



CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

Friday, August 15, 2025 @ 9:00 AM

Snoqualmie City Hall, 38624 SE River Street & Zoom

MAYOR & COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Katherine Ross

Councilmembers: Ethan Benson, Cara Christensen, Catherine Cotton, Bryan Holloway, Jo Johnson, Louis Washington, and Robert Wotton

This meeting will be conducted in person at Snoqualmie City Hall and remotely using Zoom.

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Press *9 to raise your hand to speak. Raising your hand signals the meeting moderator that you have a comment.
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CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

AGENDA APPROVAL

SPECIAL BUSINESS

- [1.](#) Strategic Plan with BERK Consulting

ADJOURNMENT

Snoqualmie Strategic Plan

Council Retreat – August 15, 2025

WORKING DRAFT DOCUMENT



STRATEGY ■ ANALYSIS ■ COMMUNICATIONS



Agenda and Project Context

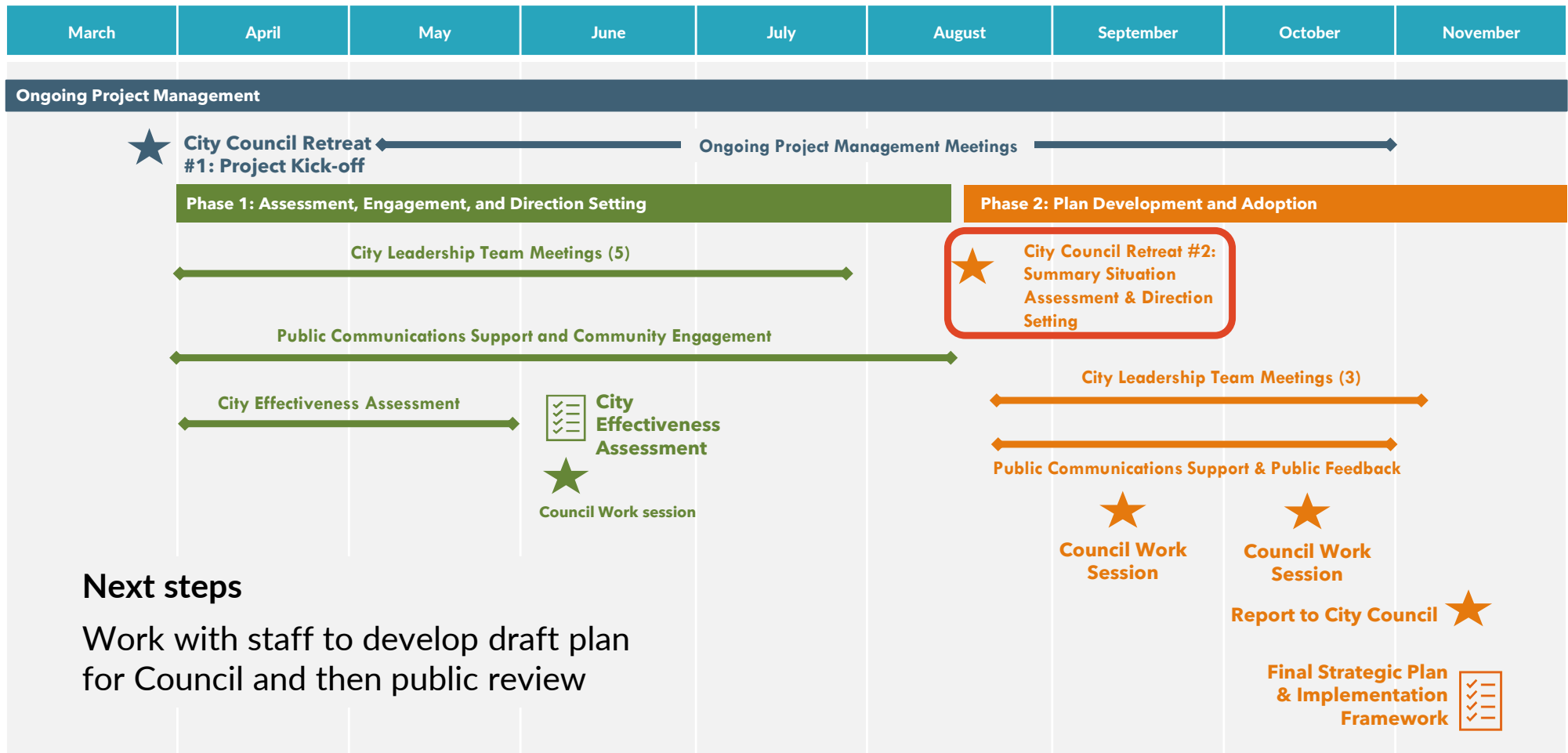
Today's Objective: substantially advance core Strategic Plan content

Agenda

Part 1: Crafting Guiding Statements: Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles (about 45 minutes)

Part 2: Priority Setting and Strategy Development (about 90 minutes)

Part 3: Looking Ahead to Implementation (about 30 minutes)



Next steps

Work with staff to develop draft plan for Council and then public review

Strategic Planning Inputs

- Council deliberation and direction
- Staff discussions and suggestions
- City Effectiveness Assessment
- Community and stakeholder engagement
- Comprehensive Plan
- Other Planning Documents (i.e., Utility System Plans, Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Plan).

Proposed Strategic Planning Products

- 1. Public-facing Strategic Plan**
 - Guiding Statements: **Vision, Mission**, etc.
 - A targeted number of **Major Initiatives**
 - Additional **Strategies** for improving City services
- 2. Implementation Framework**
 - Agreements for how the City will integrate the Strategic Plan in ongoing decision making
 - Phased action steps and performance measures for priority areas of focus



A Reminder of Our Purpose in Strategic Planning

Why Does Snoqualmie Want a Strategic Plan?

The City of Snoqualmie is developing a Strategic Plan because:

- The community faces many short- and long-term opportunities and challenges.
- You can't "do it all" given real world constraints.
- It wants to engage the community in a conversation about how to best raise and invest public resources.

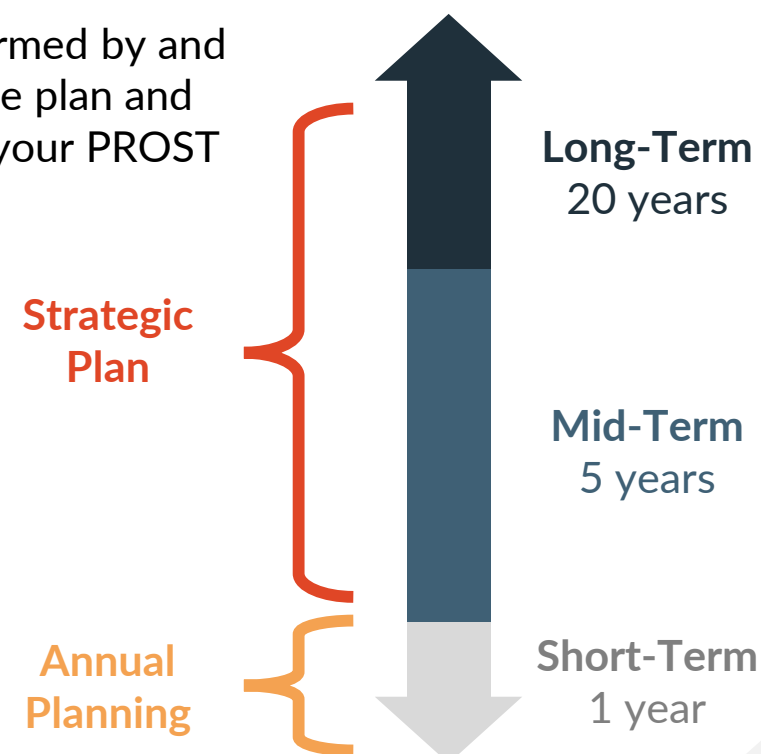
The objective is alignment around:

- What matters most for the community.
- What you will do and will not do.

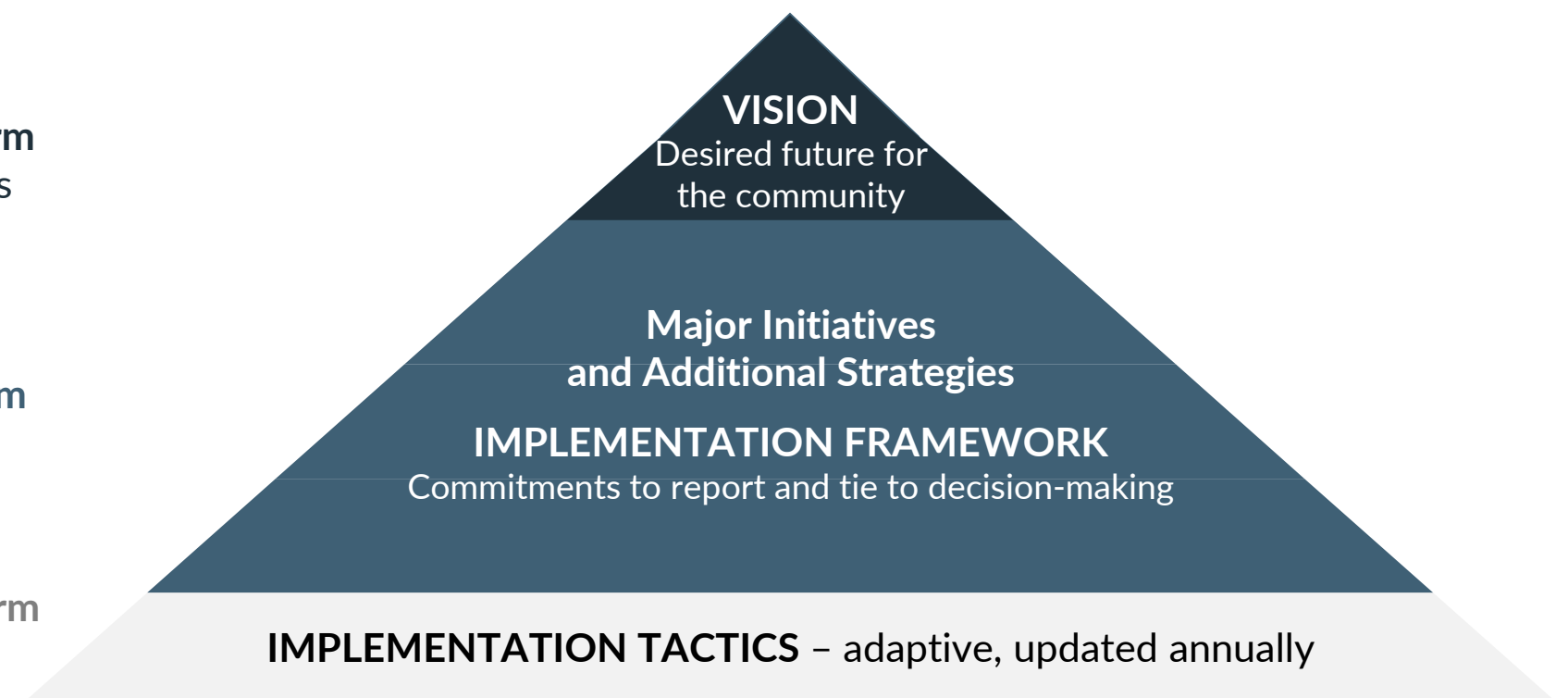
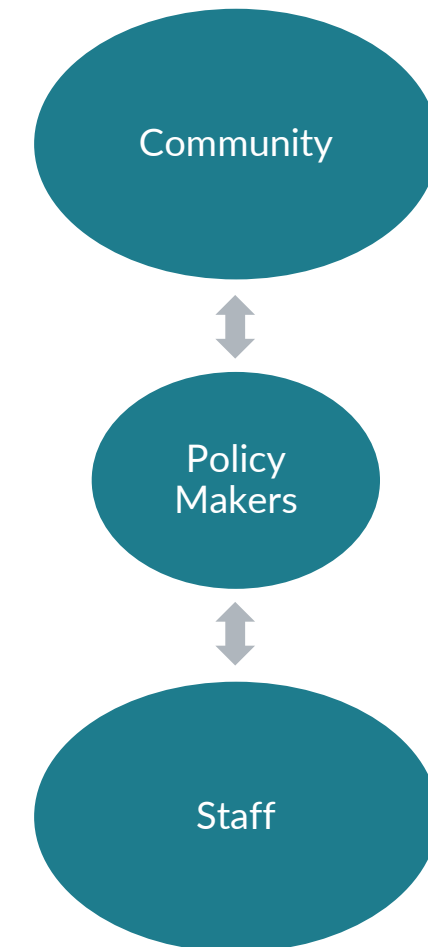
Plan Altitude and Contents

A short document with a long-term direction for the community and for the City's operations, plus a process for annual implementation.

Your Strategic Plan is informed by and guides your comprehensive plan and operational plans such as your PROST Plan, CIP, etc.



We're
working
towards
alignment:



Engagement Update: Who We Heard From and How

We used a mix of engagement methods to balance **breadth** (broad community representation) and **depth** (focused conversations with Council-identified priority groups):

Interviews

- Human Services: A Supportive Community for All
- YMCA: Staff
- Youth: Student Representatives from the School District
- ROA: ROA Outreach Manager
- Economic Development: SnoValley Chamber of Commerce

Discussion Groups

- Business community
- Seniors
- Downtown residents
- Human services providers (10 organizations)

Tabling

- Splash Pad Opening
- Big Truck Day

Survey and Online Engagement Prompt

- Online Engagement Prompt mirroring in-person tabling questions
- NCS Survey  The National Community Survey

Communications

- City website, e-newsletter, and social media

Engagement Stats At a Glance

- 200 + people engaged
- 5 interviews
- 4 discussion groups
- 2 tabling events
- 363 households completed the mailed National Community Survey.

We heard many positive stories about why people love living in Snoqualmie, what drew them here, and why they choose to stay. The following materials will focus primarily on feedback that highlights areas of opportunities for the future.



