section ten
Jail Capacity Forecasts

Forecasting future jail population sizes is, or should be, a policy-based task. The changes that have occurred in United States jail populations during the last forty years provide considerable evidence that shifts in local policies can bring about dramatic increases or decreases in jail populations within a county. Few planners who did jail population forecasts during the 1970s or 1980s were able to foresee the nation-wide policy-shift trends that would lead to dramatic growth in jail populations in the 1980s and 1990s. They were unable to foresee, for example, the greater focus on persons convicted of drunk driving. In the 1990s, the offenses that impacted most jails in the United States were domestic violence and all of the narcotics and drug-related crime followed by the minimum-mandatory sentences.

Because of this failure of foresight, even those counties that built new jails during the latter half of the 1990s found that space that was supposed to be sufficient until the year 2025 was filled by the early 2000s. In many cases, the decision-makers responsible for the policy shifts at issue had been on hand when the forecasting studies were done; they were no more able than the forecasters to predict where policy emphases would fall during the coming decade.

Too much jail forecasting work done in recent years has assumed that criminal justice system policies in a county will remain the same over the forecast period. In reality, this is rarely the case. When forecasters make their predictions based on the assumption that county decision-makers will make no changes in criminal justice system policy, they doom their predictions to failure. No county criminal justice system today can afford not to anticipate change. For better or for worse, all county systems will have to change, with increasing frequency, in the years to come. The question is not whether but how a particular set of policies can be expected to change. Jail forecasters must learn to take the likelihood of such changes into account and try to foresee the various possibilities. As the drunk driving, domestic violence, and narcotics examples illustrate, forecasters cannot do this without the close cooperation of criminal justice system decision-makers. Ultimately, the decision-makers are the ones who must decide where the emphasis will fall in the years to come.

Jail capacity forecasts must depend in large part on information made available to forecasters by a county. The forecasts contained in this report are no exception. Much historical information exists on the way the Placer County Adult Detention Center has been used during the past 17-years. Jail admissions, average length of stay, and average daily population figures are available from 1997 to the present.

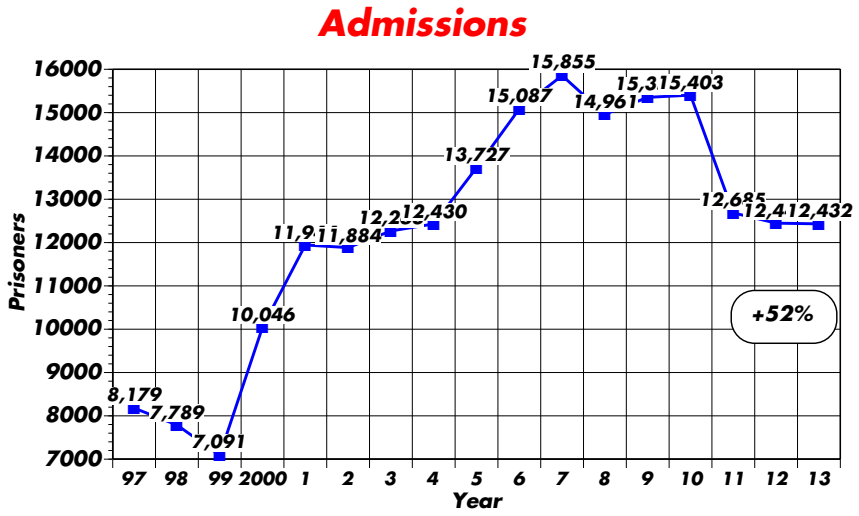
Attempts to obtain reliable, consistent older data, however, proved impossible — the records simply do not exist or are not reliable. An estimate of the forecast of county population was received from the Placer County Planning Department and Hausrath Economic Group to the year 2040.

As useful as these numbers may be in constructing a picture of what is to come, they will not aid the county unless a consensus regarding criminal justice system policy for the next twenty-five years is reached. The text, tables, and graphs that follow illustrate several possible population scenarios, scenarios that suggest what the county might expect in terms of Jail bed demand given several possible policy scenarios. No one-policy scenario is the "right" scenario. It will be up to the county decision-makers to select the view of the future that best represents what they believe to be the most likely direction of county decision-makers, and then plan for jail space on that basis.

