

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force / Law and Justice Council

SPECIAL MEETING

Justice Project Implementation Planning

Workshop #5: Funding

Meeting Summary for Wednesday, April 12, 2023

To view video recording, click on the link in the section heading.

1. Call to Order

Barry Buchanan, Councilmember and Chair of the Justice Project Planning Team, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. and welcomed all participants. The meeting was held via remote-only Zoom Webinar and in person at the Whatcom County Council Conference Room, 311 Grand Ave., Suite 105, Bellingham, Washington.

Members Present: Jack Hovenier (Co-chair), Barry Buchanan, Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, Darlene Peterson, Scott Korthuis, Maialisa Vanyo, Mike Hilley, Satpal Sidhu, Daniel Hammill, Perry Mowery, Eric Petersen, Bill Elfo, Raylene King, Donnell Tanksley,

Additional Participants: Tyler Schroeder, Kayla Schott-Bressler, Brian Heinrich, Michael Lilliquist, Wendy Jones, Malora Christensen, Doug Chadwick, Caleb Erickson, Chris Kobdich, Erika Lautenbach, Jake Wiebusch, Mike Parker, Dean Wight, Kristin Hanna, Mike Smith, David Crass

Members Absent: Stephen Gockley, Deborah Hawley, Greg Winter, Jenn Lockwood, Jason McGill, Seth Fleetwood, Bruce Van Glubt, David Freeman, Dave Reynolds, Eric Richey, Rebecca Mertzig

Council Staff: Cathy Halka, Jill Nixon, and Dana Brown-Davis, Whatcom County

Facilitators: Holly O'Neil and Mardi Solomon, Crossroads Consulting

People who are not IPRTF members introduced themselves.

Jack Hovenier offered a **Land Acknowledgement:** Before we begin, we acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional and unceded territory of the Lummi, Nooksack, Samish and Semiahmoo People who have cared for and tended this land since time immemorial. Truth and acknowledgment are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference. We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. We pay respect to their elders past and present. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today. And please join us in uncovering such truths at any and all public events.

2. Overview of Implementation Planning Process (00:02:48) – Holly O'Neil

Holly O'Neil reviewed the meeting agenda and process. She noted that public comments are welcome at any time by emailing: IPRTaskForce@co.whatcom.wa.us.

This meeting will include a review of results of the first poll about Potential Implementation Projects, and a discussion of potential funding sources.

The scope of work of this implementation planning process is to identify 8-10 projects to advance the recommendations from the [Justice Project Needs Assessment](#) over the next 1-3 years. The process for developing the Implementation Plan involves compiling content from worksheets and workshops, gathering

additional information, and refining and synthesizing implementation plan ideas. Gathering public input will begin later in April with focus groups followed by a Town Hall.

The plan will be revised and refined based on this input and then final priorities for action will be presented to County Council. Once approved, the County Executive's Office will oversee the implementation process and monitor progress. The process will repeat again in three years to create an updated plan.

3. [Findings from 1st Poll](#) (00:10:05) – Mardi Solomon

Mardi Solomon emphasized that the list of Potential Implementation Projects that the poll questions asked about is only a first draft and will change with additional input.

The poll was completed by 28 respondents who included IPRTF members, subject matter experts who participated in these implementation planning workshops, and Stakeholder Advisory Committee members.

[Importance & Feasibility of each Potential Implementation Project](#) (00:12:29)

Mardi presented summary findings about how important and how feasible respondents thought each of the 15 potential implementation projects was. The potential projects were presented in five clusters. Following each cluster of results, participants discussed:

- Where do we have the potential to make the biggest impact?
 - Where could we get some leverage?
1. [Behavioral Health Services](#) (00:14:38)
 2. [Advocate with Regional & State Partners for Increased BH Services](#) (00:26:23)
 3. [Address Housing Needs](#) (00:33:08)
 4. [Build New Jail & Accessory Services](#) (00:41:50)
 5. [Measure Progress Toward Desired Outcomes](#) (00:49:16)

[Discussion: Do you see any big gaps in what we should be thinking about in this implementation plan?](#) (00:51:27)

[Additional Poll Findings](#) (01:06:48)

Mardi then presented some additional poll results which demonstrated that 85% of respondents felt a new tax initiative should include services to keep people out of jail as well as building a new jail, and responses to questions regarding jail size, and preferred locations for the jail and other facilities.

[Update on Irongate \(Division St.\) as a potential location for a new jail](#) (01:09:59)

[Discussion: A scenario of which facilities could go on four county-owned properties](#) (01:14:38)

Tyler Schroeder announced that the county is contracting with a construction cost estimator to determine costs of building a horizontal or vertical jail at various locations, and the costs of other potential facilities on the list as well. The more money that can be saved on capital facility costs, the more money there is for the behavioral health services we are discussing.

The implementation plan will include cost estimates, as well as who will be responsible for each task.

4. [Funding Sources](#) (01:48:24) – Tyler Schroeder

Tyler presented potential sources of funding for building a jail (including potential income from an income tax) behavioral health services, and supportive housing services. All of these sources are included in a compilation of funding resources created by county staff for the Needs Assessment Report (see [Appendix N: Potential Funding Sources](#)).

Tyler also spoke about opportunities to work with regional and state partners to advocate for and leverage state and federal funding.

[Discussion: Other potential sources of funding, and projects that should definitely be part of a tax initiative? \(2:02:19\)](#)

[Further information & discussion about potential income from a tax initiative \(02:12:36\)](#)

5. [Next Steps and Closing Comments \(02:24:09\)](#)

Holly reminded everyone that additional comments can be sent to: IPRTaskForce@co.whatcom.wa.us.

She also reviewed next steps which include frequent check-ins with the IPRTF/Law & Justice Council and County Council, focus groups April 24-28, and a Town Hall meeting May 24.

Barry thanked everyone for their hard work and adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned 3:30 pm.