

Snohomish County Strategic Tourism Plan

2023 to 2027



Dear Community Leader:

Tourism is a core component of Snohomish County's economy. People from across the world travel here to explore our beautiful and diverse natural resources, thriving small business community, and cutting-edge aerospace sector. In 2022, visitors traveling to Snohomish County provided a \$1.45 billion boost to our economy. The tourism industry also accounts for more than 15,000 jobs and represents about five percent of all employment countywide.

It's critical that we have a comprehensive, data-driven, sustainable strategy to guide Snohomish County's tourism efforts and initiatives. That's why every four years, we review and update our Strategic Tourism Plan (STP) with support from tourism partners from across the county. The updated STP serves as a key point of reference for all sectors of the tourism economy, from chambers of commerce, to municipalities, to hoteliers, to tour guides, among many other partners.

This is the first time Snohomish County has ever developed the Strategic Tourism Plan as its own Destination Marketing Organization. This means we were able to center the plan around our core priority of environmental stewardship and sustainability. Going forward, tourism will be a key component of our Climate Economy Initiative; we are not seeking just to generate visits and revenue, but ensure we are making decisions that reflect best practices, ensuring what we love most about Snohomish County is protected.

Snohomish County has a unique identity and spirit, and we're making that clear with this new plan. We're much more than a place that's "north of" somewhere else. We're a singular county with strong assets—particularly our stunning natural landscapes—that can't be found anywhere else.

Prioritizing sustainable tourism practices is critical as we continue our efforts to combat climate change while protecting our economic vitality. The Strategic Tourism Plan charts our path forward for destination development and sustainable experiences that can help ensure we're preserving what makes our county so special.

I want to thank all of the County staff and external partners who worked so hard to make this new, innovative Strategic Tourism Plan a reality. Our goal is to create a comprehensive, centralized tool that tourism partners across the county can use. We thrive through collaboration, partnership, and a shared focus on sustainability.

Sincerely,



Dave Somers
Snohomish County Executive

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the following people who have supported the development of this Strategic Tourism Plan update for 2023-2027.

Steering Committee

Our steering committee for this project included diverse interests involved in various aspects of tourism from throughout Snohomish County, including representatives from cities, towns, and the tribes, events and festival coordinators, representatives from funding committees, and others—we thank you for your participation, support, and guidance in developing this plan.

Focus Groups

Thanks to the many people involved in the tourism industry throughout Snohomish County who participated in focus group sessions to help inform the development of the plan update.

Snohomish County Economic Development Staff:

- Neepaporn “A” Bounjaktha, *Executive Director*
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- Samantha Paxton, *Workforce Development Manager*
- Richard Porter, *Marketing Specialist*
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Snohomish County Marketing Firm of Record, DVA Advertising & PR

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Executive Summary

The Snohomish County Strategic Tourism Plan 2023-2027 will serve as an internal guiding document to support the County's tourism program activities over the next five years. This strategic plan was informed by extensive input from a steering committee of diverse tourism specialists and interests from throughout the county, as well as feedback gathered from focus group sessions with a variety of representatives engaged in tourism related activities.

The Plan Framework

VISION

Our vision statement describes the tourism experience we are striving to create.

MISSION

Our mission statement (see Page 41) describes how we will work collaboratively to achieve our vision.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles (see Page 35) are foundational to ongoing management and development of tourism.

GOALS AND INITIATIVES

Goals and initiative (see Pages 42-49) support the vision and mission related to tourism in Snohomish County.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance indicators (see Pages 42-49) are designed to be realistic and actionable, reflecting the dynamic nature of tourism influenced by national factors and broader economic conditions and trends over time.

Vision Statement

To build a distinct, recognized, and sustainable world-class tourism experience that highlights Snohomish County as a unique Pacific Northwest destination.

Key Goals

GOAL 1

*Elevate the
Visitor
Experience*

GOAL 2

*Advance
Development
of the
Destination*

GOAL 3

*Become a
Leader in
Sustainable
Tourism
Management*

GOAL 4

*Advance
Regional
Partnerships and
Collaboration
through Inclusive
Engagement*

Our Engagement Process to Inform Plan Development

ASSESS EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TOURISM ASSETS

- » Review of Background Information and Field Work
- » Steering Committee Perspectives
- » Feedback from Focus Groups

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- » Consultant Analysis
- » Steering Committee Perspectives
- » Feedback from Focus Groups

DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Consultant /County Collaboration
- » Steering Committee Perspectives
- » Feedback from Focus Groups



Introduction

Overview

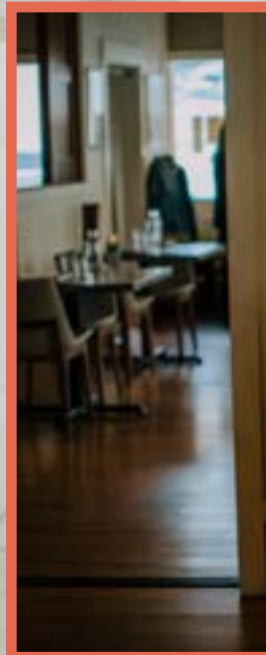
Snohomish County offers year-round visitor experiences steeped in a signature blend of nature and culture, true to the Pacific Northwest. The county encompasses over 2,000 square miles, stretching from the peaks of the Cascade Mountains to the shores of the Salish Sea. Snohomish County is easily accessed with direct flights to Sea-Tac International Airport (SEA) and domestically through Seattle Paine Field International Airport (PAE).

Snohomish County is committed to supporting long-term economic growth that is sustainable for visitors and residents. As a direct reflection of the destination's current strengths, values, and future initiatives, in 2021 Executive Somers launched the Climate Economy Initiative. This initiative focuses on generating new jobs and investments in environmentally-responsible and -sustainable sectors.

The current Snohomish County Strategic Tourism plan has been written and developed to align the tourism initiatives directly with the climate economy. The County will prioritize destination management and sustainable tourism to attract visitors who appreciate what it means to be stewards of our natural resources. As part of climate economy, tourism will focus on attracting mindful visitors. By actively messaging sustainable values, the County will invite visitors to learn and contribute, rather than consume and take. This intentional approach will mitigate overcrowding and the degradation of local landscapes.

Four core goals have been identified to support Snohomish County's vision for tourism:

- 1. Elevate the Visitor Experience:** Clearly message to visitors our sustainable approach – the “triple bottom line.” We want visitors to appreciate our destination and contribute to the local economy while leaving no trace.
 - 2. Advance Destination Development:** Implement a data-driven approach that will help to inform and guide our initiatives: to protect the environment, enhance the quality of life for people and communities, and improve the regional economy.
 - 3. Become a Leader in Sustainable Tourism:** Build upon already deeply-engrained values of sustainability and distribute sustainable tourism messaging and best practices.
 - 4. Advance Regional Partnerships and Collaboration through Inclusive Engagement:** Work to ensure that diverse tourism interests are actively involved and engaged in a way that is consistent with the county's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative.
-





Purpose of the Strategic Tourism Plan

This 2023-2027 Strategic Tourism Plan includes updated vision and mission statements, guiding principles, and strategic planning goals and initiatives.

WHAT'S NEW

Internally, since the development of the 2018-2022 Strategic Tourism Plan, Snohomish County has restructured its approach to managing and developing tourism. In 2020 the Snohomish County internalized countywide tourism efforts and established a Destination Marketing & Management Organization (DMO) model. In the last three years since the DMO was established, Snohomish County, in combination with the County's marketing agency of record, has built out a fully functioning countywide marketing system. The DMO prioritizes content- forward digital, programmatic, and social media marketing; proactive public relations outreach; and collaborative destination management with partners countywide.

In 2021, the Snohomish County Tourism division transferred from the Department of Conservation of Natural Resources to the Executive's Office, to align and integrate with the divisions of Economic and Workforce Development. The new organizational structure also allows the DMO to work closely with the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) and Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) Advisory Board.

Externally, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has had a drastic impact on the global tourism and hospitality industry. While recovery of the industry

has been strong, the negative impacts experienced early in the pandemic will take years to overcome, including but not limited to the hits to workforce, hotel motel lodging tax funds, and small businesses and events. The pandemic also shown light on industry-wide capacity issues that need to be addressed in a managed and sustainable way.

Lastly, since the adoption of the last strategic tourism plan, Snohomish County Executive Somers has launched the Climate Economy Initiative, which is a direct reaction to increasing need to respond to the global climate crisis. The climate economy focuses on generating new jobs and investments in environmentally responsible and sustainable sectors, sits at the nexus of these two goals. Investment by the County in the climate economy supports our current workforce and their ability to transition into cutting-edge jobs and fosters the birth of entrepreneurship that will lead to global commercialization.

As a result of these internal and external factors, the current plan update made major shifts toward:

- 1. Focusing on destination management and development**
- 2. Aligning tourism strategies with the Climate Economy Initiative**



Destination Management and Sustainable Tourism in Snohomish County

As tourism efforts transition from more of a focus on marketing to a strong balance between marketing and management, the DMO will foster and support:

- » Ongoing coordination and collaboration among countywide tourism partners and interests, acting —as a central hub and umbrella management organization.
- » Sustainable tourism and the implementation of environmentally-friendly practices which support Snohomish County’s climate economy;
- » Economic vitality and resiliency;
- » Partnerships, inclusivity, and workforce development; and
- » Protecting and enhancing the quality of life for Snohomish County residents.

