

Future of the Oahu Community Correctional Center

Vol. 27 - New OCCC to Expand Pre-release

December 2020

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 misdemeanor 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").

New OCCC to Expand Pre-release Opportunities

The existing OCCC does not meet modern jail design and construction standards. In order to address current and long-term needs, PSD has developed a plan to construct a new OCCC at the Animal Quarantine Station (AQS) site in Aiea/Halawa. While the focus of the project has largely been on the need for a modern facility that is reflective of correctional best practices to accommodate the island's detainee population, an essential, but often overlooked component, is development of a new pre-release facility at the AQS in order to expand opportunities for offenders who will soon be leaving the correctional system to return to their respective communities.

Pre-release, also known as re-entry, is recognized throughout the country as a best practice in corrections that, in addition to being cost beneficial, has the potential to reduce recidivism. As a result, PSD, like many correctional system administrators across the U.S., is proposing to expand pre-release opportunities at the new OCCC. During the initial OCCC studies, a forecast of the male pre-release population through 2026 was prepared revealing that the pre-release population is expected to expand substantially during that time. According to PSD, approximately 300 male offenders on Oahu are eligible for pre-release at any given time and with a modest two percent growth rate, there will be the need to accommodate almost 400 pre-release offenders by 2026. With continued operation of the 96-bed Laumaka Work Furlough Center (LWFC) in Kalihi, there will be a need for approximately 300 new pre-release beds at the new OCCC.



Re-entry training (typical)

Pre-release will be a low-security facility that will be developed apart from the detention facility. It is planned to include most functions of a typical correctional facility although it may rely on the new OCCC for services such as maintenance, meals, and medical care. Program services provided for pre-release offenders are planned to be intensive with the goal of preparing them for re-entry into the community. Space is planned for educational, vocational, and substance use disorder treatment/group programs along with academic and computer literacy classes. Offices for PSD staff and workstations for visiting service providers are also being planned. Pre-release offenders may also visit the clinic at OCCC for health care.

Some or all of the individuals assigned to the pre-release facility may be on work furlough programs where they gain work experience and develop important work habits. As they return to the facility at the end of the work day and prior to returning to their respective housing pod, they are expected to pass through screening where areas for lockers, property storage, and the community release office are planned.

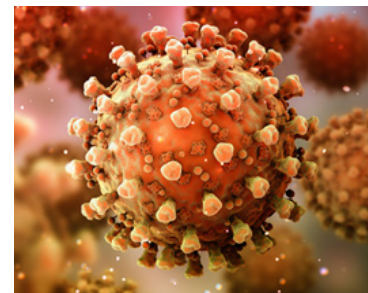
Pre-release housing is being planned with rooms for sleeping that are planned to include bunks, writing/seating areas, and personal storage areas sized to meet the American Correctional Association standards and will have the requisite accessibility and mobility features.



Re-entry training (typical)

New OCCC to Address COVID-19

Many have asked how the effects of COVID-19 will be addressed in the new OCCC. Although design of the new facility has not yet advanced beyond the conceptual stage, PSD is using this time to learn about COVID-19 (and other contagious viruses and communicable diseases that may follow in the future) and its impact on its operations. Lessons learned and best practices from other jail systems will be examined and considered in the design and operation of the new OCCC so that exposure to COVID-19 by offenders, staff and visitors can be limited in an effort to minimize the virus's transmission. For example, the new OCCC will incorporate increased space to accommodate detention and pre-release functions that allow for greater separation and social distancing, and for implementing preventive measures such as virus screening measures at each entry point, many of which are not possible in the current facility. This will include the public lobby and security screening areas, public waiting and visiting areas, initial intake at booking as well as other spaces visited by staff, offenders and visitors.



COVID-19 virus

To help reduce the potential for exposure, most inmate services such as meals, health care, programs and outdoor exercise, are planned to be delivered at the OCCC housing unit level. Unlike the existing OCCC where program delivery is centralized, plans are for the new OCCC to integrate program space into the living unit thereby minimizing the movement of offenders and staff. Opportunities for distance learning to increase the reach of programs are also being studied for possible application. Greater use of telemedicine is also under consideration to reduce inmate and staff movements that present the potential for virus transmission.



