



## City Manager's Update September 13, 2024



**To:** Fircrest City Council  
**From:** Dawn Masko, City Manager  
**Date:** September 13, 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. Patriot Day & National Day of Service and Remembrance

This week, as our Country prepared to mark the 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, 2011, the Fircrest City Council issued a proclamation at their regular meeting on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, honoring Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance. [Read the proclamation.](#)

#### 2. Council Meeting Agenda Items – September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – *All Items are Tentative*

- Ordinance – Endangerment with a Controlled Substance
- Resolution – Interlocal Agreement with the City of Steilacoom
- 2025 Preliminary Budget Presentation

#### 3. Administration Update

Administration highlights include:

- The Civil Service Commission convened for a special meeting on September 13<sup>th</sup>, where they certified the Lateral and Exceptional Entry-Level eligibility lists.
  - The Recreation Leader job announcement is now live on the City website. Interested individuals are encouraged to apply at [Employment Opportunities - City of Fircrest.](#)
  - City Manager Dawn Masko completed and submitted the required documentation information for the City's insurance renewal with the Cities Insurance Association of Washington (CIAW).
  - City Clerk Arlette Burkhart attended the "Public Records Act Deep Dive: Law Enforcement Records" training hosted by the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC). The webinar covered the application of the Public Records Act and other laws to law enforcement records, exemptions, requirements, and best practices for managing law enforcement record requests.
  - City Manager Masko attended the Association of Washington Cities Employee Benefits Advisory Committee meeting this week. Discussions included proposed health benefit rate increases for 2025 and future benefit enhancements.
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- City Clerk Burkhart and Administrative Assistant Sierra Lee are continuing efforts to update the City [website](#), ensuring the community has access to the most current information. Please visit the City website's [News and Notices](#) and [Current Information](#) sections for the latest updates.
- City Clerk Burkhart and Administrative Assistant Lee are finalizing details for the Employee Benefits Fair, which is scheduled for October 2<sup>nd</sup> from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. The event will provide employees the opportunity to engage with vendors, ask questions, and gather important information to make informed decisions as we approach open enrollment season.
- City Manager Masko spent much of the week in budget discussions with department directors. She worked on revenue projections, salary surveys, utility rate analysis, court contract cost reconciliation, equipment replacement reserves, ARPA fund reconciliation, and preparing budget summary documents.
- City Manager Masko continued work on the Middle Housing survey in collaboration with several interested citizens and Councilmembers and met with several attorneys on various legal matters.
- City Clerk Burkhart and IT Systems Coordinator Chris Bunger began initial discussions on the development of a City Centennial Celebration webpage. Clerk Burkhart also assisted with insurance renewal questions and researched several master agreement contracts with the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services.
- City Manager Masko and Court Administrator Samantha Olivarez discussed court security measures, the photo enforcement traffic program, and potential new Pro-Tem judges.
- City Clerk Burkhart continues to audit the City's claims files and is collaborating closely with the City's insurer to resolve unpaid reimbursement issues.
- As part of the City's ongoing employee training and development program, City Clerk Burkhart successfully secured a training scholarship for Assistant Planner Natasha Kolostyak to attend the "Practical Tips for Local Permitting" webinar hosted by MRSC. The webinar provides valuable guidance and tips for cities on how to improve their permit processes and comply with new state requirements for reviewing land use and construction permit applications.
- Congratulations to Utility Worker Tim Piercy on reaching an impressive 36 years of service with the City! Additionally, a big Happy Birthday to Maintenance Worker Matthew Zych, who celebrated his special day this past week!
- The City received eight new public records requests this week, bringing the 2024 total to 227 requests. At this time last year, the City had received 186 public records requests.
- In the last 30 days, the City's website has had 30,741 page views from 11,110 users. Sessions are down 38%, and users are down 36% from the previous 30 days.

#### **4. Police Department Update**

- The Civil Service Commission certified the Lateral Police Officer and Exceptional-Entry Level Police Officer lists at their September 13<sup>th</sup> special meeting.
  - Detective John Roberts attended the Street Crimes class at DuPont Police Department this week.
  - Chief Ron Schaub and Sergeant Kevin Gollinger attended the National Gaming Day event at the Community Center on September 12<sup>th</sup>.
  - Chief Schaub attended the South Sound 911 RMS (Records Management System) work group today.
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- Fircrest officers responded to 159 calls for service from 9/01/24 to 9/08/24, including 73 traffic stops, which generated 49 notices of infraction. The chart below provides additional information on call activity.

