

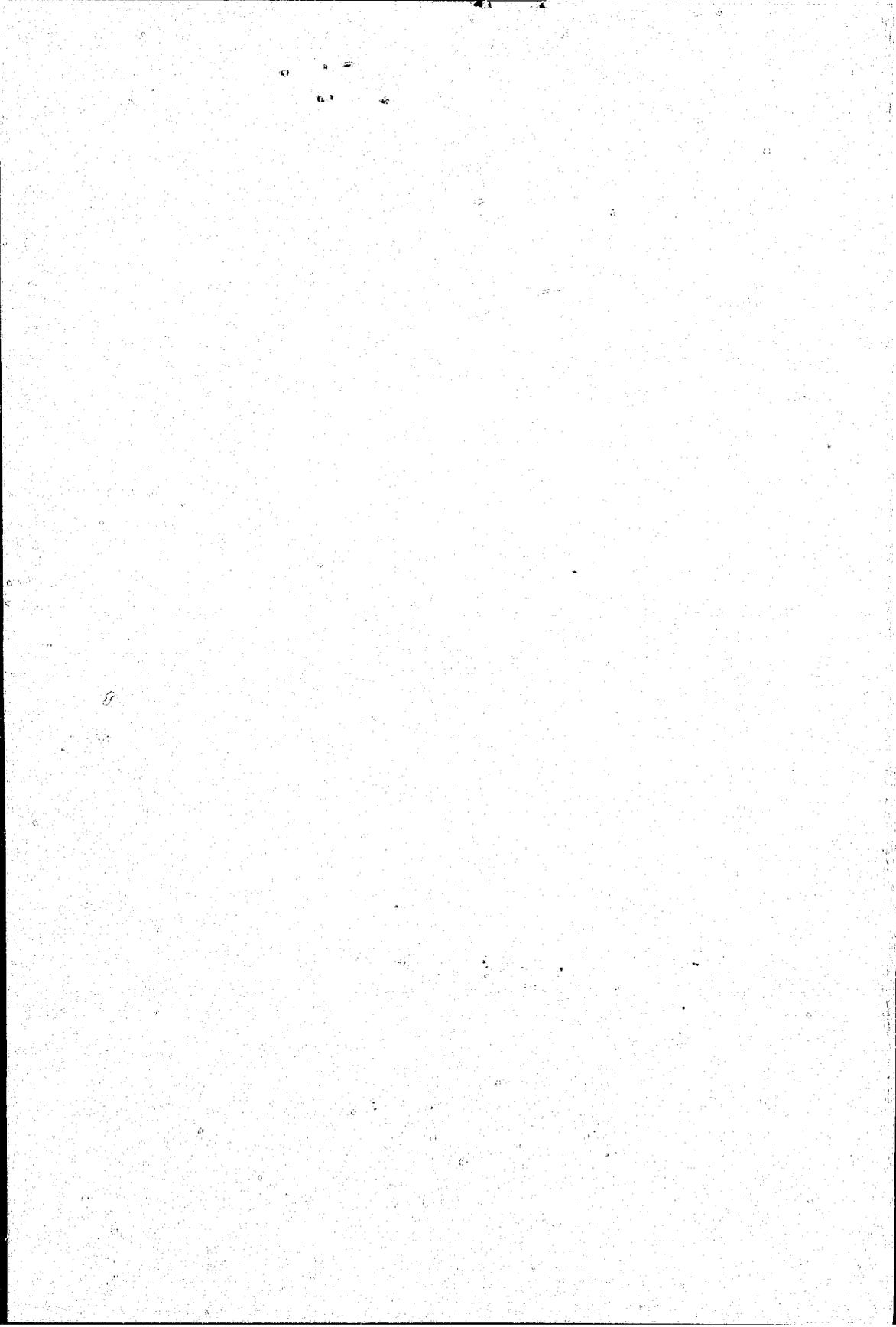
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE

NEW JERSEY
CORRECTIONAL
MASTER
PLAN

54178



State of New Jersey, Brendan T. Byrne, Governor
Department of Corrections, Robert E. Mulcahy, III, Commissioner





State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

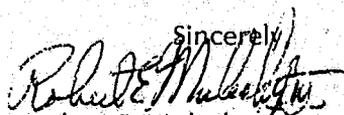
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Dear Friends,

In response to numerous inquiries concerning plans for the Department of Corrections, we have prepared this booklet which answers the questions most often asked about our Departmental Master Plan. When the Master Plan was first presented at a statewide conference in March, we acknowledged that this Plan would guide us as we undertook the kind of changes that are necessary to provide an efficient, effective, and just correctional system. The Department remains committed to this Plan and it is encouraging to see the interest it has generated. I am happy to report that the dialogue which was intended and hoped for with the development of the Master Plan has begun.

