

**SPECIAL RACE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
FEEDBACK ON POLICE-COURT FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS
JULY 25, 2022**

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Present: REAC members: Clarissa San Diego, Deanna Martinez, Eric Stahl, Jing Fong, Peggi Erickson, Renni Bispham, Savanna Rovelstad. Liaison: Clarence Moriwaki
Excused: REAC member Frank Jacobson. Liaison Brenda Fantroy-Johnson

Guests: Police-court facility (Harrison Building) project team: Public Works Director Chris Wierzbicki, Architect Matthew Coates

MOTION: I move to accept the agenda as written.

Peggi/Clarissa: Motion approved unanimously 7-0

No conflict of interest.

Public comment:

Steve Rabago, chairman, Public Art Committee: Reminder of meeting at 4:45 p.m., Wed., July 28 at The Marge Center. Available on Zoom. Primary topics include insights on police-court facility.

FEEDBACK ON POLICE-COURT FACILITY

Jing: We received comments from two architects and others on hard (structural) changes. Issues that were raised, included: court circulation, ADA accommodation, separating police from court, lobbies on main floor and second floor. We are curious about what's possible given these recommendations.

Chris Wierzbicki: Demolition of interior is complete. We're in the process of shoring up building with structural requirements. Framing of building will be within next 2-3 weeks.

We did our own third party review of the plans since there are a lot of new folks involved in the project. The person most intimately familiar with the design has retired. I was not here when plans were being developed. Project management team and contractor are new. A lot of new folks involved. We reviewed the design so everyone's comfortable with how the building functions and we can identify any potential fatal flaws.

*ADA issues. We have identified all and more of the ADA-compliance issues that were identified on the comments we received. We're in the process of addressing ADA-compliance issues so we can be 100 percent ADA-compliant.

Peggi: Will there be special things where people can plug into to hear, in the courtroom?

Chris: I believe so. Court recently received a state or federal grant to support the electronic systems.

Renni: Could you highlight the most important ADA issues you're addressing?

Chris: Door swing issues (in and out of space). Clearance issues (space in restrooms – get in and turn wheelchair). We've identified those and will correct.

Peggi: Will people in wheelchairs easily be able to get into the jury area?

Chris: Yes, this was an issue we highlighted in our plans.

Renni: Who was the third party reviewer?

Chris: I may have to get back to you. Architect out of Olympia.

Peggi: Is the witness box also wheelchair accessible?

Chris: We're in process of tweaking the configuration of the witness area. It's better for jury to see the witness head on. They're currently facing the back of the head. We're in the process of correcting that and reconfiguring the bench area so there is eye contact between jury and witness (Rm. 215). The bench is designed to have a wheelchair mechanical lift. This is why steps are wide.

*Access to the courtroom—path to get from the front door to the courtroom.

A person would come in from the front door and need to access the stairs or the elevator (take a right, then a left) come up to second floor (upper landing, Rm.201), then come in access door at 261, make another left to get into court waiting room (209) making another to left to get into vestibule (Rm. 210) and then come in to the court. The diagram showed not just movements, but how long it is – 218 feet.

Part of the challenge is we're dealing with an existing building so we have to work with the space we've been given. The stairs, elevator and front doors are fixed elements. There was a change in the design to include the doorway (261) and the walls. Part of the reason it was done (left – court security screening) was due to a potential metal detector/screening area for people coming into the court. We're still determining whether we're going to install a metal detector in this location. I don't think it's part of the specifications.

We still have some internal discussions to do with the judge and the chief about how the flow in this part of the building can work.

We think it's possible to remove these walls (261) and open up the corridor and that waiting room to be a more inviting space. Those interior walls are new to the project – not structural – walls with glass windows. They could be installed later if we needed for additional security and screenings. We're going to talk about this internally and figure out if it's a change we could make. It doesn't trim the path significantly, but does address that 1) the path is too long and has too many turns and 2) it opens up the court waiting room area to give people more space to congregate and to talk privately.

Matthew: Originally the design was to be more open but now that we have a new police chief and city staff, we can revisit. Those walls are easy to take out. If you want in the future to enhance security, you can always do that. Easier to take something out at this point.

Peggi: Are you suggesting that we not have metal detector screenings for our courts? With all the shootings I'm reading about every day, maybe we should have them?

Chris: Part of the question is do we want to have a structural unit or are we able to do it in a non-structural way, like a security officer checking with a wand. The variable is if we can open up the space and make an accommodation for security that makes sense.

Peggi: I see four seats in the court waiting area. Is that sufficient?

Matthew and Chris: There is no code requirement for seating. Seats are intended for people waiting for court clerk. Generally, the court will be open if there is an event. The seating is available for

convenience, but will likely not be used often. Chances are if you're part of the court proceedings, you will have a dedicated space. If you're a guest, you can enter court and sit down.

