

Future of the Oahu Community Correctional Center

Volume 6 - Modern Community Correctional Center Design and Function

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Hawaii Department of Public Safety

The Hawaii Department of Public Safety (PSD) operates the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) which acts as the local detention center for the First Circuit Court. OCCC provides the customary county jail function of managing both pre-trial detainees and locally-sentenced misdemeanor offenders and others with a sentence of one year or less as well as providing a pre-release preparation/transition function for prison system inmates when they reach less than a year until their scheduled release.

PSD is proposing to improve its corrections infrastructure through modernization of its existing facilities and construction of new institutions to replace others and among its priority projects is the replacement of OCCC. Located within an approximately 16-acre property at 2109 Kamehameha Highway in Honolulu, OCCC is currently the largest county jail facility in the Hawaii system. From its beginning in 1975 as a part of the county-based community corrections system concept with 456 beds, the facility has been expanded to its current design capacity of 628 beds and an operational capacity of 954 beds and consistently operates above these capacities.



Oahu Community Correctional Center

Commitment to Modern Design

At this time, PSD has not prepared a detailed design for a replacement OCCC facility which will be performed in later stages of the planning and development process. However, it can be stated that the new OCCC will look nothing like the existing OCCC in Kalihi. In fact, it will bear little resemblance to most of the images we think of when contemplating a jail or detention facility.

With technical evaluations currently underway of the 11 prospective sites upon which the new OCCC might be constructed, the PSD planning team has begun exploring how a new facility might look and function. It is clear that the design of jails and detention facilities has changed dramatically since OCCC in Kalihi was originally constructed in 1975. This change is a result of several factors including the advent of new technologies and building materials. However, most important is the fact that the mission and philosophy of jail operations have changed substantially since the OCCC was constructed; this change in function has altered jail design significantly over the decades.



Oahu Community Correctional Center

History of OCCC

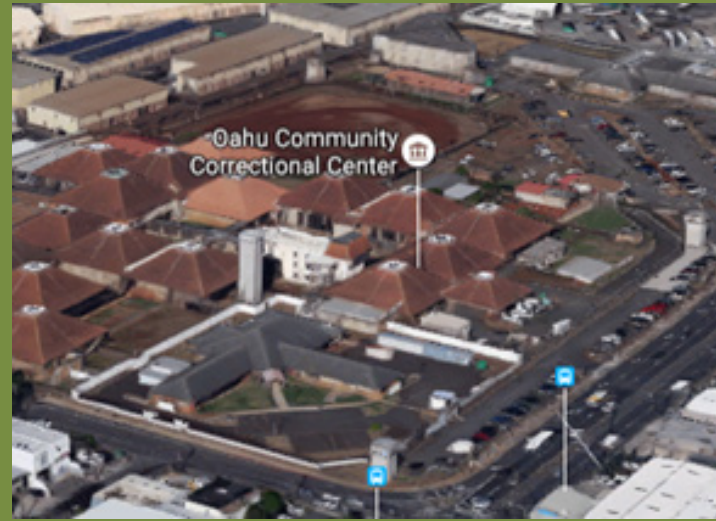
The facility initially came under state control in 1975, when it was transferred from City and County control as part of the State assuming state-wide responsibility for all aspects of incarceration. Annex 1 to the old jail was completed at the time of transfer. The main jail building, constructed as a 312-cell facility, opened in 1980 and was fully completed and occupied in 1982. At the time it was constructed it was viewed as a state-of-the-art facility and a positive step in the development of facility design and operations as detention and corrections evolved from the historic “telephone/intermittent surveillance custody and control model” to a more modern podular direct supervision approach to care and custody.



OCCC Circa 1985

From 1978 to 1987, OCCC was both the local jail and primary prison for Hawaii, since the largest portion of the inmate population originated from Oahu.

Since 1987, OCCC has functioned primarily as a pre-trial detention facility. While a model at the time of construction, overcrowding and a patchwork of additions makes operation of the facility challenging in terms of security, safety, support services and access to programs. It's important to note that the inmates housed at OCCC are under the jurisdiction of the Judiciary (courts) and not PSD. Detainees in jail can only be released, placed in outside programs or assigned to other alternatives to incarceration by the Judiciary (courts).



