

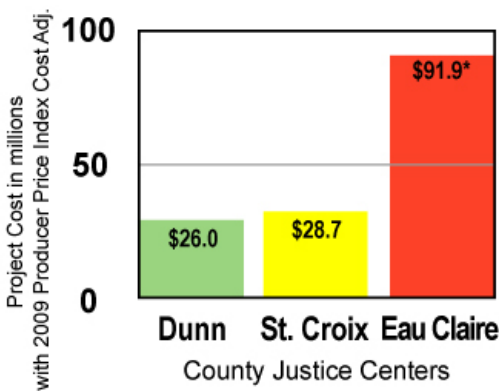
## Is an Offsite Justice Center the Affordable Solution for Eau Claire County?

The Special Committee to Resolve Jail Space and Site Needs, on a 10-5 vote, recommended that a new jail be built at the current downtown site as outlined in Concept 21. The committee decided that proximity of courts to the jail was important, and that costs of building a full Justice Center, which included both courts and jail, at another site would be prohibitive. **The committee members were warned the cost for the project, with an offsite Justice Center, would be over \$100 million, even as high as \$120 million.**

Members of Citizens for Accountable Jail Expansion (CAJE) believe that a new jail is needed. Concept 21, however, places the jail in a location with limited expansion options. Predictable growth will ultimately overwhelm the Grand Avenue Business District, encroach on an historic neighborhood, and compromise downtown revitalization and riverfront development. In addition poor soil conditions and flood plain restrictions will pose ongoing challenges that will inflate construction costs. In this document, **CAJE will show that an offsite Justice Center will most effectively address the long range needs of the county at a cost much less than the projected \$100+ million.**

## What Have Other Counties Done?

A team that included two county board supervisors and three citizens visited justice centers in Dunn and St. Croix counties. This action was taken in response to a letter sent by Judge Benjamin Proctor to the Jail Special Committee, urging committee members and board supervisors to investigate facilities in other counties, in order to gather evidence-based information about jail expansion experiences elsewhere, and also to explore the “secure courts” initiative recommended by the State of Wisconsin.



Dunn County built a Justice Center and St. Croix County built a full Government Center. **Both counties built facilities on acreage that allowed room for expansion; both projects included four secure courtrooms, providing sectoring of inmates.**

*The graph above and chart below provide a comparative cost analysis for the Dunn County and St. Croix County facilities, and a 2006 proposed Eau Claire County Justice Center - all projects reflect 2009 inflation adjustments.*

Complete County Justice/ Government Centers	Original Cost	2009 PPI & Labor Cost Adjusted for Inflation
Dunn County Justice Center (1997)	\$15,500,000	\$26,300,000
St. Croix County Government Center (1991)	\$13,000,000	\$28,700,000
Projected Cost for Eau Claire County Justice Center*	\$84,154,000	\$91,896,168

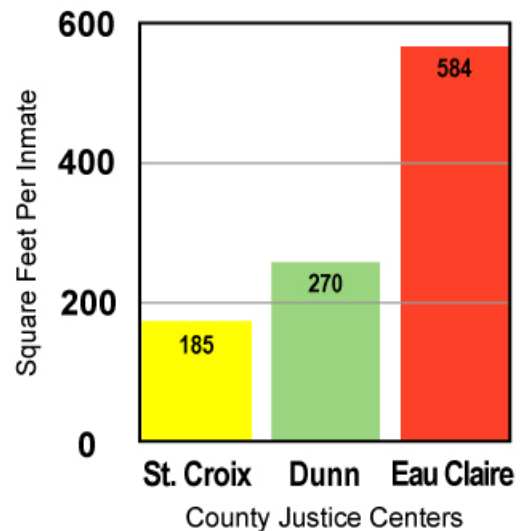
*(\*Projected cost for proposed Eau Claire County Justice Center, determined from cost figures from Market & Johnson Eau Claire Space Needs and Facility Feasibility Study, dated 10/5/2006 - excludes courthouse remodeling costs, and law enforcement garage and bridge construction costs.)*

**Today, these counties are satisfied with their facilities.** Both counties experienced some problems with contractors during construction, however, and in hindsight, would have made different decisions regarding certain structural and proprietary materials issues. Officials supplied the group with a list of potential problems that staff should avoid during the Eau Claire County building process.

**Neither county experienced public resistance because in both cases, it was decided to relocate the projects away from densely populated downtown areas, to sites on the outskirts of town.** Citizens of Hudson actually requested that the county move its project out of downtown to open that valuable real estate to more appropriate development.

## Why Are Eau Claire County Costs So High?

In a document from Market and Johnson that shows costs per square foot and compares costs from other counties' projects, the Eau Claire County Jail project price doesn't add up. Upon further examination, CAJE determined the **answer might have to do with size of the proposed jail facility and inmate capacity, i.e. number of square feet per inmate.** The Market and Johnson document shows that the proposed Eau Claire County jail has more than twice the square footage per inmate as the Dunn County Detention Center. A review of documents from St. Croix County showed similar results.



County	Detention Center Square Feet	Inmate Capacity	Square Feet Per Inmate
Dunn County Detention Center	42,648*	158*	270
St. Croix County Detention Center	33,000*	178*	185
Proposed Eau Claire County Detention Center (3 pod jail)	160,700 **	275**	584

\*Data on Dunn County and St. Croix County facilities from information and architectural drawings provided by Dunn and St. Croix counties.

