

Sheriff Eddie Cathey



# Detention Center Vision Plan

A photograph of the Union County Sheriff's Office Detention Center, a large brick building with a central tower. The tower has the text "UNION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE" and "DETENTION CENTER" on it, along with a circular seal. Two flagpoles with flags are in the foreground. The sky is blue and there are bare trees in the background.

Learn From The Past.

Evaluate The Present.

Prepare For The Future.

# Current Detention Center and Rated Capacity

Total rated capacity: 264

Total classification capacity: 225

Average daily population: 235

Square footage of existing facility: 68,870

## Average Daily Detention Center Population (ADP)

2021: 216

2022: 226

2023 :232

2024: 235

10A NCAC 14J.0301 (Classifications/Capacity Jail Code): The Detention Center cannot exceed it's designed capacity. Inmates have to be relocated until population is less than rated capacity.



# Prior Needs Assessment and Growth Projections

- In 2005, Carter Goble Associates analyzed local criminal justice system trends and existing detention operations to forecast the future inmate housing needs for Union County.
- The study estimated that Union County's population would reach 274,000 by the year 2025 and 306,000 by 2030. Union County's current population is approximately 256,000 according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Pertinent data from 1997-2005 was collected and analyzed and the assessment ultimately recommended that a facility capable of housing 520 inmates should be in place by 2018 or a facility capable of housing 710 inmates should be in place by 2028.
- The estimated cost of construction for a 710 bed facility in 2005 was \$50,441,000.

## Demographics of Charges and Impact on Rated Capacity

- Currently, there are 101 Part I criminal offenders housed in our Detention Center. 78 of those offenders are charged with Murder, Rape, Robbery, or Serious Assaults.
- Violent offenders are held for longer periods of time, 2 to 4 years on average, awaiting final disposition of their cases. This long term housing ensures community safety, but significantly impacts capacity needs.
- Lower level offenders often plea to lesser offenses and are released back into our community to make space for violent offenders. Using “forced releases” as a method of inmate population reduction increases the recidivism rate and creates a nuisance for local residents and business owners.

## Inability to Hold Convicted Offenders Accountable

- Thus far in 2024, Inmates sentenced to “weekend” confinements for their criminal convictions have been turned away five times due to capacity issues.

# Classifications Challenges

## Co-Defendant Housing

- Many homicide and violent crimes investigations result in the arrest of multiple offenders. These offenders have to be housed separately to prevent communication that could jeopardize successful prosecutions. This is difficult and often requires that we “trade” inmates with other facilities.

## Mental Health and Medical Housing

- Since 2022, the Detention Center has seen a significant increase in housing inmates requiring special considerations due to mental health or substance abuse issues.

## October 2022- March 2024

- 227 Suicide Watch
- 544 Withdrawal protocol
- 28 pregnancies
- Only a licensed physician can remove an inmate from a special medical/mental health watch. This leads to significant delays in inmate re-classification.
- Currently, we have approximately 10 inmates housed at another facility (Cabarrus County) at a cost of \$70 per day. The need to transfer additional inmates in the near future is expected as our inmate population continues to grow.

## Classification Challenges

- Confinement space designated for handicapped inmates is limited due to current facility design.
- Rise in long-term female inmates has led to the need for additional dedicated housing units or cells. In years past (2018/2019), the average number of females processed into the Detention Center was approximately 15 per month. In 2022, the average number of female inmates processed into the facility per month was 52. In 2023 the average rose to 57.
- Currently, the existing Detention Center does not have the space to temporarily relocate inmates while repairs and upgrades are being made. This will require us to transfer roughly 40-50 inmates at a time to other facilities while repairs/renovations are in process. The cost to relocate fifty inmates is roughly \$105,000 per month or \$3,500 per day.