OCCC Circa 2016

Mission of a Modern Jail

A jail is a facility where individuals (detainees) are held for trial. These may be persons who either could not meet their bail or may not have qualified for bail according to the courts. In certain cases, a jail may also house individuals who have been to court, convicted, and sentenced to short term incarceration – usually less than a year. In contrast, a prison or correctional facility is exclusively populated by inmates who have been convicted of a crime and are serving an extended sentence – typically a year or more. Many people uses the terms “jail” and “prison” interchangeably; however, in purpose and operation the two types of facilities are substantially different. PSD is proposing to develop a new OCCC to function as the island’s only jail.

The difference between a jail and a prison may seem minor on the surface, but there are fundamental differences between the two which affects the types of services the facilities must provide, how they are operated and their design and appearance. As

noted earlier, jails are locally-operated, short-term facilities that hold detainees awaiting trial or sentencing or both, and inmates sentenced to a term of less than one year. A prison houses inmates that have been convicted of a crime and because of the longer sentences, the operation of a prison typically has a greater focus on rehabilitation. Programs offered may include training in a trade and education programs for helping inmates to acquire their GED or secondary degrees.

Programs are important to the wellbeing of detainees and inmates. Many of these programs, such as training in a trade and education programs to acquire GED or secondary degrees, are designed to help inmates change their lives and avoid a return to the justice system. The very nature of the short-term stay in jails and the state of uncertainty influences not only the mindset and stresses on the detainee but also on the programs that are required. Remember that detainees are in jail awaiting trial and have not been found guilty of a crime.

The challenge to operating a jail is the many unknowns. Detainees may have a chemical dependency or suffering from an as yet undiagnosed mental health issue. In both cases, the detainee is not yet receiving treatment for their particular problem and it is the burden of the jail to provide a diagnosis and recommend the appropriate treatment program.

Evolution in Jail Operating Philosophy

In the most basic form, incarceration can follow two philosophies: A conservative philosophy that incarceration shouldn't be comfortable so as not to encourage bad behavior or a more progressive view that confinement is the punishment and can be utilized as an opportunity for rehabilitation and reform. Conservative views lend themselves to stark design without consideration to the comfort of the detainee or inmate, which can then lend itself to the development of a negative environment associated with the term “jail.”

The physical environment of a jail can directly affect detainee/inmate behavior. Certain design configurations can promote aggression and negative psychological effects. Progressive views are increasingly replacing the antiquated conservative philosophy and the belief that the more normative environment provided, the better. This approach addresses the well-being of the detainees and inmates. It is, however, important during design to find a balance between the two views as laws, administrations, and/or operational philosophies can change like a pendulum moving from one extreme to another. The challenge of a successful design is to address these opportunities of change without compromising safety and security.

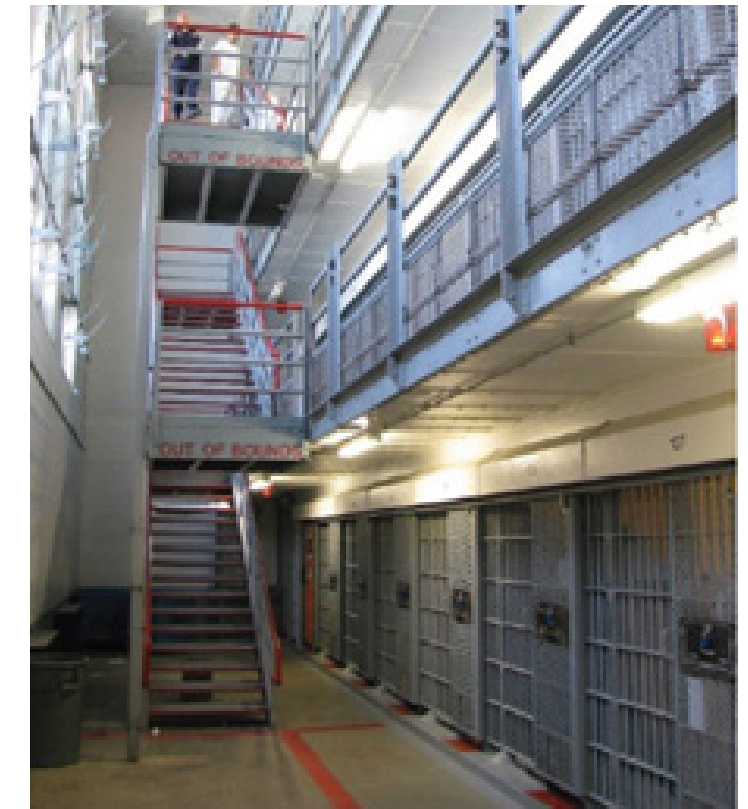
Traditional Jail Design and Function

Jails, dating back to the mid-1900s, were uncompromising spaces consisting of rows of cells within self-contained cell blocks facing spaces that acted as “dayrooms” with little contact between inmates and staff. Spaces were characterized by limited access to toilets, showers and washrooms for long periods of time. Meals were delivered into the “dayroom” or cells through slots in the doors.

