

# Olympia & Comparable Cities

Staffing & Population Growth, 2015 - 2025



# Comparable Cities January 2025 Findings

- Prior to 2025 reductions, Olympia gained **90 FTE** between 2019 and 2025, with over 50 charged to the General Fund. Areas of largest growth: Public Works, Police, Fire, and Parks.
- Olympia has over **58 FTE** in programs, services, or offices that other cities either do not have or have fewer dedicated staff.
  - Climate, CMO (4 FTE)
  - DEI (3 FTE – 1 in Parks and 1 in HR)
  - Housing & Homeless Response, CP&D (9 FTE – non general fund)
  - Clean Team, Public Works (7.25 FTE)
  - CARES, Fire (2 FTE)
  - BLS Transport, Fire (16 FTE)
  - Crisis Response Unit, OPD (14 FTE)
  - Familiar Faces, OPD (3 FTE)
- Olympia has a more robust courts and justice operation than other cities.

# Comparable Cities Framework

---

## **Olympia (57,450)**

I-5 Corridor;  
operates Police &  
Fire; four utilities;  
structural deficit;  
relatively high  
general fund  
spending per  
household

---

Bellingham (97,270) – similar responsibilities, community values, projecting a deficit

---

Marysville (74,390) – similar size, four utilities

---

Lakewood (64,620) – proximity and size

---

Shoreline (61,910) – similar size

---

Lacey (60,210) – proximity and size, projecting a deficit (parks)

---

Puyallup (43,410) – proximity

---

Tumwater (27,470) – proximity, similar responsibilities, projecting a deficit

---

# Comparable Cities Service Responsibilities

	Central Services	Police	Municipal Court	Fire	BLS Transport	Parks	Homeless Response	Streets	Water	Waste-water	Storm-water	Solid Waste
→ OLYMPIA ←	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bellingham	X	X	X	X	*	X	*	X	X	X	X	*
Lacey	X	X	*			X	*	X	X	X	X	*
Lakewood	X	X	X			X		X				*
Marysville	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X
Puyallup	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	*
Tumwater	X	X	*	X	*	X		X	X	X	X	*

\*contracted

# Follow-up Questions from January

- Olympia had more FTEs than all other cities except Bellingham, a much larger city. How do the FTE counts compare on a per 1,000 resident basis?
- Olympia's FTE count has grown significantly since 2019. Has it grown faster than the population? Has it grown faster than other cities? Has it grown faster in the past five years than in previous years?
- Do we have the same level of central service staffing that other cities do? (Central services = human resources, information technology, finance, management, etc.)

# Preliminary Findings from May

- Olympia had the **highest FTE on a per 1,000** resident basis in **2015 through 2024**, prior to 2025 reductions (**now second highest**).
- Between 2015 and 2024, Olympia's FTE count grew **2.5 times** as fast as the population, but not faster than all other cities.
- Police and Fire total FTE counts are **not out of line** with other urban cities – even with the programs and services Olympia provides that other cities do not.
- Parks and Public Works staffing levels are similar to Bellingham, despite the fact that Olympia operates more utilities.
- **Central Services appears more lightly staffed** than other cities on a per total FTE basis.

