

NEWS RELEASE

March 4, 2014

**MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
411 NORTH 5TH ST
SHELTON, WA 98584**

TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN

RE: Public Safety and Criminal Justice Citizen's Task Force

At the request of the Mason County Criminal Justice Working Team, the Mason County Board of Commissioners has adopted a resolution forming a Citizen's Task Force on Public Safety and Criminal Justice.

This Task Force will evaluate the law and justice service needs of Mason County, and evaluate whether these needs could be met by an increase in the county sales tax or other revenue stream.

Mason County has ranked the highest in total crimes per 1,000 citizens in 22 of the last 24 years compared to counties considered comparable to Mason County (Clallam, Grays Harbor, Skagit, Cowlitz, Lewis and Jefferson. In 2011, Mason County experienced the 7th highest crime rate in the state with 43.60 crimes committed per 1,000 people in the unincorporated areas of the County.

The Task force shall be comprised of no more than eleven members:

- Up to five persons, not employed by the County, who have direct experience in the fields of criminal justice and/or public safety and invited by the Commissioners to serve.
- Up to six persons who are residents of Mason County and selected by the Board of Commissioners from a pool of applicants.
- A Task Force Chair shall be appointed by the Board of Commissioners.

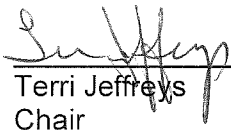
The Task Force shall review and develop recommendations to the County Commissioners on the following:

- Inventory and assess effectiveness of current crime prevention measures and identify whether additional measures should be implemented and at what cost.
- Assess whether the amount of financial resources dedicated to public safety and criminal justice is adequate to meet the needs of County citizens. If the amount of resources is found to be inadequate, identify the amount needed and proposed sources and allocation of additional resources.
- Assess whether Mason County's alternative justice, alternative sentencing measures and mental health and substance abuse case management services are effective measures for reducing crime rates and costs to the public safety and criminal justice systems and whether these programs should be grown in an effort to reduce crime.
- Identify performance measures to assess effectiveness of current and additional programs and financial resources allocated to public safety and criminal justice operations.

A report containing recommendations should be received by the Board of Commissioners by July 31, 2014, unless extended by the Board of Commissioners.

Task Force meetings shall be subject to the Open Public Meetings Act and members will be required to attend, at no cost to themselves, Open Public Meetings Act and Public Record Act trainings made available by Mason County and scheduled during regular operating hours of the County.

Interested parties may obtain an application at the Mason County Commissioners Office, 411 North 5th Street, Shelton, or by calling 427-9670, 275-4467, or 482-5269 ext. 419 or visit the Mason County website at www.co.mason.wa.us. Applications will be accepted until positions are filled.



Terri Jeffreys
Chair



Randy Neatherlin
Commissioner



Tim Sheldon
Commissioner