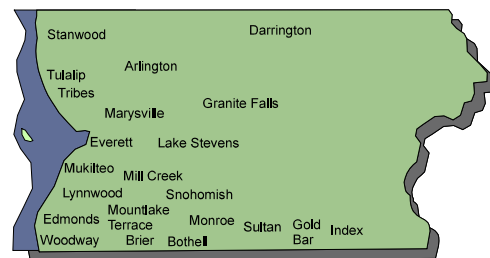


# Snohomish County Tomorrow

## A GROWTH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL



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### STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

Via Zoom

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### MEETING MINUTES

#### Participating Jurisdictions/Members

Arlington	Barbara Tolbert, Vice Chair
Bothell	Liam Olsen
Darrington	Dan Rankin
Edmonds	Luke Distelhorst
Everett	Liz Vogeli
Granite Falls	Matt Hartman
Lake Stevens	Brett Gailey, Co-Chair
Lynnwood	Julieta Altamirano Crosby
Marysville	Kelly Richards
Mill Creek	Brian Holtzclaw
Monroe	Heather Rousey
Mountlake Terrace	Bryan Wahl
Mukilteo	Bob Champion
Snohomish	John Kartak
Snohomish County Executive	Dave Somers, Vice Chair
Snohomish County Council	Jared Mead
Snohomish County Council	Nate Nehring, Co-Chair
Stanwood	Patricia Love
Sultan	Russell Wiita
Town of Woodway	Mike Quinn
Citizen Representative	Mike Appleby
Citizen Representative	Peter Battuello
Citizen Representative	Melissa Blankenship
Citizen Representative	Alicia Crank
Citizen Representative	Michael Finch
Citizen Representative	Linda Hoult
CAB Representative	Phil Lovell

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**Other Attendees/Presenters: (Listed on pages 6-7)**

#### ADD SUMMARY OF POLLS

**1. Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Co-Chair Nate Nehring.

**1.a. Introductions/Roll Call**

Roll call was taken (as listed above).

**5. Briefings; SCT Annual Assembly**

**a. Milestones**

1 Co-Chair Nehring displayed the SCT Milestones for September 2019 – December 2021.  
2

3 **b. Josh Brown; Trends in Traffic, Aviation, Population and Employment**

4 Mr. Brown explained that his focus would be on pre- COVID-19 trends because the data since the  
5 pandemic's start is in continuing flux. The trends leading up to the pandemic were:  
6

- 7
- 8 • Our region was one of the fastest growing in the U.S. last year
  - 9 • Snohomish County was one of fastest growing counties in the U.S.
  - 10 • The Puget Sound region was fast growing in transit; far ahead of other metro areas in the  
11 U.S.
  - 12 • In the land use arena, multifamily developments, including condominiums, townhouses  
13 and more traditional multifamily, had really taken off
  - 14 • There had been record growth at SeaTac airport; it was the eighth busiest airport in the  
15 U.S.

16 While there was a drop in many things when COVID-19 hit, housing values have continued to  
17 increase, and the stock market is doing well.  
18

19 Many pre-pandemic trends would probably accelerate post-pandemic such as: 1) disruption from  
20 technology (e.g. how meetings occur), 2) retail as a key contributor to local government and the  
21 need to fill old shopping malls with something other than retail, and 3) health (possible  
22 continuation of new habits like washing hands, wearing masks in airplanes, etc.)  
23

24 Mr. Brown pointed out some trends to watch looking forward:  
25

26 **Transportation:**

- 27
- 28 • Transit; while commuter service into downtown Seattle has decreased with people  
29 working from home, people who do not have other options will contribute to transit  
30 rebounding
  - 31 • Traffic; freeway levels are already up to 80-95% of pre-COVID levels
  - 32 • Ongoing collaboration on planning in Snohomish County, such as the work on Link Light  
33 Rail, will result in coming out of the pandemic with an effective game plan. The planning  
34 that we have done in this county will make us competitive.

