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“The Future We Choose”: Snohomish County Executive Delivers 2018 Budget

Budget supports public safety, veterans, economic development, and neighborhood transportation

EVERETT, Snohomish County, September 21, 2017—Today, Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers delivered his 2018 Budget Recommendations to the Snohomish County Council. The County Council will deliberate and adopt a budget to fund Snohomish County for 2018.

“I have included funding for key public priorities, namely public safety, economic development, local transportation mobility, improved customer service, and a sustainable budget,” said Somers. “Most importantly, my budget is balanced and responsible. We must address today’s priorities, while working to create the future we choose. We will continue to plan for whatever opportunities or challenges may come our way.”

Executive Somers set five key goals for the 2018 budget:

1. Maintain a safe, resilient, and livable Snohomish County.
2. Diversify and strengthen the local economy.
3. Improve transportation mobility.
4. Improve customer service and make county government more efficient and responsive.
5. Maintain sustainable budgets and maximum transparency.

By investing in critical areas of county responsibility—public safety, infrastructure, innovation, and reform—Snohomish County is planning for future growth and the resulting increase in demands for services.

The 2018 recommended budget invests in the following key priorities:

The budget restores full funding to the Sheriff’s Office for 2017 and 2018; eliminates cuts for most other law and justice agencies in 2018; adds five new deputies to the Sheriff’s Office; funds necessary technology upgrades to improve the safety and efficiency of Sheriff’s Office operations; and otherwise continues our history of ensuring the hard-working sheriff, his deputies, and civilian staff have the resources they need to face our challenges. In addition, the proposed 2018 budget also expands the county’s successful embedded social worker program to north county.

The budget increases contributions to the county’s Veterans Assistance Fund to take it to over \$1 million total. This fund is used to assist vets in navigating a complex VA system, ensuring they receive all federal benefits they have earned. The fund also provides everything from emergency vouchers for rent, to food, to burial for indigent veterans. We are also creating a special hiring program for veterans and helping with job placement assistance for family members of those serving at Naval Station Everett. Finally, as part of the

courthouse renovation, we will be creating an expanded and more prominent veterans memorial in our new courtyard to pay tribute to our veterans.

The 2018 recommended budget also launches our Snohomish County Neighborhoods Initiative. The county will focus on neighborhood gridlock and ways we can address chokepoints to help ease congestion on our local roads. This initiative incorporates the countywide sidewalk program which is focused on improving safety around schools and enhancing neighborhood connectivity.

The budget also continues support for the STEP [Service, Technology, and Excellence Program] Initiative. Executive Somers is grateful that the County Council has supported the continuous improvement office. In the long term, this will have a profound impact both on how services are delivered and on overall efficiency. The STEP Initiative, based on LEAN principles, will help the county evolve into a better, more effective operation that not only improves customer service, but also maximizes the use of resources that are available for county services.

The recommended general fund budget for 2018 is \$252,147,199. The total for all funds is \$929,466,614.

“Snohomish County is the second fastest growing county in the United States. Our secret is out!” said Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive. “With commercial air service and light rail coming, UW Bothell and the new WSU campus both growing, a redeveloping Port of Everett, and so much more, there are a lot of exciting things happening in Snohomish County.”

Snohomish County is the third largest county in the State of Washington by population and is the second fastest growing county in the country. Snohomish County is home to the largest manufacturing facility in the world and is one of the top tourist destinations in the region. From the waves of Puget Sound to the ice fields of Glacier Peak, Snohomish County has diverse ecosystems, while also being home to a thriving agriculture industry and dynamic urban centers.

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