Sincerely,


Robert E. Mulcahy, III
Commissioner

NCJRS

FEB 5 1979

ACQUISITIONS



1

What Is the Correctional Master Plan? Who developed it?

The Correctional Master Plan is a statement of policy to guide the correctional system in New Jersey. It was developed in response to a need for such long-term direction. The Master Plan offers recommendations in several areas of corrections, with the intention of making the "system" work better. It attempts to make the correctional system more of a system, using its personnel and fiscal resources more efficiently so that New Jersey has the kind of coordinated, planned and well-managed correctional system it needs.

The goal of the New Jersey Correctional Master Plan has been two-fold:

1. to offer a long range direction for the correctional system, and
2. to improve communication among the various components of the correctional system so that the entire system is improved.

The New Jersey Correctional Master Plan was developed by a 24-member council which worked with staff and consultants over a two-year period.

The Correctional Master Plan Policy Council included representatives of the Legislature, the Judiciary and the Executive (the Attorney General's office, the Public Advocate's office, the Parole Board, the State Law Enforcement Planning Agency); representatives of national and state citizen groups (The National Council on Crime and Delinquency, the New Jersey Association on Corrections, the League of Women Voters, and the Morrow Projects), two New Jersey Universities (Rutgers and Princeton), the Policemen's Benevolent Association, the Garden State School District, and representatives of correctional institution boards of trustees, staff and inmates.

Their recommendations, which make up the New Jersey Correctional Master Plan, reflect the best resolution they could achieve of the wide range of interests and concerns they represented. Their recommendations also reflect a recognition that the very serious problems of New Jersey corrections call for a significant change in the way New Jersey deals with its offenders.

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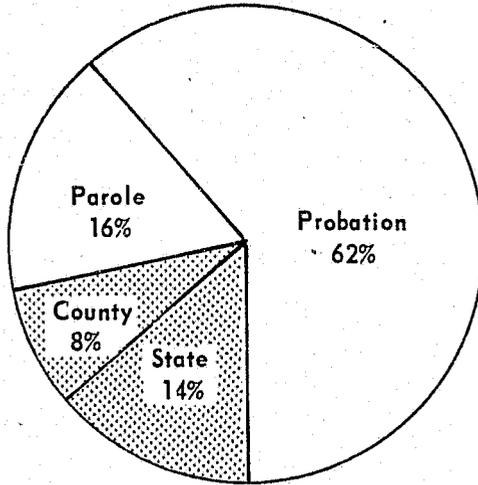
Why was the Master Plan developed?

There were several reasons for developing a Corrections Master Plan. The correctional system in New Jersey is like that in many other states. It has not been able in the past to do the kind of long-range, coordinated planning that is necessary to be effective in accomplishing its objectives. Furthermore, there has not been system-wide clear consensus on what the objectives of the system should be nor on how to best meet these objectives. In addition, the correctional system is facing great demands at the present time, and we are confronted with critical and costly issues which have long-lasting consequences.

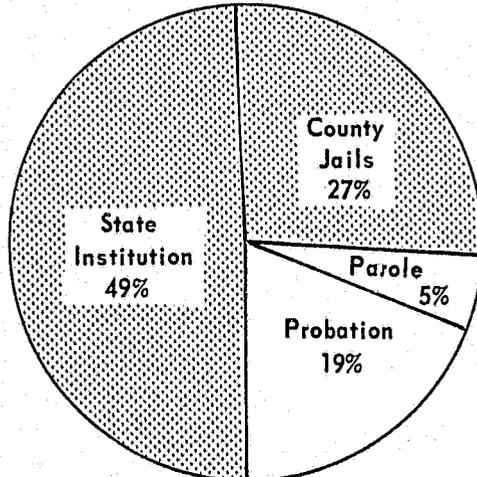
It seemed both practical and highly desirable, therefore, that a statement of correctional policy be issued so that decisionmakers could make choices which are sound, cost/beneficial and consistent with overall system goals. When the relative costs, benefits, and effectiveness of various correctional activities are analyzed, the advantages of having a Master Plan become obvious.

