



JUSTICE FACILITY & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT CENTER

Communications Plan - 2025



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I. MISSION:

To drive informed decision-making, transparent engagement, and accountable progress throughout the design and delivery of Whatcom County's Justice and Behavioral Health Facility. By aligning internal coordination with public-facing messaging, this plan supports a unified, inclusive, and efficient process that reflects community values, sustains momentum, and honors the diverse voices shaping this transformative investment.

Every message, decision, and update will be grounded in the shared goals of the Justice Project, which are focused on prevention, restoration, and accountability.

II. OBJECTIVES:

The goal of this Communications Plan is to support the timely and transparent delivery of Whatcom County's Justice and Behavioral Health Facility by strengthening the internal coordination that enables effective external communication.

This plan facilitates:

- Quick, accountable decision-making across stakeholder groups
- Clear, consistent communication of progress, challenges, and upcoming decisions
- Trust and transparency with the public through inclusive engagement and regular updates.

The foundation of this plan is the recognition that well-structured internal communication makes it possible to deliver a facility that meets community expectations, stays on schedule, and reflects shared values. This plan is rooted in the understanding that every stakeholder group has a unique and essential role to play. The Executive retains final decision-making authority on the capital project, with the Council holding authority over the total project budget, but every group informs those decisions through a structure of shared accountability.

1. Support Informed, Timely Decisions

Promote efficient communication channels that allow stakeholder groups to provide timely input, elevate trade-offs, and maintain project progress on scope, schedule, and budget.

2. Foster Transparency and Accountability

Provide consistent, accessible updates on progress, challenges, and decisions, with clarity about what has been decided, what lies ahead, and how input was considered.

3. Honor Diverse Perspectives and Lived Experience

Actively integrate voices that have historically been marginalized in justice planning and provide space for informed feedback from those with lived experience, including BIPOC communities, Tribal Nations, and individuals impacted by incarceration.

4. Mitigate Risk Through Clarity and Structure

Reduce rework, delays, and misalignment by streamlining internal messaging to surface concerns before they become delays or public controversies.



5. Advance System Transformation, Not Just Construction

Reflect and reinforce the broader goals of the Whatcom County Justice Project to reduce incarceration, improve reentry outcomes, and create facilities that integrate treatment, care, and accountability.

Key Commitments:

- Maintain momentum: All communications efforts will be designed to support decisions that keep the project on time and on budget.
- Uphold accountability: Groups are expected to engage fully, provide timely feedback, and surface trade-offs early.
- Center community values: Communications will reflect Whatcom County's priorities and commitments of prevention, restoration and accountability.

Known Communication Risks:

- Diverse definitions of success: The community is not monolithic. Messaging must acknowledge and reflect multiple perspectives without delaying progress.
- Tight timeline and budget pressures: Decisions must be communicated efficiently to avoid delays, with clarity around rationale, trade-offs, and implications.
- High scrutiny and transparency expectations: Given the sensitive nature of jail construction and behavioral health services, communications must be proactive, not reactive, and anticipate community concerns.
- Policy Tradeoffs and Public Transparency: As the project progresses, it will inevitably face difficult tradeoffs involving cost, scope, schedule, and community benefit. These moments require clear, transparent policy conversations with elected officials and the public to preserve trust and adapt effectively to changing circumstances.

Strategy:

We believe effective communication for this project means making participation easier, improving transparency, and honoring Whatcom County's commitment to inclusive, accountable government.

Our strategy is to:

- Improve access to timely, accurate, and relevant information about the project
- Create accessible, meaningful opportunities to engage at key milestones
- Promote transparency in how decisions are made and by whom
- Build trust through clarity, responsiveness, and follow-through.

III. STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

The Whatcom County Justice and Behavioral Health Facility relies on the coordinated input of multiple stakeholder groups to succeed. Each has a defined role, sphere of influence, and responsibility. This section outlines how these groups are identified, how they participate, and how communications are structured to support clarity, timely input, and mutual accountability.



The stakeholder structure is not hierarchical. It is a system of interdependent groups, each supporting the shared goal of delivering a facility that reflects the community's values of safety, equity, wellness, and fiscal stewardship.

Guiding Principles for Stakeholder Engagement:

- **Shared Accountability:** No single voice carries the full weight of decision-making. Input is collaborative and expected to be timely, constructive, and grounded in the project's core commitments: prevention, restoration, and accountability.
- **Role Clarity:** Each group operates within a defined sphere of influence. Communication expectations match the group's authority level and functional responsibility.
- **Coordination Over Hierarchy:** This is not a linear chain of command. It is a coordinated structure of peers contributing to a unified goal: a facility and a system that reflects Whatcom County's values.

Stakeholder Charters:

To support effective communication and coordination throughout the Whatcom County Justice Project, charters for each stakeholder group have been developed and are included as a foundational component of this plan. These charters define each group's function, authority, and responsibilities within the project.

The charters complement along with the other tools in this section provide clear context for how each group contributes to project outcomes. Rather than creating a hierarchy, the structure promotes collaboration, shared accountability, and timely decision-making aligned with community values and project goals.

These documents will guide how information flows between groups, how input is gathered and used, and how commitments are upheld across roles. Each group is expected to stay informed, offer timely feedback, and constructively engage in decisions that shape the facility's development. For the complete charters, see Appendix A: Stakeholder Group Charters.

Stakeholder Directory and Reference Resources:

The success of this project depends on the collaboration of a broad and evolving group of stakeholders, including County departments, elected officials, community partners, and technical advisors. While this plan identifies key stakeholder groups, specific individuals and points of contact may change over the course of the project. To support accurate and timely communication, we reference official sources where current stakeholder information is maintained. These sites should be consulted regularly to confirm up-to-date representation and direct communication efforts accordingly. Where applicable spokespeople and champions for each group have been identified below.

DECISION AND LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

[Whatcom County Executive](#)

- Satpal Singh Sidhu, County Executive
- Kayla Schott-Bresler, Deputy Executive



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- Aly Pennucci, Deputy Executive
[Whatcom County Council](#)
- Barry Buchanan, Chair, Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee
- Kaylee Galloway, Chair, County Council

COMMUNICATIONS

Whatcom County Communications Team

- Jed Holmes, Public Affairs & Strategy Manager
- Riley Sweeney, Policy & Comms Specialist

Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Public Information Officers

- Amy Cloud, Public Information Officer (PIO)
- Deb Slater, Public Information Officer (PIO)

OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Whatcom County Facilities Department and Owner's Representative ("Project Team"):

- Chris Erb, Special Projects Manager
- Rob Ney, Project and Operations Manager
- Ashley McClaran, Community Engagement Lead STV (OR)
- Adam Johnson, Project Manager STV (OR)
- Russ Isaly, Construction Manager STV (OR)

[Whatcom County Sheriff's Office](#)

- Donnell "Tank" Tanksley, Sheriff
- Steve Harris, Undersheriff
- Caleb Erickson, Corrections Deputy

Whatcom County Health and Community Services (WCHCS):

