

Economic Development

Vision Statement

The Plan includes a Vision Statement that is presented in its entirety within the Introduction of the Plan. The Vision Statement is an aspirational goal that the Plan aims to help bring to fruition through the goals, objectives, and policies of each element. The Vision of Snohomish County is:

We're all in this together: In 2044 Snohomish County is a resilient, vibrant, and inclusive place to live with a high-quality of life where all residents can thrive.

The Economic Development Element furthers the vision by planning for jobs, services, facilities, urban design, and other features that contribute to the ability to make a living wage, and the desire to want to live and work in Snohomish County. The Economic Development Element focuses on job creation and worker education, as well as equity. The Economic Development Element encourages economic and environmental resilience to climate change, natural disasters, public health disasters, and other shocks to the economy, and emphasizes creative placemaking to improve both neighborhood vibrancy and entrepreneurship.

~~((Snohomish County views economic development as an organizing principle of urban activity.))~~
People need to have living wage jobs and income to *afford* to live in a community. Economic development contributes to quality of life: services, facilities, jobs, urban design, and other features that make Snohomish County a place where people *want* to live, ~~((and))~~ work, and recreate.

A healthy economic environment requires a long-term vision of Snohomish County's future that is flexible enough to serve the community in periods of growth and recession and is open to periodic review and refinement.

Snohomish County has significant economic advantages and opportunities including: a superior deep water port, rail facilities, airports, and regional transportation nodes – all of which position the county competitively for national and international trade – renewable resources, leading edge industries, a highly skilled business management and labor force, a fertile environment for the development of businesses and industries in support of the region's advanced manufacturing and high-tech employers, and high quality of life that makes Snohomish County an attractive and desirable location.

~~((Although forecasts project significant future job growth in the service sector, traditional industrial and commercial development represent a substantial part of the economic future of Snohomish County.))~~ Forecasts by the Washington Employment Security Department project that in 2030 the top employing industries in Snohomish County by subcategory will be Health Services and Social Assistance, Aerospace Product and Parts Manufacturing, Accommodation and Food Services, and the top employing occupations by subcategory will be Sales and Related Occupations, Office and Administrative Support Occupations, and Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (Labor Market Info: Projections, July 2022). This type of development requires substantially greater infrastructure availability and faces substantial scrutiny by the community due to its real or potential impacts on the environment. Finding ways to provide for and encourage this development while maintaining the quality of the environment, minimizing the impact on infrastructure, and avoiding pricing industrial and commercial development out of this market, is an important challenge.

Efforts to compile specific actions to further Snohomish County's economic development vision have been conducted, resulting in recommendations that focus on:

- Regulatory Reform - removing barriers that prevent businesses from getting things done;
- Taxes and Fee Structure - demonstrating and rationalizing the value of government services to people and business;
- Physical Infrastructure - implementing needed improvements; and
- Human Capital - education, training, and other human services.

The county has a good track record of cooperation on economic development with cities, including using the public facility district mechanism and establishing tourism promotion areas.

The county's efforts to focus on and enlist support for maintaining and enhancing agriculture also serve as a model for other sectors of the economy.

On January 1, 2023, Snohomish County established the Department of Economic Development to ensure the economic prosperity of our region through facilitation of collaborative public-private partnerships, promotion of a thriving economic climate, and encouraging the workforce to meet industry needs. Additionally, the Snohomish County Economic Development Initiative was launched in 2016 with a goal of: facilitating collaborative public private partnerships, promoting a thriving economic climate, and encouraging the workforce to meet industry needs.

~~The Office of Economic Development was established to coordinate county resources with other agencies and municipalities to further the goals, objectives, and policies of this chapter.~~

The Economic Development Element is closely tied to other ((sections)) elements of the ((plan)) Snohomish County Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan (“Plan”):

- Transportation and utilities providing the infrastructure to support economic development activities;
- Providing sufficient land zoned to accommodate a variety of employment needs and urban centers for higher density mixed use development;
- Opportunities for economic activities in resource land (agriculture, forestry, and mineral) as well as recreational and tourist pursuits in these lands;
- Affordable housing for a variety of workforce households;
- Human services, childcare services, and workforce training to improve workforce productivity; and
- A healthy natural environment draws tourism and recreation dollars to Snohomish County((-))
- Population and employment forecasts, including 2044 employment growth targets, which guide long-term planning and economic development strategies.

