

Murders in Washington at an all-timehigh, available officers at record lows



Daleway Park homicide on April 5, 2022. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

By KIENAN BRISCOE

LACEY-Violent crime in Washington State increased 12.3% in 2021, according to a report released today by the Washington Association of Sheriff's and Police Chiefs (WASPC), while the number of commissioned officers able to respond decreased 4.4% (a 495 net loss statewide). Washington State retains its ranking as the lowest in the nation for commissioned officers per thousand residents.

Murders continued to increase jumping from 302, in 2020, to 324, in 2021, the highest ever recorded since the WASPC began recording crime data back in 1980. However, taking into consideration population increases the highest recorded murder rate (per capita) was still in 1994 at 297. The difference between 1994 and 2021, on the other hand, is that officers available to respond to murder incidents, per capita, were much higher in 1994 at a rate of 1.62 compared to 1.38. At that rate, with current population, there would be 12.591 sworn officers

which is 1,855 more than current staffing. While the amount of the reported murders in 2021 was the highest on record, the amount of sworn officers available to respond to them, and other crimes, is also the lowest on record since WASCP began conducting their annual re-

During a public safety town hall last month Snohomish County Sheriff Adam Fortney acknowledged that police shortages is "a real problem," noting that 30 deputies have left the Snohomish County Sheriff's department over the last six months which he believes is a natural consequences of recent years.

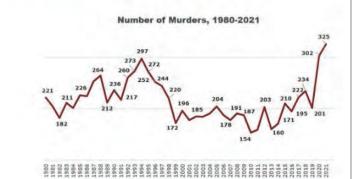
When you spend two and half years demeaning one profession—that's law enforcement—on a state-wide level, that is going to have an impact on that profession. It doesn't matter to me if it's law enforcement or another profession," he said.

"People are leaving in droves [from] many of the offices in Snohomish County," he continued. According to Fortney, officers are leaving to different states where they feel supported and can

support their financially families.

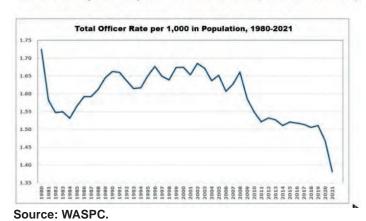
Continued PAGE 10 >>

Murders- 1980-2021



Total murders per year from 1980 to 2021. Source: WASPC.

Officers per capita 1980-2021(total sworn)



schools By OSPI PRESS RELEASE **OLYMPIA**—In a media briefing on July 19, State Superintendent Chris Reykdal described his plan to change the connection between revenue from timber harvesting on state trust lands

Reykdal unveils

plan to equitably

distribute tim-

ber revenue for

Reykdal laid out his plan for reallocating funding from the K-12 Common School Trust, which currently provides a small percentage of the funding for school construction across Washing-

and K-12 urban school construction.

In his plan, a portion of revenues from timber harvested in the rural communities—which currently are primarily provided to school districts in urban communities—would be retained within the communities that generate the dollars. In addition, Reykdal proposes the state reallocate a portion of the funds to support forest health and preservation.

His proposal calls on the state Legislature to completely fund the School Construction Assistance Program from revenue sources other than trust land revenue and instead, dedicate those dollars to projects in rural Washington.

"Rural communities in Washington have long generated this revenue through timber harvests and other trust land activities, but are not often the beneficiaries of it," Reykdal said. "We should be investing this revenue within the communities where it's generated and using a portion of the dollars to support forest health and preservation."

Reykdal will propose the change during the upcoming legislative session as part of his 2023-25 Capital Budget request.

"Common school trust revenue has been a challenging and complex conversation over many years," said Jim Stoffer, Sequim School Director and Trust Lands Advisory Committee member for the Washington State

Continued PAGE 10 >>



FOR MORE INFORMATION

CALL: Michelle at 773-255-8133 • EMAIL: SALES@LYNNWOODTIMES.COM



Inflation jumps to 9.1% in June, real earnings down 3.6%

By MARIO LOTMORE

WASHINGTON, D.C.—On July 13, 2022, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that consumer inflation rose to a 41-year high of 9.1% in June, up from 8.6% in May. The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased 1% from May to June.

Americans have not experienced such high consumer inflation since November of 1981. The all items less food and energy index rose 5.9%, the largest 12-month change since the period ending April 1980. The energy index rose 41.6% over the last year, highest since April 1980.

The index for food at home rose 1.0% in June from May, the sixth consecutive increase of at least 1.0 percent in that index. Although the overall food index increased 10.4%, the largest 12-month increase since the period ending February 1981, the food at home index rose 12.2%, the largest 12-month increase since the period ending April 1979.

All six major grocery store food group indexes increased over the span, with five of the six rising more than 10%. The index for other food at home increased the most, rising 14.4%, with the index for butter and margarine



June's wage growth v inflation chart based on BLS data. Source: Andy Puzder, Senior Fellow, Pepperdine University.

increasing 26.3%. The remaining groups saw increases ranging from 8.1% (fruits and vegetables) to 13.8% (cereals and bakery products).

The energy index rose 41.6% over the past 12 months. The gasoline index increased 59.9% over the span, the largest 12-month increase in that index since March 1980. The index for electricity rose 13.7%, the largest 12-month increase since the period ending April 2006. The index for natural gas increased 38.4% over the last 12 months, the largest such increase

since the period ending October 2005. Increases in the indexes for gasoline, shelter and food round up the largest contributors to the increase. The indexes for motor vehicle repair, apparel, household furnishings and operations, and recreation also increased in June. Among the few major component indexes to decline in June were lodging away from home and airline fares.

The March 2022 CPI-W (used in Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment [COLA] calculations, hit a four-decade high of 9.8.

The Consumer Price Index for July 2022 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 10, 2022.

Real Earnings – June 2022

Real average hourly earnings for all employees decreased 1% from May to June, seasonally adjusted, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. This result stems from an increase of 0.3% in average hourly earnings combined with an increase of 1.3% in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

Real average hourly earnings decreased 3.6%, seasonally adjusted, from June 2021 to June 2022.

Real average hourly earnings for production and nonsupervisory employees decreased 1.1% from May to June, seasonally adjusted. This result stems from a 0.5-percent increase in average hourly earnings combined with an increase of 1.5 percent in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W).

From June 2021 to June 2022, real average hourly earnings for production and nonsupervisory employees decreased 3.1 percent, seasonally adjusted.

Altamirano-Crosby, new Chair of Snohomish Health District Board



Dr. Julieta Altamirano-Crosby

SNOHOM-ISH COUN-**TY**–The Board of Health of the Snohomish Health District unanimously elected Lynnwood Councilwoman Dr. Julieta Altamirano-Crosby as its Chair on July 12. Mem-

bers not attending today's meeting were Lake Stevens City Council Member Anji Jorstad, Sultan City Council Member Joe Neigel, and County Councilman Nate Nehring.

Chair Dr. Altamirano-Crosby was proceeded by Snohomish County Councilwoman Stephanie Wright, who announced her resignation from the Board in an email last week.

