

Future of the Oahu Community Correctional Center

Vol. 50 - Senate Committees Tour Oahu's Jails and Prisons

July 2023



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").

In 2022, the Hawaii Legislature established a new Department of Law Enforcement to consolidate various state law enforcement divisions, including PSD's, in a single new agency. When the transition is fully implemented on January 1, 2024, PSD will become the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Until then, PSD will maintain both law enforcement and corrections responsibilities.

Hawaii Senate Committees Tour Public Safety Facilities

Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs Committee, Health and Human Services Committee, Commerce and Consumer Affairs Committee, and Hawaiian Affairs Committee and their staff visited the Halawa Correctional Facility, OCCC, and the Laumaka Work Furlough Center accompanied by representatives of the Department of Budget & Finance, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, PSD, and DAGS. A press release issued by the Senate following the visits is reproduced below.



Ka 'Aha Kenekoa
THE SENATE

KE KAPIKALA (STATE CAPITOL)
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

SENATE HOSTS SITE VISITS TO THE O'AHU COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER AND HALAWA CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Honolulu, Hawai'i – On July 11, 2023, the Senate Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs Committee hosted site visits to the Halawa Correctional Facility, O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC), and the Laumaka Work Furlough Center. The purpose was to bring awareness to initiatives to modernize our public safety facilities, disrupt pathways to prison, and reduce recidivism.

Luis Salaveria, Director of the Department of Budget and Finance discussed options for financing the new OCCC. Tommy Johnson, Director of the Department of Public Safety, and Keith Regan, Comptroller for the Department of Accounting and General Services, presented their vision for the future of the new Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Finally, Mary Alice Evans, Director of the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, and Harrison Rue, TOD Program Manager, discussed the potential of the current OCCC site for transit-oriented development.

"We saw deplorable conditions in our jail and prison - everything from overcrowding and lack of lighting to a leaking roof and damaged floors," says Senator Glenn Wakai, Chairman of the Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental Military Affairs, "Both facilities have glaring deficiencies, covered by decades of band aids. Ignoring the situation could lead to the Fed's mandating upgrades and the costs to taxpayers will skyrocket."

"We plan to refocus and shift from what some may see as a punitive incarceration model to a model focused on treatment, education, and

successful re-entry via wrap-around services”, says Tommy Johnson, Director of the Department of Public Safety. “It is critical to establish diversions at the front of pipelines to prison to reduce the burden on our enforcement and correctional facilities.”

The Senate has supported various initiatives that disrupt pathways to prison and reduce recidivism, including the statewide expansion of Alternative Learning Programs within the Department of Education, the establishment of the Office of Wellness and Resilience, and the continuation of the Ohana Zones Program.

“Our visit to OCCC, confirmed that the Senate’s \$10 million allocation of funds in Fiscal Year 2025 for the relocation of the facility to a new site in Halawa Valley is a prudent one and will get this project moving,” says Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means. “Overcrowding, aging facilities and outdated security infrastructure at OCCC are putting inmates and our public safety personnel at risk, and we need to move with urgency to get a new and modern facility built. We are encouraged to know that under Director Tommy Johnson’s leadership, he is working closely with the Governor, Budget and Finance, Department of Accounting and General Services and the Department of Agriculture to move quickly on putting out a Request for Qualifications so that we can determine financing options that the State can move forward with and get this project underway and built.”

For the new OCCC in Halawa, the Environmental Impact Statement was formally accepted in 2018, and the Planning and Review Use permit was approved by the Honolulu City Council in 2020. Next steps include issuing the Request for Qualifications, which is awaiting approval by Director Salaveria. This is a necessary step to inform future legislative requests and the issuance of the Request for Proposals.

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Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs Committee, Health and Human Services Committee, Commerce and Consumer Affairs Committee, Hawaiian Affairs Committee, staff and representatives of the Department of Budget & Finance, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission, PSD and DAGS at the Laumaka Work Furlough Center.

Priority Issues Affecting Hawaii's Prisons and Jails

PSD has been advocating for community and legislative support and the resources necessary to address problems in Hawaii's prisons and jails. The three most urgent are discussed below.