Tourism is a major economic driver in Washington State and Snohomish County. According to Tourism Economics:

- » Visitors travelling to Washington State in 2022 spent \$22.1 billion and generated \$3.1 billion in state and local taxes—equal to \$793 in state and local tax savings for every household in Washington.
- » Washington State visitation accounted for 221,394 jobs including indirect and induced benefits; 4.9 percent of all jobs in the state.
- » Visitors travelling to Snohomish County in 2022 spent \$1.45 billion and generated \$504 in tax savings for every household in the county.
- » Snohomish County visitation accounted for 15,105 total jobs and; 5 percent of all employment in the county.

Snohomish County's Climate Economy Initiative...
*focuses on generating new jobs and investments in
environmentally responsible and sustainable sectors.*

Sustainable Tourism in Snohomish County

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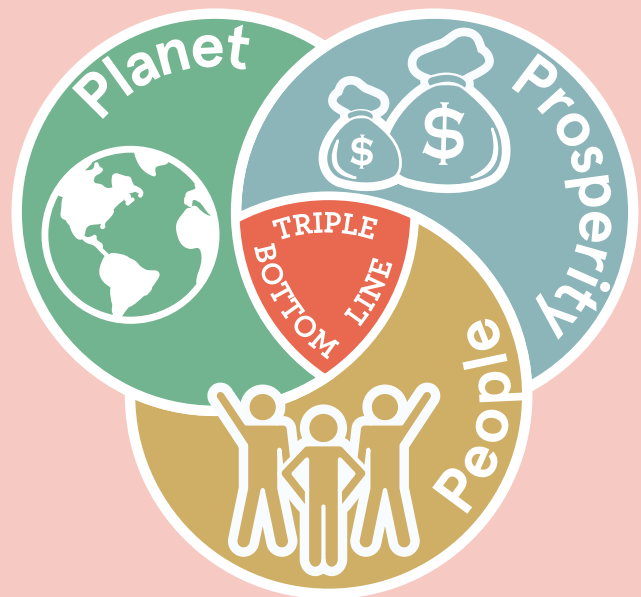
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- » Snohomish County visitation accounted for 15,105 total jobs and 5 percent of all employment in the county.

As part of the revised Strategic Tourism Plan, Snohomish County will implement a "triple bottom line" approach that balances social and cultural values, environmental sustainability, and economic development. The triple bottom line philosophy considers the integral relationship of people, planet, and prosperity in decisions that impact tourism. See Figure 1.1. This approach will be critical for the future success of tourism across the county, offering multiple benefits:

- » Supporting the quality of life of Snohomish County residents and creating memorable experiences for visitors.
- » Promoting sustainable tourism initiatives that are environmentally friendly.
- » Contributing to the economic vitality of the county and region.

FIGURE 1.1

The Triple Bottom Line



Planning Process

The consultant team (OTAK and RRC) and Snohomish County tourism staff developed the 2023-2027 Strategic Tourism Plan in close collaboration with tourism partners from across the county and a variety of sectors. The planning process (and related timeline) is shown in Figure 1.2.

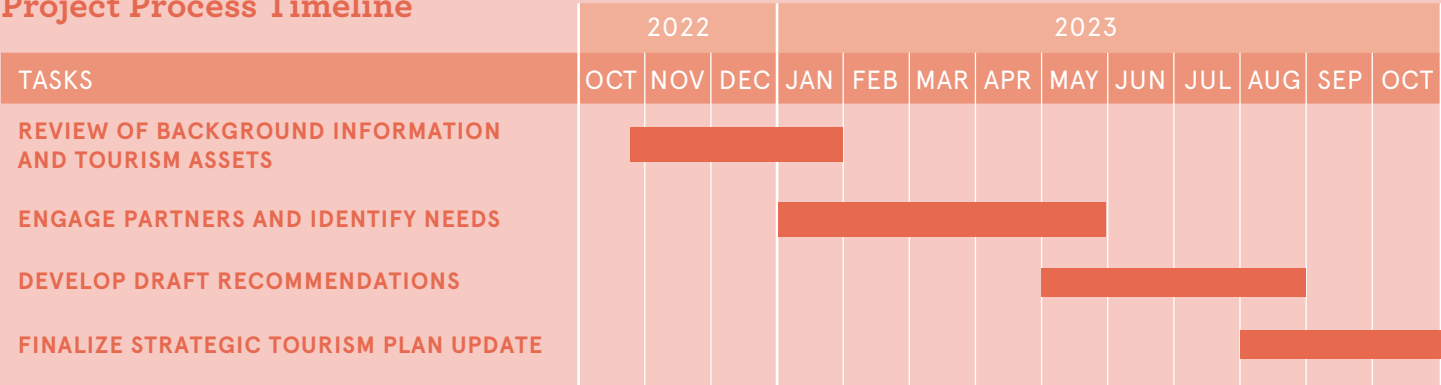
Important steps in the process included:

- » Reviewing existing conditions, tourism assets, and plans;
- » Convening a steering committee of diverse tourism partners and interests in Snohomish County;
- » Hosting four steering committee meetings to share information and gather input; and
- » Facilitating thirteen focus group sessions in the early stages of the process to gather input on issues and opportunities for tourism in Snohomish County.

The consultant team also participated in quarterly industry roundtable discussions hosted by the Snohomish County during the planning process.

FIGURE 1.2

Project Process Timeline



What We Heard— Opportunities and Challenges

As part of the Snohomish County tourism plan update, Snohomish County and the planning team collected a variety of feedback from a diverse set of interests in the tourism industry. A series of focus group sessions were held to capture a wide range of feedback from tourism sub-sectors. OTAK and RRC in partnership with the County also gathered input from the project steering committee on key issues. Participants shared feedback on topics such as:

- » Snohomish County’s current tourism marketing and branding strategy;
- » Opportunities and challenges for tourism within Snohomish County;
- » Considerations related to sustainable tourism; and
- » Additional priorities related to tourism in Snohomish County.

This input was foundational in shaping the vision, mission, goals, and initiatives presented in Chapter 3.

Challenges identified throughout the Focus Group Sessions are presented in Figure 1.3.





COMMON THEMES

Several common themes arose during the steering committee and focus group sessions.

Tourism Infrastructure and the Economy

- » Despite a challenging recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism has been a resilient sector of the economy—2022 visitation spending levels surpassed pre-pandemic levels in 2019.
- » Some rural areas of the county are experiencing capacity issues due to an increase in traffic and visitation numbers specifically seen during popular hiking and skiing months.
- » There have been strong patterns in development and increasing economic vitality in recent years in some areas of the county.
- » Various forms of funding are needed to support the growth of tourism and infrastructure improvements are needed to support certain national and international events (including conferences and sporting).
- » More tourism opportunities will be available with the expansion of Paine Field Airport. Expansion of light rail transit and other projected public transportation in the region will support future tourism with travel to/from and throughout the county.
- » Affordable housing for those working in various sectors of the tourism industry can be challenging in many locations.

Social and Cultural Opportunities

- » Tribal relationships are important to the future of well-coordinated tourism but need further development.
- » Agritourism and agricultural opportunities can be leveraged more in the future with tourism development.
- » Events and history of Snohomish County present opportunities that could be leveraged to a greater level in the future.
- » Aerospace and aviation past, present, and future are important to locals and an economic driver. Aviation culture as a tourism activity is representative of Snohomish County, but needs to be further developed.

Environmental Sustainability

- » Snohomish County prioritizes environmental sustainability.
- » There is a strong need to increase guest and resident awareness of sustainable tourism and how to visit sustainably through more education and outreach through industry roundtables, marketing, and social channels.
- » Marketing and promotion of themes around “Leave No Trace” and “Recreate Responsibly” should be increased to internal and external audiences.
- » There is a need to define and differentiate sustainability related to outdoor recreation from sustainability related to other forms of tourism activities.
- » Policies differ between communities and companies, and there is a need an overarching set of policies or best practices that can be promoted countywide.

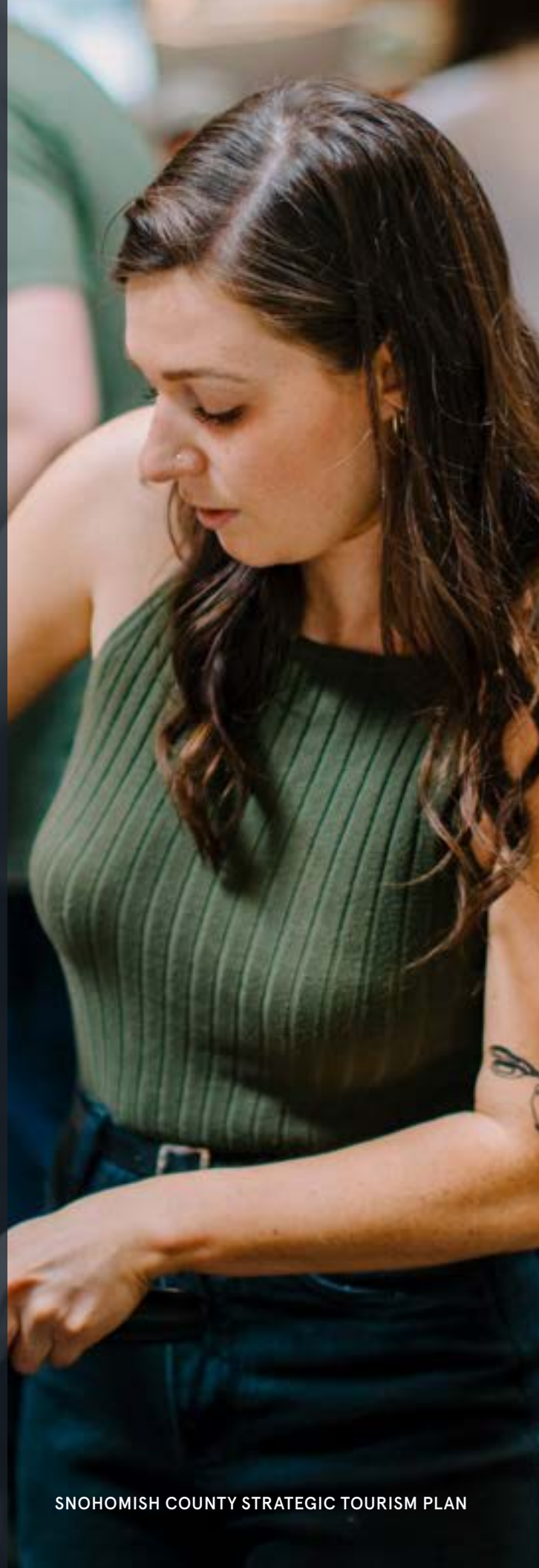




FIGURE 1.3

Key Challenges by Topic Identified in Focus Group Sessions

In addition to the common themes summarized on the previous pages, the following key challenges were identified by steering committee and focus group participants.