Dr. Altamirano-Crosby in her second year serving on the Lynnwood City Council, was appointed to the Board

of Health in February of this year. She has been a tremendous force helping the most vulnerable among residents in the county by volunteering with the Lynnwood Food Bank, the Refugee & Immigrant Center Northwest, and assisting with statewide COVID efforts. She is a member of the League of Women Voters in Snohomish County, a Stakeholder Member of Re-opening of Washington Schools for 2020-2021 school year, and a Board member of the following organizations: Lynnwood Food Bank, Community Leadership Board of the National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants (NRC-RIM), and the Foundation for Edmonds School District.

Dr. Altamirano-Crosby is a trained researcher who earned her Ph.D. in Social Communications, as well as a Certificate in Race, Equity, and Leadership from Harvard University. She also holds a M.E.D. in Educational Leadership from Seattle Pacific University. She is involved in research projects about Latinos in education in Washington. She has presented her

research at the National Catholic Ed- vention in San Diego, California, and ucational Association (NCEA) Con-

Continued PAGE 04 >>

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEND LETTERS TO

Lynnwood Times, 12918 Mukilteo Speedway C23, PMB-162 Lynnwood, WA 98087 or email editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com.

LETTERS POLICY

The Lynnwood Times welcomes letters to the editor of no more than 400 words. Letters will be printed as promptly as possible, as space allows.

To be considered for publication, letters must include a *first* and *last name*, address and phone number for verification purposes. We also reserve the right to edit letters as necessary for brevity, grammar and decorum.



For just \$72/year, not only will you have the paper delivered to your home Subscribe

now at www.lynnwoodtimes.com/support-us or fill out this form and return with

Name:	Phone:
Address:	
Email:	

If paying by check, return this completed form with your check to: Lynnwood Times, 12918 Mukilteo Speedway C23, PMB-162, Lynnwood WA 98087.

CONTACT INFORMATION

PUBLISHER Mario Lotmore publisher@lynnwoodtimes.com

MARKETING SPECIALIST

Michele Mitsuuchi-Stork sales@lynnwoodtimes.com **REPORTERS**

Kienan Briscoe

kienan.briscoe@lynnwoodtimes.com

Goerge Ftikas Jr.

george.ftikasjr@lynnwoodtimes.com Olivia Thiessen

Bo John Brusco

bo.brusco@lvnnwoodtimes.com

olivia.thiessen@lynnwoodtimes.com

Gerti Katro gerti.katro@lynnwoodtimes.com

Lynnwood Times

12918 Mukilteo Speedway C23, PMB-162 Lynnwood, WA 98087 P: 425-308-8371 | Website: Lynnwoodtimes.com | Subscription: \$72/Year (Mail Checks Payable to Lynnwood Times at above address)

Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell on recent shootings



Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Orange Swift BRT Line in Lynnwood. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

By MAYOR CHRISTINE FRIZZELL

LYNNWOOD—I want to start by sending my deepest condolences to the families of the young men who were tragically killed last week in an incident at Spruce Park. No matter what the circumstances that led to this event, we are left reeling from the senseless loss of two young lives.

The Spruce Park tragedy, compounded with the shooting death of a community member several months ago at Daleway Park, and too many reports of shootings and other acts of violence across our state and nation are unbearable. Our community deserves better.

The City of Lynnwood is committed to being a safe and welcoming community for all people. We are taking actions to address increasing crime, we are offering programming and activating our parks and open spaces by inviting community members to join us at events, we are reaching out to our partner organizations to have critical conversations on how to move forward, together, to heal as a community.

We cannot deny the rippling consequences that the COVID pandemic has had on our community. We have all been impacted from isolation, loss of access and connections to resources, resulting in the extreme conditions we've been left to navigate. But we must, and we will, find a path forward. These incidents do not define us.

The City of Lynnwood is committed to being a partner in solution-finding. We need our community partners and organizations to join us, we need community to join us, and we need to work together to find solutions.

Here are some of the established programs and opportunities available from City of Lynnwood. We encourage you to join us in these efforts:

- Block Watch program, the Lynnwood Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit can help you and your neighbors set up a Block Watch. For more information visit Organizing a Neighborhood Block Watch.
- National Night Out is coming up on August 2 – a night to join your neighbors and send a message that we are better and stronger together. We encourage you to join us for

- this neighborhood building, crime prevention event. For more information visit National Night Out 2022
- Our Cops & Clergy program meets quarterly with local faithbased leaders with the goal of forming connections through our diverse religious communities. For more information visit Cops and Clergy.
- Addressing police staffing levels, recruiting, and filling vacancies - Currently the Police Department Administration is working hard to deploy resources effectively and efficiently to serve our community's immediate needs. They are actively working to fill vacancies in order to assign resources back to community building activities. To address staffing levels, the City Council and I have recently approved the hiring of five additional police officers and the LPD is diligently working to recruit and fill those vacancies.
- Law Enforcement partnerships
 Lynnwood Police Department
 works closely with neighboring
 police departments, the Snohomish County Sherriff's Office, as
 well as the Violent Offenders Task
 Force and other specialized units
 to actively address the insurgence
 of gang activity that has been occurring throughout the County.
- We are **activating our parks** and open spaces through summer event programing, and inviting community to join us in our parks. For more information visit the Community Events Calendar.
- Maintaining Parks is also a top priority of our Parks Maintenance Crews. They are in our parks every day ensuring a safe environment, cleaning and removing any graffiti or nuisance issues. Additionally, our patrol officers make it a point to drive through our parks regularly to ensure the safety of park
- Collaboration Mayor Frizzell will be meeting with the incoming Edmonds School District Superintendent, the Verdant Health Commission Superintendent and other local Mayor's and CEOs to discuss a collaborative approach to community building.
- City Council is discussing the idea of creating a Youth Advisory Council as a means to engage with

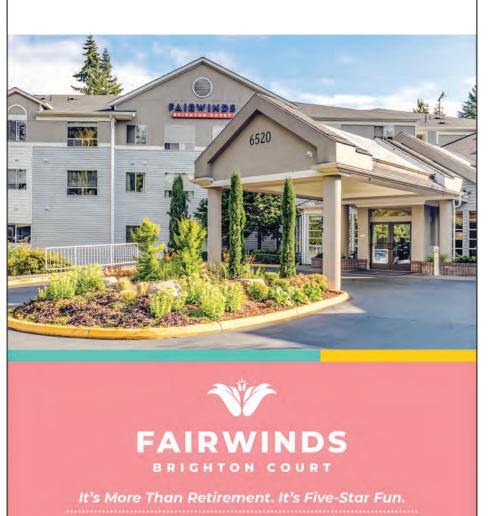
Continued PAGE 08 >>



It's Christmas in July!

Now is the perfect time to make a move! We have a number of apartments that just became available for our summer special.

Move in by July 31st and we'll take \$2,500 off your community fee or your first month's rent! Call (425) 243-6431 to learn more and schedule your tour.



6520 196th Street SW · Lynnwood

(A LEISURE CARE PREMIER COMMUNITY

From small town to city, "The Lynnwood Song" by Joanne Davis



Having grown up in the area, Joanne Davis has seen Lynnwood grow from a small town into a city, leading her to write a song about it.

By KIENAN BRISCOE

To watch and listen Joanne Davis sing "The Lynnwood Song" mentioned in this article, scan the QR code to the right.



