

COMMENT AND CONCERN CARD QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETING SEP. 20, 2010

Q. (There were multiple question/concern cards regarding RWC downtown businesses and the Maguire Correctional Facility) Already, some downtown businesses have to cope with released inmates who exhibit unpredictable and erratic behavior and scare away customers, loiter, disturb the peace, commit petty crimes and vandalize property. Many of these incidences go unreported to the police because businesses are concerned that customers will be scared off or driven away. Why hasn't the Sheriff's office surveyed downtown businesses about the problems with the existing Maguire facility?

A. The Sheriff's Office staff at the Maguire Correctional Facility along with the Redwood City Police Department hosted a community outreach meeting on October 6th, 2010 addressing the above listed issues. Businesses in the downtown area near the jail/courthouse plaza were given a flyer and invited to attend. The businesses have the option to go to the Sheriff's Office or the Redwood City Police Department in person to further discuss issues if they are concerned about the perception that all crime in or around the Maguire Correctional Facility is caused by released inmates.

Q. Many of us are Redwood City homeowners who live less than a mile away from the proposed downtown jail site. We are concerned that building another jail will decrease the value of our homes as our downtown becomes less attractive to new businesses and more dangerous for the people who live here. The National Institute for Corrections studies posted on your website are irrelevant to our situation and are not valid. For example, the studies rely upon data that is over 20 years old. They also reference communities that do not share the same characteristics as Redwood City. Can you tell me what the Sheriffs Office has done or will do to study the economic impact that this proposal will have on the value of our homes?

A. Your concern about home values with the addition of a replacement jail is valid. The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) <http://nicic.gov/> informational brief, "Issues in Siting Correctional Facilities", is a document we generally refer to when discussing home values near correctional facilities. Since the NIC still has this document on their website, we believe they still deem it relevant.

Q. Beyond the risk of inmate escapes, what other public safety considerations and statistics have you evaluated in reaching the conclusion that another county jail in Redwood City's pedestrian downtown does not further jeopardize public safety?

A. There is no known data that shows a replacement jail near downtown Redwood City would jeopardize public safety. In fact, the mere presence of dozens of law enforcement personnel in and around the jail offers a level of public safety not enjoyed by surrounding neighborhoods and cities.

Q. We would like to see a book store, clothing stores or other family-friendly businesses move into Redwood City. We are worried that by building an additional county jail downtown, we will see more bail bonds services, low-end bars, drug treatment facilities, anger management counseling services, etc. overtaking our downtown commercial space. If the proposed additional, large county jail is located downtown, how can we avoid a downtown that won't be dominated by jail service businesses?

A. The additional jail you speak of is actually a replacement jail. The primary purpose of building the Replacement Jail is to relieve overcrowding in the Maguire Correctional Facility and replacement of the Women's Correctional Center. The only additional inmates added to the County Center / Motor Pool site would be approximately 100 female and 45 male inmates (once the Maple St. Facilities close). We don't anticipate there will be a need for additional bail bonds services, bars, drug treatment and anger management counseling services.

Q. The proposed jail site is next to the Mezes residential neighborhood, Mezes Park, just two blocks away from Orion Alternative Elementary school, Everest High School, and the newly renovated Courthouse Square where family-friendly events are hosted and that attracts much pedestrian traffic. Have you surveyed the neighboring community to determine how the existing downtown jail and another county jail will impact them?

A. The Sheriff's Office has hosted a series of community meetings and meetings with individual groups to discuss the need for a replacement jail and site selection process. It is important to remember the "new" jail is actually a replacement for the current Women's Correctional Center and Maple Street facilities located east of Highway 101. The Replacement Jail will house women and relieve overcrowding at the Maguire Correctional Facility. The number of inmates will not increase system wide and they will be managed in a safe, therapeutic setting. Family friendly events currently take place, and the jail should have no bearing on their success.

Q. (There were multiple question/concern cards regarding additional parking needed if a jail is built downtown) With an additional jail located downtown, there will be a significant increase in the numbers of inmate visitors and pick-ups occurring downtown each week. Currently inmates are allowed two visits per week and up to three visitors per visit and there are about 800-1000 inmates held daily. There is already inadequate parking in that area due to other County needs. Why hasn't there been any analysis of parking impact prior to the selection of a downtown Redwood City jail site?

