sup> 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.
- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West
  - Documents were submitted to WSDOT on June 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
  - Design is in process.
- 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 67%.
  - Public Works staff and the contractor are working together to expedite the project.
  - Summer hires continued meter box prep for exchanges.

<b>TOTAL BY YEAR</b>	
	<b>Total</b>
<b>2019</b>	11
<b>2020</b>	143
<b>2021</b>	444
<b>2022</b>	283
<b>2023</b>	296
<b>2024</b>	444

<b>PROJECT UPDATE</b>	
Total City Meter Connections	2,402
New Meters Installed	1,621
Remaining Meters to be Installed	781
<b>Percentage of Completion</b>	<b>67%</b>

### 13. Pierce County Kite Festival

The Pierce County Kite Festival will be held August 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM at Chambers Creek Regional Park in University Place. Enjoy spectacular kite demonstrations, family kite flying, inflatables, food trucks, vendors, and more. Bring your kites, blankets, and cameras for a weekend of fun for the whole family. Each day, 250 kites will be given away courtesy of the Pierce County Kitefliers Association. For more details, visit the Pierce County Kite Festival [event website](#).



## 14. Summer Weather Preparedness

As the weather continues to be warm outside, follow these tips to stay cool and avoid heat-related illnesses:



- If you don't have air conditioning, go to a public place like the library, museum, or shopping mall.
- Never leave children or pets in unattended vehicles under any circumstances. Temperatures can rise as much as 20 degrees in just 10 minutes.
- During extreme heat, check on family, friends, and neighbors who do not have air conditioning and who spend much of their time alone.
- Use awnings or curtains to reduce the heat that enters your home through windows.
- Avoid using the oven during extreme heat advisories and warnings.
- Drink plenty of water to stay well-hydrated, especially during extreme temperatures.

## 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.

Edible Gardens: Fruit Trees – Saturday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 AM to Noon, in person at Gallucci Learning Garden in Tacoma. Learn about perennial food production with tips for planting and maintaining fruit trees and shrubs. To register, visit the [2024 Edible Gardens Workshop Series](#).

Solar Panels and Electric Vehicles – Wednesday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, from Noon – 1:00 PM; Virtual on Zoom. Get charged up about EVs and more! Significant rebates and tax credits are now available for everything from electric vehicles in your garage to solar panels on your roof. To register, visit [Sustainable Solutions Series: Solar Panels & Electric Vehicles](#).

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

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