

## VIABILITY

The Pacific West Rail (PWR) project team includes members with extensive museum development and operations experience, including some who are also local residents with deep community connections to the Snoqualmie Valley, providing longevity to the museum team.

### PWR Museum Team

- **Howard & Peggy Lovering:** Howard joined the Boeing Museum of Flight in 1977 as its first full-time staffer and was later named executive director. He is credited with developing the museum into a world-class facility, serving 500,000 visitors annually.
- **Matt Hayes:** Matt has over 13 years of museum leadership experience and is the current Director of the Boeing Museum of Flight.
- **John Ferguson:** John has over 30 years of museum leadership experience and is currently the Manager of Events and Corporate Membership at the Museum of Glass in Tacoma.
- **Andy Eccleshall:** Andy is a tenured Edmonds-based artist. He recently completed the Edmonds Roots mural (2020). For the project he collaborated – from concept to final drawings - with Native American artist and member of the Tulalip Tribe, Ty Juvenil.
- **Nicole Klein:** Nicole is ASUW Shell House Capital Campaign Manager for the University of Washington's \$18.5 million capital campaign to restore the historic ASUW Shell House into a learning and gathering space for students and the community.
- **Bruce McCaw:** Bruce is a pioneer in the communications and cellphone industry sectors, co-founder of McCaw Cellular Communications that was sold to AT&T in the early 1990s. He is the chair of the Seattle Hotel Group. Bruce and his brothers' sizeable donation funded the restoration of the Seattle Opera house, which is now named McCaw Hall in honor of his mother. He has also held roles with the Museum of Flight, Horizon Airlines and Alaska Air Group.
- **Kelly Coughlin:** Kelly is the CEO of the SnoValley Chamber of Commerce. She was previously the Executive Director of the Mt. Si Food Bank where she actively collaborated with the Chamber. In addition, Coughlin has a consulting company and grant writing experience.

The PWR Museum Project is privately funded and does not require a City capital investment. The extensive model railroad already exists and would be relocated to the museum building for the public to enjoy. At termination of the lease agreement, ownership of property improvements revert to the City.

The proposed project would develop the land parcel as a park with a museum in the Open Space (OS) District consistent with the provisions of the Final Plan and zoning. This open Space (OS) District is intended to provide areas appropriate for active and passive recreation and

certain institutional uses such as a museum. An institutional use, including museum is a conditional use permitted with the shoreline designation, Urban Floodplain Environment.

The project location at the Gateway to Snoqualmie on the corner of Railroad Ave/SR 202 and Snoqualmie Parkway is addressed in the Comprehensive Plan, as gateways serve as entrances to the city and its different areas and districts. Per the Comprehensive Plan, *“Protection and enhancement of gateways is important for preserving unique images for those traveling into and through the City, as they often present the first face and impression of a place.”*

Currently what visitors see at this gateway is a vacant, minimally maintained lot. The PWR Project would enhance this property and contain a visually appealing park and museum. The Comprehensive Plan also identifies this specific area as the *Gateway Neighborhood* noting it is *“reserved pending future development.”*

The project will be complementary to the popular Railway Museum train excursion, serving to further increase tourism tax revenue by drawing more visitors to our downtown corridor. The project also complements and expands on the railway history of Snoqualmie, which is a significant, established tourist attraction that supports the local business community. Additionally, the park component of the project provides an amenity for residents and visitors, and space for events and gatherings like the annual Christmas Tree lot.

The lease and development agreements help to ensure that project moves from concept, to design, to construction and provides safeguard to ensure the museum is completed.

## **CITY PRIORITIES AND GOALS**

The project supports identified City priorities, including ‘encouraging economic vibrancy,’ ‘bolstering neighborhood livability,’ and ‘enhancing quality of life.’ The project will help attract retail development to the City and supports efforts to increase economic development and tourism to bolster tax revenue that supports the general fund. It will also improve the streetscape at this highly visible location.

This project both creates and promotes the Snoqualmie brand identity supporting railway associated tourism initiatives and implementing another opportunity to expand recreational programs and activities for visitors and residents.

The project supports the Snoqualmie 2032 Comprehensive Plan Vision Plan of a *Healthy, Diverse Economy; a Distinctive Sense of Place; and Livable and Complete Community* by:

- 1) Promoting a diverse economic base that generates sufficient revenue to provide and maintain the facilities and services needed and expected by citizens.
- 2) Enhancing vibrant pedestrian-oriented retail districts with a recognized character distinctive to Snoqualmie rather than “anywhere USA.”
- 3) Promoting well-maintained public and private properties and infrastructure conveying a unified sense of community pride.

- 4) Enhancing a robust and well-integrated system of parks, open spaces, trails, activity venues, and programs, along with land use and community design strategies that encourage residents to maintain active, healthy lifestyles, enjoy the outdoors, and serve as worthy stewards of our natural environment.

### **WHY NOW, WHY SNOQUALMIE?**

PWR needs a permanent home. It had approached and considered other locations for its proposed museum, including neighboring North Bend and the City of Tacoma, but prefers Snoqualmie due to the beneficial location; team member ties to the City; and the significant, established tourism base revolving around the NW Railway Museum and Snoqualmie Falls.

