

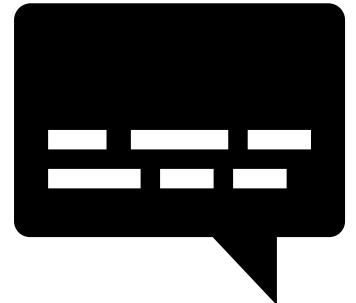


MCF-Stillwater Phased Closure Town Hall

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

Accessibility

- To turn on live captions and subtitles, select **Captions/Subtitles On** in your video controls.
- Need digital accessibility assistance for this meeting? Contact rose.witte@state.mn.us or at 612-505-4091



Housekeeping

- The presentation will be recorded.
- You may submit your questions at any time.



MCF-Stillwater History

- Minnesota's first territorial prison opened in Stillwater in 1853, predating statehood
 - In **1914**, operations moved to the current site in Bayport, which remains in use today
- For decades, it served as a close-security facility for adult males
- The **facility is historically significant**:
 - 26 buildings are on the national historical registry
 - *The Prison Mirror* is the nation's oldest continuously operating prison newspaper
- More than 100 years old, the facility's infrastructure has **aged beyond correctional standards**



Concerns about the long-term viability of MCF-Stillwater have been discussed by state leaders **for decades**.

- MCF-Oak Park Heights, built in 1982, was originally intended to replace it

Studies and reports have identified aging infrastructure and **safety risks**, including:

- Poor sightlines for staff
- Manual locking mechanisms
- Lack of temperature control

Deferred maintenance totals **over \$180 million**, with full replacement costs **exceeding \$1.3 billion**



Legislative Requirements for MCF-Stillwater Closure

Closure of MCF-Stillwater to occur in phases, with full closure by June 30, 2029

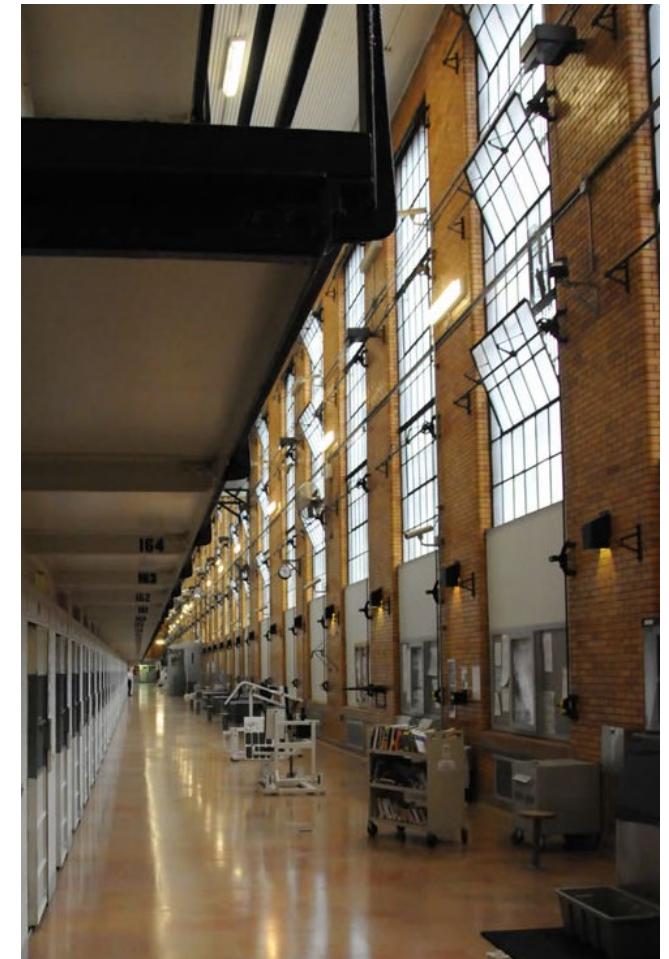
- Unlike anything the agency has undertaken before

Legislative requirements for DOC closure planning:

1. Minimize staff layoffs
2. Maximize staff opportunities to transfer to other facilities
3. Engage with labor unions, public officials, and impacted local units of government
4. Identify potentially adverse impacts of the closure on incarcerated individuals
5. Minimize disruptions in conditions of confinement, rehabilitative programming, educational opportunities, mental health and medical care, family visitation, and case planning
6. Prioritize access to services that support rehabilitation and successful reentry

