

It's O.K., Supervision Enthusiasts:

You Can Come Home Now! *Harold B. Wooten*

**A Challenge Answered:
Perception of the Prol**

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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**Private Enterprise in Ins
A Call for Caution ..**

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**Impact of a Job Trainin
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This Issue in Brief

It's O.K. Supervision Enthusiasts: You Can Come Home Now!—Author Harold B. Wooten asserts that probation systems have lost interest in supervision of offenders; instead, trendy practices which are best described as elaborate monitoring mechanisms have taken the day. But, the author contends, before we rally the supervision loyalists, we should first admit that changing self-defeating behavior of offenders has never been significantly reinforced as a value in probation. The author cites historical reasons for this failure, identifies current barriers to effective supervision of offenders, and offers recommendations to various participants in the process to address effective supervision of offenders.

A Challenge Answered: Changes in the Perception of the Probation Task.—Author Richard Gray responds to the point of view expressed in this issue's article by Harold B. Wooten. Do probation officers actually help probationers or are they primarily paper pushers or law enforcers? According to the author, past experience and current job orientation have caused a change in probation officers' perspective of their job. The author discusses the sociology of knowledge in addressing shifts in task-related perspectives.

Private Enterprise and Institutional Corrections: A Call for Caution.—The current crisis of overcrowding in American prisons and jails, coupled with reduced resources available for corrections, has led to the development of innovative responses to the problems of institutional corrections. One such innovation which has been proposed and is receiving increasing support is the idea of "privatizing" institutional corrections. Authors Lawrence F. Travis III, Edward J. Latessa, Jr., and Gennaro F. Vito examine the movement to contract with private firms for the construction and operation of prisons and jails. Focusing on legal, cost, and accountability issues in such contracting, the authors conclude with a call for caution in the movement to employ private companies for the provision of this governmental service.

Impact of a Job Training Program on CETA-Qualified Offenders.—In this article, author Dennis B. Anderson reports on research—conducted in an industrial

midwestern city during 1984—of a job training program for CETA-qualified probationers. Controlling for self-selection and risk factors, the study compared these pro-

CONTENTS

It's O.K., Supervision Enthusiasts: You Can Come Home Now!	Harold B. Wooten	4
A Challenge Answered: Changes in the Perception of the Probation Task	Richard Gray	8
Private Enterprise in Institutional Corrections: A Call for Caution	Lawrence F. Travis III Edward J. Latessa, Jr. Gennaro F. Vito	11
Impact of a Job Training Program on CETA-Qualified Probationers	Dennis B. Anderson	17
Short-Term System-Therapy with Adult Probation Clients and Their Families	John VanDeusen Joseph Yarbrough David Cornelsen	21
Addressing Inmate Mental Health Problems: A New Direction for Prison Therapeutic Services	Kenneth Adams	27
Predicting and Improving Parole Success with PAS	Lois Shawver T. L. Clanon Douglas Kurdys Howard Friedman	34
Planning and Decisionmaking in Correctional Facility Construction	Dale K. Sechrest Shelley J. Price	38
The Functions of Classification Models in Probation and Parole: Control or Treatment-Rehabilitation? ...	Peter C. Kratcoski	49
Conducting Effective Meetings	Carolyn Sue Brown Glen Plutschak	57
Departments		
News of the Future		60
Looking at the Law		63
Reviews of Professional Periodicals		66
Your Bookshelf on Review		69
Letters to the Editor		73
It Has Come to Our Attention		74
Indexes of Articles and Book Reviews		75

Planning and Decisionmaking in Correctional Facility Construction*

BY DALE K. SECHREST and SHELLEY J. PRICE**

THE PLANNING, design, and construction of a correctional institution which will be in use for 30 to 100 years requires a sound planning and decisionmaking process. It cannot be done on a part-time or intermittent basis or by people unfamiliar with the operation of correctional institutions. To the extent possible it must be free of political influence and bureaucratic gamesmanship. Cost cutting at the expense of future operational concerns, siting tug-of-wars, and rejection of humane design features that may appear as frills have all been impediments to good prison planning and construction. Problems and major delays due to these problems have resulted in considerable dollar losses and in both frustration and demoralization for those who must operate substandard or nonfunctional facilities.

For the study described in this article, good planning and decisionmaking did not guarantee success in the design and construction of new facilities or the renovation of existing ones; however, they did increase the chances of building functional facilities. A functional facility operates consistent with its mission statement and provides the following: a greater sense of safety for staff and inmates, less destructive (or "normalized") inmate behavior, minimal staff turnover through greater worker satisfaction, a physical plant which operates efficiently with minimal maintenance problems, and a more humane and positive environment based on the implementation of design concepts consistent with the standards of good practice of the field.¹ Failures in planning and decision-making were related to (1) the fact that there can be no perfect design, model, or prototype facility, (2) limits on the ability of participants to amicably or successfully resolve competing objectives through compromise, and (3) an inability to carry out sound planning and decision-making within a political and bureaucratic environment.

*Data for this article were derived from a report prepared for the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, by the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections under subcontract to Abt, Associates, Inc., contract number J-LEAA-011-81. Points of view and opinions stated are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official policies of the U.S. Department of Justice or the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections.

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Study Methods: Description of Facilities Surveyed

Information for the study was obtained through a mail/telephone survey completed by individuals responsible for construction of new facilities in 15 states. Survey information was supplemented by visits to three states where project staff toured recently opened institutions and spoke with department of corrections (DOC) project managers, representatives of state agencies involved in the administration of correctional building projects, project architects, contractors, and facility operations staff regarding the planning, design, construction and operation of the facility.