\*\*Data on proposed Eau Claire County Jail facility from Venture Architects drawings and information included on Market & Johnson Eau Claire Jail Cost Comparison document, 4/21/2009.

***One might assume that the size of the Eau Claire County facility may be partially due to expected expansion.***

***If so, what is the expansion plan?***

## What Other Factors May Be Contributing to the High Cost?

- **The downtown site has extreme space limitations. All plans explored by the Special Committee for this site are multi-story designs** - with future growth possible ONLY by adding more stories to the building as needed. St. Croix and Dunn Counties both have single story jails (although the “pod” has 2-stories of cells) with multi-story office/court space, but because they ensured adequate land availability, their planned expansion will be horizontal rather than vertical. **Architects who presented at Eau Claire’s Special Committee meetings acknowledged that vertical construction is more costly** due to special requirements for elevators and stairs, plus added structural elements needed to accommodate footing and column strength requirements to support a taller building.
- **Poor soil conditions and flood plain concerns at the downtown site limit construction options.** The condition of the ground will require supportive piers. Flood plain restrictions disallow more economical, below grade construction. Facilities in both Dunn and St. Croix counties were built on sloping land and into hillsides that provided additional below grade space at a lower cost per square foot.

## Proposed Downtown Jail Project Lacks Adequate Long Term Planning

**The Eau Claire County judges sent a letter to the committee and to the County Board objecting to the Concept 21 recommendation.**

**Their objections are twofold:**

1. There is insufficient space for a new courts building that can incorporate “specific rules in place for court construction;”
2. Projected jail growth is underestimated.

**Supreme Court rule SCR 70.39(4) calls for sectoring of inmates in the courthouse to provide “basic security.”** The rule states, “Secure prisoner transport and holding areas that will eliminate any public access to prisoners until they are in a courtroom where other security precautions are present are critical to the safety of the public, attorneys, court staff, judges, law enforcement personnel and the prisoners themselves.” Staff noted that intimidation of witnesses is already a concern in the Eau Claire County Courthouse.

The recommended sectoring of prisoners is not possible in the existing courthouse, *even with remodeling, according to Venture Architects. Achieving secure courtrooms as outlined in SCR 70.39(4) requires new construction.* Inmates will continue to be transported through public hallways.

Judge Proctor, acting as Chief Judge for the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District sent a separate letter to the committee and County Board expressing similar concerns. **He noted that the reports from the committee “lack adequate long term planning”. He pointed to several counties in the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District that have addressed “safety, security and space needs that are both immediate and well into the future”.** Included in his list of counties which have effectively addressed these needs were Dunn and St. Croix counties.

*(Data compiled from letters sent to the special committee and county board members, dated 4/02/2009, and Supreme Court Rule SCR 70.39(4).*

## Eau Claire County Justice Center - Done Right

The following chart provides estimated costs for an offsite Eau Claire County Justice Center. A typical Justice Center includes a jail, courts, court commissioner, and offices for the District Attorney, Clerk of Courts, Child Support and Probate. The proposed Justice Center would include a complete court facility as indicated on the chart, and a jail with reduced average square footage per inmate. Square footage would be equal to the average square footage per inmate in the Dunn County Jail and would exceed average square footage per inmate in the St. Croix County Jail.

### Eau Claire County Off-Site Justice Center Cost Projections

Off-Site Eau Claire County Justice Center Projections	Sq. Ft.	Cost per Sq. Ft.	Cost
3-Pod Jail (275 inmate capacity X 270 average sq. ft. per inmate)	74,250	\$200*	\$14,850,000
Fourth pod for Huber (113 inmate capacity X 270 average sq. ft. per inmate)	30,510	\$200*	\$6,102,000
New Courts – <i>Courts building including 6 branches of circuit court, intake court, court commissioner, and all court related offices**</i>	122,000**	\$168*	\$20,496,000
Court Shell – <i>Shelled space for two future branches of circuit court**</i>	13,300**	\$115**	\$1,529,500
Land Acquisition			\$600,000***
Professional Services****			\$6,540,000
Owner Items****			\$6,454,000
Unknown Design Issues (2%)****			\$1,131,430
<b>Total Costs for Off-Site Justice Center</b>			<b>\$57,702,930</b>
Courthouse Remodeling			\$8,106,000
Construction of Law Enforcement Garage			\$1,300,000
<b>Total Project Cost with Off-Site Justice Center</b>			<b>\$67,108,930</b>

\*From the Market and Johnson Eau Claire County Jail Cost Comparison document, 4/21/2009.

\*\*From Market & Johnson Eau Claire Space Needs and Facility Feasibility Study, dated 10/5/2006. Cost per sq. ft. for shelled space adjusted for 2009 Producer Price Index.

\*\*\*From Market & Johnson Schematic Design Budget document, dated 3/19/2009, Offsite Option 5

\*\*\*\*From Final Report of the Committee to Resolve Jail Space and Site Needs, 4/8/2009

### What Will Be the Long-Term Cost of a Shortsighted Decision?

- *Loss of prime real estate*
- *Threat to riverfront development and downtown revitalization*
- *Encroachment on the Grand Ave. Business District and Historic Randall Park Neighborhood*
- *No access to secure outdoor space for inmate programming and emergency evacuation*
- *No room to build a secure courts building*
- *Parking ramp required - no room for affordable surface parking*
- *Limited room for expected growth and expansion*