LYNNWOOD—For years, Joanne Davis, 83, has been coming to Lynnwood's Veterans Park to play her guitar and sing among the flowers and birds. She favors classics from Elvis and Creedance Clearwater Revival to Jimmy Rogers and Marty Robbins.

"It's just regular music that most everybody knows," she explains from a park bench while holding up a list of songs she jotted down on some paper. Joanne is a regular open mic performer at Snohomish's SnoTown Brewery. "And I always plan ahead and practice for my Thursday performance."

"Everything she does is from her memory," her friend Allen Gilbert, 59, says from the other side of the bench. Allen and Joanne met one day just before the pandemic when Allen was on a stroll through the area and heard Joanne jamming. They quickly bonded over their shared love for the classic artists mentioned earlier and have been meeting weekly at the park to play music ever since.

"On rainy days, we'll go into Fred Meyer's Starbucks and chat," says Allen.

Joanne first learned how to play the piano when she was young but mostly sticks to the guitar these days. "I haven't played the piano in years. I live in a small apartment, so there's no room for one. But I learned a lot about music from piano."

After inheriting her grandmother's piano, she began taking lessons as a child. "My mom told me straight off that she doesn't like popular music," Joanne recalls. "She likes classical music. So that's what I was taught."

Joanne doesn't just do covers; she's got countless originals too. She wrote one about "being stood up in Marysville" and another one called "The Joanne Blues." Each of her songs emulates the simplistic yet captivating aspects of classic folk and blues music. One of the songs she's most proud of is "The Lynnwood Song." Having grown up in the area, she's seen Lynnwood grow from a small town into a city. "I remember Lynnwood before it was

ever a city," she says, noting how the only store around back then was an Albertson's.

"It's changed. It's got so many stores and restaurants. I mean, they got so many things going on here. It's amazing."

No matter the change, Lynnwood continues to have a place in Joanne's heart, leading her to even write a song about it. "It's just the finest place to be," she concluded.

"THE LYNNWOOD SONG" BY JOANNE DAVIS

As we road into the City of Lynnwood On the new light rail where we stood Preparing to walk into our town Everyone was smiling not a single frown

'Cause we're living large in Lynnwood Getting bigger and better every day We're growing like a mighty oak Getting more vibrant in every way

Yes, Lynnwood is the finest place to be Yes, Lynnwood is the finest place to be

Joanne plays her songs at SnoTown Brewery, located at 511 2nd St, Snohomish, WA 98290, every Thursday during their Open Mic time. Open Mic typically begins shortly after at 6 p.m.

Exclusive Interview: Martin Yamamoto, from farmhand to Mill Creek City Manager

Creek

5-1,

City Council

appointing

Martin

Yamamoto

for the City

Manager

voted,

"I am excited to have Martin Yamamoto serve as Mill Creek's next City

Manager," Mayor Brian Holtzclaw said. "Martin has been instrumental in

'steadying the ship' over the last seven

months following the resignation of our prior City Manager. However, in the

process, Martin has also demonstrated

he is qualified and capable of leading

the City forward as the permanent City

Yamamoto has been Mill Creek's Deputy

City Manager since 2021 and took over

City Manager, as Interim, following Michael Ciaravino's resignation back

in November of 2021. After a grueling

interview process, Yamamoto was

found to be the most qualified, out of

the four finalists, given his extensive

resume and achievements. Just some of his accomplishments, as Interim City

Manager, include rolling out the first

phase in Mill Creek's rebuilding process,

consisting of building an organizational

strategy to incorporate the Council's and City's operational priorities, and

By KIENAN BRISCOE



Martin Yamamoto

position.

Manager."

M I L L "Since the beginning of the year Martin CREEK — has been performing at an incredibly high level. His demeanor and his meeting, the abilities combined make him the best

high level. His demeanor and his abilities combined make him the best suited candidate for this job and the city going forward," Councilman Vincent Cavaleri told the Lynnwood Times.

hiring Acting Police Chief Stan White.

Prior to working with the City of Mill Creek, Yamamoto worked for the City of Seattle for ten years, with the last seven as a fiscal manager. The difference between working in a big city compared to a smaller city, Yamamoto said, is extremely distinct because "things move a lot faster in a smaller city". In Mill Creek Yamamoto works much closer with individuals, city council, and individual groups than he did in Seattle which adds to a much more collaborative, and preferred, experience.

"The City of Seattle is so large and in a large municipality it's hard to make change when you're in a leadership or management role," Yamamoto told the Lynnwood Times. "But coming here to Mill Creek, making the decisions I make, and the decisions my team makes, directly impacts the City. I just love seeing how fast that can happen."

FROM FARMHAND TO CITY MANAGER

Yamamoto was born and raised in Eastern Washington, in the Tri-Cities area, where he spent his summers working on his grandparent's 2,600-acre crop farm just south of Moses Lake.

Continued PAGE 08 >>

from page 2 **ALTAMIRANO-CROSBY**

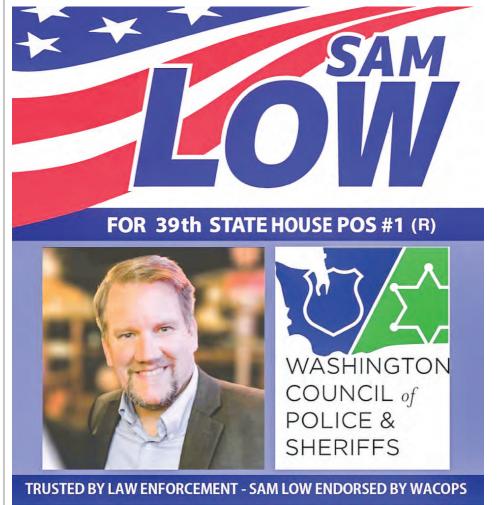
at the Washington Education Research Association (WERA) Conference in SeaTac in 2016, in addition to the International Conference hosted by the Janusz Korczak Association of USA in 2018.

Dr. Altamirano Crosby has over a decade of non-profit and community organizing experience. She is the co-founder of the WAGRO Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) whose primary focus is to provide resources to people or groups who belong to marginalized and underserved communities.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, WA-

GRO has partnered with UW Harborview Medical Center and Snohomish Health District to bring COVID-19 testing to Snohomish County. She has received numerous awards, including the Snohomish County Human Rights Award in 2017, the Distinguished Alumni Award at Everett College Community 2019, and was named the Seattle Pacific University Medallion Award Honoree in 2020.

