

# Community Partner Engagement Report



## *Washtenaw County Strategic Space Plan*

September 21, 2006



# Washtenaw County Strategic Space Plan Report on Community Partner Engagement

## Overview

As part of the comprehensive review and planning for county wide infrastructure needs the Board of Commissioners approved a process to engage community partners in a discussion that would surface questions, concerns and priorities regarding county facilities and planned use. Two communities of interest were the primary focus of input regarding space planning, Public Safety and Justice and Human Services. These are areas in which input from strategic and community partners contributed the most value into the space plan discussion concerning the more immediate needs of the county.

The Community Partner Engagement Process began in June of 2006 with the Board of Commissioners identifying specific questions to be addressed by partner groups, boards and committees that operate in partnership with the Board to advise or govern the services provided in Washtenaw County. The Board at that time also identified over twenty groups for the discussions. The final list of groups provided a balance of different perspectives, collaborative bodies that would include many of the individual partners, community based groups and employees.

Groups were contacted by letter of invitation or phone calls and offered the opportunity to provide feedback. Discussions were conducted at regularly scheduled meetings or, for those groups not meeting during summer months, an opportunity was arranged for members to participate in specially called sessions. Each engagement session began with an overview of the comprehensive infrastructure planning process and an indication of the Board's interest in securing feedback from community partners. A facilitated discussion followed the overview to solicit input on the key questions. General themes surfaced that are reported in the Strategic Space Plan. This document extends that report and provides more detailed findings and comments from participants.

## Questions Posed

### Public Safety and Justice:

*Should there be a Jail Expansion? If so, how large should it be expanded?*

*Should the current infrastructure of the jail be brought up to the standards that would be used in an expansion?*

*What alternative sanctions or diversion methods should be funded in order to reduce jail population?*

*What should the 14A1 District Court look like?*

*Should the Juvenile Division of the Family Court be centrally located with other areas of Family Court? If not, where should it be located?*

*How should the existing Trial Court building downtown be improved?*

### Human Services

*Should 555 Towner be converted to a Health campus and delivery center?*

*Would you or your clients benefit from satellite Human Service delivery?*

*Where should Employment Training and Community Services be located?*

### Funding:

*How would you fund these needs?*

*What would be the effect of not funding these proposed building initiatives?*

## **Participating Groups**

Responding to questions in Public Safety and Justice

- Ministerial Alliance
- NAACP – Ypsilanti/Willow Run
- Chief Elected Officials
- HSCC – Barrier Busters
- Planning Advisory Board
- Metro Alliance
- Criminal Justice Collaborative Council
- Police Services Steering Committee
- Police Chiefs including U of M and EMU
- Ann Arbor Chamber of Commerce Policy Committee
- Judiciary
- Employees

Responding to questions in Human Services

- Ministerial Alliance
- NAACP
- Chief Elected Officials
- HSCC – Barrier Busters
- Washtenaw Health Plan Board
- Washtenaw Community Health Organization Board
- Workforce Development Board
- Community Action Board –*Executive committee*
- Washtenaw Housing Alliance *Operations Committee*
- Employees

## Methodology

A focus group methodology was used in gathering this input. While over 200 individuals participated in this process no effort was made to insure a random or representative sample or to quantify the comments provided. The input is intended to provide general impressions, specific anecdotes from users and an overview of the level of information in the community about space needs and the current condition of certain facilities. The design was intended to provide additional information to the Board of Commissioners as they address this critical set of decisions.

## Findings

A general summary of the findings has been provided to the Board of Commissioners in the Strategic Space Plan. This document provides more detailed information, including specific perceptions of a variety of participants in over twenty groups over a period of two months. The intent here is to complement the summary document by providing more anecdotes, specific comments and concerns, organized by several major categories within the four broad topics of questioning. The complete text of comments from all groups is in the Appendix.

As indicated in the summary, participants in many of the groups complimented the Board of Commissioners for reaching out to community leaders and soliciting perceptions and insights. Participants appreciated the background information that was provided as well as the opportunity to provide feedback. Indeed, participants often suggested that the practice be continued and applied to a broad range of challenges facing the community.

## Jail

*Should we expand the jail? If so, how large?*

*If we expand the current facility, should the existing building be brought up to the standards used in the expansion?*

*What alternative sanctions or diversion methods should be funded to support reduction of the jail population?*

### Recognize the problem

A number of comments reflected a recognition that something has to be done at the jail. The following are typical:

- Generally agree that more bed space is needed
- It's pretty clear that the jail should be expanded but it should be modular in design for flexibility in expansion
- There should be changes to the kitchen, booking area, laundry facilities – infrastructure that poses potential risks to working conditions of employees
- No brainer! the infrastructure is in bad repair
- No question we need a larger jail. There are people that should be locked up that we can't lock up

- There is no question that the jail needs to be expanded
- The jail has to be expanded and should be as large as the recommendation in the original bond proposal
- Since the population of the county is going to continue to grow it would seem that expansion is necessary
- The jail overcrowding issue is a long-standing one—do we need more space? Yes, duh! But it is as much a community education problem as it is a jail expansion issue. County residents are not aware that this is a county jail, serving all communities in the county by statute. We need to engage in a major community education initiative to be sure that residents understand this.

*The jail overcrowding issue is a long-standing one—do we need more space? Yes... But it is as much a community education problem as it is a jail expansion issue.*

#### Consider the options

At the same time that participants recognized the problem, many others in the group discussions suggested that additional options need to be explored. Some related to options for the jail itself, the first nine comments are typical, while many more comments reflected a desire for alternative treatment and diversion programs. As the final comments suggest, however, alternative sanctions are not for everyone and the necessary funding to support such diversion programs may be difficult to “sell” to the public.

#### Jail management strategies

- Has privatization of jail and operations been looked into?
- Look at all jail population management alternatives as well as expansion of beds
- Current capacity for work detail crews could be increased—may need to increase corrections officers and vans to accommodate more crews
- Look again at inmates paying for the cost of incarceration or paying a flat day rate to offset the cost
- Not in favor of expansion – don’t build unlimited jail cells, prefer more alternative sanctions
- It may be time to look at whether building a new jail would be less costly than redoing the existing structure
- For upgrading the infrastructure, look at the money saved for staffing and the potential liability cost. This should be purely a cost benefit decision
- Insurance premiums have increased due to the higher liability of overcrowding – infrastructure changes should be made to reduce the risk
- Streamlined court processing to reduce the amount of pretrial time spent in jail

### Diversion programs

- We need to devote resources to alternative programs, intervention and prevention, designed to stop people from going to jail in the first place (or returning again and again). It is more cost-effective to spend the money on treatment and prevention than on jail expansion.
- Many people in the jail can be better treated outside the jail—we need to address substance abuse and mental health problems outside of jail rather than incarcerate people. These people do not belong in jail.
- We have an obligation to treat people humanely and provide the treatment available that people need (medical, mental health, other)
- There is an absence of institutional programs to help mental health patients which results in more mentally ill inmates in the jail
- The funding for alternative sanctions should increase dramatically, these sanctions can make a difference for some offenses
- We need to develop and fund (or perhaps revitalize) a street outreach program to support prevention efforts. We should develop an Options Center where people can be referred to local nonprofits for the help they need—mental health or substance abuse—rather than placing them in jail.

