

Justice Facility & Behavioral Health Treatment Center

Behavioral Care Center Update

November 5, 2025





Justice Facility & Behavioral Health Treatment Center

Forming of the IPRTF BCC Workgroup

Participants:

Donnell Tanksley and Caleb Erickson, Sheriff's Office

Eric Richey and Erik Sigmar, PA

Heather Flaherty, IPRTF

Judge Jones, Superior Court

Malora Christensen and Hannah Fisk, WCHCS

Peter Frazier, IPRTF

Starck Follis and Maia Vanyo, PD

Adam Johnson and Ashley McClaran, STV



Justice Facility & Behavioral Health Treatment Center

BCC Workgroup Process

Timeline of Key Milestones

March 31: Formed BCC Workgroup at IPRTF meeting

May 19: Kick-off meeting. Discussed Nashville model and how to adapt it for Whatcom County.

June 2nd: Presentation Q&A with Nashville DA. Discussion of in vs out of custody, on vs off-site data, and reviewed eligible charges.

August 14: Presentation of proposed BCC model, discussion, general agreement.

August 25: Legal subgroup met to discuss and agree on legal framework.

September 5th: Final discussion to see if there were any disagreements, passed recommendation unanimously.

September 9: Subgroup meetings to talk about location and transportation.



Justice Facility & Behavioral Health Treatment Center

BCC Key Policy and Background Information

Implementation Plan

- Behavioral Care Center
- 23 hour center
- New jail

Shared Vision

- Provide an effective alternative to incarceration for individuals whose legal involvement is driven by mental illness or substance use without presenting risk to community safety.
- Divert individuals from deeper system involvement at the earliest possible intercept point.
- Support public safety and health outcomes through clinically appropriate, trauma-informed treatment.
- Reduce the strain on the jail system by addressing behavioral health needs in a therapeutic, community-based environment.
- Establish a financially sustainable and Medicaid-reimbursable solution that maximizes long-term viability.

