



Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, October 21, 2025 – Central Library Lecture Room
3:30 p.m.

Minutes of Actions and Decisions of the Library Board of Trustees of the Bellingham Public Library as authorized by RCW 27.12.210 and SEC. 7.02 Charter of the City of Bellingham.

Board Members Present:	Rebecca Craven, Kristy Van Ness, Kendra Bradford, and Shirin Deylami
City Council Library Liaison:	Not present
Library Management Staff:	Rebecca Judd, Annette Bagley, Katrina Buckman, Bethany Hoglund, Jennifer Vander Ploeg and Madeline Rosenvinge
FOBPL Representative:	Carol Comeau, Friends of BPL Board Liaison
Guest Presenter:	Hannah Fisk, Whatcom County Health & Community Services

Call to order and introductions: Regular session was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair, Rebecca Craven.

Approve/modify agenda: Kristy Van Ness moved to approve the agenda. Shirin Deylami seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: No public comment.

Consent agenda: Kendra Bradford moved to approve the September 16, 2025 regular meeting minutes and the September 2025 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Kristy Van Ness seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report:

- Nothing to report.

Board member reports:

- Nothing to report.

City Council liaison report:

- Not present.

Friends of BPL report:

Carol Comeau reported:

- The recent book sale raised over \$19,000. She thanked Library staff for their efforts in advertising and promoting the event.
- Ridwell will resume donating children's books in November.
- The next Friends board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 19.

Library Director report:

Rebecca Judd reported:

- She expressed gratitude to the Pickford for partnering on the showing of *The Librarians*.
- She thanked Jon, Bethany, and the Collection Services team for their work on the Baker & Taylor closure transition. The Library is seeking a new vendor for books and preprocessing. Shirin Deylami inquired about the preprocessing requirements and whether it could be completed in-house. Bethany Hoglund explained that Baker & Taylor added barcodes, spine labels, and lamination, and the Collection Services team is not staffed to perform these tasks internally.
- The Bellingham Plan team reviewed the Community Well Being and Civic Practices portion of the plan with City Council, which is scheduled for final adoption on December 8.
- Kendra Bradford asked whether different topics would be featured in future "Behind the Scenes of the Library" SkillShare sessions. Annette Bagley noted that future topics may vary and will be reflected in the event title.

National Friends of Libraries Week, October 19-25, 2025:

Rebecca Craven noted that the Library is currently observing National Friends of the Library Week. In recognition of the Friends, she read the Board's Resolution Commending the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library. Kristy Van Ness moved to adopt the resolution, Shirin Deylami seconded, and the motion passed. All board members signed the resolution.

Library Director review process draft discussion:

Rebecca Craven explained that the policy committee, consisting of Shirin Deylami and Deborra Garrett, developed a draft review process for the Library Director included in the meeting packet. Rebecca distributed an updated version to trustees (*See attachment #1 at the end of the minutes*). Shirin Deylami asked Rebecca Judd whether anyone besides the Mayor and the Director of WCLS should be added as outside contacts for the survey. Carol Comeau suggested including the Friends President, and the group agreed. Kristy Van Ness moved to approve the document with the addition of the Mayor, WCLS representative, and the optional Friends representative to the list of outside contacts. Kendra Bradford seconded, and the motion carried.

Staff Safety and Mental Health/Welcoming Public Space update:

Rebecca Judd reported:

- Katrina Buckman will provide an update on incident statistics at the next meeting.
- Some individuals have been camping outside the front entrance to the Library, which blocks access to the book drop. Security staff, with assistance from the BPD Bike Patrol, have issued trespasses.

- A severe weather shelter will be available at Lutheran Community Services this winter on days that are colder than 32 degrees, with the possibility of a severe weather day shelter at the former Lighthouse Mission Drop-In Center. Kendra Bradford asked whether wildfire smoke or extreme heat would qualify as an emergency; Rebecca Judd clarified that currently, only winter emergencies are covered.

2026 Budget update:

Rebecca Judd reported that she presented the Library budget to City Council, where questions were raised regarding the proposed Sunday closure and Library services during renovation. During the evening Council meeting, Council President Holly Huthman mentioned the budget impacts to the Library, as well as positive personal anecdotes about the Library. The Sunday closure at Central and Bellis Fair branches will begin in December. Kendra Bradford asked whether alternatives to Sundays were suggested by Councilmembers; Rebecca Judd answered that Tuesdays were proposed by one Councilmember. Annette Bagley noted that since Bellis Fair and Fairhaven are already closed on Sundays, only two branches will be affected, rather than all four on any given day. Carol Comeau mentioned potential impacts on teens conducting research on Sundays and discussed mitigation strategies.

