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COUNCIL MEETING  
 COMMITTEE  
EXHIBIT: \_\_\_\_\_

## Address to Council on Ballot Proposition Ordinance

Good evening, Councilmembers and members of public.

I want to say several things in support of the ordinance.

First, this proposal is strikingly different than previous proposals. The development process was different – it was centered around extensive community input over 18 months, which started with Stakeholders Advisory Committee in Jan 2022, which ended with some 40 recommendations.

Then the extraordinary work of the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force and Stakeholder Advisory Committee took about six months, and, more recently County Council collaboration and many individual consultations with council members.

And the results of this process are also very positive for our community. The results are also much different than in the past 10 years. The resulting “Justice Project Implementation Plan” is very evenly and intentionally balanced to emphasize on “treatment over incarceration.” All investments are directed towards incarceration reduction and community programs in a new safe and humane jail facility.

I also want to make it clear that this process does not end with tonight’s vote, nor will it end with November’s vote. The ordinance and the Justice Project Implement Plan provide for continued oversight and input from the County Council, Finance Advisory Board, Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force which includes but

not limited to development of jail design, various treatment facilities, professional services and community programs.

I trust our ability to continue working collaboratively to find solutions that meet our needs – both for community-based services and for a jail that supports rehabilitation and re-entry.

Finally, we are not going to be able to achieve a perfect solution. We simply do not have enough resources. As I have said before, the proposed ordinance strikes a balance; it is a great compromise. It creates a pathway to secure funding to build a jail that is adequately sized and better able to address the behavioral health needs of people in jail while also supporting community-based services.

Whatcom County is a vibrant and diverse community, and the proposal in front of you tonight addresses our community's broad spectrum of priorities. I see this as an opportunity for collaboration, compromise, and unity.

And I strongly urge you to support the ordinance.