

# **JUVENILE HALL/JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER**

## **Summary**

The Sonoma County Grand Jury reviewed the physical plant, procedures, and programs at Juvenile Hall. Also reviewed were the proposed facility design and programs for the new Juvenile Justice Center. The Grand Jury was particularly interested in housing accommodations at Juvenile Hall, the adequacy of its physical plant to meet required needs, educational and rehabilitative programs, and the adequacy of security measures. The Grand Jury concluded: the housing accommodations and physical plant at Juvenile Hall need interim improvement; health care policies and security measures at Juvenile Hall have been improved; programs providing early intervention services and those providing alternatives to detention, which have been pursued and implemented by the Probation Department, have helped to contain the average daily population at Juvenile Hall to present levels; and the new Juvenile Justice Center is designed to correct the obsolete housing accommodations and physical plant deficiencies that exist at Juvenile Hall.

## **Reason For Investigation**

The Grand Jury reviewed the facilities, procedures and programs at Juvenile Hall as a follow-up to the 2000-2001 Grand Jury Report to determine the current status of conditions that were of previous concern. Also, the Grand Jury reviewed the planning for the new Juvenile Justice Center to determine what changes are proposed for addressing those concerns in the future.

## **Background**

### **Juvenile Hall**

Juvenile Hall is a detention facility located in Santa Rosa and operated by the Probation Department for temporary custody or longer term commitment and treatment of delinquent youth in Sonoma County who are under 18 years of age. The current Juvenile Hall is a 120-bed facility of several old and deficient buildings. For Fiscal Year 2001-2002 the average daily population was 100 and the average length of stay was 25 days. Juvenile Hall's population size is mostly controlled by existing diversion programs. Of all youths arrested in Sonoma County in the past year, 20% were placed in Police/Community diversion programs.

Although there was a small decline in Juvenile Hall admission rates, the average daily population and the average length of stay are expected to increase in the future. This is due to the growing sophistication and severity of crimes committed by minors, the impact of Proposition 21, the lack of local placement programs, and limited bed space at the Probation Camp and Sierra Youth Center. Proposition 21, which was passed by voters in March 2000 and upheld by the California Supreme Court in February 2002, gives the

District Attorney the discretion to file cases involving certain juveniles directly in the adult court. Those minors will require a much longer stay while their cases go through the adult court process. In addition, there is expected to be an increase in minors dependent on alcohol or drugs and those with mental health problems.

Among the programs and services provided for the youth at Juvenile Hall are: drug and alcohol counseling, mental health groups, family reunification, and medical care. Also, the Sonoma County Office of Education provides a full-time year-round school program for all grade levels.

### **Proposed New Juvenile Justice Center**

Replacement of the current Juvenile Hall, included in the 1997-2002 Capital Project Plan, has been the subject of studies and approvals over the last several years. The scope of the initial design of the new facility (which will be located to the immediate west of the current Juvenile Hall) includes housing for 140 beds, an intake/release area, a public lobby, a visiting area, staff facilities, and a central control station.

Later, the project was expanded to include one courtroom and health services offices. Still later, the project was expanded further to include a second juvenile court and facilities for the District Attorney, Public Defender, and Juvenile Probation. In the fall of 2001 the estimated cost of the project with such additional items was \$56,266,000 and the original target date of June 2004 for completion and occupancy was subsequently changed to mid 2005. The project is planned to go to bid this Fall with construction to begin in the spring of 2003.

The current modular design of the new Juvenile Justice Center includes a variety of housing types (single-bed rooms, 2-bed rooms, and dormitory) in seven 20-bed units. Three of the 20-bed units adjoin one another. The remaining 20-bed unit is dormitory housing in a separate module. All are connected to the central control area in the hub of the facility by interior corridors, as is the intake/booking area.

Facilities for the courts, District Attorney, Public Defender, visiting area, and public lobby adjoin the central control area but with restricted/controlled access to the interior corridors. This new configuration is now standard for detention facilities as it provides greater program and management flexibility and better security for both staff and juveniles.

