



PHILADELPHIA PRISON SYSTEM
Strategic Plan
FY09-FY13

A Report to Mayor Michael A. Nutter
April 24, 2008

Table of Contents

Prisons Mission Statement	4
Overview of Challenges	4
Addressing Overcrowding	7
Recommendations	8
Short Term	8
Medium Term	9
Long Term	10
Recidivism	13
Recommendations	14
Short Term	14
Medium Term	15
Long Term	15
Staff recruitment, retention, morale	16
Recommendations	17
Short Term	17
Medium Term	18
Long Term	18
Recommendations for Other Agencies	19
Technological Innovations	21
Financial Considerations	23
Summary	23

The Honorable Michael A. Nutter
Mayor's Office
City Hall - Room 215
Philadelphia, Pa. 19107

May 16, 2008

Dear Mayor Nutter:

As directed on March 24, 2008 I hereby submit a plan for the short, medium and long term management of the Philadelphia Prison System for the fiscal years 2009-2013. This plan was derived from the findings of recent statistical studies, recommendations and suggestions from the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety, Prisons' senior staff, the Prison Reform Transition Committee, and concerned professionals within the city's justice and prisoner-advocacy communities.

Nationwide, prisons and jails are teeming with persons who have callously victimized our citizens. Unfortunately, these same correctional facilities house far too many persons who are mentally ill or who have been overwhelmed by the responsibilities for their own care. Levels of incarceration have continued to rise despite our society's progress in technology, human relations and living standards. Philadelphia has been no different, until now. We are not locked into this spiral of decline

As the administration's initiatives to reduce crime and school dropout rates find success, no doubt the numbers of incarcerated persons in our city will also decline. Residential development and population increases will create a culture where living in opposition to the public interest and threats to citizen safety will no longer be tolerated.

Increased commerce will provide new opportunities to the formerly disadvantaged. Persons willing to abandon lives of substance abuse and criminal behavior will be welcomed back to their neighborhoods as productive citizens.

At the same time that we are building a safe and prosperous city, we must also address several crises in our jails. The burgeoning census of the Philadelphia Prisons is one. The ability to foster effective offender re-entry without significant recidivism is another. Yet another is the ability to fully staff our correctional facilities with talented, dedicated employees whose safety and support is assured. These issues are inter-related and each effects the orderly operations of the Philadelphia Prison System.

As you review this plan I hope you will agree that many within the prison population do not require the intense control full time custody provides and would benefit from treatment provided in the community. Likewise there will always be persons who never intend to live lawfully or respect the rights of others. The dedicated men and women of the Philadelphia Prison System will ensure that Philadelphians are protected from their kind for as long as our judiciary sees fit.

You can be assured that the elements of this plan will be executed faithfully by the employees of the Philadelphia Prison System. It is my intention to update the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety quarterly on our progress.

Respectfully Submitted

Lou Giorla
Commissioner

The Philadelphia Prison System

Mission

To provide a secure correctional environment that adequately detains persons accused or convicted of illegal acts; to provide programs, services, and supervision in a safe, lawful, clean, humane environment; and to prepare incarcerated persons for reentry into society.

Population Snapshot

(As determined on the date of April 8, 2008)

Total Prisons Census: 9,193

In-house population (at the State Road Compound): 8,775

Inmates housed in contract facilities and other jurisdictions: 418

Population Breakdown

Adults

Male 7693

Female 917

Juveniles

Male 125

Female 3

Overview of the Challenge

To put these numbers in perspective - **all of the Philadelphia Prisons facilities are operating at or over their design capacities.** Over the last ten years, four facilities have converted other usable activity space to housing areas, exceeding the originally designed bed space. In addition, those four sites have added temporary or portable beds to increase their housing capacity. Temporary housing at the deactivated Holmesburg Prison was created over one year ago as well. Although the Holmesburg site has been used intermittently over the past year, all eighty beds there are now filled.

This state of affairs may be improved by focusing our efforts on three discrete populations that can be immediately addressed:

- 1) those with only one holding case and low bail;
- 2) seriously mentally ill inmates; and
- 3) drug offenders.

Thirty-seven percent of the Philadelphia Prison population is comprised of sentenced prisoners. The remaining sixty-three percent are awaiting trial, awaiting sentencing or are probation/parole violators awaiting a status hearing. Within the detentioner population an estimated 500 inmates have only one holding case with a bail totaling \$5,000 bail or less. A deposit of \$510 or less would be required for their release.

Another significant portion of those confined in Philadelphia's jails are the mentally ill whose care has become the responsibility of Philadelphia's criminal justice system. The Philadelphia Prison System (PPS) mental health services caseload consists of over 1,700

inmates, of whom half are considered “Seriously Mentally Ill.” Essentially, these inmates’ criminal behavior and offenses result from uncontrolled and clinically diagnosed mental illness that is best treated in a supervised in-patient setting.

