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Allen County Commissioner Opposes New Corrections Building Near Jail

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People in the real estate business often say "location" is the most critical factor in closing a sale.

"Location" seems to be one reason why a proposal to build a new corrections building downtown is getting the cold shoulder from Allen County officials.

We reported last month that the Indiana Department of Correction was open to help fund a multi-story facility across from the county jail, that could be used by Community Corrections, and serve as transitional housing for early release state prison inmates.

The County Commissioners, who met downtown Friday morning, have been caught in the middle of a debate over whether the proposed location is a good fit.

Headwaters Park Director Geoff Paddock and Prosecutor Karen Richards say it's not, claiming, among other things, it could stunt downtown development efforts.

Commissioner Bill Brown wants to go another way too.

Bill Brown/(R) Allen County Commissioner: "That location is put on the shelf at this time. We needed to firm that up and wanted to talk about it at this morning's meeting. I didn't have an opportunity to. But we're going to have to talk about it next week to put some finality to that."

Allen Superior Court Judge John Surbeck says if the plan near the jail is dead, it's a shame, because he believes grouping various criminal justice programs close together makes perfect sense.

At the commissioner's meeting next week, expect more discussion of alternative sites.

Surbeck says such a facility is a necessity somewhere in Fort Wayne.