- Malora Christensen, Response Systems Div Mgr
- Hannah Fisk, Program Specialist

Criminal Justice Group:

- Eric Richey, Prosecuting Attorney
- Starck Follis, Director of Public Defender's Office
- Rebecca Mertzig, City of Bellingham Police Chief
- Courts (Superior, District and Municipal)
- County Clerk
- Municipal and Tribal Law Enforcement

Lummi Nation Behavioral Health Specialist

- REPRESENTATIVE(S) NEEDED

Lummi Nation Criminal Justice Group:

- REPRESENTATIVE(S) NEEDED
- REPRESENTATIVE(S) NEEDED

Nooksack Indian Tribe Behavioral Health Specialist

- REPRESENTATIVE(S) NEEDED

Nooksack Indian Tribe Criminal Justice Group:

- REPRESENTATIVE(S) NEEDED



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- REPRESENTATIVE(S) NEEDED

ADVISORY GROUPS

[Justice Project Finance and Facility Advisory Board \(FFAB\)](#)

- REPRESENTATIVE(S) NEEDED

[Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force \(IPRTF\)](#)

- Peter Frazier, Concerned Citizen
- Heather Flaherty, Concerned Citizen

PARTNERS

Small Cities Partnerships / City of Bellingham in Whatcom County

- Scott Korthuis, Mayor of Lynden
- Kim Lund, Mayor of Bellingham

Lummi Nation Tribal Council

- REPRESENTATIVE(S) NEEDED

Nooksack Indian Tribe Tribal Council

- REPRESENTATIVE(S) NEEDED

Engagement & Influence Matrix:

Stakeholder	Role	Engagement	Communication
County Executive & Facilities Department	Final decisions on scope, design, budget within authorized limits	Collaborate	Decision support, milestone summaries, synthesized stakeholder input
County Council	Legislative and funding authority; public accountability	Consult	Council briefings, public-facing documents, detailed memos
Sheriff's Office Operations Group	Leads operational program development and custodial planning	Collaborate	Service delivery input, design feedback loops, early risk identification
Behavioral Health Operations Group	Leads therapeutic care programming and integration strategy	Collaborate	Service delivery input, design feedback loops, early risk identification
Finance & Facility Advisory Board (FFAB)	Financial oversight and public safety sales tax advisory	Consult	Financial modeling, trade-off analysis, operational impact summaries
Incarceration Prevention & Reduction Task Force (IPRTF)	System reform, equity, and diversion strategy advisor	Consult	Policy briefs, system performance updates, alignment tracking
Criminal Justice Group	Justice system decision-makers and operational users of facility; shape pretrial, diversion, and courtroom functions	Collaborate	Operational programming input, space planning review, policy alignment updates



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Lummi & Nooksack Tribal Councils	Sovereign government partners and essential community stakeholders	Peer-Peer	Government-to-government updates, culturally attuned outreach
Small Cities Partnerships / City of Bellingham in Whatcom County	Jurisdictions contributing via sales tax; require regular updates and input	Consult / Inform	Inclusion in FFAB/IPRTF loops, quarterly presentations, feedback invitations
City of Ferndale (Permitting Authority)			
Community Members & Advocates	General public and those with lived experience	Inform / Involve	Plain-language materials, interactive forums, visual summaries, feedback loops

For more on engagement definition, see Appendix B: Stakeholder Engagement Definitions.

Audience:

While this plan organizes communications around parties to the Charter, it is also built with a broader understanding of audiences, or those who may not have a formal role in decision-making but who are deeply affected by or invested in the project.

We define:

- Stakeholders as individuals or groups who have been formally designated with responsibilities, decision authority, or advisory roles as outlined in approved charters
- Audiences as individuals or groups with an interest in the project's outcomes, even if they do not directly participate in the decision-making process.

These include:

- Families of those currently or formerly incarcerated
- Residents of neighborhoods near the project site
- Voters who supported or opposed prior jail measures
- Community-based organizations not formally chartered
- Health and social service providers not directly contracted
- Tribal community members beyond operations support and elected Council
- Journalists and the media
- Individuals with lived experience who engage as part of broader outreach efforts.

While stakeholder engagement is structured and recurring, audience engagement will be guided by clarity, inclusion, and responsiveness. Every message will be adapted to meet the needs of the people it is intended to reach.

IV. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS & FREQUENCY

This section outlines how and when communications will be delivered to stakeholders and audiences. Given the accelerated schedule, tight budget, and public visibility of the project,



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communications must be timely, coordinated, and adaptable, reinforcing both internal decision-making and public confidence.

All communication frequencies are structured to align with the level of engagement and approval responsibility defined in the stakeholder Engagement & Influence Matrix above.

Frequency Guidelines:

Stakeholder	Cadence	Formats
County Executive & Project Team	Weekly and milestone-based	1-page briefings, memos, minutes
Communications Team	Prior to dissemination of project update or public announcement	Consultation with relevant stakeholder groups for review and comment
County Council	Monthly or tied to policy discussions	2-page reports and Council packets
Operational Staff (Sheriff's Office & WCHCS)	Weekly and aligned with standing meeting cycles	Agendas, minutes, logs and registers, schedule, budget, diagrams and drawings
Criminal Justice Group	Weekly and aligned with standing meeting cycles during programming phase, monthly reports following programming phase	Agendas, minutes, logs and registers, schedule, budget, diagrams and drawings
Finance & Facility Advisory (FFAB)	Monthly or aligned with milestone input	Operational and financial models, funding updates, recommendation memos, 2-page reports
Incarceration & Preventions Reduction Task Force (IPRTF)	Monthly or aligned with milestone input	Operational and financial models, funding updates, 2-page reports
Lummi & Nooksack Operations Teams	Monthly or aligned with milestone input	Peer-to-peer briefings
Lummi & Nooksack Tribal Councils	Monthly or aligned with milestone input	Peer-to-peer briefings
Small Cities in Whatcom County	Quarterly or aligned with FFAB/IPRTF inputs	Operational and financial models, funding updates, 2-page reports, shareable slide decks
Constituents, Community Members & Advocates	Quarterly and at key milestones and upon request	Civic organization presentations upon request, web posts, newsletters, notifications, and an engagement contact through IPRTF
The Public at-Large	Monthly	Monthly opt-in newsletter, social media posts, website



Plain Language vs. Technical Detail:

Communications will be adapted to suit:

- The group's technical familiarity, as defined in the stakeholder charter or advisory scope
- Their functional role in approvals, funding, oversight, or lived experience
- Their preferred mode of engagement, whether written materials, live briefings, or visual summaries

This adaptive model promotes equity in understanding and avoids exclusion of critical voices due to jargon or overly technical delivery.

Coordination and Timing Notes:

- Milestone Anchoring: Communications will be mapped to major project milestones (programming, funding validation, permitting submission, construction start).
- Advance Notice: Materials intended for external/public release should be provided to core stakeholder groups in advance to allow alignment and preparation.
- Translation/Accessibility: Public-facing materials will meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards and be translated as appropriate, with a focus on reaching linguistically and culturally diverse communities.

