

October 7, 2020

Justice Advocates Design Workshop

NYC Borough-Based Jails Program

A DESIGN-BUILD PROGRAM

NYC Criminal Justice



NYC Department of Design and Construction
DDC



Report Delivered on
October 23, 2020 by
AECOM-Hill JV

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Workshop Objectives	4
Workshop Details	5
Workshop Approach, Experience, and Agenda	5
Key Takeaways & Main Findings	6
Activity 1: Discussion Questions	8
1. What Would Improve Your Experience As a Visitor	9
2. What Would Improve Your Experience When Entering the Building in Custody	10
Activity 2: Design Guidelines Justice Advocate Input	11
Summary & Results	12
Visiting Experience	13
Admissions Experience	21
Living Experience	25
Conclusion	30
Appendix	32
Additional Questions	33



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the questions, feedback and discussions gathered from the Justice Advocates workshop, which took place virtually on October 7, 2020 from 6:00 PM until 8:00 PM. Representatives from the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, NYC Department of Design and Construction, NYC Department of Correction, Correctional Health Services, and AECOM-Hill JV, the Program Management Consultant, were present to convene and facilitate a session to gather input from the Justice Implementation Task Force. The input will be included in the Request for Proposals (RFP), including Design Guidelines, during the procurement phase of the process. Design Guidelines will be used to inform Design Builders on how to achieve a design that is appropriate to create environments. Queen Strategy Partners, a consultant firm with expertise in designing and facilitating workshops, strategizing, planning event logistics, and reporting feedback, facilitated the workshop experience. Below is a summary of the following key areas of the workshop:

Workshop Objectives

The City is committed to closing the jails on Rikers Island and creating a network of modern and humane borough-based jails. The smaller, safer, fairer system will provide housing for a total of 3,300 people, the lowest rate of incarceration since 1920, in four borough-based sites. With a continued focus on re-entry and cultural change, the facilities will become civic assets that provide a better life for those who are detained and work in them, support smoother transitions back home, and serve as resources for the community.

The primary objective of the workshop included gathering input from the Justice Advocates to re-imagine these jails as civic assets that would provide a better life for those who are detained and work in them, support smoother transitions back home, and serve as resources for the community. Their input will be integrated into the Design Guidelines, especially in those areas related to creating supportive environments and reinforcing connected communities. Representatives from the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, NYC Department of Design and Construction, NYC Department of Correction, Correctional Health Services and AECOM-Hill JV provided information on the NYC commitment to project excellence and presented key updates.

The Design Principles and Guidelines articulate the goals of constructing new, modern facilities that are both positive civic institutions in the communities they will call home, as well as transformative supportive environments for all that enter them. The following are the program-wide design principles where Justice Advocate input related to this workshop will be included in the design guidelines:

- Support physical health and mental well-being
- Create hospitable, nurturing environments for all people within the facility
- Promote safety and security through inclusive design
- Support autonomy and enable privacy
- Provide connections to nature
- Create healthy environments
- Encourage respectful interactions
- Promote a sense of community
- Offer safe spaces
- Create a variety of welcoming spaces
- Enhance visitor experience

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Workshop Details

The guests who participated in the workshop were both those who work with people in the criminal justice system and people with direct experience either as formerly incarcerated or those with family members who had been impacted by the criminal justice system.

Workshop Approach, Experience, and Agenda

Due to the pandemic, the workshop was convened online via the Zoom platform. Workshop participants were able to participate on their phones and/or computers. The workshop engaged participants in facilitator-led interactive activities. The attendees were provided instructions to use the polling feature to choose and submit the image they liked and disliked the most. They also utilized the chat function to provide comments to justify their choices.

Workshop guests engaged in three activities that included:

Activity 1: Discussion Questions

1. What would improve your experience as a visitor?
2. What would improve your experience when entering the building in custody?

