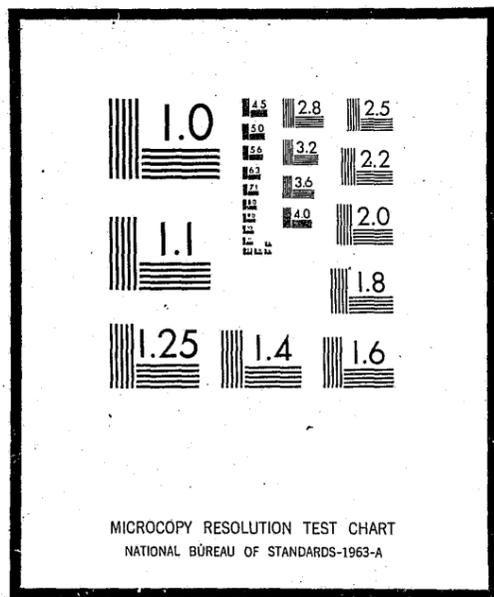


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Austin (TX) - Capital Area Planning Council -

## REGIONAL COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS PROGRAM: A SUMMARY

April, 1974

CAPITAL AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

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# INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1972, the Capital Area Planning Council hosted a team of experts from the Texas Department of Corrections who surveyed the CAPCO region to ascertain the need and feasibility of a Regional Correctional Facility. Although the Department of Corrections eventually encountered insurmountable obstacles in developing a statewide Regional Correctional Facility Program, the studies and information resulting from their efforts clearly pointed out the fact that detention facilities at the local level across the state were not sufficient in combating or reducing crime nor even minimally in protecting the rights of the accused.

As a result of the Texas Department of Corrections preliminary study and findings, and the fact that the then recent judicial decisions concerning jails called for sweeping changes and reform for jail facilities, the Capital Area Planning Council embarked upon an intensive study to evaluate, analyze and recommend alternatives and methods by which the ten-county region could approach and solve the local detention and corrections problem. CAPCO felt that outlining the existing detention/corrections process now in existence in the region, evaluating and analyzing all existing data in reference to the operation of this extensive process as well as the individual being processed through this system, would allow the region to ascertain where they were now and to consider the alternatives available to upgrade the system. Finally, they would be able to map a plan by which the region could develop an attack on the substandard conditions in our jails and corrections process.

This publication is a brief description of the findings of the CAPCO study and the recommendations that were established within the final document, "Regional Community Corrections Program". Hopefully, this summary document will equip you, the reader, with a basic knowledge of the concept of community corrections, what steps are recommended for implementing a program for community corrections in the CAPCO region and finally what resources are now available to provide necessary support for recommended programs and what resources need to be developed to support recommended programs. Details and specific data utilized in developing this document are contained in the final document "Regional Community Corrections Program".

The Capital Area Planning Council wishes to thank the Texas Criminal Justice Council for their financial support of this project and their interest in the report during development. We likewise wish to thank the consultant personnel who labored diligently in compiling statistics and for the extensive evaluation and writing that they provided in their specific field of expertise. Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to the public officials from throughout the region who assisted in providing the information necessary to publish this document.

# REGIONAL COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS PROGRAM

## Jail 'Inadequate'

### Judge Hughes Orders Broad Reforms

By EARL GOLZ  
U.S. Dist. Judge Sarah T. Hughes ruled Monday that Dallas County officials are not complying with the state law in the care of prisoners, whom she said are housed in overcrowded and dilapidated jails. She ordered the county to provide for all patients confined in its jails. Judge Hughes' opinion states that the county should be warned of the need to improve and upgrade its facilities.

## Jail Reform Decision May

A federal judge's decision at Dallas County's 5-year-old jail is not in compliance with the state law. The AMENDED state law setting out new jail standards in Texas took effect July 7, allowing the county to operate its jail which is now in compliance with the standards.

## Jail Doctor Needed For Travis County To Appeal

Help wanted: The County Commission needs a jail doctor. The county has accepted an application from Dr. Andrew W. ...

## Prison Education Program Is Cited

Nearly half the men and women now held by the Texas Department of Corrections in its 1,000 prison units spend part of their time in educational programs. The School District, for example, has prepared more than 1,000 inmates to ...

After much study, the Capital Area Planning Council (CAPCO) and its staff and consultants have come to several conclusions about the problems of crime and correction in the Capital State Planning Region:

- The Capital Area relies much too heavily on outdated jails for both pretrial detention and confinement of convicted misdemeanants. Improved jail facilities with rehabilitation programs are strongly needed.
- Even more important, alternative programs are strongly needed - programs offering to a large percentage of pretrial detainees and convicted offenders the opportunity to remain in the free community under supervision. The few such programs presently operated in the region have performed well and should be strengthened and expanded.
- A comprehensive strategy for improving the region's correctional programs should be developed and followed.