Renni: The hand screening feels intrusive from my experience going through airports. I don't enjoy when every walks through and I get wanded. Keep that in mind.

Jing: This is not a comment about structural but a note to the operations aspect. Whoever is there, whether it be two clerks in the main lobby or on second floor, they have an immense responsibility for how they interact with the public, to be welcoming and safe. Often times they are the first impression and the lasting impression. Also, going through the airport and being sexually harassed is a horrible, horrible experience.

Clarissa: If we are opening the walls, something we could also do is have educational signage so people know if something is right or if they're being treated improperly. We could have a permanent fixture/signage that goes well with the inside architecture.

Deanna: Communicate with the public how things go instead of one side knowing how it goes.

Clarissa: Not many go through the court room daily and might not understand the etiquette or what to expect. We could use this as a space to educate.

*The Watch Tower (208)

Chris: This area is not for a permanent security fixture. It is a holding area for someone who needs to be restrained before appearing in court. Right now, the space is shown with glass partitions. A window screening could be added so the area could be cordoned off and people not see. When no one is being held, it is an open room with furniture. Nobody is stationed there at all times.

Matthew: Currently, there is one court officer and will probably be only one in the future. It is their work station. They're not sitting staring at people all day. If people come in, they do the security check, if necessary. When a defendant comes in (sometimes they need to be restrained because they're under arrest), they are restrained in that area. Currently, this happens in the hallway and it is awkward for everyone involved. It's important to have a space adjacent to lobby and connected to the court room for those functions to be optimal.

Deanna: How big is this space?

Matthew and Chris: Not very big. Probably 8' X 10' 10'X12'?

Deanna: Can people see in and see out at this point? Concern: Respect. I could see a situation where people are looking and judging.

Chris and Matthew: That's why we're considering screening. It was never intended for that space to be a fishbowl. There should be privacy screening. We can make sure that is the case.

Jing: And respect for people in the lobby who may be nervous, victims, witnessing that kind of tension.

*Entrance to the court (hallway to get into the courtroom, 210 and 214).

Chris: There was a comment about providing more natural light and that the dead end corridor didn't feel welcoming. Dim. There is potential for skylights or other ways to get in more natural light. Haven't figured it out but there is potential for more natural light.

Matthew: The original design had the court rotated 90 degrees clockwise. It was decided to rotate the whole court facility based on input from court (judge and staff) about the functionality necessary between the judge's chambers and the need for immediate access to court and the other room, allowing a private way in and out. In a perfect world, we'd design from the ground up but the footprint

is only so big and this is why it ended up this way. The addition of skylights could be really nice. Great suggestion.

Those were comments on the hard recommendations. We still have considerations for art, furnishings, color, signage, and we welcome more thoughts from the committee.

Peggi: Are the doors into the court automatic? Is there a button to push?

Matthew: No, I don't think doors were intended to have an automatic opener. They'd probably be left open for people to enter during an event. We could do it. It's not typical to do that on an interior door—like in a restroom. If so directed, we'd arrange that. Currently, a normal door. It may have a latch to keep it open.

Peggi: I will consult with Marsha Cutting and ask her what she thinks. I don't want people to fight this door when they're trying to get in and out.

Jing: My question is on the different entry points for police and court visitors.

Chris and Matthew: We're fairly fixed on entry ways. It is our intention that police will not use the front doors to the building. They have access on the SW side (stairs) for their daily operations—they will not come in through the lobby or hang out there. The only people coming in through the main doors are people coming to court or to inquire with the police.

Deanna: What is the restroom situation? Are they gendered, all-gender?

Matthew and Chris: They're all individual restroom facilities so they don't need to be signed (212, 215 and main floor).

Renni: One comment was about having court on the first floor, not on the second floor. Thoughts?

Chris and Matthew: Moving court to first floor would take an entire reprogramming of the building. We're not able to accommodate it given the building schedule.

Matthew: Having the court on the first floor was briefly considered. Because of the disparate sizes of the two programs elements—the police program being much larger and ceiling heights better—courts on the lower floor was never really a fit.

Deanna: Is Universal Design implemented by Coates or does this have to be asked for?

Matthew: The difference between ADA and Universal Design is subtle but important. In a way, we do have to be asked to do this. For example, does a client want a green or sustainable design building? We do need to be directed.

Deanna: Are all the things you could do using Universal Design (UD) available to the city—can they pick and choose?

Matthew: It would be difficult to answer without reviewing documents again. Yes, we could do it. What's the difference between ADA and Universal Design? ADA is part of the code, and has minimum requirements. Universal Design isn't part of code, there are no minimums. It is a holistic way of looking at the entire building instead of just meeting minimum requirements. For example, staff areas for police. UD includes gender orientation, while it isn't spelled out in ADA. We addressed that by making changing room, central lockers, and restrooms non-gender.