Central Library Renovation Update

Rebecca Judd reported:

- Scoping meetings with Miller Hull will be scheduled to review the schematic design and changes.
- The Bellis Fair license agreement for temporary space during the renovation is circulating for city signatures.
- Kristy Van Ness reported that Rachel Myers will assist with renovation fundraising. Rachel is developing a marketing kit to ensure consistent fundraising messaging. The Library has met its \$100,000 fundraising match and additionally received a \$100,000 pledge from the Tucker Family Foundation. Bethany Hoglund shared information on the Tucker Family Foundation.

3rd Quarter Action Plan report (see packet materials)

Rebecca Judd reported:

- Progress is being made on the Barkley drop boxes, following Jennifer Vander Ploeg's contact with Talbot.
- Appreciation was extended to Annette Bagley and Bethany Hoglund for their work on the World Cup Committee.
- Staff Development Coordinator Kate Dunphy is designing a Learning Hours system for staff development.
- The Library plans to develop a bridge plan between the previous strategic planning effort and the next, focusing on time-sensitive issues such as updating the Level of Service standard for open hours.

Justice Project Behavioral Health: Concepts and Visioning Presentation

- Hannah Fisk and Chief Erickson provided a presentation on the planning and logistics of the Justice Project. *(See attachment #2 at the end of the minutes).*

- A Q&A session followed the presentation. A community engagement workshop is being held in Ferndale on Thursday, November 20 from 6-8pm. More information about this project can be found [here](#). All questions and feedback can be emailed to County Council council@co.whatcom.wa.us and the Executive's Office ssidhu@co.whatcom.wa.us.

New Business:

- Nothing to report.

Agenda items for next meeting:

- Katrina Buckman presenting Library incident data.
- Staff Learning Day presentation from Kate Dunphy, Staff Development Coordinator.

Meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting Tuesday November 18, 2025 – Central Library Lecture Room – 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

After a first year evaluation, the Director will be evaluated on a schedule determined by the Board, but no less frequently than every four years.

Process:

1. Board approves survey questions and self evaluation form. Provide Director with self-evaluation form.
2. Send out survey to limited staff including all of the management team and those who report directly to the Director.
3. Interview or survey outside contacts including the Mayor and Director of WCLS, and up to two additional outside contacts if the Board determines that additional input would be useful.
4. Director provides self-evaluation to Board
5. Committee members review survey data, self-evaluation and external surveys/interviews.
6. Committee members will write the evaluation report.
7. Report will go to the entire Board and will be discussed in executive session.
8. Board approval of the evaluation
9. Library Director will receive report
10. Possible consultation between Library Director and Board members in executive session.

Justice Project Behavioral Health: Concepts and Visioning Behavioral Care Center Models



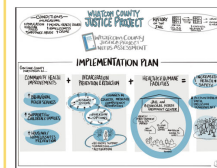
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Purpose

- Align on the vision and long-term goals for the justice project
- Review insights guiding our next steps
- Discuss considerations for the new jail behavioral health elements and behavioral care center
- Preparing for decisions needed to move forward



WHATCOM COUNTY JUSTICE PROJECT NEEDS ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



June 2023

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Starting at Booking Concept



Re-entry staff at booking to support early exit

Goals: avoid housing unit placement when possible

- Reduce time in jail
- Early connection to services

Assist with connecting to:

- Providers
- Family/friends
- Legal supports



Photo Credit: <https://myfox28columbus.com/news/local/gallery/franklin-county-is-modernizing-not-only-its-jail-but-how-it-operates?photo=5>

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Environment Matters: Therapeutic Design



