

# Future of the Oahu Community Correctional Center

Vol. 46 - The Reality About Planning for New OCCC

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## 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 contracted 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 facilities and replacing others is a PSD priority. Chief among its priorities is development of 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 experts and advisors (the "OCCC Team").

## The Reality About OCCC Plans

In October 2022, the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) was presented with a paper – *Getting it Right: Better Ideas for a New Jail* – prepared by the Correctional Reform Working Group and addressing redevelopment of OCCC. Upon careful review, the report was found to contain serious inaccuracies, false statements, misinformation, and other deficiencies that gave the HCSOC and other readers incorrect and incomplete information about the proposed OCCC and the process being followed by PSD to plan and develop this much-needed new facility.

PSD appreciates the efforts of the HCSOC to advance improvements to Hawaii's correctional system; something long-advocated by PSD. However, given the inaccurate and misleading statements and erroneous conclusions contained in the document, it was necessary for PSD to respond and refute many of the document's claims in a letter submitted to the HCSOC (October 25, 2022). Following are just a few of the areas that required correcting.

**FALSE: The new jail will cost \$1 billion.** The report compares costs for a 4,000-bed prison in Utah to a 1,000-bed jail in Hawaii. This is an apples-to-oranges comparison in terms of size (4,000 beds to 1,000 beds) and type of facility (prison vs. jail, which differ in infrastructure and security components). While the initial cost estimate for the new OCCC was \$500 million, the unjustified delays to the timeline of a methodical and meticulous planning process will assure a significant and avoidable escalation in costs.

**FALSE: P3 will be a financial disaster.** The prejudice against a Public-Private Partnership (P3) is unfounded. The P3 approach can take various forms, and this highly successful project delivery method has been used all over the world for a multitude of project types, including correctional facilities. A thorough Business Case Analysis was conducted to compare various available procurement methods and to recommend the best method to deliver the optimal project outcome for the new OCCC - the recommendation was for P3. Moreover, increasingly tight fiscal markets also suggest a preference for P3 over the issuance of General Obligation bonds.

**FALSE: Planning for the new OCCC is not following best practices.** The Working Group report supports the planning processes outlined in the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Jail Design Guide as "the path forward" in developing the new OCCC. PSD couldn't agree more. The consulting group, Pulitzer/Bogard & Associates (P/BA), which literally helped "write the book" for the NIC, is a member of the team advising PSD on the OCCC project. P/BA's principal, Curtiss Pulitzer, one of the authors of the NIC guide, has advised corrections officials around the country on how to incorporate best correctional practices in new jail facilities. P/BA's operating principles and architectural space program report, as well as the population forecast report and other expertise have contributed greatly to ensuring that planning for OCCC is moving in the right direction and should reassure the HCSOC that PSD is effectively aligning its plans with the NIC Jail Design Guide.

**FALSE: Community has not been consulted.** This is an especially false and damaging statement. PSD and its team of experts and advisors have continuously engaged the community throughout the planning process through attendance at neighborhood board, community association, and HCSOC meetings and made themselves available to elected officials, stakeholders, the media and the public when questions or concerns were raised. PSD's outreach also includes frequent publication and widespread distribution of informational newsletters and FAQs and has made available all technical studies and reports via the OCCC webpage, which also incorporates comments and suggestions that were received during public comment periods. Since July 2016, every public and community meeting attended by the OCCC team has also been documented as evidence of the extensive outreach that has been conducted (see Outreach History at: <http://dps.hawaii.gov/occc-future-plans>).

| PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES<br>Future of the Oahu Community Correctional Center |   |         |  |   |  |                        |
|--|---|---------|--|---|--|------------------------|
| JANUARY 2022   |   |         |  |   |  |                        |
| Sunday   | Monday  | Tuesday | Wednesday  | Thursday  | Friday   | Saturday               |
| 26-Dec   | 27-Dec  | 28-Dec  | 29-Dec   | 30-Dec  | 31-Dec   | 1-Jan                  |
|  |   |         |  |   |  | 2022<br>happy new year |
| 2  | 3   | 4       | 5  | 6   | 7  | 8                      |
|  |   |         | OCCC team meets with Sen. Donovan, M. Dela Cruz  |   | Senate Committee on Ways and Means holds briefing with Department of Public Safety   |                        |
| 9  | 10  | 11      | 12   | 13  | 14   | 15                     |
|  | OCCC Newsletter V02-20 published (2022 - The Year of OCCC)<br>OCCC team attends Asia NB #20 meeting |         |  | OCCC team present at Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission meeting |  |                        |
| 16   | 17  | 18      | 19   | 20  | 21   | 22                     |
|  | Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day<br>OCCC team attends Asia Community Association meeting             |         | OCCC team meets with Rep. Sylvia Luke (Chair, Finance Committee)<br>OCCC team attends Asia Community Association meeting |   | OCCC team meets with Sen. Gilbert Keiwa-Agaton   |                        |
| 23   | 24  | 25      | 26   | 27  | 28   | 29                     |
|  |   |         |  |   | OCCC team meets with Sen. Bennett Misalucha<br>OCCC team present at Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission meeting |                        |
| 30   | 31  | 1-Feb   | 2-Feb  | 3-Feb   | 4-Feb  | 5-Feb                  |

**FALSE: The new jail will be a warehouse for criminals and be punitive.** PSD disputes this false claim. From the outset, the central focus of plans for the new OCCC has been on rehabilitation and restoration. It should be noted that 30% of the beds in the new OCCC would be for transitional/reentry participants with enhanced space for delivery of reentry and reintegration programs. PSD's Operating Principles and Architectural Space Planning Program document clearly demonstrate the new facility's emphasis on reentry and rehabilitation. These program documents are available on the OCCC website and all are encouraged to review this and other aspects of the planning for the new facility.

**A Case for the Community Transitional Center (CTC).** The Correctional Reform Working Group report takes issue with the Master Plan and CTC Operating Principles/Architectural Space Program as being too large and too expensive (see: <http://dps.hawaii.gov/occc-future-plans>). PSD's plan for the new OCCC incorporates space for medical and mental health treatment and various inmate service programs, all identified as necessary in the Group's report. The CTC is exactly what the name implies,

a transitional center in which education, treatment, and work skills training programs and services are offered to facilitate the inmates' successful return to the community as responsible, self-sufficient, law-abiding citizens. Inmates assigned to the CTC may be working off site under supervision,

gainfully employed within the community, and/or taking part in community-based programs/treatment. When not involved in work or programs/treatment, they will reside at the CTC (separate from the detention center), where programs will focus on the inmates' specific needs, such as substance abuse, in a therapeutic setting, and transitional services that typically include the opportunity to work in the community, receive counseling and education, and participate in treatment in a structured setting. The innovative CTC addresses many of the deficiencies of the current justice/ corrections system with wrap-around, therapeutic services and the ability to readily transition according to individual needs. PSD has stated in various public forums that the current plan is scalable and can be revised to meet the future bed space and program needs if bail reform initiatives and other front-end diversion plans reduce the projected inmate population.

**TRUE: OCCC is old, dilapidated, and by any standard an unfit environment for both inmates and staff. It's outlived its usefulness decades ago and there is widespread agreement that it must be replaced.** In keeping with PSD's mission and mandates, the new OCCC is intended to address the persistent inhumane conditions long marked by severe overcrowding and the lack of space to effectively provide rehabilitation and reintegration services. Many programs that are touted in the report as being needed but not provided by PSD are either at a fledgling stage but can't be deployed due to limitations of space and staffing or have suffered repeated budget and staffing cuts. How can anyone expect offenders to be effectively rehabilitated given such poor and outdated conditions? To reiterate, the new OCCC will be rehabilitative and restorative and equally important, efficient, safe, and secure for inmates and staff, and serve to enhance the safety the community.



View PSD's entire response to the Working Group report at: <https://dps.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Response-to-Reform-Working-Group-Report-221025.pdf>

Unfortunately, the Group report also attempts to saddle the OCCC replacement project with a major overhaul of Hawaii's entire judicial-correctional system. PSD is just one of many system stakeholders (with the greatest demands and fewest resources) and while it has long supported various justice reforms, its ability to effect change is limited as it relies upon the Legislature, the courts, law enforcement, health care system, and others to lead such an overhaul.