### **Investigative Procedure**

The Grand Jury:

1. Interviewed the following persons:
  - Chief, Sonoma County Probation Department
  - Director, Juvenile Hall
  - Director, Project Coordinator (Juvenile Justice Center)

- Member, Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission.
2. Reviewed the following documents:
- 2000-2001 Grand Jury Final Report and Responses
  - Sonoma County Juvenile Health Care Service Policy and Manual, 02/27/01
  - Probation Department information sheet entitled “2001 Fact Sheet”
  - Sonoma County Probation Department, Application For Approval, (dated April 26, 2001), of its Comprehensive Multiagency Juvenile Justice Plan for funding under the Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act of 2000
  - “Juvenile Hall Replacement Project,” County Board of Supervisors Agenda Item Summary Report, Item Numbers 29 and 30, Board date 10/23/01
  - Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission Annual Inspection Report on Juvenile Hall, 12/05/01
  - Updated Juvenile Hall Needs Assessment
  - “Parent Guide to Sonoma County Juvenile Hall” (pamphlet)
  - County of Sonoma, County Budget, Fiscal Year 2001-02
  - Los Guilucos Juvenile Hall Security and Operations review, January 2002
  - Updated Juvenile Hall intake questionnaire of minors re medical data
  - Juvenile Hall Detention Facility Transition Schedule Narrative, as of 01/16/02
  - Press Democrat articles: “Restoring Justice For Youth, 12/02/01;” “Juvenile Hall Officer Recognized,” 02/03/02; “Court Upholds Tough Teen Crime Law,” 03/01/02; and “4 RP Teens Arrested in String of Burglaries,” 03/02/02.

## **Findings**

Findings numbered F1-F10 are lettered “A” for the existing Juvenile Hall and “B” for the new Juvenile Justice Center for comparison purposes.

- F1A. The facilities used by Juvenile Hall were built in the early 1950’s and do not meet current codes and standards. Capacity for the Hall is 120 juveniles who are accommodated in four 30-bed linear units. Each unit is a separate stand-alone building. These facilities are obsolete and with their linear configuration have security deficiencies and are operationally inefficient.
- F1B. The new Juvenile Justice Center will have capacity for 140 juveniles in a single multi-purpose facility. Housing will be in seven 20-bed units which are pie-shaped. The control station for each unit’s on-duty Staff Supervising Officer is located opposite the sleeping rooms (and opposite the beds in the dormitory unit) and provides a direct view of all rooms and activities in the unit.
- F2A. Housing in Juvenile Hall is unsuitable for the increasing number of youth who are criminally sophisticated, violent, gang-oriented, and have specialized problems (i.e., mental illness, drug/alcohol addiction, and social and family issues).

- F2B. The new Center's design provides a variety of housing types for program and management flexibility. The seven housing units will accommodate youths classified according to gender, age, offense, mental health, initial intake and assessment status, pre-placement, and security risk.
- F3A. Security at Juvenile Hall is being addressed. New locks have been installed in the maximum security unit (DePaz) sleeping rooms and new locks are being installed in all sleeping rooms in the other units. Additional fencing has been constructed around the front of DePaz and new perimeter fencing has been added on the west boundary of the facility. The control panels in DePaz and Central Control have been replaced. Central Control will be the only location where the DePaz exterior doors can be opened for entry or exit. Closed-circuit TV cameras and intercoms have been installed to monitor entry or exit from DePaz. Bullet-resistant glass and doors have been added to the exterior and interior entrance to Central Control. However, certain security and operational deficiencies will continue to exist because the Hall's housing units are in separate buildings. Access to reach these separate buildings for all services and needs can be accomplished only by breaching the interior security perimeter (e.g., the public is allowed escorted entry to visit with minors in the housing units).
- F3B. Juvenile Hall in the new Center will be entirely within one structure. Its perimeter walls will be the Center's primary security perimeter. All entry into and out of the primary security perimeter will be through double interlocked door sally ports. Sally port doors will be actuated by Central Control utilizing integrated electronic audio/visual communications and door control systems. A single point will provide entry for all public access. A separate point of entry will be designated for detention staff only. Major corridors will be monitored by direct line of sight or camera from Central Control. There will be no free movement of minors in any corridor without an escort by a staff Youth Supervisor. Each living unit within the primary security perimeter will constitute an internal security zone with its own security perimeter and systems. Visitation and attorney interviews will be conducted in a centralized security visiting area outside the primary security perimeter. Visits will be scheduled for each housing unit at separate times. Visitors who are scheduled to see minors will be processed and screened by Central Control and wait in the visiting area. Minors to whom the scheduling applies will then be brought from their unit in a group. Private visitation and attorney interviews may be conducted in several small private rooms in the visiting area. Minors will be searched in an anteroom to the visiting area before return to their unit.
- F4A. Nearly all sleeping rooms in Juvenile Hall have no restroom facilities, which compromises security to some degree because minors must be escorted to the restrooms in the unit.

