

**FIRCREST CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION AGENDA**

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2025
6:00 P.M.**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
FIRCREST CITY HALL, 115 RAMSDELL STREET**

	Pg.#
1. Call to Order	
2. Pledge of Allegiance	
3. Roll Call	
4. Agenda Modifications	
5. <u>Water Meter Project Update</u>	2
6. <u>Preliminary 2026 Budget – 6th Budget Work Session</u>	7

The public is invited to listen to the meeting via Zoom utilizing the below call-in information:

Zoom Meeting Details:

Dial-in Information: 1-253-215-8782 Webinar ID: 885 3802 7612 Password: 771679

Memo

To: Dawn Masko, City Manager
From: Tyler Bemis, Public Works Director
Date: November 14, 2025
Re: AMI Water Meter Exchange Update

Honorable City Manager Masko,

A review of water-consumption trends was completed by comparing historical usage data from 2017–2019 to the most recent meter reads collected after installation of the City’s new AMI meter system. This analysis evaluated approx. 20 metered connections on each of four selected residential blocks during both peak summer (August) and winter (December) billing periods.

Please see the attached spreadsheet, which summarizes the findings and highlights the related increase in water revenue. It is important to note that water-rate adjustments were implemented between 2019 and 2024/2025. The higher revenues reflected in the recent billing years are attributable to both the improved accuracy of the AMI meters—capturing usage that was previously under-recorded—and these scheduled rate increases. The City Council has previously approved water rate increases of 2% for 2022 and 2023, 4.2% for 2024, and 3% for 2025. No rate increases were implemented in 2020 or 2021.

Key Findings

1. AMI Meter Accuracy Shows Increased Recorded Consumption

Several locations show substantial increases in recorded water use compared to historical averages. These increases—particularly in the Summit, Monterey, and Coral blocks—indicate that the City’s legacy meters were likely under-registering consumption. The new AMI meters are providing more accurate and consistent readings.

2. Net Usage Increased in Both Summer and Winter

- August 2025 showed a net increase of 5,402 cubic feet over the 2017–2019 average.
- December 2024 reflected a net increase of 7,291 cubic feet over historical December averages.

While a few blocks experienced slight decreases, the overall trend shows higher recorded usage across the system.

3. Water Revenue Has Increased Accordingly

Improved meter accuracy has led to corresponding increases in bi-monthly billed revenue:

- August revenue rose from historical averages of roughly \$140,000 to \$209,797 in 2025.

- December revenue increased from historical averages of \$38,000–\$43,000 to \$52,259 in 2024.

These changes align with AMI system performance and more precise billing.

4. Customer and Systemwide Benefits

Beyond revenue impacts, the AMI system provides significant operational and customer benefits, including continuous monitoring, early leak detection, and more transparent usage information—supporting better water management for both the City and its customers.

House Number	Aug-17	Aug-18	Aug-19	Average CF Usage 17-19	Aug-25	Difference in CF Usage (New AMI Meter)	Dec-17	Dec-18	Dec-19	Average CF Usage 17-19	Dec-24	Difference in CF Usage (New AMI Meter)
100-300 Block Farallone	28909	34236	32026	31724	26342	-5382	17480	18652	20667	18933	16287	-2646
1200-1300 Block Coral	109310	116442	101027	108926	101141	-7785	31274	33937	31797	32336	45088	12752
100-300 Block Summit	59735	57192	40614	52514	61156	8642	19408	23218	24413	22346	18046	-4300
600-800 Block Monterey	58622	59966	54969	57852	67779	9927	20713	20774	19774	20420	21906	1486
					Total	5402					Total	7291

	Aug-17	Aug-18	Aug-19	Aug-25		Dec-17	Dec-18	Dec-19	Dec-24
Bi-monthly Water Revenue	\$ 143,282.89	\$ 149,614.97	\$ 134,503.31	\$ 209,797.49		\$ 37,812.18	\$ 43,141.37	\$ 40,981.25	\$ 52,259.81

