

LYNNWOOD TIMES



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Real News ⚡
Real Impact

New \$79.4 million Swift Orange Bus Rapid Transit line breaks ground in Lynnwood



State Senator Marko Liias (D-Mukilteo), U.S. Congresswoman Suzan DelBene (WA-01), U.S. Senator Marie Cantwell (D-WA), Administrator Nuria Fernandez, Federal Transit Administration, Community Transit CEO Ric Ilgenfritz, Community Transit Board Chair and Mukilteo Mayor Joe Marine, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee, U.S. Senator Patty Murray, U.S. Congressman Rick Larsen, and Community Transit Board Member and Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell at the Orange Swift BRT Line groundbreaking ceremony in Lynnwood on April 19, 2022. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

By **MARIO LOTMORE**

LYNNWOOD – Sticking with its mission to “help people get from where they are to where they want to be,” Community Transit, joined by federal and community partners, held its groundbreaking ceremony for the new Swift Orange Line at the Lynnwood Transit and Community Center today.

“Swift Orange Line represents a significant infrastructure investment in Snohomish County, one that will benefit generations to come,” said Community Transit CEO Ric Ilgenfritz. “Our elected leaders recognize the explosive growth in the county, and we appreciate their support and partnership in developing transit service that will meet the evolving travel needs of

people in the community.”

In keeping with Washington state’s commitment to enhancing multimodal transportation systems, the new Swift Orange Line, scheduled to be operational in 2024, will be Snohomish County’s third Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line and its first route to connect with Sound Transit’s Link light rail when the station opens

in Lynnwood. In October, Community Transit made its first connection to light rail at the new Sound Transit Link light rail station at Northgate.

“We want to provide a place for people to work, to learn, to play...,” Mayor Christine Frizzell told the Lynnwood Times when asked on the

Continued **PAGE 12 >>**

Verizon Wireless allegedly fires Northgate employee for attempting to unionize

By **BO JOHN BRUSCO**

SEATTLE – Just days after Verizon Wireless employees from the Everett-Lynnwood locations voted to form a union, Verizon terminated an employee from its Seattle Northgate and Aurora Village locations who supported his coworkers’ efforts to unionize. Believing the termination to be retaliatory, The Communications Workers of America (CWA) filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) against Verizon Wireless yesterday.

The NLRB is an independent Federal agency that was created by Congress in 1935 to “assure fair labor practices and workplace democracy nationwide.” The agency is currently in federal court in an attempt to get three Starbucks workers in Arizona who were attempting to form a union back on the job – two were fired and one is on unpaid leave.

The CWA filed the charge on behalf of Jesse Mason, who worked as a Specialist with Verizon for eight months. The CWA’s press release asserts that Mason was illegally fired by Verizon in retaliation for Mason’s union support.

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State Supreme Court rules against Edmonds gun storage ordinance

By **KIENAN BRISCOE**

EDMONDS – The Supreme Court of Washington unanimously affirmed a state Court of Appeals decision on Thursday, April 21, that a City of Edmonds ordinance regarding gun storage is pre-empted by state law.

After a robust debate following a mass shooting at nearby Marysville Pilchuck High School, the Edmonds City Council, led by then Council President now Mayor Mike Nelson, adopted an ordinance on July 24, 2018, requiring gun

owners to secure firearms with a locking device when not in use.

Violations of ordinance 4120 (codified as Edmonds City Code chapter 5.26), would range from \$500 if a minor, at-risk person, or a prohibited person gained access to the firearm, to a fine of \$10,000 if the firearm is used to commit a crime, injure or cause death to themselves or others.

At around the same time Washington voters enacted Initiative 1639 which, among other things, criminalizes un-

safe storage of firearms but in more limited circumstances than Edmonds’ ordinance, specifically not mandating how or where a firearm must be stored.

Shortly after, Edmonds resident Brett Bass, Program Manager of Forefront Suicide Prevention, Bellevue Gun Club instructor and U.S. Marine Corps veteran, was approached by Alan Gottlieb, founder of the Second Amendment Foundation (SAF), about serving as plaintiff in a lawsuit against the city.

“The city knew it was illegal. The city

did not have the authority to make the rule. They even said it would not stand up to a lawsuit,” Bass told the Lynnwood Times.

Bass knew Gottlieb personally through the Safer Homes, Suicide Aware task force, in which they both serve. He joined Forefront Suicide Prevention after volunteering on the Firearms Subcommittee of the Safer Homes task force. He became involved in the firearm industry after returning to the United States from serving in the U.S.

Continued **PAGE 11 >>**

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Earth Day surprise: Biden signs executive order to protect national forests during PNW tour



President Joe Biden at Seward Park signing executive order to protect national forests. Pictured (L-R) are: Rick Larsen, U.S. Congressman (WA-02), Bruce Harrell, Mayor of Seattle, Maria Cantwell, U.S. Senator (WA), Derek Kilmer, U.S. Congressman (WA-06), Suzan DelBene, U.S. Congresswoman (WA-01), U.S. President Joe Biden, Jay Inslee, Governor of Washington, Patty Murray, U.S. Senator (WA), Adam Smith, U.S. Congressman (WA-09), and Kim Schrier, U.S. Congresswoman (WA-08). Feature photo taken from Senator Patty Murray's twitter page.

By KIENAN BRISCOE

SEATTLE – President Joe Biden signed an executive order on Earth Day, today, to strengthen the country's forests, boost wildfire resistance, and combat deforestation. The order was signed at Seattle's Seward Park, as

part of Biden's first visit to the Pacific Northwest since taking office.

"We've reached a point that the crises on the environment has become so obvious that we really have the opportunity to do the things we really couldn't have done two, five, ten years ago," President Biden said. "Our

forests are our planet's lungs. They are literally recycling cycling Co2 out of our planet's atmosphere."

Forests in the United States absorb more than 10% of annual United States economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions. Despite their importance,

the world's forests are quickly disappearing and only a small fraction of the world's mature and old-growth forests remains.

"It is the policy of my Administration, in consultation with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, as well as the private sector, nonprofit organizations, labor unions, and the scientific community, to pursue science-based, sustainable forest and land management; conserve America's mature and old-growth forests on Federal lands; invest in forest health and restoration; support indigenous traditional ecological knowledge and cultural and subsistence-practices; honor Tribal treaty rights; and deploy climate-smart forestry practices and other nature-based solutions to improve the resilience of our lands, waters, wildlife, and communities in the face of increasing disturbances and chronic stress arising from climate impacts." The executive order signed today states.

Biden's commitment to the environment and combating climate change has been a priority of his administration which he hopes to accomplish by eliminating tens of thousands of diesel school buses and investing in freight rails and public transit like the Puget Sound area's Link light rail system.

"Here in Washington State... we're

Continued **PAGE 11** >>

Airlines and Puget Sound transit agencies drop mask mandate

By MARIO LOTMORE

TAMPA, Fla. – All major U.S. airlines and regional transit agencies announced they will no longer require face coverings during travel after U.S. District Judge Kathryn Kimball Mizelle, in Tampa on Monday, ruled that the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) overstepped its authority when it issued a mask mandate for planes and other forms of public transportation.

In her ruling, Judge Mizelle issued the following conclusion:

"It is indisputable that the public has a strong interest in combating the spread of [COVID-19]. Ala. Ass'n of Realtors, 141 S. Ct. at 2490. In pursuit of that end, the CDC issued the Mask Mandate. But the Mandate exceeded

the CDC's statutory authority, improperly invoked the good cause exception to notice and comment rulemaking, and failed to adequately explain its decisions. Because 'our system does not permit agencies to act unlawfully even in pursuit of desirable ends,' id., the Court declares unlawful and vacates the Mask Mandate."