- F4B. Each of the sleeping rooms in the new Center will have restroom facilities and the dormitory unit will have ample restroom facilities across from the sleeping area.
- F5A. Housing in Juvenile Hall is not accessible for persons with disabilities (dayrooms are on lower levels than the sleeping rooms, no handicap toilet/showers).
- F5B. In the new Center, minors with disabilities will have total access to all programs, day rooms, corridors, visiting, and exercise areas. Each housing unit will have an accessible room (sleeping, toilet, and sink). An accessible approved shower will also be located in each unit.
- F6A. The intake/release area in Juvenile Hall is extremely small, and (a) contains only two holding rooms and (b) provides no space for arresting officers to process minors or safely search for contraband. It lacks property storage, facilities to shower minors, or conduct clothing exchange. Minors must be moved into the housing units to shower, be searched, and dressed out. Also, the area is accessible by the public, who must share the same space to pick up released minors, as well as those awaiting disposition.
- F6B. All access into the new Center's booking area will be controlled by Central Control. Youth accompanied by law enforcement will enter via an exterior sally port. Entry into the facility will be through another sally port before being admitted to the booking waiting area. Youth will be seated in the waiting area or placed in one of several holding rooms. Youth will be interviewed, fingerprinted, and photographed at the admissions counter. There will be interview rooms for Probation staff and others as needed and a room for law enforcement to complete their paperwork. Personal property will be stored in the property/laundry storage area, where youth will be issued institutional clothes. Youth will shower and change clothing in the shower/changing rooms and then be taken to the appropriate housing unit. Minors will be released through a sally port into the public lobby. They will not re-enter the booking area.
- F7A. Housing units in Juvenile Hall have no air conditioning (temperatures have exceeded 100 degrees in the summer).
- F7B. The new Center will have individual rooftop heating/cooling for the housing units which will feed from a central facility unit. The system will be designed to provide a controlled climate.
- F8A. Juvenile Hall is not in compliance with Board of Corrections (BOC) educational standards in that class size exceeds the maximum number set by the standards and the square footage of classrooms is less than BOC guidelines require.
- F8B. The Sonoma County Board of Education will continue to provide the administration and operation of Juvenile Hall schools in the new Center. As at present, the minimum school day will be 240 minutes (unless otherwise required

- by law) and all minors, no later than three days into detention, will be enrolled in school. The new center will have a dedicated classroom in each housing unit with sufficient space for teaching needs (e.g., dry eraser boards, wall mounted projection screen, sink and water fountain, desk area, cabinets with locking doors, built in bookshelves, reading area, designated computer area, and a teacher's desk).
- F9A. Effort is made to give Juvenile Hall youth at least an hour of physical activity every day. They are able to make scheduled use of an indoor gym, a swimming pool, and a large outdoor playing field.
- F9B. Each housing unit in the new Center will have a small recreation area to accommodate three to four persons. Also, each unit will have access to one of three large covered recreation areas within the facility's primary security perimeter. The large covered recreation areas will provide ample space for basketball, calisthenics, dance, running around the perimeter, mat exercise, and aerobics. In addition, each unit will share access to a large, secured outdoor recreation field.
- F10A. Medical services at Juvenile Hall include nursing coverage 14 hours a day, seven days a week. A physician spends two half-days a week at the facility and is also available by pager when necessary. New residents receive a complete physical examination provided by a nurse practitioner within 96 hours of their arrival. Nursing staff dispense all prescription medications, which must be approved by the resident's parent(s). All female residents are given a pregnancy test upon admission to the facility. HIV education takes place monthly and testing is done upon request of the resident. In addition, a consulting psychiatrist is in the facility one day a week; and three mental health professionals stagger their shifts so that a therapist is available seven days a week.
- F10B. Medical examinations and treatment in the new center will be done in the housing unit exam rooms. Any medical services that cannot be done in the housing exam rooms will be provided off site. Medications will be distributed by Health Services staff at the housing units from a Control desk. All medications will be stored in a centralized pharmacy and "bubble packs" prepared by medical staff for distribution on the units. A medical screening interview room will be located in the Intake/Admission area where a health evaluation is part of the intake process for each youth. Youth with communicable diseases and those with major medical problems that cannot be treated at the Center will be treated at Sutter Hospital or the nearest medical facility capable of treating the problem.
- F11. Both the 2000-2001 Grand Jury Final Report and the Juvenile Hall Security and Operations Review of January 2002, prepared by the Criminal Justice Research Foundation, commented on the need to expand the Hall's staff training program. The Probation Department agreed with the recommendations and the following changes have been made. As part of the hiring process, all staff now undergo a

