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MEMORANDUM REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

STATE PRISON INMATE MOVEMENT

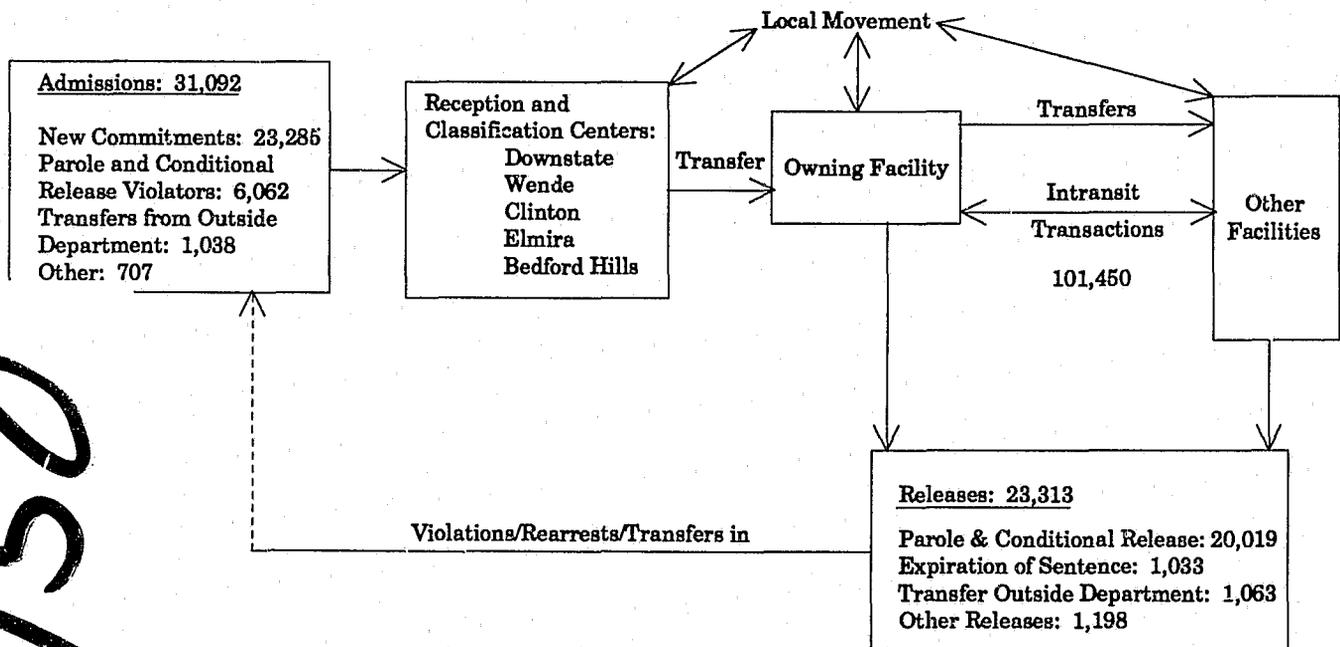
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The Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) in fulfilling its mandate of "secure confinement of offenders and the preparation of these individuals for successful reintegration into the community upon release" must on occasion move inmates between correctional facilities and between facilities and other destinations. In 1989-90 over 101,450 inmates were moved among 52 facilities; DOCS also accepted 31,092 offenders and released 23,313. Data on numbers of local moves, that is, moves to and from other destinations, are not available. The chart below provides a schematic of the inmate movement system for fiscal year 1989-90. Undertaking this amount of

inmate movement is both complex and expensive. DOCS is constrained in making efficient moves both by its own policies, procedures and limited resources and by legal mandates from outside the agency.

LCER assessed DOCS transportation system to ascertain the criteria used to determine which inmates will be moved, when, to where, and at what cost. We looked at both numbers and types of moves. Within the confines of available DOCS data, we determined that inefficiencies exist in the system and that there is potential for achieving greater economies in inmate movement.

INTERFACILITY INMATE MOVEMENT



130750

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Although DOCS population has increased markedly in the last 10 years and the Department has added several new facilities which the inmate transportation system must service, this system has undergone no substantive reorganization or updating since 1980 when Downstate became DOCS primary transportation unit. The rationale behind DOCS transportation system is

based on a limited costing study completed in 1973. DOCS has done very little research targeted to improve system efficiency and performance, although there is a need for updating this overburdened and outdated system. Our findings and recommendations focus on how DOCS might improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its inmate transportation system.

==== FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMENT ====

Chapter 58 of the Laws of 1980 requires heads of audited agencies to report within 180 days of receipt of the final program audit to the Chairman of the Legislative Commission on Expenditure Review and the Chairmen and the Ranking Minority Members of the Senate Finance Committee and the Assembly Ways and Means Committee on what steps have been taken in response to findings and conclusions and where no steps were taken, the reasons therefor.

1. A conservative estimate of the cost of interfacility movement in fiscal year 1989-90 is \$3.1 million, or approximately \$31 per interfacility move/intransit transaction. This figure is not comprehensive as DOCS financial data do not consolidate all movement costs. For instance, this figure excludes any interfacility transports not handled through a transportation unit, some correctional officer costs associated with interfacility movement and the cost of purchasing new vehicles. In addition, interfacility movement is only a portion of all inmate movement, which also includes local movement, admissions, and releases. The cost of admissions in 1988-89 exceeded \$565,000. LCER estimates the cost of all inmate movement in 1989-90 at over \$8.5 million. **For better cost control, accountability and efficiency, DOCS should modify its procedures for collecting and reporting cost data so that a comprehensive accounting of the cost of all inmate transportation is available for analysis. (See pp. 10-12.)**
2. DOCS information regarding inmate movement is also inadequate: the Department's information system does not differentiate between types of moves; information provided to show inmate movement patterns did not provide a specific rationale for transfer; there is no central record of the number or associated costs of local moves made; analysis of the Monthly Transportation Summary Report is limited. This lack of complete information inhibits the Department's ability to plan and carry out moves as efficiently as possible. **DOCS should develop a comprehensive inmate movement database to further analyze and improve its transportation system. (See pp. 4, 8.)**
3. Inmates move throughout the correctional system for a number of reasons. Much interfacility movement is driven by the need for emptying beds in reception/classification and maximum security facilities. Transfers also result from DOCS attempts to meet its placement objectives of addressing inmates' security, medical and psychological needs; keeping enemies separate; moving inmates closer to home; and meeting inmates' program needs. Presently an inmate in the system for 17 to 28 months moves an average of 2.2 times. Efficient inmate movement is constrained by the time and distance between facilities, lack of bedspace available for transportation "layovers," limited fiscal resources, the emergency nature of some moves and by court orders mandating rapid acceptance of offenders into the system. Many of these factors are beyond DOCS control. **Any analysis of the inmate transportation system must consider these constraints. Within this framework, DOCS should attempt to eliminate all moves that do not result in cost-savings or achievement of DOCS mission. (See pp. 4-6, 13-14.)**
4. Although DOCS is aware of several areas where potential cost savings exist (for instance, modeling shortest routes, using hub facilities more extensively, using air travel, increasing centralization and long-term planning for inmate movement), the Department has not fully examined the costs and associated benefits of implementing such changes in the transportation function. Options that provide cost savings could be projected from an operations research perspective using linear programming models. **DOCS should**

comprehensively examine its transportation system and recommend improvements. (See pp. 12, 13)

5. Because the transportation function is outside DOCS' primary area of expertise, it might be better handled with more extensive use of contracting. DOCS has never compared the relative costs and benefits of owning vehicles versus long-term leasing versus chartering. **Although we realize the value of having several options available for moving inmates, DOCS should perform a comprehensive examination of these options to identify the least costly way to move inmates in differing situations and pursue that option whenever feasible. (See p. 13.)**

INTRODUCTION

DOCS method of moving inmates has evolved over time in response to the needs of the system. There is no formal discussion of legislative intent governing inmate transportation; nor are there standards other than DOCS own policies and procedures.

