

***Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Meeting Summary January 8, 2018***

1. Call to Order

Task Force Co-Chair Jack Hovenier called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: Angela Anderson, Jill Bernstein, Anne Deacon, Bill Elfo, Deborra Garrett, Stephen Gockley, Susan Gribbin, Daniel Hammill, Jack Hovenier, Raylene King, Betsy Kruse, Kelli Linville, Ken Mann, Irene Morgan, Chris Phillips, Tyler Schroeder, Greg Winter

Also Present: Kathy Walker (proxy for Dave McEachran)

Absent: Jeff Brubaker, Nick Lewis, Byron Manering, Dave McEachran, Moonwater, Darlene Peterson

See the Planning Session Summary Report (attached) from Holly O'Neil, Crossroads Consulting, for a summary of the day's meeting.

9:00 am Introductions, Desired Outcomes, Agenda, Guidelines for Participation (20 min)

9:20 am Overview of the Planning Process (10 min)

Purpose: Facilitator will provide an overview of the planning cycle and how today's work will be incorporated.

O'Neil submitted and read from a presentation on the Planning Session (on file).

9:30 am Review and Evaluate Findings from Planning Survey (60 min)

Purpose: Explore areas of common ground and differences of opinion regarding the Vera Report recommendations, and assess feasibility of preferred options.

10:30 am Break (15 min)

10:45 am Identify Priorities for IPR Task Force (80 min)

Purpose: Seek agreement on long-term and short-term priorities and identify Task Force members' areas of interest.

12:05 am Review Next Steps and Wrap Up (10 min)

Purpose: Review next steps:

- ✓ Facilitator will prepare Report from today's session
- ✓ Steering Committee will use Report to prepare an 18 month Plan for approval at February Meeting
- ✓ Committees will refine their work plans and bring back to Task Force for approval Mar/April

12:15 pm Public Comment (15 min)

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.



CROSSROADS
CONSULTING

Planning Session Summary Report

WHATCOM COUNTY INCARCERATION PREVENTION AND REDUCTION TASK FORCE

January 2018

SUMMARY

On January 8th, 2018, the members of the Whatcom County Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force conducted a Planning Session to explore which of the recommendations from the VERA report should be prioritized for consideration and possible implementation. The Session was further intended to lay the groundwork for developing an 18-month Action Plan.

PROCESS

The co-chairs of the Task Force, Jill Bernstein and Jack Hovenier, along with Council Member Ken Mann and Legislative Coordinator Jill Nixon worked with a local facilitator and strategic planning consultant, Holly O'Neil of Crossroads Consulting, to design and facilitate the planning process. The Task Force had recently submitted its *Phase III Report to Whatcom County Council* in December of 2017, and was poised to evaluate the *VERA Institute November 2017 Report to Whatcom County Stakeholders on Jail Reduction Strategies*.

To lay the groundwork for the session, the facilitator developed a survey to gather preliminary input on planning priorities. The first draft of the survey and the proposed agenda for the Planning Session was first presented at the December meeting of the Task Force. At that meeting and in the week that followed, Task Force Members provided the facilitator with feedback on the survey and the agenda, which the facilitator incorporated into the final design. The final planning survey was distributed via email to Task Force Members and a similar survey was distributed to a list of interested citizens. Eighteen (18) Task Force Members and seven (7) citizens responded, and the results from both surveys were provided to the Task Force in advance of the January 8th planning session.

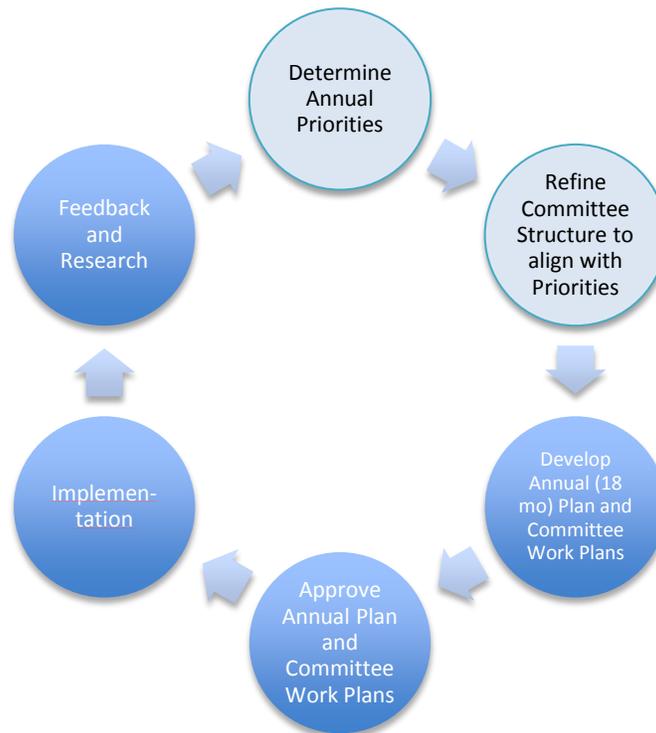
The pre-session Planning Survey was designed to:

1. Provide the three Committees with feedback on their current and proposed initiatives.
2. Assess and gather feedback on the recommendations of the VERA report.
3. Gather input on how to approach data gathering.
4. Solicit any additional feedback regarding interests and concerns.

