



MEMORANDUM

TO: County Council
THROUGH: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
FROM: Kayla Schott-Bresler, Deputy Executive
CC: Rob Ney, Facilities Director
Jed Holmes, Executive's Office
Chris Erb, Special Projects Manager (Facilities)
Hannah Fisk, Special Projects Manager (WCHCS)
Ashley McClaran & Adam Johnson, STV
RE: AB 2025-873: Discussion on Behavioral Care Center Model
DATE: December 1, 2025

Background

The [Justice Project Implementation Plan](#) calls for the construction of a Behavioral Care Center (BCC) as an alternative to jail for individuals eligible for prosecutorial diversion. The plan does not identify whether this is an in custody or out of custody facility, but its core policy goal is to prioritize treatment over incarceration while preserving public safety and reducing costs in the criminal legal system.

On November 5th, the Council heard a presentation from the IPRTF's BCC Workgroup regarding the proposed model for the Justice Project's BCC (attached). The Executive's Office has scheduled a council followup discussion for December 9th to discuss the remaining major decision points for this facility: service model (in or out of custody) and location.

Feedback from Advisory Boards and Community

Over several months, IPRTF members, criminal legal system leaders, and health professionals met to develop a behavioral care center model and have made the following recommendation to the Justice Project decision making bodies (FFAB, IPRTF, County Council):

"The IPRTF BCC Workgroup recommends adoption of the BCC Model that is part of an integrated off-site behavioral health campus providing inpatient, therapeutic, community-based care as an alternative to incarceration, rather than an in-custody model co-located with the new jail. The model incorporates four legal entry points agreed by courts, prosecutors, and defenders; a facility that allows for sufficient capacity to accommodate priority diversion referrals; eligibility for individuals charged with behavioral-health driven offenses; and integration with crisis response and in-custody behavioral health supports. The Workgroup further recommends the IPRTF and the Finance & Facilities Advisory Board advance this model to the County Council for inclusion in Justice Project planning and cost analysis, with data measures, models and staffing roles refined as implementation planning proceeds."

On October 9th, the Finance and Facility Advisory Board (FFAB) passed a motion to proceed with an out of custody facility with location to be further reviewed. On October 27th, the IPRTF passed the same motion.

On November 13th, the FFAB received a presentation from STV on three location options: repurposing the Sheriff's Work Center, new build at Division, or new build at LaBounty. Discussion reflected a general preference for a new build at Division but no decision was made.

On November 20th, the County held a Justice Project community engagement workshop in Ferndale. While the results of this event represent only a small slice of public opinion, there was strong feedback from the majority of commenters that the facility should be located at the County's Division Street campus near other behavioral health treatment options.

Policy and Fiscal Overview

Out-of-Custody: The BCC workgroup noted that an out of custody facility allows for upstream intervention as well as treatment for those already judicially involved. It also carries significant cost benefits due to insurance reimbursement eligibility. An in custody facility cannot access significant Medicaid, Medicare, or private insurance reimbursement, which would create extreme demands on local funding sources. The BCC workgroup is unanimous in its recommendation that the County move forward with an out-of-custody BCC. In discussions with the County Council and the Prosecutor's Office, both have provided perspective that they expect to see treatment services within the jail for those who would not be eligible for the BCC – a hybrid approach.

Location: The BCC workgroup has made a recommendation regarding co-locating the BCC at the Division Street campus. This location provides an opportunity to create a continuum of care that includes crisis drop-off, stabilization and detox, and in-patient treatment. However, members of the group have expressed concern regarding transportation between campuses, which is an open policy and budget question that needs resolution.

Dec 9th Committee Presentation

The December 9th Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee will feature a presentation from STV regarding the three location options for the BCC. Although no formal action is needed in December, the Council should prepare itself to take formal action in January regarding service model and location for the BCC. This timeline is necessary to maintain the capital project schedule.

Next Steps

The Project Team is working with STV to analyze operational costs and model capacity needs for the BCC. Further, the team is working with North Sound BH-ASO, stakeholders and the state legislature to provide flexibility for co-location of crisis services (23-hour and/or psychiatric urgent care) within this same facility.