While many offenders in the Seriously Mentally Ill population may be physically dangerous and require the high level of supervision that jail provides, half are held on non-violent, non-sex offenses and may perform well with community-based supports. When stabilized on properly prescribed medications and engaged in therapeutic contact with professional treatment services, these offenders function at high levels without violent behavior.

Due to a lack of available space, individuals awaiting sentencing or probation/parole hearings and mentally ill individuals are often confined together in jail to isolate them from the general population. While they are managed under close security and clinical supervision, unfortunately, the resulting atmosphere is not conducive to focused treatment for either group and detracts from progress for those who are mildly mentally ill. The absence of community-based treatment beds have made asylums of today’s jails that are often not much more effective than many of the state mental hospitals closed in the 1970’s.

Drug offenders continue to be a significant part of the inmate population. For instance on 11/4/07, of the 9014 inmates on the Prisons census, 3,242 were being held for drug related crimes. Drug offenders comprise a substantial number of the aforementioned low bail offenders and inmates on the mental health caseload.

Many of the people who fall into these three categories do not need to be in jail. We owe it to the citizens of Philadelphia to find economical alternatives to incarceration that would provide adequate supervision but not require such a massive expenditure of resources.

PPS is now the third largest City operating department following Police and the Department of Human Services in cost and the number of employees assigned. The FY09 Prisons Budget is approximately \$230,000,000.

The recommendations in this plan have been divided into four categories according to the needs of the Philadelphia Prison System to reduce its population and combat recidivism.

They are:

- 1) Addressing Overcrowding,
- 2) Reducing Recidivism,
- 3) Staff Recruitment, Retention and Morale, and
- 4) Improving Technology.

Within each category are a summary of the Prisons’ concerns and needs followed by recommendations to improve operations. The recommendations are based on the estimated time needed to accomplish them. Short term recommendations are those which could be initiated within 12-18 months, medium term in 18-36 months and long term beyond 36 months.

ADDRESSING OVERCROWDING

At this moment all of the PPS facilities are approaching their functional capacities, where food and medical services, space for training and vocational programming and the ability to provide a safe and secure operation are reaching their limits. Each eight-hour shift has staff assigned to continuous analysis of bed availability in each facility, focused on matching available beds with appropriately classified inmates as soon as possible.. This emphasis on transfers and movement, motivated by population pressures, diminishes our ability to conduct consistent treatment programming for our sentenced population. If inmate participants cannot stay in one housing unit to complete 8 weeks of programming, our efforts to reduce recidivism will not be successful. Therefore, addressing overcrowding must be our first priority.

Background: One of the most frequently cited phrases used when discussing the Philadelphia Prisons population is “design capacity”. The term however is misleading. For instance, PICC (the Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Center) opened in 1986 had an original design capacity of 650 beds. Within four years of its opening the total number of inmates held there was raised to over 1,000, by modifying most of the facility’s cells to hold two persons rather than one. While the changes exceeded the design capacity, all facility services were still delivered and with an increase in assigned personnel the “functional capacity” of PICC was increased.

Similar changes have been made to all of the permanent PPS facilities on State Road including the newest, Riverside Correctional Facility. The functional capacities of these institutions were not exceeded until 2006. As long as space, personnel and services in the facility are adequate, it is acceptable to exceed design capacity. However, when functional capacity is exceeded not only is space exhausted but facility services can no longer be delivered in a consistent or a timely basis. As a result of increased average daily population, the PPS considered the alternatives of adding temporary beds by tripling cells, constructing newer and larger facilities, or contracting beds in other jurisdictions or with private companies to supplement existing beds.

Faced with this crisis the City chose to place a moratorium on new bed construction. Triple beds were added to cells at Curran-Fromhold and House of Correction while dormitories at the Detention Center had their capacities increased from 192 to 240. The City also contracted with two other jurisdictions and engaged in a contract with a private firm building a facility in the City. Each of these measures was part of a response to population increases and again only met the demand

Short Term Recommendations

- **INCREASE BED SPACE**- There is an immediate need to acquire 200-600 additional beds to meet the increasing population. If the Prisons Census grows at the same 4%-7% as over the last eight years, our projected Average Daily Population will hover between 9,600 and 10,000 this time next year. That number may be a conservative estimate if implementation of the Police Department's crime plan results in an even higher number of admissions to the PPS. If such a rapid increase does not materialize, these beds would give us the ability to reduce the triple celling taking place at House of Correction and Curran-Fromhold.
 - **Status of Recommendation**-PPS is under contract with Community Education Centers for a 200 bed facility to be opened in Philadelphia in July. Discussions are also being held with officials in another jurisdiction to provide 200 beds with transportation services at their county jail facility. A contract has not been conformed and is pending the review of the Prisons Board of Trustees.

