

# Future of the Oahu Community Correctional Center

## Vol. 42 - Why You and Your Community Should Care About Building the New OCCC Now

March 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").

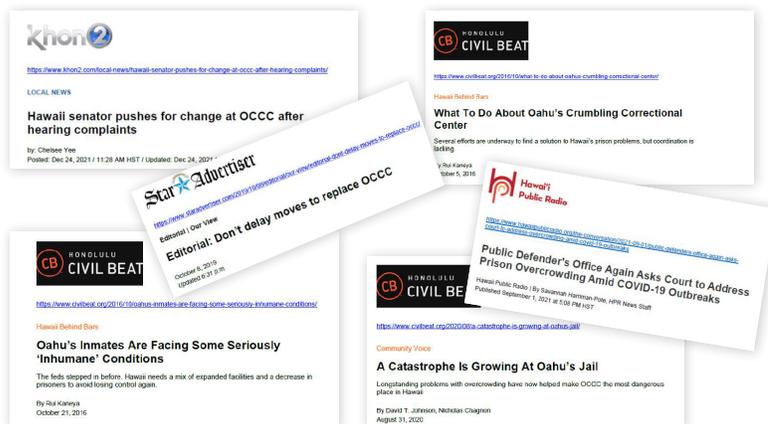
### Successful Reentry Requires Successful Training, Services, and Preparation

The evidence is clear and compelling: those who've served their time are at high risk for returning to criminal behavior — sometimes within days of their release — if they don't receive adequate resources, training, guidance, and support. To find their way back to their community as productive citizens, offenders need a roadmap, and that responsibility falls to the Department of Public Safety (PSD) as their release date approaches.

Hawaii is known nationally for the HOPE program, founded in 2004. Hawaii Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (HOPE) is now widely followed in community corrections populations across the country and has resulted in dramatic reductions in positive drug tests after release, missed probation appointments, and other actions that often land people back in jail. The swift sanctions that are handed down by HOPE judges require additional bedspace at our jails. Unfortunately, OCCC's limited space makes it difficult to accommodate the housing needs of the HOPE program.

PSD prioritizes reentry and strives to provide services to defendants and offenders throughout the state in an effort to reduce recidivism and ensure public safety. PSD also works hard to identify and address gaps in current reentry programming by introducing new programs and services and providing collaborative opportunities for community service providers to aid in an offender's reentry efforts. The prisons have the space to implement these efforts, but one of the biggest gaps identified is that the jails simply do not have the space to accommodate expanded reentry programs in their current footprint.

OCCC's outdated, cramped and inadequate design creates challenges with providing the needed support prior to release for inmates to successfully reentry society. Fully 95% of the people currently incarcerated in Hawaii will eventually return to the community. Therefore, it's critical to address their physical and mental health needs, treat their behavioral issues, and provide the skills needed to avoid reoffending and reentering the justice system. The purpose of the courts, jails, and prisons is to hold people accountable for their actions while also preparing them to return to the community as productive citizens. The revolving jailhouse door doesn't keep our communities safe, and it doesn't reform and rehabilitate those who need it most. Consequently, neighborhood criminal activity is regularly in the news and a hot topic in online community sites like Nextdoor replete with video clips and photos of break-in attempts and even violence in some cases. We all see it, we all feel it, and many adjust their lifestyles to protect themselves from it.



## Successful Reentry Requires Successful Training, Services, and Preparation (Continued)

For the system to work properly, there needs to be more space suitable for rehabilitative and training programs that help inmates return home better prepared to be successful, productive members of society. A new OCCC will offer an unprecedented opportunity to provide the type of physical environment and tools needed for most offenders to improve their lives and successfully exit the criminal justice system for good. These programs and services include assisting offenders in securing post-release housing (transitional or permanent, as well as residential out outpatient treatment for those in need of substance abuse treatment); linking inmates with health and social services; and offering pre-release training to help inmates develop job skills to improve employment prospects. A new OCCC will enhance PSD's efforts to do these things more consistently and effectively.

PSD agrees with many of the ideas and efforts led by those working toward restorative justice and looks forward to supporting those initiatives through the judicial system. However, PSD's priority is to care for those who are currently incarcerated in a humane way while helping them return to their communities with the training, services, and preparation they need to become contributing citizens.

Hawaii taxpayers are currently funding a facility that continues to deteriorate, and without adequate space for programs which leads to more hardened offenders ending up back on the street and repeating the cycle. That's just not a smart use of limited funds. We must do better. Putting that funding towards a new facility just makes good sense: the offenders are provided with improved housing and program space and given a chance to rehabilitate, the criminal justice system can adequately perform its work, and the people of Hawaii benefit from safer communities and former inmates becoming productive citizens.

## OCCC Team Attends Community Meetings

For several years now, State officials and OCCC team representatives have been attending monthly meetings of the Aiea Neighborhood Board and Aiea Community Association. In addition to reporting on progress and accomplishments in advancing plans for the new OCCC, representatives use the forums as an opportunity to seek input, advice and guidance offered by local officials, stakeholders and the public.



