

Frequently Asked Questions about Bond Measure 2-140

You have questions? We have answers. We've compiled frequently asked questions about proposed bond measure 2-140 on this page.

What are the key dates for this election?

Mar 31, 2023 Fri Military and out of country ballots mailed

Apr 17, 2023 Mon Out of State ballots mailed

Apr 25, 2023 Tue Last day to register to vote

Apr 26, 2023 Wed Local ballots mailed

May 11, 2023 Thu Last day for Election Official to mail ballots

May 12, 2023 Fri Voters needing a replacement ballot must make arrangements for pickup at Benton County Elections Office

May 16, 2023 Tue Election Day – 8:00 PM deadline to return ballots using an Official Ballot Drop Box anywhere in the state of Oregon or by USPS mail.

Please note: Ballots returned via USPS must be postmarked no later than Election Day and received by the Elections Office by the 7th day after the election

Who decided on the proposed bond facilities in this measure?

The Benton County Board of Commissioners selected the proposed facilities for the May 2023 bond based on a multi-year, community-involved planning process. The facilities are intended to address access to mental health services and community-based supports for all residents, and to provide space for emergency and law enforcement services, accountability, and treatment programs for adults in custody.

What are the proposed facilities that are included in proposed measure 2-140?

- A co-located Sheriff's Office and Emergency Operations Center for coordination during major events and natural disasters, and for emergency response.
- A new correctional facility with increased capacity (up to 120 beds) and dedicated areas to provide mental health and addiction services.
- Expanded and redesigned spaces for the Children and Family Program mental health services for youth and families.
- Funding for homelessness services facilities, with the option of a homelessness services housing and navigation center, in partnership with Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center, to help people build pathways out of homelessness. Benton County has requested state funds to complete the project.

If the measure passes, how much would it cost?

If passed, the bond levy rate would be an estimated \$0.55 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The cost would be an estimated \$142 per year for a Benton County home with a median tax-assessed value of \$258,596. Actual levy rate may vary due to changes in interest rates and assessed value. If the measure does not pass, the proposed facilities would not be built, and property taxes would not increase.

What is the tax-assessed value of my property?

Tax-assessed value is different than market value. You can search the current tax-assessed value of your property online.

[View the Benton County Assessment Property Search page](#)

If the proposed bond is passed, when will it sunset?

If passed, bonds may be issued in a series and would not exceed 31 years.

If the proposed bond is passed, when would facilities construction begin?

If passed, construction is estimated to begin in 2024.

If the proposed bond is passed, when are facilities estimated for completion?

If passed, the proposed new law enforcement facilities are estimated for completion in 2026/27.

If the proposed bond is passed, how would the County fund operational costs for a larger correctional facility?

If passed, operational costs for expanded law enforcement facilities would be funded through a combination of the current local option levy and general fund revenues.

What would the Bond Oversight Committee do?

If the proposed bond is passed, a Bond Oversight Committee would be formed. The committee would consist of community volunteers who would actively review and report on the proper expenditure of taxpayers' money for the projects and advise the public as to whether the county is complying with the ballot measure language.

What elements of the proposed bond measure address safety and accountability?

If passed, the bond would fund facilities and space for both treatment and accountability, including:

- Expanded secure holding facilities for those held under court supervision due to risk of harm or other reasons.
- Dedicated areas in the correctional facility to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment.
- Increased bed capacity.
- New, centralized Sheriff's Office and emergency operations facilities.

What elements of the proposed bond measure address mental health?

If the measure passes, the proposed bond funds would be used to renovate and expand an existing County facility, addressing program capacity, safety, and effectiveness including:

- Redesigned therapy rooms large enough for entire families.
- Expanded areas for group counseling.
- A dedicated Play Therapy space for children as an alternative to traditional therapy.

What elements of the proposed bond measure would address homelessness services facilities?

- If the bond passes, the County has allocated up to \$3 million for a homelessness services housing and navigation center. The proposed facility is envisioned in partnership with the Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center (CDDC) serving Benton County since 2002. Benton County has requested state funds to complete the project.

If we focus on crime prevention and addressing the root causes of criminal behavior, why do we need a new jail?

- A 2018 comprehensive assessment of Benton County's criminal justice system concluded the jail is in poor physical condition and has operational deficiencies.
- The booking and observation/holding area cannot hold more than four people at once, creating a bottleneck that closes the jail to new arrivals. In 2022, the jail was closed 22 times.
- Due to the current jail capacity, there are minimal treatment and rehabilitation opportunities for adults in custody; at times, up to half of adults in custody are sent to correctional facilities in other counties.
- Benton County law enforcement agencies make extensive use of citation and release (versus transporting to jail) due to lack of capacity at the jail.

What is Benton County doing to prevent individuals from justice system involvement in the first place?