NEW JERSEY CORRECTIONS: OFFENDERS AND COSTS

48,000 OFFENDERS
IN CUSTODY OR SUPERVISED



\$112 MILLION FOR
ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS

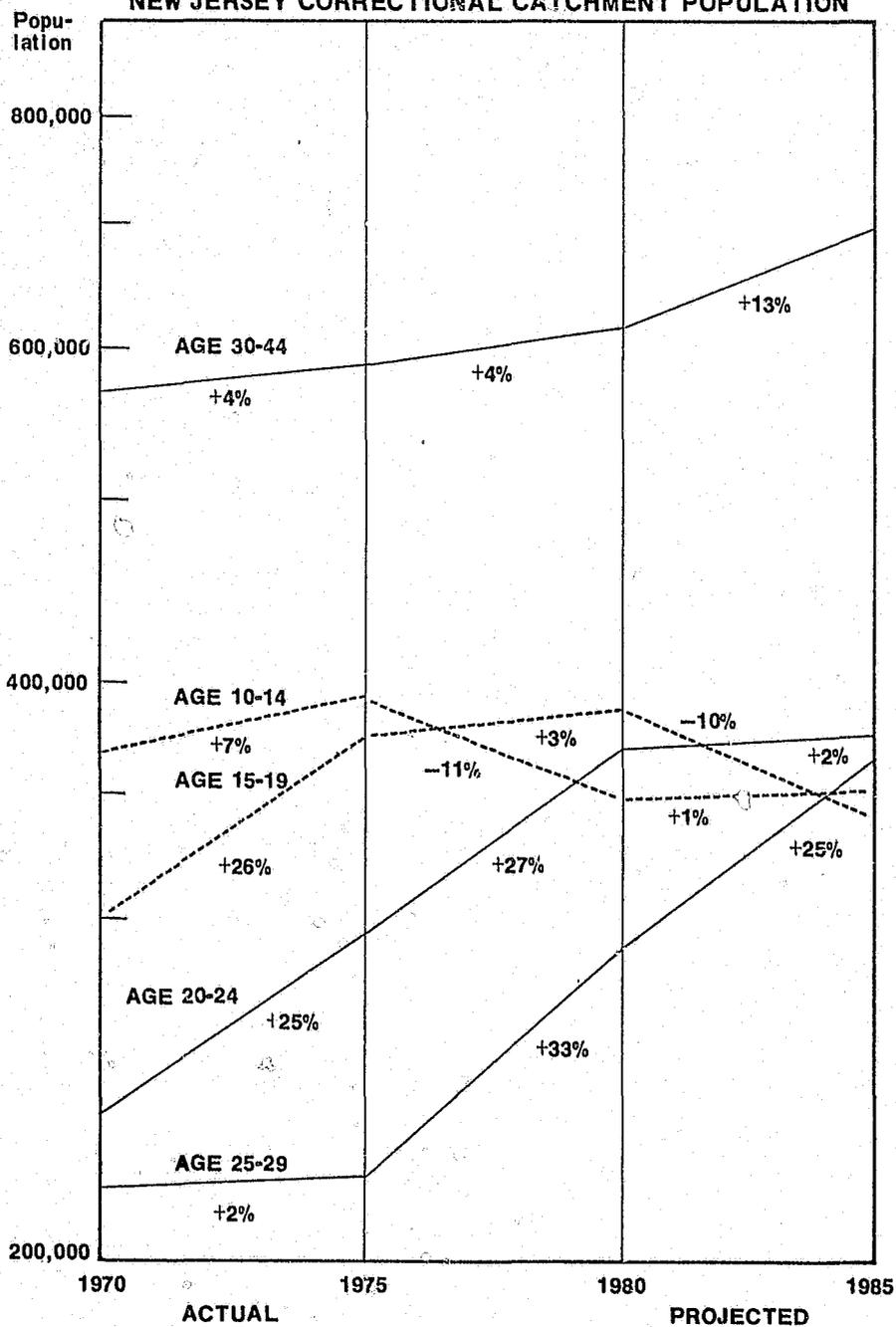


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How is the correctional "system" administered in New Jersey at the present time?

Usually the criminal justice system is defined as having three basic components: police, courts and corrections. The corrections component generally represents all those programs, facilities and operations dealing with offenders convicted by the courts. In New Jersey, the main correctional activities are administered along different jurisdictional lines: jails for pre-trial detention and sentences of less than one year are individual county activities; probation is a court-administered function run by individual counties; institutions for offenders sentenced to over one year and the supervision of parolees are the responsibility of the New Jersey Department of Corrections. The accompanying illustration portrays the distribution of offenders (and an approximate statement of costs) into the various components of the correctional system.

A) TRENDS IN NEW JERSEY CORRECTIONAL CATCHMENT POPULATION



4

What determines how many offenders are incarcerated?

Generally, three main factors determine the number of people incarcerated:

- A. the number of young males in the state population;
- B. the admission rate to state institutions (which is related to crime rate);
- C. the length of stay in prison before release.

As any or all of these three factors increase, New Jersey's institutional population increases. Let's look at some relevant statistics.

A. The New Jersey Correctional Catchment Population

Traditionally, males in their 20's are the group from which the institutional population is most heavily drawn. That group is projected from census data to increase quite sharply in New Jersey over the next ten years, as the chart indicates.

B. The Admission Rate to State Institutions

Recent admission rates to institutions have been lower than in the early 1970's. A notable exception is the increase in the rate of admission of offenders against persons. It is not likely that the low overall rate will decrease further and it is somewhat optimistic to assume that this rate will remain at its current low level.

