



Clark County, Washington

High-Level Review of Jail Build-out Assumptions

April 7, 2025



Disclaimer

The content included in this report is based on a review by PFM Group Consulting LLC of the information and data obtained from Clark County and its employees through documents and interviews.

The information and data obtained from the County and its employees through documents and interviews were taken to be reliable. Given the time and fiscal limitations of this engagement, the PFM team's scope did not include a review of individual calculations for each assumption. For example, the PFM team did not review individual calculations for net annual work hours. Still, it verified that the jail team did use such a metric in calculating its prospective personnel needs. Consequently, every statement from County personnel and data input cannot be individually guaranteed to be accurate; thus, the findings involve a degree of uncertainty.

Additionally, the County's information was, in part, informed by architects' preliminary concepts and drafts; therefore, changes to the architectural design may alter (potentially in a meaningful manner) the County team's assumptions reviewed in this document.

Actual results may vary from those presented in this review. Furthermore, changes in law, regulations, agreements, and the overall operational conditions of the County and its jail, as well as other factors that may arise, may alter the assumptions and findings presented in this report.



Overview of Engagement

- In early March 2025, PFM Group Consulting LLC (PFM) was engaged by Clark County to provide a review of the major County assumptions on its future staffing, inmate population, and operational costs related to the proposed jail renovation/expansion.
- Primary tasks were:
 - Review the County's existing key assumptions for staffing, inmate population (and by type), and operations for the County's new corrections facility.
 - Prepare a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the various key assumptions and any identified departures from standard practices or operations.
 - Present the findings and alternatives to the Council at an in-person meeting.
- To do so, PFM held four working sessions with the County Jail leadership team and County Internal Services staff, and closely reviewed the County team's February 12, 2025 presentation to Council.
 - The project team appreciates the engagement, diligence, detailed conversations, and thoughtful approach of the County's staff.
- Given the less than 30-day duration of the engagement, this review is not meant to be a detailed analysis or a substitute for the County's work to date.
- Rather, this review of the County's assumptions is meant to inform *policy-making* decisions (it is not an operational efficiency, budgetary, or staffing review).



Inmate Population: Key Assumptions



Inmate Population: Key Assumptions Reviewed

- ◆ Facility Capacity
 - Layout, units (pods), cells per unit, beds per cell
 - Special needs areas (e.g., mental health, work release)
 - Minimum, medium, maximum security classification capacity
- ◆ Types of Inmates
 - Males and females
 - Adult (no juveniles)
 - Pretrial, sentenced, out-of-county holds
- ◆ Current Population
 - By classification level, gender, sentence status
 - Annual bookings, releases
- ◆ Key Population Drivers



Inmate Population – Key Assumption Results

- **Current Population:** The Jail leadership team provided the approximate breakdown of the current inmate population by sentencing status, offense level, security classification level, and gender.
 - Sentencing status – nearly 90% pretrial | approximately 10% sentenced
 - Offense Level – 97% felony | 3% misdemeanor
 - Classification – approximately ~40%-50% minimum security, ~25%-30% medium security, and ~25%-30% maximum security
 - Gender – 75% male | 25 % female
 - Adults only (no juveniles detained at Clark County Jail)
- **Outboarding and contract beds:** Clark County Jail has 15 contracted beds at Skamania County and 25 inmates held at Western State Hospital. WSH is a psychiatric hospital where inmates may be held until they are determined competent to stand trial.
- **Anticipated Population:** Partial and full build bed capacity is predicated on the assumption that these distributions remain relatively constant and a stated goal to increase capacity for key services described on the previous page (e.g., orientation, booking, reentry, and treatment).
 - The Jail leadership team assumes jail population will increase as bed capacity increases due to current high levels of demand for bed space from the law enforcement community. *See discussion of overcrowding and population management on subsequent slide.*
 - Additionally, they have estimated that bookings could increase proportionately to increases in law enforcement officers hired by state and local agencies.



