

Correctional Facility Questions from the Essex Planning Commission

Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC)

Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS)

Question 1: *The Planning Commission is requesting public records for emergency services, paid for by the state. We request the volume of calls, type of calls (rescue, fire, police). The report should include calls from all service providers, not just from South Burlington.*

Please provide a multi-year report to show the trends and include the number of inmates for each year.

Answer:

As the City of South Burlington has presented, emergency calls to the current women’s facility, Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility, have been minimal, particularly given Vermont State Police have jurisdiction over state correctional facilities.

According to South Burlington’s data, there were 43 total fire and EMS calls for service in calendar year 2023, 23 in 2022, and 23 in 2021.

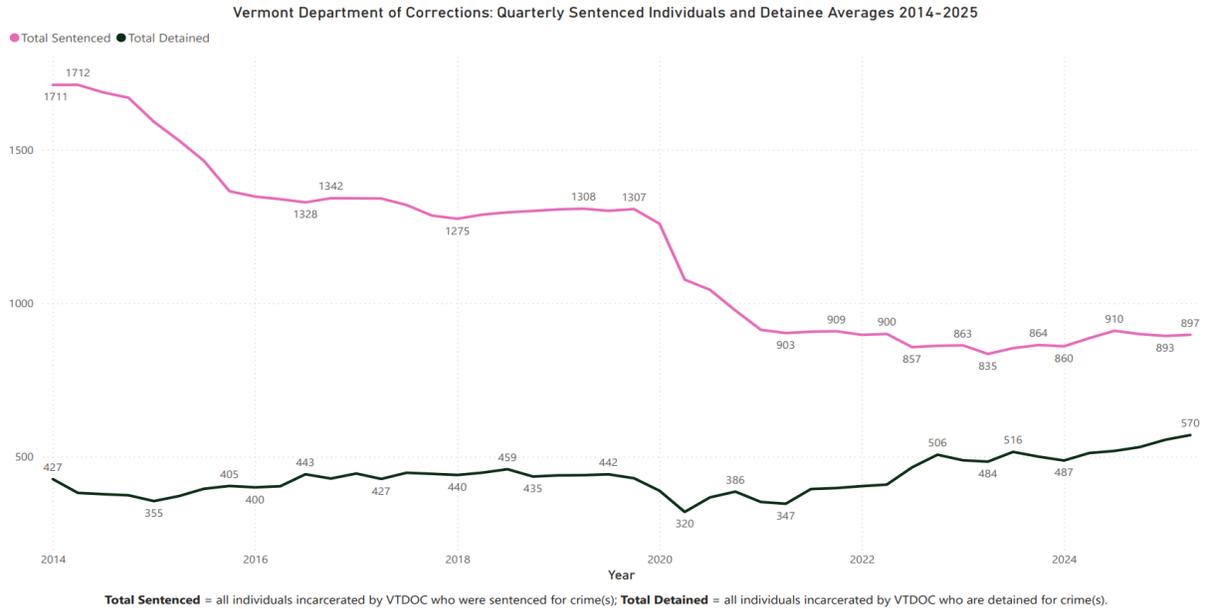
The agreement negotiated between the DOC healthcare contractor, Wellpath, and South Burlington requires the contractor to pay all municipal ambulance fees.

DOC also maintains its own transportation unit for nonemergent medical visits. This team covers the bulk of transports between correctional facilities and medical facilities statewide.

<i>EMS Calls Statewide from 2022-2024</i>						
	<i>Southern State</i>	<i>Northern State</i>	<i>Northwest State</i>	<i>Marble Valley</i>	<i>Northeast</i>	<i>Chittenden Regional</i>
<i>2024</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>2023</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>2022</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>23</i>

<i>Fire Calls Statewide from 2022-2024</i>						
	<i>Southern State</i>	<i>Northern State</i>	<i>Northwest State</i>	<i>Marble Valley</i>	<i>Northeast</i>	<i>Chittenden Regional</i>
<i>2024</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>2023</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>2022</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>

The figure below shows quarterly numbers of sentenced individuals and detainees in the Vermont correctional system for the last decade across all facilities (male and female).



Additional detailed population reports can be found on the DOC’s public Research and Data reporting page: <https://doc.vermont.gov/research-and-data/population-data>

Question 2: *Provide specific details about why are both sites viable.*

Answer:

The State weighs a number of factors during the preliminary site selection process, including site location, site area, site access, hydrological conditions (wetlands), topography, environmental impact, developable area, available utilities, and purchase cost (if applicable). The Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS) evaluates these factors on their impact on program function and development cost. The State must weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each variable when choosing available sites and must evaluate these factors using specific criteria set by the Legislature, Administration and State agencies.

