

# Future of the Oahu Community Correctional Center

## Vol. 44 - Legislative Action on PSD Funding Request

May 2022



## Hawaii Department of Public Safety

The Hawaii Department of Public Safety (PSD) carries out orders from the state courts to confine individuals for a set period of time utilizing jails and prisons located within Hawaii, at the Federal Detention Center in Honolulu, and in private contractor facilities on the mainland. Jails, known in Hawaii as Community Correctional Centers (CCCs), are located on the islands of Kauai, Maui, Hawaii and Oahu and house pre-trial detainees, misdemeanor offenders, and others with a sentence of one year or less. CCCs also provide a pre-release transition function for prison inmates who reach less than a year until their scheduled release. While some offenders will remain confined for life, over 95 percent will serve their sentences and be released to the community.

PSD envisions a future when all its facilities provide safe, secure, healthy, and humane environments for offenders and staff. A future based on better understanding the differing needs of offender populations, using therapeutic rather than punitive management techniques, ensuring racial equity, and by promoting positive change so that fewer individuals are incarcerated in Hawaii. However, aged and obsolete CCCs have undermined PSD's ability to deliver such a vision and improving some and replacing others is a PSD priority. Chief among its priorities is developing a new Oahu CCC (OCCC) at the Animal Quarantine Station (AQS) in Aiea. Assisting with OCCC planning and development is the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) and a team of consultants (the "OCCC Team")

## Legislature Acts on OCCC Fiscal Year 2023 Budget



### **Oahu Community Correctional Center, Kalihi, HI**

The citizens of Hawaii expect their correctional facilities to provide a safe, secure, healthy, and humane environment for offenders and staff. To do so, the needs of offender population must be understood, therapeutic rather than punitive management techniques must be applied, racial equity must be ensured, and positive change must be promoted so fewer individuals are incarcerated. Yet, with the age, condition, and capacity of Hawaii's jails and prisons, the ability to provide a safe, secure, healthy, and humane environment has gone unfulfilled. In response, PSD has prioritized improving and replacing jails and prisons with facilities that can employ modern standards and best practices for the betterment of the offender population.

As PSD has described in public forums and meetings, monthly newsletters, and elsewhere since 2016, its #1 priority has been to replace the current OCCC with a new facility in Aiea. Historical overcrowding, threats of violence, imposed isolation, lack of meaningful activities, inaccessible social networks, and insecurity about future prospects are all part of the current OCCC experience and run counter to the conditions necessary for successful rehabilitation and reintegration. In addition to being more costly to maintain and operate, the current pandemic also exposed the deficiencies, constraints, and personal risks of OCCC's antiquated design which resulted in large clusters of COVID-19 patients among offenders and staff.

While conditions worsen, the legislature during its 2022 session did not fund Gov. David Ige's request to continue the planning, design and seek financing needed to replace OCCC. This action further delays this much-needed and long-overdue facility, and requires PSD to continue to operate an inefficient, ineffective, and costly OCCC, exposing offenders and staff to the risks from COVID-19 and other contagions, and further increasing the price tag for a new OCCC that inevitably must be constructed.

Terminating plans for a new OCCC at this time would squander the progress made since the planning process was started while forcing the current OCCC to operate for many years to come. Countless hours spent on research and studies on cost-effective design efficiencies, community outreach and best practices will be put on hold, resulting in the possibility that PSD and DAGS may be forced to start all over. PSD is committed to pursue the much-needed replacement of the existing OCCC while the State grapples with the laws, policies, and practices that drive the jail population. OCCC is not unique with Hawaii's other correctional infrastructure facing similar circumstances. While developing the new OCCC won't address every problem in the system, doing so will begin to demonstrate Hawaii's commitment to addressing its most immediate justice infrastructure need.



# Legislature Transmits Measures Affecting Criminal Justice System

During the legislative session which ended on May 5, 2022, two measures affecting Hawaii's criminal justice system were transmitted to the Governor for approval. As reported in the April 2022 newsletter, the measures are intended to reduce the number of individuals housed at Hawaii's CCCs and improve the functioning of the correctional system.

## HB1567 HD1 SD1 CD1: Criminal Pretrial Reform

Among the measures transmitted is a reform to the bail system by eliminating monetary bail under certain conditions. HB1567 HD1 SD1 CD1 addresses the substantial and continued overcrowding of facilities used to house pretrial defendants by requiring defendants to be released on their own recognizance for certain nonviolent offenses including traffic offenses, violations, nonviolent petty misdemeanor offenses, nonviolent misdemeanor offenses and nonviolent class C felony offenses, subject to exceptions and requirements. The measure seeks to reduce unnecessary pretrial incarceration and its cost to taxpayers and the community while maintaining public safety. The measure also allows defendants the option to participate in a bail report interview via video-conference. The measure is currently awaiting Governor's Ige's signature.

## HB2169 HD1 SD2 CD1: Comprehensive Offender Reentry System

A second measure transmitted by the Legislature is HB2169 HD1 SD1 CD1 which supports successful offender reentry. The measure clarifies the role of the Department of Public Safety which is to work with the Department of Transportation and county examiners of drivers to assist inmates in procuring civil identification cards rather than issue civil identification cards. Civil identification cards are essential to eliminating many barriers for inmates exiting prison to successfully integrate back into the community including transiting into the workforce, accessing social services including health care, opening bank accounts, and secure housing among many others. The measure requires PSD to initiate the process of assisting an inmate obtain a civil identification card, birth certificate, social security card, and any other relevant identification documents 90 days before the inmate is being released to work furlough, extended furlough, or community placement programs if the inmate requests assistance after being notified that assistance is available.

