

**WHATCOM COUNTY  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**Elizabeth Kosa  
Interim Director**




**NATURAL RESOURCES**

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** The Honorable Satpal Singh Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive, and The Honorable Members of the Whatcom County Council

**THROUGH:** Elizabeth Kosa, Interim Public Works Director

**FROM:** Gary Stoyka, Natural Resources Manager   
Paula Harris, River and Flood Manager

**DATE:** March 10, 2023

**RE:** **Grant Agreement with Washington State Department of Commerce**

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**Requested Action**

Public Works respectfully requests that the County Executive and the County Council enter into a Grant Agreement between Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Commerce to provide grant funding for Nooksack River Integrated Floodplain Mitigation activities.

**Background and Purpose**

Whatcom County is engaged in an on-going effort to implement and update the Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan. Following the devastating floods of November 2021, the Washington State Legislature appropriated funding to Whatcom County for Nooksack River Integrated Floodplain Mitigation. This funding is being provided to Whatcom County through a grant agreement with the Washington State Department of Commerce. The grant agreement includes funding to purchase up to four properties located within areas of Whatcom County that are subject to inundation during flood events, upgrade stream gages, and conduct a water storage study. These properties were selected from a list of property owners who are located in areas in which future flood infrastructure could be constructed and have notified the County that they are interested in being bought out. Purchase of these properties is part of a larger effort to buy properties located in areas with areas mapped as floodplain or floodway in the current or draft new FEMA flood maps. Whatcom County has also applied for grant funding to purchase properties through the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). HMGP requirements do not allow any structures, including those for flood protection, to be constructed on properties purchased with HMGP funding. Consequently, staff have identified the Commerce Grant funding for the purchase of properties in areas where protection structures may be built in the future to provide the most flexibility in future flood protection efforts. Funding in this grant will also be used to fund a water storage study for the Lower Nooksack Basin to assess potential storage opportunities that can provide flood protection, instream flow enhancement for fish, and/or out-of-stream water supply and to make improvements to the Nooksack River gaging network to better predict future flood events.

**Funding Amount and Source**

This grant contract will provide Whatcom County with \$1,950,000.00 in funds. There is no match requirement for this grant. This revenue and the associated expenditures are included in the 2023 Flood Control Zone District budget.

Please contact Gary Stoyka at extension 6218 or Paula Harris at extension 6285, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the terms of this agreement.