

IMAGINE SNOHOMISH: PROMOTING VITALITY AND PRESERVING CHARACTER



CITY OF SNOHOMISH STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-18



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A special thank you to City Manager Larry Bauman, who wisely and generously guided the strategic planning project, and to his wonderful staff, who were fully engaged in the process, attending all of the many meetings and participating to the highest degree.

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INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT PURPOSE

This Strategic Plan is an aspirational, guiding document that will inform annual goal-setting, budgeting, and programmatic evaluation processes. By articulating a long-term Community Vision, the Plan paints a picture of the desired future of the community. Strategic Initiatives for the five-year period from 2014 to 2018 focus the City on the actions and investments it needs to make now to continue to support the community's progress towards that Vision. While the City of Snohomish is the primary actor in this Plan, success in these Initiatives will require the support of the whole community. Partnerships with community-based organizations will be needed to rally the energies and resources of Snohomish's many community institutions and informal community groups to supplement and reinforce the efforts of the City.



The Vision contained on the following pages describes a community with a high quality of life and strong character, supported by a vital economy and quality City services. This Vision and the Strategic Initiatives that have been established to achieve this Vision call for investments in the community that will sustain and build on those qualities that make Snohomish special.

Strong communities are built on resilient foundations. For Snohomish, investing in those foundations can preserve its heritage and maintain the vitality of a thriving city. This Plan calls for strategic investments in our parks, neighborhoods, facilities, and infrastructure that will both improve the quality of life for residents and make the community a more attractive place for new residents, new businesses, and visitors. This vitality and growth will broaden our tax base and ease the burden on individual tax payers.

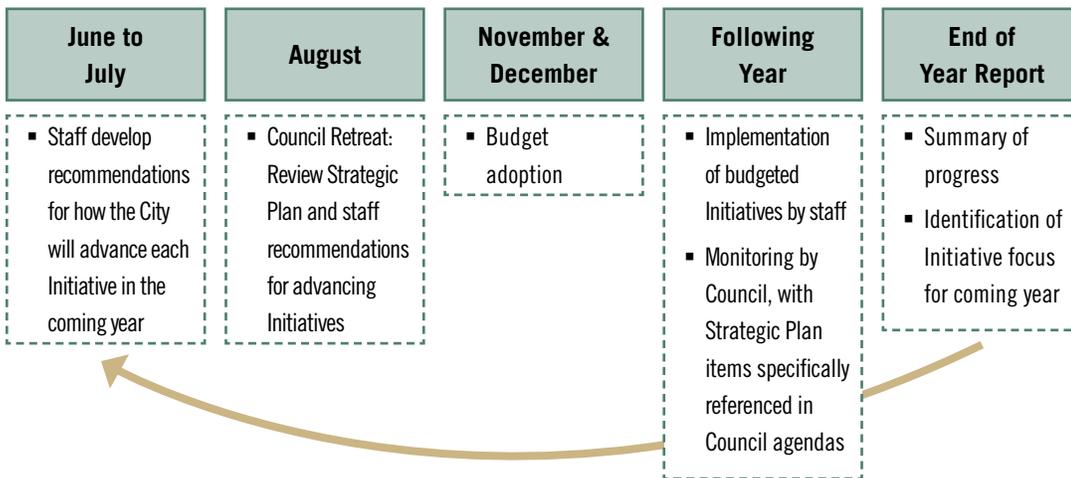


Over the course of the recent economic downturn, the City has reduced staffing to the minimum necessary for the provision of core public services. While many of the actions called for in this Plan can be accomplished under existing City resources, the more visionary elements will require residents to weigh the benefits of these actions with the increased financial resources that will likely be needed to support the improvements to City services and investments in capital projects called for in this Plan.



As an example, Strategic Initiative 1 calls for improvements to and expansions of the City's parks, trails, and public spaces. These investments will enhance the quality of life for residents while strengthening the City's economic development opportunities and tourism draws. However, funding for these desired enhancements will need to be secured. More specific work plans with estimated costs, action steps, staffing, and other resources needed will be developed separately for each Initiative and its action strategies.

Implementing the Strategic Plan. The City adopted its first strategic plan in 2006 and has used it as a management and communications tool ever since. This update will similarly guide the City’s actions, investments, and engagements with partners from 2014-18. The graphic below illustrates how this Plan will inform annual budget setting and workplanning for each of the five years in the planning period. The identification of funding sources to support Initiative implementation will be part of the budgeting process.



