

**From:** [Steven Harris](#)  
**To:** [Council](#); [Satpal Sidhu](#); [Tyler Schroeder](#)  
**Cc:** [korthuiss@lyndenwa.org](mailto:korthuiss@lyndenwa.org); [MY -](#); [Eric Richey](#)  
**Subject:** Draft Sales Tax Ballot Language  
**Date:** Monday, June 12, 2023 9:20:03 PM  
**Attachments:** [Ballot Language\\_SH\\_draft.docx](#)

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All,

Please consider the language in the attached ballot proposition. While this language doesn't preclude the cities from receiving their per capita 40% share of the tax revenue, I believe the ballot language will control what the cities can expend the funds on. While I fully expect an inter-local agreement that would accomplish this, the ballot language will act as a very sturdy "guard rail" to ensure that we actually build a new jail.

I recognize that there are current plans to build a 23 hour crisis relief center. I'm not sure if new sales taxes are required to fund the capital costs and/or operation of this facility, but perhaps it makes sense to adjust the language to include this additional use of revenues prior to the bond proceeds trigger?

Otherwise, the language appears consistent with the draft ordinance language being proposed:

**"WHEREAS**, Resolution 2019-036 recognized that there are multiple deficiencies with the downtown public safety (jail) facility that include life-safety issues and that the cost of addressing the most significant issues are too high to continue into the future and the need for an appropriately sized replacement facility continues to be the most burdensome and needed capital issue that Whatcom County faces; and"

**"WHEREAS**, following passage of a voter-approved proposition for a sales and use tax, the County intends to issue general obligation bonds for the planning, design and construction costs of the facilities identified in the Justice Project Implementation Plan; and"

Section 3 - "The primary purpose of initial expenditures of the proceeds shall be to construct correctional and behavioral health facilities needed to promote public health and safety. Proceeds shall also support expansion of the incarceration reduction programs, access to behavioral health services and accountability measures to monitor progress and inform future planning."

In summary, I don't believe that anything in the ballot language runs afoul of the RCW. If there was a use agreement in place between the County and the Cities that accomplished the same purpose PRIOR to submitting the proposition to the public, then perhaps the language would be necessary. But, unfortunately I've learned from the 2004 sales tax that even the clearest intentions of elected officials doesn't always translate into clear action.

Thanks for the consideration,

Steve Harris

WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

PROPOSITION NUMBER 2023-\_\_\_\_\_

PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND JUSTICE SALES AND USE TAX

The Whatcom County Council passed Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_ concerning funding for public health, safety, and justice facilities and services. If approved, this proposition would authorize a sales and use tax of two-tenths of one percent (20 cents per \$100) for costs associated with behavioral health, housing, public safety, and criminal justice facilities and services, as authorized by RCW 82.14.450. If passed, 100% of the funds generated by the tax will be used by Whatcom County and the Cities therein for capital expenditures necessary (e.g. planning, design, debt service) for construction of a New Jail in Whatcom County. Such jail shall be initially sized to eliminate booking restrictions due to limited capacity. Upon issuance of the bonds necessary to finance the New Jail, funds generated by this tax (in excess of those required for debt service) may be used by Whatcom County and the Cities therein for any other purpose authorized by this proposition.

Should this proposition be approved?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

DRAFT

**From:** [Max Perry](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Jail Selection  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 14, 2023 7:51:45 AM

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Congratulations on your choice of jail location to put on the ballot. The Labounty location has so much favoring that location. I would hope the responsible voters in Whatcom County will back up the 6-0 (with 1 abstention) and vote for building the new jail in 'pods' at the LaBounty location.

Max and Carole Perry

**From:** [Helen H Campbell](#)  
**To:** [Council](#); [Kaylee Galloway](#); [Todd Donovan](#); [Tyler Byrd](#); [Kathy Kershner](#); [Ben Elenbaas](#); [Carol Frazey](#); [Satpal Sidhu](#); [Tyler Schroeder](#)  
**Subject:** Yesterday's work session  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 14, 2023 8:26:06 AM

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Dear Council & Executives Office,

After following the IPRTF for the past 5 years, and the Stakeholders Advisory Group, and the Implementation Planning, I had such high hopes. While I am somewhat disappointed in the final Implementation plan, I am exceptionally disappointed in the council's selection of LaBounty as the location for your new jail. At your work session yesterday, there was unfortunately not a focus on a simultaneous mental health facility mentioned, just the jail. What a waste of time and effort. You might be "hearing" your constituents' comments, but you are NOT listening to their concerns.

It costs less to build a one story building, according to estimates from the executives office. Did they show you how they arrived at their numbers? No they did not. You won't see the numbers until you're ready to vote to introduce the ordinance. Rushing this through is a really bad way to move forward.

