



NEWS RELEASE

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NORTH AND EAST CITIES MOVE REGIONAL JAIL SOLUTION FORWARD *Six sites identified for further environmental study*

SEATTLE – The North/East Cities (NEC) municipal jail planning group announced today its intent to move forward with environmental review and public comment of six potential sites for a new regional misdemeanor jail, including working with King County to evaluate the development of an annex to the county jail in downtown Seattle. This is part of an ongoing, comprehensive process as the cities plan for a single 640-bed municipal jail facility to replace the jail beds they are losing in King County jails when their contract with the county ends. The NEC is composed of 23 cities, including Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Seattle and Shoreline.

Three of the potential sites are located in Seattle, one in Bellevue, one in Shoreline and one in unincorporated King County:

- King County Jail Annex, southeast corner of the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Jefferson Street, Seattle
- Seattle north: 1600 W. Armory Way
- Seattle south: Highland Park Way S.W. & West Marginal Way S.W.
- Bellevue: 555 116th Ave. N.E.
- Shoreline: 2545 N.E. 200th St.
- Unincorporated King County: 13225 N.E. 126th Pl.

The cities are early in the planning process of studying alternative sites and then identifying a preferred site. No decisions will be made until 2010, including decisions of which cities will ultimately be partners in a regional jail and the preferred location for the facility. There will be many opportunities for the public to learn more about the project and provide comments.

Public forums are planned to provide information and hear feedback regarding four of the possible sites (public forums regarding the Seattle north and south sites were held this past summer). While residents are welcome to attend any of the forums, each will focus primarily on a specific potential jail site, as outlined below. The forum dates and locations are:

- Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2008, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Bertha Knight Landes Room at Seattle City Hall, located at 600 Fourth Ave. (between Cherry and James Streets), Seattle – focus: King County Jail Annex site, Seattle;

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- Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2008, from 6 to 9 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at The Hollywood Schoolhouse, located at 14810 N.E. 145th St., Woodinville – focus: Unincorporated King County site;
- Thursday, Dec. 11, 2008, from 6 to 9 p.m. in the Main Dining Room of the Pagoda Student Union Building at Shoreline Community College, located at 16101 Greenwood Ave. N., Shoreline – focus: Shoreline site; and
- Monday, Dec. 15, 2008, from 6 to 9 p.m. on Level 4, Rooms 404 and 405 of The Meydenbauer Center, located at 11100 N.E. Sixth St., Bellevue – focus: Bellevue site.

Interpreter services will be available upon request. Those requiring special accommodations or interpretation services should contact The Keller Group at (425) 788-8990 five working days prior to the forum they plan to attend.

To find public transportation to any of the forums, please visit the Metro King County Web site at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/> and click on Trip Planner.

In addition to the public forums, in January 2009 the NEC group will conduct six Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping meetings – one for each potential site – focused specifically on gathering comments on the scope of an EIS that will address environmental impacts of potential development of a regional misdemeanor jail at each site. These meetings are part of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process. The dates and locations for the EIS scoping meetings are:

- Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in the Auditorium, W404, at Lake Washington Technical College, located at 11605 132nd Ave. N.E., Kirkland – focus: Unincorporated King County site;
- Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2009, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in the Theater at Shoreline Community College, located at 16101 Greenwood Ave. N., Shoreline – focus: Shoreline site;
- Thursday, Jan. 8, 2009, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in the Bertha Knight Landes Room at Seattle City Hall, located at 600 Fourth Ave. (between Cherry and James Streets), Seattle – focus: King County Jail Annex site, Seattle;
- Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2009, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in the Brockey Conference Center at South Seattle Community College, located at 6000 16th Ave. S.W., Seattle – focus: Seattle south site;
- Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2009, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in the Olympic Room at the Seattle Center, located at 225 Mercer Street, Seattle – focus: Seattle north site; and
- Thursday, Jan. 15, 2009, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. on Level 4, Rooms 404 and 405 of The Meydenbauer Center, located at 11100 N.E. Sixth St., Bellevue – focus: Bellevue site.

Cities are responsible for jailing people charged with or convicted of misdemeanor offenses. Most cities within King County have had contracts with the county that allow them to house their misdemeanants in the county's jails. The cities' current contract with the county expires in roughly four years. Due to projected growth in the county's felony population, the county will not have room in its existing jail facilities to house city misdemeanor inmates after their contracts expire, and cities need to plan for a replacement for the jail beds they are losing at King County. The county will continue to house those charged with felonies, as state law requires.

Due to geographic considerations, two groups have formed to replace the beds cities are losing in King County jails. These two planning efforts are coordinated and all the cities are working closely together to meet their collective needs. The north and east cities, including Seattle, estimate they will need 640 beds for misdemeanor offenders over the next 20 years. Seattle estimates it will need roughly 445 jail beds for misdemeanor offenders over the next 20 years, while the north and east cities in the county estimate they will need almost 200 beds collectively. In addition, five south King County cities – Auburn, Des Moines, Federal Way, Renton and Tukwila – have formed the South Corrections Entity (SCORE) and are working together to develop a plan to meet their needs over the next 20 years.

Earlier this year, the NEC group hired correctional facilities consultant Carter Goble Lee (CGL) to help it assess the feasibility of jointly building a regional misdemeanor jail instead of two separate facilities (one for Seattle and one for the other north/east cities). Results of this feasibility study showed the north and east cities, including Seattle, would significantly reduce their per-inmate costs if they jointly build a misdemeanor jail, rather than two separate facilities, to serve their collective needs over the next 20 years.

The five cities that use the greatest number of jail beds (Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Seattle, and Shoreline) identified 12 preliminary sites and asked CGL to assess them to help determine which sites should undergo environmental study. To assure that the process is as objective as possible, the NEC developed a set of factors for successfully locating a regional jail facility, including geographic distribution of sites within north and east King County (i.e., the sites should not all be located in one city). To achieve geographic distribution among the northeast region, the NEC decided to advance three sites from Seattle – including the King County Jail annex site in downtown Seattle – one site from Shoreline and two sites from the eastside for further study through the EIS process.

In addition to pursuing a potential collaboration on a regional municipal jail, the NEC is partnering with King County to explore developing an annex to the county jail in downtown Seattle. The NEC and King County have agreed to include the vacant county-owned site located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Jefferson Street – which is adjacent to the King County jail – as one of the sites for consideration under the EIS.

The site has the potential to provide additional jail beds for both the county and the north and east cities, as well as a range of county criminal justice facilities. The NEC and King County anticipate there could be substantial mutual benefit both operationally and financially from co-locating city jail beds and the county criminal justice facility uses into a single integrated facility on this site, and the continuation of a regional jail system.

For more information, log onto <http://www.necmunicipaljail.org/>

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