Activity 2: Design Guidelines Justice Advocate Input

- How do you imagine the **visiting experience** in the future facilities?
 - Lobby
 - Waiting Area
 - Visiting Areas
 - Family Visitation
- How do you imagine the **admissions experience** in the future facilities?
 - Waiting Area
 - Admissions Process
- How do you imagine the **living experience** in the future facilities?
 - Sleeping Rooms
 - Day Room and Communal Living
 - Recreation and Programming

GUEST BREAKDOWN

Workshop Participants	38
Facilitators and PMC	08
City Agency Representatives	10
Total Count	58

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Takeaways & Main Findings

Activity 1: Discussion Questions

1. What would improve your experience as a visitor?

Physical Space

- Welcoming environment and welcoming staff
- Bright and clean atmosphere
- “It should not look like a jail. It should look like a place I am going for services in the community.”
- Lots of natural light, large windows, plants, warm colors and art work on the walls
- Comfortable seating

Customer Experience

- Team present to answer questions with bi-lingual capabilities
- Family and children friendly atmosphere
- Access to vending machines in the waiting areas
- “TV monitors around the room with information about what is happening while I’m waiting. Information about the movement of the person I am there to see.”
- Scanning of bodies instead of searches
- Accessible to people with disabilities and elderly, including easy access to seating and bathrooms

Efficient Process

- Efficient guest services with strong and clear communication and positive culture

2. What would improve your experience when entering the building in custody?

Physical Space

- Reasonable temperature settings

Customer Experience

- Access to social workers, medical staff and therapists
- Compassion, empathy and being treated like a human being

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Takeaways & Main Findings

- Upon arrival, access to a shower, a hot meal and ability to make a phone call to call family and lawyer
- Courtesy, respect, humanizing processes and procedures
- Not being called an inmate or prisoner; being called by name
- Consistent mask-wearing by the Correctional Officers and staff

Efficient Process

- More efficient and streamlined intake process
- “Not sitting in the bullpen for hours or even days waiting to get into a housing unit.”

Privacy

- “Eliminating the entire process of strip searches and using machines like at the airport. No need to be naked. No need to stand in lines and rows while naked. Having privacy while using the bathroom.”

Activity 2: Design Guidelines Justice Advocate Input

Physical Space

- Comfortable seating in lobby, waiting and visiting areas
- Inviting, warm and welcoming decor in all areas
- Seating and tables that are movable and has back support
- Spaces where families can sit in a group, have privacy and engage in intimate conversations
- Color, design and themes that are kid friendly in all visiting areas
- Non-industrial materials with the limited use of metals
- Spaces that don't look too institutional, rigid, sterile or cold
- Natural light from the presence of large windows throughout the space
- Living spaces that are private and safe
- Communal areas that are comfortable and colorful

Programming

- Recreation and program options that appeal to a wide array of people



ACTIVITY 1: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

SUMMARY & RESULTS

1. What Would Improve Your Experience as a Visitor?

Attendees were first asked the following: “What would improve your experience as a visitor?” The question was designed to elicit an understanding of stakeholder preferences related to the design-build process for key aspects of the visitor’s experience such as the entrance, lobby, and waiting room. In addition, attendees provided feedback regarding engagement with security staff.

The question gave participants the opportunity to list what they believed was important to ensure a good visitor’s experience. The objective was to obtain as much feedback as possible to ensure participants felt their input was valued and not restricted. There is an implicit understanding the experience can be very traumatic for individuals visiting their loved ones in unfavorable circumstances especially if it is their first time. Therefore, ensuring the visiting experience is favorable from the outset is crucial.

The participants expressed the significance of the experience with the staff as staff interacts with visitors at the point of entry and throughout the visiting process. The participants raised concerns about ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect. There were also points raised about the process and the need for it to be clear and efficient. The participants prefer for the staff not to include correctional officers but rather include team members who engage in hospitality.

The conversation also highlighted the desired experience for visitors. When visiting their loved ones, there is a desire to enter a peaceful and calm environment rather than a harsh and confusing one. The participants shared the top characteristics for their experience included comfortable waiting areas, brightly lit and colorful spaces, information centers and access to drinks and food. They shared their preference for an experience that included an “efficient and clear process and physical space to pass through security.” It was highlighted that visitors include adults, elderly and children and each group should be considered in the design.