<b>Police Officer Activity for 9/01/24 – 9/08/24</b>			
<b>Call Activity</b>	<b>Number of Calls</b>	<b>Call Activity</b>	<b>Number of Calls</b>
Traffic Stops	73	Noise Complaint	1
Notice of Infraction	49	Outside Jurisdiction Responses	2
Citations Issued	5	Panhandling	1
Misdemeanor Arrests	5	Parking Problems	5
Abandoned Vehicle	1	Parking Tickets	2
Alarms	3	Reckless Vehicle Complaint	2
Animal Complaint	1	Reports Written	18
Burglary – Residential	1	Security Checks	6
Citizen Assists	1	Suspicious Persons	3
Disorderly– Neighbor Dispute	1	Suspicious Vehicle	3
Domestic Violence – Verbal	3	Suicide Threat	1
Follow-Ups	3	Theft	4
Foot Patrols	1	Transport	1
Lewd Conduct	1	Unwanted Person	1
Medical	11	Vehicle Theft	1
Miscellaneous	10	Welfare Checks	7
Motor Vehicle Collisions	2	Vandalism	2
Motor Vehicle – Hit & Run	1	911 Calls – Unknown	4
Narcotics Activity	1		

## **5. Finance Department Update**

- City Manager Masko and Interim Finance Director Julie Dunbar met with department directors this week to review their 2025 revenue and expenditure budgets, narratives, and equipment replacement requests. Following these meetings, Interim Director Dunbar will update the master budget spreadsheet and narratives to incorporate any revisions and work with City Manager Masko to prepare the preliminary budget.
- Accountant II Megan Ryan and Accountant I Wanda Wells attended a closeout meeting with Andrews Technology, the vendor for the City’s electronic timesheet program. The vendor provided details on contacting support, expected response times, and submitting urgent requests. The final payroll using paper timesheets will cover the pay period ending September 15<sup>th</sup>, after which all payroll submissions will transition totally to an electronic format. Special recognition goes to Accountant Ryan for leading this project.

- IT Systems Coordinator Chris Bunger worked with Locke Systems, the City's managed service provider, to configure a test laptop as part of the planned upgrade from Windows 10 to Windows 11 for City laptops.

## **6. Planning & Building Update**

### Permitting & Current Planning

- We received four new over-the-counter (OTC) permits this week for plumbing and mechanical work. 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 on schedule to meet ten (10) business-day targets. As a reminder, applications are not routed for review until payment is received.
- The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, October 1, 2024, at 6:00 PM or shortly thereafter to consider amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. As always, the public is welcome to attend and provide public comment. Following the public hearing, the Commission may make a recommendation to the City Council on adopting the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. Information on the draft Comprehensive Plan can be found at [2024 Comprehensive Plan Update](#).

### Code Enforcement

- The City received two new code enforcement requests in the past two weeks and 62 cases this year compared to 33 total cases received in 2023. Code Enforcement Officer Natasha Kolostyak has been hard at work responding and managing the caseload.
    - Concern regarding overgrown vegetation attracting vermin, as well as a junk vehicle and trash, creating a nuisance along the 100 block of Contra Costa Avenue. Officer Kolostyak sent the property owner a notice of violation letter.
    - Concern regarding outdoor camping on a single-family residential lot along the 1300 block of Buena Vista Avenue. Officer Kolostyak worked with the Fircrest Police Department (PD) to identify the issue and sent the property owner a notice of violation letter.
  - Staff has also followed up on several ongoing code enforcement cases:
    - Concern regarding excessive glare from security lights and overparked vehicles along the 500 block of Golden Gate Avenue. Fircrest PD is assisting with the vehicles. The staff has sent a notification to the property owner to adjust the intensity and positioning of the lights.
    - Concern over a camper trailer hooked up to utilities and being used as a residence along the 100 block of Amherst Street. Officer Kolostyak investigated the issue and determined it violated codes prohibiting utility hookups of RVs and has contacted the property owner to achieve voluntary compliance.
    - Concern regarding an unpermitted ROW encroachment along the 900 block of Alameda Avenue. Staff found the encroachment to be in violation and has scheduled a meeting with the property owner to discuss the next steps.
    - Concern over an unpermitted detached accessory structure along the 400 block of Alameda Avenue. Officer Kolostyak has issued a Stop Work Order, which was posted on the property. Continued work in violation of the Stop Work Order will trigger potential fines and liens placed on the property.
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## Long Range Planning

