

ORDINANCE NO. _____
ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE LEVY OF 2025
PROPERTY TAXES FOR COUNTY ROAD PURPOSES

WHEREAS, pursuant to Home Rule Charter Section 6.10 the County Executive is required to submit for Council consideration proposed tax and revenue ordinances necessary to raise sufficient revenues to balance the Budget; and,

WHEREAS, the County Council has approved a budget for the 2025-2026 biennium, including all sources of revenues and anticipated expenditures on November 19, 2024; and,

WHEREAS, annual property tax revenues are statutorily constrained to grow at just one percent of the highest lawful levy plus the value of new construction, improvements to property and increases in the value of state assessed property; and,

WHEREAS, the County has traditionally deferred their one percent annual increases, which has contributed to stagnation in revenue growth; and,

WHEREAS, the cost of providing County services has increased significantly in recent years due to statutory requirements, inflationary impacts, a growing population, and expanding community needs; and,

WHEREAS, the County has a structural budget imbalance in the Road Fund, where the cost of providing services to the County's growing population and businesses are outpacing the County's revenues; and,

WHEREAS, to begin to address the structural imbalance and avoid abrupt service reductions, it is necessary in the 2025-2026 Biennial Budget to use the County's deferred taxing authority, a.k.a. banked capacity, for the Road Fund levy; and,

WHEREAS, the County Council held a public hearing regarding the county biennial budget, which included property tax revenues, and other revenues;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED AND ESTABLISHED by the Whatcom County Council that an increase in the County Road property tax levy is hereby authorized for the levy to be collected in the 2025 tax year. The dollar amount of the increase shall be \$3,916,564, which is a percentage increase of 18.7% from the previous year. This increase is exclusive of additional revenue resulting from new construction, improvements to property, newly constructed wind turbines, solar, biomass, and geothermal facilities, and any increase in the value of state assessed property, any annexations that have occurred and refunds made.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED AND ESTABLISHED, that the Whatcom County Council does hereby authorize diverting \$1,156,530 of the County Road District levy for the budget year 2025 to the General Fund. Diverted County Road Taxes are to be used for traffic law enforcement in the unincorporated areas of Whatcom County.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2024.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

() APPROVED () NOT APPROVED

Christopher Quinn 11/18/24

Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Satpal Singh Sidhu, Executive

Date: _____