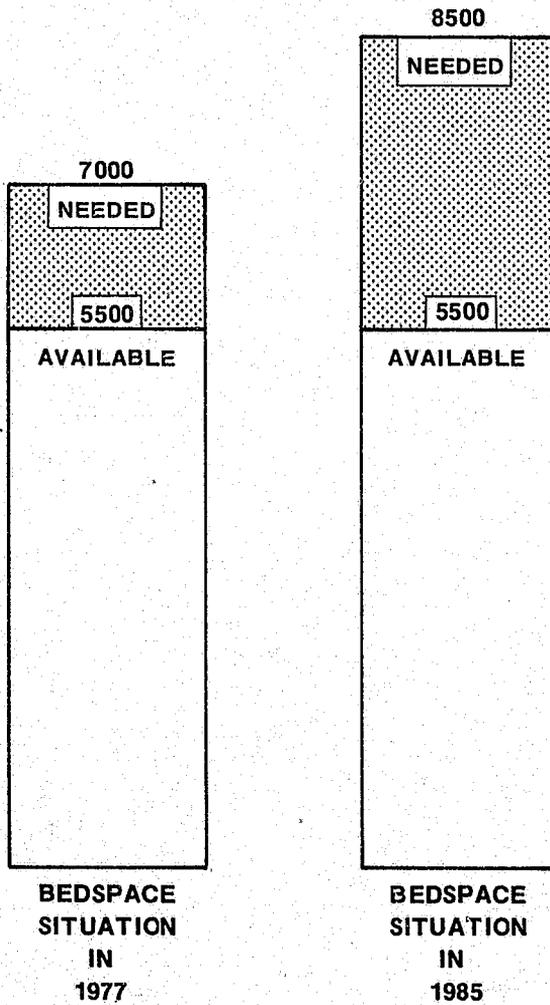
ADMISSION RATES PER 100,000 OF YOUNG NEW JERSEY MALES	Actual		Projected	
	1970	1975	1980	1985
TOTAL ADMISSIONS TO STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTS	319	284	284	284
Property, Narcotics, and Public Policy Offenders	225	172	172	172
Offenders against Persons	94	112	112	112

C. The Length of Stay in Prison Before Release

Despite the increases in admissions of more serious offenders reported in the previous table, the length of stay of Training School and Youth Correctional offenders has stayed basically the same during the past six years. During this period, the length of stay of women and prison offenders has actually dropped. It is probably unrealistic to think that length of stay can be held to current levels in the next five years. It is probably more realistic to expect stricter sentencing and release practices and an increase in length of stay. Note that offenders against persons are incarcerated for much longer than other offenders and many more offenders against persons are being admitted to state institutions.

AVERAGE MONTHS OF STAY	1970	1974
	-1973	-1975
OFFENDERS AGAINST PERSONS		
Training Schools	9.0	9.1
Youth Institutions	9.2	9.7
Women's Correctional	18.8	14.5
Prisons	35.7	30.2
PROPERTY AND OTHER OFFENDERS		
Training Schools	8.0	7.6
Youth Institutions	7.1	5.8
Women's Correctional	11.8	7.1
Prisons	20.0	18.3

CURRENT AND FUTURE OVERCROWDING



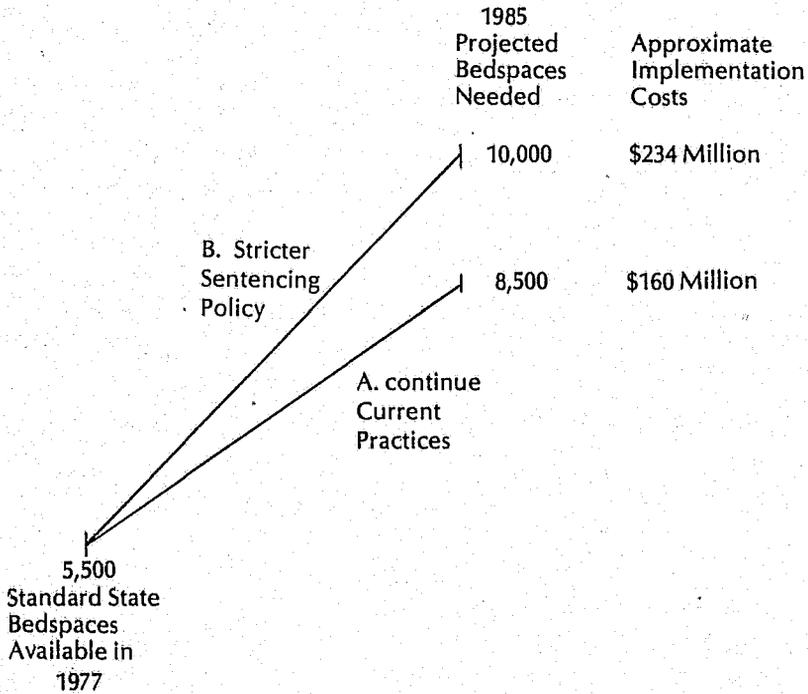
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There has been much publicity about overcrowding in old, deteriorated correctional institutions. What are the facts?