For a brief period in the 1970s, the general philosophy and mission of jails changed to one of reformation and rehabilitation. Even within the prison system the name “prison” was changed to “correctional institution” and correctional programs proliferated. However, the rehabilitative era was over by the 1980s as jail and prison systems struggled to house rapidly rising numbers of prisoners. Detention once again settled back into an updated form of its mid-1900s predecessor with a less ambitious mission of providing punishment and incapacitation.

The environment progressed into a linear, single or multiple-occupancy cells and dormitories utilizing an indirect method of

supervision. Similar to early jail design, contact between staff and inmate was limited. Supervision consisted of closed-circuit television and intermittent staff patrols of the corridors. Since staff are the most costly (and important) resource in operating a jail with staffing costs comprising up to 70% to 80% of the annual operating budget. This Indirect Supervision model in use at the time allowed operation with a minimum of staff. During the 1970s and 1980s, approximately 30% of the nation’s jails were built following the linear design and indirect supervision methodology (National Institute of Corrections, 1985). These spaces lack program space, physical separation between classifications of inmates, and incurred maintenance problems.



Traditional cell block (typical)



Traditional inmate housing (typical)



Van Cise-Simonet Detention Center, Denver, CO



San Mateo County Jail, Redwood City, California



Toronto South Detention Centre, Canada



Snohomish County Corrections, Everett, WA

Modern Jail Design

Previous design methodology is quite different from jail design in use today. Alternatives to incarceration, humane treatment and programming, and the fact that a high number of detainees and persons being sentenced have a mental health diagnosis are key drivers in the design of today's jails. Additionally, while the male inmate population is generally stable or declining, the female population is increasing. Each design choice also presents an opportunity that will ultimately affect the safety of the public, staff, and detainees as well as the efficiency in daily operations and effectiveness in function.

With technical evaluations currently underway of prospective sites upon which the new OCCC might be constructed, PSD has begun exploring how a new facility might look and function. Recently, the OCCC project team visited four modern jails and detention centers to understand how far the state-of-the-art in jail design and construction has progressed over past decades. Among the facilities inspected was the:

- Van Cise-Simonet Detention Center, Denver, Colorado
- San Mateo County Jail, Redwood City, California
- Snohomish County Corrections, Everett, Washington
- Toronto South Detention Centre, Canada

Included within the pages that follow are interior and exterior views of the four detention centers as representations of what a new OCCC could look like.

Direct Supervision

An effective design approach is based on direct supervision rather than indirect supervision. Direct supervision emphasizes staff interaction and decentralized program activities. By placing officers within the housing module they have direct contact with the detainees which provides the means to address behaviors and conflict before a situation can become disruptive. Decentralized programs allow for programs to be offered in the housing module and/or living unit, limiting the amount of inmate movement throughout the building and campus.

Programming

Decentralized programs include, but are not limited to dining, counselling, visiting, group activities, anger management, substance abuse, parenting, and education. In addition, the design of women's facilities should recognize that women in detention centers have different profiles of risks and needs and react differently to programming than men. Accommodations should be adjusted to the fact that women socialize in group settings, relate differently to their environment, and are substantially less prone to institutional damage than the equivalent secure male population.

The Direct Supervision model places less emphasis on physical security, creating a more normative environment in which to live. Housing is based on a pod or module concept. Each module is staffed around the clock by specially trained corrections officers. Modules are self-contained, combining the housing of inmates with visiting, programming, recreation, and related activities. The podular design reduces the need for inmate movement, enhances security, and increases contact between inmates and correctional staff. Interior and exterior finishes and furnishings provide a "normalized" environment in most housing areas except those used for discipline and segregation. Most direct supervision jails have carpeting, wood, upholstered furnishings, splashes of color, and considerable natural light. Housing units are also equipped with counters, sinks, drink dispensers, and telephones accessible to inmates in the dayrooms. Many pods have their own exercise machines. Cells have one or two bunks, a desk and seat, running water, intercoms, and sizable windows.

