

August 15, 1996

Introduced By:

KENT PULLEN

JM/lk 59502

Proposed No.:

96-693

ORDINANCE NO. **12474**

AN ORDINANCE making a supplemental appropriation of \$140,000 to Budget and Strategic Planning for the development of a King County Jail Misdemeanant Population Study, and amending Ordinance 12029, Section 13, as amended.

FINDINGS:

1. The misdemeanor in-custody population in the King County Jail has increased dramatically over the past few years, rising from a daily average of 571 in 1990 to 854 in 1995;
2. This growth rate has exceeded that of King County's felon in-custody population;
3. More informed jail policy decisions require an improved understanding of the factors that contribute to this growing misdemeanor population.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. There is hereby approved and adopted a supplemental appropriation of \$140,000 to Budget and Strategic Planning for the development of a King County Jail Misdemeanant Population Study from the unappropriated fund balance and contributions from the State of Washington, City of Seattle and Suburban Cities Association.

SECTION 2. Ordinance 12029, Section 13, as amended, is hereby amended by adding thereto and inserting therein the following:

BUDGET & STRATEGIC PLANNING - From the Current Expense fund, there is hereby appropriated to:

Budget & Strategic Planning	\$140,000
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1 PROVIDED THAT:

2 The study's scope and interjurisdictional funding levels are approved by all agencies
3 contributing financial support to the project.

4 INTRODUCED AND READ for the first time this 16th day of
5 September, 19 96.

6 PASSED by a vote of 12 to 0 on this 30th day of September, 19 96

8 KING COUNTY COUNCIL
9 KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

10 Jane Hague
11 Chair

12 ATTEST:

13 Gerald A. Peterson
14 Clerk of the Council

15 APPROVED this 14th day of October, 19 96.

16 Ray Lode
17 King County Executive
18

19 Attachments:

- 20 A. Proposed scope for the King County Jail Misdemeanant Population Study

Proposed scope for the King County Jail Misdemeanant Population Study

Summary

The Regional Law, Safety and Justice Committee, with the support of the City of Seattle, the Suburban Cities Association, and the State Department of Corrections, wishes to conduct a study of the misdemeanor jail population as a step toward improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the misdemeanor criminal justice system. The study focuses on identifying inefficiencies in the system, with emphasis on those inmates jailed for Failure to Appear for court (FTA) and Failure to Comply with probation requirements (FTC). These two violations are believed to be significant drivers of misdemeanor incarceration, often resulting in longer incarceration and generating significantly greater costs to criminal justice agencies than those incurred for the original offense.

Questions to be addressed:

- Are FTA and FTC significant drivers of misdemeanor incarceration?
- Are FTA and FTC positively correlated with length of sentence?
- What demographic, criminal history, or systems factors correlate with or predict FTA and FTC violations?
- What screening or systems modifications would be expected to reduce FTA and FTC violations?

Anticipated/Potential outcomes:

- Better understanding of factors that drive FTA, FTC and jail utilization
- More complete information available to judges for sentencing
- Systems improvements:
 - ⇒ Reduction in case processing time
 - ⇒ Improved screening for pretrial release and community corrections programs
 - ⇒ Enhanced opportunities to concurrently adjudicate and process inmates with multiple charges in multiple jurisdictions
 - ⇒ Reduced inmate maintenance costs to the county and cities
 - ⇒ More certain justice

Method

A consultant would be responsible for study design and management. The study would be comprised of four main activities:

1. **Flow Chart the In-Custody Process** - A flow chart will highlight the relationships between decisions and outcomes at various stages and will provide a framework for analyzing procedures, identifying bottlenecks, estimating the actual costs of the process, and indicating points where specific policy or procedural changes could reduce costs.
2. **Analyze the Misdemeanant Population** - Primary data sets would be drawn from the Adult Detention database and would be supplemented by information from the District Court

Information System (DISCIS), District and Municipal Court dockets, and the Revised Code of Washington. The study will track individuals and will provide correlational analysis of current offense, time in custody, criminal history, demographic characteristics, etc.

3. **Analyze Practices and Policies** - Using the population analysis to identify the variables that closely associate with jail utilization, there will be an examination of the practices and policies that affect those variables and the potential cost/benefit of changes. For example, if FTA and FTC are significant, evaluate strategies ranging from reducing pretrial release and probation (i.e. earlier resort to jail may reduce net jail utilization) to enhanced effort to help defendants succeed in meeting obligations (e.g. pick up and deliver to court, to counseling, to community service site).
4. **Develop Recommendations to Enhance Efficiency and Justice** - The final product of the study will be recommendations for improved management of jail capacity to protect public safety, provide appropriate accountability for criminal behavior and make more efficient use of criminal justice resources. The study will provide a framework for redesigning future data systems and management reports to enhance our ability to capture the information necessary for continued improvement. In addition, standard data collection methods, form and coding would be established, so the study could be repeated or adapted for other years, jurisdictions or purposes

Governance and Funding

Total funding is projected at \$140,000, including the state (\$50,000), King County (\$50,000), the City of Seattle (\$25,000) and the Suburban Cities Association (\$15,000). In addition, we have requested technical assistance from the National Institute of Corrections. King County Office of Budget and Strategic Planning will be the lead agency for the study. An oversight committee representative of the funding entities will be formed under the auspices of the King County Regional, Law, Safety and Justice Committee. The study should be completed and a final report issued by October 1997.