

Prison Needs Assessment

UPDATE

Fayette County,
Pennsylvania

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Introduction

Fayette County contracted with CGL to conduct a needs assessment of the County Prison in late 2016. Alan Richardson, of Justice Planners, was employed by CGL at that time and led that effort. Since the presentation of the final Needs Assessment report in May 2017, there have been several procedural changes that have contributed to a decline in the County Prison population. Examples include changes to the bail requirements for Summary Offenses, the enactment of a moratorium on placing traffic fine offenders in the County Prison, implementing a process to review, and at times reduce, unnecessarily high bonds, and expanding the use of house arrest with electronic monitoring.

As a result of these changes, and the decline in prison population, County Commissioners contracted with Justice Planners to conduct a brief review of the estimated prisoner population and bedspace needs that were detailed in the 2017 needs assessment. The purpose of this review was to determine whether the recent decline in prisoner population will continue once there is a new County Prison, or if the numbers will increase once there are more available prison beds. These changes may have an impact on the number and types of beds that will be required for a new County Prison.

Background

The information and conditions that were encountered in the 2017 study are as follows:

The County Prison first opened in 1889 and is a four-level building that is connected by a bridge to the County Courthouse. The main building of the County Prison has 184 beds in celled housing, and an Annex building with an additional 80 dormitory beds was added in 2002. Combined, the capacity of the County Prison is 264 beds. Program space is virtually non-existent. The Chapel is the only space available for any type of group gathering. Interviews and meetings by investigators, clergy, or service providers take place in one of two holding cells in the Booking area.

Over the last several years, there have been many prisoners regularly housed with other nearby jurisdictions due to a lack of adequate bedspace. A large percentage of these have been female prisoners. The prison is overcrowded and understaffed. The design is outdated, inefficient and, in many areas, dangerous to staff and prisoners, and there are many maintenance issues in the prison, including plumbing, electrical and HVAC problems.

Previous studies have been conducted for the County Prison with recommendations to completely replace the existing prison with a facility nearly double the current capacity.

The study consisted of five major tasks which were:

Task 1: Conduct Initial Meetings with designated Fayette County staff and stakeholders,

Task 2: Collect Criminal Justice and Prison/ Corrections Component Data for the criminal justice agencies and County Prison as available for the most recent 10-years of historic caseload data for developing projection models,

Task 3: Evaluation of Existing Facilities to determine the viability of continued use,

Task 4: Prepare Prisoner Profile and Projection of Prison and Community Custody Populations for the next 10- and 20-year facility planning and development terms in 5-year increments,

Task 5: Future Facility Space Needs for the 10- and 20- year facility planning periods.

At the kick-off meeting the group of 32 individuals attending was asked to define the purpose of the County Prison, as defining the purpose early on helps to guide the planning and discussion for all subsequent decision-making. A facility whose purpose is to incapacitate those that have been arrested through warehousing will look and operate very differently from one that is program-rich with the goal of improving the prisoner to reduce the chance of future arrests.

The overwhelming response from the 32 individuals attending the kick-off meeting was that the County Prison's purpose was rehabilitation. They indicated a desire for a prison that will meet the appropriate training and programmatic needs of the prisoners, a prison that was cost effective to build and to operate, and a prison that was not bigger than it needed to be.

2017 Needs Assessment Findings

The following is a synopsis of the findings that were detailed in the 2017 Prison Needs Assessment report.

Reported Crime: From 2005 to 2015 total Part 1 reported offenses decreased by 21.7 percent. The Part 1 violent crimes decreased 33.6 percent from 2005 to 2015, and the Part 1 property crimes decreased 20.3 percent.

Arrests: From 2005 to 2015 the Part 1 violent crime arrests decreased 11.1 percent, and the Part 1 property crimes arrests increased 9.2 percent. The average annual arrests for violent crimes were 219 between 2005 and 2015, and the average annual arrests for property crimes were 723 during the same time frame.

Criminal Case Filings: The percentage of cases in Fayette County that are criminal cases has decreased from 11.4 percent in 2006 to 9.6 percent in 2016, a decrease of 15.7 percent. The criminal case filings dipped from 2007 to 2009, bottoming out at 2,888. Criminal case filings rebounded starting in 2010 and maxed out in 2013 at 3,334.

Annual Prison Admissions: The number of people admitted to the County Prison is a key variable in population projections and bed space projections. Admissions are considered with the average length of stay of prisoners for projection modeling.

The number of admissions to the County Prison increased from 1,546 in 2000 to 2,355 in 2016, an increase of 52.3 percent. (The annual admission data to the County Prison is from the Offender Management Systems Reports.)

The increase in County Prison admissions occurred while the County population experienced an 8.0 percent decrease in population. Admissions solely do not necessarily drive up the population in the County Prison. If the average length of stay of the prisoners decreases while the admissions increase, the average daily population could stay level or potentially decrease, even with more admissions. Except for 2014 and 2015, the admissions have trended upward in Fayette County.