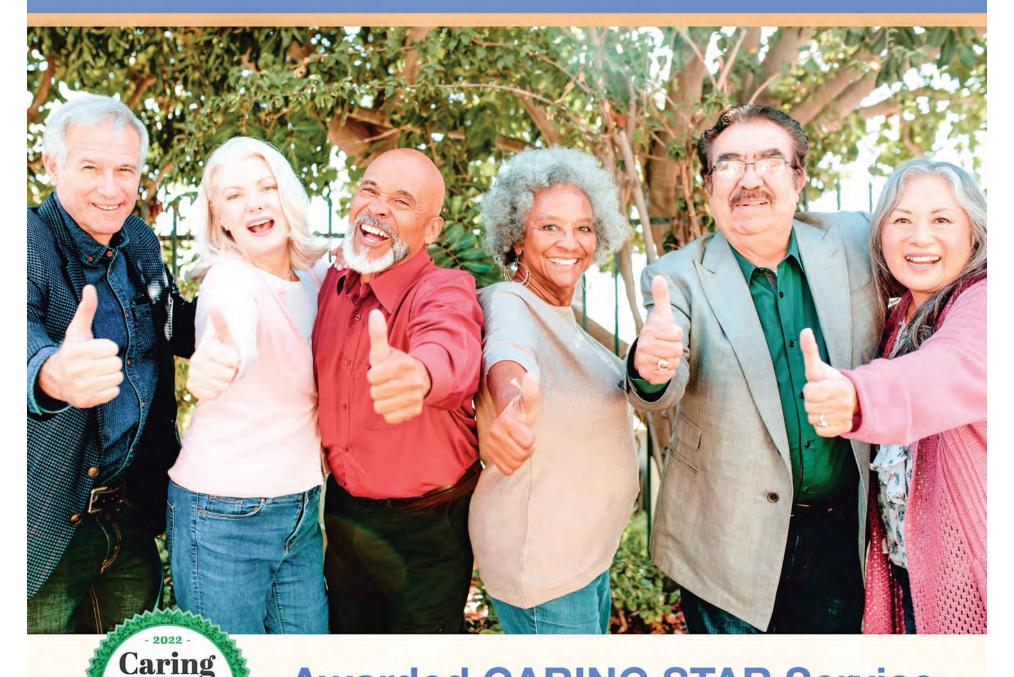
In 2018, Governor Jay Inslee appointed Dr. Altamirano-Crosby as a Commissioner to the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs and in 2019, to the Humanities Washington Board of Trustees. She was recognized by SPIRIT 105.3 as an "unsung hero."



@Electsamlow | electsamlow@gmail.com | www.electsamlow.com

QUAIL PARK OF LYNNWOOD

Independent Living • Assisted Living • Memory Care



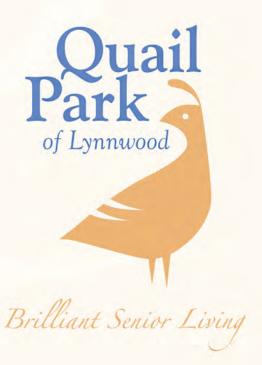
Awarded CARING STAR Service Excellence Award and Herald Readers' Choice Runner-up!

Call TODAY to learn about our current move-in specials!

Live Brilliantly!

425.640.8529 4015 164th St SW, Lynnwood QuailParkofLynnwood.com

TOP RATED ON CARING.COM



LT podcast: Sheriff Adam Fortney, in his own words

SNOHOMISH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

STAFFING SHORTAGE

OVERVIEW.

- · Commissioned patrol positions: 123
- Unincorporated Snohomish County Population: 330,000
- Approx. 1 patrol deputy per every 2,683 citizens



Out of 123 patrol positions:

- 13 are on medical or military leave
- 15 are vacant
- 17 are in training

Total undeployables: 45



IMPACTS.

- · Patrol crews understaffed
- Slower response times to 911 calls
- More officers injured on the job
- Officer burnout

91

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

- Lack of support from WA State elected officials
- Recruitment and retention challenges
- Low wages



SOLUTIONS.

- The Sheriff's office is working with the County to increase wages
- Sheriff Adam Fortney reassigned special unit officers back to patrol to offset attrition (not a long term solution*)



Sources: Snohomishcountywa.gov, Snohomish County Sheriff's Office.





Snohomish County Sheriff Adam Fortney.

By **BO JOHN BRUSCO**

To listen to the podcast mentioned in this article, scan the QR code to the right.

SNOHOMISH COUN-

importance of transparency.

TY – Join the Lynnwood
Times for its first ever
podcast episode as we deep dive with
Snohomish County Sheriff Adam Fortney into his Office's staffing shortage,
the Office of Neighborhoods, and the

A lack of support from Washington State's elected officials, recruitment and retention challenges, and low wages have all contributed to a staffing shortage at the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office according to Sheriff Fortney. To mitigate the shortage's impacts, which included slower 911 response times and an increased rate of officer injuries, Sheriff Adam Fortney announced on June 6 that some special unit officers would be reassigned to patrol.

The reassignment subsequently dissolved the Office's Directed Patrol, K-9, and Office of Neighborhoods (OON) units. As the latter was a team of officers and embedded social workers dedicated to helping individuals suffering from homelessness, addiction, and/or mental health issues, its dissolution was significant and garnered public attention.

"We are woefully inadequately staffed at the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office," Sheriff Fortney said in a June 15 interview with the Lynnwood Times. According to the Sheriff, staffing has been an issue for 25 years, but an unprecedented number of officers leaving the profession has exacerbated the issue.

What's more, in the face of being short-staffed, Fortney says that criminals have "seemingly becoming more emboldened and more violent," a statement he reiterated during a Public Safety Town Hall in Marysville, WA, on June 8.

"Are criminals more emboldened? More brazen? Uncategorically, yes,"

Sheriff Fortney told the Times. Offering a recent and specific example, Fortney recounted how a wanted felon in South County who had previously eluded officers put his vehicle in reverse at a stop signal to ram an officer's vehicle behind him.

"We have to just watch that person drive away," he says while referring to new pursuit laws. While agreeing that officers shouldn't chase criminals like the one in his example "to the ends of the earth," Fortney says, "but on the other side of that, should we just watch him drive away after he just intentionally hit the sergeants car? I'm saying no. I don't think that's okay."

Calling to attention how this sort of legally permissible behavior also endangers the broader community, he continued, "This guy's a wanted felon, so he's committed crimes against the community already. He has shown that he will not corporate with the system. [...] What else is he going to do to the community while he's out there?"

Returning to his original point, Fortney attributes this emboldened criminal behavior to recent changes to the law. While agreeing that police shouldn't engage in pursuits "for anything and everything," Fortney says, "but when you tell the criminals ahead of time that you're not going to chase them for all of these crimes—all property crimes, some violent crimes—when they know the rules are that ahead of time, what do you think is going to happen?"

This increasingly brazen criminal behavior has made it more imperative for the Sheriff's Office to ensure their patrol unit is fully staffed, Fortney says. Leading up to the reassignment, the Sheriff's Office experienced three Code Threes—'help our officer' calls—in a single month.

The Sheriff's Office is not the only law enforcement department struggling with staffing. The Lynnwood Times has interviewed Chiefs of Police from Everett, Edmonds, Lynnwood, and Marysville to hear from the people in charge the unique challenges their departments are facing. Stay tuned.

LT podcast: Chief James Nelson of Lynnwood PD



Lynnwood Police Chief James Nelson.

By **BO JOHN BRUSCO**

To listen to the podcast mentioned in this article, scan the QR code to the right.



LYNNWOOD—In continuing our podcast series on public safety, Lynnwood Times journalist Bo Brusco discusses Chief James Nelson of the Lynnwood Police Department (LPD) the unique staffing challenges his department is facing and how social work and police work go hand-in-hand.