- Assistant Planner Natasha Kolostyak and Community Development (CD) Director Mark Newman met with an applicant to discuss tree preservation ordinance regulations for a new single-family home permit. The applicant agreed to provide the City with an arborist report.
- CD Director Newman is coordinating with Tacoma Public Schools regarding tree replanting at Wainwright Intermediate School in preparation for Arbor Day this November.
- Additional materials from various summer presentations are available on the Middle Housing [webpage](https://www.cityoffircrest.net/middle-housing/) at <https://www.cityoffircrest.net/middle-housing/>. The City is currently drafting a Middle Housing survey to send out to all households to solicit their opinions.
- CD Director Newman is coordinating with South Sound Housing Affordability Partners (SSHA<sup>3</sup>P) to draft an emergency housing land capacity analysis to meet state requirements.
- Staff provided SSHA<sup>3</sup>P with a blurb on Fircrest’s current housing policies as part of a potential grant to protect existing affordable housing stock.
- CD Director Newman continues to edit the 2024 Draft Comprehensive Plan for fall public hearings. A copy of the latest [2024 Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing Draft](#) can be found on the City’s website.
- Assistant Planner Kolostyak attended the monthly Pierce County Growth Management Coordinating Committee meeting.
- CD Director is preparing to submit for a Pierce County Flood Control Zone grant for reimbursement of activities associated with the Leach Creek Pre-Treatment Outfall work.

## 7. Parks & Recreation Update

### *Recreation Programs*

- **Family and Beginner Pickleball** takes place on Sunday afternoons in the Names Family Foundation Gymnasium. These drop-in sessions provide a fantastic opportunity to try the game in a friendly and supportive environment. While the focus is on beginners, experienced players are also welcome to join as long as they are patient, inclusive, and willing to help newcomers learn the rules and techniques of pickleball. The best part? It’s free! We provide paddles and balls for check-out – so all you need to bring is your enthusiasm!



Sessions are from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM on the following dates:

- September 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>
- October 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup>
- November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup>
- December 8<sup>th</sup>

Whether you’re new to the sport or looking to hone your skills, come out and enjoy a great afternoon of pickleball with us!

- The Fall session of Beginning Ballet, led by Damaris Caughlan, Artistic Director of the Metropolitan Ballet of Tacoma, started this Thursday in the Fitness Room. These classes introduce young dancers to the joy of movement and the fundamentals of ballet, with a focus on self-control, listening skills, and patience. Ms. Caughlan fosters a fun, creative space for children to express themselves through dance. Two classes are offered: one for ages 4-6 and another for ages 6-8. Registration for the Winter Session opens in October.
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- Wednesday Workouts kick off next week in the Names Family Foundation Gymnasium. Hosted by Triple Impact Coaching, these popular clinics are designed to sharpen players' basketball IQ and overall skills. Don't miss out on two exciting 4-week sessions scheduled for September and October. Register now on [RecDesk](#) to secure your spot!
- Registration for Slime Saturday opens on September 18<sup>th</sup>. Get ready to dive into some fall-themed fun with gooey, stretchy slime creations in vibrant colors sprinkled with glitter, leaf confetti, and more. One of the slimes will even be edible – perfect for adding a tasty twist to this hands-on activity! In addition to making slime, there will be slime-themed games and activities to keep the excitement going. It's the perfect way for kids to enjoy a creative DIY project as the weather cools down. Kids ages 7 to 12 years are welcome. Fircrest residents are \$15, and non-residents are \$20. Sign up [online](#) and join us for a sticky, fun-filled day!
- Our [Youth Cross Country Program](#) started today with over 30 runners! Runners of all skill levels are invited to join this engaging and enjoyable activity. The program features a mix of games, drills, and workouts designed to enhance aerobic fitness, improve coordination, and foster healthy competition. Participants will have the chance to compete in age-level time trials on Friday evenings, October 11<sup>th</sup> and October 25<sup>th</sup>, with additional races to be scheduled as needed.
 

The program is divided into the following age groups: 5-7 years, 7-9 years, and 9-12 years. As of today, only a few spots remain. Sign up [today](#) using your RecDesk account.
- Stay tuned for upcoming information on our new E-Sports Leagues, which are set to launch in October.



