



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 29, 2024

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshar 
County Administrator

Re: **Establishment of the Justice System and Infrastructure Review Committee**

Background

As noted in my [March 4, 2024 memorandum](#), the Board of Supervisors on February 20, 2024 discussed a recommendation to establish a commission to conduct both a comprehensive review of past criminal justice reform efforts and an assessment of the current criminal justice system in Pima County. I said that the purpose of such an assessment would be to identify ongoing impacts to the jail population and proven methods of reducing those numbers. This would include a review of possible procedural and policy changes for both criminal justice and community-based services.

The March 4, 2024 memorandum noted that the County has actively worked in this space since at least 2014 and provided a number of historical documents between 2018 and 2022 that reported on the various efforts. Most notably, the County Administrator established in 2018 the Pima County Criminal Justice Reform Advisory Commission (Commission) to serve as a technical advisory committee to advise the County Administrator and conduct a comprehensive review of the existing Pima County criminal justice systems. The effort was designed to review sentencing structure, sentencing practices, community supervision, use of alternative incarceration, and community engagement. This review was followed by specific tasks ranging in complexity from reviewing the impact of sentencing guidelines upon Pima County's criminal justice system, the county jail capacity, community supervision resources, judicial operations and law enforcement responsibilities, as well as studying the full existing statutory provisions as to their uniformity, consistency and adequacy.

Ultimately, this Commission was to make recommendations to the County Administrator regarding policy and budget considerations for each criminal justice agency or department of the County. The Commission was also tasked with making specific findings and recommendations regarding the organization and structure of the County criminal justice system and the operation of any component of the system subject to statutory and constitutional restrictions. This Commission ran from 2018 to 2020. County criminal justice stakeholders submitted recommendations to the Commission for review (included in my March 4, 2024 memorandum materials); however, the onset of the pandemic in early 2020 interrupted the Commission's work. It is now appropriate for a new group to be created to not only carry on the initial work done by the Commission, but to also incorporate the

findings of the Pima County Adult Detention Center Blue Ribbon Commission and current emerging trends and challenges affecting incarceration rates. This new committee will now look at research based justice reforms to help to reduce incarceration and recidivism, programs to provide enhanced wraparound and reentry services, as well as models to expand the use of external partners for substance abuse and mental health care.

Commission Charge

A memorandum of [February 13, 2024](#) recommended the establishment of a new commission that would explore a possible lower bed capacity need than projected by the Blue Ribbon Commission, which acknowledged their projection limitations and the need for a comprehensive review and adjustment. I noted that the new commission will incorporate specific programmatic proposals to reduce jail populations, based on a larger review of the criminal justice system and possible procedural changes, with related metrics.

In the past weeks I have had an opportunity to talk with a variety of stakeholders and believe that, in addition to the various reports and memorandum shared previously, there is work that has been done by earlier committees, commissions, task forces and organizations that provide insight into what has been reviewed, what has worked and perhaps even what has not worked in our community and other jurisdictions. I initially thought that such a review would be the preliminary work of the next committee but believe that the scope of work and the potential membership of the next committee will be better identified following an analysis of these many documents. The compilation of the various reports and information is also a task better performed by staff so that the expertise and views of the volunteers who might populate the final Committee can be more effectively utilized.

For that reason, I will be assembling a team of County staff to begin a comprehensive review of past work, reports and information, which will then provide the road map for the new Committee's work.

The County team will provide a report by August 1, 2024.

Following a review of the available information, I will form what at this point in time I believe will be the Justice System and Infrastructure Review Committee (Committee)

Working from the information provided by the County team, this new Committee will build upon the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission's review of the County jail and the Pima County Justice Reform Advisory Commission's efforts and shall then:

- Identify the challenges and generate proposed solutions to enhance public safety and facilitate information sharing and collaboration;

- Facilitate discussions regarding management of jail populations, increasing social services, increasing diversion efforts, reducing recidivism, addressing racial and ethnic disparities and improving related countywide efficiencies;
- Continue work to assess the current condition of the Pima County Adult Detention facility and address any necessary design and capacity improvements; and
- Continue to evaluate funding options available to the County for facility and programmatic improvements.

Subject to modification following the work of the County team, the Scope of Work is expected to include elements such as:

- Compile all justice reform initiatives created through other County commissions, committees and working groups and evaluate the impact on jail populations.
- Assess justice system programs that may need additional County support or oversight to optimize outcomes.
- Review necessary data sharing among all stakeholders and identify potential impediments and solutions including consideration of technology, permission access sets or rules.
- Identify potential facility, supply, process changes, and/or staffing and resources that might be required to impact incarceration and recidivism, including cost estimates and timelines for each.
- Develop criteria to determine the need for an integrated resource center as a hub for deflection, diversion and/or community linkage from the jail system with services to be provided by a consortium of government agencies and community-based organizations.
- Identify tactics to reduce recidivism rates
- Identify successful strategies and partners to reduce jail admissions and reduce lengths of stay.
- Consider implementation strategies for any and all reviewed and recommended programs or initiatives
- Report regularly to the County Administrator, providing metrics and data on criminal justice trends and all jail population reduction programs.

Membership:

It is anticipated that the Committee will consist of 15 – 21 members including representatives of the following:

- The Pima County Sheriff
- The Pima County Attorney
- Behavioral health care providers

- Business Community
- Courts
- Criminal justice community based organizations.
- The Crisis Response Center
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Medical health care providers including hospitals
- Pima County Justice Services
- Pima County Office of Housing Opportunities and Homeless Solutions
- Pretrial Services
- The Public Defender's Office
- Social Service Providers

The work of the County team may, however, provide insight into other groups whose representation would be of benefit.

Recommendations from the Board of Supervisors, the Sheriff and County Attorney and other key stakeholders will be solicited and a final list of Committee members will be determined by the County Administrator, who will also select the Chair of the Committee.

The Committee will be empowered to, at its discretion, establish subcommittees or working groups to focus on specific initiatives or projects or research and analysis as necessary.

Conclusion

A County team will assemble a compilation of pertinent reports, studies and documents including those provided by the Blue Ribbon Commission and other County committees and commissions, which will be used to finalize the scope of work and membership of the new Committee. The current working name of the Committee is the Justice System and Infrastructure Review Committee.

Following the receipt of the analysis and the establishment of the Justice System and Infrastructure Review Committee, leadership of the Committee will be identified, staff assigned, and an initial work plan developed. The Committee will report regularly to the County Administrator who shall provide at least quarterly updates to the Board of Supervisors, beginning in August 2024. The work of the Committee will be completed no later than December 2025.

As noted in the previous communication with the Board, a County Finance Working Group will be formed to work in collaboration with the Committee to look further into County funding sources for both programmatic and infrastructure needs, including the possible use of general obligation bonds.

The work in the upcoming months is designed to identify the challenges and generate possible solutions to enhance public safety within the jail and the community that can be made possible by the identification of programmatic and policy modifications for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

JKL/anc

- c: The Honorable Laura Conover, Pima County Attorney
The Honorable Chris Nanos, Pima County Sheriff
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Diana Durazo, Senior Advisor, Pima County Administrator's Office
Kate Vesely, Director, Justice Services
Pima County Adult Detention Center Blue Ribbon Commission Members