In conclusion, the visitors focused on themes that enable a supportive environment; clear communication and processes, respectful interactions with staff and security and spaces that are welcoming and inviting.

Welcoming environment with staff who engage in hospitality. Treating everyone with dignity and respect. A well-lit waiting area with a playroom for children while waiting. Nice artwork and colors - friendly environment - maybe even some of the artwork produced by incarcerated people. Plants would also be nice. Staff that are not correctional officers.

The facility should be brightly lit and colorful so that it does not feel dismal.

SUMMARY & RESULTS

2. What Would Improve Your Experience When Entering the Building in Custody?

Attendees were then asked the following: “What would improve your experience when entering the building in custody?” This question may draw upon a formerly incarcerated participant’s actual experience or an advocate who is aware of ways that the current experience can be improved. The question was designed to elicit an understanding of stakeholder preferences related to the design-build process of intake and housing areas as well as education and health services access. Participants were not limited in their responses to these specific points, therefore feedback was elicited in an open-ended fashion to ascertain as much information as possible.

During this portion of the workshop, participants expressed their primary concern of being treated with humanity. The participants echoed the words “humanity, compassion, empathy, courtesy, respect and dignity” as important values.

The participants gave examples of how humanity can be demonstrated. It includes providing access to social workers, medical staff and therapists; access to a shower upon arrival, hot meals upon intake, early access to make a phone call to family and/or lawyer, privacy while using the bathroom and the elimination of strip searches.

The participants advocated for cultural shifts; from being called an inmate or prisoner to being called by name; to not sitting in the bullpen for hours or even days waiting to get into a housing unit to being treated with respect and from Correctional Officers and staff not wearing masks to consistent mask-wearing promoting health and safety for all.

In conclusion, the Justice Advocates shared the varying ways humane treatment can be integrated into the experience of those in custody. As a participant mentioned, “talking with respect and without judgment, understanding we are mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunts to someone and operating with compassion.”

The whole process should be streamlined, the arrest should already be in the system to cut down on the waiting. A social worker or reentry counselor should be meeting me there. The treatment should be one of mutual respect. Food and drinks should already be available since I may have been at central booking without food.

Hot meal upon intake, being able to make a call, early access to a shower and medical care.

**ACTIVITY 2:
DESIGN
GUIDELINES
JUSTICE
ADVOCATE
INPUT**

SUMMARY & RESULTS

This activity was designed to enable the Justice Advocate community input and impact on the design guidelines principles, especially in those areas that create supportive environments and reinforce connected communities.

The concepts of Visiting Experience, Admissions Experience and Living Experience frame the design activities.

For **Visiting Experience**, this activity allows the participants to reflect on the experience in the lobby, waiting area, visitation area and family visitation area.

For **Admissions Experience**, this activity allows for input on the admissions waiting area and admissions process.

For **Living Experience**, this activity allows the participants to provide preferences on the sleeping rooms, day room and communal living area and the recreation space and programming.

The following supportive environment areas were specifically discussed during the activities and the feedback is included herein:

1. Lobby
2. Waiting Area
3. Visiting Areas
4. Family Visitation with Children
5. Waiting Area
6. Admission Process
7. Sleeping Rooms
8. Day Room and Communal
9. Recreation and Programming

The next section begins the specific findings and results from the virtual chat comments gathered in each theme.

1. LOBBY

Participants were asked: “How do you imagine the visiting experience in the future facilities?” There was an overall consensus that the space should be peaceful, calm and comfortable. Many envision the lobby as a place where family and loved ones can have private conversations. The most liked features included large windows for bright, natural light, comfortable seating and plants.

The most disliked features included intimidating tall columns and spaces that resemble a prison hallway. There was an emphasis on creating a peaceful space where family and children can convene. The preference for a homey place rather than a cold, rigid environment was expressed.

