

JUNE 2022 NEWSLETTER



Public safety is approaching a crisis point in our communities and county. I have partnered with over a dozen mayors from across Snohomish County to make addressing public safety challenges one of our top priorities. In lieu of my traditional newsletters, I have included an op-ed we penned to outline some of these challenges and our concerns. This op-ed will be followed by specific action items we will be working on in the coming months and years.

As the mayors of Snohomish County, we share a deep and growing concern for the safety of our communities due to the tide of rising crime in our cities, especially violent crime. We're experiencing a disturbing increase in gun violence, illegal possession of firearms, shots fired, drug dealing, assaults and homicides. Property crimes and other illicit behavior throughout our communities, particularly our downtowns, pose a constant struggle for our businesses, property owners, residents and visitors.

This is not due to any shortcomings in our public safety teams. Our police departments and municipal prosecutors do tremendous work preventing and solving crimes and holding offenders accountable. But there are weaknesses and gaps in our legal and judicial systems that are undermining their ability to protect our communities.

*Recent legislation, such as [ESB 5476](#) and the *Washington v. Blake* decision by our state supreme court, have greatly hindered our ability to curtail drug possession in our communities. ESB 5476 essentially makes it legal to possess drugs until a person is caught by police three times. The first two times, police must "refer" the person to drug treatment, but they aren't required to actually go. So instead of getting drug users into treatment - presumably the intent of the law- the two-referral requirement creates a situation where drug users can possess and use drugs anywhere with no consequences. As a result, we're all seeing increased drug use on our streets, spikes in property and violent crimes, and tragically, increased drug overdose and deaths.*

The reality that our courts are direly under-resourced and overwhelmed with a backlog of trials also impacts public safety. Cases are slow to move through the process or are dismissed when the statute of limitations is up. It's less of a deterrent to commit a crime if justice takes too long to be served - if it's served at all. It's imperative that we advocate for an increase and prioritization of resources to support our criminal justice system to address this backlog.

One of the most complicated challenges is the severe shortage of behavioral health facilities and programs for those in the criminal justice system, and a gap in how behavioral health competency is determined. Too often chronic offenders with mental health challenges are deemed not-competent enough to stand trial, yet not ill enough to require mental health services. This creates an unhealthy cycle for that person, as they're released into the community without any help with their mental health. Their condition deteriorates, and often they re-offend. We need more investment in beds and services for Snohomish County to better deliver the right care at the right time, especially for people in the criminal justice system.

A consequence of all this is an erosion of public trust. Public safety is an important partnership between our community members and those who keep us safe. Cooperation and support from the community helps local governments address safety issues and helps law enforcement investigate and solve crimes. This partnership works best when people trust that if they see something - and say something - that something will be done. When that trust is broken, and people stop believing things will change, they lose confidence in the public safety partnership. This can lead to disengagement, apathy and ultimately communities that are far less safe.

We need support from higher levels and other branches of government to address these weaknesses and fix what's broken. We must prioritize resources to add capacity for behavioral health, substance use disorder and other competency restoration options. We must reduce violence, keep guns out of the hands of

felons and hold offenders accountable. As mayors, we want our residents and business owners to feel safe in their community. We want low crime rates and flourishing communities. We want to restore trust in, and support for, our public safety partnership. We want our residents who are living unhoused or in crisis to have options, resources, and, when necessary, incentives to secure housing and live in a safer, healthier environment. We must help our important law enforcement staff perform their jobs well and come home safely to their families

To our constituents: please join us as we work to effect change. Help us advocate for necessary reform of these systems. Reach out to your elected officials at the state and federal levels and let them know this is a priority. And to our fellow elected leaders: we must double down and work together to address the flaws in our systems that are perpetuating crime in our communities.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the City of Sultan, please do not hesitate in reaching out to me at russell.wiita@ci.sultan.wa.us or 360.454.4145. Take care.