Splash Pad Opening June 6, 2025

City Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

Our objective today is to advance shared ideas, not draft language. Future meetings will focus on revision of proposed draft language.

- For Vision, we suggest developing a multi-dimensional description of Snoqualmie’s best future. See the Woodinville example.
- For Mission, we suggest modifying the existing Mission Statement at right, adding stewardship of public resources.
- We suggest developing a short set ideas to include in Guiding Principles or Governing Commitments .

Vision. The desired future for Snoqualmie. Can focus on the community, the City government, or both. Should be aspirational and inclusive of those the City wishes to serve. Should align with **Comprehensive Plan, Vision 2050**, and other relevant guiding documents. Concepts suggested at the March Council retreat:

- Small town feel with strong character enhanced by natural beauty, historic roots, and local arts.
- Vibrant, connected, cohesive retail districts.
- A safe, healthy, connected place to live.
- A community open to and supportive of individuals of all backgrounds and ages.
- Responsive, efficient City government.

Mission. The role and purpose of the City of Snoqualmie. Can be more “nuts and bolts” than a Vision statement, describing what the City does and the value it provides. Concepts suggested at March retreat:

- Delivering high quality public services in a fiscally responsible manner.

Values, Guiding Principles, or Other.
The City’s commitments for how it will operate and interface with members of the Snoqualmie community. Ideas from conversations to date:

- Attention to meeting the diverse needs of all Snoqualmie residents.
- A focus on delivering the greatest value possible for each dollar of public funding.
- An open, transparent, and trusted relationship with the community.

Example Statements from the City of Woodinville Strategic Plan

OUR DESIRED FUTURE

The Woodinville community's hopes for the future are summarized in the four themes described below. Together, these themes outline our Desired Future for Woodinville.

Woodinville is a healthy and connected community.

- Woodinville has a vibrant social life with lively gathering spaces.
- People can walk and bike to local destinations.
- Regional transportation connections provide access to a wide range of employment opportunities.
- There is a strong network of support and community connections for local businesses.
- A variety of neighborhoods accommodate diverse lifestyle preferences.

Woodinville has a vibrant and diverse economy.

- Woodinville embraces its retail and tourism industries.
- There is a range of small office, service sector businesses.
- Local businesses can find affordable commercial space in the city.
- The city can attract jobs that match resident occupations.
- Land use designations support the needs of industry and commerce.

Woodinville has a healthy natural environment

- Woodinville is a city with a verdant tree canopy.
- Parks and natural areas are accessible, multigenerational, and sustainably managed.
- The water quality in streams and creeks is preserved and protected.

The Woodinville community has access to quality services.

- Local government is transparent, communicative, and in conversation with the public.
- Timelines for City processes are predictable.
- The City's website is user-friendly and answers the right questions.
- Public/private partnerships complement municipal services.

CITY OF WOODINVILLE MISSION & GOVERNING GUIDELINES

The City of Woodinville's **Mission** clarifies its primary role and focus. Its **Governing Guidelines** inform how the City operates, makes decisions, and sets priorities.

Mission

The City of Woodinville provides and partners for high quality municipal services that support all community members and advance our collective desired future.

Governing Guidelines

The City of Woodinville is committed to:

- Delivering inclusive and responsive services.**
- Investing City resources in an equitable and transparent manner.**
- The responsible, ethical, and long-term stewardship of natural and financial resources.**

The City of Woodinville provides services for residents directly, via contracted services, or through partnerships with regional organizations.

Services Provided Directly by the City of Woodinville

- Streets
- Stormwater
- Parks
- Engineering
- Development and Permitting Services
- General Government

Services Provided via City Contracts

- Police (contracted through the King County Sheriff's Office)
- Municipal Court & Custody (contracted through the Kirkland Municipal Court & Jail and South Correctional Entity)

Services Provided through Partnerships

- Fire (Woodinville Fire & Rescue District)
- Sewer and Water (Woodinville Water District)
- Schools (Northshore School District)

Source: BERK, 2022

Existing statements – for reference

City Mission Statement
We are the stewards of our natural and built environment, striving to preserve and create an extraordinary community for our residents, businesses, and visitors.

City Vision Statement
Snoqualmie is extraordinary genuine in its beauty, people, and quality of life.

Comprehensive Plan

- Vision Statement.** Snoqualmie is a complete, sustainable, and prosperous small city that provides a high quality of life and maintains long-term value to the benefit of our citizens and the region.
- Central Themes.** Complete Community; Sustainable Development; Prosperity.
- Core Components.** A Unified City with Strong Leadership; A Healthy, Diverse Economy; A Distinctive Sense of Place; A Livable and Complete Community.

From Vision 2050

Cities and Towns. Cities and Towns include a diverse array of jurisdictions, including places near major cities, small residential towns, and free-standing cities and towns surrounded by rural and resource lands.

Cities in Rural Areas. A number of freestanding incorporated cities surrounded by rural lands exist throughout the region. Under the Growth Management Act, these cities are part of the urban growth area and provide access to transportation, local services, and economic opportunity to residents in rural and unincorporated areas.

VISION 2050 calls for these communities to continue to be the primary places for meeting service needs – including shopping, jobs, and services – of both their residents and residents in nearby rural areas. Cities in rural areas are appropriate focal points for rural and resource- based industries and rural areas are typically best served by schools, institutions, and facilities located in adjacent cities and towns. Development patterns in these communities will reflect the size and scale appropriate for smaller towns and should continue to support their walkable town centers.



Emerging Priorities

Areas of focus in the Council work session on the City Effectiveness Assessment June 23, 2025

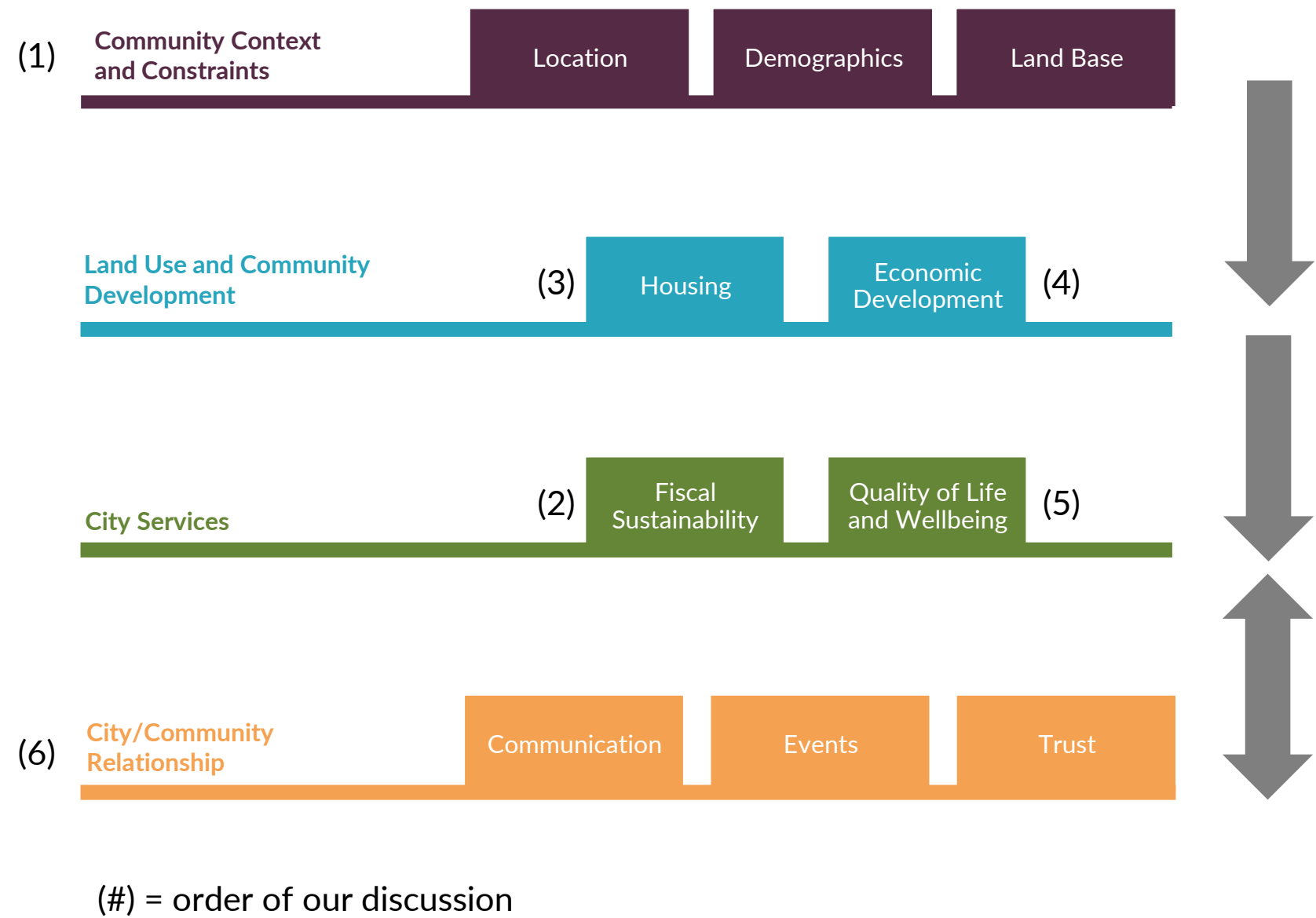
- Housing
- Economic development
- Human services
- Fiscal sustainability of the City

Key points made in today’s materials

- Snoqualmie has grown tremendously over past 20 years, but **land supply will constrain housing and commercial development** going forward.
- **Fiscal sustainability** should be a focus. The ability of the City to generate sufficient ongoing revenue to keep up with the inflationary pace of ongoing expenditures without a vote of the public (i.e., property tax levy lid lift) is limited. Time is becoming increasingly scarce for determining an agreed-upon balance between levels of service and revenues.
- **Economic development** can happen through growing existing businesses and attracting new investment.
- **Housing strategies** should focus on increasing the variety of housing forms to enhance affordability.
- Addressing fiscal sustainability, housing, and economic development will require **trust-building and community engagement**.
- There are **opportunities to improve services** for the community, including youth, seniors, the business community, and others.

Potential Major Initiatives

Potential additional Strategies

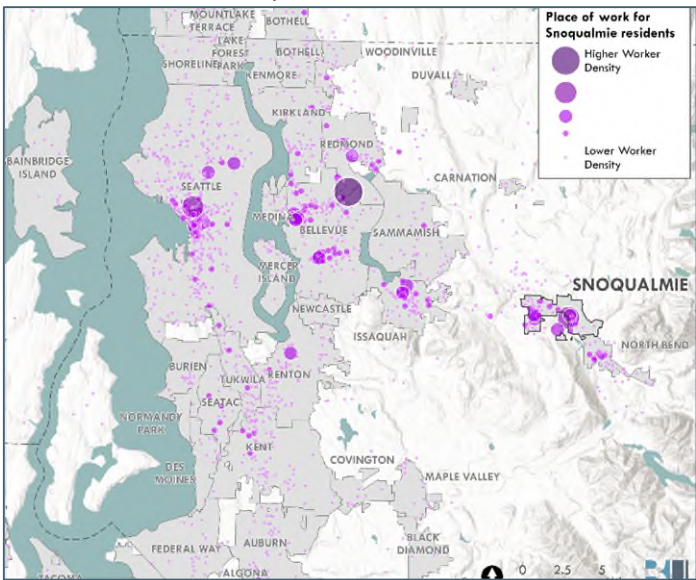


Community Context and Constraints: Location, Demographics and Land Use

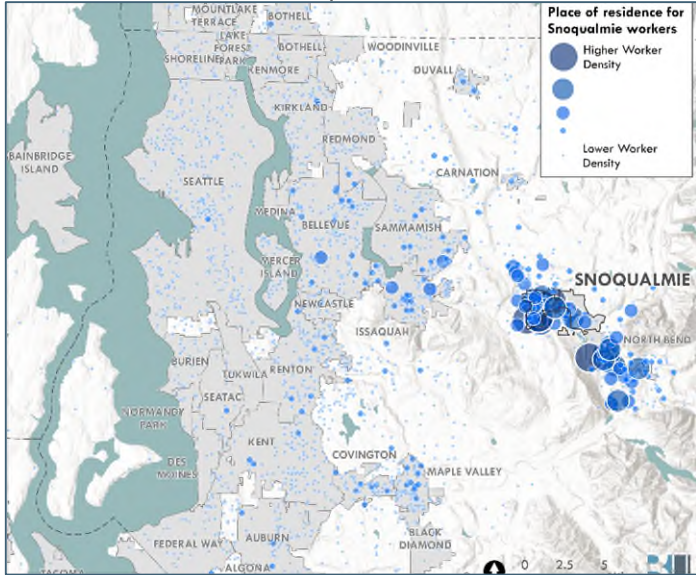
Location	Demographics	Land Use
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- Snoqualmie is located outside of the Puget Sound urban area, with easy access to population and employment centers on the east side of Lake Washington.
- 92% of Snoqualmie workers work outside of the community.
- 89% of those who work in Snoqualmie live elsewhere.
- 11% of the Snoqualmie workforce lives in the community.