The planning session was 3.5 hours long (see **AGENDA: Appendix A**). Due to the limited time, the survey feedback on the Committee’s current and proposed initiatives was not discussed at the meeting, but was included in the packet as important context. It was understood that Committees would use that feedback, in addition to the work of this Planning Session, to develop and refine their proposed Work Plans for the year.

The session began with introductions of all participants and citizens who were observing the process. The facilitator then provided guidelines for how the group would build consensus while openly exploring differences of opinion. The facilitator also provided a simple framework for understanding how today’s work would conceptually be incorporated into an annual planning cycle. The work of this planning session (as indicated in the light-blue circles) would provide the Steering Committee with the information needed to develop an 18 month Action Plan for approval at an upcoming regular meeting, working in close communication with the Committees.

ANNUAL PLANNING CYCLE



The Task Force reviewed their statement of purpose, as per County Ordinance **ORD2015-025**

TO PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS, OVERSIGHT, AND SPECIFIC TIMEFRAMES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW OR ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING PROGRAMS DESIGNED ALONG A CONTINUUM THAT EFFECTIVELY REDUCES INCARCERATION OF INDIVIDUALS STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS AND CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY AND MINIMIZES JAIL UTILIZATION BY PRETRIAL DEFENDANTS WHO CAN SAFELY BE RELEASED

The facilitator then presented the Survey Results (**Appendix B**), showing which of the VERA recommended strategies were ranked as being most important. Scores from the Task Force Members' and the citizens' ranking were shown to have no significant differences. VERA recommendations that ranked above 4.0 in the survey were offered to the group as an initial set of strategies for discussion purposes.

The "REAL-WIN-WORTH" methodology was used as a framework for discussion, with our discussion starting at the bottom of the pyramid, and ending the day at the top.

- Real** – Are we actually going to be able to do it, and how?
- Win** – Is it feasible, is it likely to succeed, is there synergy and opportunity?
- Worth** – Is it important? Do you think it will make a difference?



Working in small groups of 2-3 participants, Task Force Members and Proxies discussed the survey results and identified any additional strategies that should be considered beyond the initial set. Participants also identified any concerns or refinements of the recommended strategies, based on their perception of whether the strategy would be a "Win" for our community. The group also noted that in some cases, these strategies would be pursued entirely as the development of recommendations, and were not anticipated to be appropriate for additional action by the Task Force.

As the small groups reported out, additions and changes were captured on sticky notes and categorized relative to the five goal categories in the VERA Report. An "Other" category was used to capture other ideas or comments that were important to note.

After developing a more complete picture of the strategies participants felt were important to include in long term planning, participants used **green sticky dots** to indicate which strategies they thought should be prioritized for consideration or action in the next 18 months (across all goal areas). Additionally, if any participants had remaining concerns about the strategies, they were invited to use **yellow sticky dots**, with their initials, so that any lingering concerns could be addressed as needed after the session. Lastly, if people had interest in working on a particular strategy, they put their name on a sticky note and attached it to that strategy.

To complete the process, the Committee Chairs were invited to the front of the room to select those strategies that would naturally fall into their Committee's purview. The group then discussed how to address the remaining prioritized strategies, which did not naturally fall within the purview of a Standing Committee, and how the committee structure of the Task Force could be adjusted to support that work. Lastly, topics for future discussion were identified.

RESULTS

The tables reflect the prioritized long-term and short-term (18 month) strategies identified by the participants. Strategies were organized according to the three Standing Committees, with a final grouping of strategies related to data gathering, oversight, and accountability. Lastly, the final table reflects topics that members identified for future discussion topics.

Law and Justice Committee			
Strategy	Green Dots	Yellow Dots	Interested Parties
Adopt and validate a data-driven pretrial risk assessment system	13		Angela Anderson Deborah Garrett Jill Bernstein Stephen Gockley Dave McEachran (or designee)
Establish Regional Pre-trial monitoring services program to serve all Whatcom County Courts	13	KL	Angela Anderson Stephen Gockley Deborah Garrett RK
Implement policies and procedures that will reduce number of bench warrants issued for FTAs	4		
Expand book and release practices, including from police stations (addition: expand concept to include pre-arrest diversion)	2	DH	
Increase opportunities for people to resolve outstanding warrants	2		RK
Develop mechanisms to prevent jail admissions for violations of probation/parole	2		
Facilitate opportunities for individuals to pay off fines assoc. with moving violations	1		
(NEW) Use EHM to facilitate improvements in Whatcom County	1		
Explore how EH and EHM can reduce bench warrants for FTAs	1	KL	
Analyze warrant data to understand the scope of the problem to target responses appropriately (also include in data considerations)	0		

