



Board of Commissioners

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Honorable co-chairs Girod, Holvey and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Benton County's Justice System Improvement Program (JSIP) and the County's request for funding to help support paths out of homelessness and emergency preparedness.

Launched five years ago, the JSIP represents an overhaul of the intersection of our public safety and behavioral health systems. It will be the largest capital improvement program in county history, with a total projected capital improvements price tag of \$196 million. On May 16, Benton County voters will consider a bond measure for \$110 million. The County is directly providing over \$40 million in funding.

It's no secret capital improvement projects are facing unprecedented construction cost escalation. Benton County is no exception. I am here with two specific requests:

- \$10.2 million to complete a homelessness services housing and navigation center (of a total estimated cost of \$14.2 million), and
- \$5.0 million to complete an Emergency Operations Center (of a total estimated \$11.6 million)

The County is partnering with Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center and others to build a navigation center that will provide 24/7 shelter and crucial services to tri-County residents who are experiencing homelessness. The Drop-in Center is our lowest barrier service provider, literally the front door for folks seeking supportive services. The navigation center is a key recommendation of our city-county HOPE Advisory Board, as a missing element of our continuum of services to help people chart a path out of homelessness.

Benton County's emergency operations program is among the state leaders, but it lacks a location to coordinate trainings, exercises, and response. During the COVID-19 deployment, the Corvallis-Benton EOC relocated four times to various "borrowed" locations. The proposed EOC, on the County's new Community Safety and Justice Campus, will enable the County to provide complex emergency response coordination to Benton and neighboring counties, and be fully accessible for volunteers and donations.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Xan Augerot, Vice Chair

Cc: Speaker Rayfield, Representative Gomberg, Senator Gelser-Blouin, Senator Anderson