*Many people in the jail can be better treated outside the jail—we need to address substance abuse and mental health problems outside of jail rather than incarcerate people. These people do not belong in jail.*

- The state is developing a re-entry program to address the recidivism problem and we need to aggressively partner with them. We should be thinking about connecting any proposed jail expansion with efforts to support improved alternative diversion efforts.

### The challenges of diversion programs

- Expanded eligibility for Community Corrections allows for more referrals but funding needs to be there in order to provide the services.
- Current space occupied by Community Corrections is already too small for the existing programs so increased use would require more space
- Alternative sanctions are difficult to sell to voters
- Should invest more in alternative programs rather than larger jail, however alternative sanctions do not work for domestic violence offenders and sexual assault offenders
- We need to have the capacity to keep sex offenders in jail as long as a sentence requires. This is not a population that should receive a reduction to time served based on good behavior. They are likely to behave well in jail but less likely to change behavior when released.

### Look to the experts

A number of participants indicated that they did not feel qualified to make a decision—that they looked to the experts, those who worked in the system—to make a recommendation. But, the recommendation will need to be clear and convincing, also noted below.

- Confidence in CJCC review of data and jail management supports expansion of the jail. This would seem to be the appropriate source for this decision.
- Ultimately, we have to trust the recommendations of those who work in the jail and who provide services—criminal justice officials have a better handle on the issues—and they need to provide recommendations on what needs to be done. And, they need to do a better job sharing information and making the case.
- Most people will need to rely on the recommendations of those closest to the problems—court personnel—but a strong business case will need to be made. Demonstrate that any proposed action is a cost-effective approach to addressing real needs.

### Make the case

As the last bullet point above suggests, a common comment had to do with the need to make the case for whatever recommendation emerges. Many participants expressed the view that a clear and compelling argument needs to be made about the conditions of the jail that warrant expansion and improvement. On the other hand, some participants also argued that it is cost-effective to utilize diversion programs to minimize the need for more space/beds.

- Communities will back a plan for an expanded jail as long as the Sheriff and County Board are working together and speaking with the same message
- This is about cutting a political deal
- The conflict between county officials—the Commission and township boards, the Administrator and Sheriff, among others—has destroyed the credibility of county decision-makers. Addressing the police issue may help resolve some of this, but the whole range of spending issues across the county will impact citizen support for jail expansion and court renovation.
- Work release programs can be very effective and fairly inexpensive to operate
- Alternative sanctions would be a good option for this community but look at cost neutral or cost saving operations for programs
- Improving the infrastructure seems like it will save cost over the long run
- People need to hear how inadequate the infrastructure is – this information was not well understood in the last millage proposal

## Courts

*What should the 14A1 District Court look like?*

*Should the Juvenile Division of the Family Court be centrally located with other areas of Family Court? If not, where should it be located?*

*How might the existing Trial Court building downtown be improved?*

### Recognize the problem

As is the case with the jail, many participants recognize that there are problems with the court facilities, especially 14A1. The following comments are typical:

- District Court building is an embarrassment to the County. This should be the County's number 1 building priority
- Parties in conflict should be separated from one another
- There are real safety and security problems at the court at the Service Center; crime victims and families are abused a second time when they have to come face to face with accused or adjudicated felons.
- The 14A1 court is a disaster—it needs to be at the top of the list in terms of funding priorities.
- Inadequate lock-up space – causes staffing issues in transport and security
- Traffic flow pattern of all types of users coming in through same entrance
- Should be a separation of victims and defendants
- Criminal and civil proceedings need separation
- Current structure has not changed in 30 years despite changes in the nature of court functions and participants in the process. And the need for security has changed
- Arraignment rooms should be big enough to allow public access to the proceedings
- Victims and their families are currently being put at risk
- Safe, accessible and with separation of victims and defendants and their respective families
- Secure facility for judges
- The court at the Service Center is a real security issue; “I wouldn't want to have to work there everyday and run the risk of problems.” The corridors are too narrow; there is insufficient space to separate parties at trial. It is a safety and security problem not only for those involved—citizens and employees—but for everybody in the county.
- It is shocking that victims could be in the same space as perpetrators
- Jurors who have sat on trials for violent crimes were frightened because of the courtroom set up and lack of security in the building

*The corridors are too narrow; there is insufficient space to separate parties at trial. It is a safety and security problem not only for those involved—citizens and employees—but for everybody in the county.*

### Family court/Juvenile court

A particular area of questioning focused on participant perceptions about the location of the Family court and Juvenile division of the court. Comments were quite divided on the subject, as the points below suggest.

- The Family court division is not big enough to keep separate – there is a strong need for cross training and flexibility to provide efficiency
- If Juvenile division stayed at Platt Rd there would be no opportunity to take advantage of sharing clerk/recorders (juvenile division operates differently than other areas, not cross trained to do digital video recordings)
- The Juvenile Division should not be downtown; families that come with the youth have a difficult time
- The only way to have efficiencies is to move the Juvenile Division with the rest of the Circuit Court functions
- Maybe other youth services should be located at Platt Rd rather than consolidating the courts – Children’s Advocacy Center, youth services for victims, etc.
- Consolidation would provide the opportunity to co-locate probate referee, juvenile court referee and possibly the FOC referee that would allow for cross functional scheduling of referees
- Juvenile should be moved to the Service Center or move all the Trial functions to a new facility at Platt Rd.
- Consolidate services - move near to Youth Center at the service center
- Opposed to the Juvenile Division being moved to the Service Center. There is much better use of the Service Center space for prevention or diversion programs. The parking at the Service Center is tight when activities are happening in many of the buildings
- Does not really matter where the Juvenile Division is with other courts since they operate very separately
- The Juvenile Court should not be associated in any way with the jail or any adult facility
- Kids should not see themselves as associated with any incarceration
- There is a strong need for separation of Juveniles and Adults in the court system

### Consider the options

Unlike the jail, however, participants in discussions about the courts had few options to offer. Some suggested exploring partnerships, others believed that renovation is no longer cost-effective, or that managing the courts can be more efficient. Almost every group raised concerns about parking, no matter what recommendation emerges for improving the court facilities.

- If the County is truly interested in engaging partners why aren’t we in conversation about shared buildings between the County and local units of government
- We should not continue to pour money into a building with so many infrastructure issues

*Retrofitting a building and continually restructuring is not cost effective - at some point you have to cut your losses and build a facility that is designed for the purpose*

- Courtroom sharing and scheduling will provide opportunities if courtrooms are configured to be flexible, but in current state will continue to put pressure on scheduling of jury trials.
- A new justice campus with all services together is what is really needed

## **Towner**

*Should the 555 Towner facility be converted to Health campus and delivery center?*

*Would your clients or constituents benefit from satellite service delivery?*

*If converted to a health campus, where should the ETCS administrative offices be located?*

### Recognize the problem

Many participants agreed with the concept of converting the Towner facility to a health campus, in part because of the problems with the current site, as the following comments suggest.

