

City of Snoqualmie

Summary of Feedback on Draft Strategic Plan | November 5, 2025

Overview

From October 15 to October 29, the draft Strategic Plan was shared with the public and with individuals who had previously participated in interviews and focus groups. Recipients were invited to review the draft and provide feedback on the following questions:

- What are your overall impressions of the draft Strategic Plan?
- What would you like city leaders to consider as they adopt and implement the plan?
- What questions do you have about the Strategic Plan or about city government?

The questionnaire sought feedback to inform implementation and highlight questions for the City to consider addressing. Respondents largely focused on operational suggestions and questions that extend beyond the strategic plan's high-level framework and may be most applicable in implementation.

The draft Strategic Plan and questionnaire were distributed to the general public through a news release, e-news, quarterly newsletter, social media, and ROA e-blast. Additionally, individuals who had previously participated in interviews and focus groups through the strategic planning process were directly engaged via email. A total of 18 people completed the questionnaire. Of this total, 14 respondents were from the general public while 4 were those who had previously participated in interviews and focus groups.

The limited number of responses covered a wide range of topics and feedback without a clear consensus. As a result, the summary is organized by emerging themes, followed by verbatim record of survey responses in the Appendix.

In addition to the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft plan as described in this document, the following engagement was conducted earlier in the planning process and informed the writing of the draft plan:

- 200+ individuals engaged
- 5 interviews (human service providers, youth, YMCA staff, ROA representative)
- 4 discussion groups (human service providers, business community, seniors, downtown residents)
- 2 tabling sessions (Splash Pad Opening and Big Truck Day)
- 363 respondents to the NCS survey

Summary of Key Themes

The 18 survey responses reflected a range of topics and at times conflicting opinions without a clear consensus; as a result, many of the following bullet points reflect individual comments. While a few respondents expressed support for the Strategic Plan, many focused on concerns and implementation questions. Concerns about growth and development also emerged, highlighting areas where additional community dialogue and policy attention by the City will be needed.

Support for the Strategic Plan.

- Several respondents (6) expressed overall support for the plan.

Concerns about growth and development impact.

- Seven respondents had concerns that the plan does not fully anticipate the impacts of growth on infrastructure, traffic, and livability.
- There are worries that development may compromise environmental sustainability and community character.
- Three respondents felt the plan favors developers over residents.
- There was some desire for growth that is connected and reminiscent of historic Snoqualmie.
- There were specific concerns about traffic and water capacity impacts from the Mill Site development.
- One respondent shared that Snoqualmie does not have the resources to support residents that are in need of shelter or low-income housing.

A range of opinions on economic development.

- There are mixed views on economic development priorities:
 - Two respondents expressed interest in expanding wine tourism and improving Snoqualmie's appeal as a destination.
 - Five other respondents are concerned that relying too heavily on tourism and the Mill site will create low-wage jobs and worsen traffic and housing challenges.
- There was a desire by a few respondents to revitalize the downtown business district and reduce business turnover.
- One respondent offered detailed recommendations for the City's economic development strategy, including:
 - Addressing Snoqualmie's competitive advantages and target industries. These are cited as logistics/distribution, professional offices and business services, and hospitality.
 - Coordination with the Snoqualmie Valley Economic Alliance, with clear City leadership and budget commitment.
 - Recommendation that the Economic Development Commission evolve from advisory to decision-making authority.

"Looks good - what I expected it to look like."

"Consider the impact of more housing on traffic. Consider where tourists will park when they come to visit Snoqualmie. How will the city be able to handle more people living/visiting with its current infrastructure?"

"The [Strategic Plan] focus is on treating the city as a consumptive and development-driven area which individuals and groups have mostly spearheaded with no true local connection or concerns - just their bottom line."

"They should prioritize sustainability and resiliency over short-term economic gains and consider the long-term cultural and environmental impacts, including water availability, of over-development."

"How can we make Snoqualmie an even more enticing tourist destination? WINE, beer, cider, distilled spirits! How can we help these businesses and also bring more tourists."

"Tourism should not be a focus of the City government - especially when the infrastructure support and planning is currently insufficient for the current residents."

"Too much dependence on tourism and Mill site as economic development as will provide low wage jobs, and exacerbate affordable housing and traffic issues."

Strengthening regional partnerships.

- One respondent was concerned that the plan lacks clarity on how Snoqualmie will leverage regional partnerships such as Snoqualmie Valley Economic Alliance, ARCH, SVEA, DDI, Eastside Fire & Rescue.

More diversification and specifics tactics for fiscal sustainability.

- An individual had concerns that the fiscal strategy is too reactive and lacks specificity on revenue diversification and measurable outcomes.
- One individual offered ideas to close the projected \$900,000 annual budget gap by 2029, including:
 - Maximizing property tax authority and capturing banked capacity from prior years.
 - Evaluating a levy lid lift.
 - Implement new sales tax options.
 - Comprehensive fee restructuring.

“Fiscal sustainability requires structural solutions, not incremental adjustments. The \$900,000 projected annual deficit by 2029 cannot be addressed through efficiency alone.”

Integration with other City plans.

- An individual had concerns that the plan lacks integration with existing plans such as the Comprehensive Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, and Capital Facilities Plan. Without an explicit and clear connection between existing plans, it risks being an additional, separate document.
 - They suggest linking initiatives directly to Comp Plan elements and incorporating climate strategies across all three initiatives.

Strategic plan implementation and accountability.

- As a high-level document, the plan prompted some respondents to request more detail on how it will be implemented and measured. Some suggestions included:
 - Define zoning updates, attention to the transition to infill and redevelopment, tax incentives, and fee waivers to support housing goals.
 - Include measurable outcomes with annual public reporting.
 - Establish a Strategic Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (15–20 diverse community members).
 - Host an annual State of the City event to share progress and gather community feedback.