PSD has made every effort to work with all stakeholders to answer questions and concerns, and to work with the nation's foremost correctional system experts to craft plans for an innovative new facility to meet current and future judicial-correctional needs. The time is now for all stakeholders to support OCCC's redevelopment, and as plans develop, continue to contribute meaningful input towards enhancing the necessary rehabilitation and reintegration programs that will be at the heart of the restructured correctional system housed therein.

## Conditions Cited in Hawaii's Prisons and Jails

Over the past several months members of the HCSOC have been touring Hawaii's prisons and jails to gain a first-hand understanding of the conditions under which pre-trial and sentenced inmates are housed and serviced. What was observed were facilities that are old, overcrowded, understaffed with severe safety and security concerns. For example, the tour of HCCC in Hilo revealed cells originally designed for one person, were housing three or four individuals. There was one room with 15 mattresses on the floor, although those occupants had no access to running water or toilets. One cellblock was described as being in "horrendous condition." Christin M. Johnson, HCSOC's Oversight Coordinator, called the issues at HCCC "a system failure" although she went on to say that "the warden is doing the most he can for his staff and the people housed under his supervision." The overcrowded and deteriorating conditions at HCCC have been a problem that PSD has documented for many years.

Recently, PSD invited Hawaii's media to tour OCCC to demonstrate once again that the facility is unsafe, obsolete, and needs to be replaced. Those on the tour noted countless deteriorating ceiling tiles, some exposing wires and conduits in the crawlspaces above. OCCC officials also pointed to a concrete recreation area, now deemed unsafe with detainees exercising in a much smaller yard. Coverage of the OCCC media tour was shown on three television stations and can be viewed via the following links:

- <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2022/10/25/no-one-disagrees-occc-is-obsolete-overcrowded-whats-up-debate-what-do-about-it/>
- <https://www.khon2.com/local-news/slowly-falling-apart-dps-calls-for-new-occc-facility/>
- [https://www.kitv.com/news/crime/hawaii-public-safety-officials-highlight-overcrowding-staffing-shortages-during-a-tour-of-occc/article\\_aa58e716-54bb-11ed-a831-73890d62eec4.html](https://www.kitv.com/news/crime/hawaii-public-safety-officials-highlight-overcrowding-staffing-shortages-during-a-tour-of-occc/article_aa58e716-54bb-11ed-a831-73890d62eec4.html)

## PSD to Again Request Funds to Continue New OCCC Development

PSD has been steadfast in its resolve to address the poor conditions at the existing Kalihi jail and has made significant progress in its effort to build a new facility at the Animal Quarantine Station in Halawa. While funds were requested during 2022 to begin the next phase of work (i.e., design process), the lack of action by the Legislature to approve funds meant that another year has passed without taking steps to build a new facility.

The year-long delay has allowed OCCC's severe deficiencies, inadequate staff, and poor conditions to worsen. It has also forced PSD to operate a facility with an obsolete and dysfunctional layout that jeopardizes compliance with a federal judge's order to keep inmates, staff and visitors safe during outbreaks of COVID or other contagions.

The public is growing increasingly concerned about the dramatic rise in violent crime and high-profile property crimes and are demanding stricter enforcement and sentencing. This concern still ignores the reality that the jail has been chronically overcrowded for years, is overcrowded now, and will remain that way as the jail becomes increasingly less equipped to cope with the current population and future influx of inmates.

However, on January 18, 2023, the Hawaii Legislature will convene at the State Capitol for its 2023 session during which time PSD will again request the funds needed to move the project forward. It is crucial that the Legislature provide the funds needed to replace OCCC and avoid the added costs that will result by further delays. Acting on PSD's funding request will also move PSD closer to fulfilling the basic needs of housing and caring for offenders. This upcoming session will determine whether Hawaii will provide the appropriate level of mental and behavioral health services, drug treatment, education and other programs that are critical to providing inmates with the tools and skills they need to reintegrate into the community and avoid re-offending and re-entering the justice system.