Second, recent court decisions which dictate minimum standards for the operation of jails and prisons, and others which guarantee certain rights to the confined, have landed correctional reform in the headlines. But a wise program of reform should be open-minded enough to study alternative ways society might deal with its lawbreakers.

Third, there has been widespread discussion in recent months of a state-operated regional correctional facility for the Capital Area. But the need for planning for this at the local level, and for assuring that jail reform—a must for the region—be accompanied by reform of the total corrections system was apparent.

CAPCO wished to be sure that these three factors were considered.

A detailed plan for a Regional Community Corrections Program has been drawn up in an attempt to outline such a strategy, and this brochure is a summary of that plan. CAPCO decided to tackle this project for several reasons.

First, evidence has accumulated in recent years suggesting that imprisonment of many offenders is counter-productive, that removal from society is not the best way to help them learn to live a normal, productive life.



In going about the work of study and planning, several basic premises served as guides:

*REGIONAL COOPERATION*—Units of local government can stretch tax dollars by cooperating with one another to run programs on a regional basis.

*COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS*—The idea behind community corrections has been stated by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce: "Experience has shown that, as opposed to isolation and punishment, community-based corrections, which permit a person to live in his own community and maintain normal social relationships while providing control, guidance, and access to rehabilitative resources and services, is a more efficient, economic, and more humane approach to the treatment of the offender." Of course, some offenders require incarceration for the safety of society, but the vast majority can be handled more cheaply and with a greater chance of rehabilitation through community-based programs than in jails or prisons.

*MODERN MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES*—Criminal justice administration in general (and correctional administration in particular) is poorly managed at the present time. Modern management techniques should be applied. Planning and budgeting should be on a program-by-program basis. And elected decision-makers should be provided with the information necessary to evaluate the relative effectiveness of various corrections programs.

*FISCAL RESOURCES*—Although the use of categorical grants-in-aid is suggested at certain critical points to "prime the pump," the plan mainly focuses on better ways to use the local funds already being spent on corrections. Since a policy based on community corrections holds to a minimum the very high costs of constructing and operating high-security jail facilities, it is believed that local governments in the Capital Area can have a more effective correctional system without greatly increasing the amount of money it spends for it.

## WHAT IS COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS?

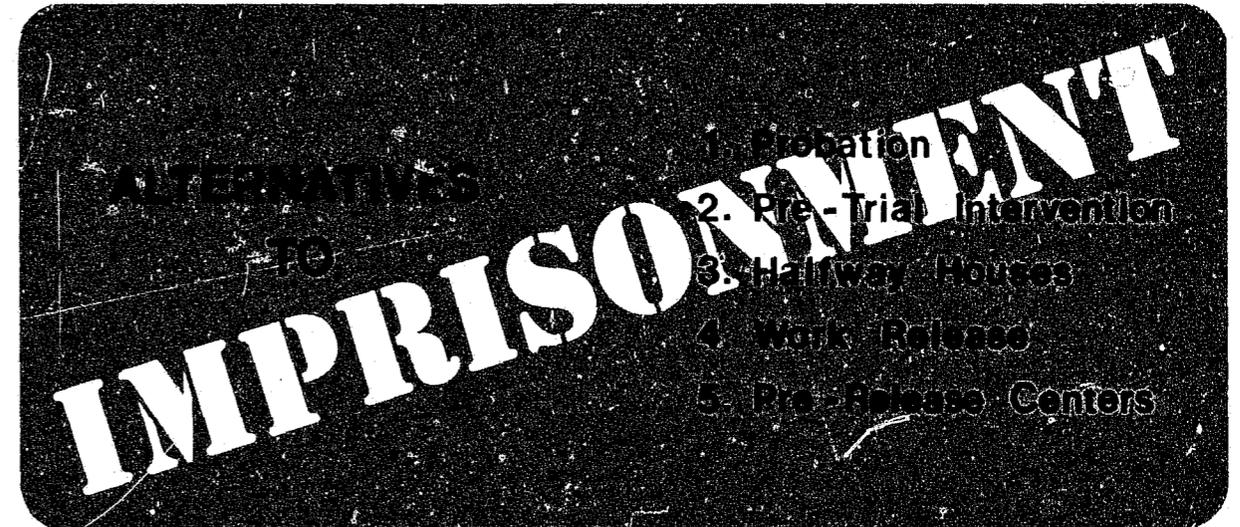
The basic idea of community corrections is that most criminal offenders—as many as 75 to 90 percent—can be handled successfully, safely, cheaply and humanely by methods that allow them to remain in the free community under supervision.

