

**WHATCOM COUNTY
EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE**

County Courthouse
311 Grand Ave. Suite #108
Bellingham, WA 98225



Jack Louws
County Executive

TO: Members of the Whatcom County Council

THROUGH: Jack Louws, County Executive

FROM: Tyler Schroeder, Deputy Executive and Jon Hutchings, Public Works Director

RE: Purchasing Policy Amendment

Date: July 7, 2016

Requested Action:

Consider and approve proposed amendments to WCC 3.08 Purchasing System that establishes administrative procedures for advertising and approving public contracts.

Background and Purpose:

Whatcom County Council and Executive share responsibility under WCC 3.08 for transparent, predictable, and efficient procurement of goods and services necessary to execute authorized County work. Certain provisions in the existing Purchasing Policy expose the County to contract claims and escalating procurement costs. This amendment is intended to preserve appropriate Council oversight of expenditures, incorporate 2015 changes to State purchasing laws, improve competitive access to public contracting opportunities, streamline project delivery, and reduce financial risk associated with contract administration. The amended ordinance:

- Improves advertising of requests for proposals, requests for qualifications, and invitations to bid
- Adjusts thresholds for soliciting price quotations and bids for professional services to \$10,000 and \$50,000, respectively, pursuant to State law
- Requires Council authorization for professional services contracts and other non-capital contracts of greater than \$50,000
- Authorizes Executive approval for contracts and contract amendments identified in a Council-approved Capital Budget Authorization Ordinance, and for certain supplies.

As part of the Administration's effort to provide a more transparent and program-oriented budget approval process, the 2017-2018 budget documents will contain a separate capital program showing specific capital expenditures for the budget cycle. This coincides with online access to all contracts and quarterly project expenditure updates.

Financial Implications:

These amendments reduce the likelihood of cost escalation associated with project delivery delays resulting from untimely change order approvals and associated contractor claims.

Please contact Tyler Schroeder at extension 5207 or Jon Hutchings at extension 6205 for questions or concerns regarding this amendment.

Enc.: Proposed amendment to existing WCC Chapter 3.08