Prisoner Classification: During the on-site interviews, the prisoner classification levels were defined as follows:

- Class 1 is a low misdemeanor classification
- Class 2 is a high misdemeanor classification
- Class 3 is a low felony classification
- Class 4 is a middle felony classification
- Class 5 is a high felony classification
- Class 6 is a classification that was “not available”
- Blank indicates that no classification is given at admission

The number of blank classifications spiked to 1,777 in 2013. Class 3 and Class 4 annual admissions classifications, which represent low and middle felons, are the largest segment of the Prison admissions, not including blank.

Prison Average Daily Populations: The historic annual ADP from 2000 to 2016 increased from 205 to 238, an increase of 15.9 percent. The ADP during these 16 years averaged 249 prisoners. The current maximum capacity in the Fayette County Prison is 264, which was exceeded in 2010 and 2011. The ADP has dipped since 2011, dropping from 278 to 238 in 2016.

Prisoner Average Length of Stay: The ALOS in Fayette County has decreased from 45.0 days in 2000 to 37.5 days in 2016, a decrease of 16.7 percent. The longest annual ALOS was in 2001 at 49.8 days, and the shortest ALOS is the most recent data point of 2016 with an ALOS of 37.6 days. The declining ALOS since 2010 is evident and has contributed to the lower population counts recently in the County Prison.

A snapshot of the prisoner population showed that just 34.1% of the Pretrial Misdemeanant population met the American Bar Association (ABA) Standard of progressing from arrest to trial or plea within 60 days, and 76.8% of the Pretrial Felons progressed from arrest to trial or plea within 120 days.

County Population: The general population in Fayette County has decreased from its peak in the 1940s when the county population surpassed 200,000. According to the US Census, the 2010 population was 136,482 and the 2016 population currently stands at 136,606. From 1990 to 2016, the population in Fayette County has decreased by 8,870 people, a decrease of 6.1 percent. There was a slight population increase in 2016, and many stakeholders during interviews expressed hope that the population declines had stopped and a plateauing of the population, or even an increase of population, was coming.

Needs Assessment Prisoner Profile and Projections

The following is a synopsis of the prisoner profiles and population projections that were detailed in the 2017 prison needs assessment.

County Population: The County population is projected to increase to 140,204 in 2036, an increase of 4.9 percent. The male population is projected to increase by 3,249 residents in 2036, while the females are expected to increase by 3,328. The female population is projected to be larger than the male population by 1,682. County population projections are from The Center for Rural Pennsylvania, A Legislative Agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

Prisoner Projections: The projection of the Fayette County system-wide ADP and bedspace needs uses thirteen models to forecast population levels to the year 2036. The primary variables employed by the models were the total ADP, total admissions, ALOS, and county population projections for Fayette County.

The projected ADP in Fayette County increases to 305 in 2036. This is a “status quo” projection which does not account for changes in legislation, policy, attitudes towards crime or Prison diversion program changes. The projected female ADP increases from 44 to 61 in 2036, an increase of 38.9 percent. The projected male ADP increases from 194 to 244 in 2036, an increase of 28.1 percent. The female ADP has been increasing at a faster pace than the males historically and that trend continues in the projections.

Bedspace Need Projections: Criminal justice facilities cannot be planned solely for the average daily population. Peaks in the population must be accommodated, along with beds for differing prisoner classification. A peaking factor accounts for seasonal variations in the prisoner population. There needs to be enough beds to accommodate seasonal increases without overcrowding. A classification factor accounts for a fluctuation in the type of prisoners held at any given time. There needs to be enough flexibility in the type of beds needed at any given time to provide appropriate separations between the various classification levels of prisoners. The peaking and classification factors are added to the projections to determine a projected number of beds needed. The recommended projected bed space need in Fayette County is 354 in 2036. The gender allocation of these beds is recommended to be 287 beds for male prisoners and 67 beds for female prisoners.

Space Needs: The estimated space needs for a 354-bed County Prison were based upon a benchmarking comparison of other similarly sized prisons in the United States. The complete space program for each comparison facility was divided into six categories to determine the percentage of total space that was allocated to each category.

1. Housing
2. Administration
3. Programs
4. Prisoner Services
5. Intake/Release/Transfer
6. Support Services

These percentages were then applied to the projected number of bedspaces that will be required in the next 10 years and 20 years.

Prisoner Classification: Data was collected regarding the classification breakdown of the prisoner population. There were two significant issues with the data provided by the Prison. The first issue was that according to Prison staff, classification assignments are based upon the prisoner's current charges. It does not factor previous criminal history, education, historical medical and mental health issues, or prior institutional behavior which are all key factors that comprise an objective classification process.

The other issue was that of the 17 years of prisoner data provided, more than 22 percent of the cases showed no classification assignment at all. It is a significant unknown variable to have no classification for one out of every 4.4 prisoners admitted. To determine the bedspace needs by classification, the data provided by the Prison was considered and combined with custody percentages from multiple other facilities.

Table 1
Classification Percentages

Classification	Beds	Recommended %	Current %
Minimum	108	31%	18%
Medium	156	44%	50%
Maximum	54	15%	9%
Special Needs	36	10%	-
Unknown	-	-	23%
Total:	354	100%	100%

Source: Fayette County and CGL, March 2017

Special needs prisoners, those with medical and/or mental illnesses, are managed but are not classified as Special Needs. This is one of the fastest growing portions of the prisoner population across the country and should have dedicated housing that can better address their needs.