In 2021, voters passed the 5-year Public Health and Safety Local Option Levy. It funds various public health and law enforcement programs, including interventions in the justice system. Examples include:

- Expanded pretrial services, offering an alternative to incarceration for low-risk offenders
- Enhanced crisis response, including the Crisis, Outreach, Response, and Engagement (CORE) team
- Staffing for the new **Crisis Center**
- In addition, law enforcement staff have participated in training for response to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and Crisis Response Intervention Training

In what ways can local law enforcement and mental health service providers collaborate to reduce the need for more jail beds in the future?

The Justice System Improvement Program is a multi-disciplinary approach with coordination between government agencies, non-governmental service providers, and the community.

- The County launched the Crisis Outreach Response and Engagement (CORE) program in partnership with the Corvallis Police Department to provide trauma-informed care to those experiencing a mental health crisis. Benton County Behavioral Health partners with [Corvallis Police Department \(CPD\)](#) to respond to service calls related to mental health crisis. This results in more people getting supportive mental health treatment and resources, and fewer people spending time in the emergency room or jail due to mental health crisis.
- The new Crisis Center—not part of the proposed bond measure—will be funded through state and federal grants. It will be a voluntary walk-in treatment-centered facility that may serve as an alternative to the emergency room, and provide stabilization for individuals experiencing mental health crisis, with referrals and support for ongoing behavioral health services. It will also serve as a resource for community partners, from non-profits to law enforcement agencies, who need help accessing behavioral health needs for clients and community members.
- If passed, the proposed bond would fund a new correctional facility with dedicated areas to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment for adults in custody.

What determines when a person who is experiencing a mental health and/or substance abuse crisis goes to the crisis center versus jail?

- If no crime has been committed, law enforcement may point the person to the Crisis Center with information on the resources available or could facilitate transport to the

Crisis Center at the individual's request and with their consent, depending on the circumstances at the time.

- If a crime has been committed, the person may be released with a criminal citation and provided with Crisis Center information. Depending on the crime committed, such as a crime against a person, the individual would most likely be taken into custody and transported to the jail.
- Until the Crisis Center is operational, if a person is a threat to themselves or others, they are taken into custody on a peace officer's hold or to the hospital.

Why did Benton County Commissioners move forward with the acquisition of the Community Safety and Justice Campus site and construction of the new courthouse/District Attorney's office?

Planning for improvements in the Benton County justice system has occurred over the last five years. Plans are based on recommendations from a comprehensive assessment and have been informed by extensive stakeholder input throughout the process.

- The site selection for the Community Safety and Justice Campus was made following a review of more than 40 potential sites, with input from two advisory committees and more than 25 community presentations.
- Acquisition of the campus site was required in order to proceed with planning for co-located county facilities.
- The proposed campus is a 29.53-acre site, about one mile north of downtown Corvallis on Highway 20, near the City of Corvallis water treatment facility.
- Proceeding with the construction of the new courthouse/District Attorney's office was necessary to leverage a 50-percent state matching fund grant—more than \$20 million—for the courthouse.

What will happen to the Historic Courthouse?

A Historic Courthouse Advisory Committee is developing repurposing options for the Board of Commissioner's consideration. The committee expects to engage in public outreach this summer and to present its recommendations to the Commissioners in December 2023. **Advisory committee meetings** are open to the public.

What are the current safety and accountability challenges in Benton County?

- As of 2019, reported crime has increased 28% over the last five years, 33% of the people who are in jail are released because of lack of space, and 31% of the adults in custody could benefit from mental health treatment.
- There is no dedicated space in the current jail for rehabilitative programs that address mental health, substance abuse, or education.

- Benton County's current jail capacity per capita is the lowest in Oregon at 0.417 beds per 1,000 people.
- A 120-bed correctional facility is appropriate for Benton County based on multiple forecasting models.

What are the current mental health challenges in Benton County?

- Over the last decade, children and youth challenges have grown, with conditions from depression to substance use continuing to rise.
- According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and the 2020 Oregon Student Health Survey, the rate of suicide among youth (10-24 years) has increased by 60% in the last decade. A quarter of all 11th graders reported having mental health needs that have gone unmet in the last year.
- Benton County Behavioral Health reports that the current wait time for individuals seeking mental health therapy is three to four months.

What are the current homelessness services facility challenges and recommendations in Benton County?

- There has been an 89% increase in people experiencing homelessness in Benton County since 2017.
- In Corvallis, nearly 800 people received services from the Corvallis Daytime Drop Center last year. CDDC is the only low-barrier, drop-in resource navigation hub in Benton County.
- Benton County and the City of Corvallis formed the Home, Opportunity, Planning, and Equity (HOPE) Advisory Board to address homelessness in Benton County. The proposed bond, if passed, would help fund the implementation of a core HOPE recommendation by dedicating funds to the development of a homelessness navigation center in Corvallis to help people build pathways out of homelessness. The County has requested state funds to complete the project.

Still have a question about JSIP? Contact us at justicesystem@bentoncountyor.gov.