



City Manager's Update August 23, 2024

To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: August 23, 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. Traffic Impacts on South Orchard Street

Night construction on the South Orchard Street asphalt grind and overlay project began on Tuesday, August 20th. This project spans from just south of Holly Drive through the intersection at Regents Boulevard/Center Street. While the night work was scheduled to be completed tonight, the recent rainy conditions are requiring the paving to be postponed until Monday, August 26th, during regular business hours. More information will be posted on the City's [website](#) once available.

2. Water Main Break

The City of Fircrest experienced a water main break on the 1300 block of Alameda Avenue around 11:00 AM on Saturday, August 17th. Public Works staff shut off the water and contained the impacted area by noon. Repairs continued until early evening when water pressure was restored. A precautionary boil water advisory was issued for residents within an identified water service area due to a release of sediment caused by the low-pressure disturbance. The advisory was not issued due to any concerns regarding bacterial contamination. Water testing results came back negative for any bacterial contamination, and the water boil advisory was lifted on Monday afternoon, August 19th. We apologize for the inconvenience our water customers experienced as our crew worked diligently to repair the break, restore water service, and ensure water quality safety.

3. Volunteer Opportunity

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

4. Council Meeting Agenda Items – August 27th, 2024

- Setting Public Hearings for the 2025 Preliminary Budget & Revenue Sources
- Ordinance – Budget Amendment #2 - Adoption
- Motion – Purchase of Police Vehicles
- Motion – Letter of Understanding – City Manager Employment Agreement

5. August 19th, 2024 – Council Study Session Recap

Discussion items at the Tuesday, August 19th City Council study session were:

- Representatives from the Hanover Group presented their preliminary site plan and project information for a proposed mixed-use development on South Mildred Street. Discussion topics included traffic ingress/egress, road configuration, amount of retail space allocated, open spaces, project amenities, and potential form-based code amendments.
- Police Chief Ron Schaub discussed the recommended adjustments to the City’s police pursuit policy. Key points included alignment with State law, pursuit authorization, training, and supervisory oversight. The revised policy only authorizes pursuits when reasonable suspicion exists that a person has committed or is committing a dangerous felony, in circumstances where there is an imminent and/or ongoing threat to persons or the community, driving under the influence where dangerous driving poses an imminent threat to the safety of others, and certain other mitigating circumstances.
- Acting City Attorney Joanna Eide presented an overview of the City’s sign code as it relates to temporary signs, including changes made in 2017 to comply with content-neutral sign regulations. Community Development Director Mark Newman discussed sign code interpretation changes, and City Manager Dawn Masko discussed potential future Council actions. City staff will bring back a revision to the City Council at the September 10th regular meeting to eliminate property frontage language as it relates to freestanding temporary signs in residential areas. The entire sign code will be revisited in 2025.

6. Administration Update

Administration highlights include:

- The Civil Service Commission held a special meeting on August 19th to continue discussions on the amendments to the Fircrest Civil Service Rules. The City of Ruston’s Civil Service Chair and Chief Examiner/Secretary were in attendance to observe our Commission as they are both new to their roles. The regularly scheduled meeting for September 3rd has been canceled, but a special meeting is being held on September 4th to certify the Police Officer eligibility list and adopt the Fircrest Civil Service Rules. Please visit the Civil Service Commission [webpage](#) on the City of Fircrest [website](#) for up-to-date information.
 - The Civil Service Oral Board held lateral and exceptional entry-level oral board interviews on August 20th. One lateral and three exceptional entry-level applicants were interviewed.
 - City Manager Dawn Masko, Community Development Director Mark Newman, and Public Works Director Tyler Bemis met with Pierce County Public Works representatives to discuss sewer options for the proposed Hanover Fircrest Project on Mildred Street. The next steps include scheduling a meeting between the City, Pierce County, and Hanover representatives.
 - City Manager Masko reviewed an Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Steilacoom for command duty services. She also finalized the amended version of the Civil Service Rules.
 - City Clerk Arlette Burkhart, Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover, and Accountant II Megan Ryan met to discuss retirement eligibility for temporary seasonal and casual employees.
 - 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 Clerk Burkhart consulted with the Washington State Archives regarding the management of transitory records. She also worked with the Finance Department to audit internal forms and with Facilities to update the master key log as part of a citywide audit of keys.
- City Manager Masko and Parks & Recreation Director Grover completed Special Events Assessment Rating (SEAR) forms for the Washington State special events data call.
- City Manager Masko coordinated with the Pierce County Department of Emergency Management (PC-DEM) to utilize the Everbridge system to notify impacted customers about the water boil advisory. The Everbridge system can send targeted notifications as opposed to mass notifications. She is also working with our PC-DEM liaison to receive limited access to the system to enable Fircrest to send out our notifications in the future.
- The City received eight public records requests this week, bringing the total for 2024 to 208 requests. At this time last year, the City had received 176 public records requests.
- In the last 30 days, the City's website has had 37,345 page views from 13,409 users. Sessions are down 43%, and users are down 37% from the previous 30 days.

