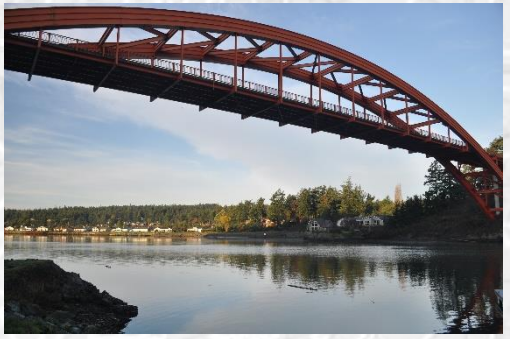
2017–2021
Strategic Plan



PREPARED BY
Administrative Services

ADOPTED __/__/2017 BY THE
Board of County Commissioners
through Resolution R2017____

AVAILABLE ON THE WEB AT
www.skagitcounty.net/strategicplan

2017-2021

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Introduction

Overview

Skagit County's strategic plan is intended to communicate the County's vision and show its direction and emphasis during the next five years. The County will use this document to guide decisions about policy, operations, and budget—and establish a roadmap that ensures efficiencies and a commitment to improvement and customer satisfaction.

Plan Organization

This strategic plan includes our **mission** and **vision** statements, our **strategic commitments**, and our **goals.**

The goals in this strategic plan are the framework that will guide Skagit County departments for the next five years, and beyond.

- Goals are broad, high-level general statements that are not time limited—and are not intended to not change from year-to-year.

In this plan, goals are grouped logically, but are not in any particular order of priority. County departments are encouraged to develop department-specific plans and strategies to implement the goals contained within the countywide plan.

Update Frequency

Although this is a five-year plan, the County envisions revisiting this plan annually, prior to the budget process, to ensure its content is timely and relevant.

County Government

Skagit County operates under the default form of government prescribed by the state constitution: Three county commissioners, nominated in districts and elected by the entire county, serve as the county legislative and executive authority. Seven independently elected officials perform regional countywide administrative functions prescribed by statute; thirteen other administrative departments are led by Commissioner-appointed department heads who report to the County Commissioners through the County Administrator. Three District Court Judges and four Superior Court Judges, elected countywide, along with the Court Commissioners they appoint, constitute the judicial branch.

Our Service Goals

- Law and Justice
- Health & Human Services
- Environmental Sustainability
- Growth and Economic Development

Our Logistical Goals

- Quality Services
- Quality Workforce
- Effective Management
- Facilities
- Public Engagement and Transparency

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Mission, Vision, and Commitments

Although Skagit County's many offices and departments have different roles and responsibilities, the County's elected leaders and employees are all guided by the following countywide mission, vision, and strategic commitments. These foundational tenets guide the work of County employees across all branches of government.

The vision statement concerns Skagit County as a region. We all recognize that our vision cannot be achieved solely through the efforts of Skagit County government.

The mission statement speaks explicitly to Skagit County government's role in realizing the shared vision.

Our strategic commitments are the fundamental principles that drive the implementation of our mission and vision, and lay the groundwork for the goals in the remainder of this plan:

- Provide solutions to problems and questions, not just responses
- Continually measure, evaluate, and improve services and delivery
- Prioritize funding and support of valued services with high return on investment
- Embrace innovation and technology for service delivery
- Ensure responsible stewardship of public assets and financial resources
- Provide transparent and fiscally responsible governance that inspires public confidence
- Collaborate with local municipalities, agencies, and nonprofit organizations to achieve common goals
- Hire, develop, and retain a qualified, motivated, innovative workforce dedicated to providing high-level customer service
- Strategically and determinedly pursue our goals to ensure that we actually achieve them

The countywide vision, mission, and strategic commitments apply to Skagit County's role as both a regional and local service provider. While specific goals may differ across the County's regional and local responsibilities, all three elements should be inherent in everything we do.

Skagit County's **Vision**

Skagit County: A healthy, safe, and vibrant community, economy, and environment that embraces the diversity of its people, and is distinguished by its extraordinary landscapes, ecosystems, and natural resources.

Skagit County's **Mission**

Skagit County government serves its residents by providing high-quality, efficient services to protect and strengthen its communities and environment.

Law and Justice

Goal 1 Ensure public safety

1A Establish priorities for law and justice programs through an inclusive team approach.

1B Allocate resources to meet critical needs in a timely manner.

1C Leverage technology to improve law and justice services.