Your one story building has a much larger carbon footprint - but to heck with climate issues. It will have much higher heating and cooling costs and a much larger roof to maintain. Have ongoing building maintenance costs been calculated? And what about the costs of transporting inmates/residents to and from the courthouse and to and from the crisis center or the hospital. Have those been contemplated in your plan? What about the extra cost for the attorneys and families to come visit, was that even considered? (Heaven forbid we consider the families) Does the executive's office have estimates of those long term costs to the family members and taxpayers? And what are the long term climate costs with more vehicles on the road? It's not just about building a building, it's also the entire long term cost to the community and to the climate.

There is still time to rethink your decision. Of the choices, Division St is a much superior location. It's next to the Ann Deacon Center, closer to the court house, closer to the hospital and assorted services. Building up is a reasonable option. (Just look at all the urban village structures going up in Bellingham.) Please do a full cost analysis and please reconsider the location. This taxpayer is willing to pay to build up.

LaBounty is a no go for so many people, and a main reason it failed last time. What are you going to do when it fails for a third time? What a waste of time and effort, for you just to repackage the same old jail proposal.

In disappointment,

Helen Campbell  
3780 Brownsville PL  
Bellingham, WA 98226  
[hhcampbell@comcast.net](mailto:hhcampbell@comcast.net)

**From:** [IPRTaskForce](#)  
**To:** [Jill Nixon](#)  
**Subject:** Justice Project Implementation Plan | An Update  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 14, 2023 2:42:16 PM  
**Attachments:** [image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)

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## Dear community partners:

We're pleased to share an update on the Draft Justice Project Implementation Plan: what it is, how we got here, and how you can continue to share your feedback on the Draft Plan.

### **Thank You for Your Feedback!**

Thank you to all who shared feedback on Whatcom County's Draft Justice Project Implementation Plan. The [Implementation Plan](#) will guide our work to continue to transform our criminal legal and behavioral health systems to serve **our entire community's** health and safety.

If you haven't yet been able to contribute your feedback to the Draft Plan, it is not too late! Reach out to County Council at [council@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:council@co.whatcom.wa.us), call 360.778.5010, or join a County Council meeting to share your feedback on the Draft Plan. [Additional information on how to contact the Council.](#)

## Draft Justice Project Implementation Plan | An Overview

### How Did We Get Here?

Earlier this year, the Justice Project's Stakeholder Advisory Committee delivered a Needs Assessment to County Council, identifying current and future needs for services, systems, and facilities to address the underlying causes of incarceration; provide treatment for substance and behavioral health needs; and when necessary, incarcerate people with dignity and professional care. The Council accepted the assessment and committed to developing a plan to identify projects and actions to address its findings. The Justice Project Implementation Plan was then drafted under the leadership of the County Executive and Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force (IPRTF) with input from directly impacted communities and key stakeholders. The Draft Plan was presented to our community as a whole at our May Town Hall,

and is currently moving through additional public comment and evolution.

## What's Next for the Draft Justice Project Implementation Plan?

Here's what happens next:

- June 20 | County Council's Committee of the Whole workshop on elements of the draft plan
- July 11 | County Council considers an ordinance to accept the Plan
- Implementation begins if County Council adopts ordinance

Visit the IPR Task Force and subcommittee [meeting calendar](#) for the most up-to-date meeting information.

## Follow the Task Force's Work

Continue to follow the IPR Task Force's work to transform public safety in Whatcom County:



[Sign up for email notifications](#)

[Visit our website](#)

[Visit us on Facebook](#)

Whatcom County Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force

Jill Nixon, IPRTF Clerk

Whatcom County Council Office

311 Grand Ave., Suite 105

Bellingham, WA 98225

360-778-5010

*Notice: All email and attachments sent to and from Whatcom County are public records and may be subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act (RCW 42.56)*



Legislative Coordinator II

Whatcom County Council Office

311 Grand Ave., Suite 105

Bellingham, WA 98225

360-778-5010

*Notice: All email and attachments sent to and from Whatcom County are public records and may be subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act (RCW 42.56)*

**From:** [dbobena@yahoo.com](mailto:dbobena@yahoo.com)  
**To:** [Council](#); [Barry Buchanan](#); [Kaylee Galloway](#); [Todd Donovan](#); [Carol Frazey](#); [Ben Elenbaas](#); [Tyler Byrd](#); [Kathy Kershner](#)  
**Cc:** [Satpal Sidhu](#); [mayorsoffice@cob.org](mailto:mayorsoffice@cob.org); [cmail@cob.org](mailto:cmail@cob.org); [Health](#); [Public Health Advisory Board](#)  
**Subject:** Regarding your actions related to the Justice Project Implementation Plan  
**Date:** Thursday, June 15, 2023 8:47:00 AM

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Dear Whatcom County Council:

I have listened to the initial hour and a half portion of your June 13, 2023 Special Committee of the Whole workshop on the Justice Project that focused on addressing the Justice Project Implementation Plan.