At present, there are approximately 7,000 bedspaces needed to house offenders whose incarceration is the responsibility of the Department of Corrections. There are, however, only about 5,500 standard bedspaces available in the department's institutions, and some of these bedspaces meet only very minimal standards.

The overcrowding situation, then, is critical—and the future picture is even more serious unless some changes are made concerning the disposition of offenders. Even if there is no increase in the rate of admission to state correctional institutions and no increase in the length of incarceration of the offenders admitted, the present state correctional institutions will be short 3,000 bedspaces due to the increase in young males in the New Jersey population.

1985: TWO POSSIBLE PROJECTIONS



6

What demands will be placed on the Department of Corrections according to projections of current trends?

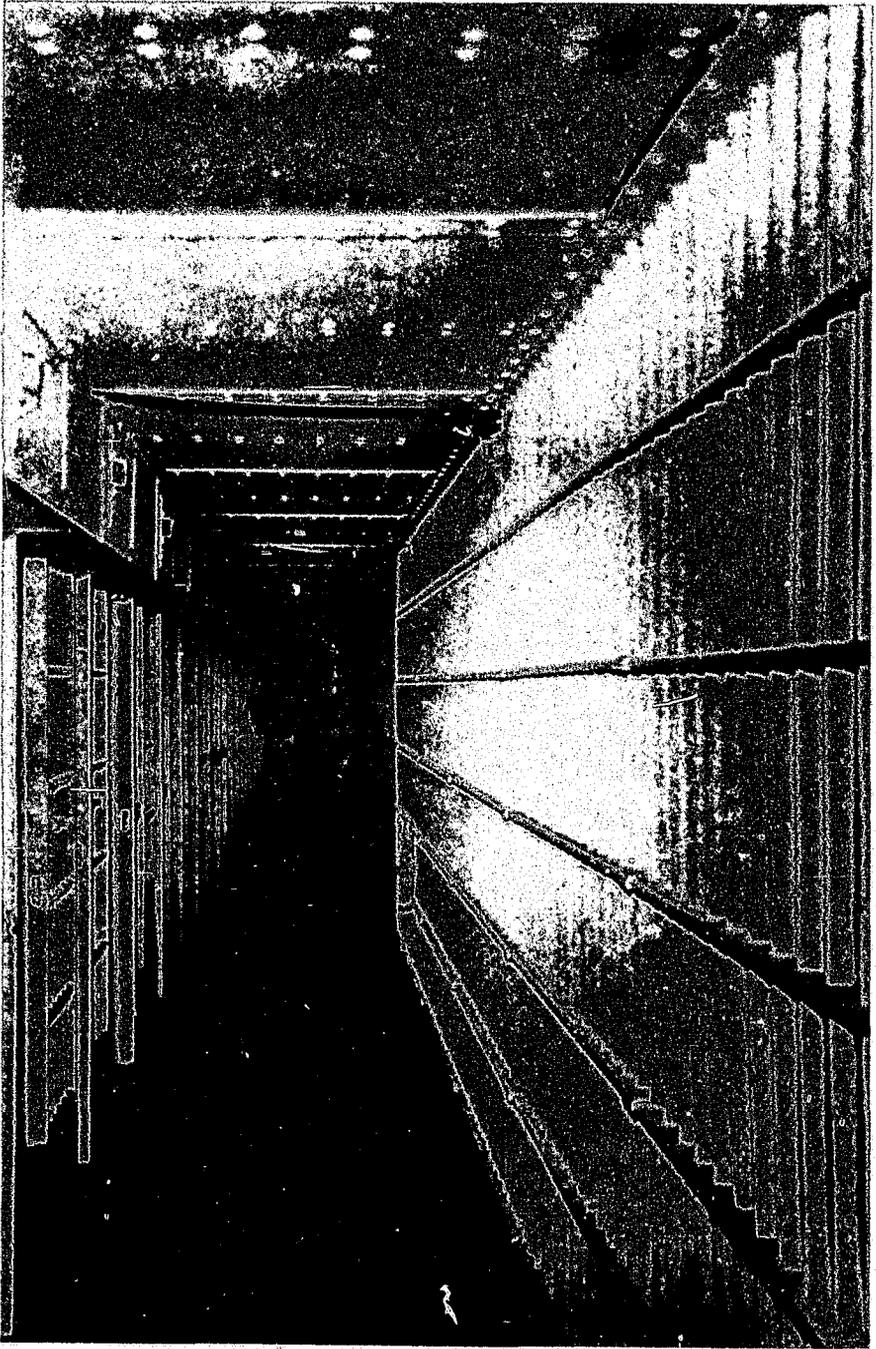
Future demands on the state correctional system depend on choices and policies adopted now. Consider, for instance, two possible projections for 1985:

A. Continuation of current sentencing and release practices.

Under these conditions, an increase in the New Jersey population from which state offenders are drawn would result in a need for 8,500 bedspaces in 1985, as opposed to the presently available 5,500 bedspaces. To build these new bedspaces and to perform essential renovations on existing facilities would cost approximately \$160 million in 1977 dollars, exclusive of financing.