In a joint press release on Tuesday, April 19, all transit agencies in Puget Sound announced they will no longer enforce facial coverings for their customers. However, transit riders are not prohibited from voluntarily "wearing face coverings if they wish."

"In accordance with yesterday's statement from the federal Transportation Security Administration (TSA), agencies providing transit to riders throughout the Puget Sound region announced

that face coverings will no longer be required on transit, at transit facilities or in transit hubs effective today."

The agencies participating in yesterday's joint press release were the following:

- Community Transit
- Everett Transit
- King County Metro
- Kitsap Transit

- Pierce Transit
- Seattle Department of Transportation (Seattle Streetcar)
- Seattle Center Monorail
- Sound Transit

The Department of Justice announced Tuesday that it and the CDC "disagree with the district court's decision and will appeal... If CDC concludes that

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LYNNWOOD TIMES

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Lynnwood delays DEI commissioner vote, approves millions in ARPA expenditures

By KIENAN BRISCOE

LYNNWOOD – In a long, contentious, meeting Monday, April 26, Lynnwood City Council postponed approving DEI commissioner candidate Arra Rael while approving Rick Michels to the Board of Ethics and Matt Cail to the Planning Commission. The Council also debated doubling the amount of proposed residential units at the future City Center, and voted to approve \$2.5 million in ARPA funds to rehabilitate Lynnwood streets and \$5,000 for Hero’s Cafe.

NEW PLANNING COMMISSIONER AND NEW BOARD OF ETHICS BOARD MEMBER, BUT DEI COMMISSIONER VOTE POSTPONED

Before the unanimous consent agenda was approved, Councilwoman Sessions opted to remove the first three items which included confirmation of Planning Commissioner candidate Matt Cail, confirmation of Board of Ethics applicant Rick Michels, and confirmation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion candidate Arra Rael.

The remaining item, authorizing the Mayor to enter and execute a contract with BHC consultants, LLC, not to exceed a total contract value of \$719,930 for engineering design services related to replacement of aging water mains and repaving of adjacent roadways, was approved as scheduled.

Council then revisited the removed agenda items, first bringing in Matt Cail to discuss his qualifications for Planning Commissioner Position 2. After hearing both Cail and Ashley Winchell, Community Planning Manager, making brief points why he would be fit for the position, Councilwoman Sessions moved to approve Cail for the role, seconded by Councilman Patrick Decker, and the motion passed unanimously.

“I think Matt is a great addition to our planning commission and we are excited to potentially have him as a member,” Ashley Winchell, AICP, Community Planning Manager, said.

Board of Ethics candidate Rick Michels was not in attendance but Councilwoman Sessions moved to approve him adding that his experience working as a reporter and being a father of six would speak to his ability to find “both sides” to an issue. Councilwoman Sessions’ motion was seconded by Councilwoman Julieta Altamirano-Crosby and passed unanimously.

As it pertained to Arra Rael for DEI commission, Councilwoman Sessions questioned if, while Rael’s qualifications did meet the requirements, her being a non-Lynnwood resident and non-registered Lynnwood voter could disqualified her for the position.

Despite Councilwoman Sessions’ concerns, Council President George Hurst, phoning in on zoom, moved to approve Rael for her position seconded by Councilman Josh Binda.

Council President Hurst spoke to his motion explaining council rules allow for up to two non-Lynnwood voters to sit on a board or commission and it is not a requirement, albeit a preference, that a board or commission member be a Lynnwood resident.

“She is a registered voter and yes she is a non-resident but all of the other members of the DEI commission are residents,” Council President Hurst said. “She is really qualified [for this position].”

Currently, out of all five current members of the city’s DEI commission, all members reside in the city limits of Lynnwood. Mayor Christine Frizzell clarified that Rael lives a couple blocks outside of Lynnwood city limits.

Council Vice President Jim Smith

had his own concerns surrounding appointing Rael saying that several candidates for the DEI commission were turned down in the past, due to their nonresident status, and he did not want to form a precedence that non-Lynnwood residents could serve on boards and commissions unless it makes sense for them to do so (such as the historical society or tourism board).

Council member Binda, a former member of the DEI commission, echoed Council President Hurst’s points adding if there is no rule in council code that prohibits Rael’s appointing, he doesn’t see why she couldn’t be approved.

After some debate Councilman Decker motioned to postpone the decision until the May 23, Business Meeting in order to have time to discuss with city staff and the City Attorney Noel Tapia concerning the rules surrounding board and commission requirements.

“I’ve asked for a postponement so we can make a decision based on fact and data and there’s no confusion,” Councilman Decker said.

The motion to postpone passed 5-2 with Councilman Binda and Council President Hurst voting no.

Although Rael was in attendance at yesterday’s meeting she was not given a chance to speak, similar to Cail. She was, however, interviewed by council at a previous date.

The decision to postpone happened just a month after Mukilteo rejected all three of Mukilteo Mayor Joe Marine’s picks for DEI commissioners on March 7 after some council members questioned the Mayor’s decision-making process. The city has since approved three DEI commissioners, two of which were the same candidates that were initially rejected.

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Young leaders inspired to fight for social justice



Student Leadership Conference panelist with Dolores Huerta. Lynnwood Times | Kienan Briscoe.

By KIENAN BRISCOE

EDMONDS – The Edmonds School District hosted a student leadership conference focusing on the theme “Becoming Leaders of Change” at the Edmonds Center of the Arts today.

Notable speakers included Superintendent Dr. Gustavo Balderas and Dolores Huerta, civil rights activist and co-founder of the National Farmworkers Association.

“I never thought I’d become a superintendent of a public school system. I never saw

people that looked like me in my teachers...so representation matters,” Superintendent Balderas said. “I’m here to say, be proud of who you are and don’t let any limits be placed upon you. Be your best selves because you are the future and I’m proud to be your superintendent.”

KEYNOTE SPEAKER DOLORES HUERTA

Celebrity and historical keynote speaker Dolores Huerta then took the stage. Her work in social justice dates to the civil rights movement of the 1960’s when she led the Delano Grape Strike of 1965. She was also the lead negotiator of the workers’ contract that was created because of that strike.

“A lot of young students will

say to me I wish I would’ve been around in the 60’s because there was so much going on. You had the women’s movement, the environmental movement, the LGBTQ movement, the civil rights movement...well that was kind of the beginning. This is like the 60’s on steroids,” Huerta said. “Now it’s your turn to not only keep what we gained in the 60’s but to build on it and make it better.”

Huerta is the recipient of numerous awards for her community service and advocacy for workers’, immigrants’, and women’s rights including the Eugene v. Debs Foundation Outstanding American Award, the United States Presidential Eleanor Roosevelt Award

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ESD Work Experience Program helps students find their niche



Pictured from (L-R): - Transit training: Trainer Keith Kachendorfer with Isaac Hostynek, Ariana Vazquez, Austin Domonkos, teacher Heidi Sullivan with Rayssa Dantas making tags for a district equity project, and brista training using walkie talkies for communication featuring Liberty Williams, Wilson Lee and Mia Sessions. The walkie talkies were purchased from a Foundation for Edmonds School grant. Photo Credit: Edmonds School District.

By KIENAN BRISCOE

EDMONDS – Three years ago a special needs student signed up for Edmonds School District’s Work Experience Program in his 10th year of high school. Through the Edmonds Foundation the student, who requested to be remain anonymous, secured a grant that allowed him to work with Community Transit.

During the pandemic the Edmonds Foundation continued their support by dropping off food and providing internet services so the student, and his siblings, could continue their education online. That student has since graduated and is part of a Workforce Development program, in Everett, as part of a paid aerospace manufacturing internship. He is expected to be offered a job after completion.

