

A photograph of a park with green grass, trees, and a picnic shelter. The text "DRAFT" is overlaid in red, and "6 PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE" is overlaid in white.

DRAFT

6

**PARKS,
RECREATION,
AND OPEN
SPACE**

VI. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

INTRODUCTION

The Park, Recreation and Open Space Element serves as an expression of the community's goals, objectives, needs and priorities for recreation planning. In all communities, recreation provides an important personal and social outlet. Park, recreation, and open space facilities are common areas that both Fircrest residents and visitors can enjoy. They can promote physical health and social/mental wellness by providing physical activity, making neighborhoods safer, building communities, and fostering social interactions. Parks provide places for exercise, sports, children's playgrounds, relaxation, and community gatherings, and serve as important community centers that are among the most heavily used and enjoyed places within Fircrest. These areas also enhance the aesthetic qualities of the community.

As with other facilities and services provided by the City, park, recreation, and open space facilities must be planned to meet the changing demands that occur with growth. When the population increases, the demand placed upon existing facilities may increase, as well. As such, parks, recreation, and open space areas and facilities may need to be enhanced or expanded to meet the growing needs. Adequate land must be set aside for these purposes, and capital funds must be made available to develop the facilities. This Element is intended to ensure that provisions will be made to prepare for future needs so that the citizens of Fircrest will continue to enjoy a high level of park, recreation, and open space services into the future.



STATE PLANNING CONTEXT

Growth Management Act

The Washington State Growth Management Act identifies the following planning goal:

"Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks." [RCW 36.70A.020(9)]

The GMA also identifies mandatory and optional plan elements. [RCW 36.70A.070 and .80]. A Park and Recreation Element is a mandatory plan element that must, at a minimum, implement, and be consistent with, the capital facilities plan element as it relates to park and recreation facilities. [RCW 36.70A.070(8)]. The element shall include:

- Estimates of park and recreation demand for at least a ten-year period;
- An evaluation of facilities and service needs; and

- An evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities to provide regional approaches for meeting park and recreational demand.

REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies

The Countywide Planning Policies for Pierce County include a Countywide Planning Policy on Natural Resources, Open Space, Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Lands, and the Environment. Open space, for the purpose of this policy, includes parks, recreation areas, greenbelts/natural buffers, scenic and natural amenities or unique geological features or unique resources.

This policy directs Fircrest to:

- Develop a plan for the provision and designation of open space considering several factors, including the following:
- Define open space in conjunction with recreation and facilities;
- Identify linkages via open space and environmentally sensitive lands across jurisdictional boundaries and coordinate with these entities;
- Encourage open space cluster design; and
- Encourage natural buffering as part of development design.
- Consider ways to use open space for recreation, including parks (golf courses, picnic areas, bicycle, equestrian, and walking trails), general recreation, or greenbelts.
- Regulate open space through tools such as zoning and subdivision ordinances, development impact fees for park and open space acquisition or dedication of land or money in-lieu of land, and designation of open space corridors.
- Cooperatively inventory existing and potential open space by creating local and regional planning inventories.



LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT

Relationship to Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan

In 2020, the Fircrest Comprehensive Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan was adopted. The 2020 PROS Plan and amendments thereto are hereby incorporated by reference and considered to be a component of this PROS Element and Comprehensive Plan.

The PROS Plan provides specific guidelines for meeting the recreational needs of a changing community and makes recommendations concerning property and facility improvements necessary to provide recreational opportunities in the future.

The PROS Plan also serves as a strategic planning tool for making parks, open space, facility, and recreational program decisions over a twenty-year period. The PROS Plan identifies the actions the City should implement to satisfy the expectations of the community. It includes recommendations that provide guidance for making land acquisitions and protecting open spaces and improving and establishing new facilities.

The PROS Plan is divided into five chapters:

- Vision, Goals & Objectives
- Existing Parks, Facilities & Program Resources
- Public Involvement

- Needs Assessment, including Level of Service Recommendations
- Capital Facilities Plan & Implementation Measures

This Element adopts the 2020 PROS Plan in its entirety. To avoid redundancy with the PROS Plan, this Element focuses primarily on goals and policies and does not duplicate inventory and level of service information contained in the 2020 PROS Plan.