In designing the lobby space, the participants would like the designers to take into account that the space should be child-friendly and it was recommended to refer to the design of the Bronx Defenders’ Lobby. The participants expressed that they do not like spaces that look like a correctional or institutional setting.

Human scale seems like it promotes a reflective and calm space and tone; the setup seems more rehabilitative than the others which seem either intimidating, institutional or neutral.

1. LOBBY

MOST LIKED Human Scale



PROS:

- Comfortable seating
- Bright light, big windows
- Welcoming, inviting environment
- Living room feel
- Promotes a reflective and calm space and tone
- Rehabilitative set-up
- Warm colors
- Peaceful

CONS:

- Lack of plants

Low-Key and Quiet



PROS:

- Less restrictive and punitive
- Good lighting
- Family friendly feel
- Quiet setting
- Calming environment
- Intimate
- Plants
- Looks peaceful
- Surrounding removes tension

CONS:

- Reminds of a hospital
- Neutral
- Too business-like
- Not that comfortable seating
- Least accommodating for social distancing

Transparent and Green



PROS:

- Greenery

CONS:

- No seating
- No furniture
- Barrenness of the floor
- Intimidating
- Reminds of a prison hallway

MOST DISLIKED Modern



PROS:

- Looks the least like a correctional setting

CONS:

- Lacks warmth
- Too rigid
- Not humanistic enough
- Stark
- Imposing, intimidating size and scale
- Less private
- Not welcoming
- Cold and institutional

2. WAITING AREA

Participants were then asked: “How do you imagine the visiting experience in the future facilities and particularly the waiting area?” There was a clear preference for organic, comfortable and welcoming seating. Their reasons included the value of creating a positive “living room” environment by using warm and inviting furniture. The experience of children was also emphasized with comments that recommended designers consider that children lounge differently than adults.

The most liked features included comfortable, inviting and warm seating. A participant expressed the value of having a comfortable space for waiting. “It allows me to really enjoy my family and escape the harshness of my environment. I feel more human.” The most disliked features included a space that was uncomfortable, unforgiving and institutional. Cold and sterile environment “sends a message that you should not linger and are not valued. Kids cannot snuggle with family, during what will be emotional time.”

In designing the seating experience, the participants would like the design-builder to take into account seating that allows for social distancing and seating that accommodates different body types and sizes.

There is a concern that the waiting area should not resemble a bus stop, the Court House or a doctor’s office. There were also requests to limit the use of metal materials.

In conclusion, the community favors comfortable, warm and relaxed seating.

Organic seating allows me to really enjoy my family and escape the harshness of my environment. I feel more human.

2. WAITING AREA

MOST LIKED Organic Seating



PROS:

- Comfortable
- Welcoming, inviting
- Allows families to sit together because no arms or dividers
- Children friendly
- Curved seating enables privacy
- Warm, friendly, calm
- More human feel
- Allows you to escape the harshness of the environment

CONS:

- Could still use warmer touches
- Needs some more natural light
- Appears plain and not inviting

Relaxed



PROS:

- Allows children to relax in different ways from adults
- Appealing to children

CONS:

- Too boxy
- People might be treating seats like footstools and then having to sit on them
- Too child-like

Traditional



PROS:

- Has the ability to move individual seats with ease
- Possibility to add more chairs

CONS:

- Institutional
- Feels like a doctor's office, no good memories or feelings there
- Seats not wide enough for overweight people

MOST DISLIKED Fixed Seating



PROS:

- Organized
- Practical

CONS:

- Cold, sterile
- Least likely to social distance
- Unforgiving
- Hard, uncomfortable
- No privacy
- Reminds buss stop
- Reminds courthouse
- Feels like prison visit room seats
- Sends a message that you should not linger
- Children cannot snuggle with family

3. VISITING AREAS

Participants were asked: “How do you imagine the visiting experience in the future facilities and especially the visiting areas?” The attendees unanimously preferred a group visiting experience design. This design enables families to be together, move seating to be closer to loved ones and move tables away from other tables for privacy. The most liked features included comfortable chairs with backs, tables to accommodate kid activities or meals and space between the other groups of visitors.