Memo

To: Dawn Masko, City Manager
From: Tyler Bemis, Public Works Director
Date: November 14, 2025
Re: Public Works Operations Memo

Honorable City Manager Masko,

Over the past several decades, the responsibilities of the City of Fircrest's Utility Division have grown substantially due to expanding state and federal regulations, enhanced water-quality requirements, and the implementation of the City's new AMI water-metering system. While expectations and compliance obligations have increased, staffing levels have decreased significantly—from an 11-person utility/electrical crew in the late 1990s to just four Utility Serviceperson II employees plus one Utility Foreman today. This staffing level is responsible for operations across five departments: Water, Sewer, Streets, Storm, and Streetlights.

Water Quality Testing and Regulatory Expansion

Water quality obligations have increased dramatically over the last decade. Requirements now include:

- Daily fluoride testing at four well sites and daily chlorine testing throughout the distribution system
- Mandatory monthly and annual DOH tests: coliform, fluoride, IOC, VOC, PFAS, lead and copper corrosion control, and others
- Continuous monitoring and operational oversight of four wells, three reservoirs, and the City's booster pump station
- Regular calibration, repair, and maintenance of chlorination and fluoridation equipment, SCADA systems, pumps, injection systems, analyzers, and monitoring devices
- Increased documentation, reporting, and compliance tracking for DOH and EPA standards

The addition of chlorination in 2016, new PFAS regulations, more stringent sampling requirements, and continuous water-quality monitoring have introduced daily tasks that previously did not exist.

AMI Meter System Workload Impacts

While the AMI meter system reduces manual meter reading, it has created significant daily workload increases due to the volume and immediacy of data being reported. The system now flags leaks, bursts, and abnormal consumption multiple times each day. These alerts require:

- Daily water audits for each flagged account
- Customer contact, troubleshooting, and on-site investigation
- Coordination of repairs when leaks are confirmed

Between September 10 and October 9, 2025, the AMI system generated **1,130 leak alerts**, each requiring review and follow-up. This level of real-time monitoring did not exist prior to the AMI deployment and has added major operational demands to an already reduced crew.

Compounding Impacts Across Multiple Utilities

The increase in water-quality and AMI-related responsibilities reduces available staff time for other essential services, including:

- NPDES stormwater compliance and catch basin inspection/cleaning
- Sewer mainline cleaning, TV inspections, and lift-station maintenance
- Street maintenance and sweeping, patching, signage, and ROW work
- Hydrant flushing, valve exercising, and general system maintenance
- Streetlight and traffic-signal repairs
- Emergency response across all five utility divisions

Conclusion

The City's water system is now governed by higher regulatory standards, more complex treatment requirements, and a modern metering system that demands continuous daily attention.

BUDGET WORKSHOP AGENDA SUMMARY

NEW BUSINESS: **Proposed Fees & Charges Update**

DATE: **November 18, 2025**

FROM: **Dawn Masko, City Manager**

RECOMMENDED MOTION: **None. Discussion only.**

SUMMARY: After reviewing City fees and charges, staff are recommending a series of updates to the Parks & Recreation, Police, and Planning fee schedules. An overview of the proposed changes is provided below, with updated fee schedules attached for Council review.

Parks & Recreation

Last year, Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Grover completed the first comprehensive fee review in more than three years for youth sports, programs, and facility rentals. Youth sports program fees were adjusted modestly, with increases of no more than \$10 per participant. Event vendor fees were also reviewed, with some increases up to 29%. Even with these adjustments, fees remain competitive, and we do not anticipate losing potential vendors – an important consideration given the regional competition for food trucks and vendors. The goal remains to maintain high-quality events and continue attracting well-known vendors to Fircrest.