Place of Work for Snoqualmie Residents



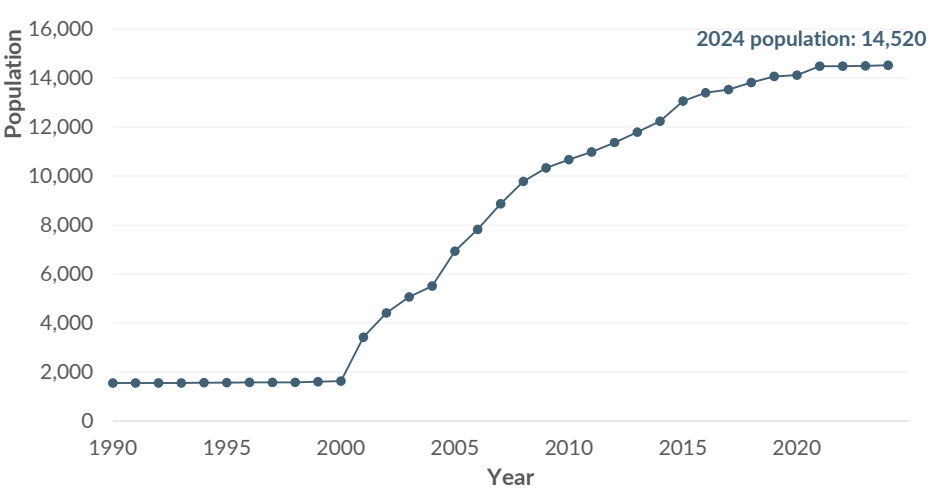
Place of Residence for Snoqualmie Workers



Sources: U.S. Census 2020-2022; BERK, 2025

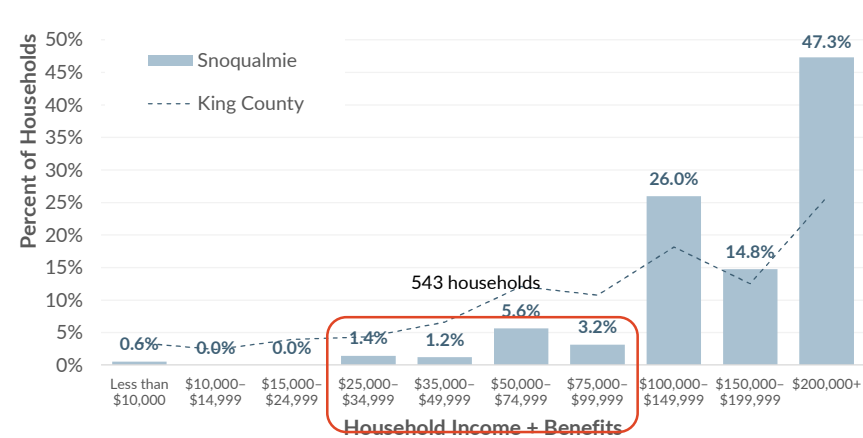
- Snoqualmie’s population grew significantly after the year 2000 with the development of Snoqualmie Ridge.
- Its 2024 population was 14,520, and the 2044 population targets is approximately 15,300.
- Population growth has slowed as available land for new housing development becomes limited.
- Snoqualmie’s median household income is higher than other cities in the Snoqualmie Valley and has steadily increased.

Population Growth in Snoqualmie



Source: 2044 targets from PSRC; historical population data from the WA Office of Financial Management

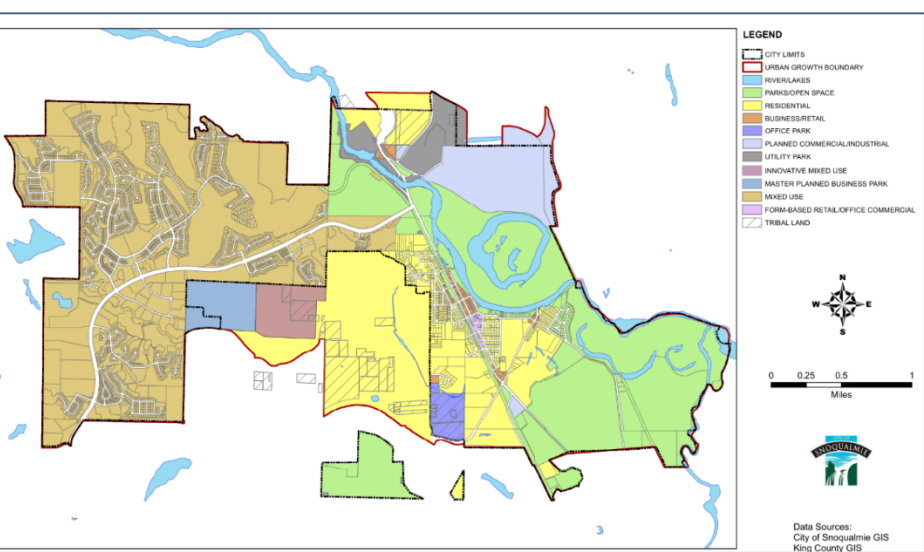
Household Income + Benefits, Snoqualmie and King County



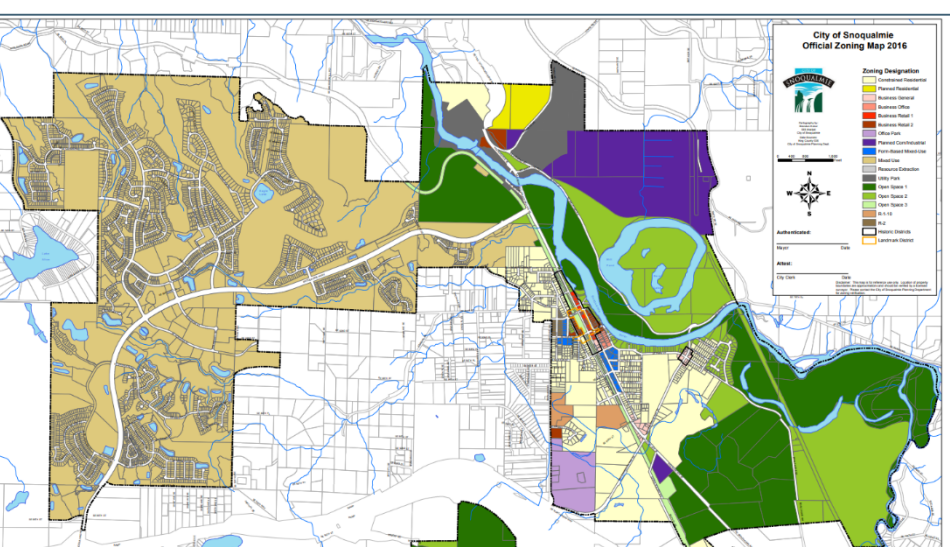
Source: American Community Survey, 2022

- Most Snoqualmie households earn more than a typical King County household.
- Households with incomes \$100,000 or lower may struggle to make ends meet. This includes about 11.5% of Snoqualmie households.
- 64% of households are small families (2-4 members) in Snoqualmie, 13% are large families (5+ members), and 12% are elderly families.

Future Land Use Map (Updated for 2024 Comprehensive Plan)



Current Zoning Map (2016)



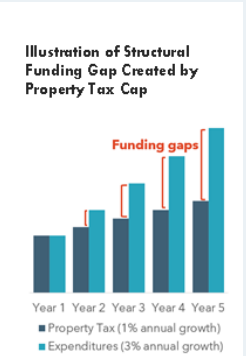
Source: City of Snoqualmie

- If the City annexes additional land, it would also accrue the housing and employment targets of that area.
- The Future Land Use Map has been updated as part of the 2044 Comprehensive Plan Update, but the Zoning Map has not (2016).
- Water rights are also a development constraint.

Facts

Snoqualmie is forecasting greater general ongoing revenues than ongoing expenditures until 2029, at which time expenditures will exceed revenues and the ending fund balance is projected to begin to decline.

- The forecast below is from the 2025-26 Adopted Budget. It will be amended with the change in contracted police services for North Bend.
- The City has a reserve fund to respond to unexpected events such as an economic downturn or emergency. The reserve target is 15% of General Fund expenditures and the City does not anticipate using this during the 2025-26 biennium or over the 10-year forecast period.
- The forecast is based on assumptions that change frequently. The City will need to remain nimble and adaptive financially to the ever-changing macro, regional, and local environment. This a common experience for cities, particularly those dependent on property tax. In Washington, a jurisdiction’s property tax revenues can only increase by 1% annually, unless the public votes for a greater increase (a levy lid lift). A city’s baseline expenditures typically grow more than 1% annually due to inflation, creating a structural funding gap as shown at right.
- Cities and counties facing this structural challenge often shield their residents from experiencing the impacts by creatively managing resources. Snoqualmie has reduced its ratio of FTEs to population (next page).
- Snoqualmie is more reliant on property taxes than sales taxes to fund ongoing police, fire, and park and street maintenance expenditures (see revenue mix on following page). The City is working to rebalance its revenue portfolio so it is more equally weighted between property and sales taxes.
- Cities facing this structural challenge deploy a mix of three strategies for maintaining a balanced budget:
 - Optimize levels of service to align with revenues.
 - Pursue economic development to enhance the tax base.
 - Increase revenues from taxes, fees, grants, and other sources.



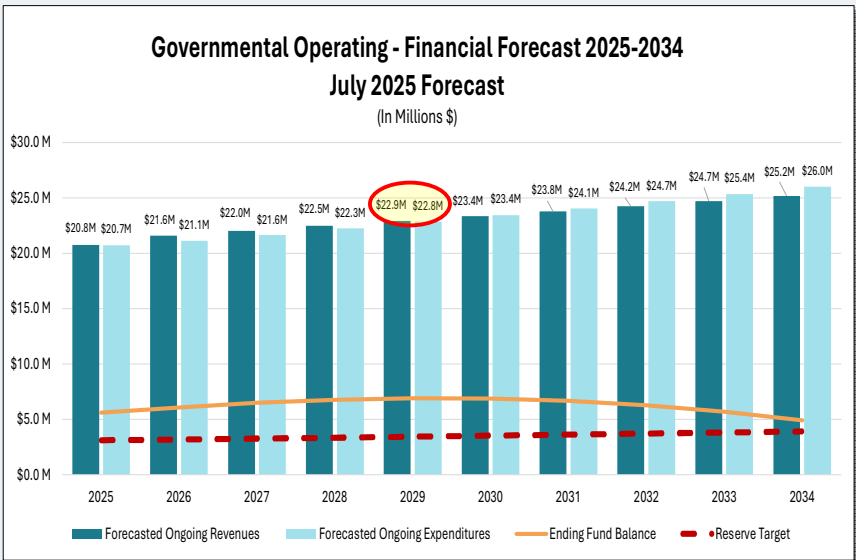
Source: BERK, 2024

Snoqualmie City Services, sorted by 2-year operating budget

City Services	2025-26 Operating Budget (2 years)	2025-26 FTEs
Administration (city management, city clerk, city attorney, communications, finance)	\$10.04 M	19.8
Police	\$8.24 M	16.7
Fire & Emergency Management	\$7.54 M	18.6
Wastewater Operations	\$6.64 M	8.9
Water Operations	\$5.88 M	8.1
Parks & Streets Maintenance	\$5.17 M	8
Information Technology Fund	\$5.04 M	6
Community Development	\$4.02 M	6
Stormwater Operations	\$3.69 M	5.6
Equipment Replacement & Repair Fund	\$2.42 M	1.95
Facilities Maintenance Fund	\$1.37 M	1.38
Human Services Awards	\$0.63 M	0

Notes: Police is the Snoqualmie portion only. Human service awards are included in the Non-Departmental budget. The water, wastewater, and stormwater funds are self-supporting and funded by customer rates. Source: City of Snoqualmie 2025-26 Budget.

Governmental Operating Forecast



Source: City of Snoqualmie, 2025

Community and Stakeholder Input

Balancing Services and Taxes

- Some feedback suggests limited awareness of the full range of City-provided services, highlighting an opportunity for better communication and public education.
“We hardly have any city services. What could they take away?”
- Stakeholder engagement raised some concerns from residents around the City’s fiscal responsibility.
- Past efforts to raise the B&O tax was seen as harmful to some businesses.
- NCS Results: Approval of Snoqualmie’s overall direction declined from 69% in 2023 to 59%.
 - Perception of the value of services for taxes also dropped slightly, from 60% to 56%.
- Community members are most supportive of investment in public safety, parks/open spaces, and city roads and infrastructure. There is dissatisfaction with the economy, but low support for economic development (next page).
- The current climate may be affecting public trust in government broadly, reflected in a 17% decrease in ratings of federal government service quality.

Potential Strategies

Make Efficient Use of City Resources

- Continue to be efficient in personnel costs by reducing overtime expenditures, evaluating City salary and benefits vs. the market, and using attrition and openings to align City staffing with service priorities.
- Periodically align City services with community priorities.
- Pursue efficient regional solutions to service delivery.
 - King County Sheriff’s Office
 - Eastside Fire & Rescue
 - Snoqualmie Valley School District
 - Si View Parks District
 - WSDOT (transfer Snoqualmie Parkway)
 - King County Department of Natural Resources (transfer Snoqualmie Point Park)
 - Snoqualmie Tribe
- Evaluate the benefit/cost of the City’s nine existing boards and commissions.
- Evaluate opportunities to leverage artificial intelligence.

Reduce Levels of Service in Targeted Ways

- Review City-owned properties.
- Reduce parks maintenance costs by transitioning from active to passive uses, turf fields, etc.
- Review vehicle replacement schedule.

Evaluate Options to Align City Operating Revenues with Inflation

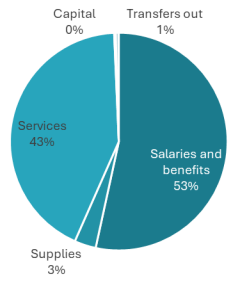
- B&O tax audit (staff driven)
- Comprehensive fee study (Councilmanic)
- Cable franchise fee agreement (Councilmanic)
- Tribe fee-for-service agreement (Councilmanic)
- Square footage tax (Councilmanic)
- Police grant and/or 0.1% Public Safety Sales Tax (HB 2015) (Councilmanic)
- B&O tax rates (Councilmanic)
- Utility tax rates (Councilmanic)
- Lodging tax (Councilmanic)
- Property tax levy lid lift (would require public vote)

City Services: Fiscal Sustainability, continued

Snoqualmie Revenues and Expenditures

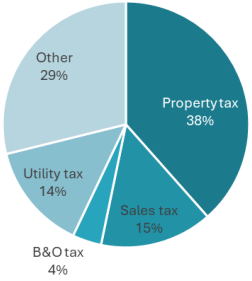
- Snoqualmie experienced the pressures of high inflation in recent years, which impacted the cost to provide services. Increases in personnel costs have been a primary driver of higher costs.
- Salaries and benefits make up more than half of the General Fund budget.
- After the North Bend police contract ends, the City will be attempting to right-size its police staffing and staffing in support departments without a loss of service level.
- Snoqualmie experienced a long period of growth, which provided new revenues to pay for services. The City is feeling some contraction and has adjusted its General Fund forecast to account for lower revenue growth.
- The General Fund is heavily dependent on property tax. The City has taken steps to diversify its General Fund revenue sources and take advantage of local revenue tools.
 - City Council approved a 0.1% increase in the transportation benefit district sales tax in January 2024.
 - Voters approved a 0.1% public safety sales tax in August 2024.
 - The City is evaluating its fee structure and expects to collect more revenue from fees.

