



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 8/25/2026

To: Board of Supervisors; Board of Commissioners of the Sonoma County Community Development Commission; Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District; Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Water Agency; Board of Directors of the Russian River County Sanitation District; Board of the Directors of the South Park County Sanitation District; Board of the Directors of the Occidental County Sanitation District; and Board of the Directors of the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District

Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Public Infrastructure; Community Development Commission; Sonoma County Water Agency; Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

Staff Name and Phone Number: Johannes J. Hoevertsz-SPI, 707-565-2550

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisory District(s): All

Title:

Purchasing Authority: Increases to Existing Delegations, and Procurement Thresholds

Recommended Action:

- A) Adopt a Resolution of the Board of Supervisors introducing, reading the title of, and waiving further reading of the proposed Ordinance amending portions of Article V, Chapter 2 of the Sonoma County Code to increase the threshold for competitive procurement requirements for all service contracts, to contracts over \$75,000 per year.
- B) Adopt a Joint Resolution to increase Department Head delegated signature authority for professional services contracts to amounts not to exceed \$75,000 per year for County Department Heads, the Community Development Commission (CDC) Executive Director, and the Sonoma County Water Agency General Manager (on behalf of Sonoma Water and the various Sanitation Districts).
- C) Adopt a Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District updating existing delegations of authority to the General Manager to the fullest extent authorized by Public Resources Code section 55549. (4/5th Vote)
- D) Authorize updates to County procurement policies, procedures, and administrative guidance documents necessary to implement the proposed amendments.

Executive Summary:

Sonoma County Public Infrastructure (SPI), Purchasing Division (Purchasing), recommends updating Department Head Authority for service agreements with the goal of standardizing procurement thresholds, improving operational efficiency, reducing administrative delays, and establishing greater consistency across County contracting practices.

Currently, County Department Heads, the CDC Executive Director, the Sonoma Water General Manager, and the Ag + Open Space General Manager have delegated authority to execute service contracts up to \$50,000 annually. Formal competitive solicitation is also currently generally required for most services contracts exceeding \$50,000 annually. Goods procurement thresholds are set at \$60,000 requiring a formal solicitation. Bringing the procurement threshold up to \$75,000 would align all three categories, Goods, Services & Construction.

The Ag + Open Space General Manager's delegated authority to enter into contracts of various kinds has been established via a series of different Board resolutions dating back to 1992. Intervening changes in the governance structure for Ag + Open Space, such as elimination of the Open Space Authority and establishment of the Fiscal Oversight Commission, render certain terminology in the operative resolutions antiquated. The Resolution specific to the Ag + Open Space Board of Directors updates the General Manager's delegated authority to conform to the current governance structure for Ag + Open Space, while increasing the dollar limits for contracts within the General Manager's delegated authority in a manner consistent with the Public Resources Code.

The proposed actions would:

- Increase delegated authority of specified department heads for professional services contracts, from the current \$50,000 to a new \$75,000 limit.
- Increase the threshold requiring formal competitive solicitation for professional services contracts, from the current \$50,000 to a new \$75,000 threshold.
- Increase delegated authority for the Ag + Open Space General Manager for professional services contracts from \$50,000 to \$51,000 and increasing this maximum contract amount by 2% per year effective July 1 each year, as authorized by Public Resources Code section 5549.
- Increase the delegated authority for the Ag + Open Space General Manager to purchase supplies, equipment and materials (excluding labor and services) not to exceed an annual aggregate of \$150,000, as authorized by Public Resources Code section 5549.
- Update the Ag + Open Space General Manager's authority to (1) enter into contracts for the purchase of open space interests in real property, subject to specified contingencies and limitations preserving Board authority to review and approve proposed purchases, and (2) enter into leases and revocable license agreements for the protection, maintenance or use of District real property, provided that the lease or license agreement is consistent with the conservation purpose for which the property was purchased and the term of such agreement does not exceed 5 years.

Discussion:

In 2025 the Board of Supervisors approved an increase to the delegated authority for the Purchasing Agent for service agreements, from \$100,000 to \$200,000 annually, for agreements not to exceed three years. No other substantial updates to delegated purchasing authority for Services or Goods have taken place since 2016, including related competitive procurement requirements. Since that time, increasing contract complexity, and operational demands have materially changed the County's contracting environment.

The County's procurement authority framework is primarily governed by Sonoma County Code Chapter 2, Article V, existing Board resolutions, and associated procurement policies and procedures. Many of the

current delegation thresholds were established more than ten years ago and no longer reflect current operational needs.