• Modern, rehabilitative prison and jail facilities are urgently needed

Protecting Hawaii's society with jails that are safe, humane, cost-efficient, and appropriately secure has grown more challenging by the deteriorating condition of facilities and the infrastructure that supports them. The condition of correctional facilities and infrastructure is critically important to operation and security since, as an institution ages, the need for maintenance, repairs, upgrades, and system replacements increases substantially. This typically involves infrastructure including electrical, HVAC, plumbing, fire and other life safety systems, security equipment, and roofs and structural systems. Older and more degraded facilities generally require a high level of attention and increasing levels of investment in maintenance and repairs.

Correctional facilities are also subjected to more intensive use than almost any other types of facilities since they are occupied by staff and inmates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and often under crowded conditions. As systems and equipment in Hawaii's facilities, many of which are undersized by today's standards, are over-utilized, excessive wear and tear and premature deterioration is the result. In addition, the nature of the correctional environment, subjects systems and equipment to frequent abuse, which further shortens their useful life. As a result, the rate of deterioration tends to be higher than other public institutions and facilities, putting an additional strain on available resources. The additional strain and misuse contribute to the need for continuous investment in repairs and maintenance and eventually development of modern, new facilities.

PSD addresses these challenges by prioritizing projects on a regular basis to ensure that the most critical needs are met to maintain safe and secure facilities. However, in the absence of available funds, PSD often can't address lower priority repair and maintenance projects. The inability to fully maintain all structures and systems increases the costs in future years for accomplishing the required maintenance and repairs. Most importantly, aging structures can cause direct and indirect security issues, such as attempted escapes, inability to lock down cells and housing units, and violence resulting from poor living conditions all of which affects the ability to provide safe and humane institutions.

To those who have visited and inspected Hawaii's prisons and jails, the conditions are both obvious—deteriorating façades, roofs and structural systems, plumbing and HVAC breakdowns, and unseen—poor ventilation, temperature control, and energy inefficiencies. PSD has a large and growing list of unfunded upgrades and repair needs with costs estimated in the tens of millions of dollars.

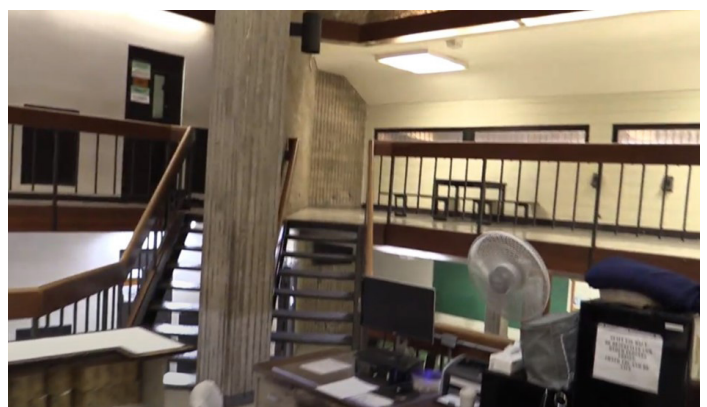
Newer facilities with improved living and working conditions has

been shown to reduce the levels of stress and depression among inmates and staff, resulting in an overall positive effect on institution operation, safety, and security. Development of modern, efficient, and cost-effective institutions would help ensure that Hawaii's criminal justice system can meet the needs of current and future inmate populations and provide for the continued safety and security of inmates, staff, and the public. While the benefits of modern correctional facility design include improved security, conditions of confinement, and safer and more efficient operations, it would also allow for delivery of rehabilitative programs and treatment services currently unavailable in the current jail and prison system.

Governor Josh Green, members of the legislature, law enforcement, the Judiciary, public interest groups, and others can help by supporting PSD's efforts to develop new, modern, and efficient facilities that incorporate offender reentry programs that include educational and treatment programs, rehabilitative services, work furlough, mental health, and medical services to meet the needs of Hawaii's inmate population. Supporting PSD's efforts to build new, modern jail facilities on all islands can help reduce overcrowding, put people on a path towards successful reentry into their communities, while providing a safe, productive, and rehabilitative environment for staff and inmates, and a safer Hawaii.



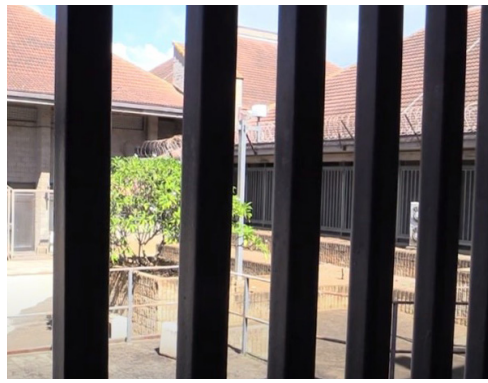
Typical living arrangement in OCCC dormitory.



