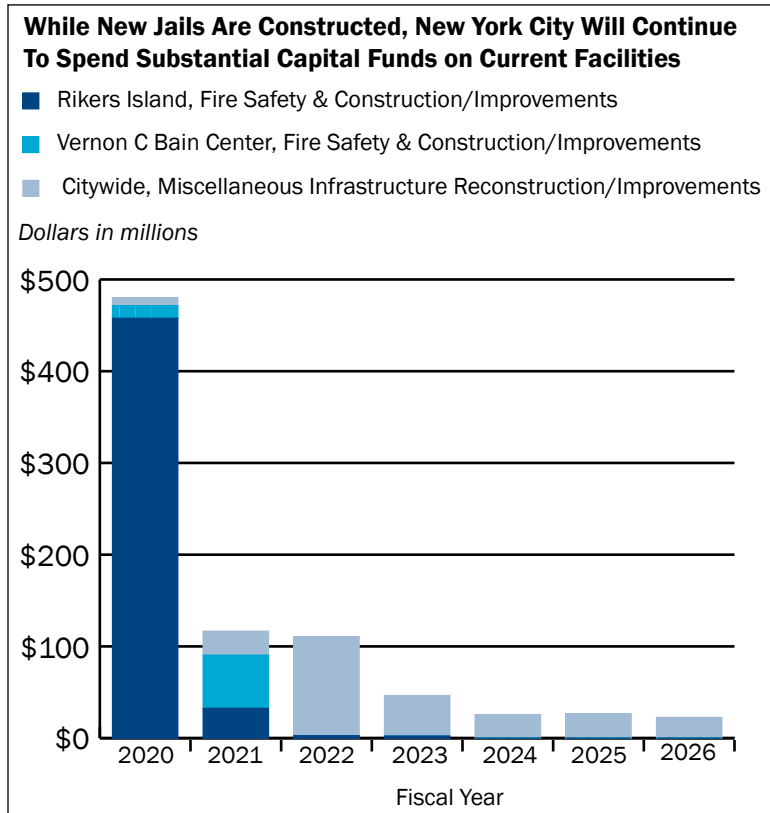


While the City Builds New Jails, How Much Will It Spend to Maintain the Jails Destined for Closure?

The plan for closing Rikers Island and replacing it with four smaller borough-based jails comes with a widely publicized price tag of \$8.7 billion. While the new jails are built, the city’s declining number of people in custody—about 5,800 as of January 1—still need to be jailed somewhere. That somewhere continues to be Rikers Island and the Vernon C. Bain Center, a barge anchored near Hunts Point.

The new borough-based jails are not expected to be ready until fiscal year 2026. In the meantime, the Rikers Island jails and the barge will need substantial repairs and upgrades as they continue to house detainees over the coming years. How much in capital funds does the city expect to commit to maintaining these moribund facilities through 2026?



- Based on the fiscal year 2020 Adopted Capital Commitment Plan, the city’s Department of Correction expects to spend roughly \$565 million to maintain the Rikers Island and Vernon C. Bain Center facilities until the new jails open.
- The capital commitment plan includes \$495 million for maintenance and improvements at the Rikers Island jails from 2020 through 2026. Despite the pending closure of these facilities, this spending is necessary to comply with minimum health and safety standards for people in custody as well as staff and visitors, including fire safety regulations and compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act.
- The capital commitment plan also projects that the city will spend \$72 million in 2020 and 2021 on renovations at the Vernon C. Bain Center, including Americans With Disabilities Act compliance, laundry facilities, and fire safety.
- In addition to the roughly \$565 million slated for Rikers Island the Vernon C. Bain Center, the correction department’s capital plan includes \$262 million for miscellaneous projects citywide. Some of these funds could also be spent on the jails scheduled for closure.

Share on   

Prepared by Amanda Gallear
New York City Independent Budget Office

SOURCE: 2020 Adopted Capital Commitment Plan
NOTE: Includes capital spending on fire safety, construction, and improvements only; does not include security, technology, or other equipment.