- The Towner facility is not currently client-friendly.
- Providing a “one stop” service delivery center makes sense; we need to think holistically about client needs and provide access to services in an effective and efficient manner. This should include DHS and social services as well. At the same time, programs offered in cooperation with other organizations, e.g., faith-based and nonprofits, can also improve access and efficiency.
- Any design should begin with customers need – the space should first be designed for customers and then staff
- It makes sense to consolidate delivery of health services at the Towner facility, although we need to continue to explore partnerships with faith-based and other organizations to be able to provide some services in a decentralized fashion.
- Co-location of services increases the client’s use of multiple services and service providers are better able to meet the client’s needs
- There is a shift in service delivery to one that is more client centered – one aspect of this may be to have more spaces for group client work, services that provide more empowerment, more partnership
- There should be planned flexibility in the use of space as client service delivery changes
- There should be the space to redesign the clinic space because the current clinic set ups are causing security issues
- Seriously look at the design for Towner – not a quick fix but redo the whole building
- Atrium space needs to be more customer friendly and safe – there have been accidents in the current set up

- Need to redo customer space at the least – better bathrooms and cleaned more frequently, painting more frequently, carpet replaced that is wearing
- Clinic days are very congested – there is no good group space and no real preservation of confidentiality – a different design that includes more meeting space for groups would provide more opportunity for peer support groups

#### Consider the options

At the same time, there was considerable support for alternative approaches to service delivery, including pursuing collaboration with partners to provide services within the community. The caveat in the final comment here is worth noting however; consideration of satellite service operations warrants careful study apart from space needs.

- It makes sense to consolidate delivery of health services at the Towner facility, although we need to continue to explore partnerships with faith-based and other organizations to be able to provide some services in a decentralized fashion.
- Too expensive to build satellite operations; however, traveling services could be conducted in Township buildings where available and appropriate for the service
- Perhaps use extra space at the Western Service Center to conduct satellite Health and human service assessment and clinics
- Yes – anytime you are bringing services to where the clients are located you increase the use – support the direction of client not clinician centered provision of services
- There should be more collaboration with existing programs to provide services to clients where they are in the community
- Work to remove barriers like transportation – services need to be out into the community
- There are partnerships ready and waiting in the community to be tapped – putting money into redesigning the building is not as effective as bringing the services to the community
- There should be more collaboration with existing programs to provide services to clients where they are in the community
- This (utilizing satellite operations) needs more research to make a sound decision – what is the critical mass of users necessary keep a satellite operation going

## Locating ETCS?

Redesigning the Towner facility poses its own problems, as the Board of Commissioners recognized, in seeking comments about the ETCS functions at Towner. Reactions were mixed; some participants thought it would be a good idea to move those offices, which may create other space problems, while other participants were not as sure. Again, the comments below are typical.

- Why not think of Towner as a campus for ETCS services?
- Customers of Community Services are also customers of DHS; 40% of the programs at Harriet are also customers of DHS. It would seem to make more sense to keep ETCS near DHS.
- Commitment by the Board of Commissioners to Harriet St is not only for workforce development services, it could be other services provided there.
- There is not enough space at Harriet St for corporate services – current environment is not attractive for use by corporate partners
- First option would be to build at Harriet, a space that would provide for administrative staff, interview rooms and classrooms, nice waiting area for customers and be a building that the local community can be proud of.
- If space was added to Harriet that area of town could be made very attractive and accessible to customers
- No matter what you do with the ETCS offices you will have space problems. There isn't adequate parking or sufficient space for offices at the Harriet Street facility, and parking is also a problem at the Eastern Washtenaw County service center on Michigan Avenue.

*We should make the Harriet St block a “real gem” for that area of Ypsilanti. They should have a wonderful experience at a world class facility.*

## Funding

*How should we fund these proposed space initiatives?*

*What would be the impact of not funding these space initiatives?*

### Millage?

Many participants expressed the view that there was little public support for a new millage to finance these infrastructure needs, as the following comments suggest.

- We cannot afford state of the art – should focus on core responsibilities and basic needs for safety and security
- No millage is possible right now or in the near future
- There is no hope in passing a millage increase.
- We should avoid asking for a millage to fund space/facility upgrades. Bonding may be the only real alternative to funding for these space needs, and a strong case will need to be made to secure support.

- We also ought to be looking to the state to help address these issues; part of the problem was caused by the state's decisions to de-institutionalize clients in mental health facilities, and they are left out on the street to become law enforcement problems. Perhaps join with other counties and communities to make a strong case for state action.
- Questionable whether there would be support among residents for a millage to fund space/facility upgrades. It also seems that the more "stuff" that is included in a millage proposal, the less support there will be at the polls.
- Current funding sources may be the only option. There is widespread concern that "we are not managing our money well."
- Any millage should sort out or separate the issues (especially operating costs); we should not be financing operating costs

### Make the case

Participants were very much aware that there are no easy answers to the funding question, as the first two comments below suggest. Whatever decision emerges, participants are looking to county leaders to provide a strong case for action, as the remaining comments indicate.

- There are no easy answers to the funding problem. A new millage would provide additional revenue to support infrastructure and facility needs, although there may not be sufficient support for it. Borrowing money using current funding streams could potentially mean a reduction in support for human and social service programs, which may limit our ability to provide the services that can really make a difference in people's lives.
- It seems obvious that something needs to be done, given the issues associated with the facilities we have discussed. But we need to do a better job of bringing people to the table, helping them understand that action is designed to meet community needs. Most people don't go to the jail, or the courts, or to the Towner facility for that matter, but the services offered at all three meet broad community needs, and that needs to be made clear
- A millage is the only way to pay for these building improvements but the county needs to be smarter about how it is presented. It is not sold to the public by good will
- There should be advocacy by community leaders and business people – local officials felt left out of the first process
- Are there opportunities for collaboration among groups in the county—the homeless shelter may represent a model to be emulated in moving forward on the space issues. Building consensus among key groups within the county on the need for action and support for funding will be critical.
- Most people don't see this as "their problem." There is a disconnect between the discussion of facilities and the services that are provided. People are not aware of the connection between facilities and services; the connection has to be made that improving facilities will improve access to services, that funding is needed not just for buildings, but for service improvement, improved access, ease and efficiency of service delivery, and safety.

- If a millage is proposed it should be framed properly and not packaged to include several different initiatives
- Citizens need to understand where their current taxes are spent (understand the fund balances for example)
- Whatever recommendation emerges, we need to do a much better job of communicating the need; the “story” in the earlier campaigns wasn’t told effectively.
- We need clear estimates of the costs of alternative jail expansion proposals. Citizens don’t necessarily know how big it has to be, but we can make decisions on sound proposals that are clear and based on good information.
- A millage is how government funds these things but you need to build a desire for the initiative in the public
- The public needs to be convinced that they are getting a quality service in order to support more funding
- Key decision-makers need to get on the same page on recommendations, and focus on those challenges that represent the greatest risk to safety and security.

### Much skepticism

It is also useful to note that there was much skepticism among participants about funding decisions. Comments ranged from people won’t support infrastructure, to the view that the controversy over the police issue will get in the way, to concern about ever securing public support for financing facilities given the skepticism over the way money is managed. Participants in one group even suggested enlisting the support of community leaders to review the issues and make recommendations, as the final comment notes.

