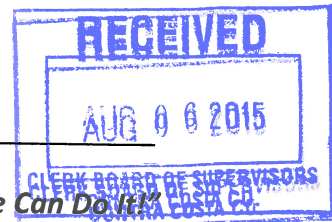


CITY OF RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA



Office of the Mayor

Tom Butt
Mayor

"We Can Do It!"
Office: 510.620.6503



August 3, 2015

Contra Costa County
Clerk of the Board
651 Pine Street
Martinez, CA 94553

Re: Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office's West County Detention Facility Jail Expansion Proposal

Honorable Members of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors:

We are writing to update you of a recent critical decision made by the City Council of the City of Richmond after thoughtfully reviewing the jail expansion plan proposed by the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office for the West County Detention Facility (WCDF), which is located in the City of Richmond.

On Tuesday, July 28, 2015, the Richmond City Council, by a 5 to 2 decision, voted to oppose the County's plan to build a 480 bed wing at WCDF.

First, we want to express the City of Richmond's unwavering support of comprehensive, relevant, and engaging pre-release and post-release programs for currently and formerly incarcerated men and women who want to better their lives through real and transformative services.

We are also supportive of our law enforcement agencies, including our police department and the Office of the Sheriff that are critical in maintaining and protecting the safety and welfare of the communities we collectively serve.

As the Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Manager, and Police Chief, we want to take this opportunity to explain the reason for our opposition to the proposal and urge your support of our decision.

We believe County's jail expansion plan is incomplete and pre-mature, which we will be further addressing in this correspondence. More importantly, we believe that this is a local decision that should be respected because the expansion is not aligned with the future plans for the neighborhood and positive community development for our city.

Home of Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park

Background:

The County Sheriff's Office currently operates three jail campuses. These campuses are:

Martinez Detention Facility

Average Daily Population = 650

Total Rated Capacity = 695

West County Detention Facility

Average Daily Population = 605

Total Rated Capacity = 1096

Marsh Creek Detention Facility

Average Daily Population = 70

Total Rated Capacity = 188

Sheriff David Livingston and Contra Costa County intend to submit a \$90M construction proposal to the Board of State of Community Corrections (BSCC) to access one-time construction funds through SB 863.

SB 863 provides funding to counties for adult local criminal justice facility projects that include facility replacements (*rather than facility expansions*), inmate programming space, and/or space dedicated to providing inmate health and mental health care services. It also requires qualifying counties to fund 10% of costs associated with adult local criminal justice facility projects.

For clarification, while we have received different updates and amended proposals from the Sheriff's Office for the wing to be expanded that have varied in the total number of inmate beds from 480, to 418, and most recently to 416, the only written and official recorded document from Contra Costa County is the DEIR, which describes the jail expansion as having 480 inmate beds. For the purposes of this correspondence, we will refer to the proposal as containing 480 beds, since that is our only verifiable number.

The City of Richmond was notified in early May 2015 of Contra Costa County's intent to construct a new wing at the West County Detention Facility through the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), which indicated that the County would: 1) build a 480 bed facility, 2) permanently lower the Martinez Detention Facility to nearly 300 inmates by transferring 400 individuals to Richmond, and 3) repurpose the vacated cells as temporary/short-term housing.

Upon receiving the DEIR, we immediately invited Sheriff Livingston and his representatives to present their proposal before the Richmond City Council. That presentation was scheduled for May 26, 2015.

After receiving the presentation, the Council decided it needed additional information before making an informed decision as to whether to support the Sheriff's SB 863 application, with the understanding that the final decision about applying for the grant would be made by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors. The Council then invited Sheriff Livingston to return on July 28, 2015 with the following requests:

- As the host city, the City of Richmond should be engaged as a partner in the planning and development of the new wing.
- The City of Richmond would be provided with a detailed project site plan, budget outline, and specifics of how the additional costs to operate and maintain the new wing and added programs would be sustained.
- A commitment should be made to provide additional resources and funding for post-release services for our community, because the addition would make the West County Detention Facility the largest jail in the County, housing nearly three quarters of the 1,500 inmate population in the County.
- A feasibility study should be conducted by a neutral third party that would look at the overall conditions of the three existing jail sites, since this is the third time the Sheriff's Office has attempted to expand the West County Detention Facility.
- The Sheriff's Office should consider opening a Booking Center at the West County Detention Facility if WCDF is expanded.

On July 28, 2015, the Sheriff's Office presented its updated proposal and response to our requests. Given the priority surrounding the item and community interest, we were surprised that Sheriff Livingston was not present at the meeting and instead sent representatives from his office.

- Regarding our request to be an engaged partner:
 - The Sheriff's Office claimed Richmond had been involved in the planning process through meetings that involved the Reentry Services Group (RSG). To be clear, the City of Richmond was invited to just one meeting on Tuesday, June 16, 2015. It is our understanding that the development of the program may have been done through a series of closed, small group meetings that involved a small group of interested parties, but representatives from The City of Richmond were excluded from attending these meetings.
- Regarding our request for additional project site and budget information:
 - The Sheriff's Office announced that as part of the \$90M jail expansion it would be creating an Office of Reentry Services that would include an Executive Director, data and evaluation, and additional staff support. The Sheriff's Office also indicated this would require additional staffing, including more Deputy Sheriffs, Sheriff aides, mental health staff, and educational staff.
 - The cost for additional staffing is estimated at \$4.43M. The estimate does not take into consideration the costs for operating the site, such as utilities and janitorial services.