Sincerely,

Russell Wiita
Mayor, City of Sultan

MEETING CALENDAR	
All Meetings Held in the Community Room at 319 Main Street Unless Otherwise Noted	
JUNE 2022	
JUNE 2	Council Workshop—7:00 pm In person and remote attendance via computer or phone
JUNE 9 & 23	City Council Meeting—7:00 pm In person and remote attendance via computer or phone
JUNE 7 & 21	Planning Board—7:00 pm In person and remote attendance via computer or phone
JUNE 7, 14, 21 & 28	Community Alliance Meeting—5:00 pm In person and remote attendance via computer or phone
JUNE 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30	Coffee with the City—9:30 am
JULY 2022	
JULY 7	Council Workshop—7:00 pm In person and remote attendance via computer or phone
JULY 14 & 28	City Council Meeting—7:00 pm In person and remote attendance via computer or phone
JULY 5 & 19	Planning Board—7:00 pm In person and remote attendance via computer or phone
JULY 5, 12, 19 & 26	Community Alliance Meeting—5:00 pm In person and remote attendance via computer or phone
JULY 7, 14, 21, 28	Coffee with the City—9:30 am

PUBLIC WORKS

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

At the May 12, 2022 City Council meeting, the council awarded the contract for upgrades to the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant to Harbor Pacific contractors. This work is planned to start in early summer and should take approximately 2 years to complete.

For more information, check out the city's website under the current city project page.

NEW PARK

At the May 5, 2022 Council Workshop, the Council discussed what they would like to see in a future park in the Sultan Basin area.

In late 2021, the City put out a survey with three conceptual layouts asking citizens what they would like to see in this future park. Currently, the City is looking at a piece of property owned by the sewer utility at the end of Dogwood Court.



The Council reviewed all the information and staff will be working with the City's engineering consultants to bring forward a design contract at a future council meeting.



THE CITY OF SULTAN HAS JOB OPENINGS!

Full Time Seasonal Utility Help

- ◆ Qualified people 18 years or older
- ◆ Likes to work outdoors
- ◆ Interested in helping out in the community to make it a beautiful place to live.
- ◆ 40 Hours per week through the summer
- ◆ \$18.47 Per Hour

Full Time Deputy Treasurer

- ◆ Experience in accounting and financial management
- ◆ Performs a wide variety of accounting and administrative support work.
- ◆ 40 Hours per week—Represented Position
- ◆ \$29.79—\$34.96 per hour

For more detailed information on any of these jobs, please go to the City's website at: <https://www.ci.sultan.wa.us/jobs.aspx>

****CITY HALL INFORMATION****

Physical Address: 319 Main Street #200, Sultan WA 98294
Mailing Address: PO Box 1199, Sultan WA 98294
Phone: 360.793.2231
Fax: 360.793.3344
Office Hours: Monday 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Tuesday through Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Closed daily between 12:00 pm—1:00 pm for lunch

Website:

www.ci.sultan.wa.us

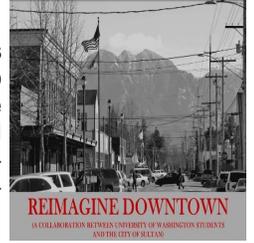
Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/sultanwashingtongovernment>

PLANNING/BUILDING

Storefront Studio

The City has partnered with the University of Washington's College of the Built Environment for the Storefront Studio Project. This program has brought a team of undergraduate architecture students into our downtown to research and reimagine portions of our downtown based on our community's feedback. They are looking at ideas for how to reinvigorate three blocks in the downtown.



When they complete their work in early June, the final ideas will be shared on the City's website and at Planning Board and City Council meetings.

If you want more information, please take a look at the City website at:

<https://www.ci.sultan.wa.us/357/Storefront-Studio-Project-Downtown-Revit> or reach out to the Community Development Director, Andy Galuska at andy.galuska@ci.sultan.wa.us or 360.793.1311.



US2 Corridor Study

On May 11, 2022, the City held an open house for the US2 Corridor Study at City Hall. The City would like to thank all of those who showed up and provided their comments. We feel this was a huge success getting over 125 people in a 2 hour time frame.

To assist with this project, it's important to have input from our citizens and people who drive on US 2. There is a survey we would like everyone to take to help with this project.



Please go to the City's website at www.ci.sultan.wa.us or follow the QR code and fill out the survey.

BE APART OF THE SOLUTION!

LET'S SAVE WATER TOGETHER!

FREE Water Conservation Kits available at City Hall!!

Now in stock:

- ⇒ Hose Nozzle—7 spray options
- ⇒ Moisture Meter—detects moisture at room level—2 options
- ⇒ Shower Head—2 options
- ⇒ Kitchen Sink Head
- ⇒ Water Timer



Every little bit helps to save water! Come in to City Hall and get yours!

NEED HELP WITH YOUR SULTAN UTILITY BILL?

If you are having financial issues and need help with your utility bill or to make payment arrangements, please contact City Hall at 360.793.2231