COMMUNITY VISION

As part of the planning process, Strategic Planning Committee members and members of the Snohomish public discussed their hopes and desires for the future of the community. This Community Vision is described below, with some elements reflecting a preservation of existing community characteristics and other elements describing proactive investment and effort to strengthen the community in new or enhanced ways.





An outstanding quality of life for all residents.

- A community of neighbors
- Strong, connected neighborhoods
- Historic character preserved in our buildings, old and new
- Connections to our heritage
- Embracing people of different cultures and backgrounds
- Parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities to match a variety of demands
- High-quality schools and public library
- A vibrant arts and cultural scene
- Connections to our agricultural roots



A community strongly connected to and protecting the natural environment.

- Leadership in sustainability
- Vital connections to our land and waterways
- Efficient use of resources and minimized waste
- Sensitive development



A vibrant local economy.

- A diverse range of local businesses and innovators
- Thriving businesses, benefiting from a positive business climate and support from the City and its partners



A thriving regional destination.

- A regional destination that is a local hub of activity
- High regional awareness of what Snohomish has to offer
- Visitors experience the area's natural beauty, outdoor recreation options, Historic Downtown, destination restaurants and shopping, and myriad community events
- Complementary tourism infrastructure, including way-finding signage, rail connections, parking, and overnight lodging



High-quality and sustainable City services.

- Fiscally sustainable and cost-effective City government
- Cost-effective utilities
- Equitable City tax burdens for residents, business owners, and visitors
- Quality City services
- Leadership on regional issues
- Inviting and efficient City facilities

2014-18 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Eight Strategic Initiatives have been identified as important steps in advancing towards the Community Vision. The accomplishment of these Initiatives will be the focus of efforts by the City and its many community partners for the 2014-18 time period.

The relationships among these Initiatives and the components of the Community Vision are summarized below. The Initiatives are presented in more detail on the following pages, with additional implementation details summarized on pages 15 and 16.

					
	Quality of Life	Environment	Economy	Destination	City Services
INITIATIVES					
1. Establish a sustainable model for strengthening and expanding our parks, trails, and public spaces.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Strengthen our foundations for connecting neighbors and enhancing our neighborhoods.	✓				
3. Strengthen the community's connections to our rivers.	✓	✓		✓	
4. Increase multi-modal mobility within and connections to the community.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5. Become more environmentally sustainable.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6. Cultivate local businesses and promote the City as a great place to do business.	✓		✓	✓	✓
7. Strengthen the City's attractiveness as a regional destination.			✓	✓	✓
8. Invest in Snohomish's civic facilities.		✓			✓





INITIATIVE #1: Establish a sustainable model for strengthening and expanding our parks, trails, and public spaces

Parks are highly valued by the Snohomish community for the opportunities they provide both residents and visitors for active and passive recreation and breaks from the urban environment. Parks are tied to multiple aspects of the community’s Vision, contributing to residential quality of life, strengthening connections between neighborhoods and neighbors, and serving to attract new residents, business owners, and visitors.

Improvements of the existing system are envisioned to increase the number, quality and diversity of the community’s parks, trails, and public spaces, potentially including destination parks, neighborhood-serving parks, sports fields, and additional programming to activate these spaces. These important investments in the Snohomish community will require new resources to fund these improvements.

A. Establish a sustainable funding model to maintain and expand the City’s existing system.

As part of this process, update the City’s Parks Plan and capital investment strategy, exploring options, including the creation of a Metropolitan Parks District, for additional revenues required to support the community’s desires for an enhanced parks system.

B. Work with partners to increase educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities for residents of all ages and assess the feasibility of establishing a recreation program as part of the new funding model.

The City will continue to collaborate with community partners to offer educational, recreational, and cultural programming for the enjoyment and benefit of residents. While the creation of a full recreation program is desired by many, its financial feasibility must first be studied, assessing demand for City of Snohomish-provided services given options already available in nearby communities.



INITIATIVE #2: Strengthen our foundations for connecting neighbors and enhancing our neighborhoods

This Initiative focuses on strengthening the physical connections between Snohomish’s neighborhoods and the social fabric that connects neighbors and the community as a whole.

A. Plan for parks and trails, multi-modal connections, and economic vitality within and between neighborhoods, taking a comprehensive, whole-City approach.

This planning effort will strengthen individual neighborhood identity, increase connections between neighborhoods, and enhance how the City looks and functions as a cohesive whole. The effort will strengthen geographic sub-areas while increasing their connections to one another.