The 2011 data in the following graphics is annualized based upon the first 9 months.

A. Admissions

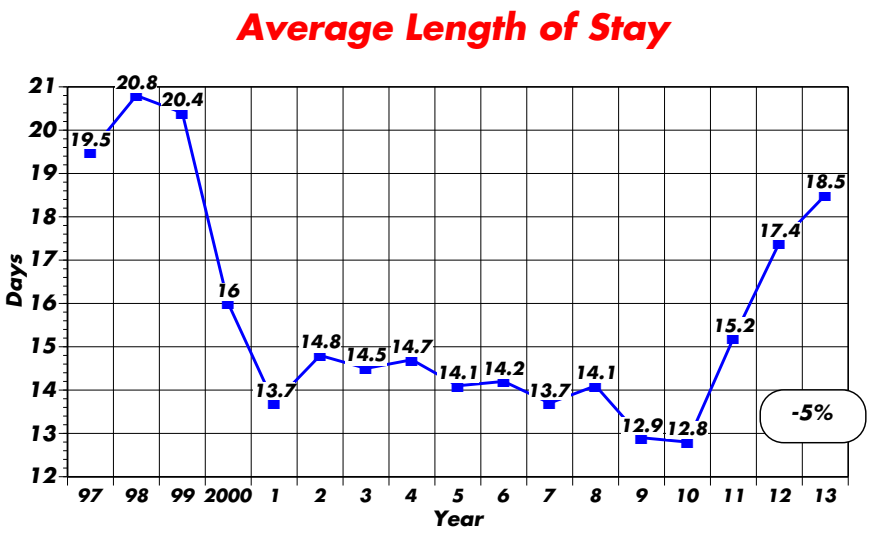
The first graphic presents the total admissions per year for the years 1997 to 2012.



In 1997, the Placer County Jail admitted a total of 8,179 persons. The number of admissions dropped from until 2000. The numbers started rising dramatically and then plateaued in the mid-2000's before dropping to it current level. The admission number has been relatively flat since 2010. The number of admissions into the jail in 2013 was 12,432, a 52 percent increase over the period.

B. Average length of stay

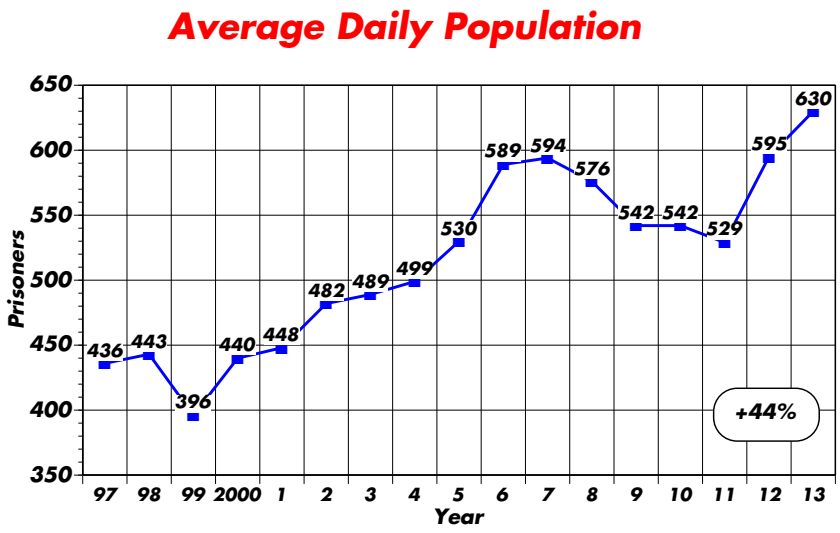
The next graphic shows the average length of stay for 1997 to 2013.



The average length of stay has been on a roller coaster, increasing for a few years and then dropping, finally steadily increasing since 2010. The average length of stay in 1997 was 19.5 days and in 2013 was 18.5 days, making for a 5 percent decrease over the period.

C. Average daily population

The next graphic presents the historic average daily populations (ADP) for the Placer County Jail over the period 1997 to 2013.



The average daily population was 436 in 1997. The average daily population increased steadily between 1999 and 2007 before dropping for a few years and has gone up each of the last 3-years. In 2013, the average daily population was 630, making for a 44 percent increase over the period.

