



## **Whatcom County Government Prepares for Fiscal Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic**

*For Immediate Release April 21, 2020, Bellingham, WA*

In a [memo](#) to the County Council on April 21, County Executive Satpal Sidhu underscored that the County Government is fiscally responsible to address the expected revenue shortfall. "Our organization will continue to prioritize the emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the economy idles, we are immediately implementing measures designed to decrease our operating costs," Executive Sidhu told the Council. "Our objectives are to prepare our organization to weather the financial impacts of this emergency, keep our organization intact, cohesive and resume expected operations that serve our community."

The initial cost saving steps include a selective hiring freeze, postponement of existing contracts, reduction of supply purchases and discretionary spending, and savings on personnel expenses through schedule adjustments. "We learned from the last recession that the quicker we act in a fiscally prudent manner with cost reductions, the better financial health we will have in the long-term," Executive Sidhu said.

The County anticipates a decline in property tax collection, sales tax revenues and other revenue sources compared to 2019 levels. Further explanatory documents are available on the County website ([COVID-19 Fiscal Response](#)). The financial projections used will be analyzed further and adjusted as needed moving forward.

Executive Sidhu also commended the efforts of County staff during these challenging times. "I am proud of the extraordinary accomplishments made by our organization in response to the COVID-19 emergency. In these unprecedented times we have met the challenge of "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" while providing essential government services. Our staff have demonstrated great flexibility and understanding, both in taking on new responsibilities to respond to the emergency and in adapting to work remotely."

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