

Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Community Service Area Subarea Plan

Concept Document – January 30, 2023

Purpose

This Subarea Plan concept document presents the vision statement, guiding principles, and scope of the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan. County planners are sharing this document before the release of the Subarea Plan Public Review Draft, scheduled for June 2023. King County Local Services is asking community members and interested parties if this concept document reflects the community's priorities and whether the scoping topics and concepts discussed below should be considered for this 20-year plan. We also want to know if any community priorities are missing that should be included. If you have any feedback to share, please visit the outreach website (www.publicinput.com/SnoValleyNEKC).

This document describes the subarea's geography, describes the community engagement process the county is using, and summarizes community interests. This information is followed by the project vision statement and guiding principles. Finally, the document includes scoping topics and concepts, which will direct the development of subarea plan policies and proposed zoning and land use changes.

The information in this document is the result of almost two years of community engagement, including more than 100 individual meetings and discussions with community members and community organizations, eight focus groups, two online surveys, two area-wide virtual events, an interactive web map, and other conversations. For more details, see the Community Engagement section.

Contents

Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea	2
Community Engagement	4
Community Interests	9
Topics Not Included in the Subarea Plan	10
Vision Statement	12
Guiding Principles	12
Subarea Plan Scope	13
Land Use.....	13
Housing and Human Services.....	14
Environment.....	14
Parks, Open Space, Cultural Resources.....	14
Transportation	15
Services and Utilities	15
Economic Development.....	16

Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea

This subarea is home to about 28,000 residents who live in a mix of more- and less-dense neighborhoods. It has the largest area of the 11 subareas in King County, spanning 881 square miles—almost 90% of which are resource lands for forestry and agriculture. The subarea extends east from the incorporated cities of Issaquah and Sammamish and the Bear Creek/Sammamish Subarea to Snoqualmie Pass and Chelan and Kittitas Counties. It stretches north from Interstate 90 to Highway 2 and the border of Snohomish County. It surrounds, but does not include, five incorporated Cities in the Rural Area, and it contains two Rural Towns.

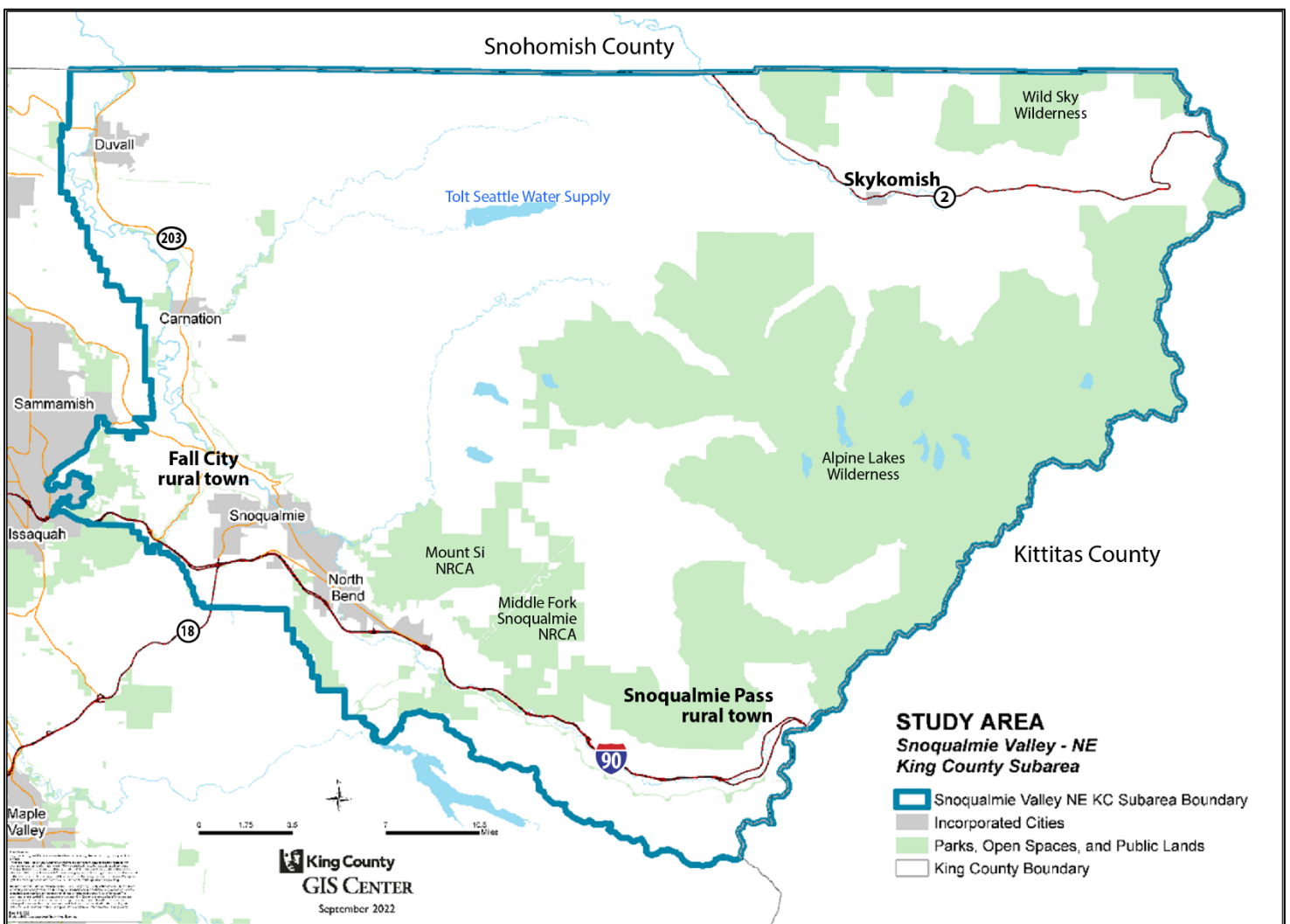
The Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County Subarea Plan serves residents living in the unincorporated areas that surround the cities of Carnation, Duvall, North Bend, and Snoqualmie and the town of Skykomish. The subarea includes the following unincorporated areas:*