## Educational and Rehabilitation Programs

- Safer Communities Ministries: Safer Communities Ministry, Inc. (SCM) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation that provides rehabilitation programs and aftercare for inmates, ex-offender, addicts, and their families. These individuals teach Life Skills classes, provide Chaplaincy services, conduct Bible Studies, and provide spiritual guidance and support to the inmates. Topics of instruction also include addiction recovery, anger management, goal setting, budget development, and job preparation. Currently, rated capacity constrictions do not allow for the expansion of this program which has been very successful in diversion and rehabilitation.
- Other rehabilitation and diversion programs are not able to be introduced into the Detention Center based on the space available and the rated capacity restrictions. For example, the SPCC G.E.D. program which produced 10 graduates was discontinued based on rated capacity needs and minimum class size requirements.
- The inability to introduce new programs significantly hinders the ability to proactively address and lessen our recidivism rate.



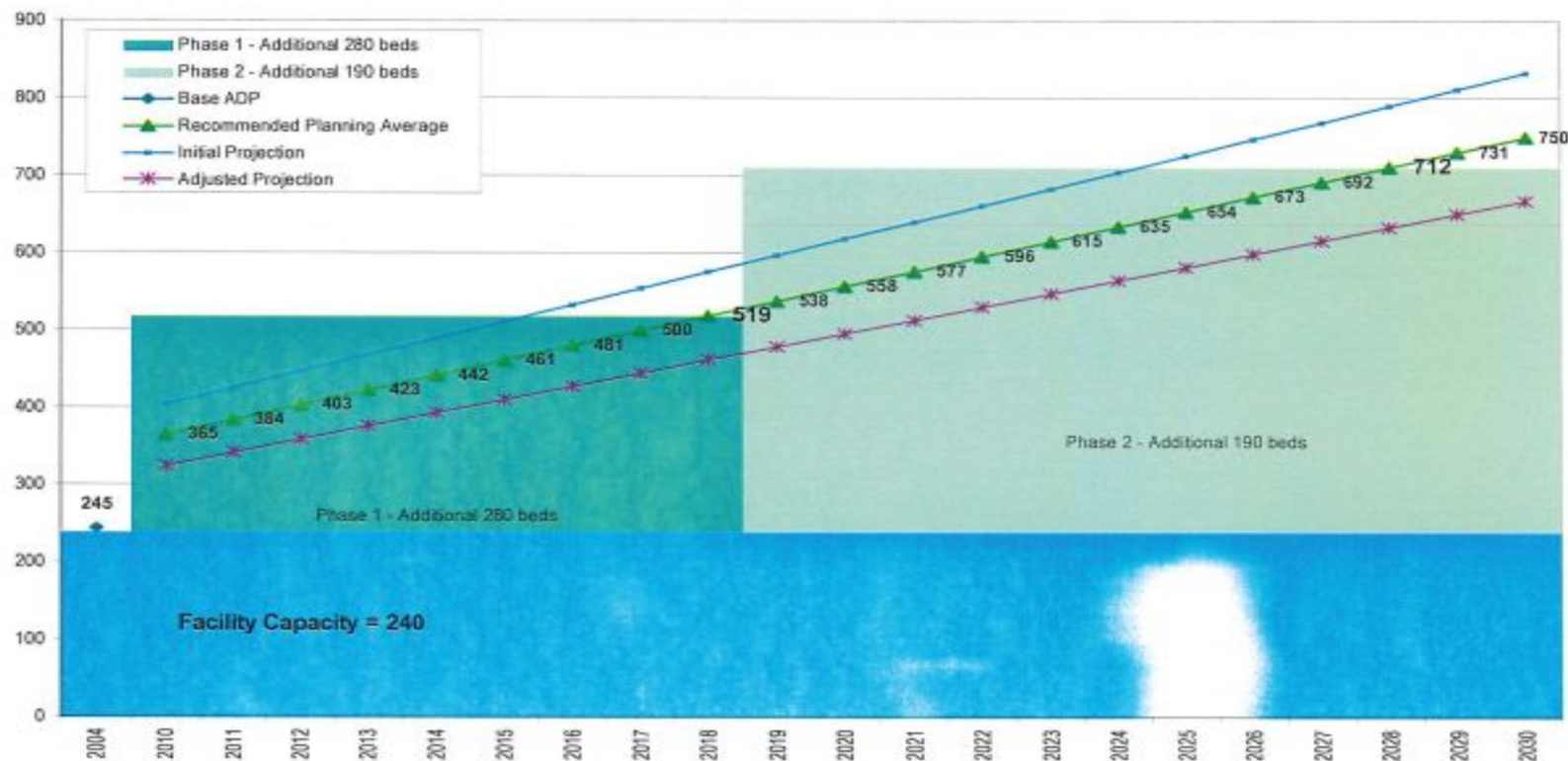
# Pending/Active Repairs and Renovation Costs