## Groundbreaking Held for New Housing Unit at Maui CCC

On November 22, 2022, PSD held a ceremonial ground-breaking to mark the start of construction of important improvements to the Maui Community Correctional Center (MCCC). The Capitol Improvement Project will add up to 32 beds in a mini-dorm setting with more indoor space, large and small multi-purpose areas, and a natural light dayroom. The new facility will also feature an enclosed, outdoor open-air recreation space and viewing garden, aimed at enhancing a culture of rehabilitation.



**Location of new Housing Unit at MCCC (DLR Group, 2022)**

*"The overcrowding at the jail has been a longstanding concern, and one that the Department has actively searched for a solution to for many years. This additional housing isn't a long-term solution, but it will help alleviate some of the severe overcrowding and help PSD better serve the needs of MCCC's pre-trial population,"* said PSD Director Max Otani. *"The Department is extremely grateful for the support of legislators, city and county officials, state and local agencies and the public who helped bring the project to fruition".*

Located on the grounds of the old Maui Jail, MCCC is the only correctional facility serving Maui County and acts as the local detention center for the Second Circuit Court. The new housing unit is intended to address over-crowding at the facility so that individuals housed in cramped conditions and in spaces not well suited for inmates would be accommodated in a modern housing unit designed and constructed to State and national standards. Construction is expected to take approximately two years.



**Dignitaries attend groundbreaking at MCCC (Credit: PSD, 2022)**

## Ho'okipa Cottage Renovations Continuing at Women's CCC

Over the past several months, considerable progress has been achieved in renovating the formerly vacant Ho'okipa Cottage at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) in Kailua. In addition to the new Housing Unit, Administration Building, and Visitation/Intake Building currently under construction, PSD is also converting the cottage into a valuable addition to the WCCC campus. Renovation of the cottage, along with the addition of a multi-purpose building, will provide a living environment for female offenders that will emphasize rehabilitation and normalization while providing life skills for a successful transition back into society. The photos below capture the progress in renovating the cottage and constructing the support building which, when completed in 2023, will provide spaces for various gatherings as shown in the rendering.



**Support Building interior rendering (Credit: DLR Group)**



**Progress in Renovating Ho'okipa Cottage (Credit: Rider Levett Bucknall, November 2022)**

# Housing Unit Construction Continues at Hawaii CCC

Since February 2022, construction of a new housing unit has been progressing at the Hawaii Community Correctional Center (HCCC) in Hilo. HCCC opened as a 22-bed facility in 1975 and today HCCC has an operational capacity of 226 beds. However, HCCC has been chronically overcrowded, and currently houses 280 inmates or 24 percent above its operational capacity (PSD, November 21, 2022). Construction involves multiple contractors led by Nan, Inc. with Rider Levett Bucknall, as construction managers, ensuring that construction is completed according to plan, schedule, and budget. Construction of the new housing unit is the first substantial improvement to HCCC in many years.



**Housing unit interior rendering (Credit: DLR Group)**



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



**Typical Cell in current Oahu Community Correctional Center.**

## Upcoming Activities

The following activities are anticipated in the months ahead.

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>December 2022</b> | <p>Development of updated site plan and new OCCC conceptual renderings underway.</p> <p>Construction continues at HCCC, MCCC, and WCCC.</p> <p>Public outreach and engagement continues with attendance at Aiea Neighborhood Board, Aiea Community Association, and Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission meetings.</p>   |
| <b>January 2023</b>  | <p>Development of updated site plan and new OCCC conceptual renderings completed.</p> <p>Construction continues at HCCC, MCCC, and WCCC.</p> <p>Hawaii Legislature convenes 2023 session.</p> <p>Public outreach and engagement continues with attendance at Aiea Neighborhood Board, Aiea Community Association, and Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission meetings.</p> |
| <b>February 2023</b> | <p>Construction continues at HCCC, MCCC, and WCCC.</p> <p>Public outreach and engagement continues with attendance at Aiea Neighborhood Board, Aiea Community Association, and Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission meetings.</p>  |

## 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)