Director Grover also conducted a detailed analysis of the City’s facility rental rates, comparing them to those of nearby jurisdictions – including Parks Tacoma (formerly Metro Parks Tacoma), Pierce County, Lakewood, and Steilacoom. The 2025 proposed rates from that review were very competitive, particularly our non-resident rates, which aligned closely with other jurisdictions’ resident rates, while keeping our resident rates Fircrest-friendly. The proposed 2026 facility rental adjustments average approximately a 4.6% increase.

Additionally, we have introduced a new age-based tier (7U, 9U, 11U) for select sports programs, aligning with a growing trend in local jurisdictions to organize youth leagues by age rather than by grade level.

These proposed fee updates are necessary to keep pace with rising operational costs and ensure the long-term sustainability of our recreation programs. Implementing these changes will enable us to continue offering high-quality, affordable programs for both residents and non-residents, while maintaining affordability in comparison to similar regional programs.

Police Department

One of the Police Department’s ongoing goals is to periodically review penalty charges and recommend adjustments when warranted. Police Chief Victor Celis has reviewed Fircrest’s current penalties and is now respectfully requesting that Council consider increasing the fine for parking violations within the City of Fircrest. Our current parking ordinance, adopted in 2006, established a \$30.00 fine – a rate that has remained unchanged for nearly twenty years.

A comparison of nearby jurisdictions shows that Fircrest's parking fines fall in the mid-range. Among peer cities, fines vary from a low of \$20.00 in Gig Harbor and Edgewood to a high of \$65.00 in Milton. Locally, University Place fines range from \$25.00 to \$100.00 depending on the violation, Lakewood's parking fine is \$145.00, and Tacoma's fines range from \$30.00 to \$85.00.

Since 2006, the cost of police services has increased by approximately 77%, and court-related costs have also risen during this period. Despite these increases, the City's parking fines have remained static and no longer reflect the actual cost of enforcement.

Chief Celis is proposing that Fircrest increase its parking fine to \$50.00. He believes this amount offers an appropriate balance: it is not excessive, but it is sufficient to encourage greater compliance. A \$30.00 fine may no longer be an effective deterrent, while a \$50.00 fine is more likely to encourage lawful parking behavior without imposing undue financial hardship.

Planning & Building

The City's planning consultant, Kim Gunderson, has completed her review of the City's planning fees and charges and is recommending updates for the 2026 Fee Schedule. As Council may recall, this effort was initially initiated by the previous Community Development Director and is now being brought forward again for Council consideration.

It is recommended that the Fee Schedule be restructured from its current format and that the prior system of separate fees and deposits be eliminated. All permits now list a single, combined fee, with fees collected upfront to streamline administration and reduce the workload on Finance and Planning staff associated with chasing down payment for later-billed fees.

Other updates include incorporating typical noticing costs for permits requiring public notice, factoring in typical Hearing Examiner costs, and adding missing permit types, including Development Agreements, Plat Vacations and Alterations, Critical Areas permits, and Clearing/Grading permits. A blanket 15% Administrative Fee has also been applied to all permits to account for staff time contributed by Administration, Finance, Planning, and other City staff.

While some permit fees reflect increases, it is important to note that Fircrest does not currently charge development impact fees. This represents substantial cost savings to developers. The recommended fees represent a step in the right direction towards a true cost-recovery model for the City, minimizing the need for taxpayers to subsidize permit costs and ensuring that fees are borne by the developer or resident to whom the permit applies.

Attachments: [Proposed Parks & Recreation Fee Schedule](#)
[Proposed Community Development Fee Schedule](#)

PARKS & RECREATION - PROPOSED 2026 FEES & CHARGES

Sports Programs				
Program	Resident 2025	Resident 2026	Non-Resident 2025	Non-Resident 2025
Pee Wee T-Ball	\$40	\$45	\$60	\$65
Youth Baseball K/1st	\$50	\$60	\$80	\$95
Youth Baseball 2nd/3rd	\$50	\$60	\$80	\$95
Youth Baseball 4th/5th	\$55	\$60	\$85	\$95
Indoor Pee Wee Soccer	\$40	\$45	\$60	\$65
Youth Basketball K/1st	\$50	\$60	\$80	\$95
Youth Basketball 2nd/3rd	\$50	\$60	\$80	\$95
Youth Basketball 4th/5th	\$55	\$60	\$85	\$95
Youth Basketball 4th/5th Girls	\$55	\$60	\$85	\$95
Youth Cross Country	\$50	\$60	\$80	\$95
4-on-4 Basketball League	\$300/team	\$350/team	\$300/team	\$350/team
Open Gym (Drop-in)	\$2	\$2	\$4	\$4

