

through to arraignment so that they can get out on bond. Many people are in jail waiting for their family members to get through endless games of phone tag with overburdened public defenders just to set up bail hearings.

· Let people out on affordable bonds or “O/R” (their own recognizance, so no bond) who are not flight risks—who have ties to the community and no history of escape attempts.

· Reduce bonds for non-violent offenders to affordable amounts.

Mid-range Measures: Another significant percentage of our current jail inmates wouldn’t be in jail if Bloomington offered more of the social services we already provide. By fully funding the service providers who already do wonderful work for our neighbors and loved ones, we can take another large chunk out of the existing jail population.

- Expand Community mediation services.
- Provide more funding for addiction treatment services
- Improve access to quality mental health treatment
- Offer better educational opportunities to working people
- Ensure quality affordable housing
- Guarantee people have access to healthy food
- Expand employment opportunities, particularly for people transitioning home from jail or prison.

Long-term Solutions:

More importantly we should be continually pursuing and creating long-term solutions that work at the social roots of crime and high incarceration rates. By intelligently expanding the many successful social service programs and other alternatives already established in town, and challenging social inequality and institutionalized racism, we could create deeper changes, reducing the need for any jail at all.

The Conclusion: We Don’t Need A New Jail!

The new jail is projected to cost between \$30-50 million to build, with added estimated annual operating costs of over \$5.5 million. These are hard economic times, and social service agencies are often first in line for budget cuts. What could those funds do for local programs? How many more families could we provide with food, shelter and health care? How many folks with addictions could we divert from jail? How many ‘at risk’ youth could we provide counseling, tutoring, and mentors? With a community working at full strength to diminish incarceration’s root causes: poverty, addiction, racism, illness, homelessness, inequality... we could create the kind of integrated, caring, and safe community that *everyone* in Bloomington deserves.

Where do the candidates stand?

At-Large County Council Candidates

(each party will have three on the ballot in November):

Democrats -

Julie Thomas - OPPOSES a new jail, SUPPORTS the construction of a juvenile facility. “Detention facilities at the local level need to focus not on punishment/revenge, but reform and change.” To address the high recidivism rate, she would like to see “educational and vocational opportunities; treatment for substance addictions, [and] therapy (individual, familial).” She believes fighting poverty should also reduce the jail population.