



— **Deadline Extended** —

Looking for a Few More Great Candidates

CITY MANAGER | Apply by March 24, 2023

Brimming with Pacific Northwest charm, the City of Fircrest is known for its welcoming parks, popular festivals and recreation programs, peaceful neighborhoods, engaging Police Department, and charming small businesses. The City is renowned for being family friendly and for its seemingly slower pace of life even while squeezed between two much larger and busier cities (a feeling that is aided by Fircrest's speed trap reputation, which residents love). It's a very walkable community, which contributes to Fircrest's small-town sense of place.

Fircrest's 27-acre parks system sets it apart from other cities of similar size in the Evergreen State. The signature space is Fircrest Park, a 10-acre area that features a new community center and pool as well as ballfields, covered pavilion, and children's play structure. In 2019, 79% of voters approved a \$13 million park bond to replace the nearly 60-year-old pool and community center. The new Roy H. Murphy Community Center opened in 2022 and features a full-size gym as well as multi-purpose rooms and an outdoor plaza. The new Edwards Family Aquatic Center, which



opened in 2021, is an outdoor pool that operates during the summer season (often at capacity).

The Gene Goodwin Memorial Tot-Lot, designed to provide outdoor play opportunities for children ages 1 to 6, draws families from miles around because of its comfortable and safe environment. Whittier Park, adjacent to the elementary school, features a large sports field, tennis courts, a picnic pavilion and restroom. Other City parks feature a diverse wetland environment, a rhododendron garden, and the large tree that holds the holiday lights. Even the City's traffic islands are meticulously landscaped, to the delight of residents.

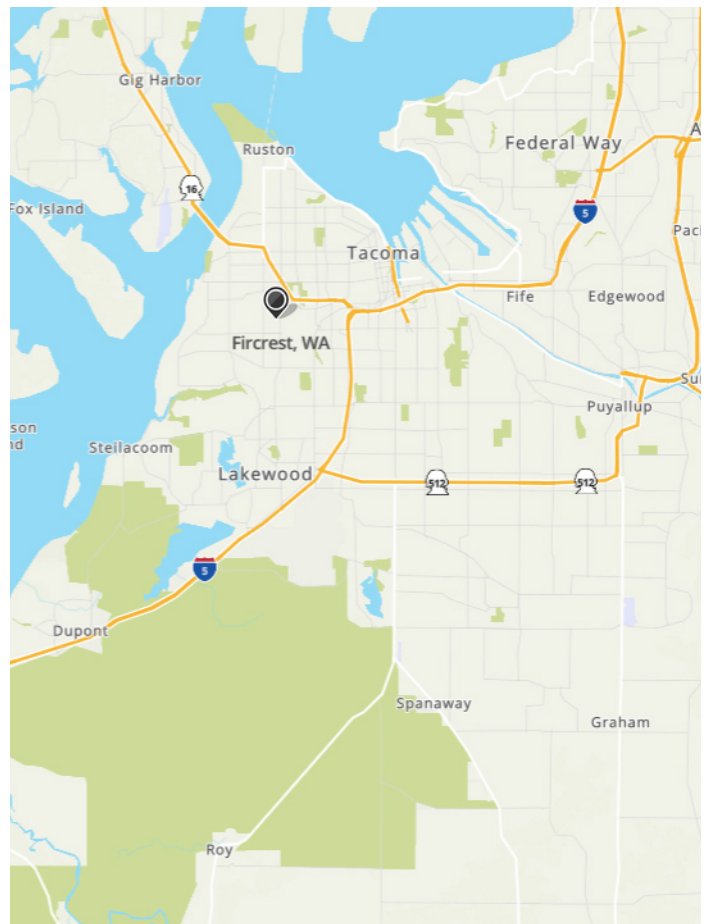
Another iconic presence in the community is the beautiful Fircrest Golf Club. Its tree-lined course was designed in the 1920s by Arthur Vernon Macan. Located on 165 acres, the private club is bordered by three arterial streets, so even residents who are not members enjoy the beauty of the green space.

Fircrest has been awarded 1st Place Nationwide in the National Night Out Town Watch Award on multiple occasions for its annual event that draws several thousand people. It has also received the Traffic Safety Excellence Award from Washington State and WellCity and Tree City designations.

