

135214

United States General Accounting Office

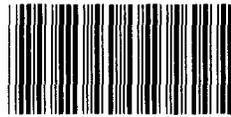
GAO

Briefing Report to the Chairman,
Subcommittee on the District of Columbia,
Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate

March 1988

DC GOVERNMENT

Alternate Sites for Federally Funded DC Correctional Facility



135214

RESTRICTED—Not to be released outside the General
Accounting Office except on the basis of the specific approval
by the Office of Congressional Relations.

RELEASED

541455/135214



United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

General Government Division

B-204325

March 1, 1988

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Subcommittee on the
District of Columbia
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This report responds to your October 1, 1987, request and subsequent discussions concerning information on the characteristics of four specific alternate locations for the proposed federally funded Correctional Treatment Facility in the District of Columbia. The information was requested to assist the Committee in its deliberations on whether the facility should be constructed on the selected site or one of the alternate sites. During the District's site selection process, a site on the D.C. General Hospital grounds was chosen as the location for the correctional facility. However, the presence of prehistoric Indian artifacts and continued neighborhood opposition led to congressional consideration of other potential locations. The alternate sites you asked us to look at are known as the Brickyard site, the South Capitol Street site, the Anacostia Park/Fort Lincoln site, and the Fort Lincoln site.

Because urban prison site selection is a specialized activity, you arranged for the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to assist us. The BOP expert reviewed the four sites, using BOP established site evaluation criteria and District data provided by us, and gave us information about the alternate sites.

As agreed, this report describes each alternate site, summarizes the BOP review of the various sites, and identifies potential cost increases that should be considered in arriving at any decision to move from the current location. A description of each site and a summary of BOP's review is included in the appendix, and the potential costs of moving from the current site are discussed on pages 4 and 5.

RESULTS IN BRIEF

In summary, BOP's review identified positive and negative aspects of each site. All the sites have disadvantages but,

according to a BOP official, these can be surmounted if enough money and time are available. The District estimates that if an alternate site is selected, cost increases (ranging from \$5.2 million to \$10.2 million for items for which estimates were practical) over current contract costs can be expected, depending on the site selected.

THE DISTRICT'S PLANNED CORRECTIONAL
TREATMENT FACILITY

The District's correctional facilities are significantly overcrowded, with most operating under a court-imposed population cap. Because the federal correctional system also is overcrowded, it is no longer able to provide relief to the District at the same level as in the past. As of January 1988, 2,154 District prisoners were incarcerated in federal correctional facilities according to a BOP official.

Congress appropriated \$50 million between fiscal years 1986 and 1988 to construct a correctional facility in the District of Columbia. The District identified a need for an 800-bed Correctional Treatment Facility to provide reception, diagnostic, substance abuse, and mental health services to inmates. Five potential sites were considered for this facility: a site at D.C. General Hospital, and sites at the Brickyard, South Capitol Street, Anacostia Park/Fort Lincoln, and Fort Lincoln. The District government selected the D.C. General Hospital site, and on October 15, 1986, awarded a \$49.8 million contract to design and construct the facility. Site preparation work has begun at the hospital site.

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Our objective was to obtain information about the suitability of the four specific sites which might be considered as alternate sites to the D.C. Hospital location for the correctional facility. You agreed with the BOP-developed site selection criteria and our use, without verification, of site data generated by the District during its consideration of these same sites. Finally, as requested, we did not ask the controlling federal agencies whether the sites could be made available to the District, although we asked about their plans for the locations.

BOP's expert identified 15 site selection criteria which he considered appropriate for this situation. According to the BOP expert, for 4 of these 15 criteria, Geological Fault Zones, Subsurface Mining Areas, Soil Characteristics, and

Archaeological and Historic Resources, insufficient information was available for analysis. He said that detailed data on these criteria are not usually gathered until the selection has been narrowed to only one or two sites because gathering this information is costly. The remaining 11 criteria are discussed on pages 3 and 4.

On the basis of data we provided, BOP applied its criteria to the sites. We met with BOP officials to discuss their results. Because of the interrelationship of the criteria and the lack of sufficient information in certain cases, it was neither possible nor desirable for us to draw specific conclusions for each criteria for each site. As a result, we summarized BOP's review in the appendix rather than describing all criteria in detail for each site.