Health care in the age of COVID-19

In addition, capabilities for medical isolation and separation of infectious individuals from the general population will be incorporated into the design of the new OCCC.

New OCCC facilities will also utilize modern mechanical systems. The equipment will ensure that ventilation and air-conditioning systems provide adequate and code-complaint air changes throughout the structures

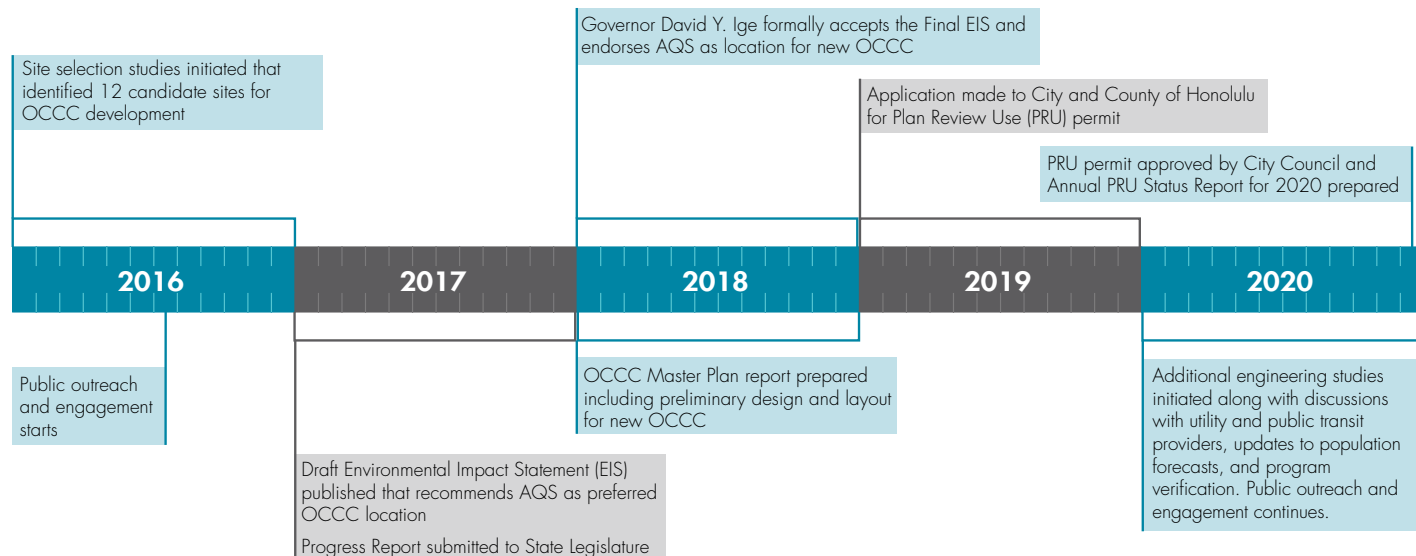
thereby helping to reduce exposure to viruses. In evaluating mechanical systems, greater weight will be given to those that can isolate housing units to prevent spread of contagious viruses, have the ability to increase the proportion of fresh air, and those that incorporate ultraviolet disinfectants as part of the system. Also under consideration are touchless accessories for use in the public restrooms that include touchless sinks and soap and paper towel dispensers. All-in-all, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the obsolescence of the present OCCC facility.