The President's Crime Commission defined the task of corrections as building or rebuilding solid ties, obtaining employment and education, and—in the larger sense—securing a place for the offender in the routine functioning of society. Based on research and evidence accumulated over the past several years, most experts agree that the best way to do this is in some way that does not remove the offender from the community at all.

To put it another way, the confinement of criminals and suspected criminals should be the exception rather than the rule. Any and all alternatives to confinement should be used, consistent with the immediate safety of the community.

After all, about 95 percent of all persons imprisoned nowadays eventually are released and return to free society. So the question of how well inmates are prepared to reenter society is a major factor in crime prevention. The safety of society demands the best methods possible of helping the offender permanently choose a law-abiding life. If imprisonment is not always the best way, and it doesn't seem to be, we are trading short-term protection for permanent risk.

The primary advantages of community corrections over traditional institutional corrections are that the community approach properly used appears to be more successful in reducing the number of offenders who commit new crimes, and that the community approach is less expensive to the taxpayer.



Some of the alternatives to imprisonment that have been tried are probation, pretrial intervention, halfway houses, work release, and pre-release centers. They allow the offender to maintain any healthy community ties he has—with his family, his job, his school, or his church—but also provide supervision and guidance to keep him from returning to a criminal lifestyle. Resources such as education, vocational training, psychological counseling, and family planning services that already exist in the community can be used in these correctional programs. That would eliminate the high costs of duplicating these services within the institution, as we presently do.

## THE EXISTING CORRECTIONS SYSTEM

The new system would also be concerned with diverting from the criminal justice process certain persons—such as alcoholics—whose offenses do not significantly harm society's interests, and to guide them instead toward rehabilitative community services.

A basic element of community corrections as it is envisioned here is supervision by skilled professionals with small enough caseloads to give the offenders meaningful guidance. One of the correctional officer's major responsibilities will be to help the offender gain access to various types of rehabilitative programs available in the community.

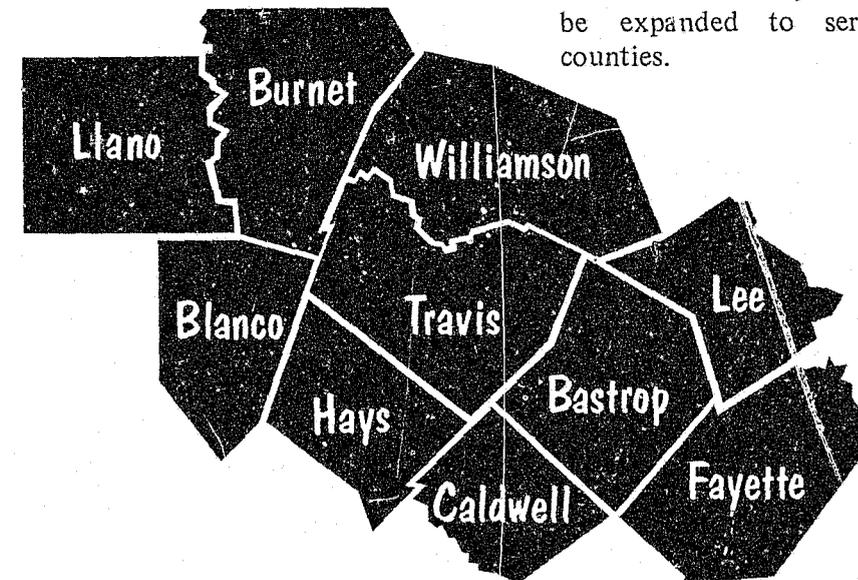
A state or region which makes a definite shift to community corrections will eventually reduce the need for expensive high-security facilities. Since the cost of keeping an adult offender in a large prison is about 14 times the cost of keeping him under probation supervision, incarceration should be limited to only those persons for whom alternatives are unsuitable.

The principles of community corrections can be, and in some cases, already are being applied in the Capital Area. For the most part, however, corrections in this region is prison- and jail-oriented.

Of the ten counties in the Capital Area, nine are rural with a relatively stable population, and the tenth, Travis County, contains a rapidly growing urban center. The Regional Community Corrections Program recognizes that the problems of the surrounding counties are different from those of Travis County and tries to adapt the principles of community corrections to the needs of each county.

At the local level in Texas the problem of adult correction has two aspects: *pretrial programs*, to make certain that persons accused of a crime appear in court for trial, and *posttrial programs*, for the confinement and/or treatment of those who have been convicted and sentenced.

