Sustaining a Culture of Collaboration and Community

The New O‘ahu Jail Project

STATUS UPDATE

March 2026
Honolulu Sunrise Rotary Club

Topics

- **Before We Start: Jail vs Prison**
- **Project History**
- **Project Goals/Vision**
- **Accomplishments**
- **Current Activities**
- **Cost Implications**
- **Project Timeline**

Difference Between a Jail and a Prison

	Jail	Prison
Length of Stay:	< 12 months. Average stay for OCCC is 3 weeks.	> 12 months Average stay at Halawa Correctional is several years.
Jurisdiction:	Operated by local law enforcement agencies or by for-profit private companies through state contracts.	Operated by federal and state law enforcement or by for-profit private companies through state contracts.
Type of Offense:	Individuals who have been arrested and are awaiting trial or have been sentenced for minor crimes.	Individuals who have been sentenced for major crimes and felonies.
Programs and Services:	Aimed at helping individuals successfully re-enter society upon release.	Offer a wider range of comprehensive programs due to longer incarceration periods.

ahl.

Project History

1857 — Oahu Prison built in Iwilei

1916 — Oahu Prison relocated to Kalihi

1950 — New structures built to replace most 1916 structures

1975 — Oahu Prison redeveloped as OCCC; functions as both a jail and a prison

1987 — OCCC felons transferred to new Halawa Correctional Facility

1998 — Corrections Master Plan recommends replacing OCCC

2003 — Corrections Master Plan Update recommends replacing OCCC

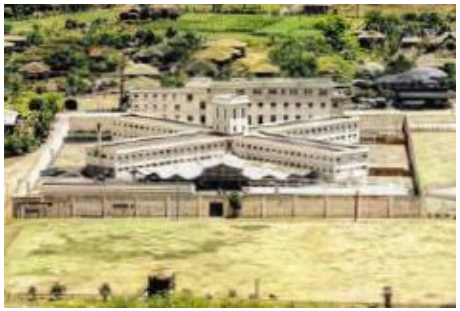
2014 — $5.0 M released for OCCC Planning effort

2016 — Planning for new OCCC begins in earnest; additional $5.4 M appropriated

2023 — $4.5 M Governor's Discretionary Funds for Design

2024 — $10 M for Procurement Appropriated

2025 — $30 M legislative funding



Existing OCCC Shortcomings

- Most buildings date from 1970s; some date back to 1930s
- Existing facility issues include:
  - Obsolete design is inefficient
  - Deteriorated physical plant
  - Overcrowding
  - Limited space restricts available activities
  - Non-productive environment: Dark and narrow corridors, poor acoustics, limited natural light, lack of privacy
  - Incapable of providing conditions that are therapeutic, curative, compassionate, humane, and offering hope
  - Individuals with mental illness, serious medical conditions, and in protective and maximum custody, housed with general population to detriment to all
  - Security electronics and management technologies are outdated
  - Not prepared to deal with today's new challenges such as pandemics

