

PROPOSAL FOR ADDITION OF 1 SWORN POLICE OFFICER TO THE LYNDEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Lynden Police Department currently operates with a sworn staff of 18 full time sworn police officers. The breakdown of staff allocation is represented below.

We currently operate with (1) Chief, (2) Lieutenants, (2) Sergeants, (2) Corporals, (1) Detective, and (9) Patrol Officers.

The Sergeants each command a squad, consisting of (at present) 1 Corporal, and (5) Patrol Officers

We have (1) Detective who generally works day shift during the week. He reports directly to Lt. Bos.

CURRENT STAFF ALLOCATION ON THE SQUADS

RED SQUAD

1. Sgt Beld
2. Cpl. Fiksdal
3. Officer Dunn
4. Officer VanLoo
5. Officer Belt
6. Officer Pluschakov
7. Officer Ellis

BLUE SQUAD

1. Sgt. Humphreys
2. Cpl. Myhre
3. Officer Harkleroad (L.D.)
4. Officer Olivarez
5. Officer Thompson
6. Officer Holland
7. Officer Lipton

The current staffing allows for 2 day shift officers, 2 night shift officers, and two swing shift officer (for red squad). Blue squad currently has one swing officer position, as Officer Harkleroad is on extended light duty, and is expected to be on FMLA until late 2022. The addition of one officer would allow us to “even out” the squads, making a second swing shift officer available on blue squad, which would likely result in similar OT savings to those achieved with the red squad formula.

My proposal would be to add the 19th police officer position, bringing our authorized strength to a total of 19 sworn staff. I would initially use the new officer to “even out” the squads as outlined above. Upon Officer Harkleroad’s return to full duty, I would transition one officer to a second Detective position, and reassign the

Detectives from the current Monday-Thursday (10 hour shifts), to a schedule that would mirror the squad assignments. The current Detective would be assigned to one squad, and the new Detective would be assigned to the other. Their days off would coincide with their squad assignment (4 days on/ 4 days off), and would allow us to have a Detective on duty 7 days a week, instead of the current 4 days.

This would also allow each Detective to be responsible for general follow up investigations generated by their respective squads. This would help keep patrol officers free and available to respond to calls and other emergency functions, without sacrificing the quality or quantity of the investigative function.

With recent legislative changes, and the emphasis placed on “slowing down and teaming up” in non-criminal mental health calls, Officers are expected to spend dramatically more time on these types of calls, as the legislature has restored law enforcement’s limited ability to use reasonable force to take persons in crisis to appropriate treatment facilities.

Our call volume continues to climb, and our reported incidents of theft and vandalism are on pace to be double what they were in 2021. LPD Officers continue to be proactive, and aggressively investigate and prosecute these offenses when they occur. I want to be able to continue to do this, because I feel that this is what our community expects. Our Officers frequently hear from arrestees that they are shocked to discover that Lynden still prosecutes even minor thefts, as some agencies in the State have stopped doing so. We want to continue to send the message that Lynden does not tolerate lawlessness.

Add to this that our lone Detective’s caseload continues to grow. We have seen an increase in reported assaults, internet-based fraud and theft complaints, vandalism, and shoplifting. Moreover, the complexity of the investigations undertaken (preserving and gathering digital evidence, writing numerous search warrants for internet, cell phone data and social media content) have all knocked a sizeable dent in our Detective’s time/availability.

Please see the statistical summary (attached) showing the marked increases in thefts and vandalism.

PROPOSED STAFF ALLOCATION WITH ADDITION OF 1 OFFICER

RED SQUAD

1. Sgt Beld
2. Cpl. Fiksdal
3. Officer Dunn
4. Officer VanLoo
5. Officer Belt
6. Officer Pluschakov
7. Officer Ellis
8. New Detective "A"