PROJECT TITLE	FUNDING
DOOR CONTROLS AND LOCKS	\$ 2,922,193
REPLACE GENERATOR	\$ 295,000
ROOFTOP UNITS	\$ 365,000
PAINT JAIL BLOCK WALLS AND FLOORS	\$ 151,234
JAIL BLOCK RENOVATIONS	\$ 1,950,000
REPLACE WASHERS AND DRYERS	\$ 435,000
KITCHEN FLOOR REPLACEMENT	\$ 201,263
JAIL SEWER SCREEN	\$ 250,000

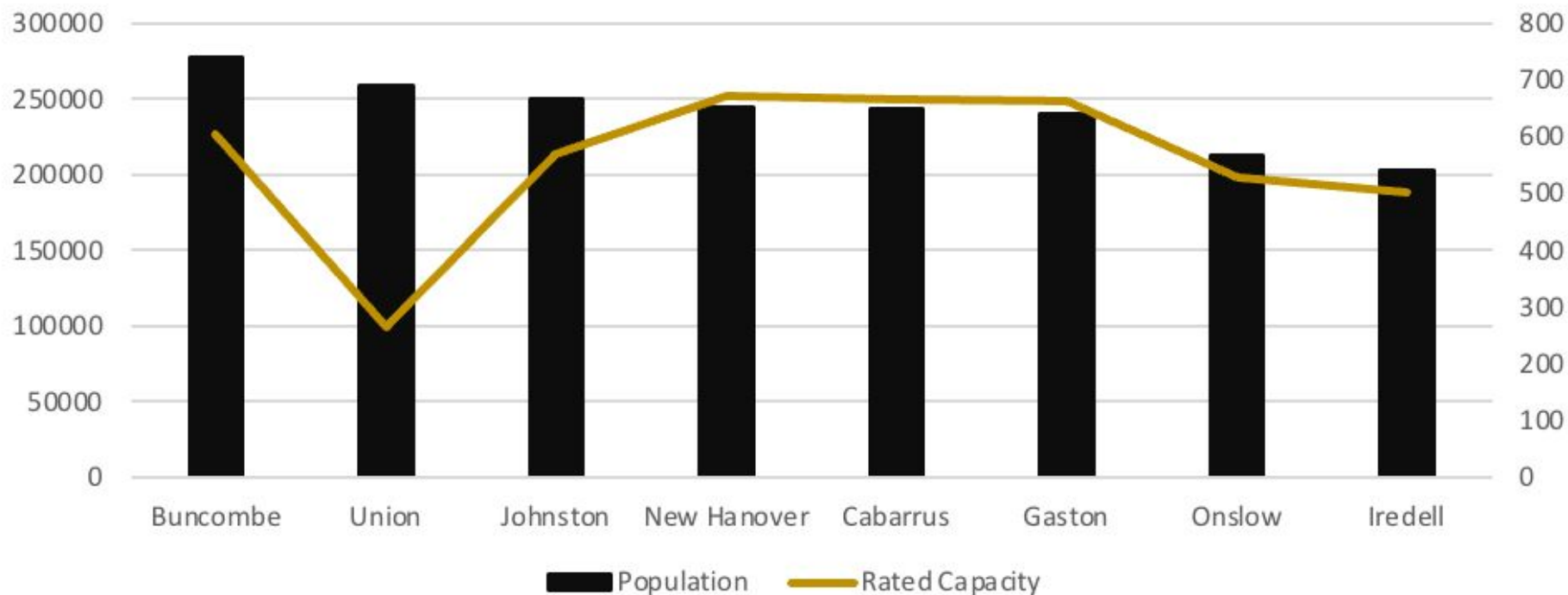
Total Costs (current and projected): \$6,569,690.00



