



Racial Equity & Our \$400 Million New Jail

Agenda

- The 411 on the new jail project
- Jails 101
- Why we care
- Who is in our jail, why, and for how long?
- Do jails make us safer?
- Reimagine Justice Lancaster
- Closing remarks and calls to action
- Questions



The 411: New Jail Project

Public information available at:
lccf-pa.com



“ approximately 1,000 beds. Accordingly, the current design contains a total of 994 beds. This reduction, along with the accepted revisions throughout the program, led to a significant decrease in the size of the proposed facility design. The original program called for 482,381 gross square feet and the current SD is reflecting a total of 433,018 gross square feet, for a total reduction of nearly 50,000 gross square feet. ■ ■ ■

Opinion of Probable Costs

The SD phase opinion of probable project costs developed by our independent cost estimator is between \$890/SF and \$940/SF.

This includes off-site development, site development and building construction costs as is depicted in the current design. Please note that we are still very early on in the design process and many things are still very much subject to change. This is merely a snapshot in time.

In addition to the construction costs described above, there are other costs associated with the project that are included in the overall project budget, known as soft costs. Soft costs typically include items such as professional fees, Inspections, Legal, FF&E (furniture, fixtures, and equipment), and other costs not directly related to hard construction costs. ”

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- Initial cost estimate is between \$385 – \$407 million
 - Does not include “soft costs”

Source: Schematic Design Report, August 2024, pp. 5 & 12

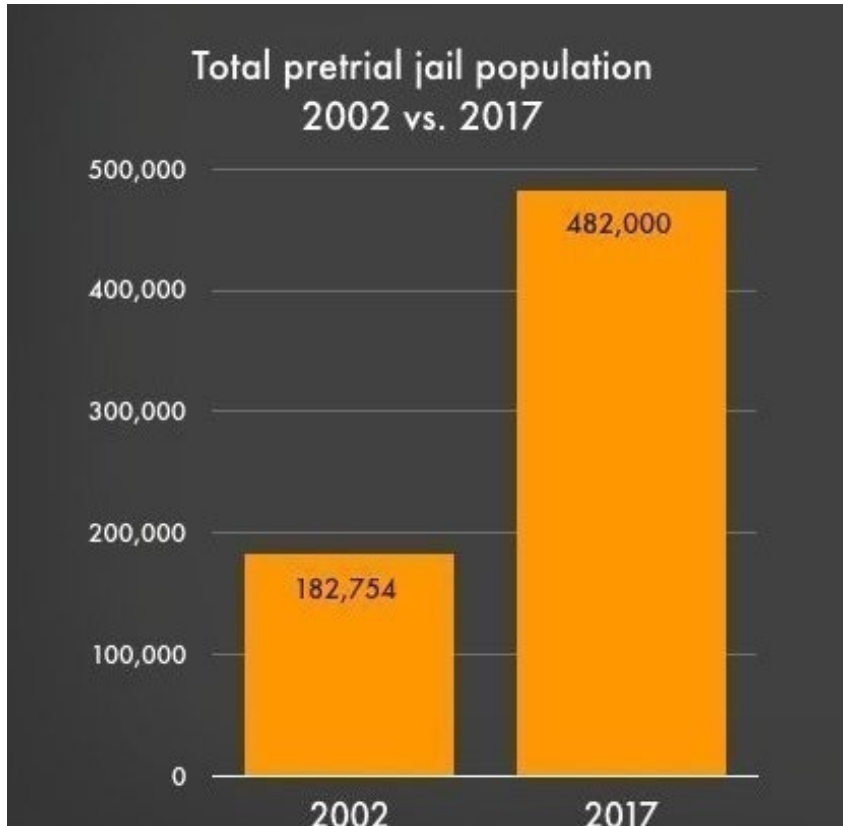
Yes, the County is considering a very big, very expensive new jail

Jails 101

- Local facilities run by counties
- People convicted & sentenced to a max term of incarceration < 2 years
- Also used for pretrial detention