The region has an abundance of entertainment options that appeal to a variety of interests. Next to Fircrest in Tacoma is Point Defiance Park, which offers more than 700 acres of woodland trails, gardens and waterfront views in addition to a zoo and aquarium. Other area attractions include the Museum of Glass, the LeMay - America's Car Museum, the Chihuly Bridge of Glass, the Tacoma Art Museum, the Washington State History Museum, the W.W. Seymour Botanical Conservatory, and the Children's Museum.

Bus service in Fircrest is provided by Pierce Transit along 22 stops. Sound Transit operates a regional commuter train to Seattle, with the South Tacoma station just a few miles east of Fircrest. National and international travel is accessible through Seattle Tacoma International Airport, located just 17 miles north. Fircrest's central location makes it easy to take day trips to Mount

Figure I: Location of Fircrest, WA



Rainier National Park, Olympic National Park, the Cascade Range, Mount St. Helens, the Pacific Coast, and the islands of Puget Sound.

Sports fans will be in heaven here. Fircrest is located in the shadow of Cheney Stadium—home to the Seattle Mariners AAA affiliate, the Tacoma Rainiers—and is just 4 miles from Chambers Bay Golf Course, a municipal course that hosted the 2015 U.S. Open and other USGA championships. Major league teams in the region include the Seattle Seahawks (football), Seattle Mariners (baseball), Seattle Sounders (soccer), Seattle Kraken (hockey), and Seattle Storm (basketball).

The housing market in Fircrest is very competitive. In December 2022, the median listing home price in Fircrest was \$625,000, trending up 16.3% year-over-year. Single-family homes make up a large portion of the market, though townhomes and apartments are also available. A single-family home with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and approximately 2,000 square feet

Table I: Fircrest Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	72.9%	0 to 14	17.7%
Black	4.6%	15 to 24	11.6%
Asian	8.0%	25 to 44	26.5%
Native Americann	1.7%	45 to 64	26.1%
Two or More Races	12.8%	65 to 84	15.4%
Total	100%	Over 85	2.7%
Hispanic Ethnicity	5.6%	Estimated Population: 7,215	

Educational Achievement (Over Age 25)	
High School or Higher	94.9%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	30.3%

Other Statistics	
Median Age–Fircrest	42.0
Median Age–U.S.	38.8
Median Household Income–Fircrest	\$90,854
Median Household Income–U.S.	\$69,021
Poverty Rate	5.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

can be had for \$589,000. It is important to note that the City Manager is not required to live in the City, and there are excellent neighborhoods in neighboring University Place, Tacoma, and Lakewood.

Fircrest is primarily served by Tacoma Public Schools, and Whittier Elementary and Wainwright Intermediate School are both located within City limits. The southern end of Fircrest is served by the University Place School District. Many excellent private school options are also available.

For those seeking higher education, Tacoma Community College borders Fircrest’s north end. Aside from other technical and trade colleges, the region is well served by three 4-year institutions: the University of Washington Tacoma, the

University of Puget Sound, and Pacific Lutheran University. The flagship campus of the state’s university system, the University of Washington, is located 41 miles north in Seattle.

Setting the standard in community policing, Fircrest is a safe community. Its crime rates are 39% lower than average in Washington State, and violent crime is less than half of the national average. Officers are visible and connected in the community, which includes regular visits to the two schools in the city to give awards to outstanding students. Thanks to Fircrest’s small size, its officers are encouraged to be visible and to engage in positive interactions with residents.

Fircrest is a family-friendly community where residents are kind, helpful, and involved in the community. If you are an experienced Manager who wants to live in a small-town atmosphere with easy access to big-city amenities, we hope you’ll choose to look into Fircrest.

HISTORY

In 1907, financiers from San Francisco (including Major Edward J. Bowes of the “Original Amateur Hour” fame) had a vision of a ‘residential park, an enchanting spot to enjoy life and raise a family.’ With that in mind, they purchased a parcel of land to the west of Tacoma and named the subdivision Regents Park. Their influence was reflected in the streets named after their California background and their value of higher education. With its curved, aesthetically designed streets, sidewalks, and sewers, Regents Park offered quiet living with a strong sense of community.

In September 1925, Regents Park and its 306 residents were incorporated as the Town of Fircrest in an effort to start anew and reenergize the community. Incorporation gave them the financial stability and control to repair and develop the infrastructure and services. Through the years, Fircrest changed its classification to City and continues to preserve its sense of community.

Today, Fircrest has lived up to the dream of a residential park. The City has a reputation of excellent quality of life, great recreational



facilities, and has set the standard for community oriented policing.

DEMOGRAPHICS

See Table 1 on page 3 for more information.

