



AFTER ACTION REPORT

Bite of Seattle 2026 Mass Shooting Incident

Operational Response & Incident Command Review

Compiled from West Precinct summary, Incident Command addendum, Duty Captain notes, and the Bite of Seattle Incident Action Plan

Fast Response, Slower Aftermath

On July 26, 2026, at approximately 6:00pm, a shooting occurred near the Armory at Seattle Center during the final day of the Bite of Seattle festival. Seattle Police Department (SPD) personnel closed in on the threat immediately and had one shooter in custody within 20–30 seconds. Officers rendered aid and secured the campus.

This report evaluates the response against the event’s Incident Action Plan (IAP) and covers personnel, equipment, budget, and lessons learned for future events of this scale.

20–30 SEC	Time to take a shooter into custody
5 HOURS	Gap before the first public press briefing
02:00 AM	Campus returned to Seattle Center staff

The Bite of Seattle, 2026

A	Event	Friday, July 24 – Sunday, July 26, 2026. Produced by “Foodie Land”; festival hours 1100–2000 daily.
B	Footprint	The largest footprint in the event’s history — activations across the entire Seattle Center campus.
C	Attendance	Thousands of attendees each day.
D	Security Partner	Foodie Land contracted “the Workshop” (Climate Pledge Arena staff) for non-police safety and security.
E	Known Risk Window	The IAP’s Situation assessment flagged late-afternoon/early-evening hours as historically the highest-risk window for large-scale disturbances.

Sunday Staffing Plan /Incident Action Plan (IAP)

Lt. Farwell Event Incident Commander (IC)

Sgt. Baily Operations Section Chief

1 IDA **Sgt. James • 5 Officers**

N. Fountain Lawn, Kobe Bell, Theatre Commons, Founders Court

2 IDA **Sgt. Jared • 4 Officers**

International Fountain, Fisher Lawn

3 IDA **Sgt. Byrd • 4 Officers**

Fisher Pavilion

4 IDA **Sgt. Phillips • 4 Officers**

Mural Amphitheater, Kids’ Theatre

5 IDA **Sgt. Bedford • 4 Officers**

The Armory, Artists at Play

2D80 **Sgt. Lednicky • 8 Officers**

Perimeter: Garages, Uptown, Queen Anne Stair Climb

Medical, Transport & Communications



Medical Aid Station

One Seattle Fire Department tent, along Harrison Street pathway, adjacent to the Armory.



Ambulance Mutual Aid

AMR, Airlift Northwest, Rural Metro, Tri-Med — all paramedic-level.



Receiving Hospitals

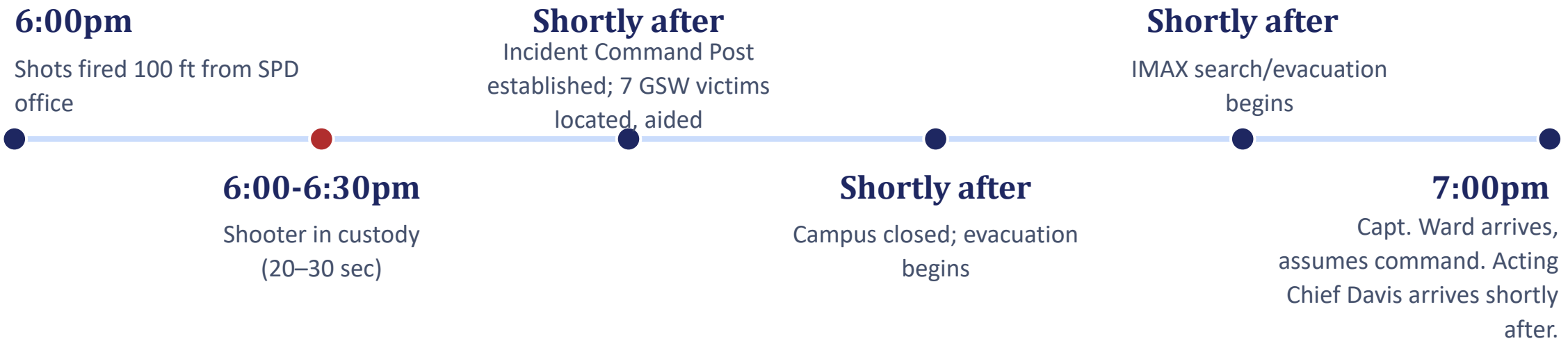
8 listed; only Harborview & Seattle Children’s have a helipad, only Harborview has a burn center.