DOCS now has a somewhat centralized transportation system which was implemented in 1974 based on a study completed by the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. This study was limited in that it estimated transportation costs at \$780,000 and recommended increased use of buses to control correctional officer costs associated with movement but did not detail how a centralized system should be operated. Prior to this study, movement had not been at all centralized, each facility had been responsible for arranging its own transfers and for transporting its own inmates.

As Chart 1 indicates, over three times as many facility transfers occurred in 1990 than in 1980, additionally, several new facilities have opened; however, the current transportation system has not been substantively altered in that time. At present, DOCS Bureau of Classification and Movement approves and schedules transfers while the transportation unit at Downstate Correctional Facility, located near Newburgh, develops itineraries and dispatches vehicles.

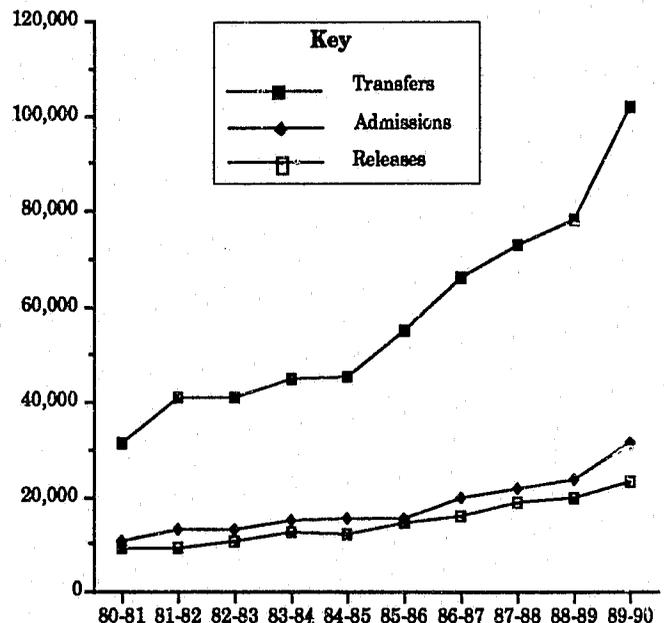
Inmate movement consists of both interfacility and local moves as well as admissions (of both new commitments and returnees) and releases or discharges. Chart 2 shows that over the past 10 years the rate of transfers has increased much more dramatically than admissions or releases. This audit concentrates on

interfacility movement as the data on other aspects of movement are quite limited. Interfacility movement involves permanent and temporary (also called intransit transactions²) facility-to-facility transfers.

In fiscal year 1989-90 over 101,450 interfacility moves were made. DOCS computer program for tallying the amount of transfers occurring within the system groups facility-to-facility transfers with temporary intransit transactions. Although it would be logical to do so, the system can not differentiate between permanent facility-to-facility moves and temporary intransit transactions. DOCS officials indicate that this counting problem likely results in intransit transactions being undercounted.

CHART 1

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES INTERFACILITY INMATE MOVEMENT ADMISSIONS, RELEASES, TRANSFERS* FISCAL YEARS 1980-81 TO 1989-90



*Includes Intransit Transactions.

Source: LCER analysis of DOCS data.

Local movement consists of moves from a facility to a destination outside the facility such as a medical appointment, court appearance, funeral visit or deathbed visit. These moves are by definition temporary and exclude an overnight stay outside the owning facility. Local moves are not centrally monitored or counted; rather, they are handled and financed by the owning facility. As a result, there is no central record of the amount or cost of local movement. Still, local movement uses significant personnel and transportation resources. Discussion of inmate movement is incomplete without consideration of local movement.

Some inmates are allowed to travel outside their owning facility for work release, community service, or school for up to 14 hours in a day. Others are allowed furloughs of up to seven days; although DOCS may provide at least a portion of the transportation for these moves, this would be handled like local movement, that is, their costs would be absorbed by the owning facility.

AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This program audit describes how DOCS currently manages inmate movement and assesses DOCS efficiency in carrying out this task. LCER, through interviews with DOCS officials, fieldwork, data verification and analysis, and review of documentation, addresses the issues of cost of inmate movement, adequacy of information for this function, and criteria for transfer decisions. The audit suggests means for DOCS to improve its current transportation system with further study. The first section discusses interfacility and local movement in terms of logistics and rationale for making these moves. The next section overviews the costs associated with interfacility movement and admissions and attempts to estimate the cost of all inmate movement. A final section discusses what DOCS has done to evaluate and improve its system and suggests directions for further analysis by DOCS in this area.

INMATE MOVEMENT: OBJECTIVES AND LOGISTICS

The Department of Correctional Services' objectives for classification and movement of inmates are:

1. Placement of inmates where their medical needs can be met;
2. Keeping inmate enemies separate;

3. Placing inmates at the lowest level of security necessary to protect public, staff and inmates;
4. Keeping all spaces filled;
5. Placing inmates closer to home as they reach the ends of their terms;
6. Maintaining inmates in programs that are effective for them;
7. Collecting reliable, valid and complete information on inmates.

Please refer to LCER's audit entitled *Inmate Classification and Placement* for additional detail on how inmates are initially classified and placed.

According to DOCS officials, inmates' security requirements (i.e., maximum, medium or minimum) are routinely reassessed every six months, in the event of an unusual incident, or when there is a need for beds. Permanent facility-to-facility transfers require a recent security assessment, which rates inmates on their public and institutional risk level. Recent disciplinary adjustment and percent of time served are considered in reclassification recommendations.

LCER tested DOCS computerized data by manually searching 50 inmate files at the Washington Correctional Facility and comparing them with computer printouts to verify that reassessments were done according to this policy. We found that although reassessment data (i.e., dates of reclassification) were entered on the computer, these dates did not show that assessments had been done every six months for over 50 percent of the cases examined. Rather, either inmates were overdue for a reassessment or more than six months had lapsed between assessments. However, because of the small size of this sample one can not generalize this finding to DOCS entire population.

Movement Rationale

As indicated by DOCS placement objectives, inmates are moved for a number of reasons. DOCS officials indicate that many moves are made to open up beds at reception/classification or at maximum security facilities. Thus eligible inmates may be transferred to less secure facilities, located "closer to home" (usually New York City) if possible, to open up more secure beds. This policy of down-classifying based on an inmate's behavior and time served, called matriculation, is used to manage both inmate behavior and bedspace.

