

Skagit County Strategic Plan 2022 - 2032





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Letter from Commissioners

Fellow Elected Officials, Employees, and Skagit County Community Members:

We are pleased to present to you the Skagit County Strategic Plan. This document codifies our mission, vision, goals and strategies to guide Skagit County through the next 10 years. We hope that it proves a useful and enlightening read for you.

As we all agree, Skagit County is a unique and highly desirable place to live. Skagit County is home to vast natural resources, including the second largest river system in the Northwest and the largest population of Puget Sound Chinook salmon. It's also one of the most fertile valleys in the world - making Skagit County agriculture first rate. Each of us ran for office, in part, to protect this Valley in perpetuity.

Skagit County is not without its challenges. We continue to have one of the lowest rental vacancy rates in Washington State. Over 25% of our population are either Asset Limited, Income Constrained and Employed, or living in poverty (United for ALICE, 2018). Like everyone in the nation, we continue to work on recovery and community repair from the opioid crisis. We'll also be feeling the impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic for years to come.

During our last strategic plan update in 2017, we strove to create a document that would help guide decisions about policy, operations, and budget. As the Board of County Commissioners in a non-Charter Washington state county, we act as both the legislative and executive branches of government. As such, having a single document that accurately captures community, employee, Department Head, and other Elected Officials' vision for Skagit County is invaluable to guiding our work to ensure we're meeting all Skagit resident and employee needs. Consensus quickly emerged that supporting the County's workforce and maintain safe facilities are critical components of providing exceptional customer service to the public. To that end, the key focus areas in

priority order are Strong and Engaged Workforce and Supportive Workplace Culture; Critical and Sustainable Infrastructure; Behavioral Health and Homelessness; Health, Housing and Community Safety; and Sustainable and Resilient County Government. Our hope is that this will be a living document, revisited each year to ensure that our vision and goals continue to match current work and community needs.

We're incredibly thankful to everyone who participated in putting this plan together. We'd also like to thank SBrand Solutions, our consultant, who helped guide us through this process.

We are pleased with this work and are delighted to present it to you.

Sincerely,



Ron Wesen

Ron Wesen
District 1



Peter Browning

Peter Browning
District 2



Lisa Janicki

Lisa Janicki
District 3

Skagit County, Today & Tomorrow

Leading and managing a fast-growing community like Skagit County requires thoughtful and inclusive planning, the ability to adapt and pivot in response to a changing situation, and a clear focus on the vision for the future. This strategic plan builds on our past success and our lessons learned and is our guidepost to a better future.



SKAGIT COUNTY

Skagit County encompasses some of the most spectacular scenery in Washington state. From Rosario Strait and the flats (a riverine delta) to the forested gorges of the Skagit River to the craggy Cascade Mountains, it is an area rich in nature and human history. Home to native peoples for millennia, it attracted the attention of European and American explorers as early as the 1790s. Euro-American settlement began in earnest in the early 1860s. After the first dike was built on the La Conner flats in 1863, the county began to emerge as a major agricultural center. Throughout the twentieth century the area's reputation as a world leader in seed production increased along with its importance as a fishery and lumber producer and as an international destination for recreational salmon and steelhead fishing. Today, the county boasts good schools, museums, performing arts theaters, Skagit Valley College, malls and specialty commercial districts as well as wonderful state and national parks. It is also the center of Washington state's petroleum industry. Today, Skagit County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state with a population of approximately 130,000. Mount Vernon, its seat, has a population of 35,000, but Burlington across the Skagit River has grown a whopping 6.4 percent in just a few years. New developments in Anacortes and west of Mount Vernon and Puget Sound real estate pressures have begun to change the face of the county.