“Snoqualmie’s transition to infill/redevelopment is the most significant planning challenge of the next decade. This shift requires regulatory updates, infrastructure capacity assessment, community engagement on density, and design standards preserving character while enabling housing diversity.”

Additional community suggestions.

- Connect different parts of Snoqualmie through improved design and pedestrian connections. There was concern by a few respondents that there will be three isolated parts of Snoqualmie: the Ridge, Downtown, and Mill Site development.
- Address traffic concerns in historic downtown.
- Improve City to resident community engagement and create more opportunities for residents to connect with each other.

- Feedback on the pool was mixed. One respondent expressed interest in pursuing the pool without partnering with North Bend, while four others opposed the proposed pool for a range of issues including cost, membership requirements for access, and limited functionality for hosting a swim meet.
- One respondent was curious about ADUs and how they would function within the Ridge neighborhood with the existing small yard space.
- One individual had interest in improving Meadowbrook near the Mill Site.

Outstanding questions for the City.

- How was previous public feedback incorporated and what are the results from prior surveys?
- How does this plan relate to the recently updated Comprehensive Plan?
- What is the status and scope of the pool project?
- What are the “new capital assets” that the plan refers to?
- What environmental and landscape considerations were made?
- What is the timeline and approach to closing the City’s budget gap?
- How is the Snoqualmie Tribe involved in implementation and coordination efforts?
- What is the defined role of the Economic Development Commission moving forward?
- How will success be measured beyond financial metrics?

“The Tribe is a major landowner, economic force through Snoqualmie Casino, and SVEA partner. How does the strategic plan coordinate with Tribal priorities and opportunities? Are there intergovernmental agreement opportunities (shared services, joint economic development, environmental protection partnerships) that should be formalized? Cultural resource protection requirements affect development—how does early Tribal consultation fit into the planning process?”

Appendix: Verbatim Record of Responses

This appendix presents a verbatim record of responses. Each main bullet point designates a new speaker. One respondent provided paragraph-style responses, shown as sub-bullets.

What are your overall impressions of the draft Strategic Plan?

- The draft focuses on mission and guiding principles for the future of City of Snoqualmie.
- I would have liked to see more leaning into wine tourism. Focusing on a splash pad and YMCA pool to bring in tourists doesn't seem like anywhere near as large of a potential tourist upside as wine tourism.
- Does not focus on some of the biggest issues impacting our community due to the accelerated growth.
- Shows the Strategic information but no plans are shown? May be I'm reading it wrongly!
- "Strong foundation, but insufficient integration for the challenges ahead
- What works well: The three-initiative structure—community relationships, responsive fiscal services, and housing/economic vitality—captures the essential domains for a small city managing growth constraints. The acknowledgment of projected deficits by 2029 demonstrates fiscal transparency. The emphasis on partnerships signals understanding that a 14,500-person city cannot solve regional challenges independently.
- Critical gaps emerge in three areas:
 - First, the plan lacks the aggressive regional positioning strategy this moment demands. While neighboring cities have established transformative partnerships—North Bend joined Eastside Fire & Rescue, Issaquah anchors the 15-city ARCH housing coalition, and the brand-new Snoqualmie Valley Economic Alliance (formed April 2024) creates unprecedented coordination—the strategic plan doesn't articulate how Snoqualmie will leverage these platforms. The newly completed DDI represents a once-in-generation economic catalyst, yet the plan doesn't specify how Snoqualmie will capture development benefits before North Bend or other competitors position themselves more aggressively. Research on highway interchanges shows the first 12-18 months post-completion are critical for establishing zoning frameworks, recruiting anchor tenants, and shaping development patterns.
 - Second, the fiscal sustainability strategy appears reactive rather than structural. Maintaining service levels while facing \$900,000 annual deficits requires more than incremental efficiency—it demands revenue diversification, shared service expansion, and economic base transformation. Peer cities facing similar constraints have implemented concrete solutions: Sammamish adopted utility taxes for 2026 implementation; North Bend enacted multi-family tax exemptions generating 372 units; Issaquah leveraged ARCH to create 3,250+ affordable units with \$34 million pooled investment achieving 10:1 leverage. The current plan doesn't specify which revenue tools (new 0.1% public safety sales tax authorized 2025? levy lid lift? comprehensive fee restructuring?) will close the gap, nor does it quantify expected returns from each strategy.

- Third, the 5-year strategic plan lacks explicit integration with longer-term frameworks. Best practice cities—Seattle's One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, Tacoma's One Tacoma, Issaquah's "Our Issaquah"—link strategic initiatives to comprehensive plans, capital facilities plans, and climate action strategies through performance measurement systems and coordinated implementation. Without this integration, the strategic plan risks becoming a separate document rather than the implementation engine for Snoqualmie's 2044 Comprehensive Plan. PSRC's Vision 2050 and King County Countywide Planning Policies require this alignment, PSRC +3 and the Growth Management Act periodic update cycle (completed 2024) provides the framework.
- The plan needs sharper analytical rigor on the growth-to-infill transition. Snoqualmie faces a fundamental transformation that peer cities have struggled to manage well. The shift from greenfield development to infill/redevelopment represents not just a land use change but a complete economic model shift: declining impact fee revenues, rising infrastructure maintenance costs, community resistance to density, and the need for context-sensitive design that preserves mountain town character while enabling housing diversity. Portland's Residential Infill Project offers the roadmap: adopted August 2020, it produced 1,400+ middle housing units in 3.5 years, selling \$250,000-\$300,000 below market-rate detached homes, by implementing size limitations on single-family homes that created market incentives for multi-unit development. North Bend's delayed action on multi-family housing created a workforce crisis where "we don't have housing for my daughter, the teacher, or the police officers we're hiring," according to Mayor McFarland. Snoqualmie should learn from this failure—the strategic plan should specify zoning updates, tax exemption programs, and fee waiver structures needed before the housing crisis prevents recruitment of essential city workers.
- Regional comparative positioning reveals opportunity and urgency. Snoqualmie occupies a unique position in the Eastside hierarchy: Not a major employment center like Issaquah (Costco HQ, future light rail), not an affluent bedroom community like Sammamish (\$227,000 median household income), but a gateway mountain community with the Falls as a tourism anchor, new highway access, and membership in both the Eastside Fire & Rescue partnership and the Snoqualmie Valley Economic Alliance. This positioning offers distinct advantages: lower land costs than Bellevue/Seattle, superior highway access post-DDI, outdoor recreation amenities, and the ability to brand as "where nature meets community." But competitive dynamics create urgency—North Bend is actively recruiting businesses with their 2023 Economic Development Action Plan, Issaquah is planning for 2040s light rail with aggressive TOD policies, and Sammamish is developing its Town Center despite fiscal constraints.