# City Population and FTE

## 2025 Population Estimates and 2025 Adopted Budgets

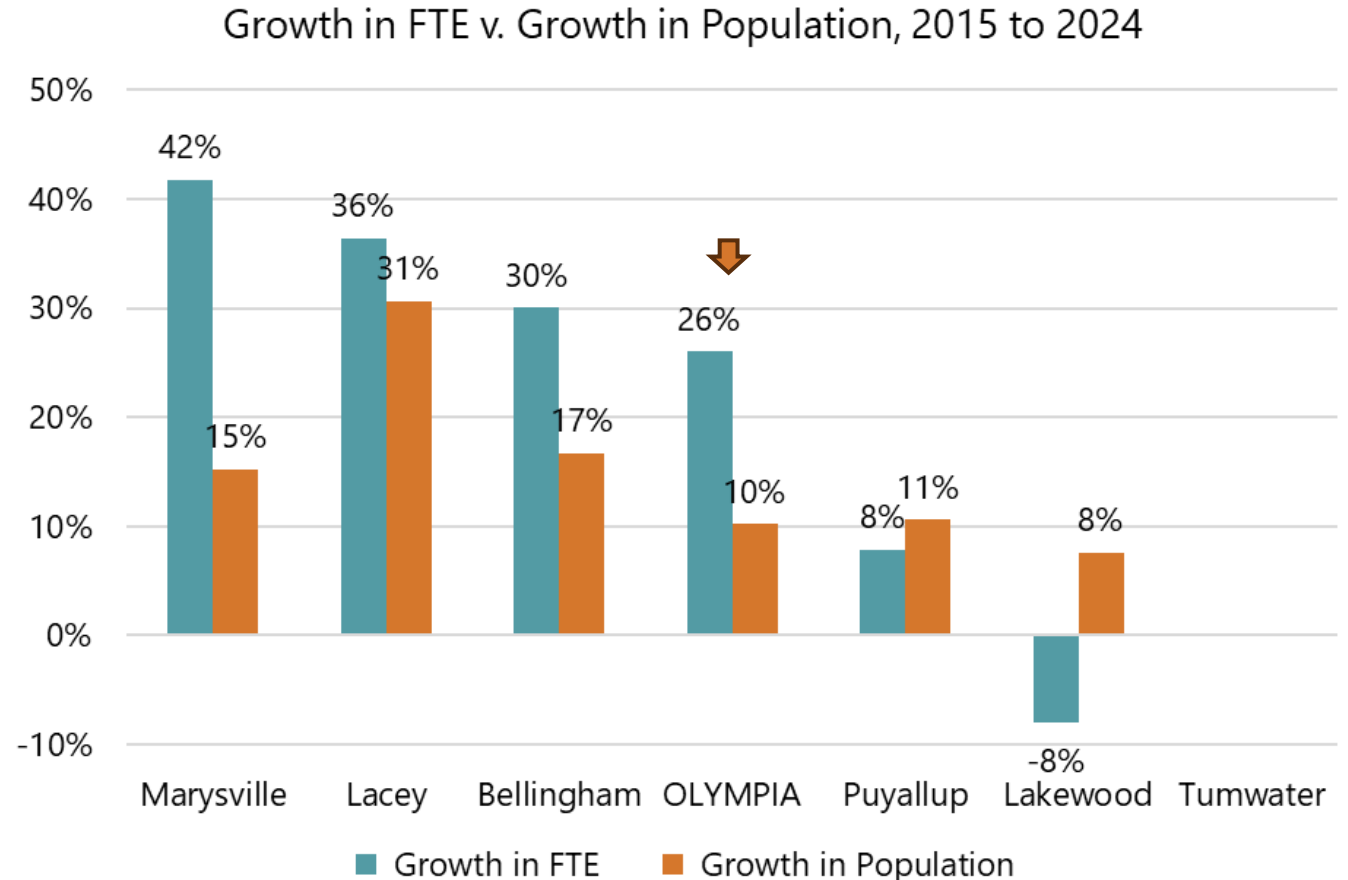
	Population	Total FTE	FTE Per 1,000
Bellingham	97,270	1,138.60	11.71
→ OLYMPIA	57,450	657.44	11.44
Tumwater	27,470	235.50	8.57
Puyallup	43,410	319.25	7.35
Lacey	60,210	342.50	5.69
Marysville	74,390	396.00	5.32
Lakewood	64,620	229.55	3.55

← preliminary

Sources: OFM April 1 population estimates for 2024, plus average rate of increase, and FY25 adopted budget data

# Growth in FTE versus Growth in Population

- Olympia's FTE grew more than twice as fast as population between 2015 and 2024.
- Marysville added police and increased technology services in 2021 and 2022.
- Lakewood reduced its police force in 2021-22.
- Awaiting data from Tumwater.