The most disliked features included uncomfortable, fixed, cold and separated seating. Being divided was strongly disliked. And having numbers on booths was considered “horrible looking and it gives the impression of being treated like cattle.”

There were some Justice Advocates who did not like any of the options presented, stating that they all lack privacy and feel like a jail. There was also a concern about flimsy seating and the need for seating to be sturdy. There was a recommendation that having a large private room for family visiting would be a better option.

Group visiting is more friendly and loving. You can move the chair to be closer to your loved one. All the other seating options are embedded with rules - don't get too close.

3. VISITING AREAS

MOST LIKED Group Visiting



PROS:

- Spacious between each group
- Serves better for private conversations
- Movable seating
- Allows a family to be together
- Comfortable seating with back support
- Accommodating for elderly visitors
- Friendly and loving
- Carpet

CONS:

- No chairs for children
- Chairs appear flimsy

Cafeteria-Style Visiting



PROS:

- Large tables
- Easy to sit with a family and children
- Green dividers

CONS:

- Uncomfortable seating
- Lacks privacy
- Not welcoming

Fixed Group Visiting



PROS:

- Spacious

CONS:

- Institutional
- Cold, scary, sterile
- Reminds current prisons
- Not welcoming
- Uncomfortable and fixed seating
- No back support
- Too much metal

MOST DISLIKED Linear Visiting



PROS:

- Nice circular stools

CONS:

- Offers minimal privacy
- Very divided
- Small stools with no back support
- Uncomfortable
- Cold
- Not family friendly
- Looks like a prison

4. FAMILY VISITATION WITH CHILDREN

Participants were asked: “How do you imagine the visiting experience in the future facilities and specifically when families visit with children?” They desired for the space to be a room where children can be “kids without the stress of what’s going on.” They shared their preference for a children-friendly theme room with boats and lighthouses as an example. The most liked features included big windows, plenty of space, bright colors, movable seating and activities for children of varying ages.

The participants most disliked a space where the children are not engaged and can become bored.

The Justice Advocates expressed a preference for a space that can accommodate both adults and children where children can play and move around. It was stated “children should be able to forget where they are and just have fun.”

Participants prefer the children’s play area as it allows children to be kids without the stress of what’s going on. They can forget where they are and have fun.

4. FAMILY VISITATION WITH CHILDREN

MOST LIKED Children's Play Area



PROS:

- Allows children to be kids without the stress of what's going on
- Does not remind of a jail, children can forget where they are and have fun
- Playful
- Childish, kids would love it and will be kept busy
- Has a theme
- Offers many activities

CONS:

- Children might hide

Family Visiting Area



PROS:

- Accommodates both adults and children
- Nice colors
- Large windows
- Gives a feeling of breezy air circulation
- Chairs can be moved, toys can be added
- Feels spacious for all

CONS:

- Uncomfortable seating

Children's Waiting Room



PROS:

- Children appropriate seating and tables
- Mural

CONS:

- Nothing for children to be occupied

MOST DISLIKED Pre-Teen/Teen Waiting



PROS:

- No preference

CONS:

- Generic
- Sterile
- Uninviting to children
- Lacks warmth
- Children will easily go restless and become bored
- Does not offer much to keep children engaged

5. WAITING AREA

The workshop participants were asked: “How do you imagine the admissions experience in the future facilities focusing on the waiting area?” The Justice Advocates expressed a preference for comfortable seating and sufficient space. The most liked features include adding tables to the design and a visually pleasant environment.

The most disliked features include tiered seating, unsafe stairs, uncomfortable seating without back support, and an overall institutional and scary look and feel. The participants do not want the new space to look like the current jail design of today.

Justice Advocates raised the need for social distancing to be considered in the design of this area as well. It was expressed that as a formerly incarcerated person having people sitting right behind you should be avoided as it can be triggering. In addition, concern was expressed for the use of metal as a material in the design.

In conclusion, the participants would like the space to be comfortable, accessible and safe. As expressed by an attendee, in order to create a sense of calmness, “all this needs is an interior designer with an eye towards happiness, warm, inviting colors and a soothing calming effect.”

