



## Differentiating Snohomish County's Tourism Product

Throughout the entire planning process, discussion about the pros and cons of associating Snohomish County with Seattle persisted in each phase, especially in the focus groups (see focus group summary in Appendix). While Seattle is arguably the most recognizable city in Washington and even the entire Pacific Northwest, it is not Snohomish County, and Snohomish County is not Seattle. Snohomish County has an allure and draw all its own.

Moving into the next five years, Snohomish County can leverage several marketing opportunities to differentiate and position itself as a distinct and appealing destination that complements the attractions of Seattle.

Strategies and unique selling points of Snohomish revolve around the interplay of the components of the tourism assets previously identified. The County also will be taking the lead in advocating for sustainable tourism practices and actions that align with its climate economy initiative, which calls for making its operations more environmentally and economically sustainable and taking action on climate change to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



By focusing on these unique selling points and refining its compelling marketing campaigns, Snohomish County can both capture a segment of the market already drawn to what they perceive of as Seattle and build its name recognition as a stand-alone market. Key differentiating attributes to consider include those that a visitor (or near-by resident) would miss out on if they just stuck to Seattle and King County:

**Cultural and Artistic Offerings and Events:** Showcase specific, hyperlocal arts, culture, and events by promoting galleries, theaters, performances, and cultural events in Snohomish County. Highlight any festivals, art shows, or music events that capture the county's creative spirit.

**Historic and Heritage Sites:** Promote the aerospace and aviation-based history and related museums. The history of aerospace and aviation technology and industry is a strong differentiator and important tourism attraction in the county.

**Natural Beauty and Outdoor Recreation:** Highlight the county's stunning natural landscapes, including its proximity to the Cascade Mountains and the Puget Sound. Recognize the close proximity to managed outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, wildlife viewing, and water sports. All outdoors messaging will be tempered with "leave no trace" principles to encourage responsible recreation and environmental sustainability.

**Small Town Charm:** Promote the county's small towns and communities, each with its own unique character and local attractions. Emphasize the slower pace of life, and the opportunity to experience the authentic Pacific Northwest.





**Farm-to-Table Dining:** Highlight the county's culinary scene, emphasizing farm-to-table dining experiences and local produce and seafood. Market the area as a food lover's destination, showcasing restaurants that focus on using fresh, locally sourced ingredients.

**Family-Friendly Activities:** Promote unique family-friendly attractions (i.e. the Imagine Children's Museum, the Reptile Zoo, etc.), parks, and activities that make Snohomish County an ideal destination for travelers with children.

**Unique Events:** If Snohomish County hosts special events or festivals, market them as distinctive experiences that travelers won't find in Seattle. Encourage visitors to plan their trips around these events.

**Accessibility:** Highlight the convenience of reaching Snohomish County, especially if it's within easy driving distance of Seattle. Provide information on transportation options, including highways, public transit, and nearby airports.

**Scenic Drives and Byways:** Promote scenic routes and drives within the county, showcasing picturesque landscapes and points of interest along the way.

**Adventure Tourism:** Market adventurous activities such as kayaking, rock climbing, or hot air ballooning if they are available in the area.