D. Federal District Court cap releases

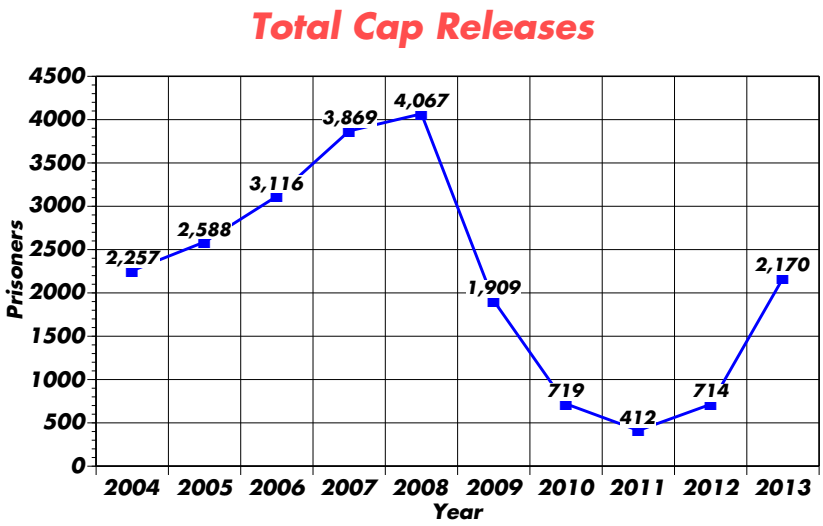
The Placer County Sheriff has been under a federal district court order limiting the population in the jail since 1990. As the data in this section will detail, in 2013 there were 2,170 inmates released pursuant to that order. Every single release signifies a system failure. The court order requires the Sheriff to release inmates to maintain the cap limit. Some inmates were released on a promise to appear Pretrial who had been denied a release by a judge and/or were simply released prior to even appearing in front of a judge. Other inmates were released early from a sentence ordered by the court, regardless of their behavior in the institution or as a result of a risk assessment.

The answer to this problem is neither to overcrowd the jail in violation of the order nor simply to construct an endless number of jail beds to detain everyone. The answer is working through this process to implement a Jail Population Management Plan that doesn't rely upon the Sheriff alone to manage the jail population.

This section presents the data regarding the cap releases from 2004 to 2013.

1. Total cap releases

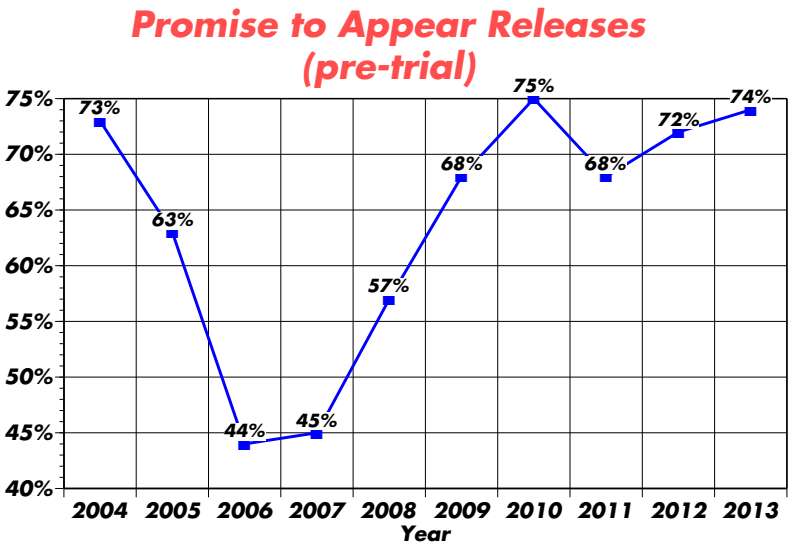
The next graphic shows the number of Fedcap releases from 2004 to 2013.



In 2004, there were 2,257 Fedcap releases. The number of releases increased to 2008 before dropping to a low of 412 in 2011. The numbers have been increasing dramatically and in 2013, there were 2,170 releases.

2. Pretrial (promise to appear) releases

The next graphic shows the percentage of the inmates released who were released Pretrial on a promise to appear.

