



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
220 NORTH MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 8645
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48107-8645
(734)222-6850
FAX (734)222-6715

TO: Jeff Irwin, Chair
Ways & Means Committee

FROM: Robert E. Guenzel
County Administrator

DATE: February 15, 2006

SUBJECT: Court Security Solution

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

It is requested that the Board of Commissioners approve the recommended actions to improve courthouse security at the 14-1A District Court, Platt Road Juvenile Courthouse, and Downtown Ann Arbor Trial Court; authorize the Administrator to sign necessary contracts; and adopt the budget.

BACKGROUND:

The security issues facing our courts have been discussed over the past two years in the Public Safety & Justice system conversations. The 14-1A District Court located at the Service Center is lacking screening and allows for citizens, victims and defendants to commingle in common spaces. The Juvenile Center at Platt Road has remained a security concern with no formal security screening being conducted. The security in the downtown Ann Arbor courthouse for the Trial Court has progressed over the years with an enhanced intake area and screening equipment; however, a coordinated plan is still in need to ensure the facility is completely secure. The Public Safety & Justice plan approved by the Board of Commissioners on August 3, 2005 included a plan and funding to make needed enhancements in these areas. With the passing of the petition to hold a millage referendum on the initiative rather than issuing the bonds to fund the initiative, the security issues remain a current concern that must be addressed.

DISCUSSION:

The following recommendations for each of the three courthouses addressed in this proposal are similar to those originally incorporated into the Public Safety & Justice initiative. Draft architectural sketches are attached to provide a visual representation of the proposed changes for each courthouse. Each plan is ADA fully accessible.

14-1A Court

It is recommended that the county build a new 550 square foot security vestibule that will connect to the existing 14-1A courthouse at the Service Center. This will allow the public to wait inside a fully enclosed permanent structure while going through the

security process. The proposal includes the setup and installation of 1 x-ray machine and 1 metal detector, along with adequate stations being built for security officers to conduct appropriate screening, blocking and monitoring. In addition to a new secure entrance, the proposal provides monitored/controlled exit access points as well to ensure no individuals can bypass the security entrance and enter through the exit access. Total construction costs are projected at \$115K.

Staffing analysis indicate that a total of 3 Building Security staff are needed to operate the security stations. Currently, the 14-1A District Court have 1.5 temporary staff patrolling the courthouse. The addition of 1.5 temporary staff will be needed in order to guarantee the security stations are properly manned during court hours. The total increase in annual operating costs is projected at \$95K.

The proposal for the district court addresses the immediate needs and provides a security solution pending the long-term system decisions of constructing a new courthouse entirely. As this is a short-term solution, it was desired to keep this proposal as cost effective as possible, while establishing a secure courthouse. An option of adding a trailer outside of the existing 14-1A courthouse was considered rather than building a fully enclosed vestibule. In this option, a new 400 square foot trailer would be set up, new sidewalks and a trailer pad would be constructed, and entry and exit ramps will be built leading to and from the trailer. New fencing and a security wall will be built to ensure no individuals can enter the facility without going through the security trailer. Members of the public will have to wait outdoors during heavy traffic periods both prior to security and following security between the trailer and the entrance doors of the building. The security trailer would include the same equipment as in the proposed option, but the space set up would provide limited visibility and monitoring capability for the officers. In addition, there would be no cost effective means to provide controlled exit access points except through the addition of security staff to monitor the exit points. As a result, the initial construction savings of this option (approximately \$60K) over the recommendation outlined above would be offset by annual operating cost increase of similar amounts because of additional officers being needed.

Platt Road Court

The security needs at the Juvenile Center on Platt Road have been concerns for years. They have been on hold pending a long-term building solution. It is recommended that the county take immediate action to provide a short-term security solution to meet the safety needs of the staff and citizens. The proposal for Platt Road include the building of a 375 square foot security vestibule to allow screening of the public through the set up and installation of an x-ray machine and metal detector. This will provide a monitored/controlled public entry point with adequate stations to allow screening, blocking and monitoring of all who enter the facility. The new construction will require that the existing entry canopy be removed. Total construction costs for Platt Road are projected at \$110K. In addition, two security staff will be needed for an estimated cost of \$110K.

Trial Court

The recommendation for the downtown Ann Arbor courthouse is a comprehensive long-term plan to ensure the facility is secure 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. As a security entrance currently exists, a temporary screening area will need to be provided during construction. The plan includes a rebuild of the public screening area to allow for better traffic control of the public entering the facility, the construction of a monitoring booth with the possibility for future technology expansion, the addition of a security office, and the use of existing security equipment including 2 metal detectors and 1 x-ray machine. The expanded security entrance construction will require the relocation of some Friend of the Court offices. The installation of new fixtures and updated HVAC mechanical units are necessary and incorporated into the plan as well.

