

# Justice Project Update

## Q3 2024

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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

OCTOBER 22, 2024



# Whatcom County Justice Project

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In July 2023, the Whatcom County Council adopted Ordinance 2023- 039 and the Whatcom County Justice Project Needs Assessment Implementation Plan. The Plan includes fifteen interrelated projects, as well as nineteen “Year 1” strategies

Executive Branch largely tasked with Implementation of the plan; criminal justice policy issues largely reside with the other County elected officials

Quarterly reports to the Council and IPRTF



# Jail & Behavioral Care Center

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- Convened Finance and Facility Advisory Board; quarterly meetings on policy and budget issues related to the new jail and behavioral care center (jail size; configuration; operational model)
- Update on wetlands issues at LaBounty site
- RFQ for owner's rep moving forward late October; 1 additional FTE in Exec proposed budget
- Anticipate convening design tables in early 2025 (Sheriff, Prosecutor, PD, Courts, WCHCS)
- Early conversations with Prosecutor's Office on behavioral care center; Exec to convene internal partners in short order to build out program design
- County Facilities to present project update at November 6<sup>th</sup> Council meeting



# Crisis Relief Center

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- High-functioning interdepartmental workgroup (Facilities, Finance, WCHCS)
- \$14M+ Committed; including \$1M expected from City of Bellingham opioid settlement dollars; fundraising for project gap continues
- Expect to have A&E selected by end of December
- Expect to bid and select operator in early 2025
- Ongoing questions about operational model / costs; could bring policy discussion forward to Council

# Data

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- Dashboards: Jail Facility Usage; Progress toward commitments; Criminal Justice System metrics; Impact of services commitments
- Cross departmental use of \$245,000 JAG grant
- Contracting for evaluation plan; also exploring alternative pre-packaged tools
- New FTE in Information Services supporting WCHCS, Sheriff's Office, PD and PA with case management systems, usage reports, and getting systems to "talk"



# Services Expansions & Coordination

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- Diversion expansion: Overdose prevention and response; LEAD; MOUD training capacity building; SUDP expansions
- Regional conversation on youth inpatient needs – emerging as a top new priority
- Expanded transportation services through WCHCS Response Services Division
- Expecting \$7M grant for housing services for *Trueblood* class members!



# Medicaid Waiver & Jail Health

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- Selected as initial site for Medicaid Re-Entry waiver (health and case management services 90-days pre release)
- Sheriff's Office and Juvenile each awarded \$2.5M contracts for capacity building toward Medicaid "go live"
- Significant opportunity; need awareness around huge ramp up for Sheriff, Juvenile, Information Services, Finance, WCHCS.
- ...and big jail medical transition coming...



# Next Steps

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- 2025 will be a big year: Crisis Relief Design; Programming for the jail and behavioral care center; Jail entitlements; Trueblood grant startup; Jail health and Medicaid waiver implementation...and more!
- IPRTF and its subcommittees (including JPOP) and Finance and Facility Advisory Board will be key advisory bodies
- Policy and budget recommendations will be developed by the administration with input from the advisory bodies and then taken to Council for consideration
- Executive Office welcomes feedback on Council expectations