



Justice Project Update Feb 2026

PRESENTERS:

KAYLA SCHOTT-BRESLER, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE

ADAM JOHNSON, STV

Outline

- 1 Update on the Justice Project Process
- 2 What the scenarios look like today
- 3 Policy dials that need to be considered
- 4 Next Steps

Purpose: We hope to solicit questions and feedback to inform future discussions and prepare you for more in-depth policy conversations and decisions



Process Update

- Currently in the Validation Phase of the Justice Project, where decisions relating to the size, scope, location, budget, and programming are made
- Aiming for architectural design to begin Summer 2026, but key decisions needed to start
- Continual engagement with the public
 - Community workshop in November, second set for March 19th at 6PM in the Lynden City Chambers
 - Monthly newsletters, weekly social media updates, regular media coverage ensures an informed public



Progress Update

- General consensus reached on location/model for Behavioral Care Center
- Initial jail capacity needs assessment conducted, more work being done to refine
- Behavioral Health consultant working to calculate impact diversion programs could have on jail capacity
- Design-Build team working with stakeholders to develop scenarios for jail design



Evolving Challenges

- Construction costs have risen steeply while sales tax revenues have stagnated
 - Sales tax receipts in 2025 were down 9% from 2023 projections
- Initial Interlocal Agreement outlined a \$155m preliminary budget with a commitment from the cities to contribute 75% of their sales tax for 4-6 years.
- With these financial pressures, the priorities of the Justice Project are now directly competing for limited resources and require prioritization



Jail Capacity Considerations

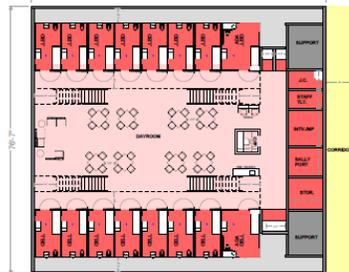
- Conversations ahead of the interlocal used 440 beds for purposes of comparing costs.
- Sheriff Tanksley has recommended around 600 beds to accommodate future needs.
- Jail Capacity Needs Analysis projected “opening day” capacity need of 480 beds, which served as a starting point for scenario planning.
- Eliminating booking restrictions is more complex than bed count – it involves capacity configuration, crime/arrest rates, criminal justice decision-making, diversion and more
- Bed count is a significant driver of both construction and operational budgets



Bed Configuration Impacts Capacity



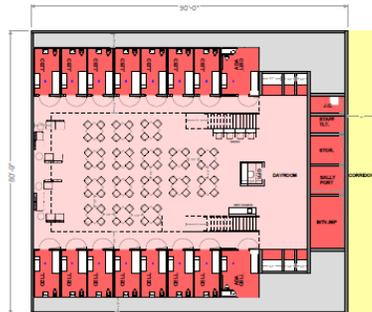
48 Bed - Dorm
 +/- 6,000 SF (125 SF / Bed)
 Stacked Beds / Centralized Support