- **EMERGENCY RELEASES**-At this time no "Prison Cap" exists as it did when the PPS was under Federal Court supervision in the 1980's and 1990's. The cap required the city to release inmates when the Prison Census reached a pre-ordained level. The city could institute appropriate protocols to release certain categories of offenders consistent with public safety interests and adequate monitoring. Releases could be coupled with tracking measures such as pretrial probation or House arrest used in conjunction with GPS tracking (See medium term recommendations).
 - **Status of Recommendation:** A proposal will be submitted to the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety by May 30th, 2008.

- **DAY REPORTING** Within the PPS detentioner population are a number of non-violent, non-sex offender detainees held for probation violations. Most are in need of mental health treatment or addiction treatment. Nearly half are homeless. Most fail to contact their probation officers as required resulting in technical violations that land them back in custody

These violators must have detention hearings within ten days of admission to PPS and appear before their sentencing judge for status hearings within 30 days of detention. Currently, they remain in PPS custody after the initial hearing and are usually released at the 30 day appearance. Day reporting would allow them to be released from custody at the first hearing provided they report daily to a prescribed center charged with monitoring their behavior and compliance with treatment. The reporting center would provide treatment referrals, submit compliance information to the Office of Adult Probation and Parole, and enable the offender to access other community services such as GED testing and employment assistance.

Placing offenders on Day Reporting would first need consensus approval from the District Attorney, Adult Probation and Parole and Public Defender's Office.

The Mayor's Office for the Re-Entry of Ex-Offenders (MORE) has been chosen to provide coordination of post-release services in the Day Reporting Program. Being a permanently funded City Agency with established connections in the treatment community MORE is well-placed to refer offenders to programming and monitor their progress. The Office of Adult Probation and Parole will work closely with MORE to monitor offender progress and remove non-compliant participants from the program.

- ***Status of Recommendation:*** A committee to explore this alternative was established during the previous administration and continues to meet. Representatives of the First Judicial District, the Defender Association, Adult Probation and Parole, the District Attorney, Prisons and the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety, Forensic Intensive Recovery and the office of Behavioral Health are participating. Proposals for housing the homeless assigned to Day Reporting have been solicited and are being reviewed. A survey of all eligible offenders has been conducted, identifying approximately at least two eligible inmates per week day for a minimum of 10 per week. MORE staff members are conducting an analysis of the treatment needs of the selected individuals. A target date of July 1st has been established for the program to begin.

Medium term Recommendations

In addition to creating more jail bed-space or releasing those already admitted, it would be wise not to admit persons who do not need to be incarcerated initially. The following will provide marginal population reductions at their inception but allow for substantial expansion when they are fully operational.

- **GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) MONITORING** – Advances in this technology now make it possible to determine the location and movements of persons, vehicles, pets and packages. Several firms specialize in correctional GPS monitoring. From sex offender tracking to work verification and house arrest, GPS offender monitoring systems report to the monitoring agency in real time, define authorized and out of bounds zones and signal alarms when monitoring conditions are violated. This is a useful technology we would be foolish to ignore. It can provide an enhanced level of supervision for day reporting, work release, and offenders both inside and outside our facilities. GPS would also enhance the security of any emergency release program PPS enacts or is ordered to implement. The cost of GPS monitoring is one fifth that of full time incarceration.
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** A review of the technology is underway and the Commissioner will form a focus group to explore the viability of GPS use by the Philadelphia Prison System.

- **MENTAL HEALTH COURT**-This program will divert high functioning mentally ill offenders to intensive community supervision rather than committing them to jail. Similar to initiatives already in progress in other cities like Baltimore and New Orleans, the program may not only impact overcrowding but also recidivism by giving a stable course of community treatment to the selected offenders. Baltimore has a caseload of 1,000 offenders now being monitored and treated under their program.
 - **Status of Recommendation:** Common Pleas Court is coordinating a program scheduled to begin in May 2008 with a limited caseload. The Prisons are represented on the planning committee.

- **EXPANDING TREATMENT COURT FOR DRUG OFFENDERS**-Already established by the Municipal Courts for ten years and after serving over 2,000 first time offenders, Drug Treatment Court combines court supervision with community treatment. Each offender also spends at day at the Prisons for a session with the OPTIONS drug and alcohol program. An expansion of this program would provide another worthwhile alternative to incarceration.
 - **Status of Recommendation** The Commissioner will consult the President Judge of Municipal Court to determine how to facilitate this recommendation and submit a plan to the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety by 9/1/2008.

Long term Recommendations

- **CONSTRUCT A DEDICATED JUVENILE FACILITY**-The PPS now houses a daily average of 125 male and female juvenile inmates who are being adjudicated as adults due to the nature of their charges. Male juvenile inmates are housed at the Philadelphia Correctional Center; female juvenile inmates are housed at the Riverside Correctional Facility. Both are adult facilities. Professional correctional standards require a minimum of sight and sound separation from adults for juveniles housed in adult facilities. Meeting that standard under current conditions requires a difficult balancing act of facility scheduling to avoid contact between the two groups. State education requirements for the juvenile inmates necessitate the dedication of formerly adult programming areas to juvenile schooling. There will be no net gain in housing capacity as a result of this project.
 - **Status of recommendation:** The FY09 Capital Programs Budget includes a 12 million dollar allocation to begin construction of a new dedicated juvenile facility. The Capital Programs Office and the Prisons have begun a review of the project requirements.