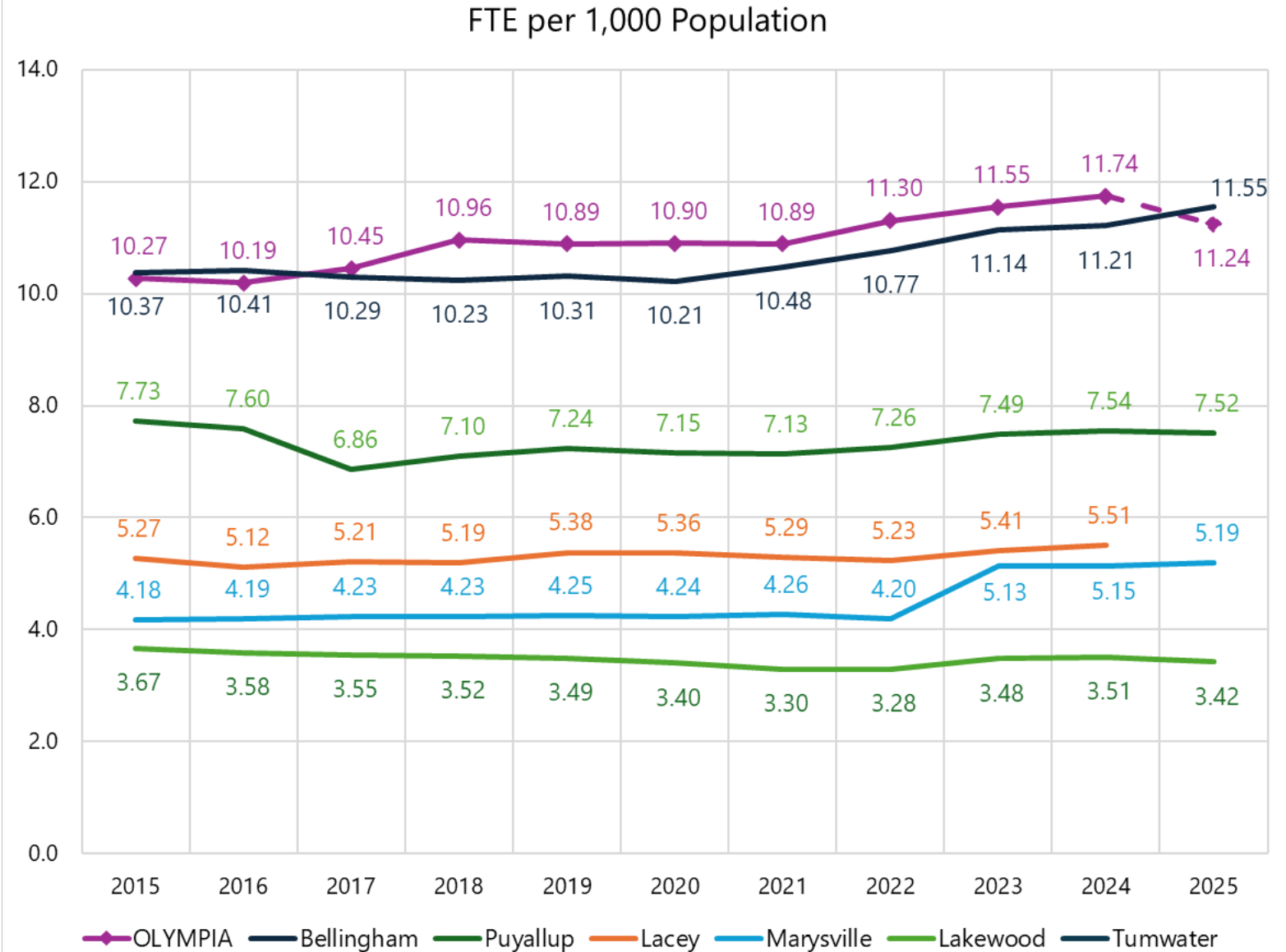
Sources: adopted budgets



# FTE Per 1,000 Population

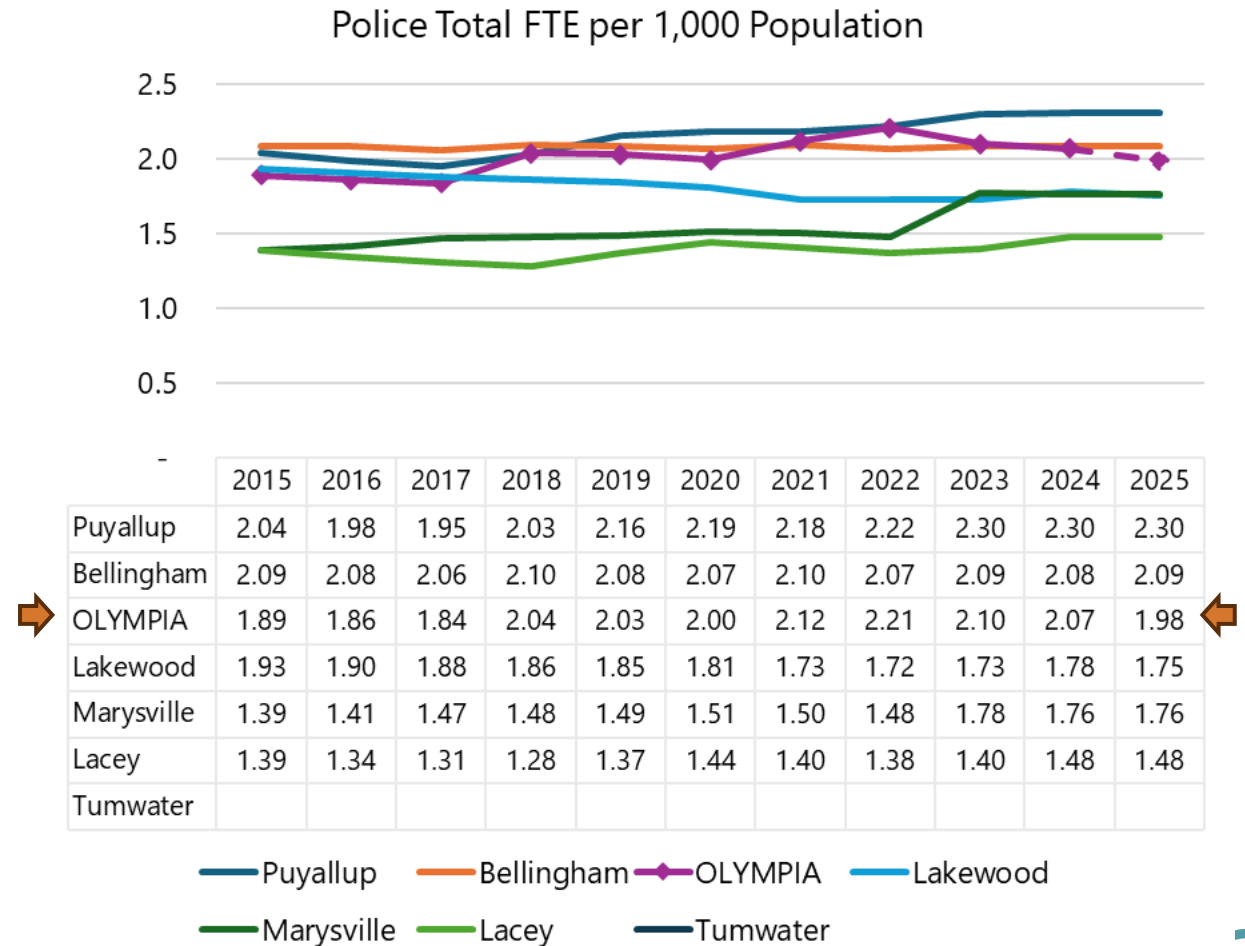
## Olympia

- 2015: 10.27 FTE for ever 1,000 residents
- 2024: 11.74 FTE for every 1,000 residents.
- 2025 (preliminary): 11.24 FTE for every 1,000 residents.