New Stand-Alone County Prison: By applying the classification percentages to the projected bed count, a proposed housing plan was developed as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Proposed Housing Plan

Fayette County Prison			
354 BED FACILITY			
HOUSING		Rated Beds: 354	
Male Housing	78%	Unit Capacity	No. of Units
Orientation (Medium)		24	1
Minimum Custody Dorm		48	2
Medium Custody Dorm		48	1
Medium Custody Cells		48	1
Maximum Custody		24	1
Ad Seg & Special Needs		24	1
Restrictive Housing (Max)		12	1
		8	276
Female Housing	22%	Unit Capacity	No. of Units
Orientation (Medium)		12	1
Minimum Custody Dorm		12	1
Medium Custody Dorm		12	1
Medium Custody Cells		12	1
Maximum Custody		12	1
Ad Seg & Special Needs		12	1
Restrictive Housing (Max)		6	1
		7	78

Source: CGL, March 2017

Applying the Low, Average, and High benchmark square footage per bed, the total space required for a new replacement prison in 2036 may range from 111,156 square feet to approximately 137,352 square feet. This is a margin of more than 26,000 square feet.

Table 3
Benchmark Application – 2036

Projected Bedspace Needs: 354		in 2036	
Component		Low Benchmark	Avg Benchmark
Benchmark Sq Ft/Bed		314	342
1	Housing	69,274	75,451
2	Administration	7,867	8,568
3	Programs	5,414	5,896
4	Services	2,491	2,713
5	Intake/Release	7,101	7,734
6	Health Care	4,316	4,701
7	Support Services	14,694	16,004
Building Gross SF		111,156	121,068

Source: CGL, March 2017

A portion of the prison should be maintained for holding prisoners that are transported for court appearances. This would likely be the housing ranges on the third floor. The first and second floors of the prison could be converted for use as either storage space or offices for County personnel.

Construction costs were difficult to estimate as there had been no comparable construction of this type in southwestern Pennsylvania in the last several years. Therefore, a wide range of costs from \$200 to \$275 per square foot was been applied to the low, average, and high estimated facility sizes. To gain a better estimate of total project costs (not just construction costs), a contingency of 10% and architectural and engineering fees of 6% were factored into the estimated costs. Based upon a cost per square foot ranges, the total project costs were estimated to range from \$25.8 million to \$43.8 million.

Table 4
Estimated Project Costs – 2036

\$ per SF	Low Benchmark	Avg Benchmark	High Benchmark
	111,156 sf	121,068 sf	137,352 sf
\$200	\$ 25,788,192	\$ 28,087,776	\$ 31,865,664
\$225	\$ 29,011,716	\$ 31,598,748	\$ 35,848,872
\$250	\$ 32,235,240	\$ 35,109,720	\$ 39,832,080
\$275	\$ 35,458,764	\$ 38,620,692	\$ 43,815,288

** includes contingency and A&E estimated fees*

A second option was developed for a new County Prison that would house most of the prisoner population but would have a portion of prisoners remain in the existing facility. The spaces and costs were estimated, but this option was not recommended due to the additional costs that would be required and the poor physical condition of the current prison.

System Changes and Updates

During the week of September 17, 2018, Justice Planners traveled to Uniontown to meet with local stakeholders and discuss changes that have been made within the criminal justice system that may have resulted in the reduction of the prisoner population, and whether the projected bedspace needs should be adjusted accordingly. During this visit interviews were conducted with the following individuals in the order they were interviewed.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>
David Lohr	County Commissioner
Richard Bower	District Attorney
Ashlee Rosner	Adult Probation
Jeffery Myers	County Prison Warden
Amanda Aorbash	Adult Probation
Kathryn Roebuck	Problem Solving Courts
Tammy Lambie	Deputy Court Administrator
Captain David Rutter	Uniontown Police Department
Vince Vicites	Chairman, County Commissioner
Sheriff James Custer	Fayette County Sheriff
Judge Mike Defino	County District Judge
Honorable Steve Leskinen	Court of Common Pleas
Angela Zimmerlink*	County Commissioner
Brent Bavington*	PrimeCare Medical, Inc.

* Interviews with Commissioner Zimmerlink and Mr. Bavington took place via telephone the week after the onsite visits.

There have been several systemic changes that have been enacted since the completion of the 2017 needs assessment that have impacted the number of prison admissions, the typical time to disposition, the prison average daily population (ADP), and the participation rates of the Home Detention program.

Summary Offenses

In early 2018 the local judiciary placed a moratorium on incarcerating most individuals charged with summary offenses. A debate is currently taking place at the Commonwealth level to determine the guidelines that will be used to set the financial thresholds by which a person can be sentenced to county prison for failure to pay fines. Until this determination is made, the local moratorium is likely to remain in place. Local officials estimate the current prison population has fallen by approximately 20 because of these recent changes.

This change has, however, resulted in a higher number of offenders entering the Home Detention program. It was the opinion of some staff interviewed that this change has also resulted in a lack of respect for the judicial process. Offenders, they feel, have lost the incentive to pay their fines. Other than

dealing with the inconvenience of wearing an electronic monitor, offenders have the ability to stay at home and continue their normal activities.