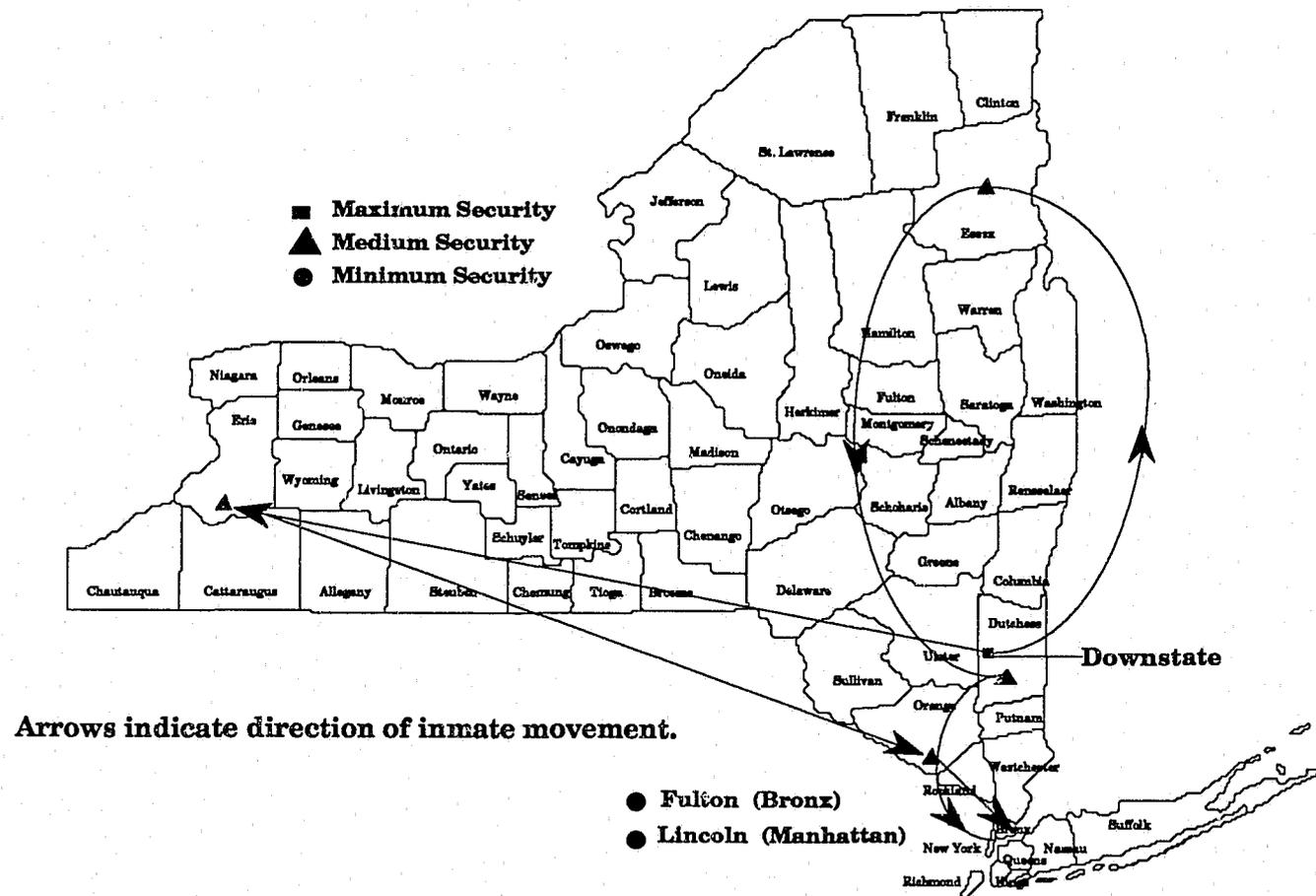
It also has rehabilitation potential in that increasing frequency of contact between an inmate and his family ideally serves to strengthen family ties, which can help ease an inmate's transition back into society and decrease his likelihood of rearrest. Moving an inmate to a less secure bed would result in more efficient use of bedspace and cost-savings, moves purely for geographic convenience would not.

LCER randomly sampled 267 inmates admitted to DOCS in 1988 to examine movement patterns. Our sample is significant at the 90 percent confidence level with a precision of +/- 5.2; this means that findings based on this sample can be generalized to all inmates committed to DOCS in 1988.

The data show that DOCS does, in fact, tend to move inmates both closer to New York City and to less secure facilities during their tenure in the system. The vast majority of inmates moving from their original owning facility to subsequent facilities moved both towards New York City and to less secure facilities. A typical example of movement for an inmate from the New York metropolitan area would be from reception at Downstate to Adirondack, a medium security facility located in Essex County; to Fishkill, a medium in the mid-Hudson area; to Lincoln, a work release facility in New York City. Map 1 traces this pattern and a similar pattern of matriculation transfers using western New York facilities.

MAP 1

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
TYPICAL MATRICULATION TRANSFER PATTERNS**



Source: DOCS.

Moves may be made to separate enemies at a facility. In the event of a crisis or disturbance moves may be made to ensure control. Displaying inappropriate behaviors can cause an inmate to be moved to a more secure setting based on the outcome of a disciplinary hearing. DOCS also may move inmates in response to an inmate's request; for example, DOCS attempts to place eligible inmates in work release facilities upon request. As is apparent, some transfers are mandatory, others are voluntary.

Inmate Movement Patterns

Our sample data show that inmates often reside in several facilities during their tenure in the correctional system. These 267 inmates moved a total of 587 times, or an average of 2.2 moves each during the 17 to 28 months they had been in the system. Only two (one percent) inmates remained at the facility where they had been received and classified (e.g., Downstate, Wende, Elmira, Bedford Hills), while an additional 28 percent moved only one time, from reception/classification to another facility. The great majority, 72 percent, moved at least once subsequent to this initial placement. Fifteen percent moved four or five times; no inmate moved more than five times in this period however.

The average length of stay at a facility other than the reception/classification facility from which an inmate was later transferred varied from 173 days (about six months) to 242 days (about eight months). For inmates whose stay in their first owning facility was shorter than average, the most frequent transferring facilities tended to be transit units, camps or facilities for young offenders (e.g., Coxsackie).

For the most part, number of moves by security classification is proportional to that classification's representation in the sample. Thus, no group of offenders move more or less frequently than expected based on security level (i.e., maximum, medium, minimum). We noted, however, that for later moves (i.e., from the second, third or fourth owning facility) medium security inmates tended to move somewhat more frequently than inmates at other security levels.

DOCS officials indicated that Emergency Operation Center (EOC) inmate profiles, which include a list of transfer orders and reasons for transfer, were a good source of inmate movement history. We examined a number of these profiles for inmates committed to DOCS in 1988; however, we were not able to compare specific reasons for transfer with DOCS objectives as the printouts used "program purposes" to explain nearly all inmate transfers.

Inmate Transfer Procedures

The Program Security Assessment System (PSAS) is used for transfer decisions. Specific transfer recommendations originate at the owning facility, and are reviewed, approved and scheduled by the Bureau of Classification and Movement. The impetus for a transfer, however, might be a mandate from Central Office to empty maximum security beds by finding cases eligible for down-classifying. Inmate behavior and time criteria determine eligibility for transfer. Chart 2 shows this process; for a more detailed narrative description please refer to Appendix A.

Inmate moves are primarily intended to meet the system's, not the inmates' needs. DOCS officials claim to have neither the resources nor space available to transfer inmates solely for programmatic reasons. DOCS has presented documentation showing that all facilities offer fairly uniform educational, vocational, addiction and counseling programs. Thus, DOCS will not transfer inmates among facilities merely to further their progress in therapeutic programming or to allow them to enroll in a specific program of their choice. Moves are intended to be "program neutral." However, DOCS attempts not to interrupt an inmate's progress in a college program by transferring him during a semester.