In addition to the comprehensive plan elements, the Consolidated Plan, prepared by Snohomish County for ((HUD)) Housing and Urban Development eligible activities, provides grants to build communities and support residents to participate in their communities.

The economy in Snohomish County relates closely to the Puget Sound Region, Washington State, and other states and nations around the world. These broader relationships play an ever-greater role in the county’s economy, particularly as it relates to trade.

The goals, objectives and policies ((describe)) state how Snohomish County is working to facilitate the provision of jobs and the enhancement of a healthy economy.

GOAL ED 1 Maintain and enhance a healthy economy.

Objective ED 1.A Snohomish County shall endeavor to provide a good quality of life for residents and business – recognizing that business can thrive only in a healthy community.

Objective ED 1.B ~~Snohomish County ((shall balance economic and environmental concerns recognizing))~~ recognizes that a healthy environment is essential to quality of life and shall address environmental concerns to support economic development.

ED Policies 1.B.1 Snohomish County shall encourage the development of established and emerging industries that increase economic and environmental resilience to climate change, natural disasters, public health disasters, and other shocks to the economy.

1.B.2 Snohomish County shall emphasize development and growth of clean technology and green jobs linked to the preservation and sustainability of the natural environment, including jobs in environmental justice, energy efficiency, renewable energy industries, natural resource management, and other technologies that address climate change.

Objective ED 1.C Snohomish County shall recognize and address the needs of small and minority owned businesses as well as larger, established enterprises.

ED Policies 1.C.1 Snohomish County shall consider displacement mitigation strategies for businesses affected by growth and development.

GOAL ED 2 Provide a planning and regulatory environment which facilitates growth of the local economy.

Objective ED 2.A Develop and maintain a regulatory system that is fair, understandable, coordinated and timely.

ED Policies 2.A.1 Snohomish County shall work to ensure that the Snohomish County Code is an understandable, accessible, and user friendly document.

2.A.2 Snohomish County should stress predictability but maintain enough flexibility in the Comprehensive Plan and development codes to allow for timely response to unanticipated and desirable developments.

2.A.3 To ensure timeliness, responsiveness, and increased efficiency, the county shall ~~((develop and))~~ maintain a program of ~~((periodic))~~ continuous review of the permitting process to eliminate unnecessary ~~((administrative))~~ procedures that do not respond to legal requirements for public review and ~~((citizen))~~ resident input.

2.A.4 Snohomish County shall endeavor to process completed development applications within 120 days.

OBJECTIVE ED 2.B Snohomish County shall encourage entrepreneurship and innovation through creative placemaking, defined as the use of arts, culture, and urban design by diverse parties to strategically shape the physical and social character of a place to spur economic development, promote enduring social change and improve the physical environment.

ED Policies 2.B.1 Snohomish County shall plan for an environment where artists, creative and cultural non-profit organizations and businesses, developers, and other parties create a vibrant and creative community with greater arts, cultural, and educational opportunities.

GOAL ED 3 Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses and jobs while working to attract new businesses and jobs.

Objective ED 3.A Promote and support the availability of suitable land for employment.

ED Policies 3.A.1 Snohomish County shall analyze the attributes and availability of vacant and redevelopable land for a range of employment uses to meet employment targets adopted in the Comprehensive Plan.

3.A.2 Snohomish County shall ensure a sufficient base of appropriately designated and zoned land for employment targets as delineated in the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The vitality of the economy calls for large sites as well as parcels suitable for the large number of small businesses within the county.

3.A.3 Snohomish County shall strive to provide assistance and incentives for the intensification and re-use of existing employment areas in incorporated and unincorporated areas.

3.A.4 REPEALED BY AMENDED ORDINANCE NO. 14-129.

3.A.5 Snohomish County shall consider developing a program to prescreen industrial sites to facilitate environmental review and subsequent land use approval.

3.A.6 Snohomish County shall support existing industry by planning for compatible adjacent land uses.