comprehensive background and psychological screening process. Also, all volunteers undergo a background check, fingerprinting, local court system check, and a Megan's Law check. Further, all staff now receive mandatory 40 hours of in-service orientation training. By July 1, 2002, all part-time and full-time staff will have received, in addition to their in-service training, Board of Corrections-approved academy training within six months of hiring.

- F12. The Juvenile Hall Security and Operations Review of January 2002 made 26 recommendations on the delivery of health care services to detained youth. The recommendations focused on upgrading and developing policies and procedures, most of which have been implemented. There are 26 new and revised policies and procedures in the Juvenile Health Care Services Policy and Procedures Manual. Also, when this aspect of juvenile care was reviewed in April 2002, there were 12 more policies in process of completion.
- F13. Currently, the plan is to renovate the existing kitchen at Juvenile Hall and keep it operational until funding is available to construct a kitchen in the Juvenile Justice Center. Meals will be cooked in the existing kitchen and delivered in temperature-controlled food carts to each housing unit in the Center. Residents will eat meals in designated dining areas of unit day rooms. Food carts will be returned to the kitchen after each meal and cleaned by staff.

## **Conclusions**

The Probation Department employees and support staff who daily manage and operate Juvenile Hall are indeed dedicated professionals. Fire and earthquake safety standards cannot be met in the 50 year old building in which they work. Yet, even though their full abilities are impeded by the antiquated and potentially unsafe physical plant in which they must operate, they have shown progressive improvement in many important areas such as security and health care. The new Juvenile Justice Center is not scheduled to be completed until mid-2005. During the three-year interim before Juvenile Hall is relocated, projections indicate its average daily population will increase. Youthful offenders committing violent crime will be the largest category. Also projected are increases in females detained, youth with alcohol or drug dependency, and those with mental health problems. New programs and policies are being pursued by the Probation Department to deal with this situation. Meanwhile, alternatives and diversionary options are being used to keep the average daily population at Juvenile Hall at its present level. These alternatives are less costly than incarceration. However, they are not appropriate for all types of youthful offenders nor available at all times. Further, during this three year interim, fiscal and practical constraints will continue to militate against making major changes and upgrades to the current Juvenile Hall facilities.

The new Juvenile Justice Center, on the other hand, promises to be a state-of-the-art facility providing safety and security for detained juveniles, those who serve the institutional needs of juveniles, members of the Juvenile Justice System, and the community. The new Center will be better able to handle the complex diversity of

Juvenile Hall detainees who are increasingly more criminally sophisticated and will better serve detainees who have dependency problems and psychological disorders. Planning for the new Center is being carried forward by a transition team including representation from all the disciplines that will be involved in the establishment and operation of the several departments to be located in the Center.

The remote kitchen arrangement is not as economical and efficient as having the kitchen in the new Center. Over time the additional staff costs of transporting food from one building to another (and food carts back and forth) could exceed the cost of the new kitchen.

### **Recommendation**

- R1. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and the Probation Department are urged to include a new kitchen facility in the Juvenile Justice Center. It makes good financial sense to design and plan the new kitchen now as part of the entire project and not later after construction has commenced or finished. Increased labor costs associated with having a separate kitchen and the potential of higher construction costs in the future make a delay of the kitchen project very uneconomical.

### **Required Responses to Finding**

None

### **Required Responses to Recommendation**

Chief, Probation Department: R1  
Sonoma County Board of Supervisor's: R1