Key Elements

- True Prosecutorial Diversion
- Hybrid Approach
- Defining Success



Justice Facility & Behavioral Health Treatment Center

BCC Tradeoffs

Decision Points: Pros and Cons

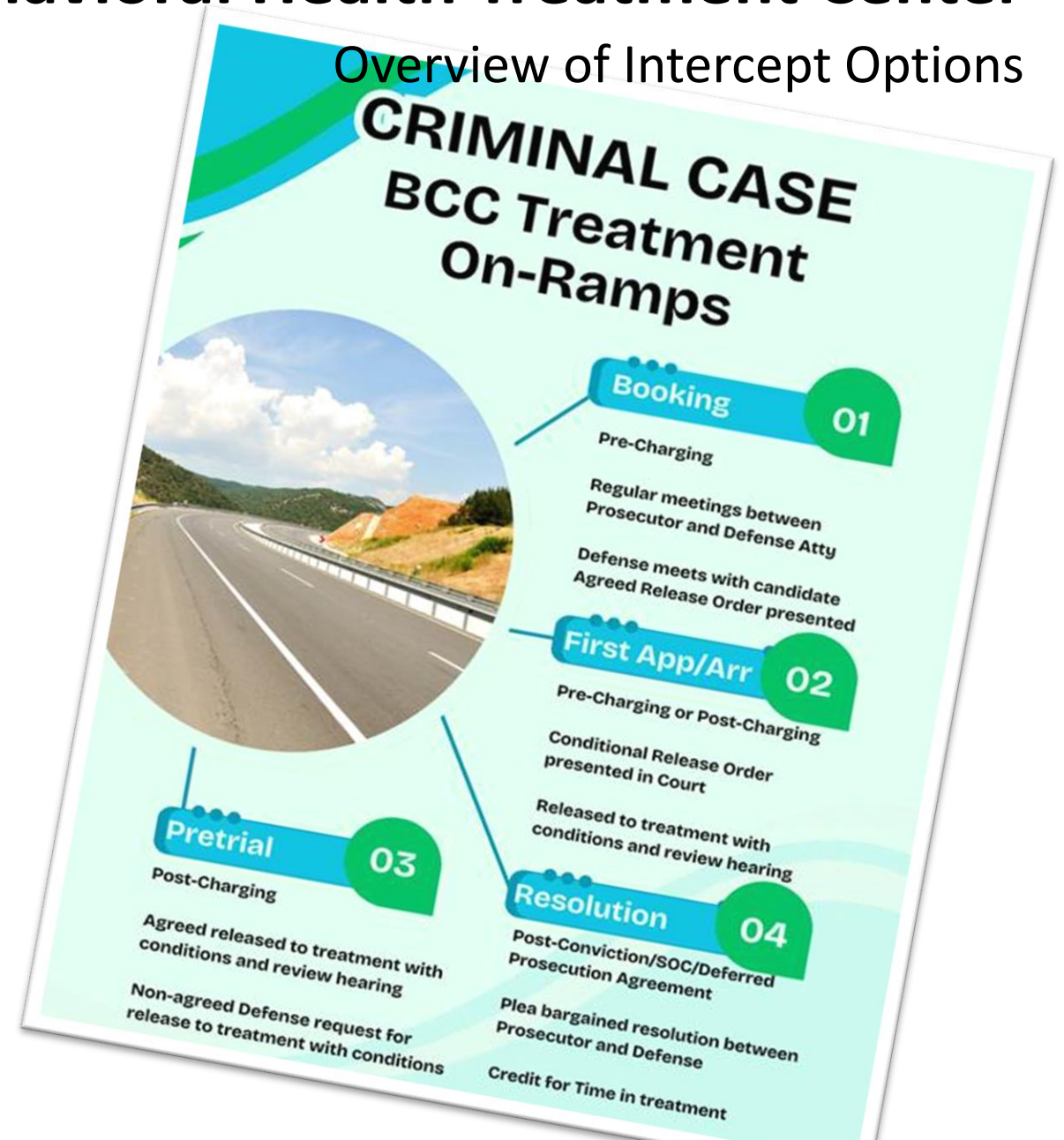
- **In vs out-of-custody**
 - Higher levels of safety
 - Flexibility
 - Reimbursement models
 - Medically necessary treatment
 - Location on intercept
- **On-site vs off-site**
 - Ease of access from current location
 - Focus of service
- **Size**
 - Behavioral health analysis
 - IMD
- **Co-location**
 - Efficiency models
 - Prevention



Justice Facility & Behavioral Health Treatment Center

Legal Considerations:

- Types of Charges
- Victim Consideration
- Participation from Superior, District, and Municipal Courts
- Multiple Points of Entry
 - Pre-charging
 - First Appearance/Arraignment
 - Post-Charging with Review Hearing
 - Disposition of a Case with Review Hearing





Justice Facility & Behavioral Health Treatment Center

BCC Workgroup Member Voices

BCC Workgroup Voices



Justice Facility & Behavioral Health Treatment Center

BCC Motions

10/9/25 Finance and Facility Advisory Board:

Motion to proceed with an out of custody facility with location to be further reviewed.

10/27/25 Incarceration Prevention Reduction

Task Force: Motion to proceed with an out of custody facility with location to be further reviewed.

Community Presentations:

7/3/25 Outreach Teams Meeting

8/28/25 Response Systems Leadership

9/11/25 Finance and Facility Advisory Board

9/18/25 Justice Project Oversight and Planning

9/22/25 Incarceration Prevention Reduction Task Force

9/22/25 Behavioral Health & Crisis Services

9/23/25 County Council

9/25/25 All Hands Panel

10/8/25 Whatcom Racial Equity Commission

10/21/25 Bellingham Central Library

10/29/25 PeaceHealth Social Work

Final: 11/24/25 Child & Family Well-Being Task Force Meeting



Justice Facility & Behavioral Health Treatment Center

BCC Next Steps

Next Steps:

- **Construction Cost Analysis by Location**
 - LaBounty (jail co-location)
 - Division (services co-location) – work center reconstruction or vacant site
- **Operational Cost and Capacity Analysis**
 - Working with STV to analyze operational costs and model capacity needs
- **Crisis Services Co-Location**
 - Work with NSBHASO, stakeholders, and state legislature to consider crisis services co-location (i.e. 23 hour or BH urgent care)
 - Present pros/cons to decision-making bodies