

North/East Cities

Municipal Jail Planning



North/East Cities Municipal Jail Planning Timeline

- In May 2008, Seattle announced plans to site and build a municipal jail after King County refused to extend its contract for county jail services beyond 2012 because of anticipated space constraints.
- In July 2008, Seattle, Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond and Shoreline – the five cities within the North/East Cities group (NEC) that use the largest number of jail beds – announced cities located in north and east King County would explore collectively siting and building a regional municipal jail. The capacity for the proposed NEC jail was 640 beds, with 445 of those to meet Seattle’s projected need.
- In August 2008, then-Executive Ron Sims stated that cities should plan for new jail facilities as the region would require significant new jail capacity in the future. Thus, the NEC cities, as well as King County, entered into agreements to start jointly planning for a regional misdemeanor jail facility. Six potential sites were identified and public forums regarding the potential sites were held in 2008. The six sites were:
 - King County Jail Annex, vacant land at the 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.
- In January 2009, Environmental Impact Statement scoping meetings were held.
- In August 2009, the cities and County reached tentative agreement extending the jail services contract through 2016. That agreement provided a more realistic time frame to pursue a regional approach for providing jail services but did not address the capacity issue.
- Between 2009 and 2010, the draft EIS was developed, with release planned for second quarter 2010.
- In April 2010, King County agreed to extend the cities’ jail contracts through 2020. As a result, Seattle recommended the NEC terminate its environmental review of potential jail sites. (Seattle was the nominal lead agency for the north and east King County cities conducting the environmental review of potential sites.)
- May 13, 2010, King County proposed an extension to cities’ jail contracts through 2020 and that the cities and county launch a regional jail planning and management group that will cooperate on monitoring and meeting the region’s long-term needs for jail capacity. The proposal is a testament to tenacity. Even while cities were considering building a regional facility, they never gave up on option of partnering with King County.

Next Steps

- Even, with this agreement, there’s no guarantee that a new jail won’t have to be built. Now the cities and county will, however, now have more time to work together to explore all possible options for meeting the region’s jail bed capacity needs.
- The information and analysis generated through the NEC joint EIS process will be helpful to cities and the county as they continue to plan for the future needs.
- Siting and building a jail normally takes at least six years.
- While this latest extension does not solve the region’s long-term jail capacity needs, it does support a renewed desire to take a regional jail approach to meeting the region’s jail bed capacity needs.