

Whereas, Racine County has proposed to construct a Secure Residential Care Center for Children and Youth (SRCCY) and Detention Center (“Youth Detention Center”) for youth at 1717 Taylor Avenue in the City of Racine;

Whereas, the Common Council of the City of Racine heard and appreciated a presentation by County Executive Jonathan Delagrave about the Youth Detention Center at its December 15, 2020 meeting;

Whereas, the County’s current youth detention facility is located on the fourth floor of the Dennis Kornwolf Service Center at 1717 Taylor Avenue;

Whereas, the County’s proposal would construct a new 70,000 square foot, free-standing Youth Detention Center in the heart of the City of Racine;

Whereas, the County’s proposed Youth Detention Center would detain youth not only from Racine County, but from our Southeastern Wisconsin neighboring counties, including Kenosha, Walworth, Washington, Ozaukee, Waukesha, Rock, and Jefferson;

Whereas, the Common Council agrees with the County Executive that improvements in conditions and services at the current youth detention facility are long overdue;

Whereas, however, the Common Council has significant and numerous concerns about this proposal;

Whereas, the proposed Youth Detention Center would be located in a key corridor, in the middle of a residential neighborhood, and within blocks of Racine’s first Community School at Knapp Elementary;

Whereas, locating the new, freestanding Youth Detention Facility in this proposed location will represent a significant step back from the progress the City and partners are making to stabilize and enhance this diverse City neighborhood;

Whereas, the proposed Youth Detention Center will create new challenges to achieving equity among our community members;

Whereas, the City’s efforts to ensure opportunity and advancement for our African American and Latinx residents are not furthered by the construction of a new Youth Detention Center within the City limits;

Whereas, placing this new Youth Detention Center in the City of Racine sends a troubling message to City residents, particularly residents of color;

Whereas, we do not want more of our community's youth and their families to see and internalize a jail for children as "normal" in their neighborhoods;

Whereas, the residents of the neighborhoods surrounding the proposed Youth Detention Center did not receive direct outreach from the County and were not directly engaged in conversations about the proposed facility;

Whereas, according to the County's own grant application to the State clearly envisions the location of this facility to be outside the City of Racine, on a 12-14 acre parcel in an industrial park;

Whereas, the County's vision for a facility with a more holistic service vision is appreciated but is in conflict with the relevant enabling State legislation which makes clear that this facility cannot ever be anything other than a permanent juvenile detention facility;

Therefore, be it resolved that, the Racine Common Council is opposed to the construction of this new Youth Detention Center in the City of Racine; urges the County Executive and the County Board to evaluate and secure a location elsewhere in the County for this facility, calls upon Governor Evers and his Administration to not release state grant funds for this facility if located in the City of Racine, and hereby directs City leadership and City staff to pursue all possible options to prevent this facility from being constructed within the City of Racine.