A. If the County Center/Motor Pool site was selected, the Maple Street functions (Women's Correctional Center, Women's Transitional Facility & Minimum Security Transitional Facility) would move to the County Center. This equates to an average of 17 extra visitors per day. HOK Architects were contracted to master plan the County's main campuses including the County Center in RWC. Although the report detailing the master plan is not complete, it includes plans for a parking structure that will accommodate the parking needs for the County, including the Replacement Jail.

Q. (There were multiple question/concern cards regarding a new jail downtown and Redwood City's precise plan/revitalization) The four-year construction process of a prominent, visible, 6-story county jail building at the gateway to Redwood City will likely raise doubts for potential investors, developers and other businesses. While we expect a plan to construct an aesthetically-pleasing building, such as the Denver facility, this is still too small of a city to absorb the impact of such a large, additional county jail. Why haven't you collected data from commercial realtors and developers to show the impact that building this other large, 254,740 sq. ft. county jail will have on new businesses and how will you ensure the proposed jail will not devastate the ongoing downtown revitalization efforts?

A. There have been a series of meetings to discuss the issues. To date, no developers attended the meetings or contacted the Jail Planning Unit to discuss their concerns. Redwood City is the county seat and therefore has the responsibility of housing many county services. Many businesses/services/restaurants benefit from the large number of county employees who work here and the citizens who come use the county services.

Q. (There were multiple question/concern cards regarding the booking and release function) It was reported in the press that even with an additional jail, all inmates will still be released from the Maguire Facility. Why must all inmates continue to be released into the pedestrian heart of Redwood City? Why can't all inmates be released from the new county jail if located outside of downtown?

A. This topic was discussed at the October 6th meeting. At this time, the plan is to continue to have all inmates released from the Maguire Correctional Facility. There is a benefit to the formerly incarcerated to be close to public transportation in an effort to get them back to their community. Releasing inmates from a location like Chemical Way would force released inmates to walk farther, through the downtown area to reach the public transportation hub that includes the train and bus stops at Sequoia Station as well as El Camino Real. The Maguire Correctional Facility already has a built in release area.

Q. (There were multiple question/concern cards regarding funding rehabilitation and educational programs) We are happy to hear that the county currently provides dozens of in-jail and out-of-jail rehabilitative programs (housing, job training, drug treatment, family support, etc.) to meet a wide-range of the inmate needs. However, given the county's current fiscal crisis (\$150 million structural deficit over the next 5 years) resources are scarce. For example, the very promising new Achieve 180 program exists due to a 3 year federal grant that also requires county matching funds. How do you plan to fully fund, over the long term, rehabilitation and other support programs for inmates, while at the same time paying for the construction and increased operational costs of an additional county jail?

A. The Achieve 180 is managed by the County Managers Office with monthly reports provided to the Criminal Justice Committee. Funding opportunities are brought forth to the CJC working group who provide guidance with management and funding. There is a dire need to replace the Women's Correctional Center, and relieve severe overcrowding at the Maguire Correctional Facility and provide the much needed space to conduct programs.

Q. (There were multiple question/concern cards regarding how this meeting was announced to the public) Why didn't downtown Redwood City residents or businesses receive an announcement notice in the mail about this meeting? Why did the announcement card you mailed about this meeting fail to mention that there are now only two sites under consideration, and that both of these sites are in Redwood City?

A. This purpose of this meeting was meant to update the community on the status of the Chemical Way site. A list of residents and businesses located near the Chemical Way was obtained from the City of Redwood City and flyers were mailed. The information was also posted in the Daily Journal Newspaper and the Sheriff's Office Jail Planning Unit Facebook page. As mentioned, this meeting was planned to discuss the Chemical Way site, so no mention was made of the other site and its location.

Q. The State of California already spends more tax dollars to incarcerate our citizens than to educate our children. National studies point to evidence-based programs that are proven to reduce recidivism that in turn, alleviates the need for more jail beds. Have you conducted a cost-benefit analysis or any type of top-down, system-wide evaluation to determine whether scarce county resources would be better spent to increase re-entry and other support programs, rather than double the number of beds in our county jails? Do you have data to identify what percentage of the eligible inmate population is served by these programs? Also, do you have outcome measures to determine your rate of success for the existing programs?