Persons in a pretrial status may be released on bail bond, may be released on personal recognizance bond, or may be held in jail until the time of trial. It is clearly to the advantage of both the accused individual and the entire community to keep pretrial incarceration to a minimum. Within the Capital Area 65 percent of the total jail load consists of persons awaiting trial. The fact that this percentage is less than the statewide average is largely due to the work of the Austin-Travis County Personal Bond Office. Fewer than three percent of the accused who were released on bond failed to show up for trial, and the program costs about 11 cents per release/day. Clearly, the costs of the personal bond office have been a wise investment, and the program should be expanded to serve the other nine counties.



## THE JAIL SITUATION

Overcrowded, poor facilities are a root cause of most of the problems of incarceration across Texas. In the Capital Area there are ten county jails, one large city jail (Austin) and several small municipal lockups, with an average daily population of 450. According to a survey conducted by TDC, most of these jails are outdated and lack decent living conditions and rehabilitative programs. In fact, there is considerable question as to whether any of the jails in this region meet basic statutory and constitutional operating standards.



Adequate or not, the county jails cost Capital Area taxpayers almost \$400,000 to run in 1972. These are operating costs only; indirect costs resulting from incarceration such as welfare costs, loss of taxes, legal defense fees are not included, nor is the cost of jail construction. This money purchased only confinement and nothing in the way of rehabilitative services. The recidivism rate for convicted persons held in Texas jails is 85 percent. This means that 85 percent of those that go to jail have been before. The TDC estimates that a regional jail incorporating a wide range of rehabilitative programs could be operated for less than the amount presently invested by three of the counties in the region for jails with no rehabilitative programs.



In regard to posttrial programs, persons who have been convicted of a felony may either be given a probated sentence or committed to the custody of the Texas Department of Corrections (TDC) at Huntsville. Persons convicted of a misdemeanor offense may be granted probation or may be sentenced to serve time in the county jail.

Nearly two-thirds of all convicted offenders in the Capital Area are released on probation in spite of the limited availability of such services. While the Travis County Adult Probation Department is recognized as one of the best and most innovative in the state, several counties in the region have no probation services at all (other than the county sheriff). The first step in developing alternative methods of corrections would be the creation of adequately-funded and well-staffed probation departments in every county.



# IMPLEMENTATION

## A Regional Community Corrections Agency

When the citizens and elected officials of the Capital Area have declared a commitment to a policy of community corrections, there will be a need for a single agency or office to implement that policy. The importance of creating such an agency cannot be emphasized too strongly. If community corrections is to be successful in Texas in the long run, it must receive state support equivalent to or greater than that provided for institutional corrections. An initial step in that direction would be the development of a successful pilot effort at community corrections in the Capital Area to serve as a model for the rest of the state.

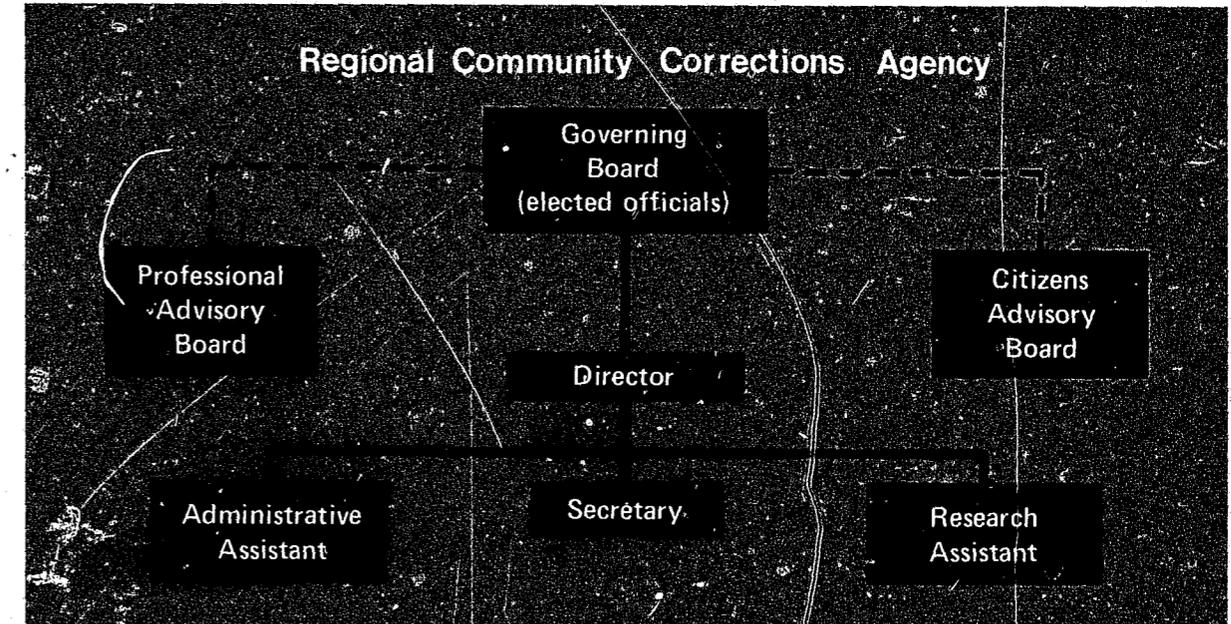
The office envisioned would attempt to link up and harmonize the efforts of law enforcement agencies, the courts, probation departments, the state prison system, and various public and private community service agencies, all the while trying to keep in mind the best interests of the entire community. There is no need for greatly expanding the range of government-provided services, but rather, there should be a means of delivering services to offenders through existing public and private

