



2008 Preliminary Budget Message

Dear Reader:

Welcome to this 2008 Preliminary Thurston County Budget. Your comments on this Preliminary Budget would be very much appreciated by the Board of County Commissioners as they prepare to adopt the 2008 County budget in mid-December.

Thurston County is well known for its fiscal prudence. This responsible management of public funds has been reflected for years in the County's excellent bond ratings. This year, the County is approaching the budget with a view to our new vision statement: *Creating Solutions for Our Future*.

The County budget is complex. It has 85 funds, and thousands of line items, managed by 32 offices and departments. These funds support the County's services to the public in law and justice; public health and social services; emergency services; roads; parks, open space and trails; County Fair; and land use planning, development services, environmental protection, and utilities operations.

The budget also provides for the general government services that enable the county to conduct its business, such as elections, financial management, human resources and capital facilities management. These functions are provided by a variety of offices headed by elected officials as well as by departments directly reporting to the Board of County Commissioners.

This preliminary budget anticipates \$269.3 million in total expenditures (all funds) and \$238.1 million in total revenue (all funds). The difference between revenues and expenditures will be made up through use of fund reserves and expenditure reductions in the adopted budget.

Through the lens of its new vision, *Creating Solutions for Our Future*, the Board and other elected and appointed County leaders have committed to working together to find creative ways to balance such competing needs as expanding demands for all services, steadily rising cost of living (which increases the county's cost of providing current levels of service), sustaining adequate fund balances in the face of declining revenues, and assuring that the County's capital facilities are well maintained and that the infrastructure supports efficient ways of doing business.

The key features of this Preliminary Budget are:

- A modest five percent increase in total revenues compared to 2007. For property tax, the County's largest source of revenue, the County projects continuing the one percent cap on property tax increases (plus additional revenues from new construction) that originated under Initiative 747. The 2008 revenue forecasts also indicate a decline in the growth of sales tax revenue, compared to the rate of growth in 2007.
- A seven percent increase in total expenditures compared to 2007, including an increase in reserves set aside for maintaining county buildings and utility infrastructure and for replacing information technology, so that major costs do not create dramatic increases in future budgets.
- No increases in the number of employees beyond positions approved during 2007.

The information that follows in this publication is organized to provide you with a detailed overview of the County's revenues and expenditures and full reports of each fund's anticipated revenues and expenditures.

Comments on this Preliminary 2008 Budget may be given to the Board of County Commissioners in person at the public hearing:

6:00 p.m., Monday, December 3, 2007
Room 280
Thurston County Courthouse
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW
Olympia, WA 98502

or in writing at:

Board of County Commissioners
Thurston County Courthouse
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW
Olympia, WA 98502

or by phone, fax or email:

Phone: (360) 786-5440
Fax: (360) 754-4104

Email via the web site: Go to <http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/bocc/>
and click on "Send an e-mail message to all of the Commissioners at the same time"

We look forward to your comments.

Sincerely,



Don Krupp
County Administrative Officer