### ***Community Events***

- Thank you to everyone who joined us in celebrating National Video Games Day at our Level Up! Community Event. With over 200 participants, the event was a tremendous success! A special thanks to our event partner, TeamWrk. We look forward to hosting more exciting events with them in the future!
- Join us for FIRfest on Saturday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at Whittier Park. Community members will have the chance to receive a free tree and participate in a work party dedicated to preserving the park's green spaces. In addition to tree distribution and conservation efforts, we'll have special activities for children, making it a fun and meaningful day for families to enjoy the outdoors. FIRfest also highlights the City's ongoing dedication to the Tree City initiative, which we've proudly upheld for the past two years as a Tree City USA. This event is a fantastic opportunity to support our local green efforts and give back to the community.
- Registration is in full swing for the [2024 Scarecrows & Skeletons of Fircrest Display Contest](#)!



All Fircrest residents are invited to participate, with registration closing on October 11<sup>th</sup>. Judging for the displays will take place on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, and winners will be announced on October 28<sup>th</sup>, just in time for Halloween. All City of Fircrest departments will be joining in, and we encourage everyone to showcase their creativity with festive decorations. To register, visit the [2024 Scarecrows of Fircrest Display Contest](#) page. Thank you to Paper Luxe for their generous sponsorship!



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

## ***Aquatic Center***

- Lap swim and water aerobics resumed on Monday as part of our extended swim session pilot program at the Edwards Family Aquatic Center. This extension is made possible thanks to five of our seasonal lifeguards who have stayed on for the extended season. We're pleased to see the Fircrest community taking advantage of this opportunity and look forward to continuing the program in future years.

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."

## **8. 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 staff is currently operating down one Utility Worker.
- Past-due utility billing notifications were sent out on September 11<sup>th</sup>.
- The Seasonal Maintenance Workers completed the yellow curbing painting throughout the City.
- The mobile sweeper remains out of service and is undergoing repairs.
- We are down to one Seasonal Maintenance Worker with the departure of Max Sinykin and Mario Nordi. Our remaining Seasonal Worker, Jack Gatpatan's last day will be September 20<sup>th</sup>. Thank you, Max, Mario, and Jack, for your contributions to the Public Works team!

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

- The Facilities staff is currently operating down one Maintenance Worker.
- A floor drain leak identified at the Public Safety Building is under repair.
- Both Fircrest and Whittier Parks were aerated and overseeded.
- Trail cleanup and maintenance occurred at all parks.

### ***Project Updates***

- Fircrest Park Maintenance Facility Structure Upgrade
    - The contractor has submitted all documents and plans for review by the Planning and Building Department.
  - 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 reviewing material submittals.
    - A contract extension is being prepared due to supply chain impacts.
  - Electron and Contra Costa Intersection Improvement – Legislative Funds
    - 100% design review is in process.
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- Emerson Street Sidewalk Extension (south side) – Woodside Drive to 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West
  - Final WSDOT review is in process.
  - We are preparing to post for construction bids.
  - Reimbursement invoices were submitted to WSDOT.
- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67<sup>th</sup> Ave West
  - Design is in process.
  - Reimbursement invoices were submitted to WSDOT.
- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
  - The installation of permanent pavement markings is “weather dependent” and is scheduled for tonight - September 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - ADA push button materials are anticipated to arrive in early November. Upgrades will be completed once the materials are received.
- Claremont Street Grind & Overlay TIB Grant
  - Design is in process.
- Sewer Main Pipe Bursting at the 500 block of Buena Vista Avenue
  - City Council approved the contract at the September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.
  - Staff is preparing the notice to proceed.
- AMI Water Meter Exchange Program
  - Meter exchanges are in progress. The project is 75% complete, with approximately 600 residential meters remaining to be exchanged.
  - We are coordinating with the contractor to identify upcoming install dates to move this project towards completion.

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%

## 9. Port of Tacoma Touch-a-Truck

Bring the whole family to the Port of Tacoma’s annual Touch-A-Truck event, a fun-filled, family-friendly day that’s free for everyone! Meet the dedicated professionals who keep the Port running smoothly, get up close to a real train engine, snap a photo in front of a towering 42-foot-tall straddle carrier, explore historical displays in the Port’s Centennial shipping container, enjoy complimentary snacks, and check out a variety of key maintenance and security vehicles. The event will be held on Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Port of Tacoma Administration Building, 1 Sitcum Way in Tacoma. An adult must accompany all children. Register for free tickets at [Port of Tacoma FREE Touch-A-Truck Tickets](#) and find additional details at [Touch A Truck | Port of Tacoma](#).