35 **Housing**

- 36
- 37 • We need to look at our options for supplying the missing middle
  - 38 • We need housing that is in between tall buildings and single-family housing. It is an  
39 opportunity for single family builders to ramp up to townhouses.

40 **Aviation**

- 41
- 42 • Studies pre-COVID-19 showed that demand was growing faster than population growth  
43 in the Puget Sound Region. This trend implies that once the vaccine is distributed broadly  
44 domestic travel will expand.
  - 45 • Original forecasts showed there would be a deficit in airport capacity by 2027; with  
46 COVID-19 that might be pushed back 4-5 years but no more than that
  - 47 • Capacity cannot be solved by Paine field; a 3<sup>rd</sup> facility in the south sound is needed

48 **Social Equity**

- 49
- 50 • The issues brought to light last year have been driven by government policy, (e.g. HUD's  
51 historical funding policies, policies on who could get home and college loans after WWII)
  - 52 • PSRC is implementing several initiatives
    - 53 ○ GEAR (staff training with other agencies across Western Washington on race  
54 and equity)
    - 55 ○ Establishing an Equity Advisory Committee who will seek meaningful input into  
56 the work we do by enlisting not just the usual PSRC committee members
    - 57 ○ Regional Equity Strategy; input to next round of comprehensive plan updates

58 **Data**

- PSRC will do pre-COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 “snapshots” of data across all the work they produce
- They will use an equity “lens” to develop data to guide public policy decisions

He closed by saying that Snohomish County has already been able to come together and that will contribute to our recovery.

**c. Russ Elliott; Changed Demand on Infrastructure as Result of Teleworking**

Mr. Elliott said he has been working with many Snohomish County representatives to bring broadband here. The State Broadband Office started in 2019 and has the most aggressive goals in the country - to reach 150 Mbps up and down. Urban areas in the state have the good broadband service but as population density lowers outside urban areas, providers do not have as much interest in ensuring service. The question is how to get providers’ attention and encourage investment. His office approaches that through partnership and enlisting the community into discussion.

There is a need to install infrastructure that will be the right scale, sustainable, and usable in the future. Then we need to maximize funding opportunities and service providers. Finally, it is important to get the projects ready and in a position to capture funding. His office has had success with that strategy; they recently got USDA funds for Point Roberts (just south of the border with Canada).

He recommends that our communities identify their areas of need and then approach his office for help to get funding.

He also encouraged participation in the State Broadband Survey. Survey results so far show that we have good access along the I-5 corridor, but it drops further away from the freeway. Under 25 Mbps is inadequate broadband service; 63% of the people responding to the survey have less than that. (For example, the Frontier Airpark documented their poor service and the state, as a result, is helping.)

Plans for 2021-2023 include hiring a digital equity officer to incorporate “best practices,” and address language barriers.

He suggested that the next steps for his office and Snohomish County communities are: 1) fill out the survey at [broadband.wa.gov](http://broadband.wa.gov), 2) identify “shovel ready projects” for funding applications, 3) hire a Broadband Office Digital Equity Manager, and 4) design and implement a Digital Equity and Inclusion program.

His presentation can be viewed [here](#).

**6. d. Chris Mefford; State of Economy, Regional Recovery**

Mr. Mefford gave the Assembly an update on the Economic Alliance Snohomish County’s transition.

In discussing regional recovery, he predicted that once the vaccine is widely distributed and the pandemic brought under control then economic productivity should start to open up.

He noted that there was a steep spike in unemployment at the start of the pandemic. Unemployment is low as of November 2020 (4.8%), though that figure probably does not reflect people that are underemployed. If recovery occurs at a similar pace as previous recoveries, it will take many months. He gave, as an example, New Orleans which took over a year to get much of its businesses going again.

Last year due to the pandemic Snohomish County lost the most jobs in aerospace jobs. Government, education, health, and retail jobs were also lost. The highest loss in occupations were in management, construction and extraction, food preparation and serving, production, office and administration support, sales and related. These occupations are in sectors where employees could not work from home.