V. COMMUNICATION SCHEDULE & MILESTONE-BASED MESSAGING

The communication schedule outlined below reflects the preliminary project timeline as of June 2025. These dates are expected to shift following the Programming and Validation phase scheduled to begin in August 2025. This schedule serves as a living framework, to be refined as the project evolves and additional detail is confirmed. It identifies key project milestones, and the types of communication planned to accompany each. Communications at these intervals are intended to support timely decisions, promote transparency, and keep all stakeholders informed and aligned.

To support this alignment, the Project Team will coordinate with County administrative staff to request agenda space with the County Council, FFAB, and IPRTF as major milestones approach. These requests will be driven by the timing of key decisions and the need for policy-level input. Coordination will include confirming the appropriate presenters, preparing briefing materials in collaboration with Communications, and allowing for routing, agenda setting, and pre-briefing as needed. This approach is meant to maintain decision momentum by engaging the right audiences at the right time. The Communications Team will track these requests to promote consistent messaging and awareness across forums.

Preliminary Communications Schedule:

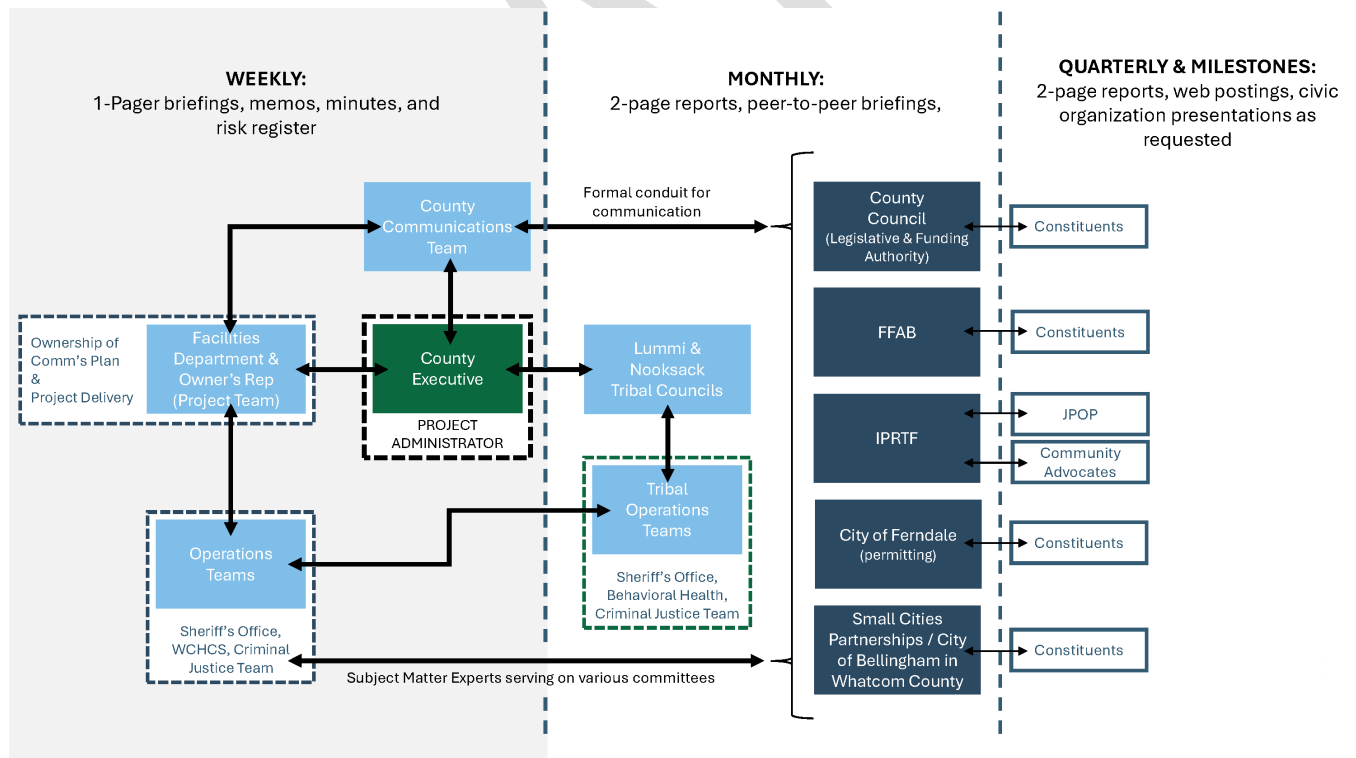
Preliminary Milestones Identified	Anticipated Date(s)	Audience(s)
Jail Capacity Analysis	July 2025	Executive, Council, FFAB, IPRTF
Behavioral Health Care Operational Model	July 2025	Executive, Council, FFAB, IPRTF



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Budget Authority	July 2025 and throughout the life of the project	Executive, Council, FFAB
Bond Issuance	Various times during the project	Executive, Council, FFAB
Design-Builder Selection Announcement	Jul 2025	All stakeholders
Programming & Validation Start	Aug 2025	Ops teams, Criminal Justice Group, FFAB, IPRTF
Schematic Design Completion	Q1 2026	Ops teams, Criminal Justice Group, Council, Small Cities, Community
Contract Negotiations / Final Budget Setting	Fall 2026	Executive, Council, FFAB, IPRTF, Community
Construction Start	Q3 2026 (Site); Q4 2026 (Jail)	All stakeholders
Ongoing Construction Activities	Throughout the life of on-site construction activities	All stakeholders
Activation	January 2028	All stakeholders
Facility Operations Begin	July 2028	All stakeholders

Stakeholder Communications Mapping:





VI. TOOLS & PLATFORMS

This section outlines the tools and platforms used to distribute project information and support communication among stakeholder groups. Each is selected to reflect the project's commitment to clarity, transparency, and practical alignment with County operations.

The County will also support stakeholder groups by integrating or supplementing their existing communication channels upon request to promote reach, consistency, and trust.

Tools & Communication Platforms:

Platform	Primary Use	Information Distributed
Whatcom County Project Dashboard (website)	Central public access point for project information	Monthly updates including schedule and budget status, major milestones, current challenges, successes, progress photos, and a “look ahead” for the upcoming month
County Social Media (Facebook, X/Twitter, Instagram)	Broad public awareness and engagement	Announcements, milestones, public meeting invitations, infographics, updates
County Newsletters	Civic engagement and general updates	Monthly updates including narrative project progress, interviews, updates from the Executive or Sheriff's Office, featured milestones
Local Media Outlets	General public visibility and storytelling	Press releases, milestone features, project background, public impacts, narrative framing
Stakeholder-Specific Channels (by request)	Leverage trusted partner networks	Project summaries, briefing decks, translated materials, updates aligned to community context
Internal Project Tools	Secure, efficient collaboration and document control	Working documents, review drafts, meeting artifacts, version tracking
Internal Operations Communications	Project execution and weekly alignment	Meeting minutes, logs, submittal schedules, coordination tools shared with Criminal Justice Group and other operations teams upon request but not distributed to all stakeholders by default

Access and Transparency Considerations:

- Operational communications (weekly design and construction team materials) are used to facilitate progress but will not be broadly disseminated unless requested. These are maintained for transparency and coordination.
- Monthly summaries will be posted publicly via the website dashboard and distributed through email newsletter and social media and will include:
 - Schedule status and budget overview



- Notable milestones reached
- Challenges and issues being addressed
- Successes and team highlights
- Progress photography
- “Look ahead” summary of upcoming month priorities

VII. MONITORING & EVALUATION

In addition to tracking output, the purpose of monitoring communication is to improve the plan itself. By identifying what is working and what is not, the Communications Team and Public Information Officers will collaborate to refine messaging, delivery methods, and engagement strategies to better meet the mission and objectives outlined in this plan.