Goal 2 Prevent crime and reduce recidivism

2A Fund and support programs that show measurable results and are successful in preventing criminal behavior.

2B Place people in the right setting for treatment rather than detention.

2C Address cultural diversity.

2D Address gang-related issues that impact the criminal justice system.

Skagit County Sheriff's Office

- 119 budgeted positions
- 39 patrol deputies
- 46 corrections deputies
- 164 cases investigated by detectives
- 4,890 traffic infractions issued
- 3,812 jail bookings
- 424 calls for K-9 service
- 230 marine unit patrol hours
- 43 search-and-rescue calls
- 1,408 animal control calls

Community Justice Center

- New facility opens summer 2017
- 100,000 square feet, with capacity for more than 400 inmates
- State-of-the-art video court and video visitation technology
- Employment and life skills programming designed to reduce recidivism

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Health & Human Services

Goal 3 Protect public health.

- 3A Focus on infectious disease control.
- 3B Improve prevention and management of chronic disease.
- 3C Support child and family health needs.
- 3D Ensure a continuum of care for individuals with behavioral health needs.
- 3E Promote and support healthy living for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- 3F Promote health and nutrition in older adults.
- 3G Support basic needs, including affordable housing.

Goal 4 Improve health policy governance and business processes.

- 4A Use the Population Health Trust Advisory Committee to get community input and support.
- 4B Transition clinical services to community partners when County services are duplicative.
- 4C Improve public health business practices.
- 4D Use evidence-based practices.

Population Health Trust

The Population Health Trust is a board of community leaders with a shared commitment to improving quality of life for everyone in Skagit County.

- 10 opioid-related deaths (2014)
- 156 alcohol or drug-related deaths (2015)
- 11% report poor mental health (2012-14)
- 38% identify as food insecure (2010-14)
- 39% of adults who are obese (2013)
- 35% of 12th graders who are obese (2016)
- 40% speak a language other than English at home (2015)
- 26.8% single-parent families (2015)

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Environmental Sustainability

Goal 5 Protect our natural resources.

5A Prevent conversion of farmland to other uses.

5B Maintain a level of forest harvest capable of sustaining the local forest products industry.

5C Protect and enhance salmon habitat.

5D Evaluate effectiveness of current natural resource protection and conservation programs, and open space management programs and policies.

5E Improve public education and outreach regarding county natural resource protection activities.

Goal 6 Reduce or eliminate water pollution.

6A Fully implement County's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.

6B Harmonize stormwater management rules countywide, to the extent reasonable.

6C Work with cities and towns to eliminate septic systems inside urban growth areas and cities.

6D Ensure regular maintenance and clean up failing septic systems in rural areas.

Goal 7 Promote sustainable activities.

7A Incentivize and reward voluntary environmental enhancements.

7B Promote safe neighborhoods, including places to walk and bike.

7C Support sustainable transportation through "complete streets" and multimodal trails for both recreation and transportation.

The Natural Skagit

Skagit County is located in the northwest portion of Washington state, between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. The majestic Cascade Range stands to the east, overlooking a fertile valley boasting a variety of agricultural crops. Running through the valley is the wild and scenic Skagit River, carrying healthy populations of all five native salmon species and two species of trout as it flows westward toward the beautiful San Juan Islands. World-famous tulip fields blanket the valley in the spring. Flocks of Canadian geese, snow geese, and trumpeter swans can be seen in the winter. Bald eagles soar overhead year-round and great blue herons stand along the shorelines. Large-scale commercial forestry is a vital industry and is practiced on more than 300,000 acres. Agriculture, a hallmark of the Skagit Valley, occupies 89,000 acres of prime farmland and yields more than 80 different crops.

SERVICE GOALS ▸

Growth and Economic Development

Goal 8 Maintain rural character.

8A Direct growth to cities, towns and urban growth areas.

8B Keep unincorporated areas (other than UGAs) rural.

8C Maintain an annually updated land-use monitoring program.

Goal 9 Manage growth to preserve quality of life.

9A Ensure adequate and attainable housing for existing population and forecasted growth.

9B Develop policies and strategies to provide an adequate supply of water to meet growth needs.

Goal 10 Plan for urban infrastructure.

10A Prioritize planning with the cities and towns to ensure residential growth occurs in the urban growth areas concurrent with provision of appropriate infrastructure.

10B Advocate for changes to the annexation statutes to require that annexed areas have logical outer boundaries with an appropriate mix of land uses.