As previously mentioned, many detainees suffer from a mental illness. Important considerations for programming and design of a secure environment for people with a mental health diagnosis include providing innovative, individual-centered and therapeutic services; spaces supporting concepts of safety and security; and reduced stigmatization associated with mental illness and with being committed.



Dayroom used for programmed activities at Van Cise-Simonet Detention Center

Studies have shown that careful and thoughtful design of spaces can assist in the positive modification of behaviors. During the design phase it is important to overcome any obstacles that prevent designers from incorporating elements that are known to be beneficial. Examples of specific design criteria for the housing and treatment of detainees with a mental health diagnosis include, but are not limited to:

- Providing natural light and acoustical treatment. Case studies have shown the use of natural light and acoustical treatment to quiet the environment have a therapeutic effect on persons with a mental health diagnosis
- Providing comfortable, normalized environments while addressing safety and security needs
- Providing positive distractions to reduce tension and anxiety
- Providing flexible treatment spaces both on and off the housing unit in varying sizes
- Providing access to the outdoors, or at least views to the outdoors
- Use of color and artwork
- Providing security surveillance that includes considerations for both medical and security staff
- Providing privacy and adequate security for one on one interview and group treatment settings
- Providing reasonable accommodation for staff and offender or inmate interactions, recognizing the need for privacy and suicide or self-injury prevention (showers, cells, dorms, etc.)

The exterior design of jail facilities is also evolving in a very positive way from its predecessors. Jails are often a part of multifunction public buildings, sharing space with the courts and related public and social services. The exterior design is now often informed by the neighborhood context and therefore, must create a positive civic presence. This leads to better opportunities for architectural expression, varieties of building massing, and the diverse use of materials.

To successfully facilitate implementation of justice reinvestment principles, the new OCCC needs to be radically different from the current OCCC. Regardless of where the new OCCC is located, it will be very different from anything the State of Hawaii has ever constructed. Advances in technology, design, and philosophy have all contributed to a change in how jails are designed and constructed today.

Modern Facility Interior Design

Van Cise-Simonet Detention Center, Denver, Colorado



Snohomish County Corrections, Everett, Washington



San Mateo County Jail, Redwood City, California



Toronto South Detention Centre, Canada



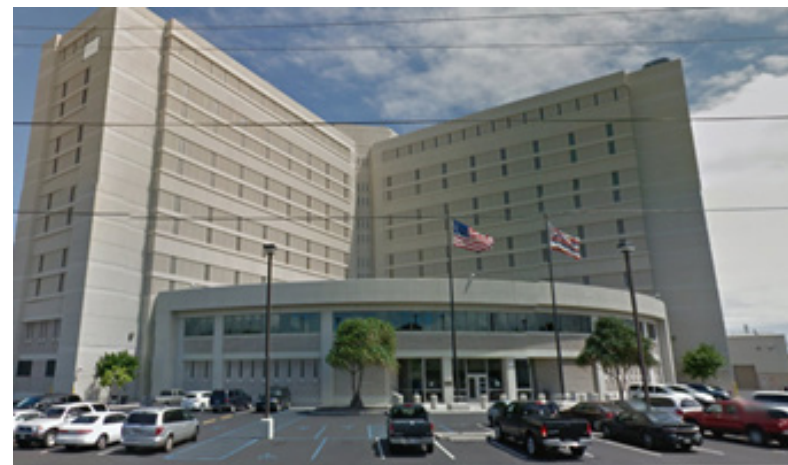
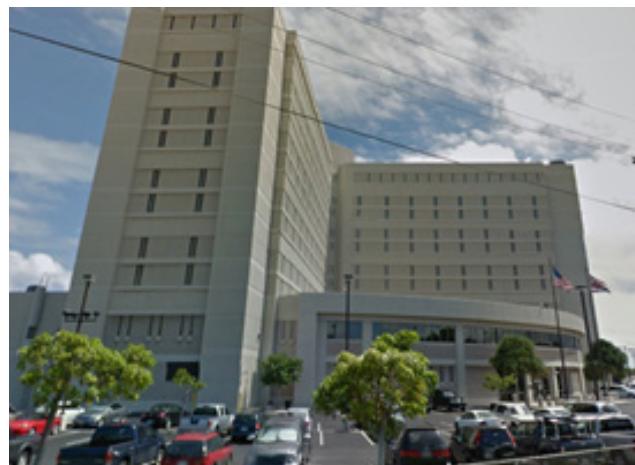
21st Century Technology