Aquatic Center				
Open Swim				
Category	Resident 2025	Resident 2026	Non-Resident 2025	Non-Resident 2025
5 & under	Free	Free	Free	Free
Full Session	\$5	\$5	\$10	\$10
Evening Swim	\$4	\$4	\$8	\$8
Lap Swim / Water Aerobics	\$4	\$4	\$8	\$8

Lessons & Passes				
Item	Resident 2025	Resident 2026	Non-Resident 2025	Non-Resident 2025
Pool Season Pass (single)	\$80	\$85	N/A	N/A
Pool Season Pass (additional members)	\$50	\$55	N/A	N/A
Swimming Punch Card	\$50	\$50	\$105	\$105
Youth Swim Lessons	\$50	\$55	\$85	\$90
Adult Swim Lessons	\$50	\$55	\$85	\$90
Swim Team	\$90	\$90	\$155	\$155

Pool Rentals				
Main Pool - Group Size	Resident 2025	Resident 2026	Non-Resident 2025	Non-Resident 2025
1–30 people	\$100/hr	\$125/hr	\$150/hr	\$196/hr
31–60 people	\$150/hr	\$187/hr	\$200/hr	\$266/hr
61–90 people	\$200/hr	\$250/hr	\$295/hr	\$391/hr
91–120 people	\$250/hr	\$312/hr	\$370/hr	\$492/hr
121–150 people	\$300/hr	\$375/hr	\$440/hr	\$584/hr
Add Party Room + Kitchen	\$50/hr	\$54/hr	\$75/hr	\$82/hr

Party Room Rental	Resident 2025	Resident 2026	Non-Resident 2025	Non-Resident 2025
Pool Party Room (Weekend)	\$86/hr	\$89/hr	\$132/hr	\$138/hr
Pool Party Room (Mon-Thurs)	\$69/hr	\$71/hr	\$106/hr	\$111/hr
Pool Party Room Kitchen (Weekend)	\$40/hr	\$42/hr	\$55/hr	\$58/hr
Pool Party Room Kitchen (Mon-Thurs)	\$32/hr	\$34/hr	\$44/hr	\$46/hr

Facility Rentals				
Facility	Resident 2025	Resident 2026	Non-Resident 2025	Non-Resident 2025
Whittier Shelter	\$115	\$118	\$140	\$147
Fircrest Park Pavilion	\$135	\$140	\$170	\$178
Gymnasium (Events)	\$175/hr	\$180/hr	\$250/hr	\$260/hr
Gymnasium (Athletics)	\$40/hr	\$45/hr	\$60/hr	\$67/hr
1/2 Gymnasium	\$20/hr	\$22/hr	\$30/hr	\$33/hr
Multipurpose Room (Weekend)	\$92/hr	\$95/hr	\$130/hr	\$136/hr
Multipurpose Room (Mon-Thurs)	\$74/hr	\$78/hr	\$105/hr	\$110/hr
1/2 Multipurpose Room (Weekend)	\$46/hr	\$48/hr	\$65/hr	\$68/hr
1/2 Multipurpose Room (Mon-Thurs)	\$37/hr	\$39/hr	\$52/hr	\$55/hr
Commercial Kitchen (Weekend)	\$40/hr	\$42/hr	\$56/hr	\$59/hr
Commercial Kitchen (Mon-Thurs)	\$32/hr	\$33/hr	\$45/hr	\$47/hr
Gathering Room (Weekend)	\$50/hr	\$52/hr	\$65/hr	\$68/hr
Gathering Room (Mon-Thurs)	\$37/hr	\$39/hr	\$45/hr	\$47/hr
Fitness Room (Weekend)	\$34/hr	\$36/hr	\$48/hr	\$50/hr
Fitness Room (Mon-Thurs)	\$28/hr	\$30/hr	\$39/hr	\$41/hr