Goal 11 Support economic development.

11A Take a regional approach to economic development by working through the Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County in collaboration with the cities, towns, and ports.

11B Support sustainable economic development.

11C Support development of a fiber backbone consistent with an adopted countywide fiber plan.

11D Provide an adequate industrial land base to attract major manufacturing businesses.

11E Support education system enhancements for skill development.

Skagit County by the Numbers

Founded: November 28, 1883
Land area: 1,731.2 square miles
Highest point: 9,114 feet (Mt. Buckner)
Length of the Skagit River: 150 miles
Population (2016 est.) 123,681
Population per square mile: 69.67
Pop. growth since 2005: 9.7%
Cities & towns: 8
Number of ports: 2
Unemployment rate (2016): 6.8%

Major Employers*

Skagit Regional Health: 1,004 employees
Island Hospital: 743 employees
Janicki Industries: 655 employees
Skagit County Gov't: 605 employees
Sedro-Woolley Schools: 507 employees
Skagit Casino/Resort: 500 employees
Swinomish Casino: 499 employees
Peace Health United General Medical Center: 400 employees
Tesoro Refinery: 394 employees
Dakota Creek Industries: 361 employees

*Source: Western Washington Univ. Center of Economic and Business Research

Quality Services

Goal 12 Provide efficient, effective, and responsive public services.

12A Seek input and feedback from customers on the responsiveness and effectiveness of county services.

12B Develop performance metrics for the effectiveness, cost, and availability of services.

12C Regularly report results of performance measurements with recommendations for improvement.

12D Use technology to improve public services.

Population by the Numbers

Population (2016 est.): 123,681

Pop. (incorporated): 71,400

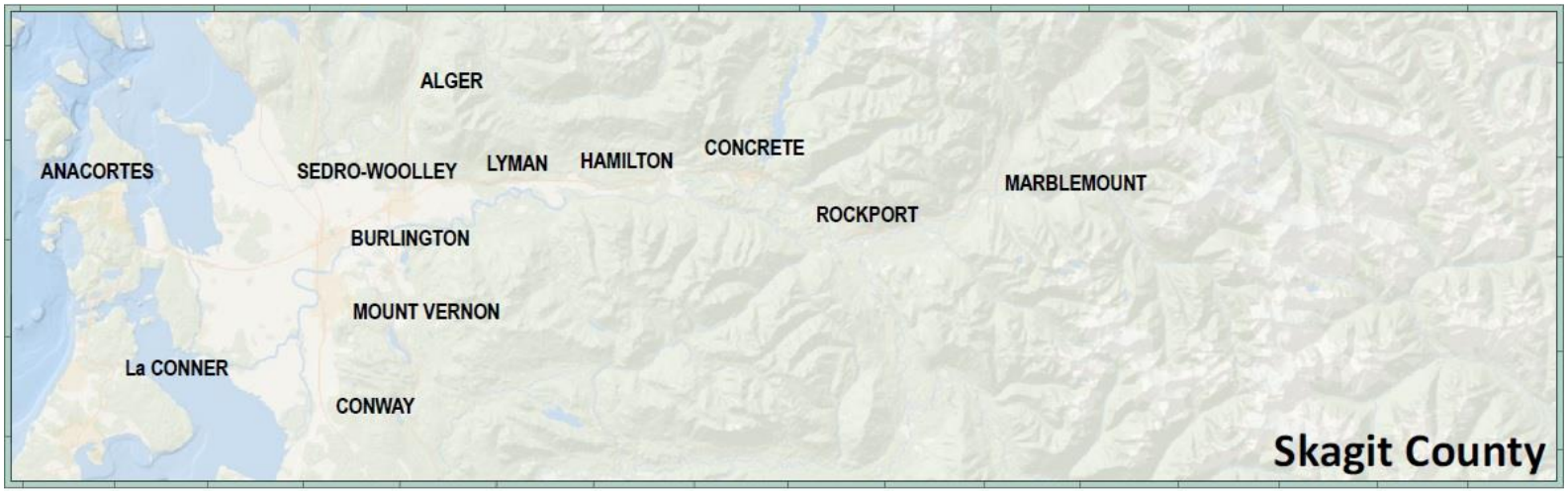
Pop. (unincorporated): 49,220

Median age (2015): 41.5

Median household income: $55,775

Workforce out-commuting: 49.4%

Workforce commuting in: 41.7%



Quality Workforce

Goal 13 Respect and value a productive, skilled workforce.