Park, Recreation and Open Space Facilities

Existing parks, recreation and open space facilities are summarized below in Table PR-1.

The locations of these facilities are shown on the PROS Facility map (Figure PR-1Figure PR-). Additional details are provided in Chapter 2 of the PROS Plan, which summarizes existing parks, facilities, and program resources.

Table PR-1 Existing Park, Recreation and Open Space Facilities

Park, Recreation or Open Space Site	Classification	Acres
Alice Peers Park – 601 San Juan Avenue	Pocket Park	0.2
Gene Goodwin Tot Lot – 611 Contra Costa	Neighborhood Park	1.4
Fircrest Park – 555 Contra Costa Avenue	Community Park	7.8
Whittier Park – 921 Contra Costa Avenue	Community Park	10.0
Thelma Gilmur Park – 1404 Evergreen Drive	Natural Open Space	6.5
Masko Park – 805 San Juan Avenue	Special Use Area	1.2
TOTAL		27.1

Proposed park, recreation, and open space facilities, including specific recommended improvements to existing facilities, are addressed in detail in the needs assessment provided in Chapter 4 of the PROS Plan and in the capital facilities plan, and implementation measures summarized in Chapter 5 of the PROS Plan. The Six-Year Capital Improvements Program for park, recreation and open space facilities is part of the Capital Facilities Element of this Comprehensive Plan. Finance options for recommended projects are explored in Appendix A to the PROS Plan.

Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.160, Fircrest has identified an open space corridor that consists of lands in the vicinity of Leach Creek between Whittier Park and the City of University Place. Future pedestrian trails developed within this corridor would connect to the Chambers-Leach Creek trail system that the Cities of University Place and Lakewood, and Pierce County, are developing. The proposed trail system will reach its terminus at Chambers Bay and the Pierce County Chambers Creek Properties. The location of this proposed corridor is shown in Figure PR-