- Baring
- Carnation
- Duvall
- Fall City
- Grotto
- Issaquah
- North Bend
- Preston
- Skykomish
- Snoqualmie Pass
- North Bend
- Snoqualmie
- Fall City
- Issaquah
- Carnation
- Baring

**City names refer to the unincorporated areas that surround the named cities.*

The incorporated cities of Carnation, Duvall, North Bend, and Snoqualmie are each surrounded by urban growth boundaries. Between the city limits and the urban growth boundary, there are unincorporated areas that planners expect to be annexed by the adjacent cities over time. Until this happens, King County remains the local jurisdiction for these areas and the subarea plan applies to them.

The subarea plan will feature policies that guide development in the two Rural Towns of Fall City and Snoqualmie Pass and in the designated Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers of Preston, Stillwater, Baring, and Timberlane Village where there are small areas of local business activity.



Community Engagement

This section summarizes how county planners have engaged with community members across the subarea. We made an effort to reach all communities in the subarea and to focus on equity during outreach.

Website

The project website (publicinput.com/SnoValleyNEKC) is the hub for sharing information about the subarea plan and the planning process and for gathering feedback for the plan. At almost every meeting, participants and interest groups were directed to the website. The site describes the planning process, provides status updates, offers opportunities to participate, and provides the results from previous engagements. It hosted all of the community surveys, which are described below. As of January 2023, 567 people have used the site to subscribe to email updates and notices about the project. These subscribers include a range of individuals and organizations, including the following:

- Residents
- Businesses
- Community-based organizations
- Elected Officials or staff members
- State and local government representatives
- Interest groups
- Public safety representatives
- Public school representatives
- Tribal representatives
- Utility representatives

Meetings

Much of the engagement for this project took place at small meetings with various groups across the subarea. Information provided at these meetings ranged from general orientation to focused discussions about specific topics, such as available services or the use of specific land parcels. Most, but not all, of these meetings were held virtually.

