

Citizen's Capital Budget Advisory Committee Mecklenburg County Jails Capital Standards

Approach

The CCBAC met with the Office of the Mecklenburg County Sheriff, obtained a summary of its current approach, and examined the CCBAC's recommendations for the Jails when crime rates were higher and jail population was swelling. We then developed high level standards for the Jails, shared our proposed standards with the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's office and confirmed the feasibility of our suggested approach.

Considerations

The CCBAC recognizes that Mecklenburg County Sheriff's current goal is to wait until a need arises before attempting to open a new facility, including utilizing fully the Jail North Annex. The CCBAC also realizes that upgrades to current infrastructure may be beneficial to improve operating costs, safety of inmates and officers, and provide a more humane detention environment.

Standards

Safety and Security

Projects which are required to ensure a safe and secure environment as well as those that alleviate a condition which noticeably diminishes usability should be given funding priority.

Regulations

All Jails capital projects shall meet the applicable requirements listed within the North Carolina Administrative Code (specifically, NCAC 10A- Subsection J).

New Construction

Jails capital projects should take into consideration jail population patterns and trends. The CCBAC recommends that standards for adult detention facilities in Mecklenburg County should follow the Sheriff's expected detention population estimates. Hence a bed-per-inmate standard is recommended. The standards are as follows:

1. *Average Daily Population ("ADP") as a Percentage Of Design Capacity:* The CCBAC sets a standard of quarterly ADP being no more than 90% of the design capacity of a facility for more than 2 consecutive quarters.
2. *Peak Population As A Percentage Of Design Capacity:* The CCBAC sets a standard of having annual peak population be no more than 115% of the design capacity of a facility. This standard should be based on a rolling "last 12 months" time basis, rather than a calendar year.

Note: Design capacity was used rather than functional capacity as the CCBAC was unsure how easily functional capacity could be increased.

Future developments should plan for expected population growth so sufficient beds are available at all times for the then-present inmate population without the need to use mobile trailers to house inmates.

Improvements

Improvement capital projects should be considered appropriate when they can satisfy **ONE** of the following requirements:

1. *Lower lifecycle costs*

These projects should be able to demonstrate a cost savings via reduction in operating budget. Payback periods should be forecast to be less than 10 years.

2. *Increase officer and inmate safety*

Officer and inmate safety is paramount. A project that can significantly reduce or eliminate a safety risk should be considered appropriate. Please include appropriate metrics and forecast improvement with project submissions.

3. *Increase the security of the facility (preventing escapes)*

A project that can significantly reduce or eliminate a flight risk should be considered appropriate. Please include appropriate metrics and forecast improvement with project submissions.

4. *Comply with legal regulations*

Legal regulations must be followed. Capital projects to bring Charlotte Jails facilities into compliance shall be appropriate.

5. *Humane detention environment*

Projects which contribute to a more humane detention environment may improve prison morale and thus, increase the safety of the officers working inside the facility. These projects have merit, but will be assigned a lower priority to projects of the types listed above.

Renovations

Limited capital dollars require repair vs. replace analysis for existing facilities that are nearing the end of their useful life. The CCBAC believes that it and other government entities should have insight into the repair/replace decision and why/how it was made.

To estimate the utility of repairing vs. replacing existing facilities and facilitate the capital allocation decision process, the CCBAC recommends that Jails prepare and present to the County along with its capital allocation request, a high level comparative repair vs. replace cost analysis that takes into considerations not only capital costs but ongoing operational costs and intrinsic public value. The analysis should be in the relative style of the North Carolina State Construction Office Life Cycle Cost Analysis model, but using Rough Order of Magnitude estimates rather than selecting and designing specific

build systems and adding in value for public opinion, historical value, and any other pertinent parameter.

Citizen's Capital Budget Advisory Committee Bibliography for Jails

Sheriff's Presentation to the CCBAC, February 13, 2013

Mecklenburg County N.C. Detention-Corrections Master Plan Fall 2008

North Carolina Administrative Code NCAC 10A- Subsection J

Fall 2003 CCBAC Recommended Standards for Mecklenburg County Jails

American Correctional Association website