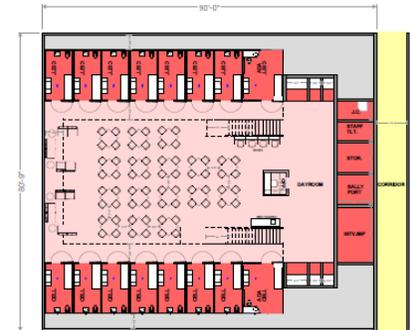
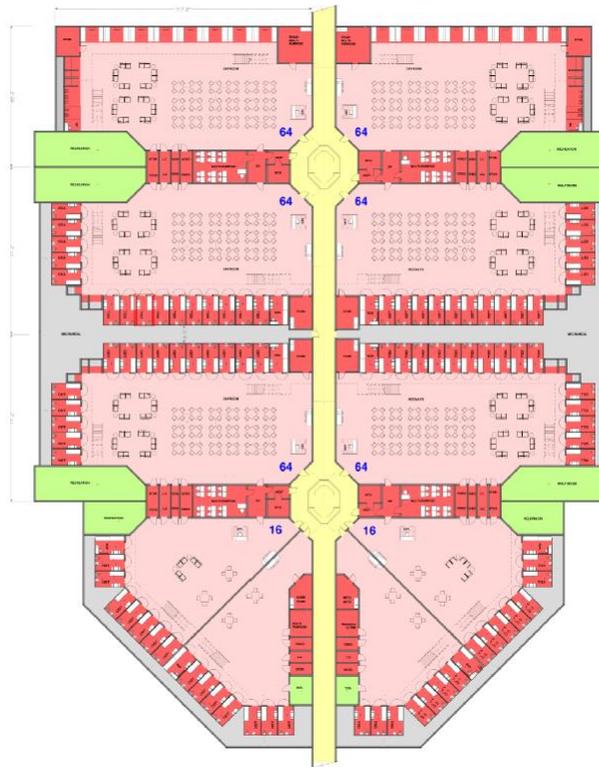
32 Bed - Single Cell
 +/- 8,400 SF (260 SF / Bed)
 Non-Stacked Beds / Centralized Support



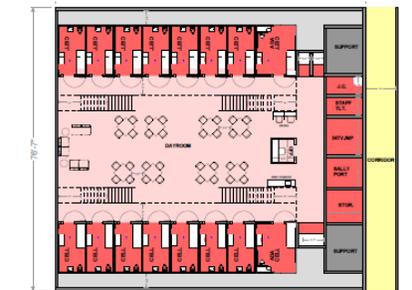
64 Bed - Dorm
 +/- 7,200 SF (110 SF / Bed)
 Stacked Beds / Centralized Support



64 Bed - Double Cell
 +/- 9,700 SF (150 SF / Bed)
 Stacked Beds / Centralized Support



64 Bed - Double Cell
 +/- 9,700 SF (150 SF / Bed)
 Stacked Beds / Centralized Support



32 Bed - Single Cell

Current Scenarios for Jail

SCENARIO 1:

Uses a \$170M target and 480 beds as the primary drivers. Housing is prioritized first, with rehabilitation, program, judicial, and support spaces incorporated where possible within the available budget.

SCENARIO 2:

Expands upon the budget-driven baseline by incorporating additional Sheriff's office operational needs. The scenario introduces targeted improvements to housing, kitchen, laundry, and judicial spaces while attempting to remain within a \$200M budget.

SCENARIO 3:

Builds on operational improvements by substantially increasing classification flexibility to further alleviate booking restrictions and strengthen rehabilitative service delivery.

SCENARIO 4:

Advances an integrated justice model by combining detention and behavioral health treatment in a single facility to support coordinated care and operations.



Current Scenarios for Jail

	SKAGIT JAIL*	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2	SCENARIO 3	SCENARIO 4
Department	DGSF	DGSF	DGSF	DGSF	DGSF
Lobby	1,200	1,950	1,313	1,313	3,500
Administration	4,060	3,000	6,028	6,028	6,075
Staff support	3,077	3,950	6,400	6,400	6,400
Security Operations	1,930	2,100	1,204	1,204	4,300
Intake / Release	6,884	6,000	9,523	17,000	30,000
Courts	4,404	3,000	7,507	7,507	8,900
Housing	61,162	66,200	80,007	115,000	120,300
Health Care	5,671	3,900	5,378	6,700	7,529
Visitation	1,451	500	980	980	1,372
Programs	4,914	7,500	230	230	3,640
Kitchen	6,800	6,000	5,667	6,000	7,238
Laundry	1,632	1,250	1,360	2,000	3,000
Warehouse	0	500	5,000	5,000	6,150
Maintenance	5,820	220	2,250	2,250	10,500
Subtotal	109,005	106,070	132,847	177,612	218,904
Building Gross	1.15	1.15	1.15	1.15	1.15
Total	125,356	121,981	152,774	204,254	251,740

*Skagit areas have been scaled to account for 400 beds increased to 480.