It is not known when the Commonwealth will decide this matter, but most individuals interviewed do not feel the total moratorium will remain in place. They feel some of the individuals currently diverted from the County Prison will be incarcerated for future offenses, but the extent is not known.

Fast-Tracking Cases

Staff described how the District Attorney's office has begun fast-tracking much of their caseload. According to information provided in the interviews, non-violent cases are not being committed to the County Prison, immediate hearings are scheduled for bench warrants, and the office is months ahead of their trial schedule. It was described that their method of fast-tracking pleas can save as much as 10 to 11 months of time waiting to go to trial, and that approximately 50 cases have been fast-tracked so far in 2018. If this is the case, taking the low estimate of saving 10 months of waiting time equals 300 days (10 months) per case. Multiply this by 50 cases and you have 15,000 days of waiting time saved. Assuming all 50 cases would have spent their time in the County Prison awaiting trial, at \$78 per day (the reported daily cost of housing a prisoner in Fayette County), the County will have saved as much as \$1,170,000 so far in 2018.

Prisoner Population Management

In February 2018 a Probation officer was assigned to the Prison to review all prisoner cases daily. The purpose of this position is to identify prisoners that may be eligible for bail modification, alternatives to incarceration, or fast-tracking their cases. From February through mid-September 2018 there have reportedly been 57 bail modifications and 12 medical furloughs from the County Prison as a result of the Probation officer and the Warden working together.

In mid-September there were 218 offenders in the Home Detention program of which 44 were indigent, meaning their program fees were paid via the County's Prisoner Welfare Fund. It was also reported Probation has the staff for a maximum of 180 offender participants in this program, which means the caseload was 21% higher than their staffing levels.

Staff emphasized the importance of screening all new offenders for programs and treatment. There is frustration over the lack of program or treatment space in the current facility. The Chapel is the only program space currently. It is also used for interviews, assessments and overflow housing which limits the ability for staff to conduct any type of prisoner programs.

It was estimated that approximately 14% of all male prisoners and 31% of all female prisoners in Fayette County suffer from a serious mental illness (SMI). Many of the individuals interviewed expressed the need and support for dedicated housing and treatment for the SMI population. This is a growing problem in prisons across the country in terms of managing this type of prisoner and increased liability for not providing proper spaces and services for this specialized group of individuals.

The number of offenders on probation has continued to grow as more individuals are diverted from the prison into alternative programs and supervision. Since 2014 the probation caseload has steadily risen.

In mid-September 2018 there were 631 active Probation cases in Fayette County and 86 absconders. As mentioned above, 218 of these offenders are on the Home Detention – electronic monitoring program.

Annual Admissions

The number of annual admissions has been updated since the 2017 needs assessment report was issued. In 2017 the number of prison admissions grew by 212 over the previous year. This was the largest single year increase since 2010. However, 2018 is projected to have the sharpest decline in admissions since 2014. This should largely be attributed to the changes the handling of Summary cases.

Table 5
Updated Annual Admissions

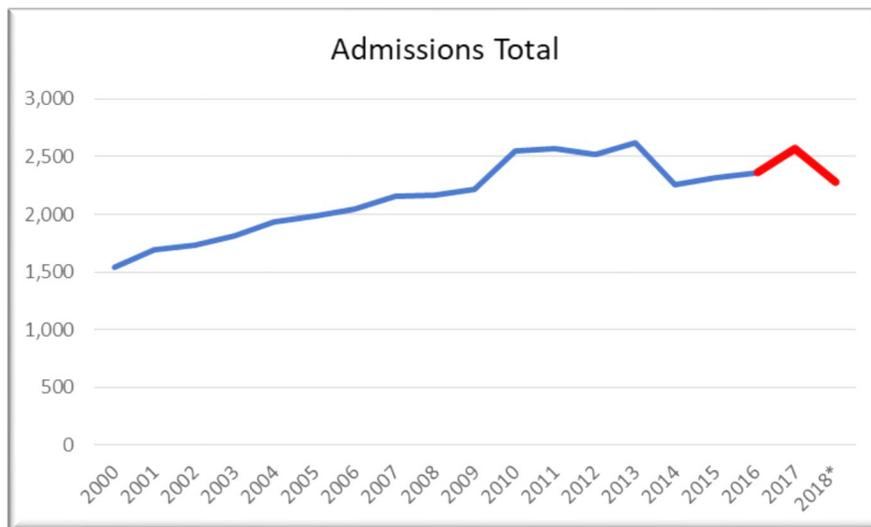
Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Admissions	1,546	1,693	1,736	1,817	1,935	1,981	2,045	2,161	2,166	2,217
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*	
Admissions	2,545	2,565	2,523	2,620	2,257	2,317	2,355	2,567	2,280	

Source: Fayette County Prison

* 2018 total has been extrapolated from September YTD data

Figure 1 below shows the annual admissions since the year 2000. The red portion of the line represents the updated data since the 2017 study which shows the increase in 2017 admissions, and then the projected fall in 2018.