A. The County does not control the State of California budget, so their priorities are not under the auspices of the Sheriff's Office. San Mateo County has and continues to promote evidence based programming for inmates. Inmates are not required to participate in programs. Their participation is optional. It must be remembered, however, that our county jail system is not a prison system. Our inmates stay an average of only about 25 days. This short length of stay impacts our ability to positively impact inmates with programming. The studies mentioned above are mostly related to state prison systems where inmates stay anywhere from a year to life. Re-entry programs are in place in San Mateo County. Their effectiveness is being evaluated, and more empirical data on their effectiveness will be available in a year or so.

The County has conducted two needs assessments to quantify the needs of both male and female inmates in our county jail system. Conclusions in the assessments include the need for more inmate programming. However, space constraints and overcrowding at both the Maguire Correctional Facility and the Women's Correctional Center seriously hamper the ability to expand programs. A replacement jail will not only help alleviate overcrowding, it will also enable the expansion of meaningful inmate programming opportunities. Adding new jail beds is a must. MCF is overcrowded, the WCC has been called a "disgrace" by the Civil Grand Jury and the risks of litigation and liability grow every day. If we don't build new jail beds soon, we also run the risk of a court order capping our inmate population, forcing early release of inmates.

Q. According to the RAND Corporation and the National Bureau of Justice statistics, we now have more mentally ill people in local county jails than in mental facilities or who are receiving treatment. Moreover the mentally ill and homeless often choose not to participate and are more likely not to complete the programs. Studies show that more than half of the local jail population has a mental disorder. Also, in addition, the County's own statistics show that upon release, one in four inmates is homeless and most are unemployed. How can you guarantee that residents and visitors who frequent downtown Redwood City will feel safe and continue to patronize downtown businesses?

A. The Sheriff's Office cannot offer any guarantees as it relates to the conduct of inmates following their release from custody. There is no known data that definitively shows released inmates pose a risk to visitors to downtown Redwood City.

It's true that many inmates in our system are in need of mental health treatment. This is due in large part to the State of California's decisions over the last 20 years to shut down facilities to serve the mentally ill.

Q. According to the July, 2009 outreach Q & A summary, inmates held in state prison are required to be returned to the county in which they were sentenced. Similarly, does San Mateo County facilitate the return of inmates to the community where they lived before being incarcerated? If not, why not?

A. There is no law that states the Sheriff must return those released to their residential community. Many are transient or live out of the area.

Q. The National Bureau of Justice Statistics shows that 64% of all local county inmates have at least one psychiatric disorder. What statistics do we have on the mentally ill prisoners in our county jails, the degree to which they receive treatment for their illness, and the degree to which their treatment is a success, and they do not commit another crime or hurt someone?

A. Mentally ill inmates have approx. a 70% recidivism rate, similar to the rate of those without these disorders. Our correctional health staff provides treatment and medication to the mentally ill. The re-entry program, in part, is designed to connect these soon to be released mentally ill inmates with programs and facilities outside of the custodial environment.

Q. Has any attempt been made to negotiate with Cargill relative to procuring a portion of the salt flats for this (jail) use? The traffic issue is marginal at best- What is relevant is to insure a safe downtown for residents and visitors.

A. No.

Q. Would you consider building a release hotel on Chemical Way for use until they have jobs and ready to go home with families?

A. No.

Q. Maguire was built in 1994 under much different circumstances and when our city had far less pedestrian traffic and was known as “Deadwood City.” In the last two years, downtown Redwood City is on the cusp of transforming into a thriving destination spot not only for Redwood City residents but for many other County residents who enjoy our theatres, Courthouse concerts, Farmer’s Market, etc. With greater numbers of people downtown than ever before, the statistical probability of public safety problems increases. Does your decision-making take into account the impact such problems will have on the ability of Redwood City to carry out its Precise Plan and attract commercial businesses and the customer base necessary to support it?

A. We would build a safe and secure facility whether it’s on the County Center / Motor Pool or Chemical Way. Working closely with the Redwood City Police Dept. to address public safety will assist both the community and businesses with the areas of concern.