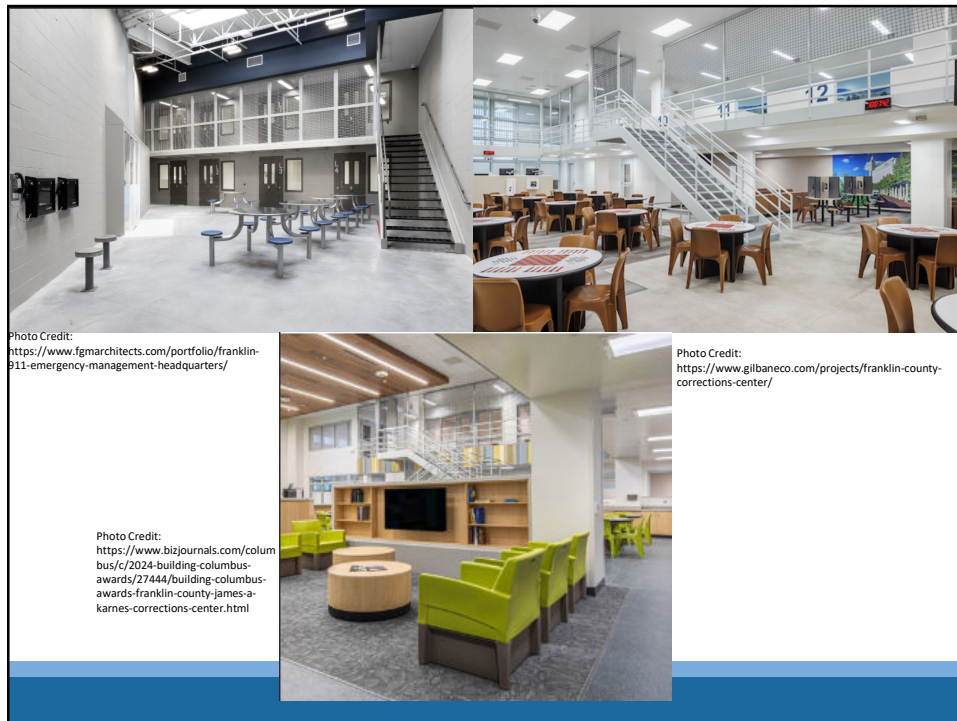
Conceptual Ideas to Review:

- Natural light, murals, textures, biophilic designs
- Recreational space access
- Direct supervision
- In-unit rooms for:
 - Group treatment
 - Skill based interventions
 - Support groups
 - Medical services
 - Family/community/attorney visitation
 - Supervised visitation with children



Photo Credit: <https://myfox28columbus.com/news/local/franklin-county-is-modernizing-not-only-its-jail-but-how-it-operates>

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Inside the Jail: Behavioral Health Unit Possibilities



Designed for individuals with safety risks (to self/others)

Features

- Smaller staff-to-inmate ratios
- Reduced stimuli, more privacy
- Explore programming models such as Intensive Outpatient Programming (IOP)

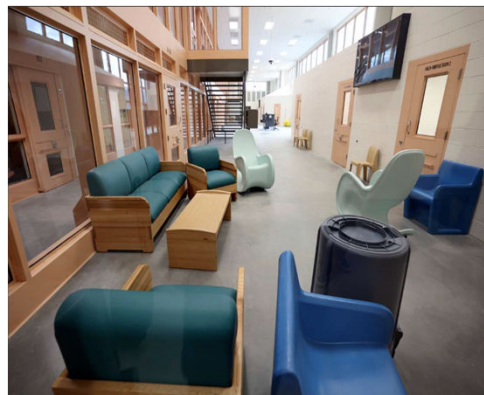


Photo Credit: <https://www.ksl.com/article/50442238/too-nice-for-inmates-or-redefined-why-new-prison-is-much-different-than-at-point-of-the-mountain>

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Acute Medical Considerations

- Line of sight supervision for those with acute symptoms
- Detox beds

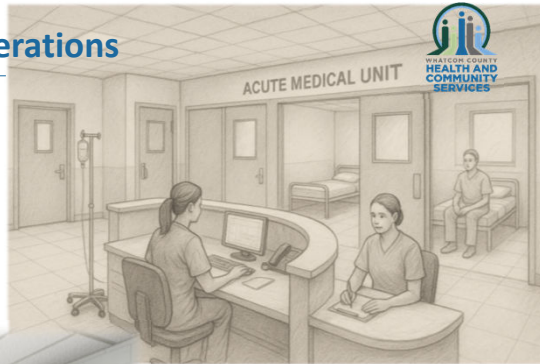


Photo Credits: <https://correctionalnews.com/2017/08/09/new-hampshire-womens-prison-will-focus-health-care/>

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The Exit Plan: Rapid Resource Center

- Located at the point of release
- Not in-custody
- Features:
 - Phone chargers, snacks, clothes
 - Transportation support
 - Staff to bridge to housing/treatment
 - Non-correctional setting