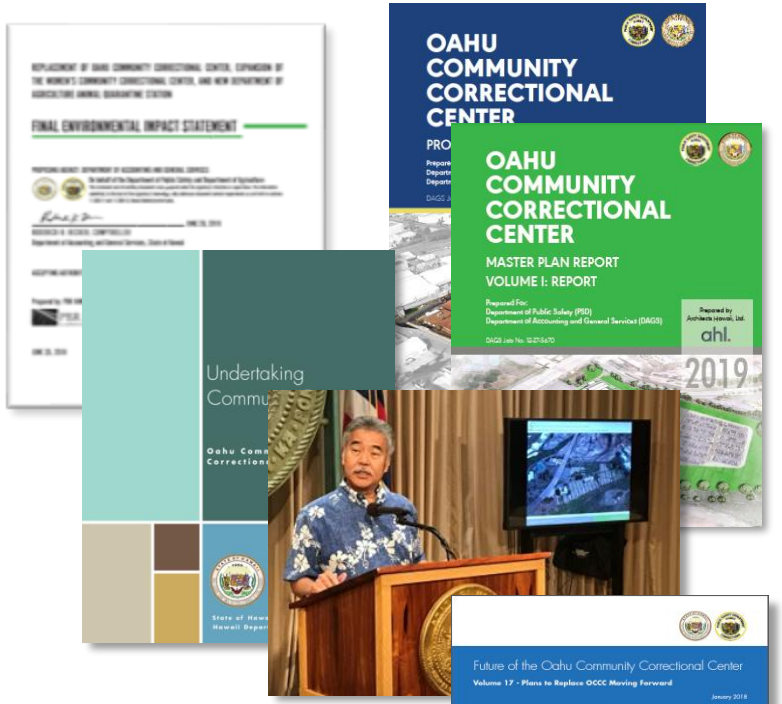
Project Goals and Vision

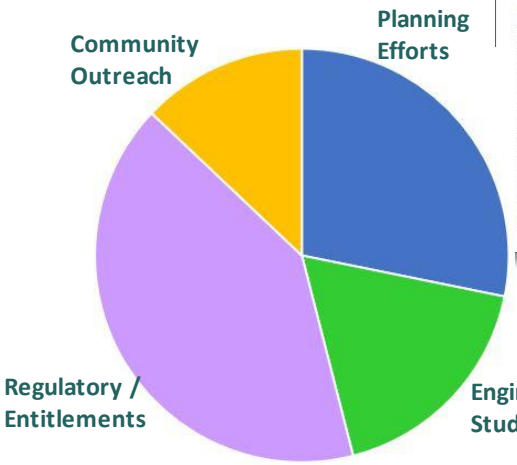
- Significantly improve how individuals are housed and treated at OCCC
- Eliminate need for costly temporary repairs that try to remedy obsolete physical plant and design
- Adopt new technologies, make more effective use of staff, and optimize cost efficiencies
- Expand number of transitional beds and treatment and program spaces to prepare inmates for successful community re-entry
- Ensure racial equity and provide therapeutic, rather than punitive, facilities and services
- Promote positive changes via new treatment programs, expanded medical and mental health services, and similar assistance
- Improve living and working conditions for occupants and staff
- Reduce recidivism

Phase 1 – Planning (2016 – 2020) $5.3 Million

Completed

- Population forecast completed
- Public outreach and engagement program begins
- 12 alternative OCCC sites identified and evaluated
- Community Partnering Plan developed
- Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) accepted
- Governor Ige endorses new OCCC at Animal Quarantine Station site
- OCCC Master Plan completed
- Plan Review Use (PRU) application approved by City Council
- Boundary and topographic surveys completed





Current Animal Quarantine Station Site

OCCC Architectural Programming

- OCCC populations forecasted in 2016 for 10-year period
- 2021 forecast update shows a need for 1,012 beds for male detainees in 2024 declining to 911 beds in 2032

Year	OCCC (Males)			
	ADP	Peaking (5%)	Classification (10.6%)	Total Bed Need
2024	875	44	93	1012
2026	853	43	90	986
2028	831	42	88	960
2030	809	40	86	935
2032	788	39	84	911

