

Justice Center Briefing Sheet

Sheet 4, August 2005

Progress of the Justice System Needs Assessment Study

Progress continues being made on Portage County's comprehensive Justice System Needs Assessment Study & Plan. The team of consultants led by Mark Goldman & Associates of Atlanta, along with two Wisconsin based firms – Preston Corp. and Mead & Hunt, are analyzing data from all Portage County Justice System agencies and producing findings.

Data being analyzed includes historical data for the Sheriff's Department number of arrests and calls for service throughout the County, Court Filings and Court Case Flow, as well as the Jail and Juvenile Detention Center populations.

The MGA Team is also closely analyzing the number of court case filings and the time it takes to process cases in the Portage County Judicial System. At the same time, the MGA Team is studying alternatives to incarceration that can reduce jail bed needs, construction costs, and operational costs – without jeopardizing community safety.

In early August, MGA team members will present an interim report to the Portage County Justice System Management Team. The interim report will contain a first round of findings of the profile of the adult and juvenile offender populations in Portage County. Later will come projections of the jail and juvenile populations and bed needs by classification category; these will be in five-year increments for the next 30 years.

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The Portage County Justice System Management Team, which consists of members from all Justice System agencies within Portage County and other representatives from the County and Stevens Point, will review & critically analyze and comment on the data being generated and studied, provide guidance, and work with the MGA team to develop strategies to better manage the Portage County Justice System and plan for its future.

Staffing & Space Needs; Projections for Growth

The MGA team is also addressing issues related to staffing and space needs. Team members have gathered historical information from all justice system departments and agencies on staffing numbers as well as space needs that will assist with projecting and planning for future staff and space needs.

MGA Team members are studying the extent to which existing buildings support current needs and their capability of supporting projected future needs. The Team is working with Portage County and Stevens Point officials to analyze issues and consider various options regarding the reuse of existing space as well as the potential to build new spaces.

With active interest of both the County and City and their law enforcement agencies, the Team is studying the feasibility of collocating the Sheriff's Department and the Stevens Point Police Department. Certain functions and spaces would be shared, which should reduce space needs and building costs while potentially allowing for reallocation of some staff positions and creating more efficiency in operations. Moreover, this would improve public safety throughout the City and County.

Schedule & Upcoming Public Meetings

There have been a series of public meetings / information sessions and there will be at least two additional sessions during the remaining months of the study.

The last public information session took place in Amherst in June. Presenters included Circuit Court Judge Flugaur, Sheriff John Charewicz, Chief Deputy John Graettinger, MGA Team members, and Bill Meyer, who coordinates the Portage County Justice Coalition Citizens Advisory Committee.

Portage County officials and the MGA Team anticipate completing this study in the fall of 2005.

Further information.

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Justice Center
project
information is
available on the
web at

www.co.portage.wi.us

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