I want to note that there was a lot of discussion about increasing the capacity to incarcerate people with a new jail facility and that Council Members approved a motion to define the equation that Whatcom County would use for the number of beds that will be proposed initially and what triggers expansion as soon as possible. I have heard officials suggest such a formula would include provisions that expansion would be triggered if the facility is at an 85% capacity for some number of months during a year, which I assume would include an annual review.

However, while Council Members have made remarks that reflect they are supportive of reducing incarceration, there was no motion made to call for an equation that could involve a yearly review on when to expand health and diversion services available at the jail into former incarceration spaces, as well as expansion of services elsewhere in the community, with such an annual review. If the implementation plan is supposed to be providing a balance of services, it seems important to include such an equation based on a decrease of incarceration into the implementation plan if you are including the one for incarceration growth.

If we don't provide ample services, inside the jail - and most importantly, outside the jail - an ever-expanding jail will continue to fail us. Without actions that incentivize officials to stay engaged on projects that prevent and reduce incarceration, trust from community members will continue to deteriorate.

Additionally, I want to support the suggestion during the meeting that Council Members take action to review and more thoroughly incorporate the input which was provided by community members to the 5/31/23 draft of the Justice Project Implementation Plan. Although Council Member Elenbaas expressed there has been a long period of input on the Justice Project and indicated that he feels Council should be ready to make the decisions without further community input, the input on the 5/31/23 draft was requested this month, with a deadline for input of June 11, just 2 days prior to your workshop.

There was actually very little discussion of the input at the June 12, 2023



Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force meeting related to any changes in the draft plan and it appeared that very few changes were adopted at that time. Additionally, the amended version of the plan was not included in the IPRTF copy of the packet for the June 12 meeting that was linked to online, so the community only had the brief presentation on the changes to get a sense of what was changed. There is a call for transparency and accountability in the very first strategy listed in the implementation plan. I believe you all should be taking this action to create alignment with that strategy.

Sincerely,  
Dena Jensen  
Birch Bay, WA

[dbobena@yahoo.com](mailto:dbobena@yahoo.com)

**From:** [dbobena@yahoo.com](mailto:dbobena@yahoo.com) <[dbobena@yahoo.com](mailto:dbobena@yahoo.com)>

**Sent:** Thursday, June 15, 2023 10:24:36 AM (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)

**To:** IPRTaskForce <[IPRTaskForce@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:IPRTaskForce@co.whatcom.wa.us)>

**Subject:** Fw: Regarding your actions related to the Justice Project Implementation Plan

Dear Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force:

I had sent this email to the Whatcom County Council earlier this morning and missed copying it to you, so I am sending it now. Also, in addition to my calling for the County Council take such an action as I describe in the included email, I feel that you should also work to advance an equation that would be used on a regular basis to trigger expanding behavioral health and other urgently needed services for community members in crisis both at the jail and in the greater community.

I recall that Task Force Members had indicated it was desirable for the structure of the jail to be flexible so that spaces could be used for other purposes if jail population was successfully decreased. I believe it is important for you to take actions that help spur that outcome, especially when there is action being taken that will help spur increasing incarceration instead.

Sincerely,  
Dena Jensen  
Birch Bay, WA

[dbobena@yahoo.com](mailto:dbobena@yahoo.com)

**From:** [megan.m](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Feedback Concerning the Justice Project  
**Date:** Thursday, June 15, 2023 3:56:28 PM

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Hi Council members,

I am emailing you to provide feedback about the justice project and implementation plan about the construction of a new jail in our county. I do appreciate that you have reached out to the community to provide feedback, and I appreciate that you seem interested in trying to provide services for people. My concern is mainly that you seem to want to help people, increase services, and divert people from incarceration, so why are you spending so much money in building a jail? What I would like to see in this plan is funding of services, specifically no-barrier housing, funds for free medical services, investment in optional mental health services and treatment centers, that are not attached to the carceral system in any way. I am asking you to remove the construction of a new jail from your plan. I also am asking you to take steps to release the people currently incarcerated in the existing WCJ and work center and youth facility.