Technological innovation and advancement have allowed for security systems that provide more efficient management of the offender population. Security systems used to be designed from the outside in, relying on fencing and guard towers such as those found at the current OCCC. Today, modern facilities' security systems are built from the inside out, using state-of-the-art security and monitoring systems that eliminate the need for guard towers and improve their ability to constantly monitor offenders. These advancements are not only more aesthetically pleasing, but are also more effective and reduce operating costs. The configuration, design, and layout of modern detention facilities allow corrections officers to manage inmates more securely, treat them more humanely, and prepare them more effectively for transition back into

society.

The facilities are also designed to blend into their host community and often look more like a medical center or office building than the historic jails that used to be constructed. An excellent example of how a modern jail can be integrated seamlessly into its surroundings is the Federal Detention Center located on Elliott Street, adjacent to Honolulu International Airport (pictured below).

Federal Detention Center, Honolulu, Hawaii



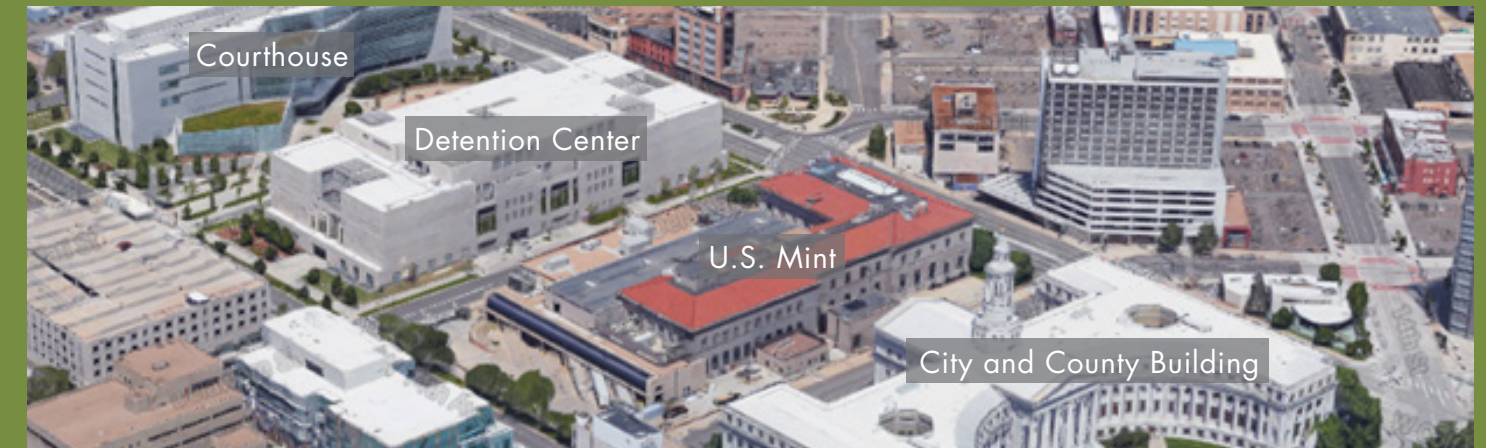
Federal Detention Center, Honolulu, Hawaii