Between June 2021 and November 2022, county staff members attended or held 117 meetings related to the subarea plan. These included the following:

- 50 meetings with residents (both individuals and groups)
- 25 meetings with community-based organizations
- 9 meetings with businesses or business interests
- 3 meetings with the offices of elected officials
- 23 meetings with local governments that are in or adjacent to the project area
- 2 meetings with public school administrators
- 6 meetings with representatives from the Snoqualmie and Tulalip Tribes

This list identifies scheduled one-on-one and group meetings, and does not include all impromptu phone calls or informal conversations that have taken place during development of the subarea plan.

Also, from June to November 2022, the county held weekly in-person office hours at the Fall City Library where people could talk with staff members about the Subarea Plan or other topics of interest.

Focus groups

The county held seven focus groups to facilitate a deeper discussion of relevant issues in a small-group setting. These groups included the following geographies and topics:

- Unincorporated Carnation/Duvall
- Preston/Mitchell Hill
- Unincorporated Skykomish
- Unincorporated North Bend/Snoqualmie
- Snoqualmie Pass
- Agricultural concerns
- Fall City
- Mobility/human services

The first round of focus group meetings took place in August and September 2022. Two more rounds of meetings are planned for February and June 2023.

Virtual community meetings

King County Local Services held virtual community meetings that included both general topics and subarea plan-specific discussions. These discussions included sharing the project scope, timeline, and engagement opportunities with participants, as well as opportunities for discussion and dialogue during the meetings themselves. These events included the following:

- Annual Town Hall for Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County – March 24, 2022 (95 participants)
- Visioning and Scoping Kickoff Event – May 24, 2022 (More than 100 participants)
- Final Visioning and Scoping Workshop Community Event – September 27, 2022 (40 participants)

More events are planned when the Public Review Draft of the subarea plan is issued in June 2023.

Online surveys

The planning team used two online surveys and an interactive web map to help develop the community vision statement, guiding principles, and scope for this subarea plan. The interactive web map gathered location-specific feedback from the community in the plan's different topic areas. The team advertised these tools through the website, multiple emails, social media posts, and with the assistance of Councilmember Perry's office. Participation is summarized below.

- June 2022 online survey – 680 views, 128 participants and 901 comments
- September 2022 Online Survey – 866 views, 388 participants, and 430 comments
- Interactive web map (open from March to August 2022) – 141 data points submitted

In September 2022, Councilmember Perry's office distributed a community engagement survey across the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County area. As of January 2023, that survey had received 490 responses from residents of the unincorporated areas listed above. The information gathered by this survey is reflected here, will help guide the development of the subarea plan, or will be considered as part of other planning processes as appropriate.

Email

Planners sent 10 separate emails notifying community members about engagement opportunities during the planning process. These included project updates and encouraged recipients to recruit their friends, family, and neighbors to participate.

Planners also used articles in King County's Unincorporated Area News, a monthly email newsletter, to increase participation and awareness. These articles included overviews of plan progress, information about how to stay up to date, project contact information and a link to the project website.

Social media

Social media was used to increase participation and awareness. The King County Local Services Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts provided status updates and information about engagement opportunities, often leveraging project-specific videos and other electronic marketing tools. Media campaigns encouraged survey participation and attendance at community meetings. Councilmember Perry's office helped spread the word as well, with a network of several thousand followers on social media and through direct and regular email distribution to residents in the subarea. Almost all of these announcements directed people to the project website.

Other organizations also helped the county reach people beyond the Local Services network, including the following:

- Fall City Community Association

- Snoqualmie Valley Mobility Coalition
- A Supportive Community For All
- Si View Metropolitan Parks District
- City of North Bend
- City of Issaquah

Other community events

Subarea planners and Local Services staff members attended several other community events to spread the word and to distribute flyers, gather feedback, and encourage participation. The following is a sampling of these events.