13A Attract a qualified and motivated pool of candidates for all positions.

13B Provide a work environment that encourages innovation and productivity, and promotes a safe, healthy, engaged, respectful, inclusive and professional work culture.

13C Encourage active employee participation and input.

13D Recognize quality employees and work, and provide opportunities for employee growth and development.

13E Provide the best possible benefit plan for County employees, one consistent with industry standards and that keeps cost growth at a reasonable level.

13F Provide consistent, fair personnel practices and continually seek ways to enhance the level of human resources services provided to County departments and employees.

13G Plan for succession and continuous service availability.

Goal 14 Ensure employee continuous improvement.

14A Develop a comprehensive training program that leverages all available resources, with a focus on in-house resources whenever possible.

14B Provide continuous feedback and regular evaluations to support employee development and improve workplace performance.

14C Evaluate alternative employee work arrangements, such as flexible work schedules or telecommuting.

14D Cross-train employees to ensure high service availability.

14E Ensure the physical work environment supports productivity and communication while meeting ergonomic best practice standards

Employees by the Numbers

Total no. of regular employees: 659

Elected officials: 17

Total full-time: 605

Total part-time: 37

Total on-call/seasonal: 189

Largest department: Public Works - 156

Most on-call employees: Health - 36

Total law and justice employees: 297*

*Includes all Sheriff, Prosecutor, Juvenile/District/Superior Court, Public Defender, and Assigned Council employees

Employee cost as a percentage of:

Total County budget: 30%

General Fund budget: 55%

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Effective Management

Goal 15 Improve internal communications.

15A Ensure employees are well informed and aware of county goals, initiatives, and policies.

15B Use multiple communication platforms, including electronic communication, to provide timely and thorough notifications responsive to the informational needs of employees.

Goal 16 Build relationships.

16A Cooperate and collaborate with cities, towns, tribes, and other government agencies to achieve policy objectives.

16B Develop cooperative staff-level relationships with cities and towns, state and federal agencies, tribes, and public-interest groups.

16C Encourage frequent, ongoing, direct communication and face-to-face discussions on key issues with cities, towns, ports, districts, state and federal agencies, and tribes.

16D Develop a strategic policy to inform and guide interactions with the four federally recognized tribes in Skagit County

16E Keep state legislative and congressional delegations aware of County needs.

Goal 17 Use strategic problem-solving techniques.

17A Develop written policies and procedures to implement long-term strategies.

17B Make decisions based on data and adopted strategies.

17C Align resources to achieve strategic initiatives.

Regional Collaboration

Within Skagit County are **four cities** (Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley), **four towns** (Concrete, Hamilton, La Conner, and Lyman), and four federally recognized **Indian tribes** (Samish, Sauk-Suiattle, Swinomish, and Upper Skagit).

The County includes many **special-purpose** and **junior taxing districts**—independently elected governments that perform special functions, such as fire, diking, drainage, irrigation, public utilities, library, parks, schools, cemetery, and more—that serve specific portions of the County and are not managed by the County Commissioners or any of the cities or towns.

Cities & Towns (2015)

Anacortes: 16,310
Burlington: 8,485
Concrete: 730
Hamilton: 305
La Conner: 895
Lyman: 445
Mount Vernon: 33,530
Sedro-Woolley: 10,700

Tribes (2015)

Samish Tribe: 1,200
Sauk-Suiattle: 183
Swinomish: 778
Upper Skagit: 504

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Facilities and Technology

Goal 18 Provide adequate facilities to meet County needs.

18A Using the Capital Facilities Plan as a strategic tool and process, identify short and longer-term facilities needs and strategies.

18B Explore opportunities for joint facilities with other public agencies, as well as public-private partnerships in Skagit County.

18C Work with state legislators and federal congressional staff to obtain funding for high-priority capital projects.

18D Consolidate primary functions into two campuses: (1) law and justice functions (including courts, prosecutor, public defense, and related services) at the Courthouse campus; and (2) other functions at the Continental Place campus.

Goal 19 Leverage technology to minimize space needs and maximize productivity.

19A Move permanent records to electronic storage to reduce space needs and maximize accessibility and retrieval.

19B Implement electronic systems to automate workflow and coordination.

Goal 20 Protect data integrity, security, and technological infrastructure.

20A Reduce redundancy in data storage and management.

20B Ensure data is maintained in standardized formats that can be shared and utilized across platforms, especially to facilitate data and GIS analysis.