Modern Jails In Community Context

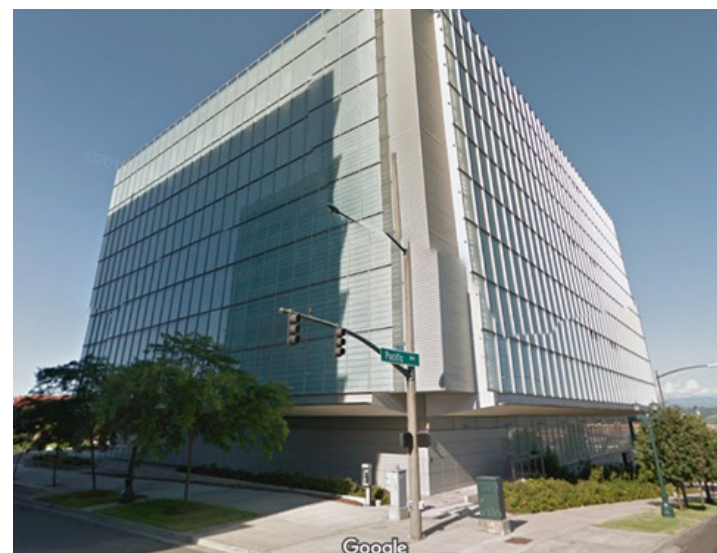
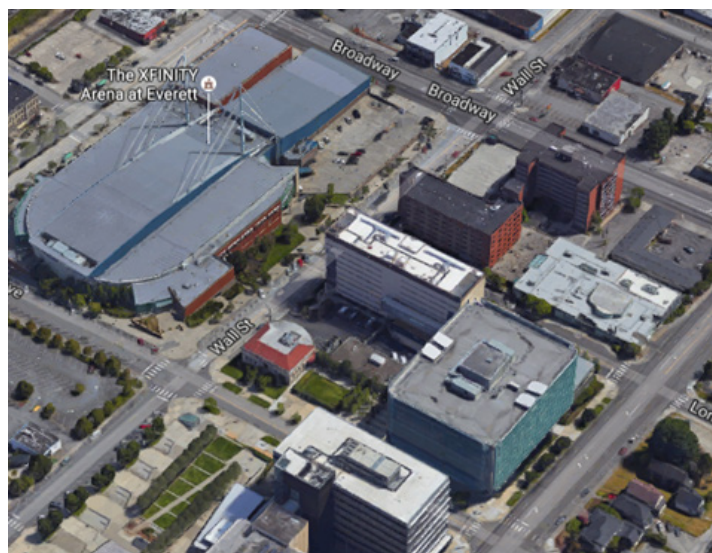
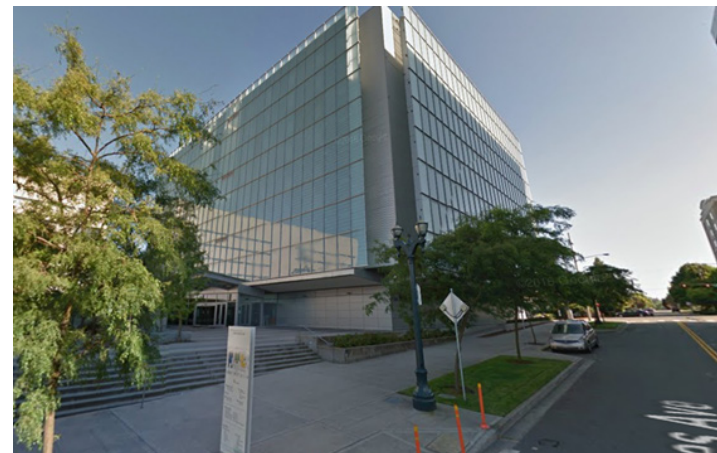
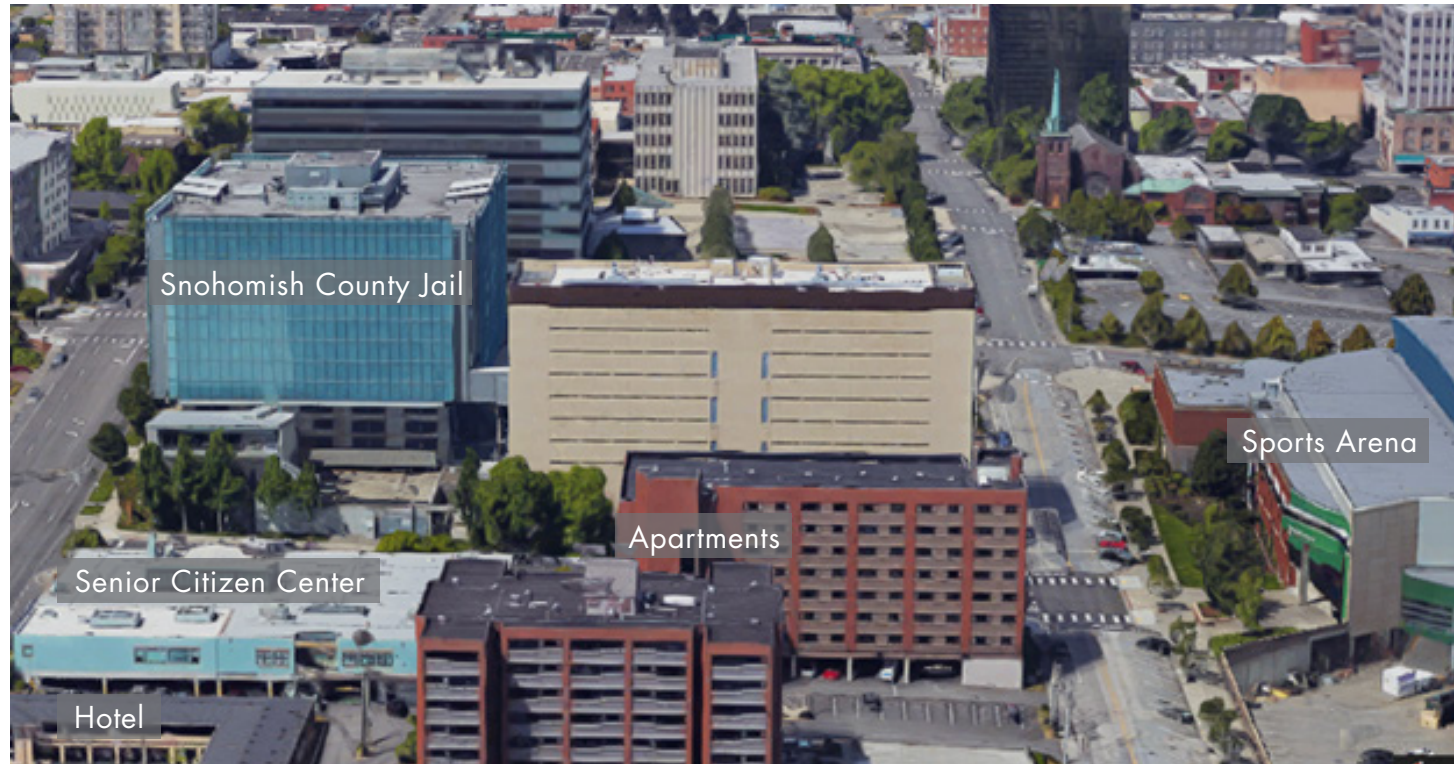
These examples of modern correctional facilities are components of the broader urban context, geographically located within the downtown centers of major cities. They benefit from close proximity to services, amenities and civic functions such as courts. Their locations within urban centers have spurred economic development through urban in-fill. Moreover, rather than detracting from the surrounding aesthetic, these modern facilities can enhance the urban experience. Building architecture and landscape elements inherent in modern facility design contribute to

