

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL
Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

Andy Saylor & Gwynne Gruizenga-Top
Whatcom County Search and Rescue
1041 W Smith Road
Bellingham, WA 98226

September 10, 2024

Dear Mr. Saylor and Ms. Gruizenga-Top:

Whatcom County is pleased to be a longstanding partner of Whatcom County Search and Rescue (WCSAR) and has valued the co-location of WCSAR at its Northwest Annex Complex. As the County prepares for redevelopment of our Northwest Annex Complex, the County Council and County Executive are committed to assisting WCSAR with relocation.

The County Executive is willing to lease a privately-owned building, with a sublet to WCSAR, for a period of ten years. The County Council anticipates approving a lease amount of \$12,500/month, plus property taxes, utilities, and insurance for a period of 120 months. The Council anticipates inclusion of budget authority in our 2025-2026 biennial budget to enter into such a lease and setting aside subsequent years of funding into a dedicated cost center in the County's Community Priorities Fund.

We understand WCSAR is in discussion with a developer who is interested in building an industrial space in Everson as a possible lease option. The Executive is amenable to entering into a lease at this location once certificate of occupancy is received. Any lease would be subject to negotiation of terms and approval by the Whatcom County Council, per County code.

Beyond year ten of the lease, the County does not intend to pay substantial facility costs for WCSAR related space but, may at that time, consider nominal costs in the form of taxes, utilities, and insurance. We would like to have continued discussions with WCSAR over the next several months about WCSAR's strategy to ensure the long-term availability of space to meet their and the County's needs for Search and Rescue related space after the expiration of the proposed lease.

Thank you for your continued partnership. Please don't hesitate to contact Kayla Schott-Bresler, Deputy Executive, with any questions at kschottb@co.whatcom.wa.us.

Sincerely,

Barry Buchanan, Whatcom County Council, Chair

Satpal S. Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive

Cc: Kayla Schott-Bresler, Deputy Executive
Donnell "Tank" Tanksley, Sheriff
Steve Harris, Undersheriff
Rob Ney, Facilities Manager
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