

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**County Advisory Committee Begins Work on
Public Health, Safety and Justice Facility Needs Assessment (Justice Project)**

BELLINGHAM, WA– Whatcom County’s Stakeholder Advisory Committee for the Public Health, Safety, and Justice Facility Needs Assessment (Justice Project) will meet on Thursday, January 20, 1 – 3 p.m. The meeting will be held remotely via Zoom. The public is invited to watch or listen live online or by phone. Information to join the meeting is available at www.whatcomcounty.us/justice.

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee, which formed in March 2020 but delayed due to the pandemic, will develop a public health, safety, and justice facility needs assessment. Councilmember Barry Buchanan said, “This is an opportunity to plan for a criminal justice system that is built to address the root causes of incarceration and designed with rehabilitation as the goal.” The needs assessment will include robust community participation to ensure the report reflects community values.

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee includes behavioral health and criminal justice advocates, behavioral health and housing service providers, individuals with experience in the criminal legal system, Tribes, members of the Incarceration Prevention & Reduction Task Force, and leadership from the County, City of Bellingham, and the small cities. The [Stakeholder Advisory Committee will meet](#) every other month over the next year and discuss topics such as criminal justice data, behavioral health services, and infrastructure needs.

For more information, please visit www.whatcomcounty.us/justice or call the County Council Office at 360-778-5010.