Transportation

- The strategic plan should explicitly answer: What is Snoqualmie's competitive differentiator? How does the DDI create first-mover advantages? Which target industries (logistics/distribution, tech satellite offices, hospitality/tourism, mixed-use) align with the city's assets? What market positioning prevents competition with Snoqualmie Falls' downtown while leveraging the interchange?"
- Seems very surface level. All good stuff, but doesn't go very deep into the needs of our city or solutions to problems we face.
- It prioritizes community members, especially families, who make up the majority of Snoqualmie's population.

- I think it deliberately masks what it is trying to accomplish with “diversify” housing. That means low income, section 8 and shelter housing. It should say that so people can vote how they choose
- Looks like a good overall plan
- Looks good - what I expected it to look like.
- Topical.
- I agree with it, but I'm not optimistic. What options are there that other cities don't have / already tried? Affordable housing runs into profit challenges; how are we mitigating that?
- Most priorities reflect recent city survey. Too much dependence on tourism and Mill site as economic development as will provide low wage jobs, and exacerbate affordable housing and traffic issues.
- In general, I think it makes sense to be looking ahead for strategies to maintain a balanced budget in light of the expected projections. The strategies are fairly high level, but seem sound. However, I'd urge caution on development of more housing, given that the city's roads don't have the capacity to handle large amounts of traffic.
- Poorly researched and no meaningful input from the local community. The focus is on treating the city as a consumptive and development-driven area which individuals and groups have mostly spearheaded with no true local connection or concerns - just their bottom line.
- Very excited about the new trails the city is building along the river and to connect SVT
- I think the plan is short-sighted and out of line with the values of those that live here. It prioritizes developers and kickbacks for a small few over the values and the quality of life for long-term residents and community needs. It is not community-focused or environmentally sound. The proposals will have serious negative impacts for people who live here and want to continue to live here, and the environment. This approach is totally out of date with what is being done, even by other cities in the area, that are prioritizing sustainability, climate-adaptation, and nature-based long-term planning.

What would you want city leaders to consider as they adopt and implement the Strategic Plan?

- Initiate strategies to combine Downtown of Snoqualmie and Snoqualmie Ridge businesses.
- How can we make Snoqualmie an even more enticing tourist destination? WINE, beer, cider, distilled spirits! Think about the wine centric areas and how much tourism comes with it - boutique lodging, tour companies, nice restaurants. How can we help these businesses and also bring more tourists.
- The traffic issues in old down town are completely ignored in this plan. Its only going to get worse.
- More rounds of cops around city and suburbs during off hours!
- Immediate priority: Establish the DDI economic development framework (Q4 2025 - Q1 2026) The interchange opened July 2025 with final completion by late 2025. Research from Jefferson County, Alabama; Homewood, Alabama; and Findlay, Ohio demonstrates that cities capturing interchange benefits had regulatory frameworks, target industry strategies, and infrastructure capacity plans ready at or before ribbon cutting. Snoqualmie has a 6-12 month window to establish:

- Interchange Overlay District ordinance modeled on Oregon DOT's Woodburn success: trip budgets preserving interchange capacity, access management standards (300-500 ft minimum from ramp terminals), design guidelines preventing strip development, and prohibited uses without mitigation. This prevents the scattershot development that undermines long-term value.
- Target industry recruitment strategy focusing on: (1) logistics/distribution leveraging freight efficiency and e-commerce growth, (2) professional office/business services offering lower costs than Bellevue with talent access to Seattle metro, (3) hospitality capturing Falls tourism and outdoor recreation, and (4) mixed-use supporting complete community vision. The Economic Development Commission should transition from advisory to decision-making authority to execute this strategy.
- Infrastructure capacity assessment for water, sewer, stormwater in the interchange zone, with specific Capital Improvement Program allocations for extensions to priority development sites. Denmark's first DDI demonstrated that 50% travel time reductions and 70% delay reductions translate to business attraction when infrastructure is ready. Site selectors report infrastructure readiness as the #1 location factor—more important than incentives.
- Critical regional partnerships requiring immediate strengthening. Snoqualmie Valley Economic Alliance (formed April 2024) represents the most significant coordination opportunity. The year-long negotiation between King County, Carnation, North Bend, Snoqualmie, Duvall, and Snoqualmie Tribe created unified grant application capability (USDA RISE Grant identified), broadband expansion coordination, and small business support infrastructure. Yet the strategic plan doesn't designate a primary city liaison, allocate dedicated budget, or identify priority joint initiatives. Best practice: Designate City Manager or Economic Development Director as primary SVEA liaison with quarterly Council updates. Allocate \$25,000-\$50,000 annual budget for alliance initiatives. Target three immediate projects: (1) joint broadband expansion grant application addressing lower valley equity gaps, (2) valley-wide tourism marketing leveraging Falls, Middle Fork recreation, and Snoqualmie Ridge, and (3) coordinated employer recruitment strategy with business park land inventory across all valley cities. King County A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) offers immediate affordability solutions. Snoqualmie is already a member alongside Issaquah, Sammamish, and 12 other Eastside cities. ARCH has created 10,000+ affordable homes since 1992 with \$34 million pooled Housing Trust Fund investment achieving 10:1 leverage on local contributions through private/nonprofit partnership. The strategic plan should commit to: (1) maximizing Housing Trust Fund applications for Snoqualmie projects, (2) implementing multi-family tax exemption ordinances (8-12 years for affordable units) matching North Bend's 372-unit pipeline success, and (3) coordinating inclusionary zoning policies with regional standards to prevent competition between cities undermining affordability. Eastside Fire & Rescue integration deserves enhanced governance participation. The interlocal agreement serving Issaquah, North Bend, Sammamish, and Fire Districts 10/38 recently expanded to Mercer Island (2024) and Duvall (2025), demonstrating successful regional model. Research shows Regional Fire Authorities achieve \$196,000+ annual savings through redundancy elimination while improving service levels. Snoqualmie should explore: (1) strengthened board participation, (2) joint training facility investments, (3) shared equipment programs beyond current mutual aid, and (4) evaluation of additional consolidation opportunities as Duvall/Mercer Island transitions provide lessons learned.