the surrounding urban landscape and a quality pedestrian experience. As illustrated, these facilities represent high-quality public buildings that fit visually amid downtown office parks, convention centers and other civic uses. Indeed, modern detention facilities possess a much more appealing façade compared to facilities of the past, with exterior design features akin to schools, community college campuses, government complexes and office buildings.

Denver, Colorado



Snohomish County, Washington



San Mateo County, California



Toronto, Canada





Today's jails and detention centers can be responsible, good neighbors. The new CCC that will eventually replace the current OCCC is yet to be designed. However, a new CCC facility will include state-of-the-art design concepts which include the examples cited above. If a modern new jail replaces OCCC and is constructed with new design and inmate supervision concepts in mind, it can help transform offenders into productive citizens, increase community safety, reduce recidivism, and save taxpayer dollars.

The new OCCC will be designed with these goals in mind. It will look, feel, and function very differently from the current OCCC. PSD is committed to ensuring that the new OCCC will help achieve these goals to improve the justice system in Hawaii.

Upcoming Activities

PSD is moving ahead with the OCCC planning process with these activities planned in the months ahead.

January 2017	Continue screening the inventory of prospective sites to identify those sites best meeting requirements. Continue community outreach process with informational meetings and other public forums to engage the public in discussions about prospective sites, planning process, path forward, etc.
February 2017	Identify highly-rated sites from among the universe of prospective sites and recommend those for additional study. Subject highly rated sites to detailed study via the environmental impact statement process. Continue public outreach and engagement process.
March 2017	Continue environmental impact statement process. Continue public outreach and engagement process.

Interested in Learning More?

For additional information about PSD, visit <http://dps.hawaii.gov/occc-future-plans> or contact:

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