In this case, location, proximity to the existing facility, proximity to human service providers and resources, and purchase cost were the primary factors leading to the selection of these sites. The State has determined Site 1 (212 Colchester Road) as the preferred site due to its location, developable area and other attributes. A full evaluation will determine the final viability and development cost of this site, but the State cannot expend the funds for the thorough evaluation and study given the current zoning regulations in place. If this further evaluation determines Site 1 to be nonviable, the State will next evaluate Site 2 (285 River Road) using the same process.

The additional information about the sewer core boundaries and additional services required does not change our desire to explore both sites but we understand the impact to Site 1 is more significant.

Question 3: *The choice of the two locations in Essex is partially based on the site's adjacency to the GMT bus line. The Colchester Road site has no bus service availability, and the River Road site is about ½ a mile to the Sand Hill/River Road bus stop that only operates on weekdays. How do the sites qualify as having a commuter stop?*

Answer:

Bus service and other public transportation are among many factors that the State considers as part of the preliminary site evaluation process. The State also evaluates utilities such as water, sewer, high-speed internet, and Class 2 roads. The initial evaluation and screening process revealed both sites had limited bus service options. However, State selected the two locations based on the strengths of the other factors, including the sites' proximity to service providers in the greater Burlington area.

Question 4: *Could the facility be converted to a different facility and could it be shared with another facility? Is there an intent to go to a private operating facility? Would there be any circumstance where out-of-state inmates could be housed at any women's or men's facility?*

Answer:

It is the intent of the State and General Assembly that the proposed facility will replace Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF) to serve justice-involved women in Vermont. There has been no discussion or consideration about converting the new facility into another facility for future use. Like all DOC facilities in Vermont, the new women's facility will be State-run, staffed by public state employees. There is no intent to operate the facility privately. The Legislature has ordered DOC to study whether CRCF, once vacated, could be used for a reentry facility (DOC recommendation: No) – see the legislative report linked in Question 7 for further information. See Question 14 for residency answer.

Question 5: *Question about PILOTT [sic]. What would the payment be? What are other specific carrots that the Town would/could get from the state? (several ideas were floated: salaries for fire and rescue, road infrastructure, wastewater treatment facility additional capacity).*

Answer:

PILOTT payments are determined by the appraised value of the constructed facility. The State does not have an appraised value for the yet-to-be constructed facility. The PILOTT program for municipalities is codified in statute under 32 V.S.A. § 3701- § 3707. Information on the Pilot program can be found on the Department of Taxes website: <https://tax.vermont.gov/municipal-officials/reports/pilot>.

The PILOT grant is based on the insurance replacement cost less depreciation of the State-owned property. Using an assumption of \$70,000,000 (conservative estimate), the attached model (Addendum 1) shows what the potential PILOT increase could be.

The State of Vermont is committed to working with communities when siting public facilities. Once a municipality issues a zoning permit and the State further evaluates the building site, the State will then engage with Town officials and the public to further assess community impacts, associated needs, and potential mitigatory solutions. The State and Town must first be in the permitting process to begin these discussions.

Question 6: *Act 162, page 36, what does the state intention [sic] to do with the Springfield facility?*

Answer: Page 36 of Act 162 of 2024 addresses a legislatively mandated DOC/BGS report to examine current reentry services, share the recommended size and scope of a new women’s facility, and provide rationale on whether it is advisable to construct a new men’s reentry facility on the same campus as the women’s correctional facility or at another location. A full copy of the report can be found [here](#), but the report states:

“The Department of Corrections is not pursuing the construction of a male reentry facility on the same site as the CRCF replacement at this time. Correctional best practice – as well as federal regulations and DOC experience – calls for the separation of incarcerated individuals by sex. While this protocol currently exists within an outdated gender binary with facilities designated as either male or female, the colocation of male and female incarcerated populations presents numerous operational and regulatory challenges as well as safety and security concerns. The Department employs a robust process for housing individuals who identify as transgender or with a different gender identity, but the Department does not recommend general housing of male and female incarcerated people at the same complex. In addition, the current proposed sites, both in Essex, do not have the requisite acreage to allow for additional facility construction. The Department does intend, however, to build reentry units as it updates male correctional facilities in the future. While there is no timeline for replacement of facilities other than CRCF, several male facilities are in acute need of replacement due to significant deferred maintenance and outdated infrastructure.”

Question 7: *Please provide the report requested by the legislature in ACT 162 concerning the women’s and men’s holding and reentry facilities.*

Answer: The report can be found on the General Assembly’s website:

- <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/DOC-Act-159-Report-November-15-2024.pdf>

Question 8: *What is the amount of guest traffic that will be generated?*

Answer:

An initial and preliminary traffic impact assessment estimates a maximum of 375 trips per 24 hours.

Rationale:

- 35 non-staff trips from 8am-4pm = 70 trips
- 60 x 1.5 (shift change) x (2 per day) = 180 trips
- 50% contingency = 125 trips

Question 9: *How many current employees and service providers work in South Burlington live within the city limits?*

Answer: The 85 DOC staff currently working at CRCF live in a number of communities surrounding South Burlington, including in upstate New York. There are currently three correctional officers with a South Burlington address and three who currently live in Essex.