Such increase in urban areas has put pressure on the county's agriculture. Although farming remains one of the most important activities in the Valley, since 1987 the number of farms has declined from 806 farms to fewer than 710. Nine out of 10 farm couples depend on off-farm income to keep their farms going. Despite this, old and new crops continue to bring substantial dollar numbers to the county. Skagit County is a major producer of cabbage, table beet, and spinach seed for the world. About half of the world's beet and Brussels sprout seed are grown in the Valley. Fifty percent of the U.S. supply of parsley, cabbage, and parsnip seed and 90 to 100 percent of the U.S. supply of Chinese kale, Chinese cabbage, Chinese mustard, and Brussels sprout seed are also grown in Skagit County. A new development has been in the growth of nurseries, greenhouses, and organic farming. And although peas have declined dramatically, the potato is enjoying status as the number one crop in the county.

Today, Skagit County is a vibrant place to live. It balances its historic roots and the influx of new cultures and faces, while enjoying the benefits of its growing cities and the peace and beauty of its spectacular mountains, rivers, forests, and farmland.

Source Data: <https://www.historylink.org/file/5663>

Strategic Plan Process

This ten-year Strategic Plan includes much of the work from previous strategic plans that remains relevant. Based on our community values and growth management plans, the Strategic Plan also incorporates our long-range planning in other areas such as natural and open spaces, parks and recreation, transportation, facilities and capital improvements. This work will all integrate into our budget process. The Board of County Commissioners wants to recognize the significant effort made by our team of dedicated and professional elected and appointed officials, as well as our amazing staff in the creation of this plan. Over the course of six months, the team participated in interviews, a survey, focus groups, a two-day retreat and hours of implementation conversations. We believe that we are stronger together, and that with a deeper understanding of our opportunities and challenges our work will be not only strategic, but focused and purposeful as well as inspiring.

The creation of this Strategic Plan and the ongoing work and success is due to the participation of the entire Skagit County staff. However, we wish to specifically recognize and thank those who contributed their time and energy to the thoughtful and insightful strategic planning retreat.

- Bob Dolhanyk, Chief of Emergency Management
- Bonnie Beddall, Human Resources and Risk Management Director
- Brian Adams, Parks, Recreation and Fair Director
- Carmen Purcell, Office of Assigned Counsel Director
- Cori Russell, Records Manager
- Dave Thomas, County Assessor
- Deannie Martin, District Court Administrator
- Don McDermott, Sheriff and Director of Emergency Management
- Geoff Almvig, Geographic Information System Manager
- Grace Kane, Public Works Director
- Hal Hart, Planning and Development Services Director
- Hayley Thompson, County Coroner
- Jackie Brunson, County Treasurer
- James Malcolm, District Court Probation Director
- Jenifer G. Howson, District Court Judge
- Jennifer Johnson, Public Health Director
- Josh Pelonio, Emergency Medical Services Director
- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Deputy County Administrator
- Ken Hansen, Facilities Director
- Laura M. Riquelme, Superior Court Judge
- Melissa Beaton, County Clerk
- Michael Johnson, Juvenile Court Administrator
- Mike Almvig, Information Services Manager
- Rich Weyrich, County Prosecutor
- Sandy Perkins, County Auditor
- Trisha Logue, County Administrator
- Wes Richards, Public Defense Director

Guided by Vision, Mission, & Values

Our vision tells us where we're going. Our mission imparts our purpose. Our values tell us how we'll make decisions that serve the public good. The Skagit County Commissioners, elected officials and department heads agree:



Our Vision

Skagit County is a safe, diverse, and welcoming community that supports sustainable growth and a vibrant economy, while preserving and enhancing our natural environment.

Our Mission

Skagit County government provides our community and natural environment with leadership that delivers inclusive support and services contributing to a safe, thriving, and sustainable place to live, work and play.

Our Values

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Customer Service
- Diversity
- Equity
- Financial Sustainability
- Inclusion
- Wellness



Strategic Plan At-A-Glance

The graphic on the following page summarizes the key components of our ten-year strategic plan. Inspired by our Vision, focused by our Mission, and led by our Core Values, we have five Key Focus Areas: Strong and Engaged Workforce and Supportive Workplace Culture; Critical and Sustainable Infrastructure; Behavioral Health and Homelessness; Health, Housing, and Community Safety; and, Sustainable and Resilient County Government.

In each of those Key Focus Areas, we have broad Strategic Goals and specific SMART Objectives. Strategic Goals are the larger, broader, often intangible concepts that will need to be accomplished to address the Key Focus Areas and be successful in the coming years.

SMART Objectives are milestones along the road to achieving the bigger picture Strategic Goals. SMART means Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic/Resourced and Timebound.

SMART Objectives will be updated annually over the life of the plan. The Implementation Plan is a separate living document that details Action Steps and is continuously updated.

VISION

Skagit County is a safe, diverse, and welcoming community that supports sustainable growth and a vibrant economy, while preserving and enhancing our natural environment.

MISSION

Skagit County government provides our community and natural environment with leadership that delivers inclusive support and services contributing to a safe, thriving, and sustainable place to live, work and play.

CORE VALUES

Collaboration	Communication	Customer Service	Diversity	Equity	Financial Sustainability	Inclusion	Wellness
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KEY FOCUS AREAS

Strong and Engaged Workforce and Supportive Workplace Culture	Critical and Sustainable Infrastructure	Behavioral Health and Homelessness	Health, Housing, and Community Safety	Sustainable and Resilient County Government
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STRATEGIC GOALS

Recruit and retain a strong workforce.	Maintain County infrastructure for public safety, resiliency, sustainability, and wellbeing.	Increase access to behavioral health outreach, support and services.	Collaboratively increase housing availability and affordability.	Prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters, events, incidents, and hazards.
Enhance workforce satisfaction by providing development opportunities and education.	Ensure adequate, accessible, and safe space.	Improve behavioral health outcomes for people connected with the law and justice system.	Support a healthy and vibrant economic environment.	Protect and enhance our natural resources and environment.
Foster positive workplace culture and collaboration.	Protect, enhance, and provide stewardship of our information assets.	Significantly reduce homelessness in our community and provide support to people experiencing homelessness.	Increase safety and reduce crime in Skagit County.	Ensure high standards of customer service that includes transparency and accessibility.
Provide an inclusive organizational culture that supports Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.			Increase physical, social, and emotional wellbeing.	

Overview of the Skagit County Strategic Plan

The following pages detail each Key Focus Area, detailing the definition and the intended outcomes we will realize by allocating time and resources to each of these areas. The Strategic Goals are listed in each Key Focus Area, as well as some examples of Initiatives, Programs and Policies that could be undertaken to achieve the Goals. The details behind this Strategic Plan are in separate Implementation Plan documents, which are continuously updated as progress is made in each Strategic Goal. The information that follows is intended to provide information and context for the overall strategy of Skagit County to achieve our Vision, but it is not a comprehensive view of all of the work we do each and every day for the community.



Definitions: A Strong and Supported Workforce is critical to the delivery of high quality services throughout the County. Increasing competition for professional, diverse, and well qualified government employees creates the need for competitive wages and benefits, professional development opportunities, succession planning, and new policies to support the workforce of the future.

Outcomes: A strong and supported workforce will result in qualified, diverse applicants for every job opening, inclusive policies and procedures throughout the County, a compensation and benefits plan that recognizes the value of retention and recognition, stronger customer support and services, and a workforce that matches the community.

Strategic Goal: Recruit and retain a strong workforce.

- ✓ Complete competitive compensation and benefits assessment by September 30, 2022.
- ✓ Adopt a compensation and benefits plan by November 1, 2022.
- ✓ Implement adopted compensation and benefits plan by January 1, 2023.
- ✓ Update minimum requirements in job descriptions to include alternatives to formal education, if applicable, by December 31, 2023.
- ✓ Adopt a hiring philosophy and policy that includes screening for emotional intelligence and soft skills by December 31, 2022.



Strategic Goal: Enhance workforce satisfaction by providing development opportunities and education.

- ✓ Deploy an ongoing professional development program for all county employees by March 31, 2023.
- ✓ All employees complete required levels of training by June 30, 2023.
- ✓ Develop a Succession planning policy and procedure by December 31, 2023.
- ✓ Create a toolbox of customized and specialized training by December 31, 2023.
- ✓ Implement a countywide performance evaluation training program by March 31, 2023.
- ✓ Include a progression in job classifications where appropriate by December 31, 2024.

Strategic Goal: Foster positive workplace culture and collaboration across the County.

- ✓ Implement regularly scheduled cross-county networking and collaboration opportunities by September 30, 2022.

Strategic Goal: Provide an organizational culture that supports Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

- ✓ Adopt DEI policies in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual by March 30, 2023.
- ✓ Develop countywide DEI 101 training program and implement by March 31, 2023.
- ✓ Provide training for all staff to be completed by June 30, 2023.

Key Focus Area: Critical and Sustainable Infrastructure

Definitions: The Critical and Sustainable Infrastructure Key Focus Area includes traditional infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and transportation services, County-owned facilities and buildings, technology infrastructure such as networks, and green infrastructure to include parks and trails. The investment into infrastructure includes ongoing maintenance, operations, and renovations as needed for safe and secure County operations.

Outcomes: Many County buildings are aging and not designed to meet the current needs of the community and County employees. Updates to accessibility and technology are needed as well as renovation of some buildings to allow for adequate work and meeting space. Being prepared for emergency situations and anticipating the needs for a court complex and juvenile justice facilities are also outcomes within this Key Focus Area.

Strategic Goal: Identify, build, maintain, and protect County infrastructure for public safety, resiliency, sustainability, and wellbeing.

- ✓ Develop and adopt a plan for safe and functional court and essential government office facilities by June 30, 2023.
- ✓ Develop a funding plan for essential County facilities by June 30, 2023.
- ✓ Conduct a needs and feasibility study for the juvenile detention facility by June 30, 2023.
- ✓ Identify and develop plans to address connectivity gaps and deficiencies in the County's transportation network to ensure adequate and continuous access for the public while meeting fish passage requirements by December 31, 2022.

Strategic Goal: Ensure adequate, accessible, and safe space for all existing County assets and functions.

- ✓ Evaluate and prioritize the accessibility, safety, and efficiency of all County infrastructure by December 31, 2023.
- ✓ Complete a campus safety evaluation and proposal by December 31, 2022.

Strategic Goal: Protect, enhance, and provide stewardship of our information assets.

- ✓ Develop a technology replacement plan by July 1, 2022.
- ✓ Create and support a cyber security maturity program by December 31, 2022.

Definitions: The Key Focus Area of Behavioral Health and Homelessness includes the support and services for behavioral health and people experiencing homelessness, as well as strategies to reduce impacts on the law and justice system. Much of our work in this area is based on collaborative efforts and outcomes with other state, regional, and local agencies working to address the root causes as well as finding solutions to the immediate crises.

Outcomes: The outcomes Skagit County is working to achieve in this area include a reduction in the number of people and families experiencing homelessness by providing support services and housing, increasing judicial services for behavioral health related court cases, partnering with community agencies to leverage both resources and services, and building capacity within the community to solve the root causes.

A background image showing three people in a boat on a body of water. The image is faded and serves as a backdrop for the text. The people appear to be outdoors, possibly on a lake or river, with trees visible in the background.

Strategic Goal: Increase access to behavioral health outreach, support, and services.

- ✓ Invest in co-creation of a countywide cross-jurisdictional integrated behavioral health and homelessness plan and implementation, incorporating both vital conditions and urgent services, to be completed by December 31, 2025.
- ✓ Coordinate with the Law and Justice Council and other partners to reduce preventable deaths (suicide, overdose) by December 31, 2025.
- ✓ Develop an evidenced-based recovery care model informed by lived experiences by July 1, 2023.
- ✓ Expand year-round low-barrier shelter-connected behavioral health services by January 1, 2024.
- ✓ Lead countywide efforts to develop and coordinate behavioral health first responder co-response outreach and intervention by January 1, 2024.

Strategic Goal: Improve behavioral health outcomes for people connected with the law and justice system.

- ✓ Utilize the Skagit County Law and Justice Council to coordinate and improve networking between public health, public safety, therapeutic courts, hospitals, and providers by December 31, 2022.
- ✓ Enhance therapeutic courts to respond to behavioral health needs and promote positive change in eligible court-involved participants to improve well-being, public safety, reduce recidivism, and strengthen families by December 31, 2023.
- ✓ Increase connection of court-involved participants to stable housing by January 1, 2024.

Strategic Goal: Significantly reduce homelessness in our community and provide support to people experiencing homelessness.

- ✓ Collaborate with community partners to prioritize residents for Martha's Place Permanent Supportive Housing project by Spring 2023.
- ✓ Expand recovery and permanent supportive housing and resources by January 1, 2024.
- ✓ Strengthen the stability of year-round low-barrier shelter access in collaboration with cities by December 31, 2022.

Key Focus Area: Health, Housing, and Community Safety

Definitions: This Key Focus Area addresses the physical and mental health of community members, affordable housing for residents in Skagit County, and community safety to include law enforcement and the jail facility.

Outcomes: The outcomes created by focusing in this area will include reduced crime, which will increase safety, additional affordable housing, new and expanded opportunities for physical and mental well being, and a healthier community overall.

Strategic Goal: In collaboration with municipalities, nonprofits, and the private sector, increase housing availability and affordability for people who live and work in Skagit County.

- ✓ Identify two or more suitable county-owned properties for multifamily housing by December 31, 2022.
- ✓ Work proactively to ensure a pipeline of affordable housing projects to leverage funding for at least two new projects per year.
- ✓ Decrease County permit timelines to an average of 60 days for housing projects by June 30, 2023.

Strategic Goal: Support a healthy and vibrant economic environment.

- ✓ Support economic recovery through implementation of priority recommendations from the Population Health Trust and EDASC Covid-19 recovery plans by June 30, 2023.

Strategic Goal: Make Skagit County a safe place to live, work and visit through Education, Enforcement and Engagement.

- ✓ Work with State Legislators to address productive police reform and effective policing practices by August 2022.
- ✓ Continue to seek new technologies and methods that will advance first responder capabilities and to keep pace with changing demands for law enforcement by December 31, 2022.
- ✓ Provide oversight as needed for shared services (Skagit County Drug Task Force, Skagit/Island Multiple Agency Response Team, Critical Incident Stress Management Team, Tactical, SAR, K9 & Crisis Negotiation Team capabilities) through regular updates presented to the Law Enforcement Executive Board by December 31, 2022.
- ✓ Create a cache of shared equipment, training, and resources for emergency events by March 15, 2023.
- ✓ Continue to tailor public safety services to individual communities/regional needs across Skagit County through effective and localized deployment of resources.
- ✓ Continue to improve communication, trust and engagement between public safety and the public through various engagement programs.

Strategic Goal: Increase physical, social, and emotional wellbeing at all stages of life.

- ✓ Expand opportunities for older adults to experience connections and belonging at the senior centers by December 31, 2023.
- ✓ Expand foundational public health services and enhance workforce capabilities to support public health work as Community Health Strategists by January 1, 2024.
- ✓ Deepen the collaboration and engagement between the Board of Health and Population Health Trust Community Health Advisory Board by December 31, 2022.
- ✓ Develop a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) plan for educating the community about DEI issues and strategies, and the vital conditions needed to live a healthy life by December 31, 2024.
- ✓ Implement two new initiatives to promote access to public health services for vulnerable or underserved populations by July 1, 2023.
- ✓ Increase the availability of non-motorized transportation and community recreation by completing 2.5 miles of the Centennial Trail by June 30, 2024.
- ✓ Assemble partnerships and funding to build six soccer fields adjacent to Skagit Valley College by December 30, 2023.
- ✓ Increase high value public access by creating permanent, safe, and legal access to Big Rock Park by December 31, 2024.
- ✓ Recognize 'parkscriptions' as a proactive tool for increasing the health of our community by attaining additional acres of high value public land and building additional trail miles by December 31, 2025.
- ✓ Recognize the value of the Skagit County Fair to a broader demographic and work toward expanding outreach to increase Latinx attendance by 20% over the course of the next five years.

