



The Utah State Prison in Draper is aging, inefficient, and in need of hundreds of millions of dollars in improvements just to keep operating at its current level. At the same time, the state needs to implement changes in the criminal justice system to reduce recidivism and future growth in the inmate population. The parallel tracks of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative proposed by the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) and the PRC's search for a new prison provide an unprecedented opportunity for improving the State's correctional system. CCJJ is recommending programs that reduce recidivism, control prison costs, and hold offenders accountable. A new prison facility will help the Department of Corrections to actually implement these programs.

Why Relocate?

The current prison:

- does not accommodate modern programs and services that could reduce recidivism and decrease the growth of the inmate population
- does not meet many national standards
- is difficult and expensive to maintain
- will cost about \$250 million over the next 20 years in repairs and upgrades just to keep the current facility functioning at its current level
- is in the path of booming commercial and residential development

Relocating the prison:

- gives the state an opportunity to design the new facilities to improve the delivery of correctional treatment, education, and training programs
- will help the state reduce recidivism and provide better outcomes for inmates
- will help the state realize cost savings over time with a new, more efficient, state-of-the-art facility
- will provide the state \$1.8 billion in annual economic output and \$94.6 million of annual tax revenue for the state and local governments when the current site is redeveloped

The Opportunity

Utah's prison population is growing. The challenge in building a new correctional facility is not in creating new beds to house more inmates, but in creating the programming space necessary to avoid their return. If a new prison is constructed with programming and reform in mind, a new prison can help reduce recidivism, improve outcomes for inmates, and save taxpayer dollars.

Nearly all inmates will be released back into the community. While incarcerated, there is sufficient time to involve these individuals in programs and services, to prepare them for successful reintegration back into the community. A modern and highly functional prison allows us to incorporate the latest thinking in design and programming to reduce the likelihood that prisoners will be re-incarcerated. An up-to-date and more-efficient design will also better serve the needs of prison employees, volunteers, inmate families, and visitors. Furthermore, overall public safety in our communities is improved when released inmates benefit from programs that help them successfully re-enter society and prevent their re-incarceration. Corrections reform that includes a new prison is therefore in the best interests of all of Utah's citizens.

Facts: Population Growth

Studies have shown that:

- Utah's prison population grew 22% in the last decade;
- Prison population growth is not driven by state population growth or increasing crime rates
- Without system reform, the state's prison population is projected to grow by 37% in next 20 years
- Parole and probation revocations make up more than two-thirds of admissions to prison
- The amount of time served for nonviolent offenders is increasing, yet this has not improved outcomes

Facts: Treatment

We can curb prison population growth trends by doing a better job meeting the needs of our offenders. Increased treatment and programming in prison can assist in this effort by better preparing inmates to re-enter society.

Studies have shown that:

- 67% of all prison admissions are parole and probation violators. Better preparing inmates for their return to the community can help reduce this number.
- 63% of new court commitments to prison are for nonviolent crimes. While much of this problem can be fixed through sentencing reform, nonviolent criminals are excellent candidates for improved treatment programs. Increased and enhanced programming space at a new facility will help this major portion of the prison population prepare for reentry into society.
- Prisons should focus on rehabilitation to reduce the likelihood of recidivism by offering effective programming and treatment during an inmate's period of incarceration.
- The current prison is so ill-equipped that some programming is conducted in hallways.
- Nearly 85% of the female inmates and about 70 percent of the male inmates have medium to very high education needs that educational programming could meet.

Figure 1

Using Treatment to Curb the Growth

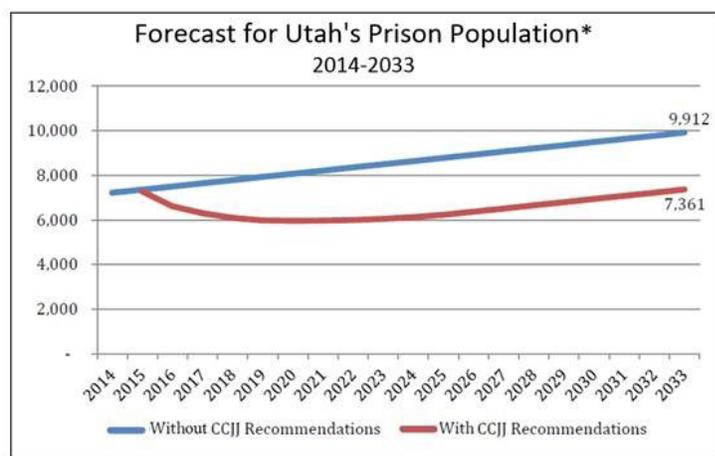
Prison relocation will help in the implementation of proposed corrections reforms. After more than year of study, the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) has formulated a package of recommendations for corrections reform. While some CCJJ reforms can be implemented independently, the construction of new correctional facilities will maximize many reforms for optimal benefit. For example, many CCJJ reforms focus on preparing offenders for reentry into society after they have been incarcerated. New prison facilities will offer more programming space to prepare offenders for reentry into society long before they ever leave the prison.

Prison relocation is critical for the successful implementation of corrections reform. If successfully implemented, studies have shown that these reforms will:

- avert 98% of the anticipated growth in the prison population (See Figure 1);
- avoid the need for 2,551 prison beds; and
- save taxpayers at least \$542 million over the next two decades.

The Importance of Volunteers

Volunteers are essential for corrections to achieve efficient operations, effective programming, and to facilitate inmates' proper transition back into our communities. The Draper facility is serviced by more than 1,200 volunteers and has the largest number of volunteers per capita in the nation. The success of improved programming at the new prison facility depends upon these individuals. Ninety percent of volunteers that serve at the prison are from Salt Lake County. It is important that new prison facilities are located in an area that is accessible by volunteers so that programming can be enhanced for maximum benefit.



*Forecasts based on corrections system's average daily population

Interested in Learning More?

For information about the PRC visit: www.le.utah.gov/prc.

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