20C Keep technology up to date to maximize employee efficiency and productivity.

County Facilities by the Numbers

Total number of buildings: 29

Total square footage: 414,263

Approx. value: $65,246,753

Technology by the Numbers

Total servers: 138

Physical servers: 25

Virtual servers: 113

Total computers: 776

Total tablets/laptops: 308

LOGISTICAL GOALS ▸

Public Engagement and Transparency

Goal 21 Make County government more accessible and customer-friendly.

21A Improve access to the County website and keep content fresh, accurate, and dynamic using the latest web technologies.

21B Position the public County website as the single, authoritative source of information for both the public and employees.

Goal 22 Improve external communications.

22A Develop and implement a unified branding strategy.

22B Proactively communicate County activities and issues through traditional and developing communication channels.

22C Identify the most effective methods for efficient public notification and continually evaluate effectiveness.

22D Improve understanding of county goals and objectives.

22E Provide accessible methods to encourage and sustain public engagement and involvement.

Engagement by the Numbers

Commissioner Public Hearings (2016): 30

Commissioner Public Meetings (2016): 320

Website visits (total): 1,465,809

Website visits by mobile: 653,131

Social media channels: 11

Boards and Commissions: 49

Public comment availability: 45 days

County Boards and Commissions

View the full list: www.skagitcounty.net/CountyCommissioners/Documents/BoardsandCommittees.pdf

- Agriculture Advisory Board
- Board of Equalization
- Boundary Review Board
- Central Skagit Library District
- Central Valley Ambulance Authority Board
- Civil Service Commission
- Conservation Futures Advisory Committee
- Darrington Library District Board
- Developmental Disabilities Board
- Forestry Advisory Board
- Housing Authority Board
- La Conner Regional Library Board
- Law and Justice Council
- Marine Resources Committee
- North Sound BHO Advisory Board
- Noxious Weed Control Board
- Parks and Rec Advisory Board
- Planning Commission
- Skagit Council on Aging
- Skagit County Ferry Advisory Committee
- Solid Waste Advisory Committee
- Upper Skagit Library District

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About this Plan

In 2005, the County conducted a survey to gauge employee attitudes about the County organization. One key finding was that employees felt that the County lacked a strategic plan or direction that guided its decisions. After a series of meetings and a retreat with elected officials and department heads, the County compiled a draft plan in 2007 with eight strategic goals. As the recession set in, the County moved its focus from strategic planning to balancing the budget. The 2007 draft was never officially adopted.

Now, as the economy improves both regionally and nationally, the Board of County Commissioners is focusing on long-range planning. In early 2016, the County revisited the 2007 draft plan. Revisions included adding an explanatory narrative, logically reorganizing it, updating it for current conditions, and including other department-specific strategic plans developed since 2007. Elected officials and department heads will evaluate this updated draft and propose new goals and strategies on an as-needed basis.

How will this plan be used?

For the public, this plan is meant to:

- Communicate the County's vision and show the intended direction and emphasis during the next five years
- Demonstrate the County's commitment to customer service
- Document ideas and suggestions for services and facilities that are important or need improvement
- Create a baseline to show progress over time and demonstrate accountability

For County elected officials, department heads, and employees, this plan is meant to:

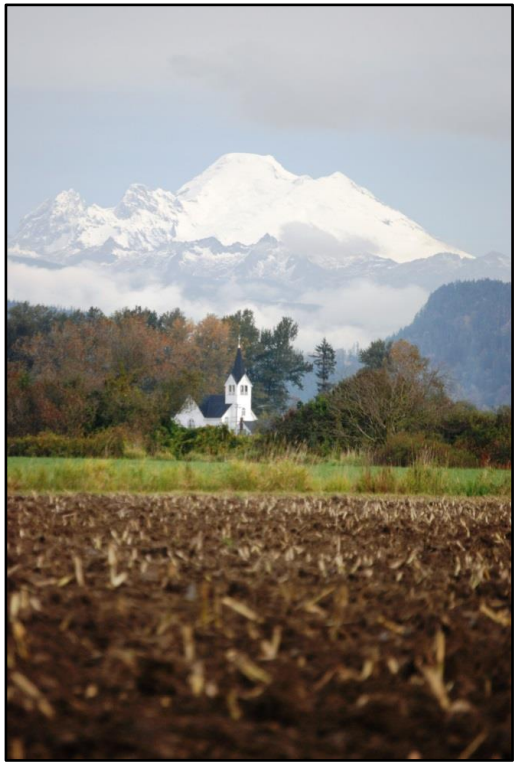
- Create a framework to guide subsequent department plans
- Align county employees, services, and programs with County goals
- Guide decisions about policy, operations, and budget
- Define a roadmap that ensures efficiencies and commitment to improvement

County departments are encouraged to develop department-specific plans to implement the goals contained within the countywide plan.

