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PROPOSED BY: BROWNE, BUCHANAN, DONOVAN  
INTRODUCTION DATE: MAY 5, 2020

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9:44  
pm.

ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**ESTABLISHING A COVID-19 INTERIM ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN  
TO RESPOND TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS WITHIN WHATCOM COUNTY  
CAUSED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**(EMERGENCY ORDINANCE)**

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant hardship to our local economy which in turn has led to substantial unemployment; and

**WHEREAS**, in previous localized emergencies Whatcom County has been able to rely upon the financial resources of the State and Federal governments to recover, however as COVID-19 is a global problem future State and Federal government funding is uncertain as it is being stretched to the limit; and

**WHEREAS**, the Whatcom County agencies and departments have done an excellent job at reducing the rate of new infections from COVID-19, managing the increased demand for social services, procuring supplies of essential Personal Protective Equipment, and will continue to have to devote considerable resources to these needs for the foreseeable future; and

**WHEREAS**, additional resources now need to be identified and dedicated to the challenge of leading the community onwards to economic recovery; and

**WHEREAS**, the County, the City of Bellingham and the Port of Bellingham have an established Regional Economic Partnership (REP) agreement where the Port serves as the state-designated Associate Development Organization (ADO) responsible for promoting and encouraging economic growth within Whatcom County; and

**WHEREAS**, the purpose and goals of the REP and ADO include:

- To retain and attract livable wage jobs and to assist businesses, entrepreneurs, and other local organizations to thrive,
- To partner to create a thriving community for all,
- To provide expertise in financing, planning, and technology to help start, develop, or grow business,
- Promote Whatcom County as a great place to live, work and do business.
- Connect businesses with economic development services and skilled workforce resources,
- To help enhance and grow cross border trade opportunities with Canada,
- Work collaboratively with our local and regional partners to create a vibrant community of higher education learning, prosperous agricultural lands, high tech businesses, marine manufacturing, and local food processing.

1           **WHEREAS**, Local government officials, businesses, non-profits and the community  
2 need an COVID-19 interim economic recovery plan to be developed and available as rapidly  
3 as possible. With the understanding it will be replaced by a long-term, detailed strategy  
4 once State and Federal recovery funding has been defined and secured; and  
5

6           **WHEREAS**, while the County does not have any significant untapped local financial  
7 resources, the county is blessed with considerable human capital and economic acumen  
8 within our community which can be drawn on to assist the ADO in the immediate  
9 development of COVID-19 Interim Economic Recovery Plan (CIERP).

10  
11           **FINDINGS SUPPORTING EMERGENCY:**  
12

- 13           a) The County Executive has issued a Proclamation of Emergency to combat the  
14 spread of the COVID-19 virus; and  
15  
16           b) The spread of the virus presents a continuing threat to the health and safety  
17 of the citizens of Whatcom County; and  
18  
19           c) The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant harm to our local economy  
20 which in turn has led to substantial unemployment within Whatcom County.  
21  
22           d) The County needs to immediately seek ways to provide employers with the  
23 confidence they need to reopen their businesses and reemploy the workforce.  
24

25           **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED**, that as a condition of, and subject to, the  
26 ADO accepting the \$50,000 funding proposed later in this document the Whatcom County  
27 Council hereby directs:  
28

- 29           1. The ADO shall be appointed as the primary lead agency responsible for the research  
30 and development of an Interim Economic Recovery Plan as outlined in Exhibit A; and  
31  
32           2. As time is of the essence the ADO shall immediately form a panel of experts drawn  
33 from the local community to augment and complement the existing ADO staff; and  
34  
35           3. The ADO shall assume county wide responsibility for messaging and communications  
36 to the press and community for all things related to the CIERP and economic  
37 recovery; and  
38  
39           4. The ADO shall report any new information which could have a moderate or material  
40 impact on the county's economic recovery to Incident Command, the County Council,  
41 County Executive, Port of Bellingham, the Mayors, Tribal Chairs and Health  
42 Department within 24 hours of receipt; and  
43  
44           5. To provide updates, at least weekly, to the community on the status of economic  
45 recovery efforts. The reports will be factual, and strive to contain the right balance of  
46 hard truth and optimism.  
47

48           **BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, the Whatcom County Council acting as the Whatcom  
49 County Health Board hereby directs that the following policies shall immediately apply to the  
50 Whatcom County Health Department:  
51

