

Core and Support Space Analysis

Although the development of new correctional bed capacity is the highest priority for the 10-Year Correctional Facility System Development Plan, as the number of offenders housed at the various correctional institutions increases there will be a corresponding need for additional core and support space. The current inmate population at the institutions and correctional centers has placed a significant strain on the existing spaces and the infrastructure has been affected. The area that was once used to feed 250 inmates in one institution is now providing for 550 inmates. While the DOC staff has done everything it can to utilize existing space, the excessive use in many areas has taken its toll.

During the time the 1990 Wisconsin Department of Corrections Development Plan was being prepared, the largest projected increase in the inmate population in state history and throughout the country was being anticipated. It was those projections that influenced the need to not only build more institutions, but to look seriously at how to expand the existing DOC institutions. The impact, from a design and operations perspective, was that all the previously accepted planning norms for large adult institutions were being challenged; the idea of an ideal institution size of 500 inmates was no longer practical. A smaller facility was no longer considered better for state correctional systems or the inmates within these institutions because of the limited access to staff, programs, and core and support services. The end result in many states was that the standard institution size was increased to any where from 1000 to 2500 prisoners, making them more cost efficient to operate for the correctional systems. This change also reduced the number of times state agencies had to struggle with local communities to site these institutions. This approach to prison construction, for the first time, put an emphasis on the need to plan institutions that were flexible and could easily be expanded in the future to respond to the unprecedented growth in the inmate populations.

The American Correctional Association (ACA) after much debate among its members, modified the recommendations contained in its own standards and eliminated the previously recommended 500 bed facility as the preferred size for an adult institution. Instead, the ACA offered that with the use of new supervisory models such as direct supervision or unit management the institution size should not be governed solely by the number of inmates housed at the institution. Subsequently, other factors including the ratio of staff to inmates, the amount of time inmates were allowed out of their cells, the nature of the operational and management philosophy of the institution, and the amount of core and support space available to provide inmates with the necessary services and programs to improve themselves and reduce idleness became critical considerations.

This professional perspective presented by the ACA significantly influenced the preparation of the 1990 Wisconsin Correctional System Development Plan. The idea that the amount of core and support service capacity available at an institution were the true governing factors for the number of inmates an institution could serve and not simply how many beds could be placed within an institution became the new guideline for system development . As a result, all of the institutions that were surveyed for the 1990 Plan were reviewed for the amount of space that was dedicated to each of the core and support elements and this information was recorded. The core spaces including food service, laundry, visiting, education and vocational education, health services, as well as exercise and recreation were individually assessed. The support functions including administration, warehouse, vehicle storage, security (central control and perimeter fence systems), power plant, and site infrastructure were individually reviewed. The end result was that the 1990 Plan recommended that

significant increases in the core and support elements of existing institutions were necessary in order to adequately service the housing that was planned at each of the correctional institutions.

The passage of time and the increasing demand to provide institutional capacity for an even greater number of inmates than anticipated during the period of the 1990's and early 2000's, forced the DOC to overcrowd its existing institutions at a pace far greater than recommended in the 1990 DOC Development Plan. Even though the Plan had strongly recommended single cell occupancy in the existing maximum security institutions, many of these institutions continued, and in some cases, increased the number of cells that were occupied with two inmates. The 1990 Plan had recommended double-celling inmates at a rate of 150% in new medium-security institutions that were specifically designed with larger cells and in most cases the new medium security institutions were built with those standards in mind. The Department had limited choices given the lack of funding to build new institutions or acquire bed capacity from other state, local or private systems, other than to double those housing unit cells at 175% to 200% of the available capacity to provide for the influx of inmates admitted to its custody by the courts and those being returned from contract prison beds outside the State of Wisconsin. This level of overcrowding was never anticipated in the 1990 DOC Development Plan. As a consequence, the recommendations for expansion of the core and support facilities that had been proposed in that Plan and changes that have been approved in the last fifteen years by the State, have simply not been sufficient to cope with the needs of the current inmate population in the system, let alone the increase in the future inmate population.