Jail Construction Cost	110,000,000	105,000,000	138,000,000	178,000,000	215,000,000
- Soft Costs	52,000,000	52,000,000	57,000,000	68,000,000	78,000,000
- WSST	13,000,000	13,000,000	15,000,000	20,000,000	24,000,000
Jail Project Costs (Range)	175,000,000 - 210,000,000	170,000,000 - 205,000,000	200,000,000 - 250,000,000	260,000,000 - 320,000,000	320,000,000 - 380,000,000
BCC Cost	35,000,000	35,000,000	35,000,000	35,000,000	35,000,000
Jail Demo Cost	8,100,000	8,100,000	8,100,000	8,100,000	8,100,000



Benchmarks

Jail Project Benchmarks

Project Name	SF per Bed	\$/SF (in 2025 Costs)
Skagit County Justice Center	250	\$903.40
FCI Leavenworth	486	\$734.00
Marysville Civic Center	248	\$755.72
Stevens County Justice Center	585	\$868.89
East County Detention Center	317	\$1,028.47
Franklin County Corrections Center	495	\$1,081.08
Averages	397	\$895.26
Scenario 1 Baseline Target	250	\$875.00



Initial Scenario Comparison

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Contingency	+20%	+20%	+20%	+20%
Base	~\$170M	~\$200M	~\$260M	~\$320M
Area	122,000	153,000	204,000	252,000
Jail Priorities	480 beds	480 beds	480 beds	480 beds
Booking Restrictions	Limited Improvement	Minimal Improvement	Most Improvement	Most Improvement
Diversion Triage	Not Provided	Minimal	Moderate	Most
Rehabilitation Spaces	Limited	Minimal	Moderate	Most
Program Spaces	Centralized Not in housing unit	Moderate Provisions	Moderate Provisions	Most Provisions
Housing Configuration	Limited with operational challenges	Minimal with classification challenges	Moderate	Most
Operation Cost Corrections	High Impacts on Staffing	Medium-High Impacts on Staffing	Moderate Impacts on Staffing	Moderate Impacts on Staffing
Operation Cost Programs	High Impacts on Staffing	Medium-High Impacts on Staffing	Moderate Impacts on Staffing	Moderate Impacts on Staffing
Rapid Resource Center	Not Provided	Minimal	Moderate	Most

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Contingency	+20%	+20%	+20%	+20%
Base	~\$170M	~\$200M	~\$260M	~\$320M
Area	122,000	153,000	204,000	252,000
Jail Priorities	480 beds	480 beds	480 beds	480 beds
Medical Unit	Limited	Minimal	Moderate	Most
Staff Wellness	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Supervision Model	Indirect Only	Opportunities for Both Direct & Indirect	Improved Opportunities for Both Direct & Indirect	Direct Supervision Provided
Court Service Space	Limited - operationally challenged	Moderate	Moderate	Most
Support Space	Limited - operationally challenged	Moderate	Moderate	Most
Administrative Space	Limited - operationally challenged	Moderate	Moderate	Most

NOTE: This document presents conceptual interpretations of how varying budget levels may support goals identified by County stakeholders. The information is preliminary and intended to assist the County in establishing a draft, planning-level project budget. At the County's request, the team developed best-available assumptions based on feedback received to date and experience with comparable justice facilities. This effort represents an initial planning step to support near-term decision-making.



Policy Levers

- Budget
 - Length of contribution by cities
 - Amount of funding available for services outside the jail
- Level of services
 - Quality/size of internal areas
 - Total area
 - Bed count
 - Bed configuration

Unknowns:

- Interest rate at time of borrowing
- Actual sales tax receipts in near and long term
- Future cost escalation



Next Steps

Working collaboratively to reach consensus on:

- A budget ceiling
- Prioritization of spending within that cap to determine level of service

Discussion will happen within JAW, FFAB, IPRTF, JPOP, with the public. The County Council will be final decision maker, but all participants of ILA need to agree on updated cooperative framework.