agencies - schools, hospitals, churches, and others. Although the services themselves can be provided on a decentralized basis, corrections policy-making and direction of services should be centralized and unified.

*The plan therefore recommends the creation of an agency which would have the general responsibility of developing a community corrections system. Its duties would include:*

- program development and operation
- application of modern management and information-keeping techniques
- allocation of local and state resources and procurement of outside funds, including federal grants
- community organization and public relations
- correctional manpower and training
- technical assistance for development of new programs.

It is suggested that this administrative office be directly responsible to local elected officials. Accountability could be assured by a governing board composed of local elected officials and two advisory boards, one made up of criminal justice and community service professionals and a second made up of private citizens and citizen groups, including ex-offenders. Funding alternatives for the office itself include grant funds, local funds from participant counties and cities, or a combination of these.



## Area-Wide Probation Services

Probation is a correctional program that allows a convicted offender to remain in the community with supervision, under conditions set by the judge at sentencing. As the President's Crime Commission defined it, probation supervision is a combination of surveillance and counseling, somewhat similar to social casework methods but distinguished by the need to enforce authoritative limits and standards of behavior. The probation officer's first duty is to "keep track" of his cases and see that they comply with conditions.

Nationally 39 percent of all convicted offenders are held in institutions (which account for 86 percent of correctional expenditures). And more than 60 percent of such offenders are handled by probation or other community-based programs (which account for only 14 percent of expenditures).

### Felons and Misdemeanants:

	No. Cases	(%)	Cost	(%)
In Institutions	362,900	39%	\$583,388,700	86%
In the Community	571,282	61%	\$101,934,800	14%

Source: U.S. President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society*, p. 161.

But the supervision available in the Capital Area is inadequate. Texas law indicates that probation caseloads should not exceed 75 offenders per officer. And the President's Commission set the maximum at 35. But at present in the Capital Area caseloads range from 75 to several hundred. This obviously permits only minimum supervision. But adequate and effective supervision ought to be the key to the effectiveness of community programs. In fact, a community correctional system might be viewed simply as a well-funded and well-staffed probation department with access to additional treatment resources such as halfway houses, vocational training, education, and so on.

Providing services in this region to satisfy the legal requirement of a maximum of 75 probationers per officer would require an approximate doubling of the number of officers currently employed. Such services would cost about \$500,000 a year, or about \$150,000 more than the current outlay for probation. But this additional cost would be less than half of what we now spend on jail operations in the region.

Although most judges and other local officials have voiced strong support for probation, lack of money (particularly in the rural counties) has prevented expansion of adult probation services. So the key to developing a more adequate system of services in the region is to locate a source of continuing outside support. The possibilities include state probation subsidy, general revenue-sharing funds, and special revenue-sharing funds (law enforcement).

The Texas Legislature has considered a bill to establish a statewide probation system. It would create an Adult Probation Board with the duties of establishing operating standards and administering state aid for probation. The bill is designed to retain flexible local control of probation offices while instituting statewide uniform standards and shifting part of the financial burden to the state where it belongs.

This is clearly the more desirable alternative. But if it proves impossible to achieve, a regional probation system funded by the counties would be possible. Administrative costs could be held to a minimum by centralizing administration in Travis County and opening branch offices in the surrounding counties. Such a system would give each county excellent probation services, and offer them access to the varied rehabilitative resources of Travis County and thorough presentence reports, which most of the counties presently lack.

*So the recommendation is for strong support of legislation to create a statewide probation system; failing that, the creation of a regional probation system funded by the counties.*



## Personal Bond and Pre-Trial Release

Since 65 percent of the jail load in the Capital Area is made up of persons awaiting trial, personal bond and pretrial release programs have the potential to reduce significantly the number of persons to be confined. When a person is charged with a crime, he may either be confined until his trial or he may be released in one of three ways: by posting bail or having bail posted by a friend or relative, by paying a professional bondsman to post bail, or by qualifying for a pretrial release program.