1  
2 Our near-term goals should be to: 1) make it safe to work (or play), 2) make it safe to get to work,  
3 and, 3) make it safe for our family while at work (e.g. childcare). The economy needs the  
4 vaccination rates to accelerate and the governor to tweak the phases, so they serve the  
5 economy.  
6

7 Longer term expectations are that major employers will drive the recovery and small businesses  
8 will follow. Restarting the economy will be slower than desired but people will want to get out of  
9 the [home] office. Key indicators to watch include air travel, hotel occupancy, and convention  
10 attendance. He predicted that the Seattle area will lead the country with tech and competitive  
11 advantages. Within the region, cities must show a plan to scale and accommodate growth, or  
12 they will lose out.  
13

14 **e. Question and Answer**

15 Audience members posted questions for the panelists. The questions, along with the panelists'  
16 answers follow:  
17

18 Question: Can we leverage broadband infrastructure with other infrastructure needs? Russ Elliott  
19 replied that would be a critical thing to do.  
20

21 Question: Can we expect reverse commutes into Snohomish County as well as changes in  
22 living/purchasing patterns afterwards? Josh Brown replied that those changes are happening  
23 now. Reverse commutes have to do with major job centers. People go both directions already.  
24

25 Question to Chris Mefford: Having worked now in Snohomish County [as interim CEO of EASC]  
26 do you see any opportunities for the county? Mr. Mefford replied that in Seattle the hot topic is  
27 business taxing levels. The business climate is poor, and the County can take advantage of that  
28 to be more competitive.  
29

30 Question: Do PUDs have [capabilities to help install broadband infrastructure]? Russ Elliott  
31 replied that the challenge is to not overbuild private infrastructure. PUDs can be a big part of the  
32 equation in supplying infrastructure, but they are not recognized by the federal government as  
33 being part of the communication sector.  
34

35 Question: If [governments] laid some of the infrastructure [would it encourage] private suppliers of  
36 broadband to invest more? Russ Elliott explained that there should be a policy of "dig once."  
37 Every subdivision should have pipes installed for broadband along with the other infrastructure it  
38 installs. It is more expensive to dig up streets again later to install broadband.  
39

40 Question: Regarding the business climate in Seattle and the region; what are the cons for the  
41 region of that climate? Chris Mefford replied that Washington's tax structure, particularly the  
42 Business and Occupation (B & O) tax, is confusing. There is no awareness of how to use B & O  
43 incentives because of the way those incentives are established. It is a dysfunctional tax and holds  
44 recovery back. It needs to be addressed to enable business recovery.  
45

46 **f. Summary and Closing**

47 Executive Somers closed by noting that incidents, like floods, wreak havoc but then open  
48 opportunities e.g. for housing, workforce and broadband. Boeing has said it is not going to walk  
49 away from their Everett facility, and the Cascade Industrial Center is progressing. He is optimistic  
50 about the future and looking forward to working with all the jurisdictions here tonight.  
51

52 The audience gave feedback via polls. (The first poll, launched at the beginning of the Assembly,  
53 identified the role that audience members played in their community.) In the second poll 72% of  
54 the audience reported that the Assembly was better than expected.  
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56 When asked via the third poll what they would like SCT programs to address in the future they  
57 reported (highest numbers of votes at the top of the list):  
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- 59 • Affordable Housing & Missing "Middle"

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- Transportation congestion – challenges and solutions
- Economic Recovery
- Homelessness
- Transit including light rail
- Annexation
- General growth issues
- Buildable Lands Report including vacant land availability
- Growth Targets (population and employment)
- Airport & Aviation including Regional Airspace Capacity

**8. Next Meeting Date**

February 24, 2021; 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. by Vice Chair Dave Somers.

All presentations given, discussions held, and actions taken at this meeting are kept on file (via recording) in PDS until six years from December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year.