Photo Credit: <https://www.cmta.com/results/briefs/northeast-community-resource-center>

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Behavioral Care Center Concepts



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Behavioral Care Center (BCC)

- A new facility
- In vs out-of-custody
- On-site vs off-site
- Goal:
 - Reduce unnecessary incarceration
 - Support pre-filing deferral, post-charging diversion
 - More eligible cases= more diversion opportunities
 - Improve public safety through treatment
 - Maximize available funding streams
 - Address MH and SUD needs early
 - Reduce Recidivism
 - Reduce legal case loads
 - Structured process
 - Free up court/jail for higher-risk cases

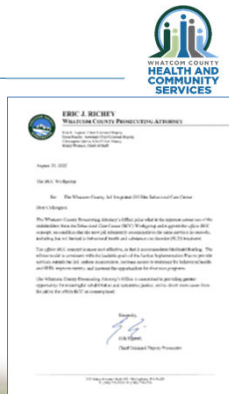


Photo Credit: <https://www.futurebelifeast.com/property/acute-mental-health-inpatient-unit/>

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In-Custody BCC Model Pros and Cons



Pros

- Legal pathway for those with charges who are not eligible for release
- Increase in safety
- Typically higher levels of completion
- Contained environment

Cons

- Less flexible
- Not Medicaid reimbursable
- Technically still in-custody- not available for people released
- Smaller targeted population
- Long-term outcomes not as supportive

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Out-of-Custody BCC Model Pros and Cons



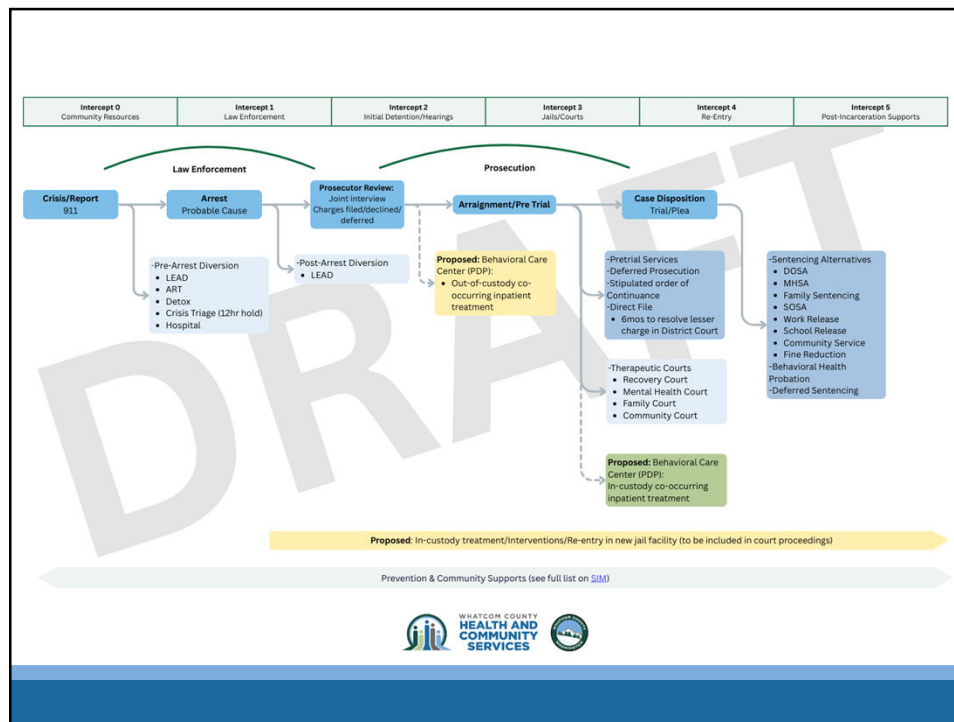
Pros

- Medicaid eligible
- Feels more voluntary and recovery focused
- The potential for different types of treatment facilities
- Legal pathway for those released to access treatment
- Longer treatment options available

Cons

- May require greater coordination with legal systems
- Requires a more robust community effort and follow-through
- The providers have to have a shared vision to ensure it works as intended
- Completion rates are not as high

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On-Site with Jail



Pros

- Immediate access for individuals exiting custody; smooth transition from jail to treatment
- Supports a focus on diversion at multiple intercept point for those currently incarcerated.
 - Arrest, pre-charging, charging, pre-conviction, sentencing
- Reduces risk of “elopement” (individuals leaving before entering treatment)
- Easier coordination with law enforcement and judicial partners.