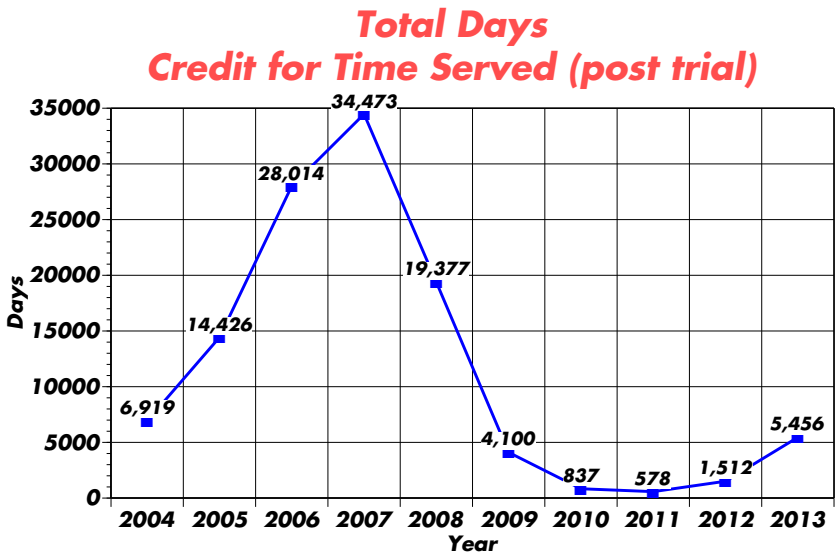


In 2004, the percentage of inmates released who were Pretrial inmates was 73 percent. The percentage released Pretrial decreased until in started rising in 2007. In 2013, the percentage-released Pretrial was 74 percent. The remaining inmates released were sentenced inmates.

3. Credit for time served

a. Total days

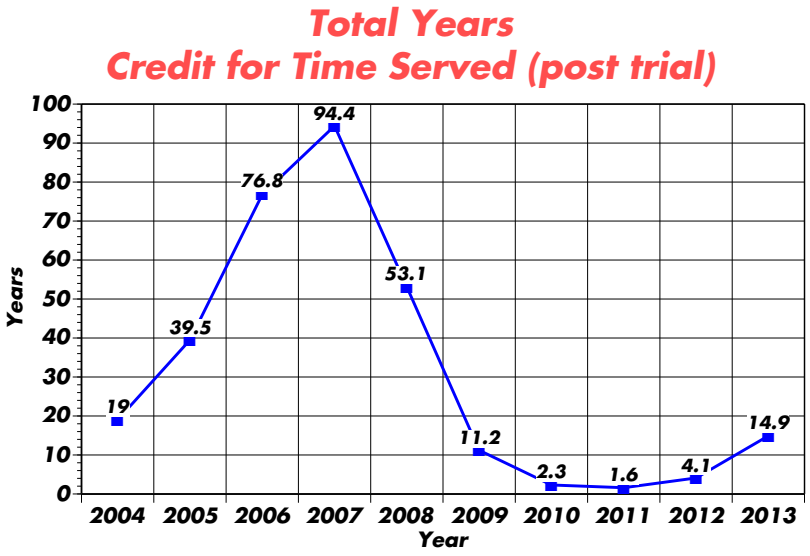
The next graphic shows the days early inmates who were released from their sentence.



In 2004, the total days inmates were released early were 6,919. The number peaked in 2007 when the total days inmates were released early were 34,473. In 2013, inmates were released early 5,456 days.

b. Total years

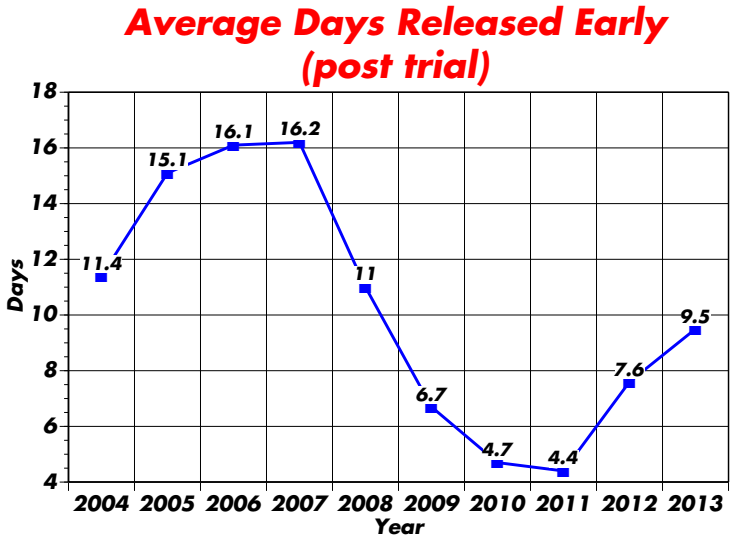
The next graphic displays the above data in the form of years that defendants were released early from their sentence.