Inmate Population: Bed Capacity Assumptions

<u>Bed</u> Count by Housing Type	Current	Partial Build	Full Build	Total Increase (Full minus current)	Percent Increase
Orientation Housing	0	154	154	154	N/A
Mental Health Housing	0	74	74	74	N/A
General Population: Single Beds	28	19	115	87	310.7%
General Population: Double Beds	301	296	296	-5	-1.7%
General Population: Quad Beds	0	0	96	96	N/A
General Population: Mini Dorm 8-beds	0	0	0	0	N/A
Dormitory	148	112	112	-36	-24.3%
Medical Housing	14	20	20	6	42.9%
Total Bed Count	491	675	867	376	76.6%
JWC J-POD Housing	0	64	64	64	N/A
Total Bed Count including J-POD	491	739	931	440	89.6%



Inmate Population: Population Management Assumptions

- The Clark County Jail currently has authorization to take actions to reduce jail overcrowding when specific population thresholds are reached **in the main jail** (See table below, adapted from Jail Overcrowding Policy, Chapter 05.08)
 - The Clark County Jail's current maximum capacity is 491 inmates. The Jail leadership team explained that housing 491 inmates would require placing inmates in all available beds and utilizing double- or triple-bunks in all cells designed to accommodate them. Doing so would limit the Jail's ability to house each inmate in a manner consistent with its assessed security classification level.
 - The Jail notifies law enforcement partners of the Booking Level each day. This practice enables law enforcement officers to make informed decisions regarding whether to cite and release or take other non-detention options in the field. However, it also means the Jail does not have complete data on the number of bookings ***it would have received*** if the overcrowding measures, making it difficult to accurately project jail population in the partial- and full-build scenarios.
 - The full build anticipates a maximum bed capacity of 867 **in the main jail**. If the policy were revised to keep the thresholds at the percentages shown below, they would be 692 (Level 1, Green), 726 (Level 2, Yellow), and 756 (Level 3, Red).

Booking Level	Overcrowding Mitigation Measures Allowed	Population Threshold	Percent of Maximum Capacity
Level 1 (Green)	No inmates for contract services accepted	392	79.8%
Level 2 (Yellow)	Above limits plus limits booking for misdemeanors; sentenced misdemeanants released at 75% of sentence completion	411	83.7%
Level 3 (Red)	Above limits plus limits to confirmation of holds; sentenced misdemeanants released at 67% of sentence completion	428	87.2%



Staffing: Key Assumptions



Staffing: Key Assumptions Reviewed

- ◆ PFM reviewed the following key assumptions for the number and type of employees needed:
 - Shift structure
 - Functional responsibilities (what functions are County-provided; what functions are contracted or carried out by inmate workers)
 - Staffing minimums and post plans/staffing (inclusive of shift relief factor)
 - Facility layout impact on post plans/staffing

- ◆ PFM reviewed the following key assumptions for projected personnel costs:
 - Base salary, annual increases
 - Benefits
 - Other personnel costs (expenditures that increase or decrease related to the number of current or new employees, such as uniforms and computers)



Staffing: Key Assumptions Reviewed

- PFM reviewed the following key assumptions for [hiring additional employees](#):
 - Training class size, frequency
 - Academy duration
 - Academy capacity limits
 - Administrative and support needs to scale up recruitment, hiring, and onboarding new employees



Staffing: Summary of Key County Assumptions

- **Current Staffing:** Per the February 12, 2025 presentation, currently Clark County has 236 personnel (178 uniformed, 58 civilian).
- **Partial- and Full-Build Scenarios:** The Jail leadership team worked from the architect's blueprints and estimated the number of hours of coverage required for each post. *The methodology to project the number of needed posts and staff is detailed further on subsequent slides.*
 - Partial- and full-build scenarios assume that all opened spaces are fully staffed (e.g., no units are closed).
 - Compared to the partial-build scenario, the full-build scenario assumes the North Tower is open and staffed
 - *Methodology is detailed further on subsequent slides.*
- **Deployment Assumptions:**
 - 18 posts for day shift; 12 posts for graveyard shift
 - Approximately 5 posts for swing shift (varies by daily workload, e.g., transportation and court docket); no transports on weekends
 - Two 12-hour shifts.
 - Officers work 4-days on, 4-days off; four squads (A side, B side) rotate days on and off



Staffing: Summary of Key County Assumptions

- **Posts:** The Jail leadership team conducted a detailed review of its current post-based staffing plan to adapt it for the partial and full build scenarios. Using provided plans from the architect, the Jail team added or updated posts for each space and function in the jail. The team considered areas of the renovated jail that would allow greater staffing efficiency and applied those assumptions to the new staffing estimates.