Monitoring efforts are designed to support:

- Timely and informed decision-making across stakeholder groups
- Public trust through transparency and responsiveness
- Equity and access by evaluating clarity and reach
- Accountability by reducing misalignment or confusion

This plan is a living document. Ongoing input is welcomed and will be used to adapt the strategy as conditions, teams, or communication needs evolve.

Internal Feedback & Oversight:

What is Monitored	How	Who Is Responsible	When
Missed messaging, delays in approvals, or misalignment	Debriefs and feedback loops	Facilities Team & Owner's Representative	Ongoing and escalated as needed
Communication effectiveness among stakeholder groups	Agenda item at quarterly meetings	Each workgroup facilitator, Owner's Representative	Quarterly ongoing
Integration of new team members into communication flow	Onboarding briefings and communications alignment	Each working group, Owner's Representative	As new members join

Public Input & Engagement Feedback

- Comment Portal: An open comment section will be maintained on the County project website to gather public input at any time.
- Periodic Surveys: Surveys will be distributed at key milestones (design completion, site selection, groundbreaking) to gather input on public awareness, understanding, and trust.



- Milestone Debriefs: Community meetings upon request and listening sessions will provide anecdotal and informal feedback loops to help shape future messaging and outreach methods.
- Attendance and engagement: The Communications Team will track attendance, participation levels, and engagement metrics at all outreach events and public meetings. These insights will help us adapt strategies, identify gaps, and demonstrate responsiveness to community input.

Adaptation & Plan Revisions:

- Authority to Revise: The Owner's Representative is responsible for maintaining, updating, and distributing revisions to the communications plan.
- Mechanism for updates: Notification for the need to integrate a new team member into communication flow will come from the associated group and directed to The Facilities Team and Owner's Representative.
- Distribution: Updates will be circulated as they occur with clear versioning and summary of changes.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This Communications Plan is a living framework designed to support the successful delivery of Whatcom County's Justice and Behavioral Health Facility. It reflects the County's values of prevention, restoration, and accountability and it honors the essential role that communication plays in building trust, enabling informed decisions, and creating space for meaningful input.

As the project progresses, this plan will evolve and be refined through feedback, shaped by new challenges, and strengthened by collaboration. By coordinating across technical teams, engaging community members, and sharing critical updates, the tools and structures outlined here will help keep the project aligned, transparent, and poised for success.



WHATCOM COUNTY JUSTICE FACILITY & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT CENTER Appendix A – Stakeholder Group Charters

This document outlines the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of stakeholder groups involved in the design and development of Whatcom County’s new Justice and Behavioral Health Facility. Each charter defines a group’s function within the project from operational programming and financial oversight to community-informed recommendations and funding approvals.

This document provides a foundational framework that will guide how each group contributes to and engages with the project.

Each group included here brings a different kind of value - technical, operational, advisory, financial, legislative, or public. No one group is prioritized above the others. Instead, this structure reflects a shared commitment:

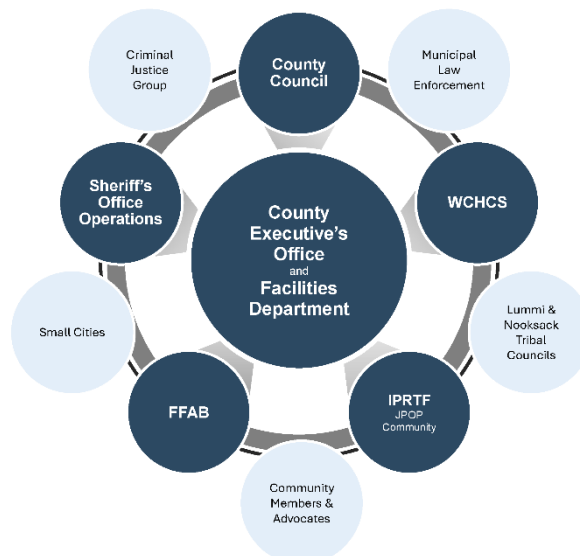
- To keep the project moving forward
- To work within the approved budget and schedule
- To deliver a facility that reflects the needs and values of Whatcom County

While the Executive retains final decision-making authority on the capital project development and the Council on the capital project total budget, input from every group informs those decisions. The Sheriff’s Office Operations group plays a particularly critical role as the subject matter expert and end-user of the facility. Some groups provide strategic recommendations, others contribute technical expertise, and many serve as critical links to the broader community.

Each group is expected to:

- Stay informed and engaged
- Provide timely feedback
- Identify trade-offs when proposing changes
- Collaborate constructively to uphold the project’s goals

The visual below shows how each group is connected to this shared effort. This is not meant to be a hierarchy, but instead a coordinated structure where each group supports the whole and ultimately project success for our entire community.





DECISION AND LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

I. EXECUTIVE (COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE)

The Executive leads and makes final construction decisions for the Justice Facility and Behavioral Health Treatment Center ("Project"), informed by timely input from all parties to this charter. It is the Executive's responsibility to make sure parties to this charter are informed of upcoming milestones and provided with timely opportunity for input.

Role and Authority

- Final decision-maker for project scope, spending decisions, priorities, and major project milestones.
- Balances innovation, operational needs, fiscal responsibility, and community priorities.

Responsibilities

- Stays informed about project updates and priorities to support productive engagement and timely, well-grounded decisions.
- Reviews and considers input from all parties to the charter and other stakeholder groups.
- Requests additional information or feedback when needed to make decisions.
- Makes timely decisions to deliver a project on-time and within budget.
- Resolves conflicts or thorough recommendations made in the best interest of the project's goals.
- Communicates major decisions clearly to all stakeholders with the support of the Executive team and Whatcom County Facilities.
- Communication to the public, in partnership with the Sheriff's Office.
- Creates and circulates written communications to all parties at each specified cadence.

Information and Timing Expectations

- Stakeholder groups will provide recommendations
- Provide feedback within 5 business days of receiving materials unless otherwise agreed upon.
- May request additional feedback from specific groups when deeper analysis or clarification is needed for decision-making.
- The Executive will review available input and move decisions forward to maintain project momentum.

Collaboration Across Groups

- Actively listens to a range of perspectives from all stakeholder groups.
- Engages groups for additional feedback as needed to inform critical decisions.
- Maintains a transparent process that respects the role and input of each group without privileging any single voice.
- Communicates major decisions and rationale clearly to all project stakeholders.



