



City Manager's Update September 6, 2024

To: Fircrest City Council
From: Dawn Masko, City Manager
Date: September 6, 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.

The City of Fircrest is saddened to learn of the injuries to members of our extended community and expresses our heartfelt wishes for their recovery. On the afternoon of Monday, September 2, 2024, Mr. Perkins came to the Fircrest Police Department to report a crime that allegedly occurred in Tacoma. The Fircrest officers who spoke with him did not perceive a threat to harm himself or others at that time. The details of this incident are complex and involve several jurisdictions, including multiple contacts with law enforcement and health care professionals prior to and after the contact with Fircrest Police. We continue to participate in the multi-jurisdictional investigation into the circumstances surrounding the events of that day.

1. Patriot Day & National Day of Service and Remembrance

Patriot Day, observed on September 11th, is a time to pause and remember the tragic events of September 11, 2001, in New York City, Washington, D.C., and a Pennsylvania field. On this day, we honor the memory of the nearly 3,000 innocent lives lost and the over 6,000 individuals who were injured. Established by an act of Congress in 2001, Patriot Day has also been recognized as a National Day of Service and Remembrance since 2009.

On September 11th, please take a moment to reflect on those we lost and express gratitude to the courageous first responders who risked their lives to save others. Let us ensure that we never forget.

2. Council Meeting Agenda Items – September 10th, 2024

- Setting a Public Hearing on the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update
- Ordinance – Sign Code Amendment
- Ordinance – Fircrest Municipal Code 2.60 – RCW Citation Updates
- Resolution – Federal Grant Signature Authority
- Resolution – Cultural Shift to Active Transportation MOU Agreement
- Resolution – Interlocal Agreement with Pierce County Sheriff's Department
- Resolution – Pipe Bursting Contract

3. Administration Update

Administration highlights include:

- The Civil Service Commission held a special meeting on September 4th and adopted the revised Fircrest Civil Service Rules. The City of Ruston's Civil Service Chair and Fircrest Police Guild Representative, Detective John Roberts, were in attendance. For up-to-date information, please visit the Civil Service Commission [webpage](#) on the City of Fircrest [website](#).
 - Following the adoption of the revised Civil Service Rules, Civil Service Chief Examiner Arlette Burkhart is updating the City's Police Officer job description to differentiate between entry-level and lateral Police Officers, as minor updates may be needed.
 - City Manager Masko, Community Development Director Mark Newman, and Public Works Director Tyler Bemis met with Hanover Company representatives and Pierce County Utilities staff to discuss sewer service options for Hanover's proposed mixed-use development project.
 - City Clerk Arlette Burkhart met with the CIAW (the City's insurer) Risk Manager Blair Kok and discussed a variety of topics, including assessments of City buildings, ADA compliance, reasonable accommodations, and required training for all employees (including seasonal and temporary employees). They also reviewed current workplace policies and procedures.
 - City Manager Masko continued working with Police Chief Ron Schaub and Pierce County Sheriff's Department staff on the new Interlocal Agreement with Pierce County for specialized law enforcement services. The ILA, which is on the September 10th City Council agenda, will replace our current specialized law enforcement contract.
 - City Manager Masko met with the Steilacoom Town Administrator to discuss a potential Interlocal Agreement, prepared an ordinance to amend Fircrest Municipal Code 2.60 relating to public records indexing to update RCW citations, and prepared a resolution delegating federal grant signature authority per federal grant requirements.
 - City Clerk Burkhart updated the City's recorder contract information and removed the contact information of former employees. She also registered the newly delivered police vehicle purchased earlier this year and conducted an audit of vehicle records. Additionally, she performed an audit of open claims for damages.
 - The City received a \$19,409.18 payment this week from Safeco (Liberty Mutual) for the recently totaled police vehicle.
 - City Manager Masko continued working on the 2025 budget, worked on the 2025 salary survey, continued working on the 2025 insurance renewal documents, researched and updated the ARPA funding spreadsheet, and met with attorneys on various issues.
 - City Clerk Burkhart and Parks & Recreation Director Grover reviewed the Recreation Leader job description with the intent of posting this job opportunity next week, pending the City Manager's review and approval.
 - The City received eleven public records requests this week, bringing the total for 2024 to 219 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 32,634 page views from 11,798 users. Sessions are down 41%, and users are down 38% from the previous 30 days.
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4. Police Department Update

- Fircrest officers responded to 169 calls for service from 8/25/24 to 9/01/24, including 87 traffic stops, which generated 46 notices of infraction. The chart below provides additional information on call activity.

