



## 2015/2016 KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE PROPOSED BIENNIAL BUDGET

### In Brief:

- Managing the jail population to a budgeted level will force the County to evaluate who is in jail, how long they should be there, and what specific outcomes are achieved.
- To avoid \$5.2 million in costs, King County will manage its jail population to a budgeted average daily population of 1,800, starting February 1, 2015.
- The County will honor its contracts and continue to book and hold people from its city and State Department of Corrections (DOC) partners.
- The County will manage its population by adjusting the County-responsible population with a focus on low-level, non-violent offenders

## KING COUNTY UNABLE TO FUND INCREASING JAIL POPULATION

After reaching a low point of 1,662 in November 2012, the number of inmates in King County jails has been steadily increasing. The average daily population (ADP) is forecast to reach 1,917 in 2015 and the staff to manage that population would require an additional \$5.2 million over the 2015/2016 biennium. Approving this additional funding would increase the \$54 million deficit to \$59.2 million and require additional cuts in General Fund agencies.

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<sup>1</sup>The County-responsible population includes all people accused of or sentenced for a felony, all people accused of or sentenced for a misdemeanor committed in unincorporated King County, all people brought to the jail by Washington State Patrol, and all people brought to the jail by Sound Transit and Metro Transit police. The County is solely responsible for paying the jail, court and prosecution costs for all of these individuals, as well as defense costs if the individual is indigent. Cities are responsible for paying the jail and court costs associated with individuals who commit misdemeanors in their jurisdictions. A misdemeanor has a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine. A gross misdemeanor has a maximum penalty of 365 days in jail and a fine of \$5,000. Felonies all carry greater penalties than misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors.

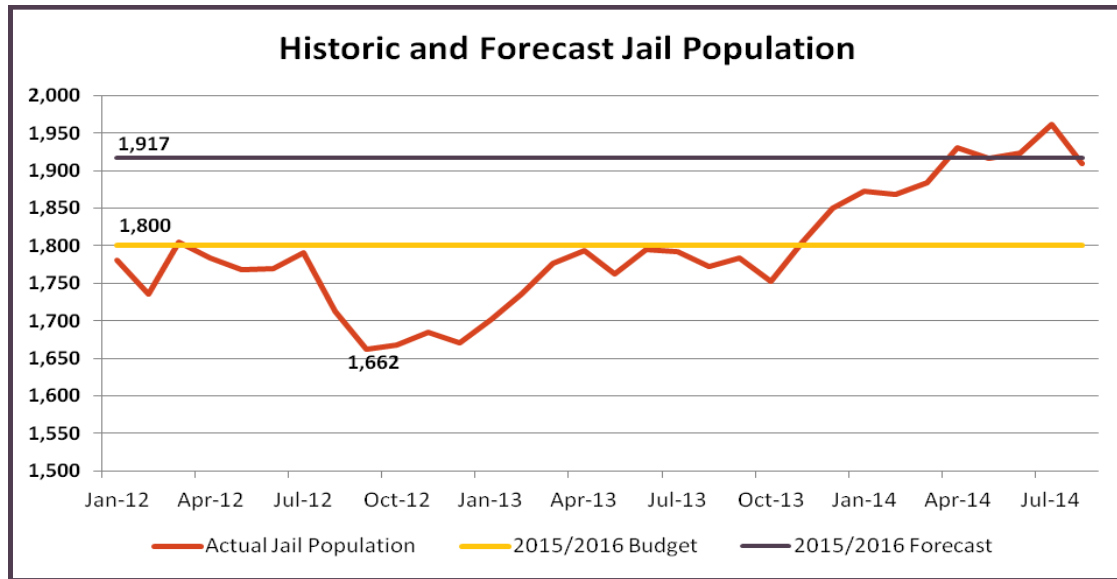


Figure 1

## JAIL POPULATION LIMIT ESTABLISHED FOR 2015/2016

The \$54 million deficit required cuts throughout the criminal justice system, some of which will have a negative impact on services. In this context, King County cannot afford the cost of the forecast increase to the jail population and will, instead, manage its population to a budgeted average daily population of 1,800 starting February 1, 2015.

The County's priority is to maintain public safety and it will develop an approach to ensure that only County-responsible low-level, non-violent offenders will be affected by the need to manage the population. Violent offenders will be booked and held in the jail in the future as they are today. The exact method for managing the population will be determined in the next six weeks through a collaborative process involving the King County Sheriff's Office, District Court, Superior Court, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Department of Public Defense and Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention. Other jurisdictions in Washington State have employed booking restrictions or early release matrices to manage jail populations and King County's efforts are not unprecedented.

King County will honor its existing contracts with King County cities and the State Department of Corrections and will continue to book and hold individuals covered by these contracts.

There will be no layoffs of County employees due to managing the jail population.

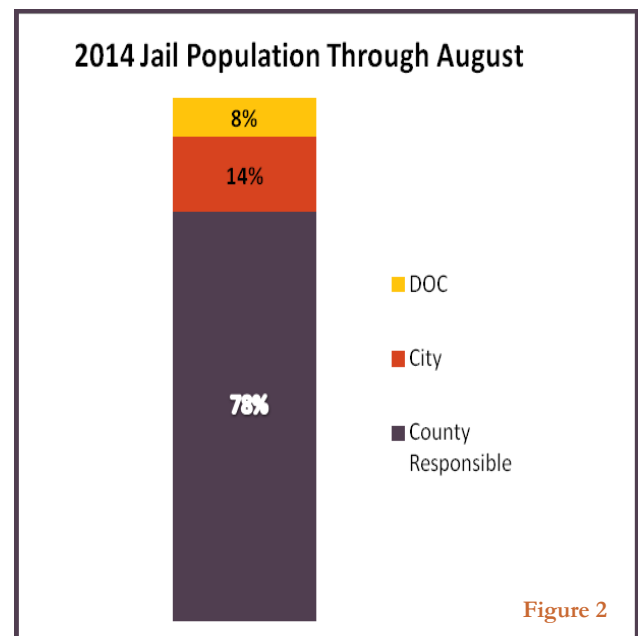


Figure 2

## **MANAGING THE JAIL POPULATION WILL FORCE THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY TO EVALUATE WHO IS IN JAIL**

Public safety requires that some people, such as those accused of serious crimes, should be in jail and they will be. But for people accused of non-violent crimes, the General Fund budget gap forces us in the criminal justice community to evaluate who is in jail and ask ourselves how we can better address the underlying causes of criminal justice involvement and reduce the endless cycle of individuals coming back through the system time and again, while at the same time increasing public safety.

King County has long been an innovator and leader in finding alternatives to incarceration, such as Adult and Juvenile Drug Court, Regional Mental Health Court, Regional Veterans Court, and the Community Center for Alternatives. In addition, in the past four years Criminal Justice agencies have engaged in significant process improvement efforts that have streamlined practices and reduced costs. These efforts set the stage for further work to improve how cases flow through the system and potentially reduce time to resolution, which could help manage the jail population.

The need to manage the jail population driven by the General Fund budget deficit, but it is also a chance to encourage greater utilization of alternatives to jail, spur new innovation, and promote process improvements throughout the criminal justice system.

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