

May 3, 2005

Mr. Robert Guenzel
Administrator
Washtenaw County
220 N. Main
P.O. Box 8645
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-8645

Dear Mr. Guenzel:

Re: Jail Inmate Cost Comparison

Per your request we have gained preliminary understanding of the issues surrounding development of comparative jail inmate costs within Washtenaw County and across various Counties within the state, as presented by your staff. We have also reviewed the information provided by Scott Patton of the Washtenaw County Finance Department and collected some relevant information and data from comparable Michigan counties. As you may already know, we employ Mr. Thomas Quisenberry, the former Undersheriff of Oakland County to assist us as a subject matter expert in public safety projects such as these. He has identified the following issues as key jail cost drivers within County Sheriff Departments, all items that are useful to understand when comparing per day inmate costs across different jails throughout the state.

- Makeup of the prisoner population – this has significant impact on the costs of running a jail. This includes the severity of crimes committed and associated security levels, the required separation of non-traditional populations, such as females, juveniles, and contagious prisoners, the justice system philosophy and legislative requirements employed by the court in sentencing prisoners, etc.
- Physical jail layout – older jails tend to have more linear cell configurations, requiring a higher guard per inmate ratio. Newer jail facilities commonly use a pod or open setting where more prisoners can be watched by fewer guards.
- Mental health diversion programs – if a County has successful mental health diversion programs, many jail beds may be freed up due to the influx of mental health prisoners, such as the homeless and former residents of state halfway houses, etc.
- Health care costs – state statutes require the provision of health care services to the inmate population, which is experiencing a pronounced trend of spiraling costs due to makeup of the jail population.

We obtained the following cost information (per inmate per day) from Washtenaw and other comparable counties as a preliminary assessment of some jail cost differentials across the state:

- Washtenaw County: \$84.43
- Oakland County: \$87.00
- Macomb County: \$70.30
- Wayne County: \$100.00
- Ingham County: \$46.97

It appears as if there is considerable variation between per day inmate costs across the Counties compared above and we would be happy to investigate those differences further if you desire additional detail on this issue.

We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to assist you and the Sheriff's Department on this very important matter. Please call me at (248) 223-3328 or Christine Andrysiak at (248) 223-3330 with any questions or concerns about this information.

Very truly yours,

PLANTE & MORAN, PLLC

Adam Rujan