Plan Review Use Permit 2020 Status Report Issued

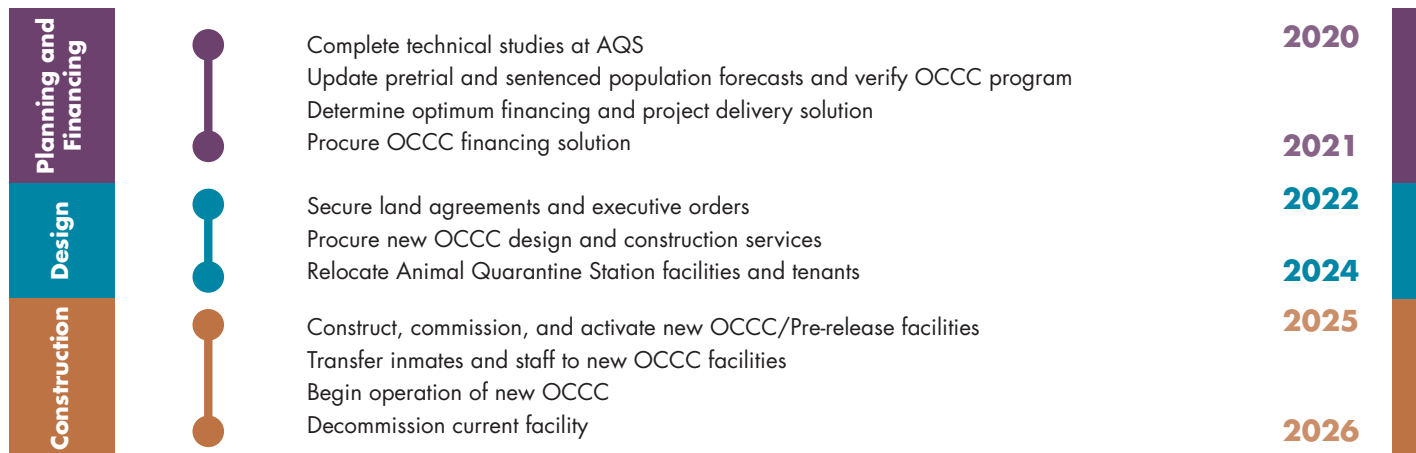
During 2019, DAGS submitted an application to the City and County of Honolulu, Department of Planning and Permitting for a Plan Review Use (PRU) permit to approve a Five-Year Master Plan for construction of a new OCCC on a portion of the Animal Quarantine Station. The City Council, having considered all the findings and reports and following a public hearing, approved the application for a PRU permit in February 2020 subject to several conditions. Among the conditions was for DAGS to submit an annual Status Report to the Department of Planning and Permitting, Aiea Neighborhood Board No. 20, and the councilmember representing the community by December 31 of each year until all conditions of approval have been met. The Status Report is intended to provide information on progress toward complying with each condition of approval for the PRU permit. The Year 2020 Status Report has been completed and will soon be filed in compliance with Condition #11 and be made available on the OCCC website.

OCCC Schedule

Much has been accomplished towards development of the new OCCC including identification, evaluation, and ultimate selection of the Animal Quarantine Station as the site of the new OCCC; preparation, publication, and acceptance of the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements in accordance with HRS 343; application for and approval of a Plan Review Use (PRU) permit from the City and County of Honolulu, and engaging elected officials, stakeholders, and the public through a multi-faceted outreach and engagement program among other accomplishments as shown below.



However, much remains to be done involving planning, design, and construction. The current schedule for undertaking and completing the additional activities is summarized below:





Honolulu, Hawaii

Upcoming Activities

The following activities are anticipated in the months ahead.

January 2021	<p>Publish OCCC Newsletter Vol. 28</p> <p>Attend Aiea Neighborhood Board and Aiea Community Association meetings.</p> <p>Look to <i>OCCC Future Plans</i> website for announcements, upcoming events, and recent activities.</p>
February 2021	<p>Attend Aiea Neighborhood Board and Aiea Community Association meetings.</p> <p>Look to <i>OCCC Future Plans</i> website for announcements, upcoming events, and recent activities.</p>
March 2021	<p>Publish OCCC Newsletter Vol. 29</p> <p>Attend Aiea Neighborhood Board and Aiea Community Association meetings.</p> <p>Look to <i>OCCC Future Plans</i> 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:

Toni E. Schwartz, Public Information Officer

Hawaii Department of Public Safety

Tel. 808.587.1358

Email: Toni.E.Schwartz@hawaii.gov

Robert J. Nardi, Vice President

WSP USA, Inc.

Tel: 973.407.1681

Mobile: 973.809.7495

Email: robert.nardi@wsp.com