In 2004, inmates were released early from 19-years worth of jail sentences. The number rose through 2007, when inmates were released early from 94.4 years of jail sentences. In 2007, in addition to there being significantly more persons released under this order, only 45% were Pretrial inmates. In 2013, the number of years released early was 14.9.

c. Average per inmate

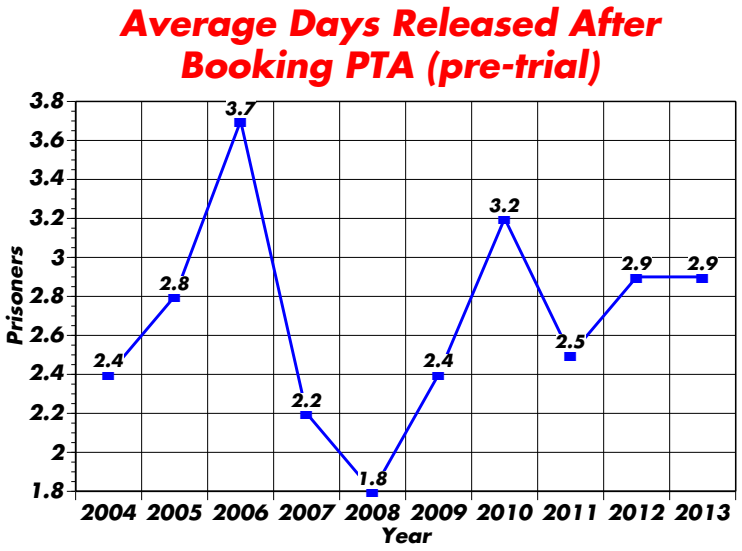
The next graphic displays the average number of days early that inmates released post trial were released from their sentence.



In 2004, inmates were released early 11.4 days. The number of days released early peaked in 2007 when inmates were released 16.2 days early. In 2013, inmates were released an average 9.5 days early from their sentence.

4. Days released after booking for Pretrial releases

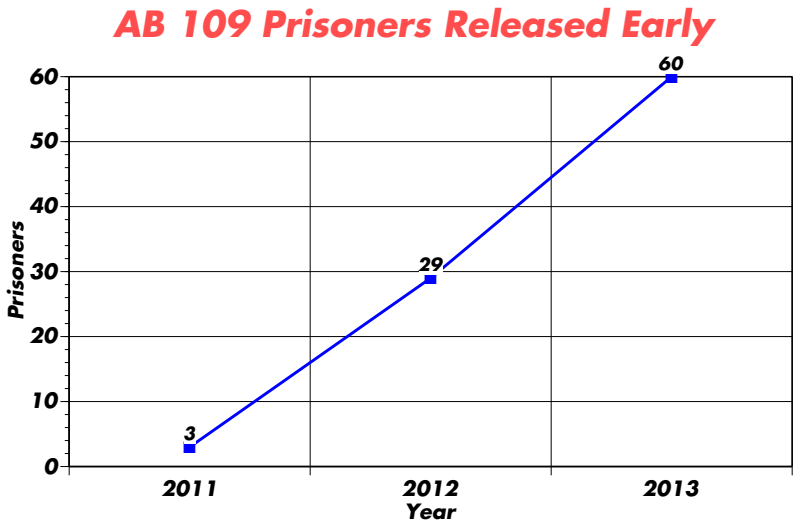
The next graphic displays the average number of days between booking and release for inmates who were released Pretrial.



In 2004, inmates released on a promise to appear were released an average 2.4 days after booking. The number of days has gone up and down within a narrow range. In 2013, inmate3s released on a promise to appear were released in an average 2.9 days.