- **REMOVE STATE SENTENCED INMATES FROM THE PHILADELPHIA PRISONS**- Unlike most other states where sentences of one year or more are

served in state prisons, Pennsylvania allows sentences of up to two years to be served in a county facility. Judges also have the authority to stipulate those serving up to five years to serve that time in the county.

As of this writing over four-hundred inmates are serving state sentences of two to five or more years in PPS facilities. These inmates represent nearly 20% of the prisons sentenced population. Neither the Prisons nor the City are reimbursed for costs associated with their care which is estimated at more than \$11,000,000.00 annually. Removal of these inmates from PPS would result in a marked reduction in the Prisons budget, coupled with the availability of over four-hundred beds

- ***Status of Recommendation:*** Under consideration in the Pennsylvania General Assembly are House Bills No.4-7 (2007) which mandate the housing of anyone serving over a two year sentence do so in state custody. The Prisons supports the legislation and is monitoring its progress. **While legislation is pending to mandate the placement of state sentenced inmates in state facilities, the First Judicial District should enact a voluntary moratorium on state sentence stipulations to the Philadelphia Prisons. Doing so begins to reduce the number of state sentenced inmates in the PPS immediately by attrition until the legislation is passed and implemented.**

• **RENOVATION / REPLACEMENT OF PRISON FACILITIES**

The two oldest Prisons facilities are the Detention Center and the House of Correction. The facilities are 47 and 81 years old, respectively (HOC was originally built in the 1800's and renovated in 1927). Their combined Census as of this writing is 3,031 inmates.

In 2007 the Philadelphia Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority (PICA) issued an assessment report on the facility conditions at four of six City owned Prisons sites in Northeast Philadelphia. The assessment called for nearly nine million dollars in repairs and renovations needed to restore the Detention Center (DC) to full operating condition over the next four fiscal years.

The same report called for over \$30 million dollars in renovations to the House of Correction. (HOC) It is important to note that the renovations for either site do not include the installation of air conditioning. Both jails are now far beyond their design capacities and during the summer months we are required to transfer inmates over 60 years of age and the chronically ill to air conditioned facilities to meet medical standards.

PICA estimated replacement costs for these facilities at over \$100 million for each, far exceeding the estimated cost of repair. However, the eventual replacement of both facilities with at least 4,500 medium custody beds in one or two facilities will be necessary as the renovation costs outstrip replacement costs.

Replacing HOC and DC with 4,500 beds would yield a net gain of approximately 1,500 beds over the present HOC and DC housing inventories. The 1,500 additional beds slightly exceeds the Prisons current triple beds (about 500), beds at Holmesburg Prison (80) and facilities contracted in other jurisdictions at this time (250). When and if the Prison population declines, PPS can begin offering leased housing to inmates from outside Philadelphia.

House of Correction and the Detention Center are not the only sites requiring repair or renovation. Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Center, Alternative and Special Detention Division and all other Prisons sites (excluding contract facilities) are also in need of immediate and long-term repairs estimated at twenty-six million dollars. Curran-Fromhold, the largest PPS facility, now in operation for over thirteen years, was not included in the PICA report.

- **Status of Recommendation:** During the coming fiscal year PPS will devote its resources and planning to relieving overcrowding and reducing the inmate population. Capital projects are in development to prioritize and address the items identified in the PICA report. The Deputy Commissioner of Operations has met with the Capital Programs Office to define the scope of work scheduled for FY09.

RECIDIVISM

Inmate services at the PPS are delivered to inmates now frequently based on the facility where they are housed and not always the treatment needs of the inmate. Overcrowding determines where inmates are housed and transferred. The assigning treatment staff must choose from available programs and available slots within that institution.

Background: Nationally there is no consensus definition of recidivism. The only common factor is the prior incarceration of the offender. Depending on the jurisdiction, it can mean an offender's re-arrest, re-admission to jail, new conviction, or a return to prison with a new sentence after a previous release on parole, probation or from secure custody.

The interval over which recidivism is measured usually ranges from one year to three years. For the purposes of the Philadelphia Prison System, recidivism must be regarded as a new admission after previous release from the PPS. The logical interval for measurement will be the last three years. Our research has shown that the highest likelihood of readmission takes place during the year after release. With a county maximum sentence being two years, measurements would capture all released detentioners and sentenced inmates readmitted during the prior three year period.

To measure recidivism, admission data needs to be screened for every inmate admitted to the PPS. A comparison with release data can be made to determine an inmate's interval of recidivism (time since last admission) and rate of recidivism (number of readmissions) over the three year interval. Intense programming and services can be targeted toward these repeat offenders beginning with a standard needs assessment.