B. A stricter sentencing policy.

If sentencing practices change in the direction of longer sentences, even a limited increase in length of stay would require the state to provide 10,000 bedspaces. The cost for this would be approximately \$234 million in 1977 dollars.



7

What are the Master Plan's major recommendations? How do they affect the various components of the correctional system?

When the Master Plan was begun, the Policy Council voted to adopt a total systems planning approach which looked at the different elements of the criminal justice system affecting corrections. It was felt that a comprehensive correctional policy and philosophy must address such issues as sentencing, parole decision-making, county corrections and probation, none of which is jurisdictionally part of the Department of Corrections, but all of which have a great impact on the overall state correctional system.

The recommendations are summarized below:

Sentencing and Parole Recommendations

The correctional philosophy for sentencing and parole recommended in the Master Plan is intended to eliminate much of the discretion and resulting disparity in the system. It acknowledges that punishment is a legitimate goal of the correctional system, and that justice demands that offenders who are similarly situated in terms of offense and offense history receive similar treatment in the correctional system.

The disposition of criminals would be guided through the use of formalized sentencing criteria. In determining a disposition from a stated range, emphasis would be more on the offense than on the offender and sentences would be determinate for a fixed maximum period. Indeterminate sentences, such as are now used for the Youth Correctional Complex, would be eliminated. The least restrictive of a range of increasingly severe dispositions should be utilized. Incarceration should be seen as the last resort when no other alternative is likely to achieve the aim of deterrence and

incapacitation. Parole discretion should be minimized through the use of presumptive parole at first eligibility within specified guidelines.

A Local Corrections Plan

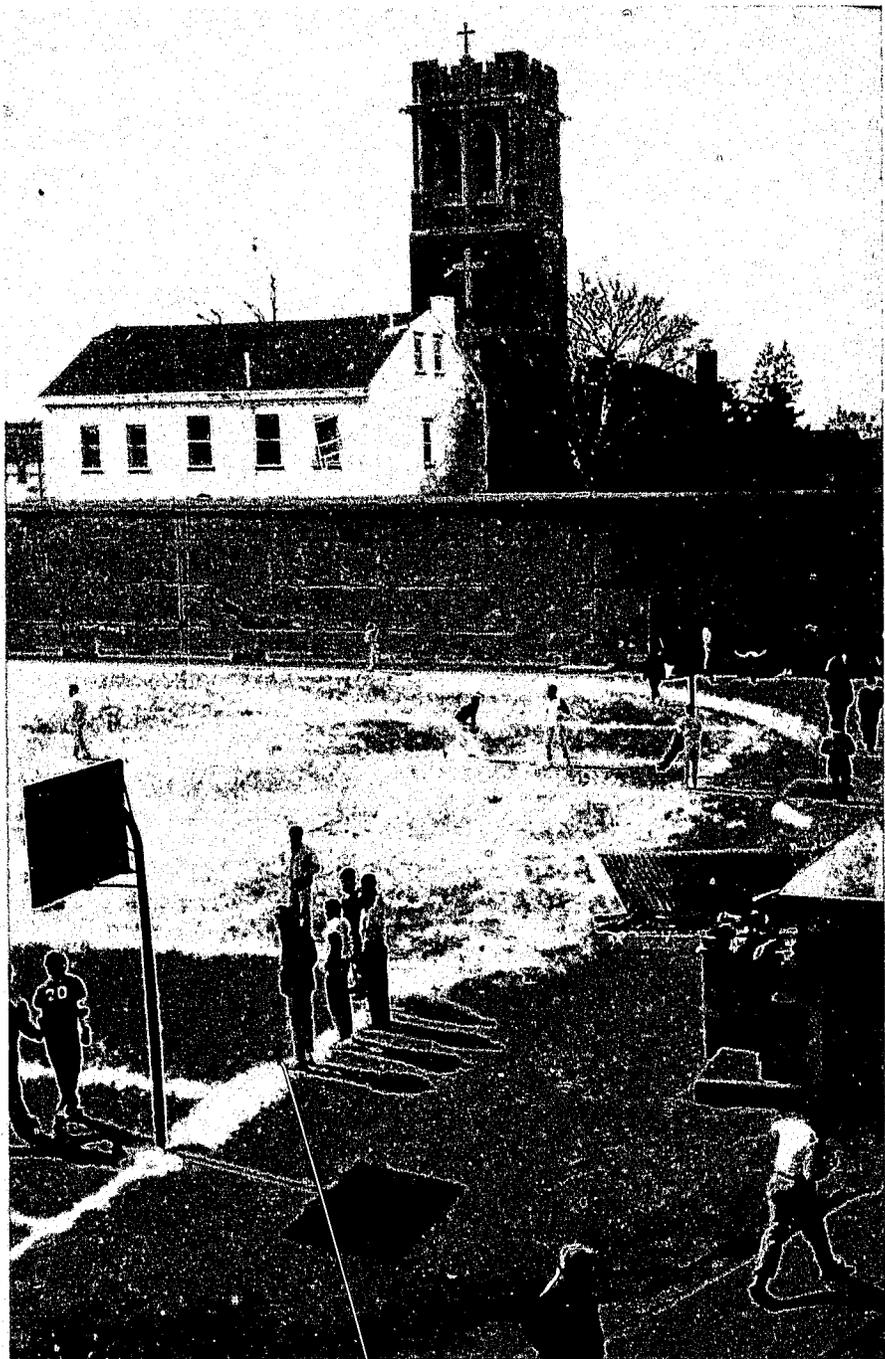
Consistent with the correctional philosophy adopted and in view of the facility needs projected for population increases, a plan was recommended which would increase the role of local correctional programs in this state. Specifically, it was recommended that a system be utilized whereby many less serious offenders who now enter state institutions be retained in facilities and programs at the local level. The state would provide funding and other assistance to local government for the care of these offenders.