BLUE SQUAD

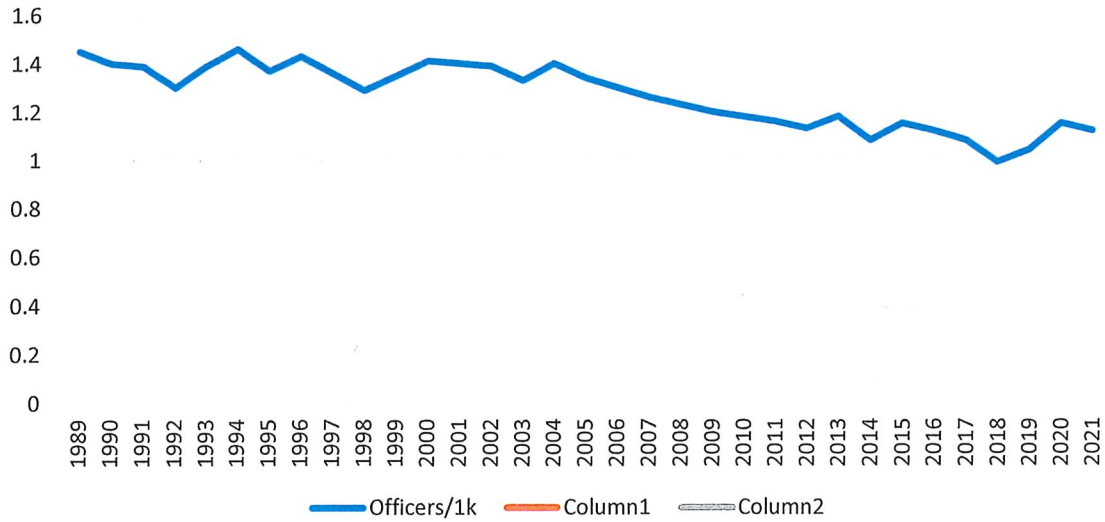
1. Sgt Humphreys
2. Cpl. Myhre
3. Officer Harkleroad
4. Officer Olivarez
5. Officer Thompson
6. Officer Holland
7. Officer Lipton
8. Detective Torok

Staffing LPD with 19 sworn Officers would bring our number of Officers per 1,000 population to a ratio of 1.25/1,000. This would still be the lowest ratio of any City in Whatcom County. Our closest comparable City in the County is Ferndale, with a population of 15,270 and 22 sworn Officers (1.44/1,000). Lynden's current population of 15,110 and 18 sworn Officers equates to a ratio of 1.19/1,000. Ferndale recently added a 22nd Officer position. Everson recently added a 7th Officer, bringing their ratio to 1.50/1,000. The next lowest ratio in Whatcom County is Bellingham, with a current authorized strength of 122 sworn Officers, for a ratio of 1.34/1,000. In fairness, Bellingham is currently understaffed by 34 positions, giving them an actual ratio of 0.97/1,000, which likely explains their difficulty in staying on top of their high call volume. This is precisely the scenario I seek to avoid in Lynden.

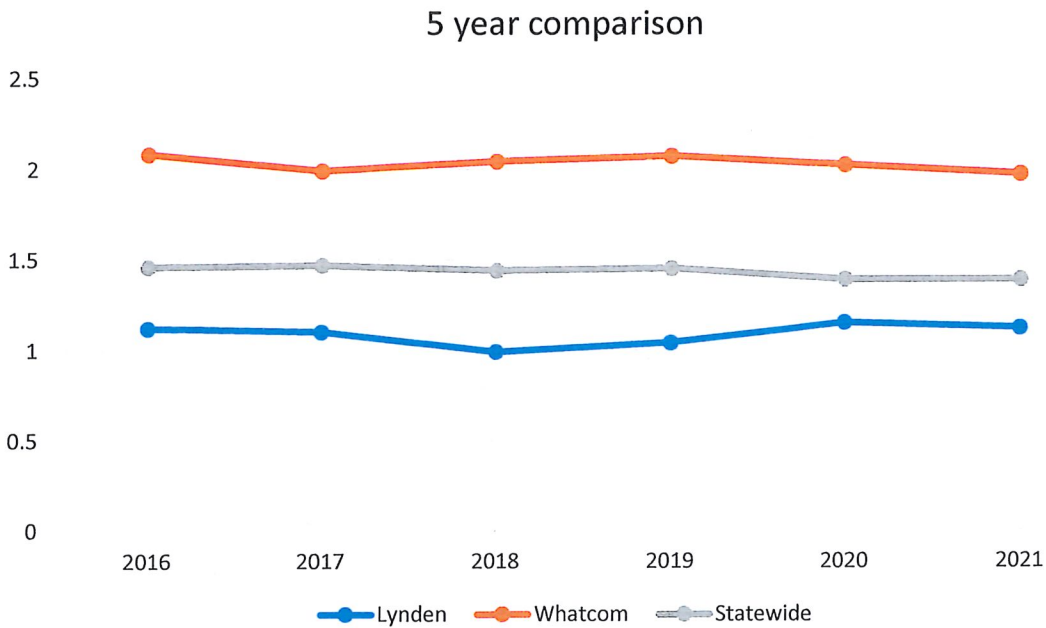
Since 1994, when Lynden had its highest number of Officers per 1,00 population (1.46/1,000), we have steadily declined. In 2018 we reached an all-time low of 0.99/1,000. A return to 1994 ratios would translate to Lynden having 22 Officers today. The addition of the requested position, bringing us to 19 sworn, would give us a rate of 1.25/1,000, which would still be the lowest rate of any city in Whatcom County, and far below our historical high.