- It seems that it is the will of the people to do nothing – no giant jail, no support for selling bonds, the people seem to support the early release of inmates
- Maybe it is time to stop political fighting about the jail and move onto another project in the County
- Before asking for funding the County should prioritize according to need
- The County should hire a political consultant to get all of the political parties on board prior to asking for a millage – that is the only way to get things passed
- Trust is at the heart of this
- Enlist a broadly representative group of key community leaders to provide an independent assessment of space/facility needs and make recommendations to the County Commission, and more importantly, to the larger community. The concern was expressed that the Commission right now lacks credibility and legitimacy, because of the conflicts over the police issue among other things. Thus, getting community leaders to provide guidance on necessary funding recommendations could be critical.

*Trust is at the heart of this...*

## Reflection

On reading and reflecting on the comments and insights of over two hundred community leaders with respect to the county's space needs planning issues, it is apparent that the Board of Commissioners was successful in providing meaningful information to participants, stimulating discussion and thought about the several questions posed by the facilitators, and securing feedback. Nearly every group expressed appreciation for the opportunity provided and encouraged similar such opportunities on a broad range of issues facing the county in the future.

At the same time, it is also apparent that participants in the focus groups were divided on almost all of the questions posed. While there is considerable recognition of the facility problems at the jail and the courts, there is not much optimism about funding for such needs. If a recommendation to update the facilities is made several themes emerge quite strongly. One suggestion is to provide a clear, convincing and compelling case. Most people are not aware of the severity of the problems, or don't see the condition of the facilities as "their" problem. Many participants commented that the earlier case for funding had not been made effectively.

A second theme that stands out in this regard is to make the connection between facilities and service delivery; people need to know that the proposed space changes are linked to access to, convenience of, and cost effective delivery of services. A final theme related to support for funding relates to the current skepticism of and frustration with the conflict and contention between and among county officials. Time and again the comment was made that until other issues get resolved there will be no movement on funding for facilities. Indeed, to underscore the point, one participant suggested that the county just move on to other issues for now.

There is a substantial amount of support for alternatives to incarceration as a means for addressing the overcrowding problem at the jail. Many participants, even recognizing the fact that Washtenaw County is a leader in diversion, suggested the need to explore all alternatives to putting people in jail. As one participant noted, you can't build your way out of this problem. At the same time, participants were aware that such programs create their own need for funding, and potentially space, and were not optimistic that the public would support new funding.

Participants were mindful of the social and economic consequences of the alternatives explored; for example, many of the comments about the Towner proposal, involving health service delivery as well as social and employment services, focused on the need for linking the range of services provided to the same individuals in a client-oriented and cost effective way. The discussion about alternative sanctions and diversion programs to minimize jail overcrowding also reflected concerns about successful reintegration of offenders into the community as the only way to address the problem in a long-term fashion.

This report included perspectives from the Boards, committees, groups and individuals that were engaged. The appreciation expressed for the outreach effort might indicate that others may benefit from the information given and the opportunity to express insights and concerns. Given the concerns and skepticism, it may be useful to see this as just the beginning of the conversation with partners and the broader community. This process provided a good beginning toward ongoing engagement about issues that concern Washtenaw County communities.



## Appendix: Community Engagement Summary of Comments

### *Jail:*

*Should there be a Jail Expansion? If so, how large should it be expanded?*

- Confidence in CJCC review of data and jail management supports expansion of the jail. This would seem to be the appropriate source for this decision.
- We cannot afford state of the art – should focus on core responsibilities and basic needs for safety and security.
- Generally agree that more bed space is needed
- Has privatization of jail and operations been looked into?
- Should look at all jail population management alternatives as well as expansion of beds
- There should be a certainty of consequences – we have the means to use jail time as a sanction that we can follow through on
- Current capacity for work detail crews could be increased - may need to increase corrections officers and vans to accommodate more crews
- Look again at inmates paying for the cost of incarceration or paying a flat day rate to offset the cost
- The Jail has to be expanded and should be as large as the recommendation in the original bond proposal
- It may be time to look at whether building a new jail would be less costly than redoing the existing structure
- Shelter Association: We have an obligation to treat people humanely and provide the treatment available that people need (medical, mental health, other)
- Safehouse: We need to have the capacity to keep sex offenders in jail as long as sentence requires. This is not a population that should receive a reduction to time served based on good behavior. They are likely to behave well in jail but less likely to change behavior when released.
- There is an absence of institutional programs to help mental health patients which results in more mentally ill inmates in the jail
- No question we need a larger jail. There are people that should be locked up that we can't lock up
- Communities will back up a plan for expanded jail as long as the Sheriff and County Board are working together and speaking with the same message
- This is about cutting a political deal
- It's pretty clear that the jail should be expanded but it should be modular in design for flexibility in expansion
- There should be changes to the kitchen, booking area, laundry facilities – infrastructure that poses potential risks to working conditions of the employees
- It seems that it is the will of the people to do nothing – no giant jail, no support for selling bonds, the people seem to support the early release of inmates

- Maybe it is time to stop political fighting about the jail and move onto another project in the County
- No brainer, the infrastructure is in bad repair
- Just adding bed space does not solve the problem – the support spaces have never been enlarged to handle the expanded capacity of the current jail.
- There is no question that the jail need to be expanded
- Whatever we build we should not find ourselves in another overcrowded situation in 2 years
- We should build a 500 bed capacity with the ability to double bunk as needed or appropriate
- There is no interest in Washtenaw County to build beyond needed capacity in order to house out of county inmates
- I am not in favor of expansion – I don't want to build unlimited jail cells I prefer more alternative sanctions
- It is only responsible to build for flexibility for expanded capacity
- Since the population of the county is going to continue to grow it would seem that expansion is necessary
- No matter how big we build the jail if we don't deal with these problems we will continue to have overcrowding. The metaphor of the stopped up sink is instructive; if the drainpipe is blocked and the water is running, no matter how big you make the sink it will overflow at some point. We need to deal with people's problems before they become a jail problem.
- Has the use of the vacant prison facility out on Platt road been explored as a possible alternative to expansion of the jail? Would this be a cost-effective alternative?
- Washtenaw County is a leader in alternative programs and diversion, with one of the highest rates of diversion in the state and one of the lowest jail commitment rates. Thus, expansion of the jail may well be necessary even with additional alternative sanctions. But we do need to get at “root problems”—it is not just a jail issue but a jobs problem, and educational issue and so on.
- The jail overcrowding issue is a long-standing one—do we need more space? Yes, duh! But it is as much a community education problem as it is a jail expansion issue. County residents are not aware that this is a county jail, serving all communities in the county by statute. We need to engage in a major community education initiative to be sure that residents understand this.
- The conflict between county officials—the Commission and township boards, the Administrator and Sheriff, among others—has destroyed the credibility of county decision-makers. Addressing the police issue may help resolve some of this, but the whole range of spending issues across the county will impact citizen support for jail expansion and court renovation. Even the AA high school decision will impact county decisions.