In 2016, the Board adopted Ordinance No. 6165 and related Resolutions increasing delegated authority thresholds for services agreements from \$25,000 to \$50,000 and establishing a general formal competitive solicitation requirement for most service agreements exceeding \$50,000 annually.

Since that time, County departments have experienced:

- Increased administrative workload related to preparation and processing of lower-value agreements, including:
 - Procurement timelines
 - Increased staff and legal review
- Greater operational demands resulting from the changing local, state and federal requirements, community needs, emergency response, inflation, expanded service delivery.

The proposed updates are intended to modernize procurement operations while preserving appropriate internal controls and oversight.

Procurement Activity and Operational Data

Based on Fiscal Year 2025/26 procurement activity, the County executed approximately 708 service agreements with a total value of approximately \$283 million, in addition to numerous agreements for goods, grants, leases, and construction.

Of the service agreements executed during that fiscal year, 315 had a total value between \$0 and \$75,000. Under the proposed revisions to the delegation thresholds, 48 of those agreements (approximately 13%) would have qualified for delegated approval. These agreements generally represent routine, operationally necessary procurements that could be processed more efficiently under the proposed delegation authority, allowing staff to reduce administrative processing time while maintaining appropriate oversight and internal controls.

Following is a breakdown of Fiscal Year 2025-26 Service Contract procurement data:

Service Contract Value	Contract Count	Total Amount
\$50,000 and Under	315	\$7,458,778
\$50,001 - \$75,000	48	\$3,185,666
\$75,001 - \$200,000	151	\$20,512,654
\$200,001 and Over	194	\$251,930,033

Historical procurement review data also indicates that a significant number of professional services agreements fall within the proposed revised delegation thresholds.

For example, in Fiscal Year 2024-2025, approximately 812 professional services agreements were executed Countywide. Of those:

- Approximately 393 agreements were under \$50,000 annually and approved by Department Heads.
- Approximately 46 agreements were between \$50,000 and \$75,000 annually and required Purchasing Agent approval.

The proposed amendments would reduce the number of routine, operationally necessary, lower value agreements requiring Purchasing Agent processing or Board action, thereby allowing departments, Purchasing staff, County Counsel, and the Board to focus resources on higher-value and more complex procurements.

Issue 1 – Increase Delegated Authority Thresholds

Background: Current Department Head delegated authority thresholds for services contracts have remained unchanged since 2016.

The proposed amendments focus specifically on increasing Department Head authority and associated procurement thresholds to improve operational efficiency.

Proposed Solution: The proposed changes:

Authority / Requirement	Current Threshold	Proposed Threshold
Department Head Services Authority (General)	\$50,000/year	\$75,000/year
Ag + Open Space General Manager*	\$50,000	\$51,000 (with annual 2% increase)
Ag + Open Space Supplies & Materials Authority	\$25,000/contract	\$150,000/year total
Services Competitive Solicitation Threshold (General)	\$50,000/year	\$75,000/year
County Goods Competitive Solicitation Threshold (General)	\$60,000/year	\$75,000/year

*Applicable law restricts delegation of contracting authority for services agreements to a lesser amount with respect to the Ag + Open Space General Manager. (Public Resources Code section 5549.)

These proposed increases are intended to:

- Streamline routine procurement activity.
- Improve procurement timelines.
- Better align operational authority with current market needs.

- Improve County responsiveness.
- Increase staff productivity.

The proposed amendments do not alter existing maximum contract term limitations. Service agreements executed under delegated authority would remain limited to a maximum term of three years unless otherwise approved by the respective Board.

Issue 2 – Increase Competitive Procurement Thresholds

Background: Sonoma County Code Section 2-58(a) requires formal competitive solicitation processes in general for most services agreements exceeding \$50,000 annually. For Goods procurement, solicitation thresholds are set by the County “Goods Policy” maintained by the Purchasing Division pursuant to Sonoma County Code section 2-53.

The current thresholds no longer align with current procurement realities, inflation-adjusted contract values, or operational needs.

Proposed Solution: The proposed Ordinance amendment would increase formal competitive solicitation thresholds to \$75,000 annually for services contracts. If enacted, Purchasing plans to update the Goods Policy to align with the increased service contract threshold.

For contracts below the revised thresholds, departments would continue to be responsible for utilizing informal competitive processes and methods designed to secure the lowest competitive pricing consistent with operational requirements.

