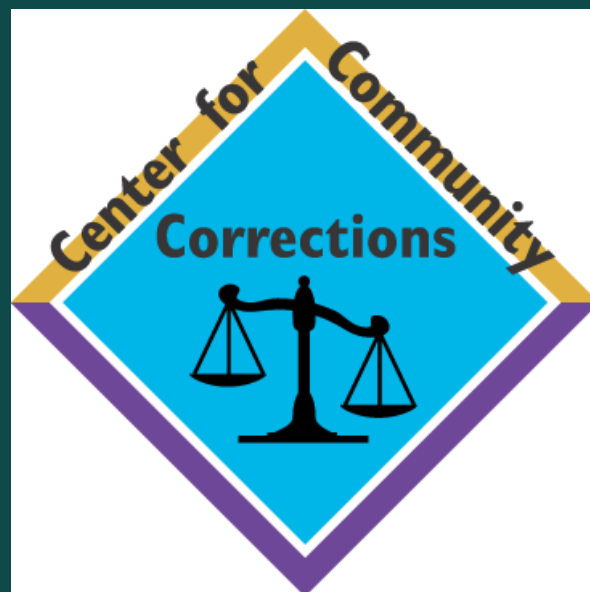


SITING HALFWAY HOUSES— SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR CORRECTIONAL PROFESSIONALS: SELECTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

By: **Mary Shilton
Margot Lindsay
Center for
Community
Corrections
September 2003**



The research conducted for this publication was supported under award #2001-DD-VX-0006 from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2001, the Center for Community Corrections (“Center”) has explored the dimensions of whether the siting of residential halfway houses for justice-involved persons could be made more acceptable. The Center used a variety of tools and techniques to look for evidence of whether listening to and involving community members can positively impact the successful location of halfway houses and related justice services in neighborhoods. The project was piloted by the National Institute of Corrections and the Open Society Institute. In 2002–2003, the Bureau of Justice Assistance provided support for meeting with practitioners and developing written information about our work.

The goal of the Center’s work was to gather information through interviews, a literature search, press clippings and case studies that would highlight ways to successfully establish and improve the siting of halfway houses in communities. The project addressed the public’s perception and knowledge about halfway houses, the experience and perceptions of public officials, and the

obstacles encountered by correctional officials and developers of halfway houses.

The project focused on six sites in different regions of the United States. We gathered contextual information about recent experiences in each jurisdiction, information about the role of public leaders and citizens, conflicts that arose, and problems that were solved or remain unresolved. More than 75 telephone interviews lasting a minimum of half an hour were conducted with public officials, members of the business community, social services, religious and civic sectors and neighbors of these residential facilities. Most of the communities included a significant number of residential programs.

In addition there were focus groups conducted by Doble Research Associates, a public interest consulting firm. These focus groups were in New Haven CT; Birmingham, AL; Washington, DC; and Fort Worth TX. The findings of these focus groups and telephone interviews with the public are discussed in an article by John Doble and Margot Lindsay entitled “Is NIMBY Inevitable?”

SUGGESTIONS FOR CORRECTIONAL PROFESSIONALS

This monograph outlines some suggestions for correctional professionals based on the work of the project. It also presents an annotated reference list that includes written pieces related to the subject of siting halfway houses. For an overview of each topic, a few documents have been collected in an anthology. This anthology of reading materials should help practitioners consider the contributions of administrators, researchers and citizens who have written about siting issues.

The following points are derived from the project's summary of Findings, Public Outreach and Halfway Houses Research and Intergovernmental Solutions August 2002, published by the Center for Community Corrections, in partnership with Doble Research Associates, Inc. for the Open Society Institute Criminal Justice Initiative.

An Overview of the Findings and Conclusions from the Interviews

I. To be successfully integrated into a community, a halfway house needs a public that understands its purpose and neighbors who are comfortable with its procedures.

Those interviewed had at least a sense that halfway house programs were to prepare residents for successful living in the broader community. Participants in focus groups and a good number of

telephone interview participants indicated empathy and concern for those under the criminal justice system. Many had direct experience with community corrections, either because a family member or they themselves had been in a program or facility. Some called for more rehabilitative programs that would erase stigmata and make those who had served their time “whole” again.

However, when it came to those services and programs for people under supervision, the fears for the safety of themselves and their families were clearly a major obstacle. There was little understanding that there can be safety without walls, and that there are measures of control that can be exercised “on the street.” And the public failed to see the programs as a long-term public safety measure. They understood the benefits to the residents, but did not see that a gradual easing back to “normal life” might prevent a return to crime.

