



## Introduction

Snohomish County Blueprint 2015 (Blueprint 2015) is a partnership of Snohomish County government, educational institutions, and workforce and economic development organizations aiming to develop a collaborative, comprehensive approach that unifies education, workforce, and economic development in Snohomish County. The Partnership fosters economic vitality in Snohomish County by retaining and attracting jobs in nine key industry clusters (clusters) which are targeted for economic development.

The charge of Blueprint 2015 is to: 1) lay the groundwork for the development of plans and programs supporting the clusters through the efficient and cost-effective use of federal, state, and local resources; 2) make the case that Snohomish County is a region for the development of the clusters; and 3) provide a framework for action steps and further discussions with other stakeholders and partners.

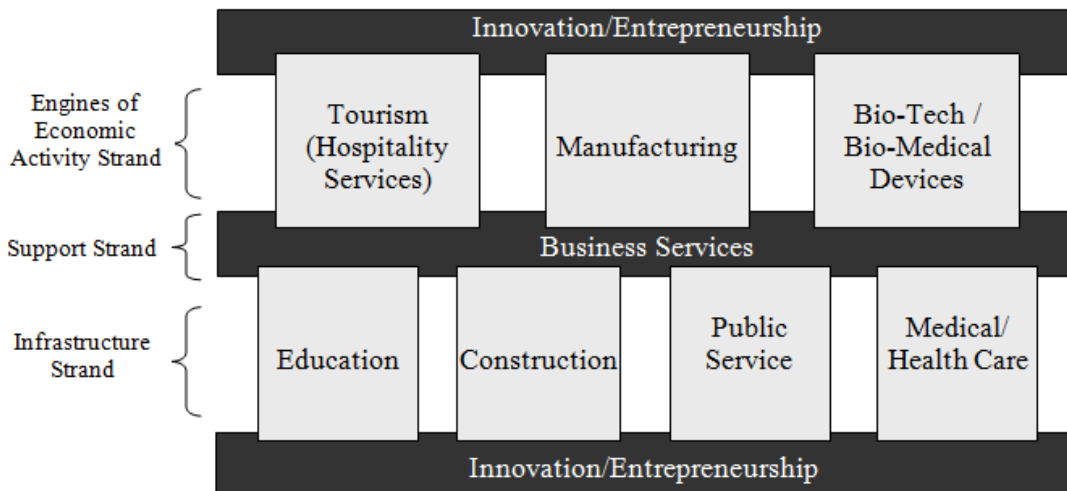
To accomplish its charge, the Blueprint 2015 Partnership produces data-driven and industry-backed cluster reports every April and October. Reports are available on the Blueprint 2015 website ([www.snocoblueprint.org](http://www.snocoblueprint.org)). The research and data presented in the reports can be used to: 1) identify jobs that are available and/or needed to expand clusters; 2) identify knowledge and skills individuals must have to be successful in the jobs; and 3) identify educational and training programs required to develop a skilled workforce to fill the jobs. In addition to producing reports, Blueprint 2015 partners develop action plans for cluster-related work, mobilize to act on cluster-related work, respond to grants and opportunities, mobilize around community needs and projects, inform and engage in public policy, and provide oversight and advising on joint efforts when needed.

Blueprint 2015 supports and is supported by a collaborative approach to development. While maintaining autonomy, organizations within the Blueprint 2015 Partnership also operate within a system that spreads across the country in order to create a comprehensive approach to development. Blueprint 2015 reports carry a similar theme, which is that, while unique in their own ways, clusters grow when the education, workforce, and economic development components behind and within each cluster are supported and working together. Additionally, Blueprint 2015 interfaces with elected officials, industry associations, international partners, local and state education agencies, national and international education consortiums, economists and labor market analysts, other workforce development councils, other economic development councils, funders, media, and other supporters to accomplish its goals. In short, Blueprint 2015 partners are accountable to each other as well as public and private entities and other community stakeholders.

**History and Development**

Blueprint 2015 is an evolution of Snohomish County Blueprint 2010 (Blueprint 2010). Preparation of Blueprint 2010 began in January 2003 with the collaborative work of partner organizations and agencies interested in addressing the economic health and vitality of Snohomish County. Partner organizations and agencies which provided information crucial to the development of Blueprint 2010 include: Cascadia Community College, Central Washington University, Edmonds Community College, Everett Community College, Snohomish County Economic Development Council (EDC), Snohomish County Government, Snohomish County K-12 School Districts, University of Washington – Bothell, Western Washington University, and Workforce Development Council Snohomish County (WDC).

To identify the key clusters used in Blueprint 2010, the EDC and WDC provided information regarding their focus of work at the time. Clusters were categorized into three integrated strands: engines of economic activity, infrastructure, and support. The figure below shows the original Blueprint 2010 clusters.



Blueprint 2010 turned out to be a highly effective road map for the shared work of the partner organizations. The Blueprint 2010 Steering Committee reconvened in November 2006 in an effort to update and refresh the road map and take the partners' shared efforts to the next level. The result of these efforts is Blueprint 2015.

Blueprint 2015 offers a new logo (shown on first page), adds Agri-Business as an economic engine cluster, expands Business Services, and adds sustainability to discussions on innovation and entrepreneurship. The Blueprint Steering Committee brought on additional partners and added a Blueprint Annual Meeting to its quarterly meeting schedule. In addition, the WDC hired a Manager of Research and Evaluation to provide labor market research, produce Blueprint 2015 products, and conduct Blueprint 2015 outreach and evaluation. A complete list of partners and accomplishments is available on the Blueprint 2015 website.