You recognize that the current jail is an absolute wreck, yet you continue to house people in there, and have continued adding people and overcrowding in there. Your own findings show that the majority of people incarcerated have a diagnosed mental illness, with up to 80% of people with a substance abuse disorder. Your own findings show that 90% of people are held pretrial, with a large portion of that being because they can't afford to pay bail. In your survey you found that over 40% of people in jail are unhoused on the street or in vehicles (I assume the number is higher if you include the people in unstable and temporary housing conditions, such as staying with friends). I have seen the reasons why police arrest unhoused people, and it is usually for absolute classist reasons, that harm no one, and yet are labeled as "violent crimes." Cops are constantly harassing encampments, constantly patrolling where homeless people hang around, and generally treating unhoused people with disrespect. People are getting arrested for "litter" "property damage" "trespassing" when they are literally just trying to survive without any stable resources. These are the types of charges given to people when they are literally just with their things and trying to sleep. Why do you care about the sanctity of sidewalks and empty buildings more than the actual human people in your community? I also know a lot of people are on the streets in the first place because of medical conditions, such as having cancer or having to pay for the treatment of loved ones, and it cost them their housing. I know a lot of people are forced to start using drugs in the first place because they are living in insecure conditions, without money to pay for their medications, and ultimately need substances to cope with the trauma they are being forced to survive under. All the while, cops are constantly telling people to move, taking their stuff, and treating them as subhuman. I've seen it! I've seen one person get arrested for trespassing literally for trying to get her purse while a cop was sweeping her tent. I've seen people get arrested and charged with "property damage" because they and their friends set up an encampment on not-in-use land where they were trying to survive together. I've seen people get charged with "arson" for standing around a fire when trying to survive freezing weather in the winter at night. The list goes on and on and on. If you talk to your unhoused constituents--and I mean TALK. Without cops there, without an aura of superiority, and with a genuine want to learn and understand, maybe then you can understand how awful the "justice" system is here.

And you are telling me you want to build another jail, with OUR money, which will forcibly

lock US up. And you justify this by saying there will be services there. What? First of all, these services don't currently exist, the money and funds you have are going into the jail before these services, and even once these do exist, they are tied to the jail and courts, forcing people into things, traumatically, against their own will and autonomy and agency. Have you been locked in a mental facility against your will? Have you been told to detox and receive treatment with the knowledge that if you fail you get sent to jail? What do you think that feels like? Is that what real, healthy, helpful services means to you? You haven't even genuinely TRIED other options. No barrier housing, in which people and families are able to feel secure and safe in their own space, costs WAY less than this jail. We could make sure every person in Whatcom is housed for less than \$200 million. We could invest in medical care, substance abuse places, community gatherings, and plenty of other things with that money. Your own stats show that 93% of people in jail have been to jail before. Clearly, jail doesn't work. Why are we approaching our fellow community members with the want to isolate, punish, and incarcerate? Why can't we seek to house and care and show kindness instead? Can't we at LEAST try????

I also want to be clear, the people have voted against a new jail. Not once. Twice. I find it hard to believe you care about the public's opinion when you don't listen when we tell you "no." You interview and survey us and then spin those around to try to use whatever means possible to build another jail. That's not LISTENING. That's manipulating our wants and needs in order for you to push what YOU want and WE don't--a new jail. Additionally, I find it hard to believe that you care about providing service and decarceration, when you have crammed as many people as possible in the current jail, you continue sweeping homeless encampments with the very police force that fills the jails, the "alternate services" that exist are heavily invested in using the police and courts which also work to fill the jail, and you keep people incarcerated in conditions that are literally deadly. People kill themselves in your jail from the conditions in it, people have died from medical neglect from your jail, people have been denied medications in your jail ROUTINELY (until a civil lawsuit found you in violation of civil rights). I do believe you when you say you care, I think you do want what is best. I just think you are incredibly misguided in what care and safety and freedom means. And I hope you understand, given the circumstances, why we don't believe or trust in you, when the current jail is the type of thing you have produced and caged us in.

Close the current jail. Do not build a new jail. Use our money to fund optional, healthy, healing services and no-barrier housing.

Thank you,  
Megan McAllister  
Resident of Bellingham, Whatcom County

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**From:** [dbobena@yahoo.com](mailto:dbobena@yahoo.com) <[dbobena@yahoo.com](mailto:dbobena@yahoo.com)>

**Sent:** Sunday, June 18, 2023 11:41:19 AM (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)

**To:** [ccmail@cob.org](mailto:ccmail@cob.org) <[ccmail@cob.org](mailto:ccmail@cob.org)>; [mayorsoffice@cob.org](mailto:mayorsoffice@cob.org) <[mayorsoffice@cob.org](mailto:mayorsoffice@cob.org)>

**Cc:** Council <[Council@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:Council@co.whatcom.wa.us)>; IPRTaskForce <[IPRTaskForce@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:IPRTaskForce@co.whatcom.wa.us)>; Health <[Health@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:Health@co.whatcom.wa.us)>; Public Health Advisory Board <[PHAB@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:PHAB@co.whatcom.wa.us)>; G. CC.