That a need to educate the public to the purposes of these programs was advocated by many was therefore not surprising. And because of the overriding concerns for safety, information needs to be stressed about control elements that can be in place to help ensure no untoward events and, if incidents were to happen, immediate consequences for the offender.

But imparting information alone is not enough. To assure understanding and comfort about safety, community members need also to be sufficiently engaged with the programs to know that operations are meeting expectations, and that measures one expected are in fact in place. And to ensure integration into the community, programs must be sufficiently open to allow volunteers to help residents in their transition back to the broader world.

2. Successful siting is more likely if there is public confidence that there will be a well-managed program, with access to drug and alcohol treatment and job development.

The public needs to have confidence in the competence of those running the programs. People in each of the focus groups saw authorities as untrustworthy and many telephone interview respondents voiced similar views. Concern for quality and professionalism was mentioned by many. Programs run by local providers, known to and trusted by the community, obviously stand the best chance of acceptance. For providers coming from the outside, particularly for for-profit providers, the trust will be difficult to develop. In those cases, a convincing track record and the prior support of a cadre of local people whom the community respects will be essential.

The need for alcohol and drug treatment and for job skills and placement was universally recognized. While spiritual support and educational opportunities were deemed important, treatment and jobs emerged as the number one priority, with jobs taking pride of place in the eyes of the community. This understanding bodes well for future funding.

Participants in focus groups spent a lot of time talking about management of effective facilities. Many telephone interviews and focus groups indicated a need for “zero tolerance” in dealing with residents who cause trouble. Most wanted community members to help in screening placement of prison releasees in their communities.

3. Correctional leaders can do a lot to encourage community input and ongoing involvement.

The need to solicit early input from the community and a measure of continuing local oversight emerged loud and clear. Despite the fact that by so doing opposition will have time to organize, the importance of early contact with the neighbors before rumors arise and of public meetings despite their contentiousness, was mentioned repeatedly.

Mentioned even more frequently was the importance of a local advisory committee to attest to the quality of the ongoing program, to provide a channel for input or questions, and to provide access to community resources.

A local provider with a local board of governance is an obvious asset, giving members of the public a sense that those they trust are looking after their interests. A local advisory committee can provide linkages to needed services, judgment of relevant professionals, and communication with the neighborhood.

4. Successful siting will be easier if there are known or visible contributions to the community.

The programs are seen as helpful to the individual residents, but not to their surroundings. Although a few respondents easily came up with such positives as making meeting rooms available to the community, rehabilitating run down houses or cleaning up a street, most could not name a contribution that the program had made or was making to their area. This points up the feeling of exploitation, that a neighborhood is being asked to accept a less than exemplary element without any *quid pro quo*.

While programs may well be contributing to an area’s well being, those contributions are not noticed, and therefore need to be given publicity.

Program directors, when introducing themselves to a new neighborhood, need to show how the program will enhance the area and the services it will provide on an ongoing basis. Focus group and interview suggestions included a welcome array of additional benefits such as improved lighting, more community police presence, and neighborhood improvement such as parks and recreation centers.

5. Although it seems unrealistic to many correctional leaders, the public is more likely to accept placement if all but very small programs are away from residential neighborhoods.

Because the focus groups and telephone surveys were held in neighborhoods with community facilities, participants were often concerned about equity of placement of facilities so that they are disproportionately located in their neighborhoods where there are many minorities or persons of color.

The impoverished or transient neighborhoods where traditionally such programs are located have left residents feeling “dumped on” and demeaned. While willing to accept some programs, the tendency to load an unresisting neighborhood has left its inhabitants determined to accept no more.

We had hoped to find suggestions for procedural initiatives that would make residential programs more acceptable, or at least less unacceptable, to neighborhoods. Reluctantly, we conclude from our findings that, until such programs are understood to make a significant contribution to an area that is in need, they are more likely to be located either in light industrial areas or in buildings that are somewhat removed from the surrounding houses. This becomes particularly important as correctional officials plan to increase the number of inmates transitioning back to the community through these facilities. The public has a universal objection to those convicted of sex and violent crimes in their neighborhoods.

The residents of the more affluent areas know how to mount the political opposition in such a way as to defeat virtually any and all correctional programs. And it appears that only once a program has been experienced, and without incident, will it then become an accepted part of the area.

6. Correctional professionals will be more likely to succeed when there has been a careful assessment of the community prior to entering it.