Radio Plan

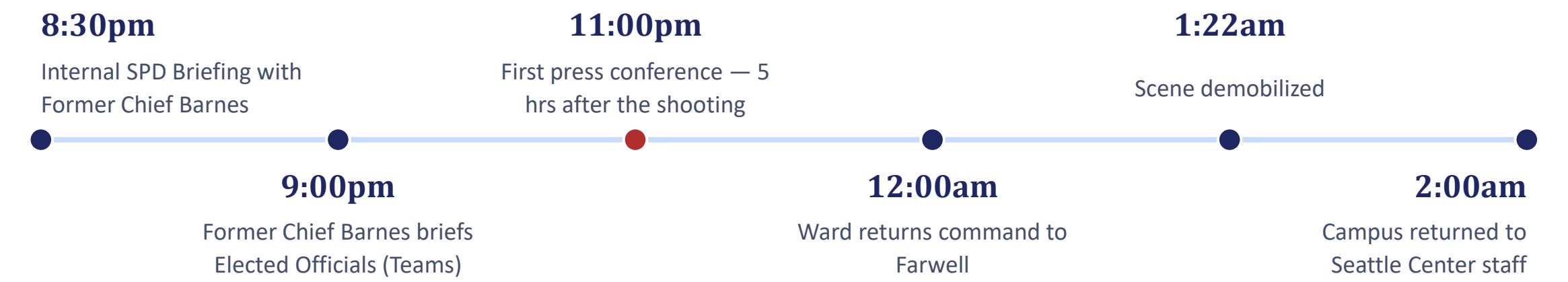
Single channel (Zone 2 SPD CTR1, 800 MHz), recorded/monitored 1100am–830pm — before the incident response ended.

Timeline: The Immediate Response *(Approximate)*



20–30 seconds from first shots to a shooter in custody — officers were stationed within 100 feet of the gunfire.

Timeline: Command & Public Communications *(Approximate)*



The public briefing followed two internal briefings (Internal SPD commanders at 8:30pm, Elected Officials at 9:00pm) rather than preceding them.

Casualty/Injury Summary

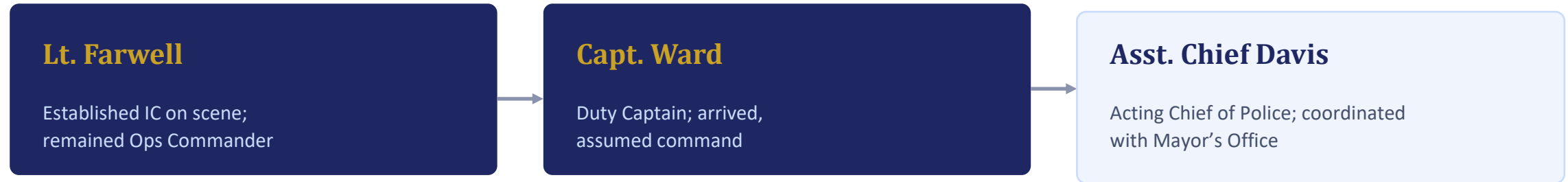
INCIDENT ADDENDUM DETAIL

3 DOA (2 scene,
1 at Harborview)

4 Injured (3 Harborview,
1 walk-in UW Montlake)

Total: 7 GSW victims

Incident Command: A Clean Escalation



Tactical command handed off cleanly (Farwell → Ward), while Davis ran a separate, parallel track with elected officials — by design, not confusion.