7. Finance Department Update

- Electronic timesheets are now in "Go Live" mode. Paper timesheets will continue until mid-September, which is the anticipated completion date for the project. The vendor will continue to provide support on an as-needed basis.
- Department Directors are working on their revenue and expenditure budgets. Accountant I, Wanda Wells, is working on an updated format for narratives, which will be distributed to Directors next week.
- IT Systems Coordinator Chris Bunger is upgrading workstations from Windows 10 to Windows 11. The twelve remaining workstations are anticipated to be completed in approximately two weeks. Once the workstations are completed, he will begin upgrading laptops.
- IT Coordinator Bunger is working with Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover to be tech-ready for the September 12th Level Up community event, which celebrates National Video Games Day.
- 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.

8. Police Department Update

- The Civil Service Oral Board interviewed one lateral and three exceptional entry-level candidates on August 20th. The background investigation will begin on two of the candidates following the certification of the new Civil Service hiring lists.
 - South Sound 911 began work sessions for the rollout of the new Motorola Records Management System (RMS).
 - Police Chief Ron Schaub attended the Regional Radio Steering Group meeting on August 21st. The discussion focused on the single radio system.
 - Police Officer Towe is doing very well in training and adjusting to the department.
 - Detective Roberts attended Firearms Instructor training this week.
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- Fircrest officers responded to 194 calls for service from 8/11/24 to 8/18/24, including 79 traffic stops, which generated 50 notices of infraction. The chart below provides additional information on call activity.

Police Officer Activity for 8/11/24 – 8/18/24			
Call Activity	Number of Calls	Call Activity	Number of Calls
Traffic Stops	79	Outside Jurisdiction Responses	1
Notice of Infraction	50	Parking Tickets	3
Citations Issued	1	Reports Written	19
Misdemeanor Arrests	6	Robbery	1
Abandoned Vehicle	3	Security Checks	14
Alarms	7	Special Emphasis	1
Burglary – Commercial	1	Subject Stops	5
Civil Issue – Child Custody	1	Suicide Threat	1
Citizen Assists	5	Suspicious Persons	3
Community Oriented Policing	1	Suspicious Vehicle	4
Disabled Vehicle	2	Theft	1
Disorderly Conduct	2	Threats	2
Domestic Violence – Physical	1	Transport	1
Domestic Violence – Verbal	1	Unknown Trouble	1
Follow-Ups	2	Unwanted Person	1
Foot Patrols	11	Vandalism	1
Medical	16	Welfare Checks	2
Miscellaneous	4	911 Calls – Unknown	3

9. Planning & Building Update

Permitting & Current Planning

- We have received nine (9) new permit requests this month compared to five (5) permits received during this time last year. 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.
- Fall weather with wind and rain is right around the corner. Consider hiring a contractor to complete a home inspection to check for roof leaks or cracks in your foundation that could lead to water issues. If you have tall trees on your lot, consider hiring an arborist to provide a tree risk assessment for your home.

- The Planning Commission met on August 20th and welcomed new Planning Commissioner Andreas Schonger. The meeting topics were updates from the Planning & Building Department, approving prior meeting minutes, and discussing Universal Design Standards.