	Current	Partial	Full	Total Increase (Full Minus Current)	Percent Increase
Posts	70	140	178	108	154%

- **Full-Time Equivalent Staff Needed (FTEs):** The Jail leadership team calculated the number of FTEs required to fill the desired number of posts for the required number of hours using a Net Annual Hours Worked approach and a Shift Relief Factor approach. The National Institute of Corrections supports both methodologies. Jail leadership reported that NAHW has produced more accurate estimates of necessary FTEs in their experience, and therefore, used that methodology to calculate the required number of FTEs based on the number of posts required.

	Current	Partial	Full	Total Increase (Full Minus Current)	Percent Increase
Post-Based FTEs	86	156	214	128	149%



Staffing: Summary of Key County Assumptions

- **Total FTEs:** The Jail leadership team compiled a table listing the number of FTEs required in the current, partial, and full build scenarios for each position classification (e.g., Corrections Officer, Corrections Sergeant, Records Manager). These sum to the value shown below.
 - The Jail leadership team used its post-based FTE assumptions to build for applicable positions.
 - For all other position types (e.g., Jail Administration, Finance, Training, Reentry), the Jail leadership team estimated the number of FTEs required based on the anticipated workload in the partial and full-build scenario.

	Current	Partial	Full	Total Increase (Full Minus Current)	Percent Increase
Total FTEs	236	370	393	157	67%

- **Non-Post FTEs:** PFM subtracted the post-based FTEs from the total number of FTEs required for each scenario in the January 25, 2025 employee cost model.

	Current	Partial	Full	Total Increase (Full Minus Current)	Percent Increase
Non-Post FTEs	150	214	179	29	19%



Staffing: Summary of Key County Assumptions

- The staffing assumptions described on the preceding slides are summarized from the County's January 25, 2025 personnel cost model as follows.

	Current	Partial	Full	Total Increase (Full Minus Current)	Percent Increase
[A] Posts	70	140	178	108	154%
[B = C/A] SRF*	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	
[C] Post-Based FTEs	86	156	214	128	149%
[D = E-C] Non-Post FTEs	150	214	179	29	19%
[E] Total FTEs	236	370	393	157	67%

***Shift Relief Factor (SRF):** The average SRF is calculated by PFM for illustrative purposes only in this table. The SRF or NAHW applied to each post by the Jail leadership team will vary depending on the shift schedule used to staff each post, the number of hours and days of coverage each post requires, and anticipated hours available for work for employees assigned to those posts after accounting for scheduled time off work and typical leave usage.



Personnel Costs: Summary of Key County Assumptions

- **Base Salary:** For each position classification, the County used the mid-step base annual salary for current employees in the position.
- **Annual Increases:** The County assumed a 4 percent increase to base salary each year beginning in year 2.
- **Benefits:** The County calculated all employee benefit expenditures for calendar year 2024 as a percentage of total salary expenditures in the same year. They applied the resulting benefit factor (52 percent) to base salary in each future year of the personnel cost model. The County also reviewed prior year costs, in which benefits totaled 55 percent of salary expenditures.
- **Other Personnel Costs:** The County estimated one-time and recurring costs for employees (e.g., training, supplies, computer, uniforms, cell phone). The County assumed a 5-year replacement schedule for computers and incorporated shared IT costs into the annual ongoing cost estimates.
- **Personnel Cost Assumptions by Year:** The Jail leadership team's personnel cost model provides projected costs over the next five years for both partial- and full-build staffing levels. Costs shown are in addition to the cost of continuing current staffing. Facility maintenance and operations personnel costs are not included in the model; they are estimated separately as described in Operations Assumptions below.