Linking Tip

You can link to this document at:
www.skagitcounty.net/strategicplan/documents/sp2016.pdf

To link to a specific page, add: #page=X
For example:
www.skagitcounty.net/strategicplan/documents/sp2016.pdf#page=10



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Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan, required by the Growth Management Act and adopted by ordinance, is a local law of the County. RCW 36.70A.120 requires the County to perform activities and make capital budget decisions in conformity with the Comprehensive Plan. This strategic plan, by contrast, is adopted by resolution and is intended as a coordination and guidance document for County departments and staff.

How the County is Organized

The chart on the following page shows the organizational relationships between the County's various elected officials, departments, and agencies.[1]

The County Commissioners also function as the Skagit County Board of Health, which has authority across both incorporated and unincorporated areas. The three Commissioners serve together as part of the governing boards for the following organizations:

- Skagit Council of Governments (including the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Regional Transportation Planning Organization)
- Skagit County Growth Management Act Steering Committee
- Skagit County Emergency Management Council (Skagit 911)
- Skagit County Solid Waste Governance Board

Individual County Commissioners also have *ex officio* voting membership on the boards of regional organizations, including but not limited to the following:

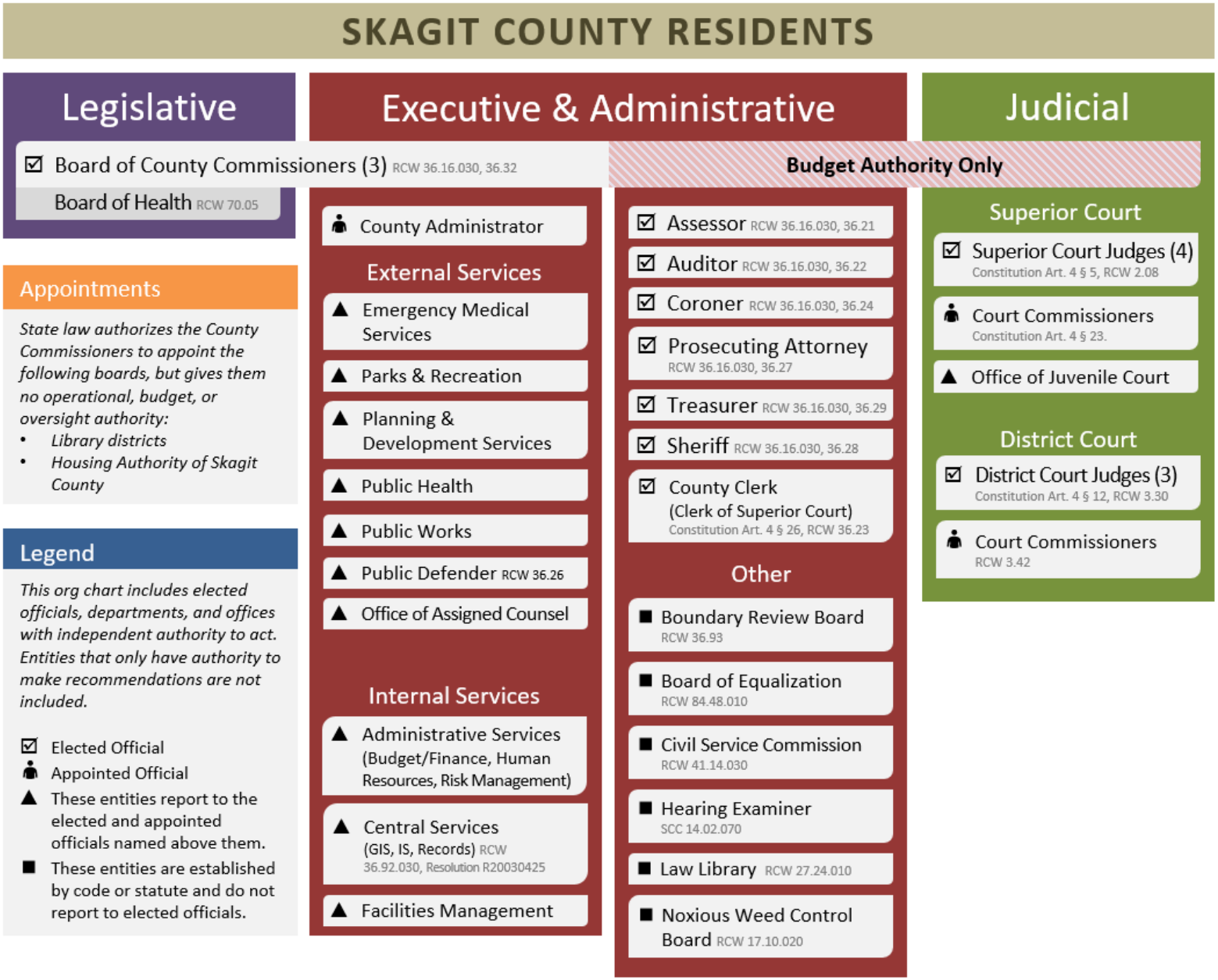
- Skagit Transit
- Northwest Clean Air Agency
- Northwest Regional Council
- North Sound Behavioral Health Organization
- Community Action of Skagit County