This is just one example Heidi Sullivan, paraeducator at the Edmonds School District’s Work Experience Program, provided the Lynnwood Times when illustrating the important role her program, supported by the Edmonds Foundation, can have on special needs students entering the job market after graduation.

“This is a student who came from life skills classes,” Sullivan said. “And to go from that to aerospace manufacturing, in just a couple years after graduation, is an amazing opportunity.”

Heidi Sullivan has worked with students with developmental delays and

disabilities since 1996 but has only been with the Work Experiences Program for the past three. She was formerly a learning support teacher and was drawn to the program by an administrator who asked if she was open to trying something new and different.

Based in the former Woodway High School campus and loosely affiliated with Scriber Lake High, the Work Experiences and Assessment Program provides vocational assessment and work experience opportunities for students enrolled in the Lifeskills (Intensive Academic Support) Program. Student from all five high schools in the Edmonds School District are evaluated and observed by using hands-on tasks to train them in work-related skills in preparation for successful job placements in the community.

“We are a dynamic vocational training program for students with special needs,” Sullivan said. “I naturally love what I do. It’s what I was meant to do.”

The program consists of six level two para educators, supervised by Susan Daniels and three other supervisors, who deliver the bulk of the instruction in Sullivan’s office for vocational training for students that includes manufacturing, postal, office, retail, and custodial jobs on campus and teaching professional conduct like hygiene, scheduling, and commuting.

Sullivan told the Lynnwood Times her group of students this year have been particularly pleasant to work with,

showing up every day with smiling faces and an eagerness to learn.

“It’s also really rewarding to see what they actually know. I’ve said in my career I never want to predict what a student knows or can do. I think that’s dangerous business,” Sullivan said. “I learn way more from them than they ever learn from me I’m sure.”

What makes the program unique, Sullivan said, is the opportunity to have real-life, hands on, learning that a traditional school setting doesn’t always offer.

“[We] offer a wide variety of experiences outside of a pencil paper environment when it comes to jobs. We actually get to put things in their hands and get them up and moving so they get to decide if they’re even interested in doing that for a job,” Sullivan said.

Sullivan and her team try their best at encouraging students who aren’t enjoying themselves to persevere, as part of teaching them real work life experience, but are sure to note which jobs they prefer over others.

Students divide their time between their home high schools and the Work Experience program, which Sullivan says is beneficial in more ways than one.

“There’s benefits to them getting to know students from all five high schools but there’s also a benefit to them being connected to their home

high school and having the traditional high school experience,” Sullivan said.

The program serves grades 10 through 12 but, since the level of need is determined by an IEP team, does not necessarily mean students will spend all three years consecutively in the program. Whether they do is determined by the individual and their IEP assessment.

“The committed para educators and Sue, our supervisor here, are what makes this program great,” Sullivan said. “The foundation coming alongside us and supporting us definitely gives us more energy to do what we do.”

EDMONDS FOUNDATION’S SUPPORT

The Edmonds Foundation develops community partnerships and bridge sustainable funding in support of the Edmonds School District’s children, families, and educators in their pursuit of educational excellence.

The district’s Work Experience Program operates on a zero-dollar budget and, without the support from the Edmonds Foundation and other local partnerships simply could not exist.

For a long time, Sullivan has been applying for classroom grants through the Edmonds Foundation, who has supported all types of classrooms across

Continued PAGE 09 >>

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Registration is now open for the Lynnwood Police Camp for youth ages 11 to 14 years. All county youth are encouraged to apply; however, space is limited!

It's a fun week of learning safety skills, team building, leadership development, physical activities and much more!

Camp Dates: July 18-21, 2022. from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. each day
Registration Fee: \$125 per child, limited scholarships are available
Application deadline: June 17, 2022

Registration: To register, contact Connie Avalos-Galer at cgalor@LynnwoodWA.gov or 425-670-5613. or visit: <https://www.lynnwoodwa.gov>.

This will give youth a chance to interact with law enforcement and have positive experiences with the police, as well as learning safety tips, team building challenges and leadership development. Some highlights include spending a day of team building at High Trek Adventure for a high ropes course challenge. Participants will also learn about police science, work with the K-9 unit and participate in SWAT team activities, plus much more!



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Lynnwood Convention Center a buzz with Meet at Artist reception



LYNNWOOD – The Lynnwood Convention Center hosted a free “Meet the Artists” reception, Wednesday, April 26, where patrons could browse its current art exhibit, enjoy complimentary house-made appetizers and a no-host bar, while meeting the artists behind the “Northwest Waters” exhibit running through June 2022.

For this exhibit, the Convention Center was looking for works that illustrated aspects of Northwest Waterways as a subject, in a variety of styles and media. Featured works portray traditional views of Puget Sound, the Pacific coast, rivers, lakes, and wetlands; and feature nautical subjects that inhabit waterways or are abstracted or uniquely creative imagery featuring this water theme.

The 35 pieces of artwork, from 14 talented local Northwest artists, selected and hung throughout the Lynnwood Convention Center represent a variety of mediums, including photography, mixed media, watercolor, oil on canvas, pastels and more. Each artist’s style is unique, yet the pieces’ common theme of water creates a beautiful and cohesive exhibit.

One of the featured artists, Yonah Ben Levy, has been an artist since a young child. Together, with her husband and art partner Chail Bezalel, the two create mixed media pieces welding together visual arts with photography,

music, and video.

When Levy’s mother was pregnant with her, during World War II, she was diagnosed with cancer and passed away nine months after Levy was born. She had no idea her mother was Jewish until the age of 16. Almost 20 years later she visited Israel and was told “if your mother was a Jew so are you.” So, she stayed in Israel from 1981 to 1998, teaching art at Israeli public schools. The two continue to divide their time between the Pacific Northwest and Israel every six months.

Living in Israel is spiritually fulfilling for Yonah, learning more about her faith and her family, but not without its hardships. The nation was constantly at war and her house is equipped with a bomb shelter; Levy even has her own gas mask. Throughout it all, she continued pursuing her love for art through a greeting card business she shared with her husband until they established themselves as successful artists.

“We started out with nothing and now we’re prospering,” Levy told the Lynnwood Times. “In a lot of ways, I’ve stayed the teacher and [my husband’s] stayed the marketer. We make a great partnership.”

Levy and her husband Bezalel remained in Israel throughout the COVID-19 shutdown creating more than 100 mixed-media pieces.



Artists Chaim Bezalel and wife Yonah Ben Levy at the Meet the Artist reception at the Lynnwood Convention Center. LT | Mario Lotmore.

“Everything we do is some type of being inspired,” Levy said. “Always do the best you can with whatever you’re inspired to do.”

Levy’s husband Bezalel studied film at Northwestern University and often uses his background to collaboratively add video, photography, and music to

Levy’s paintings.

Both Levy and Bezalel both are also musicians and lovers of music. While Levy focuses her musical interests in singing and ballet dancing, Bezalel is a poet and folk guitarist playing off his experiences growing up in New York’s

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Cut by Curt: Crafting a life post-diagnosis



Curtis showcasing the current cutting board he's working on. Lynnwood Times | Bo John Brusco.

By BO JOHN BRUSCO

At the age when most Americans retire, Curtis Gregory, 61, from Redmond, WA, opened his own business: Cut by Curt Woodworking. Curt specializes in crafting unique cutting boards, but he's recently branched out to cabinets and even made an intricate chessboard the size of a coffee table. But the passionate owner behind Cut by Curt never anticipated becoming a craftsman because just a few years earlier—Curt was in a wheelchair.

FROM CARD DEALER TO WOODWORKER

For 20 years, Curt worked in casinos, “at any little casino between Arlington and Tukwila,” he says. Starting out as a security guard escorting dealers to their cars, he decided to become a dealer himself when he noticed how much they brought home in tips.