Combating recidivism is the other side of this coin. The influence of the vocational training, drug treatment and educational programs offered by the PPS has never been measured against the recidivism of the participating inmates. Previous studies have only measured the overall rates at which inmates return to custody, which is estimated to be between 50% and 68%.

Without data identifying what works and what does not Prisons programming staff cannot properly design service plans for incoming inmates nor discharge plans for outgoing inmates.

Short Term Recommendations

- **CONDUCT AN ANALYSIS OF SERVICES NOW BEING OFFERED TO INMATES AT PPS. DESIGN A STANDARD ARRAY OF TREATMENT PROGRAMMING FOR SENTENCED INMATES.**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** A service delivery analysis commissioned in 2007 is being conducted by Dr. Marjorie Dugan and will be concluded in May 2008. The recommendations of the study will be used to analyze the future development of inmate services at PPS

- **DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF INMATE TREATMENT NEEDS THAT CAN BE GATHERED DURING INTAKE PROCESSING**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** The Deputy Commissioner of Restorative and Transitional Services is revising Social Service intake procedures to make the initial assessment more comprehensive. This assessment will be the foundation of a discharge plan.

- **COMPLETE A DISCHARGE PLAN PROTOCOL FOR ALL NEW ADMISSIONS.**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** After a review of the study of services by Dr. Dugan, Inmate Services Staff will be assigned to develop a standard discharge plan protocol to be used for all sentenced inmates.

- **INTRODUCE MORE (MAYOR'S OFFICE OF RE-ENTRY FOR EX-OFFENDERS) AND ITS SERVICES TO THE INMATE POPULATION.**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** MORE evaluators have been given PPS clearance and are presenting information to inmates in custody.

- **ENGAGE COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN RE-ENTRY EFFORTS**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** PPS will participate in the Mayor's Re-Entry Summit on May 15, 2008. The focus of this summit is to enlist employers in the Reentry process. The PPS goal is to establish an ongoing partnership with the business community.

- **FULFILL THE PRISONS OBLIGATIONS IN THE PREP LEGISLATION.**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** The Prison Commissioner has drafted a participation agreement to be signed by participating offenders which would obligate them to reimburse the City for a portion of the program costs. The comprehensive intake assessment and discharge planning protocol (see above) will provide the information inmates need to participate

- **EVALUATE THE USE OF THE INMATE WELFARE FUND TO PAY A DAILY RATE FOR PROGRAM ATTENDANCE.**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** To be proposed to the Prisons Board of Trustees in May 2008. Inmates are now only paid for institutional job assignments. Many choose jobs over programming since the pay provides a means to have money for commissary purchases. The fund is used to pay for inmate work pay and recreational activities. The fund balance will be analyzed to determine its capability to support the effort. Since the fund is generated from Commissary proceeds generated by inmate purchases, the cost to the city will be nominal.

Medium Term Recommendations

- **BEGIN AN ANNUAL RECIDIVISM STUDY STARTING IN JUNE 2009 TO GAUGE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMMING AT THE PPS AND PROVIDE GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE PROGRAM CHANGES**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** Proposed with this report. Incoming inmates will be screened to summarize previous program participation. Based on recidivism rates, programs will be redesigned, added or eliminated.

Long Term Recommendations

- **CENTRALIZE HOUSING AND PROGRAMMING FOR SENTENCED INMATES AT ONE FACILITY**
 - ***Status of Recommendation*** Upon completion of the juvenile facility PICC would become an entirely adult facility where programming could be delivered to all custody level sentenced inmates. At the moment the Alternative & Special Detention Division performs this function for the PPS but is only capable of housing minimum custody inmates.

STAFF RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, MORALE

Morale is most clearly reflected in employee attendance. PPS has the 2nd highest rate of sick leave use in City service. The Correctional Officers' union often cites forced overtime and inconvenient work schedules as reasons. Filling the vacant positions as quickly as possible is a first step and will relieve much of the need for forced overtime.

The PPS has a series of events throughout the year to recognize and honor its employees. Correctional Employee week, the Annual Employee Retirement Banquet, Black History Month Brunch, Asian Culture Appreciation Lunch, and a Perfect Attendance Luncheon among others. Each event celebrates the contributions of our employees. Improving morale is always a prime objective of the Prisons Executive Staff.

Background: In corrections nationwide, staff shortages, overcrowding and budget shortfalls are common in prisons and jails. The ability to hire and retain sufficient numbers of full time employees (FTE), especially Correctional Officers, is a constant challenge. Correctional work is among the toughest occupations in our nation today. Philadelphia is fortunate to have the finest and most innovative corps of correctional employees in the country.

Civil Service hiring in Philadelphia is antiquated. From test date to hire date the Correctional Officer applicants average over two hundred days in processing. The attrition for Correctional Officers is approximately 12 per month out of a workforce of 1800 sworn officers. For the last two years PPS has not been able to hire at a rate to meet or exceed the attrition.

