

## Unanswered Questions and Common Sense Expectations for a \$250,000,000 Public Project

### I. Jail Capacity and Use

1. What is the Sheriff's proposal for the total inmate housing capacity of the entire jail complex will be when all phases of construction are completed?
2. How will jail beds be apportioned among pre-trial detainees, sentenced municipal inmates, State DOC prisoners, federal prisoners, etc.?
3. Why is the City investing money to provide prison cells to confine convicted State Department of Corrections inmates?

### II. Budget & Finance

#### 1. Planning and Construction

- a. How much money has been spent already on planning and design of the jail complex and what is the source of that money?

#### 2. Financing Sources

- a. Why hasn't a phase-by-phase line item budget for the jail construction project been made public?
- b. The sources, amounts and terms & limitations all financing for the project should be made public.
- b. What contractual provisions will be made to ensure that at least 35% of the workforce on the jail construction project will be Orleans Parish residents?
- c. How will the public be kept informed about the bid process for the construction contracts and receive periodic updates on progress the public on the process and outcomes of the bid process?
- d. Will the City be obligated to construct additional buildings in the jail complex and, if so, what will the cost be to the City?
- e. How will the City and the Office of the Sheriff work to resolve the land use conflicts associated with the jail construction project?

#### 3. Debt Service

- a. What is debt service on the Sheriff's bond issue going to cost the City's taxpayers?

#### 4. Operating Cost

- a. A 5-year annual projected line item *operating* budget for the new jail complex must be submitted by the Sheriff and made public before the City commits to the construction.
- b. Is the new jail going to cost more to operate than the current complex? The Sheriff should submit an analysis that shows where the savings, if any, will come from.

- c. The City must end the current per diem method of funding the jail and move funding it as part of the City budget. In order to do this, the City will have to have detailed information on the jail's operating budget.

### **III. Justice & Public Safety**

1. The bed capacity of the new jail complex must be consistent with current downward crime trends, emerging new police policies, planned alternative to detention initiatives (pre-trial services), and new court efficiencies being designed to ensure equal and timely access to justice and protection under the law. These trends and changes in the system will reduce the need for jail cells as there will be fewer arrests and detentions.
2. A large number of available jail cells, particularly under the per diem funding structure, puts pressure on the entire system to provide bodies to fill them.

### **IV. Cultural and Civic Principles**

1. Does New Orleans is the City with the largest per capita jail and the largest detention rate in the nation. This Working Group and the Mayor should ask the public if this is what we want our City to be known for in the 21st Century. Do we want to build a capacity to incarcerate up to 15% of our residents? Is this consistent with our civic values are about?
2. The City must make an affirmative commitment to locking up fewer of its people and demonstrate it by building a jail with a capacity that is consistent with national incarceration rates for a city of comparable size.
3. We should build and operate the smallest jail that makes sense for our city and invest the money we save in programs and resources that emphasize healing, developing positive human potential and opportunity rather than criminalizing, incarcerating and permanently alienating of thousands of people every year.
4. Historically, the Orleans Parish Prison has been disproportionately filled with poor people and African American people. This practice contributes to perpetual poverty and devastating damage to families and communities.
5. The jail must not needlessly consume scarce resources that should be invested in community-based services for treatment, recovery and development.

### **V. Executive Leadership**

The jail construction, as it is proposed, is a project of enormous scale that involves millions of dollars of public funds – as much as \$250,000,000. A project of this scale demands that the Mayor be more directly engaged in the process and out front with his position on the issue.