“It’s easy money, and it’s a crazy business to be in,” he says.

Near the end of his casino career in 2019, though, Curt mysteriously lost 50 lbs. The noticeable weight change warranted concern from his coworkers, though Curt says, “I didn’t think anything about it.”

But after a lump had formed on his abdomen, Curt decided to see a doctor. “I get it checked out, and they tell me, ‘Hey, you got stage four lung cancer. You’re terminal.’”

Curt knew the diagnosis would dramatically affect his life, but he never counted on it leading him to open his own small business.

Once diagnosed, Curt continued dealing cards until December 2019, when he was no longer physically able to work and found himself in a wheelchair. “I couldn’t walk, you know, since I couldn’t walk, I couldn’t work,” he recalls.

Thanks to his service in the U.S. Navy, Curt received medical assistance through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Within the first year of treatment, Curt felt well enough to leave his wheelchair behind, and continues to go in for treatment every six weeks.

After regaining his strength, though, Curt became restless.

“I got tired of sitting at home,” he says.

“I saw someone making cutting boards, and I said, ‘Hey, I can do that!’”

CUT BY CURT OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Despite his battle with cancer—and the fact that he had never dabbled in this sort of craftsmanship before, Curt began teaching himself woodworking out of his garage in 2020.

After making a few cutting boards and even fashioning his own workbench, Curt had become so enamored with woodworking that he set out to find a workspace of his own.

“My girlfriend got tired of the dust,” he laughs.

One day while he was picking up wood from a shop in the Seattle area, he spotted a posting in a woodshop for a space to rent and immediately seized the opportunity.

Now with a space of his own, Curt officially opened Cut by Curt, a name his niece suggested, in April 2021. Cut by Curt is best known for its beautiful cutting boards and intricate designs. Curt says that one board takes three days to make “because each cut is a glue-up and each glue-up has to sit overnight.”

Curt is particularly excited about the unique qualities of each board he designs. “Not one of them is identical. Every single one is different,” he says. “And I like that. [Customers] like that too; everybody has a one-of-a-kind.”

Curt estimates he’s created over 80 cutting boards in the last year. He’s also made and installed a custom maple kitchen countertop for his neighbor and is currently undertaking his first cabinet commission.

When he first started woodworking, Curt never imagined it’d lead him to own a business. “I was just doing it ‘cause I had nothing to do. I never intended to sell a single board,” he recalls. “I gave one to a friend. She loved it, showed it to a friend.”

In fact, Curt had initially hoped to sail the world after he retired. “But I think I enjoy doing this more than I would being on a sailboat,” he laughs.

While he might not be traversing the globe, Curt has been shipping his woodwork across the states. In only a couple of years, he went from making



Curtis with two fellow woodworkers: Aaron Bowen of ACB Custom on the right, and Luca Lezzi of Timer Tides Woodworking in the center. LT | Bo John Brusco.



Curtis with two fellow woodworkers: Aaron Bowen of ACB Custom on the right, and Luca Lezzi of Timer Tides Woodworking in the center. LT | Bo John Brusco.

a single cutting board to hanging a map in his shop with pins in it marking each spot he’s shipped one of his pieces to around the country.

Curt is also in disbelief of his own skillset and reiterates how helpful the other woodworkers at his shop have been. “I never thought in a million years that I would get even to this level, never.”

“It would have taken me five years to get to the skill level I’m at now if I hadn’t met the guys in this shop,” he says.

Curt’s passion for improving his craft reinvigorates his spirit every day, despite his diagnosis. “The learning curve—I think that’s what I love about it,” he says. “I come to work, and I learn every day.”

That’s not to say he is never challenged. In fact, it’s the opposite; it’s the triumph over mistakes that Curt thrives on.

“Greatness is not defined by your successes. Greatness is defined by how you rebound from your failures. And there are a lot of failures learning this stuff,” says Curt, recounting how he accidentally cut a shelf on the wrong side of the cabinet he’s building—a mistake that cost him \$125.

“But I’m almost guaranteed to not make that mistake again,” he says with a smile.

Curt believes the thrill of the craft has kept him in good spirits three years after being told he was terminal.

“I get to learn every day, and that—I think it keeps me alive.”

A DIAGNOSIS IS NOT A LIFE SENTENCE

Despair and self-pity aren’t part of Curt’s nature—a fact that 13-year-old Anthony Schmidt of Instagram fame noticed when the two of them met last year.

Between working at the casino and picking up woodworking, Curt got into photography and began joining photography groups on social media, and that’s when he came across Schmidt’s impressive forced perspective work on Facebook.

Inspired by Schmidt’s work and the success he’s earned at such a young age, Curt messaged his mother. “I was like, ‘this kid is incredible,’ and she said, ‘well would you like to meet him?’ And I had no idea they were just in Woodinville. So she invited me over to their house, and she knew I had cancer.”

Meeting with Schmidt would have a lasting impact on Curt.

“What ended up happening was, right as I was leaving, Anthony says, ‘So I hear you have cancer. How long do you have?’ and I go, ‘you know, Anthony, nobody really knows how long they have. And he goes, ‘Well, it’s pretty cool that you live your life ‘cause it’s just a diagnosis; it’s not a life sentence.’”

Curt says that Schmidt changed his life. “Three and a half years ago, they told me I was terminal. I’m still here. And watching [Anthony] grow his little business—the kid inspires me.”

Schmidt’s mother later commissioned Curt to craft a 34” x 34” chessboard for the young photographer. It took him about three weeks to complete the project, but Curt says that of all his pieces, he’s most proud of that one.

Continued PAGE 09 >>

Snohomish County Approves \$2 Million Emergency Solid Waste Removal

EVERETT – The Snohomish County Council approved an emergency contract with Waste Management Inc. to aid Snohomish County Solid Waste in the removal of excess refuse at local transfer stations. Refuse has built up since the start of the year due to a shortage of intermodal containers used for waste-by-rail shipments to the Roosevelt Landfill located in south central Washington. These containers are provided to county by Republic Services and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF), which have indicated that staffing shortages are the primary reason for the reduction of available containers.

The \$2 million short-term waste transportation and disposal agreement will give Solid Waste workers the ability to transport more garbage out of county facilities.

While the contract with Waste Management will give county workers another outlet to begin lowering refuse levels at the facilities, it will take time to return to normal levels.

“We still may have to shut down some of our facilities temporarily in order to catch up on the removal of this excess garbage, but this emergency contract will help ease the strain on our system,” Snohomish County Public Works Director Kelly Snyder said.

“Our Solid Waste staff are grateful to have this extra tool to address this issue.”

As of today, the buildup of garbage has not exceeded Snohomish County facility limits. However, the Airport Rd (ARTS) and Southwest (SWRTS) Recycling and Transfer Stations are reaching their capacity limits, which

would trigger a shutdown. The last time a shutdown due to capacity limits was triggered was in 2008.

Excess refuse can become a fire and health hazard, among other dangers, at the transfer stations. While the ARTS and SWRTS facilities are seeing the greatest impact, all Snohomish County Solid Waste facilities are experiencing

customer slowdowns.

The county is urging customers to be patient when visiting the facilities. Customers are encouraged to check the lines before visiting Solid Waste facilities at <https://snohomishcountywa.gov/5431/Check-the-Lines>. For more information, visit <https://snohomishcountywa.gov/207/Solid-Waste>.

from page 7 MEET THE ARTIST

1960's folk revival scene but adding jazz-inspired, Bossa nova variations.

Another featured artist who will be featured at next year's exhibit, Harjinder Singh, is a worldwide traveler and photographer who was brought up in a society that valued art. He draws his inspiration from visiting various parks in the Seattle metro area and has pursued his photography after retiring from working at Microsoft.