Meetings begin at 7:00 PM HST with the Aiea Neighborhood Board meeting on the second Monday of each month and the Aiea Community Association meeting on the third Monday of the month. With the on-going pandemic, both groups hold meetings using a virtual meeting platform. Contact the Honolulu Neighborhood Commission Office for information as to how to attend and participate (Tel: 808-768-3710/Email: nco@honolulu.gov). Contact the Aiea Community Association for information about upcoming meetings and how to participate: <http://www.aieacommunity.org>

## Community Input Encouraged

PSD recognizes the value and importance of engaging the community and considers engagement an essential element of the OCCC planning and development process. Community members bring the aggregated knowledge, skills, and awareness to solve a collective challenge. Tapping into this wisdom can shape the type of questions that are asked, challenge prevailing norms, and bring about unexpected insights that lead to innovative and transformative solutions.

Some have suggested that the State and its consultants have not engaged the community in the jail planning process in a meaningful way. However, since 2016, PSD has continually invited community members and stakeholders to participate in the OCCC planning process. As part of that effort, PSD has:

- Arranged, attended and/or participated at one-on-one and group meetings involving neighborhood boards, community associations, and state-sponsored task forces and commissions;
- Held project information sessions and island-wide public meetings;
- Distributed monthly OCCC Newsletters to over 1,500 elected and appointed officials, government agencies, media outlets, volunteer groups, and members of the public among many others;
- Established and maintained a dedicated OCCC project website to share technical studies and other project-related materials; among other efforts (see OCCC Future Plans website for a complete history of outreach activities).

Under normal circumstances, State officials would be participating at in-person meetings with stakeholders and others about plans for the new OCCC. However, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has disrupted normal day-to-day interactions since early 2020. In response, the OCCC team has been and will continue to be available via virtual meeting services that allow individuals to contribute from safe locations. To offer ideas, comments or questions, visit the OCCC Future Plans website: <http://dps.hawaii.gov/occc-future-plans> or contact PSD directly.

# Facing the Challenges of Change: Creating better environments to effect better results

## Officer and Inmate Wellness with Post-Occupancy Data

From the International Corrections & Prisons Association 19th Conference "Best Practices for Creating A Therapeutic Treatment Environment In A Secure Setting," we know providing indoor and outdoor spaces with views of nature contribute to successful outcomes for staff and detainees.

New facilities are now being designed with greater attention and sensitivity to the needs of inmates and staff. Much is discussed of the high rate of detainees in our country's detention and corrections systems with behavioral health issues, but little is discussed about the mental health of the staff who work in these facilities. A 25-year officer spends 56,250 hours, or six years of their life in the facility before they retire, often significantly more time than inmate populations serve in a jail.

Studies of the recently completed Skagit County Community Justice Center show access to natural daylight, views to nature, improved acoustics, thermal comfort, and adequate staff spaces reduce the levels of stress, depression, and fear of being victimized for both staff and inmates.

Baseline data collected from both staff and inmates in an existing jail were compared to data collected one year following the opening of the new jail with focus on the effect on stress and depression from environmental elements, including natural daylight, views to nature and acoustic levels.

These results support the design goals for creating spaces with reduced noise, increased daylight and views to nature to enhance the feeling of safety and lower stress levels for all occupants.

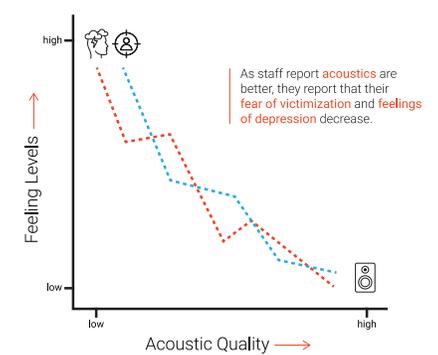
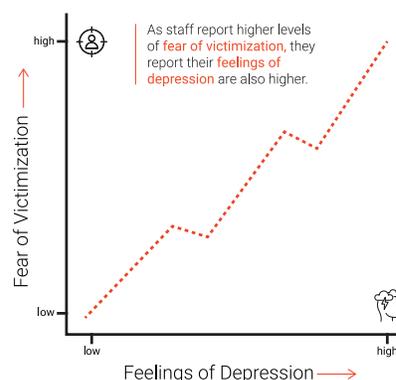
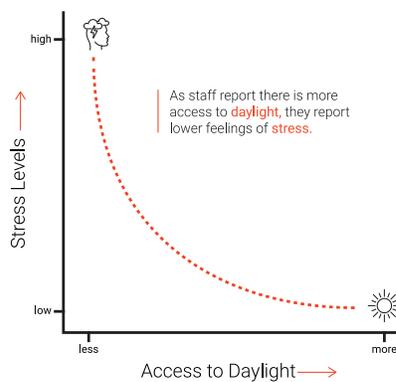
### Best Practices Research

