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Snohomish County Eyeing Hiring Freeze and Other Steps to Preserve Core Services

Economic impacts of COVID-19 are expected to force significant cuts to county budget

SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash., April 10, 2020 – Today, Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers and Snohomish County Council Chair Nate Nehring announced a series of budget steps they are considering in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including a hiring freeze, eliminating any discretionary raises, cancelling travel and training, and other fiscal management tools. Early budget estimates predict that the county’s General Fund budget may need to be cut by 10% or more due to the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“These are unique times, and they call for preemptive action on the part of Snohomish County,” said Executive Somers. “With so many people thrust out of work and many industries shutting down, we cannot have business-as-usual in the county. There are a number of steps we will need to make, including a hiring freeze, to save taxpayers’ money and adjust to a tough economic climate for our residents.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic is causing serious economic hardship for our community,” said Snohomish County Council Chair Nate Nehring. “As a result, we will need to tighten our belts and take extraordinary care of taxpayer dollars. These actions will allow us to maintain our emergency response capabilities during this difficult time.”

The preliminary budget analysis, conducted by the Snohomish County Finance Department, shows that the economic impact to the county’s General Fund budget could exceed \$24 million in 2020, just under 10% of the budget. Since over 75% of the General Fund budget is directed toward law and justice agencies, any cuts will have impacts across the board. If \$24 million were cut from the budget, it would represent approximately 220 county employees.

“We know there will be some very tough budget decisions to make because of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Somers. “We have significant mandated responsibilities that must be fulfilled. We want there to be no illusions about what may be coming, if the worst economic forecasts become reality. We will cut our budget and adapt our operations with our eyes wide open.”

For more information about Snohomish County’s response to COVID-19, please go [here](#).

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