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Report on Possible Locations for Secure Therapeutic Residences for Detained and Committed Youth

To: Charlotte Warren, House Chair Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Susan Deschambault, Senate Chair Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice Public and Safety

From: Randall A. Liberty, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Corrections

Cc: MaryAnn Turowski, Senior Policy Advisor Governor Mills

Date: January 1, 2022

Over the last several months the Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC) has made progress in identifying properties and site locations for secure therapeutic residences as part of the juvenile justice reforms passed in the Governor's budget, and first introduced by Representative Brennan within LD 546.

Outlined below are summaries and photographs of the 18 properties the MDOC team has reviewed in collaboration with Maine's Bureau of General Services. When looking at properties the team initially attempted to consider only those properties located in Cumberland and Penobscot Counties, as the statute asks. However, the search was expanded to include other counties, to ensure more options were considered.

As you will see, the properties are in various stages of readiness. Some are quite large, some are aged and in various states of deterioration, others come with significant costs required to convert into the MDOC's intended purposes.

The ideal site will be situated in nearby proximity to necessary services, including healthcare, education, employment, and behavioral health services; look and feel more home-like, as opposed to institutional; and be cost-efficient. Further, each ideal site will need to support 6-12 youth, ensuring 20 youth have accessible beds at any one time.

The staffing plan for a residential secure facility would include staff from three distinct areas:

- Administration/Security
- Food Services
- Support Services (including programming)

We look forward to discussing with you the properties described herein.

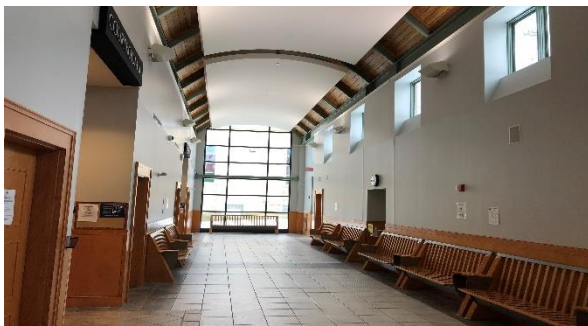
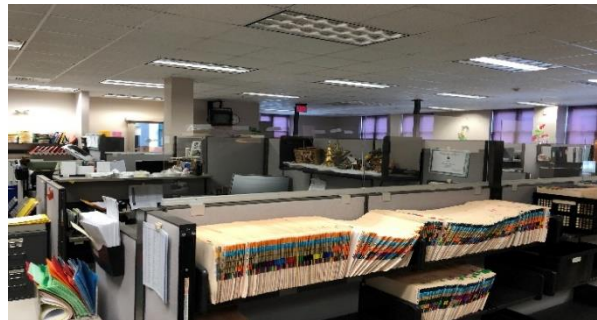
1. **Arsenal Street, Augusta** - This vacant parcel of land is located across from the historic 'Arsenal' site, adjacent to the former AMHI campus in Augusta. This property is in a metropolitan area that could likely support the services needed for youth. Acreage is unknown currently. This property could be a viable consideration for new construction following a home or cottage style used with success in other states.



2. **27 Independence Drive, Augusta: CETA Building** - The CETA building was originally built as a home for nurses, in a dormitory style building with bedrooms, living rooms, instructional/classroom spaces, bathrooms plus a small kitchen. The building was vacated in 1973 and repurposed as an office building. It has been vacant since the late 1970s. This property is located in a metropolitan area that could likely support the services needed for youth, although the building itself may require spaces to be shared to provide all services (education, healthcare, counseling, recreation, visitation, etc.). The physical plant & systems have not been consistently maintained since the building was vacated. The scale of the building is much larger than what would be needed to support housing for 20+/- youth, and the physical plant & systems would demand a significant financial commitment to restore for residential occupancy.