National trends in pretrial incarceration over time



- Unconvicted persons are the fastest growing population behind bars
- Nationally, 2/3 of people in jail are not serving sentences
- Locally, that number is closer to 70%

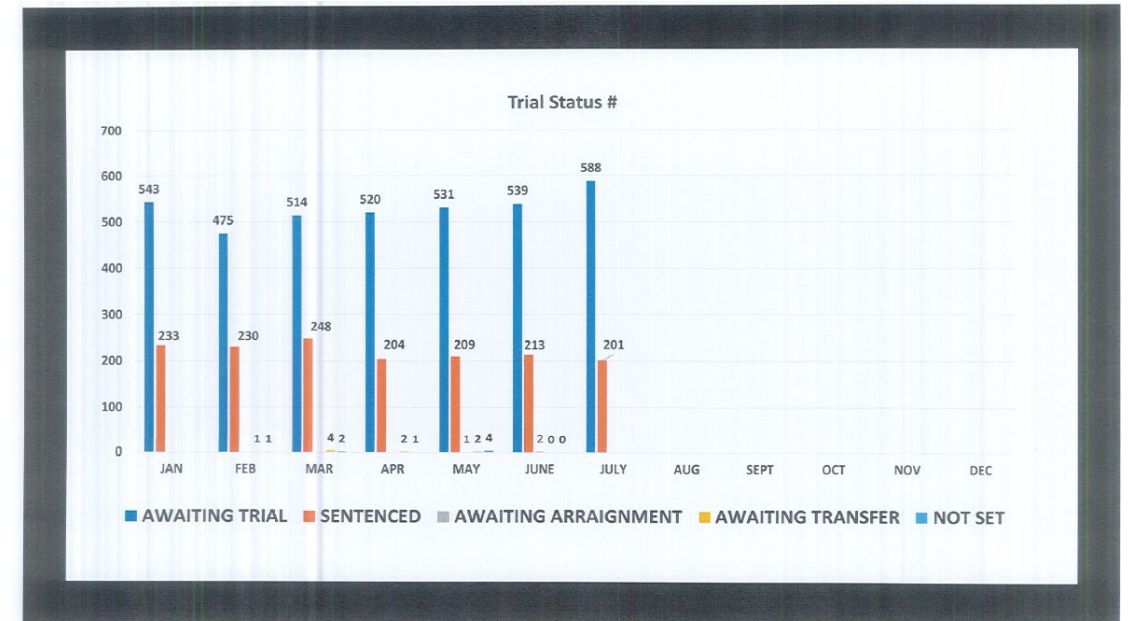
433%

The increase in the use of pretrial detention between 1970 and 2015

Source: Vera Institute of Justice, "Justice Denied: The Harmful and Lasting Effects of Pretrial Detention" (2019).

Pretrial incarceration in Lancaster County

- In 2021:
 - Average daily population = 722
 - 31% were serving sentences
 - 69% were being detained pretrial
 - In real numbers, this is ~ 500 innocent people per day
- In 2022:
 - Average daily population = 784
 - 38% were serving sentences
 - 62% were being detained pretrial
 - In real numbers, this is ~ 485 innocent people per day
- In 2023
 - Average daily population = 766
 - 30% were serving sentences
 - 70% were being detained pretrial
 - In real numbers, this is ~536 innocent people per day



- To date in 2024, 71% of everyone in our jail is being held on an accusation alone.