# Police

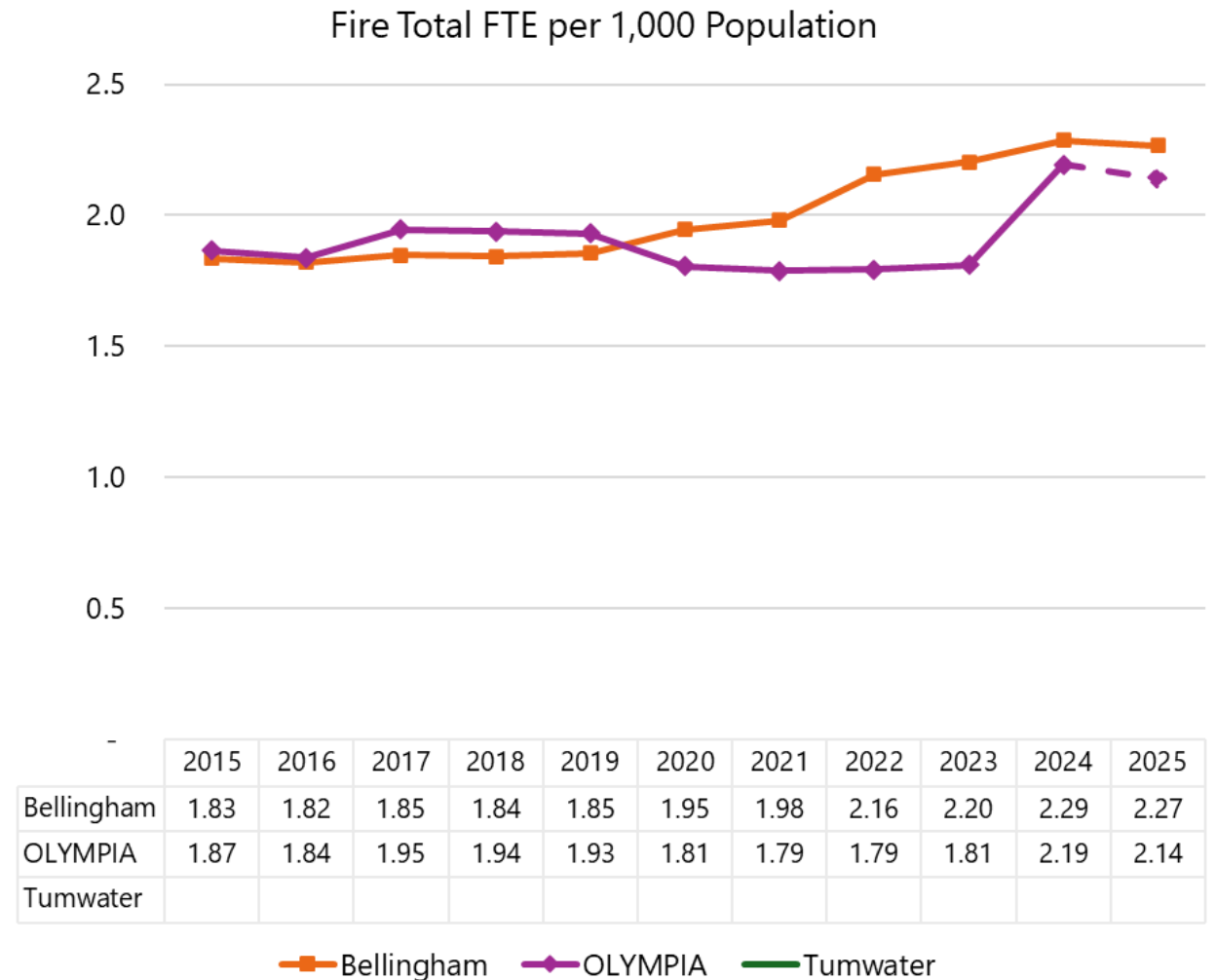
- Police total FTE (department-wide, not just officers) is third highest.
- None of the other cities operate Familiar Faces or an in-house Crisis Response Unit program.
- Lakewood reduced police force in 2021-22.