3. **25 Adams Street, Biddeford: Biddeford District Courthouse** - This building is currently being utilized for judicial functions but is expected to be vacated as early as February 2023. This property is in a metropolitan area that could likely support the services needed for youth. The building is in good repair and has desirable systems in place (ex: key card access, cameras, short-term holding). Since the building has never been used for residential purposes, significant alterations would need to be made. This would include but not be limited to adding areas to provide food services, healthcare, and housing along with installing a generator system. Because the building is in a downtown metropolitan area, there are no practical options for outdoor recreation. The only exterior space dedicated to the building is a small staff parking lot consisting of approximately 15-20 spaces.



4. **656 State Street, Bangor: Pooler Pavilion** – This building was formerly utilized as a center on aging. This property is in a metropolitan area that likely can support the services needed for youth. It has been vacant for approximately 5 years. The physical plant & systems were not well safeguarded when the building was vacated. The scale of the building is much larger than what would be needed to support housing for 20+/- youth, and the physical plant & systems would demand a significant financial commitment to restore for residential occupancy.



5. **654 State Street, Bangor: Hadeen Hall**-- Formerly utilized as a halfway house for those with behavioral health needs. This property is in a metropolitan area that likely can support the services needed for youth. However, it was initially shut down for not achieving minimum code compliance and vacant for an unknown amount of time with noticeable disrepair. We were unable to go inside, as the maintenance staff did not feel it was safe to tour the interior. In addition, there is a reported bat/vermin infestation. This property would require significant financial resources to renovate if it were determined to be an option but more likely would be a demolition/reconstruction project.



6. **State Street, Bangor** - This vacant parcel of land is located adjacent to Hadeen Hall and is located on the far end of the campus, away from the general public and adults in treatment or reporting for probation. This property is in a metropolitan area that could likely support the services needed for youth. The existing asphalt/parking space at Hadeen Hall could be redesignated and used for structure(s) added to the property after needed resurfacing was complete. Available acreage is currently unknown. This property could be a viable consideration for new construction utilizing plans and style used with success in other states.



7. **State Street, Bangor** - This vacant parcel of land is located adjacent to a maintenance building at and near the center of the mental health campus. This property is in a metropolitan area that could likely support the services needed for youth. There is ample parking located next to the property along with an athletic field believed to be utilized by the local school system. Acreage is unknown at this time but considerably smaller than the land parcel next to Hadeen Hall and far more exposed to the general public and adults in treatment and those reporting for probation. This property could also be a viable consideration for new construction utilizing plans and style used with success in other states.



8. **176 Hogan Road, Bangor** – The first floor of this building was formerly utilized as the Bangor Wellness Center and is currently vacant. This property is in a metropolitan area that could likely support the services needed for youth although the building/floor itself may require spaces to be shared to provide all services (education, healthcare, counseling, recreation, visitation, etc.). Because the other floors of the building are still occupied, systems have been maintained. There would need to be substantial financial commitment made to renovate living/sleeping areas, office and food service areas prior to occupancy. The other floors are currently occupied by MDOC Adult Probation and MDOC’s Leading the Way (an adult transitional living program). There would likely be State and/or Federal statutory considerations with placing youth in this building taking into consideration that adults under MDOC supervision are residing in the building and reporting for probation.



9. **16 Prescott Drive, Hinkley: Alford Family Cottage** - This building represents the ideal residential environment and size for 20+/- youth and is currently vacant. The structure is in good repair and is currently undergoing updates but would need safety/security modifications to accommodate higher risk youth. These modifications would first need to be approved by the organizational Board. The building is located in a rural area, thus many programmatic, healthcare and safety services may not be as easily accessible or readily available if needed.



