

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**ESTABLISHING THE WHATCOM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE LEASEHOLD
IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT FUND AND ESTABLISHING AN INITIAL BUDGET
FOR THE WHATCOM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE LEASEHOLD
IMPROVEMENTS FUND**

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) currently operates from the basement of the County Jail; and

WHEREAS, the current space has maintenance challenges, limits operational efficiency, and fails to meet modern law enforcement facility standards as the department has grown; and

WHEREAS, a leased space has been identified as suitable at 4600 Ryzex Way Bellingham, Washington; and

WHEREAS, the proposed lease agreement begins on November 1, 2025 and continues for 98 months; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County Administrative Services Facilities Division will need to perform leasehold improvements on the property ahead of occupancy of WCSO which will include but are not limited to security upgrades, locker room additions, information technology retrofitting, and layout modifications; and

WHEREAS, funds are available in the Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) I fund; and

WHEREAS, Section 6.80 of the Whatcom County Home Rule Charter allows for project-based capital budget appropriation ordinances that lapse when the project has been completed or abandoned or when no expenditure or encumbrance has been made for three (3) years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that a new fund is hereby established effective immediately, titled the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Leasehold Improvements Fund. This fund shall be used to account for the revenues and expenditures of the improvements described above; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Leasehold Improvements Fund is approved with an initial project budget of \$1,500,000 as described in Exhibit A.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2025

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Approved by Email B Waldron/A Tan
Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

() Approved () Denied

Date Signed: _____

EXHIBIT A

Supplemental Budget Request

Administrative Services

Facilities Management

Suppl ID # 5290

Fund

Cost Center

Originator: Rob Ney

Year 1 2025

Add'l FTE ☐

Priority 1

Name of Request: Sheriff's Office Tenant Imp for Leased Space

X

Department Head Signature (Required on Hard Copy Submission)

Date

Costs:	Object	Object Description	Amount Requested
	6190	Direct billing rate	\$50,000
	7070	Minor remodeling	\$1,435,000
	7190	Other miscellaneous	\$15,000
	8397.C.32412401	Transfers in	(\$1,500,000)
	Request Total		\$0

1a. Description of request:

The County Council will consider approval of a lease to relocate to the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office to 4600 Ryzex Way in Bellingham's Cordata neighborhood at the November 5, 2025 Council meeting. Contingent on council approval of that lease, this supplemental budget request would establish a project-based budget to fund the tenant improvements necessary to use this existing office building for the Sheriff's Office. Improvements include but are not limited to security fence construction, locker room additions, minor layout changes, IT upgrades, security upgrades, evidence room and enclosed office space additions. The proposed funds would be allocated toward the construction of the tenant improvement, direct billing for project management and permits fees.

1b. Primary customers:

The Sheriff's Department and associated customers.

2. Problem to be solved:

The Sheriff's Office is located in the basement of the Public Safety Building which houses the majority of the department staff along with several satellite locations. The basement was not designed for this use and the department has outgrown the square footage. An adequately sized office space and/or building would allow the department to consolidate staff and operate more efficiently.

The current Public Safety Building requires significant investment to meet the upcoming Clean Building Performance Standards. A newer office space/ building would be designed to meet updated energy codes and would require less investment to remain compliant. A more modern office building requires less maintenance costs.

3a. Options / Advantages:

Real estate searches for office space in Whatcom County have not yielded a comparable option in terms of size, layout and recent age. Constructing a new building would take time and would likely not provide cost savings due to land acquisition costs, design fees and constructions costs. Completing a tenant improvement in an existing building would have a shorter time frame for the urgent space need.

The proposed office building is modern and has an advantageous existing layout that requires relatively small changes and investment. The space is of adequate size now and would allow for departmental growth in future years. The location is suitable to efficiently manage operations.

3b. Cost savings:

Operational efficiency would increase with a consolidated Sherriff's Office. Newer buildings are more

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energy efficient and will have significant energy savings and reduced maintenance costs.

4a. Outcomes:

The outcome would be a consolidated Sheriff's Office that is able to operate efficiently with staff consolidated. The proposed building size allows for the construction of all the operational spaces necessary to complete essential public services.

4b. Measures:

Upon completion of tenant improvement and once the department has moved into the space, the staff will have the resources required to provide services to the public.

The Sheriff's Department will have adequate space to operate efficiently and provide essential services such as emergency response, law enforcement, court services and corrections.

5a. Other Departments/Agencies:

The tenant improvement will not have an impact on other departments or agencies.

Information Technologies, who will be assist with the TIs to provide secure internet access and other technology improvements necessary to relocate the Sheriff's Office to this leased facility.

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

Rob Ney, Facilities Director

6. Funding Source:

REET 1. See companion supplemental 5292.