

# Future of the Oahu Community Correctional Center

## Vol. 26 – Improving Facilities on Oahu

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### Hawaii Department of Public Safety

The Hawaii Department of Public Safety (PSD) is responsible for carrying out judgments of the state courts whenever a period of confinement is ordered. Its mission is to uphold justice and public safety by providing correctional and law enforcement services to Hawaii's communities with professionalism, integrity and fairness. Currently, offenders are housed within State of Hawaii jail and prison facilities located within Hawaii, at the Federal Detention Center in Honolulu, and in private contractor facilities on the mainland.

PSD operates Community Correctional Centers (CCCs), widely known as jails, on the islands of Kauai, Maui, Hawaii and Oahu. Each CCC houses short-term sentenced (felons, probation, and misdemeanor), pre-trial (felon and misdemeanor), other jurisdiction, and probation/parole violators. CCCs provide the customary county jail function of managing both pre-trial detainees and locally-sentenced misdemeanant offenders and others with a sentence of one year or less. CCCs also provide an important pre-release preparation/transition function for prison system inmates who are transferred back to their county of origin when they reach less than a year until their scheduled release. Although some offenders will remain in prison for life, the majority (over 95 percent) will serve their sentences and be released, eventually returning to the community.

PSD is committed to providing a safe, secure, healthy, humane, social, and physical environment for inmates and staff. However, aged and obsolete CCCs have limited PSD's ability to provide such environments. All jail facilities are antiquated with limited space for inmate programs and treatment services and combined with declining physical plants, improving facilities and replacing facilities when necessary are important priorities. Chief among such priorities is the replacement of the existing Oahu CCC (OCCC) with a new facility at the Animal Quarantine Station in Aiea/Halawa. Assisting with OCCC planning and development is the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) and a team of consultants (the "OCCC Team").

### Why Does Hawaii Need a New OCCC?

As the OCCC team continues engaging community leaders and the public, it has become apparent that not all fully understand the difficult situation facing the citizens of Hawaii — that there is no option but to replace the obsolete and deteriorating OCCC for the sake of the individuals housed at the facility, the dedicated staff who work at the facility, and the family members and friends who travel to the facility to visit loved ones. Delaying development of the new OCCC, or abandoning the project entirely as some have advocated, will make permanent the shortage of suitable spaces for addressing the medical and mental health needs of the population, the inability to provide the necessary programs and treatment services, the higher operating costs due to its obsolete design, and the constant and costly repairs to the structure itself.



*Oahu Community Correctional Center, Kalihi*

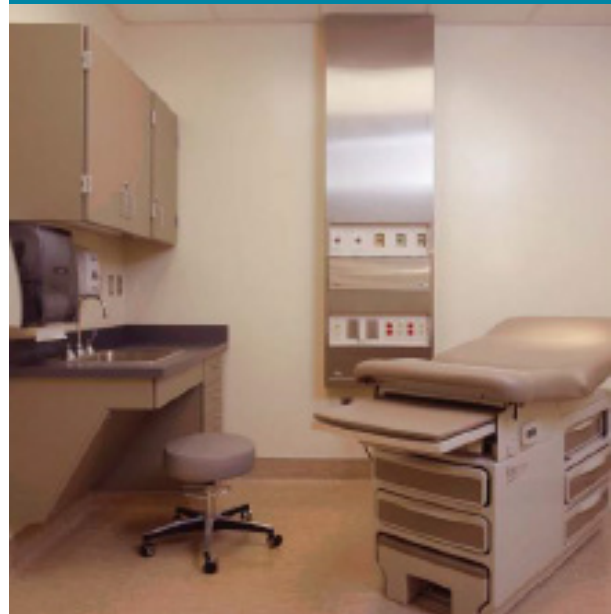
It is also important to clarify what is being proposed. Plans for the new OCCC, which are undergoing continuous refinements, will not house individuals who have been tried, convicted, and have received long sentences which is the function of a prison and not a jail. Instead the new OCCC will:

- Accommodate inmates who are nearing the end of their sentences with 288 beds devoted to transition/pre-release. This population will be housed away from other OCCC populations in a separate building that provides a more normative environment for daily living. These individuals require minimal supervision and each day travel to a work location away from the new facility as currently occurs at the Laumaka Work Furlough Center in Kalihi.
- Dedicate 72 beds to the needs of individuals requiring mental health services consisting of:
  - Acute Mental Health beds used by individuals that require specialized mental health and medical care and are housed in close proximity to where the services are provided. Rooms are typically designed for single occupancy.
  - Treatment/suicide watch beds for individuals that are in crisis and require stabilization and treatment before returning to the general population. Rooms are typically designed for single occupancy.
  - Treatment/stepdown beds for those with specialized mental health care and treatment needs. Through the stabilization process, individuals receive treatment and life skills in preparation for a return to the general population. Rooms are typically designed as double occupancy.
- Include eight infirmary beds located close to the medical unit where individuals with medical conditions can be observed and treated while isolating them from the general population. Individuals return to their assigned housing units once their medical conditions are addressed.
- House pre-trial detainees and locally-sentenced misdemeanor offenders and others with a sentence of one year or less in housing units comprising 1,044 beds. Housing is provided to accommodate all levels of security (maximum, medium, minimum security) with the number of planned detention beds only slightly higher than the current OCCC. Included as part of the overall number are Special Management Housing beds which are more secure and are reserved for individuals that pose a security risk to staff and others due to gang affiliations, aggression and/or protective custody conditions. In addition, the new OCCC will include Special Needs Housing beds which are used for disciplinary segregation and temporary holding for de-escalating volatile situations. These individuals pose a high security risk to themselves, staff or others and are returned to the general population once individual conditions are resolved.
- Include Assessment beds which are associated with the intake process; after arrival and initial screenings, individuals are held in this area to complete the evaluation process. Individuals are assessed based on their individual and facility classifications in order to place them in housing where their safety, security, programming and medical needs can best be addressed.

To ensure the most accurate number of beds needed for the purposes described above, PSD is leading an effort to review and update as necessary, earlier population projections to avoid developing too many or too few of the correct types of beds and support services to operate efficiently and successfully.



**Modern Work Furlough Center (typical)**



**Modern medical unit (typical)**



**Modern housing unit (typical)**

# Committed to Improving Conditions for Offenders

## Supporting Criminal Justice Reform

Most would agree that justice reforms that place an emphasis on sentencing/bail reform, pre-trial diversion programs, expansion/development of new special courts, and other alternatives to incarceration should be pursued by policymakers with the Hawaii Judiciary and State Legislature the appropriate entities for addressing such reforms.

Arrests, arraignments, pre-trial motions and preparations, trials, and the sentencing process involves police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, defendants, judges and others with PSD having no influence over the time devoted to preparation for trials, the duration of trials themselves, or the sentencing process.

The primary function of OCCC and other jails in Hawaii is to provide a secure facility, as mandated by the courts and based on Hawaii laws, for individuals who are being held for trial, have received short-term sentences for misdemeanor crimes, or are transitional sentence felons who are completing their sentences and preparing to return to the community. As reported previously, individuals housed at OCCC are under the jurisdiction of the courts and can only be released, placed in outside programs, or assigned to other alternatives to incarceration by the courts.

## Crowded Conditions and Limited Resources

PSD's top priority is to provide a safe, secure, healthy, humane, social, and physical environment for all inmates and staff. However, because of OCCC's deteriorating conditions and outdated design, the facility is no longer serving its intended purpose with a limited ability to provide the safe, secure, healthy and other environments for Hawaii's inmates. This is one reason why replacing OCCC with a modern facility is necessary. Currently, OCCC inmates with special needs, including those who are mentally ill and infirmed, as well as inmates in protective and maximum custody, cannot be properly separated from the general inmate population. In addition, OCCC cells designed for one or two inmates regularly house three to four offenders.

One of the structures comprising OCCC was built in 1912 and even with periodic renovations and security upgrades over the decades, there is only so much that can be done to extend the lifespan, security and usability of a facility, portions of which are more than 100 years old. The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light the severe deficiencies and constraints of working with the aged facility and further underscore the need for a new jail.

Replacing the antiquated OCCC with a modern, state-of-the-art facility will improve conditions for inmates and staff and broaden programming and treatment services and capabilities that will help prepare inmates to successfully return to the community. By building a new, modern jail from the ground up, the design team can incorporate the better layouts and the latest technology available to keep inmates, correctional officers, staff and visitors safe, while also improving functionality. The new OCCC would include areas for building administration and security, food preparation, medical services, counseling and treatment services, housing and visitation, as well as state-of-the-art security technology, building systems and maintenance functions and all of the spaces in the facility would be sized and organized to meet American Correctional Association standards.