Source: Lancaster County Prison Board Report,
<https://co.lancaster.pa.us/AgendaCenter/Prison-Board-2>

Why we care

A \$400 million investment in carceral infrastructure threatens to impoverish our future

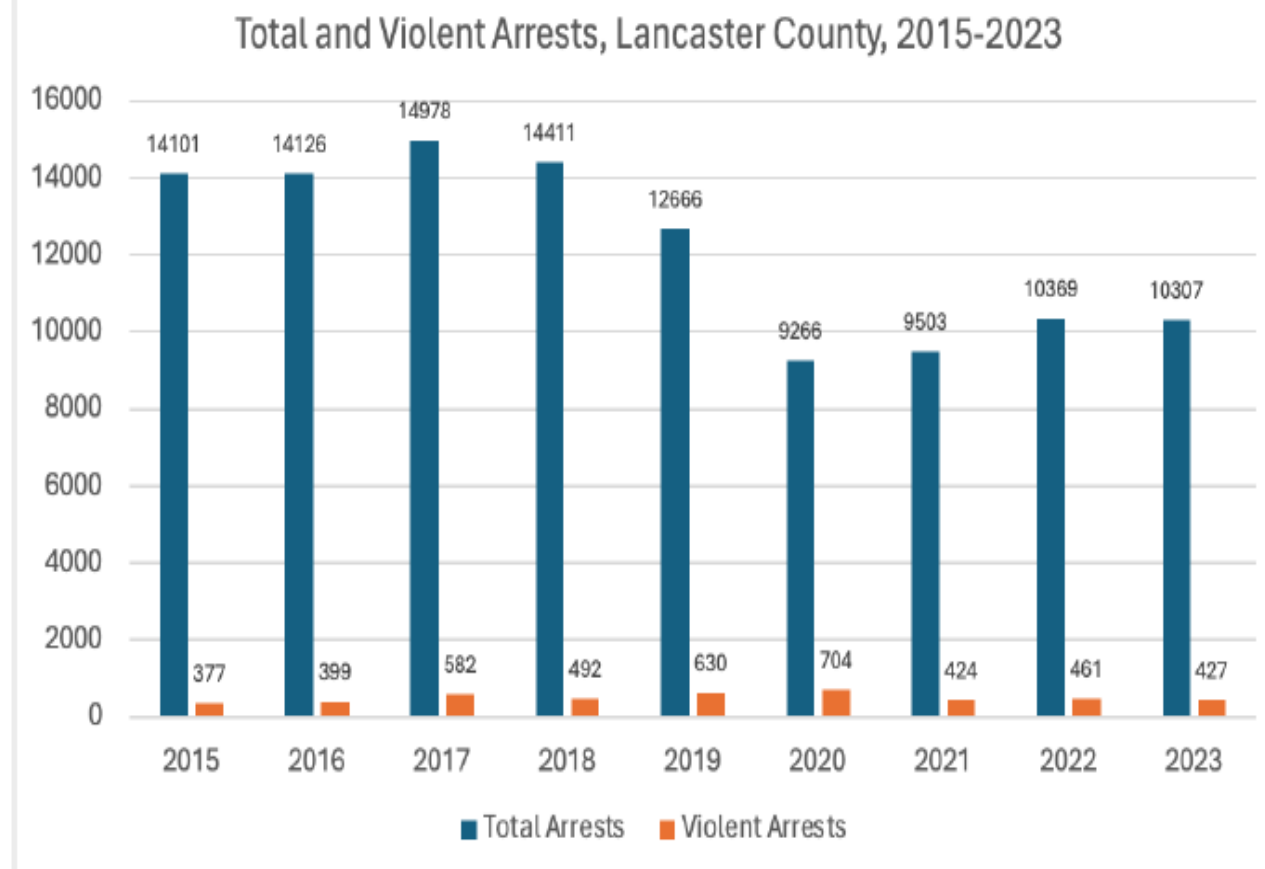
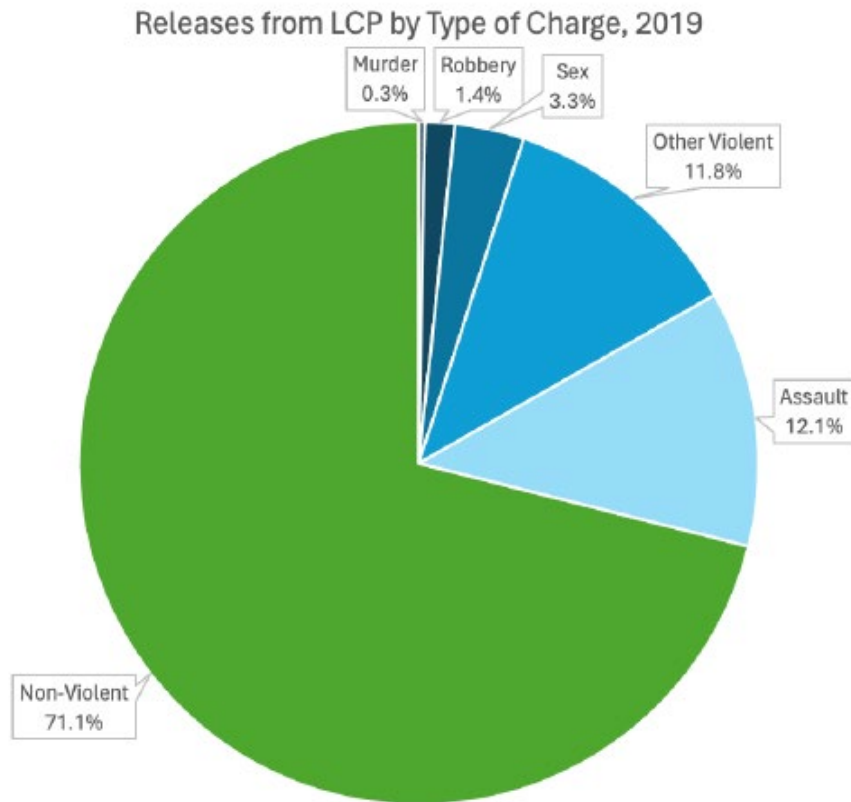