Figure 1
Updated Annual Admissions



Prisoner Profile – Time in County Prison

The 2017 Needs Assessment report used the data captured by Prison staff from three one-day snapshots that detailed the time spent in prison and compared them to the American Bar Association (ABA) standards and state guidelines regarding timely disposition which are often used as a target goal for the movement of cases. The ABA standards run from the date of filing to the date of disposition by entry of judgement.

For this update the Prison was able to provide this information for the entire 2017 prisoner population and the 2018 population as of September 18, 2018. The standard for pretrial misdemeanants is for 90 percent of the cases to be disposed within 30 days. In 2017 the disposition rate for pretrial misdemeanants within 30 days was 73.6%, which is short of the 90% standard. As of September 2018, the number of pretrial misdemeanants is on pace to far exceed those from the year before, even though the number of prison admissions has dropped significantly. This shows that misdemeanor crime is rising, but many of the offenders are being diverted from prison. The 2018 disposal rate has dropped a full percentage point to only 72.6% of the cases meeting the 90% standard.

Table 6
Misdemeanant Prisoner Profile
Time in County Prison

Time Spent in County Prison	2017 Pretrial Misdemeanants	2018* Pretrial Misdemeanants
2 Days or Less	130	121
3 to 5 Days	62	48
6 to 30 Days	118	114
31 to 60 Days	47	45
61 to 90 Days	22	18
91 to 120 Days	14	16
121 to 180 Days	13	13
181 to 365 Days	14	13
Over 1 Year	1	2
Total	421	390
% at ABA Standard	73.6%	72.6%

* through September 18, 2018

Source: Fayette County Prison

The standard for pretrial felons is for 90 percent of the cases be disposed within 120 days. In 2017 the disposition rate for pretrial felons within 120 days was 92.8%, exceeding the 90% standard. Year-to-date in 2018 the case disposal rate for pretrial felons has fallen slightly to 90.6%, but still meets the 90% standard.

Table 7
Felony Prisoner Profile
Time in County Prison

Time Spent in County Prison	2017 Pretrial Felons	2018* Pretrial Felons
2 Days or Less	121	183
3 to 5 Days	48	167
6 to 30 Days	114	352
31 to 60 Days	45	94
61 to 90 Days	18	40
91 to 120 Days	16	34
121 to 180 Days	13	33
181 to 365 Days	13	47
Over 1 Year	2	10
Total	390	960
% at ABA Standard	92.8%	90.6%

* through September 18, 2018

Source: Fayette County Prison

Average Daily Population (ADP)

The ADP has been updated since the 2017 needs assessment report was issued, and much like the number of admissions, 2017 saw an increase in the number of prisoners held and then a sharp decline through September 2018. The ADP so far in 2018 is 217, but this might be a bit misleading. The probation officer assigned to the Prison to monitor and move prisoner cases along started in late February. The first 2 to 3 months of the year likely had much higher ADP before the new Probation Officer’s and Warden’s population-reduction efforts began. While the ADP is 217 for the year to-date, the prisoner population during the consultant’s on-site visit was 180. Staff indicated that through daily prisoner reviews, deferments and bail reductions, they did not feel the prisoner population would realistically go any lower.

Table 8
Updated Average Daily Population (ADP)

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
ADP	205	250	231	241	263	276	246	246	236	241
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*	
ADP	273	278	259	263	248	237	238	252	217	

* 2018 ADP is through September 18, 2018

Source: Fayette County Prison

Average Length of Stay (ALOS)

The 2017 study showed the ALOS in Fayette County had decreased from 45.0 days in 2000 to 37.5 days in 2016, a decrease of 16.7 percent. The longest annual ALOS was in 2001 at 49.8 days, and the shortest ALOS is the most recent data point of 2016 with an ALOS of 37.6 days. The updated data shows the ALOS continued to fall in 2017 and is still declining so far in 2018. With the efforts that have been put in place to reduce the prisoner population, the ALOS should begin to level out.

Table 9
Updated Average Length of Stay (ALOS)

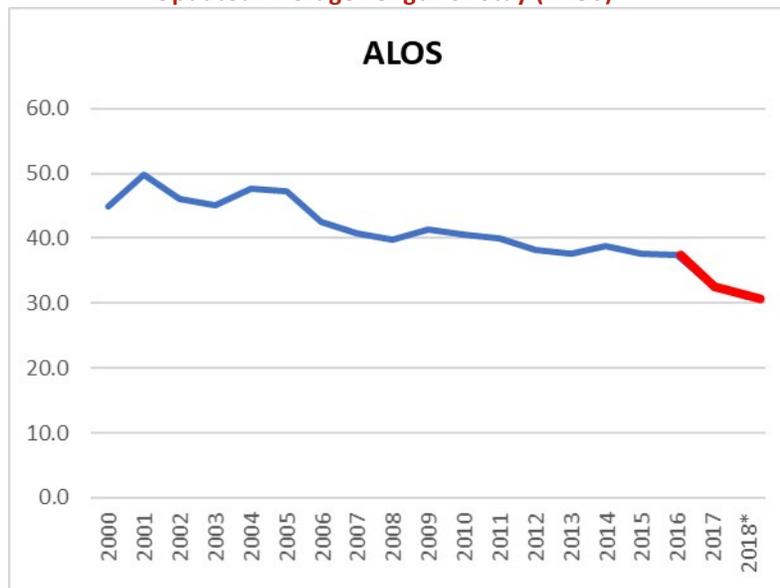
Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
ALOS	45.0	49.8	46.1	45.1	47.7	47.2	42.6	40.8	39.7	41.3
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*	
ALOS	40.6	40.0	38.3	37.7	38.8	37.6	37.5	32.8	30.9	

* 2018 ALOS is through September 18, 2018

Source: Fayette County Prison

The red lines in Figure 2 indicate the updated data from the 2017 report.