5. AB 109

The next graphic shows the number of AB 109 inmates released early from their sentence. The law went into effect 1 October 2011.

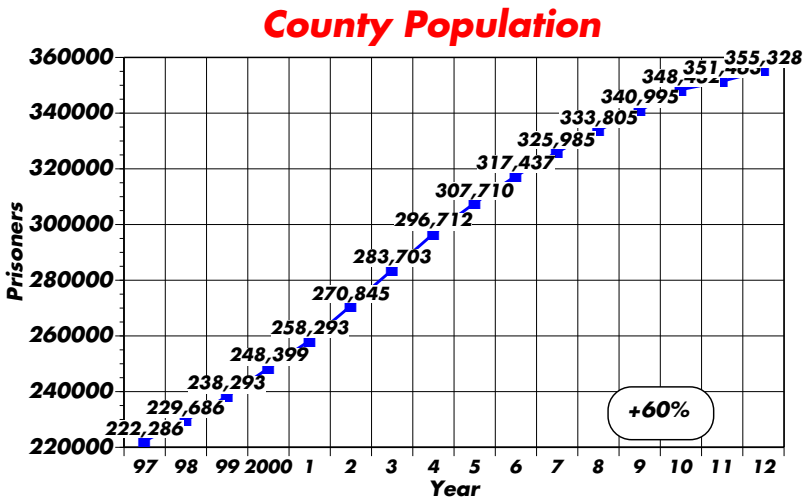


From October to December in 2011, 3 AB 109 inmates were released early from their sentence. In 2013, 60-inmates were released early.

D. County population: Actual and forecasted — 1997-2040

1. County population: Actual — 1997-2040

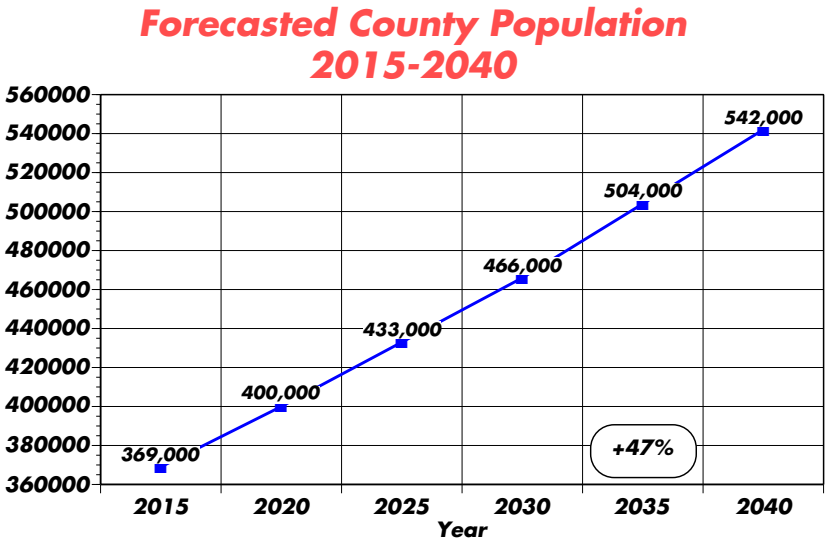
The next graphic shows the actual county population for each year between 1997 and 2012.



In 1997, 222,286 persons resided in the county. Since then, the population has risen steadily and it is estimated that 355,328 persons live in the county in 2012, a 60 percent increase over the period.

2. County population: Forecasted — 2015-2040

The next graphic shows the forecasted county population from 2015 to 2040 as provided by the Placer County Planning Department and Hausrath Economic Group, updated in 2012.