The Trial Court is located in a high traffic volume area, for both passing vehicles and pedestrians. The external entry way currently includes a snow melt system to ensure safety of citizens entering the facility but the system has been broken for some time. It is recommended that this system be repaired at this opportune time while construction is taking place. In addition, the secured internal building entrance is vulnerable due to the lack of external building security. It is proposed to construct vehicle barriers surrounding the external entrance.

Total construction costs for both the interior and exterior security enhancements total \$232,500. The new security area can be staffed by existing temporary staff. However, it is proposed that the county enter into private agency security coverage during some after hours, while the building will be locked down during the remainder of the hours to ensure 24x7 security for the facility. The operating cost for the proposed private contract are \$37,440.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES:

None. Approval of the resolution will result in the addition of several part-time temporary staff being created and the use of contractual staff as follows:

- 14-1A District Court – 2 part-time security staff
- Platt Road Juvenile Center – 2 part-time security staff
- Downtown Ann Arbor Trial Court – Contractual security staff to cover after building hour patrol

IMPACT ON BUDGET:

Total construction costs are projected at \$457,500, including:

14-1A District Court = \$115,000

Platt Road Court = \$110,000

Trial Court = \$232,500

It is recommended that these construction costs be funded through Capital Reserves.

The total increase in operating costs are projected to be \$242,394, including:

14-1A District Court = \$94,954

Platt Road Court = \$110,000

Trial Court = \$37,440

All of these operating costs were included in the original Public Safety & Justice proposal, and were therefore budgeted in the 2006/07 General Fund budget adopted by the Board of Commissioners on November 16, 2005. These costs were included in the budget through the anticipated savings from the police services contract modifications.

IMPACT ON INDIRECT COSTS

None.

IMPACT ON OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES:

Enhanced security at the County courthouses will result in safety for all Public Safety & Justice departments and agencies.

CONFORMITY TO COUNTY POLICIES:

This action conforms to all County policies.

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES:

Resolution

Draft Architectural Sketches for Each Courthouse

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO IMPLEMENT COURT SECURITY EFFORTS AT THE 14-1A DISTRICT COURT, THE JUVENILE CENTER AT PLATT ROAD, AND THE DOWNTOWN ANN ARBOR TRIAL COURT; AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATOR TO SIGN NECESSARY CONTRACTS; AND AUTHORIZING THE USE OF CAPITAL RESERVES TO FUND THE CONSTRUCTION

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 1, 2006

WHEREAS, security issues facing our courts have been discussed over the past two years in the Public Safety & Justice system conversations; and

WHEREAS, the Public Safety & Justice plan approved by the Board of Commissioners on August 3, 2005 included a plan and funding to make needed enhancements in these areas; and

WHEREAS, the security efforts were placed on hold with the rest of the Public Safety & Justice initiative due to the passing of the petition to hold a millage referendum on the initiative rather than issue the bonds to fund the initiative; and

WHEREAS, the security issues remain a current concern that must be addressed; and

WHEREAS, it is proposed that the county construct a 550 square foot vestibule as an add on to the 14-1A District Court at the Service Center to allow screening at the public including the set up and installation of one x-ray machine and a metal detector; and

WHEREAS, it is proposed that the county construct a 375 square foot vestibule at the Juvenile Center at Platt Road including the set up and installation of one x-ray machine and a metal detector; and

WHEREAS, it is proposed that a redesign and expansion of the security entry/exit access points be made at the downtown Ann Arbor Trial Court that adds a new monitoring booth, allows for future technology expansion, provides better pedestrian traffic flow and adds needed external safety through the addition of vehicle barriers; and

WHEREAS, total construction costs are projected at \$457,500 for all three courthouses; and

WHEREAS, it is proposed that the construction costs be funded through the use of capital reserves; and

WHEREAS, the plan requires the addition of 1.5 security staff at the 14-1A District Court and the 2.0 security staff at Platt Road; and

WHEREAS, the plan requires the necessary steps to secure the Trial Court facility 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through the establishment of a contract with a private security agency for after hour security coverage in an estimated amount of \$37,440 along with the lock down of the building during some agreed upon after hours; and

WHEREAS, operating costs in the total amount of \$242,394 were included in the original Public Safety & Justice proposal, and were therefore budgeted in the 2006/07 General Fund budget adopted by the Board of Commissioners on November 16, 2005 through the anticipated savings from the police services contract modifications; and

WHEREAS, this matter has been reviewed by the County Administrator's Office, the Office of Corporation Counsel, the Finance Office and the Ways and Means Committee;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the County Administrator to implement the court security efforts at the 14-1A District Court, the Juvenile Center at Platt Road, and the downtown Ann Arbor Trial Court.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the County Administrator to sign necessary contracts to complete the implementation of the outlined security efforts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the County Administrator to use \$457,500 in capital reserves to fund the construction costs of the project.