Blueprint 2015 offers a more comprehensive view of clusters. Each cluster report includes more than ten pages of labor market research including: state snapshot of cluster, Snohomish County snapshot of cluster, cluster definition, cluster employment, cluster spending and activity, Snohomish County outlook and growth forecast, cluster training and education needs, cluster innovation and entrepreneurship, cluster sustainability, conclusion, and detailed citations.

### **Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainability**

Innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainability are important driving principles behind expansion of each cluster. Growth of industries within each cluster depends largely on their ability to create new products and processes, start-up new businesses or methods of distribution, and offer items and solutions that are environmentally friendly in design and implementation. Working definitions of innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainability are below:

- **Innovation:** The design and refinement of products, services, and processes. The creation of a new device or process resulting from study and experimentation; the creation of something in the mind; the act of starting something for the first time. The creation, development, and implementation of a new product, process, or service with the aim of improving efficiency, effectiveness, or competitive advantage; involves taking new ideas and turning them into reality through invention, research, and new product development.
- **Entrepreneurship:** The recognition of opportunities and use of resources to implement ideas for new and thoughtfully planned ventures. The practice of starting new organizations or revitalizing mature organizations, particularly new businesses in response to identified opportunities.
- **Sustainability:** The characteristic of being able to coexist with another system indefinitely, without either system being damaged. The use of ecosystems and their resources in a manner that satisfies current needs without compromising the needs or options of future generations. The ability of natural resources to provide ecological, economic, and social benefits for present and future generations.

Recent attention has been given to the role of green within clusters and as its own cluster. Blueprint 2015 is currently following the O\*NET framework laid out in a report called *Greening the World of Work: Implications for O\*NET-SOC and New and Emerging Occupations*.<sup>1</sup> In its development of the report, O\*NET investigated the impact of green economy activities and technologies on occupations and clusters. In the report, O\*NET offers the following three tiers of green incorporation within clusters:

- **Green increased demand occupations:** Refers to occupations requiring green skills as a core competency. Jobs are the same as in the past, but it is increasingly expected that job candidates and employees have basic skills in sustainability and other green principles and practices. This is similar to the increase in computer skills as a core competency that took place over the past decade. Job candidates and employees were not expected to become experts, but were expected to be more familiar with how to use computers and other technologies. Snohomish County education and training providers are either developing or already offer curriculum to prepare help individuals increase knowledge, skills, and abilities in green principles and practices. Green increased demand occupations are found within each of the Blueprint 2015 clusters.
- **Green enhanced skills occupations:** Refers to occupations requiring a significant change to how work is completed and to the requirements of job candidates and employees. The essential purpose of jobs may be the same, but tasks, skills, knowledge, and external elements such as credentials have been altered. For example, commercial construction workers continue to work toward building a home. However, in the new sustainability-oriented LEED environment, workers need a different set of skills and credentials than in the past. As is the case with green increased demand occupations, Snohomish County education and training providers are either developing or already offer curriculum to prepare help individuals prepare for or transition to jobs asking for green enhanced skills. Green enhanced skills occupations are found within each of the Blueprint 2015 clusters.
- **Green new and emerging occupations:** Refers to occupations that are either brand new or emerging in the near future, thus creating a new generation of occupations and job titles. Snohomish County education and training providers discuss new and emerging occupations regularly in an effort to design programs to meet the needs of the future workforce. Green new and emerging occupations are the ones most likely to become part of a new green cluster.

The October 2009 edition of Blueprint 2015 cluster reports highlight sustainability within each cluster. However, due to the highly evolving nature and development of green occupations at this point in time, valid and reliable data is difficult to find. More emphasis on green with each cluster and as its own potential cluster will be included in future editions of Blueprint 2015, when data is more readily available.

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<sup>1</sup> (O\*NET, 2009)  
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**Conclusion**

Blueprint 2015 will gain momentum and lead to achievements much like its predecessor, Blueprint 2010. New partnerships and programs will be formed as a result of Blueprint 2015 research and resources and the Partnership will create and foster a healthy and vital economy in Snohomish County. The collaborative, comprehensive approach to education, workforce, and economic development will lead to increased job retention and attraction in Snohomish County's clusters while at the same time fostering the development of skilled workers to fill those jobs. The Blueprint 2015 Partnership will strengthen the local economy through the efficient and cost-effective use of resources. In short, Blueprint 2015 will guide education, workforce, and economic development in Snohomish County and bring about success in future endeavors.

**JOINT RESOLUTION****in support of****Snohomish County Blueprint 2015:****A Blueprint for Education, Workforce, and Economic Development in Snohomish County**

**WHEREAS**, Snohomish County, as one of the fastest growing counties in the State of Washington, is a vital part of the Puget Sound economy, and

**WHEREAS**, the greatest economic development returns for local communities, in terms of potential development of living-wage jobs, lie in the development of industry clusters that further augment and strengthen our existing economic base, and

**WHEREAS**, Snohomish County, Workforce Development Council Snohomish County, Snohomish County Economic Development Council, K-12 school system, institutions of higher education, other education and training providers, industry, industry associations, labor, and other stakeholders are active members of a steering committee to develop strategies for achieving this goal, and

**WHEREAS**, Snohomish County institutions and agencies can work together to provide the workforce development, education, and training needed by business and industry to support the economic development growth and vitality of Snohomish County,

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the undersigned parties support and champion the Snohomish County Blueprint 2015 Partnership that brings education, workforce, and economic development together to effectively target business and industry clusters during the coming years, and

**BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED**, that the Snohomish County Blueprint 2015 Partnership produces materials that serve as a framework for further discussions with other potential partners and lays the groundwork for strategic thinking around industry clusters for Snohomish County, and

**BE IS FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the undersigned parties pledge to continue working collaboratively together and committing available resources to the Snohomish County Blueprint 2015 Partnership.

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**Dale Peinecke**  
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