*“As justice designers, we are always learning and educating ourselves, our clients, our communities, and law-making agencies across the country in justice architecture. Many things need to occur to turn these places of detention into safety and healing for inmates and their families all while keeping staff and communities safe and well. We are just now beginning to see evidence-based results of facilities and programs that combine to create healthier and rehabilitative environments for offenders. What we are doing on these Community Correction Center projects, is using all our knowledge of best practices research and design such as views to nature, daylight and quality of environment, and are confident that they will result in improved outcomes for detainees and staff alike. We are committed to architectural design as an element of change in detentions to effect better results.”*

- Gary Retel, Design Leader, Principal, DLR Group



**Skagit County Community Justice Center | Mount Vernon, WA**



## Archaeological Survey Approved for New MCCC Housing Unit

With design complete, construction of a new housing unit and chiller plant will soon begin within a 0.51-acre area at the Maui Community Correctional Center (MCCC) in Wailuku. As part of constructing the housing unit and chiller plant, the area will be regraded along with installation of stairs, a walkway, curbs and a curb ramp, a new detention basin, and new utilities among other features. Once constructed, the housing unit will improve the living and working environments by providing access to natural daylight, views to the outdoors, and improved acoustics and thermal comfort, which have been shown to reduce stress, depression, and anxiety with a corresponding positive effect on overall institution safety and security. To ensure cultural or historical features would not be adversely affected by construction, the State undertook preparation of an Archaeological Assessment of the construction zone.

The assessment, which included a pedestrian survey, use of ground penetrating radar, and excavation of test units, yielded no cultural material and no historic properties were identified. The assessment did recommend archaeological monitoring be performed during construction due to the potential for unidentified historic properties to occur at levels below the depth of the manual testing. Based on the recommendation, an archaeological monitoring plan has been prepared and will be implemented during construction.

Following submission of the assessment report and monitoring plan, the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) acknowledged that the reports met the requirements of HAR §13-276-5 and HAR §13-279-4 (February 2, 2022) and have been accepted. SHPD also concurred with archaeological monitoring for identification purposes during all ground disturbing work associated with the project and with that, construction of the new housing unit and chiller plant at MCCC will begin shortly.



**Site of planned housing unit at MCCC. Credit: DLR Group.**



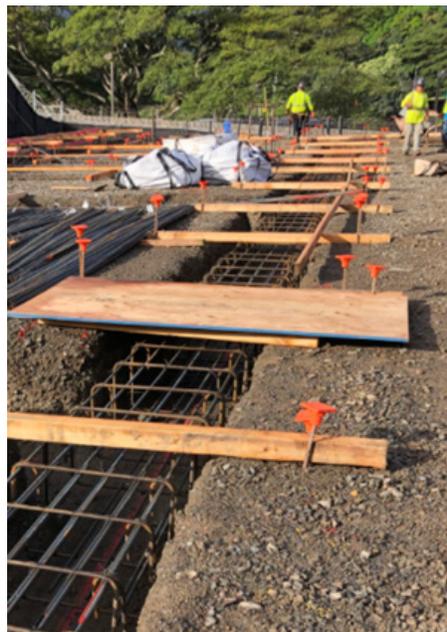
**Site of planned housing unit at MCCC. Credit: DLR Group.**

# Construction at Women's Community Correctional Center Continues

Each month PSD shares progress in constructing the new 176-bed Housing Unit, Administration Building, and Visitation/Intake Building, along with other ancillary improvements at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) in Kailua. WCCC was initially developed 1952 as the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility and adapted 40 years later to house female offenders. Once completed, females currently housed at OCCC will be transferred to WCCC thereby improving living conditions; allowing for gender-specific treatment and rehabilitation services; and improving the visitation experience. Construction during the past month was largely directed to site preparation and installation of underground utilities as shown in the photos below.



**Credit: Renderings provided by CGL Companies.**



**WCCC construction photos (February 2022).**

## Ho o'kapa Cottage Support Building Progressing

In addition to the new construction currently underway at WCCC, PSD is also renovating the formerly vacant Ho o'kapa Cottage to convert it into a useful addition to the campus. Renovation of the cottage structure and the addition of a multi-purpose support building will provide a new living environment for female offenders that will emphasize rehabilitation and normalization while providing life skills for a successful transition out of custody. The photos below capture the considerable progress in constructing the multi-purpose building which, when completed in late 2022, will provide space for various gatherings and other purposes as shown in the rendering above.



**Rendering of completed multi-purpose building.**



**Credit: Photos and rendering provided by DLR Group, March 2022.**



**Hawaii's State Fish: Humuhumunukunuku apua`a (Hawaiian Trigger Fish)**

## Upcoming Activities

The following activities are anticipated in the months ahead.

<p><b>April 2022</b></p>	<p>Preparation of OCCC Request for Qualifications continues.          New construction and renovations continue at 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. 43, etc.          2022 legislative session underway.</p>
<p><b>May 2022</b></p>	<p>Preparation of OCCC Request for Qualifications continues.          New construction and renovations continue at 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. 44, etc.          2022 legislative session concludes.</p>
<p><b>June 2022</b></p>	<p>Target date for issuance of new OCCC Request for Qualifications.          New construction and renovations continue at 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.</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)