Each community has its own distinct flavor. A knowledge of the demographics will alert a potential provider to the presence of children, which will automatically trigger in the neighbors strong fears about the safety of their families.

Each community has its own history, perhaps of prior halfway houses intended for a different population, that succeeded or failed. The building selected may have a history that will affect how its proposed use will be felt. An assessment of those histories will allow a sensitivity to the situation, and prevent the opening of old wounds.

A careful assessment of a community will also allow a potential provider to understand the needs of a particular neighborhood or area. Those interviewed often found it hard to see how a halfway house contributes to the broader community or to its immediate neighbors, as mentioned in (4). Knowledge of those needs will allow a provider to fashion a service or other contribution to the neighborhood which will address its particular need.

Providers, both public and private, meeting with the Center in June 2002, enthusiastically supported the concept of some generic educational materials which would describe the purposes and methods of halfway houses for those transitioning from institutional life back to their home communities. The providers also signaled strong support for advisory boards where no local governing boards of provider agencies exist. Most of the providers present already have such channels of communication constructed with the broader public, and have produced useful materials on which to build.

Again, the Center wishes to emphasize the importance of all five elements to the successful siting and operating of programs. If they become a standard part of all residential programs, they will help members of the public better understand the public safety dimension, know what to expect, feel they have some input into siting and external procedures, allow them a back-and-forth with the residents and, through a local board, a measure of oversight of ongoing operations. Given that federal and state agencies are planning to use halfway houses to transition as many inmates as possible back to the community, we hope these elements, drawn from members of the community and neighborhoods, can provide a smoother entry than the ones experienced by so many providers.

ANNOTATED REFERENCES

Crime Impact

Community-Based Crime Prevention in Dayton. Institute for Community Design Analysis, 1994.

The essay describes the division of the Five Oaks neighborhood near downtown Dayton, a region of increasing crime and declining property values, into ten mini-neighborhoods and the resultant drop in criminal activity.

Julien, C. *The Impact of Community Correctional Centers on Neighborhood Crimes in the District of Columbia.* Department of Planning and Program Analysis, Washington, DC. 1990.

This report gives an overview of the decision to implement Community Correctional Centers in Washington, DC as a result of skyrocketing numbers of incarcerations in the 1980s. The report provides statistical information largely on recidivism rates of offenders re-released into the community.

Effective Programs —What Works

Executive Summary—Community Impact Study: The Effect of Locating Correctional Group Homes in Residential Neighbourhoods. Canadian Training Institute, 1986.

The study set out to examine the effect a group home had on a neighborhood in terms of residents' attitudes towards the home, crime rate, and property values. The study determined that a group home did not have a negative impact on the level of criminal occurrences nor did it lower property values.

Lowenkamp, C. and E. Latessa. *Evaluation of Ohio's Community-Based Correctional Facilities and Halfway House Programs.* Draft Executive Summary, 2002.

The evaluation looked at recidivism rates of offenders in Cincinnati who were placed in CBCFs and/or halfway houses as compared to criminals released in the same year without involvement in community corrections programs.

Toward an Evaluation of Community-Based Residential Facilities (CRFs) in Canada: A Review of the Literature. Canadian Training Institute, 2002.

The review provides a critical analysis of the material written on the effectiveness of halfway house programs in North America and the United Kingdom since the HWH movement began in the 1960s and '70s.

Intergovernmental Relations and Collaboration

Efkeman, Hilary and David Rottman. "Bringing the Public In: Collaborations Between Courts and Communities." *Community Justice Concepts and Strategies*. American Probation and Parole Association. 1998.

The article explores collaboration between courts and the public in reinventing justice in several communities. It gives examples of how several agencies have jointly funded task forces and juvenile justice projects that recruit skilled volunteers. The article provides tips for overcoming institutional resistance. It emphasizes creating long term investment through public involvement in community justice innovations.

Lindsay, Margot C. "A Matter of Partnership: Public Involvement in Residential Community Corrections." *Issues in Residential Community Corrections Policy and Practice*, May 1990. United States Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections.

This article addresses how to increase public involvement in community corrections, describing ways in which policymakers and administrators, can involve local citizens.

It emphasizes how advisory boards can be effective in facilitating public acceptance, encouraging success, and assessing public climate. It includes ideas for administrative initiatives for strengthening partnership.

Local Government, Zoning, and Property Values

District of Columbia—"Community Corrections Facility Siting Advisory Commission." Draft Report and Recommendations, March 2003.