Work schedules that include holidays and weekends are unavoidable but often cited in exit interviews conducted by our Personnel office as reasons employees leave. Correctional Officer and Supervisor schedules include rotating days off where weekend days off are limited and tours of duty are six, seven or eight days consecutively.

Pay is another factor in recruitment and retention. Philadelphia Correctional Officers earn less when hired and when reaching top pay than Correctional Officers in comparable cities like Baltimore and Washington DC. Even here in Philadelphia a Correctional Officers' pay is below that of Deputy Sheriffs and Police Officers.

Correctional Officers are not the only employees needed at the PPS. Clerical support staff, maintenance staff and social workers are equally in need. Their hiring processes are not as daunting as that for Correctional officers but are dependent on Citywide exams and eligibility lists.

Natural attrition, coupled with hiring restrictions over the last eight years have greatly reduced both workforces. As a result 14 clerical positions for Wardens' secretaries and Administrative Assistants are being filled from the already depleted ranks of Correctional Officers.

Another consideration for staff retention is creating an educational incentive for staff. For over ten years PPS has required college credits or a degree for senior level supervisors and managers. Nearly all those positions are filled from the ranks of Correctional Officers. However, college is not an entry level requirement for the job and the ability to afford college without tuition assistance is out of reach for most Correctional Officers.

Short Term Recommendations

- **MODIFY THE RECRUITING AND TESTING PROCESS FOR THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICER POSITION, TO DECREASE THE TIME REQUIRED TO HIRE OFFICERS.**

- ***Status of recommendation:*** Central Personnel has instituted a form of continuous testing for the position. Polygraph testing will be replaced by hair sample drug testing requiring less appointments for each applicant. Based on information previously presented at PhillyStat, the Managing Director has ordered a review of the hiring processes for all public safety positions.

Since the Administration has opened City employment to non-city residents, PPS will now expand recruiting to college campuses and military installations inside and outside the City. The goal is to attract young persons who are beginning careers and want to live in Philadelphia but are not currently city residents. The same effort will be directed to vacancies for other available positions such as maintenance, clerical support, and social workers.

- **RAISE AWARENESS OF EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION EVENTS AND EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION EFFORTS.**

- ***Status of Recommendation:*** Expanded Use of the Prisons e-mail for messages is now being used to supplement roll call messages to custody staff and the use of hardcopy memoranda distributed to other disciplines.

- **ADDRESS USE OF UNPAID SICK LEAVE**

- ***Status of Recommendation:*** Correctional staff (1800 sworn officers) as a whole use an average of 400+ unpaid sick days in a fourteen day pay period. This time is the equivalent of 40 or more officers. While the users are unpaid, they must be replaced with officers at a time and a half (overtime) rate. This leave time is unauthorized and does not follow department policy regarding City Wide Sick Leave, Family Medical Leave, ADA accommodations and Leaves of Absence. A method to tabulate the use of unpaid (AWOL) time was established through the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Operations. An Executive Order

issued on 4/15/08 now calls for discipline when unpaid sick time is used. The discipline is progressive and can culminate in dismissal.

Medium Term Recommendations

- **EXPLORE POTENTIAL REDESIGNS OF THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICER AND SUPERVISORY SCHEDULES TO ALLOW SHORTER TOURS OF DUTY.**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** Proposed schedules are being prepared by the Prisons Staff Deployment Office. Over the next three months they will be discussed with employee unions. If all parties are in agreement, alternate schedules will be piloted before any changes are implemented.

- **PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF SCHOLARSHIPS, TUITION ASSISTANCE AND/OR LIMITED EDUCATIONAL LEAVE.**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** The Managing Director's Performance Management team is developing proposals for employee educational assistance. The PPS will use the assistance as an incentive for staff retention.

- **ANALYZE EXIT INTERVIEWS TO DETERMINE THE REASONS STAFF LEAVE BETWEEN 1-10 YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT.**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** A database created in the Prisons Personnel office is now in place and will be monitored each time an employee separates from service. Reasons for leaving will be reviewed to identify negative factors that may have led to the employee's departure.

Long Term Recommendations

- **INSTITUTE A COMBINED APPLICATION/TESTING PROCESS THAT CAN BE ADMINISTERED AT THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING AND AT THE PPS. ACQUIRE WEB BASED TESTING KIOSKS TO ALLOW APPLICANTS TO COME IN OFF THE STREET IF NECESSARY AND TAKE AN EMPLOYMENT EXAM. SCORE THE TEST ELECTRONICALLY AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TEST. GIVE THE CANDIDATE A TEST SCORE AND MATERIAL TO BEGIN THE BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION THE SAME DAY.**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** This is a proposal introduced with this report.