ADP = Average Daily Population

OCCC Bed Types & Space Requirements

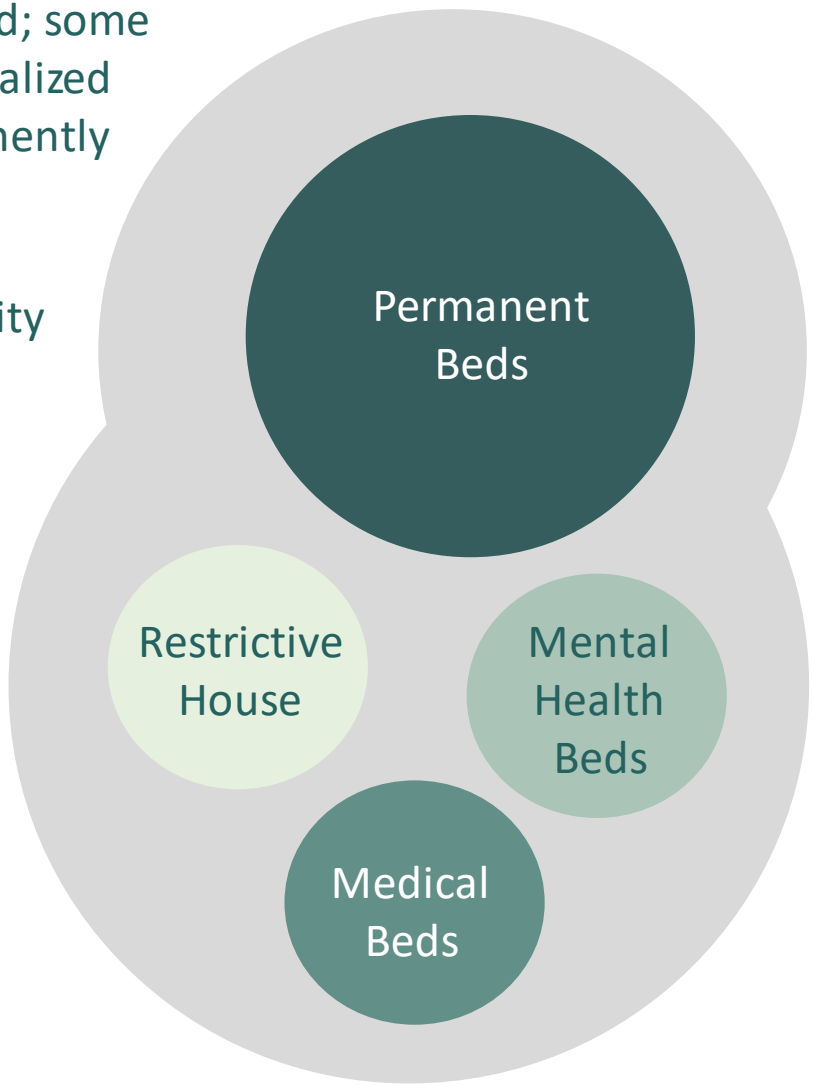
Inmates can't be assigned to just any bed; some types of beds need to reserved for specialized treatment, either temporarily or permanently

1,000 (+/-) Permanent Beds

- Minimum, Medium, Maximum Security
- Mental Health Special Needs
- Medical Special Needs
- Special Management

Temporary Beds

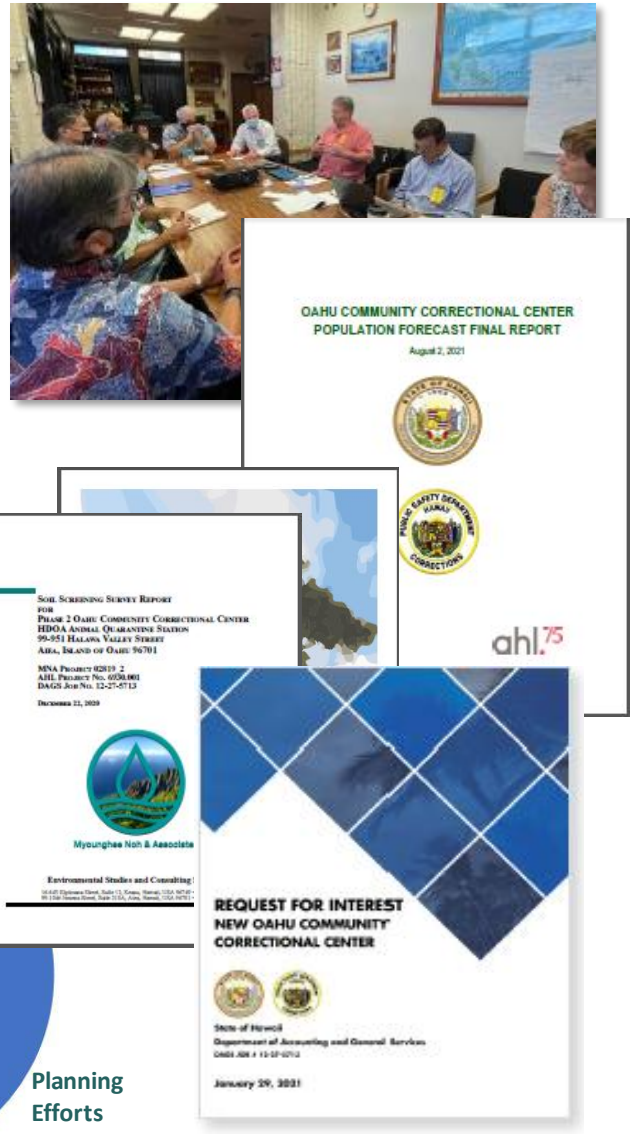
- Mental Health Acute
- Mental Health Subacute
- Medical Skilled Nursing
- Restrictive Housing