CLIMATE

Fircrest residents enjoy the Pacific Northwest’s temperate climate where it rarely feels too hot or too cold. Summers are warm and dry; winters are cool, wet, and mostly cloudy. Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies from 37° F to 77° F, rarely falling below 28° F or going above 87° F. Fircrest receives an average of 41 inches of annual rainfall. On average, Fircrest experiences 141 sunny days per year.

GEOGRAPHY

The City is comprised of 1.58 square miles of land and sits at an elevation of 276 feet. Fircrest is one of the most centrally located and well-connected cities in Pierce County, with an entrance and exit to Highway 16 just a block from the city’s border, giving residents quick access to Interstate 5. Downtown Tacoma is reachable in 15 minutes by car. Seattle is just 32 miles north, and the state capitol of Olympia is 31 miles south.

Fircrest is a residential oasis that shares two borders with the City of Tacoma (population 219,000) and two borders with the City of University Place (population 34,900). The city’s landscape is dominated by the impressive sight of Mount Rainer, a 14,410-foot volcano that is accessible via a 2-hour drive. The iconic Puget Sound is a 10-minute drive to the west.

COMMERCE

Fircrest is primarily a residential community. It is part of a large metropolitan area that offers numerous employment opportunities in a variety of fields. The city itself hosts several small business districts that feature popular options for dining, shopping and services.