Who is in our jail, why, and for how long?

Ironically, because of the new jail project, we now have more insight into what we're using our jail for....



Most people entering our jail are there for non-violent charges & “PVs”



We use our jail to incarcerate people living with health & poverty issues

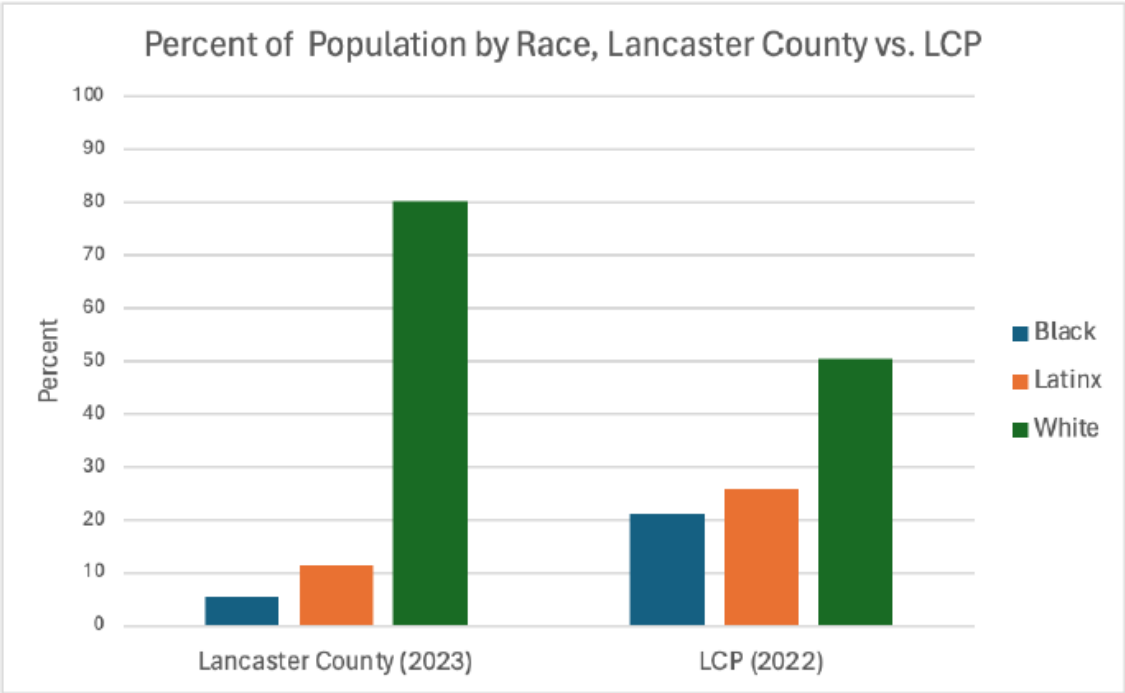
- 17% are unhoused
- 36% have a history of mental health treatment
- 56% have a history of substance use disorder