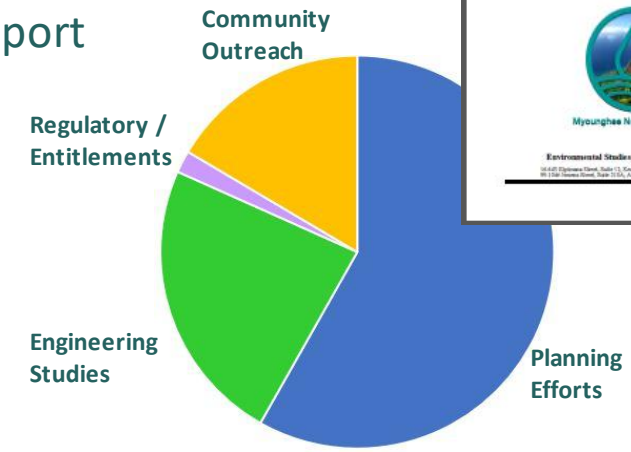


Phase 2 – Planning (2020-2024) $4.5 Million

Completed

- Request for Interest (RFI) released
- New OCCC population forecast
- Geotechnical and hazardous materials investigations
- Development plan for new Animal Quarantine Station
- OCCC development program update
- Preparation of Draft Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
- Restorative Design Report





Accomplishments

Community Outreach And Engagement:

- Phase 1 meetings with numerous Federal Agencies, elected government officials, State departments and agencies, City & County officials and departments and agencies, Neighborhood Boards 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 26, 31, 32, and 34, and other Public Interest Groups and Organizations
- 61 OCCC newsletters and multiple FAQ pages
- Monthly public outreach history calendars
- Dedicated OCCC website maintained at https://newoahujail.hawaii.gov/
- OCCC Team represented at all Aiea Neighborhood Board and Community Association meetings since 2019

OCCC team presenting at Aiea Neighborhood Board #20 meeting

Accomplishments and Current Activities

Phase 3 – Bridging Documents
Ongoing

- ☑ Planning – Completed
- ☑ Conceptual design - Completed
- ☑ Geotechnical/hazardous materials investigations – Completed
- ☐ Schematic design - *Underway*
- ☐ Market sounding and outreach – *Underway*
- ☐ New Animal Quarantine Station design – *Underway*
- ☐ Update OCCC development program – *Underway*
- ☐ Prepare Request for Qualifications – *Underway*
- ☐ Property entitlements – *Underway* Community outreach and engagement – *Underway*
- ☐ Community outreach and engagement – *Underway*

Current Animal Quarantine Station Site

Conceptual Rendering

Conceptual Rendering

Conceptual Rendering

Current Animal Quarantine Station Site

Exterior Material Board

New Oahu Jail in the Media

https://www.khon2.com/working-for-hawaii-unscripted/aiea-neighborhood-board-concerns/

https://correctionalnews.com/2026/01/30/design-changes-outlined-in-latest-oahu-jail-plans/

https://justicedesignnews.com/news/hawaii-refines-design-plans-for-new-oahu-jail/