URBAN CHALLENGES

- » *Visitor awareness of tourism assets and opportunities in Snohomish County's Urban Basecamp, compared to awareness of opportunities in other surrounding urban areas*
- » *Perception that Snohomish County cities are more industrial*
- » *Concerns about unhoused people, drug use, and other issues*
- » *Capacity of hotels and availability of lodging in certain communities*

RURAL CHALLENGES

- » *Outdoor recreation capacity and visitor behavior; the need for responsible recreation*
- » *Perceptions about the lack of amenities and services to support tourism*
- » *Visitors that tend to drive through rural areas rather than stopping to enjoy these places*

JOINT CHALLENGES

- » *Transportation to and from key destinations and within/throughout the county*
- » *Lack of awareness of the diverse visitor attractions and opportunities throughout the county (lack of what is available in urban areas by rural partners and what is available in rural areas by urban partners)*
- » *Traffic and congestion, especially on I-5, State Route 2, and other corridors, as well as to/from SeaTac International Airport*
- » *Economic leakage from Snohomish County to other areas*

2



Tourism Context and Differentiating Snohomish County's Tourism Product

Overview

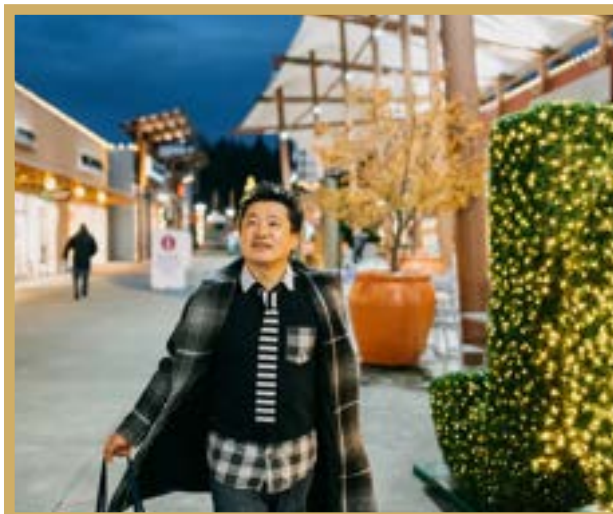
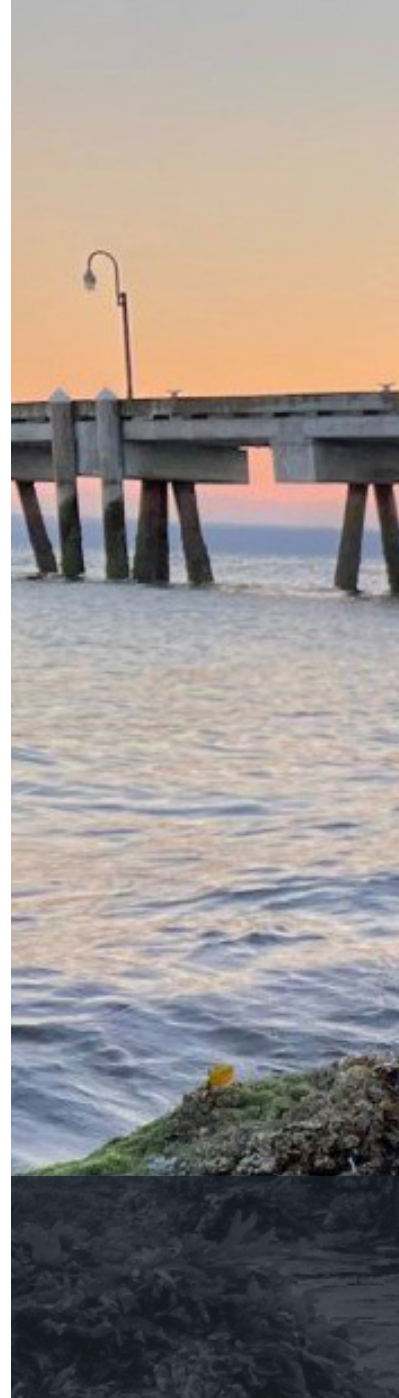
Across Snohomish County, the greater Puget Sound area, and Washington State more generally, tourism is a valuable economic sector, with diverse year-round opportunities for residents and visitors alike. With a temperate marine climate and clearly defined seasons, tourism in Snohomish County supports year-round economic activity. The County focuses on promoting and sharing the wonders of Snohomish County with visitors, supporting storytelling related to the places and experiences of the county, and providing outreach and education related to tourism and hospitality to many partners and tourism interests throughout the county.



As discussed in Chapter 1, tourism is a key industry to Snohomish County and the surrounding region and a valuable contributor to the County's emerging climate economy. More traditional economic sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and financial services are generally easily and concretely defined within state or county economic statistics with measurable benefits. However, the travel and tourism sector is not as easy to measure. The industry spans nearly a dozen economic sectors including lodging; recreation; retail; real estate; auto, air, rail, and water transport; and food and beverage. Subsequently, the travel and tourism sector employs a diverse range of people, including hotel front desk clerks, ride share drivers, outfitters and guides, wait staff, and casino table dealers. The list goes on and on. Tourism encompasses such a broad industry that residents in every community, large and small, rural and urban, are involved in the tourism industry at some level and are often de facto tourism ambassadors. A successful destination is one in which its residents are proud and eager to become part of their promotion as they recognize the social and economic benefits tourism bring to them and their communities.

Tourism is intrinsically driven by demand, driven by visitors seeking experiences, which affects each supporting sector to varying degrees. As such, it is critical to understand the available supply within the county to serve the incoming and varying demand by visitors, as well as to responsibly guide and manage the demand such that it aligns with its core mission and values.

The following pages highlight the key attractions and tourism assets throughout the county and places them within the context of tourism in Washington. It also highlights how Snohomish County tourism is an exemplary case of the True Pacific Northwest Experience—a comprehensive regional microcosm contained within 2,000 square miles. Of course, there are many more attractions and assets than those mentioned here, but those summarized on the following pages provide a strong idea of what the county has to offer.





Snohomish County Tourism Assets

A visit to Snohomish County provides a true Pacific Northwest experience with easy access to much of what the entire state of Washington has to offer. Snohomish County covers a vast 2,196 square miles, with 19 cities and towns along the coastline and inland to the foothills of the Cascade Mountains.

Tourism opportunities in Snohomish County span a wide range of experiences and settings—from urban destinations such as Everett’s waterfront and museums, to small towns, as well as rural/agricultural, and outdoor recreation destinations. A visit to Snohomish County offers something for everyone. One of the key goals of this plan is to identify and highlight key assets and attractions that are unique and memorable to Snohomish County, and build tourism experiences specifically around these in the coming years. Key highlights of the County’s tourism assets are presented on the following pages.

WATERFRONT DESTINATIONS

Cities like Everett and Edmonds offer scenic waterfront areas with marinas, beaches, and opportunities for boating, dining, and whale watching.



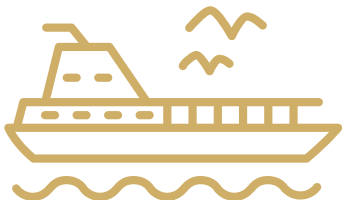
7 Puget Sound
Beaches



Largest Public
Marina on the
West Coast



3 Pods of
Resident
Orca Whales



Part of the Largest
US Ferry System



The Everett Waterfront

has undergone significant updates and revitalization in recent years, transforming it into a vibrant destination. With a focus on creating a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly environment, the waterfront now boasts a promenade, parks, and open spaces that provide views of Port Gardner Bay and the Olympic Mountains. Visitors can enjoy a variety of recreational activities, and dining at waterfront restaurants. Additionally, the new Port of Everett's Waterfront Place central development has brought residential spaces, office buildings, and retail establishments, further enhancing the area's appeal as a thriving and interconnected urban waterfront community.

ARTS AND CULTURE

The county features a vibrant arts scene with galleries, theaters, and cultural events. The Hibulb Cultural Center and Historic Downtown Snohomish are popular cultural hubs. Snohomish County's diverse and interesting history resonates with residents and visitors alike.