Other County Plans

- Comprehensive Plan (2016)
- Capital Facilities Plan (2016)
- Envision Skagit 2060 (2011)
- Climate Action Plan (2010)
- Salmon Policy Resolution (2007)
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2003)
- Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (2008)
- Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (2014)
- Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (2013)
- Countywide Fiber Plan (2017)

[1] The County government also includes one "component unit of government" in Central Valley Ambulance Authority. The County Commissioners adopt the CVAA budget but have no operational authority.

County Organizational Chart



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Skagit County Elected Officials

Position	Name	Took Office	Term Ends
Assessor	Dave Thomas	2015	2018
Auditor	Jeanne Youngquist	2007	2018
County Commissioner, Dist 1	Ron Wesen	2009	2020
County Commissioner, Dist 2	Ken Dahlstedt	2001	2020
County Commissioner, Dist 3	Lisa Janicki	2015	2018
Clerk	Mavis Betz	2015	2018
Coroner	Hayley Thompson	2015	2018
District Court, Pos 1	Warren Gilbert	2007	2018
District Court, Pos 2	Diane Goddard	2017	2018
District Court, Pos 3	Tom Verge	Appointed 2016	2018
Prosecuting Attorney	Rich Weyrich	2007	2018
Sheriff	Will Reichardt	2011	2018
Superior Court, Pos 1	Brian Stiles	2017	2020
Superior court, Pos 2	Laura Riquelme	Appointed 2017	2020
Superior Court, Pos 3	David Svaren	2017	2020
Superior Court, Pos 4	Dave Needy	2006	2020
Treasurer	Katie Jungquist	2001	2018

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Services the County Provides

Although the County's legislative authority extends only to the unincorporated areas outside the cities and towns, the County is charged with providing many regional services to all County residents. Some other services are only provided for unincorporated areas.

	General Services	Law & Justice	Environment & Natural Resources
Regional Services *for all Skagit County residents, in both incorporated and unincorporated areas*	▪ Economic development ▪ Elections ▪ Emergency management ▪ Emergency medical services ▪ Food safety permits and inspections ▪ Legal records for property and marriage ▪ Licensing – vehicle, vessel, marriage ▪ Property tax assessment and relief; collection and distribution to taxing districts ▪ Public health, including disease control/prevention and behavioral health ▪ Public records ▪ Septic permitting and inspections	▪ Coroner ▪ District Court, including municipal courts, for misdemeanor offenses, traffic violations, protection orders ▪ Jail ▪ Prosecution of felonies ▪ Public defense for individuals accused of felonies ▪ Regional Sheriff services, including search & rescue ▪ Specialized courts for mental health, drug, and family ▪ Superior Court ▪ Superior Court including felony matters, family law, and juvenile justice matters ▪ Collection of restitution for victims	▪ Flood control services ▪ Growth management planning ▪ Recreation and educational programming ▪ Regional parks and trails ▪ Salmon recovery and watershed management ▪ Solid waste management, including Ovenell Transfer Station
Rural Services *for unincorporated areas only*	▪ Animal control ▪ Building permits and inspections ▪ Fire permits and inspections ▪ Roads, bridges, and Guemes ferry	▪ Prosecution and public defense for misdemeanors ▪ Sheriff	▪ Building and land use code enforcement ▪ Farmland preservation ▪ Land use and zoning ▪ Surface water and stormwater management

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Internal Services

While most County offices are outward-facing and provide services to the public, some departments provide significant services to other departments as described below.