2025-26 General Fund Expenditures

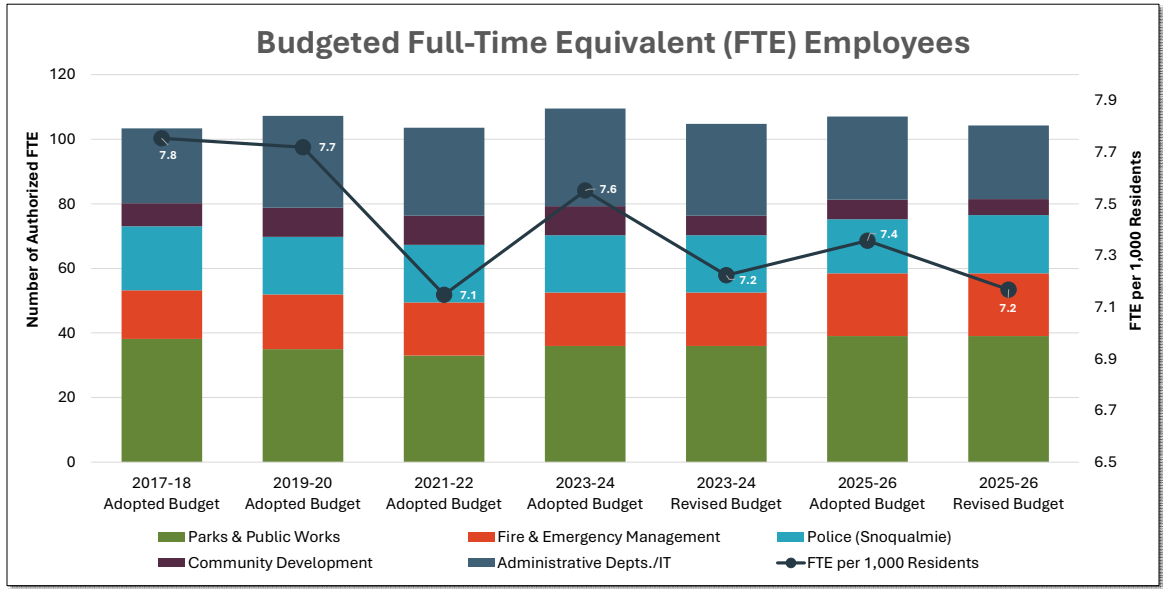


Source: City of Snoqualmie 2025-26 Budget.

2025 General Fund Revenues

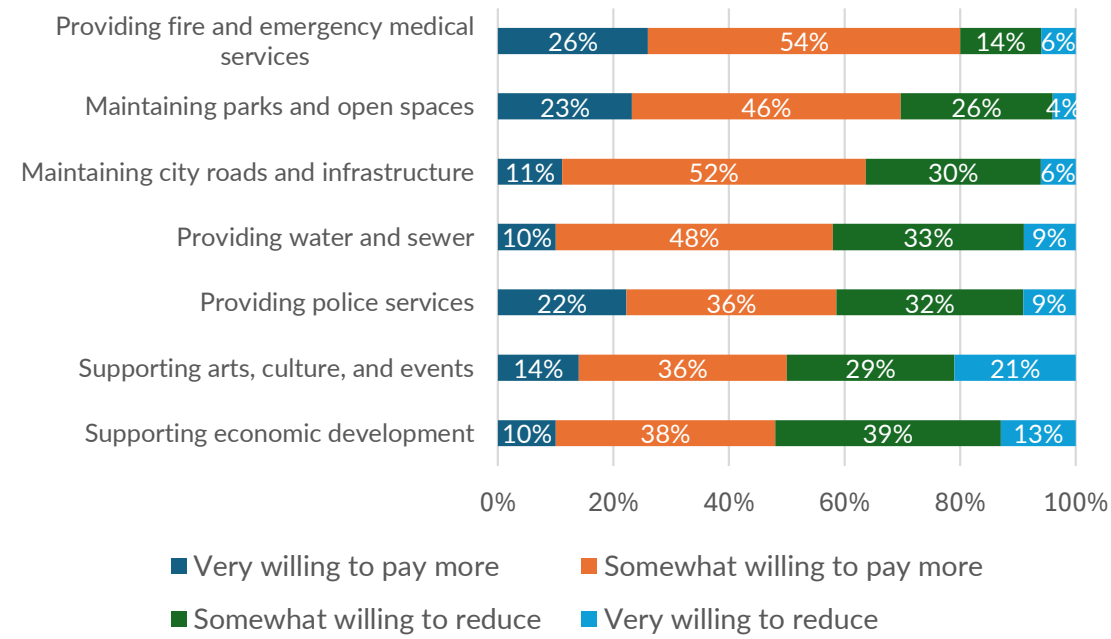


Snoqualmie FTEs per Population



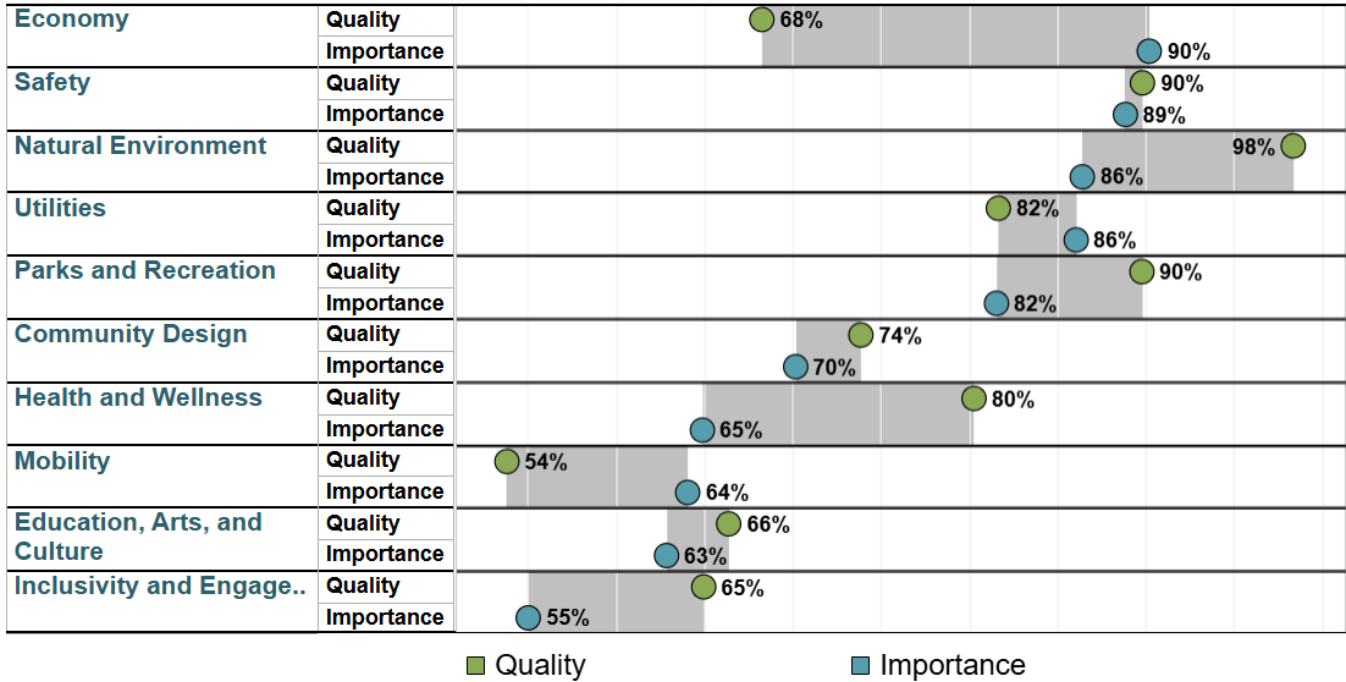
Source: City of Snoqualmie, 2025
Note: The 2025-2026 Revised Budget FTE count includes recommended adjustments based on the end of the North Bend police services contract.

Support for Investment in City Services



Sources: Polco, BERK, 2025.

Balancing Quality and Importance



Sources: Polco, BERK, 2025.

Facts

Land Base

Snoqualmie has a lack of developable land that makes reaching housing targets challenging.

- Approximately 49% of land in Snoqualmie is constrained by critical area regulations, and another 21% is affected by flood hazard restrictions, limiting opportunities for new residential development.
- About 86% of single-family lots fall under ROAs, which often prohibit additional housing such as Accessory Dwelling Units (*LDC Inc, City of Snoqualmie 2055 Growth Targets Analysis, 2024*).
- The City cannot require ROAs to allow for infill housing but could engage the ROA or the Legislature could require it.

Today, the community has a limited supply of housing affordable to low-income residents, the local workforce, and seniors.

- 80% of units are only affordable to households with incomes above 100% AMI.
- As of 2022, the city had only 218 units of income-restricted (51-80% AMI) housing.
- Households with incomes below 100% AMI are very likely to be cost-burdened.
- There is limited housing for seniors.

The City was approved to reduce its 20-year housing growth target from 1,500 to 719 units. King County will likely approve it this fall.

- Request for reduction was based off the 2024 Land Capacity Analysis.
- Implication is that remaining units would have to target the 0-30% AMI income range.
- The City is not expected to directly build or fund these homes. **A city’s responsibility is to create the conditions that that allow affordable housing providers to deliver homes that meet the community’s needs.** To do this, cities:
 - Provide capacity through zoning.
 - Reduce barriers to development.
 - Plan for transit access, utilities, and community services.
- Additional strategies can include:
 - Studying demand and demonstrating housing products that are economically viable and acceptable to the local community.
 - Partnering with non-profit housing providers.
 - Promoting the community as desiring additional affordable housing.

Community and Stakeholder Input

Human Service Provider Input

- **Housing instability and food insecurity are among the most pressing issues in Snoqualmie.**
- There is sustained demand for rental assistance, limited affordable housing options, and rising housing costs are pushing some residents out of the community.
- **For some, a significant share of household income is going toward housing costs.**
 - This leaves residents with less financial flexibility for essentials like food, healthcare, childcare, and transportation.
- **The City could play a stronger role in elevating awareness of unmet community needs,** including housing affordability.
 - Human service providers often act as the City’s de facto human services department and would welcome being more fully engaged.

Resident Input

- While Snoqualmie’s median high household income masks housing-related challenges, community feedback underscores that **housing affordability remains a significant and often overlooked need.**
- **Residents advocated for more affordable housing options,** especially for families, seniors, and local workers.
- NCS Result: Fewer than half of respondents gave positive ratings to the availability of affordable quality housing (49%) and the variety of housing options (49%), both of which scored below benchmarks.
- Some noted the appreciation for the City’s existing affordable units and desire more.

“I work full time as a teacher and live in one of the ‘affordable units,’ but it’s still too expensive. There needs to be more options.” – Resident

Employer Input

- **Employers support more affordable housing options for workers,** noting that without it, it likely adds to difficulty recruiting and retaining staff.

Potential Strategies

Overarching Strategies

- Determine community vision for growth and additional housing density.
- Determine where infill development will be accommodated; create capacity; reduce barriers; plan for infrastructure and services.
- Inventory City- and school district-owned parcels and feasibility of development.
- Complete an annexation study to evaluate the capacity and feasibility of adding residential land.

Strategies from the [2023 Housing Strategy Plan](#)

- Prevent and mitigate displacement.
- Improve the regulatory environment.
- Bring down the cost of development.
- Incentivize new housing.
- Encourage a wide variety of housing types.