3.A.7 The county shall encourage water-dependent and water-related uses of shorelines as an economic development effort that is consistent with the Shoreline Management Act and the county's Shoreline Management Program.

Objective ED 3.B Ensure economic development efforts of the county are coordinated.

- ED Policies 3.B.1 Snohomish County shall consider developing a capital investment strategy to focus investments in existing and planned areas with greatest potential for living wage job creation.
- 3.B.2 Snohomish County shall focus recruitment efforts on those industries that share and provide services and goods to one another (clusters) and other special opportunities consistent with Countywide Planning Policy ED-1.
- 3.B.3 Snohomish County shall analyze and maximize the utilization of its assets, such as property, access to grant and loan funds, organizational capacity, and human resources, to assist in economic development.
- Objective ED 3.C Support efforts that partner Snohomish County with other public, private, and non-profit economic development entities to advance economic development activities that are consistent with this plan.
- ED Policies 3.C.1 Snohomish County shall partner with other organizations to promote and enhance the county’s national and international trade position, and its attractiveness as an investment destination.
- 3.C.2 Snohomish County shall work with public and private and non-profit groups to preserve and nurture the growth of existing local industries and businesses and maintain a business environment conducive to preserving and growing jobs at large manufacturers and the large and small business operations in the county.
- 3.C.3 Snohomish County shall encourage retention and expansion of existing industries and attraction of new industries by:
- Partnering with local economic development entities to gauge and respond to changing industry needs.
 - Partnering with cities to ensure seamless planning and encourage retention and attraction of living wage jobs.
 - Partnering with organizations that provide venture capital and technical assistance to startup businesses and existing small and minority-owned businesses.
- 3.C.4 (~~REPEALED BY AMENDED ORDINANCE NO. 14-129~~) Snohomish County (~~shall~~) should market the availability of industrial revenue bond financing (~~through the Pilchuck Development Public Corporation, a public corporation chartered by Snohomish County~~) for the purpose of issuing industrial revenue bonds.
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- ~~3.C.5~~ ~~Snohomish County shall market the availability of industrial revenue bond financing through the Pilchuck Development Public Corporation, a public corporation chartered by Snohomish County for the purpose of issuing industrial revenue bonds.~~
- ~~((3.C.6))~~3.C.5 The county shall encourage, and assist with, the adoption of economic development programs in ~~((central business districts))~~ job centers in the county.
- ~~((3.C.7))~~3.C.6 The county shall continue to support funding of public facility districts at Paine Field and within the cities of Everett, Lynnwood and Edmonds.
- Objective ED 3.D Provide opportunities for job creation through promoting the expansion of existing and future potential port and airport industries and industrial areas.
- ED Policies 3.D.1 Snohomish County shall maximize the growth potential of local port and airport resources through continued commitment of resources, improved transportation access to the physical sites, and effective marketing.
- 3.D.2 Snohomish County shall promote greater industrial and commercial development at the Paine Field and Arlington airports.
- 3.D.3 Snohomish County shall institute appropriate zoning and infrastructure for sites which have potential as business distribution and warehousing parks because they maintain excellent transportation linkages to the Port of Everett, Paine Field, or the Arlington Airport.
- 3.D.4 Snohomish County shall support the expansion of public sector port and airport assets to fully utilize economic development advantages provided by state or federal laws, ~~((investigate the creation of))~~ expand the flexibility and usage of foreign trade ((zones,)) zone 85 with magnet sites and alternative site framework and consider the creation of a potential Port of Snohomish County.
- 3.D.5 Snohomish County shall prioritize the redevelopment of existing industrial areas and underutilized urban lands and investigate potential incentives that may make redevelopment a greater financial opportunity.
- 3.D.6 ~~((REPEALED BY AMENDED ORDINANCE NO. 14.129))~~ The County shall assist regional and international trade by supporting a diversity of freight modes and intermodal connections along sea, rail, and air networks to connect export-oriented goods with global markets and workers, as well as meet environmental goals.
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- GOAL ED 4 Support economic development by providing adequate levels of infrastructure and promoting technological advancements consistent with this plan.
- ED Policies 4.A.1 The county should target infrastructure funding to support the retention and attraction of living wage jobs.
- 4.A.2 The county and its cities should investigate the potential for tax revenue sharing to assist in the provision of reasonable levels of public services in unincorporated UGAs.
- 4.A.3 Snohomish County shall participate in efforts to provide innovative options to finance public infrastructure in support of economic development.
- 4.A.4 The county shall provide timely demographic, cartographic, employment, permit, and other development related information and data to support public and private sector planning, development, and marketing needs.
- 4.A.5 Snohomish County shall participate in the preservation of railroad rights of way for future rail transportation needs through such methods as interim trail use or purchase.
- 4.A.6 Snohomish County will work with public and private providers of utility infrastructure to promote improved practices, standards and facilities to a level that enhances economic development in the county.
- GOAL ED 5 Support economic development by promoting education and training opportunities for the work force and aligning human service delivery with employment opportunities.
- Objective ED 5.A Snohomish County shall promote education and training opportunities for the work force.
- ED Policies 5.A.1 Snohomish County shall participate in the community-wide effort to support expansion of public and private colleges and universities offering baccalaureate and master’s degrees within Snohomish County and support the community-based economic development programs at Everett and Edmonds Community Colleges.
- 5.A.2 Snohomish County shall encourage and, where feasible, help finance vocational-technical education and skills training opportunities that help retain existing aerospace and advanced manufacturing industries((:)); retrain timber industry workers((:)); retain and train healthcare workers, construction workers, and information technology workers; integrate
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training and education with current and projected industrial employment needs~~((7))~~; and encourage business/government partnerships in training and education.