- Communicates regularly with leadership peers in other governmental agencies — such as local Tribal Councils — supported by information and updates provided by stakeholder groups.

Escalation and Decision Process

- Issues requiring Executive attention are escalated promptly as to minimize the impact to schedule and budget in all instances.
- Concerns are presented with a summary of trade-offs, options, impacts, or benefit analysis.
- Executive decisions are final unless County Council action is required for funding or legislative approvals.

II. COUNTY COUNCIL

The Whatcom County Council provides public oversight and funding authorization for the Justice Project. Council members represent the residents of Whatcom County and help maintain accountability, transparency, and alignment with community values.

Role and Authority

- Final decision maker for total project budget
- Holds legislative authority to approve or deny funding and authorize use of public resources.
- Focuses on funding, legislative approvals, and public accountability, while relying on the Executive and stakeholder groups to lead design, operations, and project delivery.
- Serves as the body that formally receives project updates and votes on major funding milestones.

Responsibilities

- Stays informed about project updates and priorities to support productive engagement and provide timely, meaningful feedback when called upon.
- Reviews and consider funding requests, milestone updates, and public input.
- Participates in scheduled project briefings or updates.
- Asks clarifying questions early when additional information is needed.
- Votes on funding actions that support the project's budget and timely delivery goals.

Information and Timing Expectations

- County Executive's Office supported by the County Facilities Department and Owner's Representative will provide Council members with requested funding materials and briefings for inclusion in the Council's agenda packet. Prior to major Council decisions, the Executive will prepare a minimum of one public presentation in advance of a requested Council vote.
- Council members are encouraged to review materials in advance and request clarification if needed.



- The Executive or project team may request additional Council input on items that will shape public communication or require Council engagement.

Collaboration Across Groups

- Maintains collaborative nature and open communication with the Executive and project team.
- Receives quarterly updates from the Facilities Team, led by the County's Special Projects Manager and Owner's Representative, to stay informed on project progress and priorities.
- When timely decisions are needed outside of quarterly updates, the Executive or project team will request time on the Council agenda.
- Individual Council members who serve on other stakeholder groups (such as IPRTF or FFAB) may receive more detailed project updates through those channels and are encouraged to share relevant context during Council briefings or discussions.
- Acknowledges the work of advisory groups and understands how their input informs the broader project context.
- Engages with constituents transparently and constructively, reinforcing the community-centered values of the project.
- Provides feedback when requested to help shape policy-related communications or ensure public understanding of the project's direction.

Escalation and Decision Process

- Councilmembers may raise questions during quarterly updates; the project team will follow up with additional information as needed.
- If questions arise outside scheduled updates, follow-up can be requested through standard Council communication channels.
- Questions related to project policy or direction will be referred to the Executive for response or clarification.
- Council decisions are final for all funding and legislative matters under its authority.

COMMUNICATIONS

III. WHATCOM COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

The County Communications Team supports project transparency and community engagement by facilitating timely, accurate, and accessible information about the Justice Project. The team partners with stakeholder groups to develop communication materials, respond to public inquiries, and coordinate messaging across channels.

Role and Authority

- Leads public communication strategies in coordination with the Executive Office and project team.
- Develops and distributes messaging across digital, print, and media platforms.
- Supports engagement strategies to promote community understanding, input, and trust.



- Maintains alignment between internal updates and external communications.

Responsibilities

- Collaborate with stakeholder groups to develop plain-language summaries, infographics, and announcements.
- Distribute timely updates through County dashboards, newsletters, social media, and earned media.
- Coordinate messaging with the Executive's Office and Sheriff's Office to reflect shared project values and priorities.
- Support the Communications Plan through ongoing updates and implementation of feedback strategies.
- Monitor and respond to community inquiries or misconceptions, in partnership with project leaders.

Information and Timing Expectations

- Translate technical or operational content into public-facing materials within 3–7 business days.
- Coordinate with Facilities and Executive teams to schedule communications around project milestones.
- Maintain an editorial calendar that aligns with the project schedule and engagement opportunities.

Collaboration Across Groups

- Attend milestone meetings and briefings to remain informed on current project activities.
- Partner with stakeholder groups to tailor messages to specific audiences or community needs.
- Provide content support for Council presentations, public meetings, and media requests.
- Ensure consistency of tone and content across all communications.

Escalation and Decision Process

- Escalate sensitive or high-impact messaging to the Executive for review and approval.
- Coordinate with the Facilities Team and Owner's Representative when public communication relates to technical changes.
- Maintain a feedback loop with stakeholder groups to refine communication effectiveness and responsiveness.

IV. WHATCOM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS (PIO)

The Public Information Officers (PIOs) from the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office and Division of Emergency Management provide strategic communications support for the Justice and Behavioral Health Facility Project. Their expertise in public messaging, crisis communication,



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and stakeholder outreach helps the project maintain transparency and public trust throughout planning, design, and construction. These officers advise on external communications strategy and serve as key liaisons between the project team, County departments, elected officials, and the public.

Role and Authority

- Advise the Executive on communication strategies and public messaging related to the project.
- Support the development and dissemination of accurate, timely, and accessible information for the public and media.
- Provide strategic input on communication risks and opportunities to align messaging with County goals and community expectations.

Responsibilities

- Draft and coordinate public messaging, including press releases, social media content, and public statements with information provided by the Project Team.
- Advise on communication timing and delivery, especially at major milestones or during high-scrutiny phases of the project.
- Monitor media coverage and public feedback to inform and adapt messaging as needed.
- Collaborate on the development of public-facing materials to support community engagement, including FAQs, fact sheets, and presentation content.

Information and Timing Expectations

- Participate in milestone-based and quarterly coordination meetings with the Executive's Office and Project Team to stay current on developments and plan communications accordingly.
- Provide timely feedback on proposed public messaging or communications plans, particularly in advance of Council briefings, community meetings, or media outreach.
- Maintain readiness to respond to emergent communications needs, including misinformation or unexpected public concern.

Collaboration Across Groups

- Work in close coordination with County Communications staff, the Project Team, and other project advisors to maintain consistency and clarity in messaging.
- Support the Justice Project's overall communications plan by sharing aligned information across County departments and with external partners.
- Coordinate with other stakeholder organizations, when appropriate, to support unified regional communication.

Escalation and Decision Process

- Communication risks or public response trends of concern are elevated to the Executive with analysis and recommendations.



- Significant updates to communication strategies or public messaging are reviewed in coordination with County leadership prior to release.

OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

V. COUNTY FACILITIES DEPARTMENT AND OWNER’S REPRESENTATIVE (“PROJECT TEAM”)

The County Facilities Department, supported by the Owner’s Representative, is responsible for day-to-day project execution, technical oversight, and coordinated delivery of the Justice and Behavioral Health Facility. This group serves as the central hub for design coordination, schedule and budget management, consultant team alignment, and communication development for stakeholder and public distribution.