Budget Requirements & Strategy

- The DOC must reduce Stillwater's budget by **\$20 million in FY26** as part of the phased closure of MCF-Stillwater.
- To achieve this, DOC needed to reduce Stillwater's population and staffing by approximately **50% before October 1, 2025**.
- **Future phases will build on this foundation** to support further budget reduction requirements:
 - \$41.5 million in FY27
 - \$43 million in FY28
 - \$48 million in FY29



Staffing & Workforce

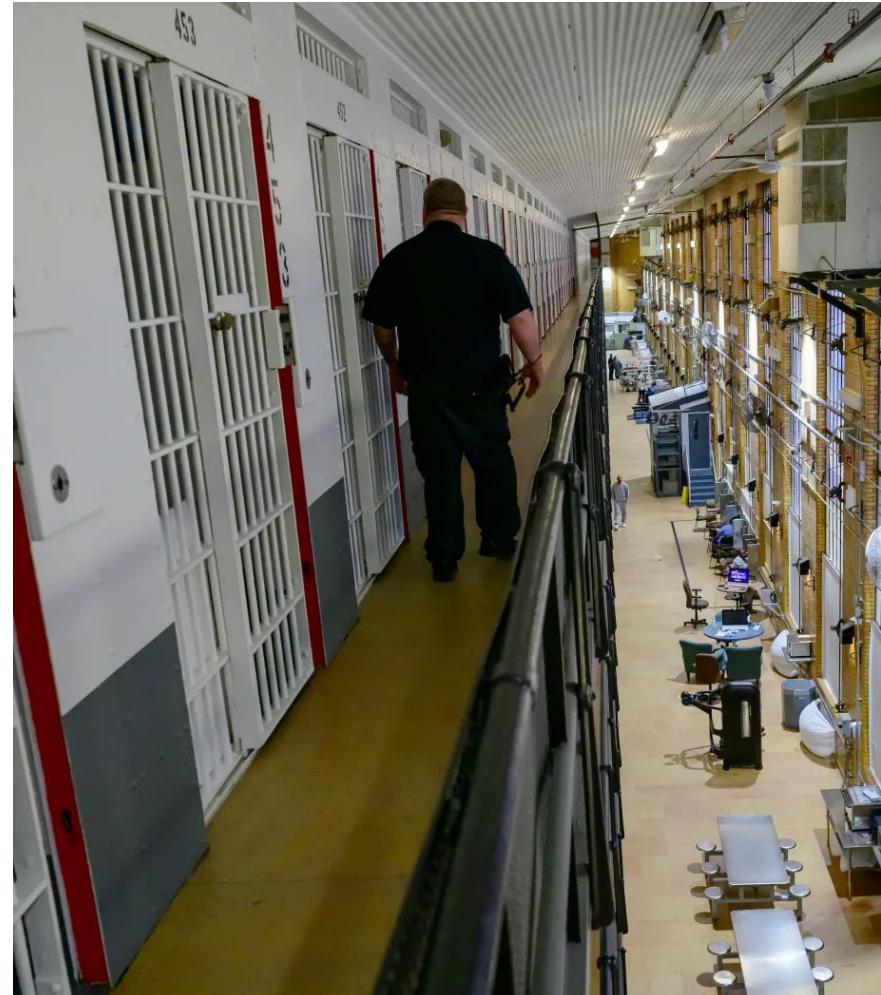
Reduction of MCF-Stillwater staff compliment by roughly 50%

- DOC HR and labor partners **met with each impacted Stillwater staff individually**
- **99% of 567 Stillwater staff retained**
- 149 Stillwater staff transferred to other facilities
- All probationary CO1s in good standing advanced into permanent positions

Consistent, productive engagement and collaboration with unions (AFSCME, MAPE, MMA, MNA, and SRSEA)

- Regular meetings focus on planning, progress reports, and review of planned communications

Focus is now shifting to staff recruitment and retention



Incarcerated Person (IP) Transfers

- Stillwater's population was reduced by approximately 50%, from 1,189 to a new capacity of 553.
- DOC leadership met with Stillwater IPs ahead of transfers
 - Received important feedback and ideas for improving transitions
- Transfers were guided by a structured decision-making process:
 - Medical and mental health continuity
 - Programming and education needs (prioritizing minimal disruption)
 - Risk assessment (MnSafe-D)
 - Known incompatibilities
 - Case planning



Incarcerated Population Statewide

- **Between June 30 – October 1**, the DOC completed 2,017 transfers statewide, including:
 - 728 individuals transferred out of Stillwater
 - 244 transferred into Stillwater
- Statewide prison population remains **stable and manageable**
 - Today's total prison population is 7,915