All of the facilities described in the survey were occupied after 1977, most having been opened in 1981. In terms of operating mission, designed capacities, physical plant, and staff complements, facilities surveyed were quite diverse. Many of the institutions reported the capability to house inmates of all security levels, containing a mix of rooms/cells designed for maximum, medium, and minimum security inmates, with a few facilities having dormitories. Reported designed capacities ranged from 180 to 1,335 inmates (the latter, a facility with several satellite units). One-half of the facilities surveyed were designed to house fewer than 500 residents. Slightly over one-half of the respondents indicated that the institution was filled beyond its designed capacity, and others foresaw increasing resident populations that would exceed the rated capacity.

The largest group of respondents described a facility exhibiting characteristics common to the "advanced practices" model. These facilities were characterized by cluster housing units or modules with accessible dayroom space; use of doors, windows and walls (versus bars) representing attempts to provide a "normalized" environment; and single room occupancy (although one-third of the facilities had begun to double bunk in the rooms), with most rooms providing 70-80 square feet of floor space. Reported gross square feet of space per inmate ranged from 352 to 833. Three-quarters of the institutions considered the American Correctional Association

¹ See Dale K. Sechrest and Shelley J. Price, *Correctional Facility Design and Construction Management*, National Institute of Justice series Issues and Practices (Washington, D.C., October 1984).

(ACA/CAC) standards in their design. As previously noted, in terms of mission, use, and physical plant, the facilities surveyed varied considerably to include a high-security or special offender unit, a renovated mental health facility, and two diagnostic-reception units. About one-half of the institutions included medical/hospital units.

Costs for construction (or in one case, renovation) of the facilities ranged from 3-1/2 million to 31 million dollars. The cost differential in most cases was explained by factors such as facility size, security level, hardware needs, and special units or design characteristics. In half of the surveys, reported final costs exceeded the initial budget allocation for construction.

The average length of time reported from the start of planning until occupation of the facilities was 4 to 5 years, excluding those cases where the length of planning phases was reduced by use of existing prototype plans and specifications, or fairly extensive system master plans. In general, one-half of the project duration was spent in planning and the other half in construction.

Most respondent states had units within the department of corrections (DOC) that had responsibility for managing facilities construction projects. These units were generally found within offices of capital programs, facilities services, planning, or operations, and were administered at the deputy director level in the DOC; the divisions were usually comprised of 3 to 10 people. Staffing included individuals with backgrounds in engineering and a staff member familiar with operations of the state corrections system and its individual facilities. Some of the units also supported an architect. For new construction projects, these staff worked closely with state agency representatives (the department of general services, state building commission, capital development unit, etc.), project architects, and other DOC staff. In addition to new facilities construction, the units usually had responsibility for maintenance, repair, and renovation of existing DOC facilities. Most of the DOC's studied did not have these units at the time the facilities discussed in the survey were planned and built. For new facility construction many of the difficulties described by respondents were recognized and dealt with by these units.

The findings of the study included a determination of the steps in the planning, design, and construction process for new institutions, as illustrated in the flow chart shown in figure 1. The chart is intended to establish a common reference point for discussion; it assumes that

the decision to build has already been made and does not suggest that the process always does or should occur as illustrated.

The Politics of New Construction

One of the most difficult problems encountered in the study was the effect of the political process on the planning, design, and construction of correctional institutions. The diffusion of power and responsibility among government agencies, including complex approval processes and turnovers in agency personnel, often contributed to costly project delays.² As a part of the executive branch of government, department of corrections staff often did not work effectively with the governor and the governor's staff to present acceptable programs to the legislature. Without the understanding and support of the legislature, programs will not be funded. A common complaint of legislators was that their concerns were not addressed by department of corrections officials.

