

ANSWERS

Volume 4: Potential Effects on Community Services from a Relocated Utah State Correctional Facility

April 21, 2015



The relocation of the Utah State Prison now in Draper raises many questions for a potential host community. Communities wonder how a new correctional facility will affect local services such as law enforcement, fire protection, and utilities. This volume ANSWERS some questions about what effect a new correctional facility will have on community services.

How will local police, fire, and ambulance services be affected?

Modern correctional facilities are built with the latest in effective inmate management technology and practices such as cameras, sensors, lights, fencing, and direct supervision. Escapes are extremely rare. In fact, there has not been an escape from the Utah State Prison in over two decades and nearly that long for the state correctional facility in Gunnison.

The demands on services from local police and fire departments will be minimal. Modern correctional facilities are largely self-contained and rarely require public safety services from outside agencies. While it can't be guaranteed that the local police or fire department will *never* be requested to respond to an incident, it is highly unlikely. For example, as of this date, the Draper City Police Department has not responded to an incident at the Utah State Prison in over two years and the Gunnison City Fire Department has responded to only one incident since 2010 (a small grass fire).

To avoid diverting ambulance services away from meeting community needs, the Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) contracts with a private ambulance company to provide ambulance services. In FY 2014, this company provided 79 transports for the prison and Salt Lake County Unified Fire Authority provided four transports.

The majority of criminal investigations regarding incidents within a state correctional facility are routinely handled by the UDC's Law Enforcement Bureau. However, the county sheriff's office sometimes chooses to conduct its own investigation of such crimes. Under Utah Code Section 64-13-6, the UDC is mandated to notify the sheriff of the county in which a state correctional facility is located of serious incidents, including criminal conduct of employees, aggravated kidnapping and assaults, and deaths. An agreement between the UDC and sheriff could be put in place to address these.

The Unified Police Department in Salt Lake County currently investigates in-custody deaths and incidents involving officers and staff at the Utah State Prison. Between 2009 and December 2014, it has responded on 28 occasions to the prison for incidents involving property damage, use-of-force, inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-officer assaults, and suicide.

Finally, the new correctional facility will employ hundreds of sworn officers. These officers offer an added security presence in the community who are willing and able to assist local law enforcement when requested.

Will the host city be required to pay to provide water and sewer service to the new correctional facility?

The State of Utah is working cooperatively with each potential host city to determine the best method to provide water supply and sewer services to the proposed correctional facility. Although on-site wells are a possible source of water for the new correctional facility, the preferred arrangement is for the facility to be connected to the public water supply system with the state paying its fair share of all needed upgrades and improvements to the city water facilities.

With regards to sewer services, the preferred outcome is for an agreement to be reached for the city to provide sewer services with the state paying its fair share of the needed upgrades and improvements to the city sewer facilities. However, if an agreement cannot be reached, an on-site sewage treatment facility would be built next to the new correctional facility. While a cooperative arrangement between the state and city is best, the state is prepared to "go it alone" to provide its own water and sewer services.

Will electricity and natural gas services be compromised by operation of a new prison?

The State of Utah will secure adequate electricity and natural gas services either through new power lines or gas mains or by expanding the capacity of existing lines and mains. Studies by utility providers are under way to determine what (if any) new investments are needed.

Are inmate families likely to relocate to the host community?

Inmates in the Utah corrections system are housed in multiple locations. In addition to at the Draper facility, an inmate may be housed in one of 21 county jails, in the Central Utah Correctional Facility in Gunnison, or in an out-of-state facility. Inmates are regularly transferred between these facilities. Families of inmates do not relocate to live near a prison because they know there is no guarantee an inmate will remain in the same location for a given length of time.

Interested in Learning More?

For a complete listing of all reports and newsletters and for information about the PRC visit: www.le.utah.gov/prc. To provide feedback, contact: prisonrelocation@le.utah.gov

Brian J. Bean, Policy Analyst

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel

Tel: 801-538-1032

Email: bbean@le.utah.gov

Robert J. Nardi, Senior Vice President

Louis Berger

Tel: 973-809-7495

Email: rnardi@louisberger.com