- **Atlantis SUD Treatment Program** – Expanded from 36 to 93 incarcerated persons (IPs)
 - Approximately 77% of people incarcerated in DOC are diagnosed with substance use disorders
- **Restrictive Housing** – 150 IPs
 - Statewide placement for IPs with long-term restrictive housing sentences
- **Earned Living Units (ELU)** – 310 IPs
 - Designated housing units that individuals must earn placement into and maintain through sustained positive behavior
 - Research from other states shows that these types of “honor units” and incentive-based models can significantly reduce violence and misconduct in prisons

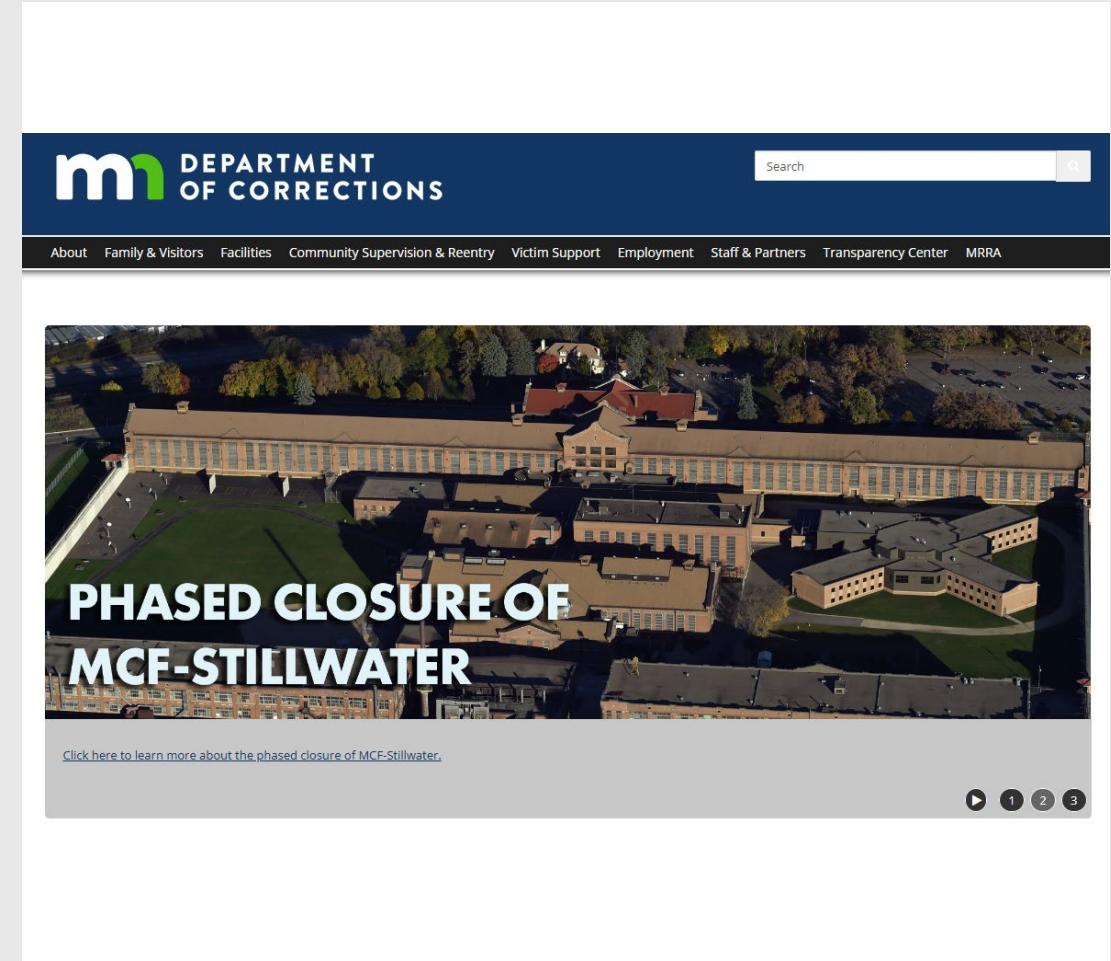
Stillwater ELUs

- 863 applications reviewed with 310 approved, and waitlist formed
 - Residents are selected based on their behavior history, program participation, staff recommendation, and other factors
- Accountability, incentives, and structures **shaped directly with IPs**
 - Incentives include increased canteen options, furniture, expanded visiting hours, and more
- IPs report a **positive community feeling** with shared accountability
- DOC is exploring additional ELUs and honors units at other facilities