Technically, there are only two vacant commissioned positions at the LPD, but there's more to the story. Of the 71 funded officer positions, ten are still in training, two are on long-term leave, and another two are on family medical leave. Putting all those numbers together, there's a total of 16 non-working commissioned positions at the department; 20% of LPD's police force.

"So we have a vacancy factor that I don't think is sustainable," says Chief Nelson, "and the city is growing, so I'm working to address that through the budgetary process."

The LPD's budget plays a significant role in the current shortage. Before the 2008 recession, the department had sufficient funding for 82 commissioned officers. Fast-forward 14 years, and the department finds itself 11 funded positions shorter with another 16 non-working. All the while, the city's population has increased by nearly 5,000 since the late 2000s.

Aside from the budget, other contributing factors to the LPD's shortage include a smaller recruitment pool and increased scrutiny of the profession. Chief Nelson was a young officer at LPD in 1993 and remembers young men and women showing up to take Officer Entrance Exams by the hundreds.

Recalling how back then, prospective police officers took written exams, Nelson says about 800 people showed up to test in the NOAA Western Regional Center in Seattle.

"There were hundreds and hundreds of

people testing for one job at the time," says Nelson. "Contrast that to today, there's been times—on recent lists—where we'll have five people that check the Lynnwood box."

Even though testing for police positions does look considerably different today, as the chief mentioned, the turnout for exams does paint a stark contrast between recruitment then and now. Luckily, Nelson is seeing a "modest increase" in recruitment this year compared to last.

When talking about recent changes in legislation and public sentiment towards the profession, Nelson explains, "undoubtedly, there's been impact there. It's reduced the people that are interested in becoming police officers." A change in attitude towards law enforcement was also a factor noted by Snohomish County Sheriff Adam Fortney and Everett Police Chief Dan Templeman when they discussed staffing shortages in their respective departments.

To combat the staffing shortage, LPD offers hiring incentives like a \$20,000 signing bonus for lateral hires and free college books and tuition for officers who've been on the force for a year. And as he stated previously, Chief Nelson is looking to collaborate with city leaders to fund more commissioned positions via the budgetary process.

In the wake of the shortage, Chief Nelson spoke highly of his staff for continuing to deliver excellence despite the lack of resources. "I'm really proud of the effort of our staff and the work that they've put out there in the face of this really difficult, challenging time. They have completely answered the call. But now I need to make sure that we're doing what we can to give them some respite."

July Update: The Lynnwood Times interview with Chief Nelson took place on June 13, 2022. Since then, the City Council approved funding for 5 more commissioned positions. This puts the total number of LPD commissioned positions at 76, the total number of vacancies at 6, and the total number of new hires at 11.

LYNNWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT

STAFFING SHORTAGE SNAPSHOT JUNE 2022

OVERVIEW.

- Commissioned officers when fully staffed: 71
- · Officers responding to 911 calls: 28
- · Lynnwood population: 40,600



SHORTAGE.

16 Non-working positions

- Vacant commissioned positions: 2
- New officers in training: 10
- Officers on long-term leave: 2



IMPACTS.

- A large backlog of traffic incidents
- · Majority of units not fully staffed
- The LPD is operating at 80% capacity



CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

- · Small applicant pool
- A change in public sentiment and new legislation
- Budget challenges in 2020 and 2021



SOLUTIONS.

- \$20,000 signing bonus for lateral bires
- Allocate funding for more commissioned positions through city's budgetary process
- Officer wellness initiatives including annual wellness checks



Sources: Lynnwood Police Department, U.S. Census Bureau. Infographic created by Bo Brusco with the Lynnwood Times. Visit Lynnwoodtimes.com for July 2022 update.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEND LETTERS TO

Lynnwood Times,12918 Mukilteo Speedway C23, PMB-162 Lynnwood, WA 98087 or email editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com.

LETTERS POLICY

The Lynnwood Times welcomes letters to the editor of no more than 400 words. Letters will be printed as promptly as possible, as space allows.

To be considered for publication, letters must include a *first* and *last name*, *address* and *phone number* for verification purposes. We also reserve the right to edit letters as necessary for brevity, grammar and decorum.

Lynnwood proudly celebrates Afro-Latino heritage



Event organizer Karina Gasperin (L-R) with Julianne Wells, Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell, City Councilwoman Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, and emcee Gustavo "El General" at the Afro-Latino Festival on July 16, 2022.

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—Hundreds attended the Afro-Latino Festival that returned for its eleventh year in Lynnwood at Silver Creek Family Church to celebrate Af-

ro-Latino heritage and culture on Saturday, July 16.

From clothing and jewelry to freshly pressed agua de coco and hand-pressed crepes, attendees enjoyed a family friendly and alcohol-free event. The festival partnered with Silver Creek Family Church offering their grounds and Community Transit to make Saturday's event a reality.

According to Pew Research Center, a quarter of all U.S. Latinos self-identify as Afro-Latino, Afro-Caribbean or of African descent with roots in Latin America. During Latin America's co-

"It is bigger every year. Everyone is enjoying the festival and it will be better and bigger next year," said Event organizer Karina Gasperin, a Lynnwood resident of over 21 years originally from Veracruz, Mexico. "This is the only Afro-Latino event in the county. Thank you to all those who attended."

"It was really nice to see some many different people getting together and enjoying themselves," Gasperin shared.

Most of the vendors appearing at the festival found their space through Gasperin's vast contribution in the Latin communities of Snohomish County, including her own television show, Actitud Latino, which premiered in 2008. Hers was the first television show aimed at the Latino community in Washington State, according to Gasperin.

According to Pew Research Center, a quarter of all U.S. Latinos self-identify as Afro-Latino, Afro-Caribbean or of African descent with roots in Latin America. During Latin America's colonial period, about 15 times as many African slaves were taken to Spanish and Portuguese colonies than to the U.S. which explains who some 130 million people of African descent live in Latin America, making up roughly a quarter of the total population.

Lynnwood Mayor Christine Frizzell along with Lynnwood councilwoman Julieta Altamirano-Crosby and RSJ Coordinator Douglas Raiford were among the many attending the festival.

Aside from the vendors and food stands, Latino Twist played an assortment of live Latin music from bachata, meringue, to salsa, urging attendees to get up and dance.

For more information about the Afro-Latino Festival, visit Afrolatino Festival.org.

Public Safety must be our highest priority

By COUNCILMAN JIM SMITH



Jim Smith

L Y N - NWOOD-It has been said many times. It doesn't matter how beautiful our parks are if they are not safe to visit. And we can expand that to

include all parts of this city.

As a Council our priority must be for the safety of our citizens. That is our calling and that is our sworn duty. If we don't keep the residence and the stakeholders of Lynnwood safe, nothing else matters.

We are thankful to our many talented members of the Lynnwood Police Department. Our Police protect everyone...but especially the most vulnerable. From traffic stops involving dangerous DUI driving, to domestic abuse, to ultra-violent robberies, our team of police and support personnel are there to protect us all.

Our Council is committed to making Lynnwood safer. We support our Lynnwood Police and appreciate them for all the good that they do. Now is the time to be more proactive, rather than reactive, against crime. We all deserve nothing less.

