THURSTON COUNTY LAW & JUSTICE COUNCIL
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS, 2012-2016

Mission: Serve as a collaborative inter-jurisdictional forum for consideration of county-wide initiatives using combined resources to improve criminal justice services, enhance public safety and reduce crime throughout Thurston County.

Strategic Plan: Thurston County has not had a county-wide law and justice strategic plan since 1995. In the current environment of limited resources, increasing population, changes in crime patterns and increased need for coordinated resources, it is timely to undertake a strategic planning process to focus county-wide attention on current public safety challenges and strategies for addressing those challenges.

Current Status:

• County population – 252,452 (2012); projected 274,666 (estimate); population over 65 = 12% 2012 and is projected to be 15% by 2016
• Motor vehicle and traffic-related fatalities are the leading cause of unintentional injury death (27.6%), followed by falls (27.2%); and poisoning/drug overdose (25%) for all ages combined
✓ Thurston County crime rate = 29.8 total crimes per 1,000 residents in 2011 (down 14.6% from 2010)
• Suicide is leading cause of intentional injury-related fatalities (14.3 fatalities per 100,000 people per year
✓ In 2011, Thurston County had a total of 44,254 proceedings in Superior Court (22,504 criminal proceedings) and a total of 14,437 cases filed

Strengths:

➢ Highly collaborative public safety community with strong leadership; Partnerships include:
   Thurston County Narcotics Task Force
   Officer-Involved Critical Incident Team
   Monarch Children’s Justice and Advocacy Center
   SWAT
   Dive & Rescue Team
   CART (Child Abduction Response Team)
   Family Safety Center (new)
   South Sound Gang Intelligence Task Force
➢ Relatively low crime rate (compared to other communities across Washington State);
➢ Low rates of violent crime;
➢ Highly trained law enforcement officers;
➢ Increase in inter-jurisdictional protocols for arrests on specific crimes;
New jail facilities coming on-line in Thurston County and Nisqually;
Technically sound 911 system;
Community willingness to look at alternative solutions to incarceration;
Six therapeutic courts in Thurston County;
Treatment Sales Tax funds to support mental health and substance treatment services and therapeutic courts;
Crime analysts in Olympia and Lacey Police Departments;
Expanded Public Defender services with talented staff attorneys;
County is a leader in using Evidence-Based practices in juvenile court to address underlying issues of juvenile crime – significant reductions in daily population in Juvenile Detention.

Weaknesses/Challenges:

- Low rate of commissioned law enforcement officers per 1,000 population (TCSO is 6th largest Sheriff’s Office in the State, but only has .5 FTE deputies per 1000 population; industry standard is 2.0 FTE per 1000 population);
- Decline in prevention and early intervention services for juveniles and adults with substance abuse addictions and/or mental illnesses;
- Loss of community policing and neighborhood watch programs;
- Inadequate law enforcement crime management software and technology and staff to allow for quick, accurate information sharing between jurisdictions and between courts (Superior, District and Municipal) and between courts and law enforcement;
  - Lack of countywide computer system for law enforcement – Cities and County need to be on one system
- Radio communication may need very costly upgrade in the Declining resource base for cities and county and an increasing population in Thurston County;
- No current crime analyst capacity for Thurston County nor for smaller cities in the county;
- Increasing demand on first responders as safety net erodes;
- Thurston County has 3rd highest rate of adults, ages 18-44, with 3 or more adverse childhood experiences (increases likelihood of interaction with health care, law enforcement and low-income housing systems);
- Reduction in Department of Corrections budget by another 5% which is continuing to reduce community supervision capacity;
- Lack of sustainable public funds for sustainable public safety and law & justice.

Opportunities:
➢ The need for coordinated planning and resource development for public safety could lead to a stronger role for the Law & Justice Council;
➢ Convene social and health services with law enforcement and first responders to develop a plan to bridge gaps in safety net services;
➢ Greater opportunities for public-private partnerships to support community responses to underlying factors impacting crime and recidivism;
➢ New collaborative relationships (public safety and other) with Chehalis Tribe and Nisqually Tribe;
➢ Implementation of Family Safety Center model in Thurston County;
➢ Continued availability of Treatment Sales Tax funds for treatment, intervention and possibly prevention services;
➢ Need to engage public in a discussion about a need for higher investment in public health and safety.

**Threats:**

➢ Unsustainable financing structure for municipal and county governments in Washington resulting in a continual reduction in public funding for basic law enforcement and emergency services;
➢ Reduction in safety-net services for low-income and at-risk populations which can result in more calls to law enforcement and first responders;
➢ Increased number of adults in Thurston County (38%) who experienced high levels of trauma as children which put them at higher risk for addiction, mental illness, criminal activity, heart disease, homelessness and unemployment AND put even higher risk on their children for child abuse and neglect/domestic violence/early trauma;
➢ Current stress on judicial system (Municipal, District and Superior courts), as a result of staffing reductions, to maintain consistency across systems in sanctions/sentences, provide adequate criminal background and risk assessment information to judges at every stage of the judicial process, provide adequate monitoring of sentencing conditions and/or orders;
➢ A continued growth in family law cases in Thurston County Superior Court (now comprise 45% of Superior Court filings in Thurston County);
➢ Reduction in federal and state funding for public safety;
➢ A continuing shift of state responsibilities for public safety to local governments;
➢ A projected population growth of 170,000 people by 2040 (67% increase);
➢ Reduction in substance abuse and mental health treatment services for low income adults and youth – puts more pressure on law enforcement, corrections and judiciary to adequately address underlying causes of criminal behaviors AND increases costs of responses.
Strategy Statements:

1. Increase the integrated use of risk assessments for confinement decisions.

2. Strengthen efforts to reduce drug abuse and addiction:
   a. Increase use of treatment-based criminal justice programs such as drug/DUI courts and Chemical Dependency programs in the jail; (how?)
   b. Strengthen community efforts to prevent drug and alcohol abuse and addiction among youth (how?)

3. Break the cycle of crime related to domestic violence and child abuse and neglect:
   a. Continue development of a collaborative, co-located Family Safety Center that improves access to services for victims and survivors of domestic violence/sexual assault and improves accountability of offenders;
   b. Strengthen community programs that prevent child abuse and neglect by supporting families and children; (how?)

4. Increase utilization of alternative to confinement for mentally ill offenders who can be safely managed in the community:
   a. Strengthen and expand Mental Health Court and Veteran’s Court; (how?)

5. Strengthen public-private collaborative projects that reduce or prevent crime:
   a. Support and expand programs focused on intervening or preventing youth from becoming involved in gangs.

6. Improve re-entry programs for offenders leaving confinement (housing & employment); (how?)

7. Improve information systems and analysis capacity for analysis, assessment and management of local law and justice cases and resources; (how?)

8. Work with local elected officials and the state legislature to establish a sustainable funding model for public safety in county and municipal governments.