

# City of Fircrest Town Topics

August 2025



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## Fircrest Police: A Message From Our New Chief of Police



Hello Fircrest!

I would like to take this time to let you know how excited I am to be back working for the Fircrest Police Department as the Chief of Police. For those who don't know me, I have been in law enforcement for 28 years. The last three years have been in the City of Tacoma, but before that I was honored to be a sergeant here at the Fircrest Police Department for nearly six years.



I thoroughly enjoyed becoming a member of the Fircrest community when I was here last. While I was gone, I missed the city, the department, and the community. While away, I continued to take part in Fircrest events and stayed in touch with community members.

I am busy working with the other members of this great department on identifying our goals and the direction we want the department to go, all with the community in mind.

I will be out and about in the community daily and look forward to meeting as many of you as I can. If you see me, please reach out and introduce yourself. We are a department that cherishes our closeness to the community, and I look forward to meeting you!

Chief Victor M. Celis

## Centennial Birthday Week is Almost Here!

If you've been around town this year, you've likely seen Fircrest's Centennial spirit on full display—from logos on City vehicles and Centennial flags along the boulevard to the limited-edition beanies, stickers, and the popular green Centennial t-shirts, all available at the Roy H. Murphy Community Center.

Fircrest's Official Birthday Week kicks off Sunday, September 14, and runs through Saturday, September 20. Each day will feature a unique Centennial-themed activity—ranging from morning events to evening celebrations—all designed to bring the community together in true Fircrest fashion.

Visit [www.cityoffircrest.net](http://www.cityoffircrest.net) for event details, and let's celebrate 100 years of Fircrest—together!



## Fircrest Night at the Tacoma Rainiers



Join us on Wednesday, September 17th for City of Fircrest Night at Cheney Stadium as we celebrate 100 years of community and enjoy a fun-filled evening with friends, family, and Tacoma Rainiers baseball. Tickets are \$18.83 (after taxes & fees) and include a reserved level seat, a hot dog, a snack item, and water. Game time is 6:05 PM. Tickets can be purchased at [www.gofevo.com/event/fircrest100](http://www.gofevo.com/event/fircrest100).

Let's cheer on the Rainiers and celebrate Fircrest's 100th Anniversary together!

Join us! City Council Meetings are held the 2nd & 4th Tuesday's of the month at 7:00 pm, Council Study Sessions are the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:00 pm, & Planning Commission Meetings are the 1st Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm.

# Serving the Community Since 1925

## Public Works: Property Owner Vegetation Maintenance

Property owners are responsible for maintaining private trees and all other vegetation in the right-of-way adjacent to their property. This includes ensuring that sidewalks, planting strips, alleys, and streets remain free from obstructions caused by overgrown branches or shrubs.

According to Fircrest Municipal Code 22.62.005, it is a violation to allow vegetation or private trees to obstruct the public right-of-way. Overgrown vegetation not only creates safety hazards but also presents accessibility barriers for people with disabilities, rendering pathways non-compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



To ensure safety and accessibility for all users, the following minimum clearance standards must be maintained:

- **Sidewalk Clearance:** Vegetation must be trimmed to allow a minimum 8 feet of vertical clearance over the full width of the sidewalk to ensure safe and accessible passage for all pedestrians, including those using mobility devices or pushing strollers.
- **Street/Alley Clearance:** A minimum 14 feet of vertical clearance must be maintained over streets and alleys to allow safe passage for emergency vehicles, delivery trucks, and other traffic.

Additional guidelines:

- Keep shrubs and branches from encroaching onto sidewalks or into the street.
- Maintain clear visibility at corners and intersections.
- Do not leave trimmings or debris in the public right-of-way.

If you have questions or need help identifying vegetation that requires trimming, please contact the Public Works Department.

## Tree Removal Information

The City of Fircrest regulates the removal of trees on both public and private property. Please review the following guidelines before proceeding with any tree removal activity.

**Tree Removal Authority:** Tree removal from public areas such as street rights-of-way, planting strips, parks, and arterial streets requires prior City approval and is subject to specific regulations. On private property, the City only regulates the removal of nonconforming trees in public-adjacent strips, and hazardous or diseased trees that pose a threat to public safety. An arborist report may be required to assess the tree's condition.

**Public Safety Hazard Trees:** The City may require the removal of trees—even on private property—if they overhang or interfere with public streets or sidewalks or are deemed by a City official to pose a danger to life, health, safety, or property. Property owners must comply within 14 days of receiving notification from the City.

**Tree Retention Requirements:** Tree retention standards **do not** apply to existing single-family lots unless one of the following applies: New home or building construction, development of vacant or underutilized land, or major additions or remodels. If any of these conditions are triggered, tree retention regulations will apply.

For more information contact us at [permits@cityoffircrest.net](mailto:permits@cityoffircrest.net) or call 253-564-8901.



# Serving the Community Since 1925

## Parks & Recreation: Events To Start The Summer Fun!

### **Strawberry Festival Kicks Off Summer in Fircrest**

Summer in Fircrest got off to a sweet start with the return of the annual Strawberry Festival on June 22—and this year's event was our biggest yet! The event drew the largest crowd we've seen to date, with families, neighbors, and friends gathering to celebrate the official start of summer. A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who attended, volunteered, or helped make this event such a success. We're grateful for the continued support and already looking forward to next year's celebration!

