

Jails

# Supervisors approve new jail for site outside Watsonville

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RP

Santa Cruz County supervisors yesterday gave the go-ahead to a new 96-bed medium-security jail outside Watsonville.

The new jail, approved on a 4-1 vote with Santa Cruz-area Supervisor Gary Patton voting no, will be built with \$4 million in state jail construction-bond funds and about \$1 million in local cash and services. But it won't solve the county's jail crisis.

Projections by the county administrative office predict that Santa Cruz County will need 41 new jail beds each year for the foreseeable future. It will take a couple of years for the new jail to be completed and, by the time it's ready for occupancy, it may be too small. In 1988, the county jail, designed for 224 prisoners, had an average daily population of 373.

In an effort to find some alternatives to incarceration, San Lorenzo Valley Supervisor Fred Keeley persuaded other members of the board to make a commitment to spend \$220,000 on some of a long list of programs that take men and women out of the county jail and into such programs as drug and alcohol abuse treatment.

The vote yesterday afternoon came at the conclusion of a three-hour public hearing in which a long list of advocates spoke, some supporting the 96-bed jail and others advocating a 48-bed unit with more money diverted into some of the compet-

ing alternative programs.

Keeley succeeded in engineering an agreement that called for county officials to design and build a 96-bed jail that, using creative staffing and management, can be operated for approximately \$805,000 a year — about the same cost as a 48-bed jail with conventional staffing and far less than a consultant's maximum cost estimate of more than \$1 million annually — then divert

the annual "operating cost" savings of about \$200,000 into the jail-diversion programs.

A jail-needs task force had put together a list of alternative programs that, if fully implemented, would cost the county more than \$900,000 a year.

Keeley's proposal was supported by the other four supervisors but Patton cast the lone vote

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## Going to jail? Here's where you'll go

When a man or woman winds up in the Santa Cruz County Jail, jailers decide, among other things, what security risk the prisoner poses to jailers and other inmates or may face from other prisoners.

The Sheriff's Office released copies of its classification policy with the guidelines used by detention officers to make the initial classification.

Some basic categorizations are made:

- Men are confined separately from women.
- Sentenced prisoners are separated from those awaiting trial.
- People jailed as witnesses, held under a civil complaint or for contempt of court are segregated from those facing criminal charges.

### Maximum security — isolation

High-risk inmate classification, individual cells, continual observation and close supervision, including civil prisoners;

Protective custody for prisoners, including inmates who face assault or victimization by other prisoners, those targeted for assault or murder by other prisoners or gangs, any inmate who has been or is a law enforcement officer;

Violently assaultive or predatory behavior, including assault on another inmate or detention officer, possession of a restrictive or deadly weapon, predatory or extortive influence on other inmate, any extensive criminal history of violence or

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against the motion originally made by Pajaro Valley Supervisor Sherry Mehl. Patton said he wanted a 48-bed jail built.

Before casting their votes, board members listened to a wide variety of speakers.

Presiding Superior Court Judge Bill Kelsay and Municipal Court Judge Tom Kelly both supported building the 96-bed jail.

Chief Probation Officer Linda Erwood also supported the larger jail.

Others, mainly employees or administrators of the alternatives-to-incarceration programs in Santa Cruz County, urged the smaller jail and a greater commitment to their programs.

"We can not build and construct our way out of our present situation," Linda Erwood, the county's chief probation officer, told the supervisors. "I'm a believer that we need to work on alternatives as well as build a new jail.

"I support a 96-bed facility. I believe that our situation over there (in the main jail) is intolerable to staff and the inmates. There need to be bold, new approaches but we also have to build a new facility."

Kelsay said, "I don't know how we can do anything but build a large facility. I believe in the alternatives, but given the present reality of our situation, I don't think you can do anything but build the larger facility.

"I believe that we don't have the options we would like to have in sentencing prisoners, but given the numbers in this county, a 45-bed facility is not sufficient. You have such numbers in the jail facility now that a 96-bed facility is probably not sufficient."

Kelly echoed Kelsay, likening the current jail crowding to street scenes in the Indian city of Calcutta.

"Even if all of the alternative programs were in operation today, we need the 96-bed facility," he said.

Vince Sanabria, executive di-

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assaults on peace officers;

Extreme escape risk.

## Maximum security — guarded housing

Serious-offender inmate classification, with group security housing, continual observation and close supervision, including:

Violent or serious criminal charges, including murder, kidnapping, aggravated assault, sex crimes;

Sophisticated criminal history, including previous history of felony charges, past felony convictions, previous sentence to state prison, identified criminal gang member or sympathizer, is or has been on state (prison) parole;

State/federal prison inmate;

Uncooperative attitude, including observable anti-establishment and non-conformist attitude, uncooperative personal behavior, remorseless personal attitude, or a marginal escape and assault risk.

## Mentally disturbed — isolation or guarded

Psychologically disabled/disturbed inmate classification, including:

Diagnosed mental illness;

Believed to fit the criteria of Section 5150 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, being a danger to themselves or others, or unable to care for themselves;

Suicide risk;

Under the influence of psychedelic drugs, such as LSD, PCP or other hallucinogenic or mind-altering drugs.

## Medium security level — general population

This is where most pre-trial prisoners and many sentenced inmates wind up, including those facing misdemeanor and minor felony criminal charges, such as traffic violations, simple assault and disturbance charges and first offender or minor felony charges;

Those exhibiting a cooperative and peaceful personal attitude;

Unsophisticated criminal history.

## Minimum Security

### Jail Farm/Blaine Street/Jail inmate worker

Must be a locally sentenced inmate without any outstanding warrants or pending criminal charges;

Must have a cooperative and peaceful attitude;

Inmate worker with self-motivation and some trustworthiness to perform job tasks in and out of security areas;

Jail Farm/Blaine Street — only men are sent to the jail farm, only women to Blaine Street. Both must be able to adopt to dormitory-style living, not be an escape risk and be self-motivated to participate in correctional programs or perform task with a minimum amount of supervision.

rector of Fenix Services Inc., told the supervisors that Watsonville and the South County have different sets of problems than other parts of the county.

"If you want to make an im-

pact," he told the supervisors, referring to chronic problems among Hispanics that include alcohol and drug abuse as well as violence, "point the criminal justice system at the grassroots."