



The following narrative describes, at a high level, the current Whatcom County jail program as of June 2026 following the project team's efforts of aligning the base program to the budget of \$205 million. The project team faced an enormous and difficult task of reducing the base program for the jail from the initial 227,021 sf down to an approximate 150-155k sf of programmed space. It should be noted that at this stage in the project, these are estimations. As the design progresses, efficiencies may be found, or unforeseen costs may present themselves. While each section is described independently, the project team took care to treat the facility holistically in terms of operations, capacity, programming, staff support, and future expansion capabilities.

1.0 Public Lobby

The programmed public lobby space provides for security screening space, waiting areas, public restrooms, reception workstations, and ancillary back of house spaces. This improves the current lobby area by providing more waiting areas and a better screening area for all visitors entering the facility. Access to visitation, court access, and access for attorneys will be improved by this lobby.

2.0 Facility Administration

The programmed Facility Administration area will provide space for all jail administration staff, a space for visiting professionals and interview room, a small conference room, server rooms and file storage, and staff restroom space. This will significantly improve staff work areas over the current space in which many of the areas have been retrofitted into spaces that were never purpose-built to house administrative staff.

3.0 Staff Support

The programmed Staff Support areas include staff locker rooms and showers, roll call/shift briefing rooms, training rooms, a mock cell for staff training, a small fitness room, a breakroom, and a quiet/respice room. This will provide better, more welcoming spaces for staff that will help with staff retention and wellbeing. It will also consolidate spaces that are currently in both the downtown facility and the work center locations into one single location, improving operational efficiencies.

4.0 Security Operations

The programmed Security Operations areas include office space for the Security Chief and administration staff, the control room and associated sally port areas, emergency response team muster room and storage area, and the armory storage areas. These areas



will all be purpose-built in locations that are operationally efficient and provide the most logical location for these spaces where the activities are most likely to occur. The location and adjacency of the control room to the lobby provides better oversight into persons entering and exiting the secure portions of the building.

5.0 Intake/Release

Several programmed activities will take place within this area. A secure, vehicular sallyport sized to accommodate standard rescue and emergency vehicles and a passenger bus has been programmed. The pre-admissions processing area will include space for arresting officers to secure arrestees, provide for diversion interview screening, perform breathalyzer screening, and other pre-admissions screening activities. This will significantly enhance the areas over what is currently provided at the downtown facility.

In the intake processing area, spaces programmed include a purpose-built full body scanner area, changeout and property staging areas, secure holding areas, intake processing areas, healthcare triage and examination room, a mental health screening room, an interview room, and classification screening areas. This area also has a staff breakroom in an area that will be operationally efficient for them to do so. This area includes the inmate property area, the staging for intake and release of property, and a washer/dryer for intake clothing when appropriate. Additionally, this area includes the transport and release areas, where inmates will either be released from custody, or released to transport to other facilities such as Department of Corrections. This will provide increased space over what is at the current facility, include more purpose-built interview and triage spaces, and provide better overall operational flow than what is at the current facility.

6.0 Courts

To allow for in-custody arraignment/first appearances, pre-trial hearings, motions, and similar functions without transporting inmates to the downtown Courthouse, a courtroom has been programmed into the jail. This will include space for a judge's bench, court clerk, prosecutor and defender, defendant seating, general and other seating. It will include a judge's chambers and workroom area for judges and staff when utilizing the courtroom space. This area will include holding cells for inmates awaiting court proceedings, 4 visitation booths, and interview rooms.

7.0 Housing



Total capacity is estimated to be between 450 and 460 beds across 9 main housing units -- 72-75% male and 22-25% female.

