

WHATCOM COUNTY					
Summary of the 2026 Supplemental Budget Ordinance No. 1 Council Requested Changes					
SBR #	Department/Fund	Description	Increased (Decreased) Expenditure	(Increased) Decreased Revenue	Net Effect to 2026 Projected Ending Fund Balance (Increase) Decrease

General Fund 1000					
5225	Non Departmental	To fund the establishment of a new risk reserve and Countywide strategic plan. This request was previously submitted in the Executive recommended budget to establish a risk reserve but has been modified at the request of Council to allocate a portion of the expenditure authority to the Countywide strategic plan. The net effect of this request did not change.	1,200,000	(500,000)	700,000
5305	Parks	To reduce funding for extra help related to the Department of Parks and Recreation's facilities maintenance need. Funding is proposed to be reallocated to address food insecurity. See companion supplemental 5306.	(209,000)	-	(209,000)
5306	Non Departmental	To increase funding for contractual services to address food insecurity in Whatcom County. This is funded through a reduction in extra help in the Parks Department facilities maintenance budget. See companion supplemental 5305.	209,000	-	209,000
5311	Council	To reduce proposed or already budgeted funding for third party facilitators for boards and commissions. This reduction will effect supplementals proposed in the Executive recommended budget which include 5016 and 5112.	89,900	-	89,900
Total General Fund 1000			1,289,900	(500,000)	789,900

Community Priorities Fund 1247					
5220	Non Departmental	To transfer funds from the Community Priorities Fund to the Capital Facilities Reserve Fund. This supplemental request was originally included in the Executive recommended budget; the proposed amendment would reduce the Executive's proposal from a \$3.5m proposed transfer to a \$3m proposed transfer. The \$500k is proposed to be used for food insecurity contracts by the Council. See companion supplementals 5219 and 5307.	3,000,000	-	3,000,000
5307	Non Departmental	To fund contracts to address food insecurity in Whatcom County. This request reappropriates budget authority for a transfer to the capital facilities reserve fund included in the Executive recommended budget. See companion supplementals 5219 and 5220.	500,000	-	500,000
Total Community Priorities Fund 1247			3,500,000	-	3,500,000

Summary of the 2026 Supplemental Budget Ordinance No. 1 Council Requested Changes					
SBR #	Department/Fund	Description	Increased (Decreased) Expenditure	(Increased) Decreased Revenue	Net Effect to 2026 Projected Ending Fund Balance (Increase) Decrease
Capital Facilities Reserve Fund 3515					
5219	Non Departmental	To accept a transfer from the community priorities fund to seed future Whatcom County capital needs. This supplemental was included as part of the Executive recommended budget but has been modified due to a proposed reallocation of budget authority to address food insecurity. See companion supplementals 5220 and 5307.	-	(3,000,000)	(3,000,000)
Total Capital Facilities Reserve Fund 3515			-	(3,000,000)	(3,000,000)
Grand Total			4,789,900	(3,500,000)	1,289,900
Presented to Council on November 18, 2025 Council meting					

Supplemental Budget Request

Non-Departmental

Suppl ID # 5225 Fund 1000 Cost Center 10004062 Originator: Tawni Helms/Council Amende

Year 2 2026

Add'l FTE ☐

Priority 1

Name of Request: Establishing a new Risk Reserve and Strategic Plan

X

Department Head Signature (Required on Hard Copy Submission)

Date

Costs:	Object	Object Description	Amount Requested
	6630	Professional services	\$200,000
	7190	Other miscellaneous	\$1,000,000
	8397	Transfers in	(\$500,000)
	Request Total		\$700,000

1a. Description of request:

The SBR would (1) create a risk reserve in the non-departmental budget to set aside \$1 million to mitigate 2026 expenses that may occur due to known and unknown risks, and (2) provide funding to create a strategic plan and metrics for the county, per Charter 1.51: The executive and legislative branches shall engage in long-term strategic planning to establish organizational structure, priorities, and performance measurements.

This \$1.2 million in total needed for this SBR is funded by transferring \$500,000 from uncommitted funds in the Community Priorities Fund (CPF) and 700,000 from 2025 expected General Fund lapse.

The \$1 million of one-time funds held in the reserve would be used to respond to unanticipated events, such as a major snow event or natural disaster, and could help mitigate the impact of potential wage increases in 2026 that are currently unknown but expected to be resolved in late 2025 or early 2026. (Note, these are one-time funds that could help in 2026 but does not address the ongoing impact of wage increases.)

The \$700,000 in lapse is anticipated from savings in from the Washington State Department of Retirement Systems reduction to the retirement rate employers pay. The biennial budget assumed a higher employer contribution to the retirement system than what was ultimately adopted by the State resulting in some savings compared to what was assumed in the adopted biennial budget.