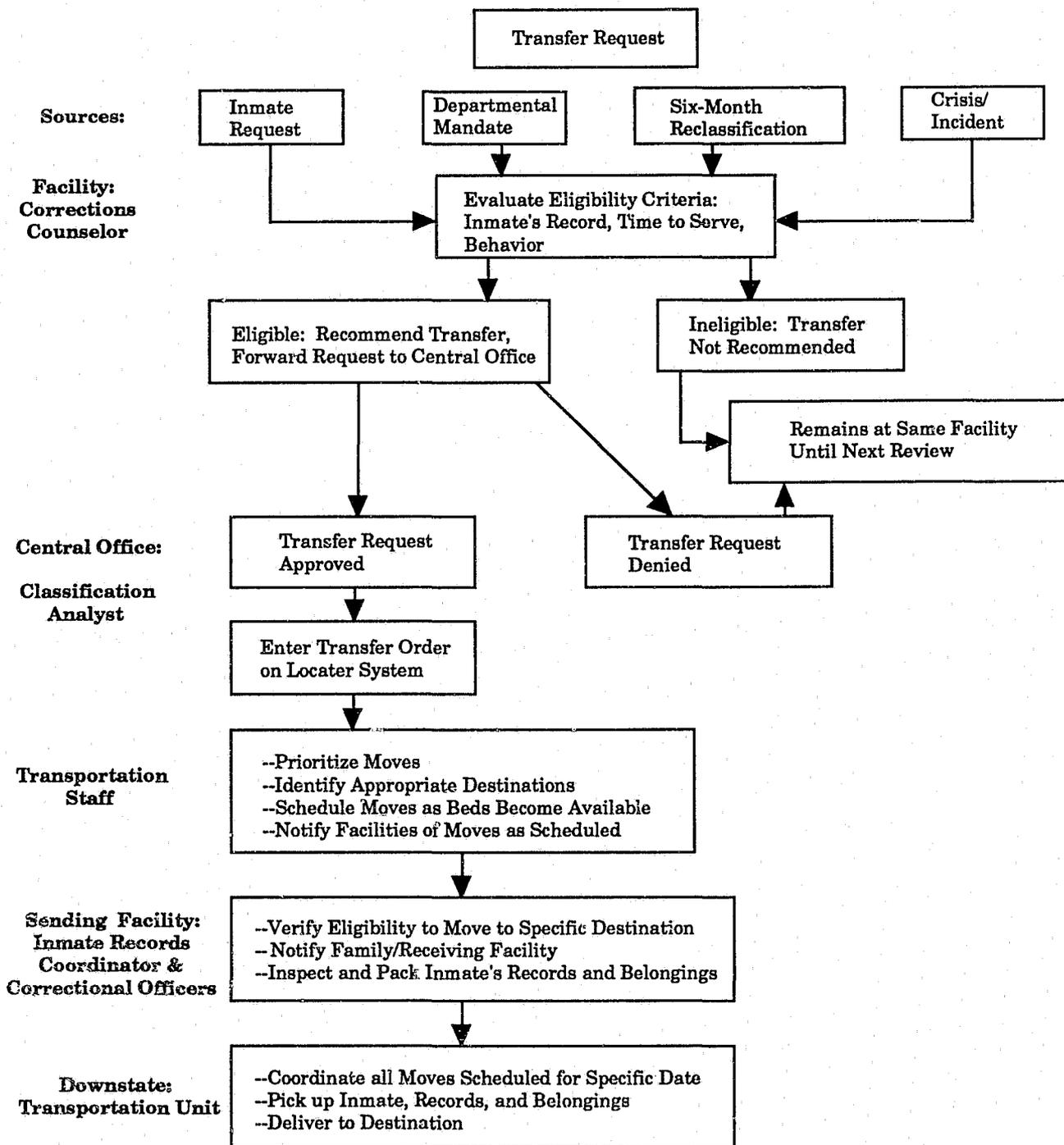
Transportation Procedures

DOCS has issued several directives regarding transportation.³ To summarize, DOCS attempts to ensure accountability and security for inmates, DOCS staff and the public, and to provide the receiving facility with as complete information as possible about the inmate at the time of the move. An inmate is always accompanied by at least two correctional officers during a transport. Generally, inmates are restrained and both inmates and vehicles are searched for contraband at intervals throughout the transport. All DOCS-owned vehicles are fitted with "hardware" to separate inmates from DOCS personnel and prevent escape. If a charter bus is used an extra correctional officer is assigned for added security.

Correctional officers are responsible for inspecting, packing and tagging the maximum of four bags of personal belongings, and musical instrument, an inmate is allowed on a transport. Time spent on this activity is an example of the hidden costs of movement. The Office of Inmate Records Coordinator at the sending facility is responsible for ensuring the integrity and security of inmates records.

CHART 2

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
INMATE TRANSFER PROCESS**



Source: LCER analysis.

COORDINATION OF MOVEMENT

Moving inmates among facilities requires the coordinated efforts of personnel at the Bureau of Classification and Movement, Downstate Correctional Facility and other transportation units, and the Division of Support Operations. Classification and Movement is responsible for authorizing and coordinating all inmate transfers. Downstate is the primary transportation unit; as such, it attends to the "nuts and bolts" of funneling inmates throughout the correctional system. The Division of Support Operations secures vehicles used for moving inmates.

Bureau of Classification and Movement

The transportation staff at Classification and Movement, that is, the transportation coordinator and assistant transportation coordinator, schedule and coordinate the interfacility transport of all inmates within the correctional system. They attempt to fill every bed, every day. To this end, Bureau transportation personnel receive a "count sheet" from each facility weekly via electronic mail, indicating the inmates awaiting transfer (i.e., outstanding transfer orders), and appropriate destinations. They enter these figures on a paper matrix which lists "from" and "to" facilities on the axes and number of inmates on the coordinates. The computer generates numbers of current openings and transportation staff determine which moves to hold because of a lack of beds. Critical moves (i.e., for special medical or psychological treatment, for security or other emergency purposes) are flagged for priority treatment; matriculation moves are handled chronologically only after priority moves and moves to initial placement facilities from reception/classification centers.

Once all moves are identified, transportation staff fill all available low security beds first, and work backwards to open up maximum security beds to fill from reception facilities using a manually calculated worksheet. When less secure beds are available and transferring an inmate into one would contribute to opening up needed beds, these are filled from an approval list or per a transfer order. Moves are scheduled daily a few days prior to the move taking place.

Though this manual system seems to be able to keep up with inmate movement, it does not provide consistently updated information on transfers that need to be made; nor does it allow for any long-term planning for inmate movement (i.e., more than a few days into

the future). Planning moves primarily to open up spaces at Downstate is not efficient system-wide as it requires a "chain reaction" of moves throughout the system to empty needed beds.

Downstate Correctional Facility's Transportation Unit

Since 1980 Downstate has been the State's primary center for inmate reception/classification as well as its busiest transportation unit. All adult, male inmates travelling from or to the eastern part of the State generally pass through Downstate. Downstate essentially functions like an airline hub, an intermediary point for the discharge and pickup of travellers.

Downstate's transportation unit operates five days a week. It is responsible for developing a daily itinerary, scheduling routes, filling and running buses. Each day Classification and Movement advises Downstate's transportation unit as to who will be moved out the following day and to what destination. The unit's Lieutenant actually schedules anticipated departure and arrival times, matches appropriately-sized vehicles with number of inmates travelling to each destination, assigns transportation security staff, and plans routes. Most trips include stops at several facilities. This itinerary is sent to Classification and Movement and to the receiving facilities. New York State Police are apprised of bus routes and approximate travel times. The Lieutenant also orders box lunches for all inmates expected to be on the road near meal times. Typically, between 100 and 150 inmates leave Downstate per day on the approximately 25 trips run per week; the number of trips varies day to day. Many of the vehicles are not filled because of capacity constraints. Specifically, moving between 14 and 36 inmates will require a full-sized bus.

Presently there is one Lieutenant, six Sergeants and 23 Correctional Officers in Downstate's transportation unit. In addition, there are ten Bus Drivers, one Keyboard Specialist and one Calculations Clerk.

Downstate's transportation unit now consists of three ten passenger vans, four 13 passenger minibuses, and seven 36 passenger buses, three of which are leased on a three year contract (which costs \$3,300 per month, plus maintenance). This fleet has been upgraded over the last five years with four new coaches, which replaced converted school buses. At present, purchasing new coaches is unlikely as they carry a prohibitive price of

between \$180,000 and \$200,000 each; further, it takes nearly two years to receive the vehicle after an order is placed.

