

Re: **Summary of Borough-Based Jails Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) Brooklyn – Fifth Meeting**

Date: March 1, 2019, 3:00 pm

Location: Brooklyn Law School, 11th Floor Brooklyn, NY

Prepared by: Joshua Eisenstat, Noah Levine, and Arnold Bloch

Attendees:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	
Elizabeth Adams	Councilman Levin's Office	Perkins Eastman Architects DPC
Sandy Balboza	Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association	
Richard Bearak	Brooklyn Borough President's Office	
Glomani Bravo-Lopez	Councilman Levin's Office	PERKINSEASTMAN.COM
Peter Bray	Brooklyn Heights Association	
Richard Brotherton	166 Henry Street	
Mark Gelbs	84 th Precinct Council	
William Harris	393 Pacific Street	Boston
Brandon Holmes	JustLeadership USA	Charlotte
Zachary Katznelson	Lippman Commission	Chicago
Howard Kollins	Boerum Hill Association	Dallas
Steven Levin	Councilman	Dubai
Claudia Massa	Downtown Brooklyn Concerned Neighbors	Guayaquil
Caroline Peri	Downtown Brooklyn Partnership	Los Angeles
Rob Perris	Community Board #2	Mumbai
Justin Pollock	87 Smith Street	New York
Alexis Sfikas	Assemblywoman Simon's Office	Pittsburgh
Stephen Smith	Downtown Brooklyn Neighborhood Alliance	San Francisco
Hizam Wahib	Arab-American Family Support Center	Shanghai
Dan Wiley	Congresswoman Velazquez's Office	Stamford
Sue Wolfe	Atlantic Avenue BID	Toronto
Daniel Zawitz	Cobble Hill Association	Washington DC
Danielle Zuckerman	State Senator Kavanagh's Office	

Daniel Abramson	CAU
Arnie Bloch	FHI
Rebecca Clough	DDC
Chelsea Davis	MOCJ
Joshua Eisenstat	PE

Chatodd Floyd	MOCJ
Dana Kaplan	MOCJ
Steven Kaiser	DOC
Noah Levine	PE
Jeff Reuben	PHA
Joseph Thomas	CAU
Nicole Torres	MOCJ
Taylor Wolfson	DCP

ACTION ITEMS:

- City to send NAC members an updated Draft Guidelines and Principles document.
- Brooklyn NAC tour of Rikers Island is scheduled for April 5th.
- NAC members requested clarification on the proposed de-mapping.
- NAC members requested the City invite representatives from the State Office of Court Administration (OCA), Brooklyn District Attorney’s Office, and supervising judges to speak with the Brooklyn NAC.

INTRODUCTION:

- Introductions from Daniel Abramson (CAU). The NAC will have an opportunity to review the updated Draft Guidelines and Principals in advance of the next NAC meeting. The NAC will review the updated document together during the next NAC meeting.
- NAC member expressed concern about having the NAC breakout into smaller group discussions on each theme in the Guidelines and Principles document. The City explained that having smaller groups allows for an in-depth discussion on each theme and provides an opportunity for NAC members to have detailed discussion on particular areas of interest.

BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

- The NAC members divided into three topic-oriented breakout groups to discuss community needs/concerns and to identify priorities that could be included in the Brooklyn NAC’s Guidelines and Principles document. The three breakout groups were:
 1. Building Design/Ground Floor Use
 2. Traffic, Circulation, and Parking
 3. Streetscape, Open Space, and Community Facilities

NAC Breakout Group Discussion on Building Design/Ground Floor Use

NAC Members discussed:

- Desire to enliven the ground floor space on Atlantic Avenue.
- Exploring having the entrance to facility located on Atlantic Avenue.
- There was a concern that the proposed jail site would have traditional retail uses that would compete with other retail within the community. “Formula businesses” should be discouraged.
- NAC members expressed concern that the current plan may put a strain on Smith Street because it contemplates putting the garage entrance/exit and sally port entrance on Smith Street. NAC members discussed ways to create an equitable share of traffic across the proposed facility’s four adjacent streets. NAC members also expressed wanting to reduce the number of entries and curb cuts.
- Current problem with vehicles queuing on the street. There was a suggestion for the City to consider pushing the secure perimeter further into the proposed facility so that queuing can be done off-street.
- Due to the nature of Atlantic Avenue, there was a concern that there would not be any street parking in front of the potential retail that may occupy the ground level space. There was also a concern that if the City provided parking along Atlantic Avenue in front of the facility, it would create congestion. There was also concern that not providing parking may impact the commercial viability of that frontage. There was a suggestion to provide loading space for potential retail off of Atlantic Avenue. Additionally, it was suggested that retail should share loading space or entries with the proposed facility.
- Inclusion of other cultural organizations -- not just BAM -- for the proposed ground floor community space could be good occupants.
- Non-profit organizations and cultural institutions may not have the funding to occupy the ground floor community space, in which case the City should provide funding to assist them.
- Innovative architecture, including high quality materials and sustainability measures (i.e. LEED, Net Zero, green roof, etc.), should be used for the proposed facility.
- Incorporation of building setbacks for the proposed facility design at a lower height (potentially at 40/50ft) to reduce bulk at the street wall and better mesh with surrounding lower scale neighborhood.
- Playgrounds/greenspaces are needed in the community.

- There is a current noise problem from existing recreation spaces at the Brooklyn House of Detention. Design should be sensitive to this issue.