5.A.3 Snohomish County will partner with governments, businesses, educational institutions, and other ~~((stakeholders))~~ parties to pursue and better align education and training with employment opportunities.

5.A.4 REPEALED BY AMENDED ORDINANCE NO. 14-129.

5.B Snohomish County shall align human service delivery with employment opportunities.

Objective ED 5.B.1 The County shall encourage initiatives that drive diversity, equity, and inclusion, and support equal employment opportunities within the local workforce.

5.B.2 The County shall work with federal and state funding and state regulators to encourage ample and safe childcare opportunities, particularly for working families.

GOAL ED 6 Encourage sustainable use of resource areas for economic development.

Objective ED 6.A Provide policies and programs to help ensure the sustainable use of timber, agricultural, and mineral resources as well as recycled resources.

ED Policies 6.A.1 Snohomish County shall seek financial assistance through grants and loans to encourage research and development into the production of value-added wood products and provide opportunities and incentives for small businesses and cottage industries that manufacture value-added wood products and products using regional forestry commodities.

6.A.2 The county shall conserve and enhance existing agriculture efforts and support innovative farming approaches as an essential part of local and regional economy and food and farm product supply.

6.A.3 The county shall develop designations and codes to encourage the extraction and marketing of mineral resources in an environmentally responsible fashion.

6.A.4 Snohomish County shall develop a program of incentives to encourage or maintain local recycling based industries using stockpiled or regionally generated recycled materials.

6.A.5 The county shall investigate incentives, tax breaks, or direct subsidies to encourage the development of ecosystem rehabilitation industries.

- Objective ED 6.B** Promote the growth of tourism resources as a clean, nonpolluting, and sustainable source of jobs and economic opportunities in Snohomish County.
- ED Policies 6.B.1** Snohomish County shall update and implement the strategic tourism work plan to strengthen the county’s tourism development and promotion initiatives.
- 6.B.2** Snohomish County shall support ventures in resource tourism and outdoor recreation that are financially viable and environmentally responsible.
- 6.B.3** Snohomish County shall recognize the value of archeological and historic preservation to economic development initiatives. This includes promoting historic resources as a tourism resource, while ensuring alignment with state and federal obligations and best practices in preserving the county’s cultural and historic resources.
- 6.B.4** Snohomish County shall provide funding, as appropriate and available, to the Snohomish County arts community to help realize the potential of art as a tourism resource, integrated with other cultural programs.
- 6.B.5** The county shall encourage water-dependent and water-related tourism development and use of shorelines consistent with the Shoreline Management Act.
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