Behavioral Health Committee			
Strategy	Green Dots	Yellow Dots	Interested Parties
Equip law enforcement officers with tools to de-escalate and divert people experiencing behavioral health crises	11		Ann Deacon Bill Elfo
Pursue opportunities to coordinate care between county agencies	9		Dan Hammill Anne Deacon Chris Phillips
Improve Data Collection System (addition: verify data on number of people in jail who seek out or are referred to Behavioral Health Services)	3	JG	

Triage Center Committee			
Strategy	Green Dots	Yellow Dots	Interested Parties
Explore sobering services in the Triage Committee as part of the Triage Services	2	DH AD	Jack Hovenier RK

Strategies related to DATA GATHERING, OVERSIGHT, and ACCOUNTABILITY			
Strategy	Green Dots	Yellow Dots	Interested Parties
Report and publish data regularly to ensure transparency and accountability	6	TS	Tyler Schroeder (Courts and Jails) Deborah Garrett (comment - yes if applied to all court processes)
Develop and track case processing performance measures	4	RK	
Work to secure and develop data to understand case flow processing (<i>amended from original text: "develop a collaborative plan to ensure efficient and fair caseflow management"</i>)		JG	
Addition: Look at new ways to make data informed bail decisions (as per VERA Goal "Reduce unnecessary pretrial detention...")			
Addition: Remove select low-level offenses from municipal code (as per VERA Goal "Reduces unnecessary admissions to the jail")			
Addition: Consumer Focus Groups and exit interview with those involved in justice system, to include their input in a system mapping and strategic planning, and include discussion of opportunities to apply restorative justice (as per VERA Goal "Create oversight and accountability mechanisms to ensure successful and sustained jail population reduction)		TS SG	Joy Gilfillen

FUTURE DISCUSSIONS (for the Steering Committee to add to Task Force Agendas, or identify other mechanism for future exploration of the topic)			
TOPIC	Green Dots	Yellow Dots	Interested Parties
Restorative Justice			
When, where, and how people are transported to jails in nearby counties		BE	Bill Elfo
Who do we need/want to have in our jails?		SG	
How changes in Behavioral Health and Medical Systems may affect our community			
Task Force proxy system and representation on TF committees			

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The group came to agreement that the strategies related to whole system DATA GATHERING, OVERSIGHT, and ACCOUNTABILITY needed to be advanced by the formation of another committee or some other type of workgroup, or possibly workgroups.

The Steering Committee was charged with the responsibility of developing a recommendation for the Task Force for how to proceed. In developing a recommendation, the Steering Committee will consult with key informants familiar with current data collection activities.

The group thanked Ken Mann for his service, and the Co-chairs and facilitator for organizing the planning session. Next steps will include:

- ✓ Facilitator will prepare Report from today's session
- ✓ The Steering Committee will use this report along with reports from Committees to propose a work plan for approval at an upcoming regular meeting.
- ✓ Committees shall use this report, review their charges as outlined in their statements of work, and review their current goals in submitting their proposed work plan and goals to the Steering Committee.

APPENDIX A

WHATCOM COUNTY IPR TASK FORCE PLANNING SESSION

January 8, 2018

County Courthouse Fifth Floor Conf. Rooms 513/514, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, WA

Desired Outcomes:

- ❖ To explore which of the recommendations from the VERA report are the highest priorities for the Whatcom County Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force, and lay the ground work for developing an 18 month Action Plan.

AGENDA

- 8:45 am** **Arrival; coffee and tea (15 min)**
- 9:00 am** **Introductions, Desired Outcomes, Agenda, Guidelines for Participation (20 min)**
- 9:20 am** **Overview of the Planning Process (10 min)**
Purpose: Facilitator will provide an overview of the planning cycle and how today's work will be incorporated.
- 9:30 am** **Review and Evaluate Findings from Planning Survey (60 min)**
Purpose: Explore areas of common ground and differences of opinion regarding the Vera Report recommendations, and assess feasibility of preferred options.
- 10:30 am** **Break (15 min)**
- 10:45 am** **Identify Priorities for IPR Task Force (80 min)**
Purpose: Seek agreement on long-term and short-term priorities and identify Task Force members' areas of interest.
- 12:05 am** **Review Next Steps and Wrap Up (10 min)**
Purpose: Review next steps:
- ✓ Facilitator will prepare Report from today's session
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 - ✓ Committees will refine their work plans and bring back to Task Force for approval Mar/April
- 12:15 pm** **Public Comment (15 min)**
- 12:30 pm** **Closing**

APPENDIX B

See following pages for Survey Results.

Contact the Task Force at 360-778-5010 or visit the Task Force website for the Survey Results.