Code Enforcement

- The City received eight new code enforcement requests in the past several weeks. Code Enforcement Officer Natasha Kolostyak has been hard at work responding and managing the caseload.
 - Concern over a camper trailer hooked up to utilities and being used as a residence along the 100 block of Amherst Street. Staff investigated the issue and determined it violated codes prohibiting utility hookups of RVs. They have contacted the property owner to achieve voluntary compliance.
 - Concern over three landscaping companies conducting transient merchant solicitation without a permit and in violation of [FMC 5.08](#). Staff contacted the businesses to remind them of the rules and application process for solicitors.
 - Concern regarding over-height vegetation and inoperable vehicles along the 300 block of Del Monte Avenue. Staff investigated and found the lawn recently mowed and the vehicles inoperable and registered.
 - Concern regarding over-height vegetation along the 500 block of Berkeley Avenue. Staff investigated and determined that the house was vacant and the lawn was maintained irregularly. Staff will continue to follow up with the property owner on this issue.
 - Concern regarding over-height vegetation along the 500 block of Alameda Avenue. Staff investigated and sent a notice of violation letter to the property owner.
 - Concern over outdoor junk accumulation along the 400 block of Harvard Avenue. Staff is investigating the issue and contacted the property owner to inquire about the property's use.
 - Concern over potential unpermitted construction work along the 1200 block of Farallone Avenue. Staff determined that building permits were issued for the work.
 - Concern over potential unpermitted site clearing and grading along the 1300 block of Buena Vista Avenue. Staff completed a site visit and did not notice any violations or active work.
 - Staff has also followed up on several ongoing code enforcement cases:
 - Concern over a boat with a trailer parked in the right-of-way (ROW) along the 500 block of Golden Gate Avenue. Staff investigated and determined a violation was present. The property owner agreed to move the boat and trailer onto private property when it is unhitched from a motor vehicle.
 - Concern regarding an unpermitted ROW encroachment along the 900 block of Alameda Avenue. Staff found the encroachment to be in violation and is working to set up a meeting with the property owner and the City to discuss the next steps.
 - Concern regarding temporary sign code violations along the 200 block of Regents Boulevard. Staff are currently reinvestigating the issue.
 - Concern over an unpermitted detached accessory structure along the 400 block of Alameda Avenue. Staff have sent several letters and attempted to contact the property owner but have received no response. Staff issued a Stop Work Order, which has been posted on the property. Continued work in violation of the Stop Work Order will trigger potential fines and liens placed on the property.
 - Concern over a collapsed deck along the 300 block of Eldorado Avenue. Staff is working with the property owner to receive community assistance to help remove the deck debris.
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- Concern over an unpermitted internal Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) along the 100 block of Panorama Court. Staff is working with the property owner to record a notice on title regarding the ADU.
- Public Works and Planning & Building staff identified ways to streamline ROW violations by sharing information received with each other to make sure work is not duplicated. ROW concerns will be handled by the Public Works Department going forward, while private property code enforcement concerns will continue to be handled by the Planning & Building Department.

Long Range Planning

- Community Development Director Newman assisted City Manager Masko and City Attorney Eide with an explanation of the temporary sign code interpretation issued in October 2023. The August 19th City Council Study Session identified several areas where the sign code in [FMC 22.26](#) could be improved, such as providing definitions for each sign type, tying sign regulations to zoning rather than use, and removing the frontage requirement for residential temporary signs. The sign code update is on the Planning & Building Department's work list for 2025 after the completion of the Comprehensive Plan and Middle Housing work.
- Our consultant, Kimley-Horn, has prepared Middle Housing survey questions for consideration and compiled feedback analysis from the Middle Housing Open House and Fircrest FUN Days events. This information will be discussed at a future Council meeting. It is also posted on the Middle Housing [webpage](#) at <https://www.cityoffircrest.net/middle-housing/>.
- CD Director Newman answered several questions regarding zoning amendment requests associated with the Hanover Company's proposed mixed-use development at 2119 Mildred Street West (formerly known as the Prose/Alliance site or the goat farm). Director Newman is reviewing the square footage of commercial retail space for similar developments in the area. He will provide this information to the Planning Commission and City Council at a future meeting. The applicant is preparing to make an application to amend the Form-Based Code, which will be subject to a public hearing. This is anticipated for Winter 2024. A Hanover Fircrest project [webpage](#) has been created at <https://www.cityoffircrest.net/government/planning-and-building-department/hanover-fircrest-project/>.

10. Parks & Recreation Update

Community Events

- The final summer event, Concert and Market in the Park, was held on August 22nd. The evening featured live entertainment by the Harmonious Funk Band, vendors, food trucks, lawn games, and fun. A big thank you to our sponsor, Umpqua Bank, for their generous support!
 - We are excited to announce Level Up! Elevate the Game. This free family, community, and team event is happening on Thursday, September 12th, from 4:00 – 7:00 PM at the Community Center. Join special guests, community leaders, and friends to celebrate National Video Games Day, play interactive games, enjoy our DJ, and win prizes. Artist, entertainer, and writer Casey Catherwood will host the event. Thank you to TeamWrk for their partnership in this unique event. Watch our [webpage](#) for more information coming soon!
 - 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.
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- The Haunted Trails planning team met on August 20th and finalized details, including pre-sale tickets and the theme “Fircrest Incident: Bio-Hazard Meltdown.” Haunted Trails happens on Thursday, October 17th.
- Planning for the 2024 Holiday Market and Tree Lighting event is also progressing well. We’ve confirmed Santa and Mrs. Claus, photographer Richard Trask, Mayor Reynolds providing the welcome, the Dickens carolers, and the appearance of Santa’s sleigh. This year’s event is being held on Sunday, December 1st.