The event is hosted twice a year featuring two different exhibits transitioned out around June. For each of those exhibits there is a Meet the Artist reception where people have an opportunity to meet the artists featured. The next exhibit, The Art of Snohomish County, will be cycled in this upcoming July.

“I was impressed [by the turnout]. This year we integrated an RSVP element because we wanted to see how many people would commit to coming, it also helps us with headcount with the food,” Julie Carlos told the Lynnwood Times. “It's one of the best turnouts [we've] seen.”

The Lynnwood Convention Center was



Lynnwood Mayor Frizzell (right) with Art Commissioners (L-R) Raniere, Lynn Hanson, and Robert Gutcheck, and Staff Liaison Fred Wong. LT | Mario Lotmore.

recently bought out by Oakview Group, who also operate Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle. In addition to some standard operational procedures that come with change of ownership, the change has also inspired many events such as the I Love Lynnwood Sign selfie contest, where participants can take a selfie with the sign every month for a chance to win a \$50 gift certificate to Anthony's Restaurant.

“We have no idea the way [this art] is going to effect members of our community, but it's always for the positive,” Raniere, artist and member of the Art Commission, told the Lynnwood Times.

The Lynnwood Art Commission is currently preparing for the Fair on 44th and told the Lynnwood Times there are some new “art focused things” coming to the fair.

from page 8 CUT BY CURT

“MY HEART GOES INTO THIS STUFF”

Curtis Gregory, according to his own definition, exemplifies greatness. He's not only rebounded from his devastating diagnosis, but he's living life as fully as he can and refuses to be relegated to his medical status. And through his hand-crafted pieces, Curt believes he has found a way to leave a lasting impression after he's gone.

“I know this sounds like a sales pitch, but it's not: my heart goes into this stuff,” he said while tapping on one of his boards. “And it has to be right, and I care. I don't want people to buy my board and then think, ‘I'm never going to do this again.’”

“You can go to Ikea and buy something and put it together, and I guarantee you, it won't be the same as if I made it for you. I don't believe you can buy something from Ikea and be able to give it to your grandkids 15 years from now. This you can.”

from page 4 EDMONDS WORK EXPERIENCE

the district.

“The foundation is aware of who we are and what we do and is always really excited to support us,” Sullivan said.

Most recently, at the beginning of this year, Sullivan contacted the Foundation about a new barista training program that took a “pretty big chunk of change to get going”. The Foundation offered Work Experience to apply for a \$3,000 grant, which they received, and used to purchase all of the supplies needed to get go-

ing, including a Jura espresso machine through working with Seattle Coffee Gear.

Since securing the grant through Edmonds Foundation, the program launched Campus Coffee, a fully functional student-run coffee stand serving specialty coffee drinks approved by Edmonds School District Food and Nutrition Services while teaching students in the Work Experience Program retail and barista skills.

Sullivan told the Lynnwood Times that typically CTE (Careers and Technical Education) programs have a history of being well funded by the state of Washington

but since her program is a special education program it doesn't necessarily qualify for CTE funding. Because of challenges associated with securing state and federal funds, supporters such as Edmonds Foundation are absolutely paramount to the program's, and others like it, existence.

“Students in mainstream classes get certain allocations for materials and it's always been challenging to advocate for students with special needs to access the same level of materials,” Sullivan said. “I definitely think we could do better with that.”

The Work Experience Program has been currently working with the state to explore various funding options.

Other partners

Along with Edmonds Foundation other partners who make the Work Experience Program possible by donating materials for activities and crafting include:

- Crown Bees
- Tubie Friends
- Cast for Kids
- Seattle Jr. Hockey Bingo
- Edmonds Rotary
- Science and Materials Center

from page 2 MASK MANDATE

a mandatory order remains necessary for the public's health after that assessment.”

The district court's ruling comes less than a week after the CDC extended the mandate through May 3, 2022, which were set to expire on April 18. The CDC's Mask Mandate was expended in April and August of 2021.

Paine Field and Sea-Tac airports and airlines drop mask mandate After the TSA's announcement that it will “no longer enforce its Security Directives and Emergency Amendment requiring mask use on public transportation and transportation hubs” due to

the district court's decision, Paine Field Airport issued the following statement: “Due to a judicial decision in our federal court system, face masks are currently optional at the airport and on commercial aircraft.”

Alaska, American, Delta, Frontier, Jet-Blue, Southwest and United airlines and Sea-Tac airport all made similar announcements no longer requiring facial coverings on domestic flights.

MASK MANDATE FOR AIRLINES

Shortly after taking office, President Joe Biden issued Executive Order 13998 on January 21, 2021, that re-

quired masks on various forms of transportation and while in transit hubs in an effort to combat the spread of COVID-19. Then on February 3, 2021, the CDC published a Mask Mandate without allowing public participation through the APA's notice and comment procedures stating “it would be impracticable and contrary to the public's health” to delay the Mandate. Below is an excerpt from the CDC's Mask Mandate document:

“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), announces an Agency Order requiring persons to wear masks over the mouth and nose when traveling on any conveyance (e.g., air-

planes, trains, subways, buses, taxis, ride-shares, ferries, ships, trolleys, and cable cars) into or within the United States. A person must also wear a mask on any conveyance departing from the United States until the conveyance reaches its foreign destination. Additionally, a person must wear a mask while at any transportation hub within the United States (e.g., airport, bus terminal, marina, train station, seaport or other port, subway station, or any other area that provides transportation within the United States). Furthermore, operators of conveyances and transportation hubs must use best efforts to ensure that persons wear masks as required by this Order.”

from page 8 **STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONF.**

for Human Rights, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States. She was the first Latina inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame in 1993 and even has a day named after her in California – “Dolores Huerta Day” on April 10.

After speaking, Huerta was joined by seven high school students and members of the student leadership committee who took turns asking how they can be leaders of change and social justice in their community. A key theme of Huerta’s responses was the importance of education.

“Education is key. A lot of the issues we have today, a lot of the challenges come from ignorance,” Huerta said.

Huerta was first contacted to speak by high school student and Student Leadership Committee member Isabel Vergara Ramos, a senior at Edmonds-Woodway High. Ramos, who’s grandmother greatly benefited from the work Huerta championed for as a farm worker in California, chose to write a paper about Huerta and her advocacy work.

In one of its meetings, the committee was deciding on who to host as a keynote speaker and Ramos pitched the idea to reach out to Dolores Huerta. To her surprise, Huerta responded.

“I’ve read everything there is to read on her and I’ve studied for so long and I just can’t believe she’s here right now, it’s definitely surreal,” Ramos told the Lynnwood Times.

After high school, Ramos will be attending the University of Washington as a pre-med student when she

graduates later this year.

Other student members on the panel were Nova Rosette-Perez, Anthony Guinto, Saley Keita of Lynnwood High School; Hibbah Khan of Edmonds Woodway; Elizabeth Lopez of Meadowdale High School; and Jazzma Pennerman of Mountlake Terrace High School.

BACKGROUND OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Dr. Victor Vergara, Executive Director of Equity and Student Success, began having conversations with Superintendent Balderas, about two years ago, how to provide students with a larger platform for voice. Out of the Superintendent Student Advisory Committee, a committee made up of student leaders in grades 9-12 from each of the district’s high schools, the Student Leadership Committee was formed.

The Committee meets monthly with Superintendent Dr. Gustavo Balderas and district leadership and also participates monthly in a professional development meeting, with a focus on creating a more equitable education system across the district.

The first Student Leadership Conference was originally scheduled for last October but due to COVID and a commitment to having an in-person event, the committee decided to postpone until April 2022, which Dr. Vergara told the Lynnwood Times just gave them more time to hash out the details.

“It took a long time to work out the logistics but being here today is just a dream come true,” Vergara told the Lynnwood Times.