The Hibulb Cultural Center

is an important institution for the Tulalip Tribes and the broader community, serving as a place of learning, preservation, and cultural exchange. It provides an opportunity for visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the history of the Tulalip people and the indigenous heritage of the Pacific Northwest



Aviation Heritage

Visitors can enjoy multiple aviation-based attractions that showcase the region's rich aviation history. Boeing Future of Flight is a gateway to the Everett Factory Tour, a guided experience that provides an inside look at the 777 assembly process and opportunities to learn about The Boeing Company. The Future of Flight's Sky Deck offers expansive territorial views with great selfie opportunities. The venue is a popular event space for weddings, receptions, meetings, parties, and other events. The aviation and aerospace Gallery includes exhibits spotlighting the company's milestones, innovation and commitment to advancing sustainable aerospace.

"We made modern jet travel a reality and took people to the moon, and now we enter the era of more sustainable aerospace."

- Chris Raymond, Chief Sustainability Officer



FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Snohomish County hosts numerous festivals and events throughout the year, including the Evergreen State Fair, musical events, art festivals, municipal attractions, and numerous farmers markets. The Lynnwood Event Center is a popular location for conferences and is planning to expand its facilities and spaces to support even more events in the future. The Sports Commission and City of Marysville are seeking to expand capacity for indoor sporting events and tournaments, and Marysville also is planning for waterfront improvements.

The Evergreen State Fair, located in Monroe, is an annual celebration of agriculture, entertainment, and community spirit that draws visitors from across the region. This event showcases a diverse array of attractions, including carnival rides, live entertainment, agricultural exhibits, and a wide range of fair food. The Fair drives visitation and lodging and generates millions of dollars of revenue for the local economy.



SMALL TOWNS AND AGRITOURISM

Small towns like Snohomish and Arlington provide an inviting atmosphere with historic downtown areas, boutique shops, and cozy eateries.

Snohomish is a picturesque town known for its historic downtown, lined with boutique shops, antique stores, and cafes. Arlington, with its small-town ambiance, hosts community events and festivals, while Sultan, along the banks of the Skykomish River, provides an ideal backdrop for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers. These small towns offer an escape from the hustle and bustle of larger cities, inviting visitors to explore their unique character and rich Pacific Northwest heritage.

With picturesque farms, ranches, and countryside, the valleys of Snohomish County offer extensive agritourism opportunities including u-pick destinations, farmers markets, farm stands, barns and event spaces, and holiday fairs and festivals.



OUTDOOR RECREATION

Snohomish County is home to expansive natural landscapes that characterize and define Washington's terrain, including the peaks and foothills of the Cascade Mountains, the Salish Sea, and numerous rivers and lakes. Visitors have opportunities to many outdoor activities like hiking, biking, white water rafting, skiing, and other endeavors. Stewardship of land and waters is the County's priority, and our messaging to outdoor enthusiasts is grounded in responsible recreation.

120
Waterfalls



19
Rivers & Streams

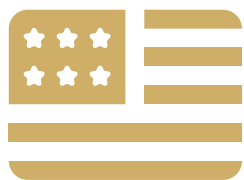


7 Puget Sound
Beaches



10
Major Mountains




70%
Public Lands


132
Summits


560
Miles of Trails



DIVERSITY ACROSS SNOHOMISH COUNTY TOURISM REGIONS

The discussion of Tourism Assets is organized geographically by the regions shown in the map below (Figure 2.1). While tourism branding may undergo change in the future, these geographic regions work well as distinctive areas for organizing visitor-facing digital content, visitor orientation, and keying tourism assets.

FIGURE 2.1
Geographic Tourism Regions in Snohomish County





URBAN

BASECAMP

Cities of Everett, Lynnwood, Bothell, Mountlake Terrace, Mill Creek, and surrounding areas

The Urban Basecamp serves as the metropolitan heart of the county, offering a blend of vibrant amenities that complement the natural landscapes of the river valleys to the east and the Salish Sea to the west. The county seat and largest city, Everett, boasts a charming downtown area with a mix of historic and modern architecture along with opportunities along the waterfront for dining and exploration of the arts scene and aircraft manufacturing. Lynnwood builds upon the metropolitan landscape through shopping and dining options, including the Alderwood Mall, as well as the Lynnwood Event Center.

FIGURE 2.2

Tourism Assets of the Urban Basecamp

The Schack Art Center, in Everett, is a cultural institution dedicated to the arts. It serves as an art gallery and a creative space where visitors can explore, appreciate, and participate in a wide range visual arts.

The Lynnwood Event Center; Museum of Flight, and other destinations bring people into the county for conferences, events, and tours, with related tourism spending benefits.



Legend

- Hotels
- Outdoor
- Events
- Attractions
- Retail
- Food & Beverage

The background of the page is a photograph of a river valley. In the foreground, a river flows over a low, curved dam made of gravel and stone. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding greenery. In the middle ground, a sandy beach is visible with some people sitting on it. The background features a large, green steel truss bridge spanning the river. The sky is clear and blue. A semi-transparent green box is overlaid on the upper half of the image, containing the title and text.

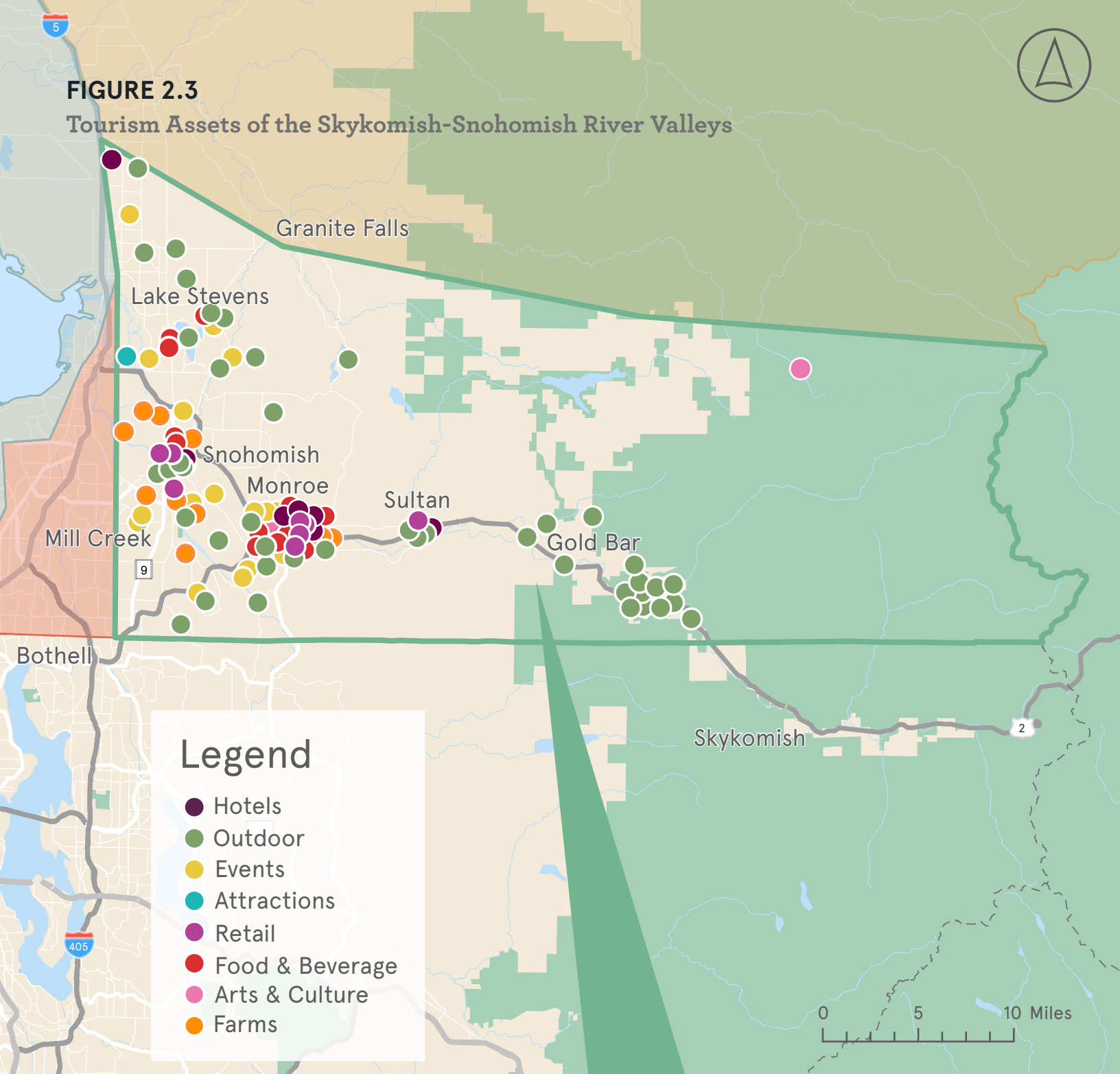
SKYKOMISH — RIVER VALLEYS — SNOHOMISH

Cities and Towns of Snohomish, Monroe, Lake Stevens, Sultan, Gold Bar, Startup, and Index

The Skykomish River Valley, nestled in the Cascade Mountains, offers outdoor enthusiasts a playground for activities such as hiking, fishing, and whitewater rafting, with small towns like Index, adding to the area's allure. The Snohomish River Valley, on the other hand, is characterized by picturesque farmland, historic communities, and a strong agricultural heritage, making it a great place for farm-to-table experiences and exploring local culture. Together, these valleys provide a diverse range of experiences for visitors, from outdoor adventures in the mountains to tranquil countryside getaways.

