

## History of Snohomish County Tomorrow

Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT) began in March 1989 as a voluntary association of cities, towns, the county and the Tulalip Tribes. Its genesis was a meeting held in the City of Snohomish. Organized by Snohomish County and sponsored by the City, the meeting called attention to the new wave of growth that was causing concern among elected officials and their constituents. This meeting signaled recognition by city and county officials that growth related impacts on road systems, public services, and resource lands were too far-reaching to be managed on a single jurisdictional level. Acknowledgment of this problem came prior to passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA). At the time, trust between governments was low and no forum existed to foster communication and coordination between the elected leaders in the county. While no vote was taken, the consensus of the group at this first meeting was to create the interjurisdictional forum called Snohomish County Tomorrow.

The first SCT General Assembly meeting (all elected officials from Snohomish County, its cities, towns and The Tribes) was held in October 1989. One of the first actions taken was to appoint an ad hoc committee to propose an [Organizational Structure](#) and [Operating Guidelines](#) for the newly created association. Much spirited debate ensued. Should SCT have a formal voting structure? Who should attend – mayors, councilmembers, city and county staff? How could city and county representation be fairly balanced? Should the organization be a formal entity with staff support? Should the organization have binding powers and delegated authorities?

Both the resulting structure and guidelines reflect the outcome of the early discussions and the decision by elected officials to form a group somewhere between a formally chartered entity and a loose association. Standing committees were developed ([Steering Committee](#), [Executive Committee](#), [Planning Advisory Committee](#), [Infrastructure Coordinating Committee](#), [Community Advisory Board](#) and the [City/County Managers/Administrators Group](#)). Decision-making at the Steering Committee was to be by consensus with a provision for weighted voting. Voting was restricted to elected officials. Officers were chosen to reflect a balance between the city and the county, as well as between large city and small city representation.

By October of 1990, the Steering Committee of Snohomish County Tomorrow had reached consensus on a number of goal statements set out in a document entitled "[Snohomish County Tomorrow Goals](#)". These goals were adopted by the SCT Assembly and represented the regional vision and framework for growth management for the county, cities, towns and Tulalip Tribes. The goals provided guidelines for future planning efforts encompassing the environment, natural resources, land use, parks, open space, housing, transportation, infrastructure, economic development, cultural resources, education, growth patterns and governmental roles.

In July 1991, Snohomish County Tomorrow took action in response to the latest round of amendments to the Growth Management Act (GMA). The SCT Steering Committee agreed to use the Snohomish County Tomorrow Goals as a basis for establishing the countywide policies required by RCW 36.70A.210 (County-wide Planning Policies). The county and the cities represented on the Steering Committee adopted the Snohomish County Tomorrow process as the legitimate method to fulfill the requirements of the Growth Management Act and, in particular, those set forth in RCW 36.70A.210. The new state law called for the creation of a "county-wide planning policy", "...a written policy statement or statements used solely for establishing a county-wide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted." Planners and public officials from cities, towns, the county and other public agencies worked over a period of months to draft these policies. Finally, on December 9, 1992, the Steering Committee acted by consensus to approve the Countywide Planning Policies and recommended that they be reviewed by each jurisdiction prior to their final adoption by the Snohomish County Council.

The policy adoption process provided opportunities for considerable public review and participation. The Snohomish County Tomorrow Steering Committee, the Community Advisory Board, the cities and the

county reviewed the [Countywide Planning Policies](#) (CWPPs) and took public input at their meetings. The County Council conducted a public hearing prior to adoption of the Countywide Planning Policies.

Today, the collaborative and mutual efforts of all jurisdictions in Snohomish County continue to be vital toward fulfilling the requirements of the Growth Management Act. The countywide policies represent a major contribution to a process designed to define and direct the collective vision of our community. The policies are noteworthy not only in substance but in the commitment they represent by local governments of Snohomish County.

Currently Snohomish County Tomorrow provides an indispensable forum for discussion. All changes, recommendations, and additions to the Countywide Planning Policies are the responsibility of SCT. All amendments to the CWPPs move through the SCT process. The SCT technical staff committees actively use the Snohomish County Tomorrow process to reach agreement on population and employment allocations to cities and unincorporated areas. These allocations become the basis for land use plans. SCT also coordinates countywide transportation planning, makes recommendations to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) on federal transportation funding allocations, and is an arbiter in the siting of essential public facilities. New regional growth challenges continue to face the organization and interest remains high.