Q. Why not move the admin wing of the jail to the site across (Hwy) 101?

A. The jail administrative function is relatively compared to the overall square footage of the MCF and the Replacement Jail. Whether the final site is the County Center / Motor Pool or Chemical Way, some administrative functions will reside in the Replacement Jail. We’re still working on the where the bulk of administrative functions will occur.

Q. Have and do you maintain contact with our assembly and senators to impress upon them to not increase the County’s responsibilities for more inmates?

A. This topic has been discussed through the California State Sheriff’s Association. This organization is handling this discussion in Sacramento.

Q. If Chemical Way does not pass. What other options do we have other than downtown? Can we rent beds from other areas-much better than releasing downtown.

A. The Sheriff plans to go to the county Board of Supervisors on October 19th to present them with information on Chemical Way. The ultimate decision lies with the Board of Supervisors on which path we follow after that date. There are currently no other sites being discussed at this time. Renting beds from another county is very expensive and not a financially good idea for our county. In addition, many other counties are dealing with the same overcrowding issues that we are.

Q. **(There was multiple question/concern cards regarding the other potential jail sites considered)** What were the number 2 and 3 sites in your preferred list, out of all the possible sites?

A. The following link will take you to the site matrix results:

http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/Attachments/sheriffs/matrix_rankings.pdf

Q. What about vouchers to the Euro Hotel and Sequoia Hotel?

A. When inmates are released from jail, they can go to the Service League office <http://www.serviceleague.org/index.htm> located near downtown RWC and receive a voucher for a hotel if they qualify. Upon release, the inmate may go to the Service League office and apply for a voucher provided by the Service League and not the Sheriff's Office.

Q. Why can't you have a third party look into a new jail? One that would be in the best interest of the community?

A. We feel we have done a thorough job. The county hired a consultant to conduct a needs assessment for a new jail. Initially it was to replace the Women's Correctional Center. As system overcrowding worsened, a second needs assessment was conducted and has brought us to where we are now. The needs assessment can be viewed at: www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/jailplanning

Q. Clearly folks in Redwood City don't feel that their voices and concerns are being heard. Have you given any thought to creating an independent committee to allow for a dialogue and a much more inclusive process? If not, why? P.S. The record shows that your jail advisory committee does not meet the forgoing goal?

A. We do not agree that the County's Jail Planning Advisory Committee (JPAC) does not help facilitate an inclusive process. The Sheriff has conducted a number of community outreach meetings and the Jail Planning Unit has attended a number of community meetings in an effort to inform the community of the progress relating to the Replacement Jail.

Q. Is there any plan to return those who have been released from the jail to the cities in which they were arrested? They seem to be released into downtown RWC where they habitually congregate near the Caltrain tracks mixing with others who litter (cigarettes, bottles, etc...) and cause other problems for RWC residents and those taking transit, visiting the downtown and high school kids?

A. The majority of released inmates have family or friends pick them up. Indigent inmates are given bus passes if they live out of the immediate area. Released inmates requiring further assistance, such as housing, utilize the Service League for additional help. <http://www.serviceleague.org/index.htm>

Q. Have you considered a floating jail on a barge? Such facilities are being built elsewhere in the world?

A. Yes, this option was discussed in the early stages of planning but ruled out as not being a viable option for long term planning.

Q. Is it merely a coincidence that the number of extra beds in your new jail plan is about the same as the number of extra beds you would need to accommodate "2-year" inmates, should the state modify their law?

A. Yes.

Q. You've identified the risk of litigation on overcrowding and the risk of the state burdening counties further. Are there any other reasons not to do it, and if is, what are they?

A. Based on all the information that has been given out, there is no way we can not move forward with the process. In addition to what is mentioned in this question, the current Women's Correctional Center is extremely outdated. Female inmates are living in poor conditions and have limited programming space. The current population at the Maguire Correctional Facility is "running" at a level it was not designed or built for. The wear and tear on our correctional facilities with the current overcrowded conditions reduces their useful life.