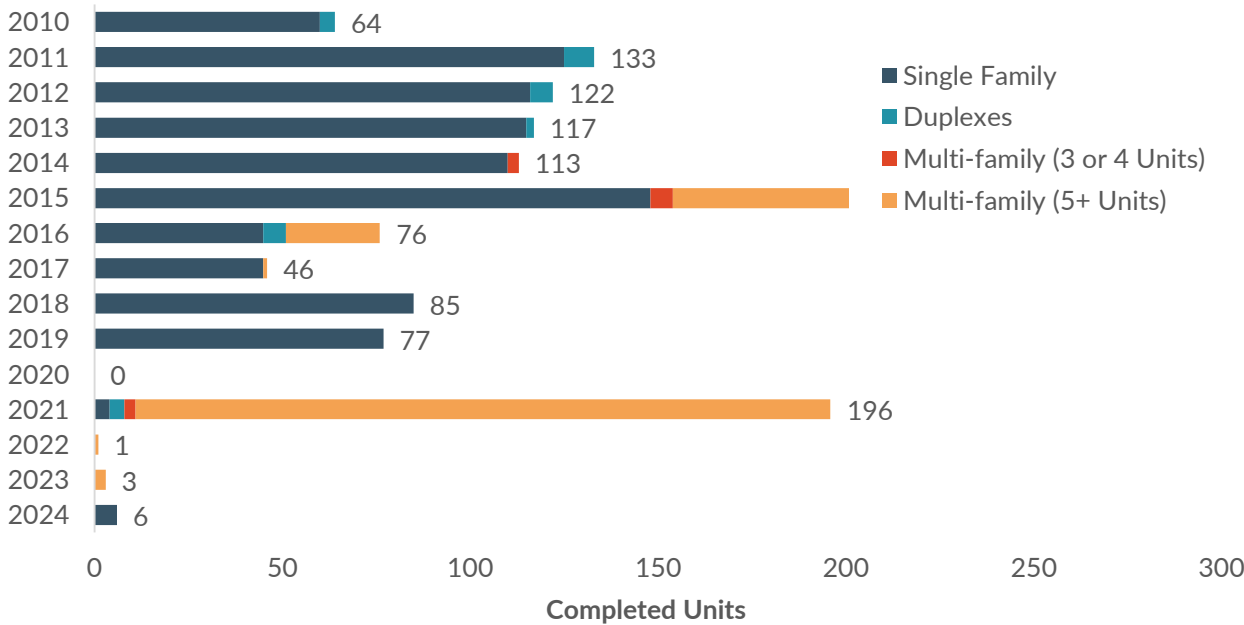
Potential Partners

- Snoqualmie Ridge Residential Owners Association
- Regional public and private sector employers
- Snoqualmie Valley and neighboring cities
- Public and non-profit affordable housing developers
- Local religious groups with land in Snoqualmie

Implications for City Fiscal Sustainability

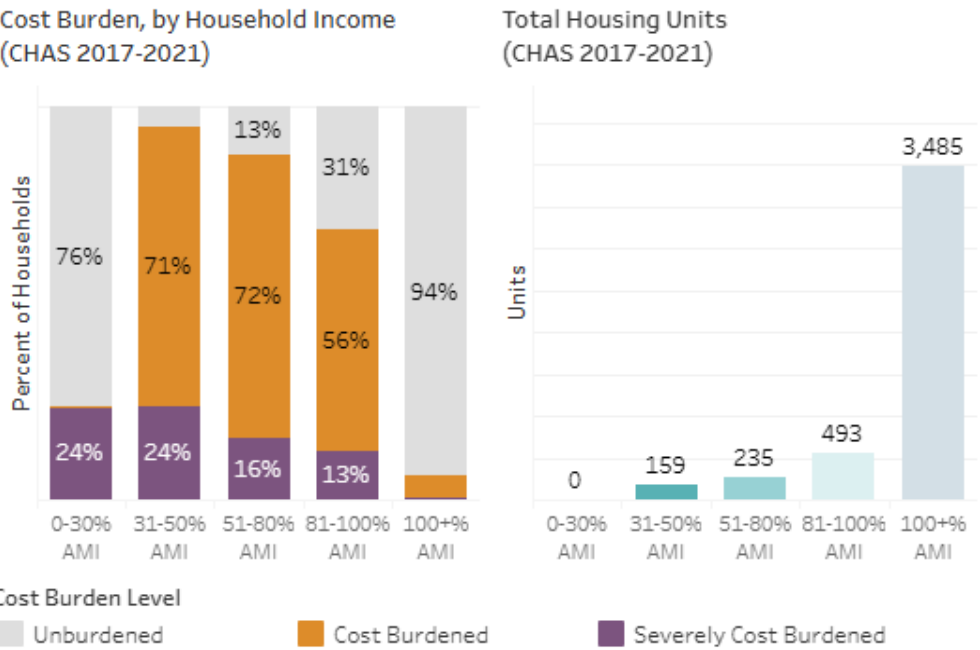
- Population growth will increase demand for local goods and services, aiding the attraction of new local-serving businesses.
 - A larger population base also provides more support for tourism-focused businesses.
- Redevelopment can offset some of the slow down in growth.
 - Infill development can boost taxable value without costly new infrastructure.
 - Annexation of additional residential land may be fiscally challenging or unsupported by property owners and/or the County.

Completed Housing Units by Type and Year



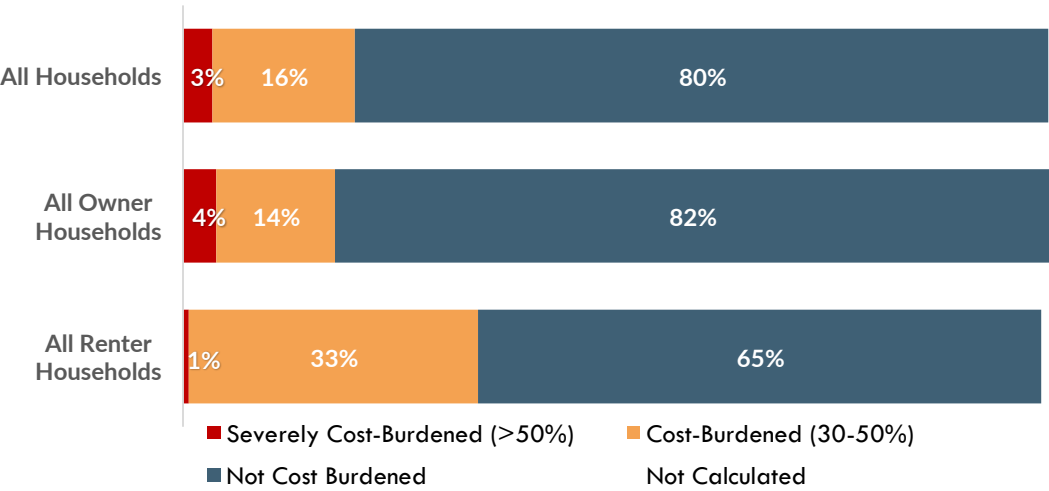
Sources: Office of Financial Management; BERK 2025

Key Housing Affordability Indicators



Source: King County Regional Housing Affordability Dashboard

Proportion of Households by Cost Burden and Tenure



Sources: U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development, Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy, 2017-2021; BERK 2025

Facts

Land Base

- Employment capacity in Snoqualmie is more than sufficient to satisfy its employment growth targets ([2024 Land Capacity Analysis](#)).
- The Office Park and Mixed-Use Commercial zones have the most initial capacity, but the bulk of the City’s growth target is achieved in the Planned Commercial/Industrial zone with the **Snoqualmie Mill site**, estimated to develop 1,851,448 square-feet of commercial space.
- A potential employment zone south of the Ridge lies outside the City and would require annexation to support expansion and job growth.

Employment

- Snoqualmie had 5,424 jobs in 2023. Employment has grown steadily since 2000.
- Snoqualmie’s 2044 employment target is an additional 4,425 jobs (*Snoqualmie 2044*).

Retail

- A strong “pull factor” indicates residents and visitors are spending locally. Snoqualmie is strong in accommodation; food/beverage stores; sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, and miscellaneous retailers (includes Amazon); and furniture, home furnishings, electronics, and appliance retailers. See table below.

Economic Development Commission (EDC)

- Snoqualmie’s Economic Development Commission meets monthly and works to identify diverse economic opportunities, recruit, and retain local businesses. The Commission presents opportunities and recommendations to support strategies and goals set by Council.
- EDCs can struggle without clear roles or decision-making authority and can be less effective if staff capacity is not sufficient to implement recommendations.

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2023 Pull Factor
721	Accommodation	1.72
445	Food and Beverage Stores	1.10
459	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, Book, and Miscellaneous Retailers (includes Amazon)	1.06
449	Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics, and Appliance Retailers	1.04
457	Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers	0.37
444	Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	0.25
455	General Merchandise Retailers	0.24
458	Clothing, Clothing Accessories, Shoe, and Jewelry Retailers	0.78
456	Health and Personal Care Retailers	0.73
722	Food Services and Drinking Places	0.67
441	Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	0.03

A pull factor less than 1.00 indicates “leakage,” with retailers capturing less than the expected retail sales for that good or service. A pull factor greater than 1.00 indicates that retailers are capturing the spending of consumers from beyond the market area. Sources: WA DOR, 2025; WA OFM, 2025; BERK, 2025.

Community and Stakeholder Input

Economic development is a top community priority. At tabling events, residents ranked economic development as the second highest priority for the City for improving livability and creating a more diverse and sustainable tax base. NCS Results: The economy was the top priority for 90% of respondents but received only a 68% rating for quality (excellent or good).

Input from Residents

- Attract more everyday services and businesses that serve locals, not just tourists** (e.g. pharmacy, family-friendly restaurants, international grocery store, and kid/youth activities such as indoor sports) to keep dollars in Snoqualmie.
- Frustration with recent closures of key businesses**, forcing reliance on neighboring city businesses for basic needs.
- Desire for investment in downtown**, including façade improvements, filling vacant storefronts, and greater infrastructure investment, which some feel has been concentrated more in the Ridge.
- Some interest in developing areas along the river and interest in learning more about the Mill Site project.
- Strong desire to prioritize economic growth as a way to sustain services without raising taxes on residents or businesses.** City should attract and promote local businesses to expand the tax base.

Ideas to Strengthen Tourism

- Better signage, wayfinding maps, and clearer promotion** of local shopping, dining, and activities.
- Increase events and programming** (e.g., farmers market, seasonal events) that build community connection and drive foot traffic.
- A desire for the City to support Snoqualmie’s tourism potential**, including partnerships with the Tribe, better marketing, and signage.

Business Community Feedback

- Some businesses feel well-supported and heard by the City, noting a collaborative approach to addressing their concerns. Others expressed concerns about lack of transparency, communication issues, and staff turnover.**
- City processes, particularly permitting and development, business license process were described as slow, complex, and understaffed**, potentially discouraging new investment or expansion.
- Physical separation between the Ridge and downtown limits walkability and resident awareness** of businesses.
- Greater coordination with the SnoValley Chamber**, including regional partnerships, industry cluster support, and entrepreneurship.
- There is some interest in establishing a dedicated full-time economic development staff position** to provide strategic direction, support for existing businesses and entrepreneurs, and attract new investment.

Potential Strategies

Address Land Constraints

- Evaluate potential annexations, shifts of the UGA, the use of Tax Increment Financing, or other strategies to increase the supply of commercially viable land.
- Increase commercial density and recreation uses downtown.
- Use City infrastructure expenditures to facilitate investment.

Retain and Support Expansion of Existing Businesses

- Review the City’s B&O program for equity, effectiveness, and competitiveness.
- Look into local improvement districts (LID) as a means to increasing investment in a particular area.
- Help businesses expand and navigate City processes.

Grow and Attract New Businesses

- Focus on local-serving retail and services businesses.
- Support entrepreneurship and start-up success.
- Support success of Snoqualmie Mill Phase 1.

Expand the City’s Tourism Base

- Enhance tourism draws downtown.
- Improve parking access and wayfinding to make downtown more welcoming to visitors.
- Strengthen the connection between the Falls and Downtown.
- Use events to draw out of area visitors to Snoqualmie.

Potential Partners

- Economic Development Commission
- Snoqualmie Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Local business community and institutions
- Property owners
- Neighboring Snoqualmie Valley communities and businesses
- Snoqualmie Tribe

Implications for City Fiscal Sustainability

- Slower economic development forces the City to either raise taxes or reduce services to keep up with inflation.
- Economic development is key to growing sales tax and diversifying revenue.

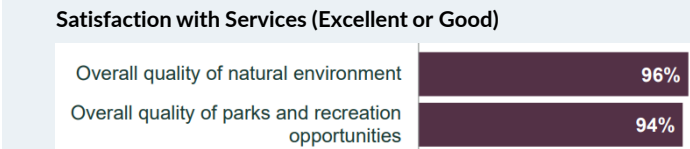
Facts

- Overall**
- Snoqualmie is a full-service city, providing most services to residents such as park and street maintenance, police, fire, and emergency response, utilities, and community development. The City also funds essential general government services that the City needs to meet the needs of residents, such as finance, information technology, legal services, and city management.
 - City residents receive services from other jurisdictions such as King County District Court, King County Library System, and Snoqualmie Valley School District.
 - Snoqualmie has provided services to other jurisdictions, most notably providing police services to the City of North Bend. North Bend chose to end this agreement in May 2025, so Snoqualmie will stop providing police services following a transition period.

- Parks**
- The Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) plan and 2044 Comprehensive Plan call for additional investments in parks and a connected trail system.
 - The PROST plan identifies that 7 miles of additional trails are needed to maintain current service levels.

- Public Safety**
- Having an “overall feeling of safety” was ranked #1 in essential or very important by residents (NCS, 2023).
 - Snoqualmie is the #4 safest city in Washington (Safewise, 2025).

- Human Services**
- City plays a funder role, providing about \$315,000 annually (\$22.50 per capita) in human services grants but have no dedicated staff.
 - Playing a funder role is common for cities in the region, with some participating in direct service.
 - Cities tend to define core funding areas and often hire a Human Services Manager to manage grants.



Source: PROST Plan, 2024

	2020	2021	2022	Average Annual Growth Rate 2020-2022
Study Area	1,123	1,401	1,435	13.6%
Carnation	134	132	110	-9.1%
Duvall	257	280	301	8.2%
North Bend	384	378	360	-3.2%
Snoqualmie	348	611	664	42.1%

Sign Up Rates for Food Benefits Show Increasing Need

Source: Snoqualmie Valley Community Needs Assessment, 2025

Community and Stakeholder Input

- Overall**
- Residents shared many positive stories about why they love living in Snoqualmie, what drew them here, and why they choose to stay.
 - NCS Results: 9 in 10 residents gave excellent or good rating to Snoqualmie as a place to live, overall image or reputation, and overall quality of life.
- Parks**
- Parks were consistently highlighted as a top priority**—they are cited as a key reason people move to Snoqualmie, a source of high satisfaction due to their quality and upkeep, and a valued space for building community.
 - There is interest to better serve older adults and youth, not just kids and young families.
 - NCS Results: Parks and Recreation received a 90% quality rating (above national benchmarks).
 - NCS Results: 36% strongly support and 19% somewhat support increasing property taxes to fund a community swimming pool, while 30% are strongly opposed and 7% are somewhat opposed.

- Public Safety**
- Public safety continues to be a top priority, a foundational expectation, and source of high satisfaction.**
 - NCS Results: Safety received a 90% quality rating (above the national benchmark) and an 89% importance rating.
 - Some concerns included incidents of petty crime, the desire to lower and enforce speed limits, and addressing nighttime street racing.