Cons

- May limit accessibility for community members not currently in custody but eligible for diversion.
- Could create stigma or deterrence for individuals seeking voluntary treatment.
- Less integration with broader behavioral health services.
- Transportation challenges for non-custody clients and families

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Off-Site on Behavioral Health Campus



Pros

- Co-located with crisis treatment and behavioral health providers; promotes holistic care.
- Supports a focus of diversion earlier- before justice system involvement
- Easier access for community members seeking treatment voluntarily.
- Potential to prevent deeper system involvement by catching individuals before arrest.
- Can be used at multiple intercepts.

Cons

- More complex to coordinate transfers from jail, especially for immediate post-release diversion.
- Higher risk of “elopement” when moving people from custody to an off-site location if transportation needs are not addressed.
- Requires strong collaboration between courts, prosecutors, and treatment providers.
- Resistance may be a factor for law enforcement where probable cause is established and booking restrictions are lifted.

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23 Hour Crisis Center: Information Gathered



WHATCOM COUNTY
**HEALTH AND
COMMUNITY
SERVICES**



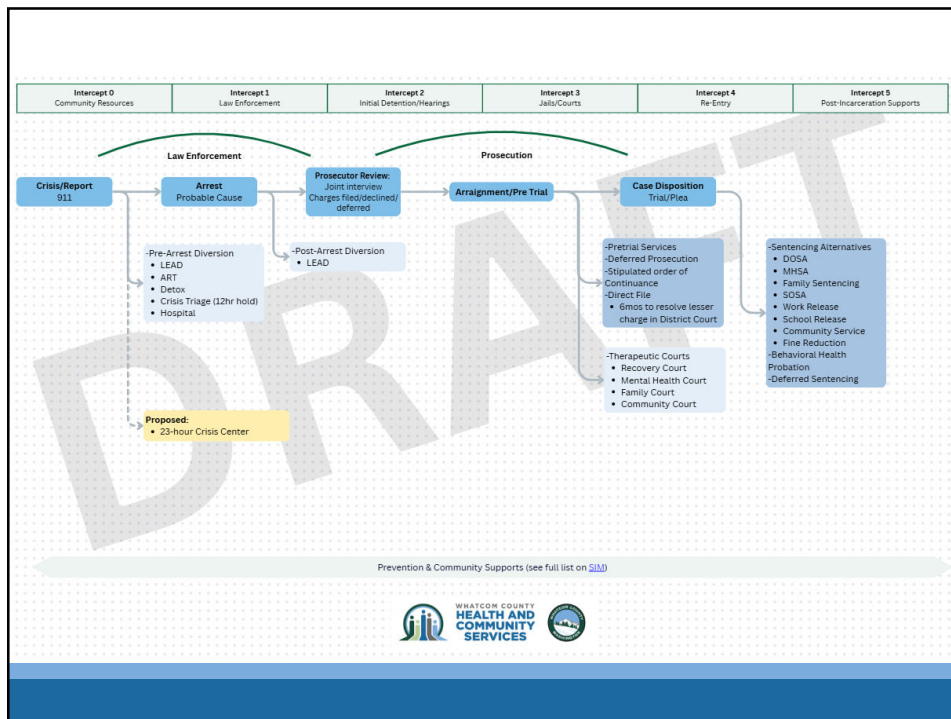
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- Short-term, voluntary crisis care- up to 23 hours and 59 minutes
- 24/7 access- open day and night
- No wrong door- law enforcement, EMS, hospitals, walk-ins all accepted
- Rapid stabilization- behavioral health + basic medical screening, medication support, peer counseling
- Safe alternative- to ER or jail- designed to connect people to longer-term care



Photo Credit: <https://brbridge.org/services/crisis-observation/>

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Funding Status



- 14+ capital secured (state, local, opioid settlement dollars)
- Operations funding remains unresolved
 - Relevant data points:
 - Medicaid is roughly about 40% of the budget
 - Non-Medicaid associated costs (\$4 to \$12 million annually)
- Risk: facility cannot open without sustainable operating dollars
- While the building dollars are secured, the challenge is how to keep it open long-term without cutting other critical services
- State law (HB 1813) will change how crisis stabilization is funded in 2026, but today, local operating dollars are still unfunded and it is unclear how the HB will impact Whatcom