- Fiscal sustainability requires structural solutions, not incremental adjustments. The \$900,000 projected annual deficit by 2029 cannot be addressed through efficiency alone. With 50%+ of city budgets typically allocated to personnel, and essential services (police, fire, streets) consuming the majority, meaningful deficit reduction requires revenue enhancement, shared services expansion, and economic base growth operating simultaneously.
- Immediate revenue actions (2026 budget cycle):
 - Maximize property tax authority: Capture all banked capacity from prior years (estimated \$164,000 annually from 2020 analysis), implement full 1% annual increase, and ensure new construction value (outside 1% cap) is fully captured. This is table stakes—every comparable city does this.
 - Evaluate levy lid lift: Property tax remains the most stable, predictable revenue source. With Washington's 1% cap meaning revenues grow at 1/9th the rate of costs, periodic voter-approved lifts are essential for service maintenance. Research shows public safety and street maintenance lifts pass most frequently. Timing: November 2026 provides sufficient public education runway; specific purpose designation and sunset provision increase passage likelihood.
 - Implement new sales tax options: The 2025 legislature authorized a new 0.1% public safety sales tax option for municipalities. For a city of Snoqualmie's size, this generates approximately \$100,000-\$150,000 annually depending on retail sales base. This should be implemented immediately—it requires Council action only, no voter approval, and directly supports strategic plan priorities of maintaining service levels.
 - Comprehensive fee restructuring: Enterprise fund services (water, sewer, stormwater, permitting, recreation) should achieve full cost recovery. Sammamish implemented phased 6.25% surface water fee increases (2023, 2024) rather than large one-time adjustments, improving public acceptance. Snoqualmie should commission rate studies for all enterprise funds comparing to peer cities (Issaquah, North Bend, Sammamish) and implement cost-recovery schedules over 2-3 years.
- Medium-term structural reforms (2026-2028):
 - Economic base diversification strategy: The DDI creates opportunity for sales tax base growth, but requires intentional recruitment. Target: \$50-100 million new commercial/industrial assessed valuation by 2030, generating \$200,000-\$400,000 additional annual revenue through property and sales taxes. This requires infrastructure investment, zoning frameworks, and active recruitment—not passive waiting for development.
- Interlocal agreement expansion: Beyond existing partnerships, evaluate: (1) building inspection sharing with Issaquah, North Bend, Sammamish (Cheney/Liberty Lake model saves 30%+ per jurisdiction), (2) IT systems consolidation (Kitsap County 6-jurisdiction records management system reduces costs while improving data sharing), (3) joint purchasing beyond MRSC Rosters, and (4) planning services for specialized projects. Each agreement should include cost-benefit analysis with clear savings targets.
- Technology investments with ROI documentation: Portland's public building retrofits achieved 31% utility cost reductions through LED lighting, HVAC optimization, and energy management

systems. Washington's Climate Commitment Act provides grants covering up to 100% of building electrification costs for public facilities. Snoqualmie should apply for 2026 grants (application cycles twice annually), conduct comprehensive energy audits, and implement measures with 5-year payback or better.

- Performance measurement system essential for accountability and adaptation. The strategic plan should include specific, measurable outcomes with annual reporting to Council and community. Best practice cities—Bellevue's biennial community survey, Seattle's Urban Village Indicators, King County performance dashboards—link short-term initiatives to long-term vision through Key Performance Indicators tracking:
 - For Community Relationships (Initiative I):
 - Partnership agreements executed annually (target: 3-5 new interlocal agreements by 2028)
 - Community engagement participation rates (target: 500+ residents annually in strategic planning processes)
 - Intergovernmental coordination meetings (SVEA, ARCH, regional boards)
 - Public trust metrics (biennial survey)
 - For Fiscally Responsible Services (Initiative II):
 - Structural balance achievement (recurring revenues \geq recurring expenditures annually)
 - Fund balance maintenance (target: 25% = 3 months operating reserves per GFOA guidance)
 - Cost per capita for major services compared to peer cities
 - Shared services cost savings (target: \$200,000+ annually by 2028)
 - Technology efficiency gains (energy costs, staff time reduction)
 - For Housing and Economic Vitality (Initiative III):
 - Housing units by type (missing middle units created: target 200+ by 2030)
 - Affordability by income level (80% AMI, 60% AMI units)
 - Jobs created (target: 500-1,000 by 2030)
 - Assessed valuation growth in interchange zone
 - Retail sales tax revenue per capita vs. Eastside average
- Quarterly reviews with department heads, annual public reporting, and biennial comprehensive assessment enable adaptive management. GFOA's "Rethinking Strategic Planning" research emphasizes rolling updates rather than complete rewrites every 3-5 years—strategies adjust based on performance data and changing conditions.
- Integration with comprehensive planning and GMA compliance. The 2024 comprehensive plan periodic update provides the framework for strategic plan implementation. Washington's Growth Management Act requires consistency between comprehensive plans (20+ year vision), capital facilities plans (6+ years), and development regulations. Best practice cities treat the strategic plan as the implementation engine, not a separate document. Specific integration mechanisms: Link strategic initiatives to comprehensive plan elements: Initiative III