The draft report includes specific information on the implementation of halfway houses in the District of Columbia, a literature review of writing dealing with the effectiveness of halfway houses in general, information on the siting of halfway houses in Washington, and a large section on recommendations for the location and operation of halfway houses in the District of Columbia.

Fehr, L. *Literature Review of Impacts to Communities in Siting Correctional Facilities*. Washington Council on Crime and Delinquency, Seattle, Washington. 1995.

The author provides a summary of research on issues related to safety, and property values as affected by opening of new correctional facilities.

Needles, H. et al. *Comparative Analysis of Property Values in the Vicinity of New Correctional Facilities at the Oshkosh Correctional Institution and its Relationship to the Proposed Racine Correctional Institution*. National Institute of Corrections Information Center, HDTB no. 11741, Boulder, Colorado. 1998.

This study discovered that property values did not decrease immediately after news that a new correctional institution would be built nearby, but continued to increase at a rate

consistent with nearby towns. However, the neighborhoods near the correctional institution went down in desirability after the announcement.

The Influence of Halfway Houses and Foster Care Facilities Upon Property Values. City of Lansing Planning Department. 1976.

This study looked at property values in five test neighborhoods around Lansing that were situated near halfway houses and/or foster care facilities. It was found that property values did not decrease as a result of proximity to such institutions, but if citizens were to become alarmed, unnecessarily or not, it would cause a false reduction of property values.

The Effects of Oriana House on the Middlebury/Buchtel Neighborhood Summary Report. Oriana House, Akron, Ohio. December 1998.

This report presents results of a study of how Oriana House, a residential juvenile treatment facility in Ohio has affected housing sales and appraisals in its neighborhood. The study found that Oriana House had no impact on the value of housing and turnover rates in the Middle/Buchtel neighborhood; overall, home sale prices in the neighborhood have increased and Oriana House has not caused more people to sell their homes. However, previous studies indicate that too many agencies in a neighborhood could have a negative effect on property values. The paper concludes with recommending that community residents work with Oriana House and other neighborhood organizations to analyze and address neighborhood problems.

Johnson, M.P. "Location of Community Corrections Centers." Presented at ICCA's Fall Conference in Chicago, Illinois, 2002.

This document proposes a planning model to identify potential sites for community corrections centers that balances the negative social impact of a CCC with the rewards of reducing the numbers of repeat offenders. The study uses multi-criteria decision models as opposed to the linear programming approach.

Ricci, Kenneth. *Jail Facility Site Evaluation and Selection.* Prepared for The National Institute of Corrections.

This paper was prepared by an architect for the National Institute of Corrections about the problems of siting jail facilities from a local government perspective. It discusses issues associated with siting, including public resistance, economic, security, and technical concerns. The paper describes the steps of the site selection process and discusses key criteria that a jail facility site needs. It includes information about addressing public concerns as well as working with local agencies that can affect the siting process.

Stanley, Craig E. *The Impact of Prison Proximity on Property Values In Green Bay and Waupun, Wisconsin.* Commissioned by the State of Wisconsin Division of Corrections and Bureau of Facilities Management. 1978.

This 1978 study by the State of Wisconsin Division of Corrections analyzed the impact of prison proximity on residential property values in the two Wisconsin communities of Allouez and Waupun. One

had above average assessed property values and the other had below average values, but the study found prison proximity barely affected assessed value equations in either communities. In both towns it was found that other factors were more important in determining house market price than proximity of the prison and homes near the institutions even had slight increase in assessed value.

NIMBY and Citizen Opposition

DeFord, Susan. "Circling the Wagons in the Name of NIMBY; New Project Meets Resolute Resistance." *The Washington Post*, February 28, 2002.

This Washington Post article describes the powerful effects of NIMBY in the Washington, DC region.

Kim, Dong Soo. "Another Look at the NIMBY Phenomenon." *Health and Social Work* 25, 2, May 2000. pp. 146-148.

While recognizing the importance of the research by Piat, the author questions some of the Piat methodology and takes issue with the finding that there was a rejection of de-institutionalization by the public. It notes the analysis might not lead to rejection of de-institutionalization per se but the public's lack of information, fear and distrust.

Rowe, Megan. "Facing the NIMBY Factor." *Lodging Hospitality* 54, 11, November 1998. pp. 65-66.

This article stresses the importance of involving local experts when siting assisted living facilities. It emphasizes meeting individuals and neighborhood associations and considering their input.