A. O'ahu Community Correctional Center

B. Cuyahoga County Jail

C. Lancaster County Prison

D. Nashville Youth Campus for Empowerment
Idaho State Women's Prison Project

E. Federal Correctional Institution Leavenworth and Federal Prison Camp

https://correctionalnews.com/2025-projects-to-watch/

OCCC Newsletter #62

Future of the O'ahu Community Correctional Center

Vol. 62 - Hawai'i Refines Design Plans for New O'ahu Jail

December 2025

Hawai'i Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

NEWS & UPDATES: FACILITIES

DCR Prioritizes Program Continuity and Community Input

NEWS & UPDATES: OPERATIONS

WCCC Hosts 'Ohana Day for Incarcerated Women and Families

From the Director's Desk

O'ahu Jail Team Presents to Metropolitan Honolulu Rotary Club

WCCC Hosts Mental Health Day Event

NEWS & UPDATES: OPERATIONS

Laumaka Work Furlough Inmates Join Hawai'i Laborers' Apprenticeship Program

Graduation Ceremonies for New Adult Corrections Officers

Incarcerated Mothers Reunite with their Keiki to Celebrate Halloween

Upcoming Activities

Interested in Learning More?

Rassmarie Bernardo, Public Information Officer

The New O'ahu Jail Project

O‘ahu Jail Update: Insights on PBS Hawai‘i

- ***John Schells**, Warden, O‘ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC)*
- ***Keke Walker**, The Reimagining Public Safety Coalition of Hawai‘i*
- ***Della Au Belatti** (D), Chair, Public Safety Committee*
- ***Christin Johnson**, Oversight Coordinator, Hawai‘i Correctional Systems Oversight Commission*
- ***Yunji de Nies**, Moderator*

American Correctional Association

Cost Implications of Project Delay

- Costly to extend lifespan, security, and usability of obsolete OCCC mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural and security systems continue to age and require upgrading or replacement
- Taxpayers to fund operation of deteriorating facility with increasing capital expenditures each year to function
- OCCC work environment not conducive to attracting and retaining workforce, placing additional burden on PSD and taxpayers
- Economic and humanitarian cost of doing nothing: OCCC continues to deteriorate, with negative impacts on occupants, staff, and community
- Estimated construction cost: $525 million rough order of magnitude in 2018; costs continue to escalate as each month passes $937 million.
- Property in Kalihi has significant economic development value; redeveloping property will result in significant benefits in jobs, tax revenues and other indirect and secondary economic activities