OFFICIALS ON SCENE AT VARIOUS POINTS

- Capt. Davisson — Acting Patrol Chief
- Katie Wilson — Mayor, City of Seattle
- Brian Surratt — Deputy Mayor
- Bob Kettle — Councilmember, District 7
- Bob Ferguson — Governor, Washington
- Pramila Jayapal — U.S. Congresswoman, WA-7

What Went Well



Officers ran toward gunfire; shooter in custody within 20–30 seconds.



Seamless transition from tactical response to life-saving aid and scene security.



Incident Command established immediately; structure expanded per the IAP's own plan.



Thousands of festival goers and vendors were evacuated with no reported secondary injuries.



Information of a potential person of interest ran toward IMAX Theatre. IMAX Theatre was methodically searched by SWAT and patrol and not dismissed.



Command handoffs (Farwell → Ward → Farwell) were clear and well documented.

Structural Gaps Behind the Scenes

Mutual Aid

Should have been coordinated through the Incident Commander. This did not occur in some instances. (e.g., FBI)

Incident Commanders

Incident commanders were adversely impacted due to personnel who were not present at the scene.

Communications & Data Gaps

Internal Briefing Preceded Public Safety Information

First public briefing (2300) followed two internal briefings rather than preceding them — a 5-hour public information gap.

Convergence of Senior and Elected Officials

Senior and Elected Officials distracted sworn staff from completing timely public safety information and on-scene decision making.

Minor Data Inconsistencies

Casualty totals (7 vs. 8) and officer counts (25 vs. 29) differ slightly across internal accounts.

Suggested Personnel and Equipment Upgrades

1

Separate the Acting Chief's tactical role from Mayor's Office liaison duties.

2

Pre-designate on-scene PIO with standing public-safety-alert authority.

3

Expand the bike/perimeter squad beyond 8 officers for this footprint.

4

Pre-authorized drone protocol for mass casualty incidents and active-suspect scenarios.

Budget Constraints Behind the Gaps

Several findings trace back to resource trade-offs, not planning oversights. Field staffing — 7 supervisors and roughly 25–29 officers — covered an event where thousands of people attended. Saturday staffing was reduced specifically to cover the citywide Torchlight Parade, showing a finite overtime pool spread across simultaneous major events.

BOTTOM LINE

Every staffing and equipment recommendation in this report carries a recurring cost. Each should go to the City Council and Mayor's Office with an explicit budget estimate attached.

Special events strain SPD resources as SPD is involved in hundreds of special events yearly. These come with a personnel and budgetary cost to the department.

Lessons Learned

- 1 Positioning officers close to the crowd, not just the perimeter, is almost certainly why the shooter was caught in 20–30 seconds.
- 2 A strong tactical response does not automatically produce a fast public information response — the two need separate planning and resourcing.
- 3 The IAP's historical risk window was directionally correct on timing, even though it anticipated fights rather than a shooting.
- 4 Coordination of senior and elected officials needs its own staffing lane so it doesn't pull commanders away from managing the physical scene.
- 5 Post-incident reporting needs one casualty-count reconciliation step before any figures are finalized externally.

Recommendations Summary



Designate on-scene PIO with independent alert authority.



Pre-authorize drone support protocol for mass casualty incidents/active-suspect scenarios.



Separate the Chief's command role from Mayor's Office liaison duties.

CONCLUSION

The instincts were right. Now resource the rest of the response the same way.

Officers positioned close to the crowd stopped the threat in seconds and evacuated thousands of people off the campus safely. The gaps identified here — aerial support policy and public information timing — sit downstream of that response. Addressing the personnel, equipment, and budget items in this report will help the rest of the organization move with the same speed and discipline the officers on the ground already showed on July 26.