Typical conditions in OCCC housing unit.



Outdoor recreation space for individual inmate use.



Outdoor visitation area out of use for many years



All visitors and their possessions subject to search to control introduction of contraband into OCC



Fencing, razor wire, and guard towers among the security measures in use at OCC

• Resources needed to address prison and jail overcrowding

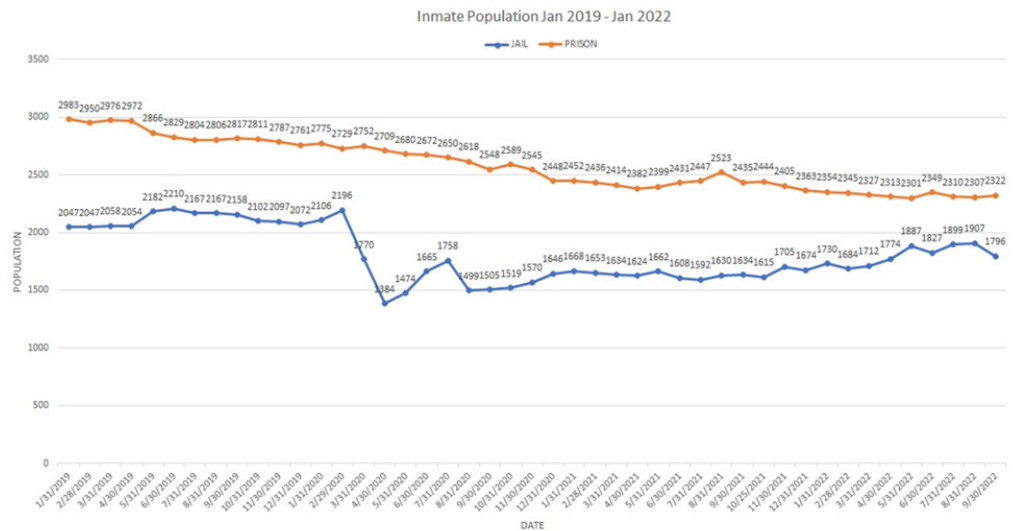
PSD is tasked with housing individuals who have been sentenced or ordered detained by the courts and has no control over the number of people who are sentenced to Hawaii's prisons and jails. Prisons and jails have been operating well over their design and operational capacity for decades and with the pandemic easing and criminal activity on the rise, the number of individuals sent to prison and jail continues to steadily increase. Unfortunately, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to the problem of overcrowding in the correctional system.

Since the 1990's, Hawaii's prison and jail populations have grown substantially during which time no new facilities were added to accommodate them and with little or no improvement to the facilities that house them (see below). PSD is forced to triple-bunk single cells, add beds to crowded dorms, and convert spaces normally used for rehabilitative programs to housing. Overcrowding creates safety and security risks to staff, inmates, and the public while the threat of lawsuits and federal oversight continuously looms over the State.

One of the main ways that overcrowding can be addressed and alleviated is by providing the necessary services on the front end to keep people from making bad choices that results in being confined to prison or jail. There are many

different entities that are part of the criminal justice system, from the community programs to the prosecutors, public defenders, Judiciary, law enforcement departments and the corrections system. It requires collaboration amongst all to expand programming in the community so that the courts could divert people away from prison or jail. More specifically, community programs are needed for those with mental health issues in custody who would be better served in the community via services and housing specific to their needs.

Corrections is just one component of the criminal justice system. PSD does all it can with the resources it has to help those incarcerated make better choices through the limited available programming and treatment services it offers. PSD strives every day to find ways to connect with offenders and help them make the changes they need so when released they don't return. Redirecting people towards programs in the community that help with specific identified needs, and that help them make better choices and having those programs widely available can go a long way towards improving public safety and reducing overcrowding in the correctional system.



• Staffing shortages affect public safety and security

Staffing shortages are not a new phenomenon and is not unique to Hawaii's jails and prisons. Recruitment and staff retention have been a long-standing and serious issues for which PSD has expressed concern to the Legislature and the public for years.