	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Partial	\$16,813,051	\$17,469,265	\$18,151,728	\$18,861,490	\$19,599,642
Full	\$19,868,841	\$20,645,260	\$21,452,737	\$22,292,512	\$23,165,879



Hiring: Summary of Key County Assumptions

◆ Training Academy:

- 10-week program
- Currently, Clark County's training academy has a capacity of 4-5 training classes per year, with each class accommodating 5-15 participants and a maximum capacity of up to 20 participants.
- The Jail leadership team does not anticipate that training academy capacity will be a limiting factor in achieving the hiring targets listed below.

◆ Hiring Targets:

- As shown on previous pages, the Jail leadership team assumes post-based FTEs (primarily sworn officers) would need to increase from 86 to 214 to staff the full-build – an increase of 128 FTEs or a 149 percent increase over current post-based FTEs.
- The Jail leadership team assumes non-post FTEs would need to increase from 150 to 179 (29 additional FTEs, or a 19 percent increase) to staff the full-build.

◆ Past Experience:

- The Jail leadership team shared that during a previous expansion (under Sheriff's Office management), the Jail ramped up hiring one year prior to implementation. In recent years, the team has increased staffing by 40 officers over a two-year period.
- The jail leadership team noted they may need additional resources to keep pace with employee background checks; under the Sheriff's Office management, the Jail had additional capacity for that task.



Operations: Key Assumptions



Operations

◆ Key Assumption reviewed included:

- Operational (non-primary supervision responsibilities and needs) functions of County
- Booking
- Medical services (on-site and off-site)
- Transportation
- Food
- Laundry
- Programming
- Commissary
- Internet/telephone
- Utilities
- Specialized areas
 - Inmate visiting (attorney/client spaces, visitation spaces, etc.)
 - Staff spaces (locker rooms, gym, break rooms, etc.)
 - Court-related spaces (video arraignments and other court proceedings)



Operations – Key Assumption Results

◆ Key Assumption reviewed included:

- Booking and property – assumes expanded booking space, including sallyport and property spaces, which allow for a more efficient booking process.
- Classification and Housing – assumes addition of dedicated orientation housing unit; anticipates benefits to security in general population due to less frequent movements.
- Medical services (on-site and off-site) – assumes continued use of a contracted entity to provide on-site medical services and expanded medical beds and capabilities in full build, thereby reducing aspects of outside medical care (e.g., hospital).
- Transportation – assumes continued responsibility for off-site transportation, with additional operational costs resulting from increases in the inmate population.
- Food and Laundry – adequate space in existing kitchen and assumes continued use of County employees for food services; purchase of food from external vendors; assumed increase in food costs given inmate population. Continued use of County employees for laundry services.
- Programming and Treatment – assumes other County entities provide programming and treatment functions; continues programming and treatment functions that exist within the jail budget.
- Commissary – assumes current contract continues with a zero net sum impact on budget.
- Internet/telephone – assumes continued contract and no change to FCC-allowed charges and proportional growth based on inmate population.
- Maintenance and Utilities – mostly captured in Internal Services budget; assumes increased maintenance and utility expenses based on square footage of phased-in build out; assumes some reduction in initial O&M costs given newness of facility.
- Specialized areas – Assumes operational, cleaning, and utility costs on square footage for spaces such as:
 - Inmate visiting (attorney/client spaces, visitation spaces, etc.).
 - Staff spaces (locker rooms, gym, break rooms, etc.).
 - Court-related spaces (video arraignments and other court proceedings).



Operations: Contract Cost Assumptions

- **Medical:** Jail leadership team estimates 2025 medical contract costs will be \$6.7 million. They estimate an 8 percent annual increase due to rising costs and increasing jail population.

	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Projected Medical Cost	\$7,236,000	\$7,814,880	\$8,440,070	\$9,115,276	\$9,844,498
Difference from Year 1	\$536,000	\$1,114,880	\$1,740,070	\$2,415,276	\$3,144,498

- **Industry (Food and Laundry):** Jail leadership assumes that industry costs (including food and laundry) will increase by \$240,000 in year 3 due to the increase in inmate population, and by an additional \$340,000 in year 6 due to rising costs and the corresponding increase in the jail population. This assumption translates to an average daily cost per inmate of approximately \$4.50 to \$5.00.