Role and Authority

- Directs and manages overall project delivery in alignment with County priorities and Executive direction.
- Coordinates technical, design, and construction activities across all stakeholder groups.
- Supports the Executive and Council in providing accurate, timely information for decisions and approvals.
- Oversees consultant contracts and facilitates the work of the Owner’s Representative and other support teams.
- Develops drafts of all project updates and stakeholder communications for review and refinement by the Communications Team prior to distribution, with the exception of the Executive Weekly Report, which is sent directly by the Project Team.

Responsibilities

- Maintain and update the project schedule, budget, and design development materials.
- Provide technical guidance and quality control throughout the design and construction process.
- Facilitate coordination across stakeholder groups, incorporating operational and programmatic needs into the facility design.
- Lead weekly project management meetings and support decision-making with clear documentation and trade-off analysis.
- Prepare presentation materials and briefing packets for Executive and Council updates.
- Track decisions, action items, and stakeholder input to maintain accountability and momentum.
- Coordinate closely with the Communications Team to support consistent, timely, and accessible messaging to the public and internal stakeholders.
- Maintain an internal communications log and verify content accuracy in collaboration with subject matter experts and advisory groups.

Information and Timing Expectations



- Share draft documents with stakeholder groups at key milestones for timely input and validation.
- Respond to stakeholder requests and emerging issues within 3–5 business days, depending on urgency.
- Maintain clear records of decisions, feedback, and action items in collaboration with the Owner’s Representative.
- Provide all public-facing draft materials to the Communications Team for review prior to release, ensuring alignment with County messaging standards.

Collaboration Across Groups

- Engage regularly with operations teams (Sheriff and Behavioral Health) to integrate operational requirements.
- Partner with Council, Executive Office, FFAB, and IPRTF to align design and financial strategies.
- Coordinate with the Communications Team to support timely, consistent messaging to the public and stakeholders.
- Collaborate with stakeholder groups to verify technical content and reflect accurate perspectives in communication products.

Escalation and Decision Process

- Elevate scope, cost, or schedule concerns to the Executive with documented trade-offs and recommendations.
- Support resolution of technical issues through coordinated input from consultants and subject matter experts.
- Implement Executive decisions and circulate outcomes to all relevant teams.
- Communicate any urgent project developments directly to the Executive via the Weekly Report, while routing all other communications through the standard review process with the Communications Team.

VI. WHATCOM COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE (OPERATIONS GROUP)

The Sheriff’s Office Operations Group plays a central role in the programming and design of the new jail facility as part of the Whatcom County Justice Project. The group is responsible for defining the operational requirements of the new facility and translating the needs identified in the Justice Project Needs Assessment into a functional design that reflects the County’s commitments to the community.

The Sheriff’s Office will work in close partnership with the Behavioral Health Operations Group to integrate direct supervision and diversion strategies that align with modern correctional practices and promote safety, dignity, and rehabilitation. In addition to shaping operational goals, this team is also directly responsible for making recommendations that support the project’s budget, schedule, and scope discipline.

Role and Authority



- Leads the development of operational programming for the jail facility.
- Defines staffing models, security protocols, intake/release processes, housing strategies, and support functions.
- Guides the facility design to reflect a supervision model that supports behavioral health-informed custody practices and alternatives to traditional incarceration.
- Provides operational expertise to ensure the facility can be staffed, maintained, and operated safely, cost-efficiently, and effectively over time.
- Responsible for contributing to design decisions that maintain budget and schedule alignment, and for recommending adjustments when trade-offs are necessary.
- Collaborates with design and project teams to ensure alignment between facility design and community expectations.
- Co-Lead, in partnership with County Facilities and its subcontractors, on facility transition planning and execution.

Responsibilities

- Stay informed about project updates and priorities to support productive engagement and provide timely, meaningful input when called upon.
- Translate the Justice Project Needs Assessment into detailed operational requirements for facility design.
- Validate that proposed spaces, systems, and workflows support the long-term effectiveness of the facility.
- Work collaboratively with Behavioral Health Operations Group to coordinate shared program areas, staffing, and diversion strategies.
- Identify and assess operational trade-offs when scope adjustments or budget constraints arise.
- Make recommendations that maintain or improve budget and schedule alignment; when a proposed change affects either, present the trade-off and explain the added value.
- Provide timely review of drawings, diagrams, reports, and consultant recommendations throughout design and pre-construction.
- Participate actively in design workshops, technical meetings, and working sessions as scheduled.

Information and Timing Expectations

- Review and respond to project materials within 5 business days unless otherwise noted.
- Provide proactive input at key design milestones to prevent rework or late-stage conflicts.
- Notify the Executive or project team immediately if operational concerns arise that may impact cost, schedule, or safety.
- Clearly present options, risks, and recommendations in all decision points where changes affect scope, budget, or timing.



Collaboration Across Groups

- Partner closely with the Behavioral Health Operations Group and healthcare contractors to define shared spaces and integrated care pathways.
- Maintain ongoing coordination with the Executive, who holds final decision-making authority on scope and cost.
- Work collaboratively with FFAB to clarify operational cost implications and long-term sustainability.
- Engage with IPRTF to align custody and diversion strategies with broader system goals and incarceration reduction priorities.
- Communicate with the County Council through established project update channels, especially on matters related to scope or funding implications.
- Collaborate with the design team, project management team, and other stakeholder groups to reinforce the project's core commitments to safety, health, and fiscal responsibility.
- Partner with the Executive's communication group to amplify project messaging and community outreach.

Escalation and Decision Process

- When design or scope decisions present operational risks or require trade-offs, elevate the issue to the Executive with a clear summary of impacts, options, and a recommendation.
- If consensus cannot be reached within the operations group or among stakeholders, the Executive will make the final decision in the context of the project's overall goals.
- The team is accountable for contributing to a decision-making process that keeps the project on time, on budget, and aligned with community expectations.

VII. WHATCOM COUNTY HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (WCHCS)

The Behavioral Health Operations Group of WCHCS plays a central role in the programming and design of the new behavioral health facility as part of the Whatcom County Justice Project. The group is responsible for advising on therapeutic and behavioral healthcare delivery requirements of the facility, translating the needs identified in the Justice Project Needs Assessment into a functional design that fulfills the County's commitments to the community.

The Behavioral Health Operations Group will work in close partnership with the Sheriff's Office Operations Group to integrate supervision and diversion strategies that prioritize treatment, recovery, and alternatives to incarceration. In addition to shaping service delivery goals, this team is directly responsible for making recommendations that support the project's budget, schedule, and scope discipline.

Role and Authority

- Leads the development of behavioral health programming requirements for the facility.
- Defines space needs, staffing models, care delivery models, and client flow through treatment services.



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- Guides the facility design to support early intervention, stabilization, rehabilitation, and successful reentry into the community.
- Provides clinical and operational expertise to ensure the facility's design fosters effective behavioral health outcomes.
- Responsible for contributing to design decisions that maintain budget and schedule alignment, and for recommending adjustments when trade-offs are necessary.
- Collaborates with design and project teams to ensure facility design and services align with County goals for public health and public safety.