The event was made possible through sponsorship

from Rick Steves, Hazel Miller, and the Edmonds Foundation.



Keynote speaker, Dolores Huerta at the Student Leadership Conference at Edmonds-Woodway High School. Lynnwood Times | Kienan Briscoe.

from page 1 **VERIZON WIRELESS**

Mason was in attendance when his fellow Verizon workers in Everett voted to unionize on April 15, where he posed in photos alongside the Everett-Lynnwood employees that were published in the Lynnwood Times and another county paper. Mason was fired when he came in for his next shift following the publications.

Additionally, Mason and his team in Seattle recently went public with their campaign to unionize. However, they’ve yet to officially file to form a union because the employees fear retaliation, according to Mason. “And Verizon is trying to confirm that fear by firing me,” he says. “I’m going to prove to them that retaliation doesn’t work.”

“Mason had a stellar employment record with no previous disciplinary action while working as a Specialist at Verizon Wireless’ Seattle Northgate and Aurora Village retail store locations, just miles from two nearby Verizon Wireless retail stores in Lynnwood and Everett, WA where workers successfully voted to form a union last week,” the CWA press release states.

“Verizon management targeted me for organizing a union. It’s illegal to do that,” says Mason, “and I’m confident that I will eventually be reinstated. I’m not scared because I know that there’s a growing movement of retail workers — from Verizon Wireless to Starbucks, to Apple — who are joining together to demand a voice on the job. They can fire me, but they can’t fire all of us, and we won’t stop fighting until every worker who wants a union has a union.”

As was the case with the Everett-Lynnwood employees after they went public with their efforts to unionize, Verizon swiftly sent its union-busting team to the Northgate and Aurora

Village stores. According to Mason, the team’s arrival marked a dramatic shift in tone at his store.

“The tone that managers took with me changed immediately when the union-busters came to the store. Before they were accelerating me being a key holder and asking whether I wanted a management role or some different promotion,” Mason recalls. “Then, my firing was the next working day after I was at the tailgate vote count party.”

Mason is confident his termination was a retaliatory move. “They knew I was strongly in favor of unionizing,” he says.

Mason had no disciplinary actions on file prior to his termination and believes Verizon failed to follow standard protocol when they let him go. “No write-up; nothing,” he says, “straight to termination.”

When he was terminated, Mason says he was accused of “a really minor procedural violation—something I didn’t even do.” However, due to the current NLRB case, Mason opted to not disclose anything more.

This isn’t the first time Verizon has been accused of illegally terminating one of its employees in the Seattle area, and his story is similar to another now-former Verizon employee from the Everett-Lynnwood locations, Brandon Carter.

Carter had no previous disciplinary record on file and was fired the week after he and his coworkers announced they were unionizing. “I was called in and they just laid a whole bunch of stuff at me and then just let me go,” Carter said.

“Normally, Verizon’s a process where there’s a documented council; first write-up, second write-up, you know, third write-up, final written. All that



Featured picture used in the original Lynnwood Times article, Verizon workers in Everett form union after landslide vote. Jesse Mason is circled in red. Lynnwood Times | Bo John Brusco.

was just kind of skipped,” Carter continued. “And then, you know, I came into work, and then I’m gone.”

Mason has long-time been a proponent of unions. “If I had the best workplace or the worst, I’d want it unionized because it’s the only way working-class people can help ourselves.”

In response to the Lynnwood Times, a Verizon spokesperson issued the following statement on April 25:

“Mr. Mason’s termination had absolutely nothing to do with union activity. While we’re not going to publicly discuss the reasons for the dismissal, we intend to vigorously defend ourselves against these baseless accusations.

“We respect the rights of our employees to choose whether or not they wish to be union-represented and we routinely provide facts to our employees so that they can make an informed decision for themselves.”

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from page 3 **LYNNWOOD COUNCIL**

CITY CENTER PLANNED ACTION ORDINANCE

Continuing to follow in Mukilteo's footsteps, Lynnwood then discussed high-density development at the City Center in the form of an ordinance amending Lynnwood Municipal Code and updating its existing Planned Action Ordinance (PAO) to better absorb future growth.

The update to the PAO recommended for council's adoption includes increasing the square footage of the City Center from 9.1 million to 12.3 million, office spaces from 4 million square feet to 4.25 million square feet, and residential units from 3,000 to 6,000.

"How many units do we need in the city of Lynnwood before someone says stop?" Former Lynnwood council member Ted Hikel said during public comment. "You're responsible for the promises you made to citizens that you won't destroy the city by turning it into another Seattle."

Through assessing the market and the findings from the Massing study Karl Almgren, City Center Program Manager, and his team are proposing these increases to reach adopted capacity consistent with the community vision, attract employers by leveraging existing development demand, and adhere to the Growth Management Act.

"I don't often say this but I agree with community member Hikel," Councilwoman Sessions said. "That is just too much housing in an area that should be vibrant and mixed use."

Following Hikel's comments, council had the opportunity to share their concerns which were largely disapproving of the proposed added development.

"This will increase traffic, this will increase crime...The real winners here are the developers," Council Vice President Smith said. "They're gonna make their millions and leave. This does not help with affordable housing."

Councilman Josh Binda and Council President Hurst appeared to be the only voices in favor of the development increases both stating that growth is inevitable and Lynnwood needs to prepare accordingly. Councilman Decker argued that, while growing up in the Los Angeles suburbs, his hometown ran out of room to grow and, when that happened, the city stopped building, then people stopped coming.

"I am in favor of planned growth, I am not in favor of forced growth," Councilman Patrick Decker said. "I am not in favor of adding another 3,000 units."

Council will consider the adoption of the ordinance at their meeting on May 9.

HARRIS FORD LINCOLN DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

Ben Wolters, Economic Development Manager, returned to council with a presentation concerning a proposed agreement to allow Harris Ford to expand its dealership at Highway 99 and 200th St SW to allow for Lincoln automobiles.

Harris Ford proposes to renovate and expand the front portion of their dealership facing Highway 99. The

proposed project includes demolishing the existing satellite showroom; constructing a new single-story satellite showroom of 4,300 square feet for Lincoln automobiles; and expanding and improving the sales lot around the new showroom with on-site parking, landscaping, pedestrian connections, and new lighting.

A Public Hearing on this development agreement was previously discussed by council at their Business Meeting March 15 and will allow Harris Ford to credit the value of the property they would dedicate toward the cost of the proposed street vacation as provided by city code. The agreement also outlines the steps the City and Harris Ford will take to allow the project to begin construction this spring. Development agreements are decided by Council through a quasi-judicial process.

Councilwoman Sessions moved to approve the agreement, seconded by Councilman Decker, and the motion passed unanimously.

Councilman Binda then moved to approve resolution 2022-07 setting May 23 for a Public Hearing on the proposed 64th Ave W Street Vacation that is part of the Harris Ford expansion, seconded by Councilwoman Altamirano-Crosby. The motion passes unanimously.

Council Vice President then made a scheduling motion to discuss commissions and residencies, regarding this project, on May 16, seconded by Councilwoman Altamirano-Crosby. The motion passed unanimously.

CITY APPROVES ARPA FUNDS FOR CITY STREETS AND HERO'S CAFE

Concluding Monday's meeting,

Councilwoman Altamirano-Crosby moved to approve \$2.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds for repaving Lynnwood residential streets through the Public Works Department, seconded by Council Vice President Jim Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilwoman Sessions then motioned to approve \$10,000 of ARPA funds, in the amount of a grant, to go toward Hero's Cafe, double the amount of what the cafe requested.

Hero's Cafe is a monthly non-profit for a safe place for local veterans to meet, have coffee, and lunch.