The remaining \$500,000 is from uncommitted funds in the CPF. During the pandemic, the County received \$44.5M in American Rescue Plan Act (APRA) funding. This allowed the county to invest in childcare, housing, homeless services, broadband, criminal justice operations, and much more. The Council set the goal of spending \$25M or 58% of ARPA funding on childcare and housing. Over the course of three years, the Executive successfully contracted \$23.8M of this funding for childcare and housing. The Council had a high-level spending plan allocating the remaining funding to other activities.

Most of that funding has been spent, with \$5M still available that was originally set aside for pandemic response, climate, and behavioral health with no specific commitments or contracts identified. This funding can be allocated toward any general fund eligible expense. After the transfer in this SBR, and in SBRs 5219 and 5223, \$1.5M will remain in the Community Priorities Fund, which is currently reserved for a Search and Rescue lease.

See companion supplemental 5226.

Supplemental Budget Request

Non-Departmental

Suppl ID # 5225	Fund 1000	Cost Center 10004062	Originator: Tawni Helms/Council Amende
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1b. Primary customers:

Public, Whatcom County departments and offices, Councilmembers, and the Executive's Office.

2. Problem to be solved:

Strategic Plan: Section 1.51 of the charter, Performance and Strategic Planning, indicates council may engage in longer-term planning regarding policy priorities, structure of county government, and performance measurements.

Risk Reserve: Given the ongoing structural problem of County revenues not keeping pace with expenses, the County has and continues to make budget adjustments that tighten department budgets limiting the ability to respond to emergent issues. This centralized risk reserve will ensure that some funds are available to help mitigate the impact of unanticipated events that the County must respond to and may be used to help mitigate the impact of the yet to be determined outcome of open labor negotiations. In many cases expending any of these funds will require approval by the Council to move budget authority from the Non-departmental budget to department specific budgets. Should an emergency necessitate spending under an Executive issued emergency order or other circumstances where spending occurs directly from the risk reserve, the Council will be notified.

3a. Options / Advantages:

Strategic Plan: This SBR would provide funding for staff and/or a consultant to ensure that this requirement is fulfilled.

Risk Reserve: As noted above, this allows the County to include in its adopted budget a projection the need for some appropriated reserves.

Alternatively, the County could leave these funds in fund balance and request use of fund balance via a supplemental budget request throughout the year if needed. Creating this appropriated risk reserve provides better transparency in the potential annual expenses assumed at the time of adoption of a biennial budget or during a mid-biennium adjustment process.

3b. Cost savings:

n/a

4a. Outcomes:

Strategic Plan: A structure for developing long-term strategic planning methodology that is shared by the executive and legislative branches will be created.

Risk Reserve: The Executive will monitor the use of the fund, report out on the unanticipated expenses that occurred during the year, and make future recommendations on the amount of funding allocated to the risk reserve on an annual basis.

4b. Measures:

Staff time and contract facilitation will be allocated to develop a long-term strategic plan.

5a. Other Departments/Agencies:

n/a

5b. Name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for:

Executive's Office.

6. Funding Source:

General Fund 1000 and Community Priorities Fund 1247.

Supplemental Budget Request

Parks & Recreation

Suppl ID # 5305

Fund 1000

Cost Center 10008002

Originator: Whatcom County Council

Year 2 2026

Add'l FTE ☐

Priority 1

Name of Request: Parks Facilities Extra Help Reduction

X

Department Head Signature (Required on Hard Copy Submission)

Date

Costs:	Object	Object Description	Amount Requested
	6120	Extra help	(\$209,000)
	Request Total		(\$209,000)

1a. Description of request:

Reduce the Parks & Recreation budget by \$209,000, eliminating extra help for parks facilities and Lake Whatcom forest lands. This funding will be added to fund the Whatcom County Food Bank Network.

Companion to supplemental 5306.

1b. Primary customers:

Members of the public.

2. Problem to be solved:

Whatcom County's food banks facing unprecedented funding needs given increased numbers of customers and a reduction in federal support. Public Works reduced its temporary help to zero; this SBR asks the Parks and Recreation Dept. to do the same.

3a. Options / Advantages:

Current proposed funding for the Whatcom County Food Bank is insufficient to address the need, and the county has been unable to secure alternative sources of funding.

3b. Cost savings:

This request is funding neutral.

4a. Outcomes:

Food banks across Whatcom County will be able to purchase food supplies to serve the growing need. The Parks and Recreation Department will need to scale back activity typically performed by seasonal help.

4b. Measures:

A transfer of planned spending from Parks to the Whatcom County Food Bank Network.