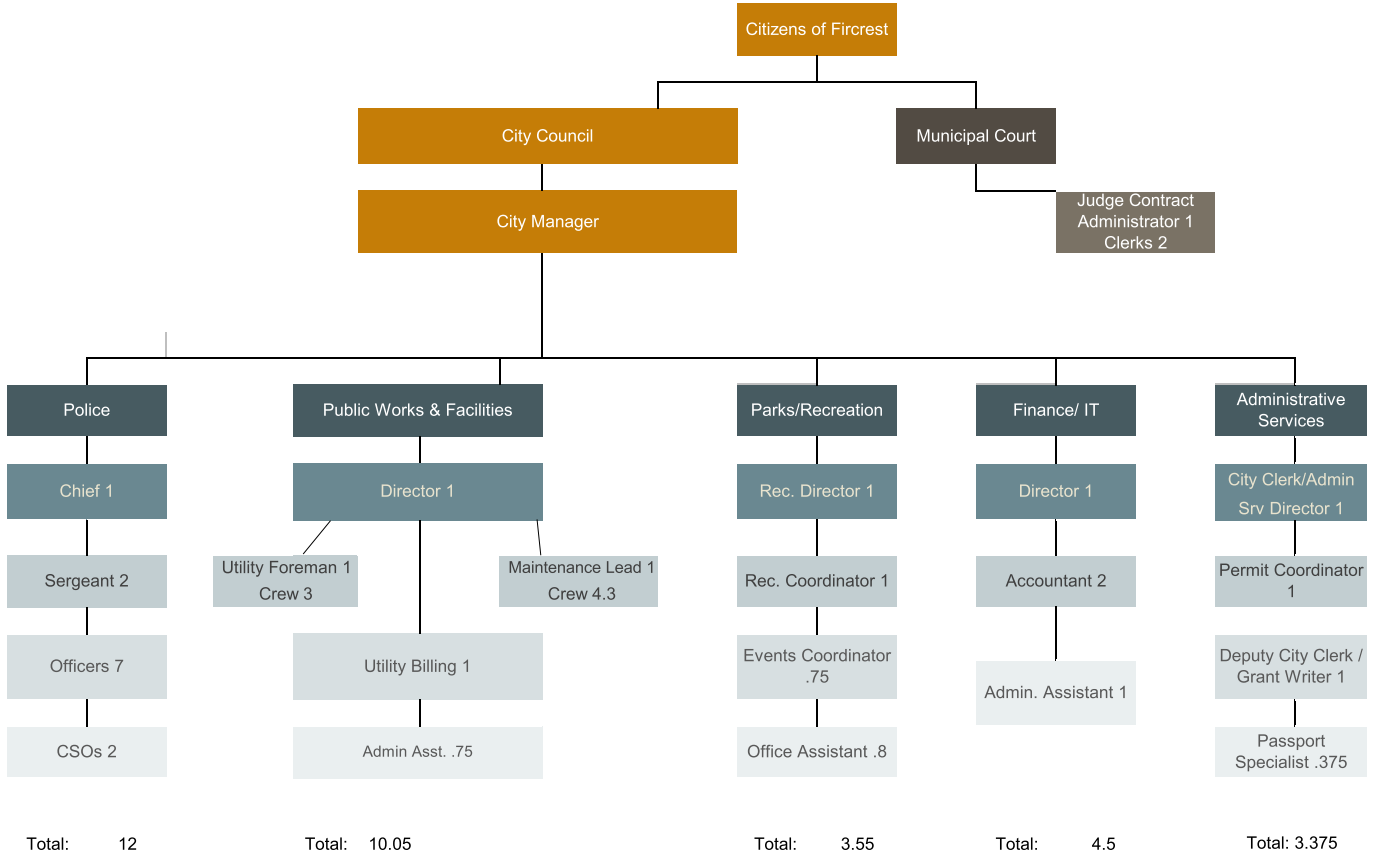
THE GOVERNMENT

The City of Fircrest has been a non-charter code city operating under a Council-Manager form of government since 1990. The Council is comprised of seven members, with councilmembers selecting the Mayor from among their ranks. Elections are staggered and occur every two years. The next election is later this year, and three seats will be on the ballot. One of these seats belongs to the Mayor, and he does not plan to run. The longest serving Councilmember has served eight terms, though not consecutively. (He served 6 terms, took a two-year break, and then ran again.) Four Councilmembers were elected between

2012 and 2020, and two members joined the Council in 2022. The Council hires the City Manager.

The City of Fircrest is comprised of seven departments and offices in four buildings all intent on providing its citizens with efficient, courteous, and professional services. These departments include: Administration / Personnel, Finance, Municipal Court, Parks & Recreation, Planning & Building, Police, and Public Works (water, sewer, stormwater, streets). The City has its own well-based water source and distribution system. The City operates a sewer collection system that discharges to the Tacoma sewage treatment plant. Current city contracts are with Tacoma Fire for fire and EMS services, Tacoma Power for electrical, Westside Disposal for garbage, CodePros for a Building Official, Kenyon Disend for their City Attorney, Gunderson Law for their prosecutor, and Summit Law for employment law.

Fircrest’s 2023 budget is \$32.7 million, with a General Fund budget of \$11.9 million. The City strives to maintain a 25% fund



balance in its General Fund. The City has 38 permanent employees augmented by seasonal employees. Fircrest has 2 bargaining units—the Police Guild and the Teamsters (Public Works)—and current contracts are in effect until 2025.

Fircrest has a liaison program where each member of the Council is partnered with a department head or the City Manager. They meet periodically so the Councilmembers can learn more about City operations. The partnership lasts for a calendar year, and then Councilmembers are assigned a new department liaison. Councilmembers share a liaison report at each Council meeting.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Though Fircrest is a wonderful community, and is fiscally strong with healthy reserves, there are a few opportunities and challenges. The first will be working with the Council and staff to build a cohesive management team. The Police Chief is retiring in May after 40 years of service to Fircrest. This is a significant change for all Fircrest staff (and especially the Police Department) as well as for residents who have known him all their lives. The finalists for the Police Chief search will have been determined about the time the next City Manager is selected, and the first task may be to select and appoint Fircrest's next Police Chief.

Roles and responsibilities will need to be refined, relationships developed, and communication paths created. Part of this analysis will involve reviewing the Council-City Manager relationship and ensuring that all parties are operating within their scope. Communication paths may also need to be refined in the community as Fircrest residents feel very connected to its government in a way that is not seen in other communities. They often contact employees rather than the City Manager so communication amongst the staff is crucial.

The Council last set multi-year goals in 2018, and all of those goals were accomplished as of last year. Residents can now enjoy a beautiful and highly functional community center and swimming pool. The City has introduced an online system to register for events and activities, as well as online permitting,

among other advancements. While much has been done, a review of current policies, procedures, and practices to ensure the City is utilizing current technologies may help increase efficiency. The next Manager should encourage and support the Council in a strategic planning process to create new long-term goals for the community. The City could also benefit from an asset management plan.

Fircrest is a small, landlocked community with limited growth opportunities. Washington's Growth Management Act requires communities to have a working plan to accommodate future population increases. As an added challenge, the state has designated Fircrest as a high transit density community even though the planned light rail and bus rapid transit system have not yet been built in the community. In addition, there are growing pressures from State government and regional bodies on such issues as policing, criminal justice, and housing. Residents want to retain Fircrest's charming, small-town feel. Balancing the community's desire with state legislation will require finesse and good relationships with other communities.