Question 10: *How would inmates in the work program get to work?*

Answer: This is yet to be determined. Public transportation, if available, would likely be the primary method of individuals getting to work. Transportation may also be provided by facility staff and/or authorized service providers.

Question 11: *Where does the population of the woman's prison come from and how many are Essex residents?*

Answer: Please find this data below. Note the Department of Corrections records residency by county.

- Addison: 1 (sentenced)
- Bennington: 6 (detained) / 7 (sentenced)
- Caledonia: 2 (detained) / 11 (sentenced)
- Chittenden: 9 (detained) / 15 (sentenced)
- Essex: 3 (detained) / 1 (sentenced)
- Franklin: 6 (detained) / 7 (sentenced)
- Grand Isle: 1 (sentenced)
- Lamoille: 2 (detained) / 4 (sentenced)
- Out of state: 1 (sentenced)
- Orange: 1 (sentenced)
- Orleans: 2 (detained) / 10 (sentenced)

- Rutland: 7 (detained) / 8 (sentenced)
- Washington: 4 (detained) / 6 (sentenced)
- Windham: 4 (detained) / 11 (sentenced)
- Windsor: 1 (detained) / 6 (sentenced)

Question 12: *What are the numbers of re-offenders? What impact will there be on the community when prisoners are released?*

Answer:

The definition recidivism in Vermont is set by statute. Citation: 2011 Act 41 Section 5:

“The Department shall calculate the rate of recidivism based upon offenders who are sentenced to more than one year of incarceration who, after release from incarceration, return to prison within three years for a conviction for a new offense or a violation of supervision resulting, and the new incarceration sentence or time served on the violation is at least 90 days.”

- Overall recidivism rate for all incarcerated people in Vermont between 2014 and 2021: 44.3%
 - Recidivism rate for women: 36.9%
 - Recidivism rate for men: 45.4%

We do expect both detainees and sentenced individuals to leave from the facility. As indicated in question ten, some of these individuals may arrange their own rides, while others may require public transportation or assistance from an authorized community provider.

Question 13: *Will inmates include those detained by ICE?*

Answer: It is possible that a small number of women incarcerated at the replacement facility will include individuals apprehended by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Vermont currently has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with federal immigration authorities authorizing the use of beds for ICE detainees. This MOU expires in August 2025; the Governor has not yet authorized renegotiations.

Question 14: *Will any inmates be from states other than Vermont?*

Answer: Any woman arrested and detained in Vermont will be transported to the state’s only female correctional facility. This includes all female individuals, regardless of residency, charged with committing a crime as outlined in the Vermont criminal code and lawfully lodged by law enforcement.

Question 15: *Does the state have any data on the number of transgender inmates and any statistics about any crimes involving transgender inmates that have taken place in prison?*

Answer: About 1% of Vermont's incarcerated population identifies as transgender, with a majority of these individuals housed at male facilities. According to [national data](#), trans individuals face increased risk of harassment and violence within correctional systems in the United States.

Question 16: *We understand that the facility will have medical care on site. What will be the impacts on Essex rescue services if the on-site medical care isn't staffed?*

Answer: Medical care is provided 24/7 at every correctional facility in Vermont as required by state law and the United States Constitution. There is no circumstance that on-site medical care will not be staffed.

Addendum 1

Town Code	4207 (Current)	<i>With addition of new property</i>
Town	Essex Town	
A: Municipal Grand List as of April 1, 2023:	\$16,176,204	\$16,176,204
B: Municipal Tax Rate	\$0.7361	\$0.7361
C: Municipal Taxes Assessed	\$11,907,304	\$11,907,304
D: Assessed Value of State buildings and lands as defined in 32 V.S.A. 3701 (2)(3)	\$37,055,696	\$107,055,696
E: 2023 Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) (%)	54.83	54.83
F: State-owned Additions to Municipal Grand List (adjusted by CLA)	\$203,176	\$586,986
G: State-owned Additions to Municipal Grand List (adjusted by CLA); UVM Buildings	\$136,419	\$136,419
H: 32 VSA 3703(c.) - Proration of UVM Grand List, grants will not exceed \$750,000	\$9,671	\$9,671
I: State-owned Additions to Municipal Grand List, accounting for proration of UVM properties ((F-G)+O)	\$76,428	\$460,238
J: Adjusted Municipal Grand List (A+I)	\$16,252,632	\$16,636,442
K: Adjusted Municipal Tax Rate (C/J)	\$0.7326	\$0.7157
L: FY25 Full PILOT Payment	\$55,991	\$329,393
K: Prorated PILOT Payment (100%)	\$55,991	\$329,393
Difference		\$273,402

**Based on an Estimate for Insurance Replacement Value for New Structure of \$70,000,000*