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 to the [Titanic Exhibition](#) in Seattle is scheduled for Thursday, September 5th. This trip sold out in just two days! However, the following Senior Trip on September 18th to the [Issaquah Salmon Hatchery](#) still has open spots. Located in downtown Issaquah, the hatchery features 37 education exhibits and interactive displays, an aquarium room that shows the salmon life cycle, a theater room with a short film, and viewing decks with a bridge over Issaquah Creek. After viewing the salmon, enjoy lunch at the Issaquah Café as well as visit one of the world-famous Thomas Dambo trolls. Register online with your RecDesk account at [Senior Trip - Issaquah Salmon Hatchery](#).

Aquatic Center

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

- Pool attendance has been low due to the wet and cool August weather. Over my years of managing the pool, it’s become clear that pool admissions have a direct correlation with the weather. We typically see busier days when the temperature is near or at 80 degrees.
- To make the most of the last few weeks of the summer pool season, we’ll be offering two programs on a trial basis to see if they might be a good fit for further implementation in 2025. One of the offerings is an adult-only open swim, which has been requested by many over the years. Our first adult-only open swim is scheduled for Tuesday, August 27th, from 6:30 – 8:30 PM. Night session rates apply.
- We are also pleased to announce that we are now offering adult swim lessons. These lessons are being held next week, Monday, August 26th through Friday, August 30th, with sessions at 5:00 – 5:30 PM and 5:30 – 6:00 PM. Visit our Aquatic Center [webpage](#) for more information or [Programs \(recdesk.com\)](#) to sign up.
- Don’t forget - the pool’s hours changed beginning August 19th. Check hours [online](#) for current hours and additional updates as we swim into the last few weeks of summer.
- 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.”

11. 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

- The utilities crew responded to a water main break on Alameda Avenue on August 17th.
- The Weathervane Booster Pump Station was repaired on August 18th, following the water main break on August 17th.
- The Seasonal Maintenance Workers continue to paint yellow curbing throughout the City.
- We are preparing to remove and store hanging baskets and flags on September 12th.
- Storm debris cleanup is ongoing following the August 17th severe weather.
- The mobile sweeper is going in for repairs today.
- 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.
- Staff started painting soccer fields in coordination with the Fircrest Soccer Club.
- Storm debris cleanup is ongoing from recent high winds.
- Staff assisted the Park Department with preparations and support for the Concert in the Park.

Project Updates

- Fircrest Park Maintenance Facility Structure Upgrade
 - The first review of architectural drawings is in process.
 - The contractor is preparing site plans for submittal.
 - Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension (south side) – Woodside Drive to 67th Ave West
 - Final WSDOT review is in process.
 - The first billing has been submitted to keep the project active.
 - We are preparing to post for construction bids.
 - Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67th Ave West
 - There are many changes to come with this project as TranTech has been purchased by another firm, and the City's design team for this project has also left with the acquisition.
 - First billing has been submitted to keep the project active.
 - South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - The ADA curb ramps have been completed. There is one remaining ADA ramp that will be adjusted to compliance following the paving work.
 - Night shift work started on Tuesday, August 20th, with adjusting utility infrastructure. August 21st and 22nd consisted of grinding and paving from 8:00 PM to 6:00 AM. The remainder of the paving work has been postponed until August 26th due to weather.
 - Information will continue to be updated on the City's [webpage](#) and social media, including advance notification on Regents Blvd and Orchard Street impacts.
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- 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 mobilized equipment but is still needing 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.
 - A contract extension is being prepared due to supply chain impacts.
- 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 75%.
 - 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%

12. 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.

13. Commissioner of Public Lands Wildfire Update

Commissioners of Public Lands Hilary Franz issued a recent wildfire update: “We are in the heart of another wildfire season here in Washington. Right now, there are currently seven major wildfires burning, and already more than 250,000 acres have burned across the state this season. Governor Inslee issued an [emergency proclamation](#) to ease aviation fuel transportation, and crews at every level of government are working to contain these fires and keep our lands and communities safe. A few weeks ago, I issued a [statewide burn ban](#) on all state lands, and I’m urging all of you – don’t be the spark this summer. To learn more about how you can be wildfire ready, head to our [Wildfire Ready Neighbors website](#).”

14. 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/>

15. Humane Society Reducing Adoption Fees

[The Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County](#) is reducing adoption fees for adult dogs, adult cats, and all small animals following the arrival of 33 cats and kittens from unsafe and overcrowded property in Pierce County. From August 16th – September 5th, adoption fees will be \$50 for adult dogs (2 years and older), \$25 for adult cats (six months and older), and \$5 for all small critters. The shelter has over 80 pets available for adoption, plus an additional 413 receiving care or in foster homes, becoming available for adoption as they are medically cleared. Click [here](#) to learn more.

16. 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 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.