An exciting opportunity, the second-largest piece of privately owned vacant land in Fircrest – at approximately 9 acres – is under contract to build a 4-building, 389-unit apartment complex and is nearing the approval stage. In addition, the City is preparing to work with the community to update the Whittier Park master plan, and Tacoma Public Schools is preparing to demolish and replace Whittier Elementary in a few years. The next Manager should plan to work with stakeholders to see these projects through to completion.

The community and the Council have experienced some division in recent years. The next Manager should be a consensus builder who can work with all parties to find reasonable solutions to issues in a way that is respectful and inclusive.

The City owns its water utility and has worked hard to keep the rates low, so operations are very lean. While they have replaced infrastructure as needed, there is always more than can be done or that needs to be updated. The next Manager should look for options, preferably through alternative funding sources.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City Council is seeking an outstanding leader with a demonstrated track record of success. The ideal candidate will be a team player with a strong ability to facilitate relationships with the Council Members, City staff, the community and regional partners. The Manager will keep the Council informed on critical issues in a timely manner while being responsive to Council questions and requests. The individual will have excellent communication skills and will not become involved in the politics. The Manager will focus on counting to seven, not four, and ensure all the Council Members have the same information at the same time.

The elected officials all want what is best for the community. The task now is to build a cohesive Council/Manager/Staff team. The successful candidate will develop healthy working relationships with each member of Council and understand the need of balancing the complementary and sometimes competing interests of each member, to find common interests and secure cooperation. The next Manager will help the Council and staff define and understand their roles, and once that is done, remind everyone when they overstep their boundaries.

The ideal candidate will be someone who is intelligent, upbeat, friendly, outgoing, honest, organized, positive, ethical, and innovative—someone with a "can do" attitude and who is visionary yet practical. He/she will be resolute yet flexible, consistent, cheerfully persistent, high energy, and a leader— not a bureaucrat. The individual will have a healthy sense of impatience, always trying to find ways to accomplish tasks more efficiently and effectively.

Outstanding customer service is very important in Fircrest, and the Manager will be expected to lead the way. Doing that, while exhibiting integrity, will be a core principle and a way of life. The Manager will be approachable, and in the community, always listening and always looking for ways to make the government more responsive.

The ideal candidate will give assignments and set broad performance parameters, monitor progress, expect results and hold employees accountable. Fortunately, the staff is excellent, with a healthy mix of long-time employees who have historical context and new staff who bring fresh ideas. She/he will mentor that talent and be confident enough to then step back and let the staff member do his/her job. Staff should be comfortable bringing forth ideas knowing they will be carefully considered. The Manager should encourage growth and career advancement opportunities, even for department heads. She/he should understand the work/life balance and support employees.

Fircrest is a lean government, though very fiscally sound, so the best candidate will be someone who is very knowledgeable and comfortable in a number of roles. For example, the City isn't big enough to have a communications coordinator, so the Manager must be skilled at identifying external audiences, the best manner of communicating with them, and the content of the message. It is also not a government where the Manager sits behind a desk and directs traffic. Expect to be busy and to pitch in when necessary.

The position requires a bachelor's degree in business administration, public administration, public policy or related field plus experience as a City Manager, Assistant City Manager or Department Head in a local government organization. A minimum of five (5) years of experience managing and supervising employees is required. A master's degree in business, public administration or related field is preferred. A thorough understanding of municipal organizations and functions of City government is required and utility experience is a plus.

COMPENSATION

The salary range is 145,000 to 180,000. The salary will depend on qualifications and experience. The City Manager is paid per contract. Benefits are excellent. The City Manager will be part of the Washington State Department of Retirement System Public

Employees Retirement System (PERS) plan. The City also has a 457 plan that is employee contribution only.

THE MOST RECENT CITY MANAGER

The former Manager was hired in 2017 and recently left for a similar position in a larger community.

RESIDENCY

The selected candidate is not required to live in the City limits. However, they should live close enough to be part of the community, attend community events, and be available for emergencies.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to Recruit37@cb-asso.com by March 24th. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Lynelle Klein at (970) 433-7189 or Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

INTERNAL CANDIDATES

We do not anticipate any internal candidates.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Candidate names will not be released without the Candidate's permission.

THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened between March 11th and April 3rd. Finalists will be selected on April 11th. A reception and interviews will be held on April 20th and 21st. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Fircrest is an Equal Opportunity Employer and strongly encourages women, minorities, and veterans to apply.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the city, visit:

www.cityoffircrest.net

southsoundaffordablehousing.org/fircrest

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fircrest,_Washington