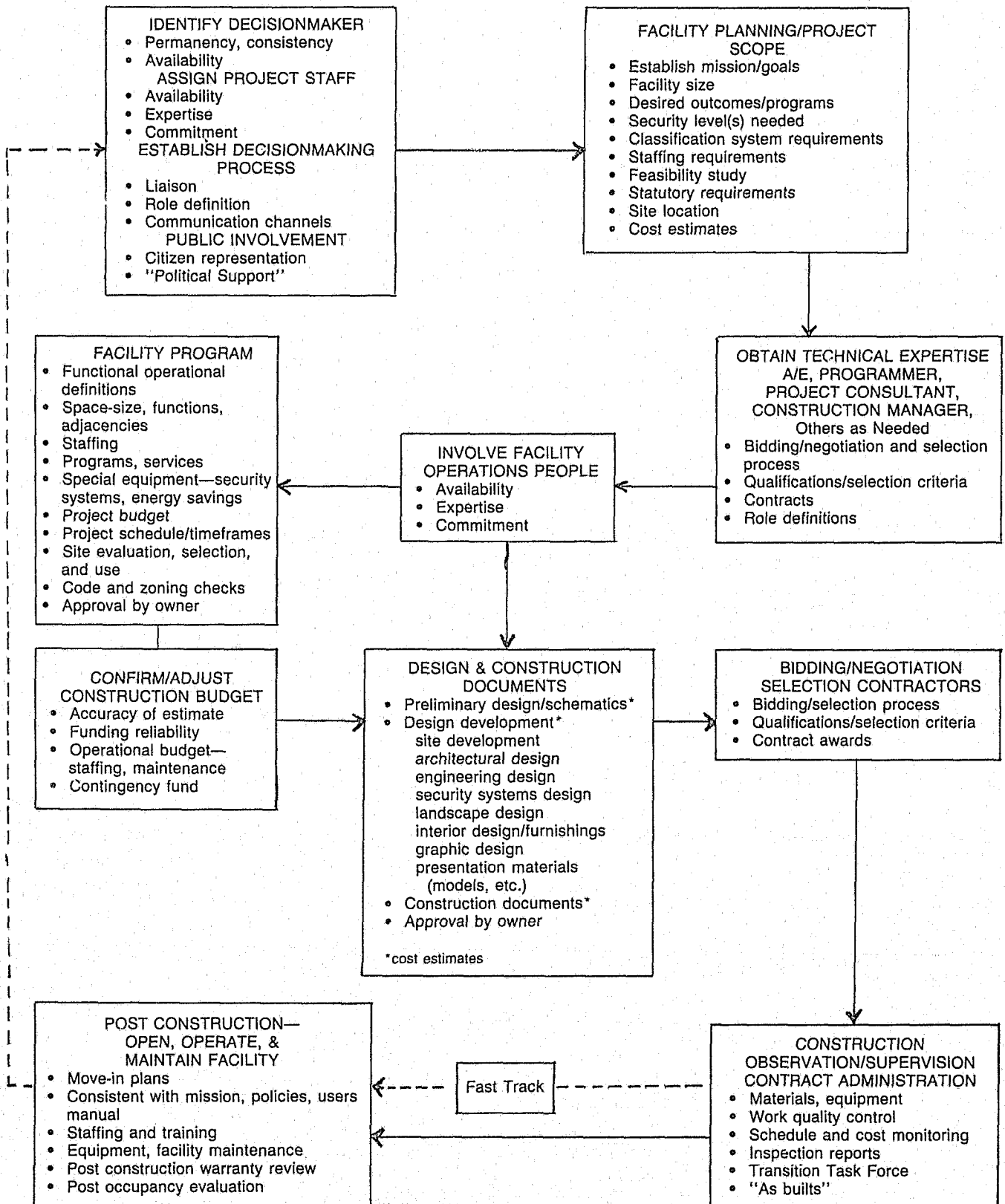
There was a critical need for correctional officials and staff considering new construction to understand the working steps in government—the legislative process, the system for approval of expenditures, and the avenues of approach to the governor or staff, local citizens' groups, and others who influence the governmental process. An understanding of the process can be of special importance during the initial approval and funding stages to ensure adequate funds for construction and for continued staffing, operation, and maintenance of the institution. Such support also can be vital to endorsement of the design and operating philosophy and provide needed support during site selection, selection of professional services, bidding on construction, and implementation of opening and start-up plans.

The construction of new facilities is a particularly sensitive issue due to the large initial expenditures involved and the public reaction to the location of these facilities. For these reasons department of corrections leadership must be in a position to evaluate legislative and public concerns and propose solutions that will meet a wide range of needs. In a public climate stressing offender punishment, for example, corrections officials must emphasize public safety and deemphasize offender rehabilitation while continuing to provide basic programs, such as work and education.

In one jurisdiction included in the study, an administrator who had been with the department of corrections for several years spoke candidly about past failures in working with executive and legislative branches of government. In the mid-1970's several facilities had been constructed without adequate consultation with appropriate representatives of the executive or legislative branches of government. The plan for several prototype

² George Edensword-Breck, "Washington's Unique Jail Program," *Northwest Architecture*, July-August 1981, pp. 8-9; *Building Design and Construction*, "Teamwork Result: Better Prisons Cost Less," May 1980, pp. 62-65.

Figure 1. Planning, Design, and Construction Flowchart



facilities was presented to the public without full support of key state fiscal and personnel officials or the leadership of legislative committees. It was later recognized that the facilities were designed for too narrow a purpose in that the treatment philosophy used in the design should not have preceded both security considerations and the politics of site selection. Neither the goals of the department nor the legislature were met.

In the state in question, the current corrections plan involves key executive and legislative representatives. It was presented informally prior to public discussion. As part of the process the governor was urged to state a public corrections policy consistent with the new plan. Most important, however, was the desire and ability of corrections staff to "test" the plan and present alternatives to it. This was particularly important with respect to costs, which in this case involved significant cost differentials between prefabricated modular construction and traditional cast-in-place concrete construction for a medium-security facility. The new plan also addressed the need for flexibility in meeting security needs across the system. It has, therefore, led to an understanding of the political structure and resulted in a pattern of new facility construction that will meet a variety of correctional needs.

Continuity in Planning and Decisionmaking

The lack of continuity in project planning and decisionmaking was one of the most critical problems in correctional facility construction. Specifically, this was related to changes in philosophy, project plans, and design by key decisionmakers and to the turnover of project administrators, often the director of the department of corrections. The resulting failure to proceed with projects as planned often resulted in elevated project costs, extended schedules, and the use and operation of facilities in ways which differed considerably from the original intent.

The average tenure of under 2 years for department of corrections administrators, leading to the high turnover of project decisionmakers, and the resulting changes in philosophy and mission for the new facility ranked highest among problems in the planning, design, and construction of correctional institutions.³ The extension of project timeliness for planning, delays in obtaining approvals, and the inability to find someone to make project decisions were linked to decisionmaker turnover. The most costly design changes clearly revealed changes in

philosophy and the function of the facility and were often preceded by a change in the department of corrections administrator.

