

From: [Brel Fingbe](#)
To: [Cathy Halka](#); SAC; [Barry Buchanan](#); [Holly O'Neil](#)
Subject: Re: THURSDAY: SAC Meeting 7 - Justice Project - Nov 17th at 10am
Date: Wednesday, November 16, 2022 8:06:33 PM
Attachments: [msag001.png](#)

Hello,

Thank you so much to the folks who were involved in making the jail video. It really helped me get a better understanding of the current state of the jail. It also brought up a number of questions. I know there is no way all of these can be answered during tomorrow's meeting, but I'm hoping that sometime soon the answers can be shared with all SAC members and the public.

With gratitude,
Brel

HOUSING CAPACITY QUESTIONS:

At one point Lt Erickson says that the jail was designed for 148 inmates, but that it often incarcerates 185-200 inmates. Were the dormitories part of the original design? Have the capacity of dormitories been expanded to accommodate more people? Of those 37-52 extra people, what percentage end up being a third body in a cell?

What is the capacity of the jail if only 2 people were in the cell (as opposed to fitting 3)? What is the capacity of the dorms in the jail?

Is there data on how often the jail has 3 people per cell? Was that occurring during covid regulations? Is that currently happening? If so how frequently? and on average how long are there 3 people per cell? In other words, is this something that people experience for a couple of days and are then moved to an opening, or are there prolonged periods where 3 people share a cell more long term?

The video mentions that a room that has a shower is often used for housing? How many rooms does this apply to? how much would it reduce the overall capacity to have these rooms to be used for showers instead of housing?

How is it determined who is in a cell and who is in a dormitory in the jail?

What is the living situation for people who have been charged with violent felonies? If someone has a history of violence when incarcerated, what is that person's living experience like in the jail?

how many trustees are there? What's the capacity for the trustee dorm?

MAINTENANCE QUESTIONS:

How frequently is the mold cleaned? Who is responsible for cleaning the mold?

There is a common theme of bad ventilation, in the kitchen, shower, housing, etc. Was ventilation not properly constructed initially, or is it a problem that has gotten worse to some sort of malfunction/deterioration?

Why hasn't the laundry machines been fixed? This doesn't seem to be a facilities issue, but a decision or lack thereof to maintain/repair/replace machines that would be the issue in any facility. It seems odd that this hasn't been dealt with by jail admin. I hear that there is an issue that machines need to be disassembled in order to be repaired/replace. Is this challenge somehow prohibitive in having adequate machines?

Why are the elevators unreliable? Are these elevators any less reliable than any other elevator that's in operation? Why aren't they repaired under normal maintenance protocols? This seems like something that any building maintenance budget needs to account for, for example the Bellingham Towers building. This question might sound a little snarky which is not my intention, but I'm genuinely trying to understand why this isn't something covered by routine maintenance since the building was designed to have elevators.

The video says that the cracks in the rec area are being monitored. What is the status of the cracks as far as structural integrity?

SAFETY QUESTIONS:

In regards to the placement of the control panel, and line of sight challenges more generally, Erickson mentions that it's a dangerous situation for officers and inmates because in certain areas the officers can't see what's going on with fellow officers or inmates. What kinds of dangerous situations have occurred? How frequently have there been dangerous situations due to this challenge?

If there is a concern around inmates accessing the power/water hookups, is there some reason why lock boxes haven't been installed around power/water connections? Again this seems like something that would be needed in any facility, is there some reason why this facility isn't capable of this kind of installation?

CAPACITY FOR SERVICES QUESTIONS:

The video says that there isn't the ability to do "good" mental health or behavioral health screening because of space limitations. Could this be elaborated upon? How do the space limitations prevent this from happening? How much of a space expansion would be needed in order to serve current jail population numbers?

What kinds of services and treatment (medical or other) are provided off site, for example the hospital? Are there restrictions on who can and can't access those services?

Original kitchen capacity was for 148, around 500 meals per day. it serves 1200-1500 meals per day. Why aren't Juvenile and work center providing their own meals? Why was it decided to not include kitchen capacity for those 2 facilities?

At the time of the jail construction (in 1986 or whenever), was there a juvenile facility? If there was one, where were they getting their food from? Was the intention always to provide food for the juvenile facility?

What was the dry goods food supply room used for beforehand if it wasn't used for a women's outdoor rec area?

Why would a courtroom be put inside a jail? Are there no other options nearby to have a courtroom? This is concerning for a number of reasons, least of which is the impact of having a courtroom inside a jail has on the presumption of innocence until being proven guilty. Is there not a lower security room elsewhere that can be used?

In jails in general (not just this one), is it standard that visiting areas have a barrier between people? In some prisons there are visiting areas where families can visit without barriers. Is there some statute that prohibits that in jails, or is that just how this jail is designed?

Why was the basketball hoop taken out?

PERSISTENT QUESTIONS (questions I had before the tour, but are still unanswered):

What is the rationale for having inmates on a 23-1 schedule? Is this a staffing issue? Are there any building design issues that contribute to the 23-1 protocol? Or some combination of staffing and building design? Is this just part of the reality of being in jail, because jail is a consequence for one's actions? Or are there some other reasons why the administration thinks having a significant portion of the jail population on a 23-1 schedule is beneficial and appropriate?

Does the Jail have data on what percentage of the population are incarcerated for violent crimes?

Does the jail have any data on the efficacy of incarceration to change behavior? Does the jail have recidivism rates of inmates? Does the Whatcom legal system have data on recidivism rates for alternatives to incarceration?

Does the jail have data on how many inmates are incarcerated because of inability to pay bail?

On Wed, Nov 16, 2022 at 3:23 PM Cathy Halka <CHalka@co.whatcom.wa.us> wrote:

Dear Stakeholder Advisory Committee Members,

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee's next meeting is **TOMORROW** on **Thursday, November 17, 10:00 am to 12:00pm**.

SAC Member join link (do not share): <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86094119077?k=Hl-cFwgcR7gltxFTphX6ASlwhpS4dsicsSWd5ZxZ60w.DOMAAAAUC5wApRZkM0lCS3Jfa1NoQ2w1ME4HQ2JGUlIRAAAAAIAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA&pwd=aDBCyZf0YzB0dGcyZ3pCRy9BMGYvZz09>

Attached is a meeting agenda and the following materials:

- Vision, Values, & Goals Poll Results
- Jail Location Poll Results
- Needs & Recommendations Poll Results
- Proposed Revisions to the Needs & Recommendations

This meeting will be very interactive so please come prepared, having read these materials.

The **Town Hall Listening Session** held yesterday was well-attended in person and online. Thank you to those SAC members who took the time to join the meeting and hear feedback from the public. If you missed it, please consider watching the video, which is available online on the [SAC Meetings & Additional Information](#) page.

And finally, if you haven't already, please watch the [Jail Tour Video](#) before we meet on Thursday.

Thank you!

The SAC Planning Team

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