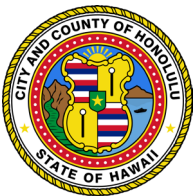
The job of a correctional officer is one of the toughest in State service. The attrition rate is above average, creating a situation where PSD must continually seek to fill the approximately 300 correctional position vacancies to alleviate the strain on the facility's workforce to provide for the care and safe custody of inmates. In addition, absenteeism is a major contributing factor for staffing shortages in Hawaii's correctional facilities. Absenteeism is high, in part, because of the entitlements built into collective bargaining agreements and state and federal laws providing additional leave.

PSD makes every effort to retain staff and to recruit qualified applicants to fill vacancies as quickly as possible through increased training cycles coupled with external recruitment campaigns. Due to the nature of the position, hiring a correctional officer takes several months longer than a typical civil service position due to the care in selecting well-qualified individuals. PSD is doing everything it can to fill vacancies and increase staffing. In a previous legislative session, PSD was provided with a budget that included funding of 160 correctional officer positions.

PSD supports any and all efforts being made by Governor Green and the state legislature to help PSD address these critical needs and hopes that they will work together to help PSD replace the outdated and overcrowded jails and find solutions to the staffing shortages plaguing not just the correctional system, but the state as a whole.

We Want to Hear From You

PSD continually solicits input from community leaders and members about plans for the new OCCC since the community at large may have the knowledge, awareness, and insight that may otherwise be absent. Knowing that, OCCC team representatives attend monthly meetings of the Aiea Neighborhood Board #20, the Aiea Community Association, and the Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission (HCSOC) in addition to engaging with state and local officials, the media, and others.



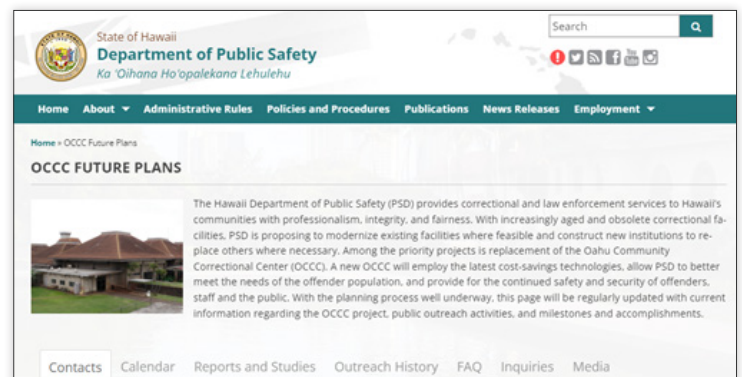
In addition to the OCCC team reporting on progress and accomplishments in advancing plans for the new jail, these forums are opportunities to seek input, advice and guidance from officials, stakeholders and the public. Contact the City and County of Honolulu, Neighborhood Commission Office for information about how to participate at an upcoming Aiea Neighborhood Board meeting (Tel: 808-768-3710/email: nco@honolulu.gov) and/or the Aiea Community Association for information about its upcoming meetings and how to participate: <http://www.aieacommunity.org>.

Members of the OCCC team also attend monthly meetings of the HCSOC which was established by the Legislature to facilitate a transition to a rehabilitative and therapeutic correctional system model. Contact the Commission's Coordinator, Christin M. Johnson for information about how to participate at an upcoming HCSOC meeting (Tel: 808-207-4597/email: christin.m.johnson@hawaii.gov)



Members of the HCSOC during a recent meeting

In addition to distributing OCCC Newsletters to over 1,500 elected and appointed officials, government agencies, media outlets, volunteer groups, and members of the public among others, PSD maintains the OCCC Future Plans a website dedicated to project-related materials, documents outreach efforts, and facilitates the public's ability to offer ideas and suggestions or ask questions: <http://dps.hawaii.gov/occc-future-plans>. Interested parties can also request to receive (via email) future announcements and notifications by submitting your contact information (name, affiliation if any, and email address) to: robert.nardi@wsp.com.