In order to maintain project continuity, the project manager should not be affected by changes in department administrators. It is essential that the project manager have the appropriate authority and responsibility to provide the necessary continuity during administrative changes. This role may be delegated by the director of the department of corrections to a qualified individual, or if the project is managed by a state administrative agency (department of general services, capital development board, etc.), the responsibility may rest with an individual who deals with correctional construction projects. In either case it is suggested that a project manager be located in the department of corrections to maintain appropriate liaison with the state general services department and other units of government required for project completion. When project management occurs outside of the department, strong liaison must be maintained.

A related concern involved project planning and design stages in which the knowledge and experience of correctional facility staff often was used only minimally or not at all. In particular, when planning and design call for a thorough analysis of facility operations, those who work in institutions can be a valuable resource for obtaining information on problems and successful applications in facility design that influence day-to-day operations. For example, security staff can make significant contributions to design where it may affect lines of sight, population traffic control, control room equipment use and placement, and elimination of unusable space. Security staff and maintenance personnel will be acutely aware of details, such as the placement of fire alarms and thermostat controls or the use of particular locking systems, door handles, and lighting fixtures in terms of maintenance, complexity of operations, and vulnerability to inmate tampering. The need to consult facility staffs in institutional planning and to ensure communication of their concerns to the designer was a recurring theme in the study.

Many states have achieved continuity in project administration and decisionmaking through the creation of "project management units" within the departments of correction. This has involved establishment of a permanent staff, knowledgeable about channels of communication and able to keep records on new construction, renovation, and repairs to all facilities in the system. These multidisciplinary units should be staffed by individuals with experience in construction contract administration, architectural or engineering backgrounds, and a knowledge of the operations and maintenance requirements of correctional facilities. The size of the unit

³Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, December 13, 1982 letter, "A Pilot Program for Effective Leadership in Corrections." Over 50 percent of the jurisdictions surveyed had two or more administrators during project duration. One state dealt with four different directors from start to finish of the facility discussed. Decisionmaker turnover was the most frequently mentioned impediment to fluid and consistent project planning.

should be allowed to fluctuate depending on the size of the building program at a given time. For large departments with continuing construction needs, or for periods of maximum construction in small departments, the following staff is recommended, at a minimum: an architect, engineers, to include electrical, mechanical, structural, and civil engineering specialties, an individual with construction experience and/or project management skills, and a department of corrections administrator/practitioner. Additional services will also be required from individuals with expertise in budget/fiscal matters, personnel, and security requirements. Correctional staff with experience in facility operations can be part of the unit or incorporated into the unit as a "team" when needed. The temporary use of personnel is most important in specialty areas such as medical services, education, industries, and food service; due to the importance of security operations, the long-term use of a person with such expertise is preferable.

Some recommendations for improving the planning and decisionmaking process are as follows:

- (1) From the start of the project, the key decision-maker or project administrator:
 - Should be known to staff and principals involved in planning, design, and construction for the new facility. The project administrator is the director of the user agency—the department of corrections (DOC)—or an individual with the authority to make final decisions for DOC concerning the project.
 - Should initiate and maintain contact with key government officials to obtain support for project goals and activities.
 - Should, through continuous involvement in planning for the project, ensure that planning and objectives for the facility are consistent with the philosophy and goals of the corrections system of which it is a part.
 - Should participate in planning and budget preparation to ensure availability of staff and resources to support the continued operation and maintenance of the completed facility.
 - Should have final approval of project plans and ensuing project work, after consultation with the owner and/or appropriate funding officials and project staff.
 - Should appoint or contract with a full-time project manager who has specialized knowledge or experience in managing the correctional facility planning, design, and construction process; this person should have access to staff or consultants familiar with project management skills and techniques; organization of the owner and user agencies; budget preparation and maintenance; staffing, operating, and maintenance requirements of a correctional facility; construction contracting, bidding, and negotiations; architectural programming; correctional facility construction; and architecture/engineering.
- (2) Selection criteria for the project manager should include consideration of the individual's commitment to remain with the project for its duration (approximately 5 years).
- (3) The department of corrections should assure continuing training of replacement staff for the project management unit.
- (4) The project manager, staff, and principals should develop and maintain a written plan approved by the project administrator which:
 - delineates project staff and principals;
 - designates roles/tasks to be performed by each;
 - contains a task/time schedule; and
 - includes an organizational chart that clearly establishes communication channels.
- (5) The project manager should be authorized to make decisions in the absence of the project administrator consistent with project plans.
- (6) The project manager should possess and implement management skills and knowledge of techniques for planning, controlling, and scheduling project activities, and:
 - Maintain channels of communication between project staff and principals, assuring at all times that principals are informed of department of corrections needs and decisions.
 - Coordinate project activities and schedules and conduct meetings on a weekly, monthly, or as needed basis, with project staff and principals. Written minutes of project meetings that reflect decisions about project work should be kept by the project manager and made available to project principals.
 - Organize and coordinate facility personnel participation in the formulation of the architectural program and design, selection of hardware and equipment, and development of facility policy, procedure, and programs. Facility staff members, such as the administrator, chief of institutional security, maintenance supervisor, and program directors should be involved in facility design and programming.