In tiered seating you have people sitting right behind you which as a formerly incarcerated person can be triggering. The stairs look dangerous also. People often have health issues and people with physical disabilities would have challenges.

5. WAITING AREA

MOST LIKED Organic Seating



PROS:

- Comfortable
- Sufficient space
- Tables
- Friendly and inviting
- Warm
- Visually pleasing
- Seems brighter and more positive

CONS:

- Not enough colors

Tandem Seating



PROS:

- No preference

CONS:

- Seems like a hospital or medical office
- Feels like parole office waiting area
- Uncomfortable as it gauges the size of the person able to sit
- Too much metal

Group Seating



PROS:

- No preference

CONS:

- People are forced to face one another
- Linear
- Less tables
- Not able to add seats
- Less social distancing
- Has cells all around
- Looks boxy
- Scary
- Institutional

MOST DISLIKED Tiered Seating



PROS:

- More space for seating

CONS:

- Uncomfortable
- Challenging for elderly or people with physical disabilities
- People sitting right behind you can be triggering
- Stairs look dangerous
- Inaccessible
- Not safe

6. ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Justice Advocates were asked: “How do you imagine the admissions process in the future facilities?” There was consensus that a space with good lighting and a spacious hallway are preferred. The most liked features included the use of non-industrial materials especially light colored wood, large windows to let in natural light, plants and art on the walls.

The most disliked features included fluorescent lighting, uncomfortable seating, cold and metallic floors and walls.

Participants requested that the admissions process be handled by social

workers. There was also a request for the designers to use reclaimed wood to remind people that everyone can be restored.

There were concerns that this space looked too institutional like a court house or hospital. Words like empty, soulless and not humanistic were used to describe what the participants don't want the space to feel like.

In conclusion, features like soft lighting and light wood in the design are preferable for creating a warm admissions experience.

Option 2 has no industrial materials, like metal which is very scary for me and it feels very cold and institutional. It has warmer colors, warm light and windows that make it look more comforting.

6. ADMISSIONS PROCESS

MOST LIKED Non-Industrial Materials



PROS:

- Welcoming
- Warm colors and materials
- Spacious
- Wood-paneled walls
- Good lighting (warm, bright, natural)
- Does not seem intimidating
- Comforting
- Windows
- Pays attention to decoration

CONS:

- White flooring
- Not enough lights
- No art or plants

Soft Lighting



PROS:

- Soft lighting
- Brightest
- Cheeriest

CONS:

- Fluorescent lighting feels antiseptic

Traditional



PROS:

- No preference

CONS:

- Looks like a court
- Feels empty, soulless
- Not functional
- Stairs might lead to people falling down
- Bench, uncomfortable seating

MOST DISLIKED Formal



PROS:

- No preference

CONS:

- Institutional
- Looks depressing
- Reminds of a prison, court or hospital building
- Appears very generic and non-humanistic
- Narrow hallway
- Cold and scary
- Floors, walls, lights and the shine feel too metallic

7. SLEEPING ROOMS

Participants were asked: “How do you imagine the living experience in the future facilities focusing on the sleeping areas?” Overall, there was a unanimous selection of a single room experience. The Justice Advocates provided examples of the possibility of the occurrence of assault, theft of property and mental health breakdowns. Hence, there was an overwhelming desire for privacy in the sleeping room setting and the most liked features included privacy and ample natural light.

The most disliked features included the dorm style design which provides less privacy and safety.

One of the participants referenced Norway as a model citing specifically; “I believe I recognize Picture Number 1 from Norway.

Must be a single room style. Dorm style living does not give you any privacy. I love the big open window and natural lighting in Number 1. I like how there is a private desk. Rooms should also include TVs, microwaves, etc. What would be included in a college room. Allowing personal items to be hung on walls and placed on the desks is important. Not taking people’s identities away! Private bathrooms with showers and toilets are a must. A shower curtain can be placed to allow for privacy and still meet PREA guidelines. Number 1 has space for people to move around. They should have their own key - like in the Norway. And, the beds should be bigger with more comfortable mattresses. I will have chronic back issues for the rest of my life because of prison beds.”

