



SOUTH CORRECTIONAL ENTITY

Serving the Cities of Auburn, Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Renton, SeaTac, and Tukwila

February 26, 2009

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South King County Cities Partner for Public Safety Misdemeanor Jail to Serve Seven Cities

The cities of Auburn, Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Renton, SeaTac, and Tukwila announced today that they will partner to build and operate a 668-bed misdemeanor jail to serve their collective needs. The cities have formed an organization known as the South Correctional Entity (SCORE) to accomplish this task. SCORE hopes to have the new jail ready to open in mid 2011 and use it to house misdemeanor offenders. The cities must build the jail to replace jail space that will no longer be provided by King County jails after 2012.

SCORE will be responsible for the operation of the new jail. The corresponding public development authority (PDA) will issue bonds, allowing for construction of the facility. SCORE is being modeled after the highly successful Valley Communications Center, a regional 9-1-1 call center, which is owned by the City of Kent and four of the SCORE partner cities: Auburn, Federal Way, Renton, and Tukwila.

“This is a great partnership that brings our cities together to build a regional jail facility to meet our future needs,” said Renton Mayor Denis Law. “It is also a commitment to solid fiscal policy and protects taxpayer dollars. We face economic challenges unlike any we’ve ever seen. Now, more than ever, we must make the wisest investments possible that will ultimately save us millions of dollars.”

Most of the inmates have been arrested, or sentenced to jail time for property crimes such as theft, driving offenses, and criminal trespass. The average length of stay for these inmates is approximately 14 days. Tukwila Mayor Jim Haggerton said, “SCORE will be piloting a unique release strategy that will return the inmate to the arresting jurisdiction upon release. This means that inmates will not be released into the surrounding communities.”

The cities need the jail space because in 2000, King County notified all cities that they would no longer provide misdemeanor jail beds. Cities were able to extend the deadline, moving the termination date to 2012. At the same time, the cities created the Jail Advisory Group (JAG) to coordinate the use of jails and develop a plan to meet their long-term jail needs.

In 2006, the cities hired the consulting firm of Ricci-Greene to conduct a study and develop long-range planning options for jail capacity. The study showed that the South King County cities would need access to 700 additional jail beds by 2026. The study also indicated that the cities would significantly reduce their costs if they joined together to build and operate a jail.

“Meeting the public safety needs of our residents while keeping costs down is our number one goal,” said SeaTac Mayor Ralph Shape. “SCORE meets that need.”

A feasibility study conducted by a separate consultant determined the costs of building and operating a joint facility and validated the recommendations from the Ricci-Greene study: working together the cities could build and operate a jail more efficiently and at a lower cost than they are currently paying others to house their inmates.

According to Des Moines Mayor Bob Sheckler, "SCORE is another example of cities in South King County working together to solve problems we all share. We've found that we are able to come up with creative, cost effective solutions to difficult issues and problems when we work together as equal partners."

The cities have identified their preferred site which is located in the City of Des Moines on property currently held by the Port of Seattle. The site is located inside a fenced perimeter, southwest of the intersection of South 208th Street and what was formerly 18th Avenue South. The vacant site is approximately 14 acres, heavily wooded, and not practical for other development based upon its proximity to the airport and associated aircraft noise. The site has been overrun by trespassers and is scattered with their left behind garbage.

SCORE will soon be submitting the necessary documents to begin the permitting process that will involve public comment and review. The public can get further information and track the progress of SCORE on its website at <http://www.SCOREjail.org>.

Burien Mayor Joan McGilton emphasized that, "SCORE is interested in soliciting members of the public to participate in the Community Outreach Team. Interested parties should submit their letter of interest to: Penny Bartley, SCORE Community Outreach, 1055 South Grady Way, Renton, Washington 98057."

"Making a decision to proceed with jail construction is never easy," said Federal Way Mayor Jack Dovey. "However, the cities have struggled with a jail system that doesn't meet their needs since 2000 and the upcoming elimination of all jail services for misdemeanor offenders has made it apparent that jail construction is the only feasible option." King County officials agree with the necessity of new jail construction and have suggested that the cities pay for the expansion of the King County Jail system. However, having the cities finance expansion of the County jail, which we have been told we can't use after 2012, would be a waste of taxpayer money.

Auburn Mayor Pete Lewis noted that, "As part of their commitment to crime prevention and recidivism reduction, the cities hope to partner with King County to provide treatment programs and services to misdemeanor offenders, providing effective solutions for the citizens of South King County. We are at a point where we can no longer afford to do business the old way. We must work in partnership to control our costs as good stewards of the people's money. We must find new ways to treat inmates with drug and alcohol problems to break the cycle of abuse, crime, and jail.

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