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23 Hour Next Steps



- Continue explore funding partnerships (state, hospitals, insurers, local governments)
- Finalize stakeholder feedback; data will guide final model
- Sizing considerations/scaling of facility for funding constraints



Photo Credit: <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/mental-health/kirkland-is-opening-the-countys-first-walk-in-crisis-care-center/>

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Adjacent Facility Need Considerations



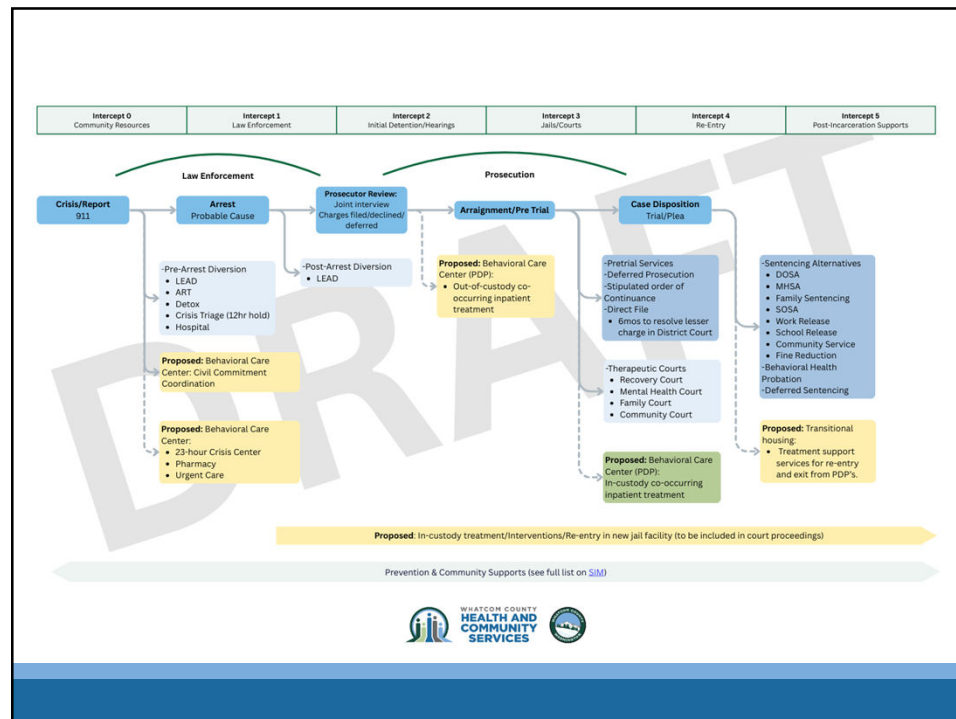
Facility Component	Purpose
BCC- Core	Crisis Relief
	Immediate stabilization and assessment for individuals in crisis.
BCC- Core	Co-Occurring Inpatient Treatment
	Residential care for mental health and substance use disorders.
Phase 2- Complimentary Services	Competency Restoration
	Services to help restore the individual's mental competency so they can understand the legal proceedings and participate in their own defense.
	Psychiatric Urgent Care
	Provide behavioral health urgent care to individuals in need of treatment services outside of the hospital when appropriate.
Phase 3- Future Considerations	Reception and Access Hub
	Streamlined intake and navigation for individuals, family members, and referring agencies. Office space for existing crisis services.
	Pharmacy
Phase 3- Future Considerations	Co-Occurring Inpatient Treatment- Youth
	Residential care for mental health and substance use disorders- youth.
Phase 3- Future Considerations	Transitional/Respite Housing with treatment Supportive Services (20 units)
	Bridge housing with on-site support for reintegration. Out-patient treatment brought to the housing unit.



Photo Credit: Roger's Behavioral Health rendering: <https://biztimes.com/rogers-behavioral-health-plans-residential-care-center-on-brown-deer-hospital-campus/>

- Need for a prioritization
- Assess for efficiency and effectiveness patterns with co-located services
- Focus on filling gaps in treatment continuum of care and intercept models

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Conclusion:



1. Are there innovative practices or models from other jurisdictions we should consider adopting here?
2. Which elements of these projects resonate most strongly with you?
3. After hearing the pros and cons, what aspects feel most promising?
4. Which parts raise the most questions or concerns for you?
5. Are there needs, services, or perspectives you feel are missing from these plans?
6. Is there anything we haven't addressed that should be shared with the design-build team for consideration?