B. Create a neighborhood program that brings people together and supports community-generated projects and events.

The focus of this program will be to strengthen the Snohomish community by bringing people together in social functions and to identify potential investments, such as community gardens, that would improve the neighborhood. Modest grants from the City could leverage community energy and resources. Initially, this effort would build on the existing Block Watch program, broadening the focus from public safety and emergency preparedness to community building.

C. Cultivate partnerships with members of our community and regional neighbors to engage and celebrate people of all ages and backgrounds.

Connections to our rich histories and increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds are an important community asset. By working with the region’s tribes and many cultural and heritage groups, the City will help ensure the full range of residents are recognized and welcomed participants in the community.





Quality of Life



Environment



Economy



Destination



City Services

INITIATIVE #3: Strengthen the community’s connections to our rivers

Snohomish is fortunate to have rivers flowing through the community, contributing significantly to the City’s physical and community identity. This Initiative focuses on making the most of this natural geography, ensuring that adjacent development embraces the rivers and all they have to offer and making targeted investment to increase public access to the rivers. These efforts will both benefit residents and draw out-of-town visitors to Snohomish.

A. Develop a River Concept Plan that establishes a vision and planning strategies for orienting the Historic Downtown District to the Snohomish River and the Pilchuck District to the Pilchuck River.

The development of the River Concept Plan will be a visionary process that describes what could happen along Snohomish’s rivers. The Plan should address water access, improvements, and investments such as a public boat launch and marina/moorage; a riverfront public space or promenade capable of hosting events; and an investment strategy outlining the resources necessary to accomplish the ideas established in the Plan, including potential public/private partnerships.

B. Invest in public improvements to activate and improve access to Snohomish’s rivers.

Evaluate opportunities for public access improvements, including a boat launch, marina, and/or moorage, and river overlooks, as well as riverfront parks or trails as identified in the River Concept Plan (see Item A, above).

C. Encourage land and business owners to make improvements along Snohomish’s rivers.

The City will encourage property and business owners along the rivers to keep the area well-maintained and use art, plantings, and riverfront dining to enliven the area. The City will also encourage the establishment of more river-focused businesses and new and redeveloped buildings that are oriented towards the rivers.



INITIATIVE #4: Increase multi-modal mobility within and connections to the community

The easy flow of pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers within and to Snohomish is critical for maintaining quality of life, economic vitality, and environmental stewardship. Efforts below identify a number of ways to improve multi-modal mobility throughout the community.



A. Update the City's Transportation Plan to continue to improve multi-modal mobility.

The City last updated its Transportation Plan in 2003/4. This planning effort will take a comprehensive look at traffic flow throughout the community, identify desired traffic flows and functioning of individual streets per guiding land use policies and visions, prioritize needs, and update impact fees and other funding mechanisms. As part of the planning process, the City will seek to create safe and efficient routes for pedestrians of all ages and abilities, as well as bicyclists traveling between the City's neighborhoods and business districts or connecting to regional trail networks.

B. Work with partners to bring a strong regional approach to transportation and transit issues.

Work with WSDOT to increase the capacity and safety of SR 9 and US 2 through and near Snohomish. Partner with Community Transit and other transit providers to plan routes to regional destinations.

C. Work with regional stakeholders to bring rail service and related regional trail connections to Snohomish.

Support the development of rail services in and to Snohomish through tourist-related and passenger commuter projects. Work with rail operators and other private and public partners in the region to ensure the best outcomes for the community.





Quality of Life



Environment



Economy



Destination



City Services

INITIATIVE #5: Become more environmentally sustainable

Snohomish has long had a strong connection to the natural environment and is in many ways defined by the natural beauty of our setting and the rivers that influence the community. We recognize that these benefits come with the responsibility of always seeking to minimize our negative impacts on the natural environment as a government and community of residents and business owners. This Initiative begins with items that we can start immediately and calls for a dedicated Sustainability Strategy to advance our thinking and effectiveness in this important area.

- A. Continue to invest in eco-friendly infrastructure through the City’s Capital Improvement Program, focusing on stormwater infrastructure and investments in City facilities.**

In its ongoing capital investments, the City will evaluate opportunities to be a good steward of both the environment and public resources, investing in infrastructure that is better for the environment and cost-effective to build, maintain, and operate.

- B. Explore options to lessen the environmental impacts of the City’s fleet and support the use of alternative powered vehicles by the public.**

When vehicles in the City’s fleet are retired, the City will replace them with more environmentally friendly choices. We will also explore options to support the private use of alternative powered vehicles.