- The criminal justice system is not fair; minorities are targeted, and represent a disproportionate number of people in the jail. They have limited access to resources to defend themselves and wind up in jail more often.
- Many people in the jail can be better treated outside the jail—we need to address substance abuse and mental health problems outside of jail rather than incarcerate people. These people do not belong in jail.
- We need to focus efforts specifically on the needs of young people, avoid putting them in jail for minor infractions, which then creates problems for the rest of their lives. We need to help young people become productive citizens, put an emphasis on education, like the Kalamazoo Promise.
- Should we be thinking about a facility other than the jail that can be used to provide alternative treatment options?
- We should treat violence as a health crisis and address it through a broad range of strategies. County leaders should convene a task force, like the task force on homelessness, to identify and build consensus a broad range of strategies to deal with these problems.
- We need to focus on early education programs, fund alternative options such as community service as an alternative to incarceration. There should be more structured and perhaps more extensive work programs, even house arrest, as alternatives. There is a perception that some people will not do community service since they know they might be released early because of the over crowding problem at the jail; we need to be sure that those who can do community service, do it.
- Farming people out to other jails is not an answer to the jail over crowding problem. It is more costly, cuts people off from local services and from their families.
- How many people at the jail are there pre-trial? (perhaps thirty percent of those at the jail on average.) Are there ways to reduce that number, opening beds for those who have been adjudicated? Are there alternative ways to handle those that are returned to jail for probation or parole violations?
- Can we distinguish between those who are incarcerated for violent offenses—who present a threat to themselves or to others—and handle them differently than others who might not need to be jailed?
- The state is developing a re-entry program to address the recidivism problem and we need to aggressively partner with them. We should be thinking about connecting any proposed jail expansion with efforts to support improved alternative diversion efforts.
- Ultimately, we have to trust the recommendations of those who work in the jail and who provide services—the criminal justice officials have a better handle on the issues—and they need to provide recommendations on what needs to be done. And, they need to do a better job sharing information and making the case.

*Should the current infrastructure of the jail be brought up to the standards that would be used in an expansion?*

- We should do what we need to do
- Infrastructure improvements should plan for additional future expansions as needed
- Need to bring the current security and processing system up to current standards for operating
- Security aspect is important in gaining future support of jail projects
- The current infrastructure should be updated to match whatever is put into the expansion sections
- For upgrading the infrastructure, look at the money saved for staffing and the potential liability cost. This should be purely a cost benefit decision
- Insurance premiums have increased due to the higher liability of overcrowding – infrastructure changes should be made to reduce the risk
- Improving the infrastructure seems like it will save cost over the long run
- People need to hear how inadequate the infrastructure is – this information was not well understood in the last millage proposal

*What alternative sanctions or diversion methods should be funded in order to reduce jail population?*

- Alternative sanctions would be a good option for this community but look at cost neutral or cost saving operations for programs
- Expanded eligibility for Community Corrections allows for more referrals but funding needs to be there in order to provide the services.
- Current space occupied by Community Corrections is already too small for the existing programs so increased use would require more space
- Probation residential center
- Crisis Residential facility/short term residential
- Crisis response teams
- Transitional Housing for substance abuse (substance abuse funding is at much lower levels than mental health funding)
- Work Release program (may have program fees paid by participants)
- Employment training/placement/job coaching
- Discharge planning for people who are in the jail and hard to place
- Should invest more in alternative programs rather than larger jail, however alternative sanctions do not work for domestic violence offenders and sexual assault offenders
- PRC which was part of the original millage proposal

- The funding for alternative sanctions should increase dramatically, these sanctions can make a difference for some offenses
- Alternative Sanctions are difficult to sell to voters
- PRC is not a solution to jail overcrowding, those housed in the PRC were not likely candidates to be in jail
- Work release programs can be very effective and fairly inexpensive to operate
- Use of alternative sanctions will increase the number of staff needed to operate programs
- There still need to be jail beds to provide a stronger sanction when a violation occurs
- Some parts of the community view alternative sanctions as fluff and they won't support it
- I would support alternative sanctions – the problem with the 05 millage is that it was packaged so that people were not able to vote for what they wanted
- Drug treatment such as an engagement center would be a viable diversion
- Anger Management programs
- Streamlined court processing to reduce the amount of pretrial time spent in jail
- Even though we do a pretty good job here in the county of diverting people from jail, we need to pursue all alternative sanctions and diversion programs that are possible. Part of the jail population problem is the reduction in social services/mental health support that leaves those with drug/alcohol/substance abuse problems and mental health challenges with little support on the street and they wind up in jail.
- Similarly, if we are not dealing with broader problems of jobs, training, education, people leave the jail without support and end up returning.
- Several comments reflect the tenor of the discussion among almost all participants: if you build the jail you will fill the jail; can't see spending more money on cells; put the money back into the community and focus on root causes; devote money to stopping returns (recidivism).
- As the comments above suggest, the group was almost unanimous in saying we need to devote resources to alternative programs, intervention and prevention, designed to stop people from going to jail in the first place (or returning again and again). It is more cost-effective to spend the money on treatment and prevention than on jail expansion.
- We need to develop and fund (or perhaps revitalize) a street outreach program to support prevention efforts. We should develop an Options Center where people can be referred to local nonprofits for the help they need—mental health or substance abuse—rather than placing them in jail.

## ***Courts:***

### *What should the 14A1 District Court look like?*

- District Court should be clean, efficient and safe facility
- Parties in conflict should be separated from one another
- Should be a separation of victims and defendants
- Criminal and civil proceedings need separation
- Current structure has not changed in 30 years despite changes in the nature of court functions and participants in the process – Need for security has changed
- Arraignment rooms should be big enough to allow public access to the proceedings
- Victims and their families are currently being put at risk
- We should focus on statutory responsibilities first
- Safe, accessible and with separation of victims and defendants and their respective families
- Secure facility for judges
- Adequate space for dispute resolution
- Should look nice and be clean
- More courtrooms – currently courtrooms have to be shared
- Should be space that is designed to be a courtroom
- Space for staff from other areas to use the facility and talk to people privately
- Should be a people friendly environment for citizens and professionals
- Inadequate lock-up space – causes staffing issues in transport and security
- Traffic flow pattern of all types of users coming in through same entrance
- Should be a completely separate area for the criminal side
- District Court building is an embarrassment to the County. This should be the County's number 1 building priority
- There should be a segregation of constituencies that use the district court
- For most people that come to the District court this is their first exposure to the court system in Washtenaw County – this is the impression they get – some would question the justice they might receive when we obviously don't invest in our court building
- This would be an opportunity to provide better navigation education for the court system
- "It's a pit" but the price tag to redo to the standards needed may be too high for tax payers to support
- Saline Court is actually a higher mandated priority
- If we spend money to fix the District Court don't just create a bandaid – plan for long term use
- We should not continue to pour money in to a building with so many infrastructure issues
- There are security issues all over the building

