



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Whatcom County Council

FROM: Justice Project Planning Team

RE: Justice Project Implementation Plan – Progress Update

DATE: March 31, 2023

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On February 21<sup>st</sup>, the Whatcom County Council approved **Resolution 2023-006**, accepting the Stakeholder Advisory Committee’s Justice Project Needs Assessment Report and identifying the next steps to create an Implementation Plan. The Justice Project Needs Assessment Report:

- **Establishes a vision, values and goals** for the criminal legal system in Whatcom County,
- **Examines data** related incarceration rates, demographics, incarceration prevention and reduction efforts, and health and welfare needs,
- **Identifies gaps** in the current community response both inside and outside of the jail,
- **Considers what it would take to fill those gaps** in order to improve health and public safety, and
- **Makes recommendations** to address the community’s public safety concerns.

Resolution 2023-006 specifies that the County Executive Office leads the development of the Implementation Plan with support from the Justice Project Planning Team and guidance from the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force (IPRTF). Further, the resolution identifies **elements of the Implementation Plan** to include:

- Potential facilities concepts and planning level costs,
- Proposed services and systems efforts and their costs,
- Identification of County Departments, Community Leaders and Organizations to lead implementation of recommendations, and
- A funding approach.

Over the last several weeks, 4 **workshops** were held as Special IPRTF meetings with key stakeholders to develop ideas for the Implementation Plan, and a fifth workshop will be held on April 12<sup>th</sup>:

1. Systems Workshop,
2. Services Workshop,
3. Facilities (community based) Workshop,
4. Facilities (jail-based) Workshop, and
5. Funding Workshop.

Feedback from the workshops will result in a list of draft project ideas for the Implementation Plan.

**The Planning Team is providing an update to County Council on April 11<sup>th</sup> to share the draft elements of the Implementation Plan and receive Council feedback and direction.**

## **NEXT STEPS**

The draft elements of the Implementation Plan will be further refined in the coming weeks with feedback from county staff, key stakeholders, the IPRTF, focus groups, and the general public.

In late April, draft elements of the Implementation plan will be reviewed with the following **focus groups** to get feedback:

- People/family/friends with lived experience in the criminal legal system,
- Lummi Nation
- Nooksack Tribe
- Latinos/Immigrants
- Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)

The general public will provide feedback at a **Town Hall Listening Session** event (hybrid meeting) on Wednesday, May 24, 2023, from 6:00 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Council Chambers or online.

The Planning Team will provide additional updates to and request feedback from **County Council in May and June** as the draft Implementation Plan is further refined.

Members of the public can submit comments on the draft Implementation Plan to [IPRTaskForce@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:IPRTaskForce@co.whatcom.wa.us). More information on the Implementation Plan is available online at [www.whatcomcounty.us/justice](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/justice).