Responsibilities

- Stay informed about project updates and priorities to support productive engagement and provide timely, meaningful input when called upon.
- Translate the Justice Project Needs Assessment into detailed clinical and operational requirements for facility design.
- Provide staffing requirements and estimated budgets for operation supported by third-party Medicaid Feasibility findings.
- Validate that proposed spaces, systems, and workflows support behavioral health best practices.
- Work collaboratively with the Sheriff's Office Operations Group to coordinate shared program areas, staffing, and diversion strategies.
- Identify and assess operational trade-offs when scope adjustments or budget constraints arise.
- Make recommendations that maintain or improve budget and schedule alignment; when a proposed change affects either, present the trade-off and explain the added value.
- Provide timely review of drawings, diagrams, reports, and consultant recommendations throughout design and pre-construction.
- Participate actively in design workshops, technical meetings, and working sessions as scheduled.

Information and Timing Expectations

- Review and respond to project materials within 5 business days unless otherwise noted.
- Provide proactive input at key design milestones to prevent rework or late-stage conflicts.
- Notify the Executive or project team immediately if behavioral health concerns arise that may impact cost, schedule, or service delivery quality.
- Clearly present options, risks, and recommendations at all decision points where changes affect scope, budget, or timing.

Collaboration Across Groups

- Partner closely with the Sheriff's Office Operations Group to define shared spaces, diversion pathways, and service integration.



- Maintain ongoing coordination with the Executive, who holds final decision-making authority on scope, cost, and facility priorities.
- Collaborate with FFAB to clarify how programmatic needs impact long-term operational and financial sustainability.
- Engage with IPRTF to ensure behavioral health strategies align with broader incarceration prevention and systems improvement goals.
- Communicate with the County Council through established project update channels, especially regarding program elements tied to public outcomes.
- Actively participate in weekly meetings with the design team, project management team, and other stakeholder groups to reinforce the project's commitments to treatment, safety, and fiscal responsibility.

Escalation and Decision Process

- When clinical or operational decisions present risks or require trade-offs, elevate issues to the Executive with a clear summary of impacts, options, and a recommendation.
- If consensus cannot be reached within the operations group or among stakeholders, the Executive will make the final decision in the context of the project's overall goals.
- The team is accountable for contributing to a decision-making process that keeps the project on time, on budget, and aligned with community expectations.

VIII. CRIMINAL JUSTICE GROUP

The Criminal Justice Group, composed of representatives from the Whatcom County Public Defender's Office and Prosecuting Attorney's Office, plays a central role in shaping the operational and programmatic direction of the Justice and Behavioral Health Facility. Their insight is essential to designing a facility that supports equitable access to justice, maintains legal process integrity, and advances diversion and treatment-based alternatives to incarceration.

Working in coordination with the Sheriff's Office and Behavioral Health Operations Group, the Criminal Justice Group provides input on workflows, decision points, and facility components that impact court processes, legal representation, pre-trial services, and alternatives to detention.

Role and Authority

- Advises on operational and programmatic elements related to intake, charging, case processing, and pretrial release.
- Recommends design and policy considerations that support equity, procedural justice, and behavioral health-informed responses.
- Identifies legal and procedural implications of operational decisions and facility layout.
- Participates in the development of diversion strategies and programs aligned with community safety and reduced reliance on detention.
- Contributes to decisions that impact scope, schedule, and budget by evaluating trade-offs through the lens of legal access and public interest.



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- Serves as an operational advisor to the Executive on matters of prosecutorial and defense coordination, service access, and system design.

Responsibilities

- Review proposed designs and operational models to ensure they support fair and efficient case processing.
- Identify programmatic gaps that affect legal access, diversion opportunities, or pre-trial release decision-making.
- Provide timely feedback on space needs for confidential meetings, court-related activities, evidence handling, and coordination with behavioral health services.
- Recommend strategies to reduce unnecessary detention through policy refinement and programmatic innovation.
- Evaluate the impact of design decisions on attorney-client confidentiality, due process, and equitable outcomes.
- Collaborate with other Operational Leadership groups to align intake, assessment, and referral processes across disciplines.

Information and Timing Expectations

- Review and respond to project documents within 5 business days unless otherwise specified.
- Engage in milestone reviews and provide structured input to minimize rework and late-stage design conflicts.
- Notify the Executive or Project Team of procedural concerns that could introduce legal, operational, or public trust risks.
- Present recommendations with clear analysis of legal context, potential community impacts, and alignment with overall justice system goals.

Collaboration Across Groups

- Partner other Operational Leadership groups to coordinate shared responsibilities in intake, diversion, and population management.
- Engage with the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force (IPRTF) to reinforce system-wide strategies for reducing incarceration and promoting access to care.
- Work with the Project Team and the design team to validate functional layouts and program adjacencies related to justice system operations.
- Support communication efforts by offering legal and procedural clarity in project updates and public messaging, as appropriate.

Escalation and Decision Process

- Raise concerns about legal risks, access to justice, or program alignment with a summary of potential impacts and suggested alternatives.
- Collaborate with other Operational Leadership groups to propose coordinated solutions when trade-offs arise.
- In cases where operational consensus cannot be reached, the Executive will determine the final path forward based on project priorities and system-wide considerations.



- This group is accountable for contributing to decisions that promote procedural fairness, legal compliance, and a facility that reflects the County’s justice reform commitments.

ADVISORY GROUPS

IX. FINANCE AND FACILITY ADVISORY BOARD (FFAB)

The Finance and Facility Advisory Board (FFAB) provides financial oversight of the funds collected from the public safety sales and use tax and makes recommendations on the finance and operations of the jail, behavioral health, and supportive housing facilities and services.

Role and Authority

- Advises on the financial stewardship of project funds.
- Updates the interlocal agreement on the public health, safety, and justice facility financing as needed
- Makes timely recommendations to the Executive and Council on design, financing, and preliminary budget to support fiscal responsibility and timely project delivery.

Responsibilities

- Stay informed about project updates and priorities to support productive engagement and provide timely, meaningful input when called upon.
- Review financial plans, expenditures, and projections.
- Scrutinize proposed scope or cost changes for impact on the project’s funding sustainability (operational and capital).
- Promote fiscal responsibility and timely delivery of project in all recommendations to the County Council and County Executive

Information and Timing Expectations

- County Executive’s Office supported by the County Facilities Department and Owner’s Representative will provide FFAB members with requested funding materials and briefings for inclusion in their meeting packets. Prior to major milestone votes, the Executive will prepare a minimum of one presentation or discussion in advance of a requested vote.
- May request additional feedback from specific groups when deeper analysis or clarification is needed for understanding.

Collaboration Across Groups

- Receives and reviews quarterly updates from the County Executive’s Office supported by the County Facilities Department and Owner’s Representative to stay informed on project progress and priorities.
- Work closely with operational groups to understand cost drivers and funding needs.
- Align financial oversight with the facility’s mission to promote health, safety, and justice.

Escalation and Decision Process



- Major financial concerns are elevated to the Executive along with recommendations for resolution.