FIGURE 2.3

Tourism Assets of the Skykomish-Snohomish River Valleys



The Bush House Inn is a historic bed and breakfast located in Index, Washington, a small town nestled in the Cascade Mountains. This well-preserved inn offers visitors a cozy and intimate lodging experience in a beautiful natural setting. The inn itself is a historic building, exuding old-world charm and character, with comfortable rooms and welcoming hospitality. Guests at the Bush House Inn can enjoy the tranquility of the surrounding mountains, explore nearby outdoor attractions like a famed climbing wall, bouldering, hiking trails and the Skykomish River, and experience the charm of a small mountain town.



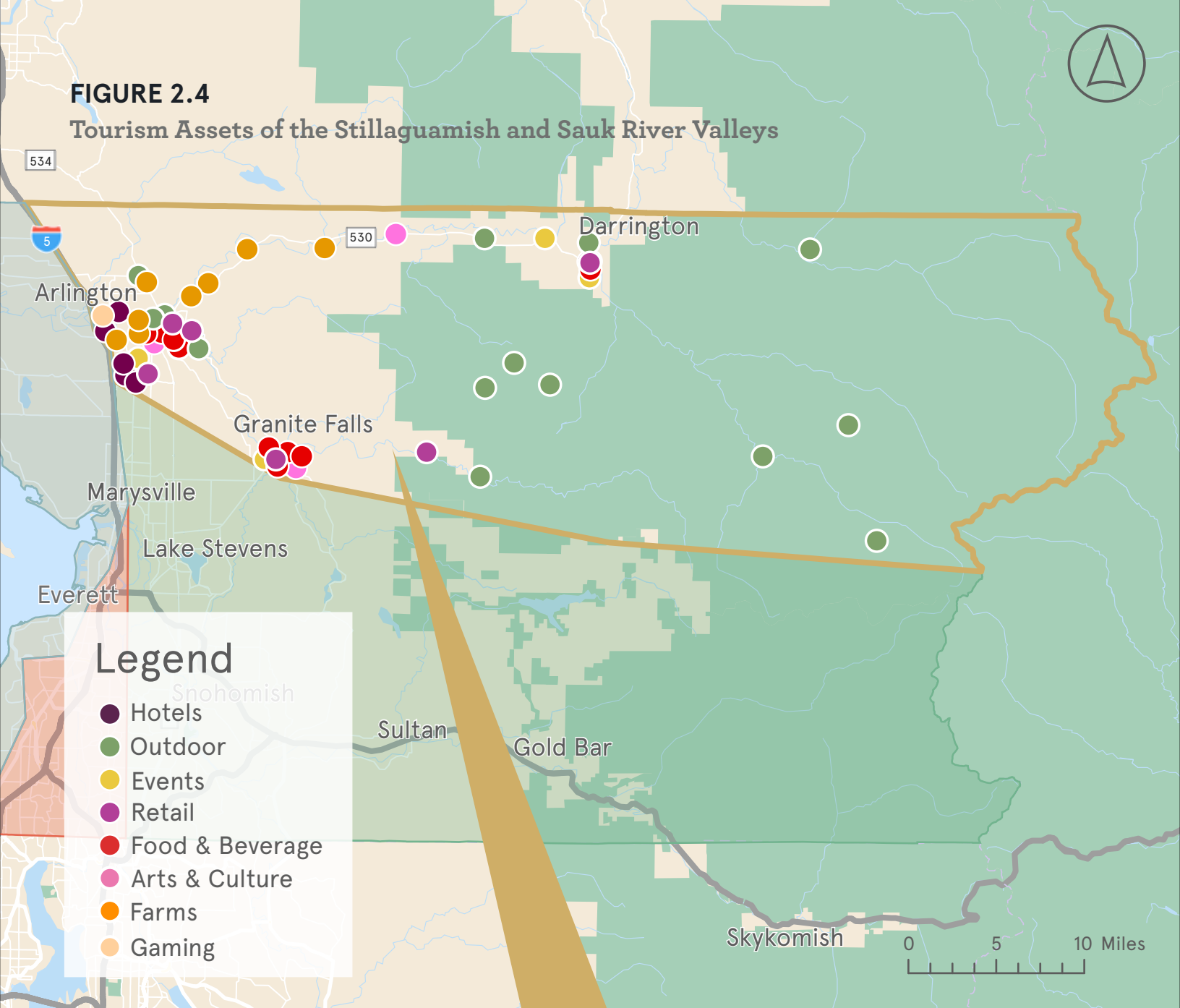
STILLAGUAMISH — SAUK — RIVER VALLEYS

Cities and Towns of Arlington, Darrington, and Granite Falls

The Stillaguamish and Sauk River Valleys comprise a picturesque region of Snohomish County, known for natural beauty and their close proximity to outdoor recreational opportunities. The Stillaguamish River Valley is home to towns like Arlington and Darrington, offering access to hiking, fishing, and camping in the nearby Cascade Mountains. The Sauk River Valley is a wilderness area with rugged terrain, pristine rivers, and old-growth forests, making it a haven for hikers, backpackers, and nature enthusiasts. The valleys are known for their scenic drives, wildlife viewing, and opportunities to connect with the Pacific Northwest's stunning natural landscapes.

FIGURE 2.4

Tourism Assets of the Stillaguamish and Sauk River Valleys



The Mountain Loop Highway is a scenic byway in Snohomish County, Washington that offers a spectacular journey through the Cascade Mountains. This 95-mile-scenic drive that traverses diverse landscapes, including lush forests, serene river valleys, and towering peaks. Along the route, travelers can explore numerous designated hiking trails to local water falls and glacial lakes. The highway provides access to attractions like the Big Four Ice Caves, the Verlot Visitor Center, and the historic mining town of Monte Cristo. It's a popular destination for those seeking a day trip or weekend getaway to experience the natural beauty and outdoor adventures of the Pacific Northwest.

www.seattlenorthcountry.com/blog/mountain-loop-highway/



SALISH SEA COASTAL COMMUNITIES

Cities of Edmonds, Lynnwood, Mukilteo, Downtown Everett, Marysville, and Stanwood/Camano

The Salish Sea Coastal Communities include coastal towns and areas along the Salish Sea, and a network of coastal waterways, including Puget Sound. These communities, such as Edmonds and Mukilteo, offer picturesque waterfront views, beachfront parks, and opportunities for outdoor activities like boating, fishing, and whale watching. The charming downtown areas with seafood restaurants, shops, and cultural attractions provide a unique blend of maritime heritage and natural beauty, making them popular destinations for residents and visitors seeking coastal experiences in the Pacific Northwest.

FIGURE 2.5

Tourism Assets of the Coastal Communities of the Salish Sea





Urban Cities

Edmonds, Mukilteo, Downtown Everett, Marysville, Quil Ceda Village on the Tulalip Indian Reservation, and Stanwood/Camano, Lynnwood, Bothell, Mountlake Terrace, and Mill Creek.



Rural Cities and Towns

Snohomish, Monroe, Lake Stevens, Sultan, Gold Bar, Startup, and Index (with Skykomish just outside of the county), Arlington, Darrington, and Granite Falls.

5  Aviation Attractions



132
Summits

70%  Public Lands

10 
Major Mountains

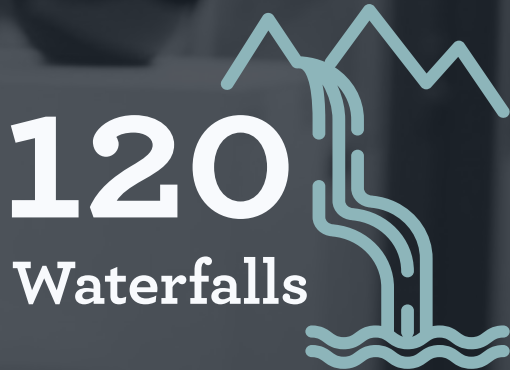
 Largest Public Marina on the West Coast