(housing/economic vitality) implements the Housing Element and Economic Development Element. Initiative II (fiscal responsibility) executes the Capital Facilities Element. Initiative I (community relationships) supports the Citizen Engagement appendix. This linkage should be explicit in the strategic plan document with cross-references showing which strategic actions implement which comprehensive plan policies. Coordinate with regional frameworks: PSRC's Vision 2050 allocates growth targets to each jurisdiction—Snoqualmie's targets for 2044 should drive housing production goals in the strategic plan. King County Countywide Planning Policies establish equity, climate, and coordination requirements. The strategic plan should demonstrate how Snoqualmie's three initiatives fulfill regional obligations and position the city for continued PSRC certification (required for regional funding access). Capital Improvement Program alignment: Every capital project in the 6-year CIP should link to a strategic initiative and comprehensive plan policy. Currently lacking: analysis of operating impacts from capital investments. Best practice requires calculating ongoing costs (personnel, utilities, maintenance) before Council capital approval, ensuring the operating budget can absorb increases. The strategic plan should mandate this requirement. Climate action integration: Washington now requires climate elements in comprehensive plans (HB 1181). King County Countywide Planning Policies set GHG reduction targets: 50% by 2030, 75% by 2040, 95% by 2050 (vs. 2007 baseline). The strategic plan should incorporate climate strategies across all three initiatives: green infrastructure in Initiative III, energy efficiency in Initiative II, climate resilience in community partnerships (Initiative I). The King County-Cities Climate Collaboration provides free toolkit and technical assistance.

- Manage the infill transition with urgency and sophistication. Snoqualmie's transition from greenfield growth to infill/redevelopment is the most significant planning challenge of the next decade. This shift requires regulatory updates, infrastructure capacity assessment, community engagement on density, and design standards preserving character while enabling housing diversity. Immediate regulatory updates (2026):
 - Middle housing code amendments: Washington HB 1110 (2023) requires cities $\geq 25,000$ to allow fourplexes everywhere, sixplexes near transit. While Snoqualmie is currently below this threshold, proactive adoption positions the city ahead of mandate. Portland's Residential Infill Project demonstrates the formula: duplex/triplex/fourplex allowances + single-family size limitations (2,500 sq ft) + streamlined permitting = 1,400+ units in 3.5 years selling \$250,000-\$300,000 below detached home prices. Snoqualmie should adopt similar provisions tailored to mountain town character.
 - Interchange Overlay District: Discussed above—essential for DDI benefit capture. But equally important is preventing interchange area from competing with downtown. Strategy: Differentiate uses—highway commercial (hotels, restaurants, logistics) near interchange; local-serving retail, offices, housing in downtown core. Wayfinding connecting interchange to Falls and historic downtown prevents bifurcation.
 - Multi-family tax exemption program: RCW 84.14 authorizes 8-12 year property tax exemptions for multi-family housing with affordability requirements. North Bend implemented this generating 372 units currently in pipeline. Snoqualmie should adopt ordinance in 2026 with: (1) 8-year exemption for 20% affordable units at 80% AMI, or (2) 12-year exemption for 20% affordable at 60% AMI. This directly addresses

Strategic Plan Initiative III housing goals and works—evidence from 15+ Washington cities shows reliable production.

- Infrastructure capacity before upzoning: Critical lesson from peer cities—upzoning without infrastructure capacity creates development delays, community backlash, and unfulfilled housing goals. Snoqualmie should commission infrastructure capacity analysis in 2026 covering water, sewer, stormwater in targeted infill areas (downtown, SR 18 corridor, interchange zone). Results drive CIP prioritization ensuring capacity precedes or is concurrent with development.
- Design standards for context sensitivity: Community resistance to density typically centers on design quality, not density per se. Snoqualmie should develop design guidelines for infill development addressing: building scale transitions (step down near single-family), materials compatible with mountain aesthetic (pitched roofs, natural materials), parking design (tucked under/behind buildings), and landscaping requirements (tree retention, native plantings). Portland and Issaquah offer successful models.
- Affordable housing land banking: Cities waiting for developer proposals miss opportunities. Proactive strategy: Identify surplus city-owned properties for affordable housing development (ARCH provides financing through Housing Trust Fund), negotiate land donations or below-market sales from large property owners, and establish land bank with dedicated funding for strategic acquisitions. King County offers potential partnerships—their affordable housing program has participated in numerous Eastside projects.
- Community engagement must be authentic and ongoing, not episodic. Initiative I emphasizes partnerships and engagement, but implementation requires specific mechanisms beyond traditional public hearings. Best practice cities—Tacoma's "One Tacoma" extensive baseline reports, Seattle's Urban Village planning processes, Bellevue's biennial surveys—invest substantial resources in authentic two-way communication. Recommended engagement framework:
 - Strategic plan implementation advisory committee: 15-20 member body with diverse representation (business, housing advocates, environmental groups, neighborhoods, social equity organizations, youth) meeting quarterly to review progress, provide input on emerging issues, and connect city leadership to community perspectives. Two-year terms with staggered rotation maintain institutional knowledge.
 - Annual State of the City event: Public presentation of strategic plan progress with Q&A, performance data sharing, and community input on emerging priorities. Bellevue's model combines formal presentation with informal networking, achieving 200-300 attendee engagement.
 - Neighborhood-based sessions: Recognize different areas (downtown, Snoqualmie Ridge, valley, interchange zone) have distinct interests. Quarterly neighborhood forums enable localized discussion of how strategic initiatives affect specific areas. Critical for building support for infill development—residents accepting density increases when engaged early and shown how design standards protect character.