We also did work at the District's Departments of Corrections, Housing and Community Development, Public Works, and the Office of Planning, during the period October 1987 through January 1988. These agencies provided background on the District's site selection process, supplied data concerning the sites, and identified potential cost impacts. We interviewed responsible agency officials, reviewed agency records and consultant reports, and visited the sites. We also contacted the General Services Administration, the Departments of Agriculture, Justice, and Navy, and the National Capitol Planning Commission concerning planned use of the sites. Our work was done in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

BOP SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

BOP used the following 11 criteria in its review of the four alternate sites for the correctional facility.

Land Area - Gross land required for a new facility.

Topographic Conditions - Slope of terrain being considered.

Access - Availability of constructed and well maintained roadways.

Utilities - Electric, gas, telephone, water, and waste water collection and treatment services.

Demographic Characteristics - A qualified pool of prospective employees.

Land Use - Existing plans for use of the site being considered.

Community Services and Facilities - Location of police, fire, and medical services.

Riverine Flood Hazard Zones - Areas within the 100-year flood zones.

Emergency Evacuation Zones - Proximity to nuclear power plants and hazardous waste treatment and disposal facilities.

Wetlands - Coastal or inland wetlands areas that support a prevalence of vegetative or aquatic life that require saturated soil.

Threatened and Endangered Species Habitats - Areas with a permanent habitat of vegetation or wildlife that are threatened or endangered.

POTENTIAL COST INCREASES IF CORRECTIONAL FACILITY IS MOVED

Cost increases for such items as designing and constructing a heating plant, redesigning the current plans, performing pre-engineering and topographical surveys, construction delays and resulting cost increases and transferring the work site are likely to be incurred if the correctional facility is relocated to any of the four alternate sites. The District government has identified some of these increases which range from \$5.2 million to \$10.2 million, depending on the site selected. According to the District, the major increase will come from the need to design and construct a separate heating plant for the alternate site. The current design utilizes the D.C. General Hospital's central heating plant.

The District has spent approximately \$5.0 million for design and site preparation at the current site. If the facility is moved to a site which is not adequate for the current design, it would have to be redesigned. Even if redesign is not required, a potential cost increase, ranging from \$200,000 to \$250,000, would be incurred for pre-engineering and topographical surveys of the alternate site. Also, additional site preparation costs would be incurred if the facility is moved to any of the alternate sites.

According to District officials, in addition to the foregoing, construction delay and increased costs are likely if an alternate site is chosen. Federal agencies control these sites, except for a 5-acre portion of the South Capitol Street site which is owned by the District. District officials said they would have to seek the transfer of the alternate site to the city, and the start of work at the new site would be delayed until the transfer is completed. This process may be complicated because the controlling federal agencies have specific plans to build on the Brickyard and South Capitol Street sites.

Further, delays in construction increase the chance of cost increases due to inflation. A District official estimates the cost of construction delays to be about \$8,800 per day. Additional costs could be involved if the contractor has to move his work effort from the current site to an alternate site.

The District government told us that they believed all increased costs would have to be covered by the existing \$50 million already appropriated and that this could result in a reduction in the planned size of the correctional facility. However, the conference report that accompanies Public Law 100-202, Further Continuing Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1988, states that the federal government will compensate the District for expenditures made in preparing the present site, including architectural design costs, if an alternate site is selected. This compensation would offset, to an unknown extent, the financial impact of relocation.

As you requested, we did not obtain official agency comments on this report. Unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days after its issue date. At that time we will send copies to interested parties and make copies available to others upon request.

If you have any questions, please call me on 275-8387.

Sincerely yours,



Gene L. Dodaro
Associate Director

DESCRIPTIONS OF ALTERNATE FACILITY SITES AND
THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS' REVIEW

The following narrative provides a brief description of each alternate site and a summary of BOP's site review.

BRICKYARD SITE

The Brickyard site is a part of the National Arboretum, owned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The site, located along New York Avenue, N.E., is approximately 15 acres of land that forms an "L" shape around the historic Brickyard. Direct access to the site is available from New York Avenue.

Hickey Run divides the site into two developable portions of 11.5 acres and 3.0 acres. The other 0.5 acres are in a potential flood plain along Hickey Run. The site slopes approximately 1 foot in every 14 feet. A 12-inch water main, 42-inch sanitary sewer and a 2-foot by 3-foot storm sewer are available to serve the site along New York Avenue. Fifth District Police Headquarters virtually abuts the site, and there is a fire station about 1.2 miles away.