Lancaster County Correctional Facility – Needs Assessment, p. 15

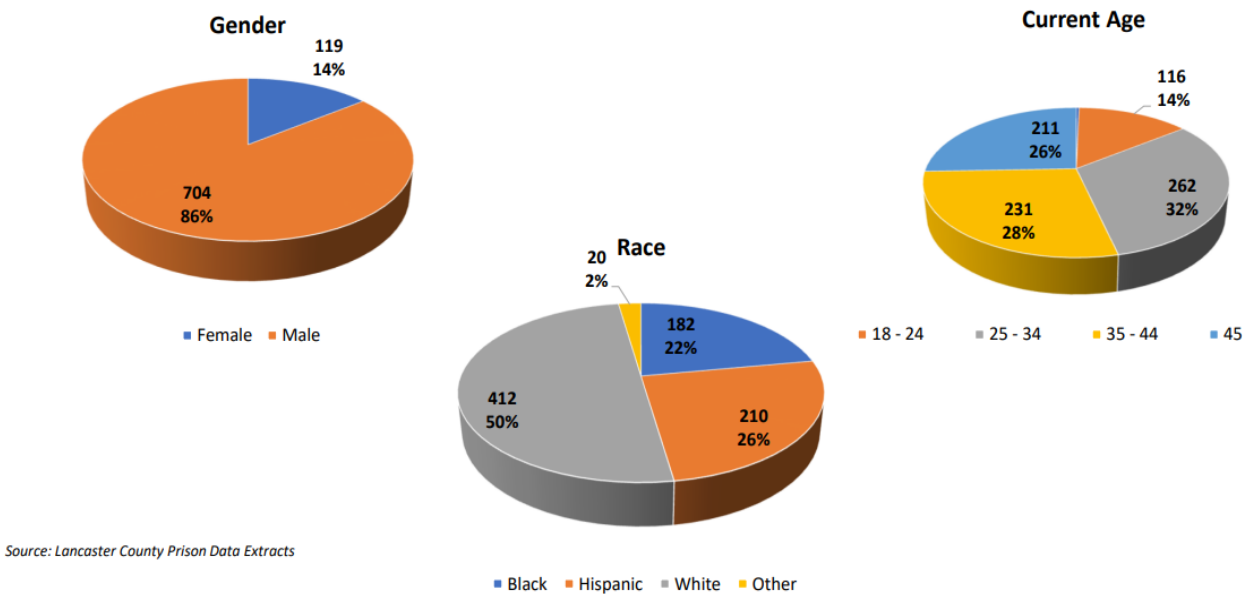


Racial disparities, population

Our jail is more disproportionately Black and Latinx than Pennsylvania jails as a whole!!



