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## **Snohomish County Public Works is Enhancing Street Sweeping Operations to Improve Water Quality**

*A \$1.5 million grant was awarded by the WA Department of Ecology to purchase high-efficiency street sweepers*

**EVERETT, Wash., August 21, 2019** – Snohomish County Public Works is advancing its street sweeping fleet to add high-efficiency street sweepers, in order to better protect the water quality of local streams and creeks. The county received a \$1.5 million grant from the Washington state Department of Ecology to purchase four new street sweepers and to develop a watershed-focused program. With the use of high efficiency street sweepers, more pollution and debris from county roads will be captured and disposed of properly, before it enters our streams and creeks.

“By incorporating water quality data into sweeping operations, we can more efficiently remove pollution from the road systems before it enters local streams,” said Gregg Farris, Public Works Surface Water Management Utility Director. “We are excited to collaborate with the Public Works Road Maintenance Division on the street sweeping program because it is a cost-effective way to continue to protect our water resources now and into the future.”

By investing in new technology, the two divisions (Surface Water Management (SWM) and Road Maintenance) are able to take another step toward improving water quality in Snohomish County. The new, high-efficiency machines will pick up 65 percent more fine dirt than mechanical street sweepers, including particles the size of a grain of rice. A contributor to surface water pollution is rubber particles that shed from tires driving on the roads. The new street sweepers will be able to pick up more of these particles, preventing them from ending up in our local waters or getting captured in storm drains. High efficiency sweepers also reduce the amount of material vacuumed out of storm drains, decreasing the amount of resources used for storm drain cleaning.

“We take pride in maintaining Snohomish County’s more than 1,600 miles of roads,” said Steve Flude, Road Maintenance Director. “With this investment in high-tech equipment, we are able to diversify our fleet to provide safe road travel and cleaner waterways.”

The new street sweeper program will be developed in 2020 and rolled out in 2021, with more staff dedicated to keeping our roads clean and free of debris. The program will establish sweeping priorities based on pollution loads, traffic volumes, proximity to polluted streams, and tree cover.

**About Snohomish County Public Works**

The Snohomish County Public Works Department constructs and maintains county roads; controls and manages surface water quantity, quality, and fish habitats; and oversees the recycling and disposal of solid waste. The department's main office is located at 3000 Rockefeller Ave., Everett, WA 98201. For more information about Snohomish County Public Works, visit [www.snohomishcountywa.gov/PublicWorks](http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/PublicWorks).

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