



Frequently Asked Questions

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What is 1A?

1A is a measure referred to the ballot by a unanimous vote of the Arapahoe County Commissioners asking voters for a property tax increase. If passed, Referred Measure 1A will raise \$46 million per year – about \$5.66 per month for the average home. The new revenue stream will build and operate a new county jail as well as programs specifically addressing mental health, addiction, job training and other programs critical to reducing recidivism and the incarceration rate in Arapahoe County.

How much will 1A cost?

The future facility will be built in two phases and will cost \$463 million dollars in capital costs and \$16 million dollars in additional operational expense for programs, staffing and maintenance. 1A will cost the average homeowner in Arapahoe County approximately \$5.66 per month.

Does this tax have a sunset?

Yes. Once the bonds to build the facility are paid off, Arapahoe County will reduce 1.1 mils from your property tax.

Isn't it more cost effective to renovate and repair the existing facility?

No. It would cost significantly more to renovate the current jail than to build a new one. The current facility was built in 1983 to house 386 inmates. Temporary solutions were attempted in 2002 and 2006 when two housing pods were added and a third bunk in each cell was completed by 2006 increasing capacity to over 1,200. Renovating the current facility will not solve serious problems with the electrical and plumbing infrastructure – all which needs to be replaced. Nor is there any way to effectively add onto the existing facility. The structural foundation, building systems and utility infrastructure in today's jail are not nearly adequate to support a multi-story building. Also, any renovation would entail frequent movement of inmates to accommodate construction which would create serious safety problems. Additional land was purchased in 2010 in anticipation of a long-term solution, in particular, a new, multi-story structure.

A modern facility will provide a modular and scalable approach to housing, technology and administrative needs (medical, kitchen, laundry, classrooms) while improving safety for Sheriff's deputies, patrol officers and inmates including:

- Housing for each inmate classification
- Space to support initial medical/mental health assessments and timely intake/release processing
- Space for employment and training services that are proven to reduce recidivism



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- Separate mental health housing and monitoring
- Space for individual and group therapy
- Reentry services
- Rehabilitation to help inmates secure work, housing, medication, and treatment planning

How will the money be specifically used?

If 1A is passed by the voters, the new revenue the County is mandated to address only those programs mandated in the 1A ballot language, including necessary expenses for operations, supplies, equipment, and capital expenditures related to public safety and the criminal justice system.

What will the new jail look like?

Only a concept has been developed. The County Commissioners authorized the development of a Master Plan for the Arapahoe County Justice Center. It was prepared by the independent firm of Reilly Johnson Architecture which specializes in the planning and design of justice facilities, especially jails and courts. The Master Plan for the Arapahoe County Justice Center includes detailed design and construction requirements. The plan is based on core functions, staff operations, program needs, and government mandated safety requirements. The plan includes a phased approach, along with specific cost estimates.

Where will the new jail be built?

The new facility will be built on the same property where it sits today - just south of Arapahoe Road on Potomac Street. The first phase of the new facility will be built with no operational impact to the existing facility.

How does the jail make my community safer?

Investing in modern facilities and programs benefit everyone in Arapahoe County.

- 1 -The recidivism rate for mentally ill inmates participating in reentry services was 50% of those inmates who did not participate.
- 2 - There is a positive correlation between crowding and violent incidents among younger inmates and for those with mental health disorders. Addressing these needs makes it safer for Sheriff's deputies, staff and inmates.
- 3 - Programming has been shown to reduce inmate violence by providing daily structure and an opportunity for self-improvement while confined. The average inmate is released in 28 days
- 4 - Jail inmates who participate in employment and training services are less likely to reoffend than those who do not participate.
- 5 - Separate housing for inmates struggling with mental health issues supports proper programming and makes it safer for everyone while confined and for return to the community.



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What are the Sheriff's plans to reduce the population of the jail?