The measure, supported by the Office of the Public Defender, PSD, Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition, Common Cause Hawaii, and the Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center, as well as other public interest groups and individuals, is awaiting Governor Ige's signature.



**Final floor sessions inside House (top) and Senate (bottom) chambers at the Capitol on May 4, 2022 (Credit: Star Advertiser)**

## OCCC Newsletters to be Published Quarterly

With the planning and programming work for the new OCCC completed, the project has reached a crossroad whereby PSD and DAGS will begin evaluating options for addressing the future of OCCC. While options are explored and a new course is charted, OCCC Newsletters, currently published monthly, will instead be issued on a quarterly basis.





## Steady Progress at Women's Community Correctional Center

Since groundbreaking in July 2021, there has been continuous progress in constructing a new Housing Unit, Administration Building, and Visitation/Intake Building, along with other ancillary improvements at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) in Kailua. The new structures are the first major improvements at WCCC which was adapted in 1992 to house female offenders.

The WCCC is the only women's prison in Hawaii and is being expanded to allow for transfer of female inmates currently housed in overcrowded, deteriorating facilities located at other State institutions. Currently PSD's largest capital improvement project, expansion of the WCCC is an important step towards the eventual improvement of other PSD facilities.

Construction during May 2022 focused on installing the myriad of conduits and underground utilities for the new structures (see photos below).



**Interior of New Housing Unit (Rendering: Pennell Consulting, Inc.)**



**Construction Progress Photos, May 2022 (Credit: Rider Levett Bucknall)**



# Construction Underway at Hawaii Community Correctional Center

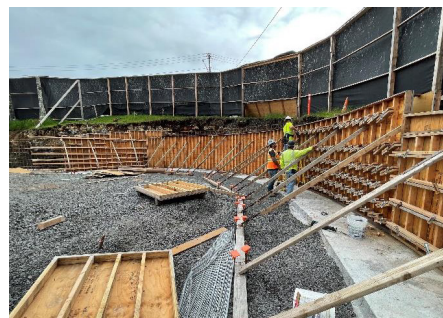
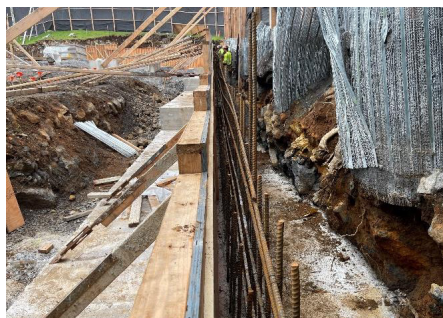
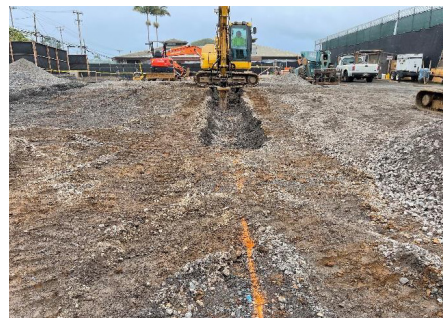
On February 9, 2022 ground was broken on construction of a new housing unit at the Hawaii Community Correctional Center (HCCC) in Hilo. HCCC opened as a 22-bed facility in 1975 and was expanded in 1990 with construction of a 40-bed dormitory building. In 1998, a new housing module capable of housing 64 inmates. Today, HCCC has an operational capacity of 226 beds and is currently housing approximately 279 inmates or 23 percent above its operational capacity (PSD, April 30, 2022). Construction involves multiple contractors led by Nan, Inc. which is responsible for constructing the new housing unit. Rider Levitt Bucknall, as construction managers, will ensure that construction is completed according to plan, schedule, and budget.



**Location of new housing unit (Komohana St. and Waianuenu Ave.)**

**Interior renderings (Credit: DLR Group)**

Once completed, the housing unit will improve living conditions for inmates and be a substantial improvement over current conditions. The housing unit will provide inmates with access to natural daylight, views to nature, improved acoustics, thermal comfort, and adequate space, all of which have been shown to reduce the levels of stress, depression, and fear of being victimized among inmates. Enhancing the feeling of safety and lowering stress levels for inmates and staff should also have a positive effect on overall institution safety and security.



**Construction Progress Photos, April 2022 (Credit: Rider Levitt Bucknall)**





**View from interior of Oahu Community Correctional Center.**

## Upcoming Activities

The following activities are anticipated in the months ahead.

<b>June 2022</b>	Architectural and Space Program for new OCCC under review. Construction continues at HCCC and WCCC. Public outreach, information, and engagement continues with attendance at meetings of Aiea Neighborhood Board #20, Aiea Community Association, and Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission.
<b>July 2022</b>	Architectural and Space Program for new OCCC completed. Construction continues at HCCC and WCCC. Public outreach, information, and engagement continues with attendance at meetings of Aiea Neighborhood Board #20, Aiea Community Association, and Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission.
<b>August 2022</b>	Construction continues at HCCC and WCCC. Public outreach, information, and engagement continues with attendance at meetings of Aiea Neighborhood Board #20, Aiea Community Association, and Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission, publication of Newsletter Vol. 45, etc.

## Join OCCC Email List

Add your name to the OCCC email list to receive announcements, newsletters, and other project-related materials by sending your name, affiliation (if any), and email address to: [robert.nardi@wsp.com](mailto:robert.nardi@wsp.com).

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:robert.nardi@wsp.com)