Administrative Services	Auditor	Facilities Management	Geographic Info Services	Human Resources
▪ Budget ▪ Communications and public outreach ▪ Ordinances and resolutions	▪ Accounts Payable ▪ Financial Statements ▪ Payroll	▪ Facilities maintenance ▪ Landscape maintenance (provided by Parks & Rec)	▪ Address management ▪ Aerial photography ▪ GIS mapping ▪ Public safety system support	▪ Employee services ▪ Hiring ▪ Risk management

Information Services	Prosecuting Attorney	Public Works	Records
▪ Technology services ▪ Government-access television ▪ Public website access ▪ Technology procurement	▪ Legal advice ▪ Legal representation in civil and administrative proceedings	▪ Equipment Rental and Revolving Fund	▪ Coordination ▪ Centralized scanning ▪ Public Records Requests ▪ Inactive storage

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Assets for achieving our goals

Although the County faces challenges as it strives for improvement, it is important to identify the assets in place to help achieve those goals.

Strengths

EXPERIENCED STAFF

- Our staff members have a high level of expertise in their fields and a wealth of institutional knowledge to draw from. They are committed to providing excellent customer service to internal and external stakeholders.

PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

- From community groups to state, local and nonprofit agencies, County staff members have an admirable track record of building quality working relationships and crafting productive partnerships to achieve common goals.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Our use of technology to record, organize and provide online access to a variety of recorded documents – including property information, maps and more – benefits local agencies and businesses by keeping county information transparent and easily accessible.

Skagit County

Challenges for achieving our goals

Although the County has a good foundation for improvement, it is important to identify the challenges to achieving our goals.

External Challenges

CHANGING ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

- The County's law and justice function serves the entire County and requires countywide funding.
- Confusion about which services the County provides versus other agencies or cities.
- Public expectation of countywide services versus actual cost of providing services to rural areas.
- Federal and state agencies mandate new programs without adequate funding.
- Losing taxable land base to other entities.

FISCAL CONSTRAINTS

- The County's law and justice function consumes a substantial portion of the County budget.
- The County has limited revenue sources.
- Growth rate in County expenses exceeds ability to raise revenues.
- Property taxes, the County's largest single revenue source, are limited to a growth rate of 1% (plus new construction), which doesn't keep pace with the rising cost of providing services.

LACK OF TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT

- Vocal members of the public lack trust in County government.
- Lack of broad public engagement with County policy and decision-making processes.
- Some elected officials distrust County government, and some believe the cities and County are fundamentally at odds.

LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE

- Many County residents are unable to access County websites or other electronic services because rural Internet access is limited or expensive.
- Rural County residents and agricultural producers lack adequate access to water.

PHYSICAL THREATS

- River flooding
- Marine storm surge
- Dam failure
- Droughts

Skagit County

- Forest fires (including wildfires)
- Train traffic and derailments
- Pandemics
- Volcanic eruptions and lahar flows
- Earthquakes
- Oil pipeline and/or refinery emergencies

Internal Challenges

TECHNOLOGY

- The County lacks the technology to do business online, such as accept permit applications.
- The County lacks a website tailored for mobile devices.
- The County lacks a website content management system

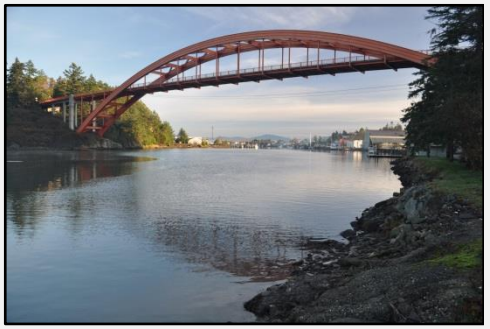
EMPLOYEES

- County departments are silos that prevent effective coordination.
- The County lacks a training program for customer service, technology, and other important areas.
- Employees need meaningful ways to engage and assist reforms for the provision of County services.

FACILITIES

- Some County office buildings require significant upgrades to make them usable for professional office space.

COMMUNICATION

- County lacks a plan for external communication and branding.
- County has not had consistent unified communications support; many offices and departments maintain siloed communications and public outreach processes.

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