

**WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL AGENDA BILL**

NO. 2011 - 78 A

<b>CLEARANCES</b>	<b>Initial</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Date Received in Council Office</b>	<b>Agenda Date</b>	<b>Assigned to:</b>
Originator:		4/12/2011		4/12/2011	Introduction
Division Head:				4/26/11	Council
Dept. Head:	<i>Budd</i>	<i>4.12.11</i>			
Prosecutor:					
Purchasing/Budget:					
Executive:					

**TITLE OF DOCUMENT:**

Resolution establishing a Whatcom County Jail Planning Task Force

**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 establishing a Whatcom County jail planning task force

**COMMITTEE ACTION:**

**COUNCIL ACTION:**

4/12/11: Introduced 7-0  
 4/26/11: Council Amended & Approved 7-0  
 Res 2011-014

**Related County Contract #:**

**Related File Numbers:**

**Ordinance or Resolution Number:** Res 2011-014

**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](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council).

**PROPOSED BY: Executive Kremen and Councilmember Brenner**  
**SPONSORED BY: Council Consent**  
**INTRODUCTION DATE: April 12, 2011**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2011-014**

**ESTABLISHING A WHATCOM COUNTY  
JAIL PLANNING TASK FORCE**

**WHEREAS**, the existing jail at the County Courthouse is in poor condition and a permanent facility for housing higher risk offenders is needed; and

**WHEREAS**, we require a new jail that will be the right size for present jail population projections, sited at a reasonable location and be designed in a manner to maximize operational efficiencies and accommodate expansion if and when the need arises; and

**WHEREAS**, the Law and Justice Council is required by Washington State RCW 72.09.300 and is established in Whatcom County Code Chapter 2.19; and

**WHEREAS**, the need for a new jail has been identified as a critical public facility that requires public involvement and significant commitment of time in order to accommodate the pressing need for a new jail; and

**WHEREAS**, the Whatcom County Council and the County Executive recognize that determining the appropriate size and location of a new jail will require significant public involvement and commitment of public resources; and

**WHEREAS**, jails are public facilities that can be difficult to site and the location of a jail can have a significant impact on the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the Whatcom County Council is the legislative body of Whatcom County and shall direct policy and adopt budgets; and

**WHEREAS**, building and operating a new jail will have a significant impact on Whatcom County capital and general fund budgets for many years; and

**WHEREAS**, a task force of citizens with expertise, and county officials can efficiently focus on finding solutions for building and siting a new jail.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Whatcom County Council requests that the County Executive shall appoint a task force of citizens and officials, confirmed by the County Council and charged with providing the County Council and County Executive advice on the appropriate size and location of new jail facilities. The task force shall be an ad-hoc subcommittee of the Law and Justice Council and shall report to and gather input from the Law and Justice Council. It is expected that they will work closely together to educate and gather input from the public. At least two members of the task force shall attend each meeting of the Law and Justice Council.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Jail Planning Task Force shall advise the Whatcom County Council on the right size, right location and financial impact of the new jail and shall provide a verbal report to the County Council and County Executive on progress no less than once every two months. At least two members of the task force shall attend each Law and Justice Council meeting to share information on progress and to hear input from the Law and Justice Council.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the selection criteria for the Jail Planning Task Force shall include no fewer than six citizens. It shall include members with various expertise, such as architecture, commercial real estate, construction of commercial projects, accounting, finance and other areas that might bring value to the process. It may also include representatives or their designee from the Sheriff's Office, Prosecutor's Office, the Police Chief's Association, the County Executive's Office, County mental health services and a Whatcom County Sheriff's Office corrections deputy.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Jail Planning Task Force shall specifically examine and consider:

- The size of the jail based on current and future needs
- A mental health triage center to reduce the need or frequency of incarceration of the mentally ill
- The potential impact of jail alternatives, offender diversion, efficiencies and changes in law and sentencing on the size of the jail
- Location(s) of the jail
- The ability to expand the jail facilities in the future should that be needed
- Other successful jail projects in our region and across the United States
- Capital costs of the new jail and how it shall be funded
- Operating costs of the new jail and how the operations will be funded
- The impact of design on capital and operational costs
- Input from jail personnel, other local governments, police, the courts, prosecuting attorneys, public defenders, probation personnel and citizens
- Input from Whatcom County's February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011, public meeting on the proposed jail and from the League of Women Voter's forum on jail issues.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the work of the Jail Planning Task Force shall rely on evidence and data where available. The Jail Planning Task Force shall also seek out and encourage the participation of citizens, staff and elected officials through the use of a regularly updated website and social and traditional media outreach and public forums and other opportunities to engage and inform the public and solicit feedback and opinion.

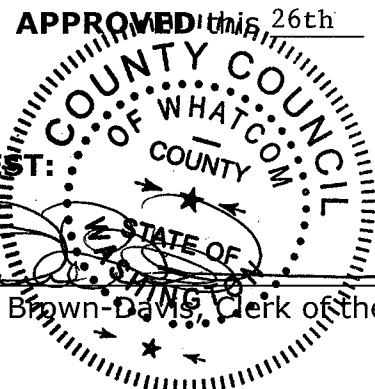
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that in considering the location of the jail that the Jail Planning Task Force shall create and use an open, transparent process, shall hear from the public on potential sites and shall make a recommendation of at least three sites for further analysis.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Jail Planning Task Force shall produce a report to the County Council, the County Executive and the general public no later than January 1, 2012 which shall address:

- The recommended size of the new jail, including recommendations for future expansion should that be needed
- The recommended location(s) of the new jail for further analysis
- Recommendations (if any) related to a mental health triage center to divert the mentally ill into more effective and efficient treatment
- Recommendations (if any) related to efficiencies in the new jail to reduce the overall operating costs
- Recommended strategies for funding the construction of the new jail.

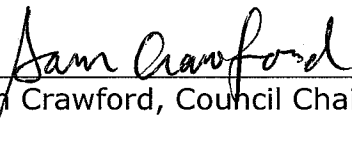
**APPROVED** this 26th day of April, 2011.

**ATTEST:**



Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

**WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

  
Sam Crawford, Council Chair

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

  
Civil Deputy Prosecutor