5a. Other Departments/Agencies:

Whatcom County Council
Whatcom County Parks Department
Whatcom County Health Department

5b. Name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for:

Champ Thomaskutty, Director of Health and Community Services
Bennett Knox, Director of Parks and Recreation

6. Funding Source:

General Fund 1000.

Supplemental Budget Request

Non-Departmental

Suppl ID # 5306

Fund 1000

Cost Center 10004021

Originator: Whatcom County Council

Year 2 2026

Add'l FTE ☐

Priority 1

Name of Request: Increase in General Fund Food Bank Spending

X

Department Head Signature (Required on Hard Copy Submission)

Date

Costs:	Object	Object Description	Amount Requested
	6610	Contractual services	\$209,000
	Request Total		\$209,000

1a. Description of request:

Reduce the Parks & Recreation budget by \$209,000, eliminating extra help for parks facilities and Lake Whatcom forest lands. This funding will be added to fund the Whatcom County Food Bank Network.

Companion to supplemental 5305.

1b. Primary customers:

Members of the public.

2. Problem to be solved:

Whatcom County's food banks facing unprecedented funding needs given increased numbers of customers and a reduction in federal support. Public Works reduced its temporary help to zero; this SBR asks the Parks and Recreation Dept. to do the same.

3a. Options / Advantages:

Current proposed funding for the Whatcom County Food Bank is insufficient to address the need, and the county has been unable to secure alternative sources of funding.

3b. Cost savings:

This request is funding neutral.

4a. Outcomes:

Food banks across Whatcom County will be able to purchase food supplies to serve the growing need. The Parks and Recreation Department will need to scale back activity typically performed by seasonal help.

4b. Measures:

A transfer of planned spending from Parks to the Whatcom County Food Bank Network.

5a. Other Departments/Agencies:

Whatcom County Council
Whatcom County Parks Department
Whatcom County Health Department

5b. Name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for:

Champ Thomaskutty, Director of Health and Community Services
Bennett Knox, Director of Parks and Recreation

6. Funding Source:

General Fund 1000.

Supplemental Budget Request

Council

Suppl ID # 5311

Fund 1000

Cost Center

Originator: Council Amendment

Year 2 2026

Add'l FTE ☐

Priority 1

Name of Request: Cut Funding for Third-Party Facilitators

X

Department Head Signature (Required on Hard Copy Submission)

Date

Costs:	Object	Object Description	Amount Requested
	7190	Other miscellaneous	(\$50,000)
	7190	Other miscellaneous	(\$39,900)
	Request Total		(\$89,900)

1a. Description of request:

Cut funding for outside facilitation of the Justice Project Oversight and Planning (JPOP) and the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission and move the funds to other budget areas in order to not have to raise taxes.

The following proposed supplementals in the executive recommended budget would be effected:

5016 Increase of JPOP facilitation costs for 2026

5112 Establishing spending for the WREC facilitation for 2026

1b. Primary customers:

Commission members, members of the public.

2. Problem to be solved:

Avoid tax increases to the public by cutting facilitator funding and reallocating the funds to other programs.

3a. Options / Advantages:

This option avoids increasing taxes and impacting staff positions.

3b. Cost savings:

This request is funding neutral and prevents added tax increases.

4a. Outcomes:

Tax increases on the public are avoided, as well as impacts to county staff.

4b. Measures:

A transfer of budgeted funds from the impacted board/commission budgets to other areas of the General Fund.

5a. Other Departments/Agencies:

n/a

5b. Name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for:

n/a

6. Funding Source:

General Fund 1000.

Supplemental Budget Request

Non-Departmental

Suppl ID # 5220 Fund 1247 Cost Center 12471000 Originator: Tawni Helms/Council Amende

Year 2 2026

Add'l FTE ☐

Priority 1

Name of Request: Transfer out Communities Priorities Fund to GF

X

Department Head Signature (Required on Hard Copy Submission)

Date

Costs:	Object	Object Description	Amount Requested
	8597	Transfers out	(\$500,000)
	8597	Transfers out	\$3,500,000
	Request Total		\$3,000,000

1a. Description of request:

Funds are being transferred to the Capital Reserve Fund. See companion supplementals 5219 and 5307.

1b. Primary customers:

2. Problem to be solved:

3a. Options / Advantages:

3b. Cost savings:

4a. Outcomes:

4b. Measures:

5a. Other Departments/Agencies:

5b. Name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for:

6. Funding Source:

Communities Priorities Fund

See companion supplemental #5219

Supplemental Budget Request

Non-Departmental

Suppl ID # 5307

Fund 1247

Cost Center 12471003

Originator: Whatcom County Council

Year 2 2026

Add'l FTE ☐

Priority 1

Name of Request: Increase in Food Insecurity Spending - CPF

X

Department Head Signature (Required on Hard Copy Submission)

Date

Costs:	Object	Object Description	Amount Requested
	6610	Contractual services	\$500,000
	Request Total		\$500,000

1a. Description of request:

Take \$500,000 that was previously recommended by the County Executive for transfer to the capital facilities reserve fund and instead commit it to the Whatcom County Food Bank Network.