Immigration Board <[immigrationboard@cob.org](mailto:immigrationboard@cob.org)>; Rep. Sharon Shewmake

<[sharon.shewmake@leg.wa.gov](mailto:sharon.shewmake@leg.wa.gov)>; Rep. Joe Timmons <[joe.timmons@leg.wa.gov](mailto:joe.timmons@leg.wa.gov)>; Alicia Rule

Legislative <[alicia.rule@leg.wa.gov](mailto:alicia.rule@leg.wa.gov)>; Sen. Liz Lovelett <[liz.lovelett@leg.wa.gov](mailto:liz.lovelett@leg.wa.gov)>; Alex Ramel

<[alex.ramel@leg.wa.gov](mailto:alex.ramel@leg.wa.gov)>; Rep. Debra Lekanoff <[debra.lekanoff@leg.wa.gov](mailto:debra.lekanoff@leg.wa.gov)>

**Subject:** Calling for action to avoid exacerbating an ongoing overdose epidemic

Dear Bellingham City Council and Mayor Fleetwood:

I am sending this link to a Vice News article, "[More People Die of Overdoses After Cops Seize Drugs: Study.](#)" The study that is referenced was published on June 7, 2023 in the journal of the American Public Health Association and was funded by the Center for Disease Control. The study is titled, "[Spatiotemporal Analysis Exploring the Effect of Law Enforcement Drug Market Disruptions on Overdose, Indianapolis, Indiana, 2020–2021](#)"

The article presents a number of scenarios and observations related to the findings of the study that echo the input of many people with lived experience and other experts in various fields. It's important to take the findings of the study under serious and urgent consideration. We must take effective life-saving and restorative actions rather than contributing to the increase of personal damage and death. The study findings can be especially pertinent during the current fentanyl overdose crisis.

It would also be valuable for you to discuss the findings of this study with community members and all organizations calling for interventions related to controlled substance availability and use in Bellingham and Whatcom County.

The Conclusion of the study states:

"Supply-side enforcement interventions and drug policies should be further explored to determine whether they exacerbate an ongoing overdose epidemic and negatively affect the nation's life expectancy. (*Am J Public Health*. 2023;113(7):750–758. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2023.307291>)"

This recent study, paired with the long history of failure of the war on drugs in general should lead us ever more promptly in the direction of harm reduction measures and providing resources that not only address causes of

controlled substance use, but that build the kind of wellbeing and empowerment which thwarts oppression and mistreatment in our communities.

Sincerely,  
Dena Jensen  
Birch Bay, WA

[dbobena@yahoo.com](mailto:dbobena@yahoo.com)

From: [Steve Jones](#)  
 To: [John Williams](#)  
 Cc: [John Williams](#); [Cecilia](#); [Susan Williams](#); [Darryl Buchanan](#)  
 Subject: Three potential site locations  
 Date: Wednesday, June 23, 2021, 8:07:18 PM  
 Attachments: [Screenshot 2021-06-23 at 8:06:52 PM](#)  
[Screenshot 2021-06-23 at 8:06:52 PM](#)

Tyler,

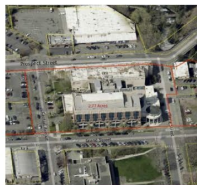
Can you please explain the apparent discrepancy with your cost estimates for a new facility based on the 430 bed, 157,180 SF size as shown in the below screenshot of the Draft Implementation Plan. Using simple math from your cost estimates shown in the 5/23/23 presentation to Council.

Labours Property - \$137M (\$528/SF); 137,000,000/528 = 259,469 sq ft facility  
 Irongate Property - \$170M (\$630/SF); 170,000,000/630 = 269,841 sq ft facility  
 Civic Center - \$207M (\$704/SF)

<b>Conceptual Estimate of Total Sq. Ft.</b> <u>these calculations were developed solely for the purpose of estimating the costs of construction at three different locations, in either a vertical or horizontal design</u>	<b>157,180 Sq. Ft.</b>
<b>Housing Pod (include medical/BH, recreation, classrooms, visitation, etc.)</b>	<b>93,500</b>

This estimate of 430 beds was used specifically for the purposes of estimating the costs of building a facility using either a vertical or horizontal design at each of the three properties owned by the County. The estimate did not, however, account for population growth, the end of booking

	<u>(9,350 sq. ft./pod X 10)</u>
<b>Medical, Dental, Behavioral Care</b>	<b>12,000</b>
<b>Booking</b>	<b>6,867</b>
<b>Kitchen Area</b>	<b>4,451</b>
<b>Facilities/Laundry</b>	<b>5,400</b>
<b>Sheriff's Office Area/Lockers</b>	<b>10,227</b>
<b>Circulation/Chase</b>	<b>24,735</b>