Figure 2
Updated Average Length of Stay (ALOS)



Prisoner Classification

During the 2017 Needs Assessment Prison described the prisoner classification definitions as follows:

- Class 1 is a low misdemeanor classification
- Class 2 is a high misdemeanor classification
- Class 3 is a low felony classification
- Class 4 is a middle felony classification
- Class 5 is a high felony classification
- Blank indicates that no classification is given at admission

The “Blank” classification was described as prisoners that were not assigned a classification, but staff could not explain why 22% of the population were not being classified. During the onsite visit in September 2018, the current Warden explained these were prisoners that were processed in and out of the prison in such a short amount of time that a classification level could not be completed before release.

As was the case in the 2017 study, Class 3 prisoner classifications are the largest percentage in the Fayette County Prison. An unexpected occurrence is the percentages of Level 1 and Level 5 prisoners. With the prisoner population strategies that have been enacted in 2018, the percentage of Level 1 prisoners may be expected to fall since many of those individuals are being diverted from prison altogether. This would seem to leave a higher percentage of higher custody prisoners (Level 5) in the County Prison. However, this has not been the case so far.

Table 10
2017 Prisoner Classifications

2017 Prisoner Classifications		
Not Assigned		600
Level 1	15%	293
Level 2	10%	202
Level 3	43%	849
Level 4	24%	465
Level 5	8%	158
No Class	0%	1
Total	100%	1,968

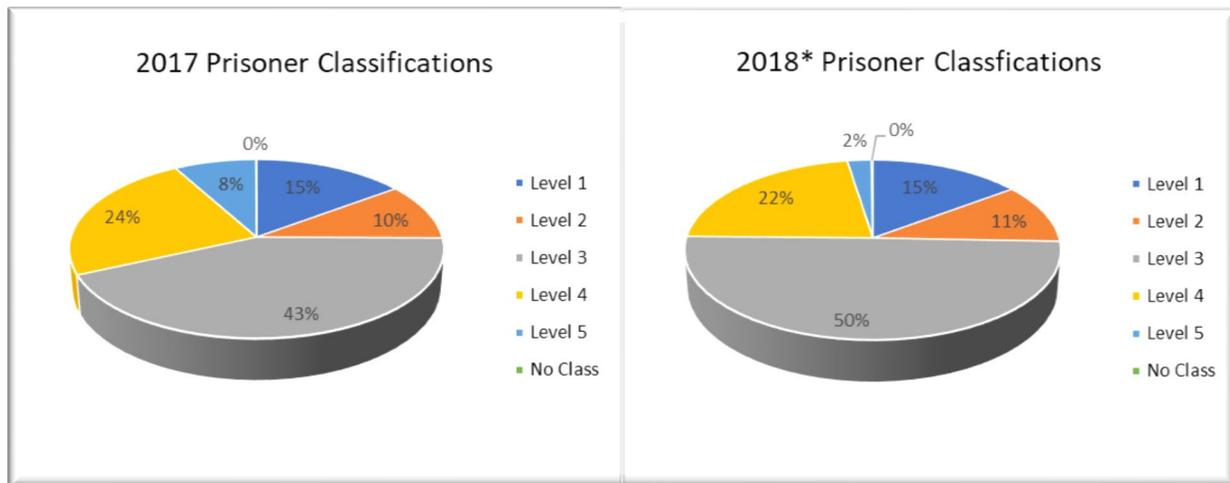
Table 11
2018 Prisoner Classifications

2018* Prisoner Classifications		
Not Assigned		356
Level 1	15%	185
Level 2	11%	134
Level 3	50%	619
Level 4	22%	277
Level 5	2%	29
No Class	0%	2
Total	100%	1,246

* through September 18, 2018

The Level 1 prisoners still account for 15% of the population. The percentage of minimum custody prisoners (Level 1 and Level 2) has increased by one percentage point in 2018, while the percentage of Level 5 prisoners has declined from 8% to 2%. The prisoners that are “in and out” of the prison too quickly to have a custody level assigned are not included in the totals or percentages for this comparison.

Figure 3
Comparison of Prisoner Classifications



Bedspace Recommendations

The 2017 Needs Assessment report recommended a total capacity of 354 beds by 2036. Beds for male prisoners accounted for 78% (276) of these beds while female prisoners accounted for 22% (78) of the beds. The aggressive measures that have been implemented to-date in 2018 have resulted in a 14% reduction of the ADP; down from 252 prisoners in 2017 to 217 prisoners so far in 2018.

It is reasonable to assume that many of these changes will have a lasting impact as long as the efforts are maintained. A second probation officer is anticipated to begin working in the prison after the first of 2019 which should help in expediting as many prisoners as possible through the legal process. It is also anticipated that the moratorium on incarcerating summary cases will be at least partially lifted, which will increase the number of prison admissions.