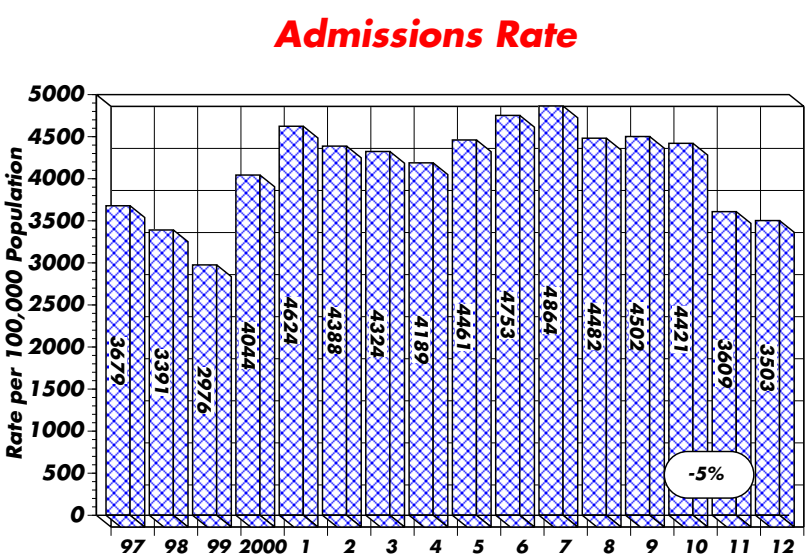


The county population in 2015 is forecasted to be 369,000. Population is expected to grow to 542,000 persons by 2040, a 47 percent increase.

E. Rates

1. Admissions

The next graphic shows the rate of admissions to the Placer County Jail per 100,000 population from 1997 to 2012.

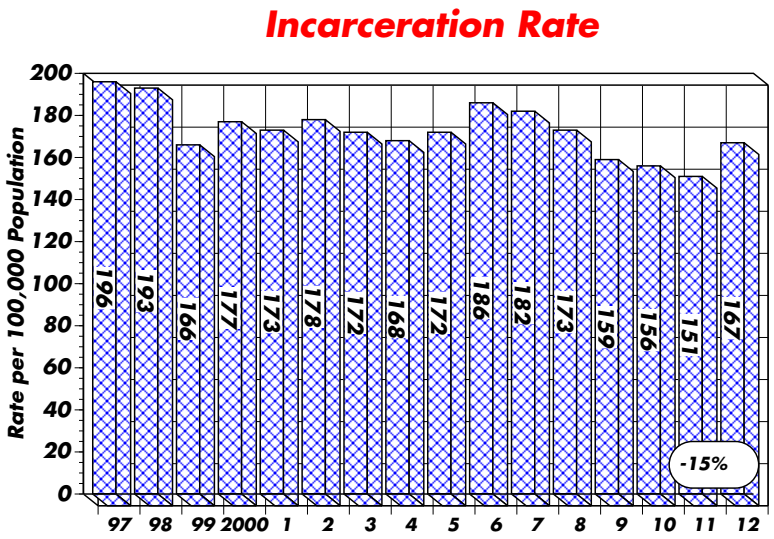


In 1997, the admission rate into the Placer County Adult Detention Center was 3,679 per 100,000 population; by 2012, the rate had decreased to 3,503 per 100,000 population, a 5 percent decrease.

2. Incarceration

a. Placer County

The incarceration rate per 100,000 of the population is shown in the graphic below for the years 1997 to 2012.



The incarceration rate decreased from 196 per 100,000 population in 1997 to 167 per 100,000 population in 2012, a 15 percent decrease.

F. Jail Capacity Forecasts

1. Introduction

A simple method of forecasting the number of Jail beds needed would be to use average daily population increases over the 17-year study period as a predictive base. During that 17-year period, the Jail population increased on average by 11.4 persons each year. Using the above method, one might predict that the average daily population would be 938 for the year 2040. However, this forecast assumes that the Jail is being appropriately utilized today (that no additional pre- or post trial intermediate sanctions exist that could impact the Jail population) and that the Jail will continue to be used at the same rate over the next 27 years as it has over the past 17 years. Neither of these assumptions is likely to be true. However, a more detailed approach is recommended to be used to develop Jail population forecasts — one in which county officials can help select specific scenarios for the future on which such forecasts can be based.

The average length of stay has moved up and down significantly over the study period. The average length of stay over the last 17 years averaged 15.4 days; over the last 10 years 14.8 days; and over the last 5 years, the average length of stay was 15.7 days. In 2013, the average length of stay was 18.5 days. For the purposes of these forecasts, three estimated average lengths of stay have been used for the year 2040: 16, 18, and 22 days.

The admissions rate decreased over the study period. The number of persons booked into the jail has increased significantly, but the rate has decreased. The admissions rate averaged 4,100 over the last 17 years. The admissions rates averaged 4,200 per 100,000 persons over the last 10 years and 3,900 over the last five years. The admissions rate for 2011 was 3,499. Three different admissions rates are used for these forecasts: 3,500, 4,000, and 4,500 per 100,000 population.