Departments would remain subject to all applicable:

- County procurement policies.
- State procurement laws.
- Conflict-of-interest requirements.
- Internal control requirements.
- Audit and documentation standards.
- Competitive procurement procedures.

Departments that are subject to the County Purchasing Policy will still need to secure approval from the Purchasing Agent for any sole source or single source procurement.

Operational Benefits

The proposed amendments are anticipated to provide the following operational benefits:

- Reduced administrative workload.
- Faster procurement processing timelines.
- Improved operational responsiveness.
- Improved procurement consistency.
- Improved vendor experience.

- More efficient allocation of Purchasing and County Counsel resources.
- Enhanced standardization.

The Department Heads and leadership of the affiliated agencies and districts support the proposed amendments and view the recommended changes as operationally beneficial and consistent with best procurement practices.

Strategic Plan:

This item directly supports the County's Five-year Strategic Plan.

Pillar: Organizational Excellence

Goal: Goal 1: Strengthen operational effectiveness, fiscal reliability, and accountability

Objective: Objective 4: Streamline routine administrative procedures and workflows and delegate more signature authority to department heads in order to re-direct work force resources to more strategic priorities.

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No.

Prior Board Actions:

- March 15, 2026: Increase Delegated Signature Authority Sonoma County Water- Resolution No. 16-0103 (March 15, 2016), increasing delegated signature authority of the Sonoma County Water Agency General Manager for sanitation district service agreements from \$25,000 to \$50,000.
- May 13, 2025: Increase Purchasing Agent Authority - Increase Purchasing Agent authority to \$200,000 and standardize County contract templates and procurement practices. ([Ordinance No.6524](#))
- July 16, 2016: Increase Delegated Signature Authority CDC - Resolution No. 16-0272 (July 19, 2016), increasing delegated signature authority of the Community Development Commission Executive Director from \$25,000 to \$50,000.
- May 24, 2016: Revise Purchasing Agent delegated Authority - Sonoma County Ordinance No. 6165 (May 24, 2016), amending Sonoma County Code Chapter 2 to revise Purchasing Agent delegated authority and establish formal competitive solicitation requirements for services contracts exceeding \$50,000 annually. (sonoma-county.granicus.com)
- March 15, 2016: Increase Delegated Signature Authority - Resolution No. 16-0102 (March 15, 2016), increasing delegated signature authority for County Department Heads, Sonoma County Water Agency, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, and related entities from \$25,000 to \$50,000 annually for services agreements. (sonoma-county.granicus.com)

- April 23, 2002: Grant of authority to Ag + Open Space General Manager - Resolution No. 02-0405, granting authority to the General Manager to enter into contracts for services and supplies up to \$25,000.
- March 12, 2002: Grant authority to Sonoma County Water Agency - Resolution No. 02-0234 (March 12, 2002), granting authority to the Sonoma County Water Agency General Manager/Chief Engineer to engage independent contractors for services up to \$25,000.
- March 21, 1995: Establish Exemptions for Purchasing Procedures - Resolution No. 95-0328 (March 21, 1995), establishing exemptions from Purchasing procedures for County officers authorized to execute agreements within Board-established limits.
- April 6, 1993: Authorize Purchasing Agent to engage Independent Contractors - Sonoma County Ordinance No. 4654 (April 6, 1993), authorizing the Purchasing Agent to engage independent contractors for services up to \$25,000.

Expenditures	FY 26-27 Adopted	FY 27-28 Projected	FY 28-29 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

There are no direct fiscal impacts associated with the recommended actions. The proposed amendments are anticipated to improve operational efficiency, reduce administrative processing time, and allow more efficient use of existing staff resources.

Staffing Impacts:

None

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

No additional staffing impacts are associated with the proposed actions.

Attachments:

- 1 – Board of Supervisors Resolution - Introducing, Reading Title, and Waiving Further Reading of Ordinance to Amend the Sonoma County Code
- 2 – Joint Resolution of the County, Agency, Commission, and District Boards
- 3 – Resolution of the Ag + Open Space District Board
- 4 – Proposed Ordinance Amending Sonoma County Code Chapter 2, Article V. - Strikeout
- 5 – Proposed Ordinance Amending Sonoma County Code Chapter 2, Article V. - Clean
- 6 – Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Procurement Activity Data
- 7 – Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Procurement Activity Data

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

- Resolution No. 16-0102.
- Resolution No. 16-0103.
- Resolution No. 16-0272.
- Resolution No. 02-0234.
- Resolution No. 95-0328.
- Ordinance No. 6165.
- Ordinance No. 4654.
- Ordinance No. 6524.