PrimeCare Medical is the healthcare provider for the Prison. Their data shows there were 108 prisoners with serious mental illness (SMI) held in 2017, and 1,039 psychotropic medications were dispensed the same year. Special Needs housing has, therefore, been added to the recommended prisoner percentages.

If the current efforts are maintained, it is estimated the County could see as much as a 12% reduction in the total number of beds required through 2036. This would reduce the projected bedspace needs from 354 to 312 beds. However, this assumption requires a commitment from County officials to maintain current efforts to move prisoners through the legal process as efficiently as possible by fast-tracking cases, reviewing the prisoner population daily for bail reductions and alternative sanctions, and increasing the use of diversionary programs such as Home Detention. It is still recommended the infrastructure of a new prison (water, sewer, power, HVAC, etc.) be planned for at least 350 prisoners and be capable of expansion.

Table 12
Proposed Housing Plan

Fayette County Prison				
312 Bed Facility				
HOUSING		Rated Beds: 312		
Male Housing	79%	Unit Capacity	No. of Units	Total Capacity
Orientation (Medium)		24	1	24
Minimum Custody Dorm		48	1	48
Medium Custody Dorm		48	1	48
Medium Custody Cells		48	1	48
Maximum Custody		24	1	24
Special Needs		30	1	30
Ad Seg & Restrictive Housing (Max)		24	1	24
			7	246
Female Housing	21%	Unit Capacity	No. of Units	Total Capacity
Orientation (Medium)		6	1	6
Minimum Custody Dorm		12	1	12
Medium Custody Cells		12	1	12
Maximum Custody		12	1	12
Special Needs		12	1	12
Ad Seg & Restrictive Housing (Max)		12	1	12
			6	66

Source: Justice Planners, October 2018

Updated Space Needs

A new County Prison should not only have the proper number and types of prisoner beds that meet all current state and federal standards, but it should also contain proper space for staff, services and prisoner programming and support. The planning standards that were used in the 2017 Needs Assessment have been applied to the revised bedspaces.

A comparison was gathered of the total spaces in other similarly sized prisons in the United States. Five comparison jurisdictions were chosen for this benchmarking exercise. Each of these prisons house between 384 and 600 prisoners and are in the eastern part of the United States. The oldest facility was constructed in 1999 while the newest facility is still in the approval process.

The complete space program for each comparison facility was divided into 6 categories to determine the percentage of total space that was allocated to each category.

1. Housing
2. Administration
3. Programs
4. Prisoner Services
5. Intake/Release/Transfer
6. Support Services

These percentages were then applied to the projected number of bedspaces that will be required by 2026 and then through 2036.

Note: As with the 2017 Needs Assessment report, a detailed space program has not been developed for the new prison. This will be accomplished after the County commits to moving forward with hiring a planning and design team to determine the specific components, spaces and size of a new facility.

A key calculation that was gathered is the total amount of building gross square footage (BGSF) per bed. Of the comparison systems, there was a wide range of the amount of space allocated per bed. This ranged from a low of 314 square feet per bed, to a high of 388 square feet per bed. However, the average amount of space allocated per bed is 341.7 among the comparison systems. This is the number that will be applied to the total projected number of beds in the year 2036 to estimate the total size of the Fayette County Prison. The benchmark percentages will then be applied to the total square footage of the system to determine sizes by component.

Applying the Low, Average, and High benchmark square footage per bed presented in Table 13, the total space required for a new replacement prison in 2036 may range from 97,968 square feet to approximately 121,056 square feet. This is a margin of more than 23,000 square feet.

The 354-bed facility recommended in the 2017 report had a range of 111,156 square feet to approximately 137,352 square feet.

Table 13
Benchmark Application - 2036

Projected Bedspace Needs:		312			in 2036		
Component		Low Benchmark	Avg Benchmark	High Benchmark			
Benchmark Sq Ft/Bed		314	342	388			
1	Housing	61,055	66,500	75,444			
2	Administration	6,933	7,552	8,567			
3	Programs	4,771	5,197	5,896			
4	Services	2,195	2,391	2,713			
5	Intake/Release	6,259	6,817	7,734			
6	Health Care	3,804	4,143	4,700			
7	Support Services	12,950	14,105	16,002			
Building Gross SF		97,968	106,704	121,056			

Source: Justice Planners, October 2018

A portion of the prison should be maintained for holding prisoners that are transported for court appearances. This would likely be the housing ranges on the third floor. The first and second floors of the prison could be converted for use as either storage space or offices for County personnel.

Additional space may be considered for the Prison that was not part of the Needs Assessment discussions in 2017. Discussions with several stakeholders included the desire to move Central Court to the new Prison site. The advantage of this would be the ability to hold preliminary hearings onsite at the Prison rather than transporting offenders to the current Central Court location. Discussions and negotiations will have to occur regarding the current lease to make this happen. If the decision is made to pursue this option, then additional square footage must be included to the Prison complex.

