



Snohomish County
Office of the Executive
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County Executive

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“Snohomish County is back on track”

Executive Reardon sets priorities for 2008, proposes general property tax cut

County Executive Aaron Reardon delivered his 2008 Budget Address today in which he outlined spending priorities for 2008 and proposed a 1% reduction in general property taxes.

Reardon’s address highlighted the efforts the County has made to improve its fiscal health and focus on critically needed services. “The steps we have taken to get Snohomish County back on track serve as the foundation for all we are set to accomplish in 2008 and beyond,” said Reardon.

In proposing the property tax reduction, Reardon said, “We have made great strides and increased public confidence in their government’s ability to live within its means while delivering the core services they expect. Today, I am asking that we go one step further by demonstrating that we understand the growing tax burden our property owners face.”

The budget presented by Executive Reardon proposes significant investments in community safety, law and justice, the environment, critical services for seniors and veterans, and local infrastructure improvements in parks and roadways.

Public Safety

Executive Reardon’s 2008 Recommended Budget continues his commitment to public safety. Law and justice services represent over 71% of the County general fund budget. Executive Reardon noted, “In four years we have added 30 new deputy sheriffs, 12 new deputy prosecutors and new tools fight methamphetamine and street-level crime. These new investments are creating results.”

Highlights include:

- Increased staffing at the District Court to focus on those who commit domestic violence or drive under the influence to ensure they are brought to justice.

- Support for the additional judge in the Superior Court and a Drug Court Coordinator to help, “break the cycle of repeated arrests, prosecutions and incarcerations of drug users in Snohomish County.”
- Establishing a cadet program in the Sheriff’s Office to free up deputies to respond to top priority calls, recruit new deputies and provide a rapid response to those who contact the Sheriff’s Office at a fraction of current costs.
- Creating a County graffiti rapid removal crew.

Community Security

Executive Reardon proposes spending \$1.1 million to begin the engineering and architectural design of a new County Emergency Operations Center. In 2006 the County began site selection to replace the existing EOC and has set aside \$3 million for construction. The current EOC is housed in a one-story wood-framed building that has never been seismically retrofitted and could suffer extreme damage during an earthquake or even a severe windstorm.

Investing in Transportation

The County will invest over \$62 million in improvements to local transportation infrastructure. “Traffic congestion from years of growth and development continues to take time away from our residents,” said Reardon. “This is a regional issue that we cannot solve alone. However, we can control whether County projects are prioritized correctly and delivered on time and on (or under) budget.”

Highlights include:

- Over six miles of arterial improvements along 20th Street and SR 9 near Lake Stevens, Beverly Park Road near Mukilteo and 67th Ave. NE near Arlington.
- Beginning work on the Granite Falls alternate route to draw heavy trucking traffic out of the downtown core and improve safety.
- Over 18 miles of paving overlays to maintain safety on existing roadways
- Major intersection improvements at 84th ST NE & 123rd Ave NE, Mariner Park-N-Ride & 4th Ave W, 51st Ave NE & 122nd Pl NE and completion of the Ash Way Roundabout.
- Replacement and construction of six County bridges to improve safety and capacity.

Protecting the Environment

“We have kept good on our commitment to clean water and healthy streams, local and regional salmon restoration projects, improving protections for critical habitat and reducing sprawl,” Reardon said. “We are improving operations at every level with an eye toward protecting our environment. We are also looking beyond services traditionally offered by the County to tackle our environmental challenges.”

Highlights include:

- Beginning a full assessment of the County’s greenhouse gas emissions and planning for the potential impacts of global warming on the County. Executive Reardon issued an Executive Order in July outlining goals to

reduce the county's greenhouse gas emissions to twenty percent below year 2000 levels by the year 2020 while planning for adaptation to climate change impacts.

- Continuing to invest in biodiesel by converting 70% of County Fleet vehicles to biodiesel in 2008; partnering with local farmers through small grants dedicated to innovations in biodiesel; and, installing a drying facility, necessary in the processing of biodiesel producing crops, powered by recapturing the methane gas released by the County's Cathcart landfill.
- Continuing an aggressive community-based work program to protect and enhance the County's marine resources, including Dungeness crab stewardship, marine habitat and water quality.
- Moving forward with the County's Smith Island project and developing partnerships with the City of Everett, the Port of Everett, and the Tulalip Tribe for estuary wide restoration success.

Community Enhancement Initiative

Executive Reardon proposes engaging neighborhood associations, community groups and youth sports leagues in prioritizing and designing local infrastructure projects. The plan would engage neighborhoods through local grants and community planning.

The plan includes:

- Bringing direct community involvement in school safety projects, traffic improvements and sidewalks.
- Establishing partnerships with local farmers through matching funds to restore critical salmon habitat while protecting valuable farmlands through the County's innovative "flood fencing" program.
- Setting aside \$450,000 in funding to match with contributions from community organizations, Parent Teacher Student Associations and youth sports associations to provide playgrounds and sports facilities in underserved areas of the County.

The plan was initially proposed to the County Council in March, but was not acted on by the County Council. Reardon proposed the plan once again citing his commitment to, "giving neighborhoods the opportunity to become directly involved in building neighborhood amenities and setting priorities."

Investing in Parks

Executive Reardon proposes authorizing nearly \$30 million in new investments in local parks in 2008. "This means new places to be with friends and family, new memories to establish with our loved ones and more reasons to get outside and enjoy all our region has to offer," said Reardon.

Highlights include:

- Setting aside an additional \$1.2 million to complete the Centennial Trail link from Arlington to the Skagit County line. This funding, along with \$5.2 million that has already been authorized, will bring the Trail to a total of 25.5 miles.

- Construction of two skateboard parks at McCollum and Martha Lake Parks.
- Construction of a climbing wall at McCollum Park.
- Construction of three new baseball fields and four soccer fields at Lake Stevens Community Park.
- Rehabilitation of three baseball fields and construction of a new soccer field at Paine Field Community Park.

Honoring our Seniors

Reardon's 2008 budget proposes continuing funding for local senior centers as well as new services to meet the changing needs of seniors in Snohomish County. "As we strive to meet the demands of the future, we must do so with the spirit and tenacity of those who brought us to where we are – our seniors," said Reardon. "We have a fundamental obligation to ensure that the basic needs of our seniors are met."

Highlights include:

- Partnering with Senior Services of Snohomish County to establish an interim Multicultural Senior Center to serve the needs of seniors from diverse ethnic backgrounds including the Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, and Hispanic communities.
- Nearly a quarter of Snohomish County households are "cost-burdened," or spending more than 30% of their income on housing. The rising rental and housing market, taxes and cost of living has hit seniors on a fixed income particularly hard. It is predicted that in ten years, over half of those living in cost burdened households will be senior citizens. In 2008, Reardon proposes partnering with the Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County in an eight month effort that will result in an Affordable Housing Action Plan to combat this problem on a Countywide basis.

Museum of Snohomish County History

Reardon proposes a significant investment to honor and remember our local heritage. His 2008 budget includes a proposal to offer a fifty-year lease of the County's Carnegie Library building to the Museum at one dollar per year if they can establish a community partnership to create ongoing fiscal stability for the museum. Reardon said, "I encourage community members, businesses, governments and organizations to help preserve Snohomish County's history and cultural legacy."

For complete 2008 Recommended Budget details, click below:

[Budget Address](#)

[2008 Recommended budget](#)

[2008 Recommended Capital Improvement Program](#)

