



**SUTTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SURVEY
ON THE
CLOSURE OF PALMER CORRECTIONAL CENTER**

This is an Informational Survey. It will inform you about a situation in our community and give you an opportunity to express your feelings about the situation. Please fill out the survey and encourage your neighbors to do the same. Sutton Community Council will host a Public Hearing with DOC Commissioner Williams on Wednesday, September 28 at 6 pm at Sutton Public Library. **Take the survey online or turn a hard copy in at the library by Monday, September 26** and make every effort to attend the Public Hearing on the 28th.

July 26, 2016 DOC Commissioner Dean Williams announced the closure of the Palmer Correctional Center.

Williams said, "Prisoners will begin moving within two or three weeks, the facility itself will be re-purposed. We are giving ourselves four to five months to accomplish the entire closure and re-purpose."

Neither Sutton Community Council nor Sutton residents were informed before the announcement was made. **There was NO opportunity for public input.**

Alaska Correctional Officers Association (ACOA) heard rumors of potential closures and requested to meet with the Commissioner to discuss these rumors. In two separate meetings on July 1 and July 7 the Commissioner clearly stated that no decisions had been made on closing any institutions and that Correctional Officers and ACOA would be part of the vetting process. On July 25th, 2016 a memo from ACOA stated "Over the last month we have fielded a tremendous number of questions from the membership (and recently the press) about the rumors surrounding the closure of several institutions across the State. We met with Upper Management twice on this issue. We asked for, and we hoped that we would be provided more concrete information to relay to Officers. Upper Management adamantly denies the rumor that it has made any concrete decision on closing any institution(s). In both our meetings we had with the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, it was stated that they are only in the early vetting process and are simply looking for ways to cut costs in these times of huge state deficits. We were told that they want to be sure that if they do have to close an institution(s) it makes sense, financially and otherwise. We requested, and Management agreed, that they will keep us informed as they work through the cost analysis associated with closing any institution(s) prior to any closures."

The next morning the announcement to close PPC was made.



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How do you feel about the way DOC acted in the decision and announcement of the closure of PCC?

- I am furious.
- I am disappointed.
- I approve.
- I have no judgement.

Williams said the facility is being closed to save money and improve inmate safety. At an early 2000 public hearing and after an extensive 2012 study, DOC representatives told Sutton residents that PCC is the most economical and safe prison facility in the state.

Have you had reason to be concerned about safety due to PCC being located in our district?

- Yes
- No

Please indicate how you think each item below will effect DOC's budget

DOC says most staff that is willing to relocate will be retained. Do you think labor costs will add to, subtract from, or have no effect the DOC budget?

- Add to
- Subtract from
- No effect

Do you think keeping the facilities open and re-purposing its use will add to, subtract from, or have no effect the DOC budget?

- Add to
- Subtract from
- No effect

Prisoners are constantly being transported to court in Palmer, supplies are delivered from Anchorage. Do you think transportation costs will add to, subtract from, or have no effect the DOC budget?

- Add to
- Subtract from
- No effect



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Do you think moving 500 inmates and their belongings will add to, subtract from, or have no effect the DOC budget?

- Add to
- Subtract from
- No effect

Do you think that 5.6 million dollars will be saved?

- Yes
- No

Normally, the Legislature thoroughly vets any cuts before they are made to a Department. Williams announcement completely circumvents the Legislative and public process. No cost analysis has been seen by the Legislature or the Public. Do you have a problem with this?

- Yes
- No

No thought has been given to how this closure will affect our community.

Mail generated by inmates and their families has kept the Sutton Post Office open. Without PCC, the post office will likely be closed. How will this affect you?

- Seriously
- Somewhat
- Not at all

Some staff members and inmate families reside in Sutton. Losing PCC will cause hardship for renters and home sellers. How will this affect you?

- Seriously
- Somewhat
- Not at all

The local elementary school constantly fights for numbers to stay open. Loss of students from these families could endanger the school. How will this affect you?

- Seriously
- Somewhat
- Not at all



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Inmates regularly help with community projects like building a playground and cleaning up the Jonesville camping area. Do you think that help would be missed?

- Seriously**
- Somewhat**
- Not at all**

The state's top Corrections official says the department wants to keep the facility open if possible. Providing detox services would address an unmet need in the community and potentially keep recidivism down, Department of Corrections Commissioner Dean Williams said in an interview Friday. The Alaska Department of Corrections said it will work with the Mat-Su community to repurpose the Palmer Correctional Center facilities for future use. A Mat-Su opioid task force and others toured Palmer Correctional last week to get a sense for how it would work as an opioid detox and treatment campus.

Mat-Su Regional has been making plans of their own. CEO John Lee told the task force the hospital is planning a “major expansion” over the next three years, to include facilities for psychiatric care and detoxification.

The Sutton Comprehensive Plan prohibits uses and structures within the Sutton Special Land Use District including maximum security facilities; correctional community residential centers; and alcohol and drug rehabilitation centers. PCC and future expansions are grandfathered in. Would you be in favor of repurposing PCC to become a de-tox service facility?

- Yes**
- No**

The closing of Palmer Correctional Center warrants additional consideration and Legislators, Correctional Officers, and the Palmer/Sutton community should be involved. This move should not proceed until the public has been heard. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

- Agree**
- Disagree**

Comments: