

# PRESS RELEASE



Snohomish County

County Council

Council Commentary

*Inside the Budget 4 9 Nov. 2007*

## Meeting the Challenge

With a little more than a week to go until the final budget hearing on Nov. 19, the Snohomish County Council continues its in-depth review and examination of the proposed 2008 spending plan submitted by the County Executive in September.

Issues surfaced during this evaluation process that have prompted the council to consider how best to respond to the critical challenges facing the county – particularly in the interrelated areas of transportation, land use and capital facilities planning, as well as criminal justice, and economic development. Sound decisions require full access to all relevant data and staff who are familiar with the issues and proposals, and the council will continue its efforts to ensure adequate access to critical information.

### Transportation, Land Use and Capital Facilities Planning

Strong leadership is needed today if the county is to avoid ever-increasing gridlock on our roads and highways. Strong leadership is needed to enhance interjurisdictional land use planning. And strong leadership is needed to provide the infrastructure, roads and parks our growing population requires.

But no single person or agency has the solutions to these complex problems. It will take strong collaboration between all branches of county and city governments, as well as business and community leaders to craft solutions that will work and that the public will support.

New thinking is clearly required to close the nearly \$500 million funding gap for essential county infrastructure projects needed to handle county growth over the next 20 years. The council's proposed ultimate capacity transportation program, announced this week, is an important first step in that new direction. (Link to [Council Presents \\$130 Mil Transportation Plan](#))

### Criminal Justice

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Criminal Justice established by the council last year continues its work to identify the most pressing public safety needs within the county. The commission will also weigh in with ideas for financing the programs and facilities that may be recommended for consideration. Maintaining safe communities is a basic function of government, and one that requires innovative approaches.

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## **Economic Development**

The ability to attract new and retain existing businesses through cooperative community planning is key to building our economic base and bringing high-wage, primary jobs to the county – jobs that strengthen our quality of life.

The council supports partnerships with the executive, the Snohomish County Tomorrow city-county planning group and neighborhood groups to ensure a robust economy that will support the healthy growth of our region.

All of these issues and more must be addressed while working within a long-established framework of sound fiscal management and prudent use of taxpayer dollars. With the responsibility for both creating policy and safeguarding the county coffers, the county council has the mandate to provide the required leadership to work collaboratively with our partners to create and implement sound public policies within the transparent environment of the legislative branch.

Note: Link to all the council's [Proposed Ordinances](#)

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