

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL AGENDA BILL

NO. 2016 - 72

CLEARANCES	Initial	Date	Date Received in Council Office	Agenda Date	Assigned to:
Originator:		2/2/2016		2/9/2016	Introduction
Division Head:				2/23/16	P & D / Council
Dept. Head:	<i>[Signature]</i>	2.2.16		3/8/16	P&D/Council
Prosecutor:	<i>[Signature]</i>	2/17/16			
Purchasing/Budget:					
Executive:					

TITLE OF DOCUMENT:

Res adopt. statemnt of principles for Criminal Justice & Behavioral Hlth Systems

ATTACHMENTS:

SEPA review required? () Yes () NO	Should Clerk schedule a hearing? () Yes () NO
SEPA review completed? () Yes () NO	Requested Date:

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE: (If this item is an ordinance or requires a public hearing, you must provide the language for use in the required public notice. Be specific and cite RCW or WCC as appropriate. Be clear in explaining the intent of the action.)

Resolution adopting a statement of incarceration prevention, criminal justice, and jail planning principles for Whatcom County's Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health Systems.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

2/23/2016: Held in Committee
3/8/2016: Amended and forwarded to Council for approval

COUNCIL ACTION:

2/9/2016: Introduced 7-0
2/23/2106: Held in Committee
3/8/2016: Substitute amended and approved 7-0,
Res. 2016-008

Related County Contract #:

Related File Numbers:

Ordinance or Resolution Number: Res. 2016-008

Please Note: Once adopted and signed, ordinances and resolutions are available for viewing and printing on the County's website at: www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council.

PROPOSED BY: BUCHANAN, MANN, WEIMER
INTRODUCTION DATE: FEBRUARY 9, 2016

RESOLUTION NO. 2016-008

ADOPTING A STATEMENT OF INCARCERATION PREVENTION, CRIMINAL JUSTICE, AND JAIL PLANNING PRINCIPLES FOR WHATCOM COUNTY'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEMS

WHEREAS, Whatcom County and its municipalities and Tribes desire to coordinate, contribute, and cooperate in enhancing public safety, and in particular our communities' criminal justice and behavioral health systems; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Executive has recently asked for input and leadership by the County Council and other legislative bodies to guide future jail planning, and has sought constructive engagement with other elected officials throughout the county; and

WHEREAS, all parties believe there is a need for an improved County jail, and that voters will approve a proposal that addresses the communities' full range of needs and values.

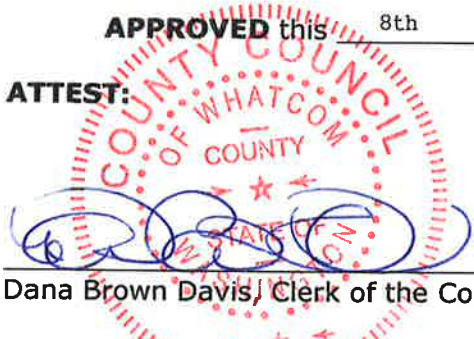
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Whatcom County Council adopts the attached Statement of Incarceration Prevention, Criminal Justice, Jail Planning Principles.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that due to a large number of other infrastructure investments that the County needs to make, and the ever escalating costs of such investments, time is of the essence for getting another proposal to the voters as soon as possible.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Whatcom County Council asks the other legislative authorities that have a stake in our shared criminal justice system to, as soon as possible, also adopt this Statement of Incarceration Prevention, Criminal Justice, Jail Planning Principles, or similar statements that make clear how incarceration prevention, criminal justice, and jail planning needs to proceed.

APPROVED this 8th day of March, 2016.


ATTEST:


Dana Brown Davis, Clerk of the Council

**WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY,
WASHINGTON**


Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Statement of Principles on Incarceration Prevention, Criminal Justice, and Jail Planning

The Whatcom County Council would like to establish guiding principles for incarceration prevention, criminal justice, and jail planning, and requests the participation of the Lummi Nation, Nooksack Tribe, and all the Cities of Whatcom County.

We believe our communities are united in our commitment to public safety, justice, fiscal responsibility, harm reduction, healing, and prevention as public priorities.

While there is a national discussion on incarceration and behavioral health, we see an opportunity to improve our criminal justice system and rebuild our jail. We should strive for conditions where the cycle of incarceration is broken rather than perpetuated.

We are fortunate that the process of thorough analysis is underway, with the creation of the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force. Subcommittees of the Task Force are focusing their efforts on creation of a Crisis Triage Facility, Behavioral Health Programs, and Criminal Justice System procedure and process reforms.

Therefore, in order to guide the public process and County administrative plans and actions, we do hereby put forward the following set of Incarceration Prevention, Criminal Justice, and Jail Planning Principles for our communities:

1. The people of unincorporated Whatcom County, the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Tribe, and the Cities are best served by a shared jail facility or a combination of shared facilities, and by a coordinated and integrated response to behavioral health issues that can help alleviate the use of the criminal justice system.
2. The following are inextricably linked: responsible stewardship of public funds, ensuring public safety, and providing adequate countywide behavioral health services.
3. In recognition of the importance of prevention, treatment, re-entry and jail alternatives, the Council established the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force (IPRTF). The IPRTF's specific recommendations should influence the direction of our future crisis triage facility, our jail facility, pre-booking and pre-trial diversions, jail alternatives, and behavioral health programming.
4. We will commit funding towards community-based preventive services. We need post-release support to maximize successful re-entry and minimize recidivism. These actions now can hold down recurring criminal justice costs in the future.
5. We will pursue construction and operation of an enlarged triage facility, implementation of criminal justice process reforms, and creation of relevant behavioral health programs regardless of the outcome of jail proposals.
6. Departments will provide data to decision-makers and the public, including relevant demographic, statistical, and jail usage information. As described in Whatcom County Resolution 2015-042, spreadsheet models for jail utilization, jail financing, and jail size should be made available to the public for examination and incorporated into decision-making.
7. The size of jail facilities should be based on a comprehensive analysis of local criminal justice policy. While accurate measures of current incarceration rates adjusted for future population growth are important, we also must consider national, state, and local trends towards improvements in prevention, alternatives, behavioral health, and re-entry support.

8. We will locate any new jail facility where it can work best for all of our partners, the public, and related businesses (attorneys, bail bonds, etc.). We need to try to obtain consensus on the Ferndale location and whether alternatives, such as a downtown Bellingham option, should be pursued.
9. We consider the Irongate minimum security facility as a valuable piece of the criminal justice continuum. This facility could be retained for certain existing jail populations and programs, or expanded to include a crisis triage facility, a re-entry support facility, a behavioral health facility, or medical facility.
10. We will apportion construction and operating costs separately and fairly among jail users based on actual use or best estimates of actual future use.
11. We will work with the County Prosecutor's Office, the District Court, Superior Court, and Lummi Tribal Court leadership on bail setting practices and probation procedures, as well as broader criminal justice issues that effect the size of the jail population but which are not under County legislative control.
12. We will issue an RFP for a Criminal Justice Planner. While the work of our IPRTF and community groups remains valid and vital, it is essential to hire a professional Criminal Justice Planner to evaluate the additional aspects of our system and our jail needs. Considerations such as financial commitments, jail location and size, diversion programs, and bail and prosecution reforms must be examined and reported on by an established, impartial expert.
13. We recognize the need to provide a safer, more secure and healthier environment for those who work, visit, and are incarcerated within the jail; therefore, we will work to have a funding proposal on the ballot with a goal of no later than November 2017.