1. The Health Department shall add the strategies outlined in Exhibit B to its existing plans in support of the County's economic recovery; and
2. The Health Department shall support the efforts of the ADO to produce the CIERP as rapidly as practical; and
3. The Health Department shall maintain responsibility for messaging and communications, through the Incident Command Joint Information Center, to the press and community related to the health and social service aspects related to the COVID-19 crisis; and
4. The Health Department shall report any new information which could have a moderate or material impact on the county's economic recovery to Incident Command, the County Council, County Executive, Port of Bellingham, the Mayors, Tribal Chairs and ADO within 24 hours of receipt; and
5. The Health Department shall provide updates to the ADO, at least weekly, on the status of the Health Departments contributions to the economic recovery efforts, to be included in ADO's weekly reports to the community.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, to help reduce the future costs to the County of responding to COVID-19 strategies 2(a) and 2(b) in Exhibit B shall be added to Incident Command's existing plans.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, the Whatcom County Council requests that an emergency allocation of \$50,000 from the Whatcom County Public Utilities Improvement Fund (EDI Fund) be transferred to ADO to support the efforts outlined in this ordinance.

**BE IT FINALLY ORDAINED**, these directives shall be re-evaluated no later than September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at which time the Council may extend, modify or terminate them.

**ADOPTED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

ATTEST:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
 WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Karen N. Frakes  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Civil Deputy Prosecutor

WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
 WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Satpal Singh Sidhu, County Executive

( ) Approved ( ) Denied

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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3 **EXHIBIT A**

4 ADO Deliverables

5 The goal will be to use a panel of experts recruited by the ADO to develop a comprehensive  
6 picture of the County’s economic recovery needs and a plan to address them.

7  
8 To provide recommendations to policy makers in our cities and county as to what actions  
9 our community can take, consistent with the Governors orders, which will have the greatest  
10 positive impact, with the least amount of resources in the shortest amount of time.

11  
12 It will be up to policy makers to choose which recommendations to adopt.

13  
14 The deliverables will include, but not limited to:

- 15  
16 1. **Immediate response** - the ADO shall work with the Health Department and the  
17 member organizations of Team Whatcom to develop and promote through action and  
18 example a program along the theme of “Whatcom Cares for Your Safety”. The  
19 purpose is to improve consumer confidence by rapidly positioning our community as  
20 regional leaders/active partners in disease transmission prevention and safe social  
21 activities.  
22
- 23 2. **Impact analysis** (within 30 days) - Through extensive outreach establish and  
24 quantify the sectors of the economy affected:  
25 a. Businesses expected to see a return of demand and thus recover in due  
26 course e.g. Auto repairs?  
27 b. Businesses likely to recover with limited assistance e.g. breweries and  
28 specialty manufacturing?  
29 c. Sectors likely to find recovery challenging e.g. restaurants, retail, donor  
30 funded non-profits and higher education?  
31

32 As some impact analysis has been done, the focus may be more on ensuring we  
33 have identified all key sectors and the critical inter-relationships between them.

- 34  
35 3. **Local actions available** – Local government finances are also under considerable  
36 stress and can’t be relied upon to provide funds to improve the business climate.  
37 Therefore, the focus on locally sourced assistance should be in the form of human  
38 capital drawn from within our community. Some examples of how this could be used  
39 may be:  
40 a. Mentorship matching  
41 b. Business management education  
42 c. Cash flow management  
43 d. Encourage local collaboration  
44 e. Promotion of “buy local” policies  
45 f. Resource sharing  
46 g. Resiliency training  
47 h. Local medical supply manufacturing and reuse technologies  
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1 The Expert Panel  
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3 It is proposed that this group comprise of 9-13 volunteers. Ideally at least half of which will  
4 have previously successfully led their respective organizations through one or more  
5 significant economic downturns, ideally as the CEO/CFO. The panel will be augmented by  
6 senior managers, a representative from the EOC with a business background, and  
7 employees of the Port of Bellingham acting under state statute in its role as the County's  
8 Associate Development Office.  
9

10 This group will be augmented with representatives from different sectors who will be sought  
11 out to contribute to their respective industries. If practical the team will collaborate and  
12 leverage resources with similar groups in Skagit, San Juan and maybe Island Counties to  
13 build a more regional response.  
14