- Attend to the schedule of activities to assure timely delivery of products for which the owner/user is given responsibility in the contract and supplementary agreements.
- Monitor and control budget expenditures.

The Planning Process

Planning refers to all activities that occur following the decision to build through the completion of construction documents. Basic elements of the planning process include: the use of studies and information defining needs of the correctional system and the new facility; preparing the preliminary budget request or scope statement; and developing the architectural program. For the facilities studies, planning delays that extended project schedules and prematurely exhausted budgets, that lacked attention to these tasks, often resulted in confusion about institutional mission, and a facility designed to meet needs defined 5 or more years before its completion.

The length of time given for the planning phase of projects studied was 2 to 3 years, with a range of 10 months to 4 years. Planning time was shortest when plans and specifications were based on a model or prototype and when existing master plans or systems studies defined needs and expectations for the new facility.

Ideally, facility planning begins with the use of studies or plans that address the needs of the correctional system.⁴ Often, however, the need for an institution is established with the governor or legislature solely through use of population projections that fail to consider alternatives or the relationship of the proposed institution to a carefully conceived plan for the total system. Proposals for new construction often have not included feasibility studies that contain an analysis of life cycle costs or expectations for future use of the institution. Rather, factors such as political considerations, economic limits, and perceptions of public opinion may be the key determinants in prison planning.

While a state master plan may not necessarily be required, basic information on correctional populations,

future trends, and alternatives must be considered in planning for new institutions. Specific planning for a new facility should reflect the factors which led to the decision to build. Data should be current, and plans must be endorsed by those that have decisionmaking authority for the project. Presumably the type of institution to be built will be derived from these types of data. Such information is often generated by a research and development unit within the department of corrections or by independent consultants brought in for this purpose. Frequently, the basic rationale for the facility is lost in transmittal of information to the programmer and/or designer, contributing to confusion about the mission of the institution and the duplication of effort. The need for continuity and communication in institutional planning starts from day one, particularly in bringing departmental expertise to the process.

Cost Estimating and the Funding Process

Cost overruns and cost constraints were major problems in correctional facility construction and were usually attributed to inaccurate cost estimates. One-half of the facilities surveyed revealed cost overruns at an average of 39 percent over the initial budget.

Cost overruns were also due to delays in project funding, planning, and bid stages that resulted in inflationary costs. In particular, time lags between requesting and obtaining funds, or delays between funding allocation and the start of work after completing planning, resulted from problems in working through the legislative process. In one instance, 6 years elapsed between allocation of funds and the start of work.

The correctional planner is placed at a disadvantage at the beginning of the process when the question of cost precedes the question of need. Although it is reasonable to begin with a general figure of projected cost that answers the question of how much money is available or what it will cost for a new institution, the arbitrary constraints imposed by a "ball park" figure should not be the controlling factors at the beginning of the planning process. The basic questions should be: What is needed? What purpose(s) will the construction serve? What kinds of programs and security requirements should be addressed? The final architectural program may be a compromise between what is wanted or needed and what is affordable. However, it should be an intelligent compromise, based on an examination of alternative solutions and consequences.

Difficulties with cost and funding estimates reported in the study may have resulted from the scarcity of information on costs of correctional construction and inadequate knowledge of the many variables which may affect costs.⁵ Cost estimates can be divided into three

⁴American Institute of Architects, Architecture for Justice Committee, 1980 *Design Resource File: Planning Justice Facilities* (Washington, D.C.: AIA, September 1980); California Board of Corrections, *Corrections Planning Handbooks*, prepared by Farbstein/Williams and Associates Sacramento: State of California Youth and Adult Correctional Agency, Board of Corrections, 1981; J. J. Enomoto, "The Prison Planning Problem in California," in M.R. Montilla and N. Harlow (Eds.) *Correctional Facilities Planning* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, D. C. Heath, 1979); Buddy Mear, Max E. Williams, J. Tom Brakefield, and Barbara Gray, *Prisons: An Architectural Notebook* (Los Angeles: Pereira Associates and Benham-Blair & Affiliates, Inc., Circa 1978); James P. O'Neil and Francis R. Ford, *Guidelines for Planning a Detention Facility* (Washington, D.C.: National Sheriffs' Association, 1981); and U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, *Planning of New Institutions, Phase One-Community Meeting* (Boulder, Colorado: Voorhis Associates, Inc., 1981).

⁵See George and Camille Camp, *The Corrections Yearbook*, 1982 and 1983 editions (Pound Ridge, New York: Criminal Justice Institute, Inc., 1982 and 1983) for current average facility costs; and California Board of Corrections, *op cit.* note 4, chapters 1.4 and 4.5, for basic cost information.

categories: (1) first costs, or construction costs, to include "the cost of constructing the building, including land, professional fees, permit fees, and other associated costs of construction—the amount of money you pay to open the door of your facility"; (2) operating costs to include "the costs of staff, utilities, ongoing plant maintenance, providing services such as food and medical care, or other recurrent costs associated with running the facility"; and (3) life cycle costs, to include "all of the costs incurred by a building owner during the various stages of a project . . . from the capital investment in land, construction and financing to the eventual costs of salvage and disposal of the building."⁶

The primary concern here is with first costs. Formulas are available for estimating first costs, although the most difficult step is determining a realistic unit cost to use in making the calculation.⁷ This must be done by surveying other recent local projects and then adjusting for inflation to a current cost or by consulting an estimating publication or service. Some data are available which provide average cost information for correctional facility construction, although these data vary widely. Figures may represent average facility costs or average unit costs—cost per square foot or cost per bed. Even when available, these figures alone do not allow for accurate estimates without additional information on factors such as materials and labor costs per region, type or security level and program of the facility, project duration and inflation rate, and activities and products included in the cost estimate. (Does the total budget include planning costs, professional design fees, administrative services, site acquisition and development, equipment, furnishings, etc.?)