Several efforts have been made to limit jail population. One of these programs is referred to as the Court Date Notification Program. The program began as a recommendation from the Arapahoe County Justice Coordinating Committee (ACJCC) and is aimed at notifying folks of pending court dates to decrease the frequency of failures to appear in court. The Sheriff's office accomplishes this through a texting program, which has proven to be as effective as the previous voice calls being made.

The Sheriff also increased the amount of mental health training for staff across the agency, including Crisis Intervention Training and Mental Health First Aid training. The training helps staff recognize when someone is in crisis, and potentially helps reduce the possibility of additional charges or arrests.

Over the last several years the Work Release and Weekender programs have expanded substantially as an alternative to general population, which reduces jail bed days and allows for eligible participants to continue to contribute to society and their families in a positive way by maintaining employment.

In 2015 the Sheriff started a program in conjunction with Human Services to assist all eligible inmates in accessing benefits once they are released from custody.

In 2016 the Sheriff started training select inmates on the use of Narcan. Narcan is highly effective in briefly reversing a potentially fatal opioid overdose and are issued a single dose package upon release to be used in the event of a relapse.

In 2018 the Sheriff started a prescription drug program, which provides released inmates 30 days' worth of medications, which allows them a window to seek out-of-custody medications and treatment. In addition, a medication assisted therapy (MAT) program was created to continue treatment medication for those suffering from opioid addiction and are participating in a treatment program.

Judicial Services also offers a pre-trial supervision program and a navigator program, which assists with connecting offenders to resources in the community. The Sheriff's Office also works closely with the judicial district to operate specialty courts, which offer treatment-based alternatives for appropriate offenders. In 2017, the Chief Judge issued a new set of bonding guidelines with a goal of decreasing bond amounts for low level crimes.

How did the County come up with the cost estimates for a new jail?

This year (2019), the County Commissioners authorized the development of a Master Plan for the Arapahoe County Justice Center. It was prepared by the independent firm of Reilly Johnson



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What is the Long Range Planning Committee?

The LRPC is a citizen committee that was created to provide input and recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on the County's priorities – specifically the Jail and transportation. The committee consists of 25 Arapahoe County residents, business leaders and non-profit representatives. The committee was appointed in May, 2019 and met throughout the summer. The committee, which was appointed for one year, will continue to evaluate infrastructure needs including transportation and the courthouse.

What did the Long Range Planning Committee recommend?

At its meeting on August 6, the committee recommended that the County replace the old jail with a safe, modern facility. The committee also recommended a small increase in the property tax to fund the improvement, estimated to cost \$463 million, an expense that the current and projected County budget cannot absorb. On August 27th, the Board of County Commissioners reviewed the recommendations and made a final decision to send Referred Measure 1A to the voters. The Committee supported expanding proven public safety programs in the jail, including programs that address mental health disorders and substance abuse; alternative sentencing programs to keep non-violent and first-time offenders out of jail; and operating programs to reduce the likelihood of inmates reoffending when they re-enter to community.

How are my property taxes used now?

The primary source of revenue for the County is property tax. Arapahoe County has some of the lowest property taxes in the state. And County government keeps only about 15% of what it collects (an average \$403 a year) to provide County services and infrastructure. The vast majority of the property taxes we pay goes to schools (57%), cities and towns (7%) and special districts like fire and water (22%).

Can the new revenue be used for something else other than the jail?

No. If the voters pass Referred Measure 1A, the new revenue can only be used on those programs mandated in the 1A ballot language.

How can we be sure the money is being properly spent?

The measure requires that all expenditures are monitored and reviewed by a Citizen Advisory Committee.



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When will the Arapahoe County collect the increase?

Homeowners will see the increase in their annual assessment in 2020.

I'm a senior on a fixed income, is there a way the County can help me?

If you are currently taking advantage of the homestead redemption, this increase is included for qualifying seniors. To inquire about senior and veteran property tax exemptions, contact the County Assessor's office at 303-795-4600

What happens if the measure doesn't pass?

If the voters don't pass Referred Measure 1A, the jail infrastructure will continue to worsen, further endangering sheriff's deputies, inmates and visitors.