There are several types of pretrial release programs, only one of which (personal bond) currently exists in the Capital Area:

*Personal Bond* – a person is released on his personal promise to appear for trial.

*Ten Percent Plan* – a person is released by posting ten percent of his total bond; upon his appearance at trial, 90 percent of the amount he posted is refunded.

*Supervised Pretrial Release* – a person is released and assigned a probation-type officer to supervise his activities and make sure he appears for trial.

A community utilizing all of these pretrial release programs could substantially reduce its jail population and jail costs without incurring the risk of an increased crime rate. Advantages include reduced jail costs, reduction in loss of personal income and avoidance of detrimental jail conditions.

Since personal bond programs already exist in the Capital Area, they warrant a closer look. Their operation involves four basic steps:

- All persons booked into the jail are interviewed immediately to determine eligibility for personal bond. During the interview, information is gathered by a counselor from the personal bond office, an attorney, or in some cases, a magistrate.
- An attempt is made to verify all the data given by the defendant during the interview.
- A summary of the data is prepared and presented to a magistrate who will determine whether or not the person may be released on recognizance.
- For each person released, the personal bond office maintains a file and notifies the defendant by mail or telephone of his trial date.

The majority of those interviewed initially qualify for release on recognizance.

### Advantages of Pre-Trial Release

1. Reduced jail costs.
2. Reductions in loss of personal income.
3. Elimination of strong criminal influence inherent in incarceration.

Travis County has the oldest and, it is generally acknowledged, one of the best personal bond programs in the state. The cost breaks down to about 15 cents per release/day, compared to over \$5 per man/day to detain a defendant in jail in the county.

While Travis County is releasing persons on personal bond at the rate of several thousand per year, the other nine counties in the Capital Area are making little or no use of personal bond, for a variety of reasons. *It is recommended that personal bond services be created in the region's nonurban counties through the development of a regional personal bond system.* The Austin-Travis County Personal Bond Office should be used as the core of the regional personal bond system, with the other counties contracting with Travis County for its services at the minimal rate.

*It is further recommended that other pretrial release alternatives be developed, including supervised release and the ten-percent plan.* It is estimated that this would divert at least 20 percent more defendants from the jail pending trial, and the savings in jail operating costs would pay for the program expansion.

## Corrections and the Alcoholic

According to the President's Crime Commission, "Two million arrests in 1966 -- one of every three arrests in America -- were for the offense of public drunkenness." In the Capital Area 44 percent of all arrests are from public drunkenness and DWI, so of course these two offenses also make up a substantial portion of the jail loads. Given the fact that the communities in the Capital Area spend from \$2 to \$6 per man/day to incarcerate jail inmates, it becomes clear that a substantial investment is made to handle alcoholic offenders through the corrections system.

It is generally agreed that current methods used in dealing with alcoholic offenders fail abysmally and carry a very high price tag. Several communities across the nation have developed innovative programs of detoxification to divert alcoholic offenders from the criminal justice system to the health services system. It should be noted that alcoholism is primarily a medical problem, unless it is accompanied by violent crime. A detoxification center could serve as a linkage mechanism between the health services and criminal justice systems.

*This plan proposes that a low-cost detoxification center be established to serve as a central point for the intake of alcoholic offenders into the justice system and referral to various treatment agencies.* This center is intended to handle nonviolent alcoholic offenders, especially chronic alcoholics. Its program would include only the most basic services: detoxification, clean-up, and immediate referral to a treatment agency. A facility with a capacity of approximately 30 beds would be required; if possible, it should be near the police station for the convenience of the police and near Brackenridge Hospital for quick referral of cases requiring immediate medical attention. It is believed that it could be operated for \$100,000 to \$125,000 per year, including all expenses for facility, staff, meals, etc.

There are several ways in which the community would regain the funds invested in the low-cost detoxification center:

- The total amount of money spent by the ten counties in the City of Austin to incarcerate drunk and DWI offenders was well in excess of the amount necessary to operate the detoxification center.
- The diversion of alcoholic offenders would free a significant amount of jail space for more serious offenders, thus forestalling additional jail construction for some time.
- The costs of prosecution and adjudication of alcoholic offenders have been estimated at \$60 to \$80 per case; the diversion of these cases into the health services system represents a significant immediate savings.

The detoxification center could operate on a regional basis only if it had access to a regional transportation network, such as that which would serve a regional correctional center. However, there are sufficient alcoholic arrests and incarcerations in Travis County alone to warrant the establishment of the detoxification center on a single county basis.

There are several possibilities for initial funding: federal grants-in-aid, county funds, and city funds. The plan suggests that a combination of these sources be used to establish and operate the detoxification center. Grant funds should be obtained and used for the first several years of operation. At the end of each year, the amount of funds saved in city and county jail operating costs should be calculated and that amount shifted from the jail budget into the detoxification center budget so that grant funding could be discontinued at the end of several years.