Sources: adopted budgets and OFM population estimates

# Fire

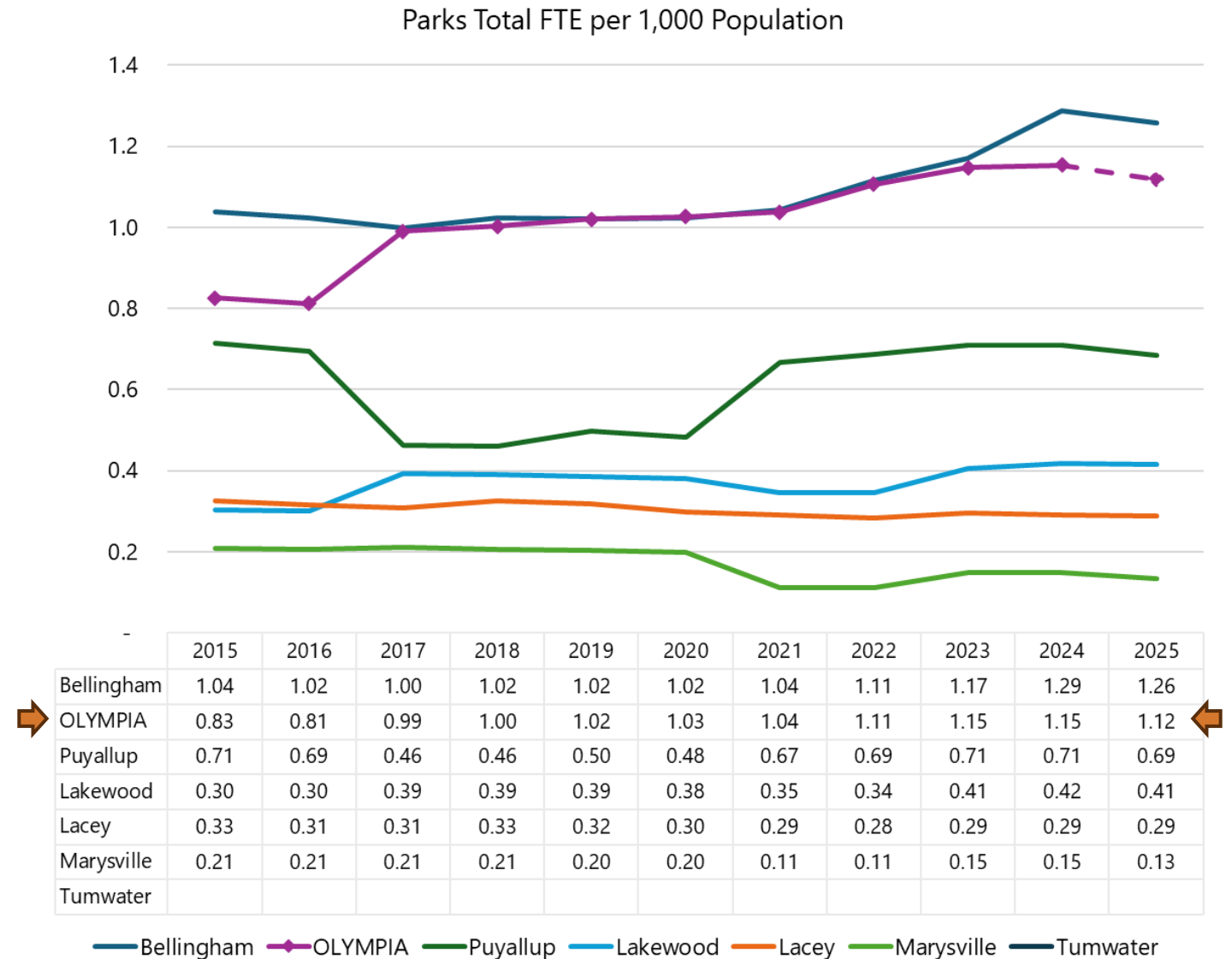
- Other cities do not operate fire departments (awaiting Tumwater data).
- Olympia's 2024 increase reflects BLS addition.
- Bellingham does not operate BLS (but pays for it through a contract).



