

Tourism Context and Differentiating Snohomish County's Tourism Product

Overview

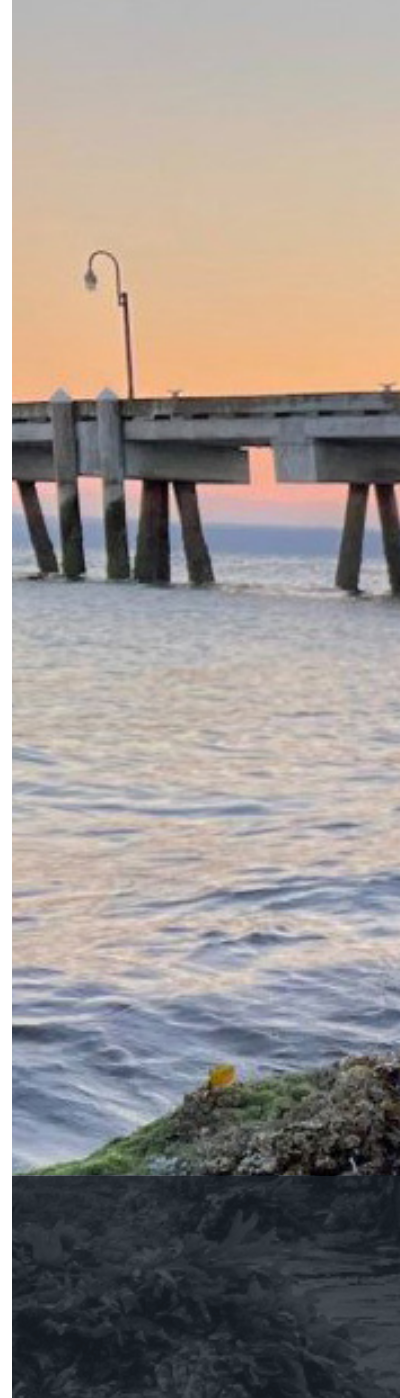
Across Snohomish County, the greater Puget Sound area, and Washington State more generally, tourism is a valuable economic sector, with diverse year-round opportunities for residents and visitors alike. With a temperate marine climate and clearly defined seasons, tourism in Snohomish County supports year-round economic activity. The County focuses on promoting and sharing the wonders of Snohomish County with visitors, supporting storytelling related to the places and experiences of the county, and providing outreach and education related to tourism and hospitality to many partners and tourism interests throughout the county.



As discussed in Chapter 1, tourism is a key industry to Snohomish County and the surrounding region and a valuable contributor to the County’s emerging climate economy. More traditional economic sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and financial services are generally easily and concretely defined within state or county economic statistics with measurable benefits. However, the travel and tourism sector is not as easy to measure. The industry spans nearly a dozen economic sectors including lodging; recreation; retail; real estate; auto, air, rail, and water transport; and food and beverage. Subsequently, the travel and tourism sector employs a diverse range of people, including hotel front desk clerks, ride share drivers, outfitters and guides, wait staff, and casino table dealers. The list goes on and on. Tourism encompasses such a broad industry that residents in every community, large and small, rural and urban, are involved in the tourism industry at some level and are often de facto tourism ambassadors. A successful destination is one in which its residents are proud and eager to become part of their promotion as they recognize the social and economic benefits tourism bring to them and their communities.

Tourism is intrinsically driven by demand, driven by visitors seeking experiences, which affects each supporting sector to varying degrees. As such, it is critical to understand the available supply within the county to serve the incoming and varying demand by visitors, as well as to responsibly guide and manage the demand such that it aligns with its core mission and values.

The following pages highlight the key attractions and tourism assets throughout the county and places them within the context of tourism in Washington. It also highlights how Snohomish County tourism is an exemplary case of the True Pacific Northwest Experience—a comprehensive regional microcosm contained within 2,000 square miles. Of course, there are many more attractions and assets than those mentioned here, but those summarized on the following pages provide a strong idea of what the county has to offer.





Snohomish County Tourism Assets

A visit to Snohomish County provides a true Pacific Northwest experience with easy access to much of what the entire state of Washington has to offer. Snohomish County covers a vast 2,196 square miles, with 19 cities and towns along the coastline and inland to the foothills of the Cascade Mountains.

Tourism opportunities in Snohomish County span a wide range of experiences and settings—from urban destinations such as Everett’s waterfront and museums, to small towns, as well as rural/agricultural, and outdoor recreation destinations. A visit to Snohomish County offers something for everyone. One of the key goals of this plan is to identify and highlight key assets and attractions that are unique and memorable to Snohomish County, and build tourism experiences specifically around these in the coming years. Key highlights of the County’s tourism assets are presented on the following pages.

WATERFRONT DESTINATIONS

Cities like Everett and Edmonds offer scenic waterfront areas with marinas, beaches, and opportunities for boating, dining, and whale watching.