- **UNDERTAKE AN AUDIT OF THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICER POSITION TO BRING SALARIES UP TO COMPARABLE LEVELS WITH OTHER LIKE CITIES AND THE PHILADELPHIA SHERIFFS DEPUTIES.**
 - ***Status of Recommendation:*** The collective bargaining agreement with the Correctional Officers local union expires on June 30, 2008. The results of those negotiations will determine a course of action for this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHER AGENCIES

The Prisons need the input and collaboration from all the Criminal Justice Partners in Philadelphia if population is to be controlled, public safety enhanced and recidivism decreased. The formation of the Criminal Justice Advisory Board by the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety will allow all entities to meet and potentially act as one system.

POLICE

The Philadelphia Police department generates 93% of all PPS admissions. The reduction in Prison population in the City is highly dependent upon the success of the Crime reduction initiatives now underway. Historical data (chart) from 2003-2004 after one year of the Operation Safe Streets targeted drug enforcement campaign show that the Philadelphia Prisons Population dropped. The only identifiable initiative by the criminal justice community at the time was the Police action.

The Police Department has been conducting a program of Crisis Intervention Training along with the Department of Behavioral Health. The training provides Police Officers with a skill set for handling the mentally ill in crisis. The program also emphasizes treatment diversion over arrest when possible. The program is now operating in the City's East Police Division. CIT would provide a suitable avenue to divert mentally ill offenders into the Mental Health court when it is established. Expanding this program to all police divisions is recommended

COURTS

Like Mental Health Court, the Municipal Court's Treatment court for drug offenders is a program capable of reducing the PPS population. Approaching its ten-year anniversary the program has adjudicated over 2000 offenders in monitored treatment without incarceration. The PPS will engage the Municipal Court in discussion to facilitate its expansion.

A study of the First Judicial District court caseloads conducted by Temple University Professor John Goldkamp showed that in 2005, thirty four percent of PPS inmates awaiting trial in Common Pleas court averaged five or more continuances while in

custody. Goldkamp predicted that the Municipal Court inventory of cases was expected to increase by between at least 15% thru 2012 and the overall court caseload by 60%. No comparison data has been gathered to test whether these conditions still exist. However, the percentage of pretrial inmates comprising the PPS population has grown from 56% in November 2005 to over 60% today.

The average length of stay for an inmate in custody at the PPS is now averaging over 90 days as compared to 74 days in 1995. In 2005 Goldkamp found that 41 percent of pretrial detainees spent more than 120 days in custody awaiting trial. If efficiencies in court process can reduce the average length of stay, the average daily population will diminish accordingly – by nearly 100 inmates for each one-day reduction in average length of stay (based on 35,000 annual admissions). An expansion of the Treatment court is recommended.

MAYOR’S OFFICE FOR RE-ENTRY OF EX-OFFENDERS

The Mayor’s Office for Re-Entry for Ex-Offenders is the arm PPS needs to reach into the Community. The faith-based, volunteer and advocacy communities have a long and storied history with the Prisons. Their dedication and initiative are of great value to the Prisons in changing the outlook and behavior of offenders. However, they are unable to provide employment opportunity and housing resources at the levels necessary to meet the growing needs of the ex-offender community.

MORE has already instituted a presence in the PPS, become partners in the Day Reporting Initiative, and scheduled a Re-Entry Summit for the coming month. The relationship is a potential glove-like fit for the Prisons programming objectives.

A next step is an evaluation of Prisons programming to determine if it meets the community’s needs. PPS consultant, Dr. Marjorie Dugan’s study will provide a focus on service delivery. MORE will then be asked to recommend changes to existing PPS programming to match the needs of community employers, and treatment providers. The PPS will seek to match those services. In this way the offender re-entry will be seamless. The process will marry the services of PPS and MORE allowing offenders to resume training and treatment they may have not completed at PPS after they re-enter the community. It is recommended that Mayor’s Office of Ex-Offender Services primarily be made available to men and women released from the Philadelphia Prisons.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

In order to meet the mandate of a “Smarter, Better, Faster” city government in Philadelphia much of the existing technology in use by the Prisons Operations needs to be replaced or upgraded. The following recommendations are long term. They require the acquisition of new equipment and extensive training of staff. These advances will allow for more efficient operations.

Replace Lock & Track- Lock & Track is the inmate records system at PPS and has been in use since 1995. It is a proprietary product acquired from one vendor who owns the programming code. The software is deficient in its reporting capabilities and new functions must be designed and created by the vendor. Full replacement is recommended.

- **Status of recommendation:** PPS and MOIS have met to begin the process of assessing the needs for a new inmate management system. Monthly meetings will be held until the process is underway.

Acquire Electronic Medical Records- The Prisons currently uses paper files for inmate medical and behavioral health records. The use of paper creates substantial delays in moving inmates among our sites on State Road. In order to transfer an inmate from place to place the file must follow. Preparing the file requires a review by a clerk and a sign out process by Correctional Officers and depending on the number of inmates being transferred may take hours.

