

Jackson County Law Enforcement Center/Government Center Legislative Bonding Request – HF 3138

Background

Jackson County had Wold Architects & Engineering complete a facility space needs study to address the need for a new law enforcement center, emergency operations center, jail, government center and courthouse remodel. The total projected cost of this project is \$38,590,000.

Jackson County's Law Enforcement Center (LEC) and Jail were built in 1976 and are now one of the oldest in Minnesota. Jails built in the 1970s were expected to last 30 years. The Jackson County LEC and Jail are now over 45 years old. Due to changes in law enforcement, incarceration practices and building codes, it is not practical or economically feasible to remodel the current facility to meet today's public safety needs. Jackson County is trying to be proactive in addressing our needs before the Minnesota Department of Corrections condemns our facility for not meeting codes.

Jackson County is also in need of additional space for county departments that provide election administration, Veteran service benefits, driver's licenses, emergency management, land records and other important services.

The Project

The proposed project would be built on land already owned by Jackson County. A LEC, jail, emergency operations center and government center would be constructed.

The jail and LEC facility would be connected to the County's health and human services building which will allow better opportunities for inmates to receive mental health services. The new law enforcement center would also provide space for expanding mental health services into local law enforcement services. A modern 911 emergency dispatch center would be built to provide public safety to county residents. The project would also create an emergency operations center that would be used to manage and provide services during emergency situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently Jackson County does not have an emergency operations center.

The government center would provide better accessibility and enhanced customer service for citizens in need of Veteran service benefits, driver's licenses, emergency management, land records and other important services. The new government center would also provide better security and adequate space for the administration of elections in the county.

Project benefits:

- Provides modern law enforcement and jail facilities that allows for improved public safety.
- Creates more opportunities to enhance mental health services for inmates and in law enforcement services.
- Eliminates handicapped accessibility issues we have with current facilities.
- Redevelops two properties in the City of Jackson by demolishing two old structures (1976 LEC/Jail; 1962 County Resource Center/old school building) and constructing new uses in those locations.

- Demolishes two buildings that are not energy efficient.
- All new HVAC equipment would be installed creating new, energy efficient facilities.
- Provides new technology capabilities for law enforcement, emergency management and overall public safety.
- Provides improved security for administering elections in the county.
- Improved customer service.
- Improved facilities that will help attract and retain law enforcement, correctional and public safety staff.

Project Cost

\$38,590,000

Project Funding

Jackson County \$29,714,300 (77% of the project)

State of Minnesota \$8,875,700 (23% of the project)

Need for State Funding

- To fund 100% of the project locally, Jackson County tax payers could see up to a 19% property tax levy increase to pay the cost of general obligation bond debt payments for 25 years. Receiving \$8,875,700 from the State of Minnesota would help reduce this property tax burden significantly.
- Jackson County has other debt obligations in addition to this project. Receiving \$8,875,700 of funding from the State would help us maintain our credit rating and debt capacity to fund other needs.

Conclusion

Jackson County has determined that State of Minnesota funding is needed for this project to be financially feasible. State funds would be dedicated to the mental health, Veteran services, election security, facility accessibility, emergency operations, public safety and energy efficiency portions of the project. If State funding is provided, this project could be shovel ready by late 2022 or early 2023 with Jackson County’s portion of the project funding being secured.