	Current Jail	New Facility
Bed Count	359 - 427	450 - 460
Operating Capacity	~ 300	~ 410
Male Beds	370	360
Female Beds	57	96
Behavioral Health Focused Beds	0	120
Medical / Detox Beds	14	40

	Cell Type	Total Beds	Subunits	Male	Female	BH Beds	Med/Detox Beds
Unit 1	Quad	48	0	48	0	0	0
Unit 2	Quad	48	0	48	0	0	0
Unit 3	Single	48	2	48	0	0	0
Unit 4	Single	56	2	32	24	32	0
Unit 5	Mixed quad/single	64	4	0	64	8	0
Unit 6	Quad	64	0	64	0	0	0
Unit 7	Single	40	5	24	16	40	0
Unit 8	Quad	48	0	48	0	48	0
Unit 9	Mixed Medical	40	2	28	12	0	40

Unit 1 – Male Orientation – 48 beds, 12 quad units (7.100)

Cell Type	Total Beds	Subunits	Male	Female	BH Beds	Med/Detox Beds
Quad	48	0	48	0	0	0

This unit will ideally be used for the first up-to 48 hours for inmates, until they are released or classified into another unit. This unit is proposed to share its outdoor rec area with another unit.

Unit 2 – Male Medium Custody – 48 beds, 12 quad units (7.100)

Cell Type	Total Beds	Subunits	Male	Female	BH Beds	Med/Detox Beds
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Quad	48	0	48	0	0	0
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This is essentially the same unit as Unit 1 in terms of the programmed space, though it will house medium-custody inmates. This unit is proposed to share its outdoor rec area with another unit.

Unit 3 – Male General Population Maximum & Restrictive Housing – 48 single occupancy beds (7.300)

Cell Type	Total Beds	Subunits	Male	Female	BH Beds	Med/Detox Beds
Single	48	2	48	0	0	0

This unit consists of one principal unit of 24 single occupancy cells. Each cell could be turned into a double occupancy cell in the future. The principal unit has its own dayroom. There are also two sub-pods, each with 12 single occupancy cells. Each cell could be turned into a double occupancy cell in the future. Each sub-pod has its own dayroom as well. This unit provides for future flexibility in classification. Because this is intended for a maximum and restrictive housing classification, this unit will have its own outdoor recreation area.

Unit 4 – Flex Unit 1 – 32-bed Male Behavioral Health, Special Needs and Protective Custody, 24-bed Female Restrictive Housing and Maximum Custody (7.400)

Cell Type	Total Beds	Subunits	Male	Female	BH Beds	Med/Detox Beds
Single	56	2	32	24	32	0

This unit includes two sub-units, which will share one outdoor recreation area. The first houses 32 males in single cells for the Behavioral health, special needs and protective custody populations. This area will include its own dayroom. The second sub-unit will house 24 females in single occupancy cells for maximum custody and restrictive housing classifications. There will be sight/sound barriers between the two sub-units.

Unit 5 – Female General Population Minimum/Medium custody, Work Force, Orientation, Protective Custody, and Behavioral Health / Special Needs – 64 beds. (7.600)



Cell Type	Total Beds	Subunits	Male	Female	BH Beds	Med/Detox Beds
Mixed quad/single	64	4	0	64	8	0

This unit will house the majority of the female population. The principal unit will have 32 beds in 8-quad bed cells. There will then be 4 sub-pods of 8 single occupancy cells each to allow for maximum classification opportunities for workforce, orientation, protective custody, and behavioral health/special needs classifications. This unit will have its own outdoor recreation area.

Unit 6 – Work Force – Minimum Custody – 64 beds, 16 quad units (7.100)

This is essentially the same type of unit as Unit 1 in terms of the programmed space, though it will house work-force inmates. This unit is proposed to share its outdoor rec area with another unit.

Cell Type	Total Beds	Subunits	Male	Female	BH Beds	Med/Detox Beds
Quad	48	0	48	0	0	0

Unit 7 – Flex Unit 4 - Behavioral Health – Acute 24 Male, 16 Female. (8.400)

Cell Type	Total Beds	Subunits	Male	Female	BH Beds	Med/Detox Beds
Single	40	5	24	16	40	0

This is one of the more complex units programmed for the facility. It includes a multipurpose room, interview room, and one outdoor recreation area shared among the inmates. The male side of the unit is meant to house those with acute mental health needs. The principal unit on the male side has 3 safety cells, and a calming room off the dayroom. There are then three sub-pods off this principal unit with 8 single occupancy cells each, and each sub-pod has their own dayroom.