With that in mind, we must bring up the obvious: Crime is expanding exponentially in the region and overflowing into Lynnwood. Drug needles in the parks and other areas have made some of these parks unusable by our families. These drug activities are escalating and must be stopped...not slowed down...stopped! Armed robberies are at a record high in Lynnwood. We need to make Lynnwood a bad place to commit these crimes.

Public safety in Lynnwood has to be number one. Fortunately we have incredible experts to make that happen... our Lynnwood Police!

If you would like volunteer for one of the Lynnwood Police volunteer groups, please contact our Lynnwood Police Department. Opportunities exist in:

- Citizen's Patrol Program
- Volunteers in Public Safety (VIPS)
- Volunteer Car Seat Technicians
- Lynnwood Explorer Program



from page 3 FRIZZELL

our local youth.

Be on the lookout for more initiatives and programs coming on line soon. Unfortunately, these things won't solve every problem, but it is a start. We want to hear from you.

What other ideas do community members have that will help us work towards building a safe and welcoming community where all are able to live, work, play, and thrive?

from page 4 YAMAMOTO

Growing up working as a farmhand helped cultivate Yamamoto's hard work ethic that would later supplement his enduring commitment to public service.

"Working twelve-hour days, working six days a week, just getting up early knowing you have a job to do really prepares you for almost anything," Yamamoto said.

While working on a farm helped cultivate Yamamoto's work ethic, he attributes learning resiliency from wrestling in High School where he learned to never give up.

"Things happen to us [in a government role], we get beaten down sometimes but we keep on moving forward, and hopefully we learn something so we can keep on improving," Yamamoto said.

In 1984, Yamamoto relocated to the Seattle area to attend Seattle University, where he received his undergraduate degree in Accounting and later returned for his M.B.A. in 2005. While attending college he worked as a Work Studies student for the City of Seattle which kickstarted his interest working in local government.

Yamamoto took a job as Accountant Supervisor for the Seattle Police Department in 1996, where worked for nine years before furthering his education to gain more expertise he believed would improve his work in the public sector.

While attending grad school, Yamamoto also started his own business, B2B Delivery Service, which was later sold to Foods on the Run for an undisclosed amount. After selling his business and obtaining his MBA he briefly worked as a consultant for Northwest Advisors but his passion for public service kept calling him back.

"It was the ability to make change, the help people," Yamamoto told the Lynnwood Times. "There's no better way to help people than through our local government."

When Yamamoto left his fiscal manager position for the City of Seattle for Deputy City Manager of Mill Creek, he shared with the Lynnwood Times that becoming City Manager was not even on his radar.

"I wasn't even sure if I was capable of doing it to be completely honest. I wanted to make sure the city had the best candidate and early on I couldn't tell you that it was me," Yamamoto said. "The lightbulb really came on about a couple months before the interview process...it just got to the point that all these little successes pointed to that this position was something I needed to do."

FOCUSES AND PRIORITIES IN HIS NEW ROLE

Now that Yamamoto is in his new role as City Manager, his top priorities are continuing to rebuild the city and address staffing shortages. While there are many positions to be filled, filling the Deputy City Manager position he vacated, and Police Chief role are top on his list.

Yamamoto also plans to spend his first few months meeting with key partners to reestablish relationships as well as work with local businesses to develop a strategy for economic recovery.

When asked what he meant by "rebuilding the city" Yamamoto shared that "rebuilding" means a lot of different things but more specifically filling budget positions, improving the City's operations in terms of workflow, and building efficiencies into everything Mill Creek does in order to save time and money.

"Rebuilding means rebuilding our core; we can't move forward unless we have those core operations," Yamamoto said.

Yamamoto's ideal vision for the city of Mill Creek is to bring its communities together by maintaining a transparent government so that they can, collectively, make decisions together. He boils down his strategy of accomplishing this into three words: Integrity, hard work, and appreciation for people.

Two teens dead from last week's drive-by shootings



Suspected vehicle involved in Spruce Park shooting. Source: Lynnwood PD.

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—Shortly after 9:15 p.m. on Thursday, July 14, two juvenile males, 15 and 16 years-old, were shot during a drive-by shooting at Spruce Park, just blocks from an earlier gang-related shooting approximately 2 p.m. the previous day.

Lynnwood Police have confirmed that both victims have died from their injuries. At this time, police are unable to confirm if the shootings are related and Lynnwood Police are searching for a suspect.

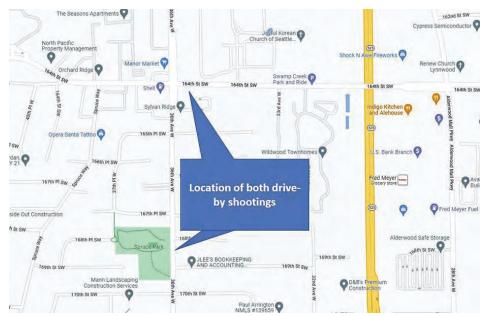
Spruce Park is located on 36th Avenue West near 164th St, just 1600 feet of yesterday's gang related drive-by shooting. According to the Sheriff's Office, the vehicle involved in Wednesday's shooting was located in Bothell and has been impounded but no names of suspects have been released.

Both shootings involve separate law enforcement agencies. Thursday's shooting was within the Lynnwood city limits, so the Lynnwood Police is investigating the case, whereas Wednesday's shooting is being investigated by the Snohomish County Sherriff's Office.

A suspect vehicle believed to be associated with the shooting on July 15 at Spruce Park was identified and seized by Lynnwood Police for evidence processing. The vehicle is a 1996 Chevy Tahoe with distinctive black front fender and hood with a white body, WA license plate #CBP4384.

This vehicle is impounded and in police custody.

Anyone with information related to



Locations of Lynnwood Drive-by Shooting. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

Thursday's incident is encouraged to contact Detective Russ Sattarov at rsattarov@LynnwoodWA.gov or call 425-670-5633.

The Lynnwood Police have informed the Lynnwood Times that records associated with the case are being "withheld from production at this time as they pertain to an ongoing law enforcement investigation. This case is still under active investigation. Therefore, the records are currently exempt from production pursuant to RCW RCW 42.56.240(1) 42.56.240(1). holds that investigative information is exempt from public inspection and copying, the nondisclosure of which is essential to effective law enforcement."

DRIVE-BY SHOOTING LEAVES TWO INJURED

Snohomish County Deputies are inves-

tigating a drive-by shooting that took place around 2 p.m. Wednesday, July 13, near 3500 block of 164th St SW in Lynnwood.

Several juveniles were walking on the sidewalk when two of them were shot - a boy and a girl - by a passing vehicle. The group of juvenile victims returned gunfire at the suspect's vehicle.

The 15 y/o and 17 y/o who were shot were transported to Harbourview Medical with non-life-threatening injuries.

Two nearby houses were struck and the suspect(s) are currently at large.

Major Crimes Unit (MCU) detectives have reason to believe the incident is gang-related and the parties are known to each other. Anyone with information related to this incident is asked to call

Homemade concoction exploded at Lynnwood PD



Lynnwood Police Station Building. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

By LYNNWOOD POLICE

LYNNWOOD—Shortly after 10 a.m. on Saturday, July 16, three Lynnwood Police Officers were injured when evidence that was being processed exploded inside the police station. Below is the full police report of the investigation released today.