**Civic Center**

- Adjacent to courthouse
- 1.3 acres developable
- Vertical design
- Cost estimate: ~\$207M (\$704/sf)



**Irongate**

- 9-12 mins. to courthouse
- 10.6+ acres, 5 developable (demo Work Cntr.)
- Vertical design
- Limited opportunities for co-location
- Cost estimate: ~\$170M (\$630/sf)



**Labounty**

- 12-15 mins to courthouse
- 39+ acres, 16+ developable
- Horizontal design
- Maximum potential for co-location
- Cost estimate: ~\$137M (\$528/sf)

**From:** [Steven Harris](#)  
**To:** [Tyler Schroeder](#)  
**Cc:** [Satpal Sidhu](#); [Council](#); [Kaylee Galloway](#); [Barry Buchanan](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Three potential site cost estimates  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 21, 2023 8:27:13 PM

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Sorry, I missed the Civic Center math -  $207,000,000/704 = 294,034$  sq ft facility.

Also, just for reference, the King County SCORE facility is 164,000sf and houses 813 inmates. <https://www.lydig.com/projects/justice/south-correctional-entity-score>

Am I missing something here?

On Jun 21, 2023, at 8:06 PM, Steven Harris <[stevenbharris1@gmail.com](mailto:stevenbharris1@gmail.com)> wrote:

Tyler,

Can you please explain the apparent discrepancy with your cost estimates for a new facility based on the 430 bed, 157,180 SF size as shown in the below screenshot of the Draft Implementation Plan. Using simple math from your cost estimates shown in the 5/23/23 presentation to Council.

Labounty Property: ~\$137M (\$528/SF):  $137,000,000/528 = 259,469$  sq ft facility  
Irongate Property: ~\$170M (\$630/SF):  $170,000,000/630 = 269,841$  sq ft facility  
Civic Center: ~\$207M (\$704/SF)

<Screenshot 2023-06-13 at 1.02.42 PM.png><Screenshot 2023-06-13 at 1.45.30 PM.png>



**From:** [Riveters Collective](#)  
**To:** [Satpal Sidhu](#); [Council](#)  
**Cc:** [SAC](#)  
**Subject:** Feedback on the draft jail funding ordinance  
**Date:** Thursday, June 22, 2023 10:25:52 AM  
**Attachments:** [Riveters Collective JSC jail ordinance feedback.pdf](#)

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Dear Executive Sidhu and Councilmembers,

Please review the attached letter which provides recommended changes for the draft jail funding ordinance. We hope you consider them and others suggested in the substitute draft ordinance presented by Councilmembers Galloway and Buchanon.

Sincerely,

Krystal Rodriguez  
Riveters Collective Justice System Committee





June 22, 2023

Dear Executive Sidhu and Councilmembers,

We have closely followed all the work by the Council and many citizen groups over the past year to develop a plan for addressing justice system concerns in Whatcom County. We would like to support passage of a ballot measure to raise funds; however, the draft ordinance seems to fall short when it comes to emphasizing prevention and treatment over incarceration, a priority shared at many town hall meetings, and through surveys and focus groups.

We would like the County to revise the ordinance language to correct this, as described below:

- Specify **monies collected from the sales tax will be evenly appropriated** between services and construction of the jail
- Require **oversight board members include those most impacted** (on the ground service providers, behavioral health and tribal members as well as those with lived experiences)
- **Ensure transparency** by frequently reporting to the public data regarding use of funds, outcomes, alignment with the Needs Assessment, etc.
- Include a process where a **third party evaluates goals, progress, and accountability** for funds spent using the Needs Assessment and recommendations by the Stakeholders Advisory Group.

We are at a crisis situation in the County and this money appropriation has the potential to fund a huge shift in our local justice system, if implemented and continually evaluated for best results.

Please consider revising the ballot measure to spell out how this will be accomplished, so we can vote with confidence on monies that the County will collect and spend over the next 30 years.