Police Officer Activity for 8/25/24 – 9/01/24			
Call Activity	Number of Calls	Call Activity	Number of Calls
Traffic Stops	87	Missing Child	1
Notice of Infraction	46	Noise Complaint	1
Citations Issued	6	Parking Problems	3
Felony Arrests	3	Parking Tickets	1
Misdemeanor Arrests	6	Reports Written	17
Alarms	1	Security Checks	12
Animal Complaint	2	Shots Fired	4
Citizen Assists	3	Subject Stops	1
Community Oriented Policing	2	Suspicious Persons	4
Disorderly Conduct - Fight	1	Suspicious Vehicle	1
Disorderly Conduct – Road Rage	1	Suicide Threat	1
Disorderly Conduct - Verbal	1	Theft	1
Domestic Violence – Verbal	2	Unwanted Loiterer	1
Follow-Ups	5	Vehicle Theft - Attempted	1
Foot Patrols	4	Welfare Checks	7
Information	1	Vandalism	1
Medical	6	911 Calls – Unknown	2
Miscellaneous	11		

- The Civil Service Commission approved the Civil Service Rules at their September 4th special meeting.
- Our department completed our firearm rifle and handgun training on September 3rd at the Pierce County Range. The top shot went to Officer Jacob Lease for the second year in a row. Firearms accuracy is critical to reducing city liability in the unfortunate event one of our officers must use deadly force to protect life. We are accountable for every bullet fired, and every bullet must be accounted for. Thank you to the Ruston Police Department, which covered our City during the training.

5. Finance Department Update

- The City implemented the first phase of a laddered investment strategy by obtaining a \$1,000,000 7-month Certificate of Deposit today, with an annual percentage yield of 4.75%. The Committee plans to reconvene in early October for further discussions.
- The electronic timesheet program is working well. The final payroll utilizing paper timesheets will be for the pay period ending September 15th.
- Finance is updating the master budget spreadsheet with department director revenue and expenditure projections. Narratives are also being updated in preparation for budget reviews next week with City Manager Masko.
- Upgrading workstations from Window 10 to Windows 11 is almost complete. IT Systems Coordinator Chris Bunger will then change his focus to updating all laptops.
- IT Coordinator Bunger is continuing to work with Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover to be tech-ready for the September 12th Level Up community event.

6. Planning & Building Update

Permitting & Current Planning

- We received one new permit this week for a single-family remodel. Applicants are receiving same-day or one-business-day turnaround time for over-the-counter (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 met on Tuesday, September 3rd, for its regular meeting. Agenda topics included an overview of Fircrest's existing middle housing stock by Assistant Planner Kolostyak, setting a public hearing for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan on October 1, 2024, an update on the CLIHP (Coordinating Low-Income Housing Planning) grant, an update on the Four Corners/Thriving Communities project, and discussion of a 2025 draft work plan. The [meeting agenda packet](#) is linked for reference.
- 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. Taking these preventative steps now can help you avoid costly repairs and ensure your home is prepared for the upcoming seasonal changes.