The impact of this overcrowding in the existing DOC institutions is quite obvious. There is a great deal of inmate idleness due to the lack of inmate jobs and access to programs and education. Most inmate programs have significant waiting lists that often result in the inability of the offender to access them prior to their release. There is a lack of indoor exercise and recreation. These conditions result in frustration for the correctional staff, inmates and their families. These circumstances become counterproductive to the mission of the Department of Corrections and its commitment to assisting individuals who are incarcerated in improving themselves and their successful reintegration in to the community upon release from prison.

In addition to the limited access to programs and services as a result of the overcrowding, the lack of space for various functions within the existing buildings, in some cases has become paralyzing. It is not unusual to see staff and inmates literally tripping over one another or a piece of equipment in areas like health services. The quantity of food being produced in certain institutions requires staff and inmates to work two and three shifts; equipment breakdowns can be devastating to providing the needed meals. Occasionally, the construction of new buildings on the already crowded institution grounds hinders observation by the staff in guard towers or on foot patrol. The lack of long-range planning to address the needs of the site infrastructure is significant at many institutions. The everyday system failures, lack of access to repair parts because of equipment obsolescence, and system overloads due to overcrowding present real threats to the continuation of service at several DOC institutions.

Individual institution master plans are sorely needed at several of the major institutions to effectively address the numerous systems and building problems that exist. The necessary improvements will have to be phased to ensure that proper replacement and upgrading occurs to sustain current operations while the planning for the recommended new building projects and existing building renovations takes place. It is critical that the

Department request funding for the site specific Master Plans now so that the long range planning can begin and new work can be appropriately staged in conjunction with the critical improvements to the infrastructure systems in the institutions. Even though institution maintenance staff has done reasonably well over the years in their efforts to keep the institutions in an acceptable operating condition and the Department has requested funds through the Capital Budget process, there has not been a comprehensive, integrated response to these problems throughout the system. Many of the solutions have been temporary fixes that often neglect to consider the ramifications of one system upon another. The solutions many not consider the long-range facility goals including sustainability, life cycle cost impact, flexibility, and obtaining the absolute best value for the dollars invested in the problem. In part, this may be a logical outcome of several budget cycles where the State's indebtedness has not allowed for some of these projects to be fully funded.

It is often difficult to focus on the need to strive for the highest and best solution when you are involved in a day to day struggle to endure and maintain what exists. On the other hand, in order to be a responsible steward for the institutions the Department must continue to request funding for these much needed projects. This will necessitate that the State Legislature impose a higher priority on the Department's critical needs in the upcoming biennial budgets in order for the institutions to operate safely and responsibly carry out the mission and goals of the agency. In addition, even though there may be slightly different points of view on what the actual increase in the number of offenders will be during the next ten years, there is no doubt that the system can expect an increase in the men and women who will require secure confinement, for a longer period of time, in the DOC institutions. The ability of the system to responsibly address that population growth will require a significant expansion of the housing capacity, core and support systems at several existing DOC institutions. The Department must continue to insist that the expansion of core and support facilities within its existing institutions is critical to its ability to properly accommodate the current inmate population and the anticipated future growth in the inmate population. The existing shortfalls in these areas cannot be overlooked.

While reviewing the requirements for each of the core and support services, this Plan examined two of the more recently completed DOC institutions to derive the space standards that should be used to plan and design the required areas for the major core and support services. Throughout the development of this Plan, other state departments of corrections were contacted; their standards were not applicable to this Plan either because of the way they were providing services to inmates or the fact that the state did not have standards that they applied uniformly to their building projects. As a result, it was agreed that this Plan would use the standards applied by the Wisconsin Department of Corrections in these most recently completed institutions as examples. One exception to this approach would be in those situations where a minimum amount of space is required for a particular function regardless of the institution size or the number of inmates served; this will need to be addressed by the DOC in its Capital Budget request.