Field Rentals		
Lighted Field Rentals	2025	2026
Fircrest Activities	\$7/hr	\$10/hr
Fircrest Soccer Club (off-season)	\$26/hr	\$34/hr
Non-Fircrest Groups	\$36.40/hr	\$47/hr
Soccer Club Field Rental	\$6,000/season	\$6,500/season

Community Event Vendor Fees				
Category	Early Entry - 2025	Early Entry - 2026	Late Entry - 2025	Late Entry 2026
Artisan/Crafters/Farms – Early	\$35	\$45	\$50	\$60
Educational/Non-Profit – Early	\$35	\$45	\$50	\$60
Commercial Vendors	\$80	\$90	\$80	\$100
Food Vendors	\$75	\$90	\$75	\$100



PROPOSED 2026 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FEE SCHEDULE

LAND USE APPLICATIONS

The applicant shall be responsible for the actual cost incurred by the City in processing the application. The Planning Director or City Manager may adjust the initial permit fee depending on the size or complexity of the project. The applicant shall remit to the City any amount exceeded by the permit fee. If the permit fee exceeds the City's actual costs, the balance shall be refunded. Fees shall be paid in full prior to issuance of a land use permit. A 15% Administrative Fee shall be applied to the cost of all fees.

Application	2018 Fee + Deposit	2026 Fee
Pre-Application Conference	None	\$600.00
Land Division		
Boundary Line Adjustment	\$100.00 + \$250.00	\$1,800.00
Binding Site Plan	\$250.00 + \$1,000.00	\$2,600.00
Short Plat	\$250.00 + \$1,000.00	\$2,600.00
Preliminary Plat	\$500.00 + \$2,000.00	\$12,000.00
Preliminary Development Plan	\$500.00 + \$2,000.00	\$5,750.00
Final Plat	\$400.00 + \$1,250.00	\$5,750.00
Final Development Plan	\$250.00 + \$1,000.00	\$2,600.00
Variances		
De minimis Variance	\$100.00 + \$250.00	\$720.00
Minor Variance	\$250.00 + \$300.00	\$900.00
Major Variance	\$400.00 + \$1,000.00 \$750.00 + \$2,000.00	\$3,250.00
Site Plans		
Minor Site Plan	\$250.00 + \$300.00	\$900.00
Major Site Plan (Preliminary)	\$400.00 + \$1,000.00 \$750.00 + \$2,000.00	\$3,250.00
Major Site Plan (Final)	<i>not listed</i>	\$1,080.00
Design Review		
Single-Family Residential	\$250.00 + \$1,000.00	\$540.00
Multi-Family Residential	<i>no discernment</i>	\$1,080.00
Non-Residential	<i>no discernment</i>	\$1,080.00
Administrative Interpretation	\$250.00 + \$1,000.00	\$540.00
Use Permits		
Administrative Use Permit	\$250.00 + \$300.00	\$900.00
Conditional Use Permit	\$400.00 + \$1,000.00 \$750.00 + \$2,000.00	\$3,250.00