2. Adjustments: Peaking and classification factors

The expected average daily population for each of the forecast scenarios does not mean that the county should have this amount of beds available. Since these are daily averages, the county's plans should include allowances for those days (in a given year) when the population surges above the average because of normal fluctuations in admissions and releases.

This situation is similar to a storm drain system. A storm drain sits empty most of the year; however, it needs to be large enough to handle the peak run-off from a summer thundershower or melting snow from the mountains. Jail populations are very similar. During peak periods — traditionally weekends, the end of the month, and the summer months — jail populations climb. A jail needs to be large enough to handle the peak periods.

It was not possible to calculate a local peaking factor. This is due to the fact that the jail is constantly operating at capacity and is forced to release prisoners on a Fedcap Release. For the purposes of the forecasts, a peaking factor of 10 percent is used.

A second factor, classification, was used to allow for the daily need, in any jail, to have a few open beds available for new inmates within each classification category. In a jail of this size, an appropriate classification adjustment factor would be 14-beds for each of the four primary classification categories. That is, the county should increase its estimate for each year by 56 beds to come to a final figure of what will be needed for each of the years in this planning cycle.

3. The forecasts for 2040

The next set of graphics gives figures for the year 2040 based on an average length of stay of 16 days, 18 days and 22 days.

The tables below show (1) the average daily population, (2) beds necessary to handle peak periods, and (3) beds necessary for classification purposes. These figures are given for each of the three possible admissions rates. Each table then gives the incarceration rate per 100,000 population for each of the three possible admissions rates per 100,000 population: 3500, 4000 & 4500.

By 2040, it is estimated that 542,000 persons will be living in the county; this figure provides the baseline for the tables.

Average Length of Stay of 16 Days				Year 2040
Admissions Rate per 100,000 Population	Average Daily Population	Total Beds Necessary for the Peak Populations	Total Beds Necessary for Classification	Incarceration Rate per 100,000 Population
3500	832	915	971	153
4000	950	1045	1101	175
4500	1069	1176	1232	197

Average Length of Stay of 18 Days				Year 2040
Admissions Rate per 100,000 Population	Average Daily Population	Total Beds Necessary for the Peak Populations	Total Beds Necessary for Classification	Incarceration Rate per 100,000 Population
3500	936	1029	1085	173
4000	1069	1176	1232	197
4500	1203	1323	1379	222

Average Length of Stay of 22 Days				Year 2040
Admissions Rate per 100,000 Population	Average Daily Population	Total Beds Necessary for the Peak Populations	Total Beds Necessary for Classification	Incarceration Rate per 100,000 Population
3500	1143	1258	1314	211
4000	1307	1437	1493	241
4500	1470	1617	1673	271

G. Conclusion

The forecasts presented in this report are just starting points. The projections are, at best, estimates of what is likely to occur in the coming twenty-five years. Should the county decision-makers wish to alter any of the scenarios, they can do so by adjusting the key indices of jail use — county population, admissions rate, expected average lengths of stay, the peaking factor, and the classification factor. By adjusting these factors, the decision-makers will obtain different estimates of the required number of jail beds.

There is no guarantee that criminal justice system policy will not change and push jail populations higher or lower than these numbers indicate. The forecasters of the 1980s did not foresee the dramatic rise in jail populations that took place during the 1990s and 2000s. No one was able to estimate those changes accurately.

Placer County officials must analyze the data contained in this report and adopt a plan for the future of their criminal justice system. Policy shifts that could change the amount of jail space available are detailed in this report. If the necessary changes recommended in this report do *not* occur, then *more* beds than those predicted in this report will be necessary. Left uncontrolled, the present Jail population will continue to grow, filling and overfilling whatever facilities are constructed in response to such growth, and leaving Placer County with *no* alternatives for managing the jail population other than simply building new facilities every few years in response to renewed overcrowding and continuing using Fedcap Releases to manage the population. An approach that emphasizes active management, on the other hand, may make it possible to prolong the sufficiency of *new* jail space for a *longer* period — giving Placer County time to explore and try out the many viable alternatives to construction that have become available in recent years and are recommended in this report.