- The Sheriff's Office revealed in its presentation that the department has unspent AB 109 funds estimated at \$1.43M. We are discouraged that the Sheriff's Office would be setting aside this particular funding instead of releasing it for other reentry service needs, which we know are many. It is also our understanding that AB 109 funds are meant to support reentry programs, but Sheriff representatives have claimed the funds can only be spent on construction and capital costs.
- Regarding our request for commitment for additional post-release resources for West County:
 - The Sheriff's Office highlighted Allegheny County, PA as a best practice model for its Jail-to-Community programming and for creating the jail's Office of Reentry Services as part of the expansion proposal. But upon further review, we find several notable differences between Contra Costa County's proposal and Allegheny County's current model. Allegheny County's Reentry Programs were studied and reviewed by the Urban Institute, which released their findings in an October 2014 report. We would like to highlight some of those details here:
 - Allegheny County's efforts in inmate reentry are both extensive and longstanding dating back to 1997, when it was one of the first jail systems in the nation to develop holistic programs and services dedicated to the successful reentry of exiting jail inmate population.
 - Allegheny County created a reentry pod in summer 2014, offering a structured living environment designed to reinforce the programming principles to which inmates participating in reentry services are committed. Participating inmates are allowed to apply to be transferred to the Pod for additional, enhanced support.
 - We would like to note that this is a critical programming difference between Contra Costa County and Allegheny County. It is our understanding that Allegheny County built the Pod to assist inmates in the current jail system. In Contra Costa County's proposal, high-security inmates would be transferred from Martinez to the West County Detention Facility, which is rated as a medium-security facility.
 - Inmates in Allegheny County who participate in the reentry program receive up to 12 months of post-release services including intensive case management and support, assistance with basic needs, housing assistance, linkages to job readiness and apprenticeship, reunification with family members and children, and substance abuse and mental health treatment.
 - The Sheriff's Office has not provided any commitments to additional post-release services, nor has it shown how it will do so in the program budget.

- Regarding our request for a feasibility study by a neutral third party:
 - No such study was produced or commissioned but the Sheriff's Office to review the overall jail system at all three jail sites.
 - Although the Sheriff's Office is in the process of conducting a jail needs assessment for the West County Detention Facility, the development of this project is being done before the study is completed or finalized.
- Regarding our request to open a Booking Center at the West County Detention Facility:
 - The Sheriff's Office estimates that opening a Booking Center at WCDF will cost about \$10M, but did not provide any other information.

Engagement with the Community and the City of Richmond

The Sheriff's Office has compiled a timeline of meetings and describes those meetings as "Community Outreach Initiatives." While we are encouraged by the department's commitment to community education, we want to note that those meetings have been at the request of community groups and neighboring cities—not the City of Richmond.

Again, we also want to note that to date, the Sheriff's Office has only invited the City of Richmond to one project meeting and has not engaged with the two neighborhoods immediately impacted by the jail expansion proposal, which are Parchester Village and Country Club Vista.

Additionally, the Mayor's Office has repeatedly asked the County to schedule at least one public hearing of the DEIR in the host city of the project (Richmond) at a time convenient for our residents because Martinez is nearly 25 miles away with no convenient public transit available. We were repeatedly denied this request. In phone conversations with the County Planning staff, the Mayor's Office was told that the County did not believe "Richmond residents had the capacity to comment on the DEIR unemotionally" as the reason for the denial – a comment we find highly offensive. What's more, at the July 21, 2015 Board of Supervisors meeting to certify the environmental document, County staff reported that few, if any, public members provided public comments at the DEIR hearing in Martinez.

We believe that if there was a genuine desire by Contra Costa County to solicit public comments on the DEIR, the County would have scheduled a public hearing in our community--the city where the project is to be built. We would expect any other city in the County to be granted the same courtesy.

Conclusion

We have always supported real partnerships between the City of Richmond and Contra Costa County, but believe this is the wrong project at the wrong time for our residents and the community. The national trend when it comes to jails is towards decreasing bed space in favor of more effective programming alternatives, instead of keeping the status quo, or even worse, expanding jail capacity.

We appreciate your time in reviewing our correspondence. We hope you will support the City of Richmond’s decision, as the host city for the proposed project, to oppose the jail expansion at the West County Detention Facility.

Respectfully,



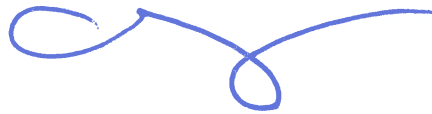
Tom Butt
Mayor, City of Richmond



Jael Myrick
Vice Mayor, City of Richmond



Bill Lindsay
City Manager



Chris Magnus
Police Chief

- cc: Congressman Mark DeSaulnier
State Senator Loni Hancock
State Assembly Member Tony Thurmond
BSCC Executive Board
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Contra Costa County Sheriff David Livingston
City of El Cerrito
City of San Pablo
City of Hercules
City of Pinole
North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council



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