Construction costs are difficult to estimate at this point, as there has been no comparable construction of this type in southwestern Pennsylvania in the last several years. Therefore, a wide range of costs from \$200 to \$275 per square foot has been applied to the low, average, and high estimated facility sizes. To gain a better estimate of total project costs (not just construction costs), a contingency of 10% and architectural and engineering fees of 6% have been factored into the estimated costs. Based upon a cost per square foot ranges, the total project costs are estimated to range from \$22.7 million to \$38.6 million. This is a reduction from the 354-bed prison detailed in the 2017 Needs Assessment which ranged from a low cost of 25.7 million to a high cost of \$43.8 million.

Table 14
Estimated Project Costs - 2036

\$ per SF	Low Benchmark	Avg Benchmark	High Benchmark
	97,968 sf	106,704 sf	121,056 sf
\$200	\$ 22,728,576	\$ 24,755,328	\$ 28,084,992
\$225	\$ 25,569,648	\$ 27,849,744	\$ 31,595,616
\$250	\$ 28,410,720	\$ 30,944,160	\$ 35,106,240
\$275	\$ 31,251,792	\$ 34,038,576	\$ 38,616,864

* includes contingency and A&E estimated fees

As with the previous study, the County may decide to build a new facility in two phases. The housing and program space may be built for the anticipated bedspace need for the next 10 years (2026), while the other supporting spaces are built for a 20-year horizon. In 2026, the bedspace need is projected to be 284. This is 28 beds less than the projected number for 2036.

Table 15
Benchmark Application Phase 1 - 2026

Projected Bedspace Needs:		284		in 2026	
Component		Low Benchmark	Avg Benchmark	High Benchmark	
Benchmark Sq Ft/Bed		314	342	388	
1	Housing	55,576	60,532	68,673	
2	Administration	6,933	7,552	8,567	
3	Programs	4,343	4,730	5,367	
4	Services	2,195	2,391	2,713	
5	Intake/Release	6,259	6,817	7,734	
6	Health Care	3,804	4,143	4,700	
7	Support Services	12,950	14,105	16,002	
Building Gross SF		92,060	100,270	113,756	

Source: Justice Planners, October 2018

The estimated project costs for the 2026 phase of construction are shown in Table 16. Depending upon the cost per square foot, the estimated project costs could range from \$21.3 million to \$36.3 million.

Table 16
Estimated Project Costs Phase 1 - 2026

\$ per SF	Low Benchmark	Avg Benchmark	High Benchmark
	92,060 sf	100,270 sf	113,756 sf
\$200	\$ 21,358,034	\$ 23,262,573	\$ 26,391,457
\$225	\$ 24,027,789	\$ 26,170,394	\$ 29,690,389
\$250	\$ 26,697,543	\$ 29,078,216	\$ 32,989,321
\$275	\$ 29,367,297	\$ 31,986,037	\$ 36,288,253

* includes contingency and A&E estimated fees

The second phase of this option would be to build the additional housing and program space to reach the projected bedspace need of 312 beds.

Table 17
Benchmark Application Phase 2 - 2036

Projected Additional Bedspace Needs:		28		
Component		Low Benchmark	Avg Benchmark	High Benchmark
Benchmark Sq Ft/Bed		314	342	388
1	Housing	5,479	5,968	6,771
2	Administration	0	0	0
3	Programs	428	466	529
4	Services	0	0	0
5	Intake/Release	0	0	0
6	Health Care	0	0	0
7	Support Services	0	0	0
Building Gross SF		5,908	6,434	7,300

Source: Justice Planners, October 2018

The estimated project costs for the second phase of construction are shown in Table 18. Depending upon the cost per square foot, the estimated project costs could range from nearly \$1.9 million to \$3.1 million in 2017 dollars. This amount has not been escalated for inflation.

Table 18
Estimated Project Costs Phase 2 - 2036

\$ per SF	Low Benchmark	Avg Benchmark	High Benchmark
	5,908 sf	6,434 sf	7,300 sf
\$200	\$ 1,370,542	\$ 1,492,755	\$ 1,693,535
\$225	\$ 1,541,859	\$ 1,679,350	\$ 1,905,227
\$250	\$ 1,713,177	\$ 1,865,944	\$ 2,116,919
\$275	\$ 1,884,495	\$ 2,052,539	\$ 2,328,611

* includes contingency and A&E estimated fees

Recommendation

The planning, design, construction and occupancy of a new County Prison is a complex and expensive undertaking. The 312 prison beds that are recommended by 2036 are based upon the current data and information available. As has been demonstrated in the 2018 changes in judicial decisions, methods of processing cases, increased use of alternative programs, and the addition of staff focusing on prison population management can influence the size of the prison population. Future changes that will strengthen or relax the current efforts may have either positive or negative impacts on the number of required prison beds.

At the request of County officials, the estimated size and costs of the new facility has been presented with an option to build in two phases. This has resulted in a new Prison plan of 284 beds through 2026, with a Phase 2 addition by 2036 of 28 more beds. If a future addition would add multiple housing units, a phased plan may make sense. However, given the additional bedspace need is estimated to be such a small number, it would make more sense to build the entire 312 beds at one time. The additional preparation, site work, and construction equipment (not to mention 10 additional years of cost escalation) for a small number of beds does not appear to be feasible.



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