TAP 14 (Technical Assistance Program): Siting Drug and Alcohol Treatment Programs: Legal Challenges to the NIMBY Syndrome. Department of Health and Human Services, Publication No. (SMA) 95-3050. 1995. <http://www.treatment.org/TAPS/Tap14/tap14toc.html>.

This monograph provides detailed information about zoning, legal challenges and administrative procedures involved with siting of treatment facilities.

Public Opinion

Piat, Myra. "The NIMBY Phenomenon: Community Residents' Concerns about Housing for De-institutionalized People." *Health and Social Work* 25, 2000. pp. 2 and 127-134.

This article presents results of a study of community opposition to group homes in Montreal Canada, based on 19 interviews with community residents, elected officials, and group home developers. The three group homes involved were for children with cognitive and physical disabilities, former psychiatric patients, and group homes for non-violent offenders. The community residents had misperceptions and criticisms of the operation of the group homes, and expressed NIMBY attitudes about them.

“Shunned by Society; Everyone Wants Drug Treatment Centers, But . . .” *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, March 21, 2002.

The writer profiles NIMBY opposition to Delancey Street Foundation’s plans to build a treatment facility in Imperial Beach California. It notes that such facilities are having trouble qualifying for siting and loans despite the fact that they improve and help neighborhoods.

Takahashi, Lois M., and Michael J. Dear. “The Changing Dynamics of Community Opposition to Human Service Facilities.” *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 1997.

This research involves a national survey of attitudes toward the NIMBY syndrome. It examines variations in community opposition, particularly geographic and community variations.

VanNijnatten, Debora L., and Sheila Wray Gregoire. Final Report Assessment of Community Consultation Exercises. Prepared for Mr. Andrew Graham. School of Policy Studies, Queen’s University. 1993.

This report is a study of four community consultation programs executed by the Correctional Service of Canada. The study describes the sequence of events at each site, an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of each program and concludes with common themes of the processes. A

major conclusion is that public involvement in siting needs to be earlier and more extensive. The analysis suggests the need for more transparent decision making, and the encouragement of a correctional service that is less reserved and defensive in its public relations.

Siting Practices

Issues in Siting Correctional Facilities. National Institute of Corrections, Washington, DC. 1993.

This Brief discusses impact on land values and public safety for seven facilities. It looked at variables related to risk, demographics, and quality of life. In addition it identifies elements of public distrust and ways to manage public opposition.

Reintegration

Rose, Dina R., Todd Clear and Judith Ryder. *Drugs, Incarceration and Neighborhood Life: The Impact of Reintegrating Offenders into the Community—Executive Summary*. National Institute of Justice, 1999.

This study examines the aggregate impact of incarceration in certain communities. It identifies problems associated with removing them for incarceration and returning them to their neighborhoods.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Project Advisors and Staff

Center for Community Corrections Project Contributors:

John Doble, Doble Research Associates

Don Evans, Canadian Training Institute

Kate Kosloske, Research Assistant

Carol Lazarus, Esq., Legal Research Advisor

Margot Lindsay, Senior Project Advisor

Jill Murphy, Project Administrator

Donald Santarelli, President,
Center for Community Corrections

Mary Shilton, Project Director

Hazel Williams, Office Manager,
Doble Research Associates

This project gratefully acknowledges the assistance and guidance of **Richard Sutton**, Corrections Branch Office, Bureau of Justice Assistance, for project oversight. The Center for Community Corrections is indebted to the **National Institute of Corrections** and the **Open Society Institute** for a pilot funding.

Acknowledgements

The Project Team is indebted to the following persons who served as sources of information to this project:

Ray Michael Bridgewater,
Community Development Consultant

Kathleen Campbell, Federal Bureau of Prisons

Warren Cikins,
Center for Community Corrections

Bud Hollis, Bureau of Justice Assistance,
Office of Justice Programs

Nolan E. Jones, National Governors Association

George Keiser, National Institute of Corrections

James Lawrence, Oriana House, Inc.

Robert Levy, Volunteers of America

Gerry Minard, Correctional Service of Canada

Don Murray, National Association of Counties

Paul O'Connor, Pennsylvania
Department of Corrections

Walter Ridley, Consultant

Thom Rogosky, Pennsylvania
Department of Corrections

James Sents, Volunteers of America

Richard Sutton, Bureau of Justice Assistance,
Office of Justice Programs

Joe Weedon, American Correctional Association

Carl Wicklund, American Probation and
Parole Association

Reginald Wilkinson, Ohio Department of
Rehabilitation and Correction