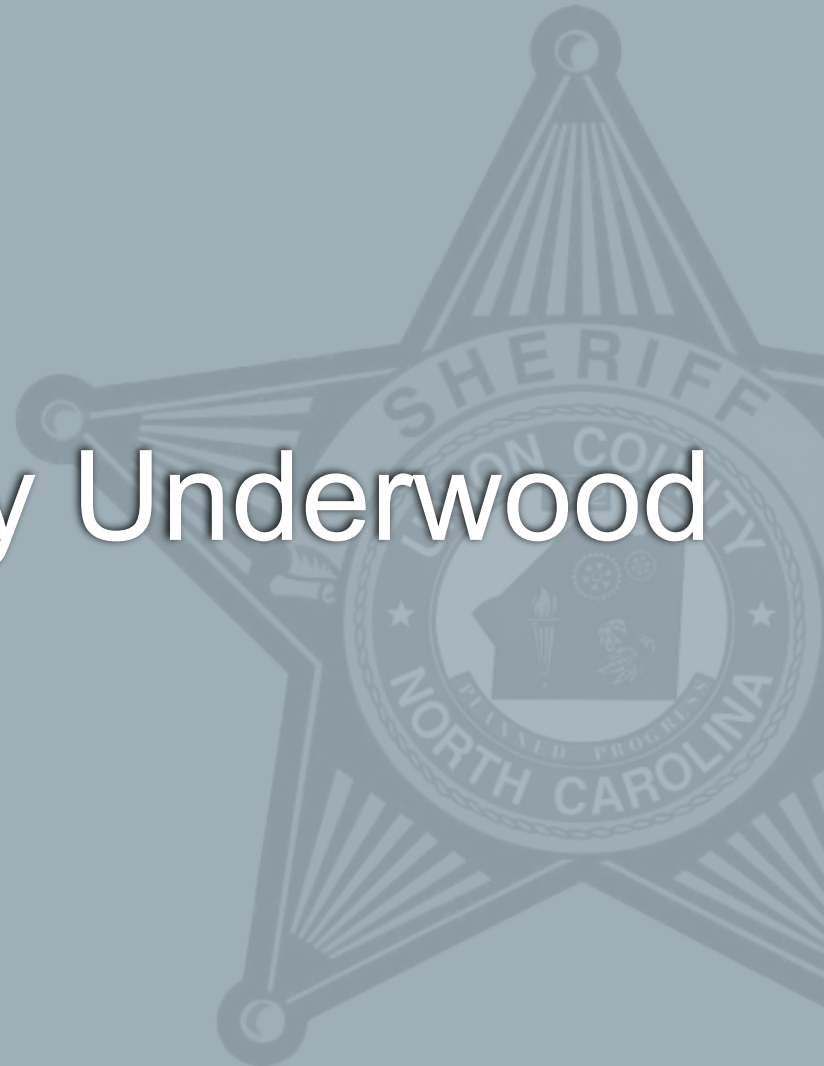
Figure 1-7  
Illustration of Bed Space Projections



## Population Comparison



Chief Deputy Tony Underwood





# Impact On Community Safety

Limited Detention Center capacity hinders our ability to conduct proactive, large scale law enforcement operations.

- Impaired driver checkpoints
- Coordinated, large scale sex offender compliance operations
- Multi-agency fugitive apprehension operations
- Citations being issues in lieu of physical arrest
- Pre-Trial Integrity Act

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# Vision

- Planning
- Partnership
- Preparing for the Future

UCSO recommends a new 600 bed Detention Center equipped with a core facility large enough to accommodate 800 total beds. The core facility would include space dedicated to inmate processing, medical services, food services, laundry, program space, etc. The projected cost of this project is \$150,813,381.00 at this time. The estimated cost to build the same sized facility in 2030 increases to \$173,241,894.00 and steadily increases year over year.

