



## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Whatcom County Council

**FROM:** Tyler Schroeder, Deputy Executive

**DATE:** May 24, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Resolution to set public hearing to authorize the surplus of a Whatcom County property located at 1000 and 1010 Forest Street, Bellingham, WA

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The County administration and Opportunity Council would like to update the County Council on the progress on constructing low-income housing and a child care facility at the County-owned property associated with this request for a public hearing.

### **Background and Purpose**

The insufficient supply of affordable housing in Whatcom County has created housing instability for low-income households. Opportunity Council has partnered with Whatcom County to be the developer of the Laurel and Forest St Project, which will construct a building to provide 56 one-bedroom apartments and a child care facility. On September 28, 2021 the County Council approved an amended and restated transfer option agreement for the subject property. This agreement referred to the RCW 39.33.015 that allows the transfer of public property for affordable housing.

Consistent with WCC 1.10, on April 15, 2022 the Whatcom County Property management Committee considered a recommendation to declare the Laurel and Forest property as surplus to the County needs and dispose of the property in a manner consistent with WCC 1.10.270 and WCC 1.10.340. At that meeting the committee considered the following background on the property:

- Whatcom County acquired the property in 1973 from the YWCA of Bellingham
- Over the last few decades the property has been used by Whatcom County to house a number of departments, including but not limited to; WSU Extension, Drug Court, Hearing Examiner Office, County Council Office
- During the Capital Improvement planning process over the last decade Whatcom County has not identified the need to improve this facility for long-term use by the County
- Currently, the facility is not needed to house the current departments located there. Drug Court is planned to be located near the County Courthouse at the Lottie St facility. The WSU Extension is planned to be located at the redeveloped NW Annex project and in the interim will be located at a County leased facility on Dupont Street.
- During the Property Committee meeting no other feasible options were presented to show that this property is needed for future County uses.

At the April 15th, 2022 Whatcom County Property Management Committee approved a motion recommending that the County Council declare the property as surplus to the County needs and dispose of the property in a manner consistent with WCC 1.10.270.

Following a public hearing on this date the Whatcom County Council determined it is in the public's interest to transfer this surplus real property known as 1000 and 1010 Forest Street, tax parcel numbers, tax parcels numbers 380311475570000 and 3803311525130000 to the Opportunity Council, a non-profit agency, pursuant to the provisions and requirements of Whatcom County Code, Chapter 1.10.

We are requesting authorization to transfer the surplus property to the Opportunity Council for public benefit purposes of affordable housing as allowed by RCW 39.33.015 and WCC 1.10.340.

Please contact me at [tschroed@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:tschroed@co.whatcom.wa.us) if you have any questions regarding the proposed surplus of this property.