Sources: adopted budgets and OFM population estimates

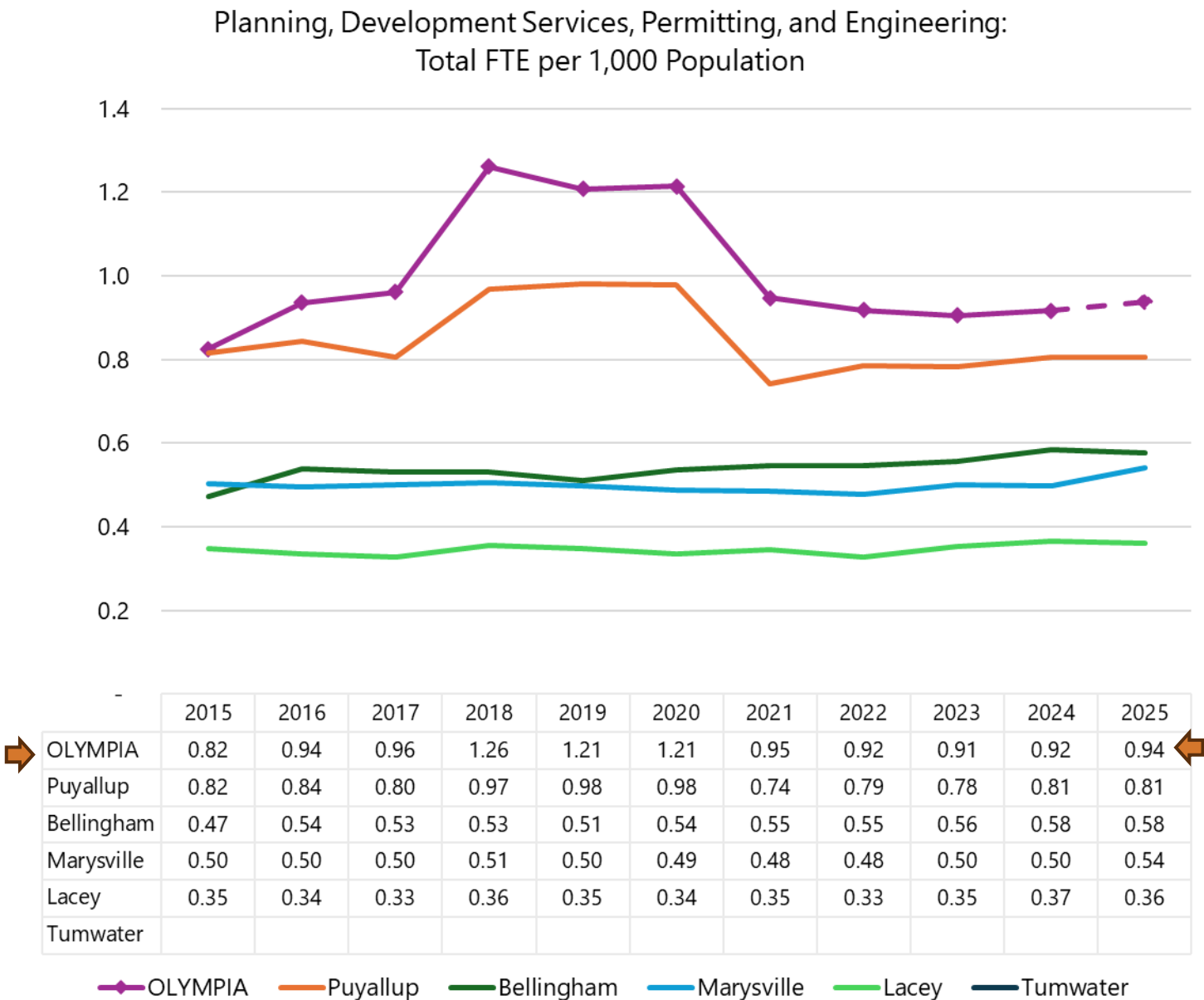
# Parks

- Olympia added Parks maintenance staff in 2017; Parks Stewardship and Support Staff in 2022-23.
- Puyallup: moved Parks maintenance staff to Public Works in 2017.
  - Other cities' maintenance staff may also be in PW.
- Bellingham: added 20 FTE between 2022 - 2025.



# Community Planning & Economic Development

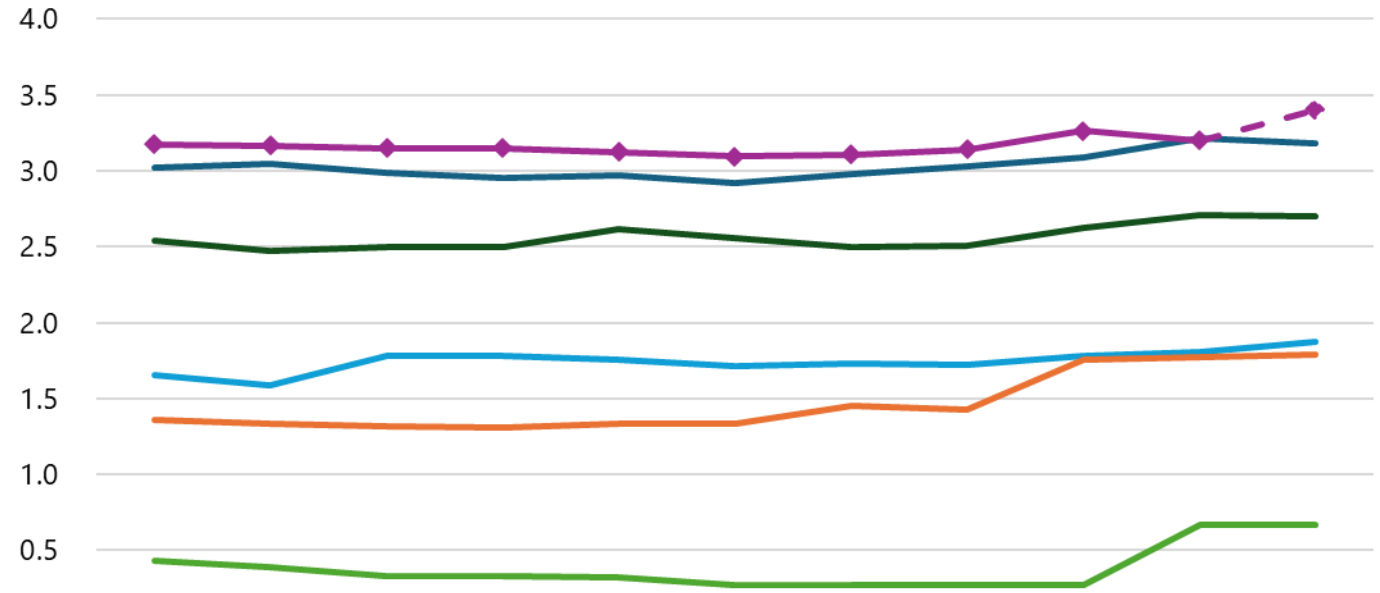
- Olympia has the largest housing and homelessness office (9 FTE; Bellingham has 4).
- Lots of reorganizations in these departments (Olympia multiple; Puyallup 2021; Lakewood 2024).
- External factors (growth, development, outside needs) impact responsibilities and service demands.