## Court Residential Center

*It is recommended that a Court Residential Center (CRC) be established. It would provide a low-security residential treatment program (halfway house) for certain offenders who are presently held in county jails but who are not considered by the courts to require high-security confinement. And it would provide an on-the-job training experience for students and other persons potentially interested in careers in the field of community corrections.*

The overall goal of CRC would be to reduce commitments to county jails, and therefore jail costs, and to demonstrate the value of community corrections by providing an effective and inexpensive rehabilitative mechanism.

Several types of offenders could be served:

- Convicted misdemeanants referred by the court for long-term treatment (3-24 months).
- Probation and parole violators and probationers and parolees judged by their supervising officers to be in danger of committing a violation. They could be referred by their officers for short-term treatment and preventive detention.

- Convicted felons on appeal (who presently are confined in the county jail).
- Eventually, minor felons who presently are sent to the Texas Department of Corrections.

There is no question that a considerable number of such persons could be handled safely and more cheaply at the community level. CRC is designed to fit between customary probation for minor offenders and institutionalization for major offenders.

CRC would require a small dormitory (30-40 beds) or several adjacent family-type dwellings in or near an urban area. It must be close to public transportation and have in-house food, dining, and laundry services.

Staff would consist of a program director, possibly one or two assistants, and 7 to 15 resident counselors. The program director and his assistants must be skilled professionals. The resident counselors would be college students or single working persons. Former convicts and probationers might also be considered, and former clients of CRC could be used as they became available. In return for room and board, the counselors would perform several functions:

help develop and maintain a "healthy" atmosphere in the program, provide a presence representing authority at all times, along with the offenders, help maintain the facility and perform secretarial duties.

The treatment program would include:

group treatment, including both peer-group pressure and regularly-scheduled meetings,

behavior modification, a "point-freedom" system under which offenders would earn points in order to be granted gradually increasing levels of freedom,

community involvement.

Many community resources are not readily available to the type of person who is likely to commit crimes. The director of CRC should, in a sense, act as an advocate for the offenders under his supervision in securing access to these services and opportunities. Offenders who satisfactorily complete the treatment program would be recommended to the court for release by the CRC screening committee.

CRC could be operated for about \$82,000 annually for a program with a daily capacity of 30. Because many of these offenders would be employed, they could be charged a modest fee for room and board (enough to provide 10-50 percent of the budget). At the average jail operating cost in this region, it would cost \$43,000 to provide the same number of man/days, or just over half of the cost of the CRC program even if no room and board were charged.



Since the bulk of the clients would be from the Austin area and since most of the needed rehabilitative services are there, CRC would best be located in Travis County. Other counties in the region which wanted to make use of CRC could contract with Travis County.

It is recommended that a combination of federal and county funds and user fees be used to establish and operate CRC. Grant funds should be obtained and used to purchase a facility and provide part of the operating costs of the first several years of operation. At the end of each of the first several years' operation, the amount saved in jail operating costs through the use of the CRC program should be calculated and diverted from the jail budget into the CRC budget.

## Jail Reform - A Regional Correctional / Detention Facility

The need for jail reform in the Capital Area is firmly established. However, reform by itself is not an adequate answer to the problems of criminal corrections. The major thrust of this document is that incarceration of individuals should take place only as a last resort, when all alternatives to incarceration are unsuitable. Jail reform should take place only in conjunction with the development of a wide range of alternative correctional programs.

There are seven basic requirements of a modern jail:

Classification and segregation of inmates (required by state law)

Recreation and exercise facilities

Alcoholism detoxification services

Psychiatric diagnostic services

Medical services

Work and school release

Social service programs

At present, all jail cells in the Capital Area are high-security cells. When considering the need for increased jail space, attention should be given to creating low-and/or medium-security facilities rather than building more high-security cells. The key to the successful operation of a low-security facility is a careful and effective screening process.

The Texas Criminal Justice Council and other agencies and individuals have endorsed the concept of regional correctional/detention facilities. Under the regional correctional/detention facility concept, a facility meeting the requirements set out above would be created to serve several counties. Local jails would be maintained as short-term (8-12 hour maximum) holding facilities. All services and rehabilitative programs would be concentrated in the regional facility. Transportation of prisoners could be handled in several ways: a bus system could be established on a regular-route, an on/call basis, or each county could have responsibility for transporting its prisoners to and from the regional facility. The regional correctional/detention facility has three basic advantages over local jails--reduced construction costs, greater economies of scale in operation, and high standards.