- Human Services**
- Snoqualmie is seen as a leader in the Valley for supporting human services through local funding.**
 - Providers expressed appreciation for Snoqualmie’s continued investments. They also emphasized the need for more flexible (indirect) funding to cover overhead and strengthen the infrastructure that enables collaboration.
 - Despite high average incomes and low poverty rates, the need for human services remains.** Averages and broad statistics obscure individuals and families who are struggling.
 - Service providers in the Valley see Snoqualmie as having real needs. Residents who are struggling financially often feel invisible, unsupported, or like they don’t belong.
 - Providers are eager to move beyond a transactional relationship** and cultivate a more reciprocal, strategic partnership with the City, where they are asked for input and included in decision making.

- Community Connection and Cohesion**
- The relationship between the Ridge and Downtown is complex.** Shaped by economic, racial, new and long-time residents. As well as perceptions of uneven city investment.
 - School boundaries limit interaction and reinforces separation.
 - Physical separation with the Parkway adds to separation.
 - Demographic shifts: newer residents tend to have higher incomes and are more racially diverse.
 - NCS Results: Ratings for community’s openness and acceptance of people from diverse backgrounds declined from 75% in 2023 to 68% in 2025.

- Community Events**
- There was appreciation for the range of community events that help build connection and community.**
 - Community members suggested that events could better serve all ages including seniors and youth; foster connection between downtown and the Ridge’ and reflect Snoqualmie’s changing demographics.
 - Events are also seen as a way to drive foot traffic to support local businesses.
 - There is strong interest in co-hosting events with community organizations and businesses.

Potential Strategies

Discuss potential strategies to improve services based on Community and Stakeholder Input and staff ideas.

- Parks**
- Evaluate opportunities to advance the Community Center Expansion Project.
 - Strengthen offerings for youth and seniors.

- Public Safety**
- Maintain strong public safety focus, including police and fire accreditation.
 - Enhance focus on emergency preparedness.

- Human Services**
- Maintain the City’s support for regional human services providers, ensuring benefits accrue to City residents.

- Community Connection and Cohesion**
- Town Center Improvement Project (Phase III) that will provide an updated multi-use paths and added street lighting in downtown.
 - Connection between Ridge and Downtown.
 - Address traffic that is impacting businesses and residents.
 - Reflect changing demographics.

- Community Events**
- Use events to strengthen the Snoqualmie community, connectivity, and foot traffic.

- Potential Partners**
- Local business community
 - Snoqualmie Ridge Residential Owners Association
 - Human services groups
 - Local community groups
 - Snoqualmie Tribe

Current Activities

Recent citywide engagement projects

- Comprehensive Plan (2024, 2025)
- PROST Plan (2024)
- Community Center Expansion (2019, 2024)
- NCS Survey (2012, 2014, 2016, 2019, 2023, 2025)

Communication channels

- Project- or purpose-specific webpages
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Next Door, Twitter, YouTube), E-newsletter, and Notify Me
- Utility bill inserts and postcards

Engagement methods

- Open houses, town halls, and workshops (poor attendance)
- Focus groups
- Resident surveys
- Pop-up tabling
- Advisory committees

2 FTE for communications and special events

Community and Stakeholder Input

Public Communications

- **Residents welcome more consistent and transparent information from the City.**
 - While mailers and social media are appreciated and used, many still feel uninformed about City Council decisions and City initiatives.
 - NCS Results: The City website, mailed materials and social media were the top sources of information.
 - Although residents expressed a desire for greater transparency, which decreased by 6% in the NCS results, participation in public meetings and contact with elected officials remains low, with only a slight increase observed from 2023 to 2025.
 - **There is a desire for two-way communication** in which residents feel their feedback is not only collected but also heard, valued, and reflected in decisions.
- **The City could be more effective in telling the story of community needs**, especially to counter the perception that supportive services aren't necessary in Snoqualmie.

Engagement

- **The City is viewed positively by some community groups, reflecting strong relationships and effective communication.**
 - These include the YMCA, human service providers, and some businesses.
 - Seniors generally expressed satisfaction with the City's role and services.
- **Stakeholders across all groups expressed a strong desire for continued engagement and City partnership.**
 - Many were grateful to be included in these strategic planning conversations and want to remain involved.
 - **Youth would like to be more involved in City conversations and decision-making.**
 - Youth representatives suggested a model similar to student representatives at the School District.
 - They also expressed interest in advising on youth-focused spaces and activities, which are currently lacking.
- **Some businesses and Downtown residents, in particular, expressed frustration with a lack of transparency and two-way communication**, noting they often feel out of the loop on City decisions.
- NCS Results: Inclusivity and engagement received a 65% quality rating (excellent or good), aligning with national benchmarks, but were rated lower in importance at 55% (essential or very important).

Trust

- NCS Results: Approval of Snoqualmie's overall direction declined from 69% in 2023 to 59%. Confidence in Snoqualmie's government also decreased from 62% to 57%, both remaining similar to national and custom benchmarks.
 - Ratings of federal government service quality fell sharply from 44% to 26%.
- **Trust and communication with the business community can be improved.**
 - Some businesses feel supported, while others cited concerns around lack of transparency, inconsistent communication, and high staff turnover.
- **Among Downtown residents, there is appreciation and acknowledgement for recent investments, but also a feeling that Downtown is often overlooked particularly regarding visible maintenance and infrastructure projects.**
- **There is a desire for the City to invest in building a productive relationship with the Tribe.**

Potential Strategies

Public Communications

- **Increase awareness of City's role, services, and value** being explicit about the advantages and limitations of living in a small town with levels of service that may differ from more urban settings.
- **Restart the Citizen's Academy.**
- **Share information through trusted channels.**

Engagement

- **Communicate simply and enhance engagement in City decision making**, highlighting key constraints, tradeoffs, and decision points.
- **Invest in ongoing relationships with community partners and leaders.**
- **Build relationships and leverage partnerships with community groups** for community events and enhanced communication, outreach, and engagement.
- **Discuss ways to engage key groups who are desiring more attention from the City.**
 - Youth
 - Business community
 - Downtown residents
 - Tribe

Trust

- **Strengthen trust in City government and public safety** through the Strategic Plan and engagement about housing, City revenues, and levels of services.
- **Be visible in the community.**

Potential Partners

- SnoValley Chamber
- Local non-profit organizations
- Local community groups
- Snoqualmie Valley School District
- Other?

Implementation Framework

An Implementation Framework describes **how an organization will tie their Strategic Plan to ongoing decision making**. Common elements of an Implementation Framework include:

An Annual Cycle

- **Review** strategic plan implementation progress.
- **Identify priority focus** for the coming year; update an internal-facing version of the plan that has the same high-level structure as the public-facing plan.
- Use that focus to inform the **budgeting, workplanning, and performance measures**.
- **Report implementation progress and outcomes** to staff, partners, and community members via an annual report.

Leadership

- Assign maintenance of and reporting on the Strategic Plan to a **single person**.
- Establish a **lead, or co-leads**, for each major area of focus.
- Create timelines for projects and report on progress.
- Establish a collective group (all leads together + other key people who need to be involved) to track progress.

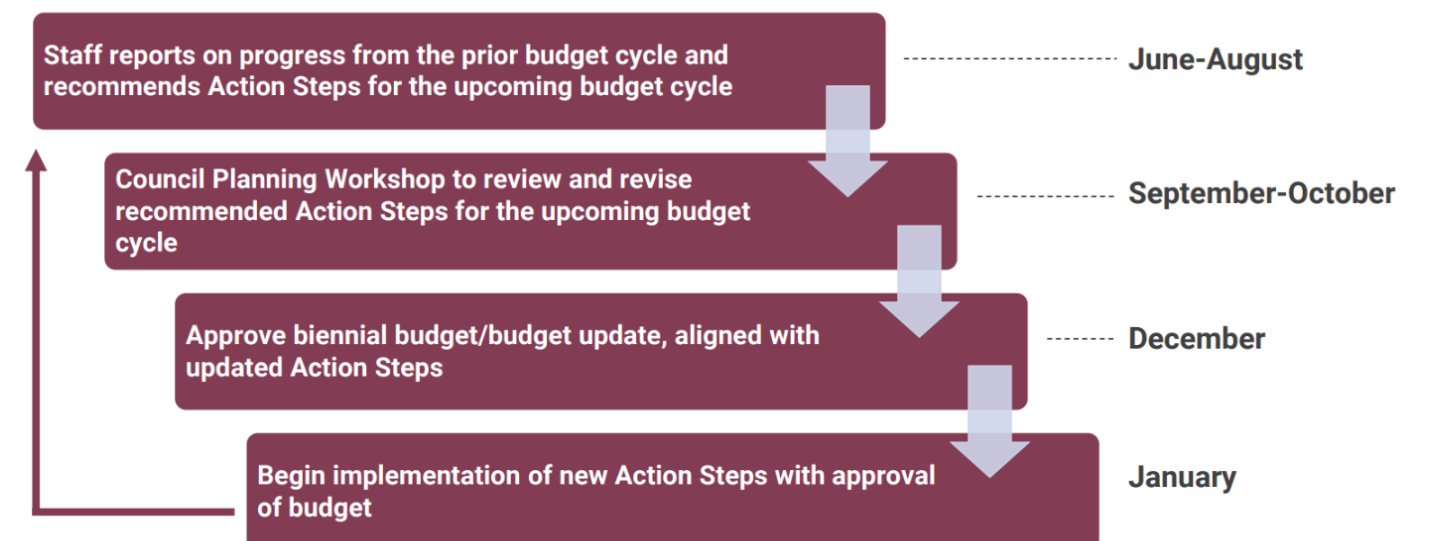
Reporting

- Track and report on **milestones, outcomes, and performance metrics**.
- Provide **regular updates at Council meetings** and share **regular updates with staff**.
- **Leadership** centers the plan and reports on progress to staff throughout the organization.
- Publish an **annual report** linking Strategic Plan implementation and organizational outcomes, including performance measures.

Champions

- Align **Council and staff planning** around the Plan.
- Embed the Strategic Plan in the language of the organization, **referring to it often**.
- Embed **Values** in recruiting, reviews, and how we talk about the organization.
- **Place posters** or other **visual reminders** of the Plan in office space or meeting rooms.

City of Woodinville Planning and Implementation Schedule



Strategic Plan: Initial Draft Outline

City of Snoqualmie | August 4, 2025

Introduction

- Strategic Plan purpose
- Brief summary of planning process
- How the City will use the Strategic Plan (Implementation Framework)

Context: Key Takeaways from City Effectiveness Assessment and Stakeholder Engagement

1. Residents enjoy living in Snoqualmie and value its parks, public safety, and family-friendly community feel.
2. City expenditures are projected to outpace revenues beginning in 2029. Residents favor economic development over tax increases or reduction in City services.
3. Economic development opportunities are limited by population size and location.
4. Development land supply constrains both housing and commercial growth.
5. Affordable and diverse housing options are limited for Snoqualmie's workforce.
6. Snoqualmie has demonstrated leadership in human services investment, which remains critical to meeting the needs of all residents.
7. Tourism is a strength with untapped economic development potential.
8. There is interest in attracting essential businesses and supporting local entrepreneurship to help prevent retail leakage and improve declining tax revenues.
9. With limited staff capacity, partnerships are viewed as a practical and efficient strategy for service delivery.
10. Community engagement will be important in determining the best path on housing, economic development, and fiscal sustainability.

City of Snoqualmie Vision, Mission, and Governing Guidelines

To be developed.

Major Initiatives (DRAFT!)

Expand Housing Options for a Thriving Community

- Determine the community vision for growth and additional housing density.
- Pursue land use strategies to support infill development and potentially add to the City's land base.
- Advance implementation of the 2023 Housing Strategy Plan to incentivize new and diverse types of housing, reduce development barriers, and expand affordability.

Grow the City's Economy and Tourism Base

- Support the success of local businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Invest in the downtown and preservation of the natural environment to support small businesses and attract visitors.
- Strengthen equitable partnerships with regional organizations and the Snoqualmie Tribe to collaboratively grow Snoqualmie's tourism economy.
- Attract new businesses to serve a growing population and create opportunities.
- Create opportunities for regional retail and employment.
- Enhance events and programming that drive community connection and foot traffic.
- Provide infrastructure and services that connect people and places across the community.

Provide High-Quality, Sustainable City Services

- Implement a multi-pronged approach to balancing the City's budget:
 - Support population and economic development.
 - Continue to align staffing and City services with community priorities to deliver the greatest value possible.
 - Evaluate a full range of revenue options to determine the appropriate mix.

Be Responsive, Transparent, and Inclusive

- Increase public understanding of the City's responsibilities, services, and decision-making processes.
- Share information through trusted channels while continuing to build those relationships.
- Create opportunities for meaningful two-way communication that actively seeks resident feedback—especially from those often underrepresented in government such as youth, BIPOC communities, and those with lower incomes to ensure voices shape City decisions.
- Strengthen the City's relationship with the Snoqualmie Tribe through regular communication, shared initiatives, and respectful collaboration.

Additional Strategies

To be added, with possible focus on youth, seniors, public safety, etc.

Strategic Plan Engagement Summary

City of Snoqualmie

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Outreach & Engagement Overview

From May through July 2025, the consulting team working closely with City staff conducted outreach and engagement that balanced **breadth** (broad community representation) and **depth** (focused conversations with specific groups). Community input gathered during this period will directly inform the Strategic Plan's priorities and strategies.

- 200+ individuals engaged
- 5 interviews
- 4 discussion groups
- 2 tabling sessions
- 363 respondents to the NCS survey (Note: this document does not include the summary of NCS results, which are presented in a separate document provided by Polco.)