The process for requesting funds for correctional facility construction often did not include mechanisms to ensure that the appropriate skills and techniques were applied in developing cost estimates and that the project was adequately defined to identify true costs. The preliminary budget request was often part of a project "scope" statement that contained the minimum amount of information necessary to justify the budget expenditure to the legislature and other approving bodies. Although far more detail will be provided in developing the facility architectural program, the initial budget request should be comprehensive enough to establish accurate funding needs based on requirements for the facility. The incorporation of previous systemwide planning is essential to this process because of the need to establish philosophy and priorities for the proposed facility as well as expecta-

tations for facility size, security levels, classification system requirements, programs, special features, and site proposals. These issues and others will affect the design, functions, appearance, operation, and specifically the cost of the institution.

Initial budget estimates for the facilities surveyed were most often developed by the project architect or the state administrative agency in conjunction with the governor's staff. Many were done as part of "scope" statements designed to begin the funding process. While working in departments familiar with construction budget estimating methods, often the persons developing these statements operated with limited knowledge of corrections and missed key factors affecting costs. In several cases preparation of the facility budget request was performed by department of corrections personnel who had never worked on a construction project.

If the budget for construction is to be developed based solely on the information provided in a project scope statement prior to architectural program development, the following concerns should be observed:

- The statement should be comprehensive; it should define needs and desires in terms of space, size, functions, programs, and security requirements so that an accurate funding request can be developed.
- Cost estimating, for purposes of funding requests, must be done using the appropriate expertise, time, and attention. A number of sources, such as digests and engineering periodicals, contain current figures and formulas for estimating conventional construction costs based on materials and labor costs by region. Information should also be researched through contacts and information sources within the correctional community.
- Contingencies for error or changes in project scope must be built into the budget request. Uncertainty or a lack of well-defined needs may warrant an increase in budgetary provisions for change. Allowing for variance with project size, generous rule of thumb contingencies are: 15-20 percent of the planning budget, 10-15 percent of the design budget, and 3-7 percent of the construction budget.
- All cost calculations for new facility construction must consider operating and life cycle costs.

Even when estimates and funding requests have been reasonably accurate, delays in funding, planning, and bid stages can lead to increased costs at the time of construction, often necessitating deletions or modifications which can affect the usefulness of the facility. Many facilities

⁶ Ibid., California Board of Corrections.

⁷ Ibid., California Board of Corrections; William M. Pena with William Caudill and John Focke, *Problem Seeking: An Architectural Programming Primer* (Boston: Canners Books International, 1977), pp. 104-105.

settled for less storage space; poorer quality equipment; and often less recreational, vocational, industrial, or educational program space. A request for additional funds may be necessary, although such funds are often difficult to obtain. The usual result was design changes in the hope that they would lead to cost savings.

Rather than risk construction of a less than adequate facility based on a fixed appropriation, separate funding for facility planning and programming is recommended, followed by funding for design and construction based on planning decisions and results that clearly establish what is needed. This procedure will avoid cost overruns based on off-target estimates and time lags between the planning and construction process. However, when several years elapse between planning and construction, and construction is based on an older cost estimate, overruns will still occur, as was the case in two facilities surveyed.

Facility Staffing

A major problem in planning for new facility construction was estimating facility staffing, particularly the numbers of correctional officers needed.⁸ Similarly, costs of maintenance and daily operations often had not been adequately addressed prior to completion of the facility. Two-thirds of the facilities surveyed had insufficient numbers of staff. There have been recent instances of institutions, particularly jails, that have not been able to open due to errors in the original estimates of staff needs. Both program and design influence staffing needs. The architectural program provides a first estimate of staff needs with a determination of staffing ratios. However, the design, with its specific location of posts, related control points, and traffic control features, must be used to further refine the original staff estimates. Staffing for correctional officers is particularly critical, since the institution cannot operate without a method for inmate control. Program and administrative staff, while no less important, can be estimated with more certainty.

Facility Siting

The politics of siting play a major role in facility planning, design, and construction.⁹ Those responsible for obtaining an appropriate location for the facility face opposition in many communities. And even with communities vying for placement of a facility in their locality, selection may still be based on criteria other than those established by the department of corrections. Several of the institutions surveyed were placed on land lacking the terrain characteristics, proximity to highway access and public transportation, adequate space, and availability of sewage and utilities preferred for institutional operation. Ironically, inappropriate siting based on the desire to keep an institution out of a locality can also occur when there is community pressure for placing a facility in an area which may see it as economically desirable. McGee has delineated many of the practical problems of siting and discussed the political basis for these types of decisions.¹⁰ In indicating that "fear of harm from the inmates, economic anxiety, and civic pride" were concerns, he notes that facts and logic often contribute little to political decisions.

