



MEMO:

TO: Whatcom County Council
FROM: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
DATE: May 12, 2023
RE: **Overview of State Operating and Capital Budgets for 2023-2025**

A number of state budget allocations were provided to Whatcom County and our partners to support local programs and projects. The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview ahead of a discussion during the May 23 Council of the Whole meeting.

River and Flood.

The State Operating budget includes approximately \$4 million for flood prevention in the Nooksack Basin and Sumas Prairie. Half of that will go to expand and support Whatcom County's floodplain integrated planning (FLIP) team. The remainder is allocated to transboundary cooperation efforts (\$900,000) and staff/technical capacity at Whatcom County and the Department of Ecology (\$1.1 million).

We were pleased to see that the State will continue support for flood disaster relief and recovery related to November 2021 floods with another \$1.5 million provided for the upcoming biennium. Over the past two years we have partnered with the Whatcom Long Term Recovery Group to utilize State funds to address the lingering needs of flood-impacted households.

The Capital Budget includes \$10.3 million for Phase 3 of the Nooksack River: Floodplains that Work project, a continuation of this multi-phase, integrated approach to floodplain management that reduces flood hazards while supporting salmon recovery, agriculture, and other land uses within the Nooksack River watershed. Additionally, \$9.975 million was provided for South Fork Nooksack Fish Camp Restoration and \$2.9 million for South Fork Nooksack River Integrated Floodplain Reconnection, which are both focused on flood mitigation and salmon recovery.

Separately, \$3 million were provided for the Stewart Mountain Community Forest, adding to \$5.5 million in grants received last year supporting Phase 2 acquisitions, which account for a significant portion of the proposed community forest land. Another \$665,000 as provided to support the acquisition of the Stewart Mountain Riparian Reserve, a property which borders the South Fork of the Nooksack River.

The County had been anticipating \$12 million for the Swift Creek Natural Asbestos Flood Control and Cleanup project. However, the Governor's Budget only included \$4 million, and we were unsuccessful in our efforts to increase that amount during the session. We will be conducting extensive outreach to return to the funding level and workplan agreed with DOE.

The State Operating Budget funds the filing of WRIA 1 (Nooksack Basin) adjudication (\$2.738 million). Separately, it provides funds to Whatcom County for technical assistance for filers (\$300,000), as well as money for technical studies and facilitation (\$700,000).

Behavioral Health.

Whatcom County was allocated \$9 million from the Capital Budget for a crisis relief center—a round-the-clock behavioral health care center allowing clients to stay up to 23 hours for stabilization and assessment. A crisis relief center was identified in the SAC needs assessment as an important facility for the future of our public health and safety system.

We are also pleased to receive operating dollars for the Alternative Response Team in the amount of \$1.174 million over the biennium.

Parks & Recreation

Whatcom County will receive approximately \$500,000 for the renovation of the Van Zandt Community Hall. These improvements will be part of a community-led effort to improve the facility ahead of the 100th anniversary of the building in 2025.

Whatcom County also received \$360,000 for improvements at the Plantation Rifle Range. The project will update the target carrier system and indoor range, allowing it to be used as the training range for the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Academy's Northwest Regional Academy location.

Allocations for Local Partners

Other notable allocations for our partners include: What-Comm dispatch improvements (\$1 million), Lummi Nation Substance Abuse Treatment Center (\$14 million), and Ferndale Civic Center Campus (\$3 million), among others. See appendix for more comprehensive list.

Please reach out to Jed Holmes (jholmes@co.whatcom.wa.us) or Kayla Schott-Bresler (KSchottb@co.whatcom.wa.us), if you have any questions.

Appendix. State Capital and Operating Budget Highlights

This list doesn't include schools, colleges, WWU or state agency projects. Items in bold indicate participation or involvement of Whatcom County.

Capital:

- **23-Hour Crisis Relief Center - \$9M**
- **Van Zandt Community Hall Renovation - \$500K**
- **The Nooksack River: Floodplains that Work – Phase 3 - \$10.3M**
- **Stewart Mountain Community Forest - \$3M**
- **South Fork Nooksack Fish Camp Restoration - \$9.975M**
- **South Fork Nooksack River Integrated Floodplain Reconnection - \$2.9M**
- **Stewart Mountain Riparian Reserve - \$665K**
- **NW Regional Training Academy - Firing Range (Plantation Rifle Range) - \$360K**
- **Swift Creek Natural Asbestos Flood Control and Cleanup Project - \$4M**
- **What-Comm - \$1M**
- Ag Research Center (Lynden) – \$700K
- Lummi Nation Substance Abuse Treatment - \$13M
- Waterfront Low Carbon District Energy System - \$100K
- Joe Martin Stadium - \$700K
- Lynden Senior and Community Center - \$700K
- Ferndale Civic and Community Organization Campus - \$3M
- deWilde Rugby Fields (Ferndale) - \$150K
- Ejidos Community Farm (Everson) - \$824K
- Nooksack Community Housing - \$470K
- Squalicum Creek at Baker Creek Fish Passage Improvement – \$4.13
- Two Padden Creek fish passage improvement projects - \$5.4M

Operating:

- **Whatcom County flood disaster relief and recovery funding - \$1.5 million**
- **Floodplain integrated planning (FLIP process) - \$2 million**
- **Other flood prevention efforts - \$2 million**
- **Alternative Response Team - \$1.174 million**
- **Technical assistance for adjudication - \$300K**
- **WRIA 1 water supply planning (technical studies, Solutions Table) - \$700,000**
- **Health District funding, public nursing program – \$2,428,602**
- Affordable housing study grant for non-profit - \$200K
- Homeless and low-income services grant to nonprofit - \$400K
- Food and farm finder program for Whatcom County - \$200,000
- SBDC program for technical assistance to BIPOC business owners - \$150,000
- Youth outdoor learning experiences in Blaine, Mount Baker, and Nooksack Valley school districts - \$500,000
- Federal Indian water rights settlement discussions related to Nooksack adjudication - \$300,000