The use of paper files also prevents the simultaneous use of files by different treatment modalities. When for instance an inmate is scheduled for dental services and gets sick the same day, the file is pulled and sent to the dentist and cannot be accessed by the Physician’s assistant holding sick call. Practitioners are reluctant to provide some forms of treatment without a complete history. Frequently testing or treatment is postponed until the file is present. The acquisition of an EMR system is recommended

- **Status of Recommendation:** Prisons have been working with the Health Department over the last three years to develop and select a suitable product. Based on needs assessments at the PPS and City Health centers, a product compatible with both departments’ needs was requested. The joint committee reviewing products recently previewed a low-cost windows based product (VISTA) now being used by the Veteran’s Administration.

Automate Timekeeping- The Prisons uses timecards and clocks to keep attendance records on Civil Service employees. Timekeeping is computed by clerks in the Prisons’ Personnel Office. However the labeling, days off stamping and correction of timecard errors is the responsibility of facility shift Sergeants. Collection, and review of time cards takes many man-hours. Accrued leave totals are not available to employees unless they formally request the data from the payroll office. Overtime pay requires three levels of written authorization and a paper transfer of forms through a minimum of three different persons. Overtime pay is often paid late as a result and although it is no one’s fault delays create friction between employees and payroll clerks thus affecting morale.

There are also multiple worksites in the Alternative and Special Detention Division where employees must take timecards from site to site or Sergeants must call to have attendance verified and physically mark the employee's card while they are working elsewhere. An electronic timekeeping system via phone line or internet-based with swipe card, or biometric (fingerprint, eye scan) capabilities is recommended.

- **Status of recommendation:** This report is the first proposal. Requests for information will be made before a formal proposal is submitted.

Automate Quarter Sessions Records Transfers -Court records such as release orders, sentencing orders, parole orders are transferred from the Courts to the Prisons via hand delivered hard copy. The PPS then transmits them to other agencies including the Defender Association via photocopy. Often inmates are incarcerated days or even weeks beyond their intended release dates while orders and files are transmitted to and from the Prisons. This antiquated system which resulted in past litigation is now requiring the PPS to research and explain cases where orders may have delayed inmate releases. Electronic records transfer from the Clerk of Quarter Sessions to the Prisons must be made the standard. With such a system in place, distribution could be managed at the point of origin: the courts. Secure electronic documents transfers to the PPS and the Defenders could be made simultaneously

The Mayor's Transition Team for the Prisons recommended that the PPS using existing equipment to scan and forward the documents from PPS to the Defender Association.

- **Status of Recommendation:** The Commissioner will explore the possibility of using existing equipment to begin the scan and forward process. The PPS will also request a meeting with the Administrative Judges of the First Judicial District to propose a process for electronic transfer of all court documents to the Prisons in a secure and efficient manner.

Replace the two-way radio system Prisons like other public safety agencies uses a hand-held and base station two-way radio system. Radios are required for routine and emergency communications throughout PPS facilities and when officers escort inmates in the community.

The radio system now in use at the Prisons consists of second-hand equipment. Radios and accessories were cannibalized after the Police and Fire Department radio systems were upgraded about five years ago. The radios were years old at the time and do not possess what are now considered standard features such as low battery indicators and duress alarms. The quantity of hand-held radios is not adequate to equip all on-duty officers with a radio. In addition the frequency now used by Prisons personnel will no longer be publicly available after FY2011. The FCC is restricting the frequency to other use. A complete replacement of the system is recommended.

- **Status of Recommendation:** The FY09 Capital Programs budget includes funding to begin this project and phases replacement and implementation over the next three years. The Deputy Commissioner of Operations and the Prisons Business office are exploring options to accelerate the implementation without additional expense. A lease purchase agreement with the equipment vendor is being considered as an option.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority (PICA) published a study of Philadelphia's Prison costs in March of 2007. The Prisons spending from 1997 through 2007 nearly doubled for a number of reasons, which include increases in personnel, overtime, and healthcare costs. Every one of those elements is driven by the Census of those in custody. The same report quotes the Philadelphia FY98-FY02 five-year plan... "The most serious problem facing the [Philadelphia Prisons System] over the coming years is the possibility of a further increase in its inmate population and the resulting financial impact on the City."

During the first two fiscal years of this plan cost savings will not be realized as the Overcrowding initiatives unfold. Additional housing will increase costs while buying time to implement day reporting, mental health court and GPS tracking.

The removal of state inmates from PPS jails will be the biggest single population reduction during that time and can deliver the greatest cost savings to the City.

The same report notes that Philadelphia is by no means alone in terms of jail overcrowding, rates of recidivism or a ballooning jail budget. The initiatives proposed here are underway in other similar cities like Phoenix, Chicago, and Los Angeles, cities facing double digit annual increases in their jail populations. While New York seems to be the exception, a marked population reduction at Rikers Island in the 1990's was primarily achieved by transferring state sentenced inmates to state facilities.

SUMMARY

The revitalization of Philadelphia, increased public safety and lower crime, will in years to come create a break even point where the jail population becomes static or declines. Until that time there is no reason to believe the Philadelphia Prisons census will be reduced without interventions such as those planned here.