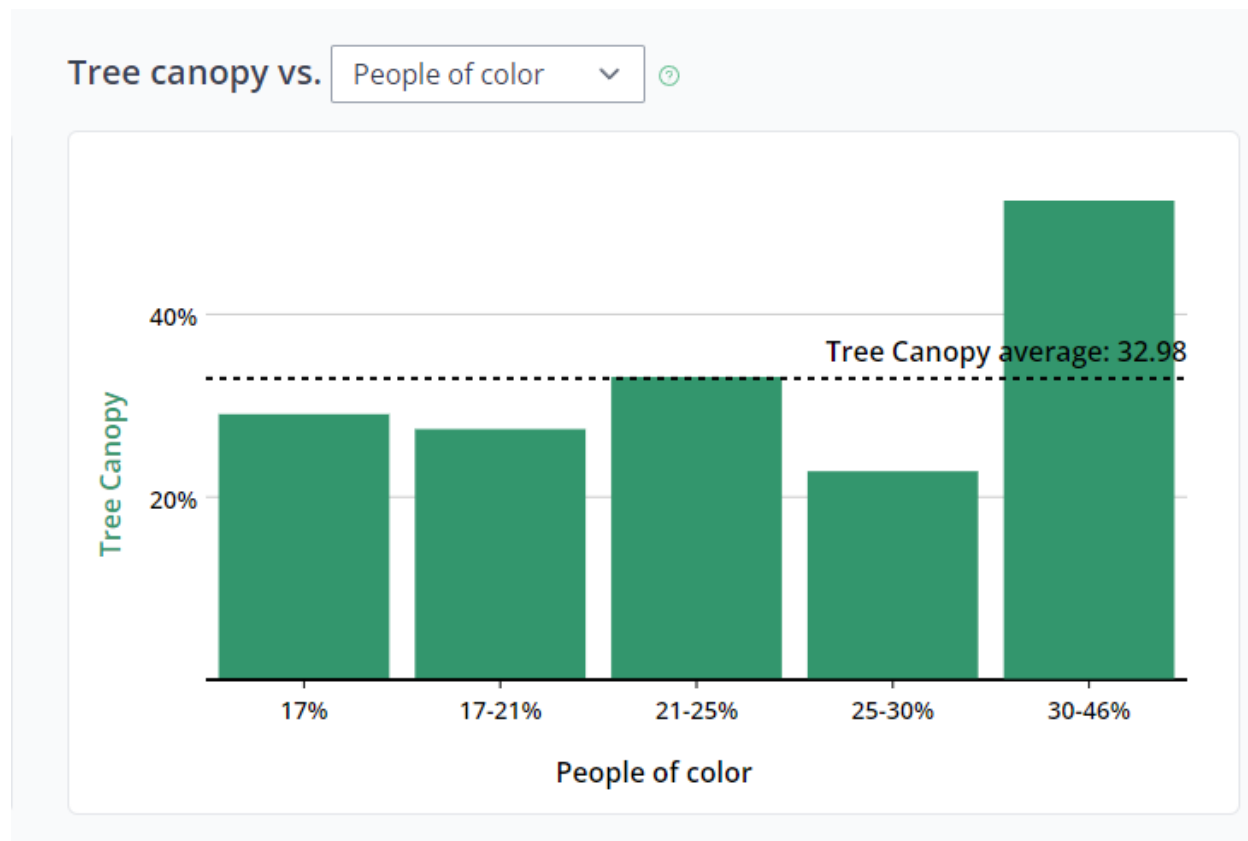


Canopied Picnic Areas at Fircrest Park Provide Cover From the Weather

GOALS AND POLICIES

This Element contains the park, recreation, and open space goals and policies for the City of Fircrest. The following goals reflect the general direction of the City, while the policies provide more detail about the steps needed to meet the intent of each goal. Goals P1–P4 and their respective policies reiterate goals and policies contained in the PROS Plan.

Goal P-1: Enhance a high-quality, diversified system of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces that are attractive, safe, functional, affordable, and accessible to all segments of the population, prioritizing historically underserved communities.



Data Courtesy of the Tree Equity Explorer

Policy P-1.1

Provide parks with activities for all age groups and abilities. Seek to fill gaps in parks, trees, and trails in underserved areas.

Policy P-1.2

Develop athletic facilities that meet the highest quality competitive playing standards and requirements for all age groups, skill levels, and recreational interests.

Policy P-1.3

Develop new or improve existing multi-use facilities to increase flexibility of use for new activities, or other new trends, as there is a demonstrated need in the community.

Policy P-1.4

Re-develop indoor community spaces that provide arts and crafts, music, video, classroom instruction, meeting facilities, and other spaces for all age groups on a year-round basis.

Policy P-1.5

Provide a blend of passive and active parks and open spaces which fulfil the recreational needs of the City's residents.

Policy P-1.6

Design and manage park and recreational trails and facilities offering universal accessibility of residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels, ages, income, and activity interests.

Policy P-1.7

Plan for the future so adequate open space, historical elements, recreation facilities, and programs are provided for future generations.



Goal P-2: Provide adequate recreational opportunities to meet the leisure needs for all ages and interest groups that engage a broad cross-section of the community and prioritize historically underserved communities.

Policy P-2.1

Evaluate present use and demand of existing parks and facilities.

Policy P-2.2

Initiate joint planning and operating programs with other public and private agencies to provide for special activities like basketball, baseball, and soccer.

Policy P-2.3

Provide programs, special events, and facilities that promote a sense of community and stimulate socialization for the individual and family such as Fircrest Fun Days and National Night Out.

Policy P-2.4

Ensure a broad range of programs to stimulate good health and physical development for all ages.

Policy P-2.5

Support the development of athletic facilities that meet quality playing standards and requirements for all age groups and recreational interests, concentrating on field and court activities that provide for the largest number of participants.

Policy P-2.6

Offer programs at a range of costs and implement strategies to ensure program affordability, while meeting financial goals.

Policy P-2.7

Evaluate opportunities to produce revenues in excess of expenditures in appropriate areas to help fund other programs.

Policy P-2.8

Continue to be innovative in offering and providing a broad and varied program of leisure activities, recreation programs and services relevant to the needs, interests, and abilities of all citizens.

NEW Policy P-2.9

Ensure that all community members have equitable access to green space and other recreational facilities.