Deanna: If the City decided to go with Universal Design—can they take all or some?

Chris: If we started off with elements of Universal Design, it would be very different. At this stage, we're more limited because of limited time. We could spend time thinking about what UD elements—how

they could be implemented at this stage—to use and give you feedback. Probably different had we started from scratch.

MC: I'd like to think that we have considered Universal Design ideas in the building already. We're dealing with an existing structure. It's not all or nothing. If there are concerns not fulfilling those goals, we can address independently. We have to consider this project is already under construction as we consider a list of priorities.

Jing: Have you heard of Inclusive Design? It's a methodology that draws on a whole range of human diversity. In contrast to UD, Inclusive Design makes different design solutions for different groups of people so you can avoid marginalizing anyone. UD designs for all but doesn't address a specific group's needs. I look at race equity in this vein of inclusive design. You have an existing building and, at the same time, it would have been a wonderful to collaborate early on instead of this late stage.

Renni: We're tasked to make recommendations. We have repeatedly said we are not experts. Going forward with the soft parts of the building, my recommendation going forward with the soft parts of the building is to contact a group like this (Diversity by Design: Equity in Design, Diversity Roundtable Group, Seattle AIA) and ask them if there's something they see from their experience with inclusive design—what do you see that we can do? They speak architect. It would be a more productive conversation and would also help build our trust and belief that people actually want to do something. You'll have our recommendations but we'd like to hear that you also talked to someone about this and they had something to say. Don't rely only on us to provide solutions. Next time around for the soft recommendations, we're hoping to hear you found someone on your own and not just react to what we have found for this project or any others.

Jing: One more resource to add is the Lynnwood Civic Justice Center that houses a police station and court. They are renovating and adding on to their building, including a recovery center – the first in the state. I met with the project manager who is the city's Deputy Chief of Police.

Their public art is under the auspices of the Parks and Rec and Cultural Arts Department. They have a race equity policy and a Diversity Inclusion Committee. The deputy police chief and I talked about a lot of things, including who goes through the front door, how they financed the project, why its named Community Justice Center, and the word *justice* – is it aspirational or is it how it's reflected in their operations. I'm happy to share my information.

Peggi: At our next REAC meeting, I'd like to recommend that REAC recommend that we name the building the Bainbridge island Justice Center. It is aspirational because of where justice is in this country. Recommendation to council.

Jing: Chris and Ellen, what is the process for making these soft recommendations – like the art? For example, Lynnwood's Parks, Rec, and Culture Department made a decision about the art and passed it on to its city council. It was a public conversation as opposed to an internal decision.

Chris: We had a conversation with the city manager about how to tackle these changes we talked about today. A potential path forward is to bring this as a discussion item for next Council meeting. We'll highlight some things we discussed—we don't know cost, what's feasible and need to process—and likely ask the council to set aside pot of money if they're inclined for the changes we can still make to the structural elements to the building.

Ellen: The Public Art Committee (PAC) is tasked with making recommendations to the Council about public art. They have hopes and aspirations for the facility and will meet with REAC this week. PAC will come up with ideas and recommendations, then forward to the project team and city council.

Jing: The Lynnwood Parks, Rec & Cultural Arts panel included a mental health expert in their process because there can be words and images that can be disturbing to court and police visitors.

Ellen: We could expand who is part of the decision-making i.e. adding community and mental health expert.

Jing: What is the process for determining the name? Who recommends that?

Clarence: You can make that recommendation. We could report out REAC's recommendation tomorrow.

Jing: I feel like there could be more input, like the process for art. Ellen, do you have a naming process?

Ellen: No. There have been very few buildings to name.

Peggi: I'd like to take a field trip to justice center. I'm interested in ideas and setting an appointment with their project manager.

Renni: Let's all go together (REAC quorum, Chris, Ellen)

Chris: Next step is to bring forward big picture ideas and budget to Council on Aug. 9 for their approval. There will be lots of time to pick art. One thing that crosses that divide is lighting for art. It would be good to know within next two months. Please have at least confirmed direction of soft changes to project team by Sept. 30.

Ellen: Art will be financed by a sub-fund of PAC. There is no budget within the police-court facility project for art.

Chris: PAC has not yet had a formal visit to the facility. I'm happy to make arrangements.

Peggi and Renni: We'll need to ask individual community leaders for input on the facility name. How do we start the process? What's the best way? Survey? Go to a meeting? Peggi will draft standard ask.

ADJOURNMENT at 6:50 p.m.


Co-chair 08/04/22