Demographics Average for 09/13 & 09/30/2022



Source: PPI Memo, p. 9

Bail Trends

CASH BAIL RATE

45.1%

ROR RATE

14.6%

AVERAGE BAIL AMOUNT

\$56,862

NON-POSTING RATE

64.7%

BAIL TYPE DISTRIBUTION



Cash Bail and Race

CASH BAIL RATE, BLACK

55.3%

CASH BAIL RATE, WHITE

43.4%

AVERAGE BAIL AMOUNT, BLACK

\$66,013

AVERAGE BAIL AMOUNT, WHITE

\$55,177

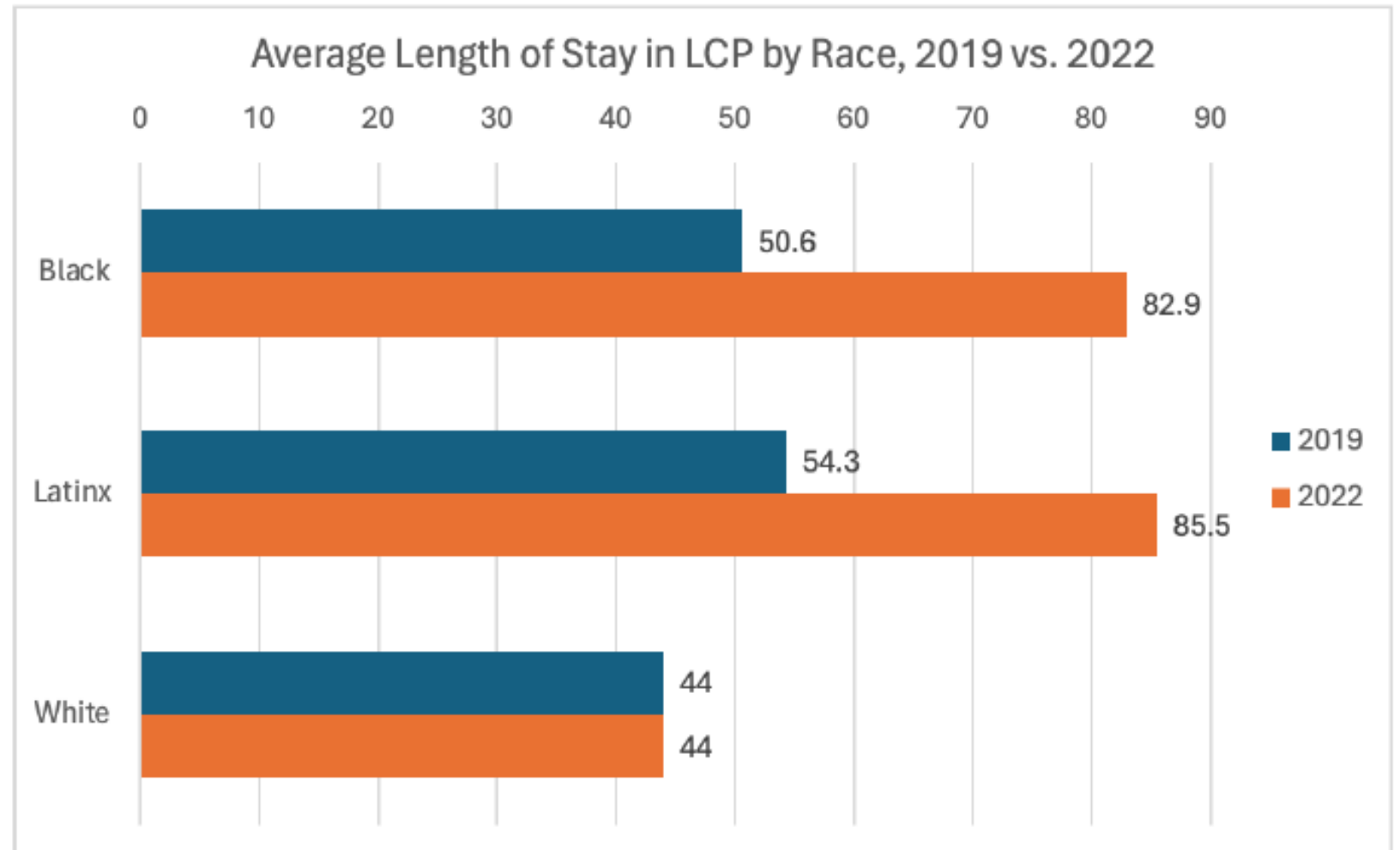
Racial disparities, bail practices

- Black people are 12% more likely than white people to be assigned cash bail.
- The average cash bail amount for a Black person is over \$10K more than for a white person.