Definitions: A Resilient and Sustainable County Government will be able to respond to and recover from any type of disaster or event, including health related pandemics and natural disasters such as a flood or fire. With highly trained staff and an educated community, the County can plan for continuity of operations and continue to provide the critical support and services in the most challenging of times. This focus area also includes sustainability practices such as recycling, energy efficiency, and a commitment to farmland legacy and the natural environment.

Outcomes: By focusing time and resources on a Resilient and Sustainable County Government, the results will include staff that are trained in response to and recovery from events and disasters, technology recovery and protection plans, educational programs for the community to prepare for and recover from disasters, facilities and equipment for safety and communication, and addressing climate change.

Strategic Goal: Fulfill our role in preparing for and responding to and recovering from disasters, events, incidents, and hazards.

- ✓ Adopt a countywide continuity of operations and government plan by June 30, 2024.
- ✓ Evaluate funding options for a dedicated emergency operations center by December 31, 2024.
- ✓ Develop a core group of well-trained and dedicated employees, from across the County, to assist in managing County response to hazard events by December 31, 2023.
- ✓ Identify major capital arterials to restore after a major incident by December 31, 2024.
- ✓ Expand county employee emergency preparedness and response knowledge and capabilities by December 31, 2024.
- ✓ Implement Phase 1 of a ransomware defense strategy by April 2023.
- ✓ Provide the highest level of public safety service to our communities during emergent and non-emergent times by conducting regular planning for emergency response affecting multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions by December 31, 2022.

Strategic Goal: Protect, enhance, and provide responsible stewardship and sustainability of our natural resources and environment.

- ✓ Develop a funding strategy and complete design to replace the eleven highest priority salmon culvert barriers by December 31, 2026.
- ✓ Develop public outreach education plans to increase organic diversion from the waste stream by December 31, 2030.
- ✓ Review and update the current sustainability plan by December 31, 2023.
- ✓ Collaborate with tribes, agencies, and the community to increase new riparian restoration within the Skagit River watershed by fifteen acres by December 31, 2025.
- ✓ Strive to add five hundred acres of farmland per year to the Farmland Legacy Program until 2030.
- ✓ Expand Voluntary Stewardship Program and exceed the goals outlined in the VSP workplan by December 31, 2026.
- ✓ Coordinate with partners to reduce the discharge of fecal coliform bacteria on twenty-five properties in the Samish and Padilla watersheds by December 31, 2024.

Strategic Goal: Ensure high standards of customer service that includes transparency and accessibility for all county services and programs.

- ✓ Implement language accessibility across all County communications by December 31, 2022.
- ✓ Evaluate opportunities for customer service efficiencies and improvements by June 30, 2023.
- ✓ Evaluate opportunities for centralized customers service hubs by December 31, 2023.
- ✓ Evaluate accessibility of County information and website by June 30, 2023.

Adaptive Strategies

Strategies are the techniques, approaches, and tools that Skagit County will use in strategic planning – they are critical to the long-term success of the community and realizing our vision for the future. These strategies cross all Key Focus Areas and can be utilized at all levels in the organization. They are adaptable to changes over time – and as such, they can be used to pivot or transform within the Strategic Goals and Implementation Plan as needed.

We will invest in technology for efficiency, effectiveness, and customer service improvements.

We will focus on creating safe and functional County buildings and infrastructure.

We will adopt competitive staffing policies.

We will maintain our intentional revenue structure to ensure fiscal sustainability.



The Path Forward

This strategic plan is a living document, and Skagit County is committed to sharing the results of our efforts in a transparent and accountable way. The plan will need to be adjusted based on changing service and delivery needs, the economy, or unforeseen circumstances, and is designed to be flexible and adaptable.

Through various paths such as daily service-related activities and the annual budgeting process, this plan will come to life and be continuously updated and improved. A key part of that will be the Implementation Plan as well as a regular reporting process to the County Commissioners. As Skagit County moves forward into the future, the organization looks forward to achieving our vision of a safe and resilient place to live and work that delivers supportive services embracing sustainable growth, economic vibrancy, community health, and diversity to enhance the quality of life for all.



