11/16 & 11/19 Community Input Gathering & Listening Sessions for
DOC's Proposal for a New Secure Youth Facility on
7930 West Clinton Avenue

Summary from Volunteer Notetaker Staff and Submitted Written Comments

The DOC held three public listening sessions on Wednesday, November 16th in the morning and evening and on Saturday, November 19th in the morning. All three sessions offered the same information in an open house style community event with displays and experts from the DOC and the design team. There were four stations available for the public to engage and they included: 1) Building Design, 2) Operational Security & Staffing, 3) Youth Programming & Juvenile Justice, and 4) Next steps. Each stationed was staffed by at least two subject matter experts, a facilitator, and a notetaker. Along with notetaking staff, the DOC offered comment cards for participants to submit written testimony as well.

Notetakers were available at each station to track interactions between community participants and subject matter experts and also available to take in public comment if requested by community participants. Below is summary of community interactions and public comment, including written comments from each station for all three sessions. During these interactions, questions were answered by subject matter experts. 18 written comment cards were submitted in total, and notetakers submitted 23 pages worth of notes. The following summary details the issues that participants expressed as concerns, questions, or advocacy. Many of the comments here were repeated throughout.

Youth Programming & Juvenile Justice Station Participant Comments Summary

- Questions regarding services currently provided at Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake Schools and what will transferred to the new Type 1 facility.
- Questions regarding the effectiveness of programs and how they work, including Dialectal Behavioral Treatment (DBT), faith-based initiatives, family-centered programming, vocational and job readiness training.
- Advocating for improved educational programming and additional vocational opportunities for youth including life skills training as a crucial component of preparing youth for transition to independent living.
- Questions regarding transportation for families and if programs will involve families.
- Questions regarding how programming is prepared and shared with youth prior to release and if families are involved when out in the community.
- Questions regarding how visitation works at a secure facility and how family interact.
- Advocating for partnerships with community groups, faith-based initiatives, youth programming in the community, local businesses and other schools.

- Advocating to have health services provide programming on nutrition, ADLs, etc. Music/Art and cooking classes would be beneficial.
- Advocating for more transparency regarding programming, sharing information about what types of programs and how they work.
- Advocating for community partnership for circles of support, restorative justice, and conflict resolution.
- Advocating for the foster grandparent program continue to operate in the new facility.
- Advocating for engaging youth in decision making or offering their input on programming or changes at the facility.
- Advocating for support animal programs including dogs and birds.
- Advocating for parenting programs for youths' parents at the new facility.
- Advocating for a sensory room and therapeutic programming.
- Advocating for community involvement in the space to see the programming and feel part of the process.

Building Design Station Participant Comments Summary

- Concerns about security and how it will prevent escapes.
- Advocating for the well-planned and beauty of the design.
- Advocating for punishment to be convicted and sent away; should not be convenient for family, friends, gang members to visit them. Should not be easy for visitors as it should be part of the punishment.
- Advocating for the facility to be placed in another city in Milwaukee County.
- Questions about the perimeter and wall height and standards for fence security.
- Questions are parking and security and cameras.
- Questions regarding recreation space and the movement within the secure perimeter that is outside.
- Advocating to keep Lincoln Hills opens since programs are working there.
- Concerns that the facility could be expanded beyond 32 beds.
- Advocating for different sports other than just basketball.
- Advocating for youth to be closer to home.
- Advocating for current design and a community garden to teach youth and share food with local food pantries.
- Questions about bedrooms, how many kids to a room.
- Advocating for solar energy and rain barrels.

- Advocating for its location.
- Advocating against the location.
- Concern over the welcoming nature of the facility. Wants youth to feel welcome and motivated to change. Advocating to make it look like a school and not a prison.
- Concerns about what happens when the facility fills up and where other youth will go.
- Advocating to postpone the decision until a new alderperson is elected in April 2023.
- Advocating to keep Felmers O. Chaney Correctional Center open, by supporting this new location.
- Concerns about the feeling of safety in the community with this facility in the neighborhood.
- Concerns that the decision is already final to build at proposed location.
- Questions and concerns about kinds of convictions that the youth will have that are living there.
- Concerns about gang activity in and around the facility.
- Concerns about visitors causing crime in the area and visitations increasing foot traffic in neighborhoods.
- Concerns and questions about how and when youth are transported in and out of the facility.
- Questions about budget, and daily and annuals costs. Concerns about how expensive this project is and its impact on taxpayers.
- Advocating that money be spent on prevention rather than a prison.
- Concerns that the facility is being built in a residential neighborhood.
- Questions about how youth will be paired in living units, types of cells, what goes on inside.
- Concerns regarding if youth will be outside of perimeter walls.

Operations, Security, & Employment Station Participant Comments Summary

- Questions about how the new facility will prevent past abuses from occurring and how staff are held accountable.
- Questions about process for hiring staff, background checks for potential staff and volunteers.
- Advocating for communicating job opportunities to the local community.
- Questions about the how the location was determined.
- Concerns that the location decision was not transparent and moved too quickly.
- Concerns that new facility will reduce property values and increase crime.
- Concerns that the police department does not have enough resources to monitor neighborhoods and new facility.

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- Concerns that district already has a jobcorps center and this facility will saturate the neighborhood and the district is already carrying too much for the city.
- Questions about what happens when a youth is having a bad day, how staff handle those situations.
- Questions and concerns about current consent decree and how that will impact new facility.
- Concerns that the new facility will revert to punishment/correctional models.
- Advocating against the mass incarceration of children.
- Advocating for residency requirements for staff at new facility.
- Questions about staff turnover and how that will impact operations at new facility.
- Concerns that current crime will increase in the neighborhood with new facility.
- Questions about the use of solitary confinement and restraints at the current and proposed facility.
- Concerns that the chosen location is a target-rich environment for criminals.
- Questions about whether the facility will be long-term or short-term.
- Questions about the transition plan from old facility to new facility.
- Questions about where girls will go and how the county will impact this new facility.
- Questions regarding recidivism rates and release procedures from the facility.
- Concerns that new facility will cause other potential business and residents not to move in the area.
- Questions about the difference between county and state facilities in the youth justice system.
- Advocating that money be spent on increasing transportation to and from Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake schools.
- Questions about the impact of family/parenting on the youth at these facilities and issues with neglect and abuse impacting neighborhoods.
- Concerns that the facility will be too close to victims.
- Concerns about the impact of this new facility to area schools and churches.
- Concerns that the facility will be too comfortable, nice and expensive.
- Questions about staff, process for discipline and accountability.
- Questions about staff uniforms and staff training.
- Questions about cultural competency among staff.