Participants prefer for the sleeping rooms to have larger and more

comfortable beds than what is currently provided in the jail system. There is also a preference for space to store personal items.

The participants recommended direct window access. There is also a preference for windows to be placed at eye level and not so high that one cannot see out.

In conclusion, there was a preference for a living space that resembles a single college dorm room where there is privacy, safety and a space to maintain your identity.

7. SLEEPING ROOMS

MOST LIKED Single Room



PROS:

- Safest in terms of assault
- Offers the most privacy and space
- Reduces the likelihood of someone stealing your property
- Comfortable and human feel
- Window, natural light
- Warm lighting
- No metal
- Proper furniture

CONS:

- Could be isolating
- Bed attached on the side to the wall, uncomfortable for larger people
- Beds are too narrow, they should be bigger with more comfortable mattresses

Divided Dorm Desk Outside



PROS:

- Space for personal belongings

CONS:

- No safety
- No privacy
- Feels cold
- Narrow beds

Divided Dorm Desk Inside



PROS:

- Space for personal belongings
- Direct window access per section

CONS:

- No safety
- No privacy
- Feels cold
- Narrow beds

MOST DISLIKED Collegial/Open Dorm



PROS:

- College feel

CONS:

- No safety
- No privacy
- No space per person
- No space for personal belongings
- Hard to sleep under these circumstances
- Small windows high up, no view and no direct window access
- Feels cold
- Narrow beds

8. DAY ROOM AND COMMUNAL LIVING

Participants were asked: “How do you imagine the living experience in the future facilities and specifically the day room and communal living area?” They answered with a preference for a living room feel with colors and murals. The most liked features included natural lighting, bright colors, comfortable and movable seating.

The most disliked features included an institutional feeling space with fixed seating. The participants want a space with warm colors instead of an all-white look that can seem cold.

A participant remarked that the space should feel like an apartment with access to a kitchen, refrigerator and television where people can establish a supportive network. The participants remarked that the space should not resemble a badly designed social services office.

The living room feel has comfortable sofas and tables for people to engage in activities.

8. DAY ROOM AND COMMUNAL LIVING

MOST LIKED Living Room Feel



PROS:

- Promotes a sense of community
- Comfortable sofas and tables enable people to engage in activities
- Access to a kitchen and refrigerator
- Looks like an apartment
- Natural light
- Best type of layout

CONS:

- Looks like a doctor's office
- Plants not incorporated
- Not enough flexibility in seating
- Not welcoming enough
- Not enough individual seats

MOST LIKED Colors and Murals



PROS:

- Bright with big windows
- Offers the most natural light
- Openness of the colors and murals
- Movable chairs
- Different seating options

CONS:

- Institutional feel
- Colors should be warmer

Flexible Grouping



PROS:

- Colors
- Comfortable armchairs
- Movable chairs

CONS:

- Looks like a badly designed social service office
- Cold

MOST DISLIKED Natural Materials



PROS:

- Natural materials
- High ceiling
- Wooden ceiling

CONS:

- Stools and tables fixed to the ground
- Traditional, institutional feel
- Uncomfortable seating
- Prison-style feel
- Traditional, institutional feel
- Not for a therapeutic setting

9. RECREATION AND PROGRAMMING

Justice Advocates were asked: “What recreation amenities and programming do you believe should be provided in the future facilities?”

Participants believe all amenities are important and the more programming is offered the better as it keeps people engaged. Programming options should appeal to a wide array of people.

“All amenities are incredibly necessary. They provide choices to engage in your favorite activity as well as trying new ones that someone

might not have experienced before. We need these types of rooms for healing.”

The poll revealed that the Justice Advocates desire for outdoor space, group programs, indoor recreation and exercise, quiet space, spiritual space and art space to be provided with the top choice being outdoor space.