- Si View Farmers Market in North Bend – August 25, 2022
- Fall City Community Association’s Fall City Night Out – July 31, 2022
- Be Dam Ready event – September 22, 2022
- Open House for Lower Frew Levee Setback project – October 22, 2022

Equity-focused engagement

Throughout this process, county planners have worked to engage a wide variety of people across the subarea. They made efforts to connect with community members who have traditionally been excluded from such planning—such as people of color, those with low incomes, immigrants, and refugees. The goal of these efforts was to create a plan that reflects the needs of the entire community. This involved working with community-based organizations, the farming community, and schools. Activities included the following:

- Visiting local businesses owned by people who are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), such as the Carnation Ixtapa and La Pasadita in Duvall
- Participating in a senior event put on by SeaMar, a community-based organization specializing in service to Latinos
- Speaking with farm owners who employ immigrants
- Placing Spanish-language project flyers at a King County Public Health clinic
- Joining and adding announcements to a Facebook page for the Hispanic community of Carnation and Duvall
- Discussions with English language learning students, teachers, and administrators in the Riverview and Snoqualmie Valley School District

Engagement gaps

County planners faced challenges reaching residents in the communities of Baring, Grotto, and Timberlane Village. Despite posting signs, sending emails to a list of almost 80 addresses provided by Councilmember Perry’s office, and connecting with some individuals in these communities, the project team has received few comments and limited participation from these communities. We are still making efforts to connect with people in these communities—including identifying and attending in-person events, speaking with business owners, and

contacting homeowner associations. We are also considering using a phone canvass to encourage attendance.

Lessons learned

Engaging with people who have traditionally been excluded from planning processes was challenging. This may be due to the dispersal of these communities across the large subarea. To connect with more communities of color, immigrants, and refugees, the project team is working to develop connections with high school students, considering mailers translated into multiple languages for subsequent engagement campaigns, and building relationships with community and organization leaders to learn what is most important to them and their neighbors. This takes time and dedicated effort to develop, but is vital to ensure that the subarea plan reflects the interests of the community.

Community Interests

The following topics were consistently expressed by community members during engagement about this subarea plan.

Land use

- Maintain the rural character of the community and limit growth to support local families and businesses
- Lack of affordable housing needs to be addressed
- New development should be mindful of natural hazards and limit environmental impacts
- Preservation of views and natural amenities enjoyed by everyone
- Enhance farmland preservation to provide greater incentives to landowners

Housing and human services

- Access to transportation options and increasing affordability issues are limiting the ability of existing organizations to support the community
- Mental health services remain a longstanding issue in the valley, with little improvements made in the last 10-20 years
- More funding needs to be provided to existing organizations and more services need to be established within the community to support those in need

Environment

- Climate change resilience and mitigation are priorities to protect farms and agricultural land in the area
- We need an overarching climate change vision to achieve long-term resiliency that doesn't just control negative outcomes but creates positive outcomes/solutions
- Strengthen the water supply and resilience to natural hazards
- Support policies that balance the needs of salmon with those of agricultural land preservation

Parks, open space, cultural resources

- Improve pedestrian connectivity to and between open spaces and trails to support recreation and active transportation
- Support sustainable forestry, including carbon capture strategies, in the rural zone while enhancing water quality, fisheries, wildlife, open space, and recreation
- Traffic on Highway 2 could be reduced through more transportation options to outdoor recreation areas

Transportation

- Transportation services should be improved; current transit options are limited
- Fill gaps in non-motorized/active transportation options and parks/recreation options for local people
- Coordinate policies and plans to improve transportation, stormwater, and flood-management infrastructure

Services and utilities

- Improve internet access and availability to better connect the area
- Improve access to disposal sites and the frequency of garbage service so residents don't need to store solid waste for extended periods of time, which can cause conflicts with wildlife

Economic development

- Build an economically sustainable local business community that supports farms through agricultural tourism and is protected against the threats posed by climate change and flooding
- Support partnerships and collaborations for farmers with municipalities and other organizations to develop infrastructure to mitigate the effects of climate change

Topics Not Included in the Subarea Plan

County planners identified several topics during engagement that the Subarea Plan can't address for the following reasons:

- The issue affects the whole county and should be addressed by the King County Comprehensive Plan (www.kingcounty.gov/CompPlan) or another countywide plan
- The request is not consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan, the State Growth Management Act, or King County standards and practices
- The issue involves a service or program that is not offered by King County but is covered by another agency
- The issue is a service, program, or investment that is more appropriate for the King County Community Needs List

The table below lists some examples of topics that were identified by the community but were not included as part of the Subarea Plan, with brief descriptions of why they were not included.

