

Contact:

Kent Patton Joshua Thompson
Kent.Patton@snoco.org Joshua.Thompson@snoco.org
425-388-3883 425-388-2576

Snohomish County Approves 2019 Budget

Public safety, affordable housing, economic development, and fiscal accountability are top priorities

EVERETT, Wash., November 19, 2018 – Today, the Snohomish County Council unanimously approved the county’s budget for 2019, prioritizing public safety, housing affordability, economic development, and fiscal responsibility. The total General Fund budget is \$263,647,945. [Editorial note: these and other budget numbers may slightly change as final budget reconciliations are made.] The total of all budgets—including General Fund, Roads Fund, and enterprise funds—is approximately \$983 million.

“I am proud of the budget we approved today, because we were able to focus on issues that matter to our residents, while spending our resources carefully. We were able to address public safety issues, economic development, affordable housing options, and combat homelessness,” said Council Chair Stephanie Wright. “I appreciate the hard work and passion of my council colleagues and the unprecedented collaboration with the Executive. Council continued to work closely with the Executive after he delivered his proposed budget, resulting in additional opportunities to invest in important priorities such as adding new deputies and establishing a gang unit within the Sheriff’s Office. By working together this year, we increased transparency to the process and produced a better final budget.”

“I look forward to signing the budget as quickly as possible. We delivered on our highest priorities: public safety, creating jobs, providing more affordable housing, and getting the county’s finances on stable footing,” said Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive. “I want to thank the County Council and countless county employees who all came together as a team. We want to build on this success and continue delivering exceptional service for our residents.”

“I am proud to champion a budget that invests in our key responsibilities and keeps our neighborhoods safe,” said Terry Ryan, Snohomish County Council Vice Chair. “Our budget continues our efforts to stabilize the County’s finances while increasing Public Safety and investing in our infrastructure.”

“It was critical that we include the revenue stabilization fund and other key elements of our fiscal health,” said Brian Sullivan, Snohomish County Councilmember. “If we want to continue making progress on public safety, human services, and our other key priorities, the finances of the county must be kept on a solid foundation.”

“I am very excited that this budget targets key transportation needs as well as ensures the county is ready for the start of commercial service next year,” said Sam Low, Snohomish County Councilmember. “Our commuters need us to think creatively about resolving the most pressing transportation needs in the county, and this budget is a good start.”

“Our partnership in developing the budget was a good model for moving the county forward,” said Nate Nehring, Snohomish County Councilmember. “To invest in our key priorities while avoiding a General Fund tax increase is the surest sign that we are providing what the public expects and needs.”

The approved 2019 budget has a number of important programs, including:

Public Safety:

- A continuing focus on public safety, including five new Deputies, two dedicated to new Gang Task Force.
- A new program to embed a detective in the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office to focus on Domestic Violence cases.
- \$2 million for the start of work on a new South Precinct building for the SCSO [or revenue stabilization depending on Council action].
- Improve technology for Deputies in the SCSO.
- Helping the Office of Public Defense to ensure our justice system is fair for all by increasing funding for certain public safety costs.
- The budget continues the county’s innovative approach to the opioid epidemic.

Neighbors in Need:

- The county has directed an additional \$300,000 toward affordable housing for the homeless, a key area for reducing suffering and improving public safety. We have also carried forward an additional \$1 million from the 2018 budget for efforts to address homelessness.
- In order to help our neediest residents—including seniors, veterans, at-risk youth, and others—the budget provides additional capacity for the Department of Human Services to manage more grant dollars from funding agencies.

Fiscal Responsibility:

- The budget provides an additional \$2.3 million towards stabilizing the county’s risk management fund balance. This ensures the county can easily handle any unexpected costs next year.
- In 2019, the county moves closer to the targeted fund balance of 14%, providing capacity should the economy turn.
- Invests \$1.68million in the Revenue Stabilization fund to help minimize revenue shortfalls during economic downturns.

Making the County Work:

- The budget ensures our technology continues to provide the necessary services to the public and county staff.

- We will continue with our STEP Initiative to improve our operations and give our employees the tools they need to succeed.

Transportation:

- \$134.9 million investment in county roads.
- Seed money of \$1.5 million for SR-2, 522, and other key transportation projects to address congestion.

Economic Development:

- The budget continues the county's focus on diversifying our economy, improving our attractiveness for foreign investors, and targeting economic development opportunities – including the Boeing NMA.

Snohomish County's 2019 General Fund budget does not raise the county's general fund tax levy amount and prepares for the inevitable downturn in the economy. Next year will have a number of major milestones for Snohomish County, including the expected start of commercial air service from Paine Field, the start of Boeing's management of the Future of Flight Aviation Center, and progress on the courthouse project. The 2019 budget allows all of these important projects to continue

###