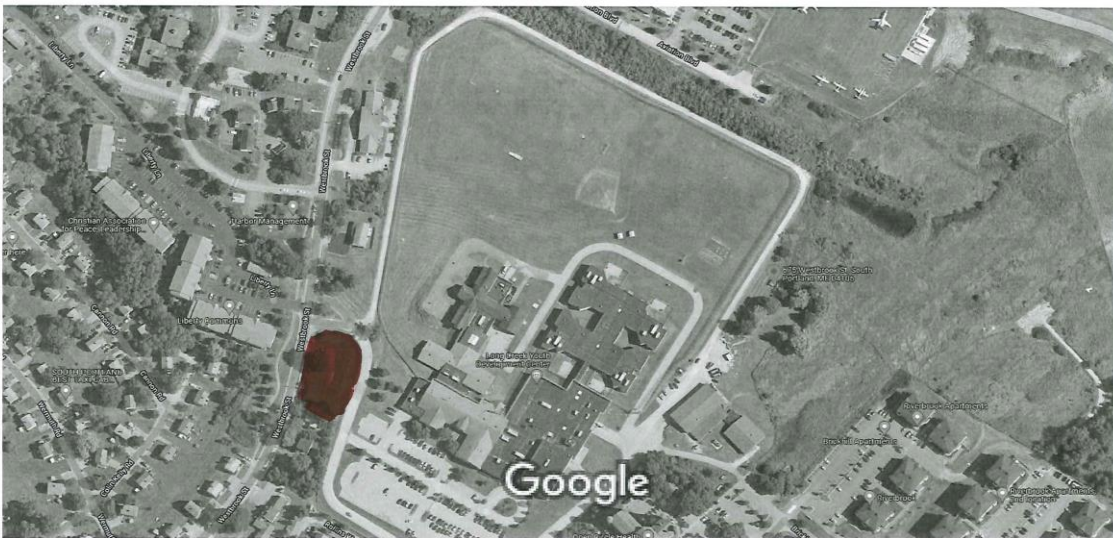
10. **629 Westbrook Street, South Portland** - This building was formerly utilized as the Region One Community Corrections office. This building represents the ideal residential environment and size for 20+/- youth and is currently vacant. This building is located adjacent to LCYDC in a metropolitan area that could likely support the services needed for youth, although the property itself may require spaces to be shared to provide all services (education, healthcare, counseling, recreation, visitation, etc.). It has been vacant for approximately 3+ years. The physical plant & systems were not well safeguarded when the building was vacated, and the physical plant & systems would likely demand a significant financial commitment to restore for residential occupancy. In addition, the building would need safety/security modifications to accommodate higher risk youth.




11. **Westbrook Street, South Portland** - This vacant parcel of land is in front of LCYDC along Westbrook Street and borders the right side of the LCYDC driveway. This property is in a metropolitan area that could likely support the services needed for youth. There is ample parking located next to the property. Acreage is unknown at this time. This property could be a viable consideration for new construction utilizing plans and style used with success in other states.



Google Maps 675 Westbrook St




Imagery ©2021 Maine GeoLibrary, Maxar Technologies, U.S. Geological Survey, 100 ft 
USDA Farm Service Agency, Map data ©2021

12. **Westbrook Street, South Portland** - This vacant parcel of land is located between the perimeter fence line of LCYDC and Westbrook Street. This property is in a metropolitan area that could likely support the services needed for youth. Acreage is unknown at this time. This property could be a viable consideration for new construction utilizing plans and style used with success in other states.



Google Maps 675 Westbrook St



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13. **145 Birch Street, Lewiston** - This property was formerly the home of the Longley Elementary School. The property and building was taken into consideration however through research it was discovered that it had already been repurposed by the school district.



14. **Andrews Avenue, Falmouth: Mackworth Island** - During research, this property was taken into consideration however, it was discovered it cannot be used for “correctional or penal institutions” as a result of act by the 91st Legislature, Chapter 1 Private and Special Laws of 1943.



15. **240 Ocean Street, South Portland** - Built in 1923-24, the Mahoney Middle School is still in operation while a new middle school is under construction. The school currently supports over 300 students. The new school is expected to be completed in time for the 2023-2024 school year at which time Mahoney Middle School will be vacated unless a decision is made to repurpose it. The school property is located next to Frank I. Brown Elementary School, which could be an added obstacle when trying to get community approval. The school is rated as a historical site which could limit future safety & security modifications necessary for high risk youth. In addition, the scale of the building is much larger than what would be needed to support housing for 20+/- youth.



