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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES BEGINNING OF MAJOR CONSTRUCTION  
ACTIVITIES FOR BOROUGH-BASED JAILS PROGRAM**

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the beginning of construction activities on the parking garage and community space alongside a new jail in Kew Gardens. The construction marks the first major activity in the Borough-Based Jails Program, a \$8.3 billion effort to construct four new, smaller, and more humane jails in Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, to replace the jails on Rikers Island.

The garage and community space will be constructed at the program’s Queens site, adjacent to Queens Borough Hall and the Queens Criminal Courthouse that make up the heart of the borough’s civic center. The new, approximately 105-foot tall structure will include a 25,000-square-foot, two-level, flexible, multi-purpose community space, plus more than 600 public parking spots.

“Today we move one huge step closer to our goal of a fairer and more equitable jail system for all New Yorkers,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Closing Rikers Island will make our city stronger and more just, and I’m proud to deliver a system that better reflects this city’s values.”

The structure is being built on the west side of an existing parking lot at Union Turnpike between 126th Street and 132nd Street. The east side of the parking lot will remain open during construction, providing 140 parking spots to the community until work is complete in early-2023. The adjacent Queens Detention Complex will begin demolition during the garage construction and then the new Queens jail will be built spanning the east side of the parking lot and the former Queens Detention Complex site.

To minimize the effect on the environment and the City’s infrastructure, the parking garage and community space will include a partial planted green roof, solar panels and on-site stormwater retention. As a result, the community space portion of the project is expected to qualify for [LEED Gold](#) certification for environmental sustainability. The project may also be the first in the City to qualify for [Parksmart](#) certification, the only certification program that recognizes high-performing, sustainable garages.

The NYC Department of Design and Construction (DDC) is managing the overall Borough-Based Jails program citywide. The 886-bed Queens jail will be designed with a maximum height of 195 feet and will house female detainees in a separate facility within the jail.

“This project is part of a once-in-many-generations opportunity to build a smaller and more humane justice system that includes four facilities grounded in dignity and respect, offering better connections to and space for families, attorneys, courts, medical and mental health care, education, therapeutic programming and service providers,” said **NYC Department of Design and Construction Commissioner Jamie Torres-Springer**. “This is a great milestone in the Borough-Based Jails program, and we continue to seek and evaluate candidates for the design-build teams that will create the Program’s other facilities.”

“The beginning of major construction for the new Borough-Based Jails program in Kew Gardens is exciting news and something we have been greatly anticipating since Mayor de Blasio pledged to close the antiquated facilities on Rikers Island,” said **DOC Commissioner Vincent Schiraldi**. “It means we are one step closer to having modern facilities that are far better in every way than what exists today. The Borough-Based Jails plan will create state-of-the-art, fully air-conditioned buildings and a more humane environment. It will also help us achieve our goal of creating the kind of environment any of us would want if someone we loved was incarcerated.”

“Closing Rikers Island is a crucial component of this Administration's commitment to a safer, fairer justice system for New York City,” said **Marcos Soler, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice**. “The progress on the Queens site represents the latest step on our path towards transforming justice by safely reducing the City's jail population, investing in community-driven public safety, and building a smaller and more humane system of detention facilities that will lead to better outcomes for people who come into contact with the city’s jails.”

Passed by the City Council in October 2019, the City’s plan to close the jails on Rikers Island and build smaller, safer and fairer borough-based jail facilities comes at a time when New York City has the lowest crime and incarceration rates of any large city in the United States.

The design of the new Parking Garage and Community Space follows an extensive and multi-step public review process, including design workshops in each of the four boroughs with local neighborhood leaders, civic associations and community boards to identify preferred design elements including the use of community space, and workshops in each of the four boroughs with advocates and justice involved individuals to provide input on the design of the new facilities.

The Queens Parking Garage and Community Space is being created by the design-build team of Hunter Roberts Construction Group along with the architecture firms Marvel and Urbahn Architects. More information about opportunities in the Borough-Based Jails program and in other DDC design-build programs is available at <https://designbuild.ddcanywhere.nyc/>. The City highly encourages participation in the jails program by Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) and will set significant requirements for M/WBE participation in the program’s design-build contracts.

Procurement and early site preparation activities are ongoing for the other three Borough-Based Jails sites in Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn. Later this year, DDC expects to award a contract to dismantle the Brooklyn House of Detention and construct a temporary swing space to

facilitate the DOC's transfers for court appearances until construction of a new jail at the site is complete.

"The news about progress toward dismantling the Queens Detention Complex is a critical step towards implementing advocates' plans to fully close Rikers Island by 2027 or sooner. Reaching this significant milestone ahead of Mayor de Blasio's transition out of office will help secure the permanent demolition of the 10 jails on Rikers, long-term divestment from mass incarceration, & a complete transformation of our criminal legal system and responses to violence. We owe this to formerly incarcerated New Yorkers who have built this movement to shutter Rikers Island and improve conditions of confinement for anyone who remains incarcerated," said **Brandon J. Holmes, Co-Director of Freedom Agenda at The Urban Justice Center.**

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