



Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

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Cynthia Brann, Commissioner
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August 23, 2019

Marisa Lago, Chair
City Planning Commission
120 Broadway
New York, NY 10271

Re: Post-ULURP Community Engagement and Design Review

Dear Chair Lago:

Thank you for inviting the applicant team¹ for the proposed New York City Borough-Based Jail System to testify at the City Planning Commission's public hearing on July 10, 2019. We are writing with follow-up information requested by the Commissioners and the Department of City Planning during and after the hearing.

The City Planning Commission (CPC) and Department of City Planning (DCP) requested more information about the duration and scope of the continuing community engagement and design review following the ULURP process and throughout delivery of the borough-based jails program.

Existing and Continuing Engagement

Specific measures that DDC and MOCJ will take to ensure robust community engagement and design review following ULURP are as follows:

- **Design Advisory Group:** For the purposes of soliciting feedback from the Borough Presidents, Department of City Planning, and the City Planning Commission on the design specifications for the projects, the City formed the Design Advisory Group (DAG) in March 2019. The DAG is co-chaired by the Director of MOCJ and the Commissioner of DDC. The City invited the Brooklyn, Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens Borough Presidents, as well as the Speaker of the City Council to each appoint a member. In addition, the Department of City Planning (DCP), Department of Correction and the Public Design Commission (PDC) are represented. The first meeting was held on May 30, 2019 and the following meeting will be in September 2019. The DAG meetings will be held quarterly until the issuance of the first RFP.

Moving forward, at the DAG meetings, DDC and the Program Management Consultant (PMC) will present updates on the design guidelines and principles that are part of the

¹ The applicant team includes the Department of Correction (DOC); Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ); Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD); Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS).



design build RFP documents. A near-term step will be for the DAG to review a compilation of all existing design guidelines (e.g. JITF Design Working Group Design Guidelines, NAC Guidelines and Principles, ULURP Recommendations). At subsequent meetings, the DAG will review draft design guidelines as they relate to the public realm, streetscape, building materials, and other relevant aspects of the projects. While the DAG's role is advisory, the City will give serious consideration to the DAG's recommendations and incorporate the DAG's recommendations, as appropriate, in the RFQs and RFPs.

- **Justice Implementation Task Force:** As described in the letter to the City Planning Commission on August 9, 2019, the City will continue to convene the Justice Implementation Task Force, including all three working groups and relevant subcommittees. Within the JITF, there are three working groups: Jail Population Reduction, Culture Change, and Design. All three strategies, guided by the Working Groups, have advanced significantly in the two years since issuing the roadmap to close the jails on Rikers Island.

All three working groups will continue to meet following ULURP. The Design Working Group continues to meet and provide feedback on plans as they develop and will continue in this role following ULURP and through the duration of the term of the Working Group. As mentioned in the 8/9/19 letter to the CPC, a subcommittee of the Design Working Group produced the Guiding Principles on Design, which informed the master planning and will inform design guidelines and principles that are part of the design build RFP documents. The Co-Chairs of the Design Working Group² will advise the City process through MOCJ on 1) the language of the RFQ and RFP to ensure that design remains prominent in the procurement documents; 2) outreach to a broad network of architects and contractors to help create interest in the RFQ and RFPs that leads to innovative and community-centric design ideals; and 3) the procurement selection process.

The Culture Change Working Group, comprised of advocates, practitioners, formerly incarcerated people and government representatives, is actively developing recommendations to improve programming, training and safety within DOC facilities. The Working Group meets bimonthly and has two subcommittees – the Programming Subcommittee and the Staff Wellness, Safety and Training Subcommittee – that meet on a monthly basis. Previously, the group developed recommendations for improving visiting areas within DOC facilities. In addition, DOC recently contracted with a provider to conduct new, special trainings for staff working in the visiting areas.