The Red Granite and the New Lisbon Correctional Institutions are the latest facilities to be completed by the Department, in 2001 and 2002, respectively. Even though the Stanley Correctional Institution was also completed in 2002 it was constructed using different design and operational standards and is not being considered as representative of what the State of Wisconsin would normally consider as acceptable standards. This Plan determined the gross area of each individual support space and divided that area by the number of inmates the institution was designed to accommodate. The resulting number represents the ratio of support space, in assignable square feet, to inmates typically housed at the two institutions and incorporates the

average of those two numbers as the standard for the particular function unless it was determined that in both examples the space was either undersized or oversized. Under these circumstances adjustments were made to the square foot allocation accordingly.

The following represents the specific details of the analyses of previous construction projects and findings as they apply to each of the core and support services:

- **Administration**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 5,715 square feet (sq ft) which is 4 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 8,949 sq ft which is 6 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 5.0 sq ft.**

- **Education**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 7,838 square feet (sq ft) which is 5.3 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 6,707 sq ft which is 4.5 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 4.9 sq ft.**

- **Food Service**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 12,284 square feet (sq ft) which is 8.5 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 16,463 sq ft which is 11 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 9.8 sq ft.**

- **General Population Housing**

The area was designed for the designated population of 750 at each institution. The NLCI currently has 78,200 sq ft which is 104.3 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 79,479 sq ft which is 106.0 sq ft per inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 105.0 sq ft.**

- **Health Services Unit**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 8,429 square feet (sq ft) which is 5.5 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 11,000 sq ft which is 7.4 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 6.5 sq ft.**

- **Indoor Exercise**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 7,348 square feet (sq ft) which is 5 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 7,559 sq ft which is 5 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 5.0 sq ft.**

- **Inmate Property**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 4,920 square feet (sq ft) which is 3.3 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 1,712 sq ft which is 1.2 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 2.3 sq ft.**

- **Lobby/Waiting**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 1835 square feet (sq ft) which is 1.3 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 2,844 sq ft which is 1.9 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 1.6 sq ft.**

- **Maintenance**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 3,326 square feet (sq ft) which is 2.2 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 5,615 sq ft which is 3.8 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 3.0 sq ft.**

- **Programming**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 6,162 square feet (sq ft) which is 4 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 4,036 sq ft which is 2.7 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 3.4 sq ft.**

- **Segregation**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 17,608 square feet (sq ft) which is 12 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 15,718 sq ft which is 10.5 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 11.3 sq ft.**

- **Shipping and Receiving**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 3,185 square feet (sq ft) which is 2.2 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 1,708 sq ft which is 1.1 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 1.7 sq ft.**

- **Vehicle Maintenance/Vehicle Storage**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 5,348 square feet (sq ft) which is 4 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 4,570 sq ft which is 3 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 3.5 sq ft.**

- **Visiting**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 6,471 square feet (sq ft) which is 4.3 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 8,027 sq ft which is 5.4 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 4.9 sq ft.**

- **Warehouse**

The area was designed for a total population of 1500 at each institution, even though initial occupancy was approximately 750 inmates. The NLCI currently has 14,619 square feet (sq ft) which is 10 sq ft per inmate. The RGCI currently has 11,796 sq ft which is 8 sq ft/inmate. **The recommended area per inmate would be 9.0 sq ft.**

Summary

It is recommended that as new space standards are developed for the Department of Corrections projects and the architects and engineers (A/E) develop the detailed space programs for the core and support facilities in these projects, that the square foot per inmate guidelines presented here be applied as a part of that process. Furthermore, if prototypical building plans exist that the Department would like to reuse for a particular core or support building or element of a building, that the A/E assigned consider these area recommendations as they develop the space requirements and modify the prototype building if the recommended square foot area per inmate suggests a larger area than called for in the existing prototype plan.