Topic	Reason for not including	How/where this topic is addressed
Invest in reducing greenhouse gas emissions	This issue affects the whole county, not just the subarea	Strategic Climate Action Plan (https://kingcounty.gov/services/environment/climate/actions-strategies/strategic-climate-action-plan.aspx)
Sustainable forestry	This issue affects the whole county, not just the subarea	30-Year Forest Plan (kingcounty.gov/services/environment/water-and-land/forestry/forest-policy/30-year-forest-plan.aspx)
Limit growth in rural areas and strengthen land use protections for fish habitat	This issue affects the whole county, not just the subarea	King County Comprehensive Plan (kingcounty.gov/CompPlan)
Balance farmland preservation, fish habitat, and flood control	This issue affects the whole county, not just the subarea	Snoqualmie Fish, Farm, & Flood Advisory Committee and Implementation Oversight Committee (kingcounty.gov/services/environment/watersheds/snoqualmie-skykomish/fish-farms-flooding.aspx)
Wildfire risk	Countywide in nature and better addressed in a different document	Countywide Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy (https://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/climate/documents/king-county-wildfire-strategy-report.pdf)
Rural Town-specific road standards	Not consistent with County standards and practices	King County Road Design and Construction Standards (kingcounty.gov/depts/local-services/roads/road-standards.aspx)
Road crosswalks, streetlights, and signage	Short-term need	Road Services 24/7 Road Help Line (https://kingcounty.gov/depts/local-services/roads/24x7-helpline.aspx) or Community Needs List
Access to senior housing tax relief	Short-term, ongoing program	King County Assessor Tax Relief Programs (https://kingcounty.gov/depts/assessor/TaxRelief.aspx)
Garbage services	Short-term need	Community Needs List
Law enforcement presence	Short-term need	Community Needs List
Reduce permit processing time	Short-term, ongoing program	Local Services Permitting Division (https://kingcounty.gov/depts/local-services/permits.aspx)

Vision and Guiding Principles

The vision statement and guiding principles were developed through several years of dialogue and working with the community. They draw from community planning efforts, the Community Needs List process, and many community conversations. The vision statement is an aspirational, forward-looking statement of what the community wants to be over the next 20 years. The guiding principles support the community's vision, informing and directing the development of the subarea plan. The scope of work topics that follow describe the topic areas being evaluated for inclusion in the subarea plan.

Vision statement

Snoqualmie Valley and Northeast King County are characterized by strong rural communities where people and businesses are thriving, the natural environment and agricultural lands are conserved and protected, farms are preserved, the community is resilient to climate change, culture and history are celebrated, and services and programs are accessible to residents in a way that preserves rural character.

Guiding principles

The guiding principles express the community's sentiments around a range of community issues discussed during the planning process.

- *Conserve and protect forests, rivers, lakes, and open spaces.*
- *Conserve and protect the subarea's working farmlands by protecting agricultural lands and supporting local farmers, ranchers, and growers.*
- *Encourage, protect, and expand a range of housing choices for all.*
- *Promote economically sustainable local businesses across the subarea and support the business districts of the Fall City and Snoqualmie Pass Rural Towns.*
- *Preserve cultural and historic resources and landmarks.*
- *Enhance the relationship between King County and the Tribes by centering Tribal needs, land stewardship, and treaty rights.*
- *Retain rural character across the subarea, including in commercial areas and residential communities.*
- *Support transit and transportation options, including active transportation and recreation, consistent with rural levels of service.*
- *Support programs and services for youths, seniors, veterans, and others to build community connections.*
- *Promote communities that are resilient to natural hazards and climate change.*

Subarea Plan Scope

The scope is a high-level list of topics that have been identified from community engagement and that fit within the purpose and scale of a subarea plan. These topics will form the subjects for developing policy, land use and zoning changes, and development regulations in the subarea plan. King County Local Services is asking if these scoping topics should be considered for this 20-year plan and what is missing that should be included.