# Public Works

- Olympia & Marysville are the only cities to operate four utilities.
- Bellingham, Lacey, Puyallup contract out solid waste and provide water, sewer, and stormwater.
- Lakewood contracts out garbage and does not provide other utilities.
- Olympia is the only city with a dedicated Clean Team.

Public Works Total FTE per 1,000 Population




	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Bellingham	3.02	3.04	2.99	2.95	2.97	2.92	2.98	3.03	3.09	3.21	3.18
OLYMPIA	3.17	3.17	3.15	3.15	3.12	3.10	3.11	3.14	3.27	3.20	3.40
Lacey	2.54	2.48	2.49	2.50	2.61	2.56	2.50	2.51	2.62	2.71	2.70
Puyallup	1.66	1.59	1.78	1.78	1.76	1.71	1.73	1.72	1.78	1.81	1.88
Marysville	1.36	1.34	1.32	1.31	1.33	1.33	1.45	1.43	1.76	1.77	1.79
Lakewood	0.43	0.39	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	0.67	0.66
Tumwater											

— Bellingham — OLYMPIA — Lacey — Puyallup — Marysville — Lakewood — Tumwater

# Central Services Staffing (2025)

Every 1 Central Service staff in Olympia serves **8.2 total city FTE**. This is third highest of all the cities (behind Bellingham and Puyallup).

*Every 1 FTE in....                      ....serves \_\_ total FTE citywide.*

	 Olympia	Bellingham	Lacey	Lakewood	Marysville	Puyallup	Tumwater
<b>All Central Services</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>6.9</b>
Manager or Mayor's Office	90.3	78.5	48.9	114.8	39.6	159.6	58.9
Communications / Public Affairs	109.6	<i>Decentralized</i>	85.6	114.8	<i>No response</i>	319.3	78.5
City Clerk Services	164.4	<i>In finance</i>	114.2	38.3	198.0	79.8	117.8
Finance	26.0	33.5	28.5	28.7	22.0	22.8	19.6
Human Resources	101.1	41.4	42.8	57.4	66.0	106.4	47.1
Information Technology	36.5	32.9	34.3	57.4	30.5	39.9	47.1
Legal-General Counsel	50.6	70.3	<i>Contracted</i>	76.5	39.6	65.8	78.5

Sources: Survey of comparable cities, December 2024. City of Olympia budget data. City FY 2025 Adopted Budgets.

# Follow-up Research?

## May Findings

- Olympia has the second highest FTEs on a per 1,000 basis than all cities but Bellingham.
- Prior to 2025 reductions, Olympia's FTE count grew 2.5 times as fast as the population, but not faster than other cities.
- Staffing does not appear out of line at the department level, even including new programs that we know other cities don't have.
- Staffing does appear light in certain central service functions.

## Next Steps?

- What else would you like to know?