Sincerely,

Justice System Committee  
Riveters Collective

**From:** [dbobena@yahoo.com](mailto:dbobena@yahoo.com)  
**To:** [Council](#); [Barry Buchanan](#); [Kaylee Galloway](#); [Todd Donovan](#); [Carol Frazey](#); [Tyler Byrd](#); [Ben Elenbaas](#); [Kathy Kershner](#)  
**Cc:** [Satpal Sidhu](#); [IPRTaskForce](#); [Health](#); [ccmail@cob.org](mailto:ccmail@cob.org); [mayoroffice@cob.org](mailto:mayoroffice@cob.org); [Public Health Advisory Board](#)  
**Subject:** Related to arguments that we need a larger jail  
**Date:** Monday, June 26, 2023 12:44:19 PM

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Dear Whatcom County Council:

I wanted to address arguments, such as Sherrif Elfo's, which promote the idea that we need a much larger jail than the one cost estimates have been provided for at this point, ignore how the need to utilize the jail would change should we ever sufficiently prioritize and fund amply accessible and supported services. This means not only discussing services, figuring out what deficiencies and gaps we have, more widely bringing in voices of those who come up against deficiencies and gaps, planning services and ways to eliminate barriers, but also actually, promptly, funding and providing resources to drive them forward.

Jails are predominately for short-time stays. Even with a big list of folks that booking restrictions aren't allowing in jail, with backlogs cleared, most of those folks should be in there quick, and then be assigned means to address their violations, whether recovery or restorative courts, community service, electric home monitoring, etc., and they then should move on.

The fact that we have so many pre-trial folks being held indefinitely is an abhorrent anomaly. It's the same with those needing competency restoration. And we currently have officials and community members working to address these mistreatments. As a community we need to be making sure mistreatments don't ever happen again - including those, for example where mold is not cleaned in the jail to keep it within health department standards, or delaying access to clean in-tact sleeping mats to jail residents until mats are in a shredded condition, or not promptly providing evacuation routes/procedures, or not promptly taking action to make identified life-safety renovations - because when we talk about people violating people's rights, threatening their safety, and needing to be held accountable, these are instances of state and local officials violating people's rights, threatening their safety, and needing to be held accountable.

When services are deficient or there are high barriers to accessing those, it is much more likely to require coercion and detention to try to force them to choose to endure things that seem impossible for folks suffering instability and mental and physical challenges to endure.

So it stands to reason, if we don't focus on services that help people become stable and able to be a part of wellbeing in their community, then bigger and bigger jails and longer stays are all we can look forward to. And sadly, a town like Ferndale could end up being laden with that burden and

disgrace.

The whole process for the Justice Project was supposed to be, at the very least, about balancing the needs for services and a jail. The current implementation plan and ordinance hasn't pulled that off. The scale is tipped early and financially for the jail and that leaves us with deficient and delayed resources for the things that will diminish the amount of people entering incarceration and diminishing their length of stay there.

Not repeating history means moving away from what hasn't worked. Nationally it's easy to see that the war on drugs, locking people up, and putting all that before trying to get people what they need to be successful, stable, and healthy are among those things that haven't worked. We need to keep pushing forward in the work we do together to do things differently.

Sincerely,  
Dena Jensen  
Birch Bay, WA

[dbobena@yahoo.com](mailto:dbobena@yahoo.com)

**From:** [HisGivenLand@comcast.net](mailto:HisGivenLand@comcast.net)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** UNFAIR TO TAKE OUR MONEY TO PAY INMATE DENTAL  
**Date:** Monday, June 26, 2023 6:23:02 PM

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Dear County Council Members,

I can't even believe that it is necessary for me to be writing to protest a decision to use taxpayer funds to finance jailbird dental care!

Are you out of your minds???? Meth-heads now just need to get arrested to get their very own dental plan???? And citizens who have not voted for this have to see their tax dollars spent on healthcare for law-breakers?

Any of you supporting this travesty of stewardship is also a criminal. You are stealing from taxpayers and using funds in a way that we taxpayers have not even gotten to weigh in on. I do have compassion for people who are in trouble, but like me, they still need to work and you should not award them free care with other people's money.

Can you tell that I am angry?

I hope so, and I hope that you will not pursue this madness and create more poverty among our law-abiding citizens....

As you give away the store, the people you are giving to will never pay anyone back and will just be a drag on society. So that makes you complicit in destroying, not managing our counties wealth and the well-being of our citizens.

Please reconsider this matter.

Michele Cameron, Everson, WA

**From:** [Liisa Wale](#)  
**To:** [Barry Buchanan](#); [Tyler Byrd](#); [Todd Donovan](#); [Ben Elenbaas](#); [Council](#); [Carol Frazey](#); [Kaylee Galloway](#); [Kathy Kershner](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Location for Whatcom County Jail  
**Date:** Sunday, July 2, 2023 5:54:26 PM

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Hello -

I am writing to you to state that I am very opposed with the Location that was picked for the Proposed Whatcom County jail that will be on the November Ballot. I can understand due to costs why that location was picked, but due to the location I will be voting against the Proposed Jail on November ballot. Yes, we do need to find a solution to the current jail that it is being used and falling apart, but location in Ferndale is not a good option.