Council Vice President moved to amend Councilwoman Sessions' motion back to \$5,000, seconded by Councilman Patrick Decker, to take the spending "in steps."

The amendment to the motion passed 4-3 with council members Binda, Hurst, and Sessions voting no. The vote returned to the original motion, as amended back to \$5,000, and passed unanimously.

Councilman Binda then suggested to bring a discussion concerning allocating \$25,000 to go toward the Lynnwood REC Center for scholarships at council's next Work Session.

Council Vice President Smith motioned to postpone the vote until May 9 to have more opportunity to discuss. Smith's motion passed 6-1 with Councilwoman Sessions voting no.

WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

Email editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com or call 425-308-8371.

from page 2 **BIDEN VISIT**

going to triple the federal commitment to your Link Light Rail system," Biden said.

The President signed the bipartisan Investments in Infrastructure and Jobs Act, last November, which adds \$66 billion to freight rail, \$39 billion for public transit, \$10.6 billion for electric busses, and \$2.5 for clean ferries, which the president says will take millions of cars worth of pollution off the road.

"Given the choice to go to point "A" to point "B" by electric rail or drive your own automobile, if you can get there as fast or faster on rail you take the rail," President Biden said.

The bill will also intends to cap and seal hundreds of thousands of coal mines in the country redistributing coal workers to install solar panels at the same salary, Biden said.

PRESIDENT BIDEN AT GREEN RIVER COLLEGE

After leaving Seattle, the President traveled to Green River College, in Auburn, to talk about lowering costs for American families through affordable health care, affordable prescription drugs, and nationwide access to high-speed internet.

Biden proposed to cap the cost of insulin at \$35 a month, cap the price seniors on Medicare have to pay for prescription drugs, and cap the cost of childcare for families earning less than

\$120,000 a year.

"We're all laser focused on lowering costs for families and a big part of doing that is lowering cost for health care," President Biden said.

Through expansion of the Affordable Care Act, Biden stated that nearly one million previously uninsured Americans will be able to afford health insurance.

Additionally, the President proposed increasing Federal Pell Grants for students by \$400 a year, the largest increase in ten years, and proposed the Federal Government require corporations to pay their taxes.

"I've been called a socialist by conservatives. I'm a capitalist. I think if you can make a billion dollars, a million dollars, or one hundred million you should be able to do it...but pay your fair share," President Biden said.

Biden also mentioned that this year the nation is on track to cut the deficit by \$1.3 trillion, which stays on course with the largest one-year deficit in history he said. He also addressed inflation and emphasized how the war in Ukraine is impacting the U.S. economy

"I'm more optimistic about America today than I have my whole life, my whole career. Because I see a future that's within our grasp." Biden said. "You are the least prejudice, the most involved, the most concerned generation in American history."

from page 1 **GUN STORAGE**

Marine Corps Reserve overseas, and after years of civilian work in private sector security contracting. It was his experience in detailed report generation that benefited in the list of documentation review that was involved with lawsuit filing.

The plaintiffs challenged the ordinance as preempted by state law. The city of Edmonds moved to dismiss that the challengers did not have standing.

The trial judge, based on the facts alleged in the initial complaint, found the plaintiffs had standing to challenge the safe storage section of the ordinance (ECC 5.26.020) but not the unauthorized access section (ECC 5.26.030) since they did not have alleged facts that would tend to show an unauthorized person would get access to the weapons.

Later, during summary judgement, the trial judge renewed her earlier determination and concluded that the safe storage portion of the ordinance was preempted by state law.

The appellate court in February of 2021, concluded that the plaintiffs had standing to challenge the entire ordinance and that the ordinance was preempted by state law.

In March 2021, the city petitioned the high court to review the decision and the court affirmed its opinion last Thursday.

"We must hold the government to account, especially since it represents the legitimized monopoly on force," Bass told the Lynnwood Times. "It is allowed – and expected – to use force to coerce the citizenry to behave within the structures of the rules upon which the citizens collectively agree."

Bass is not a fan of violating the law and holds no grudge against the Edmond's City Council passing an ordinance requiring firearms to be stored in lockers. He believes in safe gun ownership and recommends everyone take a course on gun safety, if you are an owner or not.

He feels our ability to arm ourselves has done more good than bad, and said from his observation, "Firearms are used more often in preservation of life and property than they are to take from it."

Bass believes the largest driver of firearm fatality is suicide, by far, and that increasing community connectedness, decreasing the barriers to mental health and substance use counseling, and better allocating resources to deal with the majority of suicide decedents will lead to a reduction in the number of people who die from gunshot injuries more than any other set of policy recommendations.

In 2020, firearm suicides accounted for 52% (608) of all suicide deaths and roughly 65% of all firearm deaths in Washington state according to the Washington State Department of Health and the CDC respectively.

from page 1 SWIFT ORANGE LINE



Senator Marko Liias (center) with (L-R) Julie Moore, Monica Thompson, Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell, and Sarah Olson attending the groundbreaking ceremony of the Orange Swift BRT Line in Lynnwood. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

importance of today’s milestone. “It has taken hundreds of people, decades to get to where we are today. And two years from now when we cut the ribbon on light rail and cut a ribbon for the Orange Line, we just have magnified the ability for people to move around that much more.”

Governor Jay Inslee shared two key points on the importance of mass transit during his remarks at today’s ceremony. First, reduced carbon emissions that will minimize the impact of Global Warming which will save the salmon population in Washington state and secondly, to provide clean energy jobs.

“It is exciting to be at the place where Bus Rapid Transit started in 2009,” Gov. Inslee said. “Isn’t great that on Friday when President Joe Biden comes to Washington state, I’ll be able to tell him that Washington state has a Swift Orange Line, the most exciting Bus Rapid Transit project in the United States.”

Governor Inslee thanked Senator Marko Liias (D-Mukilteo), who lead the effort that passed, for the first time in the Washington state’s history, a transportation package within a 60-day Legislative Session.

In December of 2021, Sen. Liias was chosen to chair the State’s Senate Transportation Committee and by March of 2022, the Legislature passed the \$16.9 billion Move Ahead Washington transportation package that earmarked \$3 billion for public transportation of which Community Transit is expected to receive at least \$23.8 million towards its Swift BRT Lines.