NEW Policy P-10

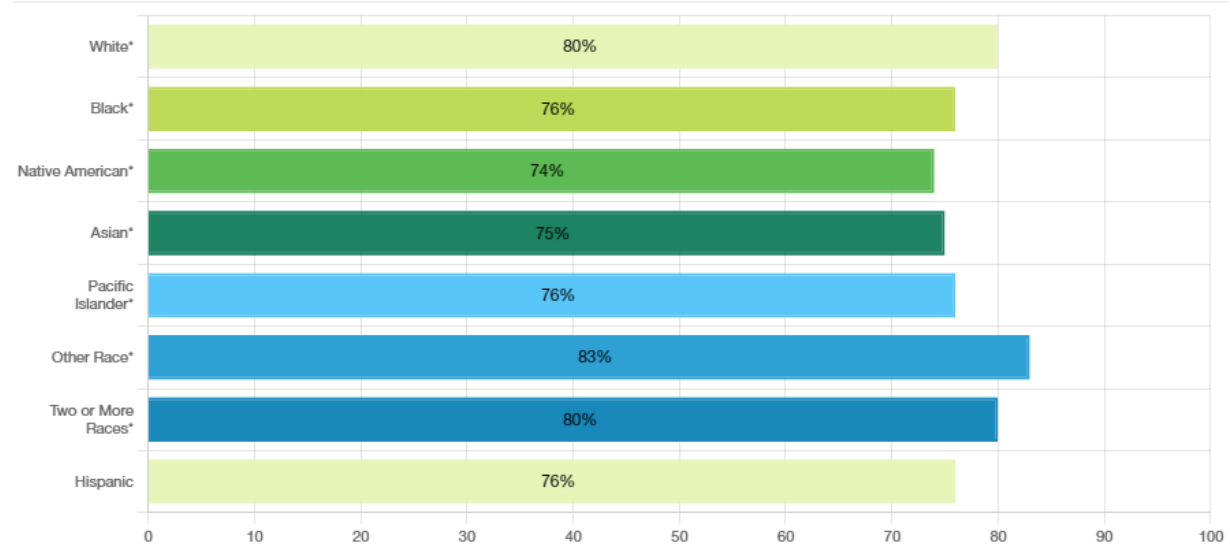
Where possible, ensure that access to parks and the Community Center prioritize residents of Fircrest when user space is limited.

NEW Policy P-11

Fircrest shall work toward obtaining a 100% parks level-of-service that promotes access to parks within a 10-minute walk.

Race/Ethnicity

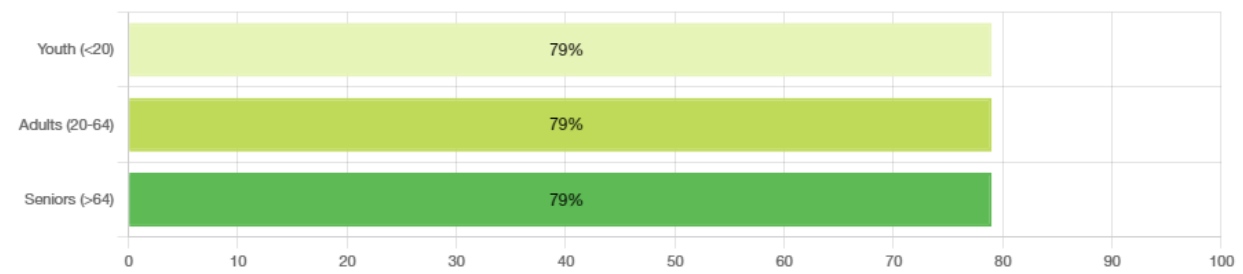
Percentage of people within a 10-minute walk by race/ethnicity. *Excludes those that report Hispanic origin (which is captured separately from race by the U.S. Census).