Some of my reasons for voting against a new jail are :

- 1) The location is too remote and does not provide access to visitors and allows remote sentencing procedures (so you do not have to bus folks into Bellingham). This creates in my mind a way for the rest of us to forget there are folks in a jail and not good for folks who are working on healing.
- 2) While listening at the Town Hall meeting that was held about a month ago I heard one person who had been housed in the current jail talk about the condition of the mattresses. Why are these mattresses that are following apart and are thin not being replaced? It tells me that if the county can not replace something as minimal as a cot mattress how can I trust the county with my tax dollars to build a new jail. (after all, the taxpayers have been fooled before).
- 3) What I heard from the Task Force at the Town Hall led me to believe that services to help with healing and rehabilitation will only happen after the jail goes forward. So if the jail does not get approved by the voters the much needed services to help people will not? That is not OK. There is already money from the state that is supposed to help with healing and rehab. Why do we have to wait to have those services that are needed now? I personally have a family member that has a serious drug problem. Who after many years is finally getting the help they need, but it is not in the jail system. If they had gotten the assistance from the state (lives in a different state) back over a decade ago instead of being thrown in jail their life would be much different then it is now. Due to being in the prison system they now have difficulty finding work or housing.
- 4) The proposed jail location now has Apartments and new housing developments right next door that were not there 4 years ago. In fact, one of the Buildings that are renting over in Ferndale go for almost \$2,000 a month according to what I read online. If I rented that apartment and then found out a jail was there I would be looking legally to get out of my lease and letting the landlord know why . This proposed space would be much better served as a park for the people and their families that are moving into that neighborhood.

I have a number of other reasons why I am opposed to the jail location proposal, but will stop there for now.

Thank you for listening,

Liisa Wale  
Bellingham, WA

**From:** [Donna Loken](#)  
**To:** [Council](#); [Satpal Sidhu](#)  
**Subject:** Ballot proposal for a new Whatcom Co Jail and Behavioral Health center  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 5, 2023 10:10:22 AM

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Good Morning Councilman Buchanan and County Executive Sidhu

I have tried to follow as closely as possible the work that has been done in the past few years to get a new jail on the ballot and passed for Whatcom County. I know a great deal of research, outreach, expertise and hours has been devoted to this project by many people including all of you and the other Council members.

I support a new jail. The existing jail is deplorable for inmates. Honestly, I'm shocked that there are public servants even willing to work in those circumstances. Thank God for them.

**I'm writing you because I am waving a flag to try to get all of your attention. I don't know what part of all the discussions and cries for help with behavioral health you all did not hear but since it has not been prioritized for immediate action, the jail proposal is going to fail AGAIN. That will be devastating for inmates, employees, loved ones and all who have any affiliation with the criminal justice system in our county, not to mention those living on our streets and in our woods and the businesses and communities bearing the brunt of this sad social ill.**

Voters are expecting you to propose a jail and a complementary behavioral health facility, appropriately sized for the hundreds of those suffering from mental health crises **RIGHT NOW** and in the near future. They are expecting you to recommend funding to fulling staff and implement the needs of those incarcerated and in mental health crisis. If these two desperate needs are not proposed for the ballot in tandem being done simultaneously or actually with the focus on a behavioral health facility to serve hundreds, not a few dozen first, we are going to be right back to where we started. Please go back to the drawing board and revisit the recommendations of the Task force and others and try again. Bellingham voters will not support anything less at the ballot and what a grave loss for all of us .

Thank you

Donna Loken



**From:** [Jadyn Holmgren](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Urgent: Say NO to a new jail  
**Date:** Thursday, July 6, 2023 10:01:37 PM

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Hello Whatcom Council Members,

My name is Jadyn Holmgren, and I am a Bellingham resident. I write to you today to tell you that I oppose the building of a new jail in Whatcom County. The people of Whatcom County have already voted no on a new jail twice before. **We still say no.**

I oppose the building of a new jail because incarcerating humans is not the answer to solving crime. The answer, rather, is to provide humans with the necessities they need to live a dignified and just life: access to affordable housing, healthcare, food, and clean water. Without these basic necessities, crime will continue, not because people are inherently bad or deserve to be locked up, but because people are desperate. The answer to preventing crime is **PREVENTION** not detention. Having what we need to live just and dignified lives is what prevents crime.

With this, I urge you to fund care in the form of social services: housing, food, and healthcare, rather than a new jail. Let's work together to make this community a thriving place for all; a place where all people get their basic needs met. This truly is the only way to build a healthy and just community.

**Please, do the right thing:**

1. Stop the construction of the new jail
2. Close and empty the new jail; invest in social services and restorative justice, not incarceration
3. **Fund housing and human services**, not jails and cops.

With urgency,  
Jadyn Holmgren