Development Agreement	\$400.00 + \$1,000.00 \$750.00 + \$2,000.00	\$5,200.00
Legislative Action		
Zoning Map Amendments	\$500.00 + \$2,000.00	\$5,400.00
Comprehensive Plan Amendment	\$500.00 + \$2,000.00	\$3,900.00
Development Regulation Amendments	\$500.00 + \$2,000.00	\$3,900.00
Area-wide Rezone	\$500.00 + \$2,000.00	\$3,900.00
Annexation	\$500.00 + \$2,000.00	\$3,900.00
Plat Alterations or Vacations	\$200.00 + \$500.00	
Critical Areas/SEPA		
Review of SEPA Checklist	\$200.00 + \$500.00	\$900.00
Preparation of SEPA Checklist	None	\$2,700.00
SEPA Environmental Impact Study	\$550.00 + \$4,300.00	Actual Cost
Review of Critical Areas Report	\$200.00 + \$1,000.00	Actual Cost
Reasonable Use Exception, Public Agency/Utility Exception	None	\$3,250.00
Minor Amendment to Type III-A Permit	\$100.00 + \$250.00	\$540.00
Major Amendment to Type III-A Permit	\$400.00 + \$1,000.00 \$750.00 + \$2,000.00	\$2,500.00
Short-Term Rentals (not requiring CUP)	\$150.00	\$525.00
Home Occupations		
Type I-A	\$25.00	\$80.00
Type I-B	\$50.00	\$80.00
Type II	\$400.00 + \$1,000.00	\$3,250.00
Review of Revised Plans to Approved Permits	None	\$200.00
Zoning Verification Letter	\$200.00	\$270.00
Land Clearing/Grading	None	\$540.00
Signs		
Freestanding Signs	Type II-B	\$360.00
Temporary and Portable Signs	Exempt	Exempt
All other Signs	Type I	\$360.00
Outside Consultants	Actual Cost	Actual Cost
Temporary accessory structures listed in FMC 22.58.015	None	<Recommend removal of this line item - there is no cost to consider this>
Appeals and Continuations		2018 Fee (No Deposit)
		2026 Fee
Public Hearing Continuation Request	\$100.00	<Recommend removal of this line item>
Request for Reconsideration	\$100.00	\$1,000.00
Appeal of Administrative Decision	\$100.00	\$1,400.00
Appeal of Planning Commission or Hearing Examiner Decision	\$100.00	\$900.00
Appeal of SEPA Determination	\$100.00	\$1,400.00
* Appellants who substantially prevail on appeal or reconsideration shall not be billed for the actual cost of the application.		
Appellants who do not substantially prevail on appeal or reconsideration, or whose appeal is dismissed for lack of standing, shall be billed for the actual cost of the application.		
Page 2		



PROPOSED 2026 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FEE SCHEDULE

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

On buildings, structures, signs, gas, mechanical and plumbing systems or alterations requiring a permit, a fee for each permit shall be paid prior to issuance. Building Permit fees shall be set based upon the project valuation, unless specified elsewhere. Project valuations shall be submitted by the applicant and shall be the total value of all construction work for which the permit is issued, as well as all finish work, painting, roofing, electrical, plumbing, heating, air-conditioning, elevators, fire-extinguishing systems and any other permanent equipment. Project values shall be no less than the valuation determination based on the Square Footage Valuation Table or the most current Building Valuation Data Table published by the International Code Council with a .09 regional modifier. If, in the opinion of the building official, the valuation is underestimated on the application, the

Project Valuation		2018 Fee	2026 Fee
\$1.00 to \$2,000		\$100.00	
\$2,001 to \$25,000	For the first \$2000	\$100.00	
	For each additional \$1,000	plus \$17.00	
\$25,001 to \$50,000	For the first \$25,000	\$491.00	\$535.00
	For each additional \$1,000	plus \$12.00	plus \$15.00
\$50,001 to \$100,000	For the first \$50,000	\$791.00	\$880.00
	For each additional \$1,000	plus \$9.00	plus \$11
\$100,001 to \$500,000	For the first \$100,000	\$1,241.00	\$1,358.00
	For each additional \$1,000	plus \$7.00	plus \$9
\$501,000 to \$1,000,000	For the first \$500,000	\$4,041.00	\$4,420.00
	For each additional \$1,000	plus \$5.00	plus \$8.00
Over \$1,000,000	For the first \$1,000,000	\$6,541.00	\$7,666.00
	For each additional \$1,000	plus \$4.00	plus \$5.00