- There is not enough room to provide the judicial functions which results in not enough time in front of the judge or magistrate
- Every bit of non court space is used for administrative purposes and for multiuse functions, you can't count on space being available
- No good place to talk with victims
- Any new court in the county should have the appropriate technology built in
- Should be built so that it can also be used for circuit court trials
- We need a District court in Saline – we were promised that by the end of 2005 and we still do not have a saline court
- The County's inability to get a court in Saline is putting a strain on our budgets locally
- Parking can be an issue even at the Service Center – without the church parking lot next door there would be serious parking problems
- Maybe decentralizing the courts - spread functions more into the outlying areas would help
- If the County is truly interested in engaging partners why aren't we in conversation about shared buildings between the County and local units of government
- It is shocking that victims could be in the same space as perpetrators
- A court should look judicial and imposing
- Jurors who have sat on trials for violent crimes were frightened because of the courtroom set up and lack of security in the building
- The court at the Service Center is a real security issue; "I wouldn't want to have to work there everyday and run the risk of problems." The corridors are too narrow, there is insufficient space to separate parties at trial. It is a safety and security problem not only for those involved—citizens and employees—but for everybody in the county.
- To the extent we can we should avoid scattering court responsibilities. If there is a disturbance, if the courts are scattered it will be more difficult to respond with sufficient resources. If the court facilities are centralized this is less of a problem.
- There are real safety and security problems at the court at the Service Center; crime victims and families are abused a second time when they have to come face to face with accused or adjudicated felons.
- The 14A1 court is a disaster—it needs to be at the top of the list in terms of funding priorities.
- Parking is a problem at the downtown facilities; when we go down there to provide services there is no place to park, especially after 11am, or the alternatives are costly and come out of our pockets, cutting into the services we can provide.
- We should avoid splitting up court responsibilities unless there is a strong recommendation for keeping family and juvenile responsibilities separate from other courts.

*Should the Juvenile Division of the Family Court be centrally located with other areas of Family Court? If not, where should it be located?*

- There would be a benefit to the families in keeping the juvenile division separated from other courts. Would suggest combining them only if there was an overwhelming opportunity for efficiency or cost saving
- There is a move toward the consolidation of court functions rather than away
- Parking is very difficult downtown. This adds more stress on families that are already in stressful situations. Downtown courthouse provides other logistical difficulties for families.
- Makes more sense to move other family court functions together in another location other than at the downtown site
- Transportation of youth would be better if located near the Youth Center
- Keep non-criminal cases separated from criminal cases
- Rebuild at the Platt Rd facility
- The only way to have efficiencies is to move the Juvenile Division with the rest of the Circuit Court functions
- There are many structural and administrative efficiencies however, parking is an issue downtown
- Juvenile division should be on a separate floor
- Opposed to the Juvenile Division being moved to the Service Center. There is much better use of the Service Center space for prevention or diversion programs. The parking at the Service Center is tight when activities are happening in many of the buildings
- If we move more functions downtown it will only clog the downtown area even more
- Does not really matter where the Juvenile Division is with other courts since they operate very separately
- The Trial Court building downtown cannot accommodate the functions of the Juvenile Court – people bring whole families with them – how will that space be accommodated for?
- Downtown is not a safe environment
- The Trial Court system is overstressed as it is downtown
- Juvenile should be moved to the Service Center or move all the Trial functions to a new facility at Platt Rd.
- There should be a consolidation of services - move near to Youth Center at the service center
- Consolidation would provide the opportunity to co-locate probate referee, juvenile court referee and possibly the FOC referee that would allow for cross functional scheduling of referees

- The Family court division is not big enough to keep separate – there is a strong need for cross training and flexibility to provide efficiency
- Closed files have all moved to downtown courthouse.
- There is no more stress placed on families to come downtown for court services than for other court cases. Families are involved in other court cases as well.
- If Juvenile division stayed at Platt Rd there would be no opportunity to take advantage of sharing clerk/recorders (juvenile division operates differently than other areas, not cross trained to do digital video recordings)
- Challenge in monitoring processes, the probate court adoption proceedings have moved
- The Juvenile Division should not be downtown; families that come with the youth have a difficult time
- Service Center has its own parking issues
- Platt Rd location has the best ingress and egress and adequate parking can be built in
- Maybe other youth services should be located at Platt Rd rather than consolidating the courts – Children’s Advocacy Center, youth services for victims etc
- The Juvenile Court should not be associated in any way with the jail or any adult facility
- Kids should not see themselves as associated with any incarceration
- Families in crisis don’t need one more thing to deal with like being downtown Ann Arbor with the traffic and parking issues
- There is a strong need for separation of Juveniles and Adults in the court system
- If Juvenile court moved to the service center than Platt Rd could be used for affordable housing – government property that could be sold or leased at an affordable rate would be a plus for affordable housing
- We also have to consider parking problems at the courts; it is difficult for the downtown facilities to say the least.
- Concerns expressed about the complexity of the court system; even among a group that is relatively knowledgeable, the complexity of the operation—the district courts, the family court, the juvenile division, the circuit court, the jail, special holding arrangements for juveniles, the need for court operations in Ypsilanti, Chelsea and Saline (mandated by statute—makes it hard to grasp. Will need to mount a significant community education campaign to help citizens understand the system and the need for upgrades to facilities.
- Most people will need to rely on the recommendations of those closest to the problems—court personnel—but a strong business case will need to be made. Demonstrate that any proposed action is a cost-effective approach to addressing real needs.
- Why the attention now to jail overcrowding and court needs? Concern for safety, fear that an incident will occur at either the jail, because of overcrowding,

or in one of the courts, due to lack of space, inability to separate parties to a proceeding, etc.

- The key decision-makers need to get on the same page on recommendations, and focus on those challenges that represent the greatest risk to safety and security.

### *How should the existing Trial Court building downtown be improved?*

- Trial Court building has security issues and inadequate amount of space for attorney/client or attorney/attorney meetings
- Downtown parking is still a problem for the courthouse
- Secure entrance of prisoners that is separate from the public. The public should not see inmates walk down the hallways in custody
- Lack of meeting space for court staff and for attorneys to resolve issues with cases
- Plan for renovation should include moving Probation out of the basement
- There will need to be a significant increase in space available at the Downtown Trial Court building to bring Juvenile Division downtown
- Confidentiality is out the window at the courthouse
- Lock-ups are so close to the Courtrooms it interferes with courtroom proceedings
- Maybe it is time to look at a Court campus
- Trial Court building has too much security at the front entrance now
- Would like to have more space to work/speak with clients or other attorneys but money is better spent on enlarging the jail
- Inmate transport security should be tackled. Without it there will be an incident.
- Improve the navigation of the court system for users
- Improve public waiting spaces – there is a lot of waiting when involved in court issues
- Safety standards designed for court spaces should be followed
- Courtroom 11 needs a jury room with a bathroom; current set up requires a complicated set of movement and monitoring for any member of the jury to use a restroom once deliberations have started.
- Rooms for settlement conference particularly on domestic relations cases.
- Opportunity to share administrative and clerk functions which are only possible through consolidation
- Courtroom sharing and scheduling will provide opportunity if courtrooms are configured to be flexible but in current state will continue to put pressure on scheduling of jury trials.
- Security is the largest issue – movement of inmates from parking lot to courtrooms which includes taking inmates out of the van in the parking lot,

movement down hallways to get to the secure lock up. Current process is a security risk and requires more staffing.