**Salmon & Habitat
Resoration**



**7 Puget Sound
Beaches**



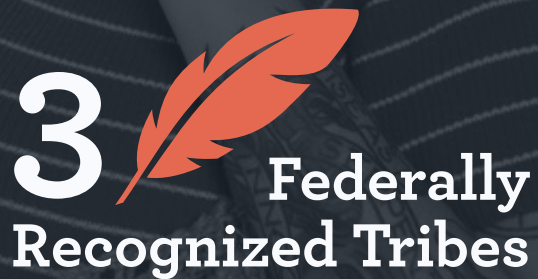
**120
Waterfalls**



**560
Miles of Trails**



**Part of the Largest
US Ferry System**



**3 Federally
Recognized Tribes**



**Breweries,
Distilleries,
Wine Tasting**

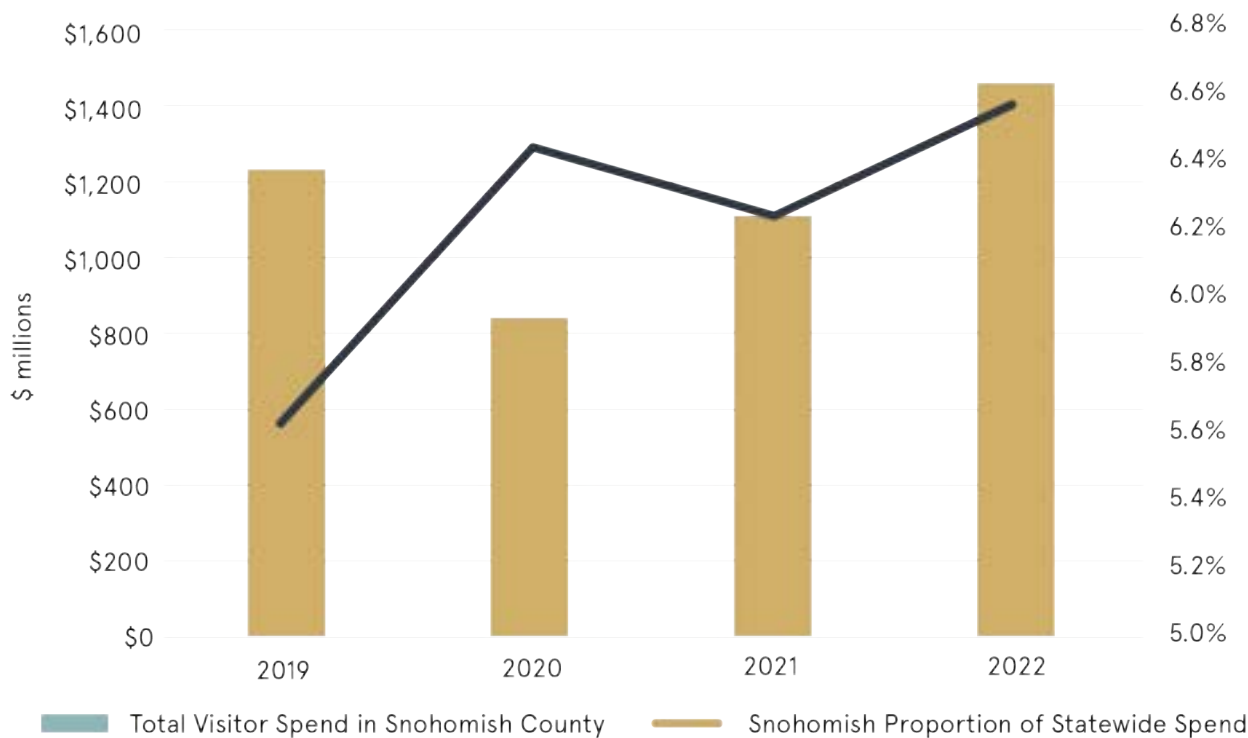
The Importance of Tourism as an Industry

A comprehensive summary of current tourism economics and data is provided as an appendix to this plan. Following are key highlights from the summary that help to emphasize the importance of tourism as an industry in Snohomish County.

Visitor Spending and Economic Impact—In 2022, 7.3 million visitors to Snohomish County spent \$1.45 billion in 2022, representing 6.6 percent of all visitor spending in the state.¹ This ranks Snohomish County third in visitor spending of all counties in the state, behind only King (\$9.56 billion) County and Pierce (\$1.67 billion) County and just ahead of Spokane County (\$1.43 billion). An impressive feat with the variety of options in the state. Visitor spending in Snohomish County in 2022 is 18 percent above that of pre-pandemic spending in 2019 (not inflation adjusted). *See Figure 2.6.*

- Tourism spending is on the rise, with only more potential to continue to grow. The direct spending of these visitors, generated:
- » **\$2.46 billion** in total economic impact to Snohomish County
 - » **15,105 jobs** and **\$644 million** in labor income
 - » **\$200 million** in state and local tax revenues

FIGURE 2.6
Snohomish County Visitor Spending (2019-2022)



¹ A visitor is defined here as those who stayed overnight or traveled more than 50 miles to their destination, as defined by the Economic Impact of Tourism in Washington (2022) report by Tourism Economics. This includes in-state and out-of-state travelers.

In-State vs Out-of-State Visitor Arrivals—Visitor Volumes and Length of Stay—While out-of-state visitors routinely (2018-2023) make up less than half of all trips (of at least 50 miles), they make up larger shares of total visitor days. The primary generating factor of this difference is driven by out-of-state visitors tending to stay longer in market. More than four in ten out-of-state visitors stay more than five days. While day visitors may be of higher volume, the impact of overnight stays for the local economy makes the out-of-state visitor important to focus on. *See Figures 2.7 and 2.8.*

FIGURE 2.7
Out-of-State Trips/Percent of Out-of-State Visitor Days

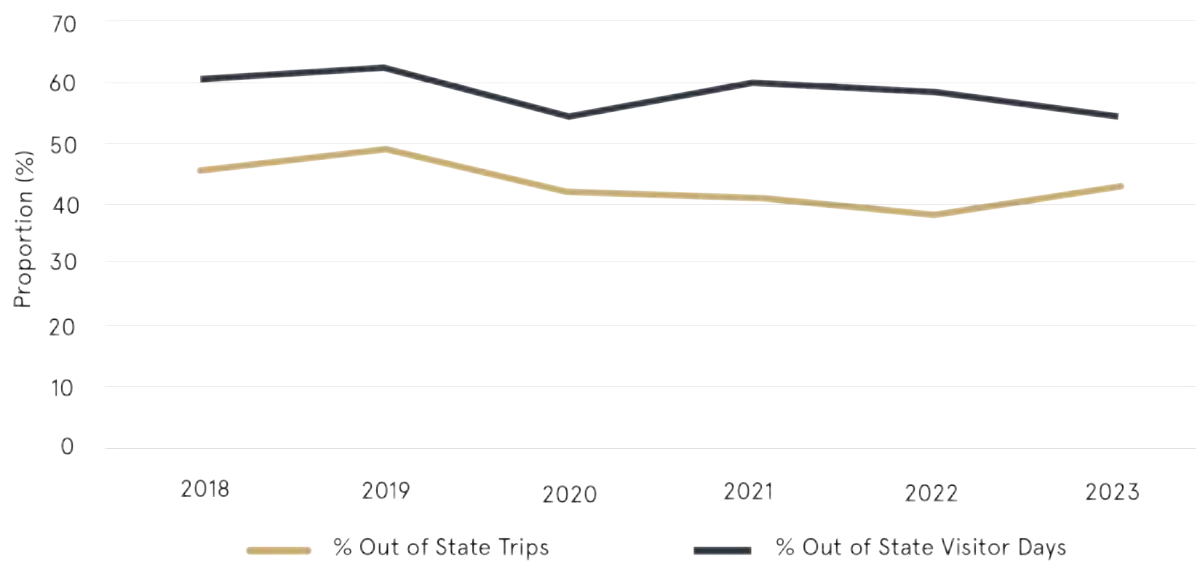
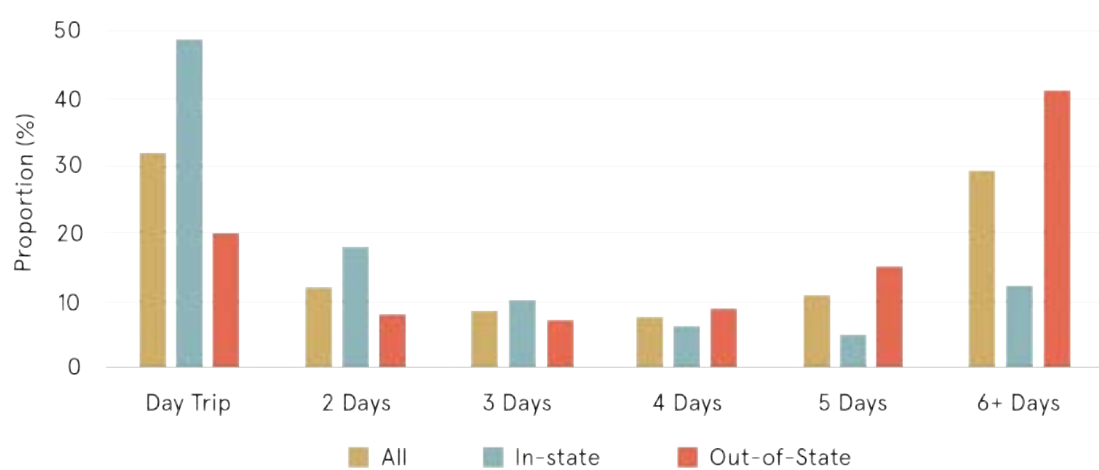


FIGURE 2.8
Trip Length Characteristics



Regional Visitation—With the four unique travel regions previously described within Snohomish County, the above visitor statistics can be further described to better understand the degree to which all regions are benefiting from tourism development, and growth. Or, alternatively, to understand regions which may not be following growth and could need better county support through management or marketing. For example, variation in length of stay by in-state and out-of-state visitors who have been observed in the four regions over the course of 2022 and the first half of 2023. These can also be considered in terms of the proportion of trips and visitor days from in-state and out-of-state visitors to each region. Here, out-of-state visitors are more prominent in the Urban Basecamp than in the Skykomish-Snohomish River Valleys. See Figures 2.13 and 2.14.