Long Range Planning

- Assistant Planner Kolostyak attended a Department of Commerce Critical Area Update webinar. The City is required to update its Critical Areas Ordinance in 2026.
 - Community Development Director Mark Newman, City Manager Masko, and Public Works Director Tyler Bemis met with the Hanover Company and Pierce County to discuss sewer service options for the proposed mixed-use development at 2119 Mildred Street West (formerly known as the Prose/Alliance site or the goat farm). The applicant is preparing to make an application to amend the Form-Based Code. The public will have ample opportunity to comment on the project during two public hearings anticipated to be held in Winter 2024. A project [webpage](#) has been created at <https://www.cityoffircrest.net/government/planning-and-building-department/hanover-fircrest-project/>.
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- CD Director Newman updated the Middle Housing website with additional materials from the various summer presentations. They are available here to view 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 continues to edit the 2024 Draft Comprehensive Plan for fall public hearings. This includes adding language to achieve compliance with Puget Sound Regional Council's review comments, adding community-based photos, updating demographic data, and updating transportation data based on the 2025-2030 Transportation Improvement Program. A copy of the latest [2024 Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing Draft](#) can be found on the City's website.
- CD Director Newman attended a South Sound Housing Affordability workgroup meeting to review consultant responses to a Request for Proposals (RFP) regarding the Coordinating Low-Income Housing Planning (CLIHP) grant. The grant will provide development regulations and code amendment suggestions to implement the requirements of [HB 1998](#) for co-living and microunits.
- CD Director Newman prepared the Cultural Shift to Active Transportation grant documents for Council review and reviewed grant funding options available to the City from the Pierce County Flood Control District.
- CD Director Newman provided guidance on permits, land use applications, and fees for a potential townhome project along Orchard Street, frequently referred to as the Bourgaize Properties.

Code Enforcement

- The City received one new code enforcement request this week 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 excessive glare from security lights and overparked vehicles along the 500 block of Golden Gate Avenue. Fircrest Police is assisting with the vehicles. Staff have issued a notice of violation letter regarding the lights and are in contact with the property owner to attempt to find a long-term solution to resolve the issues.
 - Staff has also followed up on several ongoing code enforcement cases:
 - Concern over a camper trailer hooked up to utilities and being used as a residence along the 100 block of Amherst Street. Code Enforcement 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 is working to set up a meeting with the property owner and the City 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.
 - Concern over a collapsed deck along the 300 block of Eldorado Avenue. Officer Kolostyak 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.

7. Parks & Recreation Update

Recreation Programs

- Beginning next week, our Saturday morning Beginning Pickleball sessions will move to Sunday mornings to accommodate Skyhawk Sports programming in the gym.
- Our Wednesday Workouts program kicks off next week with its first session. The second session will start in October.
- Ballet classes will also begin next week on Thursdays at the Community Center.
- Our [Youth Cross Country Program](#) starts up again next week. 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 11th and October 25th, 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, a few spots remain. Sign up [today](#) using your RecDesk account. Don't miss the chance to develop your running skills in a fun and supportive environment!

- Registration is now open for our Fall programs, including [Barre](#), [Barre/HIIT](#), [Beginner Barre](#), [Chair Yoga](#), Wednesday Workouts, Beginning Ballet, and [Creative Movement Ballet](#). You must have a [RecDesk account](#) to sign up for programs.
- Stay tuned for upcoming information on our new E-Sports Leagues, which are set to launch in October.

Community Events

- Join us for the Level Up! Family and Community Event at the Roy H. Murphy Community Center on Thursday, September 12th, from 4:00 – 7:00 PM. In celebration of National Video Games Day, our event partner, TeamWrk, is marking their 5th anniversary with this unique event filled with fun and inspiration. The event will feature special guests, including Marcel Cunningham, artist and entertainer Casey Catherwood, comedian Boebblast, and Bryanna Goecke, sports and esports branding and marketing executive from XSET, among many others.

Highlights of the event include the recognition of our Community Champion Award winners, interactive booths, games, giveaways, and exciting prizes, as well as the chance to compete in a Mario Kart Tournament to win a Nintendo Switch. Don't miss this one-of-a-kind event!

- Registration is now open for the 2024 Scarecrows & Skeletons of Fircrest Display Contest! Additional information and the registration form can be found at [2024 Scarecrows of Fircrest Display Contest](#). Thank you to Paper Luxe for their generous sponsorship.
- Staff is gearing up for several upcoming events, including the annual FirFest Tree Giveaway and the Holiday Market and Tree Lighting event.