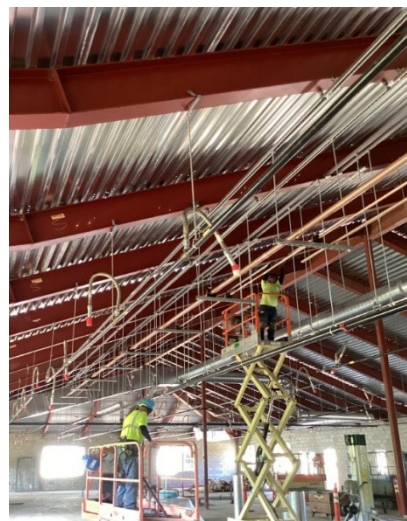
OCCC website home page

Construction Progressing at Women's CCC

Steady progress continues in constructing a new Administration Building, Housing Unit, and Visitation/Intake Building at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) in Kailua. WCCC is being transformed so women currently housed in the crowded and aged OCCC can be transferred to WCCC when construction is completed. Work on the new Administration Building is currently focused on interior spaces as shown in the photos below.



Rendering of New WCCC Administration Building (Credit: CGL)



Construction progressing on new WCCC Administration Building (Credit: Rider Levett Bucknall, June 2023)

In addition to the new construction, the formerly vacant Ho'okipa Cottage is undergoing an extensive renovation to become a positive addition to the WCCC campus. Renovation of the Cottage and construction of an adjacent multi-purpose Support Building will provide a new living environment for residents that will emphasize rehabilitation and normalization while providing life skills for a successful transition out of custody. Design of the Main Cottage and Support Building focused on materials that are normative and similar to that found in a private residence, while standing the test of time and ease of maintenance. Both buildings will be naturally ventilated with the help of ceiling and exhaust fans with a large Lanai connected to the dayrooms contributing to the positive, rehabilitative setting. The images below compare the conceptual renderings against the near-finished conditions.

Renderings vs actual construction progress



The multi-purpose room above features an exposed wood structure and a high lifted roof that allows for maximum ventilation. The space can be used for daily dining or special events and is a space for gatherings and celebrations.



Dormitories are identified by privacy panels visible from the entry. Each resident will have a drawer under the bed and a full height locker for their belongings.



Front entry to Ho'okipa Cottage

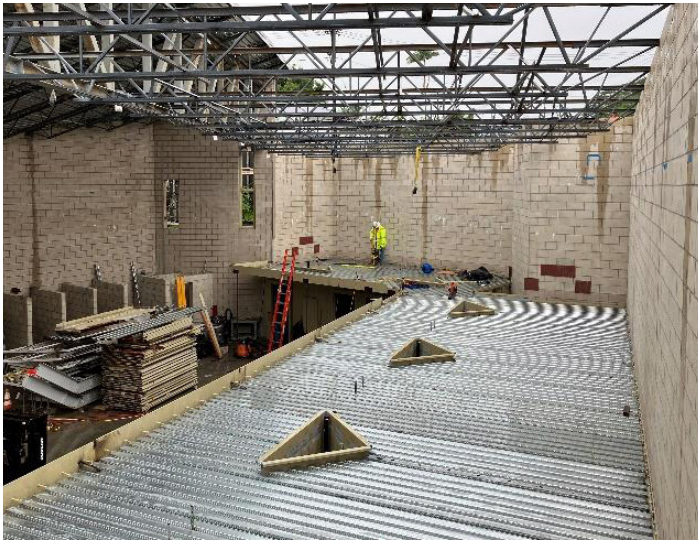
Credit: Photos by Rider Levett Bucknall, June 2023; Renderings by DLR Group

New Housing Unit Takes Shape at Hawaii CCC

Since construction of a new housing unit began at the Hawaii Community Correctional Center (HCCC) in Hilo, considerable progress has been achieved. HCCC has been chronically overcrowded, and currently houses 293 inmates or 30 percent above its operational capacity (PSD, July 3, 2023). Construction of the new housing unit will improve living conditions and help address the crowded conditions and is the first substantial improvement to HCCC in many years.



Rendering of HCCC Housing Unit (Credit: DLR Group)



Interior and exterior work at the new housing unit (Credit: Rider Levett Bucknall, June 2023)



Celebrating the Fourth of July at Pearl Harbor.

Upcoming Activities

The following activities are anticipated in the months ahead.

<p>July 2023</p>	<p>Members of Hawaii State Senate tour PSD facilities on Oahu.</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>
<p>August 2023</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>
<p>September 2023</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>

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.

Interested in Learning More?

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

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