At 0900-hrs on Saturday, July 16, 2022,

a Lynnwood Police Officer responded to a local hobby store (Hobby Lobby) 193rd/60th Ave W to retrieve what was believed to be drug paraphernalia and clothing abandoned by an unknown person. The officer returned to the police station and was in the process of cataloguing the property and weighing what was believed to possibly be fentanyl when a small ball of unknown powder exploded on the table.



10:11:35| HAZMAT | FIRE TAC 07| 19321 44TH AVE W, LYNNWOOD / PD LYN / LF311 *61L1, A15, E15, E18, HZ12* | REQ AID TO STATION FOR POSSIBLE EXPOSURE TO CONCUSSIVE BLAST

10:13 AM - Jul 16, 2022 - TweetDeck

The blast created a very loud noise, along with a concussive blast, and caused a loose piece of material to embed into a TV screen. Dust filled the The Fire Department conducted a Hazroom, creating an immediate concern ardous Material examination of the of exposure to dangerous chemicals. The building was immediately evacuated to await a fire response.

There were two officers within the room when the blast occurred and a patrol sergeant in an adjoining office. Both officers suffered a ringing of their ears. One had a small piece of unknown shrapnel in his cheek which was easily removed. Both officers and the sergeant went directly to the hospital and were examined and released with no serious injuries. The officers have returned to their normal duties.

area to determine if the area was contaminated. The FBI and the ATF also responded to provide expertise and investigative resources. It was ultimately determined that the scene was safe and not contaminated. It is believed that the explosive substance was a homemade concoction of volatile chemicals.

The investigation will continue and there is no indication that the store or Lynnwood Police Department were targeted.



from page 1 2021 CRIME REPORT

In the city of Seattle over 400 officers have left the department over the past couple years through retirement or resignation leaving the number of deployable officers, in 2022, at 954 - the lowest in over 30 years.

Overall crime statistically decreased, from 2020 to 2021, due to a 78.8% decrease in identity theft and fraud and a 60.9% decrease in drug offenses. The reduction of crime data in these two areas are significantly related to pandemic-driven fraudulent unemployment claims and the Blake decision changes, which influenced how Police Officers can handle simple possession of narcotics, Steven Strachan, Executive Director for WASPC, explained during a press conference Wednesday, July 20.

Strachan was confident the decrease in commissioned officers had no effect on the reported crime data, stating that WASPC has one of the highest reporting rates in the nation at nearly 100%. However, he continued that there is no data on how the lack of available officers affected resident's willingness to report crimes given their lack of confidence an officer would respond.

Strachan informed the Lynnwood Times that in months to come the Association will be communicating with legislature and the public on what sort of changes to police reform laws could look like in the 2023 legislative session, based on feedback police agencies express on the revisions that went into effect this past session.

Also on the rise were incidents of hate crime with 592 incidents in 2021, a

26.5% increase from 2020 with the most frequent being intimidation (273 incidents), destruction of property (164 incidents), simple assault (146 incidents) and aggravated assault (91 incidents). The WASPC defines a hate crime as a criminal defense committed against a person or property which is motivated in whole, or in part, by the offender's bias against a race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender or ethnicity.

Crimes against persons (which includes murder, rape, and assault among others), in total, rose from 99,602 in 2020 to 104,618 in 2021. Rape and assault cases remained somewhat the same with rapes increasing from 2,376 in 2020 to 2,572 in 2021 and assaults (both simple and aggravated) increasing from 61,522 in 2020 to 64,417 in 2021.

While crimes against persons (violent crimes) were up and crimes against society (which includes drug related offenses) were down, by almost 50%, crimes against property remained relatively the same at 365,122, total, in 2021 compared to 367,955, total, in 2020.

"With the reduction in staffing some agencies have been forced to move to an online reporting mechanism because there simply is not the staff to respond sometimes to 911 calls and sometimes the lack of consequences, and the lack of response, has somewhat contributed to some of those property crime incidents," Strachan told the Lynnwood Times.

Strachan was clear to elaborate that his explanation of what may be contribut-

ing factors to property crime incidents was anecdotal, based on discussions he's had with law enforcement agencies, and was not driven by data.

OTHER FACTS AT A GLANCE

- There were a total of 1,968 assaults on law enforcement officers and one officer killed in the line of duty last year Detective Jeremy Brown, 46, who served 15 years on the force before being shot in the line-of-duty where he served in Clark County
- Full-time law enforcement employees totaled 15,607; of these 10,736 were commissioned officers
- There were 2,163 arrests for Drug/ Narcotic Violations; of that number 5.5% were persons under the age of 18. 4.6% of these arrests involved marijuana and 10.4% of these involved heroin.
- The weapon type of "Personal Weapons" (hands, fists, or feet) was reported in 52,303 incidents; firearms were reported in 11,377 incidents
- There were 6,064 sexual assault (forcible and non-forcible) incidents reported in 2021. There was a total of 6,064 victims in these incidents with a total of 4,671 offenders
- There was a total of 60,808 domestic violence incidents reported: 14,487 of those incidents were Violations of Protection or No Contact Orders

ABOUT THE WASPC ANNUAL CRIME REPORT

Although the collection of nationwide

from page 1 **OSPI TIMBER REVENUE**

School Directors' Association. "Policies that ensure equity of revenue for our rural school districts are a step in the right direction for our students and communities."

Less than half of Washington's school districts have been able to access the funds from timber harvesting, in part because school bonds, which allow a local community to support the construction of their schools, require 60% voter approval to pass.

Districts that have been able to pass bonds and access the funding from timber revenue are located primarily in densely populated areas that are largely removed from trust land activities, such as King, Pierce, and Spokane counties.

Not only is funding harder for rural communities to access, but the amount of funds coming from Common School Trust revenue has been steadily shrinking over time. Over the past 10 years, that funding is down from 3.35% to 1.38% of total school construction costs.

The share that comes specifically from timber revenue is even smaller, shrinking from 2% of total construction costs to 0.7% over that same period. Under Reykdal's proposal, funding from the Common School Trust will be used to invest directly in rural school districts to serve building upgrade and replacement needs.

Reykdal expects the Legislature to fully backfill the School Construction Assistance Program with general obligation bonds or cash sources so urban districts retain their state dollars.

"We are grateful for Superintendent Reykdal asking hard questions about how we can equitably fund our schools and manage our public lands. Today, logging revenue accounts for less than 1% of the state's school construction budget," said Alyssa Macy, CEO of Washington Environmental Council and Washington Conservation Voters.

She continued, "The climate crisis is already harming our natural resources and communities. Now is the time to design a new future for all the people in which our state forest management enriches the well-being of Washington's communities, provides rural schools with the support they need, and sustains the health of our forests for generations to come. WEC looks forward to collaborating on making reform a win-win for all."

To ensure the long-term viability of trust lands, Reykdal is also calling for some of the Common School Trust Revenue to be used for:

- Managing healthy forests through thinning, fire mitigation, overseeing forest health, and maintaining water quality; and
- Transitioning trust lands to longterm, sustainable uses such as wind and solar energy production, recreation, and education.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction will also offer energy assessment grant funding to help school districts comply with the state's green building initiatives passed recently by the Legislature (House Bill 1257 [2019] and Senate Bill 5722 [2021]).