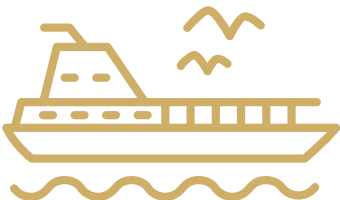
7 Puget Sound Beaches



Largest Public Marina on the West Coast



3 Pods of Resident Orca Whales



Part of the Largest US Ferry System



The Everett Waterfront

has undergone significant updates and revitalization in recent years, transforming it into a vibrant destination. With a focus on creating a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly environment, the waterfront now boasts a promenade, parks, and open spaces that provide views of Port Gardner Bay and the Olympic Mountains. Visitors can enjoy a variety of recreational activities, and dining at waterfront restaurants. Additionally, the new Port of Everett's Waterfront Place central development has brought residential spaces, office buildings, and retail establishments, further enhancing the area's appeal as a thriving and interconnected urban waterfront community.

ARTS AND CULTURE

The county features a vibrant arts scene with galleries, theaters, and cultural events. The Hibulb Cultural Center and Historic Downtown Snohomish are popular cultural hubs. Snohomish County's diverse and interesting history resonates with residents and visitors alike.

The Hibulb Cultural Center

is an important institution for the Tulalip Tribes and the broader community, serving as a place of learning, preservation, and cultural exchange. It provides an opportunity for visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the history of the Tulalip people and the indigenous heritage of the Pacific Northwest



Aviation Heritage

Visitors can enjoy multiple aviation-based attractions that showcase the region's rich aviation history. Boeing Future of Flight is a gateway to the Everett Factory Tour, a guided experience that provides an inside look at the 777 assembly process and opportunities to learn about The Boeing Company. The Future of Flight's Sky Deck offers expansive territorial views with great selfie opportunities. The venue is a popular event space for weddings, receptions, meetings, parties, and other events. The aviation and aerospace Gallery includes exhibits spotlighting the company's milestones, innovation and commitment to advancing sustainable aerospace.

"We made modern jet travel a reality and took people to the moon, and now we enter the era of more sustainable aerospace."

- Chris Raymond, Chief Sustainability Officer



FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Snohomish County hosts numerous festivals and events throughout the year, including the Evergreen State Fair, musical events, art festivals, municipal attractions, and numerous farmers markets. The Lynnwood Event Center is a popular location for conferences and is planning to expand its facilities and spaces to support even more events in the future. The Sports Commission and City of Marysville are seeking to expand capacity for indoor sporting events and tournaments, and Marysville also is planning for waterfront improvements.

The Evergreen State Fair, located in Monroe, is an annual celebration of agriculture, entertainment, and community spirit that draws visitors from across the region. This event showcases a diverse array of attractions, including carnival rides, live entertainment, agricultural exhibits, and a wide range of fair food. The Fair drives visitation and lodging and generates millions of dollars of revenue for the local economy.



SMALL TOWNS AND AGRITOURISM

Small towns like Snohomish and Arlington provide an inviting atmosphere with historic downtown areas, boutique shops, and cozy eateries.

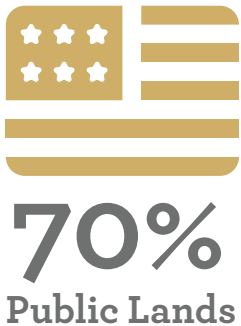
Snohomish is a picturesque town known for its historic downtown, lined with boutique shops, antique stores, and cafes. Arlington, with its small-town ambiance, hosts community events and festivals, while Sultan, along the banks of the Skykomish River, provides an ideal backdrop for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers. These small towns offer an escape from the hustle and bustle of larger cities, inviting visitors to explore their unique character and rich Pacific Northwest heritage.

With picturesque farms, ranches, and countryside, the valleys of Snohomish County offer extensive agritourism opportunities including u-pick destinations, farmers markets, farm stands, barns and event spaces, and holiday fairs and festivals.



OUTDOOR RECREATION

Snohomish County is home to expansive natural landscapes that characterize and define Washington's terrain, including the peaks and foothills of the Cascade Mountains, the Salish Sea, and numerous rivers and lakes. Visitors have opportunities to many outdoor activities like hiking, biking, white water rafting, skiing, and other endeavors. Stewardship of land and waters is the County's priority, and our messaging to outdoor enthusiasts is grounded in responsible recreation.





DIVERSITY ACROSS SNOHOMISH COUNTY TOURISM REGIONS

The discussion of Tourism Assets is organized geographically by the regions shown in the map below (Figure 2.1). While tourism branding may undergo change in the future, these geographic regions work well as distinctive areas for organizing visitor-facing digital content, visitor orientation, and keying tourism assets.

FIGURE 2.1
Geographic Tourism Regions in Snohomish County