- Digital engagement platforms: SurveyMonkey, Bang the Table, or similar tools enable broader participation than in-person meetings alone. Target: 500+ annual survey responses providing statistically valid community input on priorities and satisfaction. Demographically representative sampling requires intentional outreach to underrepresented groups—Spanish language materials, partnership with Riverview School District (54.27% non-White 6-8th graders), and evening/weekend timing.
- Regional coordination transparency: Many residents don't understand interlocal agreements or regional partnerships. Regular communication explaining SVEA, ARCH, Eastside Fire & Rescue, and other collaborations builds understanding of why regional approaches deliver better results than isolated city action. Include cost savings data and service level improvements."
- How will you revitalize small business downtown? There seems to be a lot of turnover with businesses.
- I think we should consider more ways to engage the community. I think that many things ended because of COVID, but there are so many people in our community that want connection with others, and what better way then the city helping people do that!
- The fact that the city is not set up to deal with the criminal element that comes with shelter, low income and section 8 housing, it will be a disaster.
- No Pool. Too expensive, tax on all but not open to all without additional membership fees. Doesn't serve the entire community, just the ones who can afford it. Current design won't meet the needs of the valley as it is not big enough to host swim meets.
- We need a pool in Snoqualmie - do NOT partner with North Bend, where they get all the revenue from it and Snoqualmie pays into it.
- "We have a small but impressive list of wineries in the Snoqualmie area. Wine tourism has a multiplier effect on the local economy (can be as high as 221: https://conference.management.ase.ro/archives/2020/PDF/3_17.pdf). Woodinville is so flush with cash, that they are building their own link to the ST line!
- Snoqualmie can be the destination for wine and trains! Lean into it.
- Please do not risk improving Snoqualmie overall just because the pool is potentially there. I'd love to see more reasons to live/work here versus starting a pool that isn't fully funded. I'm also REALLY curious to know how we could possibly fit ADUs in Ridge yards. I'm open to the idea, but the yards are so tiny!
- And please consider parking implications for the new railway museum. Losing the lot by the bowling alley not only negatively impacts tourist parking, but also makes it more challenging for local residents to patronize the downtown businesses. I do not enjoy parallel parking, and the few tiny lots are ""policed"" by some of the local business owners, if you will.
- As a part of the ""Identify and maximize partnerships with community organizations to serve as trusted intermediaries"" point, I think a quick and simple way to facilitate these partnerships is to list out those community organizations on the snoqualmiewa.gov website with links to their websites or contact info.
- Does Snoqualmie have a local Rotary/Ruritan/Masons/OddFellows/etc?

- What are the organizations that serve the community's needs (food bank, Encompass NW, Railway Museum, etc).
- Make finding those communities easier for Snoqualmie residents to help encourage more participation in those groups."
- Regarding Mill Site--environmentally very constrained land, isolated by floods, warehouses will exacerbate city traffic, current demographic surveys indicate less wine drinking/interest; low wage jobs + unaffordable housing for workers.
- Consider the impact of more housing on traffic. Consider where tourists will park when they come to visit Snoqualmie. How will the city be able to handle more people living/visiting with its current infrastructure?
- Make attempts to meaningfully inform and collaborate with the public with whom y'all serve. Tourism should not be a focus of the City government - especially when the infrastructure support and planning is currently insufficient for the current residents.
- With the millpond development- consider how it can be connected to the downtown both for pedestrians and architecturally. Concern is that we have three very separate parts of snoqualmie (downtown, the ridge, and millpond development). Would like the see the downtown middle school be apart of the trail updates to provide safe sidewalks/biking paths for kids going to to and from home to school.
- Would love to see a swimming pool on the plan - inside pools are very expensive, any considerations for an outside/seasonal pool only? They really become community gathering places in the summer as well as provide employment for high school kids that have their lifeguard certification. Creating a safe place for kids to swim promotes lifelong safety around and in the water.
- The City should take a long-term planning approach that incorporates climate change adaptation and protection of natural resources, which is the driving reason people move to this area and want to live here. They should prioritize sustainability and resiliency over short-term economic gains and consider the long-term cultural and environmental impacts, including water availability, of over-development. They should also consider how to actually allow the people who have lived here for decades to continue to live here, by ensuring the area continues to be affordable, and not giving developers large tax breaks and discounts while still not providing affordable housing. They should consider development that creates an inclusive community with culture, which is represented by Old Snoqualmie, not the short-sighted drive-through sprawl of the Snoqualmie Ridge.

What questions do you have about the Strategic Plan or about city government?

- How are you going to make sure these strategies are implemented? and how involved are you planning to keep residents?
- Can we please STOP focusing on a YMCA & Snoqualmie centric pool expansion? A town of ~14,000 people does not need to have a \$30+ million dollar pool that we paid for! Contribute a PORTION of that \$15.8MM that Snoqualmie has to a VALLEY WIDE pool (in whatever city location with other cities donating matching funds) and instead use the remainder of that money to oh, maybe make Gateway Park an ACTUAL PARK vs. a parking lot for The Club at Snoqualmie Ridge's 18-wheelers during the Boeing Classic. It's ridiculous a) that area has a "park" name and b) we aren't

spending anything to turn it into a beautiful, welcoming park entrance to downtown Snoqualmie area. It's embarrassing that our focus is on an over-priced pool for such a small population, but we can't even make a "park" look like an actual park. And also please seriously consider the fees for renting our park spaces. They seem to be so underpriced for outside private groups renting them and creating noise, trash, and neighborhood chaos (e.g. Jeanne Hansen for Cascade FC tournaments). Fees should be structured at a certain rate if a person is a Snoqualmie resident and renting as an individual, then much higher for these large groups. And do they at least have a deposit so when they leave Jeanne Hansen looking trashed, the city can keep their deposit while our tax \$\$ is spent cleaning up after them?