NAC Breakout Group Discussion on Traffic, Circulation, and Parking

NAC Members discussed:

- Need to reduce the impact of the proposed facility on State Street.
- Making the proposed jail more cohesive with the surrounding community by: (1) creating an underground connection between the proposed jail and the courthouse, and (2) implementing pedestrian and bicycle improvements along State Street and additional streets.
- Removing the portion of State Street that is not in front of City-owned property from the City's proposed de-mapping boundary.
- A unified underground sally port for all vehicles with separate entrance and exit. All truck deliveries should be done underground.
- Provision of off-street parking that meets the New York City Department of Correction (DOC) staff parking demand, including during shift changes when parking demand peaks.
- Discouraging travel to the proposed facility by personal automobile and encouraging use of public transportation (i.e. parking cash out programs or providing free or discounted transit passes).
- Greater parking placard abuse enforcement for on-street spaces, which should begin immediately.
- Concern that on-street parking by police officers on Schermerhorn Street is problematic and that it is not friendly to pedestrians.
- Congestion pricing and residential parking permits, noting that these policies would require cooperation from the State legislature as they fall within the State's jurisdiction.
- Concern about the proposed BQX Street Car, believing that it may result in more congestion on the roads.
- Concern about the proposed reconstruction to the Brooklyn Queens Expressway (BQE) and the cascading impacts on traffic. The DEIS should consider this concurrent project.
- Streets are currently highly congested. Questions about what would happen during the proposed facility's operation and construction.

NAC Breakout Group Discussion on Streetscape, Open Space, and Community Facilities

NAC Members discussed:

- Land marking various buildings in Downtown Brooklyn and Boerum Hill. NAC members described it as a real opportunity to respect the character of the community.
- Extending the Boerum Hill Historic District further along Atlantic Avenue.
- Existing Atlantic Avenue Special District should be better adhered to by the City when new buildings are being built in order to help preserve the character of the community. Concern about the relationship between the Landmarks Preservation Commission and New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) when it comes to new development.
- Need for more street furniture, landscaping, and other streetscape amenities in the area. Great opportunity for streetscape improvements in the area. Downtown Brooklyn Partnership is embarking on a study related to this issue.
- Need for benches that fit in the neighborhood context.
- Need for more trees, although it was noted that illegal parking often damages sidewalk trees.
- Greater opportunities for community input in the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Forestry Division's selection of trees that are planted in the neighborhood.
- Inadequate outdoor street lighting in Downtown Brooklyn, specifically along Schermerhorn Street, Atlantic Avenue, and other streets.
- Investing in parks that could be used by people of all ages. Need for small parks, as well as:
 - Possible conversion of parking lots into parks;
 - Progress on Willoughby Park concept;
 - Need for a park at Wyckoff Houses; and
 - Need for preserving green spaces at NYCHA developments even as new affordable housing is being built
- Utilize historic head house to create a triangle park at the Atlantic Avenue-Pacific Street Subway Station.
- Create a gateway entrance to Brooklyn Bridge Park at the western end of Atlantic Avenue. This would provide a more pedestrian

friendly entrance as well as lead to an economic boon for businesses on Atlantic Avenue.

- Rehabilitation of Gowanus Community Center.
- Better maintenance of Bike Share stations.
- Investing in schools and hospitals for the community.
- Need for more supermarkets throughout the area.
- Improving the pedestrian conditions on State Street.
- Utilizing the existing historic Atlantic Avenue railway tunnel for cultural tourist and retail opportunities.

NAC DISCUSSION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS:

- JustLeadership USA discussed criminal justice goals and reforms at the City and State level, such as:
 - Reducing the City’s jail population to 3,500;
 - Replacing City sentences with alternatives to incarceration;
 - Removing State technical parole violators from Rikers Island;
 - Decriminalizing lesser offenses such as possession of gravity knives, turnstile jumping, and offenses related to sex workers;
 - Supporting legislation to eliminate of cash bail; and
 - Supporting discovery reform legislation that protects survivors of abuse/violence
- The City explained a City jail population of 5,000 is achievable even without State reforms. There are a number of things that can happen this legislative session that could impact the height. State reforms provide more tools to expand release options and mandate certain culture changes (i.e. eliminating money bail for misdemeanors, removing state parole violators from City jails) to get us to 5,000 faster. Without State reform, reducing the City’s jail population will continue to depend on the discretion of the courts, district attorneys, etc. to divert people from jail and reduce case delay.
- The City explained that the ULURP process defines the maximum buildable envelope. However, before a shovel is in the ground, the building size can be reduced to reflect a reduced number of people in the City’s jail system. Additional strategies to further reduce the height and density are under continued review by the City, and as

decisions are made, we will continue to share the impact on the proposed plan.

- NAC members asked if the City has a phasing plan for shuttering the jails on Rikers Island.
- When asked by another NAC member about the organization's position regarding the City's decision to not propose a facility in Staten Island, JustLeadership USA indicated that their organization will not advocate for a Staten Island jail.

NAC DISCUSSION OF DRAFT GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES DOCUMENT

NAC Members discussed:

- Concern that the draft language "'Brooklyn NAC supports..." is not always accurate because there is not full consensus on everything included in the document. NAC requested such language be revised to reflect differing opinions, particularly when there is not consensus amongst the NAC members.
- Concern that the Brooklyn NAC's Guidelines and Principles document will not represent all of the community members who would be impacted by the proposed project. NAC member suggested the document include mention of the individuals who participated in the NAC.
- Importance of underscoring the moral imperative to close the jails on Rikers Island.