<https://www.brokenrulespa.org/county-profile-lancaster>

Racial disparities, length of stay

- Black people stay in our jail 88% longer than white people.
- Latinx people stay in our jail 94% longer than white people.



Source: PPI Memo, p. 9

Do jails make us safer?

Responding to recent
comments from our public
officials



Our current practices are harmful; not helpful. A new building wont change that.

Pretrial incarceration is destabilizing, leads to worse outcomes, and is correlated with increased recidivism

- The human and societal costs of what we're doing cannot be overstated:
 - “[C]riminal justice stakeholders have also grown increasingly concerned over the collateral consequences of widespread detention and have pointed to the lack of empirical evidence demonstrating that pretrial detention is necessary to ensure public safety. Research has actually found that pretrial detention can have adverse effects on public safety. Detaining low-and moderate-risk defendants has strong correlations to higher rates of new criminal activity, both during the pretrial period and in the years following case disposition. **Moreover, there is a statistically significant and positive correlation between longer pretrial detention periods and rates of post-disposition recidivism.** The current research has not been able to fully explain these correlations, however, scholars have suggested that this relationship may be the result of the collateral consequences of pretrial detention (e.g., loss of job, unstable housing, familial problems upon release).”
 - “Defendants and their families are not only financially affected by these increasing bail amounts; studies have shown that there is a correlation between the imposition of monetary conditions to secure pretrial release and the increased likelihood of individuals suffering from housing insecurity, unemployment, loss of child custody, and an increased risk of future criminal behavior. Being incarcerated during the pretrial period can also undermine an individual’s ability to freely interact with their lawyer to mount a defense. Additionally, pretrial detention can limit their ability to demonstrate that they are acting responsibly (e.g., supporting their families, maintaining employment, working in the community), which can result in less lenient sentencing outcomes.”

Source: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *The Civil Rights Implications of Cash Bail*, pp. 14-15 & 17 (Jan. 2022).
<https://www.usccr.gov/files/2022-01/USCCR-Bail-Reform-Report-01-20-22.pdf>

- No wonder our recidivism rate is so high: 88.5% of people coming in to our jail have been incarcerated before, according to the Needs Assessment report.

Treatment is not effective in carceral settings

- For treatment to be effective, it must be voluntary, and the recipient must be vulnerable and open.
- *Also:*
 - The vast majority of people in our jail are being held for an indefinite period of time, which doesn't work well with the idea of programing.
 - Jail is punishment. We should not be jailing / criminalizing people so that they can "get help". Instead, we should be focusing on *prevention*. The safest communities are the most resourced.
 - No matter how robust programing might be, if no supports are lacking in the community, the cycle will continue.



A smaller new jail is possible

“But what about a crime wave?” (DA Adams)

“That is pure speculation” (PJ Ashworth)

- From the Needs Assessment report:
 - “jail populations are incredibly sensitive to law enforcement, court processing, and sentencing practice”
 - Average Daily Population = Admissions x Length of Stay
 - Crime in Lancaster County has been falling substantially over the last decade

Introducing: RJL



- Reimagine Justice, Lancaster!
 - *We strive for a just and equitable community where everyone has access to the resources they need—education, housing, meaningful work, and restorative care—to thrive. By drastically reducing the role of the criminal legal system and addressing social and public health issues through community-based solutions, we envision a future where public safety is achieved through support, rehabilitation, and wholeness, not incarceration.*
- Advocacy to date:
 - PPI Memo
 - Budget Memo
- *Website and other coalition infrastructure still under construction....stay tuned!!*

What we want



What you can do

- Follow Lancaster Bail Fund on social media & sign up for our listserv
- Donate!
- Attend a Commissioner's Meeting: 10/1 Presentation

lancasterbailfund.org





Thank you & Questions