In addition, the Jail Population Reduction Working Group meets quarterly and has played a critical role in advising the City's strategy to reduce the jail population to 4,000. Specifically, the City consulted the group during the planning to expand supervised release for youth and ATI programming as well as strategies to reduce the number of people detained for parole violations. A subcommittee of the group, the Release Assessment Subcommittee, advised on the development of the new release assessment system that aims

² The Co-Chairs of the Design Working Group are Feniosky Pena-Mora (Columbia University), Purnima Kapur (Harvard University), Rosalie Genevro (The Architecture League) and Stanley Richards (The Fortune Society).



to increase the rate at which people are recommended to be released at arraignment while mindful of safety.

- **Neighborhood Advisory Committees:** As described in the letter to the City Planning Commission on August 9, 2019, the City convened Neighborhood Advisory Committees (NACs) to provide a regular forum to address the concerns in each neighborhood. The City will reconvene the NACs and attend Community Board meetings to provide regular updates and will solicit feedback on the program, overarching design goals, the development of design guidelines, and how these will inform the Requests for Proposal (RFP) processes for the design and construction of the borough-based jails. In addition, an overview of designs will be provided after contract awards, and the City will provide regular updates during the design and construction of each of the new facilities. In Manhattan, we will continue to work with Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and Council Member Margaret Chin’s Joint Rikers Task Force.³
- **Community-Based Organizations:** The City is committed to continuing to meet regularly with community-based organizations to discuss the plans to close the jails on Rikers Island. To date, the City has met with dozens of organizations – from faith organizations, to social justice organizations, to youth organizations – to engage in meaningful dialogue around the plan and to ensure that our program continues to reflect the best thinking of experts on both community needs and criminal justice reform. Organizations that want to discuss the borough-based jail plan, can contact the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice at mocj@cityhall.nyc.gov.
- **Public Design Commission Review:** After the projects are awarded to the most qualified design builders through the RFQ, RFP, and selection processes, each facility’s design documents must be reviewed and approved by the Public Design Commission (PDC) as mandated by the City Charter. The project will go through PDC’s formal review including three stages of design review: conceptual, preliminary, and final. In addition to the planned engagement with community boards around a range of issues related to this project, the City will have design-specific reviews with each affected Community Board throughout the design process and will provide the PDC with copies of the resolution from each Community Board to consider as the PDC reviews and approves the proposed designs. Additionally, given the size of this project, the PDC will hold public hearings where the public can provide testimony on public realm design-related concerns, which the PDC will take into consideration when reviewing the proposals.
- **Community Construction Liaisons:** In addition to ensuring communities are informed and are able to provide input during project development, DDC is also implementing robust, on-the-ground communications during construction itself. There will be

³ The Manhattan Borough President’s Office created a Rikers Task Force in early 2018. The Office recently merged the Task Force with the Manhattan Neighborhood Advisory Committee convened by the City to form a new advisory group, which is called *Jails, Justice, and Community*. As per the Manhattan Borough President Brewer’s ULURP recommendation, this new group “will meet regularly to discuss and update community members, criminal justice advocates, and city agencies on criminal justice reform measures and work on ways in which [they] can help shape future conversations and outreach efforts around borough-based jails and criminal justice reform as a whole.”



Community Construction Liaisons (CCLs) for each borough who will be on-site, on the ground contacts to provide real-time information about construction activities to elected officials, community boards, residents and businesses. They will be there for the full duration of the project and will establish relationships, providing phone numbers and emails, throughout the area so that people know who to call if there is an issue. The CCL will also provide notices about construction activities via print, email and on the DDC website. The CCL will work to resolve issues arising from construction impacts, and to help ensure that the team is responsive to neighborhood concerns throughout the duration of the project.

DDC will also have in-house communications specialists dedicated to the project throughout the project to arrange outreach priorities and ensure the tasks above are executed.

Thank you for your attention to this application. We look forward to discussing these topics during the post-hearing follow up review session on August 26, 2019.

Sincerely,

Liz Glazer, Director
Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

Cynthia Brann, Commissioner
NYC Department of Correction