We used a mix of engagement methods to balance breadth and depth—gathering broad input from the wider community while also collecting deeper insights from groups whose voices are often underrepresented in City decision-making, including:

- **Interviews** with key community leaders and partners, including:
 - Human and Social Service providers
 - Youth representatives
 - YMCA staff
 - ROA representative
- **Discussion groups** with priority populations, including:
 - Business Community
 - Seniors
 - Downtown Residents
 - Human Services Providers (10 organizations)
- **Tabling** at community events to connect with the public, including:
 - Splash Pad Opening
 - Big Truck Day
- **Surveys and online engagement** to gather broad input from across Snoqualmie

The priority populations were identified in collaboration with City staff and included:

- **South Asian residents and new residents** – to better understand the experiences of newer and culturally diverse community members
- **Downtown residents** – to reflect perspectives of those living in the city's historic center
- **Seniors** – to highlight aging-related needs and access to services
- **The business community** – to gather input on economic conditions, challenges, and opportunities

Summary of Key Themes

- There is an opportunity to improve City communication and better educate residents about city services. Some stakeholders expressed a desire for more meaningful community engagement in decision-making. Investing in communication and engagement efforts could help build and strengthen community trust in the City.
- Building relationships and leveraging partnerships such as with businesses, the SnoValley Chamber, Tribes, youth, and human service providers can strengthen community and partner engagement and alignment across key topics. Community members that were engaged in this process welcome partnerships and being invited to the table.
- A lack of cohesion between the Ridge and Downtown is driven by economic and racial differences, perceptions of uneven City investment, school district boundaries, and physical distance.
- Despite the community's overall affluence, human service needs remain urgent for some, particularly around housing instability and food insecurity. There is interest in the City helping to tell this story and involving service providers in planning efforts.
- There is strong interest in revitalizing economic development by filling vacant storefronts with essential businesses, increasing transparency and support for local businesses, boosting tourism and generating revenue through economic development growth rather than tax increases.

Detailed Summary

The following summarizes key insights from interviews and discussion groups organized by participant group: Human Services, Business Community, YMCA Staff, Youth, Older Adults, Downtown Residents, and ROA. It does not include input from the NCS survey. Direct quotes are included throughout to reflect and amplify participants' voices and perspectives.

Human Services Themes

The following themes reflect insights from an individual interview with the Executive Director of A Supportive Community for All, as well as a focus group with 10 human service providers from the Snoqualmie Valley Local Advocacy Team.

Despite high average incomes and low poverty rates, the need for human services remains.

- Service providers in the Valley do not view Snoqualmie as less in need than other nearby communities.
- In fact, the Snoqualmie Valley Navigation Program, which launched in 2021, has served more people from Snoqualmie than any other city in the Valley.
- Residents who are struggling financially often feel invisible, unsupported, or like they don't belong. Reference to federal poverty rates and median household income obscures the real need. Providers expressed a desire to incorporate self-sufficiency and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data for a fuller picture.

"Since we launched the Snoqualmie Valley Navigation Program in 2021, we have served more folks from Snoqualmie than any other city in the Valley."

"Housing is the biggest pain point especially for lower-income service workers. We have a difficult time hiring local employees because they can't afford to live here."

Housing instability and food insecurity are the most pressing needs.

- There is sustained demand for rent and food assistance, and there is very little affordable housing available in Snoqualmie for those who work in the local economy.
- Gentrification and rising housing costs are pushing out residents, families, and individuals.
- In addition to housing instability and food insecurity, additional needs include:
 - Affordable and available childcare and infant care.
 - Transportation access and car repair assistance.
 - Availability of mental health and addiction services.

Snoqualmie is seen as a leader in the Valley for supporting human services through local funding.

- The City of Snoqualmie is recognized for being generous in its contributions to regional human services organizations. Many providers feel that the City is one of their strongest supporters and appreciate its leadership in human services funding.
- Even with this support, providers emphasized the need for more flexible (indirect) funding to cover overhead and strengthen the infrastructure that enables collaboration.
- It is difficult for small organizations to apply for and manage grants, requiring significant staff time and resources.

"Cannot emphasize enough the importance of unrestricted funding and trusting organizations to do the work. When we are funded well, everyone benefits."

"If they want human services to stay in their communities, they have to support. What we get from other contracts and federal funding is not enough... we're really counting on that support."

Human services providers often serve as the City's de facto human services department, but the City could play a stronger role in telling the story of community needs.

- Many providers feel they are the human services department for the City and as such continued support through funding is essential.
- They would like the City to help tell the story of community needs, through the State of the City address and other public communications.
- Providers are eager to move beyond a transactional relationship with the City and cultivate a more reciprocal, strategic partnership.

Specific recommendations for City action from human services providers

- Help tell the story of human services needs in Snoqualmie and address the misconception that services are not needed.
- Invite providers to the table by seeking their input and included them in City Council and committee meetings.
- Share information on community needs and service gaps from the City's perspective to foster a more reciprocal relationship.
- Continue investing in human services and increase access to flexible, unrestricted general operating support.

YMCA Interview Themes

The following themes reflect insights from an interview with the Snoqualmie Valley YMCA's Executive Director and Family Programs Director.

Expanding the Community Center is a top priority to meet the City's needs and growth.

- Additional space is needed to expand programming; the facility is currently at capacity and would have to cut existing programs to add new ones.
- The YMCA is interested in reaching youth ages 8–18, a group that is often difficult for both YMCAs and other community centers to engage.
- There is a need for a pool for the community.

Snoqualmie is experiencing change, with high turnover and growth in young families.

- Many families who previously used YMCA services have moved away for a variety of reasons, including job changes and relocating closer to extended family.
- At the same time, new housing has brought an influx of younger families to the area.
- Participation in programming has come back to pre-pandemic levels especially among seniors.

"Our top priority for the City to focus on would be the Expansion Project. We need a pool in the community and more space to do more programming for the growing community."

The YMCA services low income and unhoused residents.

- Through the shower free program, the YMCA serves approximately 2,500 showers annually, primarily for unhoused individuals – many of whom are employed.

There is interest in deepening collaboration with the City.

- The YMCA sees its relationship with the City as a two-way partnership and is eager to work together on programming and outreach. They would appreciate support from the City in promoting under-attended programs to boost community participation.
- Given limited staff capacity, the YMCA is also interested in co-hosting community events and collaborating on shared resources.

Youth Interview Themes

The following themes reflect insights from an interview with two student representatives from the School District.

Mental health and suicide are significant concerns for youth.

- Suicide has directly impacted students in the Valley.
- Youth described a hypercompetitive environment driven by academics, sports, extracurriculars, and pressure to get into a “good” college. This creates significant stress and promotes a narrow definition of success and options after high school.

“Expand having people talk about mental health, to help destigmatize it. There aren’t enough resources.”

Specific recommendations for City action to support mental health.

- Create more community events for teens and youth to build community and strengthen their sense of belonging.
- Address the hypercompetitive culture and expand the definition of success and promote a wider range of post high school pathways.
- Expand conversations and resources related to mental health, with a focus on reducing stigma.
- Provide more safe spaces and mentorship opportunities for middle and high school students: places and opportunities where they can study, connect, and feel supported.
- Support and expand the work of Empowering Youth Network, including its events and mental health resources. Youth appreciate the staff members as familiar, trusted adults.

Youth are concerned about increasing substance use among their peers.

- Alcohol and marijuana are the most common substances used. Youth expressed concern that students are starting at increasingly younger ages.
- Youth emphasized the importance of supporting organizations like Empower Youth Network, which offer prevention and education programs, and are a trusted resource among youth.

E-bike use is rising, but youth are not always riding safely.

- Snoqualmie’s layout makes e-bikes a convenient alternative to driving, but youth often ignore traffic rules, speed, and don’t use hand signals.
- There is a need for more education around safe riding practices to help prevent accidents involving riders, pedestrians, and drivers.

Youth want to be included in city decisions and conversations.

- Youth expressed a desire for City leaders to actively seek out their perspectives not just during strategic planning, but in ongoing government processes.
- They suggested creating a youth role in city government, modeled after the student representative on the School District Board of Directors, and involving youth of different ages.

"Snoqualmie is built around youth: we are a suburban community with a lot of kids and youth. The City should reflect that and get youth involved in their decisions and processes."

Youth want more community events for all age groups.

- Youth appreciate well-attended, all-ages community events, such as the past Fourth of July celebration with booths, food trucks, and vendors.
- With youth spending so much time online, they see value in events that foster real-life connection.
- Events could also help bridge the gap between Ridge and Downtown residents, whose separation is reinforced by school boundaries and limited walkability.

Older Adults Resident Themes

The following themes reflect insights from a focus group with 10 Snoqualmie older adult residents. All participants live on the Ridge and were recruited through the YMCA's older adult programming. See the Appendix for the list of participants.

There is appreciation for the City's responsiveness and upkeep of infrastructure.

- The City is seen as doing a good job maintaining public spaces and prioritizing families and children. Several participants noted the need to balance that focus by considering residents of all ages beyond just a focus on young kids.

Older adults live in Snoqualmie for a variety of reasons, and most plan to stay.

- Many moved here to be near younger relatives, enjoy the natural beauty, and small-town feel.
- Most do not plan to leave and value living in Snoqualmie.

Transportation access is limited and could become a greater barrier in the future.

- Bus routes are infrequent and not convenient.
- While most participants currently drive, they expressed concern about limited transportation options in the future once they can no longer drive.

Need for age-inclusive community amenities.

- Residents want the City to consider amenities that serve all age groups, not just young children.
- Suggestions included more courts for pickleball and other ball sports.

Residents expressed a strong desire to prioritize economic growth as a way to sustain services without raising residential taxes.

- The City should attract and promote local businesses to expand the tax base.
- Essential services should remain fully funded.
- Residents expressed concern about the closure of key businesses, which forces them to rely on neighboring cities for basic needs. There is a strong desire to attract more everyday services and food options.

There is a need to support people who are earning less than the median income.

- Some residents emphasized the need for more support and opportunities for those earning below Snoqualmie's high median income, citing high demand at the Snoqualmie Food Bank.

"I can afford to pay more but if I'm speaking for other people... there a plenty of people that can't afford it."

Downtown Resident Themes

The following themes reflect insights from a focus group with 10 Snoqualmie downtown residents. See the Appendix for the list of participants.

The relationship between the Ridge and Downtown is complex, with many Downtown residents feeling that the Ridge receives more investment in infrastructure and facilities.

- Several participants described the Ridge as feeling "manufactured" and receiving more City investment. This perceived imbalance has led to concerns about Downtown being overlooked, particularly in terms of infrastructure and right-of-way maintenance. However, there was appreciation for the recent Downtown sidewalk improvements.
- One participant noted the socioeconomic divide between the two areas.

"There is such a divide in Snoqualmie. I feel like you have the "old-timers" (residents who've been here forever and forbid change) and the "newbies" (who welcome some change, and understand it's needed to keep people coming to the area, and to keep Snoqualmie relevant)."

Satisfaction with City services and maintenance was mixed.

- Some residents recognized and appreciated recent City investments Downtown.
- Others expressed concern that key needs like safer intersections and long-term maintenance are not receiving enough attention. Participants emphasized the importance of maintaining what already exists, rather than focusing solely on new projects.
- Overgrown planters, unkempt flower beds, and litter were cited as visible signs of under-enforced maintenance and code enforcement.

There was a desire for greater transparency and communication from the City.

- Participants generally felt that City government lacks transparency and doesn't adequately communicate with residents.
- Concerns were raised about new projects such as mixed-use development in the downtown core being advanced without meaningful public input.
- Several participants noted that while mailers and social media are somewhat helpful, they still feel out of the loop about what the City Council is doing. There was a desire for two-way communication, where community feedback is heard, valued, and reflected in City decisions.

School district boundaries and city limit lines reinforce divisions and limit connection between different parts of the community.

- Participants noted that connections across neighborhoods are often tied to school district lines and related activities.
- Schools and clubs were highlighted as important hubs for community interaction.

Residents want more frequent and inclusive community events that connect all parts of Snoqualmie.

- A farmers market was identified as a key opportunity to bring residents together and activate downtown.
- Existing parks in downtown are underutilized and could better support recurring community events.
- There's a shared belief that downtown has potential to be both a stronger local gathering place and a more vibrant tourist destination with more support for downtown businesses needed to help realize that vision.

Ridge ROA Themes

The following themes reflect insights from an individual interview with the Outreach Manager of the Ridge ROA. She spoke both in her professional capacity and as a South Asian resident with strong connections to Ridge residents, new residents, and the South Asian community. These reflections primarily represent perspectives from the Ridge.

New residents are drawn to Snoqualmie for its small-town feel, relatively affordable new construction homes, family-friendly environment, and proximity to I-90.

- Many people move from nearby cities like Sammamish and Issaquah due to lower housing prices.
- The area is viewed as safe and family-oriented.

Some feel that Snoqualmie lacks youth-focused amenities and everyday services.

- Families often leave Snoqualmie for youth-centered activities in Bellevue and Issaquah, such as indoor sports and trampoline parks.
- As the community's demographics shift, there is growing demand for amenities that serve South Asian families, including an international grocery store.
- Some residents point to the number of vacant storefronts in Snoqualmie and express interest in more diverse retail options for everyday needs.

There is limited connection and interaction between Ridge and downtown residents.

- Downtown is often perceived as a tourist destination rather than a place for locals.
- Some Ridge residents rarely visit downtown, noting that if they have to get in the car, they might as well go to Issaquah or other nearby cities with more amenities.
- Downtown is seen as less diverse and less appealing to newer residents, many of whom are looking for newly built homes, low-maintenance properties, and a sense of community with other South Asian families.

Economic development is preferred over raising taxes and there's an opportunity to better inform residents about current City services.

- The Outreach Manager believes most Ridge residents would oppose tax increases, especially if service levels remain unchanged. There is strong support for growing the tax base through economic development.
- Some residents question what services could be reduced, as they already feel little is offered, highlighting an opportunity to educate residents on what the City currently provides.

"Focus on economic development. People would not be happy with an increase in taxes, especially at current service level. We hardly have services: what would they take away?"

Residents would benefit from improved communication and orientation resources from the City.

- Many residents, especially new residents are unfamiliar with City services or how to access them.
- The Ridge ROA frequently fields questions about how to rent park shelters or navigate City processes, indicating a need for clearer information and outreach.
- Suggested topics include updates on business openings and closures, how to reserve event space, and a “City Services 101” guide.
- There was some frustration with recent City decisions, including delays in opening the splash pad (over a year), removing basketball courts to build it, and the YMCA pool initiative.