**Age**

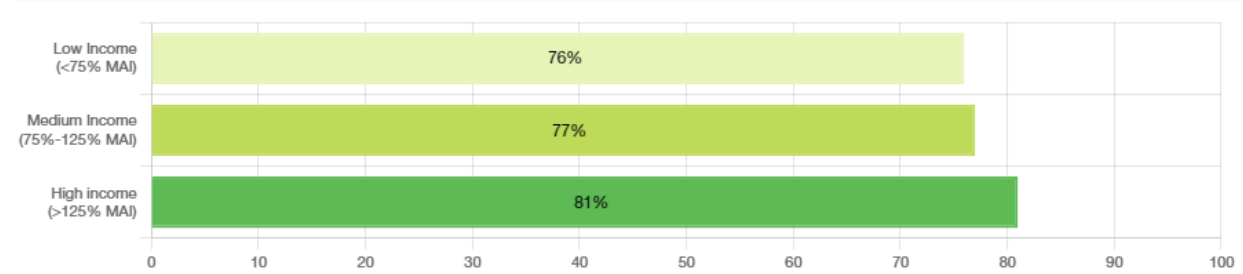
Data Courtesy of ParkServe

Age

Percentage of people within a 10-minute walk by age group.

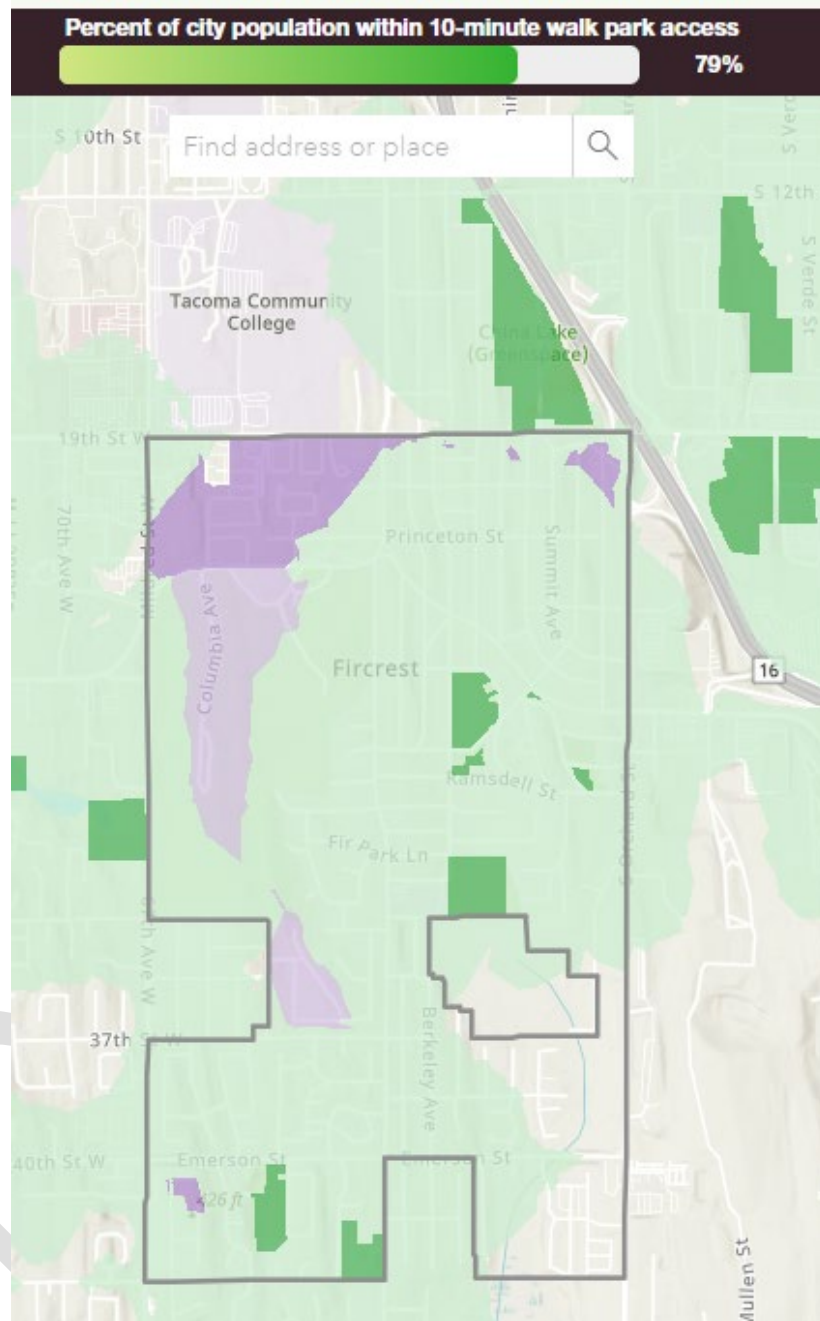
**Income**

Percentage of households within a 10-minute walk by income. MAI - Median Area Income, which is the median income of the urban area.