A regional correctional/detention facility might be established in the Capital Area in one of several ways:

- Regional correctional/detention facility built and operated by the Texas Department of Corrections.
- Multi-unit regional correctional/detention facility located in Travis County: the existing Travis County and Austin City jails would serve as high-security facilities and a new low-security unit would be constructed.

- Regional correctional/detention facility in Travis County would serve all the jail needs of Travis, Hays, Williamson, and Caldwell counties, and would handle special cases (alcoholics, mental patients, long-term prisoners) for the other counties in the region. Two intermediate-level facilities located in Bastrop and Burnet counties would hold prisoners for moderate lengths of time (several weeks) and would have recreation and exercise facilities but no long-term rehabilitation program. Finally, the other seven counties would have short-term holding facilities to detain prisoners for 8-12 hours.

## Juvenile Services in the Capital Area

Each county in Texas has a court of record designated as the juvenile court. In the Capital Area, the county courts serve as juvenile courts in all counties except Travis, where the 98th District Court has been designated as the juvenile court.

Travis County makes up about two-thirds of the region's population, but appears to have a much higher percentage of the region's delinquency cases. Within this region, only Travis County provides detention facilities for juveniles other than the county jail. The Travis County Juvenile Court operates Gardner House Child Care Facility, a short-term court residential facility. In the other nine counties, juveniles who must be detained are placed in city or county jails, and only limited juvenile probation services are provided.



The great majority of those juveniles adjudicated delinquent are placed on probation rather than committed to institutions. Travis and Hays Counties, and soon Bastrop County, have the only juvenile probation departments in the Capital Area. The Travis County department operates a domestic relations division, the Gardner House facility, a drug treatment program, a vocational rehabilitation project, a juvenile public defender office, and a juvenile delinquency prevention project, as well as providing juvenile probation services. The department has the services of a psychologist and several consulting psychiatrists, and makes extensive use of other community agencies.

*It is recommended that available resources be concentrated on strengthening the Travis County Juvenile Court/Probation Department, and making its services available to the other counties in this region through inter-governmental contracts. Thus, the specific tasks to be accomplished fall into two categories: (1) regionalization of juvenile services, and (2) improvement in Travis County services.*

At the present caseload levels existing in the nonurban counties, one or two additional officers could provide adequate services, depending on the number of participating counties. Such officers would be attached to the Travis County department, but would cover the region on a circuit-type basis. The cost would be borne by the participating counties.

Although it is a relatively rare occurrence for a juvenile to be confined for a significant length of time in the nonurban counties, it is suggested that these counties develop stand-by agreements with Travis County whereby juveniles could be held in the Gardner House facility on a per diem basis when necessary.

As for improvements in Travis County services, the most urgent needs are these:

- A juvenile halfway house to serve as a shelter for dependent and neglect cases (especially the older children who cannot be easily placed in foster homes) and as a pretrial diagnostic center for other juveniles.
- Expanded resources for the placement of children in foster homes, children's homes, etc.
- Expanded drug treatment services, especially a residential treatment facility.
- Expanded vocational training resources, including a residential facility.
- Certain physical improvements to the Gardner House plant, including the installation of a cooling system and updated kitchen equipment.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Capital Area Region relies principally upon jails and probation for corrections at the local level. The jails are generally in poor condition with few programs designed to correct the offender. Probation is, overall, understaffed or non-existent.

The region currently offers several examples of effective community programs, particularly probation and personal bond in Travis County, but there is a strong need for augmenting these and developing others.

Jail conditions in the region are uniformly poor and citizens pay a high price both in dollars and recidivism. The added threat of jail litigation makes jail reform a must. Present costs of jail construction are so high that only a regional effort seems economically feasible.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Programs of Personal Bond should be expanded or developed throughout the region.

Programs of Pre-Trial Release should be developed and implemented throughout the region.

The first step in reform of corrections in the region -- vitally needed as it is -- should be a formal declaration of a new corrections policy incorporating the principles and guidelines of community-based treatment by the Executive Committee of the Capital Area Planning Council and by all local legislative bodies, particularly the ten county commissioners courts and the Austin City Council.

An agency should be developed which would have the general responsibility of developing a community corrections system.

Strong support for legislation creating a state-wide state financed probation system should be encouraged and developed. Failing that, a regional probation system funded by the counties should be created.

Establishment of a Detoxification Center is necessary to deal with the alcoholic offender. A regional detoxification center can be contemplated with transportation considerations and constraints.

A Court Residential Center should be established for the region.

Alternatives for the establishment of a Regional Corrections Facility or RCF System should be considered.

In the juveniles area it is recommended that all available resources should be concentrated on strengthening the Travis County Juvenile Court/Probation Department and making its services available to the other counties in the region through inter-governmental contracts.

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