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## People Not Prisons: With Site Decided, It's Now Time to Design Utah's New Prison the Right Way

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AUGUST 12, 2015 – The coalition People Not Prisons has a message for the Prison Relocation Commission and the public: **“The site has been selected, now it is time to focus on doing this right.”**

The PRC yesterday recommended a parcel of land three miles west of the Salt Lake International Airport as the new site of the Utah State Prison. The recommendation still must be approved by the Legislature and the governor before the project can move forward. A special legislative session will be held sometime in the coming weeks to facilitate the decision-making process.

People Not Prisons supports this area as an appropriate site for the new prison facility. The site is close to medical services, courts and legal resources, rehabilitation facilities and services, medical and mental health professionals, as well as to inmates' families and volunteers along the Wasatch Front. There is also enough open land to build a modern and innovative facility from the ground up, utilizing a rehabilitative model that will allow for more progressive correctional approaches, such as direct observation of inmates by officers.

“The Prison Relocation Commission’s process has been open and transparent to us as advocates,” said Jean Hill of the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake. “Many of us have been attending these meetings non-stop for the past two years. Our concerns about proximity to volunteers and services were heard and responded to. Our demands that criminal justice reform accompany the relocation process were acted upon.”

Now that the PRC’s site recommendation has been announced, members of PNP encourage policymakers and the public they represent, to get engaged in the prison *design* process. The new prison should be designed to:

- **offer more space for programming** than does the current facility in Draper;
- **utilize safer correctional design** for the security of both inmates and correctional staff;
- **provide better on-site medical and mental health treatment** to inmates;
- **reduce the use of restrictive housing and solitary confinement;**
- **offer significant vocational opportunities** for both male and female prisoners;
- **provide ample safe outdoor recreation access** even for prisoners in maximum security; and
- **work in concert with more plentiful community-based treatment beds** (including community correctional facilities and additional in-patient substance abuse treatment), which will require additional

future investment.

“We hope that members of the public will not lose interest in this process now that a location recommendation has been made,” said Anna Brower of the ACLU of Utah. "While a new facility is an important piece of the criminal justice reform puzzle, we must continue to hold our leaders' feet to the fire to ensure we get the full bang for our buck, in terms of really improving the system in Utah. We need to make sure that this facility is built right, that related reforms are initiated with integrity, and that other needs – such as investment in mental health and substance abuse treatment – are met."

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***The People Not Prisons Coalition** is a loose coalition of advocacy groups working on behalf of people with mental health conditions, people recovering from substance use disorders, and men and women caught up in Utah's criminal justice system. Our Coalition includes but is not limited to:*

Utah Support Advocates for Recovery Awareness (USARA) - Utah Association of Addiction Treatment Providers (UAATP)  
Odyssey House – First Step House - Utah AFL-CIO - Disability Law Center - Utah Prison Support – ACLU of Utah  
New Roads Behavioral Health - Utah Prisoner Advocate Network (UPAN) - The Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City  
and several individual criminal justice reform advocates from various Utah communities