- Need for small meeting rooms for private conversations, case evaluation, mediation, staging area for witnesses and civil motion issues
- If you plan to keep the Trial Court in the current downtown space than you need to spend the money for an adequate security system – going halfway on security is just asking for problems
- A new justice campus with all services together is what is really needed
- The way in which prisoners are taken too and from the building is inadequate
- Retrofitting a building and continually restructuring is not cost effective - at some point you have to cut your losses and build a facility that is designed for the purpose of the building
- There is some concern that this would be built too fancy – we just need safe and secure
- Inmates' travel through the hallways is both scary and humiliating for the inmates – what does this say to people about innocent before proven guilty?

#### *Health:*

*Should 555 Towner be converted to a Health campus and delivery center?*

- Yes – Co-location of services increases the client's use of multiple services and service providers are better able to meet the client's needs
- Access (entry point) into Employment Training should also happen from same site to increase enrollment into Employment Training services. It is not necessary to have full service delivery for ET from Towner or to have Administrative Offices in Towner to have the collaborative effect of the entry point.
- There is a shift in service delivery that is more client centered – one aspect of this may be to have more spaces for group client work, services that provide more empowerment, more partnership
- There should be planned flexibility in the use of space as client service delivery changes
- Is this the most cost effective plan? Experience shows that it is more expensive to turn administrative offices into a clinic building than the other way around. Is there an option to build a separate clinic building at the same site and keep the administrative offices for administration?
- How much face to face contact for verification purposes will be required for enrollment into programs? If more can happen remotely there may not be as much need for client walk-in space to deliver services in 5- 10 years out
- There should be more collaboration with existing programs to provide services to clients where they are in the community

- Work to remove barriers like transportation – services need to be out into the community
- Towner has programmatic boxes that make collaboration on services for clients difficult
- There are partnerships ready and waiting in the community to be tapped – putting money into redesigning the building is not as effective as bringing the services to the community
- Clinic days are very congested – there is no good group space and no real preservation of confidentiality – a different design that includes more meeting space for groups would provide more opportunity for peer support groups
- The size of room 107 is important to maintain. We have need of larger spaces for consumer services
- Any design should begin with what the customers need – the space should first be designed for customers and then staff
- Satellite services should be looked at in contrast to a transportation plan or system – is it more cost effective to set up satellite services or to provide better transportation options to a central place
- Maybe what could be looked at is moving WCHO out of Towner to make more space. Do these functions need to be in proximity to the other departments?
- There should be the space to redesign the clinic space because the current clinic set ups are causing security issues
- Seriously look at the design for Towner – not a quick fix but redo the whole building
- Atrium space needs to be more customer friendly and safe – there have been accidents in the current set up
- Need to redo customer space at the least – better bathrooms and cleaned more frequently, painting more frequently, carpet replaced that is wearing
- Why not think of Towner as a campus for ETCS services?
- Customers of Community Services are also customers of DHS. 40% of the programs at Harriet are also customers of DHS. It would seem to make more sense to keep ETCS near DHS.
- Commitment by the Board of Commissioners to Harriet St is not only for workforce development services, it could be other services provided there.
- There is not enough space at Harriet St for Corporate services – current environment is not attractive for use by corporate partners
- ETCS services are more of a consistent flow of a large number of people over a longer period of time. We should be where customers can be served best.
- This is a nice to have project not as high a priority as a 14<sup>th</sup> District court with the structural problems that exist. The Towner building is structurally sound
- Moving ETCS out would remove the only African American leader from that building.
- We should be aware of these changes as well.

- Improving access to health services at the Towner facility makes sense, especially to the extent we can make service delivery “one stop,” so people don’t have to go from place to place to get services.
- It makes sense to consolidate delivery of health services at the Towner facility, although we need to continue to explore partnerships with faith-based and other organizations to be able to provide some services in a decentralized fashion.
- The Towner facility is not currently client-friendly.
- Providing a “one stop” service delivery center makes sense; we need to think holistically about client needs and provide access to services in an effective and efficient manner. This should include DHS and social services as well. At the same time, programs offered in cooperation with other organizations, e.g., faith-based and nonprofits, can also improve access and efficiency.
- Some ETCS services are provided at the Towner facility—the “thaw” program, weatherization, and emergency cash assistance. It may make sense to link these services to the health services that are provided at Towner.
- Does it make sense to consider co-locating some of the family support services at the jail site? Would this also be a way to improve service delivery?

*Would you or your clients benefit from satellite Human Service delivery?*

- Too expensive to build satellite operations however – traveling services could be conducted in Township buildings where available and appropriate for the service
- Perhaps use extra space at the Western Service Center to conduct satellite Health and human service assessment and clinics
- Yes – anytime you are bringing services to where the clients are located you increase the use – again supports the direction of client not clinician centered provision of services
- There are efficiencies in administration by being central
- Having a health campus at Towner does not mean that current satellite service would not exist.
- That would be possible with more staff but if a crisis hits all the nursing staff need to be available in one spot
- This needs more research to make a sound decision on – what is the critical mass of users necessary keep a satellite operation going
- This may work for part time or discrete functions that are clearly notated to the public
- The VA Hospital could be a good benchmark for providing remote service
- But we also should pursue satellite options, especially in partnership with faith-based organizations. We need to pursue opportunities for partnerships or coalitions. That will provide benefits to people, who can get access close by their

neighborhoods, and it also will build support among those in the congregation or community who are engaged in these entities.

### ***ETCS:***

#### *Where should ETCS be located?*

- Seems that moving ETCS to ECGS is a ‘no brainer’ option because of the cost and better use of space
- ETCS also needs to be more community based and should deal with more of the low-skilled/lack of employment history customers
- ETCS should be moved to vacant county space if that is available – if that is the lowest cost option
- It would make sense to move ETCS from the building if there is another suitable location
- Customers still come to Towner for the Community Services portion of ETCS and these need to be close to DHS
- It would be shortsighted to encourage building a space in a leased facility
- May have difficulty with residents in local area near Harriet – need more space for parking
- Services need to provide adequate and presentable space for corporate services
- Accessibility is important to get customers from outside of the Ypsilanti area
- Co-location with the courts is not appropriate for our senior customers or our corporate partners
- We need a separate entrance for our corporate services
- Our corporate partners expect a nice, even impressive space
- First option would be to build at Harriet, a space that would provide for administrative staff, interview rooms and classrooms, nice waiting area for customers and be a building that the local community can be proud of. We should make Harriet St block a “real gem” for that area of Ypsilanti. They should have a wonderful experience at a world class facility.
- Would lean toward Towner because it is a county owned building
- We expect the additional space to be a space used by WCC as well
- At Harriet, a bigger parking lot is needed even if we don’t expand the space
- Before moving any workforce development functions consider the relationship with WCC at the Harriet St site. This collocation works very well for the customer
- If space was added to Harriet that area of town could be made very attractive and accessible to customers
- The administrative offices of ETCS can be located in several places, but that will also create space problems on its own. There is not sufficient space for offices or parking at the Harriet Street facility, thus requiring new facilities. And parking

is also a problem at the Eastern Washtenaw County service center on Michigan Avenue—people have to park up beyond the fire station.