## 10. Mobile Dental Clinic

The Korean Women's Association (KWA) is partnering with Floss Boss Mobile Dental Clinic to bring free, high-quality dental care to uninsured members of our community. The Mobile Dental Clinic will be available on Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM at Tacoma Central Presbyterian Church, 8001 Pine Street S. in Lakewood. To receive these free dental services, appointments are required. Please contact Sung Hong, KWA Community Liaison, at 253-549-8086 or via email at [shong@kwacares.org](mailto:shong@kwacares.org) to schedule an appointment.



## 11. Swasey Library Temporary Closure

The Swasey Library, located at 7001 Sixth Avenue in Tacoma, is closed for an estimated six weeks. The branch closed on September 3<sup>rd</sup> to update its heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system. Book drops are closed while repairs are underway. The closest book drop location is Wheelock Library at 3722 North 26<sup>th</sup> Street. Visit the [Swasey Library](#) webpage for more information.

## 12. PSRC Regional Safety Action Plan

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is hosting a public meeting to directly engage community members in the creation of the Regional Safety Action Plan. This is a chance for you to engage directly with PSRC representatives and fellow community members to discuss how PSRC can address increasing trends in roadway deaths and serious injuries.

At the meeting, key transportation safety issues affecting your area will be discussed, and ways to improve traffic safety for all will be explored. PSRC wants to hear from you: What are your biggest safety concerns? What's happening in your community?

Join PSRC on Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, from 5:00 to 7:30 PM at the Tacoma Art Museum. Enjoy dinner, entertainment, and interactive opportunities to share your thoughts on how to make Pierce County's roads safer. Your voice matters – be a part of the conversation! If you can't attend in person, you can still contribute by completing the [online survey](#). For more details and to access the [online survey](#), visit the [PSRC Regional Safety Action Plan Engagement Hub](#).

## 13. Thriving Communities – Four Corners Open House

What should the Four Corners area around South 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Mildred Street look like when light rail comes to the neighborhood? It's time to put on your community planner hat because Thriving Communities wants your input! They are hosting two open house sessions on Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, to gather feedback on shaping the future of the Four Corners area. Your voice matters in envisioning this transformation. Both sessions will take place at Tacoma Community College, Opgaard Student Center—Senate Room, 6501 S. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Building 11.

Join Thriving Communities at one of the following sessions:

- Lunchtime Open House | 12:00 – 1:30 PM | Lunch provided
- Evening Open House | 6:00 – 8:00 PM | Refreshments provided

You may also share your thoughts by completing the [Four Corners Visioning Survey](#) at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/4CornersPC](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/4CornersPC).

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## 14. Back-to-School Safety Reminders

With school back in session, it's crucial to prioritize traffic safety and stay alert, especially around children. Drivers play a vital role in keeping students safe, so please take a moment to review these important reminders:

- **Slow down** in school zones and neighborhoods, adhering to posted speed limits. Your cautious driving can save lives.
- **Yield to pedestrians** at crosswalks and intersections. Allow them ample time to cross before proceeding.
- **Stay focused** while driving – avoid using your phone or engaging in other distractions. A moment of inattention can have serious consequences.
- **Obey school bus signals.** If yellow or red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended, traffic must stop. Children may be crossing the road, so stop far enough back to ensure they can safely board or disembark.
- **Never pass a stopped school bus** from behind when it's loading or unloading children.
- **Maintain a safe following distance** between your vehicle and others, allowing for sudden stops or unexpected pedestrian crossings.
- **Observe school zone signs** and reduced speed limits. Slow down immediately when entering a school zone and always yield to pedestrians.
- **Don't block crosswalks** when stopped at lights or stop signs or waiting to turn. This forces pedestrians to navigate around your vehicle, putting them at risk.
- **Follow school crossing guards' directions** to help ensure the safety of students.
- **Be vigilant for children on bicycles**, especially in school zones and neighborhoods. Watch for bikes emerging from driveways or behind parked cars.
- **Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians.**
- **Avoid double parking** when dropping off your child at school, as it blocks visibility for other children and vehicles.
- **Don't drop off or pick up children across the street** from the school.
- **Stay Alert!** Children can be unpredictable, often ignoring hazards. Please don't assume they're paying attention to your vehicle.

By following these guidelines, we can all contribute to a safer environment for students and our community.