<b>Presenters, SCT Staff</b>	
SCT Coordinator	Cynthia Pruitt
EASC/CAI	Chris Mefford
PSRC	Josh Brown
WA State Dept. of Commerce, Broadband Offc.	Russ Elliott
<b>Other attendees:</b>	
City of Arlington	Paul Ellis
City of Arlington	Marc Hayes
City of Arlington	Michael Hopson
City of Arlington	Debora Nelson
City of Arlington	Jan Schuette
City of Arlington	Ashleigh Scott
City of Arlington	Don Vanney
City of Arlington	Michele Blythe
Dick McKinley	Alderwood Water & Wastewater District
City of Bothell	Liam Olsen
City of Bothell	Michael Kattermann
City of Bothell	Jeanie Ashe
City of Brier	David Marley
City of Brier	Valerie Rosman
Community Transit	Roland Behee
Community Transit	Ric Ilgenfritz
Community Transit	Deb Osborne
City of Darrington	Reed Rankin
Edmonds	Phil Lovell
City of Edmonds	Diane Buckshnis
Edmonds School Board	Carin Chase
City of Everett	Cassie Franklin
City of Everett	Nick Harper
City of Everett	Scott Bader
City of Granite Falls	Thomas FitzGerald
City of Lake Stevens	Kim Daughtry
City of Lynnwood	George Hurst
City of Lynnwood	Corbitt Loch
City of Lynnwood	Nicola Smith
City of Lynnwood	Art Ceniza
MBA	Dylan Sluder
City of Marysville	Tom King
City of Mill Creek	Tom Rogers
City of Mill Creek	Mike Todd
City of Mill Creek	Stephanie Vignal
City of Mill Creek	Benjamin Briles
City of Monroe	Brad Feilberg
City of Monroe	Rich Huebner
City of Monroe	Deborah Knight
City of Monroe	Ben Swanson
City of Monroe	Stacy Criswell
City of Monroe	Tyler Christian
City of Mountlake Terrace	Erin Murray

City of Mountlake Terrace	Steve Woodard
City of Mountlake Terrace	Kyoko Matsumoto-Wright
City of Mukilteo	Jennifer Gregerson
City of Mukilteo	Louis Harris
City of Mukilteo	Steve Powers
City of Mukilteo	Andrea Swisstack
Naval Station Everett	Rima Blackwell
Naval Station Everett	Glynis Casey
PSRC	Ben Bakkenta
PSRC	Nancy Grennan
Seattle	KIRO Radio
Silver Lake Water and Sewer Dist.	Curt Brees
Sound Transit	Peter Rogoff
City of Snohomish	Judith Kuleta
City of Snohomish	Tom Merrill
City of Snohomish	Glen Pickus
City of Snohomish	Linda Redmon
Snohomish	Jeanine SanClemente
Snohomish	Alice Armstrong
Snohomish	Heidi Johnson
Snohomish	Tony Niolu
Snohomish County	Angela Ewert
Snohomish County	Garth Fell
Snohomish County	Linda Hjelle
Snohomish County	James Henderson
Snohomish County	Ken Klein
Snohomish County	Jay Larson
Snohomish County	Doug McCormick
Snohomish County	Michael McCrary
Snohomish County	Barbara Mock
Snohomish County	Tom Teigen
Snohomish County	Max Phan
Snohomish County	Stephen Toy
Snohomish County	Steve Dickson
Snohomish County	Josh Dugan
Snohomish County	Tiffany Kelly
Snohomish County	Mary Jane Brell Vujovic
Snohomish County	Eileen Canola
Snohomish County-Camano Assoc. of Realtors	Cami Morrill
Snohomish County Council	Megan Dunn
Snohomish County Council	Stephanie Wright
South County Fire	Thad Hovis
Snohomish County PUD	Brenda White
Snohomish County Transportation Coalition	Brock Howell
City of Stanwood	Jennifer Ferguson
City of Stanwood	Kevin Hushagen
City of Sultan	Christina Sivewright
City of Sultan	Jeffrey Beeler
Tulalip	Julia Gold
Washington State Dept. of Commerce	Valerie Smith
City of Woodway	Brian Bogen