- No matter what you do with the ETCS offices you will have space problems. There isn't adequate parking or sufficient space for offices at the Harriet Street facility, and parking is also a problem at the Eastern Washtenaw County service center on Michigan Avenue.

### ***Funding:***

*How would you fund these needs?*

- In funding these projects (jail) should be a specified number of years of operating in any millage proposal not unlimited and not for the length of the millage.
- It may not be possible to ever include operating funds in a millage proposal
- Building initiatives should be paid by the existing millage funds collected
- If a millage is proposed it should be framed properly and not packaged to include several different initiatives
- Citizens need to understand where their current taxes are spent (understand the fund balances for example)
- Alternative sources of funding not currently available to the county need to be worked out with the legislature (user fees, entertainment tax, ticket fees etc.)
- Don't tie together funding into same pot (if we fund one thing we lose another ie police services funding and jail expansion/renovation)
- Reasonable millage but for separate items (court, jail)
- No millage is possible right now or near future
- Package plan will not work
- Don't tie unrelated items together
- For agencies that already contribute in a collaborative funding model you could conceivably increase the Cost Allocation Plan. However, agencies that are contributing would rather contribute more for service delivery if there was an alternative way to fund the building needs.
- An overall increase in millage that would increase the capital fund to fund a number of capital projects over time rather than a large millage for a specific project.
- Should be paid from existing millage collected
- There is no hope in passing a millage increase
- Maybe not including operating funds would increase chances of voter approval
- Offer a Human Services millage
- Separate the issues and not put together a package so that voters can clearly vote for or against certain pieces
- Key to success is not to have organized opposition

- Millage should be proposed for the jail but for other programs discussed we should be looking at other options of service delivery rather than bricks and mortar solutions
- Taxpayers need to pay for these improvements but only if the leadership is acting together
- Is there Homeland Security money to offset the costs?
- We need to see that the building is designed for customers first and administration second – what will the customers get out of this redesign if you are going to sell a new design to us
- Citizens won't support a millage – so where is the money coming from?
- Officials need to be better managers of the future to pay for future needs
- What support can come from fines or tickets?
- Put the funding question on the building occupants – what solutions can they come up with to help find funding?
- A millage is how government funds these things but you need to build a desire for the initiative in the public
- The public needs to be convinced that they are getting a quality service in order to support funding more
- There is a perception that County services are not given or utilized in the out county area
- A justice campus that had free parking and easy to navigate buildings would be what people want
- However the request is made to the public it needs to be simple and clear
- Let the community create the proposal and create a mandate for the decision makers
- Before asking for funding the County should prioritize according to need
- Talk to the clients to determine highest priorities
- The County should hire a political consultant to get all of the political parties on board prior to asking for a millage – that is the only way to get things passed
- A millage is the only way to pay for these building improvements but the county needs to be smarter about how it is presented. It is not sold to the public by good will
- There should be advocacy by community leaders and business people – local officials felt left out of the first process
- We need to expand the options to the County by a change in legislature. We need to have user fees and entertainment tax
- Any millage should sort out or separate the issues (especially operating costs) We should not be financing operating costs
- Trust is at the heart of this
- Most people don't see this as “their problem.” There is a disconnect between the discussion of facilities and the services that are provided. People are not aware of the connection between facilities and services; the connection has to be

made that improving facilities will improve access to services, that funding is needed not for buildings but for service improvement, improved access, ease and efficiency of service delivery, and safety.

- There is a perception that collective government is not working collectively to address critical problems.
- Are there opportunities for collaboration among groups in the county—the homeless shelter may represent a model to be emulated in moving forward on the space need issue. Building consensus among key groups within the county on the need for action and support for funding will be critical.
- Questionable whether there would be support among residents for a millage to fund space/facility upgrades. It also seems that the more “stuff” that is included in a millage proposal, the less support there will be at the polls.
- Current funding sources may be the only option. There is a widespread concern that “we are not managing our money well.”
- We ought to be doing some market research to get information on how citizens perceive the issue and whether there will be support. The Chamber has members that do this for their businesses, but governments tend not to do a good job of this.
- We should avoid asking for a millage to fund space/facility upgrades. Bonding may be the only real alternative to funding for these space needs, and a strong case will need to be made to secure support.
- We also ought to be looking to the state to help address these issues; part of the problem was caused by the state’s decisions to de-institutionalize clients in mental health facilities, and they are left out on the street to become law enforcement problems. Perhaps join with other counties and communities to make a strong case for state action.
- There are no easy answers to the funding problem. A new millage would provide additional revenue to support infrastructure and facility needs, although there may not be sufficient support for it. Borrowing money using current funding streams could potentially mean a reduction in support for human and social service programs, which may limit our ability to provide the services that can really make a difference in people’s lives.
- Whatever recommendation emerges, we need to do a much better job of communicating the need; the “story” in the earlier campaigns wasn’t being told effectively.
- We need clear estimates of the costs of alternative jail expansion proposals. Citizens don’t necessarily know how big it has to be, but we can make decisions on sound proposals that are clear and based on good information.
- A “big cookie sale”

*What would be the effect of not funding these proposed building initiatives?*

- Inmate lawsuit
- Someone seriously hurt or killed because of lack of security, especially during inmate movement issues
- Lack of funding for the mental health services increases the population in the jail
- Citizens need to understand how these issues will affect themselves and their families
- Citizens need to realize that increase in taxes paid is the cost of having and maintaining a civilized society
- Root issues will not be addressed and the problems that exist now will continue and get worse
- Homelessness will increase
- State of illness will increase for clients, especially the homeless
- There will be increased community safety issues – someone will be let out of jail or not put in jail that should be
- Citizens will be discouraged that the court system will work for them – public needs to know that resources are committed to this
- Current surroundings impede the ability of the judge to command the respect of those entering the court system – architecture does matter in this case
- Because of a lack of funding for alternative sanctions some offenders do not see enough consequences for first offenses and continue down a bad path – may have been diverted. There would be a lack of consequences for actions.
- The building is very difficult right now for consumers
- Ignoring problems is not a long term solution but in hard economic times we have to make choices and sometimes that means not doing what needs to be done if the money isn't there – right now we cannot look into the organization to find the funding
- Stagnation or backward movement
- Continued inefficiency
- We are bursting at the seams at Harriet now
- We have outgrown the space
- There will be liability and high risk
- An incident will occur and the community will say how could they have let it get so bad
- Federal government might
- Key players need to be on the same page to expect the public's support, without that there will continue to be divisions among the county and little support for the actions that need to be taken
- If the County does not take control of this some other “body” will do so and we may not like the solutions that are generated

- There will always be competing interests for the same money which is why a teamwork approach is the only solutions to getting anything done
- There would be a customer and community impact
- A tragic accident or incident at the courts
- Unsafe neighborhoods
- It seems obvious that something needs to be done, given the issues associated with the facilities we have discussed. But we need to do a better job of bringing people to the table, helping them understand that action is designed to meet community needs. Most people don't go to the jail, or the courts, or to the Towner facility for that matter, but the services offered at all three meet broad community needs, and that needs to be made clear.