- What do you plan to do for residents trying to navigate the old down town area?
- Plan doesn't so future planned work? May be I'm reading it wrongly!
 - Q1: How will the three strategic initiatives integrate with each other operationally? The initiatives are presented as distinct domains, but successful implementation requires synergy. For example, Initiative I (community relationships) should inform Initiative III (housing/economic development) through engagement revealing community priorities on development character. Initiative II (fiscal responsibility) constrains what's achievable in Initiatives I and III through budget reality. Where is the integration mechanism? Which staff position has cross-initiative coordination responsibility? How do quarterly performance reviews address interdependencies?
 - Q2: What is the anticipated timeline for closing the \$900,000 annual budget gap? The strategic plan acknowledges projected deficits by 2029 but doesn't specify a deficit reduction schedule. Is the goal: structural balance by 2027? 2028? 2029? What revenue increases and cost reductions are assumed in each year? Without this specificity, Initiative II "fiscally responsible services" lacks measurable success criteria. Recommendation: Include year-by-year deficit reduction targets with revenue/expenditure assumptions.
 - Q3: How does Snoqualmie's strategic positioning relative to North Bend and other valley cities inform economic development strategy? The Snoqualmie Valley Economic Alliance creates collaboration opportunities but also reveals competitive dynamics. If both North Bend and Snoqualmie recruit logistics/distribution businesses for interchange areas, does regional coordination prevent zero-sum competition? Or does competitive positioning strengthen both cities? The strategic plan should articulate whether economic development is collaborative (rising tide lifts all boats) or competitive (capture market share from neighbors).
 - Q4: What role does the Snoqualmie Tribe play in strategic plan implementation? The Tribe is a major landowner, economic force through Snoqualmie Casino, and SVEA partner. How does the strategic plan coordinate with Tribal priorities and opportunities? Are there intergovernmental agreement opportunities (shared services, joint economic development, environmental protection partnerships) that should be formalized? Cultural resource protection requirements affect development—how does early Tribal consultation fit into the planning process?
 - Q5: How will success be measured beyond financial metrics? Initiative I (community relationships) and portions of Initiative III (housing options) have qualitative dimensions not captured by budget balance alone. What constitutes success for "extraordinary quality of life"? Resident satisfaction scores? Housing diversity metrics? Community cohesion indicators?

Employment-housing balance? Without defining success, strategic plan evaluation becomes subjective. Best practice cities use balanced scorecards with multiple outcome categories—financial, community, service quality, sustainability.

- City Government Structural Questions. Q6: Is the current governance structure optimized for the strategic plan's implementation demands? Snoqualmie operates under council-manager form with mayor selected from Council. Research shows professionally managed cities typically outperform strong-mayor cities on financial sustainability and service delivery. With projected fiscal challenges and complex regional coordination requirements, does the City Manager position have sufficient authority, resources, and support to execute the strategic plan? Are department heads aligned on strategic priorities, or do competing demands fragment implementation?
- Q7: What is the Economic Development Commission's role in Initiative III implementation? The strategic plan emphasizes economic vitality but the commission is currently advisory. Should it transition to decision-making authority? What is its relationship to the City Manager's economic development responsibilities? To the SVEA liaison role? Clarifying governance prevents confusion when recruiting businesses, negotiating development agreements, and implementing incentive programs.
- Q8: How does capital project selection align with strategic priorities? Cities commonly struggle with capital improvement programs driven by department wish lists rather than strategic priorities. Does Snoqualmie's CIP process require demonstrating alignment with strategic plan initiatives? Is there a scoring matrix prioritizing projects by strategic contribution? Are operating impacts calculated before capital approval? MRSC The 6-year CIP should be the financial blueprint implementing the strategic plan—if disconnected, strategic initiatives remain aspirational.
- Q9: What is the staff capacity for implementing this strategic plan while managing current workloads? Small cities face the "capacity trap"—ambitious strategies without sufficient staff to execute. Has Snoqualmie assessed whether current staffing levels can implement these initiatives? Are position vacancies preventing progress? Would shared services partnerships (joint planners, building inspectors, economic development specialists with valley cities) increase capacity while managing costs? Unfunded mandates from state/federal governments consume staff time—how much capacity remains for strategic priorities?
- Q10: How will the strategic plan adapt to changing circumstances over the 5-year horizon? GFOA research shows detailed long-term plans quickly become obsolete—the "time cone" concept suggests strategies should become more general with distance from present. What is the update mechanism? Annual refresh? Complete rewrite at mid-point? Trigger events prompting review (economic downturn, major state policy changes, regional growth target revisions)? Adaptive management requires defined review processes, not ad hoc responses to crisis.
- Regional Coordination Questions. Q11: How does Snoqualmie balance regional cooperation with maintaining distinct identity and local control? The strategic plan appropriately emphasizes partnerships, but residents often fear regional approaches mean loss of small-town character. How does the city communicate that shared services improve fiscal sustainability without compromising local control? For example, Eastside Fire & Rescue maintains local governance

representation while achieving efficiency—but do residents understand this? Public education on interlocal agreements prevents misinformation undermining strategic partnerships.

