



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 1  
**COUNCILMEMBER LISA HERBOLD**

August 8, 2016

Anthony Wright, Director  
Facilities Management Division, Department of Executive Services  
King County  
500 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 800  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Director Wright,

I am writing you today in my capacity as chair of the Council's Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development and Arts Committee and supporter of Council Resolution 31614, "...endorsing a vision for The City of Seattle to become a city with zero detention for youth, and establishing a path forward to develop policies that eliminate the need for youth detention." One of my responsibilities on the Council as chair of the committee overseeing the Seattle Office for Civil Rights is to monitor the implementation of this vision.

I would like to thank you for the decision last year to reduce the number of beds in the proposed Youth and Family Justice Center, from 212 beds to 112. I know that we jointly share the intent to make progress in reducing youth incarceration. Your decision to reduce the number of beds for incarcerated youth is an important acknowledgement that the decisions we make about the facilities we build can positively impact our jointly held policy goals of reducing youth incarceration.

By way of this letter, I am requesting that King County consider a third-party needs analysis of the proposed juvenile detention portion of the Youth and Family Justice Center, similar to the National Council on Crime and Delinquency 2011 study, *Bed Space Forecast for Baltimore Youth Detention Facility*. This analysis should not only consider a detention forecast based upon current trends, but should consider the impacts of our current diversion programs as well as those that will result from our near term efforts to become a zero detention city for youth.

The circumstances were different, but you may recall that, in response to the City's investment in a proposal to build a new King County adult detention facility, the Seattle City Council in 2008 passed a Statement of Legislative Intent that led to a concerted effort to examine capacity, needs, and alternatives to incarceration, including an evaluation of the need for a the proposed adult detention facility.

The 2010 Jail Planning and Performance Audit recognized that for future jail capacity planning it was important to know how many jail beds the county would need over time. The same issues considered at that time in relation to adult detention facility capacity would be important, I feel, to today's consideration of the youth detention portion of the proposed Youth and Family Justice

Center. Here are excerpts of that audit, specifically relating to the need for additional capacity in the County's adult detention facilities.

- *Year-to-Year Population Forecasts Have Been Off Target*
- *From 2007, each year the forecast for the next year has assumed growth, but the experience has been population decline, or until recently, a leveling off.*
- *The forecast for 2009 assumed a growth from 2008 of 447 in the total secure population, but there was actually a decline of 145 --for a difference of 592*
- *Budgeting and operational planning assumed a higher-than-realized inmate population.*
- *The council's policy decisions can be best informed by having financial, strategic, and business plans that provide a range of alternatives to consider, and sound estimates of their potential short and long term fiscal impacts. Such plans do not currently exist for jail operations.*
- *Reliable inmate population forecasts are needed to support criminal justice policy, budget, and operational decision-making.*
- *Forecasting Best Practices-*
  - ✓ *Limit the potential for a conflict of interest*
    - ✓ *Independent entity prepares forecast*
    - ✓ *Planning processes supported by independent forecast*
  - ✓ *Provide timely updates to support decision-making*
    - ✓ *Examine recent changes and identify cause*
  - ✓ *Present forecast and supporting data in an understandable form*
    - ✓ *Describe assumptions*
    - ✓ *Obtain agreement on methods*

Though again, the circumstances in 2010 were different, this work resulted in the identification of policy-based reasons for King County to anticipate that the recent decrease in jail bookings would be sustainable, and, together with other developments at the time, ultimately helped to inform the decision not to build that facility. By the way of this letter, I'm requesting that you consider a third-party needs analysis to consider what the future capacity needs will be for the youth detention portion of the proposed Youth and Family Justice Center.

Sincerely,



Lisa Herbold  
Chair, Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development and Arts Committee

CC: EPIC, James Williams  
Patricia Lally, Director, Seattle Office of Civil Rights  
Stacey Jehlik, Seattle Office of Intergovernmental Affairs  
Diane Carlson, Director of Regional Initiatives, King County Executive