Q. Significant impact of jail related traffic on downtown. Regardless of where the jail is located, environmental studies will be done. Number of released inmates now, in future. Approx. 16,500 inmates are released each year. Many of these are not released to the street. The release numbers include those who are sent to state prison, other counties, Immigration, and programs. How do they transport out of the area and what provision will be made to ensure they don't simply walk across the freeway and congregate in downtown RWC? Released inmates are responsible for their own transportation home. The Sheriff's Office provides bus vouchers to those who need them.

Q. What will the useful life of the facility? Since the life of the existing jail is declining after only 16 years?

A. San Mateo County correctional facilities operate 24/7, 365 days a year. Correctional Facilities are generally built to last thirty years. Overcrowding puts a tremendous strain on our correctional facilities, negatively affecting the physical plant, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, elevators, etc...significantly shortening the lifespan of our correctional facilities.

Q. Is there any money for the county to be made in increasing the jail population?

A. The County does not stand to make money if our jail population increases, conversely, it costs the County more money if and when a population spike occurs.

Q. Is this outreach a check the box agenda item? The community outreach meeting held on Sep.20, 2010, wasn't a check the box agenda item. The meeting was a good faith effort to guide the process of locating a replacement jail. We solicited input from the community by providing question and concern cards. Every question and concern card submitted by the community will be posted with answers. Follow up questions can be asked of the Jail Planning Unit at JPU@co.sanmateo.ca.us You stated in the San Mateo Daily Journal that you wanted to be able to go to the Board of Supervisors claiming everyone has been heard. Do you know that the County residents believe that a downtown jail is unacceptable? We understand that there is both opposition and support for a downtown jail.

Q. The proposed number of beds is an increase in number of current prisoners. The men's facility has maxed out at 1100 and the women's at 100. The new facility will house 1500+/- beds. Please explain.

A. The average daily population of our correctional facilities* is approximately 1100 inmates. Our total system capacity is rated by the State for 834 inmates. If you back out the inmate beds from our Maple St. Facilities ((-146) *Maple St. Facilities close when the Replacement Jail opens*), you have 688 +768 (Replacement Jail) = 1456 beds. 1456 beds will allow us to relieve overcrowding at our men's and women's jails, provide excellent inmate programming opportunities, provide room for peaking and classification factors, maintenance, and sufficient room for future increases in our jail population.

*San Mateo County correctional facilities include the Maguire Correctional Facility and the Maple St. Facilities (Women's Correctional Center, Minimum Secure Transitional Facility, and Women's Transitional Facility).

Q. What is the timing? Was the site on the initial list? What is the infrastructure plan?

A. The timing is based on many factors. First viability is determined. Once that is complete, the properties need to be placed under contract and environmental issues are studied. The Board of Supervisors would need to approve a site to move forward on. In the coming months a more detailed timeline will be developed. The Chemical Way site was on the initial list, but fell off as the properties were not for sale at the time. Studies done by Redwood City and their consulting firm show the current infrastructure could support the facility. If the site is chosen, a more detailed look at this will occur.

Q. You mentioned that you are concerned about a judge coming in and making the decision for a new jail. How would that process occur? Does the County make that decision or does the judge appoint an independent commission to help pick the site. How many lawsuits have been brought against the County on this issue to date?

A. Due to overcrowding conditions, a federal judge could impose a cap on the number of inmates San Mateo County could hold in its correctional facilities. This means that whatever number of inmates we have over what a judge would set would have to be released immediately. For every inmate that gets booked in, one inmate already in custody would have to be released, even if his/her sentence is not served. Our decision would be hastened by a judge making this decision. The judge would not tell us where to build it. Fines could be incurred by the County for not following the judge's caps/rulings. To date there have been no law suits on this issue.

Q. Will you explicitly recommend the Chemical Way site? The Jail Planning Unit continues its due diligence on both the Chemical Way and County Center / Motor Pool sites. The findings will be presented to the Sheriff and then Board of Supervisors for a final decision. When will the downtown site be off the possible site list? If the Chemical Way location is chosen as the site for the Replacement Jail. What could we do to remove the downtown site? The decision will be made by the County Board of Supervisors upon completion of due diligence.

Q. Of the individuals currently incarcerated-how many are awaiting adjudication?

A. Approximately 70% of the inmates in our correctional facilities are pre-trial (awaiting adjudication) including inmates with parole holds and ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) holds. Would those cases have been adjudicated be in the new facility and those awaiting adjudication be in Maguire? The Replacement Jail will house both pre-trial and sentenced inmates.