FIGURE 2.13
Length of Stay in Each Geographic Tourism Region

Length of Stay (in nights)	All	In-State	Out-of-State
Coastal Communities	3.4	2.5	4.6
Urban Basecamp	3.2	2.4	4.2
Skykomish-Snohomish Valleys	3.5	2.6	4.8
Stillaguamish-Sauk Valleys	3.1	2.4	4.2

FIGURE 2.14
Out-of-State Visitor Days and Trips in Each Geographic Tourism Region

Year	Coastal Communities	Skykomish-Snohomish Valleys	Stillaguamish-Sauk Valleys	Urban Basecamp
Proportion of Out-of-state Visitor Days				
2022	57.7	53.5	56.2	59.3
2023	55.4	49.5	53.7	55.8
Proportion of Out-of-state Trips				
2022	38.8	34.6	38.2	40.2
2023	43.1	36.9	41.7	44.7



Differentiating Snohomish County's Tourism Product

Throughout the entire planning process, discussion about the pros and cons of associating Snohomish County with Seattle persisted in each phase, especially in the focus groups (see focus group summary in Appendix). While Seattle is arguably the most recognizable city in Washington and even the entire Pacific Northwest, it is not Snohomish County, and Snohomish County is not Seattle. Snohomish County has an allure and draw all its own.

Moving into the next five years, Snohomish County can leverage several marketing opportunities to differentiate and position itself as a distinct and appealing destination that complements the attractions of Seattle.

Strategies and unique selling points of Snohomish revolve around the interplay of the components of the tourism assets previously identified. The County also will be taking the lead in advocating for sustainable tourism practices and actions that align with its climate economy initiative, which calls for making its operations more environmentally and economically sustainable and taking action on climate change to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

By focusing on these unique selling points and refining its compelling marketing campaigns, Snohomish County can both capture a segment of the market already drawn to what they perceive of as Seattle and build its name recognition as a stand-alone market. Key differentiating attributes to consider include those that a visitor (or near-by resident) would miss out on if they just stuck to Seattle and King County:

Cultural and Artistic Offerings and Events:

Showcase specific, hyperlocal arts, culture, and events by promoting galleries, theaters, performances, and cultural events in Snohomish County. Highlight any festivals, art shows, or music events that capture the county's creative spirit.

Historic and Heritage Sites: Promote the aerospace and aviation-based history and related museums. The history of aerospace and aviation technology and industry is a strong differentiator and important tourism attraction in the county.

Natural Beauty and Outdoor Recreation:

Highlight the county's stunning natural landscapes, including its proximity to the Cascade Mountains and the Puget Sound. Recognize the close proximity to managed outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, wildlife viewing, and water sports. All outdoors messaging will be tempered with "leave no trace" principles to encourage responsible recreation and environmental sustainability.

Small Town Charm: Promote the county's small towns and communities, each with its own unique character and local attractions. Emphasize the slower pace of life, and the opportunity to experience the authentic Pacific Northwest.



Farm-to-Table Dining: Highlight the county's culinary scene, emphasizing farm-to-table dining experiences and local produce and seafood. Market the area as a food lover's destination, showcasing restaurants that focus on using fresh, locally sourced ingredients.

Family-Friendly Activities: Promote unique family-friendly attractions (i.e. the Imagine Children's Museum, the Reptile Zoo, etc.), parks, and activities that make Snohomish County an ideal destination for travelers with children.

Unique Events: If Snohomish County hosts special events or festivals, market them as distinctive experiences that travelers won't find in Seattle. Encourage visitors to plan their trips around these events.

Accessibility: Highlight the convenience of reaching Snohomish County, especially if it's within easy driving distance of Seattle. Provide information on transportation options, including highways, public transit, and nearby airports.

Scenic Drives and Byways: Promote scenic routes and drives within the county, showcasing picturesque landscapes and points of interest along the way.

Adventure Tourism: Market adventurous activities such as kayaking, rock climbing, or hot air ballooning if they are available in the area.



3



The Plan

Introduction

The Snohomish County Strategic Tourism Plan provides updated vision and mission statements, guiding principles, and goals and initiatives to support management and development of tourism countywide. Key performance indicators related to each goal and set of supporting initiatives are also presented on the following pages.

Snohomish County Tourism, which administers the Destination Management Organization (DMO), will continue to collaborate and coordinate with countywide partners and interests on an ongoing basis. Snohomish County Tourism will act as a central hub for management, development, and marketing of the tourism product. As such, the vision, mission, guiding principles, as well as goals and supporting initiatives in this plan are written to represent opportunities for action that the County will implement and support, while collaborating with diverse tourism interests countywide and providing leadership for the management and development of tourism.

Vision Statement

To build a distinct, recognized, and sustainable world-class tourism experience that highlights Snohomish County as a unique Pacific Northwest destination.

Guiding Principles

The following three guiding principles and supporting ideals are foundational to ongoing management and development of tourism:

- » Fostering a commitment to sustainability and achieving “triple bottom line” social, environment, and economic values (people, planet, prosperity). Tourism requires a balance of these values to be truly successful.
- » Actively promoting and monitoring tourism that benefits all, through inclusive initiatives and actions that respect and celebrate social and cultural differences, including both those who live and work in Snohomish County and those who come to visit.
- » Seeking collaborations with and opportunities for shared benefits with:
 - Tourism partners and communities within Snohomish County;
 - Regional tourism partners outside the county; and
 - Other industry partners and agencies who are indirectly influenced by tourism.

In implementing this Plan, Snohomish County will monitor performance on an ongoing basis (per the measures presented in Chapter 4), striving to improve efforts while also charting the need for new and revised approaches and recommendations for the next Strategic Tourism Plan update in 2028.

Mission Statement

The Snohomish County tourism plan convenes and works collaboratively with tourism partners, residents, and visitors to elevate and steward Snohomish County for the benefit of all.



Goals and Initiatives

The following goals with supporting initiatives were developed based on input from County staff and the steering committee, as well as feedback received in the focus group sessions. These goals and initiatives support the vision for tourism in Snohomish County, as well as the mission of the DMO. The goals and initiatives also actively support the guiding principles described above and the recommendations for differentiating Snohomish County's tourism product, as presented in Chapter 2.



Key Performance Indicators for Realistic and Actionable Measures

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are included below each of the goals and supporting set of initiatives on the following pages.

Realistic and Actionable Measures—Our KPIs are designed to be realistic and actionable, reflecting the dynamic nature of tourism influenced by national factors and broader economic conditions. By focusing on attainable objectives, we avoid setting rigid thresholds for each indicator while still tracking their trends over time.

Flexibility—We recognize that some factors impacting tourism, such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic or global recessions, are beyond our control. Our KPIs allow for flexibility in determining the success of our tourism efforts, ensuring we can pivot when necessary. However, the



GOAL 1—ELEVATE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Relevance to Sustainable Tourism and the Triple Bottom Line:

Our focus on sustainable tourism initiatives is meant to elevate the visitor experience while also supporting economic development in the county. Tourism is the “first introduction” to a destination; we want to clearly message to visitors our sustainable approach. We want visitors to appreciate our destination and contribute to the local economy while leaving no trace.



Initiatives:

- 1.1 Build an enduring and inclusive brand that is seen as a leader in sustainable tourism. This initiative will involve evaluating and updating the Snohomish County tourism brand to align with the updated tourism product.
- 1.2 Tailor and enhance countywide marketing, promotional, and public relations services as the DMO in collaboration with the County’s agency of record.
- 1.3 Continue to support COVID-19 recovery and resiliency activities through the end of 2024 and formulate strategies for when ARPA recovery funding ends.
- 1.4 Implement and expand the current wayfinding program.
- 1.5 Foster a sense of place through unique and differentiating tourism activities that elevate and enhance visitor experience across the county (historic and unique places, events, festivals, custom itineraries, etc.) Continue to tie promotion of these tourism assets into an overarching message about a “true PNW” experience.



Key Performance Indicators:

KPI 1: CONSISTENT OR STEADY GROWTH IN ROOM NIGHTS AMONG OVERNIGHT GUESTS RELATIVE TO THE REGION

Measurement Approach: Continuously track and analyze the number of overnight stays within Snohomish County relative to regional trends through annual reports and statistical analysis. Monitor success by whether overnight stays are tracking at a similar pace with other counties (e.g., King and/or Pierce as data permits) and the state to understand if major differences exist in Snohomish County.

Rationale: Though lodging stay as typically not the primary driver of demand, they generate a large volume of tax dollars and are used across the industry as an important metric of measuring tourism, making it a key performance indicator of visitation.

KPI 2: MONITOR VISITOR ORIGIN TRENDS

Measurement Approach: Monitoring visitor origins will allow for a determination of whether Snohomish County is continuing to attract visitors from key drive and air markets such as Los Angeles and Portland. Additionally, assessing if there are communities that seem to be drawing a new/different kind of visitor (separating origin statistics for at the sub-regional and/or community scales within the county) will allow for more robust monitoring of overall tourism trends across the county.

Rationale: Monitoring visitor origins allows an in-depth look at the market capture from major population hubs with either drive or air access. The value of a visitor is often variable based on their origin (due in part to spending and length of stay). Further, comparisons may be made in performance between markets where marketing effort is applied and where it is not as well as understanding key changes in access such as new or lost direct flights.

KPI 3: MONITORING TOURISM SECTOR DATA (E.G., OUTDOOR RECREATION, AVIATION, URBAN ACTIVITIES) AND PRIORITIZE BASED ON SUCCESS

Measurement Approach: Collect data on the performance of different tourism sectors (e.g., urban, outdoor recreation, events, etc.) through tools such as mobile location data, visitor surveys, event attendance, lodging and hospitality tax, and other secondary data sources. Regularly assess the growth potential of each sector paired with visitor perceptions to explore whether specific tourism sectors are performing well or growing.

Rationale: In seeking to achieve the mission of 'for the benefit of all,' providing granular sector data allows the county to understand if sectors are lacking and to better support specific industries or geographic areas/communities of the county.

