

Criminal Justice Report Hailed as 'Blueprint for Change'

County urged to act quickly; Board chair wants jail report followed

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The new *Dane County criminal justice assessment report is a "blueprint for change,"* said County Board Chairman Scott McDonell, and *should be implemented as soon as possible to help the county save time, money and beds in jail.*

McDonell and the report's author, Alan Kalmanoff, met with The Capital Times' editorial board on Thursday to tout the 151-page document as the foundation for a sea change in how the county handles lawbreakers at practically every step of the way in the criminal justice system.

"Every day we are slow in implementing this report will exacerbate the problems," McDonell said. *"If we did all of what's in this report, we'd be in great shape."*

The recommendations in the report, which were presented to the County Board Thursday night, call for more reliance on modern-day methods, such as using computers for court scheduling instead of paper, and using electronic bracelets for off-site monitoring of minor crime offenders instead of putting them behind bars.

"There is enormous waste here in scheduling and in jailing," Kalmanoff said. "There are many places in the system here where you can make things go quicker."

McDonell said *change in the system can come about rather quickly, since the recommendations in the report are predicated on having the budget and the wherewithal by the leaders in the system to do it.*

"We have control over this," he said. "There is no one else we need to go to to do this."

Kalmanoff said if there's any downside to the report, it's getting entrenched people to change their mind-set.

"People are resistant to change," he said. "But they need to understand they are the ones who will benefit the most from it."