



Snohomish County Council

NEWS RELEASE

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Council Meets Commitment in 2007 Budget

The Snohomish County Council Monday adopted a 2007 budget that makes key strategic investments in public safety, transportation, and the health and well-being of veterans of the armed services. County Council Chair Kirke Sievers said the council's adopted budget is about, "commitment to our community, commitment to fiscal integrity, and commitment to solving the issues most important to our citizens."

The council budget adds detectives to deal with the increase in property crimes and officers to patrol neighborhoods and enforce speeding laws. Council Vice Chair Dave Gossett said, "These are critical public safety issues and we're going to provide the deputies needed to help meet the problem." In addition, the council rejected a request for \$100,000 for a consultant to study the issues and will have the county's law and justice cabinet work with citizens on future public safety needs.

The Sheriff's budget is increased by 11 positions over that proposed by the executive. Those positions include two detectives to work on the increase in property crimes, four more patrol officer, and four new motorcycle units for traffic enforcement. The other position would provide administrative support.

The budget provides new positions to meet the building boom in the county. It funds the people and technology needed to process permits fairly and accurately while making key investments in inspectors and code enforcement to make certain the work is being done correctly. Councilmember Dave Somers said, "We're using new technology to be smarter about the way we handle permits. And we are providing for the staff necessary to make sure residents are protected if something is wrong."

Transportation and neighborhood livability remain some of the most important issues facing Snohomish County. The increase in the road fund accounts for almost \$3 million in new investment over the six-year span of the county's capital improvement programs. More road overlay projects will be completed in 2007 and intersection signal projects and others are added or accelerated in the CIP. The additions made by the council build on the Enhanced Community Infrastructure Development Initiative funded this year. Councilmember Gary Nelson said, "Citizens are willing to make further

investments in transportation when they know they will be completed on time and on budget. Snohomish County has a strong track record of meeting that commitment.

The county is not forgetting its parks and natural resources. The 2007-2012 capital improvement program includes more than 30-parks, ball fields, trail, and conservation area improvements. In addition, the council has added important maintenance funds for several park facilities. Councilmember John Koster said, "This budget makes even more strides in improving active recreation in the county and provides more funding to maintain what we already have." The budget also recognizes the first two installments of mitigation money from King County for the Brightwater Wastewater Treatment Plant. The first installment of \$33.5 million is due from King County on November 21st and another \$17 million is anticipated in 2007.

The council also added \$275,000 to the county's program that assists veterans. State law provides funding for this program through a small portion of the property tax. But it only provides about \$470,000 which has not been able to meet the needs of veterans. Council Chair Kirke Sievers proposed the increase in funding saying, "Our veterans program is overwhelmed at its current funding level of under half a million dollars. This council is making an investment of an additional \$275-thousand dollars to help meet those needs. They have served us. We must not forget them."

The budget adopted by the county council includes approximately \$202.9 million in expenditures in the general fund which pays for basic county operations and most of the system of law and justice. The total budget, including capital improvement programs, totals \$ 904.5 million.

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