Q. Number of inmates now, anticipated with new jail? Crime attributable to recently released inmates or their associates who visit who pick them up, now and historically? Sheriff's plan to mitigate impact to local businesses and environment, which has slowly been improving after decades of stagnation. Benefits to RWC?

A. Unless the State begins pushing back inmates to the county jails, we do not expect a significant increase in our population. The number will remain the same and has historically been 1100-1200 in the system. This jail will replace the Maple St. facilities which will account for approx. 175-200 of the inmates who will be housed in the Replacement Jail. We do not have data that shows criminal activity directly related to inmates being released or their associates. A benefit to RWC will be jobs created during construction and ongoing staff increases both of who will likely visit RWC merchants/restaurants/services.

Q. The current jail creates an ugly wall at street level. Does the conceptual design for the new downtown jail improve upon this? For instance: 1. Public uses incorporated into the ground level, street front, such as a new law library, cafeteria or public meeting spaces.

A. The jail aesthetics will be incorporated into design with consideration being given to final site location.

Q.How would this not be another fortress, taking up another block of downtown.

A. Correctional facilities are designed, built and staffed with security and safety of the public, community, staff, visitors and inmates at the forefront. Modern designs of correctional facilities in urban areas can make them appear from the outside as an office building, hotel, or blend in with the existing environment.

The following were concerns by citizens who attended this outreach meeting

- It seems that the objections to the downtown RWC location are based on NIMBYism, rather than legitimate, rational dangers. RWC goes out of its way to attract visitors w/ various community events; presumably, visitors to the jail increase local business. If traffic is a problem, public transit investment is the answer. If architectural aesthetics or litter is a concern, surely the Century Cinema is more of a blight on the downtown area.

- We owned a house in RWC since 1988 and have lived there continuously since 1997. Over the past several years, RWC has made considerable strides in improving the downtown environment, especially evenings and weekends. Another jail is not consistent with these goals. Given there are suitable alternatives near the police station, we believe it is not necessary to build this facility downtown.

- (Written by a nine year old) That there will be more crooks around downtown (more murders) and it is just two blocks from my sisters school (Orion), and there is already a jail about (unreadable) yards away and that makes me concerned.

-Dear Officers and everyone else. Is it true that when we think of jail we think of price tags instead of the children who are affected by it, when I hear that I think of heartless. Please don't let hundreds of children suffer through a jail 2 blocks from their school. Have a jail outside of downtown. When I came today I found out the children won't follow their dreams when they see how many people can't not because of self confidence but because of bars.

-Are you aware that Redwood City School District has cut their library out of the schools? Are you concerned about what message a 6 story downtown jail sends to the children?

- I am starting a new (unreadable) company and wanted to locate it downtown. I will not do this if another jail is built downtown.

- Concerned about the negative impact that the downtown jail would have on attracting new retail businesses to establish locations in RWC. RWC needs additional tax revenue.

- That a jail on Chemical Way which releases inmates at Maguire is the same impact on our community as a jail downtown! Bad.

-Downtown RWC business for 30 years with children being dropped off at all hours of the day and night.

- As a taxpayer (I assume I am paying for this) I am willing to pay extra to provide a redundant release function at the new facility.

- Releasing only at Chemical Way does not require max security if they are ready to release then not max required.

- My concern is that if you just increase the capacity of the jail there will be additional capacity to have more inmates so 1200 beds= 1600 inmates. If you have so many inmates it will be best to house them at the alternative site.

- At a recent county supervisors meeting. Mr. Munks requested 70 additional personnel for the new facility. How do you (unreadable) this request. Especially with (unreadable) personnel in the range of \$90,000 dollars. In these times of recession, this is not good judgment.

- I understand state prisoners will be moving to county jails in an attempt to reduce the amount of prisoners in the state system. I'm concerned about more serious felons in our downtown.

-San Mateo County is dumping its problems onto RWC without addressing how SM County can improve conditions in downtown RWC. The County should first improve upon the "dead zone" that is the Maguire Jail. Will the poor design of the Maguire Jail be improved?