This is a companion to supplementals 5219 and 5220.

1b. Primary customers:

Members of the public.

2. Problem to be solved:

Whatcom County's food banks facing unprecedented funding needs given increased numbers of customers and a reduction in federal support.

3a. Options / Advantages:

Current proposed funding for the Whatcom County Food Bank is insufficient to address the increased need, and the county has been unable to secure alternative sources of funding.

3b. Cost savings:

This request is funding neutral but cuts funds from the capital reserves portion of the Community Priorities Fund.

4a. Outcomes:

Food banks across Whatcom County will be able to purchase food supplies to serve the growing need.

4b. Measures:

A transfer of funds from the Community Priorities Fund (capital reserves) to the Whatcom County Food Bank Network

5a. Other Departments/Agencies:

Whatcom County Health Department.

5b. Name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for:

Champ Thomaskutty, Director of Health and Community Services

6. Funding Source:

Community Priorities Fund 1247.

Supplemental Budget Request

Non-Departmental

Suppl ID # 5219 Fund 3515 Cost Center 35151000 Originator: Tawni Helms/Council Amende

Year 2 2026

Add'l FTE ☐

Priority 1

Name of Request: Capital Reserve Fund - Transfer in from CPF

X

Department Head Signature (Required on Hard Copy Submission)

Date

Costs:	Object	Object Description	Amount Requested
	8397	Transfers in	\$500,000
	8397	Transfers in	(\$3,500,000)
	Request Total		(\$3,000,000)

1a. Description of request:

Council has proposed to reduced the transfer from 3.5m to 3m and reappropriated the funds to the Whatcom County Food Bank. See companion supplementals 5220 and 5307.

This SBR would transfer \$3.5 million from the Community Priorities Fund (CPF) to the Capital Facilities Reserve Fund (CRF) (CRF). The CPF was created in 2023 to account for the revenues and expenditures related to general fund savings during the pandemic period. The CRF was established in the 2023 budget to allow the County to plan and save incrementally for future capital projects. Funds were dedicated to the long-term preservation and improvement of our general government and public safety buildings and was initially seeded with funding from the CARES Act (that has since been expended) and the intent was to transfer \$500,000 annually from the GF to the CRF. Due to the structural imbalance in the GF, the 2025-2026 Adopted Biennial Budget suspended that transfer.

The transfer in this SBR will help the County with upcoming capital facility projects (e.g. Sheriff's Office, tenant improvements, maintenance, PDS Office, and a possible needed morgue.)

During the pandemic, the County received \$44.5M in American Rescue Plan Act (APRA) funding. This allowed the county to invest in childcare, housing, homeless services, broadband, criminal justice operations, and much more. The Council set the goal of spending \$25M or 58% of ARPA funding on childcare and housing. Over the course of three years, the Executive successfully contracted \$23.8M of this funding for childcare and housing. The Council had a high-level spending plan allocating the remaining funding to other activities.

Most of that funding has been spent, with \$5M still available that was originally set aside for pandemic response, climate, and behavioral health with no specific commitments or contracts identified. This funding can be allocated toward any general fund eligible expense.

After the transfer in this SBR, and in SBRs 5223 and 5225, \$1.5M will remain in the Community Priorities Fund, which is currently reserved for a Search and Rescue lease.

See companion for transfer out SBR #5220.

1b. Primary customers:

Whatcom County.

2. Problem to be solved:

As noted above, this SBR would provide resources for the County to address pressing capital facility needs, including having funds available to pay for initial Sheriff's Office costs if an acquisition or lease

Supplemental Budget Request

Non-Departmental

Suppl ID # 5219

Fund 3515

Cost Center 35151000

Originator: Tawni Helms/Council Amende

opportunity is identified.

3a. Options / Advantages:

The reserve can be used to fund or partially fund future, large-scale capital projects, such as building new facilities, upgrading technology, or repairing infrastructure.

3b. Cost savings:

By creating a reserve, the County in some cases will be able to avoid taking on additional debt for future for capital projects.

4a. Outcomes:

n/a

4b. Measures:

n/a

5a. Other Departments/Agencies:

AS-Facilities Management is lead on most capital facilities project. Any use of the Capital Reserve Fund will require additional Council approval through a future supplemental budget action for a specific project.

5b. Name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for:

6. Funding Source:

Community Priorities Fund