Construction of New State Institutions

Because of the severe overcrowding and the resultant necessary use of substandard beds, it was recommended that the Department of Corrections undertake a construction program to provide 1,200 new bedspaces. It is believed that this number will be sufficient if a local corrections plan, as outlined above, is implemented. This recommendation stipulates three conditions for the building program:

- before any new construction is undertaken, all suitable existing bedspaces should be utilized;
- for existing facilities, at least 50 square feet of bedspace must be provided for every inmate, and other renovations must be undertaken as necessary to meet minimal standards, and
- for additional or replacement bedspaces, the standards to be adopted must comply with the physical and space standards promulgated by the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals.





8

What are the advantages of the Master Plan?

There are several advantages. Initially, it is felt that the correctional philosophy recommended in the Master Plan, if followed, will provide a system that the public understands and has confidence in. The current use of discretion in sentencing and parole makes it difficult for the average citizen who observes the correctional system—and the offenders who participate in it—to comprehend the dynamics of the system. There appears to be disparity in how lawbreakers are treated—who goes to prison, for how long, and the conditions under which they are released.

The sentencing and parole recommendations, if enacted, would introduce equity of punishment into the system. It would further enhance the reintegration of offenders into society. These two objectives are the stated goals of corrections as defined by the Master Plan.

Another advantage is that under a local corrections plan, resources can be used to provide facilities and programs for less serious offenders closer to their home communities rather than in remote sites where reintegration into the community is made more difficult. Analysis of correctional practices in New Jersey shows that the state takes a large number of offenders and processes them into a state-run institution where they actually stay for relatively short periods of time. This utilizes secure facilities which are needed for more serious, long-term offenders. It would be more cost/beneficial to spend state money for the provision of the appropriate kinds of facilities and programs at more local levels. This would allow the State Department of Corrections to concentrate on those more serious offenders who could not—and should not—be kept in local facilities.

With the use of state fiscal support for local correctional services, the courts would then have more of a range of programs into which they could sentence offenders who would not need the long-term institutions.

The construction program recommended in the Master Plan would provide the critically needed bedspaces for offenders in state institutions. The correctional system of New Jersey must meet its responsibility to provide decent, humane, and safe environments in which thousands of people live and work.

9

What would be the outcome if the Master Plan recommendations were implemented?

The New Jersey Correctional Master Plan, if implemented as a whole, would have the following effects:

- Corrections at the local level, in accordance with state standards, would be increased and supported by state assistance for the less serious offenders who now enter state institutions.
- At the state level, the more serious offenders would all be housed in secure correctional institutions which meet minimum standards for inmates and staff.
- It is likely that there would be a moderate increase in the length of stay for these more serious offenders in secure state institutions.
- The sentencing and parole processes would have less discretion than at present, with the likely consequence that the correctional system would be seen as more equitable, just, and comprehensible by both citizens and offenders.



