



**King County**

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

## **Proposed Approach For Strengthening Regional Cooperation to Meet Long Term Jail Needs**

### **The Proposed Approach**

- In response to a request from the North/East Cities (NEC) Oversight Group, Executive Constantine is proposing an approach for strengthening regional cooperation to meet our jail capacity needs and manage our jail populations into the future.
- This approach consists of two parts – launching collectively a regional jail planning and management group and setting forth a framework for King County to house 150 city inmates for the period 2017 through 2020.
- The proposal to accommodate 150 city inmates is based on successfully launching the regional group, negotiating the jail services agreement within a specific timeframe, and including provisions in the agreement to update costs and establish a minimum fee.
- These beds when combined with NEC's other capacity arrangements will allow NEC to end its process to site and build a new jail facility in north King County.

### **The Changing Landscape of the Region's Jail Population and Capacity**

This approach is possible because of the following three changes:

1. The jail population housed in King County facilities has declined over the past two years. It is evident that King County will have more available capacity for city inmates than forecast two years ago.
2. The South Correctional Entity (SCORE), a coalition of seven south county cities, is building a misdemeanor jail facility that will become operational in the second half of 2011. This facility will meet the jail needs of these south county cities, thereby helping relieve pressure on jail capacity across the region.
3. More contracting options for jail beds are available to cities today to help meet their jail bed need.

Due to these three changes, there is a strong likelihood that both King

County's and NEC's jail population capacity needs can be accommodated through 2020 without construction of additional jail capacity at this time.

### **Managing Uncertainty and Risks**

While accommodating our jail population needs through 2020 is likely, it is not a certainty.

- Recent history is evidence of the difficulty in predicting fluctuations in jail population and forecasting long term trends.
- External drivers beyond our control (such as actions of the state legislature) can significantly impact jail population.
- We continue to face risks to existing jail capacity with the chance of flooding in the Green River Valley and with King County's aging detention facility in downtown Seattle.

These risks can be mitigated by working together as a region on measures designed to manage our jail population such as ensuring the efficient use of jail space, expanding appropriate and safe alternatives to detention, and exploring effective approaches for diverting low-level mentally ill or chemically dependent offenders.

While this proposed approach creates additional time to plan for our region's future jail needs, it is not a long-term solution for our region's jail capacity needs. The county and cities will need to regularly track the region's jail population trends and use of jail capacity and be prepared to resume planning for new capacity by 2013 or even sooner if trends indicate the need for additional capacity before 2020.

### **Proposed Approach for Strengthening Cooperation to Manage the Region's Jail Needs**

#### Launch a Regional Jail Planning and Management Group:

- The proposal is for the county and the cities together form a county-wide jail planning and management group consisting of staff from entities operating jails in the county and cities using contracted jail capacity.
- The purpose of this group is to be a collaborative forum for regional cooperation and management of the inherent uncertainties and risks in planning for the region's jail needs into the future.
- This group would focus on fostering a well coordinated system of jails in the county, utilizing the region's jail capacity effectively and efficiently, developing periodic reports on trends in the region's jail population and capacity utilization, and cooperating on meeting the region's long term jail capacity needs.

Extend the Jail Services Agreement between King County and Interested Cities:

- The proposal is to make 150 beds available for city inmates as part of a revised jail services agreement for the period 2017 through 2020. This extension is only available to cities already contracting with the county through 2016.
- To manage this risk and plan effectively, the Executive is proposing that the county make these beds available if together the county and cities accomplish the following measures.
  - *Successfully launch the regional jail planning and management group.* Since the successful launch of this group is a critical measure for managing the risk to the county and the region, the target date for accomplishing the launch is October 2010.
  - *By January 2011, set a timetable for negotiating and executing, no later than January 2013, an extended jail services agreement for 2017 through 20.*
  - *Incorporate the following two measures into the extended jail services agreement for 2017 through 2020.*
    1. *Update base costs in the rate model and adjust the annual inflators.* Since the offer of 150 beds for city inmates would not take effect until 2017, the rate model may need to be updated to reflect current costs and the annual inflator may need to be adjusted to accurately reflect the inflation rate experience and expectations for the period 2017 through 2020.
    2. *Establish a minimum daily maintenance charge for at least 100 beds per day.* The commitment of 150 beds, beginning in 2017, will require the county to allocate budget and provide staffing for up to three inmate housing areas. A minimum daily maintenance charge for at least 100 beds per day, whether or not these beds are used, will ensure the county has the resources for operating these jail beds. This minimum is exclusive of other applicable surcharges.