

Island County's 2008 Budget Basics

Where the money comes from and where it goes

Total estimated budget for 2008 is \$73.9 million

Overall growth in expenditures equals 7%

Overall growth in revenues expected to be 5%

Local sales taxes: County government anticipates receiving 8% more in sales taxes in 2008. That's \$600,000 more for an estimated total of \$7.9 million sales tax revenue in 2008. (This does not include the newly-adopted mental health/therapeutic court sales tax of 1/10th of 1 percent, which becomes effective Jan 1.)

Property taxes: The total general and road fund levy amounts will increase 1%. Additional income for the General Fund from new construction is estimated at slightly more than \$200,000.

Fees increases: Environmental health and building fees haven't been raised in 5 to 6 years, since 2002 and 2003. While costs of providing services have increased and will be partially offset by expenditure reductions, Environmental Health fees will increase overall by about 1% and building fees will increase by approximately 9%, which amounts to 1.5% annually over the past 6 years

Interest Revenue is projected to be \$2.1 million, which is slightly less than the 2007 forecast, due to lack of growth in investment rates.

Real Estate Excise Taxes were down 10% in 2007 compared to 2006. The county anticipates there will be no growth in Real Estate Excise Tax collections in 2008. (It depends on real estate market activity since the source of this revenue is an excise tax on real estates sales.) Revenue from Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET) pays for drainage projects, park improvements, building maintenance and debt payments for bonds, issued for construction of the county's Juvenile Detention Facility, Law & Justice Bldg., and remodel of the Administration and Annex buildings in Coupeville.

Salaries & Benefits (all funds and programs): Total estimate for 2008 salaries is \$22 million, with employee benefits at \$8.5 million. The overall increase from 2007 salaries and benefits equals \$1.6 million (5.8%). Cost of living allowances, depending on bargaining units, ranges from 2.5% to 2.6%. (Labor agreements with two major bargaining units for sheriff deputies and corrections officers, are currently under negotiation.)

Basic medical insurance plans increased 7% to \$260,000. There was a \$300,000 increase in retirement costs. Retirement rates will increase from 6% in 2007 to slightly over 7% in 2008. Eligible employees are covered by WA State Retirement Systems plans. These rates are developed by the WA State Actuary and adopted by the WA State Legislature.

Supplemental requests: County departments and service subcontractors sought a total of \$1.4 million in supplemental requests. The Board of Island County Commissioners was able to fund only \$572,000 of the requests. Over half of the available funds were allocated to Law & Justice. In other areas, there will be a 10% increase in funding for non-profits, which provide services to the island senior community; a 10% increase in funding to WSU Extension; and a \$50,000 increase to keep Public Health Nursing at its current levels.

New positions for 2008: There will be an increase of 6.05 FTEs (full time equivalents), with the majority awarded to law and justice (5.70 FTEs). Approved supplemental budget requests included one additional sheriff's deputy; one additional deputy prosecuting attorney; one additional district court deputy clerk; funding to bring to full-time positions in District Court Probation, Superior Court Clerk's office, and Juvenile Court Services; and, finally .5 FTEs in elections and in records management

Maintenance & Operations (all funds & programs): Overall increase 6% (\$1,459,105).

Major capital projects planned for 2008 include Phase II Camano Hill widening on Camano Island; design work for a new Camano Annex office building and sheriff's Camano precinct; jail improvements (\$800,000); drainage projects (\$650,00); parks projects (\$346,000), with the majority of funds used to improve boat ramps and beach access at Libbey Beach on west Whidbey Island, and Cavalero Beach and Utsalady Bay on Camano Island. About \$130,000 is also budgeted over the next two years for an RV dump station and restroom for the county's fairgrounds in Langley.