On the female side, the principal unit will house sub-acute behavioral health inmates in 10 single occupancy cells and also includes a calming room and a room for a mental health clinician within the space. There is then a sub-pod consisting of 4 single occupancy cells for acute mental health inmates, and 2 safety cells with a dayroom within the sub-pod. Sight and sound separation will be provided between the male and female sides of the unit.

**Unit 8 – Behavioral Health Subacute – Male 48 beds (8.500)**

Cell Type	Total Beds	Subunits	Male	Female	BH Beds	Med/Detox Beds
Quad	48	0	48	0	48	0

This unit is for the male subacute population and will house 48 males in 12 quad-bed cells. This unit includes an interview room, mental health clinical office, calming room, and its own outdoor recreation area.

Unit 9 – Flex Unit 3 – Medical & Detox – Single occupancy – 40 beds (8.300)

Cell Type	Total Beds	Subunits	Male	Female	BH Beds	Med/Detox Beds
Mixed Medical	40	2	28	12	0	40

This is the medical unit for the jail. It provides for a nurse's station, medical supply storage, occupancy in shared and single rooms for males and females, as well as spaces for safe and supervised detox to occur. While a traditional outdoor recreation space is not provided, a smaller fresh air court will be provided for patients in this area as the expectation is that inmates here will only be staying short-term and transitioning out to other classifications.

Each unit will have access to an outdoor rec area (though some of these will be shared between units) as well as a multi-purpose room within the unit so that programs can be brought to each unit. Most of the units also have privacy carrels that can be used with multifunctional tablets that will be used for video visitation purposes. Each unit will be built as a hybrid supervision model to allow for either direct or indirect supervision as staffing allows. This program provides an increase in available beds over the current jail, especially for the female population. It also provides an improved opportunity for classification in the facility with several of the units having sub-pods. Each unit will have access to a recreation area, and programming space, which the current jail does not have. A brief overview of each unit is provided below.

8.0 Health Care

The programmed Health Care area includes administration space for staff such as office space, and medical records storage. In the Clinic Services area, space is programmed to include interview rooms, lab, exam rooms, a dental exam room, and general medical



supplies. This will greatly increase the examination areas, storage space, administrative space, and efficiency over what is currently available in the jail.

9.0 Visitation

In addition to visitation provided in the Court area, 10 in-person visitation booths will be provided, and will be located near the public lobby. The types and locations of visitation booths will increase access for professionals and attorneys.

10. Programs and Services

This area is programmed for housing support, classifications and records, the emergency response team muster room, two video arraignment booths, a large multipurpose classroom, and a small multipurpose/counseling room. Several of these functions are currently disparate, and the new facility will be programmed to make one cohesive unit that will better support the in-custody population.

11. Food Service

The Food Service area is programmed to include space for staff, staff dining, and the kitchen. The kitchen will have walk-in coolers/freezers, storage, prep areas, and typical kitchen equipment. This will provide an increase of approximately five times the current kitchen at the downtown jail, which is a needed improvement for operations, safety, and efficiency.

12.0 Laundry

The Laundry area will include space for three large and one small each of washers and dryers, areas for soiled and clean holding, folding and sorting tables, and other cleaning needs. This space will be a much larger, safer, and more efficient space than what is at the current downtown facility, which is currently shared with the kitchen.

13.0 Warehouse / Commissary

The programmed warehouse is sized to approximately 1,100 square feet. It also includes small mailroom. The size of this warehouse is likely to be undersized compared to the storage needs of the new facility.

14.0 Maintenance / Central Plant



Justice Facility & Behavioral Health Treatment Center
Program Scope Summary
June 16, 2026

This area is programmed for Facilities Management staff to store materials and make repairs on site for the jail. This should allow for more operationally efficient maintenance activities to occur on site.