Downstate charters additional buses as needed in times of heavy inmate movement or when their own vehicles are out of service. Charter detail follows:

Fiscal Year	Number of Charters	Total Cost	Cost per Charter
1989-90	151	\$217,629	\$1,451
1988-89	191	316,297	1,656
1987-88	78	99,245	1,272

In these three years, Downstate chartered buses from 13 different outside vendors, and also hired DOCS vehicles assigned to other facilities on occasion. Some of the variance in these annual figures may reflect the as needed nature of chartering. These figures do not include the cost of correctional officers assigned to the charter.

Other Transportation Units

Other facilities in the system designated as transportation units are Albion, Auburn and Queensboro. Albion has a 15 passenger minibus with which it moves women from Albion and Groveland, in the western part of the State, to New York City facilities (Bayview and Parkside) and Bedford Hills and vice versa. One round trip is necessary each week; however, approximately every third week an additional round trip is made. Presently, movement of women is restricted by vehicle capacity, not bedspace.

Queensboro, located in New York City, moves inmates from facilities to work release in the City. Auburn is used as a hub facility to the extent possible, based on available bedspace. As such, it is used as a drop off point and short trips in the central/western part of the State are run out of it. Other facilities make interfacility moves as required (e.g., for an emergency situation, to speed transfer, etc.).

In fiscal year 1987-88, the four transportation units ran 2,890 trips, carrying 57,943 inmates and 135,605 bags of belongings a total of 971,252 miles. The listing at bottom of page shows the distribution of this movement by transportation unit.

Division of Support Operations: Vehicle Acquisition

The Division of Support Operations is responsible for coordinating all capital purchases and thus plays a role in securing vehicles. DOCS is required by contract to lease passenger vehicles and their replacements from the Office of General Services (OGS), at a cost of approximately \$400 per vehicle per month. As most purchases of larger vehicles are tied to equipping a new facility, bus purchases have been included in the capital budget which enables DOCS to acquire them without OGS involvement. Although Support Operations may recommend specific vehicle purchases, the decision to purchase or lease a vehicle and its funding source are ultimately determined by the Division of the Budget. Support Operations, in coordination with Classification and Movement, assigns and reassigns vehicles to facilities as needed and monitors vehicle registration and location on a computer generated log.

Distribution of Inmate Movement

Transportation Unit	Trips		Inmates		Miles	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Downstate	1,999	69%	47,242	82%	651,871	67%
Queensboro	513	18	6,601	11	141,025	15
Auburn	302	10	3,166	5	75,626	8
Albion	76	3	934	2	102,730	11

Support Operations is also responsible for developing a long-term vehicle plan. Presently, this plan is quite general and calls for:

- Keeping pace with the increasing need for vehicles brought on by the increasing number of inmates and facilities;
- Planning for the transportation needs of new facilities as they are opened;
- Replacing aging vehicles based on miles per vehicle.

Current projections indicate that additional smaller vehicles should be purchased.

COSTS OF INMATE MOVEMENT

Interfacility Movement

Transportation costs as reported on DOCS Budget and Finance's expenditure reports, which capture only the cost of interfacility movement, have risen 56 percent over the past seven fiscal years as follows:

Fiscal Year	Amount	Percent Increase Over Base Year
1983-84	\$2,034,859	--
1984-85	2,297,525	13%
1985-86	2,369,004	16
1986-87	2,604,814	28
1987-88	2,814,144	38
1988-89	3,081,551	51
1989-90	3,183,353 ^a	56

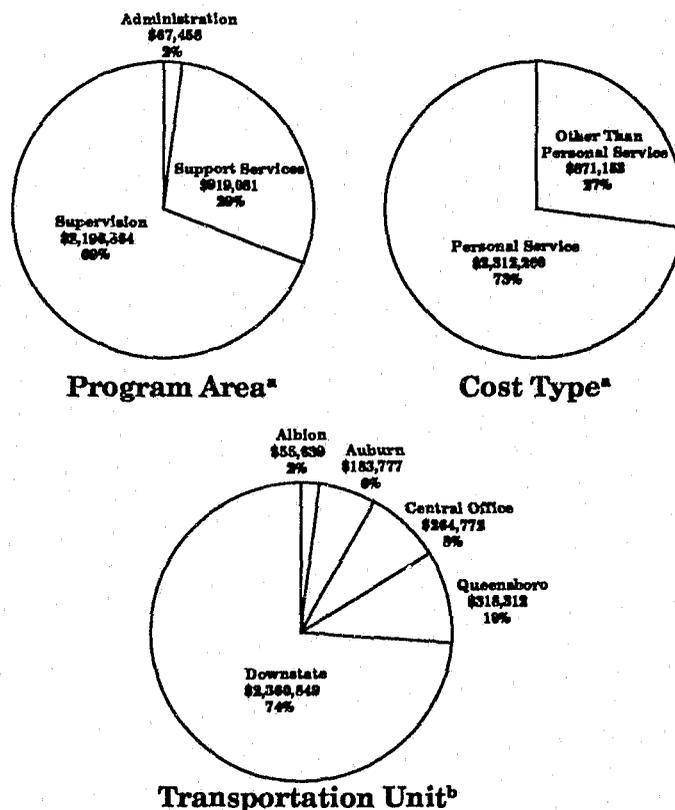
This increase can be attributed to the greater numbers of inmates and facilities that are serviced by the transportation units. DOCS classification and matriculation policies also contribute to inmate movement.

Costs relevant to interfacility inmate movement are found in the administration, supervision and support services programs of DOCS budget. Administrative costs include the salaries of Classification and Movement personnel assigned to transportation; support services costs include those associated with vehicles such as purchasing, chartering, leasing, gas, oil, maintenance and travel expenses, as well as bus drivers salaries; while supervision costs include the salaries of correctional officers assigned to transports.

Chart 3 distributes expenditures among these program areas, as well as other cost components. Chart 4 shows that administrative expenditures have remained fairly constant over the past seven years, thus, increases in the supervision and support services programs account for nearly all the increase in overall transportation expenses. Most transportation costs are personnel related: 90 percent of supervision costs and 73 percent of all costs are in the category of personal services.

CHART 3

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
COST COMPONENTS OF INTERFACILITY
INMATE MOVEMENT
FISCAL YEAR 1989-90**



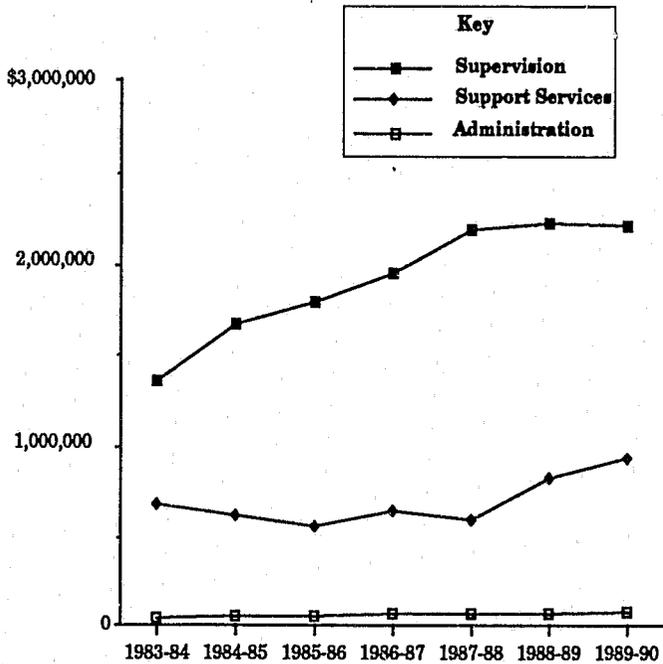
^a1989-90 DOCS Inmate Transportation Expense totalled \$3,183,353.

^bThese expenses plus a Lincoln Correctional Facility charge of \$4 to transportation in FY 1989-90 equals 1989-90 DOCS Inmate Transportation expense of \$3,183,353.