- Q12: What is Snoqualmie's role in King County regional decision-making beyond required participation? The city participates in PSRC, Growth Management Planning Council, and other regional bodies. But does Snoqualmie actively shape regional policy or reactively comply with regional mandates? With Sound Cities Association representing 38 cities, is Snoqualmie positioned on Public Issues Committee to influence policy development? Small cities risk becoming policy-takers rather than policy-makers—strategic regional engagement protects local interests.
- Q13: How does the I-90/SR 18 interchange benefit capture coordinate with North Bend's development strategies? The DDI dramatically improves access for both cities. Is there a formal coordination mechanism preventing destructive competition (race-to-bottom incentives, conflicting traffic impacts, redundant infrastructure investments)? Or is healthy competition viewed as beneficial? Clarity on this relationship informs economic development strategy—if collaborative, joint recruitment makes sense; if competitive, differentiated positioning is essential.
- Long-Term Vision Questions. Q14: How does this 5-year strategic plan position Snoqualmie for success in 2044 (comprehensive plan horizon) and 2050 (Vision 2050)? The strategic plan should be one chapter in a longer story. What is the 30-year vision this plan advances? Is Snoqualmie aspiring to: (1) Mountain gateway community with tourism/recreation economic base and residential character? (2) Employment center with regional job draw and balanced tax base? (3) Bedroom community with enhanced quality of life and regional services partnerships? (4) Hybrid model balancing multiple identities? The comprehensive plan articulates this, but the strategic plan should explicitly connect 2026-2030 priorities to 2044 destination.
- Q15: How does climate change affect strategic plan assumptions and priorities? King County requires 50% GHG reductions by 2030, 95% by 2050. Snoqualmie faces specific climate vulnerabilities—increased flooding risk from Snoqualmie River, wildfire smoke from Cascades, changing snowpack affecting recreation economy. Does the strategic plan integrate climate resilience across all three initiatives? Infrastructure investments should be climate-adapted, economic development should prioritize green jobs, and community engagement should build climate literacy. Climate action is not a separate initiative but a lens applied to all strategies.
- Q16: What does success look like in 2030 when this strategic plan concludes? Beyond specific metrics, what should residents experience differently? Should Snoqualmie in 2030 have: More diverse housing options accessible to teachers, police, firefighters working in the community? A thriving downtown AND successful interchange commercial area? Structural budget balance with healthy reserves? Active regional partnerships delivering measurable cost savings? Painting this picture makes the strategic plan tangible and enables retrospective evaluation of whether objectives were achieved.
- Conclusion: Strategic opportunities demand immediate, coordinated action. Snoqualmie's strategic plan captures essential priorities but requires sharpening, accelerating, and integrating to match the challenge scale. The convergence of DDI completion, fiscal pressures, infill transition, and regional coordination opportunities demands aggressive, coordinated action across all three initiatives simultaneously. The next 18 months are critical. By mid-2027,

regulatory frameworks for interchange development should be established, SVEA partnerships should have delivered first wins (broadband grants, joint recruitment successes), fiscal sustainability strategies should show measurable deficit reduction, and housing production should accelerate through middle housing policies and tax exemptions. Cities that delay these actions face crisis management rather than strategic positioning.

- Regional leadership offers Snoqualmie's greatest opportunity. As convener of the Snoqualmie Valley Economic Alliance, home to the region's iconic Falls, and anchor of the valley alongside North Bend, Snoqualmie can position itself as the regional coordination leader—not just a participant. This role enhances influence in King County, PSRC, and state decision-making while delivering tangible benefits through shared services, coordinated recruitment, and unified legislative advocacy. The strategic plan should be reframed as an integrated implementation blueprint, not three separate initiatives. Community relationships enable housing/economic development by building support for necessary changes. Fiscal responsibility constrains and shapes what's achievable but also drives innovation through shared services and revenue diversification. Housing and economic vitality create the sustainable tax base funding community services. These dynamics should be explicit, with cross-initiative implementation teams, integrated performance metrics, and quarterly Council reviews assessing progress holistically. Snoqualmie's assets—the Falls, new highway access, valley setting, strong schools, own police/fire departments, engaged community—position it for success. The strategic plan must now provide the execution framework transforming these assets into sustainable prosperity. With neighboring cities actively implementing housing action plans, economic development strategies, and fiscal reforms, Snoqualmie faces competitive pressure to match or exceed peer performance. The opportunity is now; the tools are available; the question is whether leadership, staff, and community will execute with the urgency this moment demands."
- What role does the city play in negotiating trash pickup service prices? They went up significantly and have no option to lower them unless we cancel service all together. That on top of increased water utilities is crazy. It's too expensive.
- None!
- How can we prevent section 8c low income and government tax credit and shelter housing housing.
- What is happening with the pool?
- Glad to see deferred maintenance prioritized. But what are the new capital assets referring to? Is the pool part of that? I'd rather see deferred maintenance and delay the pool. That's a quick win, observable result and frankly more equitable.
- Does this follow directly from the recent Comp Plan revision?
- I'd love to see more detail on how these strategies are going to get implemented. For example, how will the government go about "revitalizing" Falls avenue? What does that actually mean?
- 1: Did you fully consider environmental and landscape impacts to the City? 2: What part of the plan is intended to provide meaningful engagement, beyond this base attempt to try and rally political points?
- Concern with millpond development and Meadowbrook road - drivers already speed on Meadowbrook. Because it feels like a straight, wide road, it's not intuitive to slow down. with the

removed parking lanes speeding cars are right beside the sidewalk. Would like to see improvements of Meadowbrook included alongside the millpond development

- Numerous citizens have voiced concerns about the Mill Site. How will the City deal with increased traffic of the Mill development while not creating a negative environmental impact or impact to the people that already live here? How will the City provide water for the Mill site? How will the Mill site benefit the community by being affordable for local businesses and local residents? What does "revitalization" of Falls avenue mean? This is already the main destination of Snoqualmie, it has actual character and shouldn't be converted to be more like the ridge. How was feedback from the previous rounds of surveys and outreach incorporated into this? Is there some sort of accountability of showing what constituents actually want for their community? This does not seem to represent what citizens actually want, and seems like a way for developers to make more money.

If you would like to receive future updates on Strategic Plan implementation, please share your name and email.

Six individuals shared their names and email addresses. These will be shared with City staff for follow-up.