## Reducing Recidivism

Providing a nurturing, healthy, and humane environment while in detention is crucial to preparing them for successful reintegration into society. However, because of OCCC's deteriorating conditions and outdated design, the facility is no longer providing the corrections approach and services that can prepare inmates to successfully reintegrate into Hawaii's communities and reduce recidivism, while still holding them accountable for their actions. Since the majority of all inmates (95%) are eventually released, conditions within OCCC must support their successful re-entry into Hawaiian society. In addition, studies have shown that renovating and upgrading the existing jail will be costlier over the long term compared to the construction and operation of an entirely new and efficient facility. Moreover, a modern design using the latest technology available can reduce operating costs and increase the availability of rehabilitative programs, which leads to better outcomes for inmates.

## Cultural Programming to Break Cycle of Intergenerational Incarceration

Keeping inmates connected to their individual cultural values, especially for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders who are disproportionately represented in the inmate population, is critical to helping them successfully break the cycle of recidivism; a topic never considered when the existing OCCC was first built. Treating inmates with the dignity of honoring their cultural diversity is a cornerstone of successful reintegration and recidivism reduction models and careful attention in planning the new OCCC is being given to incorporating services to assist offenders to maintain their cultural and religious traditions and practices.



# WCCC Improvements Moving Forward

With plans to relocate female offenders from OCCC to the Women’s Community Correctional Center (WCCC) in Kailua, the State of Hawaii has made steady progress in advancing improvements at WCCC to accommodate the additional population. WCCC is the only facility in Hawaii serving the needs of sentenced female offenders and relocating females from OCCC to WCCC is intended to improve living conditions while expanding treatment and rehabilitation services and access to family visitation. Improvements at WCCC will include:

- Constructing a new Housing Unit and Administration Building
- Renovating the vacant Ho’okipa Cottage and Support Building for housing and support purposes (see story below)
- Improving internal circulation, on-site parking, and ingress/egress from Kalaniana’ole Highway

The improvements at WCCC will be similar in scale and appearance to a community college campus with spaces devoted to administration, housing, visitation, inmate services, among others with improved visitor and employee parking near the WCCC entrance. At this time, the design phase has been completed, the necessary municipal permits and approvals have been acquired, and funds for construction have been appropriated. In early 2020, the State of Hawaii sought bids for constructing the improvements and the bids that were received are undergoing review. The start date of construction is projected to be 2021 with completion and occupancy expected in 2023.



**Conceptual image of planned WCCC Housing Unit and Administration Building. (Credit: CGL Companies)**



**Conceptual images of planned WCCC Housing Unit. (Credit: CGL Companies)**



# Ho'okipa Cottage Renovations Progressing

WCCC includes the currently vacant Ho'okipa Makai Cottage and Support Building. Renovation of the Cottage as a low security facility will soon begin to provide an environment for female offenders that focuses on rehabilitation, normalization and providing life skills for successful transition out of custody. Such an environment, coupled with skills learning, is expected to lead to lower rates of recidivism.



**Existing Ho'okipa Makai Cottage**



**Existing Support Building**

Plans for renovating the Cottage and Support Building focus on using materials that are normative and similar to that found in a home environment, while withstanding the rigors of daily use and offering ease of maintenance. Both buildings will be naturally ventilated with the help of ceiling and exhaust fans to ensure a comfortable living environment. A color palette with natural patterns and exposed wood inspired by Hawaii's natural environments will be used to evoke nature and provide a sense of biophilia with a large Lanai connected to the dayrooms bringing the outdoors inside.



**Renovated cottage will include dayrooms where staff and female residents can interact.**



**Residents will be housed in a dormitory setting with room for their belongings with the Support Building used for daily dining, special events and other gatherings.**



**Conceptual rendering of renovated Ho'okipa Makai Cottage.**



## Upcoming Activities

The following activities are anticipated in the months ahead.

<b>December 2020</b>	<p>Publish Newsletter Vol. 27.</p> <p>Submit Plan Review Use Permit Compliance Report to County Department of Planning and Permitting, Aiea Neighborhood Board and Aiea Community Association.</p> <p>Attend Aiea Neighborhood Board and Aiea Community Association meetings.</p> <p>Look to OCCC Future Plans website for announcements, upcoming events, and recent activities.</p>
<b>January 2021</b>	<p>Attend Aiea Neighborhood Board and Aiea Community Association meetings.</p> <p>Look to OCCC Future Plans website for announcements, upcoming events, and recent activities.</p>
<b>February 2021</b>	<p>Publish OCCC Newsletter Vol. 28.</p> <p>Attend Aiea Neighborhood Board and Aiea Community Association meetings.</p> <p>Look to OCCC Future Plans website for announcements, upcoming events, and recent activities.</p>

## Interested in Learning More?

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

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