



Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

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Columbus, OH 43229

Ted Strickland, Governor

www.drc.state.oh.us

Terry Collins, Director

June 12, 2007

Sheriff Simon L. Leis, Jr.
Hamilton Co. Sheriff's Office
1000 Sycamore Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Re: Queensgate Minimum Security Jail

Dear Sheriff Leis:

Per the request of Jeff Eiser, Deputy Director of the Hamilton County Jail's Corrections Division, the following are some of the concerns that the Bureau has with Hamilton County continuing to operate the Queensgate Jail.

The Bureau understands that the Queensgate facility was originally constructed for use as a warehouse or similar commercial use facility, and was not originally constructed to later act as a jail; therefore, the usual security measures typically associated with a secure jail facility are lacking in this structure. Of particular note are the security perimeter walls of the facility:

1. The outer walls are basically commercial grade walls, and the extreme age of the facility (believed to be around 100 years old) brings into question the current integrity of even these commercial graded walls.
2. The window glazing in the security perimeter windows is not even minimum security, detention grade glazing. While screens were added to the windows in an effort to deter inmates from damaging the existing glass windows, help shield prisoners from any broken window glass, and to discourage escapes out of the windows, the security protection provided by these windows fall significantly short of the minimum security, detention grade glazing typically approved for Full Service Minimum Security Jails.
3. The window frames supporting the security perimeter windows are more along the lines of commercial grade quality and the security level of the materials used to secure the frames to the perimeter walls is questionable. Also, the age of these frames and accompanying anchoring materials may have caused even their commercial grade integrity to be currently questionable.

The large open dormitory style housing units and the inmate traffic pattern associated with moving large numbers of prisoners from their housing units to the centralized mess hall for meal service are both associated with a jail layout usually restricted to minimum security risk prisoners. Unfortunately, it is the Bureau's understanding that early on, in an effort to reduce the overcrowding of the main jail, the Queensgate facility was forced to take on prisoner risk levels well above the risk level generally associated with minimum risk prisoners.

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Also of concern, is the matter that the Queensgate facility has direct style staff supervision, which can cause the risk of staff safety to become more questionable, should the housing units continue to contain prisoner classifications greater than minimum security levels.

The Queensgate Jail has some amount of quality programming opportunities, for I believe the last time I visited the jail, I toured a computer learning program area. The question becomes: "Is there sufficient programming spaces at the Queensgate Facility to meet the 'quantitative' programming needs of all the otherwise eligible and interested prisoners being housed there?"

When Hamilton County officials asked the Bureau of Adult Detention to approve the Queensgate Jail facility to open for business in 1992, the Bureau did so with the understanding that the Queensgate Jail operation was only a temporary housing measure, needed to help Hamilton County until they could build and open up a new 1500 bed jail project being planned for the Camp Washington area. This earlier proposed 1500 bed jail project was later terminated during the planning stage and fifteen years later, the Queensgate facility is still operating as a jail.

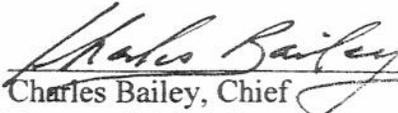
In summary, some of the more concerning aspects of the continued operation of the Queensgate Jail are:

1. The security perimeter walls, windows, and window frames fall below the detention security grade typically associated with minimum security county prisoners.
2. The age of the building brings into question any structural integrity of the security perimeter elements currently in place; even on a commercial level of thought, where the products being serviced are human beings.
3. The approval of the jail was based on the understanding that only minimum security prisoners would be housed in the facility, and then only until a new jail, which was well underway in planning stages, could be built and opened up for business.
4. Prisoner populations above minimum security risk classifications poses potentially higher risk concerns with direct supervision style staff posts; taking into account that direct supervision is needed for the current housing layout and the high numbers of prisoners being housed. This is a ripple effect security / safety concern, resulting from the housing of prisoner risk classifications above a minimum security risk classification.
5. While the Bureau has not evaluated the extent of programming opportunities being offered to prisoners within the Queensgate Jail, there is some concern that because of the number of prisoners being housed in the jail, the range of security risks of prisoners being housed, and the limited programming spaces available, not all prisoners are being provided with appropriate opportunities to engage in programming options.

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I hope the information contained within this letter is of some benefit to you. Please feel free to contact this Bureau, if we can be of further service.

Sincerely,



Charles Bailey, Chief
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Columbus, Ohio 43209

Copied: Inspector Pitts-Wilson, B.A.D.
Deputy Director Jeff Eiser, H.C.S.O.
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