These bills work to ensure that state energy performance standards are met for buildings in Washington, including schools, with a goal of a 70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in new construction by 2031.

The plan to transition revenues in the Common School Trust from the state's school construction grant program crime information dates back to the 1890's, no ongoing program was initiated until the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) established a committee on uniform crime records (UCR) in 1917.

The Washington State UCR program went into effect in October 1979 and collection of monthly Summary Reporting System (SRS) data from contributing agencies began in January 1980.

Today, the Washington State UCR Program offers on-line data entry or batch file upload and proves various reports necessary for statistical purposes in the criminal justice system. Data for Crime in Washington 2021 were compiled from monthly NIBRS submissions by individual law enforcement agencies throughout the State of Washington.

ABOUT THE WASPC

WASPC was founded in 1963 and consists of executive and top management personnel from law enforcement agencies statewide. With more than 900 members it includes the 39 elected county sheriffs, and 240 police chiefs, as well as the Washington State Patrol, the Washington Department of Corrections, and representatives from local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement into a single body, working toward a common goal. WASPC's function is to provide specific materials and services to all law enforcement agencies in the state, members, and non-members alike.

WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

The Lynnwood Times wants to know what issues you would like us investigate Email editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com.

to rural uses is the first in a series of transformational budget and policy proposals Superintendent Reykdal will unveil through November in a series called Washington State Innovates: K–12 Education for the 21st Century and Beyond.





Community Transit Transit Development Plan is underway

By COMMUNITY TRANSIT PRESS RELEASE

SNOHOMISH COUNTY- Over the next six years, Community Transit is poised to deliver expanded and new transit services to better serve communities, while also planning for a longer-term transition to zero emission vehicles and infrastructure as part of its commitment to environmental sustainability. The agency's draft 2022-2027 Transit Development Plan (TDP) outlines the agency's goals to offer frequent service to new regional light rail connections, expand service within the county, and pilot new and innovative transit options customized to local community needs.

Key initiatives in the draft Transit Development Plan

Strengthening local connections: The opening of Lynnwood Link light rail in 2024 will change the transportation landscape in Snohomish County, providing people with frequent and fast light rail service into King County. Community Transit will take advantage of this opportunity to restructure service and provide connections to light rail as well as frequent and all-day service within the county.

2024 will also include expansion of the agency's bus rapid transit (BRT) network, with the launch of the Swift Orange Line as well as expansion of the current Swift Blue Line. The agency is also planning for future BRT expansion through an extension of the Swift Green Line in Bothell and a new Swift Gold Line from Everett into Marysville and Arlington.

Safe, reliable service: As the agency expands service, it continues to actively recruit and hire bus drivers, maintenance staff, and other staff in order to support this expanded network. Community Transit offers a \$5,000 signing bonus for new drivers.

The agency is committed to a safe, healthy and equitable environment for riders and employees, and has prioritized security initiatives to ensure a welcoming workplace and ride. This includes reporting and tracking incidents and deploying additional resources during certain hours to provide security presence. Better lighting, video cameras and other design changes at stations are being tested in a pilot program along the Swift Blue Line route.

Innovative services: The agency is investing in innovative transit services that complement existing bus service,

and provide convenient and equitable coverage, connecting more communities with regional service. The agency's microtransit pilot program is slated to launch in Lynnwood in fall, 2022, and plans for additional pilot programs will be announced soon.

Planning for Zero Emissions Vehicles: Community Transit pledges to strengthen its commitment to environmental sustainability by studying the feasibility of moving to a zero emissions fleet, and the infrastructure, systems and employee training required to support that transition.

Youth Free Fare Policy: The Move Ahead Washington transportation funding package includes significant funding for agencies that adopt a policy eliminating fares for riders 18 years and younger. Community Transit is currently seeking public comment on this proposed policy change and looks forward to welcoming more young riders to its service should the Board approve this policy change later this year.

Draft Transit Development Plan public comment period

The Transit Development Plan is a state-mandated report that forecasts revenue and service levels for the next six years and is updated each year.

The draft 2022-2027 TDP is available for review online at communitytransit. org/TDP; public comment is welcome through Aug. 4.

Comments can be sent several ways:

- Email: PlanUpdate@commtrans.
- Phone: (425) 353-7433 (RIDE)
- Social Media: Facebook.com/communitytransit or @MyCommTrans on Twitter (Use #CTTDP)
- Mail: Community Transit, Attn: Transit Development Plan 2312 W. Casino Road, Everett, WA 98204
- Public hearing: Thursday, Aug. 4 at 3 p.m. For details, visit bit.ly/ CTBdMtgAug22

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

For Community Transit drivers, our employee benefits are the secret sauce for a great career



Karren Hill, a bus driver for Community Transit. Photo courtesy of Community Transit

By COMMUNITY TRANSIT

SNOHOMISH COUNTY—We've all felt the effects of the current labor shortage. But every cloud has a silver lining. There's never been an easier time to find a job! But in a sea of opportunities, how can jobseekers find the best opportunity?

"It's important to look at the full package when comparing options." says Melissa Anderson, who works in the human resources department at Community Transit. "Benefits like health insurance and paid time off add up to saved income."

"Many have never heard of a pension, for example," says Anderson. "It can be a game changer for retirement planning."

"A pension is a type of retirement plan that provides monthly income after you retire from your position," explains Community Transit Benefits Coordinator Mary Lowery. "Pension payouts last for the lifetime of the retiree and in some cases can continue to be made to the spouse of a deceased retiree." Typically, a person must contribute to a pension for a minimum period of time to be eligible, also known as being "vested."

Karren Hill has worked as a bus driver for Community Transit for over 40 years and is looking forward to retirement at the end of July, thanks to her retirement pension.

"I am retiring before I can collect social security and before I can get Medicare. The fact that I have that guaranteed income means a lot — I don't have to worry about the stock market crashing it or anything else," she says.

Along with the pension, Hill says she

appreciates the great benefits Community Transit offers, including 95% company-paid medical insurance premiums, and 100% company-paid dental and vision benefit premiums.

"I like that we have choices in what our medical and dental options are — and we don't have to pay high premiums," says Hill.

On top of a \$5,000 sign-on bonus, Community Transit drivers can earn more than \$57,000 in their first year. Drivers also get 34 days of paid time off, holidays and accrued leave in their first year.

"We also have onsite physical therapy and fitness rooms, and access to Employee Assistance Program resources. I used them when my husband passed away, and they got me in touch with an estate attorney and the first visit didn't cost anything." says Hill. "The company also pays you a benefit towards a fitness club if you are a member."

"It is a good job with lots of opportunities," says Hill. "I like being out there on my own without a boss looking over my shoulder. You're not stuck in a stuffy office — you're outside, seeing different things and people every day."

Community Transit is hiring bus drivers, mechanics, administrative roles, and more. Learn more about benefits and open positions at their monthly virtual Career Chats.

Visit **communitytransit.org/busdriver** to learn more.



Upcoming Community Events in Snohomish County









italian restaurant & wine bar Everett Marina • Mill Creek



Celebrate Spring Italian Style

Patio Dining, Fresh Seasonal Dishes

Happy Hour Daily

lombardisitalian.com



