

**From:** [Cathy Halka](#)  
**To:** [SAC](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Whatcom County Public Health, Safety and Justice Initiative  
**Date:** Friday, May 13, 2022 9:04:08 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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**From:** Cathy Halka  
**Sent:** Friday, May 13, 2022 8:42 AM  
**To:** Safford, Bertha H. MD <[bhsafford@fcn.net](mailto:bhsafford@fcn.net)>  
**Cc:** Jill Nixon <[JNixon@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:JNixon@co.whatcom.wa.us)>; Barry Buchanan <[BBuchana@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:BBuchana@co.whatcom.wa.us)>; SAC <[SAC@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:SAC@co.whatcom.wa.us)>  
**Subject:** RE: Whatcom County Public Health, Safety and Justice Initiative  
**Importance:** High

Hello Dr. Safford,

Thank you for your email. The [Stakeholder Advisory Committee](#) (SAC) for the [Justice Project](#) was formed by County Council to guide the development of a needs assessment, which will answer some critical questions about public health, safety and justice facility needs. The project schedule anticipates completing the needs assessment report at the end of this year. The report will not be complete in time for a 2022 ballot initiative, and the intent is to prepare for the November 2023 ballot. Please visit the [SAC Meetings and Additional Information](#) page for more information on ongoing work of the SAC.

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County Council established the [Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force](#) (IPRTF) in 2015 to review best practices and make recommendations to safely and effectively reduce incarceration. The INDEX (Information Needs and Data Exchange) Committee is a subcommittee of the IPRTF. The focus of the INDEX Committee is to work on the data associated with reducing and preventing incarceration overall, regardless of jail location or size.

At the February [INDEX Committee](#) meeting, Caleb Erickson proposed and there was discussion on the priority data, but there was no vote or determination related to the discussion.

The INDEX Committee will soon begin a project to inventory all the criminal justice and behavioral health periodic reports that exist now and make them available to the public on the County website. Additionally, the IPRTF will be discussing at a future meeting whether to make a recommendation to the County Council and Executive to request funding and authorization for the following additional data related projects:

- Contract with a data analyst in 2023 to determine what data is necessary to evaluate the success of its incarceration prevention and reduction programs on the jail population, how best to share that data amongst jurisdictions and agencies, and develop an initial data dashboard for public transparency.
- Hire a full-time criminal justice system data analyst position with the expertise to evaluate and report on the data, and who will expand and maintain the criminal justice data dashboard for the public, including the information-gathering infrastructure and be responsible for evaluating, monitoring, and reporting on the criminal justice system.

I hope this information helps answer your questions, and please feel free to reach out with any additional questions you may have.

Best.  
Cathy

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**Cathy B. Halka, AICP** *(she/her)*

**Legislative Analyst**

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*Work Schedule: Tuesday through Friday*

*This email is subject to disclosure through the Public Records Act.*



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**From:** Safford, Bertha H. MD <[bhsafford@fcn.net](mailto:bhsafford@fcn.net)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 11, 2022 12:13 PM

**To:** Cathy Halka <[CHalka@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:CHalka@co.whatcom.wa.us)>; Jill Nixon <[JNixon@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:JNixon@co.whatcom.wa.us)>

**Subject:** Whatcom County Public Health, Safety and Justice Initiative

Greetings,

I was given your contact information by the public information officer of the Sheriff's Office. I have several questions regarding the Whatcom County Public Health, Safety and Justice Initiative.

My overall question is the impact on this work by the recent statements of County Exec Satpal Sidhu and Bellingham Mayor Seth Fleetwood hoping for approval of a new jail by the end of this year. I would appreciate comments from the chair, Barry Buchanan, on how this will impact their timeline and work. From my reading, their report is due at the end of the year, and its purpose is to inform the public on the jail facility needs. It therefore seems premature for a vote on the jail prior to completion of this work.

Additionally, I have questions for the Index Committee regarding its data priorities and availability.

What is the timeline for the priority data selected at the February meeting (service calls, warrants, and incarceration data)?

Will this data be made public as it becomes available?

Do you anticipate developing an overall public data sheet to aid community members in their knowledge of these important areas?

Thank you for your assistance.

*Berdi*

Bertha H. Safford MD

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