Suggestions from the earlier discussion about working within the political environment also apply to siting:

- Contact with key community representatives should be initiated to inform them about the potential plan and reduce opposition based on misinformation. While the grassroots approach to educating communities may be effective, the majority of respondents strongly favored the practice of starting with the most influential members of the community.
- Be prepared to respond to the traditional reactions to a correctional institution and anticipate the problems of selecting an inappropriate site based on community needs.
- Present a plan to decisionmakers that includes options backed by recommendations. This might include a list of site selection criteria and weighting for each variable.

Architectural/Facility Program Development

More explicit than the preliminary budget planning document, or scope statement, but preceding design development, is the completion of the architectural or facility program. This phase of planning is sometimes referred to also as the "pre-architectural" phase. For purpose of discussion "architectural program" will be used. The architectural program should tell the designer exactly what is expected of the facility in terms of functional and operational requirements.¹¹ Every aspect of the facility must be addressed, such as movement patterns, staffing

⁸ For methods of estimating facility staffing, see F. Warren Benton, *Planning and Evaluating Prison and Jail Staffing*, Volumes I and II (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, October 1981); and California Corrections Board, *op. cit.*, note 4, Chapter 5.2 and Appendix J. Brief discussions of inmate-staff ratios are also contained in Joan Mullen and Bradford Smith (Principal Authors), *American Prisons and Jails*, Volume III, *Conditions and Costs of Confinement* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, October 1980), pp. 94-97; and the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, Task Force on Corrections, *Task Force Report: Corrections* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), pp. 95-99.

⁹ Following problems in the decisionmaking process, siting was the second most frequently mentioned cause of project delay for the facilities surveyed. Respondents identified as the single most critical factor in site selection placement of the institution where citizen resistance would be minimized.

¹⁰ Richard A. McGee, *Prisons and Politics* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1981).

¹¹ For approaches to architectural programming, see California Corrections Board, *op. cit.*, note 4, chapter 5.2; and William M. Pena, et al., *op. cit.*, note 8.

patterns, security details, programs and services, overall space needs, housing configurations, and the like. Issues addressed in preliminary planning, such as siting, staffing, and overall goals, must again be addressed in more detail to show the designer what is needed. Expectations or possibilities for future use of the facility must be considered realistically in terms of their implications for the design. For example, how might the mission of the facility change? Will crowding be an issue?

All of the facilities surveyed reported that an architectural program had been done; however, the programs appeared to vary considerably in emphasis, focusing on either philosophy-function definitions or more technical details. This appeared to occur regardless of the source—consultant/programmer, architect/engineer or designer, or department of corrections staff. In one case, the contents of a legislative act were adopted as the program statement, which illustrates the difference in approaches to programming. A comprehensive and detailed architectural program is vital to the construction of a facility which will meet the needs of the owner. The greater the detail the less likely the possibility of poor coordination and confusion in the completion of the facility.

In retrospect, departments of corrections project staff pointed to a failure to "think operationally" in designing the facility, particularly about security and maintenance needs. Often the primary consideration in design was the types of programs offered to inmates, at the expense of addressing the safety and security of staff and inmates, developing secure traffic flow patterns and preventing disturbances and escapes.

The project architect/engineer (A/E) should be involved in program development as early in the process as possible. In almost every case where this did not happen the A/E rewrote the program once assigned to the project. In some instances, this resulted in a new architectural program inconsistent with departmental philosophy and objectives or one in excess of an already established budget. Additional funds were then needed to pay for the rewrite of the original program. The advantages appear to favor early involvement of the A/E to ensure timely and consistent input from all participants.

Perhaps the most critical issue during program development was the need for involvement of facility staff members and practitioners in order to identify critical operational and practical needs of the institution. Department of corrections personnel must not rely on the architect/engineer to define the needs stated in the architectural program. Involvement of department staff and/or consultants familiar with current practices and technical issues must be a part of the process. The ability of these individuals to contribute to the project at this stage may be questioned due to their limited experience, difficulties

relating to the technical questions, and resistance to change. There also may be problems in the availability of these individuals, since many departments of corrections are short of staff, particularly facility managers and supervisors. One-half of the project managers surveyed who requested assistance from department of corrections' staff were not able to get help.

Finally, it may be difficult to gain the commitment of staff who are not only busy but may not see the importance of their involvement at this stage. Despite these concerns, experience of correctional staffs in the operation of facilities, if adequately assessed, is required to ensure the construction of a facility that meets the mission for which it was designed. Acceptance of new practices, hardware, and equipment also may be increased by involving staff in their selection.

Several jurisdictions surveyed developed task forces of facility personnel to assist in planning, programming, and design review. The task forces were seen by respondents as very effective means for identifying facility needs through the provision of specific guidelines for information needs and organization of activities. In other states, departments of correction expertise came primarily from one representative (usually an active or former superintendent). Project management units have been very effective in providing control over individual preferences and biases and in achieving balance between input from facility staff and department of corrections policies. When information is channelled through these units, states are able to benefit from previous experience and maintain consistency.