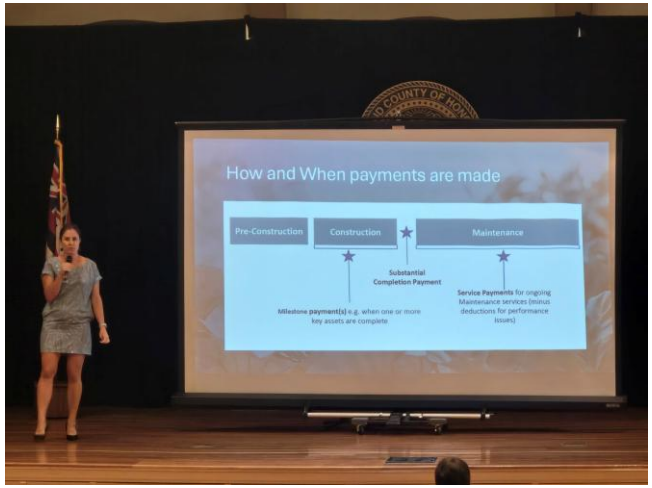
P3 Procurement Presentation

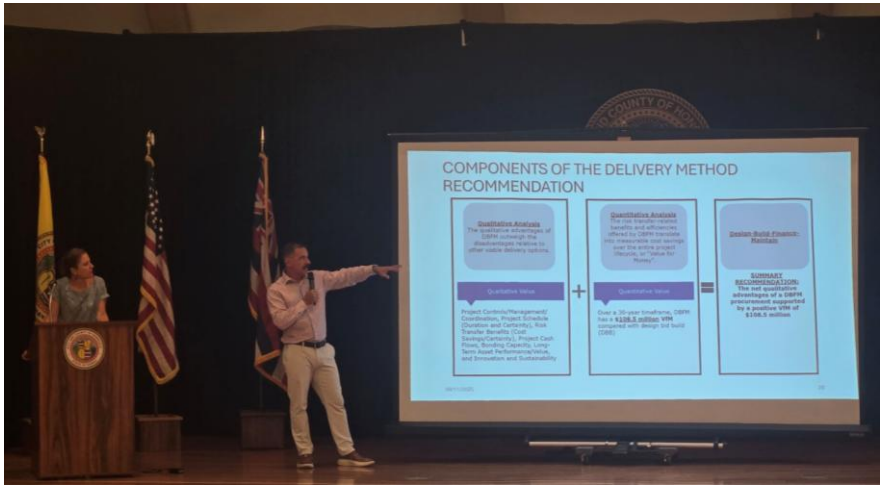
The OCCC design team presented to the legislature and various departments and committees about the P3 process and how it can be implemented to the OCCC project.

Presenters:

Mark Polston Senior Vice President, Transactions and Delivery Strategy – WSP

Bridey Best, Senior Vice President for WT Partnership America



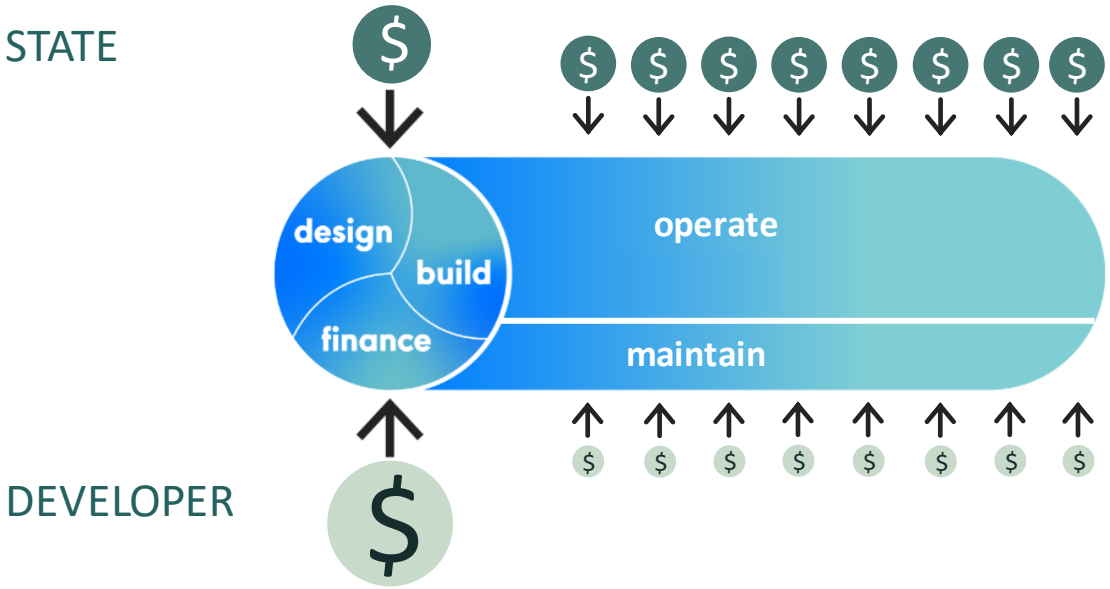


P3 Procurement

The DBFM method delegates and contracts a private sector partner to design, build, finance, and maintain the Project on the State's behalf. Operation of the functional services of the jail will remain with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR).