Participants made the following programming suggestions during the session:



PROGRAMS	TRAININGS	EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT	MULTI-PURPOSE ROOMS	OTHER
Restorative and transformative justice circle group	Computer	Libraries	Quiet areas	Drivers permit preparation
Substance abuse	Vocational	Literacy support	Private rooms for therapy	Chapel and faith based spaces
Parenting skills	OSHA	Pre-GED and GED programs		Exercise options (yoga, activities)
NA/AA meetings	Cable	College courses		Cooking
Restaurant management	Customer service phone call			Arts and crafts (knitting and crocheting)
	Auto mechanic			Independent laundry



CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

The virtual workshop yielded information and insights valuable to the design guidelines process. The workshop participants were passionate individuals with a long history of advocating for justice issues. Justice Advocates were engaged and committed as they advocated on behalf of the detained and their families to ensure an optimal experience. They provided robust input that will have significant value in the design-build process and they will be engaged for continued input to ensure the needs of the community they represent are heard.

In conclusion, the overall turnout for the virtual session was good. The City was able to collect significant feedback and meaningful insights from the participants in attendance. The underlying theme for the discussion questions as it relates to the qualitative input provided was individuals being treated with dignity and respect.

In the visiting experience feedback aspect of the workshop, participants emphasized the importance of comfortable seating, group visiting and family-friendly spaces.

With respect to the admissions experience, attendees recommended comfortable seating that considers elderly and disabled individuals. There was a concern about design that looks and feels too institutional and there was a preference for natural lighting and non-industrial materials.

Regarding the living experience, participants recommended privacy and safety to be considered in the design of the sleeping rooms. An overall preference for single rooms was expressed over dorm-style living. Additionally, Justice Advocates shared the desire for the communal space to have a “living room feel”.

The virtual community session encouraged participants to advocate for the needs of their community and ways the space can be an asset to the community. They want an environment that enables those visiting to feel comfortable, welcome and respected and those in custody to experience humanity, establish supportive networks and engage in programming that positions them for long-term employment opportunities. They desire for staff interactions to be rooted in respect and hospitality as well as the inclusion of social workers, medical and mental health professionals into the experience.

The workshop generated design insights in line with the City’s objectives. Attendees were forthcoming in providing their likes and dislikes along with comments and justifications. Their flexibility is acknowledged in allowing the transition to a virtual platform to garner their input for the design guidelines. Practical takeaways were received that will not only be useful in optimizing the design of the physical structure, but they will also be key in maximizing meaningful engagement between the NYC Department of Correction staff, visitors and people in custody. Both components are equally and critically important to the visiting, admissions, and living experiences for the families and loved ones of incarcerated individuals as well as the incarcerated themselves.

Overall, the stakeholders were unified in their feedback that led to greater clarity in understanding the needs of the incarcerated population and their loved ones that lends to a more compassionate, just, and humane approach.



APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

During the Q&A segment at the end of the workshop, there were several questions asked by the participants. Below is a list of questions posed by the group:

1. Question: Going back to the beginning, if we're going to call it a supportive environment, why are we still calling it a jail?

Answer: MOCJ responded that the City agrees there is power in language and that is why the word "facilities" is being used. If we are creating something different and transformative, then, yes, we should use different language.

2. Question: What is the difference between tonight's workshop and Friday's workshop?

Answer: MOCJ responded that the workshop on Friday is another opportunity to invite other participants who were unable to make tonight's workshop and have previous experience with the justice system, in addition to the Justice Implementation Task Force.

3. Question: How can we assure ourselves and this process that people who are directly impacted are going to get a chance to compete as vendors? Is there a demand that the City has to contract with small organizations?

Answer: DDC responded that there will be specific and competitive M/WBE requirements for the program to ensure that minority and women owned businesses have the opportunities to get involved. DDC stated that the participant acquiring more information will be contacted directly by DDC offline so that they can be put in touch with the DDC M/WBE division to learn more about involvement opportunities.

NYC Criminal
Justice



NYC Department of
DDC Design and
Construction

AECOM-Hill JV