Source: LCER analysis of DOCS data.

CHART 4

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
INTERFACILITY TRANSPORTATION COSTS
FISCAL YEARS 1983-84 TO 1989-90**



Source: LCER analysis of DOCS data.

The \$3.18 million interfacility movement amount for fiscal year 1989-90 can not be considered comprehensive; it excludes the cost of interfacility moves not run through transportation units, any personnel involved in preparing inmates for and carrying out transports other than those specifically assigned to transportation units, and the cost of new vehicles purchased with capital funds.

With the proceeding caveats in mind, we developed a partial baseline figure for interfacility transportation by dividing the total cost of interfacility movement by the number of transfers and intransit transactions for the same time period. This [\$3,183,353/101,450] results in a baseline of \$31.38 per move, which appears to be a reasonable price, assuming all moves made are necessary in terms of cost-savings elsewhere or achievement of DOCS mission of secure confinement and rehabilitation of offenders.

Admissions

As previously mentioned, another cost of inmate movement involves moving an inmate from the locality in which he was sentenced to DOCS reception/classification center. While this move is the responsibility of the jurisdiction, its cost is later reimbursed by DOCS. In DOCS budget this cost is referred to as "Transportation of Convicts"; it amounted to \$565,341 in fiscal year 1988-89. As Table 1 shows, this amount has nearly doubled in the past five years. Although charged as OTPS in the support services program, this amount is termed a miscellaneous expense and is not included in transportation expenditures as reported previously. This amount should be added to the \$3.18 million for interfacility transportation costs for a more complete cost accounting of inmate movement.

TABLE 1

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
REIMBURSEMENT TO LOCALITIES FOR
INMATE TRANSPORTATION**

Fiscal Year	Amount Reimbursed	Percent Increase Over Base Year
1984-85	\$287,100	--
1985-86	316,885	10%
1986-87	431,791	50
1987-88	492,472	72
1988-89	565,341	97

Source: LCER analysis of DOCS data.

Local Movement

Local movement is handled by the owning facility and is not centrally reported; therefore, we could not determine a comprehensive figure for either the amount or the cost of this function. Releases from custody or discharges to other agencies (e.g., the Division for Youth or Office of Mental Health) can also be included in this category as their cost would not be reported as a transportation expense. Facilities have limited discretion in controlling local movement as inmates are guaranteed certain protections, such as appearing in legal proceedings and gaining access to adequate medical care. Denying an inmate these trips without sufficient

reason might result in legal action. Some cost saving could result if inmates' appointments were scheduled in a way to maximize the inmate:officer ratio during a trip. However, the unpredictable nature of local movement (e.g., family deaths, medical emergency) precludes this to some extent; further, consolidating moves might affect facilities' vehicle requirements (i.e., for station wagons or vans). In the recent "Summary of Proposed Budget Reductions," reducing/consolidating outside medical trips was recommended as a way to potentially save \$155,000 in 1990-91.

Again, the largest cost component for local movement would be personal service for escorting officer time. At 52 facilities throughout the system, 180 correctional officer posts are assigned to transportation; officers in these positions routinely handle local movement as needed. We can estimate the annual cost of this as 180 times \$24,500, the approximate starting salary of a corrections officer/grade 14. Thus, local movement would cost at least \$4,410,000 per year. However, this figure excludes operating and maintenance cost for vehicles, meals and travel expenses, fringe benefits, overtime charges, and the cost of any correctional officer not regularly assigned to a transportation post who temporarily acts in this capacity. A very conservative estimate of all inmate movement approaches \$8.5 million annually.

INMATE MOVEMENT: INEFFICIENCIES AND ALTERNATIVES

DOCS officials indicate that although they would like to upgrade the inmate movement system, they are constrained in doing so by these factors:

- Insufficient resources: inadequate staffing, expertise, bedspace, and long-term planning;
- The increasing numbers of both inmates and new facilities that must be serviced by the transportation system;
- The timeframes for accepting inmates from local jurisdictions as mandated by the Courts.

Constraints

Classification and Movement cites a need for additional clerical personnel to handle increased data input, as well as an analyst to interpret management

reports. In addition, neither Classification and Movement nor Downstate staff have the technical expertise to evaluate and improve their transportation system using an operations research approach as they indicate is required. As we will explain, use of a linear programming model would give DOCS a framework for understanding and solving the transportation dilemmas facing them in ways that accomplish desired moves at least cost. DOCS officials state that they have requested assistance from DOB in updating the transportation system, but no useful alternatives to the status quo have resulted.

DOCS contracted with State University of New York at Albany students to study the transportation system in 1986. A computer-based planning support system for Downstate was developed that automatically calculated numbers of inmates to move. This study did not offer a complete approach to improving DOCS transportation system, rather, it was intended to be a first step. In any event, DOCS never implemented this system, which was essentially a planning spreadsheet, for lack of technical expertise in-house; further, funding was not provided to hire the system's developer to assist in implementation. DOCS is now pursuing a grant to hire a consultant to update and automate their transportation system to industry standards. DOCS also pointed out that software has been developed elsewhere geared toward this type of problem.

DOCS has done little in the way of long-term planning for transportation. DOCS officials indicate that their initiatives to upgrade the Department's vehicle fleet have not been funded. As mentioned, DOCS had been purchasing vehicles with monies left over from capital construction. Lack of a known funding stream for vehicle replacement has limited DOCS ability to plan ahead.

Moreover, DOCS officials have stated that vehicles historically have not been properly maintained due to lack of funds for maintenance contracts. This has resulted in frequent breakdowns and downtime which necessitated additional chartering costs and correctional officer time. Generally accepted vehicle management standards would require that regular maintenance schedules for DOCS-owned vehicles be established and adhered to. Further, vehicle use should be monitored to limit the numbers of miles traveled per year to control the wear and tear each vehicle sustains. In this past fiscal year, Downstate was finally able to contract maintenance for its fleet at a cost of approximately \$3,890 per month.

Another resource that would assist DOCS in managing the ever increasing influx of inmates it handles is having strategically placed "spare" bedspace. This bedspace would be useful located at Downstate to hold-inmates after classification and prior to transfer for initial placement until there were enough inmates awaiting transfer to fill a bus, thus increasing the inmate:officer ratio. Further, having some beds reserved for transportation "layovers" at designated and geographically disparate facilities would enable better coordination and planning for inmate moves. This would allow DOCS to schedule trips more efficiently by eliminating the need to run trips for few inmates.

As mentioned, DOCS uses Auburn as a hub facility to the extent possible. They have also developed an initiative to purchase an additional jail (the Cayuga facility) located in the city of Auburn to temporarily house inmates awaiting transfer to or from the central/western part of the State. This additional facility would be used as a dropoff point for inmate exchanges to shorten trip distances. However as of early 1991, DOCS and local officials in Auburn have been unable to negotiate a mutually satisfactory price; further, there is local opposition to having another prison facility in Auburn.

Finally, inmate movement faces external constraints such as court orders mandating rapid acceptance of inmates into the system after sentencing. Although unable to control numbers or timing of inmates admitted to its system, DOCS is required to service all offenders sentenced "on demand." It is unlikely that the trend towards incarceration and the resulting increase in DOCS population will reverse. These constraints should be considered in an analysis of DOCS transportation system.

DOCS officials indicate that they have considered several areas for cost cutting: vehicle procurement, staffing patterns, alternative modes of transportation and increasing centralization of transportation. Yet, DOCS was unable to substantiate that any of these options had been comprehensively examined for their cost-effectiveness.