Please see the attached graphics for historical representation of levels of police staffing in Lynden, as compared to other Whatcom County Cities, as well as the State of Washington averages for municipalities.

LPD Officers per 1,000



Historical rate of Officers per/1,000 Population in Lynden since 1989



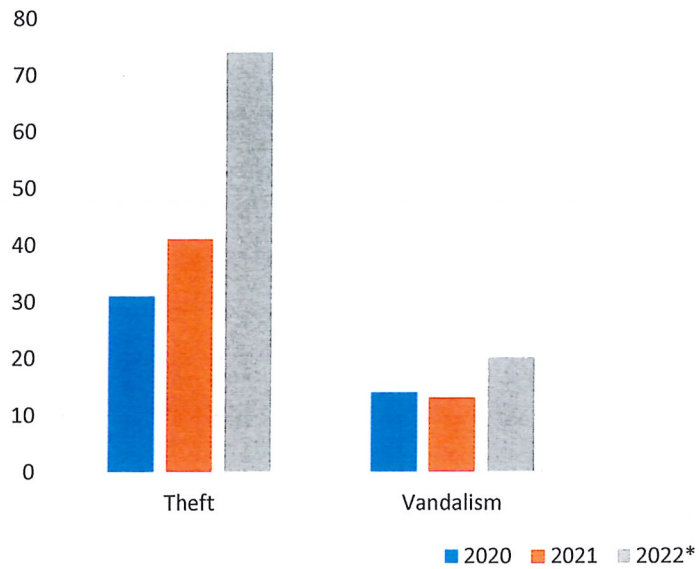
5-year comparison of average rates for Lynden, all other Whatcom County cities, and Statewide average for municipalities in Washington.

In summation, given the continued growth of Lynden's population, not to mention the plans for large scale residential development on the horizon, the need to keep up with this growth across many fronts is upon us. If we are to continue to serve this truly exceptional community at the high level they expect from their police department, then we must grow with our community. We must invest in the most valuable resource any police department has...good quality police officers.

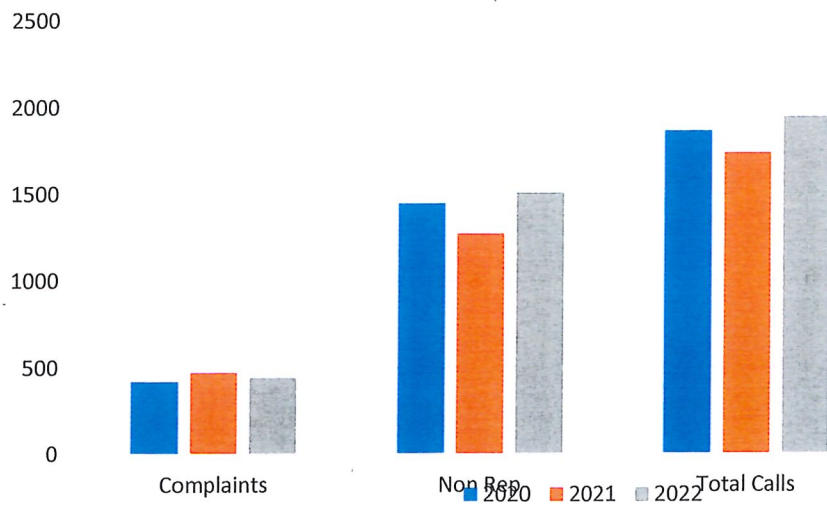
I welcome the opportunity to discuss any of these issues at any time. Thank you for your careful consideration of this important request.

Steve Taylor, J.D.
Chief of Police
Lynden Police Department

Theft and Vandalism first 3 mos of each year



Call volume 1st quarter of each year 2020-2022



60,000 Vehicle

1400.00 Uniforms

1400.00 Ballistic Vest

1000.00 Portable radio

1800.00 Mobile Radios (2)

1700.00 Radar Unit

600.00 Misc. Equipment for Patrol Vehicle (Evidence kit, First aid kit, Lock Out Tools. Etc...)

7000.00 Computer (computer, printer, scanner, wiring)

500.00 Handgun

800.00 Patrol Rifle

500.00 Less Lethal Shotgun

2000.00 Pre-Employment testing

\$78,700.00 Total