Communications & Transparency

- Memos to staff, the incarcerated population, and friends/families
- Public webpage created and updated regularly
- In-person and virtual town halls with staff
- Briefings to local government leaders and key legislators
- Tours for legislators and media
- Commitment to being as transparent and responsive as possible



Planning the Future

Decommissioning and Management Studies will help to inform next steps

- Due to the Legislature on September 30, 2026

Decisions about the pace and scope of reductions will be guided by:

- Staffing capacity
- Security risks and the safe management of population
- Availability of programming and medical/mental health services at receiving facilities
- Facility infrastructure
- Budgetary pressures and cost-efficiency

Must ensure that no facility becomes overburdened, all staff are supported, and IPs maintain access to programming and essential services

Decommissioning Study Engagement

Decommissioning study stakeholder engagement in 5 tiers:

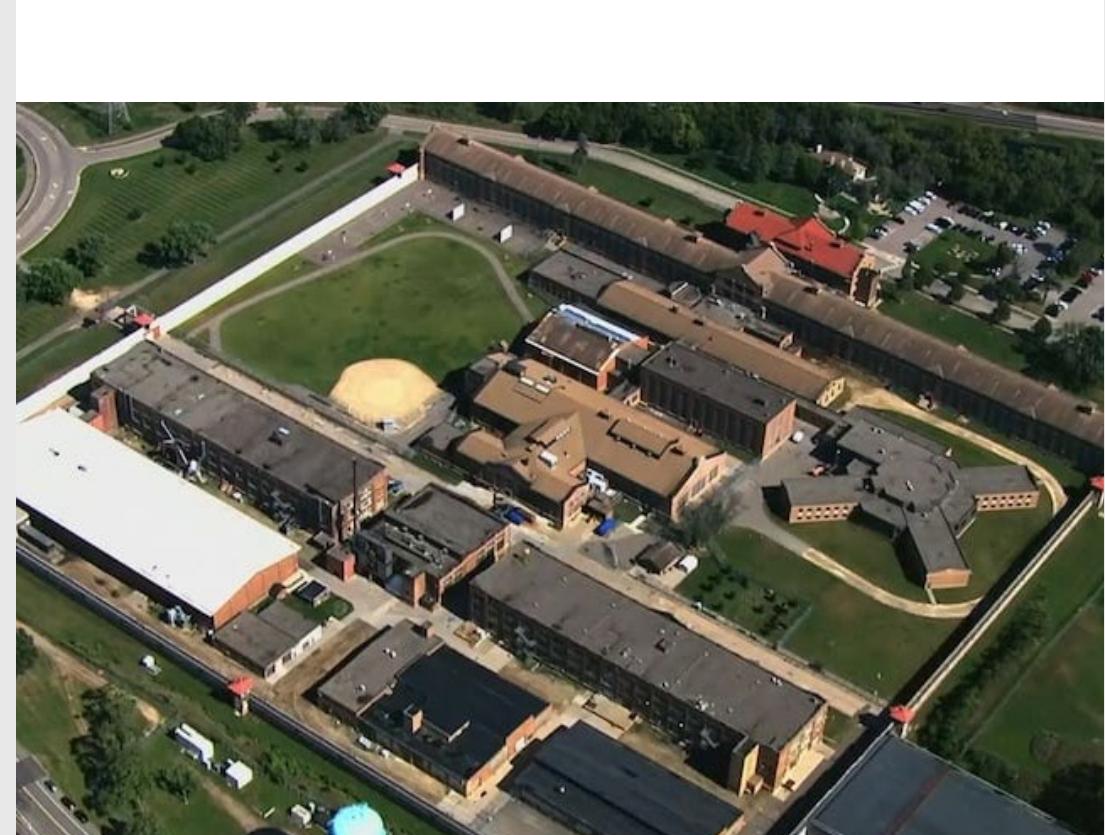
- Local elected officials – tour on 1/27/2026
- Regional
- State Regulatory & Departments
- Legislators
- General Public

General public engagement likely in Spring 2026

- Public forum type meetings
- Potential for informational booths at community events
- Potential private developer info session and Q&A

Engagement will:

- Present the concept
- Disseminate information
- Gather feedback from the community



Stillwater – Warden Bolin

- Stillwater staff transition
- IP transition
 - ELU, Atlantis, and Restrictive Housing
- Stillwater programming
- Exec Team/Administration mission



Questions?