DOCS specifically mentioned the possibility of using air travel (i.e., chartering or purchasing planes) to move inmates. This may be cost-efficient as it would greatly reduce correctional officer travel time. New York City currently flies its inmates from Rikers to NYC-owned, DOCS-run facilities near the Canadian border (Riverview and Cape Vincent) daily. Potential problem areas for DOCS in flying inmates are expected to be

restrictive Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations as well as State requirements. Finding willing carriers and airports might also be problematic considering DOCS population. Still, it would be worthwhile for DOCS to cost-out the potential price and savings resulting from such a change in travel mode.

Finally, DOCS has never assessed the option of contracting transportation out over the entire system due to perceived legal and logistical issues. Nor has DOCS fully examined the relative costs and benefits of owning versus leasing versus chartering vehicles. A complete and systematic study of the costs and benefits of these options would equip DOCS to make an informed choice of the least expensive option, while allowing them to maintain backups as needed. A study such as this would also provide the cost data needed to justify increased budget requests for an upgraded fleet. Considering that transportation is not DOCS primary function, it is possible that this function might be better handled by those who have the resources and expertise.

Potential Efficiencies

The variables affecting the cost of inmate movement include: number of moves, correctional officer coverage (i.e., the inmate to officer ratio), vehicle capacity, ability to plan and schedule moves, distance of moves, and timeliness of moves. These variables can also be considered constraints in a minimum cost flow problem which could be solved using linear programming.

To reduce labor costs for correctional officers one option is to increase the amount of inmates transported per officer, within the constraint of at least two officers for any number of inmates. Although DOCS attempts to maximize the number of inmates per officer during a transport, a high ratio is impossible in many situations. Interfacility movement offers the most opportunities to achieve a high ratio. The inmate:officer ratio for all types of transports could range from 1:2 for a local or emergency move to 36:3 (12:1) for an interfacility transport using a filled full-sized bus. As indicated, having spare bedspace and a more fluid timeframe would allow Downstate to fill more buses to capacity, as would having appropriately-sized vehicles for all types of transports.

A second option is to eliminate discretionary trips. For example, although limiting "closer to home" moves might impact inmate management by reducing incentives for good behavior, matriculation moves not

related to down-classification are a potential area for elimination. In any event, all inmate transfers should be assessed for their potential cost savings impact.

Shortening either the time or the distance of trips would cut down on correctional officer overtime charges. Due to the physical size of the State, many trips last longer than a seven hour work day. Using hub facilities for inmate exchanges, as DOCS has suggested, would reduce correctional officer overtime and relieve them from having to make long, round trip visits to the more remote facilities. The cost would involve making spare bedspace available at certain designated facilities.

Finally, transportation access and associated costs should be considered when determining sites for new facilities. Additional facilities should be located downstate as most inmates originate and are returned there upon release.

We note that in the 1991-92 *Executive Budget* DOCS proposed clustering several facilities within a region into a centralized hub system to streamline operations and better utilize inmates as a workforce. The thrust of this proposal is that DOCS is planning its operations to meet systemic, rather than inmate, needs. If implemented, this concept could potentially affect inmate movement to the extent that inmate transfers would be limited to facilities within the cluster. That is, assigning inmates to a single cluster for the duration of their stay in the system would limit the distance and amount of matriculation moves made. Also using cluster hubs as transportation hubs could potentially result in more efficient transportation system-wide.

Information

DOCS does not routinely collect all pertinent data regarding movement. For better information management and availability of data for analysis, there is need for consistent and complete cost aggregation and reporting for all movement, including local moves. In addition, there should be more extensive analysis of the Monthly Transportation Reports collected by the Division of Support Operations, as well as more specific reporting of reasons for transfers. This would give valuable information on the logic of moves. DOCS ability to identify and control the actual cost of inmate movement is hindered by the lack of these data.

CONCLUSIONS

Currently DOCS has limited control over inmate transportation costs. Escalating costs result from an inefficient, "on demand" system of moving inmates. In addition, the current separation of transportation responsibilities among Classification and Movement, Support Operations and facilities compromises long-term decision making.

The entire system should be systematically reviewed from an operations research perspective. Consideration should be given to the possibility of increasing centralization of the transportation function by using hub facilities more extensively. Having a rational framework to consider transportation problems would lead to better planning and more capacity to project and control costs.

NOTES

1. *Executive Budget 1989-90*, p. 93.
2. A category developed to enable more complete tracking of an inmate's location on DOCS automated systems. It signifies that an inmate has been moved from his owning facility to another facility for a period up to ten days, usually to facilitate appearance in court, at a deportation hearing or for specialized medical treatments. Although these moves are expected to be short-term, some eventually result in a permanent transfer.
3. DOCS directives pertaining to inmate movement are as follows: #4906 Transfer of Inmates, #4918 Inmate Health Care During Transport, #4011 Processing Inmates Records for Transfer, #2014 Inmate Records Disposition, #4019 Inmate Information During Transfer of Custody, #4919 Transportation to NYC for Court Appearances, #4302 Special Needs Inmates, #2830 Reporting Inmates Movement via Locator System, #4917 Transferring Inmate Property, and #4901 Transporting Prisoners.
4. This figure was derived from expenditure reports run April 10, 1990. It may not reflect all expenses charged to the fiscal year 1989-90 appropriation because of lapsed spending after the end of the fiscal year.

APPENDIX A

INMATE TRANSFERS

A transfer request is initiated at the facility level by a corrections counselor based on review of an inmate's record. The counselor interviews the inmate, completes a Program and Security Assessment Summary (PSAS) and reclassification form which is then reviewed by the senior corrections counselor. A recommendation for transfer is forwarded to the Bureau of Classification and Movement.

A classification analyst at Central Office reviews the case, checks facts and approves or denies the transfer. These are again reviewed by the assistant director of classification and movement. Inmates may be ineligible for transfer due to time criteria or if they have had disciplinary problems. Transfer requests only for conjugal visits or specific programs are not routinely approved.

Once a request for transfer has been approved, a transfer order (TO) is entered on the Locator System. The Locator, a subsystem of the population management system, is an "electronic logbook" that ties the inmate's Departmental Identification Number (DIN) with his New York State Identification Number (NYSID). Its primary objective is to "identify the location and status of any inmate within the State Correctional System at any point in time from admission to discharge or release." Classification and Movement is responsible for administering the Locator System.

A hold will be placed on a TO if a move can not be made immediately. Moves out of reception facilities and critical moves, such as those resulting from a disturbance or to provide mental health treatment, are prioritized; matriculation moves are handled chronologically. Both specific and flexible transfer orders are used. Specific TOs match an inmate with an identified facility and are used when appropriate destinations for an inmate are limited. An approval list or flexible TO indicates several facilities or a type of facility for which an inmate transfer would be appropriate.

At Downstate and other facilities the inmate records coordinators have much responsibility for seeing that transfers proceed smoothly. Specifically, they receive the TO from Classification and Movement, check the inmate's record to verify eligibility for transfer, notify facility departments of upcoming transfer, collect and package inmate's records and property, enter the transaction on computer, notify inmate's nearest relative and receiving facility, and prepare baggage and transfer lists. This process acts as a check on the transfer process. Other checks include refusal of admission by officials at the receiving facility (if the placement is not appropriate), inmates themselves, and monthly computer-generated error reports.



STATE OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

THE STATE OFFICE BUILDING CAMPUS

ALBANY, N.Y. 12226

THOMAS A. COUGHLIN III
COMMISSIONER

March 19, 1991

Mr. James J. Haag
Acting Director
State of New York
Legislative Commission
on Expenditure Review
111 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210-2277

Re: Audits of State Prison
Inmate Movement and Inmate
Classification and Placement

Dear Mr. Haag:

In response to your February 19, 1991 correspondence and in accordance with item B-410 of the Budget Policy and Reporting Manual, enclosed is the Department's reply to the Commission's tentative audits of "State Prison Inmate Movement" and "Inmate Classification and Placement."