### **Derby Days Returns with Strong Community Support!**

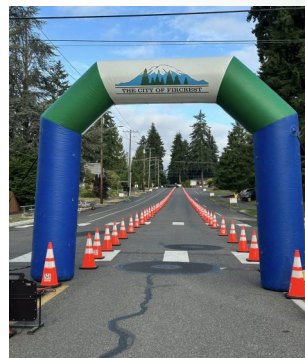
The annual Derby Day made a big return for Fircrest's 100<sup>th</sup> year, and the energy was off the charts! Thanks to the incredible support from our neighbors, volunteers, and local sponsors, the event was a huge success from start to finish. Families lined up early with their derby cars, ready to race down Electron Way with pride and plenty of cheering from the crowd. From sleek speedsters to quirky themed cars, the variety made for a fun and memorable experience. A big shoutout goes to our Electron Way neighbors and volunteers, who helped with everything from set-up to traffic flow to event admin to clean-up. Their efforts kept things running smoothly and safely all day long. We're also grateful to our sponsors, whose continued generosity helps make events like Derby Day possible. Events like this remind us what makes Fircrest so special—community pride, teamwork, and a whole lot of fun. Thanks again to everyone who made it happen!

### **37th Annual Fircrest Picnic & Rod Run Draws a Crowd and Classic Cars**

On Sunday, July 7, Fircrest Parks & Recreation proudly hosted the 37th Annual Fircrest Picnic and Rod Run, welcoming car enthusiasts from across the region. This year's event featured an impressive 420 classic and special interest vehicles, filling the park with chrome, color, and plenty of nostalgia.



We're grateful to everyone who helped make this year's Rod Run a success. We can't wait to do it again next summer!



## Edwards Family Aquatic Center

As summer heats up, we're continuing to do our best to meet the growing demand from the community. With public open swim sessions and swim lessons filling much of the daily schedule, we've also made room for a variety of programs to help ensure there's something for everyone. Our dedicated lifeguards and pool staff are here every day to keep things safe, welcoming, and fun. Whether you're swimming laps, taking a class, or just cooling off, they're ready to assist however they can. A quick reminder: pool capacity may vary by session and is determined by management based on several safety factors—including swimmer-to-guard ratio, line of sight, and the overall swimming ability of those in the water. These adjustments are made with your safety as our top priority. We're looking forward to seeing you at the pool as we soak up the rest of these sunny August days!

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to our Pool Managers, Cooper and Savannah, at [pool@cityoffircrest.net](mailto:pool@cityoffircrest.net). Don't forget to check our website regularly for the latest schedules and program info.

# Serving the Community Since 1925

## Fircrest's Growth and Community Spirit: 1940-1955



During the 1940s, Fircrest continued to grow as a close-knit, civic-minded community. In April 1941, Fircrest Park was officially granted to the Metropolitan Park District, beginning a lasting partnership that supported local recreation for nearly two decades. As World War II unfolded, the town stepped up with its own Civil Defense program and Volunteer Fire Department. In January 1942, Mayor Lakin formed the Fircrest Home Defense Council to coordinate local efforts, and by 1943, the Volunteer Fire Department was fully established under the leadership of longtime resident Wood Freeman, Fircrest's first Fire Chief.

Freeman was more than a community leader—he was an inventive mind with national impact. Born in the early 1900s and raised in Fircrest, he developed his skills aboard his family's deep-sea trolling boat out of Tacoma. In 1937, he patented the Metal Marine Pilot, a magnetic-compass-based self-steering device for boats. Manufactured locally under Metal Marine Pilot, Inc., Freeman's invention became one of the first successful marine autopilots, known for its durable and simple design. Despite its widespread use, Freeman remained deeply connected to Fircrest throughout his life.

In 1945, Fircrest's Town Hall moved from the Methodist Church into the newly renovated Public Utility Building. The original church building, located at 909 Dartmouth Street, still stands today as Liberty Baptist Church, its early role as Fircrest's first seat of government an important chapter in the town's history.

By the late 1940s, Fircrest was drawing regional attention. From 1947 to 1949, the Fircrest Golf Course hosted the popular Fircrest Open, bringing visitors to the growing community. In 1949, the town celebrated the dedication of Wainwright School with a tree-planting ceremony led by Mayor Morrison, underscoring Fircrest's commitment to education. That same year, a cement wading pool was added to Fircrest Park through the Metropolitan Park District partnership, providing a summertime gathering spot for families.

As the 1950s began, Fircrest invested in infrastructure to support its expanding population. By 1951, new wells were drilled and a water tank installed to meet rising demand. In 1952, the town expanded for the first time with an annexation southwest of Ramsdell Street. That same year, Oren Satterlee was appointed Fircrest's first full-salaried Chief of Police, marking a new era in professional public safety.

By 1955, local business and civic life were thriving. Manley's Market opened its doors, serving as a convenient shopping destination for families. Also that year, the Fircrest Kiwanis Club was incorporated, beginning a legacy of community service that continues to this day.

These years laid strong foundations for Fircrest's growth, community spirit, and civic pride—qualities that still define the city today.

Stay tuned to future issues of Town Topics for more Fircrest history and fun facts.