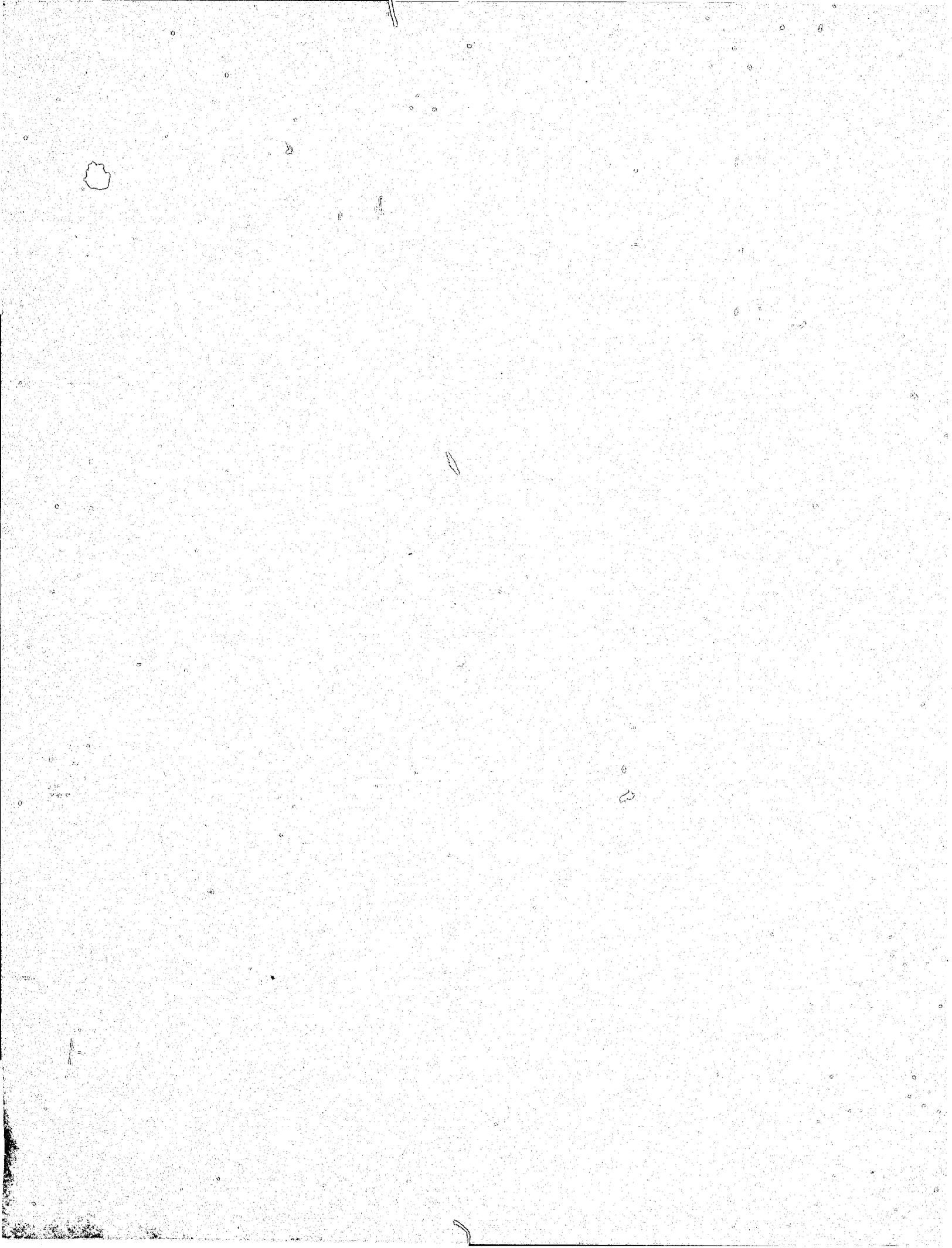
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Finally, what about costs?

Especially in these times, public agencies must be very conscious of costs and correctional costs are very high. Experts say that by the time a medium or maximum security correctional institution is constructed and equipped, it costs almost \$50,000 per cell! The State of New Jersey must therefore examine very closely the number of people it chooses to incarcerate in these facilities. We must, of course, have a correctional system which provides a sufficient number of high security bedspaces, but because of the high construction and operational costs we must use them only when necessary. It is unwise and uneconomical to house in such facilities offenders who could be better taken care of in programs and institutions at the local level.

The Local Corrections Plan would cost an estimated \$193 million to implement over the next 8 years. This figure represents the best possible approximation of costs to construct the 1,200 new high security bedspaces, to renovate the deteriorated existing facilities, to convert other existing bedspaces, and to support local correctional programs and facilities for less serious offenders whom they would be receiving under this plan. This figure is stated in terms of 1977 dollars and is exclusive of financing costs.

To be sure, the costs are high but not to plan to meet the state's correctional needs incurs even higher dollar and social costs. It is hard to conceive of a governmental function which has more impact on the lives of its citizens than the criminal justice system. The citizens of the state have every right to expect protection from offenders through a correctional system characterized by efficiency, effectiveness, and justice.





END