For your information, the Division of the Budget has cleared this reply for transmission to the Commission.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the tentative audit reports.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Coughlin III,
Commissioner

Enclosure



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
THE STATE OFFICE BUILDING CAMPUS

ALBANY, N.Y. 12226

THOMAS A. COUGHLIN III
COMMISSIONER

CHESTER H. CLARK
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

March 8, 1991

Mr. James Haag
Acting Director
State of New York
Legislative Commission
on Expenditure Review
111 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210-2277

Dear Mr. Haag:

Attached are comments pursuant to the Commission's tentative audit reports addressing "State Prison Inmate Movement" and "Inmate Classification and Placement."

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the audit findings and recommendations.

Sincerely,

Chester H. Clark
Assistant Commissioner

Attachment

Department of Correctional Services

RESPONSE TO THE L.C.E.R. DRAFT AUDIT OF STATE PRISON MOVEMENT

The Audit assessment of the Department of Correctional Services Transportation System pointed out apparent weaknesses and the recommendations for improvement are sound. However, there are a few points deserving of comments.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) "...D.O.C.S. should modify its procedures for collecting and reporting cost data so that a comprehensive accounting of the cost of all inmate transportation is available for analysis.

RESPONSE

Concur with recommendation.

Prior to modifying procedures for collecting data, a more detailed method of distinguishing types of inmate movement must be developed. (See item #2.) Coordination between involved Central Office Units is critical. (pp. 10-12)

- 2) "D.O.C.S. should develop a comprehensive Inmate movement database to further analyze and improve its transportation system."

RESPONSE

Concur with recommendation.

Currently, the Division of Management Information Services is developing a mainframe "Inmate Movement" system that will serve as a planning tool as well as a reporting system for inmates transportation data. Upon completion, this system will replace and supplement most of the manual systems/procedures now employed by the Classification and Movement Transportation Unit. (p. 8)

Steps are being taken to correct the data gathered for statistical analysis and population projections used by the Division of Program Planning and Research. (pp. 13-14)

A comprehensive inmate movement database would be required to distinguish types of inmate movement. FCPS (Locator) codes were created to distinguish "transfers" from "Intransit" moves. However, integration of the FCPS and FTR 1 (Transfer Order) programs prohibit "transfer" transactions if no transfer order has been issued. Therefore, transfer transactions are not always equal (i.e., one transfer out for every transfer in). These types of moves usually occur during non-business hours. The same may apply to intransit transactions. (pp. 10-11)

In addition, intransit moves within facility subdivisions do not require the types of transportation under discussion. An inmate may be "owned" by one subdivision but placed into an infirmary bed designated for another subdivision. Thus, the inmate is moved "intransit" between the two subdivisions. (pp. 10-11)

The existing transfer "reason" codes are extensive. Inasmuch as most facilities offer fairly uniform programs and each facility of transfer reviews the inmate's record to determine the type of program best suited to meet the inmate's needs, to distinguish specific types of program moves on the computer would not be advantageous. (pp. 6)

- 3) "...D.O.C.S. should attempt to eliminate all moves that do not result in cost savings or achievement of D.O.C.S. mission."

RESPONSE

Concur with the recommendation.

Rather than the need to empty beds in reception/classification centers and maximum security facilities, movement is driven by backfilling vacancies resulting from releases/discharges or due to adding to or deleting from existing bedspace. To fill the beds, outstanding transfer orders and/or approvals are used to place inmates into appropriate facilities, including transferring inmates approved for reduced security. The end result is creating space into which reception inmates may be transferred to accommodate state-ready intake. (pp. 6, 8)

Expansion of the HUB concept will increase the possibility of eliminating moves that do not result in cost-savings. Other areas are being addressed to decrease transportation costs. (pp. 13-14) (See item #4).

- 4) "D.O.C.S. should comprehensively examine its transportation system and recommend improvements."

RESPONSE

Concur with recommendation.

The following issues are being addressed or have been implemented:

- a) Centralization of transportation;
- b) Facility "depots" to house "intransit" inmates;
- c) The HUB concept which may be expanded;
- d) Alternate means of transportation.

Currently, the Department has undertaken a project to examine the operation of the transportation system using in-house resources. (pp. 13-14)

- 5) "...D.O.C.S. should perform a comprehensive examination of these options to identify the least costly way to move inmates in differing situations and pursue that option whenever feasible.

RESPONSE

Concur with recommendation. (pp. 13-14)

LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON EXPENDITURE REVIEW

The Legislative Commission on Expenditure Review was established by Chapter 176 of the Laws of 1969 as a permanent agency for among other duties, "the purpose of determining whether any such department or agency has efficiently and effectively expended funds appropriated by the Legislature for specific programs and whether such department or agencies have failed to fulfill the legislative intent, purpose and authorization." This program audit, *State Prison Inmate Movement*, is the 208th staff report.

The audit was completed by James Held, Project Manager, and written by Martin O'Connor and Elizabeth Reynolds Zabin. Martin O'Connor served as audit manager during most of the audit. Appreciation is expressed to DOCS staff. Stuart Graham supervised quality control. Michael Roberts handled production. Layout and graphic design were done by Dawn Hewitt. Overall supervision was the responsibility of the Acting Director.

May 20, 1991

James J. Haag, CIA
Acting Director

PROGRAM AUDITS 1988-1991

Public Service Commission Utility Management Audit Program, 2.19.88.

City University of New York's SEEK Program, 2.26.88.

State School Computer Aid Program, 3.25.88.

Leasing and Maintenance of OMRDD Community Facilities, 4.20.88.

Council on the Arts Decentralization Program, 4.27.88.

Special Delinquency Prevention Program, 5.20.88.

CUNY/SUNY Campus Child Care, 6.24.88.

State Agency Leasing Practices, 6.29.88.

State Correctional Industries, 7.5.88.

Department of Taxation and Finance, Systems Modernization Project, 7.27.88.

OMH Residential Treatment Facilities, 7.29.88.

OMH Physicians' Extra Service Program, 10.20.88.

Civil Service Leaves of Absence, 11.3.88.

The Commission on Cable Television's Role Since the Cable Act of 1984, 12.21.88.

Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Program, 12.31.88.

Return a Gift to Wildlife, 3.15.89.

Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor, 3.17.89.

State Aid to New York City Private Bus Operators, 6.20.89.

Consumer Protection Board's Advocacy Program, 6.30.89.

Recruitment and Retention of Foster Parents, 8.15.89.

State Control of Acid Rain, 11.30.89.

State Agency In-House Training and Conference Attendance, 12.8.89.

State Parks Building Maintenance Management, 12.14.89.

SUNY Management Flexibility Program, 12.20.89.

Medicaid Fraud and Abuse Audit Program, 3.10.90.

Correctional Officer Pre-Service Training, 3.12.90.

Independent Living Centers Program, 3.16.90.

Reducing Customer Waits at Motor Vehicles Offices, 4.9.90.

Outside Hospital Care Program of the Office of Mental Health, 4.12.90.

Overview of Long Term Care, 6.26.90

Interstate Sanitation Commission, 9.25.90.

Urban Development Corporation Project Accountability, 9.30.90.

The State Office of Rural Affairs, 10.5.90.

Expedited Food Stamps, 11.2.90.

Quality Control of the Food Stamp Program, 11.9.90.

State Administration of the Economic Development Zone Program, 11.29.90.

Tax Processing Banking Arrangements, 12.3.90.

CUNY Management Flexibility Program, 12.31.90.

The Department of Taxation and Finance's Collection Efforts, 2.11.91.

Regulation and Enforcement of the Urban Development Corporation Housing Portfolio, 3.1.91.

Community College Contract Course Program, 4.26.91.

State Prison Inmate Movement, 5.20.91.