This project, combined with upcoming improvements to the Centennial Trail, will provide improved connection between Snoqualmie Falls and downtown Snoqualmie, and offer a new tourist attraction along this route. Not only will the project support the City's economic development and tourism goals, but it will also provide an educational activity for Snoqualmie youth, while also creating a potential partnership opportunity with other Valley agencies.

### **BENEFITS TO CITY AND RESIDENTS**

- **Educational Model Railroad Exhibit:** PWR will provide the Northwest with its largest and best model railroad exhibit. The opportunity to be the best of its kind is rare to any community and a single, powerful ingredient for the success of the total attraction.
- **Interpretive Center of American History and Culture:** Importantly, PWR will interpret rail transportation history, technology, and culture, with public programs for visitors and students.
- **Educational Center:** The model railroad is a valuable technical and cultural resource, capable of inspiring and motivating students. Trained docents and staff will share information during tours, and informal programs will stress STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) and support public education learning requirements.
- **Meeting and Business Venue:** The museum and its event and meeting facilities can be an adjunct to the convention and business activities of the Snoqualmie Corridor. Convention planners will find that PWR provides a valuable new venue for breakout meetings and social and cultural programs that can help attract business.
- **Regional Special Event Venue:** Cultural attractions have begun to establish their popularity as unique event locations, attracting various social, cultural, and entertainment events.
- **Community Meeting Place:** PWR will have a meeting room that groups can use, establishing the museum as a locus of community service. In addition, special arrangements for non-profit organizations, trade-out agreements with clubs, and nominal fees for space use will make PWR accessible for many good causes.

- **Entertainment and Shopping:** The entertainment of the miniature world is inviting. The specialty shop, decorated with a railroad and travel motif, will cater to a large segment of tourists. Day and night, inside and on the outdoor plaza, social and cultural events will add constant activity and color to the institution.
- **Destination Attraction:** With all the above elements working together, a synergism will create a powerful draw. This broad market service will establish PWR as a thriving destination attraction for the region, one that can bring new visitors to enhance the cultural community. PWR will enrich resident and visitor experiences in Snoqualmie.

## ALTERNATIVES SITE USES

There are limited uses allowed at this site that meet current zoning code. A viable, allowed-usage project for this City-owned property – one that also aligns with defined economic development and tourism goals of the Comprehensive Plan and City Council priorities - has not been presented to the City in nearly two decades. Given that the City has completed nearly all of its 20-year vision plans for the downtown core and enhanced downtown's connection to Snoqualmie Falls, this project is an optimal fit. Additionally, as the City does not have funding to develop this parcel and the project team will fund it, the project will not require additional taxpayer dollars - which means the return on investment is significant.

Snoqualmie Venturing Crew 115 uses this land parcel for free each winter as the site of its annual Christmas Tree lot. The City recognizes the community's connection to this holiday tradition and looks forward to exploring all alternative options that will continue to offer Christmas tree sales.

Along with hosting a Christmas Tree lot, the vacant parcel has also been used for PSE storage, as an overflow parking area, and as a staging area for construction projects and the Boeing Classic golf tournament. None of these uses are optimal, nor do they support the City's Comprehensive Plan or Council priorities.

Nearly 20 years ago, a park was proposed for this site that included a railroad spur, train display, visitor's center, and restroom. It was this project that resulted in paver bricks that currently cover a portion of the property. At that time a City consultant – Roger Brooks of Destination Development – who was helping create the long-term visioning plan for the downtown corridor to enhance tourism, advised that until the downtown revitalization work was complete, this type of park - in this location – was likely to serve as a place for visitors to stop and then head up Snoqualmie Parkway and leave, rather than draw them toward downtown. This is one of the reasons the project never made it to completion, along with a change in leadership at the Snoqualmie Valley Rotary.

## SNOQUALMIE TRIBE

The City met with the Snoqualmie Tribe “government to government” in March of 2023. While some members of the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe are not supportive of this project and wish for

the property to be developed into native grasslands, a request was made to set the museum back from the Snoqualmie River and Kimball Creek. The applicant has accommodated their setback request and actively looks forward to future discussions with the Tribe as designs for the open space develop.

Additionally, the City will administer all applicable land development regulations and require careful adherence to archeological standards while taking into consideration Snoqualmie Tribe feedback and comments throughout the development process. None of the project will infringe on the Two Sisters Return area – located on the opposite side of the wide, 4-lane Snoqualmie Parkway – nor the site line of Snoqualmie Falls, which is not visible from this city-owned land parcel.

The City feels the model train museum and park at this location support the Comprehensive Plan vision, City Council priorities and goals, and will improve the vacant site, making it a welcoming and visually appealing gateway to Snoqualmie. It will invite visitors to explore our City, supporting City and Tribal services and programs through additional visitation, hotel stays and tourism tax revenue. The proposed project and its environmentally sensitive design will improve this land parcel, complementing the adjacent open space area while blending seamlessly into our downtown and connecting it to Snoqualmie's history.