State partially funds design and construction of New OCCC facilities

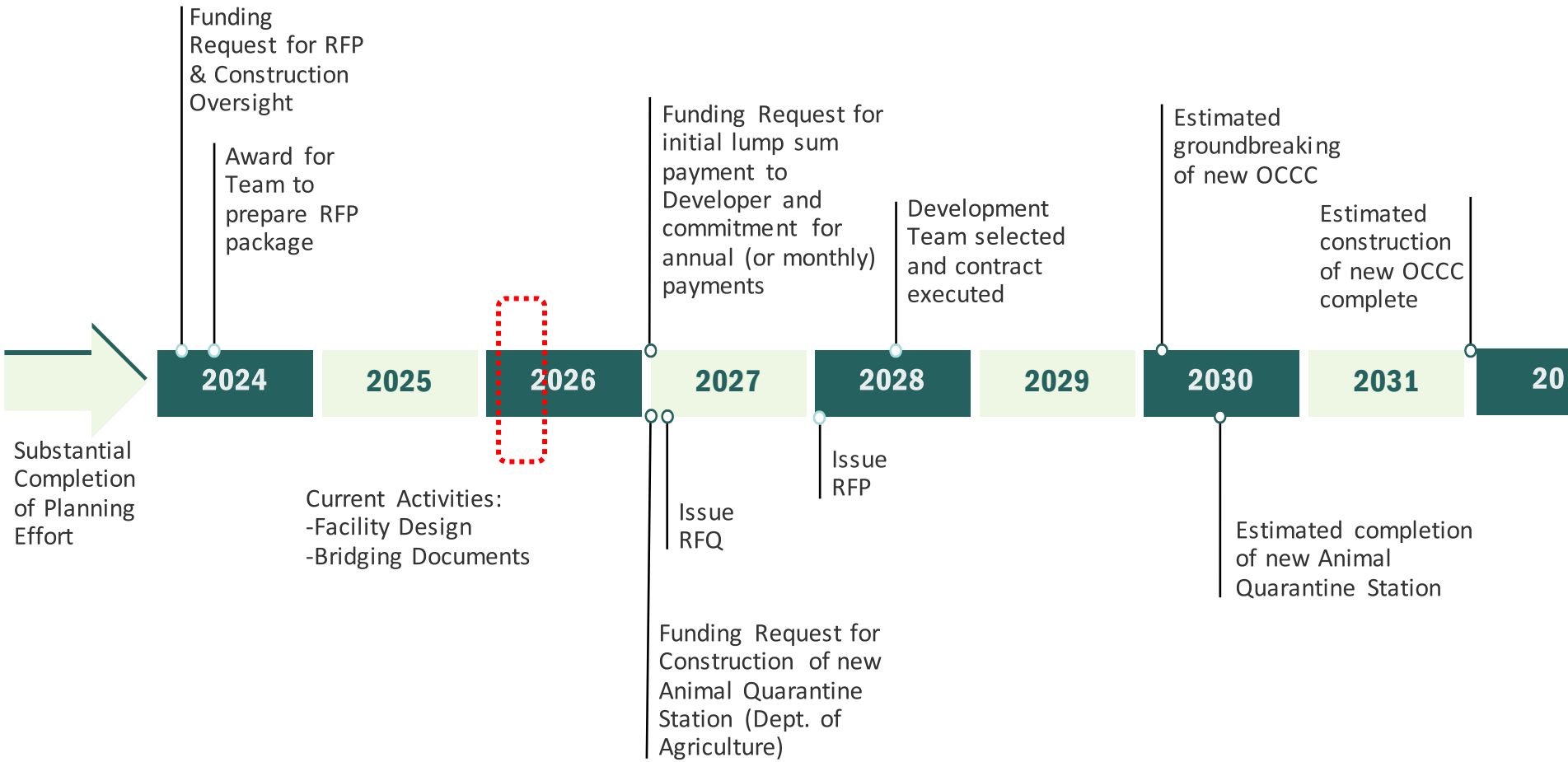
State pays developer incremental finance and maintenance payments over 30-year term



New O'ahu Jail developer funds remainder of costs

New O'ahu Jail developer maintains facilities for 30 years to defined standards

Project Timeline



Mālama ia Hawai‘i
caring for and protecting our island community
THE NEW O‘AHU JAIL
newoahujail.hawaii.gov
Mahalo
https://newoahujail.hawaii.gov/