



**Snohomish County**

**County Executive's Office**

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**Aaron Reardon**  
*County Executive*

M/S #407  
3000 Rockefeller Avenue  
Everett, WA 98201  
(425) 388-3460  
FAX (425) 388-3434

[county.executive@co.snohomish.wa.us](mailto:county.executive@co.snohomish.wa.us)  
[www.co.snohomish.wa.us](http://www.co.snohomish.wa.us)

## State budgets offer County key transportation projects, blueprint for four-year university, Reardon says

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*Executive calls Legislature's work economic development win;  
critical for several of County's major budget priorities*

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon today outlined how state action will benefit local citizens – particularly multi-million dollar roads projects aimed at relieving traffic congestion on key highways and another that lays the groundwork for a new four-year university.

The Legislature approved its transportation, operating and capital budgets on Sunday.

“Transportation and education - our lawmakers showed real leadership in these areas this year,” Executive Reardon said. “We asked them to give us the tools we need locally to make the County’s economy more competitive - and they did that. They took tough votes that will leave an important legacy.”

Executive Reardon praised Senate Transportation Chair Mary Margaret Haugen for her leadership in passage of a transportation package that earmarks about \$400 million for Snohomish County transportation projects, including money for:

- Expansion of State Route 9 - \$123 million;
- Expansion of several important interchanges on I-5, including 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue in Everett, NE 172<sup>nd</sup> Street in Lakewood; 116<sup>th</sup> Street NE in Marysville; 196<sup>th</sup> Street SW in Lynnwood and State Route 525 at Swamp Creek - \$122 million;
- Improvements to State Route 532 near Stanwood - \$69 million; and,
- Freight mobility projects in Everett and unincorporated Snohomish County - \$10.6 million.

In addition to those projects, the state transportation package includes another \$2 million annually for the County and local cities. They will divide a one-cent increase in the gasoline tax. The additional revenue is included a broader boost in the state's gasoline tax - by 9.5 cents over the next four years.

The additional revenue will help meet future needs that are identified in Snohomish County's 10-year Comprehensive Plan Update, which was released earlier this month by the Executive.

Executive Reardon praised several Snohomish County lawmakers for lining up in support of the tax and the critical transportation infrastructure projects they finance, including Sen. Jean Berkey, D-Everett; Sen. Darlene Fairley, D-Lake Forest Park; Sen. Dave Schmidt, R-Bothell and Sen. Paull Shin, D-Edmonds.

House members who voted for the transportation package included Rep. Mike Sells, D-Everett; Rep. Brian Sullivan, D-Mukilteo; Rep. Mary Helen Roberts, D-Edmonds; Rep. Al O'Brien, D-Mountlake Terrace; Rep. John McCoy, D-Tulalip; Rep. John Lovick, D-Mill Creek; Rep. Ruth Kagi, D-Lake Forest Park; Rep. Mark Ericks, D-Bothell; and Rep. Maralyn Chase, D-Shoreline.

Executive Reardon also lauded Haugen and Rep. Mike Sells, D-Everett, for their successful push to get \$500,000 to produce a business plan for a new four-year college in Snohomish County. The money was included in the state Capital Construction budget that passed the Legislature over the weekend.

"This money is the foundation for a new university in Snohomish County," said Executive Reardon. "We now have something to build on – thanks to lawmakers like Sen. Haugen and Rep. Sells. Before this session started Everett Mayor Ray Stephanson and I talked about our vision for a new four-year university here.

"A university is absolutely essential to the future of our County – our students are less likely to go on to college because there's no school here and it will stimulate our economy."

Executive Reardon noted that the Legislature's actions complement actions called for by the Snohomish County Citizens Cabinet on Economic Development, which stressed the need for new transportation and infrastructure projects to handle additional growth. The

County's recommended Comprehensive Plan update projects that as many as 280,000 more people may be living here by 2525, up from 660,000 today.

The Citizens Cabinet also advocated for a four-year college in Snohomish County.

"A competitive economy has got to have the necessary infrastructure to sustain itself," Executive Reardon said. "That includes roads and it includes schools. Our state Legislature has recognized that."

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For additional information please contact:

Mark Funk  
Executive Management Analyst  
Snohomish County  
(425) 388-3623  
mark.funk@co.snohomish.wa.us