16. **880 Lisbon Street, Lewiston** - Built in 1925, the Martel Elementary School closed in June 2019. The lack of technology and a gymnasium are a couple reasons linked to the closure. Prior to closure, the school provided educational accommodations for approximately 275 students. This property is in a metropolitan area that could likely support the services needed for youth, although the building itself may require spaces to be shared to provide all services (education, healthcare, counseling, recreation, visitation, etc.). The scale of the building is much larger than what would be needed to support housing for 20+/- youth, and the physical plant & systems would demand a significant financial commitment to support residential occupancy.



17. **120 Wescott Road, South Portland** - Memorial Middle School is still in operation while a new middle school is under construction. The school currently supports over 400 students. The new school is expected to be completed in time for the 2023-2024 school year at which time Memorial Middle School will be vacated unless a decision is made to repurpose it. The school property is located next to the construction of the new Middle School along with the Skillin Elementary School which could be an added obstacle when trying to get community approval. The scale of the building is much larger than what would be needed to support housing for 20+/- youth.



18. **708 Main Street, Sanford** - This property was formerly the home of the Sanford High School. The building was vacated in 2018 when construction of a new school was completed. Through research it was discovered that the building had already been repurposed as the new location for the Sanford Middle School.



Many of the properties we looked at present significant challenges as potential sites for small, secure therapeutic residences for juveniles. Some are much too large, built to hold 200+ youth. Some were not designed for residential occupancy, so they require further investigation to even determine feasibility of residential occupancy, including review of town ordinances, zoning and building codes, as well as costs for reconstructing the property into livable space.

Other properties have the challenge of location, they are in areas far from community-based services which will present challenges to ensuring juveniles have access to quality programs and services, and the rural geography presents concerns related to being able to staff the facility appropriately. Other properties have a different type of location challenge, they may be in metro communities, with ease to services but the neighborhood and/or community may not be welcoming or appropriate. Further still other properties are aged and deteriorated in ways that raise concerns about environmental and health issues like asbestos, lead, or mold.

Fortunately, there are several properties that may be good contenders. In particular, the Good Will Hinckley property and the buildings adjacent to LCYDC and the Bangor probation office and transitional residence. The vacant lands are also worth considering as the MDOC could construct specifically designed secure therapeutic residences following a style used with success in other states.

In the coming months we will continue to narrow down the potential properties to better understand logistics, including zoning, mitigation of environmental and health issues, and costs.

While there are many unknowns about the properties, we are clear on the staffing package for an individual secure residential facility. Each residential secure facility would need between 20-30 staff, covering three distinct areas:

- Administration/Security
 - 1 Unit Manager *to oversee the administration and operations of the facility.*
 - 5 Juvenile Program Workers *to provide care, rehabilitative services and support, and security.*
 - 10 Juvenile Program Specialists *to supervise the JPW and supports the implementation of the residents' individualized treatment plan while providing care, rehabilitative services and support, and security.*
- Food Services
 - 3-5 staff *to run the food service operations for residents and staff.*
- Support Services, including programming
 - 2-4 teachers
 - Including librarian and recreation
 - 1-3 behavioral health staff
 - 1-3 medical and nursing staff
 - 1-3 building maintenance and grounds crew.

The bulk of the staffing would fall within the administration and security area, which is the where Juvenile Program Workers (JPW) and Juvenile Program Specialists (JPS) fall. Each residential secure facility would need at least 1 JPW per shift and 1 to serve as the relief. Additionally, each facility would need at least 2 JPS per shift and 2 to serve as the relief. The staffing package we suggest reflects MDOC supplying the program and services staff, i.e., teachers, librarian, vocational instructors, behavioral and medical staff. However, it is possible that these services could be contracted, and therefore the staffing package would go down, thereby changing the costs associated with the secure facility.

There is still much research and consideration to be done on this topic. As we continue, we will look to stakeholders, including yourselves, for input to ensure the property is near needed services, feels home-like, is cost-efficient, and allows for racial, cultural and gender responsive care. We believe the process of seeking a community-based secure property to be fluid, and we look forward to continuing the search.



Our Mission: The mission of the Department of Corrections is to reduce the likelihood that juvenile and adult offenders will re-offend, by providing practices, programs and services which are evidence-based and which hold the offenders accountable.