Architect/Engineer Selection

Selection of the project architect is an aspect of the planning, design, and construction process heavily influenced by political interests, although the effects on project outcome have been difficult to identify. Very few departments of corrections had total authority to select the architect, although their choices carried varying degrees of weight in the final decision. In most instances department of corrections staff members felt that they had little say in A/E selection. Most states now have systems where boards or commissions select the project architect through a system of progressive screening, ranking, and elimination of applicants based first on qualifications, submitted proposals, and detail presentations, followed by fee negotiations. Two-thirds of the departments surveyed had department of corrections representation on the selection board. This was not true at the time the facilities discussed in the survey were built and is an important trend in correctional facility construction. Still, however, the composition of the boards and, even

more, the criteria used for evaluation of applicants vary too widely.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has published considerable material on the selection process for architects.¹² This material emphasizes the importance of open deliberations, public participation, and increased competition. The Federal Government has led the way with the Brooks Act, Public Law 92-582, which suggests an agency-based selection system which has been enacted and expanded upon by 16 states. This system contains three basic elements: (1) public announcement of intent to award a commission, (2) review of qualifications and ranking a number of eligible firms on the basis of demonstrated competence and ability, and (3) negotiation of a fair and reasonable fee with the most qualified firm.

While no single system may be best for all jurisdictions, the AIA indicates that "experience has shown that the agency-based selection system or an architect selection board system are the most effective procedures for obtaining highly qualified firms to design public buildings."¹³ Four states in the United States have adopted the architect selection board system which incorporates the three elements of the Federal law. The selection committee is often comprised of public members, registered architects, and public officials in addition to the user agency representatives. The use of either the agency-based selection system or the architect selection board system is recommended for the selection of the architect in correctional facility planning, design, and construction.

The type of contract and payment made for professional services was governed by state law in two-thirds of the surveys and state agency representatives often handled contract activities. Most frequently, the architect/engineer was retained at the beginning of the planning stage for conventional design-bid-construct services and reimbursed on a fixed fee or lump sum type payment. At one facility, where a prototype design was used, the architect was retained to site adapt only. While there was some awareness of problems in the original design, changes were not made due to the limitations of the contract. While the initial savings for site adapt work were considerable, the failure to correct design details required

facility modification in two facilities and at considerable additional cost.

A related issue is the often underutilized capability of the architectural firm to make suggestions in the course of planning, design, and construction. It is the responsibility of both department staff and the architect/engineer to identify both potential problems and problems which are evident in existing facilities and to bring them to the attention of officials at levels high enough to ensure that action is taken.

Too often it was found that architects were willing to accept the requirements of the department without pointing out possible problems. This is of particular importance where court decisions mandate minimum conditions, and national standards have been developed for the field.¹⁴ When court cases and/or standards require consideration in facility design the architect should not proceed with the designated work until an authorized department representative has approved use of the standards or provided a suitable and written waiver of compliance in the area of concern.¹⁵ This concern by the A/E should extend to design flaws which may be evident in departmental staff proposals and in particular when an existing facility design or prototype is site-adapted to a new location. Where necessary a legal opinion should be requested.

The primary issue at this stage involved the need for department of corrections personnel to know and understand all of the details of the contract, its conditions, and agreements. While involvement of the state administrative agency is often maximal during this phase of the project, it is equally important that department of corrections project staff have a clear knowledge of tasks and responsibilities contained in the contract.

Methods for increasing department of corrections influence in the selection of professional services include:

- Establishment of departmental criteria and procedures for review of applications and selection of the architect, preferably based on the Brooks Act requirements and/or the selection board system;
- Representation of the department of corrections on the selection board;
- Selection criteria based on qualifications that may include investigation of information submitted by firms to include calls to former clients and visits to facilities and to the firm's offices;
- Formal presentations in the final stages of competition by the proposed project team leader or project architect;
- Greater concern for the role of the architect in identifying critical issues in legal, professional, and technical areas;

¹² See, American Institute of Architects, *Selecting Architects for Public Projects, A Guide for Local, State and Federal Officials* (Washington, D.C.: AIA, January 1982); American Institute of Architects, *Compendium: Architect Selection Laws* (Washington, D.C.: AIA, April 1982).

¹³ Ibid., American Institute of Architects, *Compendium* . . . p.i.

¹⁴ See the American Correctional Association series of manuals of standards done in cooperation with the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections and used in a national program of correctional accreditation.

¹⁵ These points are adapted from "Policy Statement on Compliance with Accreditation Standards," Walker McGough Pultz Lyerla, P. S. (Spokane, Washington: WMFL, January 1981).

- Increasing the awareness of departmental staff regarding legal, professional, and technical issues;
- Budgeting adequate funds for the selection process.

Summary

Findings of this study suggest that many of the difficulties encountered during the planning process for new institutions and the problems in facility operations found in the decisionmaking and planning stages relate to inadequate involvement in the process by departments of correction. Many of the restrictions or impediments to successful department of corrections involvement can be linked to the administrative structure used, the mechanisms for controlling the expenditure of state funds, the political environment in which such activities occur, and the pressures common to the criminal justice system. Yet, findings often revealed a great lack of ability or effort, including the necessary commitment of time and expertise by department officials and staff, to actively participate in the process of building facilities for their own use. The tendency clearly has been for the correc-

tions profession to have others—state agency representatives, architects, consultants—make decisions for it.

The attitude assumed by corrections personnel may have resulted from the frustrations of attempting to deal with a process characterized by bureaucratic complexities and political influences. Initially there may have been a lack of understanding of the resources required by the task. In the past 5 or 10 years departments of corrections have become increasingly aware of and responsive to the need for their effective participation in the planning, design, and construction process. The most useful approach has been the creation of "project management units" within departments of correction. These units provide a permanent staff, knowledgeable about channels of communication and able to keep records on all aspects of construction in the department. There remains, however, a need for increased understanding of the systems in which these facilities must be created and, along with this knowledge, an active pursuit of the right to influence decisions affecting future correctional activities.