Acknowledgements

The Skagit County Commissioners wish to express our appreciation to the community at-large, our partners and stakeholders in the community, our elected and appointed leadership team, and all of the County staff that so passionately serve the community. As partners in our shared future, you are all a key source of information and guidance for our strategic planning efforts. With your continued engagement and feedback, the County will continue to provide the support, services, and programs that will achieve our vision of the future.





Strategic Plan Definitions

Behavioral Health

Behavioral health is a term that covers the full range of mental and emotional well-being – from day-to-day challenges of life, to treating mental health and substance use disorders.

Strategic Plan

A strategic plan is a working, living document that reflects the policy direction, sets the Vision, and drives and informs an Implementation Plan which the staff will utilize to ensure progress and measurable results. The strategic plan should be updated regularly and communicated across and outside the organization. The key components of a strategic plan include:

Mission Statement

A mission describes the purpose of Skagit County - the reason why we exist. It converts our broad dreams and visions into more specific, action-oriented terms. A mission creates focus for our work and accountability to stay on track.

Vision Statement

A Vision Statement is an aspirational statement that is clear and inspires long term change. The vision leads the organization - it guides our Strategic Goals, Outcomes, Adaptive Strategies and Work Plans.

Core Values

Core values are traits or qualities that are not just worthwhile, they represent an organization's highest priorities, deeply held beliefs, and core, fundamental driving forces. They are the heart of what our organization and employees stand for in the world. They tell our story and focus on HOW we will conduct business.

Key Focus Areas

Key Focus Areas are the most important issues facing Skagit County now and in the future. Key Focus Areas will be the focus of the organization in budgeting, planning and staffing.

Outcomes

The Outcomes are bigger picture and longer term – what are we trying to achieve in each Key Focus Area? What is the end result if we are successful? An outcome is the change that happens as a result of implementing our strategic plan. They will drive the Key Performance Indicators, which are more specific and usually involve objective data such as numbers.

Strategic Goals

Strategic Goals are the larger, broader, often intangible concepts that will need to be accomplished to address the Key Focus Areas and be successful in the coming years. Strategic Goals are typically longer term (3 – 10 years) in nature and have milestones along the way to measure success.

SMART Objectives

SMART Objectives are milestones along the road to achieving our bigger picture Strategic Goals. They are accomplishments that can be defined in quantifiable and measurable terms. SMART means Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic/Resourced and Timebound. Objectives are specific, actionable targets that need to be achieved within a smaller time frame to accomplish our Strategic Goals. SMART Objectives typically take between 1 year – 3 years to complete.

Action Steps

Action Steps are very specific tasks that need to be completed to achieve the SMART Objectives and Strategic Goals. They are very short term (30 – 180 days). These will be included in the implementation plan.

Adaptive Strategies

Strategies are methods or overarching concepts used to accomplish a goal. They can be thought of as a broader tool or technique that will allow our organization to have success more quickly or efficiently. More than one strategy may be used concurrently and they are the high-level tools or techniques needed to accomplish the outcomes, factored into the everyday work of the County.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan is a tracking document for the strategic plan that is based on the Key Focus Areas, Strategic Goals and Outcomes. The Implementation Plan tracks several critical parts: the SMART Objectives to accomplish the Strategic Goal, the Action Steps that will accomplish the SMART Objective, and the KPI's that will measure success for the Outcomes. Included will be who is responsible, specific timelines, and any resources needed to accomplish the work.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Key Performance Indicators are measurable values that demonstrate how effectively the organization is achieving Strategic Goals and Outcomes. KPIs are used to evaluate success at reaching target metrics in budget, strategic planning, master plans, and more. A great KPI measures not just numbers, but the outcomes we wish to see because of the work.



Skagit County Commissioners
1800 Continental Place, Suite 100
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
Phone: (360) 416-1300
commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us

www.skagitcounty.net