Currently, Arboretum plans call for this site to be developed as a new maintenance shop area which also would include plantings of native American trees and shrubs that would be considered part of the Germplasm Repository of Native American Trees/Shrubs. This site is currently not zoned as it is federal property. The National Arboretum, including the Brickyard complex, is on the National Register of Historic Places.

BOP's review characterized most of the site criteria as positive. For example, acreage available, roadway access and utilities available were considered positive. However, several site criteria were characterized negatively. For example, the Arboretum has plans to use the site, and the site also lays in a potential minor flood plain.

SOUTH CAPITOL STREET SITE

This 21-acre site, located at the south end of the Frederick Douglass Bridge, borders the Anacostia River with access from South Capitol Street. The District of Columbia owns 5 of the 21 acres. The remaining 16 acres, part of the Anacostia Naval Station, are federal lands controlled by the Department of the Navy.

The site is generally flat; however, most of the site is below the flood plain level. In the nearby area are two 30-inch water mains, a sanitary sewer, and a 90-inch storm drain which transits the site. A police station is approximately 2.25 miles away and a

fire station is approximately 1.75 miles away.

The District has no major improvements planned for its part of the site. However, the Department of Navy plans to build a Naval Intelligence Center on its portion, according to a Navy official. A conceptual design contract has been awarded for the project. The site is not zoned as it is federal and District government property.

BOP's review characterized most of the site criteria as positive. For example, acreage available, roadway access, and utilities available were considered positive. However, several site criteria were characterized negatively. For example, the Navy has plans for the site and much of the site is in a flood plain.

ANACOSTIA PARK/FORT LINCOLN SITE

This site has approximately 16 acres of land located along the Anacostia River, south of the railroad tracks between South Dakota Avenue extended and the river. There is currently no access by road to the site. The Department of Housing and Urban Development has title to 5.3 acres which are part of the Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Plan. The other 10.7 acres are part of Anacostia Park and under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service.

Approximately 8 acres of the site are in the 100-year flood plain and are considered wetlands. The slope of the site is steep. A 12-inch water main is available nearby and a 42-inch sanitary sewer is available at the intersection of South Dakota Avenue and New York Avenue. No storm sewer is available for the site. A police station is about 1.2 miles away and a fire station is about 2.0 miles away.

The entire site is unzoned because of federal ownership. There are no plans by the federal or District governments to develop the site, except as open space.

BOP's review characterized some of the site criteria as positive. For example, a positive factor was that endangered species were not likely to exist at the site. However, most site criteria were characterized negatively. For example, the site is in a flood plain, has no roadway access, and available utilities are marginal.

FORT LINCOLN SITE

This approximately 10-acre site is located between New York Avenue and the railroad tracks, about 1,000 feet east of South Dakota Avenue. There is currently no access by road to the site.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has title to about 8.5 acres which are included in the Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Plan. The other 1.5 acres are part of Anacostia Park and under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. Approximately 1 acre at the southeastern corner of the site is in the 100-year flood plain. Also, about 1 acre of this site is considered wetlands.

Much of the site consists of a slope of 1 foot in every 7 feet or greater. A 16-inch water main and a 42-inch sanitary sewer run under South Dakota Avenue with a 30-inch storm sewer along the northern boundary of the site. A police station is approximately 1.2 miles away and a fire station is approximately 2.0 miles away.

This site is not zoned as it is federally owned. The Urban Renewal Plan and the National Park Service plans for the land call for the area to be largely open space.

BOP's review characterized some of the criteria as positive. For example, the site is not near hazardous materials or a hazardous activity. However, most site criteria were characterized negatively. For example, the site is in a minor flood plain, has no roadway access, and available utilities are marginal.

Requests for copies of GAO reports should be sent to:

**U.S. General Accounting Office
Post Office Box 6015
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877**

Telephone 202-275-6241

The first five copies of each report are free. Additional copies are \$2.00 each.

There is a 25% discount on orders for 100 or more copies mailed to a single address.

Orders must be prepaid by cash or by check or money order made out to the Superintendent of Documents.

**United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548**

**Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300**

**First-Class Mail
Postage & Fees Paid
GAO
Permit No. G100**