Demographic information sourced from Esri 2022

Data Courtesy of ParkServe



Data Courtesy of ParkServe



Fircrest Pool at the Edwards Family Aquatic Center

Goal P-3: Provide a park, recreation, and open space system that is efficient to administer and maintain.

Policy P-3.1

Develop parks and recreational facilities only when adequate maintenance and operation funding are available to maximize maintenance efficiency, safety, and public enjoyment.

Policy P-3.2

Prepare master plans for parks and facilities prior to development, major improvement, or renovation to promote cohesive, quality designs and ensure consistency with community needs – such as the Whittier Park Master Plan.

Policy P-3.3

Incorporate sustainable standards and best management practices into planning and design of new parks and rehabilitation of existing facilities.

Policy P-3.4

Preserve and protect significant environmental features for parkland open space use, including unique wetland, open spaces, and woodlands, which reflect Fircrest's natural heritage.

Goal P-4: Develop, staff, train, and support a professional Parks and Recreation Department that effectively serves the community in the realization of Goals P1, P2, and P3.

Policy P-4.1

Employ a diverse, well-trained work force that is knowledgeable, productive, courteous, responsive, and motivated to achieve department and citywide goals.

Policy P-4.2

Where appropriate, provide staff with education, training, and modern equipment and supplies to increase personal productivity, efficiency, and pride.

Policy P-4.3

Monitor workload and staffing needs to maintain an adequate and efficient work force.



Goal P-5: Enhance Fircrest's landscape and provide habitat for wildlife by increasing the amount of property permanently dedicated for open space uses with preference given to properties having the greatest significance as critical areas, properties that can act as buffers between different land use types and intensities, and properties that represent a valuable natural or aesthetic asset to the community.

Policy P-5.1

Consistent with Countywide Planning Policy Environment-15, methods that the City may use to increase public open space include, but are not limited to:

- Public acquisition of property in fee simple or through development easement acquisition;
- Private acquisition with covenants, conditions and/or restrictions limiting the use of the property to open space;

- Alternatives to public purchase, including, but not limited to:
 - Flexible zoning, subdivision and regulatory approaches designed for protection or preservation;
 - Land trust;
 - Conservation easement;
 - Transfer of development rights, purchase of development rights, and other compensable regulatory approaches;
 - Donations;
 - Preferential assessments;
 - Planned developments;
 - Dedications;
 - Impact fees;
 - View preservation easements; and
 - Use value assessments.



Goal P-6: Conduct appropriate long range and current planning analyses that will support the preservation, development, maintenance, and expansion of park, recreation, and open space facilities to meet the long-term needs of the community.

Policy P-6.1

Review, amend and adopt, as appropriate, development regulations that will achieve the intent of the Countywide Planning Policies relating to Natural Resources, Open Space, Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Lands, and the Environment.

Policy P-6.2

Coordinate park planning and use of facilities with other City projects and not-for-profit, private or public groups to assure maximum use of recreational facilities. Encourage a variety of uses in public schools and facilities to efficiently help meet the recreational needs of the community. Cooperate and coordinate with other jurisdictions in the planning and development of regional parks and recreational facilities.

Policy P-6.3

Dedicate adequate park and open space land within Fircrest by ensuring park or open space land has been dedicated or impact fees collected to contribute to park land acquisition and facility development before granting development or redevelopment approvals for residential projects.

Policy P-6.4

Improvements to dedicated open space should be appropriate for the natural constraints imposed by the open space area. Proposed improvements in critical areas designated as open space should be subject to review under the critical areas ordinance.

