

Issaquah-Fall City Road Heritage Corridor

Location: Sammamish Plateau, Snoqualmie Valley

Length: 4.8 miles

Begins: SE Duthie Hill Road

Ends: 328th Avenue SE in Fall City

Corridor is limited to a central stretch of the larger SE Issaquah-Fall City Road. The heritage corridor begins at the junction of Duthie Hill Road SE (which continues as the main arterial), veering generally east along SE Issaquah-Fall City Road over the forested ridge. It continues as far as 328th Avenue SE, where the road becomes SE 46th Street in Fall City.

Road history in local context

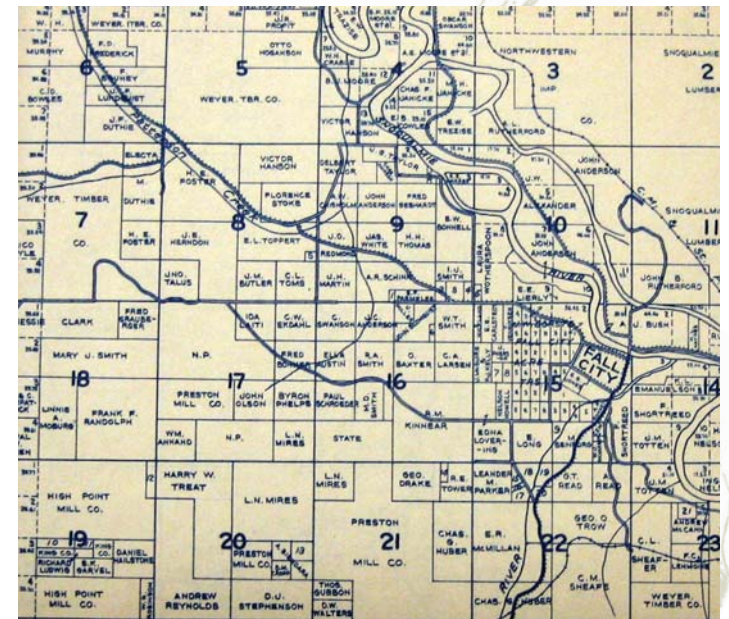
Farming and coal mining set the stage for wagon roads in central King County. Two of the earliest locations of Euro-American settlement were the fertile Snoqualmie and Squak valleys. The town of “Falls City” was first settled in 1869, near the base of Snoqualmie Falls. It soon became an important river shipping point for flat-bottomed steamboats hauling produce raised on the prairie above the Falls. At Squak, where coal had been discovered as early as 1862, hop ranching and later dairy farming gained a foothold.

Today’s Issaquah-Fall City Road appears to follow the route of a very early trace depicted on GLO maps. King County first established

this road in 1883 as the D.H. Thomas Road No. 99, formally connecting Fall City to Renton via the village of Squak. From the south end of Lake Sammamish, it climbed the forested ridge in the same prominent fashion as it does today. Over the crest of the ridge—that portion which comprises the Heritage Corridor—several segments were re-aligned and abandoned over the next three decades, and show up as dotted lines in the official King County *Roads Establishment* book.

Jeremiah and Kate Borst officially platted a townsite at Fall City in 1887, in the hopes of attracting the Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern Railway. The arrival of this line from the growing city of Seattle later that year opened up both valleys to a larger world. Gilman (renamed Issaquah) in the Squak Valley prospered with expansion of its coal, logging and sawmill industries. As an efficient transporter of produce, coal, and people, the railroad soon dominated transportation, so the D.H. Thomas Road No. 99 remained a secondary route of access into Fall City.

At the threshold of the auto era in 1903, the corridor was extended anew at either end. The George Coutts Road No. 683 was established as a new alignment for the west end. The Orin Baxter Road was established at the east end, just past the Kinnear-Ambold Farm



Metzker Map of the Issaquah-Fall City Road, 1926



Issaquah-Fall City Road and Kinnear-Ambold Farm, c. 1912. Courtesy of King County Archives



Four miles northeast of Issaquah on Coutts Road, 1932. Courtesy of King County Archives

(HRI No. 763) and leading into Fall City. Despite these continued extensions and improvements, the road remained basic and rough. A 1912 photograph of the Kinnear property, showing a barn that still stands today, depicts just how primitive it was. Nonetheless, a Kroll map of that same date indicates there were multiple, private ownerships of 40 to 160 acres along the road, as well as larger timber holdings by Weyerhaeuser, Northern Pacific Railroad, and the State of Washington.

In 1915, when the Sunset Highway was designated as the major route for motorized travel from Seattle over Snoqualmie Pass, this old wagon road into Fall City reverted to true back-road status, primarily serving local residents and farms. As the primary access into the Snoqualmie Valley from Issaquah, it had been superseded by the new Preston-Fall City Road.

A snapshot in time, the old Issaquah-Fall City Road appears on a 1926 Metsker map in its present-day alignment—graded and graveled but still unpaved. Its location, early roadway character and rural setting speak to its brief (1883-1915) but important role as the primary wagon route from Squak to Fall City.

Sources: King County records: Assessor's Property Record Cards, Land Use and Aerial Survey - 1936-1941, Historic Preservation Program HR database, *Index to Roads Records*, *Engineer's Road Establishment Atlas - 1913*, Roads' Map Vault database. Maps: AAA - 1917-1929; Anderson - 1888, 1907; Kroll - 1912, 1913, 1926, 1930, 1936, 1938; Metsker - 1926, 1936; Washington Map & Blueprint Co. - 1900, 1905, 1908.

Corridor signature

- Strategic wagon road history
- Evocative roadway character
- Varied forest and farmland views

Issaquah-Fall City Road Heritage Corridor follows the route of the oldest wagon road into the Snoqualmie Valley, pre-dating the arrival of the railroad. This farm-to-market route linked Fall City to Issaquah from as early as 1883. The evocative central segment over the forested ridge retains some of the most intact roadway design elements of any in the Heritage Corridor system.

Contributing features

The following **roadway features** contribute positively to overall corridor character:

- Historic curvilinear alignment
- Early profile hugging rolling terrain
- No built-up bed; no visible drainage ditches
- Flat roadbed without crown
- Narrow or non-existent shoulders with ground vegetation to edge of pavement
- Lush vegetation and mature trees bordering roadway; narrow vegetation cuts within right-of-way

The following **contextual features** contribute positively to overall corridor character:

- Varied near- and mid-distance forest and farmland views
- Views across Snoqualmie Valley at eastern end
- Adjacent late 19th and early 20th century farmsteads
- Set back residences well-screened by vegetation
- Informal rural landscaping; gravel lanes

Non-contributing features

The following elements visually detract from overall corridor character:

- Formal gated entrances
- Large-scale residences with suburban-style landscaping

