

# WILKESON WASHINGTON

## Economic Impact

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The closure of the Fairfax Bridge has caused significant disruption to the economic ecosystem of Wilkeson and its surrounding communities. While Wilkeson is home to just under 500 residents, the town and neighboring areas rely heavily on tourism, small business revenue, and through-access to Mount Rainier National Park.

### Core Economic Impact

1. Wilkeson alone is projected to lose approximately \$1.35 million in seasonal revenue (May–September), primarily from tourism, lodging, food service, retail, and local services.
2. Neighboring communities (including Fairfax, Carbonado, Buckley, Burnett, and South Prairie) are also experiencing a downstream effect from lost tourist traffic and regional recreation detours.
3. Estimated combined seasonal loss across the corridor: \*\*\$2.5 - \$3 million\*\* in direct and indirect economic activity.

### Why This Matters

In small rural towns, these losses represent more than a minor disruption, they threaten the long-term sustainability of local economies, businesses, and public services. This revenue is often what keeps businesses afloat year-round and helps residents maintain employment and housing.

### Clarifying the Scale of Impact

- While the Fairfax Bridge does not carry millions of vehicles annually, it plays an outsized role in sustaining a vulnerable rural economy.
- Per capita, Wilkeson's loss equates to over \$2,700 per resident — a scale of economic harm that would be considered catastrophic if seen in urban areas.
- Losses are amplified by lack of alternate infrastructure and economic diversification.

### Call to Action

This is not a traffic issue, it's a rural economic emergency.

Wilkeson and surrounding communities are asking for:

- Immediate, unrestricted relief funds to support affected small businesses and residents
- Expedited support for temporary access solutions via easement roads
- Long-term infrastructure prioritization to restore access and economic stability

# Contact

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For feedback or further information, please feel free to contact us at [clerk@townofwilkeson.com](mailto:clerk@townofwilkeson.com)

**Town of Wilkeson**

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\*Estimate based on reported revenue losses from Wilkeson businesses, regional traffic decline patterns, and comparative data from Fairfax, Carbonado, Buckley, and South Prairie during peak tourism months.