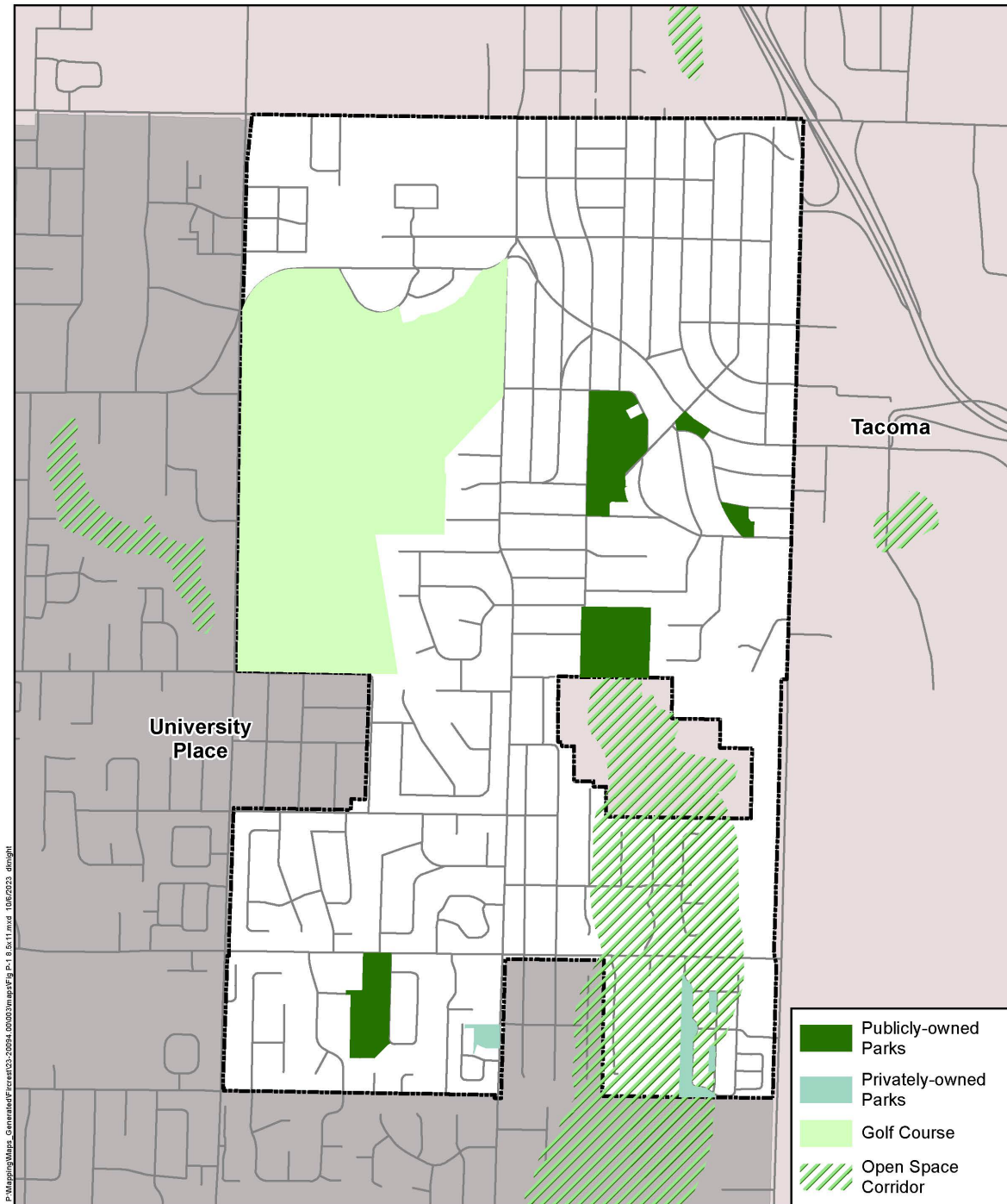
NEW Policy P-6.5

Enhance the resilience of existing parks, recreation, and open space facilities by assessing and addressing climate hazards and impacts to ensure the facilities can benefit the community long-term.



Gene Godwin Memorial Tot Lot Playground

Figure PR-1 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Facilities Map



This map is a geographic representation based on information available. No warranty is made concerning the accuracy, currency, or completeness of data depicted on this map.



0 600 1,200 Feet



Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Facilities Map
Comprehensive Plan Update
City of Fircrest
October 2023

Figure

P-1