Land use

Scoping Topic	Concepts
Land use, zoning and development conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect rural areas and natural resources lands from new development that is inconsistent with the rural character. • Continue to allow small areas of commercial development that serve local rural communities. • Continue the role of Snoqualmie Pass and Fall City Rural Towns as community hubs. • Support Snoqualmie Pass and Stevens Pass as recreational destinations. • Continue to limit new development in unincorporated areas inside the urban growth boundaries of Carnation, Duvall, North Bend, and Snoqualmie before those areas are annexed. • Evaluate appropriate land uses near the Interstate 90 – State Route 18 interchange. • Review development conditions across the subarea. • Keep existing industrial zoning in the Preston Industrial Area and ensure compatibility with adjacent rural properties.
View corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect view corridors along Interstate 90 and Highway 2.
Fall City rural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider compatibility of upzones with rural character and existing development. • Evaluate development regulations in residential areas. • Keep existing boundary between business district and existing industrial land. • Consider allowed uses in business district given the planned development of a new large on-site septic system. • Continue to prohibit density bonuses as affordable housing incentives to help maintain rural character.
Snoqualmie Pass recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrate new development outside of avalanche risk areas.

Housing and Human Services

Scoping Topic	Concepts
Housing choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Cities in the Rural Area and affordable housing providers to increase the supply of affordable, long-term housing in the cities for workers in the subarea, to protect against sprawl into the rural areas. • Incentivize development of “middle housing” in Fall City while retaining compatibility with existing development. • Increase diversity of housing in Snoqualmie Pass Rural Town—including microhousing—to support housing that is affordable to workers.
Behavioral health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to and availability of behavioral and mental health support services for youth, seniors, and others in crisis by partnering with service providers.

Environment

Scoping Topic	Concepts
Flood resilience and channel migration risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase resiliency of transportation systems during major flood events. • Help cities along the Snoqualmie Valley to develop solutions and programs to reduce flood hazard and channel migration risk where feasible.
Natural systems Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider opportunities to restore riparian corridors in the lower Snoqualmie River watershed to address high water temperatures.

Parks, open space, cultural resources

Scoping Topic	Concepts
Active transportation connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support improved connections from unincorporated communities and valley cities to regional trails and population centers through biking, walking, and rolling.
Regional trail network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with agencies to complete missing links and create new links in the regional trail network.
Recreation programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with agencies and other organizations to expand recreation programming.
Trailhead overcrowding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with agencies to address overcrowded trailheads on the I-90 corridor.

Scoping Topic	Concepts
Fall City amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage partnership opportunities to provide, manage, and maintain community facilities and gathering spaces. • Support efforts to acquire land and expand active transportation trails serving the Fall City area. • Support efforts to attain landmark status for significant buildings.

Transportation

Scoping Topic	Concepts
Access to services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the community to address mobility needs to access services in alignment with Metro Transit Service Guidelines and consistent with rural levels of service.
Snoqualmie Pass SR-906 corridor improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with agencies to support improvements to SR-906 corridor for safety, operational functionality, and enhancement for users.
Redmond-Fall City Road SE/SR-202 corridor improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with agencies and the local community to coordinate on the SR-202 corridor study and implementation of safety and active transportation improvements.

Services and utilities

Scoping Topic	Concept
Broadband availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with providers to increase community member access to reliable broadband in unserved or underserved areas in the subarea.
Electrical grid resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with utilities to maintain a reliable electric grid.
Fall City wastewater service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the scale of the community’s on-site septic system to serve the existing Fall City business district; do not expand the service area outside the business district. • Connect to the regional wastewater system to prevent a potential health hazard and when consistent with policy and regulations, and pipe the conveyance.

Economic development

Scoping Topic	Concepts
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the Snoqualmie Valley farm economy, such as seeking opportunities to develop value-added products and ways to help farmers connect products with consumers.
Agritourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider ways in which agritourism can support farm resilience.
Natural beauty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support local businesses unique to the subarea, such as those focused on tourism, outdoor recreation, or public education, that leverage and depend on the natural beauty of the area.
Natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner with agencies, organizations, and the community to support outdoor recreation that encourages local employment and protects natural resources.
Commercial nodes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus non-resource-based economic growth in existing rural commercial nodes at Fall City, Snoqualmie Pass, Preston, Stillwater, Baring, Timberline Village, and Preston Industrial Areas, to serve the local rural communities.