15 Commitment & Governance guidelines  
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- 17 • Meetings will be held online (i.e. GoToMeeting). It is suggested the initial meeting be  
18 two hours long and additional meetings will be 1 hour. It is suggested that meetings  
19 will initially be held three times per week at times that do not conflict with other  
20 regularly scheduled COVID-19 such as 11am, 1pm or 4pm Monday, Wednesday, and  
21 Fridays. The frequency will change over time as the group sees fit  
22
- 23 • Members of the group will be expected to participate in a least two out of every three  
24 meetings  
25
- 26 • Members may be added or removed by a 2/3rds majority vote  
27
- 28 • A chair and vice chair shall be appointed at the first meeting  
29
- 30 • Meetings shall be governed by Roberts Rules as necessary  
31
- 32 • If decisions are not unanimous minority reports can be included upon request  
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34 Additional principals  
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36 Recognizing that uncertainty causes businesses to conserve cash, and delay rehiring, while  
37 certainty and optimism bring business investment and job growth, the team will seek ways  
38 to increase local employers' confidence in the future.  
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40 Recognizing that every adversity in life provides opportunity, the team shall look for ways  
41 this disaster can be leveraged to make our economy and community stronger and more  
42 resilient in the future.  
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**EXHIBIT B**

Health Department deliverables

The Health Department’s critical role in helping our economy recover shall grow to include:

Disease prevention education and enforcement as businesses reopen, and  
Establishing and promoting best practices to reduce the County government’s contribution to the cost of providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to third parties

1. **Whatcom Cares for Your Safety** - the Health Department shall immediately work for the ADO, and the member organizations of Team Whatcom to develop and promote through action and example, a program along the theme of, "*Whatcom Cares for Your Safety*". The purpose is to improve consumer confidence by rapidly positioning our community as regional leaders/active partners in disease transmission prevention and safe social activities.

- a. To support the ADO in the effort to position Whatcom County as a community that cares for the safety of its residents and visitors, to be seen as a safer place to visit, stay, and eat out than many other areas.
- b. To support the ADO in providing local businesses with the tools to remind residents and tourists that Whatcom’s abundant outdoor recreation opportunities are an inherently safer "post-COVID" social activity than say sitting in a crowded stadium or theme park.
- c. To support the ADO in helping local residents and businesses feel confident remaining and spending their money within Whatcom is as safe, if not safer, than going to other places where the disease prevention policies may be viewed as weaker.
- d. To develop, or contract with an existing supplier of training tools, to provide a COVID-19 safety training and certification program for individuals similar in concept to the WA State’s Food Worker Card.
- e. To conduct inspections, award "COVID-19 Safety Inspection Ratings" and publish the results online, similar to what Health Departments in other jurisdictions have been issuing to restaurants for years, and are posted with pride on storefront windows (a mock up is provided for example purposes as Exhibit C).
- f. To carry out periodic audits and enforcement of these safety rules.
- g. As the above will require additional resources beyond what the Health Department staff has available, the Department is encouraged to utilize furloughed local government workers and volunteers as much as practical.

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2. **Reducing the County's contribution to future PPE costs** – recognizing WA State and Whatcom County have already spent considerable amounts of money to acquire and distribute PPE to assist health care organizations to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, moreover this rate of expenditure cannot be maintained, therefore the Health Department shall support Incident Command in enacting the following policies which:

- a. Ensure organizations requesting additional supplies of PPE only draw upon Incident Command's limited inventory for as long as they continue to have no other viable options, this shall include written statement substantially similar to:

*"By ordering Personal Protective Equipment and/or other supplies through Whatcom Incident Command you agree to reimburse Whatcom County for any portion of our actual cost which is not reimbursed by FEMA or others. Furthermore, you understand Whatcom County may not know the cost of the supplies at the time you order them, and the actual cost incurred by Whatcom County to acquire the items you are requesting may prove to be considerably higher than the price you normally pay your commercial suppliers."*

- b. Follow the example set by the State government, PeaceHealth and other parties' to develop strategies to reuse N95 masks, and looking for other ways to apply this approach to all PPE where practical. Including but not limited to face shields, gowns, Tyvek clothing, single use stethoscopes etc. This process will include establishing a means to collect, sterilize, verify, repack and redistribute. To ensure an adequate supply of dirty items are received for cleaning there should be a policy of exchanging like for like in the same quantities, less an appropriate allowance for those too damaged or soiled to be reused.

EXHIBIT C

(This is provided for illustrative purposes only; the final design may be considerably different)

# We Care for Your Safety



This business has received an

# A+

Safety evaluation from Whatcom County  
COVID-19 safe workplaces team