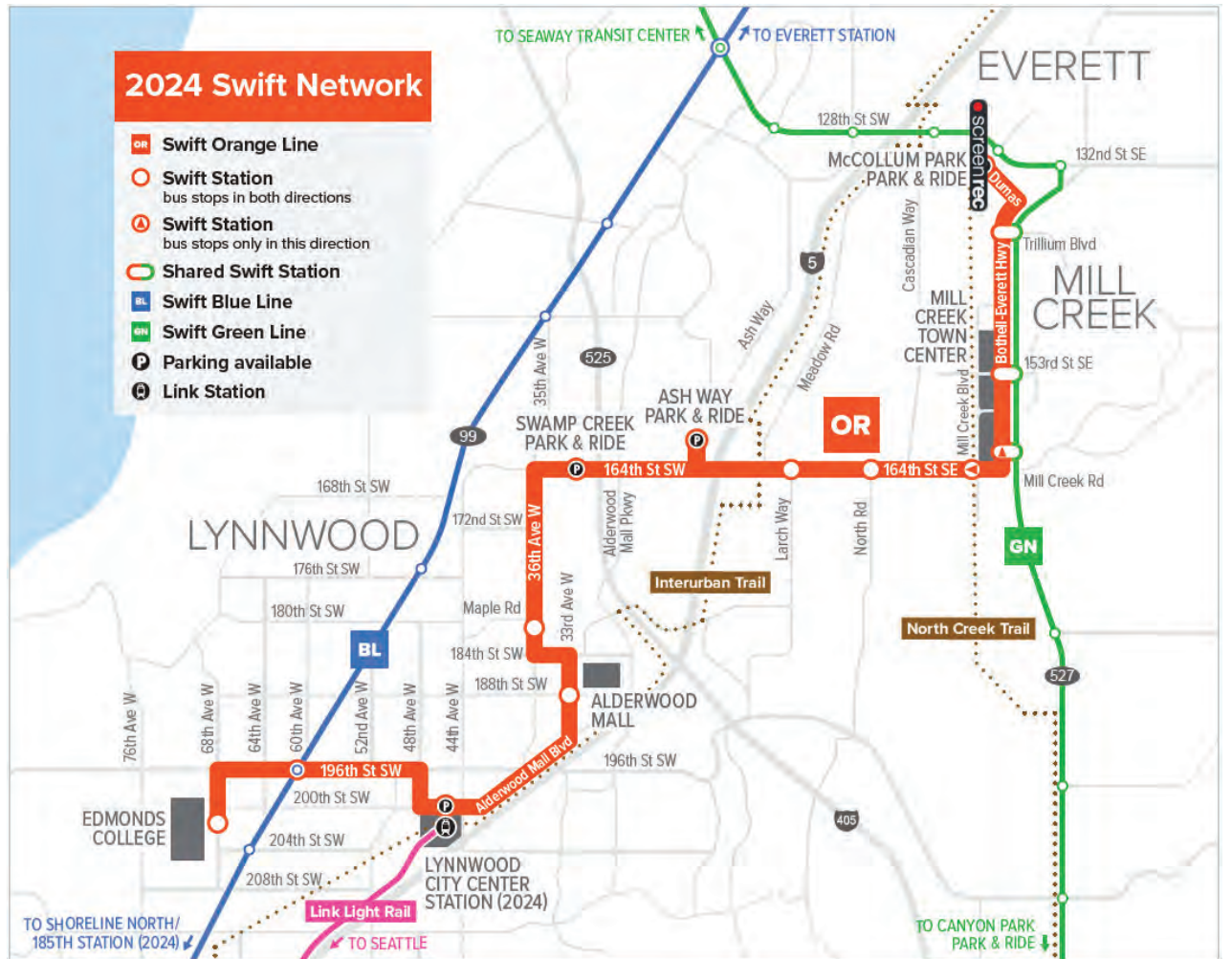
“The federal government, the Biden Administration, and Congress acted on the Infrastructure Bill and last year the legislature acted on the Climate Commitment Act,” Sen. Liias told the Lynnwood Times when asked how he achieved such an historic accomplishment. “So, we had resources waiting to be invested and programmed, that helped a lot. We really were investing the dollars that were waiting out there and putting them to work right away.”

With a total operating budget of \$171.9 million for 2022, the transit agency is expecting operating revenues of \$263.1 million which includes \$100 million in funds from the federal government.

In February of this year, Community Transit received notification from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that it awarded \$37.1 million in Capital Investment Grant funds which cleared the way for construction of the Swift Orange Line. In total, the Swift Orange Line Project has received \$64.7 million in federal funding including \$6.7 million of American Rescue Plan stimulus funding.

“It is so important that public transit continues to grow, because where public transportation grows, community grows,” Nuria Fernandez, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration, said about the significance of today’s groundbreaking.

Administrator Fernandez thanked U.S. Senators Patty Murray (D-WA) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA), who were both in attendance, for their leadership in the passage of the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that earmarked \$39 billion for public transit. She thanked both Gov. Inslee and the state legislature for its commitment to public transportation be it “bus, light rail, or ferry.”



Multimodal 2024 Swift Orange Bus Rapid Transit Line. Source: Community Transit.

“It is not just about taxpayers and moving money, it is about giving the taxpayer what they deserve, and that is the best transportation system that this county can deliver,” Administrator Fernandez added.

Senator Murray acknowledged the environmental and economic benefits to public transit and Senator Cantwell stressed the need for cost affordable options for commuters in Washington state.

Congressman Rick Larsen (WA-02) focused a message on how the Orange Line will connect residents to schools, jobs and businesses. Congresswoman Susan DelBene (WA-01) added how funding the overall Swift network is an investment for future generations.

During the pandemic, Community Transit provided free rides to vaccinations as well as partnering with the Snohomish Health District to host on-site COVID-19 vaccination and testing at the Ash Way Park and Ride in Lynnwood. In 2021, the transit agency expanded its travel options for Snohomish County riders to destinations like the University of Washington, downtown Seattle, and Sea-Tac Airport.

SWIFT ORANGE LINE

The Swift BRT network is Community Transit’s most highly utilized service, providing fast, frequent daily service. Swift is a different kind of bus service in that it is designed to get customers to their destinations faster than standard routes.

The 11-mile Swift Orange Line will provide east-west connectivity across southern Snohomish County, linking together Mill Creek Town Center, Alderwood Mall, Lynnwood City Center, and Edmonds College. It will also connect the park and rides at McCollum Park, Ash Way, Swamp Creek, and the Lynnwood Transit and Community Center.

As a part of this project, a new transit center is being built at Edmonds College and the transit facilities at McCollum Park are currently being renovated to better accommodate future services. Construction on the new Orange Line will also include 16 new Swift BRT stations (19 stations in total), roadway and signal improvements at existing stations, and additional intersections within the corridor.

Buses will arrive every 10-12 minutes weekdays and every 15-20 minutes early mornings, evenings, and weekends, stopping for only 10 seconds at station. Riders will need to pre-pay before boarding the bus.

Special traffic signal technology and bypass lanes will be utilized to keep buses on schedule; and digital signage displaying real-time information will be at each transit station. For those using wheelchairs,

bikes, strollers, and carts, elevated curbs have been constructed throughout the Swift corridor.

THE FUTURE OF SWIFT NETWORK AND LATEST INNOVATIONS

Community Transit is responsible for providing bus and paratransit service, vanpool, and alternative commute options throughout Snohomish County. The agency is building a network of Swift bus rapid transit lines with Swift Blue Line along Highway 99, Swift Green Line between Canyon Park/Bothell and Boeing/Paine Field, Swift Orange Line coming to Mill Creek and Lynnwood in 2024, and Swift Gold Line serving as far north as Arlington by 2028

Two years ago, at the dawn of the pandemic, ridership fell 50%. However, over the last year-and-a-half, ridership has returned to 75% of its pre-pandemic level. Construction will begin on the southern extension of the Swift Blue Line later this year to serve the 185th Street light rail station in Shoreline. It is scheduled to be completed in 2024, just in time for the opening of Sound Transit’s light rail Lynnwood Link.

A fourth Swift BRT line, Swift Gold Line, is being planned to connect Everett Station with the Smokey Point Transit Center in Arlington. Swift Gold Line will serve downtown Marysville, the Cascade Industrial Center (CIC), and Everett Community College. This project is currently in the scoping phase and is expected to be operational by 2028.

Community Transit will be awarding a contract next month to test an on-demand shuttle service in the Alderwood-Lynnwood area. Residents will be able to “hail transit” using their mobile device to connect with destinations within travel zone identified in the pilot project or connect with other travel services such as the Lynnwood Transit and Community Center. The pilot is expected to launch later this year and will utilize vans or small buses.

A feasibility study on zero emission vehicles utilizing battery-electric and/or hydrogen fuel cell technology is currently underway. The type of zero emission vehicle selected must be able to serve a gamut of Community Transit’s geographic complexities – both rural and urban.

“Over the next year we will be concluding that feasibility study and at the end of that process we will make a selection on which technology is best for community transit,” Roland Behee, Director of Planning and Development, Community Transit, told the Lynnwood Times. “The feasibility study is fully funded, and we are seeking funding right now for the next phase which is the transition planning... there is a lot of funding now for zero emission infrastructure.”