X. INCARCERATION PREVENTION AND REDUCTION TASK FORCE (IPRTF)

The Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force (IPRTF) serves as Whatcom County's Law and Justice Council, as required by RCW 72.09.300. Its purpose is to continually review the County's criminal justice and behavioral health programs and make specific recommendations to safely and effectively reduce incarceration of individuals struggling with mental illness and chemical dependency, and to minimize jail utilization by pretrial defendants who can safely be released.

In addition, the IPRTF serves as a conduit between the community and other interested stakeholder groups, as well as the Justice Project Oversight and Planning (JPOP) Committee, helping elevate system-wide insights and community-informed recommendations to support long-term justice reform.

Role and Authority

- Advises on programs, policies, and system changes that support incarceration prevention and diversion.
- Reviews strategies that promote safe and effective alternatives to jail for individuals with behavioral health needs and provides recommendations.
- Functions as the Law and Justice Council for Whatcom County, fulfilling statutory responsibilities under RCW 72.09.300.
- Bridges communication between community priorities, other advisory groups, and the JPOP Committee.

Responsibilities

- Stay informed about project updates and priorities to support productive engagement and provide timely, meaningful input when called upon.
- Review and recommend programs and practices that reduce jail reliance, particularly for individuals with mental health or substance use challenges.
- Translate system-level insights and program recommendations into feedback that informs facility planning.
- Identify systemic gaps and offer data-informed recommendations to the Executive and project team.
- Serve as a liaison to the broader community by sharing updates and gathering feedback, particularly from underrepresented populations.

Information and Timing Expectations

- Submit formal recommendations within defined timeframes to support project momentum.



- Maintain readiness to provide input when the Executive or project team requests additional feedback to inform policy direction or implementation planning.

Collaboration Across Groups

- Receives and reviews quarterly updates from the County Executive's Office supported by the County Facilities Department and Owner's Representative to stay informed on project progress and priorities.
- Engage with other stakeholder groups to elevate insights from across the system and reinforce shared goals.
- Actively support the Justice Project's engagement strategy by sharing relevant input from the community and ensuring transparency with JPOP.
- Actively participate in weekly meetings with the design team, project management team, and other stakeholder groups to reinforce the project's commitments to treatment, safety, and fiscal responsibility.

Escalation and Decision Process

- Major concerns, recommendations, or insights from the IPRTF are elevated to the Executive and Council with supporting analysis or policy context.

PARTNERS

XI. Small Cities Partnerships/City of Bellingham in Whatcom County

The Small Cities Partnerships and the City of Bellingham are key financial contributors to the Whatcom County Justice and Behavioral Health Facility project, dedicating local sales tax dollars to support this regional investment. Their participation in this advisory group reflects a shared commitment to developing a facility that aligns with community values, regional public safety needs, and equitable behavioral health outcomes across jurisdictions.

These partners provide insight into the needs of municipalities across the County and serve as a conduit between city leadership, the public, and the project team, promoting transparency and intergovernmental collaboration throughout planning, design, and implementation.

Role and Authority

- Represent the priorities and perspectives of participating cities to support a facility that reflects shared goals for public safety and community well-being.
- Offer feedback on design, operations, and service models to promote regional benefit and fiscal accountability.

Responsibilities

- Stay informed about project developments and upcoming decisions to provide timely input when requested.
- Share updates and gather feedback from city councils and administrative staff to inform project planning.



- Provide insight on operational expectations, service gaps, and opportunities for alignment between jurisdictions.
- Contribute to the identification of long-term policy considerations related to funding, facility use, and behavioral health services.

Information and Timing Expectations

- Receive and review project updates quarterly, or more frequently as needed during key milestones.
- Respond to requests for input within agreed-upon timeframes to maintain project momentum and transparency.
- Participate in targeted engagement sessions with the design team or project leads when topics intersect with municipal priorities or funding implications.

Collaboration Across Groups

- Coordinate with other stakeholder and advisory groups, including the FFAB and IPRTF, to support consistent messaging and shared understanding of project goals.
- Elevate concerns or recommendations that may impact multiple jurisdictions for consideration by the Executive.
- Actively participate in regional coordination efforts to promote efficiency, shared services, and effective community reinvestment.

Escalation and Decision Process

- Concerns or recommendations raised by Small Cities or the City of Bellingham that affect funding agreements, interlocal commitments, or major design implications are escalated to the Executive and County Council with relevant analysis and documentation.



- XII. Lummi Nation Tribal Council**
- XIII. Nooksack Indian Tribe Tribal Council**

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Appendix B – Stakeholder Engagement Definitions

The following definitions clarify the levels of engagement referenced in the Communications Plan Engagement and Influence Matrix. These terms are grounded in the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework and adapted to reflect Whatcom County's unique structure, responsibilities, and intergovernmental relationships.

Communication Commitments by Role:

- **Collaborate:** These groups are decision makers and require real-time information, early review of materials, and tailored engagement to maintain momentum. Communication must be clear, detailed, and aligned with their authority and accountability levels.
- **Consult:** These groups play an advisory or oversight role and must be engaged regularly, especially before milestones or major decisions. Communication must balance clarity with sufficient technical depth to support informed feedback.
- **Peer-to-Peer:** This level reflects mutual respect between sovereign governments or jurisdictions. Communication must honor cultural protocols, legal standing, and self-determination. Engagement emphasizes relationship-building, transparency, and reciprocal input.
- **Involve:** These groups are invited to participate in workshops, design discussions, or structured feedback opportunities that shape project direction. Communication should be interactive, responsive, and designed to reflect their input in final outcomes.
- **Inform:** These groups receive clear, timely, and accessible updates to support public awareness and transparency. While not part of decision-making, this communication builds understanding and reinforces trust through consistency and clarity.

Engagement Level Definitions:

Engagement Level	Definition	Application in This Project
Collaborate	Work together consistently throughout the process to shape options, define direction, and develop solutions. Decisions are made with direct input from the group.	Used with operational groups (e.g., Sheriff's Office, Behavioral Health) and the Executive, where co-development of facility or programmatic elements is essential.
Consult	Obtain input and feedback at key decision points. While final decisions may be made elsewhere, input meaningfully shapes outcomes.	Used with FFAB, IPRTF, and County Council (outside of funding authority), where informed recommendations are expected.
Peer-to-Peer (Government-to-Government)	Exchange of information and input between sovereign or jurisdictional equals. Respects distinct legal, cultural, or governmental standing.	Used for Lummi and Nooksack Tribal Councils. Communications reflect sovereign-to-sovereign respect, outside typical public engagement channels.



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Involve	Invite participation in workshops, design discussions, or decision shaping, with feedback reflected in outcomes. More interactive than “Inform,” but not shared decision-making.	Used for the public and Small Cities - particularly in milestone moments or feedback rounds where their input influences future direction.
Inform	Provide accurate, timely, and accessible information to support awareness, understanding, and transparency. Not intended for feedback, but critical for trust.	Used for broad public communication, and in low-engagement phases with stakeholders not directly involved in decision-making.

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