

ARGUMENT FOR THE BONDS

The relationship between the Weber County Sheriff's Office and the public is built on a foundation of trust and shared responsibility. Success of any correctional facility hinges on the ability to meet the capacity demands of the community it serves. Weber County's population is expected to grow 50.8% by 2060. Growth alone increases capacity demands. Preservation of peace requires the continued ability to incarcerate anyone who endangers our community by committing crime.

Simply building more jails will not result in a safer community. Jails are not long-term detention facilities. The vast majority of inmates rejoin our community within a year of incarceration. The unfortunate reality is that many who are released will continue committing crime and cycle through the justice system again and again. This is dangerous, ineffective, and costly.

The Weber County Justice Center Bond will increase capacity by enhancing medical and mental health treatment, centralizing community-supported reentry efforts, and expediting cases through virtual court services.

Jails have become behavioral health facilities. Forty-four percent of jail inmates in the United States have an underlying mental illness, often compounded by substance-use disorders and pre-existing health conditions. When left untreated, these individuals do not get better and are likely to continue committing crime, costing taxpayers more money. Our jails treat an average of 45-50 inmates daily. A new medical wing will increase medical spaces to meet that high demand. It will also include exam rooms, a trauma suite, and expanded treatment options to reduce transportation and security costs from having to treat inmates elsewhere.

Successful reentry into the community is not one-size-fits-all, and preparation begins at booking. Research shows that centralized access to community resources, such as therapy, substance-use treatment, employment, and housing is crucial for success. Rather than upgrade the old downtown jail, the work-release program will move to the Weber County Justice Center to be streamlined into a larger community-supported reentry effort. Supporting successful and permanent paths toward recovery results in increased jail capacity and safer communities.

The majority of inmates in our jails are still awaiting trial. Inmate transportation is expensive and risky. In-house virtual court services will be expanded to accommodate multiple hearings to process cases faster and for less money.

Approval will authorize financing of up to ninety-eight million dollars (\$98,000,000). Weber County has a AAA bond rating on its existing debt and is in the best position to secure the lowest interest rate to fund this project. Homeowners can expect a cost of \$4.51 per month (home value of \$468,000) and long-term interest savings.

Being smart on crime requires us to address the underlying reasons why individuals commit crime in the first place. Community investment in constitutional, evidence-based solutions to reduce the likelihood of re-offense is key to increasing jail capacity.

Preserving peace and safety for everyone requires a shared understanding of the challenges we face and a vision of our success. Let us invest together. To learn more about what the Weber County Justice Center will do for our community, please visit: www.webercountyutah.gov/weberjusticecenter.

SUBMITTED BY THE WEBER COUNTY COMMISSION

(No opposing argument was submitted)

The County shall conduct a public meeting on October 10, 2023, beginning at the hour of 6:00 p.m. at 2380 Washington Boulevard, Ogden, Utah. The purpose of the meeting is to hear arguments for and against the issuance of the Bonds.