MEETING SUMMARY

REGIONAL LAW, SAFETY AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE (RLSJC)

Thursday, January 27, 2011
7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

King County Drug Diversion Court ~ Mary Taylor

Mary Taylor, Manager of the King County Adult Drug Diversion Court presented information about the history, structure and process of the King County Drug Court.

- The King County Drug Court was started in 1994 and was among the first drug courts in the nation.
- King County Drug Court uses a mixture of incentives and sanctions to compel behavior with its participants. The participants are seen in court, by a Judge trained in drug and alcohol issues, every two to six weeks for an average of 18 to 24 months.
- The Executive Steering Committee sets the policies that guide Drug Court, including determining eligibility requirements. The Prosecuting Attorney's Office is the gatekeeper to Drug Court and screens individuals against the eligibility requirements.
- Participants are required to stay in the program for at least 10 months, but some people stay for two or three years. Once a participant graduates, he or she cannot be involved in the court again for at least three years, but there is a robust alumni group that they can be a part of.

State of Washington Legislative Agenda ~ Open Discussion

Discussion was opened to the larger group to air concerns and comments generally about the state legislative session, or to bring specific bills to the attention of the whole group.

- Judge Anne Harper brought up SB5114, sponsored by Senator Hargrove which proposed to eliminate competency evaluations. If passed, it is expected that SB5114 would re-direct about 600 people a year from treatment into the Emergency Room. There is also a fear that between District Court, Superior Court and Seattle Municipal Court, the jail could see a spike in admissions and also that people in need of treatment would be released to the streets.
- Judge Richard McDermott raised two items of interest for the group. The first is a budget proposal that would reduce the salaries of elected officials statewide. Judge McDermott stated that this could be a threat to impartiality of salary setting. He also noted the long term consequences of eliminating funding for Becca and CHINS (Child in Need of Service) programs.
- King County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg also brought up two items of interest that the PAO (Prosecuting Attorney's Office) is monitoring. The first is the Judiciary Committee's bill concerning mandatory minimum sentences for 3-Strike cases where all strikes are Class B felonies. The PAO is also monitoring proposals in the legislature to accept DNA samples from individuals at arrest rather than at conviction.

Other Committee Business

- The committee was asked to consider scheduling the full committee for every other month rather than every month. Staff workload and scheduling concerns were cited as reasons for the proposed change. The committee agreed to move to an every other month meeting schedule but to re-visit the decision in 2012.
- The committee was asked to send any ideas about updates or changes to the RLSJC website (http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/Budget/RLSJC.aspx) to Jennifer Albright, staff to the Committee. Albright reported that there is a desire to update the webpage and some small capacity to do so.