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MAYOR DE BLASIO AND CITY COUNCIL REACH AGREEMENT TO REPLACE RIKERS ISLAND JAILS WITH COMMUNITY-BASED FACILITIES

The agreement ensures a single public review of identified jail sites in four boroughs and marks critical unity on the path to close Rikers Island and modernize the City's justice system

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Corey Johnson announced an agreement today to move forward on closing Rikers Island and creating a smaller, safer and fairer borough-based jail system. Together with the Council Members representing these areas, the Mayor and Speaker have agreed to a single public review process for four proposed sites in Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens. These sites together will provide off-Island space for 5,000 detainees, and will include the three existing DOC facilities in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens, as well as a new site in the Bronx located at 320 Concord Avenue in Mott Haven.

“This agreement marks a huge step forward on our path to closing Rikers Island,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “In partnership with the City Council, we can now move ahead with creating a borough-based jail system that’s smaller, safer and fairer. I want to thank these representatives, who share our vision of a more rehabilitative and humane criminal justice system that brings staff and detainees closer to their communities.”

“Today is a historic day, as we are yet one step closer to closing Rikers Island. The New York City Council is proud to have spearheaded the historic Close Rikers movement by creating the Lippman commission and passing legislation enacting many of its recommendations. The Council has also funded innovative programming to keep cases out of the criminal justice system altogether, such as the CLEAR and HOPE programs, which provide treatment instead of incarceration to those with substance abuse issues. We all know that closing jails on Rikers means opening more humane, community-based facilities elsewhere. I am proud to stand with my Council colleagues and thank them for their support on this crucial issue. I look forward to working closely with Mayor de Blasio, my Council colleagues representing these communities, and the communities themselves in finally achieving our shared goal of closing Rikers Island,” said **Speaker Corey Johnson**.

“Many Bronx families have been touched by our criminal justice system and understand the importance of creating a more humane approach to detention,” said **Council Member Diana**

Ayala. “This proposed site represents an opportunity to help improve detainee rehabilitation and ultimate reintegration into society, while also creating a safer work environment for officers. I am committed to creating a robust community engagement process on the ground to make sure the neighborhoods I represent and residents throughout the Bronx have an opportunity to provide input into this important proposal. I thank the Mayor, my colleagues and my predecessor, Melissa Mark-Viverito, for her vision in calling for the closing of Rikers Island two years ago.”

“I look forward to working with the Mayor and the Speaker to ensure the communities of Lower Manhattan are heard as we move forward with the process of establishing a fairer and more humane criminal justice system,” said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin.** “By working together, we will achieve the dream of closing Rikers for good. I thank Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson, and former Speaker Mark-Viverito for providing the leadership to make our shared vision of a more just city a reality.”

“The reopening of the Queens Detention Center not only makes sense but is the right thing to do,” said **Council Member Karen Koslowitz.** “This proposal restores the Center back to its original purpose and ensure that Queens’ borough-based jail facility is located in our civic center, close to our courts. This smaller facility will bolster the safety for our Department of Correction staff, will create an environment that is more conducive to rehabilitation and will save taxpayer dollars on transportation costs. I look forward to engaging with the residents of my district on this proposal and I thank the Mayor and the Speaker for continuing us down the path of closing Rikers Island.”

"It is essential that we close Rikers as quickly as possible," said **Council Member Stephen Levin.** "We must ensure our justice system reflects our commitment to safety, justice, and fairness for all - a standard we cannot in good conscious say we currently meet. We understand that the boroughs, including Brooklyn, will be an important part of the solution, and I look forward to engaging with the community on what form that may take."

“Today’s announcement is a meaningful step toward closing Rikers Island by committing to a timeline and process. I am thankful to Mayor Bill de Blasio and Speaker Corey Johnson for their cooperation and commitment to get this done. I look forward to working with the administration and my colleagues in the City Council to close Rikers once and for all,” said **Council Member Keith Powers, Chair of the Committee on Criminal Justice.**

With the support of Speaker Johnson and Council Members Chin, Levin, Koslowitz and Ayala, the City has identified four sites to hold new, modified or renovated facilities. These include:

- Manhattan Detention Center, 125 White Street, Manhattan, 10013
- Brooklyn Detention Center, 275 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, 11201
- Queens Detention Center, 126-01 82nd Avenue, Kew Gardens, 11415
- NYPD Tow Pound, 320 Concord Avenue, Bronx, 10454

These sites will need to go through a public review – a process known as the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) – which includes hearings and recommendations by the local community board, borough president, the City Council and the City Planning Commission. Today’s agreement between the Mayor and Speaker will consolidate the proposal to renovate, expand or construct jails in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx into a single ULURP process, which will allow for a more expedited review. An application could be submitted for certification as early as by the end of 2018, and the design process could begin as early as next summer.

Today’s announcement marks another major step in the process to close Rikers Island, which Mayor de Blasio and the City Council first announced in March of last year. In January, the City selected a vendor to identify sites that will eventually replace the jails on Rikers Island. The vendor, Perkins Eastman, and its subcontractors are creating a master plan with recommendations for how to maximize capacity at each of the sites and design jails that best meet the needs of inmates, staff and communities. They will also carry out a comprehensive public engagement process with local communities and stakeholders, and incorporate the feedback and needs of communities into the planning process. In order to expedite the pre-ULURP process, the City will simultaneously carry out environmental reviews to ensure these projects will not have an adverse effect on the surrounding communities.

Because existing borough-based facilities have the capacity to house only approximately 2,300 people, there is no immediate way to close Rikers Island safely and house the population off-Island. Expanding the capacity in the boroughs while simultaneously implementing a series of strategies to significantly reduce the jail population is currently underway. There is now an average of around 9,000 people per day on Rikers Island, which represents a 20 percent reduction since Mayor de Blasio took office.

In recent months, the City has introduced a number of programs that are driving down the jail population. These include a new program that replaces short jail sentences for minor, low-level offenses (typically under 30 days) with services that help prevent recidivism. In addition, the Administration announced that every person in the Department of Correction’s custody will receive re-entry services to help connect them with jobs and opportunities outside of jail, as well as five hours of programming per day to address vocational, educational, and therapeutic needs.

The complete Roadmap to closing Rikers, along with opportunities to get involved, is available at nyc.gov/CloseRikers.

The New York City Council has played a critical role in the movement to close Rikers Island, including convening the Lippman Commission and funding the CLEAR and HOPE programs in partnership with the Brooklyn and Staten Island district attorneys, so that low-level drug offenders can receive treatment and services instead of being sent to jail.

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