- C. Take proactive measures for stewardship of Snohomish’s rivers and Blackmans Lake.**

Promote the efforts of organizations focused on protecting our rivers. Provide public education and outreach to residents regarding stewardship.

- D. Encourage sustainable development through the City’s land use regulations.**

The City has committed to conserving surrounding resource lands through a transfer of development rights program. The City will continue to explore ways to offer options and incentives for more sustainable land use and building practices.

- E. Encourage reduction of energy consumption by City government, builders and developers, residents, business owners, and visitors.**

The effort should consider sustainable energy production, waste reduction, and ways to support local agriculture.



INITIATIVE #6: Cultivate local businesses and promote the City as a great place to do business

Small businesses drive the Snohomish economy, creating jobs, services, and a tax base to support City services. The City’s economic development efforts will create jobs by supporting existing and new companies in our community. The focus will be on local businesses and creating a climate where they can thrive.



A. Update the City’s Economic Development Plan in ways that enhance the business climate and strengthen the success of local businesses.

The strategy should evaluate the business climate and competitiveness of the City to identify ways to make the City a more attractive place for business. The Strategy should focus on helping local businesses succeed.

B. Collaborate with partners to strengthen the skills and employment opportunities of Snohomish residents.

Encourage innovative early childhood and elementary education through the Snohomish School District. Support the expansion of programs at the middle school and high school levels that support Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics studies and technical careers. Partner with Everett Community College for expansion of their East County Campus, support expansion of Washington State University Everett Campus, and encourage corporate and continuing education opportunities through Everett Community College.

C. Facilitate growth and the enhancement of community character by establishing plans and ordinances that support businesses and residents in key opportunity districts.

Support the continued establishment of larger format development along Bickford. Ensure the preservation of the visual character of the Historic Downtown while exploring opportunities to encourage more investment along Avenue D, potentially including zoning changes that would allow more development. The effort should enhance Bickford as a gateway/entry point to the City and strengthen the connection of the Bickford Corridor to other parts of the City by improving the streetscape and way-finding and creating safe routes for bicyclists and pedestrians on or parallel to Bickford.

D. Attract new residents and businesses by promoting Snohomish’s quality of life and supportive business climate.

Encourage diverse housing options that attract a variety of new residents. Promote the City’s excellent schools and parks, strong sense of community, sustainability initiatives, and other assets.





INITIATIVE #7: Strengthen the City’s attractiveness as a regional destination

Regional tourism plays an important role in Snohomish’s economy and is tightly linked to the community’s attractiveness as a place to live as well. Visitors are drawn to town for many of the same reasons that Snohomish is an attractive place to live, including the beautiful natural environment, an attractive downtown with an appealing environment and a dynamic range of restaurants and small businesses, and the outdoor recreation options available nearby.

A. Enhance the streetscapes of primary corridors and improve gateways, signage, and way-finding to strengthen the City’s identity and invite people into the City.

Specific emphasis should be given to creating attractive gateways to the City. Develop a plan for unified signage, directing residents and visitors to various attractions and destinations.

B. Work with community and business partners to enhance and expand signature events in the area.

Major events can attract out-of-town visitors who might not otherwise come to Snohomish. These positive exposures in the community will hopefully entice them to return to experience other aspects of what Snohomish has to offer.

C. Work with community and business partners to expand arts and cultural offerings.

Promote the offerings of existing organizations, encourage regional cultural event producers to utilize Snohomish venues, and provide technical assistance to arts and cultural organizations on best business practices.

D. Promote Snohomish’s offerings to regional visitors.

Create a strategic marketing plan for tourism assets, utilize the City’s website to promote activities, maintain an active social media presence, and create an outreach plan to travel writers and tour providers.

E. Work with partners to ensure the Historic Downtown is clean and attractive.

Explore the use of fines, awards, events, and other options in partnership with businesses and community-based organizations to improve the cleanliness of the City’s streetscapes. Maintain City-owned properties to set a good example.

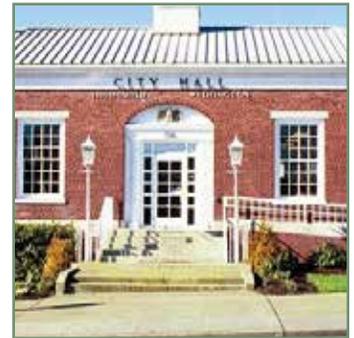


INITIATIVE #8: Invest in Snohomish’s civic facilities

Investments in City facilities must be considered along with other needed investments in the community, balancing the need for appropriate facilities to support the provision of quality City services with other potential public investments.