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

Aquatic Center

- As mentioned in last week's update, the [Edwards Family Aquatics Center](#) will remain open through September for lap swimming and water aerobics. Five of our seasonal pool staff have agreed to stay on through September to support these programs. Beginning October 4th, the pool will be closed to the public. However, the University Place Aquatic Club (UPAC) will continue to rent the pool three days a week for two hours each day, which will continue to generate revenue for the City. Below is the schedule breakdown for the remainder of September and October.
 - September 7th – October 4th
 - Lap Swim Sessions: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 6:30 AM to 9:30 AM.
 - Water Aerobics Classes: Monday & Wednesday from 8:00 AM to 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."

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

- Utility Worker Jim Marzano's last day with the City was last Friday, August 30th. After 36 years of loyal service, Jim will be greatly missed.
- The Seasonal Maintenance Workers continued to paint yellow curbing throughout the City and completed the north end today.
- Hanging flower baskets were removed on September 3rd. Flags were also removed on Regents Blvd., with the exception of the intersections, where flags will be removed on September 12th, following Patriot Day.
- The mobile sweeper remains out of service and is undergoing repairs.

Maintenance – Parks & Facilities

- The Facilities staff is currently operating down one Maintenance Worker.
- A floor drain leak was identified at the Public Safety Building. Repairs are currently in process.
- As the summer public swim season has ended, staff are deep cleaning and preparing all equipment to be winterized.

Project Updates

- Fircrest Park Maintenance Facility Structure Upgrade
 - The contractor has submitted all documents and plans for review by the Planning and Building Department.
 - 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 67th Ave West
 - Final WSDOT review is in process.
 - We are preparing to post for construction bids and preparing invoice submittals.
- Regents Blvd (west) Grind & Overlay – Alameda Ave to 67th Ave West
 - Design is in process.
 - We are preparing invoice submittals.
- South Orchard Street Grind & Overlay – TIB Grant Funded
 - Temporary pavement markings are in place for traffic safety.
 - The following remaining work is weather-dependent, and dates are tentative:
 - The installation of permanent pavement markings is “weather dependent” and is scheduled for the night of Friday, September 13th (following the proper cure time for asphalt).
 - ADA push button upgrades will be completed once materials are located.
- 44th Street West & 67th Ave West Lift Station Upgrade
 - The contractor is procuring equipment and materials in preparation to start construction, with Public Works staff reviewing material submittals.
 - A contract extension is being prepared due to supply chain impacts.
- Claremont Street Grind & Overlay TIB Grant
 - Design is in process.
- Sewer Main Pipe Bursting at the 500 block of Buena Vista Avenue
 - Contract documents will be presented to the City Council at the September 10th meeting.
- 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.
 - 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%

9. Humane Society Waiving Adoption Fees

This is the final weekend of [“Clear the Shelters”](#) in partnership with NBCUniversal. From September 6th – 8th, adoption fees for all pets will be waived! Visit [The Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County](#) for additional information.

10. 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony

In honor of the anniversary of September 11th, West Pierce Fire & Rescue will hold a public ceremony in remembrance of the 2,977 victims lost on that date in 2001. Those victims included 343 firefighters, 60 police officers, and 55 military personnel.

The public is invited and encouraged to attend the ceremony, which will be held on Wednesday, September 11, at 5:30 PM at West Pierce Fire & Rescue Station 31, located at 3631 Drexler Drive West in University Place. The ceremony will take place in the 9/11 Reflection Park in front of the station, where a steel beam from the Twin Towers is on display, among other symbolic features.

This is one small way for us to not only remember those victims but also to honor fire, police, and military first responders who serve and protect our families, our communities, and our nation at home and abroad.

11. 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 24th, 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 found at the [PSRC Regional Safety Action Plan Engagement Hub](#).

12. Thriving Communities – Four Corners Open House

What should the Four Corners area around South 19th 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 25th, 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. 19th 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.