KPI 4: MONITORING TOURISM SATISFACTION IN SNOHOMISH COUNTY AMONG VISITORS

Measurement Approach: The DMO will administer regular surveys to visitors, seeking feedback on their experiences, satisfaction with various levels of service, and future priorities to continue improving the destination. Furthermore, sustainable tourism behaviors and perceptions can be reinforced and explored among visitors.

Rationale: In today's highly connected world, many travelers draw on the previous experiences of friends, family, and others in an online world. This level of connectivity makes them one of the best promoters and brand ambassadors of a destination through free "word of mouth" advertising. Maintaining high satisfaction increases the likelihood of stronger destination promotion.





GOAL 2—ADVANCE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESTINATION

Relevance to Sustainable Tourism and the Triple Bottom Line:

Support a data-driven approach to destination management and development. A considered, data-driven approach will help to inform and guide our initiatives: to protect the environment, enhance the quality of life for people and communities, improve the regional economy.

Initiatives:

- 2.1** Further define what a data-driven approach looks like for Snohomish County tourism. This could include hiring a third-party consultant to conduct an audit of existing data sources and identify new data sources that will measure KPIs in the STP.
- 2.2** Implement a data-driven and research-based approach to confirm and quantify the increasing value of tourism in Snohomish County to the regional economy. This initiative will include collecting tourism data on an ongoing basis to support monitoring of key performance indicators (see Chapter 4) and providing regular reporting on data results. The county will also distribute data results to partners and interests via email and other communications, while framing the data into a simple narrative.
- 2.3** Use a research-driven approach to build a variety of themed itineraries with a focus on increasing visitor and industry awareness of diverse tourism opportunities across the county. Market this diversity to visitors as Snohomish County's tourism product.
- 2.4** Track use of hotel motel lodging tax and tourism promotion area funds for local events, festivals, and general tourism promotion across the county. Use a data-driven approach to align use of the funding with LTAC, TPA, and Snohomish County tourism goals and initiatives.

Key Performance Indicators:

KPI 5: SUSTAINED ECONOMIC IMPACT FROM VISITOR SPENDING

Measurement Approach: Continuously track visitor spending within Snohomish County, focusing on overall economic impact, including job creation, business revenue, and tax revenue. Analyze trends over several years to explore whether the industry is seeing significant changes on an annual basis. Because of the variation in visitor spending, monitor against other counties and similar regional destinations to explore if changes in spending profiles align with those in Snohomish County.

Rationale: Spending and economic impact are common end points from which residents, businesses, and tourism industry interests can share a common understanding of importance. Visitor spending allows Snohomish County residents to start businesses, hire employees. In short, visitor spending helps to build the local economy. Thus, it provides a valuable communication tool with which to compare the performance of other industries and other destinations.

KPI 6: LEVERAGING AUTHENTIC EVENTS AND GROUP SALES TO DRIVE NEW VISITATION

Measurement Approach: Snohomish County competes directly with major venues in King County and others across the Greater Seattle Metro area. However, there's an authentic experience as part of visiting Snohomish County that can be leveraged for local events and other group sales opportunities. Tracking, as best as possible, the volume and impact of those events on the local economy, and overall draw for residents is recommended to support tourism and the social/cultural aspect of the county. Tracking of funding of events by County programs also should, occur and considerations related to events funding could be integrated into evaluation sheets for specific programs (LTEC/TPA).

Rationale: The key to attracting and maintaining a vibrant tourism base is recognizing and leaning into the niche within which a destination finds itself. The authenticity of Snohomish County and its communities is the key to differentiating itself from Seattle. Differentiation helps answer the question "Why go north?".





GOAL 3—BECOME A LEADER IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT

Relevance to Sustainable Tourism and the Triple Bottom Line:

According to feedback received from the steering committee and focus groups, Snohomish County already has a strong commitment to sustainability in its management practices. Advancing sustainable tourism countywide includes working with industry partners to development and distribute common sustainable tourism messaging and best practices.

Initiatives:

- 3.1** Define and promote best practices in sustainable tourism countywide through outreach and education to tourism industry representatives.
- 3.2** Actively market sustainable tourism opportunities to business and leisure visitors. Sustainable tourism messaging should be included through visitor attraction campaigns, as well as in market campaigns.
- 3.3** Continue to support and coordinate with the Snohomish County Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) in their work on land management planning and related influences on tourism management planning.
- 3.4** Coordinate with Snohomish County Planning and Development Services as well as the city planning departments to understand and identify destination management needs.





Key Performance Indicators:

KPI 7: POSITIVE RESIDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM

Measurement Approach: Engage in ongoing dialogue with residents through periodic resident surveys and town halls. Communities today have started to focus on ensuring that the perception of residents on their tourism growth and development are considered when planning the future. Snohomish County's residents are no different and may need to be continually asked about how they perceive the area doing in terms of tourism development. The DMO (or delegated party) will track these changes in perception at regular intervals over time to understand if more direct messaging and engagement are needed among locals.

Rationale: Residents are the frontline ambassadors of tourism and their welcoming of visitors directly has an impact on tourism satisfaction. Additionally – and arguably more importantly – resident quality of life and economic vitality is often directly related to resident's perception of tourism and their willingness to support tourism initiatives.

KPI 8: MEASURING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY WHERE POSSIBLE

MEASUREMENT APPROACH: The environmental aspect of sustainable tourism is most commonly thought of when thinking about impact and metrics. While the county does a good job compared to most across the country, monitoring overall environmental impact from tourism, where feasible, should be a metric that is broadly tracked. It can be difficult to fully capture a holistic metric for sustainability, but carbon offsets, tons reused/recycled, and water used are common metrics estimated for the tourism industry. This is largely an industry-wide initiative, but attempting to quantify some measures will help support the effort.

Rationale: While maximizing the economic and social benefits of tourism for the residents and businesses of Snohomish County is a component of a vibrant industry, the environment needs to thrive too. Aligning with the Climate Economy Initiative of the county, measuring and monitoring environmental sustainability is essential moving forward.

GOAL 4—ADVANCE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION THROUGH INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT

Relevance to Sustainable Tourism and the Triple Bottom Line:

Ensure that tourism industry interests countywide are working to support equitable and inclusive tourism practices. Ensure that diverse tourism interests are actively involved and engaged in a way that is consistent with the County's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion program.

Initiatives:

- 4.1 Continue to bring together diverse communities of varying sizes, tribes, agency land managers, and other diverse interests to gather input on sustainable tourism management and development.
- 4.2 Continue to work with the Snohomish County Office of Social Justice and the County's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion staff to diversify focus groups or committees engaged in tourism-related efforts.
- 4.3 Identify unique and diverse social and cultural tourism opportunities that should be promoted and marketed as part of the Snohomish County tourism experience.
- 4.4 Evaluate and work to address issues related to urban and rural tourism interface including, but not limited to: traffic congestion; overuse of outdoor recreation sites; the growing need for tourism-related workforce housing; and other social issues. Address these through partnership, collaboration, and coordination with other entities.
- 4.5 Work with partners such as the Economic Alliance of Snohomish County (EASC) to coordinate and host tourism and hospitality industry events. This initiative will include supporting the EASC in applying for funding to support ongoing communications and outreach efforts.
- 4.6 Increase opportunities for cross-collaboration and partnerships across urban and rural areas. For example, look for ways to package and market cross-county urban, rural, and outdoors experiences through themed itineraries and promotion of related content.
- 4.7 Gather, track, and analyze data to monitor visitor activity related to diverse social and cultural tourism opportunities.

Key Performance Indicators:

KPI 9: MEASURABLE INVESTMENTS IN TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE BY COMMUNITY LEADERS

Measurement Approach: Maintain a record of investments made by leaders across the county in tourism-related infrastructure and improvement projects. Assess the alignment of these investments with sustainable tourism goals and monitor trends in infrastructure development. If the industry sustains and supports these new investments, the industry shows that it has been successful in maintaining and increasing capacity.

Rationale: While tourism is often an economic sector largely driven by the demand first, maintaining a balance of diverse experience and amenity supply is key to both resident economic performance and visitor perception of their experience.

A scenic view of a waterfront. In the foreground, several kayakers are visible, including a bright orange one and a white one with blue accents. They are on a grassy bank near the water. In the background, a city skyline is visible across the water, with a bridge and a large log floating in the water.

Conclusion

Given the current political and environmental climate, the modern DMO of any size needs to be adaptable. While this strategic tourism plan puts forth our best assessment of the current state of tourism in Snohomish County (and actively anticipates the next five years), we're aware that the future is unknown.

All tourism partners, countywide, must continue to manage the destination in real time, guided by our collective tourism principles. This advocacy includes providing clear sustainability messaging to residents and visitors alike. The actions we take today will have long-term impacts and ramifications. We act in an ecosystem of interrelated interests. We must ensure that Snohomish County remains a naturally beautiful and economically vibrant destination for the next five years and beyond.

Snohomish County tourism, as the DMO, will act as a centralized hub – a convening body of and for tourism partners, sectors, and interests from across the county. We believe that, with active management and appropriate marketing, our county can continue its trajectory to become a desirable, distinct, and widely recognized global destination.

This strategic tourism plan will serve as a launching point for our efforts to promote sustainability while stimulating the economy. It will be our guiding document. In the coming years we will revisit our mission and vision as we begin to put the strategic plan and goals into action and measure and monitor our KPIs. This is to make sure that we are continuing to align ourselves with our core values.

Snohomish County is a beautiful place. Let's continue to steward it for generations to come.

