

North Stillaguamish Valley

ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

What is it?

In August 2014, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) awarded the Economic Alliance Snohomish County (EASC) a grant to create an economic redevelopment plan for the North Stillaguamish River Valley. A Working Group, composed of elected officials, representatives from key Snohomish County offices, Washington State University and Workforce Snohomish, gave regular guidance to the team. Additionally, a rigorous outreach process - including community forums, expert interviews and formal and informal business surveys - shaped content of the plan in a meaningful way. The report includes an economic profile that establishes context for the goals, strategies and actions that follow.



GOALS & STRATEGIES

1. INFRASTRUCTURE: DEVELOP INFRASTRUCTURE TO CONNECT RESIDENTS WITH SOCIAL & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- 1.1 Build highway and arterial infrastructure critical for economic development
- 1.2 Enhance public transportation access and broaden transportation alternatives
- 1.3 Continue to develop pedestrian and bike networks
- 1.4 Strengthen freight rail infrastructure in the lower Valley
- 1.5 Position the Arlington and Darrington Municipal Airports for an increased role in economic development activities
- 1.6 Improve telecommunications infrastructure
- 1.7 Implement priority improvements to utility infrastructure
- 1.8 Improve safety for motorized and non-motorized traffic along the SR 530 corridor

3. COMMUNITY & WORKFORCE: SUPPORT COMM. & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ADDRESS HUMAN SERVICES NEEDS

- 3.1 Prioritize and invest in the development of strong workforce talent across all demographics
- 3.2 Provide opportunities for post-secondary, continuing and adult education and re-skilling
- 3.3 Connect Valley residents with employment opportunities throughout the region
- 3.4 Improve access to existing human services resources for Valley residents
- 3.5 Expand programming and recreation opportunities for Valley youth

5. PLACEMAKING: CREATE VIBRANT PLACES THAT ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE, DRAW VISITORS & STRENGTHEN BUSINESSES

- 5.1 Ensure a range of affordable and high-quality housing options for Valley residents
- 5.2 Beautify and maintain the public realm, including streetscapes, parks and gateways
- 5.3 Continue to extend the exceptional recreational infrastructure of the Stillaguamish Valley
- 5.4 Elevate sustainability and good design as a priority in new development throughout the Valley
- 5.5 Market the Valley's unique place-based assets and stories

Why is it important?

On March 22, 2014, a massive landslide near Oso, Washington, in the North Stillaguamish Valley covered an area of approximately one square mile with mud and debris in less than a minute, killing 43 people and destroying 36 homes. This disaster created acute impacts and exacerbated the long-term economic challenges facing this rural valley. This plan is part of the community's effort to achieve sustainable, long-term economic development.



What did we learn?

The economic profile relied on rigorous analysis of demographic and economic data from various sources, as well as historical research and a deep stakeholder engagement process. The following findings underpin the strategies.



History

- > Economic roots in resource industries - timber, mining
- > Arlington's economy has diversified into industrial sectors
- > Population growth concentrated in urban areas of County
- > Little population growth in much of Valley



Demographic Trends

- > Higher concentration of residents aged 65+ than region
- > Higher concentration of family households in Arl. / Darr.
- > Less racially diverse than the region except Hispanic pop.
- > Lower rates of educational attainment & household income



Economic Trends

- > Valley workers live throughout region
- > Mfg jobs in decline relative to other sectors; services growing
- > Valley residents work in Arlington, Marysville, Everett, Seattle
- > Arlington is the area's primary employment center & growing

What happens now?

Many of the action steps are specific and ready for implementation today, and others require additional collaboration amongst local leaders to add detail for execution. The EASC will continue to coordinate and lead implementation conversations and advance key strategies for long-term success in the North Stillaguamish Valley.

2. INDUSTRIES & EMPLOYMENT: CREATE, ATTRACT AND RETAIN JOBS IN TRADITIONAL AND ADVANCED INDUSTRY SECTORS

- 2.1 Support and grow existing businesses
- 2.2 Foster entrepreneurship and drive new business creation
- 2.3 Cultivate a positive business and regulatory climate
- 2.4 Provide space for the creation, expansion or relocation of businesses
- 2.5 Enhance the diversity and character of retail and services offerings
- 2.6 Grow family wage employment in the Industrial Sector
- 2.7 Stabilize natural resource industries and continue to grow value-added activities
- 2.8 Continue to strengthen sustainable tourism assets and supporting services

4. RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY: TAILOR REGULATIONS TO ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE, PRODUCTIVE & EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 Ensure alignment and consistency of adopted policy and regulations addressing sustainability and resilience in the built environment
- 4.2 Study, prioritize and implement enhanced hazard mitigation measures
- 4.3 Strengthen protection of the Valley's unique natural resources and environment

6. RURAL INNOVATION: BECOME A MODEL FOR INNOVATIVE, ASSET-BASED RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

- 6.1 Develop and foster a regional innovation ecosystem around Valley entrepreneurialism
- 6.2 Improve Stillaguamish Valley access to innovation capital and resources
- 6.3 Advance the quality and sustainability of natural resource-based employment in timber and mining
- 6.4 Explore innovative practices and value-added activities in Stillaguamish Valley agriculture
- 6.5 Leverage outdoor recreation and tourism to support sustainable economic development in the upper Stillaguamish Valley