A. Sustain high-quality City services through cost-effective facilities.

Appropriate City facilities are needed to provide the efficient, quality services desired by Snohomish residents. Given their age and condition, an evaluation of existing buildings is necessary to identify opportunities to make buildings as efficient, safe, and inviting to the public as possible. Options for co-locating administrative, public safety, and public works facilities should also be explored, as should opportunities to use necessary investment in new or existing facilities as a mechanism for advancing other community or economic development goals.



SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The table below summarizes the lead and supporting departments for each of the Strategies supporting the Plan’s eight Initiatives. While the City is committed to all of these items, these actions cannot be completed by City staff alone and will require substantial public and private partnership involvement.

Lead Department	Supporting Department(s)
Initiative #1: Establish a sustainable model for strengthening and expanding our parks, trails, and public spaces.	
A. Establish a sustainable funding model to maintain and expand the City’s existing system.	
City Manager	Support Services, Economic Development, Planning, Public Works
B. Work with partners to increase educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities for residents of all ages and assess the feasibility of establishing a recreation program as part of the new funding model.	
Public Works	Economic Development
Initiative #2: Strengthen our foundations for connecting neighbors and enhancing our neighborhoods.	
A. Plan for parks and trails, multi-modal connections, and economic vitality within and between neighborhoods, taking a comprehensive, whole-City approach.	
Public Works	Economic Development
B. Create a neighborhood program that brings people together and supports community-generated projects and events.	
City Manager	Planning, Economic Development, Public Works, Police
C. Cultivate partnerships with members of our community and regional neighbors to engage and celebrate our diverse backgrounds.	
City Manager	Economic Development
Initiative #3: Strengthen the community’s connections to our rivers.	
A. Develop a River Concept Plan that establishes a vision and planning strategies for orienting the Historic Downtown District to the Snohomish River and the Pilchuck District to the Pilchuck River.	
Planning	Public Works
B. Invest in public improvements to activate and improve access to Snohomish’s rivers.	
Public Works	City Manager, Planning, Economic Development
C. Encourage land and business owners to make improvements along Snohomish’s rivers.	
Economic Development	Planning
Initiative #4: Increase multi-modal mobility within and connections to the community.	
A. Update the City’s Transportation Plan to continue to improve multi-modal mobility.	
Public Works	Planning
B. Work with partners to bring a strong regional approach to transportation and transit issues.	
City Manager	Economic Development
C. Work with regional stakeholders to bring rail service and related regional trail connections to Snohomish.	
City Manager	Economic Development, Public Works

Lead Department	Supporting Department(s)
Initiative #5: Become more environmentally sustainable.	
A. Continue to invest in eco-friendly infrastructure through the City's Capital Improvement Program, focusing on stormwater infrastructure and investments in City facilities.	
Public Works	Planning
B. Explore options to lessen the environmental impacts of the City's fleet and support the use of alternative powered vehicles by the public.	
Public Works	Support Services
C. Take proactive measures for stewardship of Snohomish's rivers.	
Public Works	Planning
D. Encourage sustainable development through the City's land use regulations.	
Planning	Economic Development
E. Encourage reduction of energy consumption by City government, builders and developers, residents, business owners, and visitors.	
Planning	Economic Development, Public Works
Initiative #6: Cultivate local businesses and promote the City as a great place to do business.	
A. Update the City's Economic Development Plan in ways that enhance the business climate and strengthen the success of local businesses.	
Economic Development	City Manager
B. Collaborate with partners to strengthen the skills and employment opportunities of Snohomish residents.	
Economic Development	City Manager
C. Facilitate growth and the enhancement of community character by establishing plans and ordinances that support businesses and residents in key opportunity districts.	
Economic Development	Planning, Public Works
D. Attract new residents and businesses by promoting Snohomish's quality of life and supportive business climate.	
Economic Development	
Initiative #7: Strengthen the City's attractiveness as a regional destination.	
A. Enhance the streetscapes of primary corridors and improve gateways, signage, and way-finding to strengthen the City's identity and invite people into the City.	
Planning	Economic Development, Public Works
B. Work with community and business partners to enhance and expand signature events in the area.	
Economic Development	City Manager
C. Work with community and business partners to expand arts and cultural offerings.	
Economic Development	City Manager
D. Promote Snohomish's offerings to regional visitors.	
Economic Development	
Initiative #8: Invest in Snohomish's civic facilities.	
A. Sustain high-quality City services through cost-effective facilities.	
City Manager	Support Services