Some South Asian residents feel a strong sense of belonging, while also recognizing the value of cultural representation.

- There is an understanding that it can be difficult for the City to meet all cultural needs, but representation remains important.
- Past efforts, such as the City’s Diwali celebration were noted and appreciated.
- Future efforts could include partnering with schools or community organizations to support recognition of a broader range of cultural traditions.

Business Community Themes

The following themes reflect insights from a focus group with 11 Snoqualmie businesses representing a range of locations across the community and varying years in operation, as well as an interview with the SnoValley Chamber of Commerce CEO. See the Appendix for the list of business participants.

Snoqualmie's location, natural beauty, and small-town feel are core strengths.

- Snoqualmie's proximity to I-90, SR-202, and SR-203, along with its natural beauty, public safety, and family-oriented environment contribute to a high quality of life that attracts both residents and visitors.
- The small-town feel fosters a strong sense of community and supports word-of-mouth marketing and local customer loyalty.
- However, some noted a decline in the community feel of Snoqualmie compared to the past, pointing to fewer volunteers and less attendance at events.

Workforce and affordability challenges are impacting business stability.

- Business owners reported ongoing difficulty recruiting and retaining workers, likely largely due to the lack of affordable housing.
- Commercial rents were cited as prohibitively high, and there is interest in the City to offer relief or incentives.
- Raising the B&O tax was seen as harmful.
- The City could be a more active partner in workforce programs and initiatives through the SnoValley Chamber of Commerce.

Some see the City as collaborative and supportive, while others expressed concerns.

- Some business owners described City staff, Council, and the Chamber of Commerce as approachable, responsive, and collaborative in addressing concerns, making businesses feel supported.
- Others expressed a lack of trust in City leadership citing staff turnover, and lack of communication and involvement of business on decisions that directly impact them.

"The City's leadership, including the Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor, and City Council, has been approachable and collaborative, making us feel welcomed and supported from the beginning."

Local businesses have concerns over the physical separation between the Ridge and downtown, as well as challenges getting local residents to shop in town.

- Although word of mouth works for some, business owners also shared concerns about low awareness of shops and difficulty drawing local customers.
 - City and media can take a more supportive approach and amplify businesses to spread the word.
- The physical separation between the Ridge and historic downtown limits walkability and reinforces a sense of disconnect and isolation between the two areas.
- Traffic congestion and ongoing freeway construction were a challenge shared by many.

"We are a small town, we need to bring more attention to both areas [downtown and the Ridge]. Infrastructure to connect the two parts of the city is really important and relevant."

Improving signage could help draw visitors into Snoqualmie.

- Businesses emphasized the need for more prominent and strategic signage. Especially on and off I-90, near the Falls (e.g., Gateway Park) to help redirect visitor traffic to Snoqualmie.
 - Suggestions included larger, more visible signs with maps and clear language promoting shopping, dining, and activities.
- Business owners noted that the City and Economic Development Commission (EDC) are actively discussing signage improvements at Gateway Park, and there was broad support for moving this forward.
- Some noted that millions of visitors come to Snoqualmie Falls, DirtFish, and the Casino each year, but that poor infrastructure, lack of wayfinding, and missed partnerships especially with the Tribe limits the benefit to local businesses.

"All the traffic is directed to exit at the Ridge and bypasses historic Snoqualmie—that really hurts businesses. If traffic has to be directed to the Ridge then there at least needs to be better and more signs. Stating historic Snoqualmie is this way is not enough. People don't understand what that means. It doesn't sound appealing. We need something that says "shopping, activities and food" or something like that."

Collaboration and events are key to draw people in.

- There is strong interest in regular events that drive foot traffic and community connection, such as farmers markets or seasonal festivals.
 - There is interest in utilizing Railroad Park as a potential anchor space for hosting events.
- Business owners pointed to successful events in neighboring cities (e.g., Issaquah Salmon Days) as inspirational models, emphasizing the importance of collaboration.
- Businesses recognized that the City has limited capacity to support such events, suggesting that this is an opportunity for greater collaboration with the business community.

Marketing, tourism, and Tribal partnerships remain underdeveloped.

- Despite heavy tourist foot traffic in the region, some feel that the City has missed opportunities to coordinate marketing and partnerships that drive benefit to local businesses.

- SnoValley encourages the City to take a regional, valley approach to economic development.
- The loss of the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) funds and deteriorating relationships with Tribes were seen as missed opportunities to collaborate on culturally rich and mutually beneficial tourism initiatives.
- Some urged the City to re-engage Tribal partners in mutual beneficial and respectful relationship and invest in infrastructure and marketing that brings tourists to town.

City process improvements are needed.

- While there was appreciation for the City's collaborative spirit, participants also cited challenges with delays, process complexity, and limited staffing capacity.
- Several expressed concern that the City's permitting and development processes could discourage new investment or expansion, particularly for those unfamiliar with the community.

There is opportunity for the City to support entrepreneurship and innovation.

- Snoqualmie has a growing base of entrepreneurs, including tech professionals launching new ventures. There is potential to focus on industry clusters such as outdoor recreation or technology and incentivize and support innovation, startups, and businesses beyond storefronts.
- Some suggested that City-owned utilities could be leveraged to offer incentives and promote business growth.

Specific recommendations for City action from business owners

- Streamline the business licensing process and make B&O digital.
- Improve guidance and resources for when someone applies for a general business license.
- Reduce red tape and streamline processes for businesses.
- Invest in infrastructure improvements such as connected walking and biking trails to connect downtown and the Ridge.
- Invest in beautification and maintenance of downtown:
 - Improve lighting and public restroom
 - Require building owners to take more responsibility for the condition of their properties (windows, storefront, alleys, garbage)
 - Falls Avenue was identified as needing upgrades to better serve as part of the historic business core and become less of an alley
 - Behind the Railroad was identified as another place to invest and improve
 - A central garbage facility to reduce clutter and improve the experience for visitors
- Improve signage to inform people of Snoqualmie; downtown, the Ridge, and the many businesses across the city.
- Update sign codes and more flexible temporary signage allowances to better market events and store promotions.
- Build mutual beneficial relationship with the Tribe.
- Establish clear and strategic economic development strategies through partnership with the SnoValley Chamber of Commerce.

Tabling

We tabled at two community events to inform residents about the strategic planning process and gather input on city priorities:

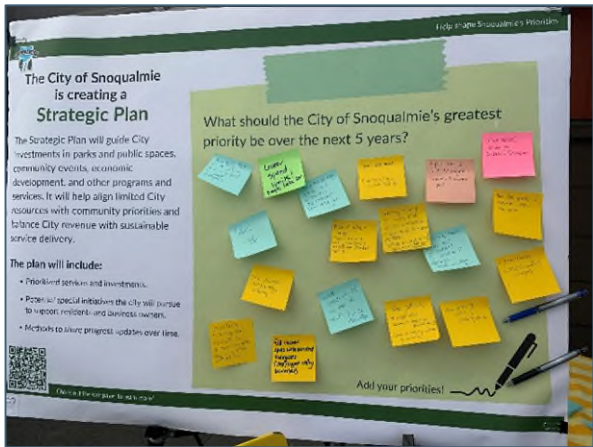
- June 6, 2025 | 2-4 PM - Splash Pad Opening at the Snoqualmie Community Park
- June 26, 2025 | 10-12PM - Annual Big Truck Day at Centennial Fields Park

At both events, we used three interactive boards:

1. City Services Priorities Voting Board – Residents voted for their top three City service areas (from six options) to help identify priority areas under limited resources and capacity.
2. Visioning Board – Residents shared what they hope will be the City's top priority over the next five years to help inform the Strategic Plan.
3. Kids' Board – Children drew or wrote about their favorite part of living in Snoqualmie.



Splash Pad Opening Tabling



Tabling Themes

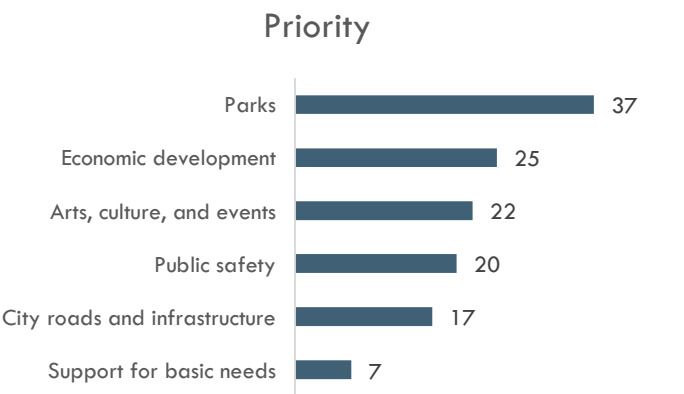
The following reflects findings and takeaways from both tabling activities.

Residents prioritize parks, trails, bike infrastructure and a pool as essential to family life, recreation, and community well-being.

- These results were shaped in part by the demographics of the event, many attendees were families with young children. However, the responses reflect broader community values, especially the importance of parks for family life, community connection, and quality of life.
- There was strong interest in building a community pool accessible to all.

Economic development is a key strategy for improving quality of life and reducing financial burden.

- Residents would like more everyday retail and dining options in Snoqualmie. Examples included fast food, family-friendly



Tabling Board Activity Results (Splash Pad and Big Truck Day)

“Right now, I have to drive to Issaquah, Bellevue, or North Bend to go shopping or eat out with my family.” – Splash Pad Opening attendee

restaurants, and big box stores like Target and Trader Joes, to avoid traveling to nearby cities.

Support for expanding the local economy to keep dollars in Snoqualmie and reduce tax burdens through increased revenue.

- There is a desire to invest in economic development to drive down taxes.
- Specific economic development initiatives included:
 - Developing areas along the river.
 - Investing in downtown Snoqualmie (improving the facade and filling vacant buildings and store fronts).
 - Mill Site project.
 - Small business support

Public safety continues to be a priority and a foundational expectation.

- Residents highlighted the importance of emergency services and maintaining a safe, livable city.
- Specific concerns included incidents of petty crime, the desire to lower and enforce speed limits, and addressing nighttime street racing.

Some residents advocated for more affordable housing options for families, seniors, and workers.

- Many residents said that even current affordable units are still expensive and insufficient to meet community needs.
- Some residents emphasized that lower-income community members need more support, even if they are less visible due to Snoqualmie's reputation for affluence.

"I work full time as a teacher and live in one of the 'affordable units,' but it's still too expensive. There needs to be more options." – Splash Pad Opening attendee

The community wants more public spaces that promote connection, access, and inclusion.

- Residents expressed a strong interest in investing in a larger, welcoming community center and creating more youth-friendly spaces.
- They noted a significant lack of spaces for youth ages 12–18, despite this group making up a large portion of the population.
- Other creative ideas included:
 - Planting fruit trees and blueberries for public foraging (like on Gilman Boulevard).
 - Becoming a "golf cart community" by allowing carts in specific zones.

Appendix. Participant List

Topic	Name	Organization	Title
Interviews			
Human Services	Jody Miesel	A Supportive Community For All	Executive Director
SnoValley Chamber	Kelly Coughlin	SnoValley Chamber of Commerce	CEO
YMCA	Diana Reul	YMCA	Branch Executive Director
YMCA	Zach Well	YMCA	Family Programs Director
Youth	Graysen Davis	School District	Class of 2026 Snoqualmie Valley School District Student Representative
Youth	Henry Ehrnman	School District	Class of 2025 Snoqualmie Valley School District Student Representative
Ridge ROA	Shilpa Hastu	Ridge ROA	Outreach Manager
Focus Groups			
Human Services	Human Services Focus Group		
	Steve Wright	Snoqualmie Health Foundation	Executive Director
	Jennifer Kirk	Reclaim	Executive Director
	Salwa Raphael	Hopelink	Center Manager
	Brooke Drennon	Youth and Family Services	Senior Director
	Karen Rodriguez La Paz	Hopelink	Vice President of Community Affairs
	Alison Roberts	Snoqualmie Valley Food Bank	Executive Director
	Misty Messer	CarePoint Clinic	Executive Director

Topic	Name	Organization	Title
	Kira Avery	SnoValley Senior	Program Coordinator
	Max Harrison	Empower Youth Network	Executive Director
	Nella Cumming	Encompass	Executive Director
Businesses			
	Alice Friedel	Down to Earth	Owner
	Ashley Grammer*	June and Gem	Owner
	Brandi Lily*	Pineapple Life Studios	Owner
	Gary Skiba	No Boat Brewing	Owner
	Heather Dean	Snoqualmie Ice Cream	Co-Owner
	Julie Chung	Snoqualmie Ice Cream	Co-Owner
	Julie Thomas	Books & Bottles	Owner
	Katie Podschwit	Chickadee Bakeshop	Owner
	Paula Shively	Sno-King Ice Arena	Assistant Director of Facilities
	Selena Ma	Snoqualmie Inn	General Manager
	Zhanna Bogomaz	Mini Treehouse	Owner
Older Adult Residents			
	Barry Johnson		Older Adult Resident
	Carlo Spani		Older Adult Resident
	Doug Jansen		Older Adult Resident
	Gary Lane		Older Adult Resident
	Jean Lane		Older Adult Resident
	Man Ling Thibert		Older Adult Resident
	Marcia Spani		Older Adult Resident
	Neil Thibert		Older Adult Resident
	Patty Johnson		Older Adult Resident

Topic	Name	Organization	Title
	Ralph Riden		Older Adult Resident
	Vonne Cunningham		Older Adult Resident
Downtown Residents			
	Amanda Rich Anderson		Downtown Resident
	Ashley Chan		Downtown Resident
	Diana Reul*		Downtown Resident
	Dorie Ross		Downtown Resident
	Jeremy Fursman		Downtown Resident
	Josh Wilund		Downtown Resident
	Katy Lindell		Downtown Resident
	Kramer Lindell		Downtown Resident
	Lindsey Setterlund		Downtown Resident
	Matthew Mullvain		Downtown Resident
	Nate Ziemkowski		Downtown Resident

*Provided responses via email.