	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Projected Industry Cost	\$960,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,300,000
Difference from Year 1	\$0	\$240,000	\$240,000	\$240,000	\$340,000

- **Facilities:** Internal Services leadership assumes that facilities and maintenance costs will increase from 2024 actual expenditures in proportion to partial- and full-build square footage. In addition, Internal Services leadership noted that maintenance and operations costs have increased annually by between 3 percent and 5 percent, while square footage remained constant.

	2024 (Actual)	Partial (Proj.)	Full (Proj.)
Facility Cost	\$1,312,000	\$2,166,000	\$2,767,000
Difference from Year 1	\$0	\$854,000	\$1,455,000



High-Level Findings



High-Level Findings

● Finding 1. The core assumptions are thoughtful and reasonable.

- The County's Jail leadership team provided thoughtful and thorough rationale for each assumption given changes in population coverage, transport needs, and new roles/functions. **To the extent that any of the underlying assumptions or policies are adjusted, the jail team's projected staffing needs (and resultant operational costs) may be altered.**
- The PFM team's review suggests that from a high-level policy-making perspective, the assumptions used in the February 12, 2025, presentation are generally reasonable, with several comments for consideration (see following findings).

● Finding 2. The jail population appears likely to increase, given baseline facts, but not necessarily in proportion to the number of law enforcement personnel.

- **The assumed jail bed space relies on an assumption that an increase in Clark County population and law enforcement will drive the need for additional jail beds and allow other law enforcement and justice entities to fully use the jail (e.g., probation violators, state/regional extraditions and transfers, etc.). This warrants discussion among policymakers.**
- This assumption is inconsistent with experiences in some other jurisdictions.
- For example, New York City has a population of over 8.8 million individuals, more than 34,000 sworn officers, and an incarceration rate of about 70 per 100,000 in population. New York's incarceration rate per capita has decreased while its population has increased, and its sworn police force has remained approximately constant.

● Finding 3. From a policy and cost perspective, the County should be strategic about its goal (size of jail and ADP). Most of the changes to operational costs are related to increased staffing projections for the facility tied to ADP.

- The County's criminal justice team (County Administration, Jail, Prosecution, Courts, Public Defender, law enforcement agencies, etc.) should collaborate to ensure that the new jail facility is the result of need and not a "build to fill" approach. To be clear, this is not to suggest that this is what is occurring in Clark County, but rather to ensure that the prospective jail build-out reflects a deliberate, intentional process that seeks to avoid unintended consequences, policy implications, and capital and operational costs. **A coordinated approach to managing crime, safety, and incarceration is necessary.**



High-Level Findings

- **Finding 4. Staffing and hiring targets should be aligned to the County's strategic goals and thoughtfully timed.**
 - The partial- and full-build personnel cost projections assume full staffing in each scenario.
 - This is appropriate for the model and a helpful tool for county planning, but warrants further consideration regarding how it will be phased into upcoming annual budgets.
 - **Full staffing may not be necessary or efficient in the immediate future.** The full-build assumes jail capacity increases by 376 beds (76 percent); this figure increases to 440 beds (90 percent) when including J-Pod beds. If the jail population does not reach the new maximum capacity immediately, the jail can open new housing units gradually as needed and scale up staffing incrementally.
 - **The County should set hiring targets and monitor progress to scale up as needed.** In the past (1990's), the Jail leadership team indicated that they used a one-year period of ramped-up hiring efforts to increase the sworn complement by 40 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. In recent years, the Department has taken approximately two years to recruit and onboard 40 FTEs.
 - At a similar rate, it would take approximately three years to achieve full staffing in the partial-build scenario and four years to achieve full staffing in the full-build scenario. Additionally, the County team flagged resource needs to accommodate hiring that is not currently assumed in the proposal but could be provided through collaboration with other County entities.
 - It is also notable that corrections agencies nationally have struggled with recruitment, hiring, and retention in recent years.